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BYU
STUDIES

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS IN PIONEER UTAH
CHRISTMAS SEASONS WITH CHURCH PRESIDENTS
CHARLES DICKENS AND LDS CHRISTMAS FICTION
EVACUATING MISSIONARIES FROM NAZI TERRITORY
A JOSEPH SMITH FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
MORMONISM'S ENCOUNTER WITH MICHIGAN RELICS
MATERIAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOPER-SAVAGE ARTIFACTS





Detail of illustration by R. Seymour, from Thomas K. Hervey, *The Book of Christmas* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1888), facing 109.

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY
LATTER-DAY SAINT
JOURNAL



TO OUR READERS:

BYU Studies is dedicated to the correlation of revealed and discovered truth and to the conviction that the spiritual and the intellectual can be complementary and fundamentally harmonious avenues of knowledge. This periodical strives to explore scholarly perspectives on LDS topics. It is committed to seeking truth “by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118) and recognizes that all knowledge without charity is nothing (1 Cor. 13:2). It proceeds on the premise that faith and reason, revelation and scholarly learning, obedience and creativity are compatible; they are “many members, yet but one body” (1 Cor. 12:20).

Contributions from all fields of learning are invited. *BYU Studies* strives to publish articles that openly reflect a Latter-day Saint point of view and are obviously relevant to subjects of general interest to Latter-day Saints, while conforming to high scholarly standards. *BYU Studies* invites poetry and personal essays dealing with the life of the mind, reflections on personal and spiritual responses to academic experiences, intellectual choices, values, responsibilities, and methods. All personal essays received will be entered in our annual personal essay contest. Short studies and notes are also welcomed.

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COVER: *Front*: Detail from Joseph Smith Birthplace, c. 1905. WLC Litho. Courtesy Larry C. Porter. The full picture appears on page 70.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLES

- “All Hail to Christmas”: Mormon Pioneer Holiday Celebrations 6
 Richard Ian Kimball
- Culture Carol: Dickens’s Influence on LDS Christmas Fiction 28
 Rosalynde Frandsen Welch
- The Evacuation of the Czechoslovak and German Missions
 at the Outbreak of World War II 122
 David F. Boone
- A Joseph Smith for the Twenty-First Century 155
 Richard Lyman Bushman
- Mormonism’s Encounter with the Michigan Relics 174
 Mark Ashurst-McGee
- Tools Leave Marks: Material Analysis of the
 Scotford-Soper-Savage Michigan Relics 210
 Richard B. Stamps

DOCUMENT CORNER

- Remembering Christmas Past: Presidents of the Church
 Celebrate the Birth of the Son of Man and Remember His
 Servant Joseph Smith 49
 Larry C. Porter

PERSONAL ESSAYS

- Home Production 239
 Christin L. Porter

POETRY

- | | |
|--|-----|
| Through High Country Woods, before Spring
Dixie Partridge | 27 |
| The Night before My Baptism
Mark Bennion | 48 |
| Nobody Can
Marilyn Bushman-Carlton | 120 |
| Cedar Waxwings
Cheryl Carlstrom | 172 |
| Again, October
Dixie Partridge | 173 |
| Learning to Be a Woman
Marilyn Bushman-Carlton | 242 |
| The Quiet Ones
Marilyn Bushman-Carlton | 244 |

BOOK REVIEWS

- | | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons</i>
by Jan Shipps
Leslee Thorne-Murphy | 245 |
| <i>Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons</i>
by Jan Shipps
Randall Balmer | 248 |
| <i>Can Science Be Faith-Promoting?</i>
by Sterling B. Talmage
Noel L. Owen | 251 |

BRIEF NOTICE

- | | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Out of Obscurity: The Church in the Twentieth Century</i> | 255 |
|--|-----|



FIG. 1. A nineteenth-century etching of a woman buying a Christmas tree. Such images in Church magazines reflect the commercial aspect of the religious holiday. From *Juvenile Instructor* 16, no. 24 (December 15, 1881): 285.

“All Hail to Christmas”

Mormon Pioneer Holiday Celebrations

Richard Ian Kimball

To Mormon historians and members of the Church generally, Christmas is not a particularly “Mormon” holiday. Though contemporary Latter-day Saints throughout the world embrace a variety of traditions that commemorate the holiday, no major body of distinctively Mormon tradition surrounds the day in December traditionally reserved for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. Mormons celebrate the holiday like most other Christians—reading from the nativity account in Luke, exchanging presents, and spending time with family and friends. Santa Claus, decorated trees, and the redemptive story of Ebenezer Scrooge all are staples of the winter holiday for Mormons in the United States (fig. 1). Some members of the Church lament that Christmas celebrations have devolved into a commercialized ritual focused on the acquisition of goods rather than on a solemn remembrance of the Savior’s birth. Such critics seek to put “Christ” back into “Christmas” and return to the days of old, when the holiday meant more than toys and shopping trips.

In Mormon history, such halcyon days of Christmas past never existed. Nevertheless, the celebrations of Christmas and the New Year—the central components of the pioneer Saints’ holiday season—carried considerable cultural importance before, and especially after, 1870. The winter holiday season was annually anticipated and widely celebrated, and it served as the crowning social event of the year, being preeminently important to early Mormons. As an 1869 editorial in the *Juvenile Instructor* recorded, the winter holidays provided “long evenings for social gatherings and parties and pleasant fire-side intercourse, and in no country and among no people are they more valued than in our Territory and by the Saints who reside here.”¹ By about 1870, the Saints in Salt Lake City celebrated Christmas in much the same way we do today. Santa Claus, gifts, and parties and socials competed with the birth of Christ as the central focus of the Mormon Christmas.

Celebrations revolved around a season of merriment that included both holidays, though, much like today, each holiday meant something different to the pioneer Saints. Christmas was a time of friends, frolics, and feasts. In addition to its religious connotations, this holiday offered the Saints a chance to close out the year in high style with a public expression of gratitude and

joy for the bounties brought in during the recently concluded harvest. The commemoration of the New Year, on the other hand, was more contemplative and provided early Mormons with an opportunity to assess the past year and contemplate the future. Pioneer New Year's celebrations were more subdued than those of today and included expressions of gratitude for past blessings and declarations of hope for the coming year.²

Utah Holiday

After the Saints arrived in Utah, records of Christmas celebrations offer a fairly complete picture of Christmas and New Year's celebrations. Newspaper and journal accounts attest that the winter holiday period carried considerable cultural importance to pioneer Mormons. The Mormons combined American and European Christmas traditions, and in this amalgam emerged a tradition that became the "Mormon Christmas." Part import, part homegrown, the resulting celebrations recalled holiday festivities from other parts of the world while containing a distinct Latter-day Saint sensibility that required moderation and self-control in merry-making.

Even as they struggled for sufficient food and shelter, the Mormon pioneers took time their first year in the Valley to celebrate Christmas and staged Christmas dinners that ranged from boiled rabbit to splendid spreads. The settlers also set aside time for contemplation and celebration at the close of the year. Some of the story of the first Mormon Christmas holiday celebration in Utah (in 1847) is well known and reflects the deprivation and discomfort of pioneer life. Elizabeth Huffaker, who participated in that first Christmas celebration as a child, recalled that temporal needs overshadowed the holiday festivities. "We all worked as usual that day," she remembered. "The men gathered sage brush, and some even plowed, for though it had snowed, the ground was soft and the plows were used nearly the entire day." On the following day, Sunday, a large meeting was held around the flagpole at the center of the fort. Children played and the group sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints." Huffaker's Christmas dinner consisted of boiled rabbit and bread. Despite spending the holiday in unfamiliar and straitened circumstances, Huffaker concluded that "in the sense of perfect peace and good will I never had a happier Christmas in all my life."³

Young Elizabeth Huffaker may have captured the way most Mormons in the Valley spent their first Christmas, but there were some who celebrated more festively. According to the diary of Eliza R. Snow, a flurry of holiday activities began before Christmas and extended through the New Year. On December 23, 1847, Sister Snow attended a dinner with several friends at Brother Writer's home, where they "had a good time." Sister Susa Young Gates, one of the attendees, referred to this and other occasions as "organiz'd parties." Christmas Day found Eliza at a party hosted by

Lorenzo Young. At least a dozen guests “freely & sociably partook of the good things of the earth,” including a “splendid dinner.”⁴ Another pioneer Christmas party was a social for the little girls of the camp, hosted by Clara Decker Young. The week between Christmas and New Year’s found women gathering at the Willis home, where President John Smith taught and blessed them; other Saints assembled to hear Parley P. Pratt give a discourse titled “The Velocity of the Motion of Bodies When Surrounded by a Refined Element”; still others held dinner parties to note the upcoming New Year.⁵

As resources increased over the next several years, the pioneer Saints demonstrated their attachment to the Christmas holiday by steadily enlarging the size and scope of their holiday activities. Catherine Wooley spent the second Christmas in the Valley hosting a dancing party for seventeen couples. The guests ate refreshments at eight, one, and again at three o’clock as they promenaded through the night.⁶ An even larger crowd gathered at Brigham Young’s home to celebrate Christmas 1850. One hundred fifty guests celebrated with a large feast comprised of locally grown foodstuffs. Dancing occupied the visitors “until a late hour.” Though sweets were a luxury during most of the year, by the Saints’ second Christmas in Salt Lake, a sufficient supply of molasses had been stored to make candy canes for the children. Honey taffy and animal-shaped cookies made from sweet dough filled children’s stockings.⁷ In 1850, a brass band traveled on horseback throughout Salt Lake City on Christmas morning, serenading leading Church officials.⁸ Within three years of the Valley’s settlement, widespread celebrations of the Christmas holiday—from fetes involving hundreds of guests to small family celebrations in rough-hewn cabins—had surfaced in the Great Basin.

Christmas celebrations in Utah continued to grow in size and significance. On Christmas morning in 1852, hundreds of public workers, led by self-proclaimed “public hand” Brigham Young, descended on the Carpenter’s Hall in Salt Lake City for a “mammoth party.” Hours of dancing, singing, and listening to speeches kept the partygoers busy into the night. The assembly accepted a donation of candies and raisins, which had been sent to the party by a Captain Hooper, and divided it among the poor so they, too, could enjoy some luxuries of the season. Just twelve hours after the Christmas Day party closed, more than five hundred persons filled the hall again for a second day of dancing and revelry, which lasted from ten o’clock in the morning until midnight.⁹

A Long Holiday Season

The Saints in early Utah celebrated the birth of Christ as part of a longer holiday season that began before Christmas and extended into the

New Year.¹⁰ On January 5, 1854, the *Deseret News* reported that the Social Hall, then Salt Lake City's largest place of indoor assemblage, "has been occupied every afternoon and evening . . . by social parties; changing daily, and vieing with each other which shall enjoy themselves most, while each in their turn have seemed to be full, enjoying all they were capable of." Furthermore, "the assemblies will be continued from day to day till all the public hands have had a cotillon [*sic*] dance."¹¹ A week of public parties, dances, and amusements—referred to in another newspaper article as the "customary annual period of relaxation"—initiated not only the celebration of Christmas but also the busiest social season of the year.¹² One report from Fillmore in 1860 related that "sleigh riding and other amusements have been the order of the day for the last two weeks, and dinner, pic-nic and dancing parties have been well attended and on such occasions the *pungoes*, as the natives call them, have had to move lively."¹³ Indeed, the holiday season kept Mormons in Fillmore and other parts of Utah moving from sleigh to dance floor to party.

Mormons, like other Americans, had come to expect a festive season at the close of the year during which they could enjoy the company of distant friends and relatives and express gratitude for a bountiful harvest. Christmas and the New Year dovetailed with the slow season in agricultural Utah. Crops had already been gathered, and the frozen ground usually prevented plowing. Of this lax period, the *Deseret News* commented in 1865:

Holiday times are coming . . . workmen are taking the holidays, because they can't help it; sad interferers [*sic*] with outdoor work, those storms. Good fires are pleasant just now. Are those big piles of wood still held in reserve in the lower wards? Remember the poor, where you find them, you who are comfortable; their comfort will add to your pleasures.

Further advising the holiday merrymakers, the paper reminded readers to "take care of yourselves when you get heated with dancing, and avoid catching colds."¹⁴

Admonitions and Regulations

Not all Christmas festivities, however, received the approbation of Church leaders. Just days after Brigham Young's large 1850 holiday party was carried off in decorous fashion, Apostle Parley P. Pratt took aim at less respectable Christmas activities. On New Year's Day 1851, Pratt delivered a sermon at the Fourteenth Ward schoolhouse. Pratt hoped that "the same proceedings would not be permitted in that house as were practiced in some parts of the valley. For instance," Pratt pointed out, "some of his young people rode out to the north country, at Christmass [*sic*], spent the Sabbath, &c.—and was informed they had been to a party, ate and drank, fiddled and danced. Did they sing and pray at their party? No! Did they ask

a blessing at the table? No!” Pratt “told his folks he did not wish them to attend any more dances among a people who had no time to sing, pray, ask a blessing, or go to meeting.” Apostle Wilford Woodruff followed Pratt by arguing that “when any people, suffered themselves to be led away by vanity, folly, or recreation, so far as to banish God from their thoughts and ways, they BOUGHT THEIR WIT TOO DEAR.”¹⁵ Elders Pratt and Woodruff seemed more concerned with maintaining the rectitude of Mormon gatherings than the sanctity of the Christmas holiday, but their criticisms speak to an early concern with the manner of holiday celebrations. In some ways, these brethren were reminding the Saints to keep Christ in Christmas—to maintain a reverential attitude of thanksgiving when commemorating the birth of the Savior.

Admonition against excessive merrymaking during the holidays became an expected complement to announcements for parties, dances, and socials. Writing about the holiday social season, editors at the *Deseret News* recognized the necessity of celebrating but warned against too much amusement:

There is much more leisure time at the command of the people than at any other season of the year. It is a time of very general relaxation from arduous toil; and amusements, parties and other sources of social intercourse and enjoyment receive a large share of attention by many. Dancing is a good and healthy exercise when it is not indulged in to excess and when proper precautions are taken to avoid injurious results. . . . But no wise person would wish to dance every evening.¹⁶

Even during the Christmas holiday, the scriptural injunction requiring moderation in all things prevailed, so the Saints sought to keep their leisure-time activities in check. The consumption of alcohol was particularly proscribed. In establishing the behavioral boundaries for the 1860 holiday season, the *Deseret News* offered no freedom to imbibe in the spirits of Christmas: “No gentleman will ever obtrude his presence upon any respectable company, while he is affected by the distillations of wheat or barley.” If a kind word failed to dissuade drunkards from a dance, “something more than a hint like this should be made tangible to them.”¹⁷ The peace of the Christmas season was to accompany the pioneers’ holiday celebrations even if it had to be enforced with a “tangible” push toward temperance.

The Saints took care not to mix their celebrations with the Sabbath day. Even more sedate Christmas celebrations—dancing, visiting, and attending socials—were not “generally deemed as fitting to be performed on the Sabbath as on a week day”; when the calendar called for a Sunday Christmas, celebrations were rescheduled to avoid the Sabbath.¹⁸ Celebrations commemorating the religious holiday did not measure up to the standards for observing the weekly Sabbath holy day.

Rowdyism during the Holidays

The Saints' fears about rowdyism disrupting Christmas Day celebrations stemmed from a long history of unseemly and sordid behavior that surrounded the year-end holidays in America and Europe. Historian Stephen Nissenbaum has concluded that early American Christmas celebrations, like their European predecessors, "involved behavior that most of us would find offensive and even shocking today—rowdy public displays of excessive eating and drinking, the mockery of established authority, aggressive begging (often involving the threat of doing harm), and even the invasion of wealthy homes."¹⁹ Although rowdy public behavior proved unpopular among most Latter-day Saints, Christmas festivities provided license for some revelers to follow such less-refined traditions.

While evidence of a handful of ill-mannered public holiday displays has been preserved, most evidence of immoderate Christmas revelry must be found between the lines of the historical sources. For example, although most Christmas celebrations went off without a hitch, peaceful displays of Christmas cheer were on occasion considered worthy of remark. Following Christmas Day 1860, the *Deseret News* recorded:

There was no rowdyism seen in the streets, nor unusual demonstrations made of a belligerent character, such as we have seen on such occasions, indicating that if there are any rowdies about, they are not very anxious to show off. . . . At the time of going to press no unpleasant circumstance had transpired, and it is believed that none occurred to mar the festivities of the occasion.²⁰

Three years later, the holidays passed "in a quiet, peaceable, orderly manner, drunkenness and rowdyism being no part of the ceremonies."²¹ The fact that a quiet Christmas elicited a response in the local paper indicates that not all holidays passed off so peaceably.

Other reports directly signify the intemperate activities that often accompanied the holidays. On December 24, 1862, a *Deseret News* editorialist commented, "It is presumed that [Christmas] will be very generally observed by the Deseretans as a holiday, an arrangement to which we would not particular[ly] object if the supposed anniversary of the birth of the Savior was not too often desecrated by intemperance and the disgraceful performances of many of its observers."²² Usually, the rowdy behavior was associated with alcohol, as in 1859, when a group of "christians, dissenters, and other outsiders, with some who profess better things have tarried too long 'at the wine,' or made too free use of 'mountain dew.'"²³ Non-Mormons were often blamed for the flare-ups of Christmas incivility. In 1861 the newspaper ruthlessly attacked rabble rousers who spilled their Christmas indulgence into the holiday streets of Salt Lake City. The editorialist hoped that decent Christmas celebrations could take place in the near future without "being molested by the unhallowed yells and disgusting

performances of reckless beings reveling in dissipation and debauchery, as has often been the case during the last three years.” Eight reckless revelers—including a judge, an attorney, one “professional rowdy,” and “one youthful aspirant for distinction”—appeared before the bar that year to answer for their holiday offenses. Fines ranging from five to fifty dollars were levied against this crew for “furious driving,” drunkenness, and fighting. One rowdy was cited for running a horse over a female pedestrian.²⁴

On several occasions, rowdy holiday behavior in Salt Lake City turned violent. Not even the Sabbath day was spared. Such was the case on Christmas Day 1859, a Sabbath Christmas that turned bloody. Just after Sabbath services at the Tabernacle adjourned, a gang-style gunfight disrupted the quietude of Sunday afternoon. As many as fifty shots volleyed across the streets of Salt Lake City as W. A. Hickman’s group pursued Lot Huntington and his minions. The chase lasted for a quarter mile down the street to the front of Townsend’s hotel and concluded when Huntington took shelter in a house. The shoot-out involved eight or ten persons, though none but Huntington and Hickman received injuries. Unexpected on any day of the year, this violent outburst marred that year’s Christmas celebration and was remembered as “one of the most disgusting and disgraceful affrays that ever transpired in this city.”²⁵

When other rowdy, but less violent, outbursts interrupted peaceful Christmas gatherings, the *Deseret News* often poked fun at the ruffians—as though such behavior, while unacceptable, was an expected part of the holiday festivities for some residents of Salt Lake City. For example, in 1869 Pat Morley and Mack Murphy got into a brawl after they had drunk too much. Neither was hurt, but each carried “marks of the engagement” when they appeared before the judge. Lacking any of the gravity that typically attended crime reporting, the paper summarized the events humorously: “On investigating the matter, [the judge] decided that such pugilistic displays are contrary to the law and opposed to good order. Each gentleman (?) was therefore desired to contribute \$10 to the city fund, or, in default, take apartments in the Rock House situated in the rear of the Hall.”²⁶

Although most Christmas celebrations remained quiet with most participants “brimful of good nature,”²⁷ sometimes a reenactment of rowdy holiday traditions led to drunkenness and fighting, which were generally disdained and guarded against. But the occasional minor flare-up or intemperate holiday behavior was accepted with good humor as a vestige of a bygone era, the spirit of Christmases past.

Holiday Food

As has been evident, no Christmas celebration in pioneer times was complete without a feast. Even when families had no means to provide

gifts, they went to great lengths to procure extra food to make the holiday special (fig. 2). Like the Cratchits in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Latter-day Saint families felt to thank God for even a small feast when they had little more than each other.

Mormon immigrants from across the world carried their culinary Christmas traditions with them when they gathered to Zion. Scottish Saints made shortcake for their holiday celebrations, while Danish Saints supped on "sweet soup made of rice and fruit juice."²⁸ Many Scandinavian immigrants ate their celebratory dinner on Christmas Eve. On Christmas and New Year's Day, Scandinavian Saints looked forward to rice mush cooked in milk and sweetened with cinnamon and sugar.²⁹ Even the animals in Scandinavian homes received an extra share of food to commemorate Christmas day. Of course, plum pudding was the season's delight for British settlers in Utah. Ann Mailin Sharp, a handcart pioneer of 1856, made her holiday concoction with "flour, suet, molasses, dried groundcherries, and a few dried wild currants." The ingredients, "sewed up in a white cloth," were "kept boiling for hours in the kettle hanging over the fireplace." When the pudding finished cooking, a small amount of brandy was poured over it and lit with a match. The blue flame rising from the pudding may very well have reminded British converts of the Christmases of their past and given them hope for a bright future in Christ.³⁰

Wilson Howard Dusenberry noted that a Christmas celebration at Cluff's Hall in Provo provided him the "best dinner I ever ate in Utah."³¹ But not all pioneer Christmas dinners turned out to be the best ever. Isaac

CHRISTMAS, 1870.

Fresh Arrivals for the
HOLIDAYS.

G. W. DAVIS

BEGS to announce that he has JUST RECEIVED a Choice Stock of

**Gunpowder Tea,
Extra fine Natural Leaf do.
Rio and Java Coffee,
Sugars, all kinds,
Raisins and Currants,
Peel and Spice,
Prime Oregon
Bacon,
New York
Cheese,**

CANDY AND CANDY TOYS
In endless variety!

All of which will be sold at the
LOWEST PRICES
To suit the times.

Our FRUITS are all Cleaned.
Call and examine Prices and Quality
See Window for Samples.

G. W. DAVIS,
OPPOSITE SALT LAKE HOUSE,
ALSO
2 doors north of Kimball & Lawrence's
d18 17

FIG. 2. An advertisement for unusual Christmas foods and gifts. From *Deseret Evening News*, December 7, 1870, 2.

and Elizabeth Grace, converts to the Church and emigrants from Liverpool, England, settled in Nephi, Utah, late in 1851. Scurrying to finish building the Graces' home before Christmas, Isaac and neighbor Charles Sperry worked diligently despite the December wind, and the family moved in on Christmas Day. To dry the frozen mortar that supported the new mud adobe chimney, the Graces built a large fire and began to cook their Christmas dinner. Just as familiar holiday smells filled their homey cabin, a loud crash disrupted their activities. They turned to see their newly thawed fireplace crashing to the ground, their Christmas dinner covered by a heap of warm, wet adobe. Not able to hold back her tears, Elizabeth picked up their two small children and retreated to their wagon. There is no mention of plum pudding or sweet soup in the account of the Graces' first Christmas in Utah.³²

Holiday Amusements

Second only to feasting and socializing with family, dancing proved popular for nearly every group of holiday revelers—from small family gatherings to ward socials to large jubilee gatherings. As if it were sounding an official decree, the *Deseret News* on December 25, 1861, declared the pre-eminent place of dancing in Mormon holiday culture:

In the observance of anniversaries and holidays or the appropriation of any part or portion of time for a specific purpose, every nation, kindred, tongue and people have notions peculiar to themselves, suited to their political, religious and social existence, and particularly in the choice of amusements and the time to indulge in festive or social recreation, every nation and community do as they please when not interdicted by constitutional or statute laws to which they may be subject. Exercising that right the people of Utah have, by almost universal consent, adopted dancing as their principal amusement and selected the winter season as the most suitable for indulging in that favorite recreation, believing that inasmuch as there is a time for every purpose and for every work no more appropriate season than the winter months could be designated as the "time to dance."³³

And dance they did. Mormon Christmas parties nearly always included dancing. The Saints stayed warm during the winter months by stepping lively to the music of bands, lone violins, hand clapping, or even whistling. On Christmas Eve in 1860, for example, Heber C. Kimball hosted a party for his family and neighbors, where he "mingle[d] freely in the dance[s]."³⁴ The pioneers in Tooele marked their community's first Christmas by gathering in John Rowberry's home for a party and dance. Because no one in the settlement owned a musical instrument, dancers reeled to the sounds of Cyrus Call's whistling and danced until midnight.³⁵ This and numerous other examples illustrate the Mormons' love of dancing and its prominence in Christmas gatherings.

Other holiday activities existed for those not drawn to the dance. The theater offered one popular alternative. In 1862, for example, the newly renovated Salt Lake Theater reopened its doors on Christmas Eve, and a “crowded house at the Theatre” became a hallmark of the holiday season.³⁶

Still other ways to spend the holiday included sleighing and visiting. Often these two activities were combined, as in the case of Brigham Young. As in so many other things, Brother Brigham’s 1865 celebration set the pace, according to the *Deseret News*: “Among the ‘sleigh items’ of the times, we noticed President Young and a number of the male members of his family, with a few friends, out sleigh driving on Monday, in that mammoth sleigh, with some others of a smaller calibre in the wake.”³⁷ Though sleighs were often a necessary mode of travel over frozen roads, sleigh riding on Christmas transcended mere transportation and reflected one’s status in the community. That same year, one reporter surveyed the Christmas scene and concluded, “Sleigh-riding seemed to be at a premium, and pedestrianism at a discount. The city appeared to be—not on wheels—but on curvated iron appliances, our local[s], a big crowd of boys, and a few other folks seeming to be the only people who were using their pedal extremities.”³⁸ The Christmas Day promenade that marked the holiday in cities like Philadelphia took on a different form when it arrived in Utah. In this case, form trumped function—the sleigh was the thing.

Another pioneer Christmas tradition was the festive holiday greeting “Christmas gift!” On Christmas morning, children and adults rushed to see who could be the first to wish another a “Christmas gift.” The one with the fastest mouth received a piece of candy for his or her sleight of tongue.³⁹ This tradition harked back to an earlier European holiday tradition that permitted peasants, apprentices, and servants to demand gifts from their patrons in exchange for their goodwill throughout the year—similar to our contemporary Halloween. The social hierarchy was temporarily upended to allow the peasant to become the lord of the manor—to drink the lord’s best wine and eat his finest foods. Although at one time such social inversions had produced a rowdy, even violent, Christmas season, the tradition had mellowed by the time it reached pioneer Utah. The salutation “Christmas gift” implied no social inversion, even if the greeting recalled the earlier tradition.⁴⁰

“Christmas out in Mormondom”

Not all who celebrated Christmas in Utah were Mormon, however. Almost from the beginning of Mormon settlement, a variety of Christmas celebrations existed in addition to the Mormon forms. These “other” celebrations of Christmas tell us much about the fluidity of Mormon society and describe its more rigid social boundaries as well. Although it appears—

for good reason—that the soldiers of Johnston’s army did not try to celebrate Christmas with the Saints, later visitors did their best to join Mormon celebrations. While generally welcome at the festivities, the visitors were not always received with open arms, particularly on the dance floor. Captain Francis Marion Bishop, a topographer on John Wesley Powell’s second expedition down the Colorado River, spent Christmas with the Saints in Kanab in 1871. Rife with sarcasm, Bishop’s picturesque journal entry for December 25 captures the difficulties that outsiders faced when trying to fit in with the Saints:

Snow, rain and wind. A Merry Christmas this is indeed. In Utah or in Arizona it’s all the same. Free as we are here, we are to be favored by Mrs. Thompson with a plum pudding for Christmas dinner. After dinner, Fred, Clem, Mac, Andy, Jack and I rode up into Utah to see what the Mormons are doing. Stayed until after ten o’clock and rode back into Arizona and there concluded our Christmas at Camp 94. One can but be amused at the queer style of the Latter-day Saints, as they style themselves. So uncouth in all their movements; so void of grace of look or action. The boys are somewhat incensed at the treatment they received, being somewhat unceremoniously snubbed by the Kanab belles. The *Effort* was opened by a Mormon prayer, followed by a speech[?] from Bishop [Levi] Stewart.⁴¹

So far from home, the members of a scientific expedition might have expected a warmer reception, but Christmas in Kanab may have been reserved for family, close friends, and Church members. Bishop’s reception left him with a less-than-favorable impression of the Mormons.

Bishop’s co-worker Walter Clement Powell (“Clem” in Bishop’s journal account) provides more detail on the expedition’s Kanab Christmas and offers a poignant description of the mixture of celebration and sadness that characterized his “Christmas out in Mormondom.” By Christmas Eve, Clement Powell already felt the pangs of homesickness. “Would give anything if I could spend the holidays at the dear old home,” Clem recorded in his journal. While his cabin mate visited a friend, Clem spent the evening “watching the dying embers that smoldered in the fireplace, calling up the faces of loved ones far away.” Early the next morning, Clem awakened to guns and pistols saluting the holiday and felt the “mingled feelings of pleasure and pain that it was again Christmas.” Immediately Clem “wafted a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year homeward.” Much of the rest of Clem’s Christmas Day was spent in reverie and relaxation. Trying to get up a game of ball (which did not materialize because no one could agree on a set of rules), watching others play quoits, and playing cards occupied most of his time and kept his mind off the folks at home. Mrs. Jacob Hamblin presented him with an apple for a Christmas gift, but the high point of Clem’s day was a Christmas dinner of ham, sardines, milk, butter, bread, coffee, and plum pudding.

After dinner, the boys traveled to Kanab. Though they arrived at the dance “all gay and in good spirits” after a “splendid gallop over the sage-covered plain,” the boys’ hopes were quickly dashed. During the dance, the boys consistently “got the mitten” when they asked uninterested girls to join them on the dance floor. Unlike Captain Bishop, who blamed the snub on uncouth Mormon ways, Clem pointed to the visitors’ behavior. On the way to the dance, the boys had imbibed a little too much in the spirit of the holiday—in this case, a bottle of wine. Smelling the liquor on their breath, the Kanab belles refused to be entreated.⁴²

Christmas in a Contemporary Style

Within about two decades of the Mormons’ arrival in the Great Basin, Christmas had assumed many of the characteristics with which it is associated today—commercialism, presents, and Santa Claus. Although the birth of Christ was the central backdrop to the holiday festivities, commerce and consumption quickly came to occupy a central place in the Christmas season.

As early as December 1858, the Globe bakery in Salt Lake City wished its patrons a “Merry Christmas” as part of its advertisement in the *Deseret News*.⁴³ The next year, city streets were “thronged, and the stores, shops and market places were filled with customers, buying, selling and exchanging, plainly indicating that something more than common was inciting them to action.” Vendors along East Temple Street had constructed displays “to please the eye and attract the attention of those who might be in search of something to supply the wants of the outer or inner man.”⁴⁴ By the end of the 1860s, advertisements for Christmas gifts had become a staple of the *Deseret News* throughout December and into January every year. In 1867, the newspaper noted the arrival of the holiday on the streets of Salt Lake City and in the paper’s pages as well: “Christmas is coming! Any body would think so by taking a walk down the street and looking at the stores. As every one will want to make a variety of purchases during these holiday times, we recommend them to glance through the advertising columns of the *News*, and find where they can get best suited.”⁴⁵ In developing a commercial orientation toward the winter holidays, Mormons kept pace with other Americans, who, by the 1860s, enjoyed Christmas marketplaces with “an ever-expanding array of consumer choices” that regularly evoked “expressions of awe and disorientation, amazement and stupefaction.”⁴⁶

Newspaper and street displays offered a gamut of Christmas gifts as well as the ingredients for a Christmas feast. Christmas food and candies, pudding, currants, firecrackers, toys, dolls, music boxes, and books were just some of the potential presents available in Salt Lake City stores.⁴⁷ More expensive gifts included furs and boots.⁴⁸ To guarantee a Christmas morning

Z. C. M. I.

—:o:—

EAGLE EMPORIUM—RETAIL

—:o:—

DURING CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR'S
WEEK we will open a

BAZAAR

OF CHOICE

Domestic, Japanese

AND

Chinese Novelties

FOR

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

—
Also a Fine Assortment of GENUINE

Irish Poplins,

Moire Antiques,

Velvets, Plushes & Silks,

Fine Shawls and Wraps,

Ladies' Work Boxes

and Fine Jewelry.

—
FUR SETS, • \$3.25

And upwards.

FIG. 3. An advertisement for the Church-owned cooperative ZCMI. From *Deseret Evening News*, December 7, 1870, 2.

surprise, the gifts could be wrapped in paper sold at the *Deseret News* office.⁴⁹ Not all gifts were useful or expensive, however. For example, early in December 1870, ZCMI's "Eagle Emporium" advertised a selection of "Japanese and Chinese Novelties for Christmas Presents" (fig. 3).⁵⁰

Newspaper advertisements on Christmas Eve 1870 demonstrate that every conceivable commercial product was available from Salt Lake City merchants. Just one column of advertising tempted consumers to purchase "a perfectly fitting suit of clothes" from tailor C. Thirkill; "nicknacks, Cakes, Christmas Trees . . . Pine-apples, and other imported fruits" at the store of Henry Wallace; "first class cuts" of beef, mutton, and pork; and a "Splendid Assortment of New Goods, both beautiful and cheap, expressly adapted for Christmas and New Year's Gifts" from Carl C. Asmussen. Taken together, it seemed possible to "procure the necessaries for a first-class Christmas" just by visiting the vendors along East Temple Street.⁵¹ Some merchants, including ZCMI, stayed open until late on Christmas Eve to accommodate last-minute shoppers.⁵² When Christmas had passed and merchants still had goods on their shelves, after-Christmas sales promised, "BARGAINS! BARGAINS!!" for those who had yet to spend all their money.⁵³ By 1870 the commercial Christmas carried the day—at least in terms of public displays along the boulevards of Salt Lake City and on the pages of the *Deseret News*.

Many of the presents purchased along East Temple Street immediately became the property of Santa Claus, who filled stockings in Mormon settlements throughout the West. Looking forward to the Christmas holiday in 1869, the *Deseret News* reported:

Christmas, as it comes around in each revolving season, brings to mind many sweet recollections of the past. With what ardent anticipations we hung up our stockings and went to sleep on Christmas eve, and with the first dawn of the morning came the rubbing of little eyes, the prattle of little tongues and the patter of little feet rushing off to ascertain whether old Santa Claus had come down the chimney to pay a kindly visit and fill the stockings with *bon bons*.⁵⁴

Santa Claus had become as much a part of Christmas celebrations—especially to children—as snow, feasting, and social gatherings. Visits from Santa Claus represented the hub of a child's Christmas (fig. 4). Even when times were tough and money hard to come by, some parents extended themselves, scrimped, and saved enough money to provide something special from Santa. At Union Fort in 1861, Ann Mailin Sharp made sure that her daughter Ann had a special doll in her stocking that year. To help Santa, little Annie's mother had sent to England for the doll's head, arranged to have the head carted across the plains in a covered wagon, constructed a soft body for the doll, and clothed it in a "full skirted pioneer costume." Little Annie was the envy of her neighborhood friends as they clamored to play with her gift from Santa.⁵⁵



FIG. 4. Children in early Utah, as today, looked forward to a visit from Santa. From *Juvenile Instructor* 42 (December 15, 1907): 756.

Though the number of gifts varied and Santa's deliveries did not always meet up to children's expectations, there was almost always something for each child to enjoy on the holiday morning. As Sarah Bell Harris remembered, Santa "nearly always . . . left a few raisins, a few pieces of candy and sometimes a glass or mug or an old doll made new with a new dress. Often he left a pair of warm mittens or a new pair of knitted stockings."⁵⁶ Sometimes, Santa could not afford even that and left only a lump of sugar, a piece of fruit, or cookies made from dough sweetened with molasses. Even if expectation exceeded reality, Santa was here to stay. In the adobe cottage Maud Bliss Allen called her childhood home, Christmas Eve was not complete until she had recited "The Night before Christmas," complete with her signature line—"On Comet, on Cupid, on Dunder and Blitzen."⁵⁷

Other poignant and humorous scenes filled Mormon homes on Christmas morning. On one Christmas Eve in pioneer Ephraim, two young girls excitedly tacked their woolen stockings to the front of their family fireplace. Scurrying off to bed, both girls had visions of the next morning, when, if Santa Claus had made it to Ephraim on his travels throughout the world, they would reach into their stockings and find a glorious mug. When morning arrived, one sister anxiously poked into her stocking and pulled out the much anticipated mug. Hot on her sister's heels, the other

pioneer girl peered inside her own stocking and, much to her chagrin, found only an apple and a fried cake. Dejected, she blurted out disgustedly, "Such darn partiality." Bowed, but unbroken, the second sister managed to find the bottom of her stocking, where she discovered her own mug "and was so happy she forgave Santa Claus."⁵⁸

The character of Santa Claus often assumed a religious role in the minds of children. Sarah D. Jensen described the relationship of pioneer children to Santa in Ephraim: "The pioneer children all had divine faith in Santa Claus, but didn't expect him to bring them many presents."⁵⁹ Just up the road in Fountain Green, Utah, C. H. White reminisced about Christmas using terms that place a patina of divinity on the jolly old Christmas elf. She remembered that children "hop[ed] and pray[ed] that Santa would put something" in their stockings. When the children looked into their stockings the next day and found sweet doughnuts twisted into the shapes of boys and girls, they "knew that Santa had heard our prayers."⁶⁰ In Washington County in southern Utah, Santa Claus stood in for another biblical figure when Anthony W. Ivins presented each child with a gift of a "small Noah's Ark, filled with candy and a real chocolate Santa Claus steering the ark."⁶¹ As the giver of gifts and the bearer of Christmas spirit, Santa Claus transcended his status as a cultural icon and became a quasi-religious character to the children of Mormon Utah.

In the nineteenth century, as now, even the older folks might invoke the Christmas spirit and God's love in the form of Santa Claus. As captured by Eliza R. Snow, their wishes extended to the poor as well as to themselves:

Remember your time honor'd laws,
Kind master of the merry glee:
Prepare your gifts, good Santa Claus,
And hang them on the Christmas tree.

And where no Christmas trees are found,
With liberal hand your gifts distill;
The bags and stocking hanging round,
Great Santa Claus, be sure to fill.

Untie your purse—enlarge your heart—
O, do not pass one single door;
And in your gen'rous walk impart
Your comforts to the sick and poor.

When eyes are watching for the morn,
In humble hut and cottage too;
How disappointed and forlorn,
If missed, dear Santa Claus, by you

Go all the rounds of baby-hood
And bless and cheer the hearts of all
The "little folks," and please be good
To those who're not so very small.⁶²

“We . . . Wish All . . . a Merry Christmas”

Without question, the Christmas and New Year holiday season was the preeminent social occasion for early Latter-day Saints. Though members of the Church in far-off Utah might have considered themselves a “peculiar people,” widely separated from their American neighbors, their Christmas celebrations did little to set them apart, though Christmas celebrations maintained a handful of particularly Mormon overtones. Commercialism, gift giving, social gatherings, and visits from Santa Claus prevailed along the Wasatch front just as they did elsewhere in the United States.

Not only would most of their contemporaries have been comfortable celebrating Christmas in Utah, but most modern Mormons would feel comfortable joining in with the celebrating pioneer Saints. The following editorial, published by the *Deseret News* on Christmas Eve in 1868, sums up the spirit of Christmas, then as now:

This time honored anniversary has again rolled round, and with its advent what a host of joyful reminiscences crowd the mind. Christmas! The time of never-to-be-forgotten family re-unions and social gatherings. Many of the happiest recollections of our early years are associated with this great anniversary of the Christian world. Christmas is ever green: it never grows old, but as each succeeding year rolls around, each succeeding Christmas is looked to with as much eagerness as its predecessor. That dear old Santa Claus, who fills the stockings with *bon bons* and toys is ever welcomed eagerly by the youngsters, and at that season, in many portions of the earth, the members of families who may have been separated and divided by long distances, make it a point, if possible, to meet again with father and mother and participate in old time joys and pleasures. All hail to Christmas. We delight to honor it, and wish all, especially the readers of the NEWS, a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.⁶³

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1. “Editorial Thoughts,” *Juvenile Instructor* 4 (January 2, 1869): 4.
2. Few historians have appreciated the cultural significance of nineteenth-century Mormon Christmas celebrations. Typically, historians have cursorily considered the subject and concluded, as did Milton V. Backman when describing the Saints in Kirtland, that “even Christmas was little more than a routine day.” Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 283. Some historians have delved more deeply into Mormon holiday celebrations. However, these historians tended merely to gather pioneer Christmas stories without providing much social or cultural context to explain how important the holiday celebrations were to Mormons in the nineteenth century.

See John H. Monnett, *A Rocky Mountain Christmas: Yuletide Stories of the West* (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett, 1987); John E. Baur, *Christmas on the American Frontier, 1800–1900* (Caldwell, Id.: Caxton, 1961). Susan Arrington Madsen has compiled and edited a wonderful primary-source collection of pioneer Christmas accounts in *Christmas: A Joyful Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984). In the past several years, scholarly treatments of Christmas in America have mushroomed. The works that have most informed my approach include Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas: A Cultural History of America's Most Cherished Holiday* (New York: Vintage, 1997); Penne L. Restad, *Christmas in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 105–91; Phillip Snyder, *December Twenty-Fifth: The Joys of Christmas Past* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1985); William B. Waits, *The Modern Christmas in America: A Cultural History of Gift Giving* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

3. As quoted in “The Pioneer Christmas,” in *Heart Throbs of the West*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939–51), 2:329. For more on how Mormons celebrated their first Christmas in the Rocky Mountains, see Sherry Lewis Brown, “The First Christmas in the Valley,” *Pioneer* 40 (November-December 1993): 13–15.

4. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 214–15.

5. “The First Christmas in the Old Fort,” in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958–77), 17:71.

6. Clarissa Young Spencer and Mable Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1947), 183.

7. “The Pioneers’ First Christmas,” in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 2:331.

8. “Christmas Morning,” *Deseret News*, December 28, 1850, 180.

9. “The Pioneers’ First Christmas,” 2:331–33.

10. Such lengthy celebrations to close out the year were not uncommon in the United States or in Europe. As historian Leigh Eric Schmidt notes, “In early modern Europe Christmas was a long season of festivities that reached a crescendo in the week between Christmas and New Year’s and that often reverberated through Twelfth Night. . . . Although this pattern of prolonged festivity was severely challenged in the British colonies by Puritans, Presbyterians, Quakers, and Baptists, the holiday jubilee was nonetheless widely replicated in North America, especially in the mid-Atlantic and the South. In the winter lull of agricultural and commercial calendars, the months of December and January gave license to several nights of holiday feasting, imbibing, dancing, masking, and gaming.” Schmidt, *Consumer Rites*, 108–9.

11. “The Social Hall,” *Deseret News*, January 5, 1854, [3].

12. “Holiday Festivities,” *Deseret News*, January 4, 1855, [3].

13. “From the Late Capital,” *Deseret News*, January 11, 1860, 357.

14. “General Items,” *Deseret News*, December 21, 1865, 84.

15. “Fourteenth Ward,” *Deseret News*, January 11, 1851, 188. Elders Pratt and Woodruff followed in a long line of religious leaders who tried to reclaim the holiday for the righteous. More than a century before, evangelist George Whitefield criticized the “sinful and pious ways of observing that holy season” including “those who ate and drank to excess, those who played cards and dice, those who neglected their worldly callings, those who indulged in luxury and extravagance, misspent the holiday.” Whitefield wanted to redeem libertine Christmases and replace them with a day of worship and prayer. See Schmidt, *Consumer Rites*, 178.

16. "Leisure Hours—Mental Improvement," *Deseret News*, December 28, 1865, 92.
17. "The Ball Room," *Deseret News*, December 26, 1860, 340.
18. "Merry Christmas," *Deseret News*, December 28, 1859, 340.
19. Nissenbaum, *Battle for Christmas*, 5.
20. "Christmas Day," *Deseret News*, December 26, 1860, 337.
21. "The Holiday Festivities," *Deseret News*, January 7, 1863, 221.
22. "Christmas," *Deseret News*, December 24, 1862, 208.
23. "Merry Christmas," *Deseret News*, December 28, 1859, 340.
24. "The Holidays," *Deseret News*, January 9, 1861, 356.
25. "Another Shooting Affray," *Deseret News*, December 28, 1859, 340.
26. "Police," *Deseret Evening News*, December 28, 1869, [3].
27. "Christmas Is Past," *Deseret Evening News*, December 29, 1869, 553.
28. "The Pioneers' First Christmas," 2:334.
29. "Their Christmas," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 2:246; "Julia's Christmas," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 15:198.
30. Mary Ethel Young Lambson, "Christmas in Union Fort in 1861," in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 2:122–23; Annie C. Kimball, "The Plum Pudding," in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 1:107.
31. "From the Diary of Wilson Howard Dusenberry," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 1:242.
32. Florence McCune Lunt, "A Home for Christmas," in *Treasures of Pioneer History*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1952–57), 1:112–13.
33. "The Festive Season," *Deseret News*, December 25, 1861, 204. For more on this subject, see Larry V. Shumway, "Dancing the Buckles off Their Shoes in Pioneer Utah," found in both *BYU Studies* 37, no. 3 (1997–98): 6–50; and in *Nearly Everything Imaginable: The Everyday Life of Utah's Mormon Pioneers*, ed. Ronald W. Walker and Doris R. Dant (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), 195–221.
34. "President Kimball's New School House" *Deseret News*, December 26, 1860, 337.
35. "Christmas in Tooele," in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 4:197–98.
36. "Christmas Eve in the Theatre," *Deseret News*, December 31, 1862, 209; "Christmas," *Deseret News*, January 2, 1867, 5.
37. "General Items," *Deseret News*, December 28, 1865, 98. Latter-day Saints were not the only Americans using Brigham Young's Christmas celebrations as a measuring stick. Julia F. Snow, writing in *Harper's Monthly* in 1866, declared that Santa's fireplace was wide enough to accommodate all of the children's stockings in Brigham Young's family. Julia F. Snow, "Christmas Guests," *Harper's Monthly* 32 (February 1866): 354.
38. "Christmas Day," *Deseret News*, December 28, 1865, 92.
39. Isabella Kerr Wilson, "Ogden's First Christmas," in Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 2:341. For an example of adults going to great lengths to be the first to greet each other—including hiding and climbing through windows—see Sarah Jane B. Hill, "Christmas Gift," in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 3:177–78.
40. For more on Christmas celebrations in agricultural European societies, see Nissenbaum, *Battle for Christmas*, 3–11.
41. Charles Kelly, ed., "Captain Francis Marion Bishop's Journal," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 15 (1947): 214. Though offended by his reception at the Kanab Christmas celebration, Bishop later returned to Utah and became a professor of natural science at the University of Deseret and opened an assay office on West Temple Street in Salt Lake City.

42. "Journal of Walter Clement Powell," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 16–17 (1948–49): 381–82.
43. "New Advertisements," *Deseret News*, December 22, 1858, 180.
44. "Merry Christmas," *Deseret News*, December 28, 1859, 340.
45. "Coming," *Deseret News*, December 25, 1867, 363.
46. Schmidt, *Consumer Rites*, 130.
47. "General Merchandise," *Deseret Evening News*, December 22, 1869, 541; "Christmas, 1870. Fresh Arrivals for the Holidays," *Deseret Evening News*, December 21, 1870, [2].
48. "Dunford and Sons," "Theodore Lubbock," and "ZCMI," *Deseret Evening News*, December 21, 1870, [1], [2].
49. "New Advertisements," *Deseret News*, December 28, 1864, 104.
50. "ZCMI," *Deseret Evening News*, December 7, 1870, [2].
51. "Special Notices," *Deseret Evening News*, December 24, 1870, [2].
52. "Local and Other Matters, ZCMI," *Deseret Evening News*, December 24, 1870, [3]. In New York City, department stores like Macy's regularly stayed open until midnight on Christmas Eve by the 1860s. For more on how urban retailers catered to Christmas shoppers, see Restad, *Christmas in America*, 123–31.
53. "New Year's Gifts!! ZCMI," *Deseret Evening News*, December 31, 1870, [2].
54. "Christmas is Coming," *Deseret Evening News*, December 21, 1869, [3].
55. Lambson, "Christmas in Union Fort in 1861," in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 2:123.
56. Sarah Bell Harris, "Christmas Memories," in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 1:103.
57. "The Pioneers' First Christmas," 2:336. Clement Clarke Moore's "An Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas" designated Santa's reindeer as Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, and Blitzen. Restad, *Christmas in America*, 47–48. Moore's authorship of the poem has recently been questioned in David D. Kirkpatrick, "Whose Jolly Old Elf Is That, Anyway?" *New York Times*, October 26, 2000, B1.
58. Lillie G. Barton, "How the Pioneers of Ephraim Celebrated Christmas," in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 1:121.
59. Barton, "Pioneers of Ephraim," in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 1:121. Expressing a religious faith in Santa Claus was not unique to Mormon children. Indeed, Leigh Eric Schmidt located a similar sensibility among American children generally. He writes that "St. Nicholas reemerged as a focus of real veneration; praying to him or through him became a recognized piety of Victorian childhood." Schmidt, *Consumer Rites*, 139. For more on Santa's connection with Jesus, see Restad, *Christmas in America*, 52–56.
60. C. H. White, "Echoes of the Sage and Cedar's Oak Creek," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 18:163–64.
61. "Their Friend," in Carter, *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 14:204.
62. Eliza R. Snow, "Santa Claus," *Juvenile Instructor*, Salt Lake City, December 15, 1868, 189.
63. "Christmas," *Deseret Evening News*, December 24, 1868, [2].

Through High Country Woods, before Spring

white trunks from snow,
columns of silence

a nimbus of frost
low in the aspen

oh to pause on white ground
and hold from movement

from whisperings gone
like leaves from their trembling

to stand rooted to sky—
the steadfastness

of seasons; to open and enter
silence made visible

—Dixie Partridge



a

FIG. 1. The ghost of Jacob Marley appearing to Scrooge (a). In Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, this visitor is followed by three other specters, including the Ghost of Christmas Present (b), who succeed in converting Scrooge from a cold, grasping miser to a man of charity, mercy, and forbearance. Minus the ghosts, published Christmas stories for Latter-day Saints also portray mighty changes within individuals. These stories reveal cultural priorities that differ somewhat from Dickens's. Illustrations by John Leech, from Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843), facing 25 and 78.



b

Culture Carol: Dickens's Influence on LDS Christmas Fiction

Rosalynde Frandsen Welch

During the festive weeks before Christmas feasts, everybody loves to hate Scrooge. That's how it always was in the household of my childhood. On the first Sunday afternoon of December, my father would gather the children in the family room and ceremonially produce our green, hard-bound edition of *A Christmas Carol*. He worked his way through the five staves of the *Carol* during that afternoon and the Sunday afternoons that followed, in order to complete the reading before Christmas Day. Although the younger children would fidget and the older children would complain, we needed the annual retelling of the tale to demarcate the ritualized realm of "the holidays" and signal our entry into sacralized Christmastime. All rituals require narrative; *A Christmas Carol* supplied the narrative structure (fig. 1)—the good guys and bad guys, the beginning, middle, and end—of our suburban, middle-class Christmas ritual.

I suspect that my family was not unique in this respect. Since its publication on December 19, 1843, Dickens's Christmas fable has supplied the cultural myth that informs the rituals of America's greatest urban festival, and thus it has been revised, retold, re-released, adapted, condensed, and modernized more than any other seasonal story. Thinly disguised as the Grinch or more subtly rendered as the narrator of the enormously popular *Christmas Box*, Scrooge is alive, to begin with. But his enduring popularity does not imply that the *Carol* has ossified into an institution immune from the transformative power of time. Rather, Scrooge continues to haunt the American cultural imagination as the most protean of men, changing guises as frequently as the reasons for retelling the story. But whereas most cultural stories begin as collectively imagined, orally transmitted folktales, recorded and reified much later (think of Homer or the Grimm brothers), the *Carol* inverts the process: it was first a written text but has become a shared cultural artifact. The collaborative product of accumulated retellings over the past century and a half, the *Carol* is what Paul Davis calls a "culture-text."¹ Each generation re-interprets the tale according to its underlying biases and values and then re-creates the *Carol* in its own cultural image. Each new version of the *Carol*, then, registers a new set of collective anxieties, shared values, and cultural contradictions. And if the culture-text of *A Christmas Carol* serves as a site for working out issues of

cultural identity, then an examination of a community's Carols provides a rich site for working out cultural history.

So what can Latter-day Saint Christmas stories, our Carols, tell us about Mormon culture? Deseret Book's 1997 anthology of fictional Christmas stories, *Once upon a Christmastime*,² and five earlier Christmas anthologies represent a rich collection of literary materials that suggest answers for this question. Nearly every story in this handsome volume takes up themes and characters of *A Christmas Carol* as a subtext, some with very little difference and some with significant revision. The ruptures and continuities registered in these re-imaginings of Scrooge and Tiny Tim reveal the anxieties, values, and contradictions of the social matrix, namely the North American subsection of LDS culture, which binds together the writers and readers of these stories. Thus in comparing LDS Christmas stories to the culture-text of the *Carol*, we discover not only our literature but also our lives. But in order to compare, we must first understand. After evaluating the cultural meaning and function of Dickens's *Carol* within its historical moment, we will be prepared to understand the meaning and function of LDS Christmas stories.

A Christmas Carol as a Product of Dickens's Goal of Social Reform

A Christmas Carol has been credited, with some hyperbole, with single-handedly rescuing the Christmas holiday from certain demise at the hand of frowning Puritan sobriety, and Charles Dickens has been hailed as the inventor of the Anglo-American Christmas, the veritable Founder of the Feast.³ Alternatively, the *Carol* has been accused of single-handedly destroying Christmas, replacing it with the frenzied seasonal circus of buying and spending that defines December. Russell Baker wryly charged Dickens with re-imagining Christmas as "a festival of consumption . . . in which a month-long celebration takes place not in the church, but in the department store."⁴

Hyperbole aside, Dickens undeniably sentimentalized the exchange of money and goods at Christmas and in doing so perhaps unwittingly prefigured its modern materialism. More likely, however, Dickens set out neither to resurrect nor to destroy Christmas; rather, in the *Carol* he figuratively relocated the Christmas festival of agrarian feudalism to the industrialized city. "Merry old England" lived again in the world of the *Carol*: the medieval manorial festivities drawing both serf and lord (fig. 2), the feudal games, and above all the boar's head and sacramental Christmas feast find a new urban incarnation in Fezziwig's party (fig. 3), Fred's memorable game of blindman's buff, and the Cratchits' Christmas feast. The relentless trajectory of industrialization and urbanization that had drawn Ebenezer Scrooge—and thousands more like him—from the country to the city by 1800 also brought a scourge of social ills that came to a head in the 1840s:



FIG. 2. Distributing Christmas largesse. Traditionally, wealthy landlords shared with the poor as part of the Christmas festivities. Dickens attempted to foster similar attitudes in urban England. Illustration by R. Seymour, from Thomas K. Hervey, *The Book of Christmas* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1888), facing 109.

intense population pressure, a sense of temporal and geographic dislocation, the disruption of established social structures, and a plummeting quality of life, among others. Dickens found in feudal Christmas traditions an antidote to these urban social ills, and the *Carol* represented his imaginative resolution of the real contradictions under which Victorian England labored.⁵

In March 1843, Charles Dickens received a copy of the Second Report of the Children's Employment Commission, the second part of a government investigation into the employment of children in mines and factories. The report was graphically illustrated with horrific images of naked children pulling coal carts twice their size to which they were chained, buried deep in mine shafts not even tall enough for the children to stand up straight. Together with the severe trade recession of the mid-1840s and the continuing discussion of vexing social issues in Parliament and the press, these reports fueled a heightened concern with the plight of the poor in industrialized urban England. Dickens, along with his fellow middle-class Victorians, was properly shocked by the report's revelation of misery and wrote on the same day that he was anxious to produce "a very cheap pamphlet called 'An Appeal to the People of England, on behalf of the Poor Man's Child.'" Four days later, his plan had changed: he would wait until the end of the year, and then "a Sledge hammer" would "come down with twenty times the force."⁶ That sledgehammer was *A Christmas Carol*, which appeared in December of that year.



FIG. 3. Fezziwig's party. On Christmas Eve, Fezziwig hosts a party for his family and all in his employ, regardless of their social standing. In Dickens's hands, this party becomes the urban equivalent of the feudal manorial feast. Illustration by John Leech, from Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843), facing title page.

If the *Carol* represented Dickens's direct response to the parliamentary report, it also reflected his ongoing concern with the problems of greed, alienation, and exploitation that seemed inevitably to accompany industrialization. During the six weeks in November and December of 1843 in which he composed the *Carol*, he was simultaneously immersed in writing the American sections of his serial novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Relentless in its portrayal of characters driven only by hypocrisy and profit, *Chuzzlewit* is perhaps the most cynical and depressing of Dickens's novels and reveals Dickens's preoccupation with the troubling social consequences of industrial capitalism. The twin prom-

ises of progress and prosperity that accompanied early industrialization had failed to materialize fully, especially for the working classes; *Chuzzlewit* and the *Carol* both articulate the disappointment and frustration of a culture betrayed by its technology. Whereas the former merely catalogs the social ills attending industrialization and laissez-faire economic policy, the latter proposes a solution and imagines its happy resolution.

But given the wide array of pressing social issues, where might a reformer—even a reformer with the energy and optimism of Charles Dickens—begin an attempt at meaningful change? Dickens wanted to begin with the most egregious of the problems, of course, and in the world of the *Carol* that problem turns out to be the economic alienation dissolving human relationships at the levels of class, family, and individual. It has been much remarked that one can be most alone in the midst of the largest crowd, and Ebenezer Scrooge is figurative proof of that irony: although he lives in the largest population center in England, the unredeemed Scrooge is absolutely isolated. That he works beneath the sign “Scrooge and Marley” only accentuates his singleness: “Scrooge was [Marley's] *sole* executor, his *sole* administrator, his *sole* assign, his *sole* residuary legatee, his *sole* friend, and *sole* mourner.” It becomes clear that the pun on “sole” is not

made frivolously: Dickens continues on to describe Scrooge as “secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster,” a man who likes “to edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance.” Scrooge’s estrangement from humanity leads him to reject opportunities for charitable giving—“I wish to be left alone,” he informs the two gentlemen solicitors who visit his office⁷—and disregard the obvious poverty of his clerk. If Scrooge’s self-absorbed alienation allows Tiny Tim’s illness to persist, then an entire class of Scrooges has allowed the acute social illnesses of Victorian society—ignorance and want—to persist.

Scrooge’s alienation does not stem from generalized psychological or emotional pain; rather, it results from his insistence on defining all relationships in terms of economics. In the opening scene, for example, Scrooge identifies his clerk not by name but only as “my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week.”⁸ The clerk is nameless because his relationship to Scrooge consists solely of a particular use-value (“my clerk”) and a particular cost (“fifteen shillings a week”). Similarly, when his nephew Fred arrives to deliver a Christmas dinner invitation, Scrooge immediately points out the economic gulf between them (“You’re poor enough”) and refuses the invitation on grounds of Fred’s economic imprudence in marrying, disregarding Fred’s non-economic status as a nephew.⁹ Money constitutes the matrix of Scrooge’s human relationships; like Shakespeare’s Shylock, Scrooge’s miserly prototype who cannot distinguish between his ducats and his daughter, Scrooge cannot conceive of human relationships in non-economic terms. It is in this sense that biographer Edgar Johnson calls Scrooge “nothing other than a personification of economic man” and “the embodiment of all that concentration upon material power and callous indifference to the welfare of human beings that the economists had erected into a system.”¹⁰

Scrooge is the human product of the economic system in which he exists. For the same laws of economy that remake Bob Cratchit into a fifteen-shilling clerk just as surely remake Scrooge into a nameless economic functionary, a single, interchangeable cog (“Scrooge or Marley?”) in the vast machinery of the London economy. Scrooge himself observes that “[my business] occupies me constantly.”¹¹ He defines himself as wholly a function of political economy and thus cannot help but model his human relationships from the impersonal medium of money. And since he forces all human relationships to obey the profit-driven laws of capitalism, concepts such as “family” and “community” that denote non-economic relationships have no meaning for Scrooge. One need not agree with all of Marx’s critique of capitalism to see his concept of “commodification” (the turning of people and human relationships into products of exchanges) at work in the world of the *Carol*.

If economic problems cause social machinery to seize up, then love allows it to run smoothly, according to the *Carol*. Charity, in other words, can compensate for the alienating forces inherent in a capitalist economy. Scrooge's transformation from alienated miser to charitable giver sets the world aright: Tiny Tim does not die, and the specters of Ignorance and Want are banished. Fred's meditation on Christmas charity articulates an important theme of the story:

I have always thought of Christmastime . . . as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys.¹²

For Dickens, then, Christmas functions as a sacralized time set apart from the rest of the year, a time of transformation during which the law of love replaces the laws of economics, and sympathy replaces alienation. By relieving the tensions that accumulate during the year, Christmastime acts as a period of ritual purification from stains of greed and isolation—a temporary respite from the unpleasant economic reality to which men and women must return after the holidays. In this way, the *Carol* constructs Christmastime as an imaginary emancipation from the iron laws of economics, a way of restabilizing human relationships and allowing social good and self-interest to coexist.

How exactly does Dickens liberate Christmas from those iron laws of economics? First, he establishes a model of economic abundance to replace the scarcity model that governs the thinking of the unredeemed Scrooge. In the first scene of the *Carol*, Scrooge memorably demonstrates the Malthusian scarcity model under which he labors, when he refuses to contribute to a charitable collection for the poor: “I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. . . . If [the poor] would rather die,' said Scrooge, 'they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.’”¹³ For Scrooge, as for other Victorian Malthusianists, the geometric growth in population always exceeds the arithmetic growth in food supply, and the inevitable hunger of the “surplus population” serves as a constant reminder of the scarcity of essential commodities. By contrast, the world of the *Carol* outside Scrooge's office nearly bursts with abundance—the abundance of commodity and consumption is matched only by Dickens's own linguistic abundance. Dickens fills paragraph after paragraph with sentimentalized representations of buying and selling and effusive description of commodities (fig. 4); his rhapsody on the fruiterers' shops is worth quoting in full simply for its gleeful celebration of surfeit:

There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into



FIG. 4. An English market on Christmas Eve. Surrounded by such abundance—Dickens implies—people have no reason to not be charitable and provide for the poor. Illustration by R. Seymour, from Thomas K. Hervey, *The Book of Christmas* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1888), facing 267.

the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers' benevolence, to dangle from conspicuous hooks that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins, squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner.¹⁴

In the copious world of the *Carol*, supply always exceeds consumption, so that the laws of supply and demand need not pinch the pockets of generous Christmas givers and the “surplus population” may revel in Christmas plenty. Christmas is reimagined from the perspective of affluence as a universal festival of giving and getting.

Second, in order to liberate Christmas from the grasp of impersonal economics Dickens strategically transforms economically mediated relationships—that of employer and employee, for example—into non-economic relationships, such as father and son. Scrooge, distanced from everyone at the beginning of the tale, by the end has become a “second father” to Tiny

Tim.¹⁵ The result of this strategic transformation of relationships is a conceptual redefinition of the urban “family.” Davis observes, “The *Carol* replaces the extended manorial family with an urban ‘family of man.’ . . . Not linked by relations of blood or property, the new urban family is a microcosm of the human economic community.”¹⁶ In the course of Scrooge’s personal transformation, he is shown the figures of the children Ignorance and Want, from whom he shrinks in disgust; by the end of the *Carol* he has learned that in the new urban family he must acknowledge his own complicity in the future of these creatures of social neglect. He must adopt them as his own son and daughter.

The *Carol*, then, draws a surprising conclusion about the social and economic problems it addresses: that is, social reform must be achieved through personal conversion. For the *Carol*, after all, is the quintessential urban conversion narrative, and Victorian readers would easily have recognized it as deeply rooted in the Bible and Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Scrooge’s conversion shares important features with that of Paul and the pilgrim Christian: all involve dreams or visions, elements of the supernatural, and a spiritual awakening or rebirth. Overt references to Christian theology are curiously veiled in the *Carol*; notwithstanding, Scrooge’s exclamation “I’m quite a baby. Never mind. I don’t care. I’d rather be a baby” clearly indicates Scrooge’s fulfillment of Christ’s commandment to be born again.¹⁷

In enacting Scrooge’s Christmastime conversion, the *Carol* links the Easter story of spiritual death and rebirth to the Christmas season. And it is this juxtaposition of atonement and nativity that lends the *Carol* its powerful affective quality: the *Carol* does not set out to convert Scrooge alone but rather attempts to accomplish nothing less than the spiritual conversion of its readers. For if the tale is truly to become a sledgehammer on behalf of the poor man’s child—that is, if it is to have a material effect on the real world—it must turn its readers to love and charitable giving just as surely as it must transform Scrooge. But the reader’s conversion differs from Scrooge’s in one crucial aspect: while Scrooge is transformed by the visions shown him of the Ghosts, the reader of the *Carol* is transformed by the very experience of reading a written text. Dickens’s faith in Christian love as a remedy for the social problems of Victorian England is matched by his faith in the written word as an agent of transformation in individual lives.

LDS Christmas Stories as a Product of A *Christmas Carol*

Dickens’s belief in the power of the written word is not unique to him, of course; the notion that a book can effect a spiritual conversion in its reader is one that resonates vigorously within a Latter-day Saint context. In fact, the 1997 anthology *Once upon a Christmastime* seems to have been

conceived and structured upon that premise. The subtitle of the volume reads “Short Stories for the Season.” These were collected not merely as stories *about* the season but also as stories *for* the season, not simply describing the Christmas spirit but, like *A Christmas Carol*, helping to generate that transformative spirit in its readers. For readers who believe that a book—the Book of Mormon—possesses the power to convince its readers of Christ’s divinity and thus to transform lives, it is not difficult to accept the notion that the written word has existence and efficacy *off* the page and *in* the realm of lived experience.

Other aspects of Latter-day Saint theology and collective psychology make its culture particularly fertile soil for the *Carol*, and these affinities reveal both familiar and surprising characteristics of that culture. For example, Scrooge’s transformation depends on his capacity to identify with the visual representations he witnesses in the visions shown him by the ghosts; furthermore, his identification with those representations was strong enough to work permanent changes in Scrooge’s character. The capacity to identify with representation finds an analogue in Latter-day Saint theology: the ancient American prophets’ repeated admonitions to liken the scriptures unto ourselves depend on the same ability to identify with representations, albeit written representations, and to allow such identification to work real changes in one’s character. Latter-day Saints recognize the mechanism of Scrooge’s conversion as one method of their own continuing spiritual conversions.

One might find an additional evidence of a “Carol-friendly” culture in the LDS concept of a “change of heart.” For decades, critics have struggled with the difficulty the reader encounters in believing that “Scrooge could overcome the neglect and psychological distress of a lifetime overnight, no matter how therapeutic the spirits.”¹⁸ But the Latter-day Saint concept of spiritual transformation resolves this credibility problem, for we understand a “conversion” to be both a moment and a process. While scriptures contain accounts of sudden conversions not unlike Scrooge’s (Alma the Younger’s and Lamoni’s, for example) and while Latter-day Saints recount their own “conversion moments,” the weekly renewal of covenants and Alma’s sermon in the fifth chapter of his book both acknowledge the fact that a conversion is also a lifelong process. Furthermore, we frequently (if tacitly) allow the account of the conversion moment to stand as a synecdoche for the lifelong conversion process: converts share their “conversion stories,” understanding that the story of the initial conversion represents the continuing process of conversion in which we participate together. For Latter-day Saint readers, then, Scrooge’s overnight transformation simply represents in narrative form the lifelong process of transformation on which he embarks, and the difficulty finds a satisfactory—and credible—resolution.

By far the most significant affinity between Latter-day Saint culture and the *Carol*, however, is immediately apparent to readers of *Once Upon a Christmastime*, that is, the importance assigned to the conversion narrative as a formal and informal genre of Mormon literature and self-expression. The pages of Latter-day Saint scriptures, magazines, and lesson manuals are filled with narratives of conversion, as are the informal testimonies delivered monthly from the pulpits in Latter-day Saint chapels; the protagonists of these narratives range from investigators to long-time members experiencing more subtle “conversions” to particular principles of the gospel.

Since the story of Scrooge is the story of his conversion, it is no surprise that the culture-text of the “LDS Carol” lives on most robustly in the form of the Mormon conversion narrative. In *Once upon a Christmastime*, for example, forty-one of the forty-five stories are structured by the conversion or spiritual transformation of the protagonist. In the most overt rehearsals of the standard Latter-day Saint conversion narrative, the protagonist undergoes a religious conversion to Mormonism that happens to take place at Christmastime; Dallas Merrell’s Christmas memoir, for example, recounts the Christmastime conversion of a family friend who takes the missionary discussions and accepts baptism.¹⁹ Sometimes the conversion takes the form of reactivation and long-overdue repentance, as in Michael Wilcox’s “A Father’s Christmas Answer,” in which the protagonist’s father undergoes a long struggle with nicotine addiction that culminates in his Christmastime victory over the drug and his reconciliation with the Church and his family.²⁰ Most frequently, however, the central conversion is a more subtly rendered spiritual transformation in which the protagonist, like Scrooge, finally comprehends and embraces the “Christmas spirit.” These stories begin with their main characters in need of redemption, though their particular necessities vary: some are lonely, some selfish, some grieving, some prideful, some cynical. The stories follow an upward trajectory, and by the conclusion—usually on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day—their respective Scrooges have experienced the needed spiritual transformation. Christmas works its miracle, a joyous change in the hearts of these characters.

The protagonist of Carroll Morris’s story, “Silent Night,” is typical of these converted Scrooges: she “feels the darkness begin to lift; in its place comes something as light and sweet and full of promise as the first warm breeze of spring.”²¹ Even direct references to Scrooge’s conversion abound: “Scrooge changed because of Christmas . . . Christmas helps people change.”²² Conversion is a common theme in all Christian literature, but these conversions are uniquely Mormon: not only do they involve Latter-day Saint characters and situations, but they are narrated in unmistakably

Latter-day Saint terms. One character asks, "But have I had a change of heart? Was I renewed in Christ? Have I been born again?"²³ Scrooge might well have asked himself the same questions had Dickens made him a Mormon.

But perhaps more interesting than the generic similarities connecting the *Carol* to its LDS culture-text is the prevalent and puzzling difference that distinguishes the two, namely, the pronounced lack of any supernatural element in the LDS carols. The full title of Dickens's novella is *A Christmas Carol, in Prose, Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*, and a ghost story it certainly is (fig. 5); the element of nonrationality introduced by the ghosts—not to mention their importance for the plot—is vital for Scrooge's redemption. Strange, then, that not a ghost (aside from the Holy Ghost), angel, vision, or spirit haunts the present-day Christmas stories. Although some story titles hint at the supernatural—"The Bread of the Angels," "Angel," "Ghosts," "Angel Voices," "The Angel of the Bathtub"—the "angels" turn out to be rambunctious children in tinsel halos and the "ghosts" to be memories of a lost wife or pioneer ancestors. That angels and ghosts should be absent from Latter-day Saint fiction carries a particular irony, of course, since our religious community and belief are built upon the strength of a message delivered by an angel. But in this age of rationality when the phenomena and forces that shape our everyday lives are fully explained, or seem to be, perhaps some have lost the ability to imagine the supernatural. The characters who live in these stories no longer require angels; they prefer to experience the divine more quietly, more privately, more explicably.

If the Ghosts are the agents of Scrooge's conversion and if they are conspicuously eliminated from these LDS Carols, what takes their place



The Last of the Spirits

FIG. 5. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come haunts Scrooge. Containing no supernatural elements, LDS Carols are often haunted instead by "motherless and fatherless children, childless parents, and alienated couples." Illustration by John Leech, from Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843), facing 150.

in the narrative structure of the tale? A simple plot summary of nearly any of the stories suffices to provide the answer; Jack Weyland's story "Shop with a Cop" is a typical example. The story's Scrooge is one Dutton, a crotchety cop who is assigned (against his will) to supervise a Christmas shopping trip for two poor children. He grudgingly performs the task and during the experience finds himself pondering the purpose of Christmas; by Christmas morning, he has experienced a change of heart, and at the end of the story, he arrives at the children's home laden with Christmas gifts and food to augment their meager celebration. No ghosts visit Dutton during the night; rather, it is the giving of person-to-person service that brings about his conversion to the Christmas spirit. This is the model that informs virtually all of the stories in the collection: the performance of an act of Christian charity, typically formulated as providing the Christmas trappings for a disadvantaged family, kindles the redeeming warmth of Christmas within the cold heart of the protagonist. At first glance, this seems to parallel Dickens's *Carol*—after all, on Christmas Day Scrooge

sends the prize turkey to the Cratchits and makes a charitable donation to the poor. But Scrooge's acts of charity are simply evidence of his conversion (fig. 6); in these LDS Carols, the act of charity is actually the catalyst of conversion.²⁴

In a significant variation on the Latter-day Saint model, the protagonist accepts rather than offers the act of service, but the redemptive result remains the same. In another Jack Weyland story, "A Christmas Song," a Scrooge-like teenager and his terminally ill mother experience a spiritual Christmas redemption by accepting an act of loving service offered by their ward family.²⁵ For Latter-day Saints, redemption requires that one accept Christ's love



FIG. 6. The new Scrooge. Here Scrooge warms his assistant while discussing a salary raise plus assistance to the Cratchit family. Unlike Scrooge, who is changed by visits from phantoms, the protagonists in LDS Carols are rendered more charitable by the act of giving itself. Illustration by John Leech, from Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843), 164.

as well as radiate it to others, and this requirement is registered in our Christmas stories. The real Christmas miracles, these stories tell us, are not angelic visitations or ghost-borne visions; the real Christmas miracles happen when hearts are changed and sincere acts of Christian charity follow.

As one reads through the dozens of Christmas stories collected in the anthology, one begins to detect thematic and structural patterns that surface regularly throughout the book. One of the most salient of these patterns involves the completion of a family group, which coincides with the protagonist's ultimate conversion to the Christmas spirit. While these Christmas stories are not visited by ghosts or angels, they are haunted by motherless and fatherless children, childless parents, and alienated couples. In the world of the LDS Carol, death, sin, grief, selfishness, and, above all, divorce leave families incomplete and crumbling, and these stories recite their recuperation. A typical example is Margaret Blair Young's "China Doll," in which an adolescent girl struggles to accept her mother's death and deal with her father's inept parenting; the story concludes as the girl learns that her father will remarry and finds herself capable of loving his new wife. The girl's newfound capacity for Christmastime love coincides with the completion of her previously incomplete nuclear family. In other stories, nuclear families are not actually incomplete but are fractured by a sense of alienation and isolation; the central Christmastime conversion neutralizes this alienation and restores familial solidarity. Benson Parkinson's story, "Wesley's Carol," for example, has a prodigal son returning home for the family Christmas celebration; in Carroll Morris's "Silent Night," the protagonist reveals feelings of grief and isolation that have been straining her marriage, and the couple reaches a Christmastime reconciliation.

These tales of broken and incomplete families are obviously the structural representation of a deep cultural anxiety about the perceived breakdown of family values and the nuclear family; it doesn't require much insight as a cultural critic to observe that Mormons see themselves as advocates for the integrity of the traditional family. Less obviously, this intense focus on the nuclear family maps a significant departure from Dickens's *Carol*, which corresponds to an equally significant feature of our present-day collective values. Whereas Dickens's *Carol* works to broaden the concept of "family" to include all members of an economic community (so that Scrooge himself becomes a father to Tiny Tim), LDS Carols collapse the concept of family to include only the core group of parents and children. In contrast to Dickens's concern with the systemic and societal problems fracturing the "family of man," our Carols articulate a concern with the private problems that fracture the nuclear family. Carroll Morris's character Maggie voices one of the primary themes of our Carols when she

says, referring to her friends and community associates, “But they’re not family. It’s family that’s most important to me.”²⁶

This focus on the nuclear family rather than the “family of man” gestures toward a more general rupture between the LDS Carol and the Dickensian Carol: whereas Dickens’s tale responds to vexing social, political, and economic issues and advocates reform aimed at eliminating ignorance and want from the community, LDS Carols address the human capacity for experiencing personal suffering and sin and advocate redemption at the individual and familial levels. Dickens’s characters suffer from poverty, hunger, disease, ignorance, economically enforced isolation, and other public problems; with a few notable exceptions, the characters in the Latter-day Saint stories suffer from disappointment, doubt, jealousy, fear, ingratitude, sin, depression, grief, fatigue, insecurity, and the host of personal problems that plague the human heart. These Carols explore the limits of the individual potential for sin, suffering and redemption, while broad social problems such as economic injustice and poverty fade to the margins of awareness.

This thematic slippage—from the socioeconomic to the personal realm—might signal a shift in the Latter-day Saint notion of Zion building: when Zion meant a utopia like Nauvoo, Zion building necessarily involved the social, political, and economic structures that allow a physical community to function; now that Zion designates “the pure in heart,” Zion building concerns itself with the emotional and spiritual formation of individual Latter-day Saints. In any case, the focus on the individual reveals the relative affluence of the society portrayed in these stories, for economic concepts lose their significance when everyone is perceived as more or less comfortably middle-class. As one such comfortable middle-class character says, “Sometimes it’s much more painful to be poor in love than it is to be poor in money.”²⁷ Affluence takes the edge off the image of the Cratchits’ poverty and turns the reader’s attention to the condition of Scrooge’s heart.

Because these Christmas stories are written from a position of affluence, they tend to elide the harsh economic forces that differentiate the figures of Scrooge and Cratchit. As a result, Scrooge and Cratchit slip toward one another, becoming difficult to distinguish or even merging completely. Chris Heimerdinger’s *A Return to Christmas* offers a striking visual representation of this structural shift: the two protagonists of the story, who represent a wealthy Scrooge and an impoverished Cratchit, turn out to be identical twins separated at a young age and reunited at the climax of the story—Scrooge and Cratchit resemble one another literally in this case.²⁸ In a more subtle instance, Laurel Mouritsen’s “The Mistaken Gift” tells the story of Winston Langley, a young working man who, like Cratchit, holds a low-paying position; like Cratchit, Langley is the sole provider for his

family and struggles to stretch his wages to cover the necessities of his mother and sisters. Unlike Cratchit, however, Langley is not trapped in poverty by rigid class distinctions; on the contrary, he plans to enroll in business school and has every reason to expect—together with the reader—that his economic situation will soon improve. Langley considers himself a “man of business” and occupies himself wholly with his business affairs; in this sense, he is a clear Scrooge-figure, “filled with none of the cheer and goodwill that characterized the holiday’s approach,”²⁹ and the story continues on to recount Langley’s Scrooge-like conversion to the proper Christmas spirit. Langley resembles both Cratchit and Scrooge, and in the climate of optimistic upward mobility that pervades the story, Cratchit and Scrooge come to resemble one another.

In another example, Eileen Kump’s “The Hope Chest,” awareness of the unpleasant economic reality of poverty is so thoroughly effaced that the Cratchits nearly disappear from view completely—and would disappear altogether were it not for their structural importance to the plot. The story rehearses the familiar scenario of a comfortable suburban family giving their own Christmas gifts to a poor family, discovering the real meaning of Christmas in the process. In this rendition, however, the narrative is entirely concerned with the middle-class dilemmas of the protagonists, and throughout the entire story, the recipients of their Christmastime charity are referred to only as “that other family.” The poor lose their names and personalities, and consequently poverty loses its urgency and meaning. This story could have been produced only in the context of affluence, where the figures of Ignorance and Want (fig. 7), lacking faces and names, become abstractions.

Yet even while these Carols reveal affluence, they disclose a grave ambivalence with regard to materialism. Like Dickens’s *Carol*, these Latter-day Saint Christmas stories are filled with depictions of the abundant material accouterments of the season: all manner of food, Christmas trees, presents, colored lights, and decorations swirl around the action of the stories. And the celebrations depicted in these Christmas stories almost all require some kind of ritual exchange of material goods, taking the form of gift exchanges, charitable donations, or potluck dinners. In this sense, LDS Carols, like Dickens’s, convey a materialist notion of Christmas, as if they were saying, “Christmas is Christmas because of the things we surround ourselves with during our celebrations.”

Dickens employs images of material plenitude to suggest a Christmastime model of economic abundance that replaces the prevailing scarcity model, but these Carols put images of material abundance to a different use. In the LDS Carol, the tangible trappings of Christmas serve, paradoxically, to evoke an intangible, transformative “Christmas spirit.” While the

stories appreciatively employ the material objects that characterize Christmas, they insist that the Christmas spirit—the spirit of love, generosity, and fellowship—is the real object of Christmas celebration. “Christmas is more than gift-wrapped boxes, holly berries, and office parties. . . . Christmas is love,” these stories tell us.³⁰ In Chris Hicks’s “The Little Christmas Tree,” for example, the protagonist, a soldier in Vietnam, receives a parcel from home that turns out to contain a small plastic Christmas tree. When the narrator comments, “The box contained Christmas, or at least the spirit of Christmas,”³¹ he implicitly equates the contents of the box—a material object—with “the spirit of Christmas.” He goes on to describe how “the tree seemed to alter the atmosphere of the whole camp”; in other words, the material presence of Christmas effects a spiritual change in the environment. The stories convey a message at once materialist and anti-materialistic, engaged in an endless tug-of-war struggling to resolve our own ambivalence toward materialism.

Michael Fillerup’s story “Ghosts,” perhaps the best in the anthology, explicitly thematizes the ambivalence over materialism implicit in so many of these stories. The story’s opening sentence—“The Janitrol furnace that had kept them warm for eleven winters gave up the ghost late Friday afternoon”—echoes the opening of *A Christmas Carol*, in which the narrator memorably declares Marley to be dead, and by the time Fillerup refers directly to the “Ghost of Christmas Future” in the story, we have already recognized his protagonist, Dale, as Scrooge. Dale, like Scrooge, finds himself “alone and without heat on Christmas Eve”; like Scrooge, Dale’s heart is as cold as his home. Dale’s Christmas Eve is marked, not by visits from the ghosts of Christmases past, present, and future, however, but by memories of his late wife and a visit from his tactless home teacher.



FIG. 7. Ignorance and Want. For Dickens, ignorance and want have faces—“yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish,” pinched, and twisted. In contrast, some modern Carols reduce ignorance and want into mere abstractions. Illustration by John Leech, from Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1843), 119.

Like so many LDS Scrooges, Dale's nuclear family has been incomplete since his wife's death about a year ago, but as the story unfolds the reader learns that the marriage had been struggling for years. Dale had been a life-long member, a successful Church leader and lawyer, ambitious but also image conscious and materialistic; Verna was a convert, idiosyncratic, an activist for every cause, spiritual, and absolutely unconcerned with image and wealth. Their personal conflicts over materialism dramatize the ideological conflict that informs so many Latter-day Saint Christmas stories: "When they moved into their dream house, . . . it annoyed him that she didn't seem to fully appreciate his hard-earned bounty. When she joked about 'large and spacious buildings' and too many rooms to clean, he took it personally."

As with most of our Carols, acts of charity—in this case, Christmas Eve gifts for the homeless and an impromptu home teaching visit—signal the Christmas season, but Fillerup does not sentimentalize the acts; rather, he takes the opportunity to explore the limits and efficacy of love. Where is the boundary between duty and charity? How much discomfort should we be willing to endure for love's sake? Can compassion really melt pride?

The story investigates the private regrets of one grieving widower but also deals with the public milestones that mark male Latter-day Saint adulthood: mission, college, courtship and marriage, early poverty, later professional success, and Church leadership. In his portrayal of Dale's life, Fillerup broaches the stickier aspects of Latter-day Saint social structure; he tackles its occasional religious aristocracy and ecclesiastical snobbery, for example, by showing the familial objections to Dale's marrying Verna. As the story approaches its climax, Fillerup's observant eye focuses on two of the most vexing and resonant Latter-day Saint social issues of recent years: the distribution of priesthood power and the related formation of gender relationships. As Dale recalls his final argument with Verna, during which he tried to stop her from taking what would prove to be a fatal plane trip, he articulates the complex interweaving of these two issues:

No, he had to have it his way, always his. He was the priesthood holder; he was the boss. But it wasn't even that: no one could have lorded it over her by virtue of the priesthood or any other -hood. No one could have unless she allowed them to. And why had she allowed him all those years?

Here "Ghosts" most closely approaches the *Carol*, for Fillerup has discovered the *Carol's* real genius: the skillful wedding of the personal with the public. Just as Dickens explores explosive social problems through the lens of Scrooge's personal redemption, Fillerup confronts the living, breathing social issues that animate LDS culture today through the lens of Dale's personal grief. At the site where public meets personal in Fillerup's story, the heat of friction kindles a Christmastime warmth that can melt the iciest of

his readers' hearts. As "Ghosts" concludes, Dale's Janitrol furnace is resurrected.³² And as the furnace's belly belches blue flames, Dale and the reader together feel the Christmas blaze begin to burn within themselves, ignited by sparks flying from the *Carol's* own heart.

Conclusion

Works of fiction serve their communities of readers in various ways: they crystallize and dramatize cultural changes, anxieties, and contradictions; they provide the cultural narrative for social structures and rituals; and they intervene in social projects by galvanizing individual readers to change their personal behavior and their public institutions. *A Christmas Carol* works in all of these capacities, but the latter describes its explicit themes as well as its underlying objective: Dickens links the public and the personal and fashions his literary sledgehammer as an act of social reform driven by spiritual transformation. The Latter-day Saint Christmas stories in *Once upon a Christmastime* are also socially produced, and the best of them are socially productive, as well. These stories, through their similarities to and differences from the culture-text of the *Carol*, register contemporary anxiety over disintegrating nuclear families, they reveal a preoccupation with the nuclear family and personal redemption over the "family of man" and public reform, and they suggest a grave ambivalence over materialism even as they point toward collective affluence. The culture-text of the LDS Christmas story changes subtly from year to year; this year, let us change ourselves and our communities, deeply and spiritually, as we tell our Christmas stories.

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18. Davis, *Ebenezer Scrooge*, 196.
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21. Carroll Hofeling Morris, "Silent Night," in *Once upon a Christmastime*, 140–49.
22. Jack Weyland, "Shop with a Cop," in *Once upon a Christmastime*, 1–7.
23. Jay A. Parry, "Christmas Offerings," in *Once upon a Christmastime*, 226–30.
24. One notable exception to this generalization has the protagonist find an abandoned copy of the Book of Mormon, the reading of which results in a Christmastime conversion. See LaRene Gaunt, "Christmas Light," in *Once upon a Christmastime*, 61–64.
25. Jack Weyland, "A Christmas Song," in *A Celebration of Christmas: A Collection of Stories, Poems, Essays and Traditions by Favorite LDS Authors* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 17–24.
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30. *The Magic of Christmas: A Collection of Stories, Poems, Essays and Traditions by Favorite LDS Authors* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 89.
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32. Michael Fillerup, "Ghosts," in *Once upon a Christmastime*, 174–88.

The Night before My Baptism

I pull the sheets away from the pillows,
turn down the bed lamp, the blinds,
as a thick clattering rain
pours from the mountains and leaves its throbbing

on my roof. Thunder swells in the valley,
lightning throws the black pulse from my room,
a rocket flash. I think how each drop
might scatter the loose tiles above me, rinsing

the gutters. Mulch, berries, and dead mice
rattle eaves before they fall to the ground.
The bed shakes me, the chatter turns to rumble
but I slender in, grind down, and believe.

—Mark Bennion

Remembering Christmas Past

Presidents of the Church Celebrate the Birth of the Son of Man and Remember His Servant Joseph Smith

Larry C. Porter

At Christmastime the story of the sojourn of Jesus Christ from Bethlehem to Calvary enjoys a resurgence among countless millions. For Latter-day Saints there is a second tradition associated with this special season—remembering the Prophet Joseph Smith and the course of events in his life from Sharon, Vermont, to Carthage, Illinois. As we commemorate anew these two births, we have cause to turn back time and review selected Christmas memories and moments from the lives of the fifteen Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Some of these glimpses are personal and soul-stirring in nature, others are homespun. Some accounts are deeply spiritual, while others reflect the tinsel and festive gaiety of the traditional celebration. Often the prophets' Christmastime experiences and messages are emblematic of conditions affecting the entire Church at that moment, but at the same time all of the accounts illustrate the lasting and eternal significance of the Christmas season.

These memories and messages are arranged by year under each President's name. Each respective President primarily expresses his own feelings and observations, but periodically others in the household or persons contemporary to the situation lend substance to the moment. In some of the instances where information on Christmas celebrations is limited, we have tried to explain the circumstances the prophet was experiencing during that time. The Christmastime observations, thoughts, and traditions included in this account show how the fifteen Presidents of the Church celebrated the birth of the Savior and remembered the life of Joseph Smith Jr.

FIRST PRESIDENT, JOSEPH SMITH JR.

A series of reverses, which had left the Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith family in financial difficulty, prompted Solomon Mack, father of Lucy, to

provide the couple with a homesite on his own hundred-acre farm, which bridged the Sharon-Royalton township lines in Windsor County, Vermont. It was on the Sharon side that Joseph Smith Jr., future prophet of the Restoration, was born just two days before Christmas on Monday, December 23, 1805.¹ That first Christmas was celebrated in the midst of his siblings, Alvin, Hyrum, and Sophronia, as they surrounded the family hearthstone atop Dairy Hill. The birth of the infant Joseph must have reminded the family of another sacred event occurring under similarly humble circumstances in a Bethlehem manger.

We can only surmise what was occurring during certain of the thirty-eight Christmases enjoyed by Joseph Smith. Although Joseph's Christmas activities are not always accounted for, selective episodes do give us a sense of what it was like to keep Christmas with the Prophet.

Christmas with Emma

For Joseph, Christmas 1826 was most certainly filled with contemplations of his Harmony sweetheart, Miss Emma Hale, who he had been courting from the residences of two respective employers, Josiah Stowell of Bainbridge Township, Chenango County, New York, and Joseph Knight Sr., Colesville Township, in Broome County. Their marriage took place within a matter of weeks, on January 18, 1827, at South Bainbridge, New York. The newlyweds went to live with Joseph's parents at Manchester, where he farmed with his father for a season and was in a position to remove the gold plates from the Hill Cumorah on September 22.²

During December 1827, Joseph and Emma moved from Manchester, New York, to Harmony, Pennsylvania, where they took up an initial residence with Isaac and Elizabeth Hale, Emma's father and mother. Here on the Susquehanna he was finally able to begin a serious examination of the characters on the newly acquired golden plates.³ The holiday season was apparently spent in the home of his in-laws. A year later, in December of 1828, Joseph and Emma, for the first time, were able to enjoy Christmas in the simplicity of their own home, a small one-and-a-half story frame structure that had been placed on thirteen acres acquired from Isaac Hale.

Revelations and Church Service

In December 1830, Joseph and Emma were residing with the Peter Whitmer Sr. family in the township of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, having left their Harmony home the preceding August. That December was singularly marked by the receipt of three revelations contained in the present Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 35, 36, and 37). One of these communications directed the Prophet and the Church to move to Ohio

(D&C 37:1–3). During April and May of 1831, the main body of the Church in New York moved to Kirtland, Ohio, and vicinity in three primary companies.⁴

The Prophet and Sidney Rigdon embarked in December of 1831 on a mission to proclaim the gospel “unto the world in the regions round about” (D&C 71:2). From December 4, 1831, to the following 8th or 10th of January 1832, they preached to the people of Shalersville, Ravenna, and other Ohio communities.⁵

On December 25, 1832, Joseph’s thoughts were enmeshed in national politics. South Carolina was threatening to secede from the Union over protective tariffs favoring the Northern States. As the spirit moved upon him, the Prophet was given understanding of the far-reaching implications of this state of affairs. He explained, “Appearances of trouble among the nations became more visible this season than they had previously been since the Church began her journey out of the wilderness. . . . On Christmas day [1832], I received the following revelation and prophecy on war.”⁶ Then follows one of the most distinctive and far-reaching prophecies ever uttered by the seer—section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Joseph as foreteller chronicled the event and attendant conditions associated with

The Christmas War Revelation

Perhaps the best known Christmas occurrence in early Church history is also one of the hardest to reconcile with the long-standing Christmas traditions celebrating peace and the birth of Christ. On Christmas Day 1832 in Kirtland, while praying earnestly and reflecting about slavery at home and abroad, the Prophet Joseph received a revelation that prophesied “the time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at [South Carolina]” (D&C 87:2). While the revelation seems to be overtly addressing the nullification crisis that was brewing in the Palmetto state, its occurrence on Christmas Day has been accorded little significance. Why did the Lord reveal a message on war while much of the world was celebrating his birth? Was the Prophet, perhaps, aware of war and slavery’s ironic juxtaposition against the peace and freedom brought by Christ? The paradox in the timing of this Christmas revelation is certainly evocative.

Section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants may offer a further glimpse into the revelation’s timing. Referring in 1843 to the 1832 prophecy on war, Joseph connected it again with “the slavery question” but now also linked it clearly to events that would happen “previous to the coming of the Son of Man” (D&C 130:12–13; see also 14–17). Had commemoration of the Savior’s first coming turned Joseph’s thoughts to the Second Coming? If so, the Christmas holiday may be considered relevant in interpreting this revelation.

the United States Civil War. That conflict was to herald the commencement of a series of devastating hostilities and wars that would eventually envelope the whole world.

Christmas at Home

On one Christmas Eve, new convert Jonathan Crosby traveled to Kirtland to meet the Prophet. Joseph Smith invited Crosby to join an assembly of friends—Hyrum Smith, Reynolds Cahoon, Martin Harris, John Carl, and George A. Smith—for a “very pleasant time” at the Smith’s home. The company “drank peper & sider and had supper.” The next day, Crosby was invited to a Christmas “feast,” where Patriarch Joseph Smith Sr. was giving blessings.⁷

As Joseph recorded in his journal, weather conditions on December 1, 1835, set the stage for a traditional season: “At home spent the day in writing, for the M[essenger] & Advocate, the snow is falling and we have fine sleighing.”⁸ This December proved to be a marvelous season for the Prophet. The true spirit of giving was manifest. During the course of the month numbers of Saints went out of their way to contribute of their temporal substance to the Prophet in order that he might have means to continue to do the Lord’s work. Reflecting on the goodness of the Saints he spoke of their kindnesses to him as noted on December 9:

My heart swells with gratitude inexpressible w[h]en I realize the great condescension of my heavenly Fathers, in opening the hearts of these, my beloved brethren to administer so liberally, to my wants and I ask God in the name of Jesus Christ, to multiply, blessings, without number upon their heads, and bless me with much wisdom and understanding, and dispose of me, to the best advantage, for my brethren, and the advancement of thy cause and Kingdom, and whether my days are many or few whether in life or in death I say in my heart, O Lord let me enjoy the society of such brethren.⁹

And on December 25, Joseph experienced the simple joys of Christmas as expressed in his heartfelt sentiment, “At home all this day and enjoyed myself with my family it being Chris[t]mas day the only time I have had this privilege so satisfactorily for a long time.”¹⁰

Christmas 1835 is the last account of a Christmas celebration in the Smith home until 1843. For the next eight years, Joseph seems to have been preoccupied with Church and other family issues during the holiday seasons. Returning to Kirtland on December 10, 1837, from a trip to Missouri, Joseph found that many members—some in high places—had turned against the Church.¹¹ Some of the malcontents had leagued to deprive him

of his presidency and, if need be, his life. By January 1838, Joseph, Brigham Young, and Sidney Rigdon had been forced to flee Kirtland.

December in Liberty Jail

By December 1838, the Church in Missouri had suffered a series of severe setbacks. A committing court at Richmond had found “probable cause” and charged Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Alexander McRae, and Caleb Baldwin with a multiplicity of crimes, including murder and “overt acts of treason.” They were imprisoned in Liberty, Missouri, on December 1, 1838.¹² The prisoners found themselves in the crudest of circumstances—a fourteen by fourteen and one-half foot dungeon with only a trap door entrance from the main floor above. Their quarters consisted of a dirt floor covered with “worn out straw.” There was no stove for heating, and when they used an open fire the inadequate venting filled the room with insufferable smoke. There were insufficient blankets to keep them warm under freezing conditions, and the food was so foul as to be hardly palatable.¹³

Emma Smith made immediate arrangements to go from Far West to visit her husband on December 8. She brought her six-year-old son, Joseph Smith III, and was accompanied by Phebe Rigdon and her young son, John Wickliffe Rigdon. A Dr. Madish of Terre Haute, Indiana, loaned them a two-seated carriage “drawn by a beautiful span of cream horses” for the journey. John Rigdon recalled: “We started rather late in the morn & did not get to the jail til after dark & they would not let [us] go in till the next morn. After taking breakfast at the hotel we were taken to the jail & there remained for three days.”¹⁴

On December 16, the Prophet wrote words of comfort to the beleaguered Saints from his place of imprisonment:

Dear brethren, do not think that our hearts faint, as though some strange thing had happened unto us, for we have seen and been assured of all these things beforehand, and have an assurance of a better hope than that of our persecutors. Therefore God hath made broad our shoulders for the burden. We glory in our tribulation, because we know that God is with us, that He is our friend, and that He will save our souls. We do not care for them that can kill the body; they cannot harm our souls. We ask no favors at the hands of mobs, nor of the world, nor of the devil, nor of his emissaries the dissenters, and those who love, and make, and swear falsehoods, to take away our lives. We have never dissembled, nor will we for the sake of our lives.¹⁵

Emma was again at the jail on December 20, for a two-day visit. This time the wives of Alexander McRae and Caleb Baldwin went with her. In

the midst of the sparsest of fare the hearts of the prisoners were made glad that dire Christmas season by the presence of these loved ones.¹⁶ It was only such visits as this and the kindness of friends and fellow Saints that made the prisoner's habitation durable from December 1, 1838, to April 6, 1839, when a change of venue took them to Gallatin, Daviess County, Missouri.

In November 1839, Joseph led a small delegation to Washington, D.C., to obtain redress through the United States Congress for losses in real and personal property suffered by the Latter-day Saints. While awaiting a decision, Joseph visited Philadelphia from December 21 to December 30, 1839. He preached to the Saints during this Christmastime in the "City of Brotherly Love." On December 16, 1840, the Prophet welcomed passage of the act chartering the City of Nauvoo.¹⁷ In December 1842, Joseph was concerned for Emma, who was soon to be delivered of a newborn. The infant arrived the day after Christmas, and Joseph made this simple entry: "She was delivered of a son, which did not survive its birth."¹⁸

Christmas with a Beloved Friend

Perhaps no Christmas was more pleasant in the span of the Prophet's lifetime than his last earthly celebration on December 25, 1843, in Nauvoo (fig. 1). All the ingredients of what might be regarded as a traditional observance of that day were present. Joseph and Emma had just occupied the hospitable quarters of the newly constructed Mansion House. In the early morning hours, the household was awakened to harmonious strains of beautiful music. The Prophet recorded:

This morning, about one o'clock, I was aroused by an English sister, Lettice Rushton, widow of Richard Rushton, Senior,¹⁹ (who ten years ago, lost her sight,) accompanied by three of her sons, with their wives, and her two daughters, with their husbands, and several of her neighbors, singing, "Mortals, awake! with angels join," &c., which caused a thrill of pleasure to run through my soul. All of my family and boarders arose to hear the serenade, and I felt to thank my Heavenly Father for their visit, and blessed them in the name of the Lord. They also visited my brother Hyrum, who was awakened from his sleep. He arose and went out of doors. He shook hands with and blessed each one of them in the name of the Lord, and said that he thought at first that a cohort of angels had come to visit him, it was such heavenly music to him . . .

At two o'clock [P.M.], about fifty couples sat down at my table to dine. . . .

A large party supped at my house, and spent the evening in music, dancing, &c., in a most cheerful and friendly manner. During the festivities, a man with his hair long and falling over his shoulders, and apparently drunk, came in and acted like a Missourian. I requested the captain

of the police to put him out of doors. A scuffle ensued, and I had the opportunity to look him full in the face, when, to my great surprise and joy untold, I discovered it was my long-trying, warm, but cruelly persecuted friend, Orrin Porter Rockwell, just arrived from nearly a year's imprisonment, without conviction, in Missouri.²⁰

This rare, yet unexpected gift closed the activities of a beautiful Christmas Day. The Prophet must have felt all the warmth engendered by a lasting friendship between the two, which had spanned the years from the earliest days of the Restoration in New York. Joseph wrote the following day, December 26, "I rejoiced that Rockwell had returned from the clutches of Missouri, and that God had delivered him out of their hands."²¹

Joseph was not privileged to see another Christmas season. Enemies from within and without the Church deemed otherwise. Even as he contemplated the new year and prospects of his 1844 U.S. presidential candidacy "for conscience sake," the Prophet's antagonists planned his destruction. He and his brother Hyrum were mortally wounded at Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844.



Courtesy Church Historical Calendar

FIG. 1. Illustration of Nauvoo at Christmas by Ken Baxter, 1996. The Prophet Joseph Smith celebrated Christmas 1843 with Emma and their family in the Mansion House. During Christmas dinner the family was surprised by an unexpected visitor.

SECOND PRESIDENT, BRIGHAM YOUNG

The Christmas seasons between 1844 and 1847 denote a period of particular importance in the life of Brigham Young and that of the fledgling Church. The Saints, still reeling from the loss of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, struggled with feelings of extreme animosity toward those who had so unjustly wronged them. Brigham Young expressed wise counsel to those around him in a Christmas setting. On December 25, 1844, Brigham recorded in his journal:

I spent an agreeable time at Brother [Joseph Wellington] Collidge's, in company with Elders Heber C. Kimball, George A. Smith, A. M. Lyman, John Taylor and their ladies. The band was in attendance. We partook of a substantial dinner; after which I made a few remarks expressive of my good feelings and love to my brethren. *I remarked that the Lord would never suffer us to overcome our enemies while we cherished feelings of revenge, when we prevailed over our enemies it must be from a sense of duty and not of revenge.*²²

Christmas 1845 saw the Nauvoo Saints involved in an intense effort to complete their temple endowments and sealings before their anticipated departure for the West the following spring. Their designs were decidedly complicated by continual harassment from their enemies, who under the pretense of law were attempting to arrest Brigham Young and other leading Brethren. In spite of these encumbrances, the work of the temple moved forward day and night. Brigham Young spent most of Christmas Day and on through the entire night in the temple. He recorded:

12:15 p.m., George D. Grant brought word that the United States marshal is in the city again. Elder Kimball sent a message to him by Elder Grant, and at 1:15 Elder Kimball and I left the Temple.

Six p.m., the high council met for prayer in room No. 4; the high priests met in room No. 8.

At twenty minutes before six, Amasa Lyman, George A. Smith, Orson Hyde, and John Taylor went into the Temple, at 6:10 Parley P. Pratt and Orson Pratt, and at 6:18 Brother Heber C. Kimball and I went in.

The Twelve met in my room for counsel and prayer. After considerable conversation about the western country we united in prayer: George A. Smith was mouth.

One hundred seven persons received their ordinances. The business of the day closed at twenty minutes past ten o'clock, and notice was given that no more washings and anointings would be attended to at present. Brother Kimball and I, with some few others, remained in the Temple all night.²³

Compelled by mob threats, the Saints had left the comforts of Nauvoo for primitive conditions at Winter Quarters in unorganized U. S. territory (Nebraska) on the Missouri River. An entire community of Saints had begun their removal, and Christmas Day 1846, of necessity, was largely business as usual:

Mild day. Christmas. Col. John Scott discharged the cannon thrice at sunrise. I wrote to Mr. [Logan] Fontenelle, Indian interpreter, as to some articles abstracted by the Indians from camp, also expressing a wish that Major Miller would inform us where he wished the house built for the Indians, as we had gone South at the time appointed but he had failed to meet us.

The General Council met at Dr. Richards' octagon—held two sessions.²⁴

Brigham Young Sustained as President

The 1847 Christmas season embraced a vital increment in the development of Church government among the Saints and in the life of Brigham Young. Returning to Winter Quarters from having guided the initial pioneer company to the Great Salt Lake Valley, Brigham and the leading Brethren conversed over the necessity of reorganizing the First Presidency with Brigham Young as president of the high priesthood. These men deemed that continuance of the three and one-half year “apostolic interregnum” since the Prophet’s martyrdom was insufficient.

On December 5, 1847, at the home of Orson Hyde, Brigham Young was sustained by nine of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as President of the Church with Heber C. Kimball as first counselor and Willard Richards as second. Over one thousand members of the Church assembled at a special conference held December 24–27, 1847, in the newly constructed Log Tabernacle at Miller’s Hollow (later Kaneshville, Iowa). On December 27 they ratified the work of the Twelve by the uplifted hand.²⁵

Brigham Young’s recording of the interim Christmas Day and his sustaining by the people on the 27th is as follows:

[**December 25, 1847**] The Council went to the Log Tabernacle and attended meeting. The congregation voted that the High Council on the East side of the river have all municipal power given to them by this people, and that the Bishop’s courts have authority as civil magistrates among the people, until the laws of Iowa are extended over us. . . .

A committee was appointed to investigate the laws of Iowa and ascertain what steps were necessary to be taken to effect a county organization. . . .

The council met in the evening and consulted about filling up the quorum of the Twelve Apostles. . . .

[**December 27, 1847**] Conference convened again when Elder Kimball spoke followed by Elder Joseph Young, myself, Elders Geo. A. Smith, Orson Pratt and A[masa] Lyman, when I was unanimously elected President of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards were in like manner elected respectively my first and second counsellors. Uncle John Smith was unanimously elected Patriarch over to the whole church.

I spoke again referring to what had been accomplished by the Saints and other topics; bore testimony that the communion of the Holy Spirit was enjoyed by those present, when the conference was adjourned till the 6th of April at the Log Tabernacle.

After benediction by Elder Geo. A. Smith the congregation shouted three times “Hosannah, Hosannah, Hosannah to God and the Lamb Amen, Amen and Amen.”²⁶

Wilford Woodruff was present at the Log Tabernacle on this momentous day. In his journal, Woodruff recorded: “During the evening the people met with the band of music at the tabernacle & spent the evening in music, singing & dancing.”²⁷

Christmas Celebrations in the Salt Lake Valley

In Salt Lake City, there was time for a more festive celebration of Christmas by the Young family. Clarissa Young Spencer remembered that:

Within the short space of three years [following the arrival of the pioneers] the population of the city had increased to thousands, and the Christmas celebration took on a still greater air of gaiety. A brass band paraded up and down the streets, with the players mounted on horseback. They serenaded at Father’s house as well as the homes of other Church leaders. All the toys were home made, the ads in the paper carrying no mention of commercial playthings. However, if a husband wished to delight his wife with a new bonnet on Christmas morning, there was Mrs. A. Smith, “Late of St. Louis,” who advertised a superior assortment of velvet, silk, satin, and straw bonnets, and a variety of fancy goods and millinery.

For days before Christmas I would slip into the family store, north of the Beehive House, and watch John Haslam tie up little square packages of nuts and raisins during his spare time. It was doubly worth my while because I could always count on his slipping me a lump of sugar or some other tasty bit while he was working. We would receive these nuts and raisins on Christmas morning along with vinegar and molasses candy that the girls had made and an abundance of “store” candy—gumdrops and peppermint sticks.

There was no tree in our home, for at that time the Christmas tree had not even come into general use in the East, but we always hung up our stockings, and every child received one toy and some clothing. We girls would receive knitted scarves, nubias (headdresses), mittens, shoes, stockings, garters, and wristers. . . . Some of us younger girls once received some red cashmere hoods that Mother's sister had made for us. They were made with a pointed cape in the back and trimmed with white swansdown and would have been rather pretty except that they had been lined with green cambric and tied with green ribbons because they were the only materials available in the house. . . .

The boys would often receive new capes for Christmas, those being the outer garment most commonly worn. My brother Ernest, who was a big, husky fellow and didn't feel the cold very much, would wear his about his waist in skirt fashion to the great amusement of the rest of us.

For Christmas toys the boys would get swords, drums, guns, and skates while we girls would be happy with wooden-headed dollies. The heads were turned in our own carpenter shop, then painted and sewed onto cloth bodies. When the dolls were finished they would be beautifully dressed by our diligent mothers.²⁸

Emmeline B. Wells, wife of President Young's counselor, Daniel H. Wells, remembered a community celebration with President Young:

By and by when the Social Hall was built, Christmas was sometimes celebrated there with dancing parties, and the enjoyment was such that those who had the opportunity of attending them remember to this day those good old times. Children's parties, too, were given there occasionally, and our girls and boys will perhaps never forget while they live, the first Christmas tree in the Social Hall, where there was a present for every child of several large families, and all numbered and arranged in perfect order of name and age. It was a beautiful sight to us then, though it would perhaps seem very primitive now in these times of electric lights and every variety of color and brilliancy in illumination. President Young, Daniel H. Wells and others of their fellow citizens were there, but Brother Brigham was foremost in making the affair a grand success. It was an event in the lives of our children they ought never to forget, and I doubt if they ever will. I have been talking it over with one or two recently and trying to recall the most particular incidents.

Hon. John W. Young, then only a boy, handed the presents down from the tree, and I recollect Brother Brigham standing and pointing with his cane, and telling John just which to take down, and so on; the children were wild with delight and some of the mothers were quite as much elated, though not as demonstrative. After the Santa Claus tree was stripped of its gifts, the floor was cleared and the dancing commenced,

and there was good music, too, and President Young led the dance, and cut a pigeon wing to the great delight of the little folks.²⁹ In fact, I think the evening was almost entirely given up to the children's festivities, and the older ones, the fathers and mothers and more especially President Young, made them supremely happy for that one Christmas eve.³⁰

THIRD PRESIDENT, JOHN TAYLOR

On December 15, 1844, John Taylor, as editor of the *Times and Seasons*, shared with the Saints of Nauvoo his thoughts on the horrendous loss occasioned by the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum in Carthage Jail during June of that year. But he optimistically announced that the "heavenly desire" still burns in the hearts of the Saints and that the embodiment of the keys of salvation are to be found in the temple ordinances:

But we have said enough: the day in which we live, the vengeance and folly of mankind, manifested in every important move, the eagerness with which truth is received by the faithful saints; and the heavenly desire, burning in the hearts of the "heirs of salvation," like the fire in the "burning bush of Moses," for the completion of the *temple*, wherein can *only* be consummated and practiced the holy washings; the holy anointing; and the holy conversations for the salvation of the living and the dead, are sufficient to arouse every one that wishes to be saved.³¹

Elder Taylor and Parley P. Pratt were performing a special mission in the British Isles during the Christmas season of 1846. On December 17, the missionaries traveled by train from Edinburgh to Glasgow, Scotland. As they proceeded toward their destination, Elder Taylor composed a poem, which he set to the tune of Auld Lang Syne and sang at the Soiree in Glasgow on December 18.

The poem speaks of missionary work and speculates as to where the Church's proselyting efforts might lead: California, Vancouver, Britain. The tree images running throughout the poem signify the gospel of Jesus Christ, which will bless and perfect all nations. In stanza four, Elder Taylor predicts that the gospel will bring peace to the historically feuding British Isles by stating that Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England will come together around the tree. Elder Taylor links the gathering of Israel to "the mountain's top" with the peace found within Christ's Church.

Ureka! now we've found the tree;
 The balm—the heavenly boon;
 That will the Saints and nations bless,
 And perfect them in one.

Chorus.— Then since our God has made us one,
 And planted freedom's tree,
 We'll taste its bud, but eat the fruit,
 In California. . . .

And if we to Vancouver go,
 And dwell on Britain's isle—
 We'll visit those we used to know,
 On Zion's heav'nly hill.

For there upon the mountain's top,
 The house of God shall stand:
 And to it all the nations flow,
 From every sea and land.

The shamrock, thistle, leek and rose,
 That bloom so fresh and fair,
 Shall planted be, around the tree,
 And of its fragrance share.

Then hail Columbia's happy shore,
 And hail the British laws:
 God save the Queen, and every King,
 Who favours Zion's cause.³²

John Taylor was sustained President of the Church on October 10, 1880. His last Christmas was spent at the Kaysville, Utah, home of Thomas F. Rouche. President Taylor had gone into voluntary exile in February 1885 to avoid arrest by federal officers for violating the Edmunds Act of 1882.³³ He died at the Rouche farmhouse on July 25, 1887, attended by a few family members and friends.³⁴

FOURTH PRESIDENT, WILFORD WOODRUFF

Over a succession of years, President Woodruff experienced wide diversity in his Christmas celebrations. A potpourri of personal accounts from his journal illustrate the variety of circumstances that surrounded his Christmas activities:

[**December 25, 1836, Kirtland, Ohio**] Went up to the house of God [Kirtland Temple] to worship & herd a discourse from Brother Samuel Smith. Brother Hiram Smith broak bread which closed the meeting. Elder [Abraham O.] Smoot was quite sick & healed by the laying on of hands.³⁵

[December 25, 1840, London, England] CHRISTMAS Day in LONDON The Church Bells throughout the city commenced Chanting for meeting at half past ten. We met with the Saints at Father [Henry] Corner Room Georges Row 24, at 11 oclock & we tought the Saints Some plain principles, which had a good effect.

We took our Christmas dinner with Br. Morgan. He had his family at home with him. The Dinner Consisted of Baked Mutton, Goose, Rabbit Pies, Minced Pies, & Plum Pudding & bread & cheese, Porter and water. We spent the evening at Mr Albums in conversing about the things of God. . . . After sitting an hour with the family we retired to rest.

This is the first Christmas I ever spent in England. Whare I shall be next Christmas day the Lord ownly knows, & what a year to come will bring forth we Cannot tell, But may the Lord preserve my life, my wife & Child in peace I pray & enable all the Saints to be esestablished in righteousness. Christmas is Considered the greatest of all days in England.³⁶

[December 25, 1841, Nauvoo, Illinois] Christmas Day was an interesting day indeed to the Twelve. We were invited to a Christmas supper at Mr Hiram Kimball's. It was excellent Slaying [sleighbing] & I got a horse & slay & carried the wives of the Twelve to Mr Kimballs & home again after our meeting broke up. Our company consisted of B Young H. C. Kimball O. Pratt W. Richards J. Taylor & W. Woodruff All with our wives except W. Richards who waited upon Sister Hyde. We had an excellent feast. . . .

A year ago this Christmas I was in London Eng & took dinner with Br & sister Morgan in company with Br Kimball but we are now again with our families.³⁷

[December 25, 1871, Woodruff farm, at Cottonwood, Salt Lake County, Utah] Was Christmass But I spent the day husking Corn.³⁸

[December 25, 1876, St. George, Utah] Christmas I went to the Temple. 40 women were Sewing Carpets and all the men were at work & Josiah Hardy worked at the Buz Saw till 9 oclock at night to get through so that the Ensign might be moved into the Temple for dedication. Presidet Young rode to the Temple the first time He had been out for 3 weeks. He has been laid up quite sick with inflamitory Rheumatism in his feet.³⁹

[December 25, 1883, St. George, Utah] I wrote a letter to A[rza] Hin[c]kley. . . . I was sealed for 13 Dead Couple. I Ordained Charoques Erastus to the office of a Seventy I think *the first Lamanite Ever* ordained to that office in this dispensation. There was 316 Baptisms to day which is Called Christmass.⁴⁰

[December 25, 1885, Salt Lake City, Utah] Christmass day I spent the day in the Chamber locked up as a prisioner while all the family went to the ward school House to attend the Christmass [party]. I wrote Letters to

George Teasdale & Thomas E. Ricks. I felt thankful to God I was Still a free man on Earth.⁴¹

[**December 25, 1886, St. George, Utah**] Christmass Morning Warm & pleasant. Emma [Smith Woodruff, wife] had knit 13 pair of Mittens in which she put money & Candy for the Children in their stocking and there was a great Row among the Children this morning. Grand Pa & Grand Ma got \$2.50 each in their stocking with other things.

There is a great time in the street this Morning. A Band of Music . . . are serinading before the House and a regular Christmas Hollowday.

We had our dinner at 3 oclok. Brother Thomas Cottam had all of his Children together and 23 grand Children. There was 20 grown persons & 24 Children at the table. The Evening was spent in music & singing.⁴²

[**December 25, 1888, Salt Lake City, Utah**] All is astir this morning. The Children are Exam[in]ing their Presents. Br Wilkin went out to the penitentiary [Utah Territorial Penitentiary at Sugar House, Salt Lake City]. They took out 50 Turkeys to get up a Christmass dinner for the Prisioners. Emma had all her Children together Except Nellie & Henry.⁴³

Wilford Woodruff was sustained as President of the Church on April 7, 1889. On Christmas Day 1889 he recorded: "I spent the day at Asahels. We took Dinner with him & spent the Evening there."⁴⁴ President Woodruff enjoyed spending Christmas with his family, and many of the Christmas Day entries during his presidency sound similar to the 1889 entry. In 1892 Christmas fell on a Sunday, so the family celebrated on December 26: "This day [December 26] was spent for Christmass. We had our Christmass Dinner. I had a large Company of Children & Grand Children and a pleasant day."⁴⁵ On December 25, 1897, President Woodruff wrote: "Christmas Day Spent the day at home with family."⁴⁶ This was his last holiday entry. President Woodruff passed away at the home of his friend Colonel Isaac Trumble in San Francisco, California, on September 2, 1898.

FIFTH PRESIDENT, LORENZO SNOW

Elder Lorenzo Snow and his sister, Eliza R. Snow, were called to participate in the rededication of Palestine for the returning of the Jews.⁴⁷ The group, led by President George A. Smith, departed Salt Lake City on October 26, 1872. While en route to the Holy Land, the party toured the European Continent. President Smith's party arrived in Nice, France, on December 24. George A. Smith detailed the tour that Lorenzo Snow and others participated in as they visited various locations in Nice on Christmas Day:

Touring with Lorenzo Snow, Eliza R. Snow, Faramorz Little, Miss Clara Little, and Paul A. Schettler.

Took a drive through Nice and vicinity, romantic[ally] situated between hills & vallies. Handsom bay, red rocky soil, rendered lovely by the hand of patient toil. The day was pleasant, the gardens green, variegated flowers abundant, Orange groves, loaded with golden fruit, contrasted beautifully with the deep dark foliage, while the lemon trees, also loaded with fruit, and the olive forests all combined to make a green contrast, never before witnessed by me on Christmas Day. . . . About 200 guests adorned our table at tagle d' hotel which commenced with a good soup, & after 12 courses wound up with ice cream & roasted chestnuts. The sitting lasted 1½ hours.⁴⁸

New Year's Eve found the party in Milan, Italy. In anticipation of their arrival in Jerusalem, Eliza Snow devoted a stanza of an expansive poem entitled "The Year 1872" to the topic of Jesus Christ. In this stanza, Eliza emphasizes the great love in the Savior's atoning sacrifice and looks forward to the time when Christ will come again:

I go to place my feet upon the land
 Where once, the Prince of Peace, the Son of God
 Was born—where once He lived and walk'd and preach'd,
 And prayed, admonished, taught, rebuked and bled;
 And then, to answer justice' great demand,
 And seal his mission of Eternal Love,
 Upon the cross poured out his precious blood—
 Arose to life triumphant o'er the tomb;
 And after being seen and heard and felt,
 Ascended up to heaven; and as He went,
 Those who stood looking, heard and angel say,
 "Ye men of Gallilee, why stand ye here
 Gazing to heaven? The selfsame Jesus, whom
 Ye see ascending, in like manner will
 Again descend."⁴⁹

The company continued on to Jerusalem (fig. 2). On Sunday, March 2, 1873, in a tent that had been pitched on the Mount of Olives by previous arrangement, President George A. Smith led "in humble, fervent supplication, dedicating the land of Palestine for the gathering of the Jews and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and returning heartfelt thanks and gratitude to God for the fulness of the Gospel and the blessings bestowed on the Latter-day Saints."⁵⁰

Because of the intense prosecution of the antibigamy laws by federal officers, Lorenzo Snow went on the "underground" for an extended period of time. In the early morning hours of November 19, 1885, seven U.S. marshals descended upon his home in Brigham City, Utah. Due to the indiscretion of a dog who loved his master too much and sniffed him out, Elder

Snow's hidden cubicle was discovered by the officers. An arrest and conviction for cohabitation followed. He was consequently incarcerated in the Utah Territorial Prison at Sugar House on March 12, 1886, and spent the succeeding Christmas behind locked doors.⁵¹

The gloom of imprisonment was much improved, however, by the delivery on Christmas Day of "a beautifully ornamented raisin cake" from Minna Cannon. There was also "a nice Silk Handkerchief, the S. L. Temple woven on each corner," which came from Lorenzo's son, daughter, and granddaughter. The latter gift was accompanied by this simple note of well-wishing to the venerable patriarch:

Christmas Greetings,
To Dear Papa
Dearest Pa, with joy we greet you
On, now this happy Christmas morn,
Yet because, that we must miss you
These blessings much thereby are shorn,
While you've suffered, we acknowledge
Our present loss is future gain:
And we hope now soon to see you,
And have you with us once again.
LeRoie, Mable & Lori.⁵²

Lorenzo Snow was finally released from prison following a February 7, 1887, U.S. Supreme Court decision in his personal case.⁵³

President Snow, then President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, was the recipient of some highly prized gifts from his daughter Lana Snow Savage and her husband George for Christmas in 1891. In a poetic response written January 1, he not only expressed his gratitude for earthly favors but also revealed his devout belief in a future association of royal dimensions between spouses and the Father of us all:

Dear George and Lana:
That golden pen with diamond point



FIG. 2. Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In March 1873, Lorenzo Snow and others rededicated the Holy Land for the returning of the Jews. While there, the visitors were able to view many sites of Jerusalem. This illustration appeared in the *Juvenile Instructor* a year and a half later. *Juvenile Instructor* 9 (October 10, 1874), 243.

With holder fine is nicely wrought,
 With cushion too, so sweet and chaste
 Its donor I could easy trace—
 A priceless gift—a present rare
 That indicates your love I share.
 But other Christmas days have told
 Your love for me had not grown cold.
 And now my Son and Daughter too
 To bear my thanks, (I feel its due)
 This missive, Dear, to send to you.
 May blessings choice forever flow
 Enrich your labors here below,
 Infuse your heart with holy fire
 And sanctify each thought, desire,
 That 'way beyond high ether blue,
 In realms of light, where both of you
 May there be crowned a King, a Queen
 By our great Father—Elohiem.⁵⁴
 affectionately Your Father
 Lorenzo Snow

LeRoi Snow, son of President Snow, stated that his father was given to the writing of poetry, which he sent as season's greetings to his friends.⁵⁵

Lorenzo Snow was ordained and set apart as President of the Church on September 13, 1898. He enjoyed his last Christmas in the year 1900 and sent out his final note of celebration to his friends and loved ones on January 1, 1901: "In the eighty-seventh year of my age on earth, I feel full of earnest desire for the benefit of humanity. . . . May the light of truth chase darkness from your souls."⁵⁶ Lorenzo Snow died of apparent complications of pneumonia in Salt Lake City on October 10, 1901. He was buried in his beloved Brigham City, Utah.

SIXTH PRESIDENT, JOSEPH F. SMITH

Joseph F. Smith was but five years of age when his father, Hyrum Smith, and uncle, Joseph Smith, died. However, he did have some latent remembrances of the Prophet. From his mother, Mary Fielding Smith, and a host of contemporaries he inherited a rich recollection of the Prophet and his teachings. Joseph F. Smith was one of the Prophet's most ardent exponents, as exhibited in a December 1894 sermon.

At the suggestion of Bishop Frederick Kesler of the Salt Lake City Sixteenth Ward, President Joseph F. Smith, second counselor to President Woodruff, met with a large and enthusiastic congregation to enjoy a

protracted evening of eulogizing the memory of the Prophet Joseph Smith's eighty-ninth birthday, December 23, 1894. The gathering was unique because numerous individuals, who had been personally associated with Joseph Smith, remarked and bore fervent testimony of his divine calling as a prophet of the Lord. President Joseph F. Smith presented a masterful discourse on the inner nature of his uncle as he had come to know him and his works. President Smith stated:

I should like to see introduced among the Latter-day Saints, even at the risk of introducing another general holiday, the practice of celebrating or commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is now over fifty years since he was martyred; and during those fifty years, we have never had to my knowledge more than a small private gathering occasionally, in honor of the birthday of the man who was chosen of God and designated by His voice to be the mouthpiece of God Almighty to the inhabitants of the earth in the dispensation of the fullness of times. The only exception I recall was when, on the 23rd of December, 1892, a general fast was proclaimed and observed among the Latter-day Saints, preparatory to the final completion and dedication of the Salt Lake Temple in April following. We celebrate what is supposed to be the birthday of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we get a long way off from His birthday; so that now, instead of celebrating the real birthday of our Lord, which was on the 6th of April, we celebrate the 25th of December in each year. And it is a proper thing that we should hallow His birthday, above all others. And in my judgement—and of course I may be a little biased in regard to this matter—in my judgement the next birthday celebration to that of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ should be that of Joseph Smith, to this entire people of the Latter-day Saints. . . . No matter what we may recollect of the Prophet or what may be said to us here tonight with regard to our memory of him, the one thing that I wish to call your attention to first and foremost of all other things is this, that whatever else the Prophet Joseph Smith may have done or may have been, we must not forget the fact that he was the man out of the millions of human beings that inhabited this earth at the time—the only man, that was called of God, by the voice of God Himself, to open up the dispensation of the Gospel to the world for the last time; and this is the great thing to bear in mind, that he was called of God, by the voice of God Himself, to open up the dispensation of the Gospel to the world for the last time; and this is the great thing to bear in mind, that he was called of God to introduce the Gospel to the world, to restore the holy priesthood to the children of men, to organize the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the world, and to restore all the ordinances of the Gospel, for the salvation not only of the living, but also of the dead, and he was called to this mission by God Himself. Now, if somebody

tells us about Joseph Smith being fond of wrestling, fond of running a foot race, fond of having a good scuffle with some lusty neighbor or friend; or if you hear somebody tell about the good, that is, the overflowing of the human nature that was in him, it need not detract one iota from the great and glorious principles which were revealed through him to the world. . . .

. . . By the gift and power of God he translated this book (the Book of Mormon) from its original language, and from the engravings upon the golden plates into the language which we now read within the lids of this book; and it contains the fullness of the everlasting Gospel. It will lead men to the obtaining of the knowledge of truth whereby they may be saved and brought back again into the presence of God and partake of His glory and of endless lives. This is the great thing that I rejoice at, and this is the great and glorious thought that comes to my mind and that pervades my soul when I think of commemorating the anniversary of the birth of that great and glorious man, Joseph Smith; for he was the only man that I have any record of, or knowledge of, or that I have ever read of in any history, that God Himself, in connection with His son Jesus Christ, deigned to visit in person and commune with in this world. From Adam until this day, I have never heard of but this man that has ever been so favored of God. There have been other prophets, and great prophets, too, who have had angels minister to them, and others who have seen the finger of God, and who have been favored more or less; but where is the circumstance, and who is the man unto whom the Father and the Savior have appeared together in person, and declared themselves unto him? Where is that man? Nowhere that history records, except the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that while he was a youth. He was only a youth, comparatively in fact, when he was martyred, being only 38 years of age.

He was brimming over with the noblest and purest of human nature, which often gave vent in innocent amusements—in playing ball, in wrestling with his brothers and scuffling with them, and enjoying himself; he was not like a man with a stake run down his back, and with his face cast in a brazen mold that he could not smile, that he had no joy in his heart. O, he was full of joy; he was full of gladness; he was full of love, and of every other noble attribute that makes men great and good, and at the same time simple and innocent, so that he could descend to the lowest condition; and he had power, by the grace of God, to comprehend the purposes of the Almighty too. That was the character of the Prophet Joseph Smith. And while he could play with children and amuse himself at simple, innocent games among men, he also communed with the Father and the Son and spoke with angels, and they visited him, and conferred blessings and gifts and keys of power upon him that were never before bestowed upon any human being other than the Son of

God himself. No man yet that ever lived upon the earth had all the keys of the Gospel and of the dispensations bestowed upon him as were bestowed upon the Prophet Joseph Smith in the temple at Kirtland when he was visited there by the Son of God, by Moses, and by Elias and Elijah, and when the heavens were opened unto him and he received the keys of power and authority by which he could lay the foundation of the work of God, broad and deep, to cover the earth with the knowledge of God, and with His power and glory. And that work, the foundation of which he laid, is today spreading abroad among the nations of the earth, and it will continue to spread until it covers the earth as the waters cover the sea; and that is my testimony. Amen.⁵⁷

A Memorial to Joseph Smith in Vermont

Joseph F. Smith was ordained and set apart as President of the Church on October 17, 1901. Early in 1905, at the request of President Joseph F. Smith and members of the First Presidency, Junius F. Wells visited the farm once belonging to Solomon Mack, lying in the townships of Sharon and Royalton in Windsor County, Vermont. Solomon was the grandfather of Joseph Smith Jr., and it was on his homestead, atop Dairy Hill, that the Prophet was born to Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith on Monday, December 23, 1805.

Junius had been directed to verify the exact confines of the farm through township records, interviews, and available historical sources. He was successful in purchasing the property and was authorized by the Brethren to build a memorial cottage on the site of the original home. It was likewise agreed that he would commission the erection of a thirty-eight-and-one-half-foot granite shaft with appropriate inscriptions to be dedicated and unveiled at that location on December 23, 1905. Elder Wells completed his arduous task and greeted President Joseph F. Smith and the Centennial Memorial Party as they arrived at South Royalton, Vermont on December 22. The group of thirty persons was comprised of Smith family members, General Authorities, and other invited guests.⁵⁸

During the services held the following day, December 23, in the Joseph Smith Memorial Cottage, President Joseph F. Smith dedicated the home, the polished shaft of Vermont granite, and all appurtenances (fig. 3). The opening words of President Smith's dedicatory prayer read:

Our Father who art in heaven! Hallowed be Thy most holy name. We Thy servants and handmaidens, representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, have gathered here to dedicate this monument to the memory of Thy servant, Joseph Smith, the great Prophet and Seer of the nineteenth century, who was born into the world near this spot, on the 23rd day of December, 1805—one hundred years ago.⁵⁹



WLC Litho. Courtesy Larry C. Porter

FIG. 3. Joseph Smith's birthplace, Sharon, Vermont. In commemoration of the Prophet's one hundredth birthday on December 23, 1905, President Joseph F. Smith traveled to the Solomon Mack farm to dedicate the Joseph Smith Memorial Cottage (left) and a granite monument (right).

President Smith and certain members of his party spent Christmas Eve in transit to Boston by way of the railroad. On Christmas Day, the Smith family members drove to Topsfield and Boxford, Massachusetts, and there visited the home sites of Joseph Smith's ancestors, including that of Joseph Smith Sr. At the Pine Grove Cemetery in Topsfield, they paid homage to certain of these honorable men who had preserved the "watched bloodline" of the Lord's servant, Joseph Smith the Prophet. The party then returned to Boston and boarded the night train for the West via Palmyra, New York, and Kirtland, Ohio, where they stopped to tour church historic sites.⁶⁰

In the December 25, 1905, *Deseret News*, the First Presidency gave very specific directions as to what the Saints must do in their personal actions to be consistent with the true observance of this sacred anniversary:

Bless the children; provide for the poor; comfort the distressed; visit the widow and the fatherless; forgive those who may be regarded as enemies; be filled with the spirit of blessing; have charity for all; promote peace and good will, and spread abroad the light and intelligence which flow down from heaven in the gospel of the Son of God; recognize his divine hand in all that is good and useful and that promotes the welfare of humanity.⁶¹

“Christmas, to the Latter-day Saint”

During the Christmas season of 1907, President Smith and his counselors, John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund, chose to carefully define Christmas in “What Christmas Suggests to a Latter-day Saint.” Primary emphasis was given to the meaning of Christ’s earthly ministry, a work set in motion by “the first great Christmas night” and culminating with the risen Lord’s advent and personal reign. The role of certain servants who had “gone before his face,” such as John the Baptist and Joseph Smith, were also stated. It is a thoughtful refining of the true nature of Christmas:

CHRISTMAS, to the Latter-day Saint, is both reminiscent and prophetic—a reminder of two great and solemn events, which will yet be regarded universally as the mightiest and most wonderful happenings in the history of the human race. These events were predestined to take place upon this planet before it was created. One of them was the coming of the Savior in the meridian of time, to die for the sins of the world; and the other is the prospective advent of the risen and glorified Redeemer, to reign upon the earth as King of kings. . . .

As already intimated, there have been various dispensations of the gospel, which was first revealed to Adam out of heaven, where it was instituted as the means—the only means—of man’s salvation. But the greatest dispensations are, without doubt, the two immediately connected with the resurrection, namely, the one in which Christ Himself rose from the dead, and the one in which He will come in the clouds of heaven, simultaneously with the resurrection of the just, who are to reign with Him a thousand years. This final dispensation will witness the restitution of all things, the welding together of all the dispensations, the gathering into one of all things in Christ, things in heaven as well as upon the earth.

Such in brief is the divine program, as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the latter-day restorer of the religion of Jesus Christ, the pre-ordained plan of salvation. This also is the significance of Christmas, or it is what Christmas suggests to the mind of any thoughtful Latter-day Saint.

It is in honor of our Lord that we observe this day, one celebrated throughout Christendom as the birthday of the world’s Redeemer. Christ is God, even Jehovah, the God of Israel and as such we worship Him. And we also honor the memory of His faithful servants John and Joseph, who, in missions involving their martyrdom, went before His face, opening and preparing the way.

In the light of these solemn facts, and in the spirit of charity and good-will exemplified and enjoined by our blessed Redeemer, we send forth to the Latter-day Saints and to all the world, a hearty and kindly Christmas greeting!

Let no one suppose that “Mormonism,” so-called, is here to make war upon men, or upon creeds, governments, and institutions that men revere. It sustains law, order, liberty and truth, the world over. The Latter-day Saints are friends, not enemies, to mankind. That we have a message to deliver we know; and, God being our helper, we will deliver it, come life or death, come weal or woe! But we purpose doing this in the spirit of peace, in the spirit of patience and brotherly love, forgiving our enemies, and returning good for evil; oppressing no man for refusing to listen to our testimony, nor ridiculing what he holds sacred, however false or foolish it may appear to us. The liberty of conscience is inviolable, and we stand ready to defend all men in the exercise of this sacred, God-given right. We may be abused and slandered for exercising this right ourselves, but heaven forbid that we should deny it to others! Despite the human weakness that all men possess, and which prompts them to retaliate when they feel themselves wronged, we will endeavor, with the help of the Lord, to follow His divine injunction: “When men revile you, revile not again.” Our plain and simple duty is the preaching of the gospel, the gathering of scattered Israel, the redemption of Zion, and the salvation of the living and the dead. We have no warfare to wage against our fellow-men, no wrongs that we wish to avenge. We leave that to Him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” May He be merciful to those who misrepresent and bring trouble upon His people! . . .

But these issues are all in the hands of the Lord. He will do His own work in His own time and way. Our mission is not to curse, but to bless; not to punish or threaten, but to persuade men to do right. We preach salvation, not damnation; and in this spirit we send forth this greeting, echoing, and, if possible, emphasizing the salutation of the angels to the shepherds, on the first great Christmas night: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”⁶²

Christmases in Want

On Christmas Day in 1914, David A. Smith, son of President Joseph F. Smith, sent a letter of heartfelt gratitude to his father, who was then in Santa Monica, California, for a period of respite after a very demanding schedule. David’s letter and the written response from his father which followed gives us wonderful insight into the filial relationship of President Smith and his son as well as a rare Christmas story from the past experience of the President. David wrote his father:

My Dear Papa:

After a day of noise and excitement, the quiet of the evening, now that the children have retired for the night, has caused my thoughts to take me back to my childhood days and especially to the celebrating of

Christmas with my brothers and sisters, and I thought of President Wilson “who arose early to-day to direct in person the Christmas festivities at the White House for his small grand niece.” I would not change places with President Wilson for anything, and yet I wonder, when I see their all, as we were, as children, with our new articles of wearing apparel, some candy, nuts and rasons [sic]; giving away to these thoughts fear overtakes me and I tremble as I begin to realize the responsibility that is resting upon me and I wonder if with all my advantages, I will be able to live up to the requirements and attain the success that your example and teaching would have me reach. Oh! Papa my heart is full of love for you and for your wives and children, my brothers and sisters, and now that I am beginning to feel a little of the responsibility that has been yours for so long; the more I realize what I owe to you; the more helpless I seem to become. All my days I have lived in the love of my dear parents, and when in my soul, for I have always had a desire to live up to every requirement. . . . Last year I had the pleasure of accompanying you when making your Christmas calls, while we miss you this year we are grateful [sic] that you are permitted to get away, in a measure at least, from your arduous labours.

I called on all of the folks yesterday and delivered their Christmas turkeys and one was sent to you, had I known earlier we might have sent two, I hope the one you did get went around.

Today I delivered to Aunt Sarah the two coats you ordered from Provo for Frank and Willard we received them this morning, as far as I can learn all are well and have had a happy Christmas.

Praying for the blessings of our heavenly Father to be with you, and with love for all, I am affectionately, your loving son.

David⁶³

In a letter dated December 29, 1914, President Smith responded to David’s remembrances with equally stirred emotions of his own:

My Beloved Son:—Your most refreshing and welcome letter of Christmas eve, came to my hand yesterday, and I read and re-read it with pleasure, mingled with grateful tears.

Your letter also took me back not only to the boyhood days of my own boys and girls, but also to those of my very own. From 1846 to 1848 and 9 I knew no Christmas, and no holiday; and, indeed, if we had a Christmas or a New Year celebration at all before 1846—or until after I was married, for the life of me, at this moment, I cannot remember it. I was teamster, herd-boy, plow-boy, irrigator, harvester, with scythe or cradle, wood-hauler, thresher, winnower (by the half-bushel measure or fanning-mill, later) general roustabout, and a fatherless, motherless, and almost friendless missionary, and withal, always penniless.

I say *almost friendless*. I had one true friend, a widow, frail, aged—but oh! so true! She was my never-to-be-forgotten and ever-to-be-loved and remembered Aunt Mercy R. [Fielding] Thompson. She, like my own precious mother [Mary Fielding], never forgot me while they lived. But in their time, they had very little, and it was a continuous struggle just to live!

Then when, after these dreary experiences, my own precious cherubs began to come along, we were existing on \$3 per day for each working day employed, and that in tithing products at high prices. Well, I cannot tell you how we managed to live at all, but we did! God must have helped us, for I did not *steal* nor defraud my neighbor. I did not owe any man, woman or child one cent, except it was my gracious Aunt Mercy who, as often as she could, slipped a favor in my way. I owed no man through all those days, and I *had* to work—I could not be idle.

Now again to the Christmas holidays: There were my . . . precious chicks (fig. 4), but not a dollar in cash, with which to buy one thing for Christmas. I could draw a few pounds of flour, or meat, a little molasses, or something of that kind, ahead, at the general Tithing Office and pay



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 4. Joseph F. Smith family, November 1898. President Smith is seated fourth from the left. President Smith recalled with gratitude the chance he had to be with his family and play with his children during Christmas seasons of economic hardship.

up at the end of the month with tithing scrip, received in payment of my labor which more than often began at 6 a.m. and ended at 11 p.m., at \$3 per day in tithing pay, which was not cash.

I saw many reveling in luxuries, with means to lavish their every *want*, which were far more than their needs—riding in buggies, on prancing horses, enjoying their leisure, while *I—we all!* were on foot and of necessity tugging away with all our mights to keep soul and body together. Under these spiritless conditions, one day just before Christmas, I left the old home with feelings I cannot describe. I wanted to do something for my chicks. I wanted something to please them, and to mark the Christmas day from all other days—but not a cent to do it with! I walked up and down Main Street, looking into the shop windows—into Amussen’s jewelry store, into every store—everywhere—and then slunk out of sight of humanity and sat down and wept like a child, until my poured-out grief relieved my aching heart; and after awhile returned home, as empty as when I left, and played with my children, grateful and happy only for them.⁶⁴

President Smith was engaged in a series of missions in the 1860s–1870s. In the 1880s he was likewise away from home for substantial periods of time fulfilling Church assignments while avoiding arrest warrants issued by federal officers stemming from the anti-bigamy campaign in Utah. During this extended period he had little opportunity to further his agricultural or business pursuits as some others were able to do. Financially embarrassed he had no substance. Yet these letters show that the most significant gifts in life are not necessarily tangible and tied with satin ribbon. There are moments when only the gift of love can be offered, but such is always sufficient for the day. For President Smith and his family, Christmas was an involvement of the heart where pure love, extended and reciprocated, provided the ingredients for true happiness at yuletide.

SEVENTH PRESIDENT, HEBER J. GRANT

At age twenty-five, Heber J. Grant was ordained as an Apostle by President George Q. Cannon on October 16, 1882. Already familiar with the business world of Wells Fargo and Company, Zion’s Savings Bank and Trust Company, and ZCMI, Elder Grant was a decided asset to the Brethren in fiscal and other matters. Though his initial years in the Twelve were surrounded with the chaos created by severely repressive measures directed against the Latter-day Saints, he sought to keep an air of normalcy for family members throughout the holiday season. Such normalcy can be seen in Elder Grant’s journal entry for December 25, 1888: “Spent nearly the

entire day at home. Took the little ones out in [a] buggy to make some Christmas presents. I feel truly and sincerely thankful on this Christmas day for all of the many blessings me and mine are in the enjoyment of.”⁶⁵

Books! Books! Books!

Heber J. Grant was ordained and set apart as the Church President on November 23, 1918. During the holiday season and on other occasions, President Grant habitually gave of his substance to buy books for numerous friends. He drew from a multiplicity of titles, sometimes buying out entire editions, four or five thousand copies, of a book he particularly liked. Handwritten messages in his own deft penmanship or preprinted inscriptions were all signed in person (fig. 5). Such works as William Jennings Bryan’s *The Prince of Peace*, Edgar A. Guest’s *The Path to Home*, Thomas Carlyle’s *Martin Luther*, David Starr Jordan’s *The Strength of Being Clean*, Henry Drummond’s *The Greatest Thing in the World*, and Orson F. Whitney’s *Love and the Light* were among those circulated.⁶⁶ He had read each volume with care himself and underscored salient passages in his own copy.

Illustrative of his exhaustive giving of books in the holiday season are his activities on Christmas Day, 1925:

Spent the morning until 11:00 A.M. at the hotel, writing in books and signing slips. . . .

A lot of books arrived from Independence last night. Some of them should have been here at least ten days ago and I wrote in books until late last night and again this morning, also wrote in them this afternoon until about 3:00. . . .

Called and delivered a lot of books this evening. Gusta [President Grant’s wife, Hulda Augusta Winters] was with me. . . . Presented to all the people on whom we called this afternoon and evening a copy of “The Prince of Peace.” . . .

Have had a very strenuous day indeed, but have thoroughly enjoyed the day in visiting with my daughters and granddaughters and friends.⁶⁷

President Grant enjoyed both an exceptional number of friends in the religious sphere and also in the greater business community. His diary chronicles the massive efforts of one man to make a difference in people’s lives:

Day spent with books. Books! Books! Had lunch at home today for the first time in several days. I am sending books to all the members of the Sunday School Union Board, Y.L. and Y.M.M.I.A., Primary, Relief Society boards, and to the directors of Grant & Co., Home Fire, Utah State National Bank, Zions Savings Bank, Utah Light & Power Co., Utah

1925-26.
 Holiday Greetings
 To
 Geo Albert + Lucy W.
 Smith
 from
 Your Friends
 Mr.
 Mrs.
 Heber J. Grant.
 Salt Lake City.

FIG. 5. Inscription, Heber J. Grant to George Albert Smith, Christmas 1925. The inscription reads: "1925-26. Holiday greetings to Geo. Albert + Lucy W. Smith from your friends Mr. Mrs. Heber J. Grant. Salt Lake City." President Grant estimated that he gave over one hundred thousand books to friends as holiday and other occasion gifts. This inscription is found in a copy of William Jennings Bryan, *The Prince of Peace* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1925).

Light & Traction Co., Z.C.M.I., Utah Hotel, Salt Lake Theater, Consolidated Wagon & Machine Co., Beneficial Life Ins. Co., Union Pacific Railroad Co., and the Pacific Coast Joint Stock Land Bank, to say nothing about personal friends. I am sorry to say that all the books have not yet arrived from the Deseret News press and that part of the books will not reach my friends until after Christmas. . . . [I] am giving over one hundred copies of the Lecture on Martin Luther to the employees in the Church offices. Owen and Rachel Heninger have been helping Brother Anderson and Bertha mailing these books. I was busy all day principally with books, and it was a little after nine o'clock P.M. when I left the office.⁶⁸

During the 1935–36 school year, President Grant went to Brigham Young University, where his portrait was to be unveiled in the Heber J. Grant Memorial Library. In answer to an inquiry, the school's president, Dr. Franklin S. Harris, told President Grant that the library had over one hundred thousand volumes on the shelves. In his address that followed, President Grant said that while he had never kept track of the number of books he had given away, he believed that the number, too, would be just about one hundred thousand volumes.⁶⁹

Christmas with Family

President Grant's Christmases seem to have been filled with children and grandchildren, in addition to his numerous friends. In 1936, he recalled the Christmas Day humor of a young grandchild:

We drove down early in the morning to American Fork and visited with Edith and her family. . . . We returned in time for a family gathering at our house at eleven o'clock. We have forty-seven living grandchildren, ten great grandchildren, and twelve grandsons-in-law and ten sons-in-law, which makes quite a tribe when we are together. One of the great grandchildren, John Taylor Anderson, five years old, put his fingers in his ears and said, "chatter, chatter, chatter," which accurately describes what went on.⁷⁰

EIGHTH PRESIDENT, GEORGE ALBERT SMITH

In December 1905, Elder George Albert Smith, then a member of the Twelve, accompanied the large entourage of relatives and Church members who went to dedicate the Joseph Smith Memorial at Sharon, Vermont, in commemoration of the Prophet's one hundredth birthday on December 23 (see fig. 3). On Christmas Day he visited the old ancestral homes of five generations of Smiths in the towns of Topsfield and Boxford, Massachusetts. He recorded the events of that auspicious day:

Awoke feeling well. Had a good breakfast and took the Saugus branch train in company of John Henry [Smith], Hyrum M [Smith], Ida B and Jos F. Smith Jr. at 8.20 A M. Were met at Saugus by Frank P. Bennett with three automobiles and taken to his fathers home, a most beautiful place. Here we were joined by T. P. Berrett, Howard Berrett, Prest Jos F. Smith, Ina, Edith A, Jesse M and Elias A Smith and took Automobiling to Topsfield, to old home of Asael Smith now owned by Francis Trainer. It is located about 1½ miles north of Topsfield proper. Visited the cemetery and took pictures of Monument erected by Grace Smith [George A. Smith and others initiated the monument] in 1873 to the memory of the first Robert and first and second Samuel Smith. Thence to Boxford to the old home of Robert Smith now occupied by some of his descendants named Smith. Thence through Salem to Lymme riding over the floating bridge. At Lymme Edith, Ina, Elias A and myself left the scene of the burning of the Witches at Lymme and went back to Boston leaving the others to eat Dinner with the Bennetts. This was a delightful Christmas day cold and clear but with out snow. Took train at 6:19 P. M. for Palmyra [NY]. Mr Burgess the N.E.P.A [New England Passenger Agent?] of the Nickle Plate road accompanied us to Rotterdam Junction. We had a Christmas tree on the train and spent the evening very pleasantly. Everybody received a present. I got a jumping jack.⁷¹

The following year, the holiday season caught Elder George Albert Smith on a protracted journey by train traveling from New Orleans to Salt Lake City. Obviously lonely for his beloved Lucy and little ones, he took solace in the amenities afforded the traveler:

New Orleans Monday [December 24, 1906] Spent the day at the park cemeteries etc and left at night for the land of Utah. I received lovely Christmas letters from Lucy and the children and wished myself home all day long. Bought a few trinkets and some flags.

On Texas Pacific train [December 25, 1906] Spent my Christmas posting my journal and reading and reading my letters. Had dinner of Turkey etc at Mineola Texas. Am very lonesome but feel sure my children will have a jolly time at home. Train is about 2 hours late and losing time. We arrived Fort Worth House where a splendid Christmas dinner was served. I took a walk after eating and went to two moving picture shows. Retired feeling fairly well, after visiting with the photos of my family.⁷²

Christmases without Lucy

Elder George Albert Smith experienced a very difficult Christmas Day in 1937. He had lost his wife and sweetheart of forty-five years, Lucy Emily Woodruff Smith, on November 5, 1937. He recorded in his diary: "I remained at home all day with my family. . . . All well and happy as possible.

I went with Emily and Edith to Lucy's grave and placed roses on it. The wreath the girls had placed there the night before looked fresh + green."⁷³ President Smith chose not to remarry during the remaining years of his life.

Elder Smith spent Christmas Day surrounded by his children and grandchildren. A bustling household perhaps gave some relief to the lingering remorse felt over the loss of his life's companion. His diary reflects his inner sorrow while reacting to the festivities about him:

Awoke and heard the children running around the house at 8 o'clock in the morning, welcoming a joyous Christmas Day filled with much comfort and satisfaction to many people. Our Heavenly Father was kind enough to give us a snow storm so that everything is beautiful and white. . . . It was a real treat to see how happy the children were with their gifts. I do not believe they realized how generous their portion is. In fact we have all been wonderfully treated in the way of gifts from our loved ones. . . .

Surely the Lord has been very kind to me in giving me fine children as a result of a companionship with a noble woman who did her best to keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father. She was a great help to me and I miss her greatly since she was called home. My children try in every way to make up to me my loss but of course that isn't possible. . . .

It has been a very peaceful day. Have been so happy to observe the mirth and cheerfulness in the members of our household but there is an empty place that cannot be filled. It is nearly six o'clock at night and I have not yet opened my Christmas packages. Have enjoyed the others but have had no enthusiasm to see what my packages contain. I am sure they will be nice. My children always remember me generously. Before I go to bed I will have a good visit with my family and open the packages and let them enjoy them too. . . .

I played with the children, helped them enjoy their toys, read to them some faith-promoting stories and we shed tears together as we had brought to our attention the sacrifices that were made by some of our loved ones when they settled this country and made it possible for us to have a joyous place in which to live.⁷⁴

A Centennial Christmas Message

George Albert Smith was ordained and set apart as President of the Church on May 21, 1945. The pioneer centennial year of 1947 was filled with major activities and responsibilities for the eighth President of the now million-member Church. President Smith's Christmas message to the Saints that year was filled with praise and thanksgiving to his Heavenly Father for the bounteous blessings enjoyed in the post-World War II era and the

emergence of the Church after one hundred years of progress since the arrival of the initial pioneer company. This epistle to the Saints also contains a charge of continued vigilance:

At the approach of another glad Christmastide my heart is filled with gratitude to my Heavenly Father for the many blessings which he has bestowed upon the Latter-day Saints during the year which is now drawing to a close.

Here in this land which has been spared actual warfare, our farms and fields have yielded bounteously; our flocks and herds have multiplied. Through diligent efforts we have produced enough of the necessities of life to sustain ourselves, and to provide a surplus which we have sent to assist our impoverished brethren and sisters in other lands. Since the close of the war, eighty-seven carloads of food, clothing and bedding have been sent by the Church to the needy and destitute across the sea. In which so many willing hands have labored and toiled during recent years.

Our missionary effort at the present time is greater than at any previous period in the history of the Church. Today there are in full-time missionary service more than four thousand of the sons and daughters of God who have been divinely commissioned to proclaim the truth to the children of men. They are sent out to teach repentance to the inhabitants of the earth, that these people may turn from the error of their ways, that they may cleave unto that which is righteous, and thereby gain the favor of our Heavenly Father and enjoy the companionship of his Spirit, which is a safe guide along the pathway of mortal life and a sure preparation for a home in his celestial kingdom.

During the present year we have been able to complete a very successful celebration in honor of the arrival, one hundred years ago, of the first pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley, under the leadership of President Brigham Young. Appropriate exercises were held by the Saints in many of the cities of the intermountain empire, celebrating the event; a modern caravan of automobiles, camouflaged as oxen-drawn covered wagons, traveled over the pioneer route from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City. At the mouth of Emigration Canyon one of the most beautiful and imposing monuments in the world was constructed, marking the end of the trail and on which was written the historic declaration of the great pioneer president, "This is the Place."

While we are recounting our blessings, we must remember that great problems are yet before us. The world is still staggering from the effects of the recent war; cities are in ruins; famine stalks unchecked in many sections of the old world; rumblings of political and social upheavals cause men's hearts to tremble with fear; the dove of peace is denied admittance in the councils of the nations.

But the promises of the Lord can be relied upon in the future as they have been in the past. Each passing year brings us nearer the date of his coming in power and glory. True, the hour and the day, no man knoweth. But the duty of the Latter-day Saints is to watch and pray, being valiant for the truth and abounding in good works. Despite the discontent in the world and the apparent growth of the power of evil, those who continue to stand in holy places can discern through it all the handiwork of the Lord in the consummation of his own purposes. The Almighty reigns and will continue to reign!

Therefore, at this season of the year, let personal discords be forgotten and animosities banished. Let rejoicing be heartfelt but not boisterous. Let gift giving be as generous as circumstances will allow, but not extravagant. Let the hearts of the children be made glad, and let us live that the spirit of the Prince of Peace may dwell in our homes.⁷⁵

NINTH PRESIDENT, DAVID O. MCKAY

In 1920 the First Presidency sent Elder David O. McKay of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to make a survey tour of all the island missions of the Pacific Ocean—the first member of the Twelve to do so. Other mission areas would also be visited as deemed expedient during a period lasting from 1920 to 1921. His traveling companion was Hugh J. Cannon, President of the Liberty Stake in Salt Lake City. They departed Vancouver, British Columbia on the *Empress of Japan*, bound for Yokohama, December 7, 1920. Their itinerary placed them in Tokyo, Japan, for the holiday season. Elder McKay recorded his impressions of the Christmas enjoyed with the family of President and Sister Joseph H. Stimpson of the Japan Mission (fig. 6). Elder McKay recorded:

If mild weather, bright sunshine, a clear blue sky, green vines and leafy trees are the characteristics of Christmas in Tokyo, then this twenty-fifth of December, nineteen twenty, has been just a usual Christmas; but to one who has spent nearly all one's holidays in northern Utah, it was most unusual.

It is true that several days before there were evidences on every hand throughout the city that a festive season was approaching. . . .

. . . It will not be appropriate to go into detail about the meaning and significance of these . . . decorations, because they were not being put up for Christmas, at all, but for the New Year—Japan's festive season—ten days hence. As Christmas eve approached, these decorations throughout the city became more profuse, and it was difficult, sometimes, to realize that these people were not making their streets more beautiful and attractive in honor of the birth of the Savior of the World.

True, the comparatively few Christians were preparing to commemorate this great event, but most of the Japanese people are not Christians.

Christmas eve, however, found four little groups of true followers of the Master fully prepared to do honor to the occasion. These were the Branches of the Church of Jesus Christ located at Osaka, Tokyo, Kofu and Sapporo.

It was Brother Cannon's pleasure and mine to be participants in the festivities at Tokyo.

President and Sister Joseph H. Stimpson had a real Christmas tree in their room at the Mission house, and old Santa remembered their little Children here, just as he did the tens of thousands in Utah sixteen hours later. What a blessed privilege old Saint Nicholas enjoys—to cross the Pacific in that short time! By boat it took us fifteen days!

The morning hours were spent in exchanging greetings and in preparing for the children's exercise in the afternoon.

Sixty minutes before the hour to begin, the little boys and girls began to gather at the house. And what an interesting, little motley



FIG. 6. Japan Mission special conference, January 1921. *Standing*: Irwin T. Hicken, Deloss W. Holley, Howard Jensen, Joseph S. Pyne, Lowring A. Whitaker. *Sitting*: Joseph Stimpson, Mary E. Stimpson, David O. McKay, Hugh J. Cannon, Myrl L. Bodily, Owen McGary. Elder McKay spent Christmas in Tokyo with the Stimpson family. *Juvenile Instructor* 56 (March 1921): 112.

group they were! And how different their greetings from those our own children give! Only one or two bright young hopefuls could say, "I wish you a merry Christmas," all the others could express the same wish only by bowing, which they did most gracefully. We American children can all learn true politeness from these polished little [children]. I had my first lesson in the art this Christmas day. . . .

Tokyo Christmas Program

Elder David O. McKay attended a "children's exercise" on Christmas Day 1920 at the Japan mission house in Tokyo. The following is a reproduction of the program recorded by Elder McKay:

Singing:	"Christmas Carol,"—Sunday School Children.
Prayer:	Brother Yoshijiro Wantanabe
Singing:	"Far, far Away on Judea's Plains", Sunday School Children
Opening Address:	Brother Nikichi Takahashi
Flower Recitation:	By nine girls.
Girl's Song:	"Jesus bids me shine," by twelve little girls each holding a candle.
[Dialogue]:	"Temperance" by five boys
Solo:	"I'll Be a Sunbeam," by Miss Sadako Terauchi
Talk:	On the Book of Mormon by Sister Taune Nachie.
[Singing:]	"Thanksgiving Song" by the boys of the Sunday School.
Recitation:	"Thanksgiving" by four boys
Dialogue:	"Three Wise Men," by the boys of the Sunday School.
Solo:	"Aloha Oe," sung by Miss Baba in English.
Girls Chorus:	By girls who come to practice with the Stimpsons.
Play:	Written by Sister Kotoe Morimoto, given by the MIA's.
Talk:	Elder David O. McKay of the Council of the Twelve.
Orchestra:	Concluded by a medley of American airs.
Closing Talk:	By Brother Jiro Fugita
Singing:	"Kimi ga Yo."
Benediction:	by President Joseph H. Stimpson.

(David Oman McKay, Scrapbooks, vol. 126, "A Christmas in Tokyo," front, type-script, Church Archives, format changed.)

The vim and energy and loudness with which they rendered their various parts were second only to their eagerness to do so. Another lesson worthy of imitation, I thought.

Though it made me somewhat sadly contemplative, it was a wonderfully interesting experience to hear those half hundred Japanese children, in their variously colored costumes, singing lustily, if not harmoniously, such songs as “Jesus wants me for a sunbeam” and “Glory to God in the Highest,” and not one of them a Christian. However, it was gratifying to note the same interest and joyousness in their responsive souls that would be manifest a few hours later by their little white brethren and sisters across the sea. When we, strangers to them, found our hearts filling with the same love for them that we have for the children at home, it was easy to understand that Christ included the Little Ones with yellow faces when He said:

“Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” . . .

Christmas, 1920, was more interesting and pleasant than I had anticipated it could possibly be over 5500 miles away from home and Loved Ones; yet as the hour next to midnight approached and we retired to our rooms, I was conscious of a very keen regret; viz., That, excepting the members of the Church, it appeared that neither parents nor children had participated in the entertainment because of any sympathy for the Gospel. They had come either for amusement or gifts or both.

I fell asleep wondering if, after all, these aren't the principal incentives in our Christmas festivities at home.⁷⁶

Memories of Childhood Christmases

On a winter's day in 1938, President McKay, second counselor to George Albert Smith, returned to the old family home of his youth in Huntsville, Utah (fig. 7). It had been unoccupied for some time, and he was there to check on the place. As he pattered about the house with its familiar trappings, he began to muse on the innocent laughter and excited merriment of the children and their friends at Christmas seasons of long ago. Moved by his impressions of the moment, he wrote a special letter of endearment dated December 12 to his brother, Thomas E. McKay, who was then presiding over the Swiss Mission:

My Dear Brother and Playmate, Thomas E.,

I went to Huntsville the other day and visited the Old Home. It was a typical wintery day, so you can easily imagine how cold the rooms were in which no fires were burning, and in which none had been for weeks. The house was just like a large refrigerator.

There were a few things which I wanted to do so I threw your old coonskin coat over my shoulders, and soon felt warm and comfortable. For a few moments I strolled leisurely from room to room, and, being in a reminiscent mood, I let my mind wander at will down the lanes of memory. I saw “Tommy” and “Dadie” [Thomas E. and David O.] go up stairs to bed, and felt the tender touch of the dearest, sweetest mother that ever lived as she tenderly tucked the bed-clothes around her two roguish boys and gave them good-night kisses.

Again it was Christmas Eve. Our stockings having been hung where Santa couldn't help but see them, we lay half expecting to hear the jingle of the sleigh bells announcing the approach of good old St. Nick to the chimney top—sleep came tardily, but finally the sandman succeed in closing our eyes.

Christmas morning. I can see those boys creeping down the stairs before daybreak—no electric switch to press and flood the room with light; no flashlight at hand. They didn't even light the old kerosene lamp. Step by step they groped their way in the dark, and sought the nail (or chair) on which each had hung respectively his empty stocking. Who can ever forget the thrill of that first touch of the stocking filled with Santa's treasures! Apple in the toe, sticks of red and white candy protruding from the top, and trinkets and presents hidden in between! Perhaps a



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 7. Elder McKay driving a sleigh, Huntsville, Utah. In a 1938 letter to his brother, Elder Mckay reminisced about Christmases at the old family farm in Huntsville.

trumpet stuck out with the candies; but the drum and sled were standing near by.

The air in the room was cold even though the last embers in the kitchen were still smoldering—evidence, if the boys had stopped to think, that father and mother had sat up late enough to welcome St. Nick to our house.

Soon the girls were awake also, and the lamp was lit—then the “oh’s” and the “ah’s,” and the medley of sounds of drums, jewsharp, harmonica, and music box!

As the sun came smiling over those snow-capped mountains, he turned the frost into diamonds that sparkled from the leafless trees and seemed to dance on the twelve-inch blanket of pure white snow.

Then came the playmates with their merry cry “Christmas Gift.”

In the afternoon the children’s dance! (One of those boys danced with a sweet little girl eleven successive times!) Oh the romance of childhood!

Chores—evening shadows, supper and bed, and another Christmas was gone. Why, to childhood, is Christmas day so short and the next far away?

Christmas again, anticipated by the trip up South Fork to get our own Christmas tree from the hillside. They were older then, those boys, but their stockings still were hung, and good old Santa never failed to fill them. . . .

Later came school and missions, yet still the tender ties that radiated from a devoted father and loving mother ever pulled us back to the Old Home, the dearest, sweetest spot on earth.

It is only an old country home, but no place was ever filled with truer love and devotion on the part of parents, brothers, and sisters, than those which pervaded the hearts of the loved ones in that family circle.

Hanging your coat in its accustomed place, I walked out of the front door; as the night-latch clicked, I thought it might have been the click of the lid of a treasure chest that held the wealth of memories that no money could buy.

Well, my brother and pal of youthful days, I just wanted you to share with me this glimpse of happy memories, and to say as the Yuletide now approaches, my heart is full of loving wishes to you, that you and yours may enjoy the happiest Christmas ever, and that the New Year may come laden with happiness and joy supreme.⁷⁷

Christmas Message from the Prophet

David O. McKay was sustained President of the Church on April 9, 1951. President McKay recognized that the true spirit of Christmas was the

Spirit of Christ. He also realized that each individual must allow that spirit to “radiate throughout his home” (fig. 8). In his 1959 Christmas message, President McKay counseled Saints about their holiday celebrations:

AT THE RENEWING of this glorious season it is important to realize that Christmas, the day which has been set aside to celebrate Christ’s birth, is recognized as a day that should “change all grief into love.”

The danger which arises in our celebration on Christmas is the possibility of subordinating the real purpose of commemorating the spiritual to be overshadowed by the material. The true spirit of giving happiness to others, the fellowship of good friends, and the satisfying knowledge that Christmas reminds us of Christ’s promise of a new and better life must always be uppermost in our minds. The heavenly host that praised God and said: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14), give us these keynotes:

1) Faith in Deity is the first essential to happiness and peace.

2) Brotherliness is the second essential by which this happiness and peace can be maintained.

It is fitting at Christmas to renew our desires and to strengthen our determination to do all that lies within our power to make real, among men, the message heralded by the angels when the Savior was born. Let us glorify God by seeking the good, the true, the beautiful. Let us strive to establish peace on earth by exercising that same good will toward one another which God has shown toward us!

When he came as a lowly babe, there was no room at the inn; today, every heart and every home should bid him welcome. If such were true, selfishness, jealousy, enmity, and all things which bring unhappiness would be replaced by kindness, willing service, and goodwill.

The source of happiness is within one’s soul. So springs faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. First then, let each individual admit into his own heart the true spirit of Christmas. Then let it radiate throughout his home. A thousand such homes would make a true Christian city, and a thousand such cities would build a true Christian nation. . . .

He came to give us life eternal. Let us accept his gift with gratitude. . . .

Yes, Jesus is the Prince of Peace, but he will not bring peace to the world in any magic way. As he has always done, he will grant it only according to the law upon which it, like all blessings, is predicated. Hate breeds hate; love begets love; kindness invites more kindness; and kindness and love beget peace.

When mankind learns this simple lesson, peace will come to them as a natural result. Predatory interest will fade away. Men will see one

another as brothers, each one created in the image of God. They will understand that to love God, they must first love their neighbors as themselves.⁷⁸

“The Responsibility of Establishing Peace”

In December 1968, a time riddled with war and civil unrest, President McKay counseled that the responsibility for establishing peace rests upon each of us:

The responsibility of establishing peace in the world rests not alone upon the leaders of nations. It rests upon the individual, upon every home, upon every hamlet and city.

Christ’s reality must be sensed by you and by me, and the reality of his philosophy must be mine and yours if we hope to advance spiritually.

In the march of spiritual progress, there are certain necessary and definite steps, if we can only sense them:



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 8. President McKay with children and grandchildren, Christmas 1957.

1. *A consciousness of freedom.* This is the principle that began when Christ accepted his appointment to his earthly mission. God desires to make men like himself, but to do so, he must first make them free.
2. *A sense of self-mastery.* We cannot rise unless we overcome and conquer temptation, as Christ did.
3. *A sense of obligation.* Here again, Christ was the example, sacrificing his own comforts and needs in order to serve others.
4. *A submission of self to the will of God.* Man's highest spiritual achievement is to speak and act for the good of his fellowmen, to the glory of God, and thus make of life a consecrated possession.

Today the destiny of nations is involved in this all-important question, "What think ye of Christ?" Now is the time as never before for the so-called civilized nations struggling for peace to answer this question and answer it correctly.

Without Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, the world cannot survive. The true spirit of Christmas is the spirit of Christ.⁷⁹

TENTH PRESIDENT, JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Joseph Fielding Smith married Ethel G. Reynolds in 1908 following the untimely death of his first wife, Louie E. Shurtliff, that same year. Elder Smith described in simplicity the Christmas of 1912, one of their first holiday seasons together: "Christmas day I spent the entire day at home with my wife and children, and all were happy."⁸⁰

Christmas in the Eyes of a Child

Amelia Smith McConkie, daughter of Joseph and Ethel, related her early remembrances of Christmas in her father and mother's household:

Christmas, of course, started with . . . mother and my older sisters spending a lot of time in the dining room where the sewing machine was. . . . Our Christmas was a matter of getting new clothes more than anything else. And so they would make those clothes, and hide them, and wrap them up for Christmas. And then on Christmas morning, . . . all the younger children would be so excited to see what Santa Claus had brought, that they could hardly go to sleep. . . .

There was one Christmas when my sister, Lois, was so anxious to get down and see what Santa Claus brought that she woke Joseph and I up to go down. And so we got out of bed, and tried to march downstairs together. And we had to go past mother and dad's bedroom to go down the stairs to where we were going to have Christmas presents with the

tree and everything. And of course, dad could hear the noise. So he said, “Who’s there?” . . . Joseph and I ran back upstairs. But Lois was so far down the steps that she couldn’t come back up. . . . And so she went down to the family room, down in the bottom part of the house and hid under the table. . . . When she went down and made so much noise, she woke dad up, and he couldn’t get back to sleep, so he just came down to the basement family room and turned on the light and sat down in his nice rocking chair . . . and started to read. And he read, and he read, and he read. . . . She had to wait under the table until dad got up.

When asked if President Smith knew his little daughter was hiding under the table, Amelia replied, “He didn’t know, no. He hadn’t looked underneath the table to see if anything was there. She was stuck.”⁸¹

Amelia further recalled that at Christmas her father “might tell us stories about when he was a little boy.” President Smith and his wife saw that their children “got an orange and an apple, . . . a candy cane, and maybe some other little candy” in their stockings (fig. 9). Oranges were a special



FIG. 9. Christmas morning. President Joseph Fielding Smith’s daughter Amelia Smith McConkie remembered that each year her parents made sure the children’s stockings were filled with oranges, apples, candy canes, and other treats. *Juvenile Instructor* 21 (December 15, 1886): 372, image reversed.

treat. “The only time we got oranges ordinarily was when somebody got sick, and then dad thought that oranges were good medicine, when you were sick, and then he’d sit and peel the orange, and feed us one section at a time. Father made sure that we ate it.”⁸²

Music was a part of the Smith family Christmas celebrations. “Father liked good music. And one of the first Christmases I can remember was when he got . . . some records, and he’d play them, and then he’d dance around.” Amelia remembered that they “had this old Victrola that had to wind up this way to play. And dad would dance to the music, if it was a march, he’d march around, if it was a dance, he’d do a little jig, things like that.” As Christmas came to a close, the family would gather together and sing. Amelia explains: “we sang Christmas carols and we sang hymns. . . . And then, he’d say ‘well, alright now it’s time to go to bed.’ And so he’d shew us up to bed.”⁸³

Christmas in the Eyes of a Grandchild

Joseph Fielding McConkie, a grandson of President Joseph Fielding Smith, remembered a variety of cherished moments spent with his grandfather during the holiday season:

Grandfather Joseph Fielding Smith would visit every one of his children and grandchildren who lived in the Salt Lake Valley, which I think included every one of them, on Christmas day. He would always give each of his grandchildren a brand new silver dollar until he had too many grandchildren then it became a new fifty cent piece. I well remember the year of the big reduction. At one time grandfather had but few children and lamented the fact. He later said, however, that he had “a greater family than the Patriarch Jacob when he went into Egypt to get corn from Joseph.” Grandfather had ten children, minus Lewis Warren Smith, who died in World War II, and numerous grandchildren. Grandfather was a sweet man. Whenever we greeted him it was with a kiss and he expected that it would be on the lips—no embarrassment about that! He would kiss you and hug you and give you the silver dollar. It was a positive experience that always made us feel good.

My memories of him don’t reach back beyond his third wife, Aunt Jessie Evans Smith. She was vivacious and full of fun and very good for him. Mickey Hart of Hart Brothers Music Store in Sugar House was our neighbor and lived just down the street on Lambourne Avenue. He was invited to come to the house and accompany Aunt Jessie on the piano. She would sing to us with her beautiful contralto voice. This was back in the days when people had time to visit with one another. Christmas was the time of year when grandfather made the rounds to see everyone.⁸⁴

Greetings for the Christmas Season

Joseph Fielding Smith was sustained as President of the Church on January 23, 1970. His first Christmas message to the Saints was one of thankfulness for the birth and Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thanksgiving for his servant Joseph Smith:

I greet you at this Christmas Season, in love and fellowship, and with prayer that our Eternal Father will look down upon you in mercy and pour out His bounteous blessings upon you.

In these times when iniquity abounds, when there are great tribulations on the earth, when there are wars and rumors of wars, we are all in need, as never before, of the guiding and preserving care of the Lord.

We need to know that in spite of all the troubles and ills which befall us, still the Lord is governing in the affairs of the earth and that if we keep His commandments and are true and faithful to His laws, He will bless us here and now and reward us with eternal life in His kingdom in due course.

Those of us who know that Joseph Smith was called of God to restore the fulness of His everlasting gospel in these the last days, are entitled to a special feeling of peace and thanks-giving now and always. . . .

We pray for peace on earth, for the spread of the gospel, and for the final triumph of truth.

We plead with our Father's Children everywhere to join this world and eternal glory in the world to come.

And now as one who has an absolute knowledge of the truth and divinity of this great latter-day work, I bear my testimony that it is true and that we are engaged in our Father's business.

I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that He died upon the cross for the sins of the world; that He rose from the dead; and that He hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

I know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God; that the gospel has been restored in this dispensation; and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in very deed the kingdom of God on earth.

And I now pray that at this Christmas Season, and at all times, we may center our faith in the Son of God and gain for ourselves that peace which passeth understanding.

I am thankful for the love and fellowship which the gospel gives us and pray that you may be guided and preserved and have the desires of your hearts in righteousness.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.⁸⁵

ELEVENTH PRESIDENT, HAROLD B. LEE

Harold B. Lee was set apart as president of the Salt Lake Pioneer Stake in 1930. Unforgettable experiences accompanied his first year as the realities and hardships of the Great Depression visited the people in his stewardship (fig. 10). The dire needs of the Saints and their neighbors became particularly noticeable when compared with the President Lee's holiday celebration:

I remember one Christmas, I think it was the first Christmas after I was made stake president,—our little girls had their Christmas morning gifts and dashed over [to the house where Donna Mae lived] to show their little friends a new doll and whatever else they had, and shortly they came back—both of them crying. “What in the world is the matter?” we asked. They said, “Well, we were over to our friends and they didn't have any Christmas. Santa Clause did not come to their place.” And all too late we remembered that just across the street was a family where the father was not a member of the Church—the children were, but the mother passively so, but he had been out of work and we had forgotten.



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 10. Harold B. Lee (center front) with the Salt Lake City Commission, 1938. As president of the Salt Lake Pioneer Stake, President Lee headed a campaign to insure that families affected by the Depression would have a Christmas. President Lee was very much aware of civic concerns and needs throughout his life.

Our Christmas was spoiled. We sent for the children and tried to divide what we had to try to make up for lack of thoughtfulness, but it was too late, and Christmas dinner that day did not taste very good to me. I was unhappy. I did not sleep well because I was in charge of the welfare of my people. So we made a survey, and to our amazement we found that 4800 out of our 7200–7400 were either wholly or partially dependent. There was no government work in those days. We had only ourselves and Church finances were falling off. We were told that we couldn't look for much help from the general funds of the Church. Thus were we situated as we approached another Christmas season. We found we had over 1,000 children under 10 years of age, for whom, without someone to help them, there would be no Christmas, yet these little ones believed that there was some kind of an impersonal somebody who would come to bring them help. Then we started to prepare, on the second floor on Pierpont Street. We gathered up the toys—all the broken toys—and for a month or two before Christmas all the fathers and most of them were making toys for their own children, and mothers were there. If you wanted to get the spirit of Christmas you had to only step in and see that. We started out then to see to it that none of the 1,000 children would be without Christmas. There was to be a Christmas dinner in all the homes of those 4800 who, without our help, wouldn't have any. Nuts, candy, oranges, a roast of beef or meat of some kind with all that went with it for Christmas. It was on the day before Christmas and I was then a City Commissioner. We had a heavy snowstorm, and I had been out all night with the crews trying to get the streets cleared, knowing that I would be to blame if any of my men fell down. I went home to get cleaned up to go back to the office, and as I started back to town there was a little boy thumbing his way into town. He stood out there in the biting cold, no overcoat, no gloves, no overshoes. I took him into the car and I said, "Son, are you ready for Christmas?" "Oh, gee, mister, we aren't going to have any Christmas at our home. Daddy died three months ago and left Mamma and me and a little brother and sister under 10 years of age." "Where are you going, son?" "I am going up to a free picture show." I turned up the heat in the car and said, "Now give me your name and address." They were not members of the Church. "Somebody will come to your home, you won't be forgotten. Now you have a good time today." That night I asked every bishop to go with his delivery men and see that every family was cared for. They were all to report back. I had forgotten this little boy to whom I had made a promise. I had been so busy I had forgotten this little family. I asked the bishop if he had any more left. He said, "Yes, we have." Now I had promised the little family there would be Christmas for them. A little later he called to say, they too, had all been taken care of.

As I awoke that Christmas morning, as I ate my Christmas dinner[,] in my heart I said, “God grant that I would never let another year pass but that I, as a leader, would ‘know’ my people. I would know their needs. I would be feeling after the ones who needed most my leadership.” My carelessness had meant suffering, because I did not know my people the first year.⁸⁶

Harold B. Lee’s daughter, Helen Lee Goates, shares the sequel to the Christmas story above.

Two years had passed since that sorrowful Christmas morning when we went across the street to Donna Mae’s house and found that Santa Claus had not visited our friend’s home. Now it was Christmas of 1934. I was nine years old and my sister, Maurine, was ten.

Our neighborhood, the city and the entire nation was still firmly in the grip of the ravaging world-wide depression. Unemployment was everywhere and people struggled day to day to meet the demands of just living.

While some progress was taking place in Pioneer Stake over which my father presided, in helping the Saints help themselves without succumbing to a governmental dole, there was still great concern everywhere in the Church about the well-being of the members. There was still no organized means for helping the needy through-out the Church, and it was two years before the Church Security Program was to be introduced.

After Thanksgiving Day our Daddy called a family council meeting. He told us:

“Mother and I have been thinking, girls, that there are many families around us who do not have as many blessings as we do, and unless someone comes forward they may be neglected and not have much of a Christmas. We would like to know if you two girls would like to help if we chose a needy family for Christmas?

“Remember, it would mean that you two would not have as many gifts as in the past. And for the family, we would not have so fancy a dinner, either.”

We both assured our parents that we wanted to be a part of this new plan for Christmas. It was a wise father who was preparing his daughters at an early age to find a learning experience at Christmas-time.

Soon the preparations were underway. Maurine and I found our old dolls which had largely been discarded during the past several years. Maurine’s doll was named Louise and mine was called Janet. The refurbishing called for new paint and hair. Aunt Bessie would make new clothes for both dolls. We chose other toys and games that we felt could be repaired. We were happy working in the project and looking forward

to the grand completion of the work. Meanwhile, Mother was busy making pies and preparing a turkey dinner we could all share.

Finally, Christmas Eve arrived and it was time to visit our chosen family. The newly painted dolls had been returned to us and we were delighted to put them in the beautiful new dresses that had been furnished to us. But now, all the tender feelings for those dolls returned to us. They were so beautiful and we now loved them with a new intensity surpassing our younger years.

We went with our parents trudging behind with reluctant steps. At the moment of delivery, when each of us had to place our dearly loved dolls in the arms of a new “mother,” we needed a little nudge from Mom and Daddy, but we did it. Then a miracle took place. When we saw how happy those under privileged little girls were with our dolls, we felt a joy and pride that we could add to their happiness on this Christmas Eve. We went home happy and the payoff our Daddy promised was fully realized. We were happy because we were learning to share and to give.

It was one of the most memorable lessons ever taught to us by a wise father. He taught us through this experience in our young years that sharing and caring for the needs of others, even when its personally painful, brings us the greater happiness.

Harold B. Lee, our dear and wise daddy, was always a great teacher, who seized the moment to make a deep impression and a happy Christmas memory, for his two little girls.⁸⁷

TWELFTH PRESIDENT, SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Throughout a lifetime of ecclesiastical service, President Spencer W. Kimball extolled the teachings and virtues of the Savior of the World. Walking the streets of Jerusalem and Bethlehem at Christmastime and beholding the environs and birthplace of the Savior of mankind was a great joy for two modern prophets. Elder Spencer W. Kimball and his wife, Camilla, in company with Elder and Sister Howard W. Hunter, arrived in the city of Jerusalem on Christmas Eve in 1961 and hurried over to Bethlehem to witness a portion of the celebration there.⁸⁸ President Kimball later reminisced on those sacred moments and shared the perspectives of a prophet who had the capability to block out the mundane of a modern scene and recreate in his mind’s eye what once was. He affirmed:

We celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ at this season of the year. Some years ago, Sister Kimball and I were in the Holy Land with Elder and Sister Howard W. Hunter, and on Christmas Eve we were mingling with thousands of religionists and curious from around the

world. We bent over to get through the small aperture into the Church of the Nativity and inched our way in turn to the crypt where some churches claim are the sacred spots of the manger and the birth of the Savior.

As we stood looking at the metal star in the concrete floor, it seemed to fade and we seemed to see a crude manger in a cave and sitting by it a lovely lady with a beautiful face and sweet spirit watching a little infant wrapped like other Hebrew babes in swaddling clothes. He had likely already been washed and rubbed with salt and laid on a square cloth, his little head on one corner and his tiny feet on the corner diagonally opposite. The cloth had been folded over his sides and up over his feet and the swaddling bands tied around the precious little bundle. His hands would be fastened to his sides, but he would be loosened occasionally and rubbed with olive oil and possibly dusted with powdered myrtle leaves. If still in swaddling bands, he could be handled easily on the trip to Egypt, and he could even be strapped to his mother's back.

How grateful we are that the baby Jesus was born. . . .

. . . My wife and our party move about with the surging crowds, we are jostled and pushed. We are nearly drowned in the ocean of innumerable bodies and faces. It is hard to concentrate upon the sacred object of our coming. There is little on the hill which can stir our reverence or satisfy our longing to be alone with our thoughts.

We have our taxi take us to the hill overlooking the shepherds' field. . . . There, gazing into the valley, the only place near Bethlehem where we could find privacy, we stood in the dark, looking out into the starry sky as did the shepherds, and with the shepherds contemplating the angel dressed in exquisite whiteness in the center of infinite glory, and the words he had said to the humble shepherds (fig. 11):

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

"For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

"And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10–12).

Did not the angels sing that night? We, too, seemed to hear faint music, not loud, but in symphonic harmony it penetrated deeply our hearts. We seemed to hear singing in unison, the never-to-be-forgotten melody, the cry of the ages: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

As the strains of the heavenly words merged with our hearts, we four sang. After singing "Far, far away on Judea's plains, shepherds of old

heard the joyous strains,” we stood close together in the star-lighted night with our wraps pulled tight about us—physically close, mentally close, spiritually close, emotionally close; and we communed. No lights but the twinkling lanterns in the heavens, no sound but the whispering of our subdued voices. Our Father seemed to be very near. His Son seemed close. We prayed. More in unison than a single voice, our four hearts poured out love and gratitude that rose to mingle with the prayers of all mankind that night.

We prayed our gratitude. We prayed our love. Like the raising of the flood gate releasing the long impounded and pent up waters behind a dam, our voices almost inaudible, mellowed with reverence, softened by the intangible forces of the heavenly world, we poured out our prayer of thanksgiving: grateful, Father, that we know so positively that thou dost live; that we know the babe born here was in reality thy Son; grateful that thy program is real, workable and exalting. We told him we knew him, we loved him, we would follow him. We repledged to his cause our lives, our all.



FIG. 11. Bethlehem. Elder Spencer W. Kimball visited Bethlehem in 1961. Dismayed with the Christmas Eve crowds in the city, Elder Kimball and his party retreated to a nearby hill, and there reflected upon a quieter evening many years ago. Romanticized images of Bethlehem such as this appeared in Church magazines when Kimball was a youth. *Juvenile Instructor* 36 (December 1, 1901), 709.

The years have come and gone since then, but always at this beautiful season, we repledge ourselves to his work—and invite all people everywhere to join us in our prayers of joy and love and gratitude for the life and teachings of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.⁸⁹

Christmas Traditions with Camilla

The Christmas memories and experiences of Spencer W. Kimball prominently include his wife. Spencer and Camilla spent their Christmas holidays in a variety of activities. They seemed to enjoy the social events of the season, such as performances of the *Messiah* and Christmas parties. “Each year there were many activities to which Spencer and Camilla were invited,” their son Edward Kimball remembered. “They tried to attend as many as possible, knowing that people appreciated their presence. Spencer was often called upon to speak.” They also attended the Church meetings of various wards. On December 29, 1968, “they attended meetings of the Mexicans, Chinese, Indians, Japanese, Norwegians, and their own ward.”⁹⁰ Edward Kimball relates the following Kimball Christmas traditions:

Every year from 1964 to 1973 Spencer and Camilla spent Christmas Eve at the home of Olive Beth Mack, their only daughter (and the only child living in Utah). There everyone participated one way or another in the reading and acting out of the Nativity. Then at home on Christmas Day there would be exchange of gifts among Spencer, Camilla, and Mary Eyring, Camilla’s deaf, unmarried sister who lived with them for twenty-five years. Sometimes one or more of the three sons (living in Illinois, Connecticut, and Wisconsin), along with their families, were visiting and participated in the Christmas morning gift giving (fig. 12). On Christmas Day Camilla always fixed a banquet for all who assembled, anywhere from a dozen to 23 family members. . . .

There is a pattern during the Christmas season most years of visiting friends ill in the hospital and of taking small gifts around to many friends.⁹¹

The Kimballs hosted some thirty-six out-of-town family members during the Christmas season of 1967, as this was the year of their fiftieth wedding anniversary. A few days before Christmas, Elder Kimball recorded his feelings about the spirit of giving:

I walked down Main St. to nearly Third South just largely observing the people and though I saw shopkeepers and clerks weary, they generally were cheerful and friendly; and though many of the thousands of shoppers showed weariness in their faces, I thought I felt a giving spirit. The businessmen who generally walk Main St. had no look of getting in their faces but more of giving. There were whole families, there were children, there were young couples, there were young men, there were young

women—all eager in finding something to satisfy someone’s needs or wants. I thought I felt the spirit of giving in a marked degree.⁹²

“They Named Him Joseph”

Elder Kimball felt that the Christmas season was a time to commemorate the birth and life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He very literally honored the Prophet’s given name in a December 1966 article entitled “They Named Him Joseph”:

When theologians are reeling and stumbling, when lips are pretending and hearts are wandering, and people are “running to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord and cannot find it”—when clouds of error need dissipating and spiritual darkness needs penetrating and heavens need opening, a little infant is born. Just a few scattered neighbors in a hilly region in the backwoods even know that Lucy [Smith] is expecting. There is no prenatal care, nor nurses, no hospital, no ambulance, no delivery room. Babies live and die in this rough environment and few know about it.

Another child for Lucy! No trumpets are sounded; no hourly bulletins posted; no pictures taken; no notice is given; just a few friendly community folk pass a word along. It’s a boy! Little do the brothers and



Courtesy Edward Kimball

FIG. 12. President Spencer W. Kimball with Camilla and grandchildren, Christmas 1974.

sisters dream that a prophet is born to their family; even his proud parents can little suspect his spectacular destiny. No countryside farmers or loungers at the country store, no village gossips even surmise how much they could discuss, did they but have the power of prophetic vision.

“They are naming him Joseph,” it is reported. But no one knows, not even parents, at this time, that this infant and his father have been named in the scriptures for 3,500 years, named for and known to their ancestor, Joseph, the savior of Egypt and Israel. Not even his adoring mother realized, even in her most ambitious dreaming and her silent musings, that this one of her children, like his ancestor, will be the chief sheaf of grain to which all others will lean and the one star to which the sun and moon and other stars will make obeisance.

He will inspire hatred and ambition; he will build an empire and restore a church—the Church of Jesus Christ. Millions will follow him; monuments will be built to him; poets will sing of him; authors will write libraries of books about him.

No living soul can guess that this little pinkish infant will become the peer of Moses in spiritual power and greater than many prophets before him. He will talk with God, the Eternal Father, and Jesus Christ, His Son; and angels will be his great instructors. . . .

“We fancy,” said Bareham, “God can manage His world only with great battalions, when all the time He is doing it with beautiful babies.”

O foolish men who think to protect the world with armaments, battleships, and space equipment, when only righteousness is needed!

Having read the pages of history, six thousand years of it, can we not see that God sent His babies to become the teachers and prophets to warn us of our threatening fate? Cannot we read the handwriting on the wall? History repeats itself.

O mortal men, deaf and blind! Can we not read the past? For thousands of years have plowshares been beaten into swords and pruning hooks into spears, yet war persists. . . .

The answer to all of our problems—personal, national, and international—has been given to us many times by many prophets, ancient to modern. Why must we grovel in the earth when we could be climbing toward heaven! The path is not obscure. Perhaps it is too simple for us to see. We look to foreign programs, summit conferences, land bases. We depend on fortifications, or gods of stone; upon ships and planes and projectiles, our gods of iron—gods which have no ears, no eyes, no hearts. We pray to them for deliverance and depend upon them for protection. Like the gods of Baal, they could be “talking or pursuing or on a journey or peradventure sleeping” when they are needed most. And like Elijah, we might cry out to our world:

How long halt ye between two opinions! if the Lord be God, follow him. . . . (I Kings 18:21.)

My testimony to you is, the Lord is God. He has charted the way, but we do not follow. He personally visited Joseph Smith in our world, in our century. He outlined the way of peace in this world and eternal worlds. That path is righteousness. The Prophet Joseph with all the successor prophets proclaiming the ripening of this world in iniquity and the solution of all vexing problems. The Book of Mormon which he translated relates the story of 200 years of peace in the old days, which was the greatest era of happiness of which we have any complete record.

God lives, as does His Son, Jesus Christ; and they will not indefinitely be mocked. May we hearken and repent “for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision . . . the Lord will be the hope of his people. . . .” (*Joel 3:14, 16.*)

Joseph Smith is a true prophet of the living God and his successors likewise. The mantle of authority and prophecy and revelation and power lies in His choice servant who now leads us, President David O. McKay.⁹³

President Kimball often remembered the Prophet’s birthday. In 1972, he wrote: “Today is Joseph Smith’s birthday and a holy day and what a great contribution he has made to the world and to us.” On December 23, 1973, President Kimball “spoke about the Prophet Joseph on his 168th birthday, then also tied it into the birthday of the Lord.”⁹⁴ Three days later, December 26, 1973, President Harold B. Lee passed away. Spencer W. Kimball was ordained and set apart as President of the Church on December 30, 1973.

THIRTEENTH PRESIDENT, EZRA TAFT BENSON

Ezra Taft Benson grew up in the small farming settlement of Whitney, Idaho, with a populace of some fifty families. Much of his daily existence naturally centered in the large family of ten brothers and sisters to which he belonged. Though their means were very limited, Christmases were celebrated with all the excitement and rapture that could be generated where hearts were as one and love abounded. Those moments of revelry were not forgotten by President Benson as he reflected on the holidays in this humble setting:

I love Christmastime! And I find great joy in remembering Christmases past. Perhaps it is the emotion of the season that makes this time of year seem particularly poignant and meaningful. And especially memorable.

Many events of almost nine decades of Christmases, dating back to my childhood on the Whitney, Idaho farm where I was reared, are still clear in my mind and among some of the most enjoyable memories I have.

As a boy I loved going to the canyon to cut our Christmas tree, and I always tried to get one that reached to the ceiling.

Though we received only a few gifts, our stockings were filled with fruit, nuts and candy, and Santa always left something.

Like all children, we suffered terrible anticipation at Christmas-time—until, that is, we happened onto the Santa Claus costume in the bottom of an old trunk. Suddenly the secret was out. So that was why Father was always out doing chores when Santa came on Christmas morning. The following December it occurred to me that if Father had been playing Santa all those years, he and Mother must be hiding our gifts somewhere on the farm. I couldn't stifle my inquisitive mind, and in no time I'd led my young brothers on a search that turned up several gifts buried in the wheat in the granary.

I'm told that I was a bit of a tease during my youth. I do remember coming in on my sister Margaret while she was balancing on a stepladder to decorate the tree. Sensing an opportunity to tease her, I feigned danger by giving the ladder a little shake. Margaret, who was not amused, ordered me out of the room and then tossed in my direction a dustpan that caught me on the lip. I still have a scar to remember that little prank by.

One of my favorite winter—and especially holiday—activities was taking out the big two-horse bobsleigh with bells on the horses. In those days, “Jingle Bells” was not only a song, it was a thrilling experience. There's nothing quite like riding through country lanes with the sleigh-box filled with straw and a group of friends singing Christmas carols. In more recent decades my wife Flora and I have made many happy Christmas trips to visit family in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The highlight of each visit is a ride in a horse-drawn cutter or bobsleigh. It's exhilarating to get hold of the lines of a good team drawing a bobsleigh or two-seat cutter and ride out into the Canadian open.

In Whitney on Christmas Day our family visited our grandparents, and we almost always traveled to their homes by bobsleigh. These were such happy occasions. Our grandparents were very musical and always provided entertainment of various kinds. There were recitations, skits, original poems, music and dancing. Grandma Dunkley, a convert to the Church from Scotland, would dance the Highland Fling for us, and we loved that. . . .

I'll never forget one Christmas, the Christmas of 1923. I returned home on Christmas Eve to my parents and ten brothers and sisters after serving two-and-a-half years as a missionary in England. Earlier that day, while traveling through Salt Lake City, Church Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith conferred upon me a blessing in which he counseled me to be

devoted to the Lord, and then promised that, in turn, the Lord would make me equal to my labors.

Then it was on to Whitney for a joyful reunion with my family. That evening Mother and Father took me into their confidence, letting me help them fill the stockings after going to the granary and elsewhere to gather presents they had hidden. This took a good part of the night. We spent the rest visiting, with me reporting on my mission and Mother and Father telling me what had happened while I was away. It was a choice evening.

My brothers and sisters arose early Christmas morning. After having a glass of milk and a piece of bread in the kitchen, they hurried into the living room to see what goodies Santa had brought them. It was a happy morning. I couldn't hold back the tears as I felt the joy and love in our home. It seemed that we were hugging and kissing each other throughout the entire day. It was a wonderful reunion. Being away from home had only intensified my deep feelings for my noble parents and my dear brothers and sisters.⁹⁵

December 1945 and 1946: Post-War Mission

Though World War II was over in 1945, the devastation remained. In Europe starvation was widespread, and the urgency of seeing to the temporal needs of the European Saints required a man of strong leadership. Elder Ezra Taft Benson was named president of the European Mission. Of those poignant times, President Benson remembered:

December of 1945 and 1946 will forever live in my memory. Just three days before Christmas in 1945 President George Albert Smith convened a special meeting of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. With World War II finally over, President Smith announced it was time for the Church to reestablish contact with the Saints in Europe and distribute much-needed welfare supplies. In that meeting I was called to go to Europe as president of the European Mission to handle those assignments.

The call came as a complete surprise. Because of conditions in Europe, it was not possible to take my family with me. I had no idea what I would find when I got there, how I would arrange for travel throughout a continent that had been devastated by war, or how long the First Presidency would require me to stay. I was told that I should prepare to leave as soon as possible. This unexpected development affected greatly our preparations for Christmas and created an unusually sentimental and loving atmosphere in our home. Flora and I realized we would be separated for a period of time, and our feelings were tender at the prospect.

How grateful I was for her support, and for the knowledge we shared that this was the Lord's will for our family at this time. As the Christmas season drew to a close, I recorded in my journal: "The next year will no doubt be spent, in large measure and possibly in its entirety, abroad. It will mean some sacrifice of material comforts. I will miss my wife and sweet children and the association of the brethren and the visits to the stakes. I go, however, with no fear whatsoever, knowing that this is the Lord's work and that He will sustain me. I am grateful for the opportunity and deeply grateful that my wife, who is always most loyal, feels the same way. God bless them while I am away."⁹⁶

Upon his departure, President Benson gathered his family about him for a final family prayer together. Kissing each of them, he bid them good-bye for the present. He made a phone call to his eldest son, Reed, at Brigham Young University. Both were choked up by the expressions of love that ensued.⁹⁷ Of that emotional moment Reed remembered, "For a father and son who constantly counseled together, I realized how much I would miss my Dad."⁹⁸ President Benson recounted,

The following ten-and-a-half months were among the most challenging and yet rewarding I or my family had known. The separation tested our faith and endurance and physical energy to the limit, but helped us grow as never before.

I'll never forget the thrill of stepping off the airplane in Salt Lake City the following December, in 1946, and finding Flora waiting for me. That Christmas was among the most poignant I have ever spent. Perhaps there had been no year in my life when my soul had been so stirred or when I had faced such challenges. I had been forced to rely completely upon the Lord, and my gratitude for His goodness and watchcare filled my soul and brought me easily to tears. I had come to love deeply the Saints in Europe, and leaving them had been a bittersweet experience.

But being home again brought such deep and fulfilling joy. While the separation had been difficult for us all, we had grown even closer to one another. And as we realized how many blessings the Lord had given us throughout the year, tears flowed freely. After the children had opened their presents on Christmas Day, I wrote in my journal, "The children were most happy and appreciative. There has not been an unkind word all day. In fact, we seldom hear arguments in our home. But this day has been especially blessed. It has been such a joy to sit with my angel wife and review the past devoid of regrets, anticipate the future joyously, and count our many blessings gratefully. I shall never forget this glorious Christmas."⁹⁹

“The Real Purpose of Christmas”

Ezra Taft Benson was ordained and set apart as the President of the Church on November 10, 1985. President Benson taught each of us the divine significance of the Christmas celebration in an inspired discourse wherein he eulogized:

The real purpose of Christmas is to worship Him whose birth is commemorated during this season. How might we do that? By giving. Certainly there are genuine feelings of love and friendship wrapped up in the beautiful packages we exchange with those dear to us. But I'm concerned about another kind of giving. Considering all that the Savior has given and continues to give us, is there something we might give Him in return this Christmastime?

Christ's great gift to us was His life and sacrifice. Should that not then be our small gift to Him—our lives and sacrifices, not only now but in the future?

Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life.

Sacrifice is truly the crowning test of the gospel. We are tried and tested in this mortal probation to see if we will, in fact, turn our lives over to God. If we will put first in our lives the kingdom of God. (See Matthew 6:33.) To gain eternal life, we must be willing, if called upon, to sacrifice all things for the gospel and for the Lord.

Just as when one loses his life in the service of God, he really finds the abundant life, so also when one sacrifices all to God, then God in return shares all He has with him. . . .

We once knew well our Elder Brother and our Father in Heaven. We rejoiced at the prospects of earth life, which would make it possible for us to have a fulness of joy. We could hardly wait to demonstrate to our Father and our Brother, the Lord, how much we loved them and how we would be obedient to them in spite of the earthly opposition of the evil one.

Now we are here. Our memories are veiled. We are showing God and ourselves what we can do. Nothing is going to startle us more when we pass through the veil to the other side than to realize how well we know our Father and how familiar His face is to us.

God loves us. He is watching us. He wants us to succeed. We will know someday that He has not left one thing undone for the eternal

welfare of each of us. If we only knew it, heavenly hosts are pulling for us—friends in heaven that we cannot now remember who yearn for our victory. This is our day to show what we can do—what life and sacrifice we can daily, hourly, instantly make for God. If we give our all, we will get His all from the greatest of all.

Perhaps one of the greatest blessings of this wonderful Christmas season we celebrate is that it increases our sensitivity to things spiritual, to things of God. It causes us to contemplate our relationship with our Father and the degree of devotion we have for God.

It prompts us to be more tolerant and giving, more conscious of others, more generous and genuine, more filled with hope and charity and love—all Christlike attributes. No wonder the spirit of Christmas touches the hearts of people the world over. Because for at least a time, increased attention and devotion are turned toward our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. . . .

Not many years hence Christ will come again. He will come in power and might as King of kings and Lord of lords. And ultimately every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ.

But I testify *now* that Jesus is the Christ and that He *lives*.¹⁰⁰

FOURTEENTH PRESIDENT, HOWARD W. HUNTER

At the age of nineteen, Howard W. Hunter was a talented young musician, capable of playing alto and soprano saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, and drums. In the latter part of 1926, he was offered a contract to furnish a five-piece orchestra for a two-month stint on the passenger liner S.S. *President Jackson*, bound for the Orient. He spent Christmas at his Boise home, and on December 30 his parents put him on a train for Seattle, Washington. There he and his band, “Hunter’s Croonaders,” shipped out on January 5, 1927. The cruise took them to various ports of call in Japan, China, the Philippines, and Canada. When he finally returned to his beloved Boise, Howard expressed these feelings: “Home never looked as good to me as it did when we got there. This is the first time I have been away for more than a few days and I was glad to be back after a trip nearly half way around the world.”¹⁰¹

Christmas in the City of David

In December 1961, Elder Howard W. Hunter—then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—and his wife, Clair, joined with Elder and Sister Kimball to enjoy a brief vacation in the Holy Land before taking up an arduous series of conference assignments in Europe. Elder Hunter recorded his observations of Christmas Day in the City of David:

Today is Christmas—the first Christmas we have ever been away from home. There are people from all over the world in Jerusalem today and it is said that there were 20,000 visitors in Bethlehem last night. Clair was ill this morning. . . . She thinks she may have had food poisoning which is not uncommon in this part of the world. Brother and Sister Kimball went to the Dome of the Rock and I spent part of the morning in the walled city. As I was returning to the hotel, Brother and Sister Kimball came by in a taxi and took me back with them. . . . [W]e had lunch together, and then walked to the Mandelbaum Gate where all of the Christians who had come across the border from Israel were waiting to go back. Border restrictions are waived on Christmas and Easter for Christians to visit the holy shrines. The four of us walked to the Garden Tomb outside the wall this was the most quiet place in Jerusalem. As we sat in the tomb, we read from the New Testament of the events which transpired many years ago. I think I shall never forget this experience—the story of his death and resurrection became so real. At Damascus Gate we got a taxi to take us around the wall to the Virgins Fountain and Pool of Siloam on the south side. We then went back to Gethsemane and came along the upper street to St. Peters Church, built at the place where Peter denied Christ, and to the old house of Caiaphas where Christ came on the morning of the crucifixion. Under the old church are the ruins of the house. When we came out of the church we walked down the steps of the old street where Jesus passed on his way to Pilate. The taxi took us back to our hotel where we had dinner and visited until we went to bed. All the shops in Jerusalem are decorated for Christmas and Christmas music could be heard everywhere we went today. This has been a pleasant experience to spend Christmas in the place where Christ spent so much of his time.¹⁰²

A Christmas Message to Children

Howard W. Hunter was ordained and set apart as President of the Church on June 5, 1994. In December of that year, President Hunter and his counselors, Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson, in a thoughtful manner formulated “A Christmas Message from the First Presidency to the Children of the World.” They entitled their epistle “The Real Christmas”:

The real Christmas . . . is founded in the life and mission of the Master, in the principles he taught, in his atoning sacrifice.

Christ is not just a fact of history, but the Savior of men everywhere and at all times. If we open the door he will enter. The Prince of Peace waits to give us peace of mind, which can help us to also be peacemakers.

If you desire to find the true spirit of Christmas and partake of its sweetness, find time during the hurry of the season to turn your heart to

God. Perhaps in the quiet hours and in a quiet place, on your knees—alone or with loved ones—give thanks for the good things that have come to you, and ask that his spirit might dwell in you as you earnestly strive to serve him and keep his commandments. He will take you by the hand, and his promises will be kept.

Sooner or later—and we pray sooner than later—everyone will acknowledge that Christ’s way is not only the *right* way, but ultimately the *only* way to hope and joy. Every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that gentleness is better than brutality, and kindness greater than force. Whenever possible, we must become more like him.

This is our prayer and our wish for the world. We testify that Jesus is the only true source of lasting joy, that our only lasting peace is in him. We bear testimony of the Firstborn of God who has “borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,” who “was wounded for our transgressions” and was “bruised for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:4–5). We give you our solemn witness that Jesus Christ is the Messiah for whose coming the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob prayed during long centuries. We testify that he lives. He is the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh. He is the Savior, the Light and Life of the World. He is the real Christmas.¹⁰³

FIFTEENTH PRESIDENT, GORDON B. HINCKLEY

A nineteen-year-old Gordon B. Hinckley said good-bye to the members of the Salt Lake City First Ward on June 11, 1933, as he responded to a call to serve a mission in Great Britain. In December he experienced his first Christmas away from home in the expansive city of London. As he wrote to his father, Bryant S. Hinckley, Gordon was in a contemplative and appreciative mood:

Dear Dad. This is the first time in all my life that I have not been home for Christmas. While sitting before a boarding house fire and watching the flames go up the chimney, pictures pass by in memories of other Christmas days. There is the morning when, pajama-clad, we hurried downstairs long before the rooster in the back yard was awake. Such excitement—bulging socks, games, horns, a bright sweater, candy and nuts and fruit. Then we ran back upstairs blowing harmonicas to show all those wonderful things to you and mother. You were tired out but you played with us, and kissed us before sending us back to bed before daylight. During the day you pulled us up and down the street on our new sled, and we knew you were the biggest, strongest man in all the world. . . . Last night I missed the thrill of expecting Santa Claus. You have not come around this morning. I miss you. [But] with distance

between us, I begin to see in your life the spirit of Christmas beyond the magic of Santa Claus. . . . There is a deep and silent expression of the virtues of Him whose birth we honor on this day. God bless you, dad, and keep you ever wonderful to me.¹⁰⁴

Sister Hinckley's Love of Christmas

Christmas has always been a festive time in the Hinckley household. Over the years, Marjorie Pay Hinckley, wife of Gordon B. Hinckley, has held "Grandchildren's Christmas Parties" or "Cousins' Christmas Parties" for the younger generation. These Christmas celebrations include a personalized invitation to each child, a gift of a Christmas tree ornament from some foreign country for everyone, decorative tables with delectable food, games, and grandmother's "wonderful Christmas stories," such as her favorite, *The Little Match Girl*.¹⁰⁵ Sister Hinckley shared her love of the Christmas season with Janet Lee, wife of Rex E. Lee, former president of Brigham Young University. Sister Lee recalled,

Several years ago, during the Christmas season, President and Sister Hinckley came to BYU for a musical event. Before the program, there was a buffet dinner, and at one point while the men were away from our table, the women began to talk about the frustrations of getting ready for Christmas. Our conversation focused on the fact that everything about the season was becoming a burden for women. We bear the responsibility of selecting gifts, organizing social events, preparing everyone's favorite food, and making certain that family, guests, and even the less fortunate have a merry Christmas. We felt overwhelmed if not resentful.

Sister Hinckley listened patiently, and then without the slightest edge of criticism in her voice said, "I love Christmas. It is the most joyful of all seasons. I love seeing the eyes of little children light up on Christmas morning. I love giving gifts. I love being with my family. We just need to simplify and remember what we are celebrating."

After she had spoken, something magical happened. Our attitudes shifted, and we began to talk about the birth of our Savior and the spirit of giving. In the years that have passed since those words were spoken, a burden has been lifted for me during the holidays. As I shop, prepare food, and join with friends and family to celebrate the birth of our Savior, her words nurture and calm me. "I love Christmas," I hear her say, and I let her teach me to relax and enjoy the season.¹⁰⁶

A Christmas Message

President Gordon B. Hinckley was ordained and set apart as the fifteenth President of the Church by Thomas S. Monson on March 12, 1995.

His 1997 message to the Saints, “A Season for Gratitude,” bespeaks the nature of giving and gratitude that marks the Christmastide celebration:

This is a season for giving and a time for gratitude. We remember with appreciation the birth of the Prophet Joseph Smith, which is celebrated this same month of December, two days before Christmas.

How great indeed is our debt to him. His life began in Vermont and ended in Illinois, and marvelous were the things that happened between that simple beginning and tragic ending. It was he who brought us a true knowledge of God, the Eternal Father, and His Risen Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. During the short time of his great vision he learned more concerning the nature of Deity than all of those who through centuries had argued the matter in learned councils and scholarly forums. . . .

We stand in reverence before him. He is the great prophet of this dispensation. He stands at the head of this great and mighty work which is spreading across the earth. He is our prophet, our revelator, our seer, our friend. Let us not forget him. Let not his memory be forgotten in the celebration of Christmas. God be thanked for the Prophet Joseph.

Now, what a wonderful season this is, this Christmas season. All of the Christian world, while not understanding the things that we understand, pauses for a moment and remembers with gratitude the birth of the Son of God. . . .

In that spirit we reach out to embrace one and all with that love which is the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We Latter-day Saints are a vast concourse of people bound together in a oneness of love and faith. Our blessing is great, as a people and as individuals. We carry in our hearts a firm and unshakable conviction of the divine mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Creator who, under the direction of His Father, made all things, “and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). He was the promised Messiah, who came with healing in His wings. He was the worker of miracles, the great healer, the resurrection and the life. His is the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved.

He was with His father in the beginning. He was made flesh and dwelt among us, “and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, . . . full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). . . .

He came as a gift of His Eternal Father. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

He condescended to leave His throne on high and come to earth to be born in a manger, in a conquered nation. He walked the dusty roads of Palestine, healing the sick, teaching the doctrine, blessing all who would accept Him.

He came “into the world [not] to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:17). . . .

On Calvary’s hill He gave His life for each of us. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15:55).

We honor His birth. But without His death that birth would have been but one more birth. It was the redemption which He worked out in the Garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross of Calvary which made His gift immortal, universal, and everlasting. His was a great Atonement for the sins of all mankind. He was the resurrection and the life, “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor 15:20). Because of Him all men will be raised from the grave.

But beyond this He taught us the way, the truth, and the life. He gave the keys through which we may go on to immortality and eternal life. . . .

We testify of His living reality. We testify of the divinity of His nature. In our times of grateful meditation, we acknowledge His priceless gift to us and pledge our love and faith. This is what Christmas is really about.

To each of you we extend our love and blessing. May you, wherever you may be across the world, have a wonderful Christmas. May there be peace and love and kindness in your homes. May you husbands smile with love upon your wives. May you wives know the sweet joy of being loved and honored and respected and looked up to. May your children be happy and filled with that indescribable magic which is the spirit of Christmas. May those of you who are single find sweet companionship in the knowledge that you are not alone, that Jesus stands as your friend. He came “to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79).

To each of you we extend our love and blessing. May it be a happy and wonderful season. We leave a blessing upon you, a blessing of Christmas, that you may be happy. May even those whose hearts are heavy rise with the healing which comes alone from Him who comforts and reassures. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me” (John 14:1).

So said He in His hour of great tribulation: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

In the spirit of that great promise and gift, may we all rejoice this blessed Christmas season.¹⁰⁷

CONCLUSION

Christ's peace is the essence of the Christmas season. The Presidents of the Church have sought, by their example and their words, to emulate the teachings of the Savior. In their Christmas celebrations and activities, we can see the recurring themes of Church service and missionary work; the importance of family, friends, and children; and the spirit of service and giving. In those unfortunate times of war, the prophets have reminded us that peace lies in correctly answering the question "What think ye of Christ?"¹⁰⁸ As special witnesses of Jesus Christ, the Church Presidents testify of Christ's birth and divinity and have asked us to live in accordance with his teachings. In addition, many have asked us to commemorate the birth and life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. For Latter-day Saints, then, Christmas is double celebration: it is a time to celebrate our Lord and Savior and a time to remember the Prophet Joseph Smith.

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1. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 294, 299; Larry C. Porter, *A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831*, Dissertations in Latter-day Saint History Series (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute, BYU Studies, 2000), 6–7.

2. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 1:282–83; Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 359–63.

3. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:284.

4. Porter, *Origins of The Church*, 115–30.

5. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:370.

6. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:301–2 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*). The *History of the Church* records that the revelation was received on "Christmas day [1832]." In Section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants Joseph Smith uses the date: "While I was praying earnestly on the subject, December 25th, 1832" (D&C 130:13).

7. "A Biographical Sketch: The Life of John Crosby, Written by Himself," typescript, 7–8, Jonathan and Caroline Barnes Crosby Papers, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah. The author would like to thank Richard Ian Kimball for bringing this story to his attention.

8. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:93.

9. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:97, 99.

10. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:120.

11. The national financial panic of that year had helped cause the crash of the Saints' own banking institution, the Kirtland Safety Society. A series of lawsuits, implicating the Prophet, arose from the demise of that institution. Many members, some in high places, turned against the Church. Brigham Young was forced to flee from Kirtland on December 22, "in consequence of the fury of the mob spirit that prevailed in the apostates who had threatened to destroy him because he would proclaim publicly and privately that he knew by the power of the Holy Ghost that [Joseph] was a Prophet of the Most High God." *History of the Church*, 2:529. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, fearing for their lives, escaped from Kirtland on January 12, 1838, and took refuge among the Saints at Far West, Missouri. *History of the Church*, 3:1, 8–9.

12. Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 373–74.

13. *History of the Church*, 3:420–21; Jermy Benton Wight, *The Wild Ram of the Mountain: The Story of Lyman Wight* (Afton, Wyo.: Afton Thrifty Print, 1996), 170–73.

14. John Wickliff Rigdon, "Sidney Rigdon and the Early History of the Mormon Church," *Friendship, N.Y. Sesqui-Centennial Times*, 1965, 3.

15. *History of the Church*, 3:227.

16. A dauntless Emma Smith returned to Liberty on January 21, 1839, with Mary Fielding Smith, Mercy Fielding Thompson, and their little infants. They had been driven the distance by Don Carlos Smith, Joseph's brother. Of these moments in prison Mercy said:

We arrived at the prison in the evening. We were admitted and the doors closed upon us. A night never to be forgotten. A sleepless night. I nursed the darling babes and in the morning prepared to start for home with my afflicted sister, and as long as memory lasts will remain in my recollection the squeaking hinges of that door which closed upon the noblest men on earth. Who can imagine our feelings as we traveled homeward, but would I sell that honor bestowed upon me of being locked up in jail with such characters for good? No! No! (Thompson, Mercy Rachel, Centennial-Jubilee letter, December 20, 1880, deposited in the Relief Society Jubilee box, Salt Lake City, Utah, for opening April 1, 1930, in Don C. Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith: Daughter of Britain* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966], 86)

See Gracia N. Jones, *Emma's Glory and Sacrifice: A Testimony* (Hurricane, Utah: Homestead, 1987), 89–90; Pearson H. Corbett, *Hyrum Smith: Patriarch* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963), 201–2; Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith*, 82–86.

17. *History of the Church*, 4:239.

18. *History of the Church*, 5:209.

19. Lettice Rushton's husband, Richard Rushton, had just passed away in Nauvoo on October 4, 1843. This must have been a particularly poignant time for her. See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Ancestral File (TM)-ver 4.19.

20. *History of the Church*, 6:134–35; for the circumstances of Orrin Porter Rockwell's harrowing imprisonment and release, see *History of the Church*, 6:135–42.

21. *History of the Church*, 6:143.

22. *History of the Church*, 7:328, emphasis added.

23. *History of the Church*, 7:551–52.

24. History of Brigham Young, December 25, 1846, Manuscript History of the Church, 1839–1882, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

25. Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852: "And Should We Die"* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 199, 212–13; Richard E. Bennett, *We'll*

Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846–1848 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 272–73, 287–92.

26. History of Brigham Young, December 25, 27, 1847, Church Archives.

27. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–84), 3:300–301, December 27, 1847.

28. Clarissa Young Spencer with Mabel Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1947), 183–85.

29. A Pigeonwing is “a fancy dance step executed by jumping and striking the legs together.” Philip Babcock, ed., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1993), s.v. “pigeonwing.”

30. Emmeline B. Wells, “Early Christmas Reminiscences,” *Young Woman's Journal* 12 (December 1901): 540–41.

31. John Taylor, editorial, *Times and Seasons* 5 (December 15, 1844): 743.

32. John Taylor, “Lines,” *Millennial Star* 9 (January 15, 1847): 28.

33. See Ray Jay Davis, “Antipolygamy Legislation,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. David H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:52–53.

34. B. H. Roberts, *The Life of John Taylor* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1892), 408–9. The home of Thomas F. Rouche still stands on the southwest side of Kaysville, Utah with appropriate historical marker.

35. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:112, December 25, 1836.

36. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 1:582–83, December 25, 1840.

37. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:143–44, December 25, 1841.

38. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:46, December 25, 1871.

39. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:297, December 25, 1876.

40. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:215, December 25, 1883, emphasis added.

41. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:350, December 25, 1885.

42. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:414, December 25, 1886.

43. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:530–31, December 25, 1888.

44. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:73, December 25, 1889.

45. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:231, December 26, 1892.

46. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:525 December 25, 1897.

47. On October 15, 1872, President George A. Smith received an injunction from President Brigham Young stating, “when you go to the Land of Palestine, we wish you to dedicate and consecrate that land to the Lord, that it may be blessed with fruitfulness, preparatory to the return of the Jews in fulfillment of prophesy, and the accomplishment of the purposes of our Heavenly Father.” *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists: Comprising a Series of Letters By George A. Smith, Lorenzo Snow, Paul A. Schettler, and Eliza R. Snow, of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1897) 1–2.

48. George A. Smith, Journal, December 25, 1872, George A. Smith Papers, Church Archives. The company continued their journey to Jerusalem, and on Sunday, March 2, 1872, the male portion of the company and Eliza R. Snow entered a tent that had been pitched on the Mount of Olives by previous arrangement. Here President George A. Smith led “in humble, fervent supplication, dedicating the land of Palestine for the gathering of the Jews and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and returning heartfelt thanks and gratitude to God for the fulness of the Gospel and the blessings bestowed on the Latter-day Saints.” *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists: Comprising a Series of Letters By George A. Smith, Lorenzo Snow, Paul A. Schettler, and Eliza R. Snow, of Utah*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News), 260.

49. Eliza R. Snow, “The Year 1872,” *Womens' Exponent*, Salt Lake City 1, no. 19 (March 1, 1873): 146.

50. *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists*, 260.

51. Francis M. Gibbons, *Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 171–74.

52. Lorenzo Snow, “Lorenzo Snow, Utah Penitentiary, March 12th 1886,” notebook, 71, copy in author’s possession, courtesy of Jill Mulvay Derr and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.

53. “Apostle Lorenzo Snow at Liberty,” *Woman’s Exponent* 15 (February 15, 1887): 140.

54. Snow, “Lorenzo Snow, Utah Penitentiary,” 96.

55. Albert L. Zobell Jr., “It Being Christmas,” *Improvement Era* 52 (December 1949): 827.

56. Lorenzo Snow, “Greeting, 1 January 1901,” in Leonard J. Arrington Christmas card, “Prophets at Christmas,” courtesy of Ronald K. Esplin and Richard L. Jensen.

57. Joseph F. Smith, in *Collected Discourses: Delivered By President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, ed. and comp. Brian H. Stuy, 5 vols. (Burbank, Calif.: B. H. S. Publishing, 1992): 5:26–30, December 23, 1894. Bishop Frederick Kesler was bishop of the Salt Lake City Sixteenth Ward for forty-three years.

58. *Proceedings at the Dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument at Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, December 23rd, 1905*, Introduction, 5.

59. *Dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument*, 22. Similarly the Deseret Sunday School Union Board invited all Sunday Schools of the Church to conduct special commemorative services on Sunday, December 24, 1905, honoring the life and work of the Prophet Joseph Smith. As an added feature, the board recommended that “brethren and sisters who reside[d] in the ward or neighborhood who knew the Prophet be invited to take part in the proceedings and speak of their experiences in the early days of the Church when Joseph was alive.” “The Centenary of the Prophet’s Birth,” *Juvenile Instructor* 40 (December 1, 1905): 721.

60. *Dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument*, 53–88.

61. “Greetings from the First Presidency,” *Improvement Era* 9 (January 1906): 248.

62. “What Christmas Suggests to a Latter-day Saint,” *Millennial Star* 70 (January 2, 1908): 1–4.

63. David A. Smith to Joseph F. Smith, letter, Joseph Fielding Smith Papers, 1854–1918, Church Archives.

64. Joseph F. Smith, “Christmas and New Year,” *Improvement Era* 22 (January 1919): 266–67.

65. Heber J. Grant, Journal, December 25, 1888, Heber Jeddy Grant Collection, 1852–1945, Church Archives.

66. George D. Pyper, “President Grant—The Patron of Drama, Literature, Art and Music,” *Improvement Era* 39 (November 1936): 673–74.

67. Heber J. Grant, Journal, December 25, 1925, 296.

68. Heber J. Grant, Journal, December 24, 1926.

69. Pyper, “Patron of Drama, Literature, Art and Music,” 674–75.

70. Letter of Heber J. Grant to Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Nystrom, December 31, 1936, in Heber Jeddy Grant Collection, letterbook; see also Heber J. Grant, Journal, December 25, 1936.

71. George Albert Smith, Journal, December 25, 1905, typescript, George Albert Smith Papers, Church Archives. A jumping jack is “a toy figure of a man jointed and made to jump or dance by means of strings or a sliding stick.” Babcock, *Dictionary*, s.v. “jumping jack.”

72. George Albert Smith, Journal, December 24–25, 1906.

73. George Albert Smith, Diaries, December 25, 1937, Church Archives.

74. George Albert Smith, Journal, December 25, 1940.

75. George Albert Smith, "To the Latter-day Saints Everywhere," *Improvement Era* 50 (December 1947): 797.

76. David Oman McKay, Scrapbooks, 1928–1970, "A Christmas in Tokyo," vol. 126, typescript, Church Archives.

77. David O. McKay, quoted in Jeanette McKay Morrell, *Highlights in the Life of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 29–31.

78. David O. McKay, "The Spirit of Christmas," *Improvement Era* 62 (December 1959): 894–95, emphasis added.

79. David O. McKay, "Upon Every Home," *Improvement Era* 71 (December 1968): 3.

80. Joseph Fielding Smith, Diary, December 25, 1912, in Leonard J. Arrington Christmas card, "Prophets at Christmas," courtesy of Richard L. Jensen.

81. Amelia Smith McConkie, interview by Brenda K. McConkie, tape recording, Salt Lake City, October 10, 2000, transcript in possession of author. Paragraph break inserted to increase readability.

82. Amelia Smith McConkie, interview.

83. Amelia Smith McConkie, interview.

84. Joseph Fielding McConkie, interview by author, Provo, Utah, October 18, 2000, transcript in possession of author.

85. Joseph Fielding Smith, "Christmas Greetings," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, December 19, 1970, 3.

86. Harold B. Lee, "Profile for Progress," April 3, 1968, Regional Representatives Seminar Files 1967–1979, 28–29, Church Archives; compare to Harold B. Lee, "Are You Ready for Christmas?," *Improvement Era* 71 (December 1968): 4–5.

87. L. Brent Goates to Larry C. Porter, letter, September 27, 2001, Salt Lake City, copy in author's possession.

88. In correspondence to his children and loved ones at home President Kimball wrote of their presence in Israel:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1961, HOLY LAND: December 25, 1961.

Dear Ones:

Christmas in Jerusalem! What an experience! CHRISTMAS EVE IN BETHLEHEM! We shall tell you a little about it all if you will forgive the carbon copy. We arrived here after dark last night [Jerusalem, December 24th]. Here at this hotel the carols were being blatantly played over loud speakers. We caught a taxi and hurried over to Bethlehem. The milling thousands crowded every nook and corner. People had to take turns getting into the sacred places. We waited for some time before we could get into the crypts where the Lord was thought to have been born. There are two rival spots in the cave underneath the Church—the two are rivals, two religions, in dispute as to where the sacred spot was. So there are two spots a few feet apart and each of the rival organizations makes its own claims. One is the place where he was born, they say, and the other where the cradle was. This part was frustrating but when we went to Shepherds Field we had it alone in the dark. We quietly sang "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains, shepherds of old heard the glorious strains, Glory to God in the Highest." Letter in Spencer W. Kimball, Journal, December 24–25, 1961, courtesy Edward J. Kimball.

89. Spencer W. Kimball, "Jesus of Nazareth," *Ensign* 10 (December 1980): 3–9.

90. Edward J. Kimball to Jack W. Welch, October 24, 2000, Provo, Utah, copy in author's possession.

91. Edward J. Kimball to Welch, October 24, 2000.
92. Spencer W. Kimball, Journal, December 22, 1967.
93. Spencer W. Kimball, "They Named Him Joseph," *Instructor* 101 (December 1966): 474–76.
94. Spencer W. Kimball, Journal, December 23, 1972; December 23, 1973.
95. Ezra Taft Benson, *President Ezra Taft Benson Remembers the Joys of Christmas* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988) 1–3, 5.
96. Benson, *President Ezra Taft Benson Remembers*, 6–7.
97. Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 199.
98. Personal interview, Larry C. Porter with Reed A. Benson, October 14, 2000, Provo, Utah.
99. Benson, *President Ezra Taft Benson Remembers*, 7–8.
100. Benson, *President Ezra Taft Benson Remembers*, 10–13.
101. Eleanor Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994) 47–57.
102. Howard W. Hunter, Journal, December 25, 1961, Church Archives.
103. "A Christmas Message from the First Presidency to the Children of the World: The Real Christmas," *Friend* 24 (December 1994): 2–3; For a more expansive message of this same theme, see Howard W. Hunter, "The Real Christmas," in *Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional Addresses 1972–1973* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1973), 65–70.
104. Gordon B. Hinckley to Bryant S. Hinckley, 25 December 1933, quoted in Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 76.
105. Virginia H. Pearce, ed., *Glimpses into the Life and Heart of Marjorie Pay Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 169–72.
106. Janet Lee, quoted in Pearce, *Glimpses into the Life*, 79–80, emphasis added.
107. Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Season for Gratitude," *Ensign* 27 (December 1997): 2–5.
108. McKay, "Upon Every Home," 3.

Nobody Can

That good child, George Washington
who grew up to be president,
hung at the front of the second grade room. It was February
and we were making cherry trees.

Stretched above the blackboard,
twenty-six large and small letters
fit exactly round and straight
within solid and dotted lines.
Even the snowflakes outside
stacked in sequence on the chainlink fence.

Our desks were cleared
and covered with sheets of white paper
which we'd branched and pink-blossomed.
To set the paint, Mrs. Putnam had shown how to dip them
quickly
into a bucket of water,
holding the paper
so the water wouldn't puddle in the middle
and spill.

There were boys and girls behind me waiting;
somehow water, lots of it,
slapped the floor, rivered.

She didn't see who did it,
but a boy told my name.
Jangling papers quieted;
a bell rang at a far end of the school.
Mrs. Putnam, with round-rim glasses, sometimes yelled.

But she shushed the boy, handed him a rag,
restarted the bucket line,
then led me softly to the back wall
where we hung my finished tree.

Later, she paused above my desk,
where I practiced a row of small *bs*,
my flecked tan paper torn and bruised.
You're doing fine, she whispered,
you'd need a ruler and compass
to make them perfect.

—Marilyn Bushman-Carlton



Courtesy Dana W. Bishop

FIG. 1. Czech city street, 1939. The banner reads: "One People, one Empire, one Leader!" Nazi troops marched into Czechoslovakia in March 1939, annexing the country in a bloodless takeover. The Czechoslovak Mission remained open for several more months, but by the latter part of August, Germany was mobilizing against Poland, and war with Great Britain and France was imminent. As a result, all American mission personnel in German-occupied lands were forced into an emergency evacuation. This affected three Latter-day Saint missions: the Czechoslovak, East German, and West German.

The Evacuation of the Czechoslovak and German Missions at the Outbreak of World War II

David F. Boone

The evacuation of Latter-day Saint missionaries from Europe at the outbreak of World War II was truly a unique event in Church history. At the beginning of World War I, a few American missionaries serving in Europe were moved to areas of safety, but until 1939 there had never been a large-scale evacuation of missionaries as a result of their being endangered by impending war (fig. 1). As the threat of war gathered over Europe in the late 1930s, Latter-day Saint Church leaders in Salt Lake City watched anxiously. In August 1939, there were missionaries laboring in Great Britain, Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, Switzerland, Holland, and three Scandinavian countries. The evacuation of American missionaries from Europe at the outbreak of World War II eventually affected ten missions and hundreds of missionaries, but only those in the Czechoslovak and East and West German Missions were forced into an emergency evacuation.

The European Setting

President J. Reuben Clark Jr., who had significant national and international contacts,¹ kept general Church leaders and mission presidents apprised of conditions in Europe. As early as 1938, President Clark recommended to the European mission presidents that they make plans to evacuate their missionaries if conditions required. In August 1938, the mission presidents in threatened countries, particularly in Germany and Czechoslovakia, followed these plans and evacuated all mission personnel to neutral countries. Within a few weeks, however, tensions eased, and the missionaries returned to their fields of labor. This experience became known among Church personnel as the fire drill evacuation (fig. 2). Some Church members were critical of this 1938 evacuation and called it a false alarm rather than a fire drill. A year later, however, when evacuation again became necessary, “some felt the exodus of American elders might have failed if they had not benefited from the mistakes they made the year before.”²

Upon their return in 1938, the missionaries focused on preparing local Church members to take over the leadership of their branches in the event the American elders were again forced to leave. They also assisted in preparing Church records so that information on members was available



Courtesy Terry Bohle Montague

FIG. 2. Missionaries from the West German Mission in the Netherlands on the shore of the North Sea during the fire drill evacuation, October 1938. *Kneeling:* George Blake. *Standing, left to right:* Unknown elder, Lawrence J. Meyer, A. Burt Horsley, Wesley Knudsen, T. Frank Swallow, Wilford Woolf, Grant Baker, Clark Hillam, unknown elder, and John Dean. The experience gained during this evacuation prepared both the missionaries and the mission leaders for the emergency evacuation of August 1939.

to local leaders. Many of the missionaries ignored the political posturing and the military buildup occurring around them, but the people were uneasy. As frequently as time and distance allowed, mission presidents met with their missionaries to keep them focused on proselyting activities. It was difficult, however, for the missionaries to ignore the anxiety of the people with whom they associated.

Czechoslovakia

Germany overran and annexed Czechoslovakia in March 1939, nearly six months before marching into Poland (fig. 3). During the invasion, Martha Toronto, wife of President Wallace F. Toronto of the Czechoslovak Mission, was in the hospital recuperating from the birth of their child. She remembered the sounds of the invasion and the anxiety of the nurses:

There were rumbling[s] of every sort from vehicles large and small riding over the cobblestones [streets], noise of people running and shouting, and even much unrest and chatter among the nurses. I inquired of a nurse the cause of all this commotion, and she answered that a surprise [German] invasion was in progress. A phone call to Wally [my husband] confirmed this news, and when he came to see me that afternoon, he assured me that everything was all right, except that we were now being ruled by the Germans.³

President Toronto thought that they “wouldn’t have to leave the country . . . because the bloodless takeover . . . went very smoothly. Hitler’s thousands of troops had skillfully used this surprise tactic and were in complete control.”⁴

The mission had to make adjustments, however, to comply with the regulations of the new government and to avoid any problems with the German-controlled government or secret police. President Toronto advised the missionaries to discontinue tracting, not because it was against the law, but because he deemed it prudent that they not be any more visible to the government than necessary. He restricted the elders to teaching contacts they already knew and those referred to them by local members. They concentrated most of their efforts on those already baptized (fig. 4).

When the German government imposed restrictions on public gatherings, the Church was already in compliance. Nevertheless, even the strongest members felt the pressures of the occupation and worried about what the new regime meant for the Church in Czechoslovakia. The Saints were

Courtesy Dana W. Bishop



FIG. 3. From an upper-story window, Elder Verdell Ray Bishop of the Czechoslovak Mission photographed Nazi troops marching through the streets of Brno, Czechoslovakia, in March 1939. Early one morning, a horrified Martha Toronto, wife of the Czechoslovak Mission president, looked out her window and saw her “three-year-old [son] Bob, who was always fascinated by the soldiers, goose-stepping along side this mass of high black boots and uniforms.” Martha Toronto Anderson, *A Cherry Tree behind the Iron Curtain: The Autobiography of Martha Toronto Anderson* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1977), 19.



Courtesy Dana W. Bishop

FIG. 4. Czechoslovak Mission, February 1938. *Back row:* Elder Clyde, Elder Asael Moulton, Elder Allen, Elder Risenmay, Elder Ward, Elder Davis, Elder Manning, Elder Hinckley. *Middle row:* Elder Rulon S. Payne, Elder Orton, Elder Butler, Elder Barlow, Elder Dahl, Elder Greenwood, Elder Robert Lee. *Front row:* Elder Dover, Elder Merrill, Elder Burton, President Wallace F. Toronto, Sister Martha Toronto, Elder Pettit, Elder McFarlane.

never certain when they might be breaking the law, and with the people anxious and preoccupied, the missionaries enjoyed only limited success after the invasion. While meeting with a branch of the Church in Prague, President and Sister Toronto shared an experience that illustrates just how tense the situation was. Sister Toronto described the fear that gripped the congregation as a Nazi officer stepped into the meeting hall:

We were all in church on Sunday morning attending a Mothers' Day Program. The service was drawing to a close but still in progress when the back door of the meeting hall opened, and in stepped a tall Nazi officer. . . . The congregation, members and friends alike, froze in their seats. A German officer appearing as he did meant but one thing to us all—arrest and imprisonment.

After hesitating a moment or two he smiled and started walking . . . toward . . . the front of the hall [where President Toronto was] presiding over the meeting. . . . [The president] rose and walked toward him and spoke to him in German. . . . We all sat like terrified mummies in our seats. At last, speaking now in Czech, Wally [President Toronto] turned to us and announced that this young officer had something to say to us and would speak to us in German.⁵

President Toronto told the story of the German officer in the April 1940 general conference. He recounted the officer's words as follows:

Brothers and sisters, I come here not on an appointment of my own choosing. I come here [to Czechoslovakia] as a servant of my government. I know we have brought you considerable distress and dismay. We have caused already much suffering. Nevertheless, you and I have something in common, something which oversteps the boundaries of race, language, and color. You and I have the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Despite the fact that I speak German and you Czech, yet because of the Gospel we still speak in common terms. The time is coming when we shall know this better than ever before.⁶

The officer reaffirmed his belief in the Church and asked if he could participate with the branch in their worship services. When he finished speaking, the members welcomed him with great emotion. For the next several months—until he was assigned to another area—the officer attended the branch meetings in Prague.

On June 3, 1939, President Toronto received a letter from the First Presidency, which in part directed, "In view of the political changes, it is deemed advisable to attach the Branches of the Church in Czecho-Slovakia to the East-German Mission. You are therefore authorized to close the office of the Czecho-Slovak Mission as of July 1, 1939."⁷

President Toronto was astonished by the announcement; he did not think the First Presidency was fully aware of how much political conditions



North Central Europe, 1939

had stabilized since the German takeover. Later in June, he attended a conference in Switzerland for the European mission presidents and discussed his view of conditions with Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, who was presiding at the conference. Elder Smith endorsed President Toronto's position, advised him to send a report to the First Presidency, and wrote them a letter of his own. Before the end of June 1939, President Toronto received a cable from the First Presidency deferring his release and delaying the evacuation of the mission. Despite permission to remain, unforeseen events—the direct result of the tensions of impending war—caused complications for the missionaries remaining in Czechoslovakia.

Two American missionaries, Elders Robert Lee and Rulon Payne, believing they were assisting a local member with American dollars, contacted a Gestapo agent to exchange currency. (The elders did not know the agent was part of the Gestapo.) This activity was illegal under German law but fairly routine under Czech standards. The German agent arrested them immediately and took them to Gestapo headquarters and then to prison, returning later to search their apartment for evidence against them.

Unfortunately, Elders Verdell Bishop and Asael Moulton, who had not seen Elders Lee and Payne during the day, went looking for them and arrived at their apartment in time to be arrested by Gestapo agents as accomplices. The four missionaries were incarcerated in the Pankrac penitentiary (fig. 5). Elders Bishop and Moulton knew nothing about the reasons for their arrest and might have been set free except that personal checks bearing their names had been found in the possession of Elders Lee and Payne. It was illegal to have foreign currency in one's possession because it was worth more than the local tender and was needed by the government.

President Toronto remained unaware of the arrests until Elder Moulton was brought to the mission office by a government agent the next day. Elder Moulton, a mission leader, had in his possession a key that opened the cash box in the mission office. The cash box contained the Czech mission's contingency funds in British pounds and American dollars, to be used if an emergency evacuation was necessary. Elder Moulton distracted the agents long enough for President Toronto to quickly remove most of the cash from the box and hide it in a desk drawer. The agents confiscated the rest of the money and returned Elder Moulton to prison.

The next day President Toronto went to secure the release of the four elders, still not knowing why they had been arrested since no official charges had been brought against them. When he arrived, he was told that he must pay two thousand dollars each for the release of the missionaries.⁸ For more than a month, each time he visited the prison the amount of bail changed. Finally, the Gestapo chief, a Dr. Bäumlburg, told President Toronto, "You have a rich church which could pay the required fine upon a

moment's notice.”⁹ President Toronto realized that the government was trying to extract as much money from the Church as possible and felt inspired to tell the Gestapo agent, in exaggerated terms, just how much American money the missionaries brought into Germany each month:

It becomes perfectly clear that there are no serious charges against our missionaries, but that they are being held only for the purpose of exacting from our Church a great amount in American dollars, which the German government sorely needs at the present time. We are willing to pay a reasonable fine for our men breaking the currency regulations of the country, but not the great amount which you require of us. . .

. . . If it is foreign currency you want, then let me point out that you are endangering one of your finest sources of income. Do you know that for the past few years there have been from 250 to 300 Mormon missionaries laboring in Germany to teach your people the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Do you know that each one of these [missionaries] brings into your country each month from 40 to 50 dollars? . . . Figure it for yourself, Doctor, and you will find that it totals from approximately 10,000 to 15,000 dollars each month.¹⁰

President Toronto finished with a warning. “Now, Doctor,” he declared, “unless you come to terms and deal reasonably with us, I shall request our



Courtesy Dana W. Bishop

FIG. 5. Czechoslovak Mission elders, Prague, December 1938: Elder Rulon S. Payne, Elder Verdell Ray Bishop, Elder Risenmay, Elder Allen, and Elder Madsen. Elders Payne, Bishop, Lee (not shown), and Moulton (not shown) were arrested by Gestapo agents for carrying foreign currency. The elders were imprisoned in the Pankrac penitentiary, a notorious prison for political enemies of the Nazi regime, for more than a month before President Toronto could arrange their release. Anderson, *Cherry Tree*, 21.

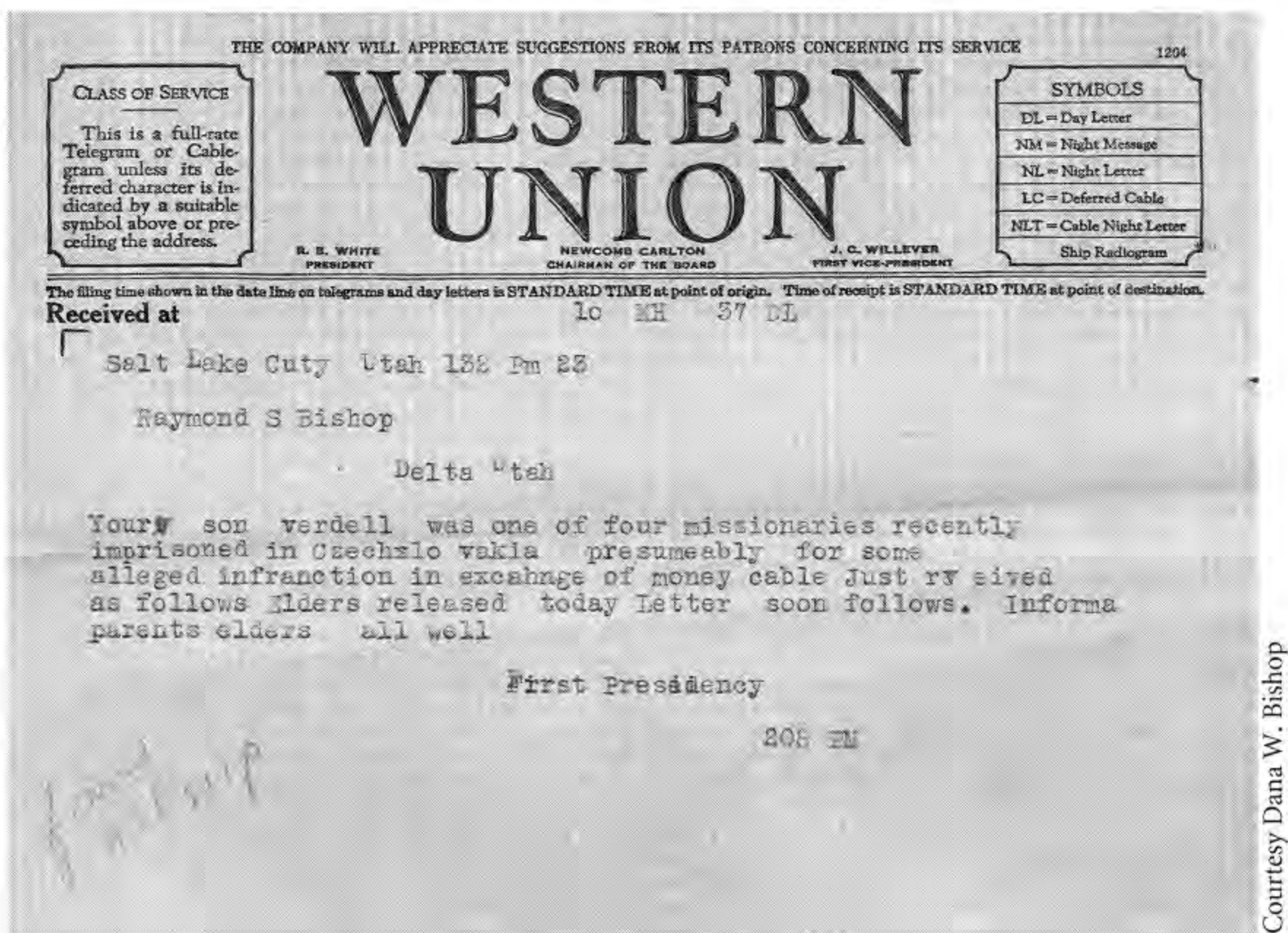


FIG. 6. Telegram from the First Presidency to Raymond S. Bishop, father of Elder Verdell Bishop, informing him that his son had been released from prison.

Church to immediately withdraw every American missionary from the German Reich.”¹¹

Of course the president was bluffing. There were less than two hundred missionaries then serving in the German-occupied territories, and President Toronto did not have the authority to remove missionaries from his own mission, much less from all of Germany. The bluff worked, however. Two days later, on August 23, 1939, the Finance Administration agreed on a fine totaling almost two hundred fifty dollars each, or one thousand dollars for all four, rather than the eight thousand dollars that had been demanded earlier. Within two hours, the missionaries were released (fig. 6).

During their confinement, the missionaries were kept in separate cells, isolated from each other. No talking was allowed among them while they were in their cells or the exercise yard. But according to Elder Moulton, they developed a series of messages that could be communicated by tapping on the walls of the cells or by winking at each other when they came face to face. Even this meager contact helped to maintain morale. The elders passed the time by remembering scriptures they had memorized and the love they felt from and for their families. One elder pressed bread into squares and allowed it to dry to form a crude pair of dice, which he rolled

on the floor.¹² Another made chess pieces. He learned from an Austrian cell-mate how to play the game, which he continued to enjoy throughout his life.

Sister Toronto was allowed to visit the prison once a week with a fresh bundle of clothing for each of the elders and to take their soiled clothing home to be laundered. The prisoners had little food, both in quality and quantity. Their rations consisted of a bean-meal bread and a watery, weak broth made from potato peelings.¹³ Nevertheless, the missionaries reported no torture, abuse, or serious mistreatment.

When the elders were released, they returned to their apartments to pack their few belongings because the evacuation of their mission was already in progress. Despite his earlier resistance to leave the mission, President Toronto had begun to evacuate the Czechoslovak Mission, on the advice of the American consul, even before he received a cable from the First Presidency directing him to do so. Sister Toronto and their three children were the first to leave. Before her departure, however, Sister Toronto insisted on cooking a “good meal” for the newly released prisoners. She cooked them “a big noon meal . . . but after a diet of bread and water and soup for 44 days they couldn’t quite handle it, even though it tasted so good they overate and became ill.”¹⁴ The day after the elders’ release, while regular civilian train travel was still available, Sister Toronto and the children left for Denmark (fig. 7). After two arduous days of travel, by way of Berlin, they were met in Copenhagen by a delegation of mission presidents and their wives.

President Toronto intended to follow Sister Toronto and the children with the remainder of the missionaries within a few days but was delayed by the rearrest of Elder Rulon S. Payne. When Elder Payne went to the American consul to obtain an exit permit as required by law, he was taken into custody, frisked, strip searched, and



Courtesy Dana W. Bishop

FIG. 7. Bob Toronto, age two (*top*); Marion Toronto, age five (*bottom*). Sister Toronto and her three children, including Marion, Bobby, and five-month-old Carol, were the first mission personnel to be evacuated from Czechoslovakia. President Toronto was anxious for them to reach Denmark before the public trains in Czechoslovakia and Germany were taken over for the deployment of troops.

arrested by German agents. After sending the other elders on to Denmark, President Toronto demanded an immediate investigation and learned that Elder Payne had been arrested “because he had the same name as a British spy the Nazis were looking for, a Mr. Payne.”¹⁵ After verification of his identity by President Toronto and American consul representatives, Elder Payne was released amid profuse apologies and immediately granted his exit visa. That night, August 31, 1939, President Toronto and Elder Payne left Czechoslovakia for Berlin; they arrived in Copenhagen on the evening of September 1.

Sister Toronto had expected President Toronto and the rest of the mission personnel to follow within two or three days. When they had not come by the third day, she began to worry, and with each passing day without word, her anxiety increased:

I was so worried and upset. We were watching all these things that would come over the wires and these bulletins would go up in the square in Copenhagen and I'd come back to the mission home and say, “Brother Smith, what am I going to do?” He'd put his arm around me and say, “Sister Toronto, this war will not start until Brother Toronto and those missionaries get on Danish soil.” (fig. 8)¹⁶

Sister Evelyn Wood, wife of President M. Douglas Wood, also remembered the tense atmosphere in Copenhagen as they waited for news:



Courtesy Dana W. Bishop

FIG. 8. Sister Toronto and Elder Joseph Fielding Smith in Copenhagen. In a prophetic statement, Elder Smith promised Sister Toronto that war would not begin until President Toronto and all the missionaries were out of Czechoslovakia.

Being rather naive, I said to Joseph Fielding Smith, “Do you mean to say that they’d hold a war up, all the negotiations that are being made, while we get those missionaries out of there?” It didn’t seem possible to me. He turned right to me, and he said, “The war will not start until those . . . men are out of the country.”¹⁷

Although it was very close timing—less than twenty-four hours—all the missionaries made it out of Czechoslovakia before the German offensive against Poland began (early in the morning of September 1), thus fulfilling the prophecy made by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith.

East German Mission

On August 24, 1939, the East German Mission office received notice from Church headquarters to prepare the missionaries for imminent departure. Elder Paul Lambert, acting in the temporary absence of President Alfred C. Rees, sent telegrams to each companionship instructing them to call the mission office in Berlin. When the missionaries called, they were told to pack their trunks in preparation for immediate evacuation and to remain close to their residences so they could be contacted again if necessary.

A message sent the following day instructed them to go to the mission office in Berlin on the first possible train. Some of the missionaries were confused because they did not know how completely they were to close their areas and whether their departure would be permanent. A year earlier, during the fire drill evacuation, they had left not expecting to return. When they did return, they had to renegotiate housing, purchase food, and reestablish contact with the people they were teaching. The question now was whether to leave things ready to come back to or to close down their areas. Some of the elders who thought *this* evacuation would be permanent spent their extra money on cameras or souvenirs. Others left money with local members or their landlords with instructions that it be used for the benefit of the branch.

The missionaries traveling west to Berlin had a relatively easy journey, but the mobilization of German troops en route to the Polish border made it difficult for those traveling east to get through. Most of the trains that had been used for public transportation had now been pressed into military service. Although certainly aware that Germany was preparing for war, the elders had been preoccupied with missionary work since they had been in the country. Some expressed astonishment at the massive military buildup—fortifications, troop trains, and soldiers—they saw along the way to Berlin. Elder Albion Smith, from Idaho Falls, Idaho, described his reaction: “I was surprised to see the number of anti-aircraft guns, and cannons on the way. Behind every bush or tree and camouflaged place were all sorts of war mechanism.”¹⁸

Elder Ralph W. Kauer and his companion caught the last regularly scheduled public train going east to Berlin. All subsequent eastbound trains were taken off the schedule for public use, and civilians who wished to travel were at the mercy of available train space. Because his companion had been in the mission for only a short time and could not read German, Elder Kauer had to be solely responsible for securing tickets and arranging connections. When the elders went to board their train, they found it completely filled with soldiers headed for the Polish border. The conductor saw their plight and pulled them up onto the endgate of the last car on the already moving train, where they rode until they got off to make another connection.¹⁹

The elders' troubles, however, were not over. When they ran across the tracks to board another train, they were apprehended by a local policeman for trespassing. Elder Kauer explained that his companion was new in Germany and could not read the signs, but the officer was apparently not convinced and announced that he must take them to the police station. Elder Kauer pointed to others who were crossing the rails and were also in violation. When the policeman went in pursuit of these trespassers, the missionaries ran for their connecting train, which was pulling out of the station. "The last we saw of this policeman," Elder Kauer remembered, "he was just standing there shaking his billyclub at us."²⁰ Kauer worried that the policeman would call ahead and have the train stopped. When nothing further happened, Kauer decided they were probably not significant enough to be pulled off the train and was glad. Later that day and without further problems, the elders arrived in Berlin.

Overall, the missionaries from the East German Mission had less difficulty getting out of the country than those in the Czechoslovak and West German missions. Although the East German Mission had more personnel than the other two missions, it was on a more direct route to neutral areas. By Saturday, August 26, within sixteen hours of the order to evacuate, all the missionaries from the East German Mission had reached safety in Copenhagen.²¹

West German Mission

When the order to evacuate arrived at the West German Mission office in Frankfurt, President M. Douglas Wood was attending a conference in Hanover. He was accompanied to the conference by Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, who was making a tour of the European missions (fig. 9). Elder Smith's new bride, Jessie Ella Evans Smith, traveled with him.²² She kept a journal during the tour, and on the day before the evacuation order was received, she wrote, "The feeling [at the conference] is very tense and we held meetings that night and had a very splendid service, but everyone was still wondering about conditions."²³ Elder Smith and President Wood did

Courtesy Dana W. Bishop



FIG. 9. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith and Sister Jessie Ella Evans Smith. The Smiths toured the European missions during summer 1939. When the First Presidency ordered the evacuation of the European missions, they appointed Elder Smith to direct the evacuation.

not tell the congregation about the telegram received on August 24 advising them to prepare to evacuate the mission. President Wood was anxious to get back to mission headquarters to direct operations, especially after the arrival of a second telegram on August 25:

Friday morning [August 25, 1939] we received a telegram from the First Presidency, which was relayed from our office in Frankfurt to Hanover, telling us that we should immediately evacuate Germany. . . .

I said to Brother Smith: "My wife and I should be in Frankfurt [at the mission office]. There are so many things to do. Things are beginning to happen so fast, you see here in Hanover the women are already driving the street cars [because many of the men had been mobilized and troops were moving toward Poland]." ²⁴

President Wood, at Elder Smith's urging, went to secure a flight to Frankfurt. The clerk thought that because they were on the main European transport line, all reservations would be booked. Flights had to be reserved at least two weeks in advance, and the current crisis made the clerk certain that no accommodations could be obtained at any price. President Wood asked the clerk to try anyway. To the clerk's astonishment, there were two seats available on the next flight to Frankfurt.²⁵ The Wood's flight lasted almost an hour and a half, but that was four and a half hours faster than going by train.

* 20 Telegramm **Deutsche Reichspost**
 aus *Frankfurt/Main* *20w 25 1634*

Abgenommen				übermittelt	
Tag	Monat	Jahr	Bei	Tag:	Zeit:
25.	8	39	1715		
von: <i>D</i>			durch: <i>Ho</i>		
Anm:			<i>evl baker</i>		
			<i>Steinweg & herne</i>		
			<i>westf</i>		
<i>leave immediately for rotter</i>					
<i>Dam Trunks same train assign</i>					
<i>temporary successor wire</i>					
<i>quikmere upon departure</i>					
<i>wood</i>					

Für sonstige Nachfragen × C 117 DLS A 5

Courtesy Terry Bohle Montague

FIG. 10. Telegram from President Douglas M. Wood ordering missionaries to evacuate the West German Mission. The text reads: "leave immediately for rotter Dam Trunks same train assign temporary successor wire quikmere upon Departure." "Quickmere" was a code word the missionaries were to wire to President Wood, indicating that they had received his telegram and were ready to proceed to Rotterdam. Terry Bohle Montague, *"Mine Angels round About": Mormon Missionary Evacuation from Western Germany, 1939*, 2d ed. (Orem, Utah: Granite, 2000), 29.

Upon his arrival at the mission home, President Wood contacted the Dutch consulate. He made arrangements for the missionaries closest to Holland to enter the nearest border station so they would be in a neutral country and out of harm's way. This was the planned procedure for evacuating the West German Mission and had been followed successfully the year before in the fire drill evacuation. The president then wired each companionship, directing them to evacuate as planned (fig. 10). Most of the missionaries headed toward Holland, but those in northern Germany set out for Denmark,²⁶ and a few in southern Germany went to Switzerland.²⁷ Because Holland, Denmark, and Switzerland were known for their traditions of neutrality, they were thought to be safe havens for the refugee missionaries. The West German Mission office sent telegrams to the mission presidents in each of these neutral countries notifying them of the imminent arrival of the American missionaries from the West German Mission. All the European mission presidents knew the general evacuation procedure, having participated in its planning and review as Elder and Sister Smith

toured each of the European missions.²⁸ Most of the presidents had decided to follow the same routes used the year before.

President Wood could not know that the majority of the missionaries were being sent into trouble, rather than away from it, as they traveled toward Holland (fig. 11). The Dutch had learned important lessons from their experiences in World War I and now closed their borders to all foreigners unless they had tickets that ensured their continued travel out of the country.²⁹ Like the missionaries from the Czechoslovak Mission, the missionaries evacuating from Germany faced restrictions on the amount of currency they could legally carry. With war imminent, they were allowed no more than ten German marks, barely enough for food and not nearly enough to purchase additional tickets.

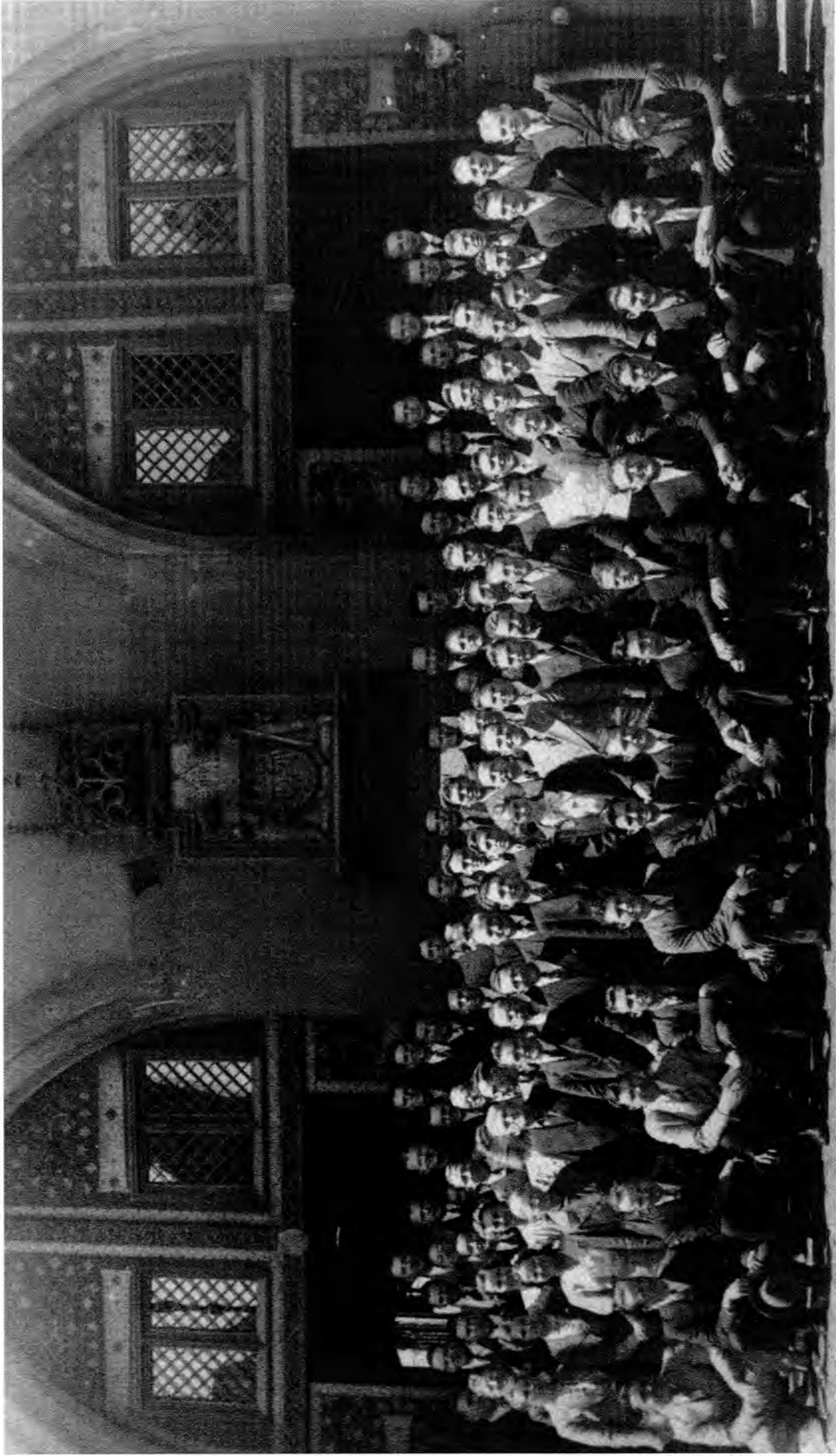
Elder and Sister Smith were among the last Church personnel to get into Holland before the new regulation went into effect. They had arrived at the mission home in Frankfurt almost a day after parting company with President and Sister Wood. In Frankfurt, Elder Smith received instructions from the First Presidency to oversee the continental evacuation and decided to set up headquarters at The Hague in Holland.³⁰ Elder Smith purchased two tickets, via train. These tickets, he was told, were the last two tickets on an overnight train to The Hague.³¹

Without any public notification, the Dutch applied the new policy. When the missionaries attempted to follow instructions and cross into Holland, they were turned away. Elder A. Burt Horsley and his companion, Elder Richard D. Poll, were among the first missionaries to be stopped at the border. Elder Horsley remembered being taken off the train and firmly denied permission to continue:

When we reached the Dutch side of the border the train stopped again for customs inspection and we were taken off the train and arrested for vagrancy because we each had only ten marks with us. The people were very cordial to us but made it clear that they were not making any exception to their laws. But I was allowed to make a phone call. I phoned the mission office in The Hague.³²

It may be that this call was the first that Franklin J. Murdock, president of the Dutch mission, learned of the border closures. President Murdock instructed Elder Horsley to return to Germany and, when there, to call his mission president in Frankfurt for instructions. Elders Horsley and Poll returned to Germany, but once back inside, they were detained by the German government. Horsley tried to call his mission president for advice and help:

Here I made efforts to call the mission president from the post office and depot. I made the effort to get in touch with the mission president in Frankfurt, but was informed that the lines were all used by the military and that



Courtesy Terry Bohle Montague

FIG. 11. President Wood with his wife, Evelyn, and missionaries of the West German Mission on steps of the Ramerberg in Frankfurt, Germany, May 1939. Many of the missionaries would face complications as they evacuated from Germany. Montague, "Mine Angels round About," 23.

there was no way I could have access to a telephone, especially for a long distance call.³³

Horsley realized he and his companion were stranded. He did not know what to do, so after being denied the use of a telephone, he just waited. Finally, "the clerk at the desk motioned to [him] and told [him] that if [he] would get in a particular phone booth [the clerk] would place the call to Frankfurt for [him]."³⁴ After what seemed like a long wait, the call was connected. The mission staff had left the office but were waiting outside for their ride to the train station when they heard the phone ring. Elder Horsley explained to President Wood the predicament he and Elder Poll were in. They had been at the Dutch border for about six hours, without funds, and they could not proceed further. President Wood instructed Horsley to be patient and to look for other missionaries in a similar situation. Then he said, "Brother, if you will have faith, I will see that we get some money to you immediately." President Wood phoned the telegraph office with the money order, but before the wire went through, the operator called to say that no more orders were being accepted. She said, however, that she would attempt to get this one last wire through.³⁵ She was ultimately successful, and Horsley and Poll received money and instructions to buy tickets to Copenhagen.

As Elders Horsley and Poll prepared to leave Germany for the last time, they found six other missionaries in a similar predicament, and Horsley and Poll shared the money President Wood had sent them so that these elders could travel with them to Denmark.³⁶ After their experiences at the Dutch border, the missionaries had a largely uneventful trip, although they had to remain vigilant to make the proper connections and to keep track of their luggage, each other, and the direction they were going. After three days of travel, which included their delays at the border, they arrived in Copenhagen, weary but safe.³⁷

In an unusual way, another group of missionaries stranded at a border crossing received funds to continue their journey. They also called President Wood for instructions, but by this time, it was no longer possible to transfer money by telegraph. The president explained his inability to assist them because of the government restrictions. The missionaries held a council to decide what their options were and what the best course of action might be. While they were meeting, they were approached by a young German soldier who had been taught by elders in the past and now identified the group as missionaries. When the elders explained their dilemma, the soldier took from his pocket a small roll of money, indicating that he was on his way to the Polish front and would not need it. The small roll amounted to fifty marks, not enough to see them through Holland to the safety of Denmark, but sufficient to enable them to return to the town

where two of the elders had labored. One of the elders had recently received his monthly allowance from home but, because he could not lawfully take the money out of the country, had left it with his landlady. He had instructed her to give the money to the local branch if he did not return. When the train arrived, he ran to his apartment, retrieved the money, and with it bought tickets for each of the members of his group. President Wood, reporting this episode in the April 1940 general conference, noted that the amount the elder had received from home was just enough to pay the passage of the missionaries to Denmark, with a little left over for food.³⁸

Sister Erma Rosenhan, another missionary from the West German Mission, was one of only fourteen missionaries to get through the Dutch border.³⁹ Having had a German member as a missionary companion, Sister Rosenhan had no American sister to travel with when the evacuation order came. Although she had been told that an elder would come to accompany her to Holland, he had not arrived by Saturday morning, August 26. Anxious to be on her way, Sister Rosenhan prepared to catch a morning train even though it meant traveling alone. The local branch president advised her to buy a ticket to London rather than just to Rotterdam, Holland. The British consulate was closed, so Sister Rosenhan could not get the required British visa, but she bought the London ticket anyway. Because of her foresight in buying the ticket to London and her insistence on catching the Saturday morning train rather than waiting for her escort, Sister Rosenhan easily passed through customs at the Dutch border. She arrived at The Hague without experiencing any of the problems many of the elders had to confront.⁴⁰

Elder John Robert Kest as Courier. A third group of missionaries found themselves stranded at the border with little idea why they were not allowed into Holland or what they were to do. Elder Frank Knutti, one of the group,⁴¹ remembered crossing the border into Holland and then being sent back to Germany by Dutch officials:

We were checked through at Bentheim and went on to Oldenzaal inside of Holland where the authorities held us for a short time, took our passports to check them but later brought them back and called to us to follow them. We were led back to our train but on through it to the other side where another train was standing. After we were on, it pulled out and we were on our way, or so we thought. Before too long, someone noticed the country seemed familiar and we were dismayed to find that we had been returned to Germany. Our protests were to no avail. . . . We only were told the Dutch Government had refused our coming into the country because we had no tickets through Holland to another country.⁴²

Unable to get through to President Wood, the elders tried to call the Dutch Mission office in The Hague, expecting that their fellow missionaries from Germany were there waiting for them. Unfortunately, President

Franklin J. Murdock was not in the office when the call went through, but the elder who took their call promised to have the president phone them when he returned. For hours the small group of missionaries waited for the phone call, but none came. It was late Saturday night, and the German border officials did not like the missionaries hanging around the station, so the elders pooled their limited funds and rented a room for the night. By Sunday morning, the call still had not come, and since they had no additional funds, the elders pretended it was fast Sunday. At least this solved the problem of having nothing to eat!

Meanwhile, President Murdock had sent a young elder, John Robert Kest,⁴³ on a very early train to the Dutch-German border with money to assist the stranded missionaries. Elder Kest arrived in Oldenzaal only to find that the missionaries were no longer in Holland but were probably back in Germany. He did not have a visa to enter Germany and therefore was in a quandary about what he should do. He called President Murdock to find out if there had been any further contact with the elders and asked for counsel. President Murdock had heard nothing more from the missionaries and told Elder Kest to “do your best and use your judgment as to what should be done.”⁴⁴

The stranded missionaries had to have help, so Elder Kest decided he must take a chance and try to get into Germany without a visa. Before leaving the Dutch border station, he purchased ten tickets that would take the stranded missionaries all the way to Copenhagen and another that would take him to Bentheim, on the German side of the border, and back to Oldenzaal, Holland. He then boarded the train, fully expecting to be discovered and thrown off at any time. “Why the Dutch authorities,” Elder Kest recalled, “allowed me to board that train, never asking for a visa, is a mystery; it was most irregular.”⁴⁵ Elder Kest had second and third thoughts about what he was doing because, in addition to the risk of traveling into Germany without a visa, he was not sure where the elders were or whether they could still be contacted on the German side of the border.

In Germany, as Elder Kest expected, border officials asked for his passport. When they questioned why there was no visa stamped on the passport, Elder Kest “explained in exasperatingly slow and deliberately incoherent English that at present [he] was living in Holland, had heard that some of [his] friends were in Bentheim and knowing that railroad and train transportation was being curtailed, wanted to visit them while possible.”⁴⁶

Having studied drama and music before his mission, Elder Kest decided that if he ever played a successful part, this was the time. He “rambled on, deliberately, on utterly pointless tangents, hoping all the while they would have great difficulty understanding [him]; which they did.”⁴⁷ The man in charge could speak very little English, and in order to promote maximum

confusion, Elder Kest refrained from speaking German. Unable to make any headway with the American youth, the German border guard took him into a nearby cubicle for further questioning. Once the Germans had the missionary inside the cubicle, they began to search him for anything that would incriminate him or give them information as to his identity and his business in Germany. Inside one coat pocket, Elder Kest had the tickets he had purchased, which, if found, would be confiscated. In the other pocket was a set of Church lessons to be used in the Church auxiliaries during the coming curriculum year. Elder Kest was translating the lessons into Dutch and had brought them along to work on during the long train trips. As the guards searched the elder, they found the lessons first, perhaps because they were bulkier than the tickets. Several guards hovered over the lessons, trying to figure out what they were and suspicious of what they could be.⁴⁸

While the guards were preoccupied with the lessons, the elder, unobserved by the others, took the ten tickets from his coat pocket and placed them on the table before him. When the guards finished their review of the lesson material, they searched every pocket and confiscated his money, his passport, and all the other personal belongings they could find. After they had completed their search, the guards gave Elder Kest a receipt for his possessions and ordered him to be aboard the next train to Holland, which was scheduled to depart in about forty minutes. Elder Kest assured the officials he would be on time, grabbed the tickets off the table, and hurried out into the street. Surprisingly, “not an eye flickered” as Elder Kest picked up the tickets. “[He] had the strong impression that the action had been entirely unobserved.” He left the station, “knees weak, . . . palms sweating.”⁴⁹

Out in the street, Elder Kest could not find the American missionaries. Finally, someone remembered seeing them at the hotel where they had spent the night and gave Kest directions. By the time he found the hotel, it was nearly time to catch the train to Holland. He found the missionaries holding a council to determine what they should do. Elder Kest handed the tickets to a senior missionary, Elder Ellis T. Rasmussen. Without a doubt, the elders were delighted to see Kest. After a short conversation, the small group knelt in prayer. Elder Kest remembered the power of that prayer: “As the seven of us knelt in fervent prayer, we all felt a closeness and unity experienced very infrequently in life. We were truly united and prayed with power and faith, believing our request would be granted, for we realized the desperate nature of our situation.”⁵⁰

After the prayer, Elder Kest ran back to keep his appointment with the border guards, and the missionaries gathered their possessions. At the station, a guard returned Kest’s personal effects, his remaining money, and his lessons and personally escorted him to the waiting train. Elder Kest had to

buy a German ticket back to Oldenzaal even though he already had the ticket he had bought in Holland to guarantee his return. Once back in Holland, he telephoned President Murdock to report his success and to receive further instructions. Not knowing whether other missionaries might need assistance, the president asked Kest to remain near the border overnight.

In the meantime, Elder Rasmussen's group was on its way, but not without delays and additional problems. The trains were irregular, few were available for civilian travel, and even fewer were on time. Rather than make another attempt to get through the Dutch border, the elders decided to go back to the interior of Germany and then work their way north to Denmark. In spite of the problems, they at least knew they were making progress and going in the right direction. As they waited for connecting trains, they developed a system of communication that allowed them to scatter to get information and to find one another again before boarding. They selected a central point at which to meet at a predetermined time, or if they did not have a large area to cover, they maintained visual contact. During their wait, they mingled with other groups waiting for connecting trains. In this way, they learned about delays they could avoid, unscheduled trains, and express trains that had priority over local connections.

On Monday morning, the train they boarded did not move. The missionaries scattered. One of the elders learned that the delay was caused by the coming of a faster train that would stop briefly at the station and then proceed. Back together, the elders reasoned that if there was a faster train and it was going in the same direction, they should catch it. Soon the train came, and because of their system, the missionaries were ready. With luggage in hand, they exited the first train and climbed in through the windows of the express train. Almost before they could settle in, the train pulled away from the station, and the missionaries were on their way. They arrived safely in Denmark that afternoon.⁵¹

The Rescue Mission of Elder Norman George Seibold. With so many missionaries stranded without money and others unaccounted for, President Wood needed a courier who, like Elder Kest, could find the missing missionaries and give them tickets to Denmark and money. When Elder Norman George Seibold, who hailed from Idaho, came to the mission office to report the safe evacuation of all the missionaries in his district directly to Denmark from the north of Germany, President Wood suggested a new assignment.⁵² There were still thirty-one missionaries scattered between Frankfurt, Germany, and the Dutch border.⁵³ President Wood asked Elder Seibold if he would be willing to go and find them. Elder Seibold assured the president he would try. President Wood counseled Elder Seibold to "follow his impressions entirely as we ha[ve] no idea what towns these elders w[ill] be in."⁵⁴

Elder Seibold was given five hundred marks, tickets for travel to London through Holland, and tickets to Denmark through Germany. Elder Seibold left Frankfurt around midnight on Saturday, August 26, on a train bound for the Dutch border. The train was so crowded that Elder Seibold had to ride standing up for the four hours to the first stop. When he arrived at the station in Cologne, Germany, he felt impressed to get off the train. “It was almost impossible to get off a train and get back on, they were so crowded. . . . I got off at the station there and hunted somewhat for anyone that I might know or anyone that might look like a missionary.”⁵⁵

According to President Wood, Elder Seibold was a “big football player . . . who weighed over 200 pounds.”⁵⁶ Although his size made him conspicuous, it was an advantage to him at times. The big elder found the same crowded conditions inside the station in Cologne as he had experienced on the train. In addition, the station was noisy, and people were trying to get through the crowd to find traveling companions and connecting trains. The elder pushed his way into the confusion but could not find any missionaries because of the crowd. He climbed atop a baggage cart for a better view and whistled a favorite mission song, “Do What Is Right” (fig. 12).⁵⁷ Elder Seibold hoped to call together those who heard and recognized the song without having to yell or draw unnecessary attention to himself. Fortunately, the tactic worked, and Elder Seibold found a group of elders and an elderly missionary couple:

To carry any kind of a tune or to whistle any kind of a song is beyond me really. Like the old saying, I couldn’t carry a tune in a bushel basket. But I did



Courtesy Terry Bohle Montague

FIG. 12. Baggage cart in Frankfurt train station. To attract the attention of missionaries stranded in a crowded German train station, Elder Norman Seibold stood on such a cart and whistled the hymn “Do What Is Right.”

a pretty fair job when I jumped up on that baggage car[t] and whistled “Do What is Right,” because it got around, and a lot of people stopped, but it picked up several missionaries.⁵⁸

Elder Seibold gave each of the missionaries a ticket to London as well as sufficient money to see them through Holland to London. When they reached the Dutch border, the couple was allowed to enter Holland, but some of the elders were refused entrance by Dutch officials even though they also had tickets to London and the same amount of money as the couple. They were sent back across the border to Germany, where Elder Seibold caught up with them again. This time he bought them tickets to Hamburg, from where they eventually made their way to Copenhagen.

The couple was able to travel through Holland and on to England. From England they sailed home to the United States with a group of British missionaries. This couple’s experience was faith-promoting for Elder Seibold. As he noted in his journal, “That these old people got through shall be a testimony to me as long as I live, because what we went through in the next twenty-four hours, these old people could not have stood.”⁵⁹

Unfortunately, Seibold’s whistling atop the baggage cart attracted the attention of some local policemen in the train station.⁶⁰ After removing the missionary from his perch and asking him why he had been standing there whistling, they found that he had a large sum of money and decided to arrest him. Seibold resisted briefly, and the police threatened to take him out of the train depot and into the city police station. Besides his fear that the precious money would be confiscated, Elder Seibold “knew that if I got out of the station and got into city hands, I might be in a lot of trouble. At the time the policeman laid his hands on me, I knew better, but I told him that he’d better unhand me or there might be a fight. So he let me go.”⁶¹ Seibold felt that if his size had ever had an important effect, it certainly had on this occasion:

Now ordinarily you don’t refuse a German policeman anything. I told them that I would go see the military police, but I would not go into the city at all. Now why I did that I don’t know, but because I was large, maybe the Lord made me look larger or something and I got away with it.⁶²

The police then took him to the military officials positioned in the train station. After listening to his reasons for being where he was and for carrying such a large amount of money, one of the officers gave him a letter of introduction and explanation—a military clearance, in effect—to use if any other official tried to stop him.

Although he started his journey alone, by the time he reached the Danish border, Elder Seibold had collected a group of thirteen missionaries.⁶³ As he found them, he gave them tickets, money, or both, as needed, and traveled with them as he continued to search for other stranded missionaries. By this

time, most of the trains were being used only for troop transport, and the elders often traveled only a short way before being ordered off the train. They would then catch another train and ride until they were bumped off again. “[It] was just a matter of catching trains and bluffing conductors and policemen,” Seibold remembered, “but we made it.”⁶⁴

Finally reaching the Danish border, Elder Seibold and his group of missionaries ran into trouble. After the elders had bought tickets to cross into Denmark, the German guards would not let them board their train. The letter of introduction and explanation the officer in Cologne had given Elder Seibold now proved invaluable. On August 28, Elder Seibold wired the worried mission leaders waiting in Denmark that thirteen of the missing elders had safely crossed the Danish border and were on their way to Copenhagen.

Elder Seibold then turned back to Germany alone to continue his rescue mission. At places where he thought there would be missionaries, he received no impression to get off the train, so he continued on. At a town where he thought there was not a chance of finding any missionaries, he felt impressed to get off and investigate:

We had one experience that is faith promoting and really interesting in the way that it happened. I had a feeling or something that encouraged me to stop at a small station in a small town and to get out and go out into the station and look around. It was an out-of-the-way place and I had no idea that there would be anybody there. It felt like a waste of time. But I did it. There was hardly anyone in the station at the time and it was one of the more empty places on the whole trip. But I had a premonition to go outside the *Bahnhof* and out into the town, which seemed silly to me at the time. But we had a short wait and so I went. I passed a *Gasthaus*, a restaurant there, and I went inside and there were two missionaries there. It was fantastic, in that they both knew me and of course they were quite happy to see me. They had spent their last ten *pfennigs*, or you might call it their last dime, for a soft drink there—apple juice is what they were drinking.⁶⁵

Seibold acknowledged the influence of the spirit in finding these two elders: “I had to be led there, because I just wouldn’t have been smart enough to go there myself. . . . As surely as if someone had taken me by the hand, I was guided there.”⁶⁶

Seibold spent another day in Germany before he felt impressed that his job was done and it was time for him to leave. He had found seventeen of the thirty-one stranded or lost missionaries. The other fourteen had found their way out of the country in numerous ways. Elder Seibold was the last American missionary to come out of Germany after the Church ordered the evacuation.⁶⁷ Looking back on his experiences forty years later, Elder Seibold admitted, “In a lot of ways it was a lot of fun. We were at that time too young to know what kind of trouble we could have got[ten] in. But it has been a testimony and it has been a guiding thing to me in my life.”⁶⁸

The evacuation of the West German Mission had been accomplished in just over one week despite border closures, forced changes in travel plans, numerous problems due to lack of funds, and the restricted use of ground transportation and communications. Elder Seibold recognized the hand of the Lord in safely bringing the missionaries out of the war-threatened area:

“It was a wonderful time, and anything . . . I have said . . . might indicate . . . I had a whole lot to do with it needs to be qualified. The things that happened on this trip . . . were not my doing. It was strictly the hand and the guidance of the Lord. I feel it and I know it as well as anything. I’m not smart enough to comprehend or to foresee some of the things.”⁶⁹

The Final Step: Sailing for Home

Once all the missionaries had arrived in neutral countries, the focus of the evacuation changed to getting ship passage home, not only for the missionaries themselves, but for the mission presidents and their families as well.⁷⁰ Getting steamship tickets was not an easy task (fig. 13). In Holland, President Murdock encountered

thousands of people waiting in line to purchase tickets. . . . Some of the potential passengers were offering to pay as much as \$2,000 for standing room on any of the ships [passenger or freight] going to America . . . [when] tickets were selling for about \$200. They offered to provide their own food, sleep on the deck, if necessary, but would give the two thousand dollars for the opportunity to do so. Many of the steamship companies . . . had reservations as far ahead as February 1940.⁷¹

Numerous people also clamored for passage out of British ports. “The usual complement of passengers for the *SS Washington* [out of Southampton, England],” for example, “was 1,200 passengers. But on this trip [September 1939] there were 1,800 paying passengers.” Among those sailing on this ship were American sport, theater, movie, and political celebrities. Because of the crowded conditions, every available space was used to accommodate passengers, including the drained swimming pool, movie theaters, lounges, hallways, and even deck space.⁷² From Scandinavian ports, most of the missionaries boarded freighters retrofitted to accommodate passengers in cargo holds.

Conclusion

By late September, all American missionaries from the Czechoslovak and East and West German Missions had returned to the United States. Those from other missions in Europe reached American soil by mid-December.⁷³



Courtesy Dana W. Bishop

FIG. 13. The American freighter *Marmachawk* at Copenhagen, 1939. Freighters such as this were modified to accommodate passengers and used to transport mission personnel and other evacuees to the U.S. Although space was limited and tickets hard to come by, all American mission personnel were evacuated from Europe within three months.

Having directed the evacuation of the European missions, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith summed up the effort statistically:

There were in the European missions at the time [of the evacuation] 697 persons, of whom 611 were young men and 63 young women missionaries; the other 23 were mission presidents, their wives and children. These missionaries returned in 23 ships, mostly freight boats which had been improvised to care for the numerous passengers returning to America.⁷⁴

Upon instruction from the First Presidency, Elder Smith “released those missionaries who had served twenty or more months of their missions and transferred the rest to safer fields of labor in the United States.”⁷⁵

In the April 1940 general conference, President J. Reuben Clark Jr. touched on the miracles witnessed during the evacuation:

The whole group was moved from the disturbed areas in Europe to the United States, and thence either to their new fields of labor or to their homes, without one accident or one case of [serious] sickness. . . . The entire group was evacuated from Europe in three months, at a time when tens of thousands of Americans were besieging the ticket offices of the great steamship companies for passage, and the Elders had no reservations. Every time a group was ready to embark there was available the necessary space, even though efforts to reserve space a few hours before had failed.⁷⁶

Elder Harold B. Lee noted, "It is a matter of record that hardly had the last missionary been called home until all hell seemed to break loose in Europe, in veritable fulfillment of the prophecy that had been given."⁷⁷

Epilogue

During the war, the Saints in Europe endured incredible privations and suffering. That Church units in war-torn countries continued in spite of conditions is nothing short of heroic. Unfortunately, however, some members felt that the Church had abandoned them when the missionaries left. A Swedish member suggested that "the rats all leave when the ship goes down."⁷⁸ Another member charged that "at the first sign of trouble, the shepherd . . . run[s] off and leav[es] the sheep."⁷⁹

Although the local members had to remain behind and face the terrors of war while the American missionaries sailed for safety in America, in reality, the members in Europe were not abandoned. The missionary's role is that of messenger, not shepherd. A missionary is one appointed as a witness for Jesus Christ to take the news of the gospel to those who do not have it. When that messenger is unable to share the message effectively, he is no longer scripturally mandated to remain. The real shepherd of the flock is the Lord Jesus Christ, and he did not desert his sheep. Christ's under-shepherds were the local Church leaders.

During the war, membership in several European missions grew, financial contributions as measured by the payment of tithes increased, and Church organizations remained largely intact despite the absence of American missionaries. Elder Ezra Taft Benson's well-chronicled relief mission following the end of World War II contains numerous examples of individual privation and sacrifice but also notes the existence of functioning branches and faithful members. Much of the recent growth in Europe, as reflected in the number of members, local missionaries, stakes, and temples, can be traced to the leadership developed during an era when, because of the evacuation of the American missionaries, local individuals had to stand up and be counted.

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Boone has authored a companion article of the many missionaries from the Czechoslovak and East and West German Missions who evacuated Europe through Copenhagen. The article focuses on a thorough report of the evacuation by Danish Mission President Mark B. Garff. The article, based on a speech given at the Mormon History Association annual meeting in 2000, will appear in *Regional Studies in LDS Church History: Europe* (forthcoming, 2002).

1. "Church Completes Reassignment of European Missionaries," *Improvement Era* 42 (December 1939): 735.
2. Gilbert W. Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany: A History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany between 1840 and 1970* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 92. See Alfred C. Rees, in *One Hundred Tenth Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1939): 73.
3. Martha Toronto Anderson, *A Cherry Tree behind the Iron Curtain: The Autobiography of Martha Toronto Anderson* (Salt Lake City: By the author, 1977), 18.
4. Anderson, *Cherry Tree*, 18.
5. Anderson, *Cherry Tree*, 19–20. See Wallace F. Toronto, in *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1940), 52.
6. Toronto, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 52. See Anderson, *Cherry Tree*, 19–21.
7. Czechoslovak Mission History, June 20, 1939, typescript, 13, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
8. In his mission report, President Toronto explained that "other American and English citizens living in the German occupied territory had been held in lieu of ten thousand dollars each." Wallace F. Toronto to the First Presidency, September 18, 1939, 6, copy in possession of Allen Toronto.
9. Czechoslovak Mission History, December 31, 1939, 9. See Anderson, *Cherry Tree*, 26.
10. Czechoslovak Mission History, December 31, 1939, 9. See Anderson, *Cherry Tree*, 26.
11. Czechoslovak Mission History, December 31, 1939, 9. See Anderson, *Cherry Tree*, 26.
12. Asael Moulton, interview by Allen Toronto, date unknown, notes in author's possession.
13. Moulton, interview.
14. Anderson, *Cherry Tree*, 26.
15. Martha S. Toronto Anderson, James Moyle Oral History Program, interview by Richard O. Cowan and David F. Boone, February 1978, typescript, 1, Church Archives. See Czechoslovak Mission History, December 31, 1939, 11.
16. Anderson, Oral History, 3.
17. M. Douglas and Evelyn N. Wood, James Moyle Oral History Program, interview by Richard O. Cowan and David F. Boone, February 3, 1978, typescript, 16, Church Archives.
18. Albion Smith, interview by David F. Boone, August 25, 1978, quoted in David F. Boone, "The Worldwide Evacuation of Latter-day Saint Missionaries at the Beginning of World War II" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1981), 18.
19. Ralph W. Kauer, James Moyle Oral History Program, interview by David F. Boone, August 26, 1978, typescript, 5–6, Church Archives. See Boone, "Worldwide Evacuation," 18–19.
20. Kauer, Oral History, 6. See Boone, "Worldwide Evacuation," 19.
21. East German Mission Manuscript History, December 31, 1939, Church Archives.
22. As Sister Smith accompanied her husband on their European tour, she often used her distinguished, opera-quality, contralto voice to delight audiences of European members and missionaries. Occasionally she sang a song or two in the native language of her audience or persuaded President Smith to join her in a duet. Boone, "Worldwide Evacuation," 13.

23. Jessie Evans Smith, Journal, August 24, 1939, typescript, 13, Church Archives.

24. M. Douglas Wood, in *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 77–78.

25. This was the last commercial flight for that aircraft. When the plane arrived in Frankfurt, it was taken off the public transportation route and sent to the Polish front to carry troops, munitions, and supplies. Wood, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 78.

26. Wood, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 77; West German Manuscript History, August 27, 1939, typescript, Church Archives; Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, 95; Boone, “Worldwide Evacuation,” 23.

27. Swiss Mission Manuscript History, August 27, 1939, typescript, Church Archives; Mark Garff, Journal, August 28, 1939, typescript, 5, Church Archives; Boone, “Worldwide Evacuation,” 23.

28. Boone, “Worldwide Evacuation,” 23. See also Joseph Fielding Smith, introduction to “Border Incident,” by Ellis T. Rasmussen and John Robert Kest, *Improvement Era* 46 (December 1943): 752.

29. The Dutch had suffered a shortage of food during World War I and did not want foreigners in their country if war broke out again. They needed to save their limited food supplies for their own people. Wood, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 79; Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, 93.

30. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 526; Smith, Journal, 13; Smith, introduction to “Border Incident,” 752.

31. Smith, Journal, August 25, 1939, 13.

32. A. Burt Horsley, interview by David F. Boone, September 16, 1978, transcript in author’s possession.

33. Horsley, interview.

34. Horsley, interview.

35. Wood, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 79; Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, 93.

36. As the missionaries traveled toward Holland or arrived at the border, they often came in contact with other missionaries in the same predicament. Most of them stayed together, which ultimately made locating them easier because they were in groups rather than just in pairs. The six elders who joined with Horsley and Poll were John Dean, Edward Mabey, Lawrence Meyer, Wilford Woolf, John Bingham, and Joseph Loertscher. They later met up with Wesley Knudsen, Ralph Thompson, Harold E. Kratzer, and Richard Larkin Glade. Terry Bohle Montague, “*Mine Angels round About*”: *Mormon Missionary Evacuation from Western Germany, 1939*, 2d ed. (Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distribution, 2000), 71, 73; Rasmussen and Kest, “Border Incident.”

37. Richard D. Poll, Journal, August 27, 1939, original in family’s possession.

38. Wood, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 80–81.

39. Smith, Journal, August 30, 1939, 15.

40. Erma Rosenhan, Journal, August 26, 1939, typescript, Church Archives. There do not seem to have been any specific instructions regarding the evacuation of the sister missionaries, perhaps because there were so few of them. Except for Sister Rosenhan, there is no mention of lady missionaries from the Czechoslovak and German missions. This does not mean, however, that there were no other women. In addition to the mission presidents’ wives, a Miss Grace Olson is mentioned, although there is no specific information in available Church records about her status or her experiences during the evacuation. Sister Don C. Rigby (no given name listed) also traveled with the

elders during the evacuation. She had journeyed to Germany to meet her soon-to-be-released husband and accompany him home. Her plans were realized but certainly not in a way either of them could have imagined.

41. In addition to Knutti, this group included Ellis T. Rasmussen, Rayo Parker, William Thayne, Claytor Larsen, and Louis J. Haws. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 753; Montague, "*Mine Angels round About*," 63.

42. Frank Knutti, Journal, August 26, 1939, copy in author's possession.

43. Elder Kest knew the Murdocks well, and according to his sister, John Robert's association with the president and his family may explain why he was chosen for such an important mission: "[President Murdock's] wife was Claire Murdock. She was very musical. And so my brother Bob, being so interested in music himself, he was a singer and an actor, became kind of special to them I think. They produced the opera *Martha* for the Dutch Saints during the early part of that year [1939]." Marjorie K. Crooks, interview by David F. Boone, September 29, 1999, transcript in author's possession.

44. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 795.

45. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 796.

46. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 796.

47. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 796.

48. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 796.

49. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 796.

50. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 796.

51. Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident," 793. See also Montague, "*Mine Angels round About*," 93, 95.

52. Norman George Seibold, James Moyle Oral History Program, interview by David F. Boone, 1978, typescript, 4, Church Archives.

53. Wood, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 79; West German Mission Manuscript History, August 26, 1939, quoted in Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, 94.

54. Wood, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 80; West German Mission Manuscript History, August 26, 1939, quoted in Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, 94.

55. Seibold, Oral History, 4.

56. Wood, *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 79, quoted in Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, 94.

57. "Do What Is Right," in *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 237.

58. Seibold, Oral History, 12.

59. Seibold, Oral History, 6. The uncertainty of rail travel in a country involved in military mobilization took its toll on even the young elders. They had to change trains frequently, go out of their way to make connections, and endure irregular schedules before finally reaching safety, tired and often hungry, in either Holland or Denmark.

60. There are slight discrepancies, especially in dates, place names, and the sequence of events, in different accounts of the evacuation from the West German Mission. I conducted the interviews cited in this article in the late 1970s and early 1980s, approximately forty years after these events took place. As Seibold admitted, "Forty years is a long time and my mind is a little dim on some of it as far as the sequence of the thing. . . . I'll tell the story as I remember it." Seibold, Oral History, 4. Montague, in "*Mine Angels round About*," 85–86, identifies the train station where Seibold confronted the police as the Emmerich, Germany, station rather than the Cologne station. According to Montague's account, it was at Cologne that Seibold climbed onto the baggage cart and whistled but at Emmerich that he was threatened by the police, probably because they had seen the large amount of money he was carrying.

61. Seibold, Oral History, 5.

62. Seibold, Oral History, 12.

63. See Montague, "*Mine Angels round About*," 83–100. Montague based her account of Seibold's rescue mission on an interview with him and also on interviews and correspondence with several of the missionaries he found along the way and who shared at least part of the journey through Germany to Denmark. Among them were Owen Ken Earl, Louis J. Haws, Charles Jenkins Jr., William Manning, Ferryle McOmer, and Frank Knutti. She also drew information from the journal of Ben Lasrich and from Rasmussen and Kest, "Border Incident." (Rasmussen's group met and joined with Seibold's group and are among the thirteen elders who arrived in Denmark on August 28.) When I interviewed Seibold in 1978, he did not remember spending much time traveling with any group. "I was alone most of the time," he recalled. "There were short distances that I would travel with the brethren and then I'd send them off. . . . I haven't recorded it in my journal and I can't remember for sure." Seibold, Oral History, 5.

64. Seibold, Oral History, 6.

65. Seibold, Oral History, 6.

66. Seibold, Oral History, 11–12.

67. According to Montague, there were two elders from the West German Mission who were still in Austria. Assigned to a remote rural area, Elders Nephi Henry Duersch and Robert J. Gillespie were bicycling from village to village and staying with members during the last week of August when the telegrams ordering the evacuation went out. They did not return to their apartment and read their telegram until September 2. The two managed to catch a train to Stuttgart, Germany, and another to Basel, Switzerland, arriving there in the early morning of September 3. Montague, "*Mine Angels round About*," 101–102.

68. Seibold, Oral History, 11.

69. Seibold, Oral History, 11.

70. England, Denmark, and Holland were, for the most part, the host countries for the evacuating missionaries. Except in isolated instances, the major focus of mission leaders in these countries was to provide ship passage home for the departing missionaries.

71. Franklin J. Murdock, interview by David F. Boone, January 20, 1981, transcript in author's possession.

72. Boone, "Worldwide Evacuation," 112.

73. Unusual and faith-promoting experiences occurred in every aspect of the missionary evacuation. The missionaries leaving the Czechoslovak and West German Missions (almost one hundred in number) had the most harrowing experiences getting to neutral countries. Many of them recorded personal experiences in journals, correspondence, and mission reports, and these, along with oral and mission histories, provided many personal insights and details for this article. More than sixty years after the evacuation, many of these former missionaries still became animated and excited just remembering events and sharing their experiences. Several worthwhile compilations of the experiences of evacuating missionary personnel are also of great interest and are a valuable part of preserving the past. References include several graduate level studies on Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland. Published sources on the evacuation are limited but include Smith, *Essentials in Church History*; and James B. Allen and Glenn M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992). Elder Smith's volume is included because of his personal involvement as the General Authority supervising the evacuation. Works specifically dedicated to the missionary evacuation include Montague, "*Mine Angels round About*"; and Boone, "Worldwide Evacuation." Histories on specific

European areas include Bruce Van Orden, *Building Zion: The Latter-day Saints in Europe* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996); Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*; and Albert L. Zobell Jr., *Under the Midnight Sun: Centennial History of Scandinavian Missions* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950).

74. Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 526. Elder Smith's summary refers to all the missions of Europe, not just the Czechoslovak and East and West German Missions.

75. Curtis B. Hunsaker, "History of the Norwegian Mission from 1851 to 1960" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1965), 86; East German Mission History, December 31, 1939.

76. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in *One Hundred Tenth Annual Conference*, 20.

77. Harold B. Lee, in *One Hundred Thirteenth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1943), 128.

78. Personal conversation by the author with Carl-Erik Johanson, December 17, 1980, notes in author's possession.

79. Leone Openshaw Jacobs, interview by David F. Boone, transcript in author's possession.

A Joseph Smith for the Twenty-First Century

Richard Lyman Bushman

Since Henry Caswall published *The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century* in 1843, a year before Joseph Smith's death, nineteen book-length biographies of the Prophet have appeared in print, more than half of them since 1940.¹ They differ wildly in tone and perspective, as might be imagined. Several are still worth considering by serious students of Joseph Smith's life. Among the more notable, I. Woodbridge Riley's *The Founder of Mormonism* is severely critical but ingenious and original, the first biography to attempt a scientific explanation of Joseph Smith's revelations.² Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* is a magnificent piece of journalism that oscillates between snide skepticism and genuine admiration and is always interesting.³ John Henry Evans's enthusiastic presentation of the Prophet's achievements in *Joseph Smith, an American Prophet* is credited by former Church Historian Leonard Arrington with having attracted him to Church history.⁴ Donna Hill's balanced but noncommittal *Joseph Smith, the First Mormon* tells a good tale with the benefit of her brother Marvin Hill's extensive knowledge of Joseph Smith's life.⁵ Hill's is the biography Latter-day Saints are most likely to recommend to interested friends. Each of these studies deserves attention from anyone seriously interested in Joseph Smith. After more than half a century, *No Man Knows My History* is still considered by most American historians as the best account of Joseph's life. To the surprise of Mormons, many non-Mormon readers think that Brodie presents a sympathetic as well as a revealing picture of Joseph Smith.⁶

We have no reason to think that the writing of biographies about the Prophet will cease as we enter the twenty-first century. Major historical figures always invite reassessment, and interest in Joseph Smith shows no signs of flagging. The relentless growth of the Church makes him more important now than ever. To account for Mormonism's modern success, the mysteries of Joseph Smith have to be plumbed. How are we to understand this extravagant and bold figure whose work has now attracted millions of followers all over the world? How can Joseph be situated in American culture and now in global culture? Why was he so successful? Puzzles such as these are sure to attract biographers in the coming century.

Over the past hundred years, two issues have shaped writing on Joseph Smith, and as we move into the twenty-first century, it may be worth speculating on how these questions will be addressed in the future. May we

expect sharp departures, or will the classic questions be answered in the classic ways? The first of these is the question of belief. Until now, the tone and import of a Joseph Smith biography has depended heavily on whether or not the author believed in Joseph's revelations. Will the author's attitude toward the authenticity of the revelations continue to govern the organization of biographies in the future as they have in the past?

The second issue is the question of significance. What is the place of Mormonism in American history? Where did Mormonism come from? What is its impact? What does Mormonism tell us about America? These questions bear directly on Joseph Smith's life, and the answers are sure to change as our understanding of American culture evolves. The discussion will become even more complicated as Mormonism spreads around the globe. Mormon historians rarely deal with the question of significance, but non-Mormon readers want an answer. Mormon authors should contribute to this speculation as it goes forward rather than leaving the question of significance to outsiders and critics.

Belief and Joseph Smith's Life

The issue of belief was recently posed to me by Alfred Bush, curator of Western Americana at the Firestone Library at Princeton University. Because of his Mormon background, Bush is one of the most attentive observers of the Mormon scene and is responsible for a superb collection of Mormon Americana at the Firestone. When he learned I was writing a biography of Joseph Smith, he told me that I must address the question of the historicity of the Book of Mormon. The historian is responsible, Bush insisted, for determining whether or not the book is true history.

I see this as a version of a question that has dominated writing on Joseph Smith from the beginning: Was Joseph Smith a prophet to whom God actually spoke? Were the Book of Mormon and the other revelations—amounting to over 800 pages of writing—from God or were they the fabrications of a human mind? Although Mormons and their critics answer differently, they all deal with this question of authenticity, and the author's answer determines a great deal about how a biography is put together.

The issue of authenticity can be thought of as a governing question. The writer's position on the revelations has consequences far beyond the passages where the revelations themselves are discussed. If the author believes in the revelations, the story is likely to take the following shape:

1. Joseph's character and personality will be conceived positively (fig. 1). A believing author will tend to see Joseph as possessing a character worthy of a prophet. George Q. Cannon said of the Prophet, "His magnetism was masterful, and his heroic qualities won universal admiration."⁷ For these



FIG. 1. Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith. Believing biographers of Joseph Smith are more likely to represent Joseph in words and images consonant with his own stated calling. The engravings shown here, based in part on sketches made in 1842, comprised the frontispiece in George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith, the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888). These images show the two Church leaders in a dignified, respectable bearing, underscoring the believers' view of Joseph Smith as a sincere witness and martyr. The images evoked the memory of Joseph and Hyrum together, who "in life . . . were not divided, and in death . . . were not separated" (D&C 135:3).

biographers, faults get overlooked and virtues magnified. Critical historians always suspect believing historians of whitewashing Joseph and his family. After my book *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* appeared, I was asked by one colleague why I had not mentioned Joseph Smith Sr.'s bouts of intoxication. Actually it was a slip in my scholarship, but the critics thought I was covering up. Unbelievers would never make such a mistake. They would be sure to notice Father Smith's somewhat demeaning weakness.

2. Believers will see Joseph's doctrines as unique or at least inspiring. His revelations look like new truth bursting on the earth. John Henry Evans inspired Leonard Arrington because Evans was so upbeat about Joseph's teachings. "Joseph Smith's attraction," Evans wrote, "lay partly in his personality, but mainly in the dynamic power of his religious philosophy."⁸ Non-Mormons tend to think that the Book of Mormon is simplistic and easily dismissed.⁹ Believers see its profundities and complexities.

3. Among believers there is an inclination toward providential history, that is, to see the hand of the Lord working on the Saints' behalf. They are likely to play up small miracles in everyday life. The Mormon world is filled with God's presence. Consequently, the biography's overall plot line is

inclined to be triumphalist. Struggle is a form of testing that brings success in the end. This is God's cause, and it will eventually overcome all opposition.¹⁰

Skeptics, on the other hand, give the narrative another form:

1. Joseph has to become in some sense a scoundrel. The reason for this is that he pretended to have revelations that the author believes were fabricated. It follows that Joseph deceived his followers by claiming revelation he was not really receiving. He almost inevitably therefore becomes a showman or a con man. This is the way Brodie puts it:

For Joseph what was a dream one day could become a vision the next, and a reality the day after that. It is doubtful if he ever escaped the memory of the conscious artifice that went into the Book of Mormon, but its phenomenal success must have stifled any troublesome qualms. And at an early period he seems to have reached an inner equilibrium that permitted him to pursue his career with a highly compensated but nevertheless very real sincerity. Certainly a persisting consciousness of guilt over the cunning and deception with which his prophetic career was launched would eventually have destroyed him.¹¹

Starting with such assumptions about Joseph Smith's character, one can expect all sorts of relapses into deceptive behavior because a lie lay at the bottom of his life. Joseph becomes morally ambiguous, doing many noble and heroic things but also capable of base behavior—a divided man at his core.¹²

2. Because Joseph's revelations are thought to be a concoction, the skeptical biographer has to locate the sources of the revelations. Where did all the components of the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses come from? As Brodie puts it, Joseph Smith's theology was "a patchwork of ideas and rituals drawn from every quarter."¹³ This assertion leads to a survey of all kinds of source materials, sometimes ranging far into the past in search of precedents for his ideas.¹⁴ Since Joseph wrote so much, it is difficult to locate a source for everything, so these biographers content themselves with a few examples and presume the rest could be accounted for by further searching. Strangely, not much credit is given to Joseph's own imagination and certainly none to God. The skeptics show a peculiar reluctance to suggest Joseph might have had independent genius, even though writing the Book of Mormon in three months is surely one of the greatest writing feats of all time.

3. Along the same line, the skeptic may have to work out the devious means by which Joseph carried off his deceptions. Having to account for the testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses, skeptics speculate about making supposed gold plates out of tin or filling a box with sand to make it heavy enough to feel like gold. The requirement of discovering the magician performing his tricks results in the fabrication of events, comparable to the attenuated explanations of the Spaulding theory in the previous century where Sidney Rigdon had to be shown smuggling the manuscript of the Book of Mormon to Joseph.¹⁵

These contrasting qualities could be elaborated, but they suggest, I hope, how the question of authenticity has shaped the organization and tone of writings about Joseph Smith in the twentieth century. Doubtless the question of authenticity will not die in the twenty-first century, but I believe that this issue has steadily been losing its edge and that a growing body of readers are ready for another depiction of the Prophet. These readers do not want to be caught up in the battles of believers and disbelievers; they are more interested in knowing about an extraordinarily intriguing person.

This group of readers, I suggest, may not be satisfied with the choices that Dan Vogel, one of Joseph's best-informed critics, offers to readers of Joseph Smith biographies. In describing some of the supernatural events in Joseph's early life, Vogel says that we have three choices: (1) Joseph Smith *consciously* deceived people by making up events and lying about them; (2) he *unconsciously* deceived people by imagining events and calling them real; (3) he told the truth. Vogel asserts that we cannot believe that Joseph told the truth without abandoning all "rationalist categories of historical investigation."¹⁶ No one can believe rationally in the actuality of supernatural happenings of the kind Joseph claimed for himself. Therefore, he must have been a deceiver, either consciously or unconsciously. Like Brodie, Vogel leans toward conscious deceit. Vogel believes Joseph Smith knowingly lied by claiming that he translated the Book of Mormon when in fact Joseph was making it up as he went along.

For my hypothetical body of twenty-first century readers, Vogel's alternatives represent a hard choice. Readers are being asked to consider the revelations as either true or a form of deception. Joseph Smith either spoke for God or he duped people. There is no middle ground. Vogel's set of alternatives represents a version of what I would call "the strict Enlightenment," by which I mean a form of Enlightenment thought that forces everything into rational categories of analysis and refuses to admit the validity of any other forms of thought and belief. By this strict standard, Mohammad's vision of Gabriel carrying him to Jerusalem was a form of conscious or unconscious deception. Saint Theresa's transports, Native American vision quests, Saint Paul's encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus—all these and hundreds of other reports of visitations and journeys into heaven are conscious deceptions, or they are the product of the visionaries' imaginations and are thus unconscious deceptions.

The Enlightenment had a word for all these supposed revelations: superstition. Joseph was categorized with a long line of impostors starting with Mohammad and continuing down through the French Prophets and Joanna Southcott, the notorious English prophetess.¹⁷ Enlightened newspaper editors and critics of religion dealt with revelators by classifying

them all as frauds and throwing them all on the trash heap together. For many years, Roget's *Thesaurus* listed the Qur'an and Book of Mormon together under "pseudo-revelation"¹⁸ (fig. 2). Joseph Smith, Mohammad, and other extrabiblical prophets could be understood by putting them in the company of impostors through the ages.

In this postmodern era, when the Enlightenment itself has been discredited, many readers may prefer to be less strict in their rationality. Vogel himself thinks of Joseph Smith as a sincere deceiver. He sympathetically concludes, "I suggest Smith really believed he was called of God to preach repentance to a sinful world but that he felt justified in using deception to accomplish his mission more fully."¹⁹ Many readers want to see human life as variegated, strange, and rife with complex possibilities. These new readers are open to experiences beyond the ordinary. They want to observe lives that are unlike their own, sometimes in astounding ways. As George Eliot said of the visionary Theresa of Avila, "Who that cares much to know the history of man, and how the mysterious mixture behaves under the varying experiments of Time, has not dwelt, at least briefly, on the life of Saint Theresa."²⁰ In other words, Theresa's visions take us to the outer reaches of human capacity to places we don't ordinarily go. This desire to explore the varieties of human experience does not require a dissection of every supposedly supernatural event in order to find its rational, scientific basis. We realize now that dissection kills the animal put under the knife. We grant visionaries the benefit of the doubt and acknowledge that they may have had experiences beyond conventional understanding and knowledge. They are part of a grand human effort to discover meaning through poetry, art, and revelation. We can delight in the diversity of human experience and rejoice in all that God has wrought among his children. Modern readers may be willing to allow that Joseph Smith was sincere in saying he had visions and translated the Book of Mormon, and simply want to know more. To call him a deceiver misses the point of visions. In *The American Religion*, the literary critic Harold Bloom, no believer in revealed religion, relished the genius of Joseph Smith's historical revelations without getting bogged down in questions of scientific authenticity.²¹

986. Pseudo-Revelation.*—N. the -Koran, — Alcoran; Ly-king, Shaster, Vedas, Zendavesta, Vedidad, Purana, Edda; Go-, Gau-tama; Book of Mormon.

FIG. 2. Entry in Roget's *Thesaurus*, 1935. Enlightenment thinking placed the Book of Mormon and other religious texts and words into categories that marginalized them. Entry 986 of Roget's *Thesaurus* puts the Book of Mormon under "pseudo-revelation." Peter Mark Roget, John Lewis Roget, and Samuel Romilly Roget, *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases, Authorized American Edition* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1935).

The common presumption nowadays is that visionaries should not be called “pious frauds,” Vogel’s term.²² That broad tolerance has come about partially because of developments outside of Mormon historiography. In a postcolonial time, the accusation that strange religions are superstitions has been discredited by our experience with native peoples. Imperialists once applied the term “superstition” to the religions of colonized populations. Discrediting their religion as superstition was one step in subjecting them. Now, in our effort to see these colonized people on their own terms, we want to give their religions full credit. That transformation in the study of world religions has prepared an audience to give more credence to Joseph Smith. Rather than colonizing him in the name of Enlightenment rationality, we listen more sympathetically. Contemporary readers will look upon Joseph Smith as if they were tolerant ethnographers going among native people. Interested students will want to learn about the world of early Mormonism without disrupting it and get as close as they can to the experience of revelation as Joseph experienced it.

I have presented the passing of the old twentieth-century issue of authenticity as if this were a gain for Mormons. Biographers of Joseph Smith now can write for an audience with broad sympathies who will want to know more about revelation and will not require that it be explained as pious deception. But I wish now to reverse direction and ask if Mormons will be happy with this outcome. Is it an improvement to end the war between believers and unbelievers that raged in the biographies of the twentieth century? The new tolerance permits a believing biographer like myself to present more of Joseph’s revelations without fear of running up against a wall of hostile disbelief, but is that advantage counteracted by a blurring of the real issues? Wouldn’t believing biographers prefer to have the question of authenticity laid squarely before our readers, even at the cost of having the revelations disputed? Do we want Joseph Smith’s challenge to the world to be lost in a haze of a patronizing kindness?

By giving in to tolerance, there is a danger that Mormonism will be treated like voodoo or shamanism—something to examine in excruciating detail and with labored respect, while privately the ethnographers believe these religious manifestations are the product of frenzied minds and a primitive, prescientific outlook. Wouldn’t we prefer to be taken seriously enough to be directly opposed rather than condescended to? Right now, the Book of Mormon might aspire to be classed with the Qur’an as the inspired book of a great world religion. Many readers would go with us that far. But are Mormons willing to accept that judgment, or do we want a more exclusive claim on revelation? Many Mormons believe that Joseph Smith and the scriptural revelations are in a class of their own, distinct from Saint Theresa and Mohammad and would be unhappy to be put on such a list, no matter how distinguished the other visionaries.

One fact in Joseph Smith's history may prevent his complete absorption into the muffling embrace of liberal tolerance, and that fact is the existence of the gold plates. Many modern readers will acknowledge Joseph's sincerity in his more ordinary run of revelations. They can imagine holy words coming into his mind as he wrote, "Hearken, O ye people of my Church" (D&C 1:1). Most of the Doctrine and Covenants fits within the limits of believable revelation—though privately the readers may feel the words came from no greater distance than Joseph's own subconscious. But gold plates, sitting on the table as Joseph translated, shown to witnesses to feel and examine, touched by Emma as she cleaned house? Such a tangible artifact is hard to attribute to a standard religious experience, even in an extraordinary person such as Joseph. With the gold plates, we cross into the realm of deception or psychotic delusion. In the minds of many readers, to see and touch forty pounds of gold plates with ancient writings on them, people had to be either tricked or confused. Joseph turns back into the impostor or self-deluded fanatic.²³

Here the old issue, then, reasserts itself. The broad-minded reader has to ask, Can it be possible that Joseph Smith did receive the gold plates from an angel? Was he guided by heaven, or was he not? There is no hiding behind the marvelous workings of the human spirit in explaining the plates. Either something fishy was going on, or Joseph did have a visitor from heaven.

The believing biographer here must abandon his tolerant readers to their own devices. The believer cannot help the unbeliever understand and sympathize with Joseph recovering the plates from the hillside. In that moment the issue is joined, the old issue that has hovered over accounts of Joseph's life from the beginning: Did God speak to him or not?

The Significance of Joseph Smith in American History

The second issue, the question of significance, has never been satisfactorily addressed by twentieth-century Mormon biographers. What do Joseph Smith and Mormonism mean in American history? We call him an American prophet; what is his place in American history? What was the impact of his religion? What do Joseph Smith and Mormonism reveal about the nature of American culture?

Mormons have fiddled with answers, but we rarely address the question seriously because it is of little concern to us. The Restoration is of such immense importance in world history that it carries its meaning on the surface as far as we are concerned. In the Restoration, God enters history to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ. Compared to that transcendent purpose, Mormonism's place in American history is of secondary concern.

In fact, Latter-day Saints are inclined to reverse the order and place American history in the history of the gospel. We think that Western civilization has been shaped in preparation for the Restoration. The breakup of the medieval church, the rise of learning and free inquiry, the separation of church and state, even a technology like printing are seen as providential preparation for the Restoration. The United States, in the Mormon view, was founded to make a home for the Church.²⁴

Unbelievers, of course, are not satisfied with this view of events. They want to wrench Mormonism out of our conspectus and fit it into their own historical schemes, a task that, unfortunately, is not easily accomplished.²⁵ The trouble is not a paucity of explanations but an overabundance. With so many being offered, how do we choose from among them? They are so diverse, we feel in danger of losing intellectual coherence. Mormonism appears to be so many things it goes out of focus.

Without going into details or evaluation, let me list some of the alternatives for situating Joseph Smith in American history, most of them of recent vintage. Interest in the question of significance has grown as Mormon and non-Mormon historians have become less combative.

1. Dan Vogel argued in *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (1988) that Mormonism derived many of its doctrines and a basic attitude from a tradition of religious seeking going back to Roger Williams. In his later years, Williams believed authority had been lost and people must wait for God to bring back revelation and authority. Closer to Joseph Smith's time, the Irvingites or Catholic Apostolic Church in England searched for prophetic utterance and appointed apostles according to revelation. Vogel believed Mormons branched out of this Seeker movement.²⁶

2. In another study, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (1987), Michael Quinn suggested that many early Mormons saw the world under the spell of magic. Building on the work of Jon Butler and Keith Thomas, historians of American and European magic, Quinn made Joseph Smith into a practitioner of magic whose magical worldview infused his teachings and writings.²⁷

3. John Brooke's widely acclaimed *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (1994), discovered in Mormonism a strange brand of philosophy and religion supposedly traceable to Hermes Trismegistus, the mythical ancient-Egyptian theologian. Many scholars have shown how early modern Hermeticism, intermixed with alchemy, flowed into the Rosicrucian movement and Free Masonry. Brooke tried to find Hermeticism in Mormonism (fig. 3) and in fact argued for its dominant influence on Joseph Smith's distinctive doctrines.²⁸

4. In another vein entirely, Kenneth Winn wrote a volume on Mormonism and Republicanism, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty* (1989), at a time

when the social and political ideology of the Revolution seemed to be a key to the understanding of American history.²⁹

5. In *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (1988), Richard Hughes and C. Leonard Allen link Joseph Smith to the Restorationists—those who wished to return to the practices and beliefs of primitive Christianity.³⁰ Mormons themselves are comfortable with this category. An article of faith states that “we believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church.”

6. Earlier, Alice Freeman Tyler’s *Freedom’s Ferment* (1944) placed Joseph Smith among utopian reformers because of the Prophet’s plans for the City of Zion, putting him in a class with the Shakers and the founders of Brook Farm. In his massive *Religious History of the American People* (1972), the Yale scholar Sydney E. Ahlstrom accepted Tyler’s categorization and inserted a discussion of Mormonism in a chapter titled “The Communitarian Impulse.”³¹

7. In *The Democratization of Christianity* (1989), Nathan Hatch made Mormons exemplars of a democratic impulse among early national Christians. Mormonism attacked cultural elites and returned religious power to ordinary people, linking Joseph Smith to the democratic forces coming out of the Revolution.³²

8. Grant Underwood’s *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (1993) made a persuasive argument for Mormonism as a form of millenarianism.³³

I have doubtless overlooked explanations, but the list of eight is long enough to make the point. Mormonism cannot be accounted for simply, any more than can the Constitution or other complex phenomena in our history. Each of these books standing alone seems to locate Mormonism satisfactorily, but taken together they show the elusiveness of significance. After reading them all, we see that no simple answer to the initial question can be given. Mormonism is multifaceted, diverse, baroque in its effulgence of meanings.

The problem is further complicated by Mormonism’s estrangement from American society. For a movement that purportedly incorporated so many elements from the surrounding culture, Mormonism found itself at odds with that culture over and over again. I don’t mean arguments, I mean violence. None of the Saints’ American neighbors accepted them for very long. Wherever the Latter-day Saints settled in the nineteenth century, they were rejected like a failed kidney transplant. In New York, Missouri, Illinois, and even Utah, the Saints were attacked by force and compelled to change or die. Far from being fundamentally American, something about Mormonism repulsed large numbers of Americans.³⁴

Every attempt to assimilate the Restoration into some schema has to face the possibility that Mormonism was more un-American than American.



FIG. 3. Mountains of the Adepts, ca. 1667. Recent attempts at situating Joseph Smith's revelations in history have led some historians to arcane sources greatly separated in time and distance from Joseph Smith's early home in upper state New York. Historian John L. Brooke's *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), reproduces this seventeenth-century Rosicrucian drawing in his discussion of some of the "formative influence[s] on the young Joseph Smith" (19). The drawing, which shows a blindfolded initiate ready to be taught the seven alchemical stages of perfection, was originally published in a Steffen Michelspacher, *Cabala, Speculum, Artis et Naturae, in Alchemia* (Augsburg, Germany, 1667). Courtesy of Department of Special Collections, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

There is more evidence of Mormonism's alienation from the nineteenth-century United States than of it being a natural outgrowth of American culture. The American connection grows ever more tenuous as Mormonism is increasingly viewed as a world religion. If Mormonism is so American, why the immediate success in nineteenth-century Europe and the rapid twentieth-century growth in Latin America and the Philippines?

I see no way to resolve this problem. I am inclined to increase the confusion rather than clarifying it by adding still another dimension, but one that explains the conflicts with Americans. One place to start on the question of significance is with the single most important principle of the Restoration—revelation. With the Restoration, God began directing his Church again, speaking to prophets, actively engaging in a work. We cannot say Joseph was the only one who laid claim to revelations. The Free Will Baptists, the Universalists, the Shakers—all had founders who received open visions of God when they were called to their work. But among all these, Joseph was preeminent in the extent of his claims, in the number of his revelations, and in the success of his movement.³⁵ What was the significance of his reliance on revelation?

All these visionaries, and Joseph most of all, discerned what orthodox Christianity had forgotten—that biblical authority still rests, as it always has, on revelation. The Bible's cultural influence was based on the belief that God revealed himself to prophets. The reason for embracing the Bible was that its words had come from heaven. Christianity had smothered this self-evident fact by relegating revelation to a bygone age, making the Bible an archive rather than a living reality. The significance of Joseph Smith—and other prophets of his time—was their introduction of revelation into the present, renewing contact with the Bible's God.

Reliance on revelation made Joseph Smith appear marginal in American Christianity, but like marginal people before him, Joseph aimed a question at the heart of the culture: Did Christians truly believe in revelation? If believers in the Bible dismissed revelation in the present, could they defend revelation in the past? By 1830 when Joseph came on the scene, the question of revelation had been hotly debated for well over a century. Since the first years of the eighteenth century, rational Christians had been struggling with deists, skeptics, and infidels over the veracity of miracles and the inspiration of the prophets and apostles. In 1829, Alexander Campbell debated with the atheist Robert Owen for an entire week on the question of revelation and miracles.³⁶ Campbell believed he had proven God's presence in the Bible, but doubt lingered on, and over the course of the nineteenth century, belief in revelation eroded among the educated classes. Through the intellectual wars with skeptics and higher critics, believers steadily lost ground. The loss was only dimly perceived by everyday Christians

in Joseph Smith's time, but in the half-century to come, the issue divided divinity schools and shook ordinary people.³⁷

Joseph stood against that ebbing current. He prophesied and received revelation exactly as Christians thought Bible prophets did. In effect, he reenacted the writing of the Bible before the Christian world's eyes.³⁸ Most dismissed him as a charlatan without even bothering to evaluate his doctrine. The people in Palmyra decided the Book of Mormon was bogus before they saw it. Their precipitous condemnation betrayed their doubts about the possibility of revelation. If revelation in the present was so far out of the question that Joseph's claims could be discounted without serious consideration, why believe revelation in the past? After one incredulous visitor marveled that the Mormon Prophet was "nothing but a man," Joseph remarked that "they look upon it as incredible that a man should have any intercourse with his Maker."³⁹ That was exactly the point. People had lost faith that a person could receive revelation. Joseph's life posed the question: Does God speak to man?⁴⁰

In this sense, Joseph was among the "extremist prophets," as one pair of historians have called them.⁴¹ He forced the question of revelation on a culture struggling with its own faith. Joseph's historical role, as he understood it, was to give God a voice in a world that had stopped listening. "The Gentiles shall say," Nephi wrote in the Book of Mormon, "A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible." "O fools," the Lord rejoins, "know ye not . . . that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that I speak forth my words according to mine own pleasure" (2 Ne. 29:3–4, 7, 9). Not only does the Book of Mormon show that God does "inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old" (D&C 20:11). But the reality of revelation in the present also proves the reality of revelation in the past. One reason for restoring the Book of Mormon, an early revelation said, is to prove "that the holy scriptures are true" (D&C 20:11). In reply to a minister's inquiry about the distinguishing doctrine of Mormonism, Joseph told him, "We believe the Bible, and they do not."⁴²

At some level, Joseph's revelations indicate a loss of trust in the Christian ministry. For all their learning and their eloquence, the clergy could not be trusted with the Bible. They did not understand what the book meant. It was a record of revelations, and the ministry had turned it into a handbook. The Bible had become a text to be interpreted rather than an experience to be lived. In the process, the power of the book was lost. In Joseph Smith's 1839 account of the First Vision, that was the charge against the churches. "They teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof" (JS–H 1:19). It was the power thereof that Joseph and the other visionaries of his time sought to recover. Not getting it from the ministry, they looked for it themselves.

To me, that is Joseph Smith's significance for our time. He stood on the contested ground where the Enlightenment and Christianity confronted one another, and his life posed the question, Do you believe God speaks? Joseph was swept aside, of course, in the rush of ensuing intellectual battles and was disregarded by the champions of both great systems, but his mission was to hold out for the reality of divine revelation and establish one small outpost where that principle survived. Joseph's revelatory principle is not a single revelation serving for all time, as the Christians of his day believed regarding the incarnation of Christ, nor a mild sort of inspiration seeping into the minds of all good people, but specific, ongoing directions from God to his people. At a time when the origins of Christianity were under assault by the forces of Enlightenment rationality, Joseph Smith returned modern Christianity to its origins in revelation.

For that reason, rationalists today are required to attack Joseph Smith's revelations. Mormonism revives all the claims to heavenly authority that the Enlightenment was invented to repulse. Since the Enlightenment is far from dead, a biographer of Joseph Smith cannot escape its skepticism. Even if general readers momentarily suspend disbelief, in the end most of them will not believe. That is a fact in our modern world. Educated believers are in a small minority. We write under a different constellation of intellectual moods and fashions in the twenty-first century, but the rationalist doubts of the twentieth century are still with us.

Despite the prevailing disbelief, some modern readers will enjoy the story of an old-fashioned prophet rising once more. Appalled by the miseries of our time, they may feel that the world is desperate for revelation from a caring God. Rather than dismiss Joseph out of hand as a blatant fraud, they will listen and observe. Is it possible that biblical revelation could be renewed? Could the Enlightenment have shut up the heavens through its disbelief? Must we foreclose the very possibility of divine communication? Those questions, raised by this "modern" prophet, may seem worth pondering by at least a few.

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1843). For a review of Caswall's career, see Craig L. Foster, "Henry Caswall: Anti-Mormon Extraordinaire," *BYU Studies* 35, no. 4 (1995–96): 144–59.

2. I. Woodbridge Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism: A Psychological Study of Joseph Smith, Jr.* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1902), based on his earlier dissertation, "A Psychological History of Joseph Smith, Jr., the Founder of Mormonism" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1902).

3. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945). A revised and enlarged edition was published in 1971. The many book reviews of *No Man Knows My History* are digested in Louis Midgley, "F. M. Brodie—'The Fasting Hermit and Very Saint of Ignorance': A Biographer and Her Legend," *FARMS Review of Books* 8, no. 2 (1996): 147–230.

4. John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith, an American Prophet* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 21.

5. Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith, the First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977).

6. Newell G. Bringhurst, "Applause, Attack, and Ambivalence: Varied Responses to *No Man Knows My History*," in *Reconsidering No Man Knows My History: Fawn M. Brodie and Joseph Smith in Retrospect*, ed. Newell G. Bringhurst (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 53–55.

In addition to the five biographies of Joseph Smith already mentioned, my list, arranged chronologically, includes Edward W. Tullidge, *Life of Joseph the Prophet* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1878); George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith, the Prophet* (1888; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986); Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: John B. Alden, 1890); Harry M. Beardsley, *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931); Preston Nibley, *Joseph Smith, the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1944); Daryl Chase, *Joseph Smith the Prophet: As He Lives in the Hearts of His People* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1944); Norma J. Fischer, *Portrait of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960); John J. Stewart, *Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes, 1966); Carl Carmer, *The Farm Boy and the Angel* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970); Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph Smith: Martyr, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977); Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Norman Rothman, *The Unauthorized Biography of Joseph Smith, Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Norman Rothman Foundation, 1997); William D. Morain, *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith, Jr., and the Dissociated Mind* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1998); and Heidi S. Swinton, *American Prophet: The Story of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 1999).

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7. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith*, 20.

8. Evans, *Joseph Smith, an American Prophet*, 211.

9. Paul Conkin concludes that "in a sense, the book is rather simple." Paul K. Conkin, *American Originals: Homemade Varieties of Christianity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 168.

10. Concluding his account of Joseph's death, Cannon wrote, "The enemies of truth were sure that they had now destroyed the work. And yet it lives, greater and stronger after the lapse of years! It is indestructible for it is the work of God." Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith*, 527.

11. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 84–85.

12. Beginning with I. Woodbridge Riley at the beginning of the century, the reflections on Joseph's character took the form of scientific psychological labels. Riley couched "the Final question" as being "Was He Demented or Merely Degenerate?" Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism*, xix. In *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire*, Harry Beardsley built on and magnified Riley's speculations about epileptic visions, but he also thought that Joseph was "lazy, tricky, and thoroughly unscrupulous" (42).

13. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 403.

14. No one has stretched further than John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), but it began in earnest with Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism*, 105–73.

15. Among many examples are Beardsley, *Joseph Smith and His Mormon Empire*, 48–52; Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 37; Dan Vogel, "The Prophet Puzzle' Revisited," in *The Prophet Puzzle: Interpretive Essays on Joseph Smith*, ed. Bryan Waterman (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 53.

16. Vogel, "The Prophet Puzzle' Revisited," 53.

17. J. F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780–1850* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 180–88.

18. Compare Peter Mark Roget, *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1909), item 986, and Peter Mark Roget, John Lewis Roget, and Samuel Romilly Roget, *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*, Authorized American Edition (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1935), item 986.

19. Vogel, "The Prophet Puzzle' Revisited," 61.

20. George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1881), prelude.

21. Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992).

22. Vogel, "The Prophet Puzzle' Revisited," 61.

23. My argument here relies heavily on the forthcoming work by Terryl L. Givens, *"By the Hand of Mormon": The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

24. Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Progress of Man*, 3d ed. (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1936), 196–288.

25. For example, Daniel Walker Howe calls the recent attempts of Mormon historians to contextualize their studies in American religious history a "maturation." Daniel Walker Howe, "Protestantism, Voluntarism, and Personal Identity in Antebellum America," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, ed. Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 219.

26. Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988).

27. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987). A revised and enlarged edition was published in 1998.

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include Richard L. Bushman, "The Mysteries of Mormonism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15, no. 3 (fall 1995): 501–8; William J. Hamblin, Daniel C. Peterson, and George L. Mitton, "Mormon in the Fiery Furnace; or, Loftes Tryk Goes to Cambridge," *FARMS Review of Books* 6, no. 2 (1994–95): 3–58; and the reviews by William J. Hamblin and Davis Bitton in *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994–95): 167–92.

29. Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830–1846*, Studies in Religion, ed. Charles H. Long (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

30. Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 133–52.

31. Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History to 1860* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944), 86–107; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 501–9.

32. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

33. Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

34. This ambiguity is well stated in the summary of early Mormonism in David Brion Davis, *The Great Republic: A History of the American People* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1977), 532–41.

35. See Richard Lyman Bushman, "The Visionary World of Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 37, no. 1 (1997–98): 183–204.

36. *Debate on the Evidences of Christianity; Containing an Examination of "The Social System," and of All the Systems of Skepticism of Ancient and Modern Times, Held in the City of Cincinnati, Ohio, in April 15, 1829; Between Robert Owen and Alexander Campbell* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Robinson and Fairbank, 1829).

37. James Turner, *Without God, without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

38. This line of reasoning is taken from Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 82–93.

39. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 2:66.

40. 2 Nephi 27:23; 28:6; Jacob 4:8; Mormon 8:6; 9:11, 20; Doctrine and Covenants 11:25; Givens, *Viper on the Hearth*, 82–93; Turner, *Without God, without Creed*, 141–67. The philosopher Richard Rorty, representing a modern mentality, has said that over the past three centuries we have learned that "the world does not speak. Only we do." Rorty, quoted in Andrew Delbanco, *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 221.

41. Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6, 173.

42. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:155, capitalization added.

Cedar Waxwings

October's invitations, hand-glazed red crab apples;
ornaments in red tiers glint in kissing ripeness
in the late sun.

At the appointed time they come—
masked revelers, courtesans draped in peach-fuzz
coats of gray and rust. Each wingtip flashes
a ruby and a topaz.

Their maple-nut voices
outdo each other with stories
of blazing pyracantha
and frosted juniper berries.

All afternoon they spin through waltzes.
Then as sunset nears,
eat delicately at the pregnant tables.
While the backdrop flames and drops in ashes.

—Cheryl Carlstrom

This poem won second place in the *BYU Studies* poetry contest for 2000.

Again, October

Tomorrow we turn back
to Standard Time—that trick,
that misnomer.

Along fences, the Rubaiyat roses
bronze in the dusk

beyond a curvature
of hollyhocks like Grandmother grew.
Silver palms of grape leaves
survive again, hardy as bushel mums
rusting deeper after frost.

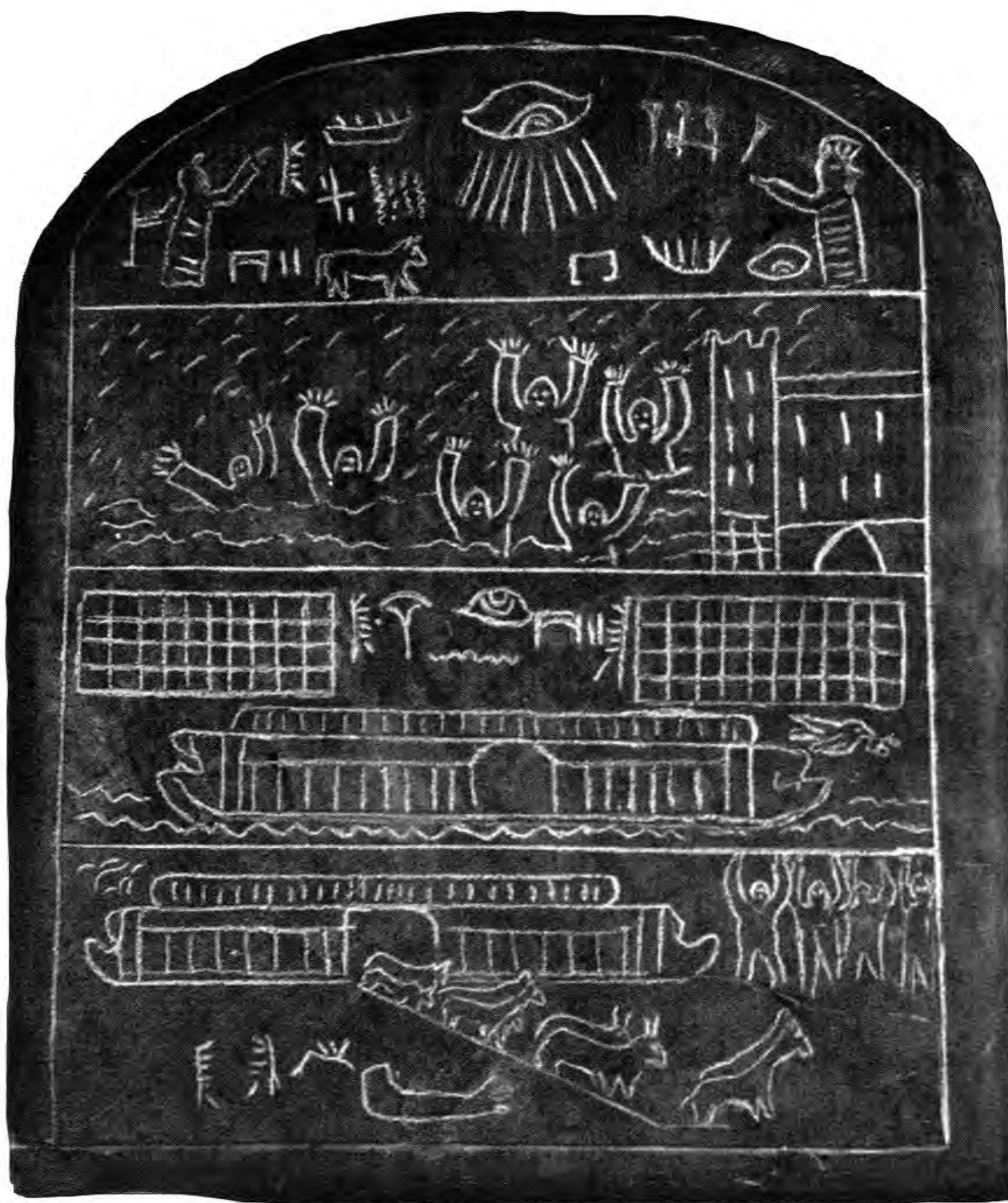
From this ground over years:
corn in crooked rows and sunflowers
of too-heavy heads
grew up like the children
who planted—

swift and tall and gone.
A long division of iris spread in ranks
to scent the berry patch
where asparagus comes up wild
and nightshade hides from our weeding,
collecting strength
among genealogies of plants.

Back indoors, we leave off lights.
Birch leaves hint buff gold
through windows in minimal light.
In its slow delicacy, the power of the eye
adjusts to this world:

shadow movements
and ravelings on into dark,
the sinews we sense where we stand,
milk of the risen moon
holding another daylight.

—Dixie Partridge



Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

FIG. 1. A slate tablet showing the Flood story. This is one of the supposedly ancient artifacts that James O. Scotford and Daniel E. Soper claimed to have discovered in Michigan from the 1890s to the 1920s.

Mormonism's Encounter with the Michigan Relics

Mark Ashurst-McGee

One of the strangest and most extensive archaeological hoaxes in American history was perpetrated around the turn of the twentieth century in Michigan. Hundreds of objects known as the Michigan Relics were made to appear as the remains of a lost civilization. The artifacts were produced, buried, “discovered,” and marketed by James O. Scotford and Daniel E. Soper. For three decades these artifacts were secretly planted in earthen mounds, publicly removed, and lauded as wonderful discoveries. Because the Michigan Relics allegedly evidence a Near Eastern presence in ancient America, they have drawn interest from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This article traces the intriguing history of this elaborate affair and Mormonism's encounter with it. At the center of this history lies the investigation of the artifacts by Latter-day Saint intellectual and scientist James E. Talmage.

The Hopewell and Adena Native American societies are commonly referred to as the Mound Builders because they built hundreds of thousands of earthen mounds throughout the greater Mississippi River valley and in surrounding areas.¹ These Indian mounds have long provoked the curiosity of European Americans.² Exploitation of this curiosity has led to a series of bizarre archaeological hoaxes. Many a schemer and prankster secretly buried bogus artifacts in the Indian mounds and then offered such items to the public, claiming they were removed from a mound.³

The mounds and hillocks of Michigan's lower peninsula became the temporary repositories of scores of archaeological forgeries. The Scotford artifacts—by artifacts I mean human-made objects—were made of clay, copper, and slate. Scotford produced a wide range of items, including tablets, caskets, amulets, coins, axheads, daggers, chisels, saws, and smoking pipes. Most of these pieces have inscriptions of one kind or another, whether hieroglyphics, a cuneiform stamping of ancient alphabets, or unknown characters. Almost every piece bears a prominent cuneiform symbol—“IH/”—which various interpreters have called the tribal mark, the mystic symbol, or the forger's signature. The tablets are especially notable: they illustrate battles, Bible stories, and calendars. Divided into panels, the biblical tablets tell the stories of the Garden of Eden, the Flood, the



Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

FIG. 2. Slate tablet crudely depicting stories from Genesis: the creation of man, the creation of woman, Eve partaking the fruit, Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden, Cain slaying Abel, and Abraham sacrificing Isaac. The Michigan Relic collections contain many similar images of Old Testament scenes.

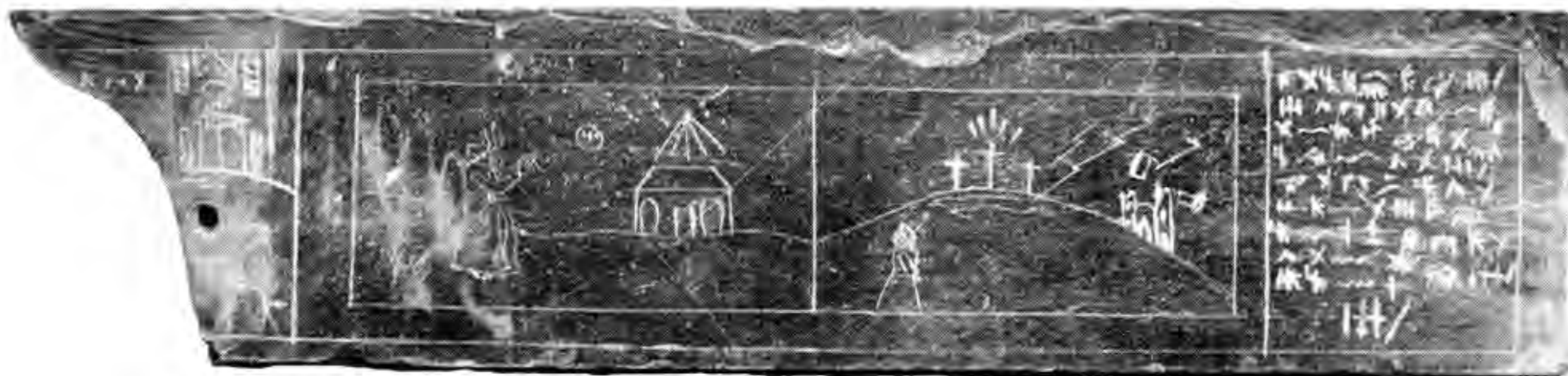
Tower of Babel, and the life of Christ (figs. 1, 2, 3). Most common are the Flood tablets, which depict in succession scenes of the wicked drowning, the ark floating, the dove flying from the ark, the animals unloading, and the rainbow token of peace.⁴ This striking scenery captured the attention of thousands, and the ensuing debate over the Scotford-Soper frauds played a part in the professionalization of archaeology around the turn of the century.⁵

The Initial Discovery

The fraudulent relics first appeared in October 1890 in Montcalm County, in central Michigan. James O. Scotford exuberantly announced to the village of Wyman that he had found ancient pottery while at his job digging post holes. The excitement of his “discovery” spread, and during the following spring and summer, Scotford and several residents of Wyman and nearby Edmore spent time digging in dozens of local mounds, hoping to find more relics.⁶ One unfortunate man dug too deep into the soft sand and died in a collapse.⁷ Others successfully uncovered wonderful objects, though no one found as many as Scotford (see fig. 4).⁸

M. E. Cornell, a Seventh-day Adventist minister from Michigan and a collector of Native American artifacts, authored and published a booklet describing the new findings and the circumstances of their discovery. Many of the items and all of the tablets, including a deluge tablet, featured inscriptions and were composed of sunbaked clay.⁹ Cornell wrote:

Scores of the citizens of Wyman and Edmore are familiar with all the circumstances of the discovery, and have been eye-witnesses of the excavating and taking out of the relics; and to them the evidence of genuineness is so clear that doubts are never entertained for a moment. . . . Three caskets have been found pierced by roots of the trees growing on the mounds over them. We found one with the cover broken in by the root of a tree, and the casket was filled with sand. The root was coiled up inside the box.¹⁰



Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

FIG. 3. Engraved slate with two scenes from the life of Christ: the star over Bethlehem and the three crosses on a hill. New Testament images are rare in the Michigan Relic collection. Such images piqued the curiosity of members of several Christian religions.



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 4. Early Scotford forgeries. Unearthed in the early 1890s, these artifacts were among the first unburied. These relics were made from clay, while later finds were often slate or copper. Francis Kelsey observed that these poorly fired artifacts could not have remained intact in the wet Michigan ground for long.

The circumstances of discovery truly were impressive. Cornell repeated such accounts to promote the finds as genuine artifacts.¹¹

Actually, some of the locals did entertain doubts. A group of people from the county who formed a syndicate to financially exploit the situation decided to check first with Michigan archeologists. When the archeologists determined that the artifacts were forgeries, the syndicate disbanded. All of these events occurred within a year of the initial “discovery.”¹²

In early 1892, at the same time Cornell published his glowing report, Francis W. Kelsey, a professor of Latin at the University of Michigan, with Morris Jastrow Jr., a colleague from the University of Pennsylvania, dealt a serious blow to the hoax. Kelsey and Jastrow considered the inscriptions (fig. 5) a linguistic disaster. Several ancient scripts had been jumbled together, they claimed, resulting in a “horrible mixture.” Furthermore, the inscriber used too few characters at too high a frequency for his work to represent authentic language.¹³ The two concluded that the alleged artifacts had been produced by someone with no linguistic knowledge.¹⁴

Although Kelsey was a linguist, the fakes were so crude that no archaeological expertise was needed to spot serious flaws in the artifacts. He found that one tablet was molded “in a frame of machine-sawed boards, as may be seen from the edges, which were not rubbed down enough to remove the impressions of the splinters.”¹⁵ In a letter to a New York newspaper, he wrote that the clay contained a large amount of drift sand and that the objects would “dissolve immediately in water. In view of . . . the nearness of

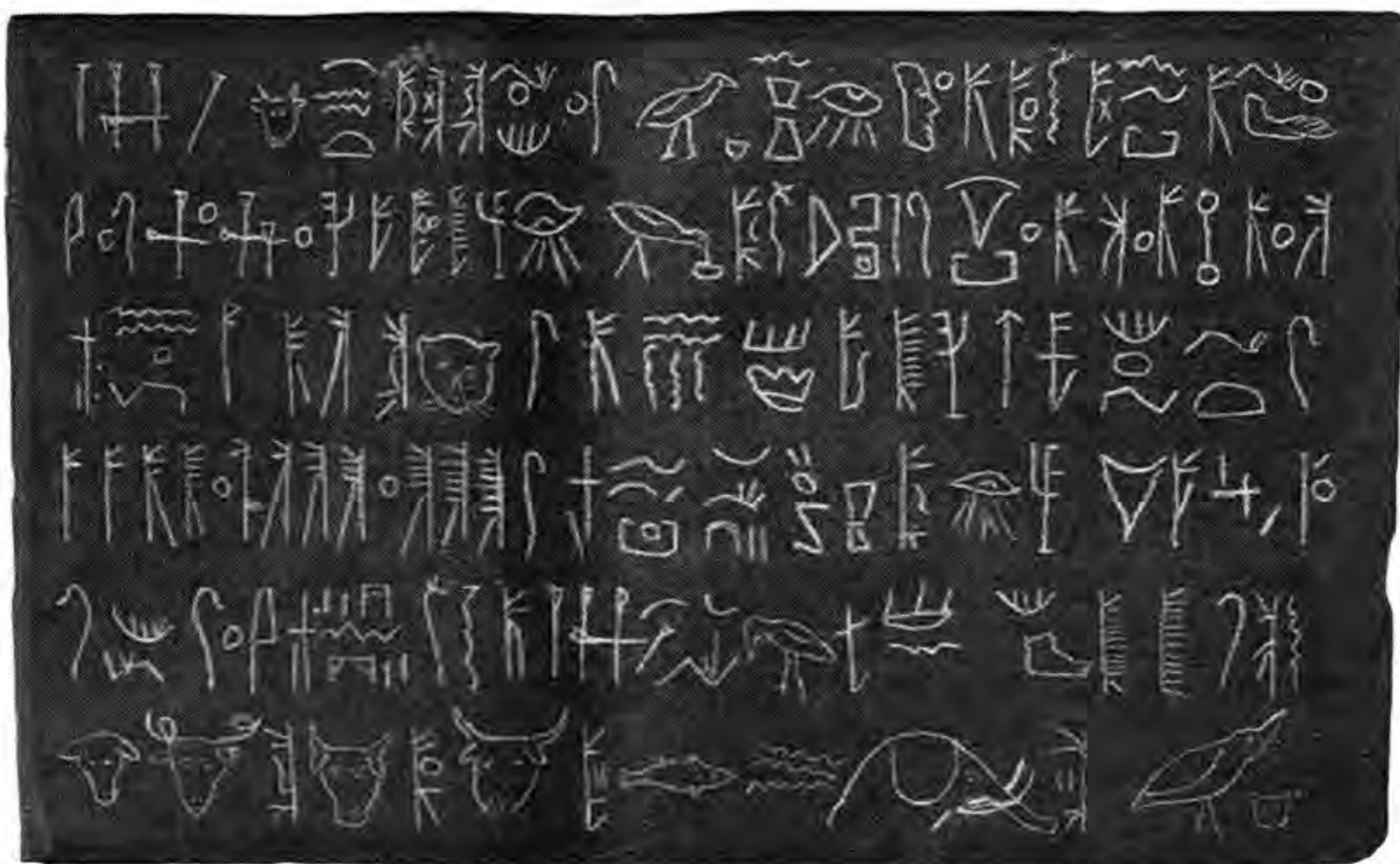
the objects to the surface, and the amount of the yearly rainfall in this region, it is clear that the objects could not have been in the ground more than one year." Kelsey foreshadowed Mormon interest when he wondered if "some prophet will arise in due time and interpret the supposed mystic symbols into a new creed."¹⁶

In 1893, James O. Scotford submitted a stone casket to be exhibited at the World's Fair in Chicago. Walter C. Wyman, head of the fair's archeology department, rejected the casket as a fraud in spite of Scotford's bitter protest.¹⁷

The Hoax Perpetuated

Five years later (1898) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Francis Kelsey encountered a new batch of the same type of material. This second batch was billed as "the finest collection of prehistoric relics ever exhibited in the United States."¹⁸ A certificate of authenticity accompanying these items claimed they were discovered in Mecosta County (which adjoins Montcalm County, the site of the initial discoveries). The certificate bore the signatures of four witnesses to their discovery. One was William H. Scotford, apparently an alias used by James O. Scotford.¹⁹

This same year, John Campbell, professor at the Presbyterian College in Montreal, Canada, defended the Michigan Relics in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*.²⁰ Campbell compared their characters with an illustration of alleged inscriptions from a stone discovered on Monhegan



Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

FIG. 5. Slate artifact displaying the type of script Scotford created. Francis W. Kelsey, a Latin professor at the University of Michigan, judged such unsophisticated writing to be proof that the Michigan Relics were not authentic.

Island, off the coast of Maine, in 1856²¹—the year Scotford was born.²² Campbell claimed to have translated some of the inscriptions from both the Monhegan stone and the Michigan relics. In his estimation, the Michigan Relics were the charms of a tribe of wandering Japanese Buddhist monks.

When a third batch of artifacts began appearing around Detroit in the opening years of the new century, Francis Kelsey commented publicly again, noticing in the three successive phases a gradual improvement in manufacture.²³ These most recent items were being “found” and sold by Scotford, who was now living in Detroit.²⁴

Like Francis Kelsey, Walter Wyman also followed the unfolding saga of the frauds. After hearing that the hoax was growing and taking in more people, Wyman decided to pay Scotford a visit. According to a *New York Times* reporter,

He [Scotford] was at work in his shed, and so the archaeologist came upon him unexpectedly, surrounded by curious objects in various states of manufacture.

“He was not at all embarrassed,” Mr. Wyman said the other day, “and tried to sell me for \$100 a stone casket bearing hieroglyphics. I didn’t like to say I knew he was a faker, and gave various excuses; but before I left the place he offered me the casket at the bargain rate of \$25.”²⁵

Soper and Savage Join Scotford

In 1907, Daniel E. Soper and James Savage entered the scene.²⁶ Both became extensively involved with the Scotford “relics.” Soper had collected genuine mound artifacts for years. He had once served as Michigan’s Secretary of State but had been forced to resign for corrupt behavior.²⁷ Soper moved to Arizona to put this scandal behind him. While living there, he privately planted some of his genuine Native American artifacts. Then, in the presence of some local archaeologists, Soper pretended to discover them. The intended dupes caught and exposed the fraud, recognizing that the artifacts did not originate in the Southwest.²⁸ Not long afterward, he returned to Michigan.

After years of collecting mound artifacts, Soper now became involved in their production. As the main promoter and distributor of the material, he served as front man for Scotford, who remained the creator, planter, and digger (fig. 6).²⁹ Soper trumpeted the relics as “the most wonderful discovery ever made in this country.”³⁰ Although he often claimed that he never sold the material, documents exist wherein he offers the items for sale through the mail under such letterheads as “Happy Hollow Gold Mining Co., immense dividends assured, millions in sight, no mining scheme, no long wait, quick action guaranteed, no debts, no danger of loss.”³¹

James Savage, dean of the Western Detroit Diocese and pastor of the Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, joined the Scotford enterprise shortly

after Soper. Savage, who had collected Native American artifacts for almost three decades,³² came to fervently believe that the Michigan Relics were genuine. In 1907 he purchased a large collection from Scotford.³³ Savage read the “/” in “IH/” as a mutated S, rendering the Christian symbol “IHS” (the initials for *In Hoc Signo*).³⁴ At first, he believed that pre-Columbian Norsemen created the artifacts. Later, with Soper, he asserted they were made by the lost ten tribes, who were then killed by the Indians. Finally, he thought they were produced by a colony of ancient Jews.³⁵ Savage became a partner with Soper in excavating and invested the rest of his life in the discoveries.

It was also in 1907 that the imposture received broad exposure in the *Detroit News*. Calling them “the most colossal hoax of a century,”³⁶ the *News* attacked the artifacts in a series of articles. One article pointed out that the artifacts were only discovered in the presence of Scotford, Soper, or their associates. Another article complained that the thin green coating on the copper pieces could be wiped off with a finger, as opposed to the tough, encrusted surfaces of genuine copper artifacts. Also, it was reported that one of Scotford’s sons “works in metals and is something of a chemist.”³⁷ The *Detroit News* did not quash the Scotford-Soper enterprise but did slow it down for a couple of years. In 1909 things picked up again.³⁸ By the end of 1911, Scotford, Soper, and Savage had opened over five hundred mounds together.³⁹

Another person who soon became interested in the Michigan Relics was Rudolph Etzenhouser (fig. 7), a traveling elder of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. With Scotford, Soper, and Savage, Etzenhouser had unearthed some of these artifacts himself.⁴⁰ He sincerely viewed them as evidence for the historicity of the Book of Mormon. In 1910 he published a collection of photographs of the material (see figs. 8, 9).⁴¹ Ironically, Etzenhouser did not understand the full meaning of his own words when in the introduction to his brochure he wrote, “To Mr. Daniel E.



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 6. James O. Scotford, left, and Daniel E. Soper, ca. 1911. The diggers stand with artifacts disinterred from this earthen mound in Michigan.



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 7. Six men digging up a mound in Michigan, ca. 1911. From left to right: Rudolph Etzenhouser, Rowland B. Orr, James Savage, Daniel E. Soper, John A. Russell, and Clarkston W. James.

Soper . . . belongs the credit of having been for several years the moving spirit in the investigation of these prehistoric relics of Michigan.”⁴²

James E. Talmage’s Investigation

James E. Talmage directed the Deseret Museum in Salt Lake City, which had been closed to the public since July 1903 and would move to a new building in July 1910.⁴³ In May 1909, Talmage traveled east as part of his efforts to reopen the museum. He visited a number of museums and attended the American Association of Museums conference in Philadelphia.⁴⁴

Talmage knew little or nothing about the Michigan Relics until William C. Mills, state archaeologist of Ohio and an associate in the American Association of Museums, conversed with Talmage concerning the subject. Their interchange prompted Talmage to visit Mills at the University of Ohio, where Mills showed him a tablet unearthed by the Scotford-Soper group. Mills believed that this tablet and all of the Soper materials were genuine. Fascinated by the tablet, Talmage soon opened correspondence with both Soper and Savage.⁴⁵ Soper sent him blueprints of some artifacts, which Talmage found “inspiring.”⁴⁶ On September 8, 1909, he wrote to Soper, “I have been impressed with the seeming parallelism between the

facts brought to light by your discoveries and the historical story given in the Book of Mormon."⁴⁷ A month later, on October 12, 1909, he wrote to Soper again, reiterating that he was "very deeply interested" in the artifacts.⁴⁸

The next day Talmage met with the First Presidency (Joseph F. Smith, Jon R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund) and a special committee, which had been called at his insistence to consider the issue. The committee included Apostles John Henry Smith, Orson F. Whitney, Anthony W. Ivins, Heber J. Grant, and, later, Joseph Fielding Smith. Book of Mormon scholar B. H. Roberts also sat on this committee.

In his journal, Talmage recorded, "The consensus of opinion was that the alleged discoveries should be investigated. If genuine they are certainly of importance to Book of Mormon students; but their genuineness is by no means assured."⁴⁹ On November 9 he met with the First Presidency again. As a result of their deliberations, he left for Detroit the next day—"solely in the interest of this investigation."⁵⁰ Talmage conducted the investigation "under the auspices of the Deseret Museum."⁵¹ He intended to procure the Michigan artifacts for the museum. He may have considered using the alleged relics as a special exhibit for the reopening.

Upon his arrival in Detroit, Talmage met with Soper and Savage to examine their collections and discuss the artifacts with them. He wrote, "I find that both Mr. Soper and Father Savage know of the seeming parallelism between the pictographs they have unearthed and the Book of Mormon record. They discussed the matter quite freely." Rudolph Etzenhouser had likely talked with them about the Book of Mormon by this time and shared with them his writings on Book of Mormon archaeology. In the course of their discussion, Soper and Talmage arranged to excavate some mounds together the following day. That night Talmage wrote in his journal, "Prof. Kelsey has written to me reiterating the charge of fraud. On the other hand, Prof. W^m C. Mills of the University of Ohio is equally insistent that the finds are surely genuine. . . . The discoveries are certainly surprising, and I await opportunity of fuller examination."⁵²

The next day Talmage went digging with Soper. James Scotford accompanied them and acted as the spade man. The dig was a success. The trio



FIG. 8. Clay box topped by a sphinxlike creature, approx. 10" x 12" x 2". Note the "IH/" carved into the front on the left. This item was unearthed near Edmore, Montcalm County, Michigan, in June 1899. From Rudolph Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 35.



FIG. 9. Slate tablet, $8\frac{3}{16}$ " by $5\frac{5}{8}$ ". This artifact was unearthed near Detroit on May 14, 1908. From Rudolph Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 20.

opened two mounds and unearthed three objects: the copper head of a battle-ax, a small perforated slate tablet or pendant, and a knife blade. They planned to meet for further excavations the next day but were rained out. Inclement weather precluded digging the following day as well, so Talmage visited both Soper and Savage to examine their collections further. Finally, on the fourth day, they resumed their work under clear skies. Talmage, Soper, and Scotford returned to the area of their previous venture and opened a dozen mounds over the course of the day. Again, they struck it rich. With his own hands, Talmage removed from the excavations two slate tablets and another knife blade.⁵³ One slate exhibited the Flood story on one side and on the other a battle between Indians and a "civilized" group.⁵⁴

Talmage realized the implications these objects held concerning Book of Mormon historicity. He saw in the slates the story of a white, civilized people with biblical knowledge and an ancient Near Eastern language, who fought with and were eventually exterminated by the Indians.⁵⁵ Talmage noted that, if authentic, the Michigan Relics "would furnish strong external evidence of the main facts set forth in the Book of Mormon narrative" and that "their discovery must be considered as marking one of the most important developments in American archaeology."⁵⁶

Leaving Detroit, Talmage traveled further east to submit his newfound specimens to the scrutiny of archaeological experts on the Atlantic seaboard. First, in New York City, he met with Harlan I. Smith, curator of the ethnology department at the American Museum of Natural History. Smith told Talmage, "They just don't look like anything heretofore found." After a homesick Thanksgiving, Talmage traveled down to Washington, D.C. He recorded that a Mr. Holmes, chief of the Bureau of American Ethnology, told him, "The objects are plainly non-Indian, and are therefore not genuine archaeological specimens from [the] region." For Talmage, who believed in the Book of Mormon, it was easy to see that both of these men were begging the question. Whether these strange new relics evidenced

a hitherto unknown people was precisely the issue. He felt that he had not received any “definite and specific reasons” for rejecting the items he showed them.⁵⁷

Unsatisfied, Talmage traveled to Columbus, Ohio, to visit his friend William C. Mills. He wrote,

I submitted for his inspection all the articles taken by me from the mounds near Detroit. Prof. Mills has been emphatic in his belief that the relics are genuine, and that they represent an ancient people once inhabiting the Michigan region. I pointed out to him some inconsistencies in the record of the finds, and he agrees with me that further critical examination is required. We were together until a late hour.⁵⁸

Pressing on with the investigation, Talmage returned to Detroit. He conscripted a pair of Latter-day Saint missionaries and returned to the site of his former diggings. Talmage disguised himself in case of a run-in with Soper, Savage, or Scotford. After two long days, Talmage and his helpers had thoroughly excavated twenty-two mounds. But, lacking the oversight of Soper and Scotford, they were unable to locate anything. Talmage noted in his journal, “Negative evidence is certainly valuable, but it is less inspiring than a positive find.” He traveled to visit Mills once more and then returned home to Salt Lake City, arriving on December 10.⁵⁹

The next day, a Saturday, Talmage “made a preliminary and partial report” to the First Presidency and arranged to meet with them again after the Sabbath. On Monday, he gave a full report of his month-long investigation. The Presidency was “greatly interested” and decided to hold a meeting on the subject. Attended by the First Presidency, the Presiding Bishopric, Henry Peterson, George H. Brimhall, Joseph B. Keeler, Joseph Fielding Smith, and the special committee, the meeting was described by Talmage as follows: “Diverse views were expressed as to possible genuineness of the finds. Conference lasted over two hours. I was accorded a vote of thanks for work done, and was instructed to continue my investigations.”⁶⁰

Now that he was home in Utah, Talmage could take a closer look at the items he had exhumed in Michigan. Applying his scientific competence as a geologist and chemist, he commenced a rigorous physical examination of the material (fig. 10). Following one set of experiments, he apparently wrote to Soper regarding the evidence of fraud found on one of the tablets. In a reply letter, Soper demanded that Talmage return the item. Talmage responded, “[f] these relics are found to be genuine we shall . . . exhibit them as such; and if they prove to be spurious we shall be equally desirous of exhibiting them as examples of forgery and fraud.”⁶¹ Soper, infuriated, lashed out at Talmage, telling him that he had “outraged my feelings as they never have been before.” Soper further stated, “This transaction is the most



FIG. 10. James E. Talmage at work in the laboratory of the Deseret Museum in Salt Lake City, ca. 1911. Talmage's meticulous analysis led him to conclude that the Michigan Relics were frauds. From James E. Talmage, "The Deseret Museum," *Deseret Museum Bulletin*, new ser., no. 1 (August 1911): 29.

cold-blooded, barefaced, contemptible deception that the writer ever ran up against."⁶² Soper threatened to sue Talmage and have him arrested.⁶³

Talmage's investigation was not entirely turned over to lab work. He made three more trips to the East. In the summer of 1910, during his trip to the annual American Association of Museums conference, Talmage visited Independence, Missouri. There, he "had a long talk" with some leaders of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, including Frederick M. Smith, first counselor in the presidency. The RLDS elders did not agree on "the proper course to pursue in the matter" and did not wholeheartedly approve of Rudolph Etzenhouser's brochure.⁶⁴

In the fall, Talmage went east again. He excavated seven mounds near Grand Rapids, Michigan, and spoke with local archaeologists. On the second leg of this trip he visited Detroit, where he met with Etzenhouser and Savage. Shortly after arriving home, he reported to the First Presidency and the Presiding Bishopric. A month later, he met again with the First Presidency, "regarding Museum affairs and Michigan relics."⁶⁵ On February 8, 1911, Talmage submitted a report to the First Presidency which stated, "The matter of the Michigan relics is still one of doubt and perplexity. In my mind the evidence of forgery is very strong; but the absolute proof of

forgery, the identification of the forger, and the location of the factory are yet incomplete.”⁶⁶

In June 1911, Talmage was back in Detroit. After some sleuthing, he contacted Etta Riley, James Scotford's stepdaughter. After speaking with her, Talmage confided to his journal,

She solemnly declared to me that she positively knows her step-father, James Scotford, has made, buried, and dug up many of the articles reported to be genuine archeological relics. She gave circumstantial details, and agreed to sign a written statement with the proviso that such statement shall not be made public without her consent during the lifetime of her mother, Mrs. Jas. Scotford.

Riley also informed Talmage that Scotford made the objects at his home. So, in addition to considerable scientific evidence, Talmage now had the forger and the factory. The next day Etta Riley signed a statement of the facts in the presence of Talmage and her friend as witnesses. Talmage kept his promise; he never made her statement public. The Riley statement appears here for the first time (fig. 11).

The Michigan Relics received their greatest amount of scholarly attention during the time that Talmage worked on them. In 1909, Soper had shifted his project into high gear. To arouse interest, Etzenhouser mailed his brochure of photographs to archaeologists and curators from coast to coast.⁶⁷ Although the brochure was mostly received with skepticism, it aroused interest. In 1911, the *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* noted that the alleged antiquities were provoking “widespread discussion among the archeologists and curators of the country.” This issue of the nation's oldest archaeological journal included another denunciation of the Soper artifacts by early critic Francis Kelsey. Kelsey's critique was countered by J. O. Kinnaman, an archaeologist, Latin professor, dean of Benton Harbor College, and editor of *American Antiquarian*. Kinnaman stated that “long before the first date mentioned by Prof. Kelsey,” he had “examined personally many of the same kind of ‘finds.’” A Montcalm man by the name of Franklin owned these Michigan Relics. In particular, Kinnaman recalled viewing a Flood tablet.⁶⁸ Defenses such as Kinnaman's kept the controversy in the spotlight. The journal called Michigan “the storm center of American Archeology.”⁶⁹

It was during this period (1911) that Father James Savage defended the artifacts in the *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society*. Among other arguments, Savage discussed his copper artifacts in light of contemporary archaeological evidence of copper mining in the area around Lake Michigan.⁷⁰ But the main reason he accepted the finds was his personal experiences in digging. He described one mound, upon which was a live tree and an old stump. From this mound he had personally removed a copper tablet that was underneath the stump with one of the live tree's roots

Detroit, Michigan, June 6, 1911.

I, Mrs. Etta Riley, residing at 253 Fifth Street, Detroit, Michigan, make the following statement of my own free will and choice, and without compulsion or restraint:

I am the daughter of Mrs. James Scotford. James Scotford is ~~the father~~ my stepfather. I hesitate to reveal what I know about the work Mr. Scotford has done, in consideration of my mother's peace of mind. She is now old and feeble, and God knows she has suffered much from the perfidy of her husband, James Scotford.

With the assurance given me that this statement will not be made public during the life of my mother, ~~or~~ ~~otherwise~~ without my express consent, I declare as follows:

I have seen and witnessed the preparation of plates in slate, clay and copper, which plates have afterward appeared as purported archeological finds. I know that James Scotford makes and prepares tablets of slate, hammered pieces of copper and pieces in clay, simulating works of ancient art, and that he buries such and afterward digs them up as per demand.

As an instance in fact I was recently a guest at the Au Sable residence of the Rev. Father James Savage. My stepfather, James Scotford, Daniel E. Soper of Detroit, and the Rev. Father James Savage were there. They found certain relics, or purported relics, and showed them to me. I told them I had seen the pieces before, - - that I had seen the identical pieces before they were buried; then the gentlemen named became indignant and angry; they even threatened my life.

As God lives, I know that the tablets and other pieces found on the shores of the Au Sable were made and prepared at the home of James Scotford in Detroit, Michigan.

I make this statement with the full assurance and understanding that it will not be made public during the life of my beloved mother. After she has passed away this statement may be published.

Signed in duplicate this 6th day of June, 1911.

Mrs. Etta Riley

SIGNED in presence of the following witnesses:

Mrs. G. O'Neil
J. E. Savage

Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 11. Etta Riley Statement. This sworn affidavit by the stepdaughter of James O. Scotford testifies that Scotford was the manufacturer of the Michigan Relics.

laid across it.⁷¹ Savage concluded his article by remarking that critics do not “seem to appreciate the credit of Herculean energy, versatility and genius they attribute to the maker of these finds, as thousands of them have been found in the sixteen counties of Michigan thus far heard from, and no *two* of these specimens are alike.”⁷²

In a general study of hoaxes, Curtis D. MacDougall found that many frauds have required an “enormous amount of ingenuity and energy.”⁷³ Making a lucrative investment would require just such careful, deceptive techniques of burial. And moreover, although the geography of the finds was large, it corresponded with the known digging enterprises of Soper and Scotford.⁷⁴ This duo uncovered the mysterious relics everywhere they went. The extent of the hoax is impressive, but is less astounding considering Soper's other financial schemes and Scotford's former occupation as a magician and hypnotist.⁷⁵

As Talmage quietly arranged his evidence, Soper forged ahead. He intended to make 1911 the greatest year yet. To the local newspapers he announced, “A party of Canadian and American experts is coming to Detroit this spring . . . then they can investigate whether I am right.” “I'll show Prof. Kelsey,” he told the papers, “I'll show them all.”⁷⁶ William C. Mills had been orchestrating this gathering.⁷⁷ Ontario's Minister of Education sent his secretary, Clarkson W. James, who brought Dr. Rowland B. Orr, curator of the Provincial Museum at the University of Toronto. The party also included Professor J. O. Kinnaman and Rudolph Etzenhouser. On June 9, the party found four objects. Again, the experience of unearthing artifacts overpowered skepticism. All believed the finds were genuine and signed an affidavit to that effect.⁷⁸

A month later, on July 11, 1911, the Deseret Museum reopened—without a grand exhibit of Michigan artifacts. Talmage's Scotford-Soper material was instead shown as an archaeological frauds display.⁷⁹ Five days later, Kinnaman announced an epistemic rupture in the field of archaeology. He averred the Michigan artifacts evidenced “a Caucasian race, with civilization developed to a point that was equal to any ever developed in the valleys of the Nile and the Tigo-Euphrates.” If deciphered, he stated,

Not only the history of the American continent will be revolutionized and rewritten, but the entire ancient history of the world will have to be revised, and as a result our knowledge of civilization and of the Caucasian race in general, will extend thousands of years back of the wildest dream of the most enthusiastic archaeologist now working in Oriental fields.

Kinnaman denounced all critics as blind dogmatists.⁸⁰ His news quickly spread throughout America and to Europe, exciting both archaeologists and laymen.

Breaking in the *Chicago Examiner*, the news of Kinnaman's archaeological revolution prompted University of Chicago Professor Frederick Starr to

investigate. Starr was dean of the Department of American Archeology and Anthropology and enjoyed an international reputation as one of the foremost American archaeologists. In late July, he led a team of Chicago archaeologists to Detroit. They inspected James Savage's collection and excavated with the famous trio. The party opened two mounds and discovered five artifacts, including a slate tablet. All five bore the "IH/" inscription. Like Talmage and others, Starr removed artifacts from the mounds with his own hands.

After returning home, Starr stated publicly, "I have serious doubts regarding the authenticity of these objects." He remarked that the tablet he had disinterred looked too fresh. Some of the other items looked so clean, he suspected that they had never been in the ground; he suspected that Scotford had been placing them in the digs by sleight-of-hand the moment before removing them as a find. (Later, Scotford did admit to skill in sleight-of-hand.) Starr also expressed grave doubts about the authenticity of the inscriptions on the tablets. Citing the work of Henry Gillman, Starr questioned the antiquity of the finds. Gillman had excavated in Michigan for decades without finding anything of the Scotford-Soper variety. Starr found it suspicious that only Scotford and his cohorts could find the artifacts. The respected archaeologist warned against purchasing the artifacts.

Because Starr was held in such esteem, many had eagerly awaited his evaluation. His well-publicized doubts settled the question for most. Still, he was unwilling to deliver a decisive verdict, and he also considered further investigation. This left the door open for many others. Soper responded to Starr's criticism with the Big Lie: "The discovery is so stupendous," he said, "that it is hard for a man to grasp it and give it credence."⁸¹

Kinnaman soon met with Starr to compare notes. Afterward, he realized he had been taken in. In a press release, Kinnaman confessed that the earliest he had seen objects of the Scotford type was "a little" earlier than August 1891—the *end* of the first big summer of finds. "Yes, I was badly fooled," Kinnaman admitted. "And for that matter," he added, "so were the gentlemen with me . . . and Dr. James E. Talmage, of Deseret Museum, Salt Lake City."⁸² Unbeknownst to Kinnaman, Talmage was within days of releasing the results of his comprehensive analysis.

Unaware of Kinnaman's reversal, the *Deseret Evening News* enthusiastically covered his initial glowing report. The paper wondered whether the Michigan Relics provided "a confirmation of the history of the Jaredites as given in the Book of Ether." James E. Talmage must have rushed to the news office to extinguish the excitement because the next day the *Deseret Evening News* announced that Starr and Talmage disagreed with Kinnaman and that the paper would publish Talmage's position.⁸³ It appeared the following day. After considerable scientific experiment and some detective work,

Talmage came forward with the results of his careful and thorough investigation.⁸⁴ A refinement of his argument was published that September in the Deseret Museum's *Bulletin*.⁸⁵ Talmage concluded, "As a result of my investigation, I am thoroughly convinced that the alleged 'relics' are forgeries and that they are made and buried to be dug up on demand."⁸⁶ He laid out eight specific reasons for his assessment, which are excerpted below.⁸⁷

1. According to the evidence I have been able to gather, practically all discoveries of the Michigan 'relics' thus far announced have been made by James O. Scotford, of Detroit, or by his son-in-law, Scoby, or by parties who, like myself, have been operating for the time-being under guidance of the men named. . . .

2. The conditions of burial seem to preclude a possibility of ancient interment. The objects are generally found within a foot or two feet of the surface, and I have heard of no credible instance of any one of these objects having been exposed through nature's weathering, attested by parties other than those well known to be skilled in making these finds. Nevertheless did these objects exist by the hundreds in these little mounds, within a short distance of the surface, it is beyond human belief that they should never be uncovered except by pre-arranged digging.

3. Most of the objects are so fresh as to be practically new. Some of the slate tablets I have seen and handled suggest the thought that they may have just left the maker's hands [fig. 12]. The lines made by the graving tools, when examined microscopically, show fresh fractures, practically indistinguishable from others made in the course of experiment at the time of the examination.⁸⁸

4. The copper pieces . . . have evidently been corroded by rapid chemical treatment and not by the slow processes of time. The green layer on every piece I have seen is thin and non-adherent, easily wearing off even with careful handling, leaving a surface clean and smooth Moreover, the surface of the copper pieces generally shows the outlines of crystal aggregates due to the formation of copper compounds in the process of chemical corrosion.⁸⁹

5. The copper of which these articles are fashioned is ordinary commercial copper, smelted from sulphur-bearing and arsenical ores. It is not native copper, such as the copper objects taken from genuinely ancient mounds in this country are known to be. This conclusion as to the character of the metal is based on chemical analyses made in my own laboratory and elsewhere, and on conductivity determinations made at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington [fig. 13].⁹⁰

6. The way in which the pieces of slate and copper have been fashioned indicates their modern origin. [Talmage noticed plainly visible saw marks on one of his artifacts, and under the microscope he found file marks on another.]

7. [The articles exhibit] haphazard, off-hand, slovenly sketching [unlike the careful work of ancient artists].⁹¹

8. The characters are a jumble thrown together without regard to origin.⁹²

While Talmage declined to name the forger, he did express his feeling that Savage and Etzenhouser were innocent victims.⁹³

James E. Talmage had finally provided a thorough and careful scientific evaluation of the Michigan relics. The Detroit newspapers seized upon Talmage's exposé of the Scotford-Soper frauds. Talmage's conclusive work was also acknowledged by the *New York Times*.⁹⁴ He played a large role in debunking what modern archaeologist Stephen Williams calls "one of the largest-running scams in prehistory."⁹⁵

Talmage's report incensed Soper and Savage. Calling it a "flow of twaddle," Savage—the hoax's perpetual unwitting supporter—took issue with its conclusions in the *Detroit Free Press*.⁹⁶ In response to Talmage's first point, regarding Scotford's ability to find the stuff, Savage claimed that others had also discovered these "Michigan relics." A few discoveries did occur independent of Scotford and his associates but took place in areas they had promoted (for example, around Detroit and within the immediate vicinity of the village of Wyman), where a few people stumbled across material while digging a cellar or plowing.⁹⁷

In response to Talmage's second point, about the conditions of burial, Savage stressed the number of objects and their detail, as well as the amount of effort it would take to plant them if fake. In particular, he wrote about an undisturbed layer of black stria through which he had dug on a few occasions and under which he found artifacts of the Scotford-Soper type. Sav-

age apparently never considered the possibility of any kind of interment other than vertical shaft deposit. However, other methods of burying bogus artifacts, such as slant-planting, have been documented.⁹⁸ This technique would also account for the Scotford artifacts found under tree stumps.

Attempting to counter Talmage's third point, regarding the fresh appearance of the artifacts, Savage referred to authentic relics he had discovered that looked fresh when he unearthed them. But Talmage's investigation went beyond natural appearance to microscopic examination. Savage made no counter-attack on Talmage's fourth point regarding rapid chemical corrosion.

In response to Talmage's fifth point, concerning metallurgical composition, Savage held that "experts"



Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

FIG. 12. Slate depicting a fanciful dragon.

had examined the artifacts and determined they were made of native copper. But Savage's undocumented newspaper assertion lacked the credibility of Talmage's museum bulletin, which named the experts who tested his samples. As far as Savage's claim can be taken seriously, three explanations may account for items of pre-industrial copper. First, because in his article Savage confused the items of the Scotford-Soper type and genuine items he had exhumed before his association with Scotford, the native copper objects may simply be authentic artifacts collected by Savage previous to his association with Scotford. Second, the items of pre-industrial copper may be genuine artifacts exhumed from the Native American mounds within which Scotford planted fakes. Third, as with other objects, they may be once authentic pieces that have been fraudulently reshaped and anachronized.⁹⁹

Finally, Savage dismissed Talmage's observation that saw marks were visible on one particular object (point six). He justified his dismissal on the grounds that excavators had unearthed saws, chisels, and axes, and if they had found these, they would probably still find "other methods of reducing." This, he figured, provided an internally consistent explanation for the saw and file marks found on this and other objects.¹⁰⁰ But Savage's rejoinder falls short because, as Talmage had noted, the saw that left marks on his artifact was "modern" and "almost surely . . . machine-made."¹⁰¹ "By the way," wrote Talmage,

this piece, which of all the pieces examined by me is the most flagrant instance of modern workmanship, has been the subject of a somewhat animated correspondence. Its *return* has been demanded. As the piece was unearthed by a digger in my employ, whose services were engaged and paid for by me, I cannot understand any claim of ownership superior to my own, except possibly that of the man who made and buried the object.¹⁰²

Savage did not respond to Talmage's seventh and eighth points. His fierce rebuttal failed to vindicate the Scotford-Soper material.

While mound relics drew general interest in America, the Scotford-Soper material evoked a particular fascination. According to Francis Kelsey, this



FIG. 13. Michigan Relic battle-ax. James E. Talmage uncovered this copper ax from a mound in Palmer Park, near Detroit, on November 15, 1909, while in the company of Scotford and Savage. Talmage took this item to Salt Lake City and punched disks from it and sent them to the Smithsonian and other institutes to test the metal's composition. He discovered that the ax was made from factory smelted copper. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art.

was due to the biblical and religious illustrations on the slates.¹⁰³ The keen interest that Savage, Etzenhouser, and Talmage—all church men—had in the material affirms Kelsey's assertion.¹⁰⁴ Of course, the implications for Book of Mormon historicity fueled the attention of Etzenhouser and Talmage. Besides implying that ancient Hebrews had been in America, the relics incorporated other elements that paralleled the Book of Mormon.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, in March 1911, the *Detroit Journal* claimed it had uncovered evidence that Soper was behind a scheme to market the artifacts in Utah.¹⁰⁶

In light of this evidence that Scotford exploited religious interests, Talmage's conclusion that the material was "made and buried to be dug up on demand" deserves a closer look. Were some artifacts produced with Talmage or Etzenhouser in mind? For example, the Babel scene from Talmage's Flood tablet depicted a group of people praying or paying homage to a bird with several tongues protruding from its beak.¹⁰⁷ Some interpreted the bird as a representation of God's confusion of tongues, as recorded in the Bible. Talmage, thinking that the actions of the people in the scene were "not easily explained by the record in Genesis," wondered if this part of the scene had been "intended as a representation of the petition presented by Jared and his followers asking the Lord not to confound their tongues" (Ether 3:33–37).¹⁰⁸

Similarly, following the initial excavations, Talmage recorded that in one mound "we found a tablet of dark gray slate with inscriptions on both sides. . . . I was somewhat suspicious when Scotford, pointing to the inscribed circle with rays, said: 'This is like what was found on one of the plates from Mormon Hill, at Cumorah, New York.'"¹⁰⁹ Talmage apparently suspected that this artifact had been manufactured specifically for him. On another occasion, Scotford had mimicked the Ten Commandments tablets (fig. 14) and perhaps he sought to replicate the golden plates as well.¹¹⁰ However, the Anthon transcript characters from the Book of Mormon plates had by this time been published,¹¹¹ and nothing resembling a circle with rays can be found among them.¹¹² What then did Scotford have in mind when he made this suspicious remark about the inscribed circle with rays and Cumorah's plates?

Inscribed circles with rays *are* prominent on the Kinderhook plates,¹¹³ which have from time to time been mistaken for the Book of Mormon plates.¹¹⁴ The Kinderhook plates were an archaeological hoax perpetrated in Illinois in 1843 to trick local Mormons.¹¹⁵ A comparison of photographs reveals that the Talmage tablet compares with the Kinderhook plates in size, shape, and appearance.¹¹⁶ Scotford may have made a loose replica of a Kinderhook plate, hoping to sway Talmage or Etzenhouser with religious enthusiasm.¹¹⁷ By the turn of the century, descriptions of the Kinderhook plates had been widely published—some by Rudolph Etzenhouser himself.¹¹⁸



FIG. 14. Copper plate. This Michigan Relic is shaped to suggest the traditional concept of the Ten Commandments. Note the dots down the center and right edge, numbering the ten text panels. From Rudolph Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 8.

In the wake of Talmage's exposé, Mary Robson, a neighbor of Scotford's sons, informed a news reporter that the young men had told her they helped their father make and bury the artifacts and that they grew plants on the sites to make them appear undisturbed.¹¹⁹ Scotford's sons protested the charges, explaining that they had just been playing tricks on the elderly woman.¹²⁰ But none of this exposure stopped Scotford, Soper, or Savage. They kept right on digging, hoping to revive their cause.

Such a revival would prove difficult owing to the publicity that Talmage's investigation had received. In 1914, Savage wrote to Soper of his efforts to interest the secretary of the Archaeological Society of America: "I saw the foot prints of the 'cloven foot' of Kelsey & Talmage. He [the secretary] mentioned both their names."¹²¹ In another letter to Soper, Savage lamented that "Kelsey & Talmage still keep up their devilish work."¹²² Both Soper and Savage remained involved with "the cause" until their deaths in the 1920s.¹²³ They died leaving large collections of the bogus material. Savage donated his collection to the University of Notre Dame, and Soper's collection was inherited by his son Ellis Clarke Soper.¹²⁴

Professional archaeologists have not taken the Michigan Relics seriously since the events of 1911. Based on Talmage's investigation, even rogue archaeologist Barry Fell and his Epigraphic Society have rejected them.¹²⁵ Modern historians and archaeologists recognize James E. Talmage's major role in exposing the hoax.¹²⁶ In a small but significant way, he contributed to the professionalization of the field of archaeology that took place around the turn of the century.

The Scotford-Soper Frauds since Talmage

Of the Michigan Relics, historian John Cumming writes,

In the passage of years in which countless archeological explorations under controlled scientific conditions, have taken place, not a single tablet or artifact of this type has been discovered. With all of the building and highway construction, nothing of the kind has been found. The discoveries ceased when Soper stopped digging.¹²⁷

Of course, public and scholarly interest waned long before the digging stopped. Today there are relatively few who know of the Scotford-Soper frauds. Still, they remain a curiosity among some historians, religious groups, and amateur archaeologists.

Forty years after the digging stopped, the Michigan Relics captured the attention of Milton R. Hunter, the president of the New World Archaeological Foundation. Hunter, who was also a General Authority in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, researched and wrote about archaeological evidence regarding Book of Mormon historicity.¹²⁸ In 1960, he received a letter from two Latter-day Saint missionaries who discovered the Savage collection while proselytizing at the University of Notre Dame. In 1962, he visited Notre Dame to view them. He showed so much interest that Notre Dame gave him the collection. In the course of this transaction, Hunter learned of Ellis Clarke Soper, who still had his father's collection. He contacted Ellis, who lent him a number of items. Hunter responded so favorably that Ellis decided to give him the entire collection. So, by 1963, Hunter had acquired the bulk of Scotford's productions.¹²⁹

Though aware of Talmage's published study,¹³⁰ Hunter hoped that the Michigan Relics would prove authentic. In a letter to Ellis Soper, Hunter wrote, "I . . . feel that the artifacts are all genuine. I intend to devote much of my future years in finding proof to demonstrate that they are. I want to vindicate your father and Father Savage in this whole matter." In the same letter he expressed his disappointment that "the General Authorities, or head officials of the Church, except myself, seem to have very little interest in the collection." He had tried for years to get President David O. McKay to look at the material, and had made a number of appointments with him, none of which materialized.¹³¹

Hunter's primary objective was to decipher the inscriptions on the relics. Searching for a translator, he sent photographs of the Michigan Relics to over fifty institutions—including universities, museums, governments, militaries, and private research institutes. Most replied that (1) the characters were a mixture of Asian scripts, (2) the language was unknown to them, or (3) the inscriptions were fraudulent. In this third category Hunter received responses from New Testament scholar William F. Albright, the Egyptian Antiquities Department of the British Museum, the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, the Department of Mediterranean Studies at Brandeis, and diffusionist Cyrus H. Gordon, among others.¹³²

Hunter completed a draft of the first of his projected two-volume work on the Michigan Relics. Discarding contemporary archaeology, he recycled the classic sources behind the old mound-builder myth. Then, after rejecting the staple theories that the mound builders were the lost ten tribes or refugees from Babel, he suggested that the mound builders were Nephites. Hunter perceived the following parallels between the Nephites described in the Book of Mormon and the Michigan mound builders depicted on the Scotford-Soper tablets: white skin, civilization, written language, use of stone as a medium for writing, Hebrew religion, Egyptian-influenced culture, mining, domesticated animals, horse-drawn chariots, highways, a monetary system, and expert weaving technology.¹³³

Before passing away, Hunter deeded his collection to the Church.¹³⁴ Some of his research was included posthumously in a 1977 Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center report supervised by religion professor Paul R. Cheesman. Like Hunter, Cheesman was interested in archaeological evidence for the Book of Mormon.¹³⁵ His report recognized but underestimated the evidence of fraud. Unaware of facts known today, Cheesman generally argued that the material was genuine and concluded that the artifacts be considered “possibly authentic.”¹³⁶ According to the report, one linguist held that the characters “show order.”¹³⁷ It may be that some order can be found in some inscriptions, but the report failed to adequately address the basic linguistic problems raised by Francis Kelsey almost a century earlier. The other substantial point in the report concerned a copper knife blade from Hunter's collection. A metallurgist observed that the blade appeared to be made out of unsmelted native lake copper.¹³⁸ As the method behind this observation was not given in the report, it probably did not match the rigor of Talmage's tests of metal composition. Even if there were a native lake copper blade within Hunter's collection, explanations for such an anomaly have been given above.

Conclusion

In his general study of fraud, Curtis D. MacDougall discovered a “cardinal truth about hoaxes.” That is, “they survive a great deal of debunking.”¹³⁹

There will probably always be some people who believe that some or all of the Scotford-Soper artifacts are authentic, despite the extensive and competent physical, historical, and epigraphical investigations that have found them fraudulent.¹⁴⁰ (See, for example, the scientific study in the accompanying article by Richard B. Stamps, “Tools Leave Marks: Material Analysis of the Scotford-Soper-Savage Michigan Relics.”)

The story of Mormonism’s encounter with the Michigan Relics contains a model of investigative research as well as a cautionary tale. James E. Talmage was both open-minded and careful throughout his investigation. He performed the necessary research and he followed the evidence. His judicious investigation of the Michigan Relics can serve as a model for Latter-day Saints interested in Book of Mormon and biblical archaeology.

Mark Ashurst-McGee is a doctoral student in history at Arizona State University. The author would like to thank Jason Izatt, Steve Siporin, T. Michael Smith, John W. Welch, and Jed Woodworth for help with this article.

1. For a basic introduction to the Mound Builders, see *Mound Builders and Cliff Dwellers* (Alexandria, Va.: Time-Life Books, 1992), 6–77.

2. Robert Silverberg, *Mound Builders of Ancient America: The Archaeology of a Myth* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1968).

3. Stephen Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology: The Wild Side of North American Prehistory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

4. Examples of Scotford’s Bible story tablets can be found in Rudolph Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens from Michigan, U. S. A.* (Detroit: John Bornman and Son, 1910); and David Allen Deal, “‘The Mystic Symbol’ Demystified,” *The Ancient American: The Voice of Alternative Viewpoints* 1 (March–April 1994): 16–23. Calendars: Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 14, 19, 33, 37. Battles: Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 15, 22, 34. The Garden of Eden: Deal, “‘Mystic Symbol’ Demystified,” *Ancient American*, 17. The Flood: Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 6, 16, 18, 22, 25, 30, 32, 36. The Tower of Babel: Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 17. The life of Christ: Deal, “‘Mystic Symbol’ Demystified,” 30. The precise number of objects Scotford created is not known.

5. Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology*, 71–76. Most academic fields were professionalized during the progressive era.

6. M. E. Cornell, *A Brief Account of the Wonderful Discovery of Pre-Historic Relics Consisting of Caskets, Tablets, and Altars with Written Records of the Mound Builders* (Battle Creek, Mich.: By the author, n.d. [circa 1893]), v–6; Francis W. Kelsey, “To the Editor of the Nation,” January 16, 1892, in “Archaeological Forgeries at Wyman, Michigan,” *New York Nation*, January 28, 1892, 71. See also James Savage, “The Prehistoric Finds of Michigan,” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society* 22 (1911): 28–29.

7. Francis W. Kelsey, “To the Editor of the Nation,” January 16, 1892, 71.

8. Francis W. Kelsey, “Some Archeological Forgeries from Michigan,” *American Anthropologist* 10 (January–March 1908): 58.

9. Cornell, *Discovery of Pre-Historic Relics*, v.

10. Cornell, *Discovery of Pre-Historic Relics*, 7. See also the Levi Burkholder affidavit on Cornell, *Discovery of Pre-Historic Relics*, 32.

11. Cornell also put forward some weak supportive evidence for authenticity. He found the ancient scripts on the material proof of antiquity. Cornell, *Discovery of Pre-Historic Relics*, 14. He took as evidence for authenticity that there were no patterns in the material, as in other Mound Builder pottery (14–15); that some figures, which Cornell considered idols, compared to similar mound artifacts (26–27); and that a copper dagger found in Genesee County was finer than could be made with the technology of his time (27). Even if there was such a dagger, there is no indication that this was Scotford material.

12. Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," 49–53; [William A. Denscotter], "Keeps Fake Relic Just As Souvenir," *Detroit News*, November 16, 1907, p. 5, cols. 3–4.

13. Kelsey, "To the Editor of the Nation," January 16, 1892, 71; Morris Jastrow Jr., "To the Editor of the Nation," January 19, 1892, in "Archeological Forgeries at Wyman, Michigan," *New York Nation*, Jan. 28, 1892, 71–72.

14. Jastrow, "To the Editor of the Nation," January 19, 1892, 71–71; Kelsey, "To the Editor of the Nation," January 16, 1892, 71–72.

15. Years later, Kelsey also claimed that one of the casket lids "had been dried on a machine sawed board." Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," 50.

16. Kelsey, "To the Editor of the Nation," January 16, 1892, 71.

17. Silas Bent, "Bogus Relics of Past Tempt Collectors," *New York Times*, December 20, 1925, p. XX5, col. 6.

18. Francis W. Kelsey, "A Persistent Forgery," *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 33, no. 1 (January–February–March 1911): 26; Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," 53, 55.

19. Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," 53–56, 58. Later, when asked to identify this "William H. Scotford," James O. Scotford declined to comment. "Men 'Higher Up' May Be in Fake Relic Business," *Detroit News*, November 20, 1907, p. 2, col. 3.

20. John Campbell, "Recently Discovered Relics of the American Mound-Builders," *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 2d ser., 4 (May 1898): 3–19.

21. Campbell, "Recently Discovered Relics," 10–11. The marks on the "Monhegan stone" bear only a superficial resemblance to those on the Scotford material. Moreover, the Monhegan stone does not actually contain inscriptions. Its surface is covered with bedding and cleavage resulting from naturally occurring cracks and weathering of the stone. This information was supplied to the author by Maine archaeologist Bruce Borque. The misperception of language in the grooves of the Monhegan stone does not stand as an isolated incident of fantastic archaeology. There have been a number of "misinterpreted cracks in rocks." Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology*, 12.

22. James O. Scotford, in Ancestral File, ver. 4.19, Salt Lake City, ID # 49D6-HD.

23. Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," 53–59; Francis W. Kelsey "To the Editor of the Nation," May 31, [1910], in "Correspondence: A Persistent Forgery," *New York Nation*, June 16, 1910, 603–4.

24. Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," 58. Supporter John A. Russell gave the locations of most of Scotford's digs. John A. Russell, *Prehistoric Discoveries in Wayne County, Michigan* (Detroit: Shelby Printing, 1911), 6–7.

25. Bent, "Bogus Relics," p. XX5, col. 7.

26. John Cumming, "Humbugs of the First Water: The Soper Frauds," *Michigan History* 63 (March–April 1979): 34, 36.

Daniel E. Soper may have been a distant cousin of Parley P. Pratt's wife Phoebe E. Soper. Daniel E. Soper—born in Genesee, Michigan, in 1873—was the son of

Theodore Soper and a woman called Ann or Anna. In 1868, a Theodore W. Soper married a woman named Mary Ann Henning in Genesee, Michigan. Theodore W. Soper was born in New York state in 1848 to William Soper and a woman named Amelia. Around 1847, a William Soper married an Amelia Weeks in New York state. This William Soper was born in 1807 in Hempstead, on Long Island. Phoebe Soper Pratt was the daughter of Samuel Soper and Hannah Bornlay, both of Hempstead. This information comes from International Genealogical Index and the Ancestral File.

27. Soper was accused of extravagance with state funds, official carelessness, and demanding kickbacks for an appointment to public office. "Soper in Disgrace," *New York Times*, December 18, 1891, p. 8, col. 2; "Charges against Soper," *New York Times*, January 1, 1892, p. 2, col. 6.

28. A[lbert] L. Spooner, "'Cuneiform Tablets' from Michigan: The Soper Frauds," *Cranbrook Institute of Science News Letter* 25 (October 1955), 18.

29. In his general study of hoaxes, Curtis D. MacDougall writes, "Although it is customary for the originator of a hoax to make certain that it is related or published at the proper time and place, not infrequently it is someone else who is most responsible for its becoming widespread." Curtis D. MacDougall, *Hoaxes* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 283.

30. "Daniel E. Soper in a Fake Relic Business," *Detroit News*, November 14, 1907, p. 2, col. 3.

31. "Soper in a Fake Relic Business," p. 1, cols. 7–8, p. 2, cols. 1–4; "Soper Plans Extensive Relic Hunt as Soon as Frost Leaves the Ground," *Detroit Journal*, March 23, 1911, in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection, Milton R. Hunter Collection, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Albert L. Spooner stated that he owned "a letter in which Soper stated that he never sold, traded or gave away a single piece, but, I also have letters in which he offered hundreds of pieces for sale." A. L. Spooner, "The Soper Frauds," in possession of the author, 5. Spooner wrote this before March 23, 1977, the date on the cover letter he sent to Dr. Paul R. Cheesman. A[lbert] L. Spooner to Dr. Paul R. Cheesman, March 23, 1977, in possession of the author.

32. "Relics Branded Fakes Unloaded on Dean Savage," *Detroit News*, November 15, 1907, 1; "Others Have Found Relics," *Detroit Journal*, March 25, 1911, in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

33. Savage would later make two more large purchases—one from Scotford and one from "a relative of Scotford's by marriage." Cumming, "Humbugs of the First Water," 36. Letters from Savage to Soper show Savage was not a coconspirator. Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

34. *In Hoc Signo* means "under this sign." This is a reference to the Emperor Constantine's dream in which Constantine was shown a cross and told that he would conquer "under this sign."

35. "Relics Branded Fakes Unloaded," p. 2, col. 1; "To Prove Genuine Their Prehistoric Finds Here," *Detroit Free Press*, February 12, 1911, clipping in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection; "Daniel Soper Finds 'Prehistoric Tablet' Ten Miles from City," *Detroit Journal*, March 22, 1911, 2, in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection; "Prehistoric Relics Found Here Branded by Starr as Fakes," *Detroit News*, July 28, 1911, 2.

36. "Soper in a Fake Relic Business," p. 1, col. 7.

37. "Soper in a Fake Relic Business," p. 1, cols. 7–8, p. 2, cols. 1–4; "Relics Branded Fakes Unloaded," p. 1, col. 8, p. 2, cols. 1–2; "Keeps Fake Relic," p. 5, cols. 3–4; "Men 'Higher Up,'" p. 2, cols. 2–3.

38. "Dan Soper Is Digging Again," *Detroit Journal*, September 9, 1909, clipping in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.
39. Savage, "Prehistoric Finds," 31.
40. "Others Have Found Relics."
41. Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*. Etzenhouser included a reproduction of John Campbell's comparison of Scotford characters and Monhegan stone characters. He mistakenly labeled the entire plate "The Monhegan Stone: Found . . . in 1856." Campbell, "Recently Discovered Relics," page 11, plate 3; reproduced in Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 2. This made it appear that both the Monhegan characters and the Scotford characters appeared on the stone that had been discovered in Maine a half-century earlier.
42. Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 4.
43. James E. Talmage, "The Deseret Museum," *Deseret Museum Bulletin*, new ser. (August 16, 1911): 23. For a biographical sketch of Talmage, see Becky White Workman, "James Edward Talmage," in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 544.
44. James E. Talmage, Journal, May 1, 1909, James Edward Talmage Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
45. James E. Talmage, "The 'Michigan Relics,'" *Deseret Museum Bulletin*, new ser. (September 16, 1911): 3–4 (this article was reprinted in the *Improvement Era* 14 [October 1911]: 1048–73); Talmage, Journal, May 22 and October 13, 1909.
46. James E. Talmage to Daniel E. Soper, September 8, 1909, in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.
47. Talmage to Soper, September 8, 1909. On Talmage's interest on the historicity of the Book of Mormon, see James E. Talmage, *The Book of Mormon: An Account of Its Origin, with Evidences of Its Genuineness and Authenticity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1899), 12, 16, 31, 32.
48. Quoted in Daniel E. Soper to James E. Talmage, April 1, 1910, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.
49. Talmage, Journal, October 13, 1909.
50. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 3, 5; Talmage, Journal, November 9, 1909.
51. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 3.
52. Talmage, Journal, November 14, 1909.
53. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 8–15; Talmage, Journal, November 15–18, 1909.
54. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 7, illus. 5, and 9, illus. 6.
55. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 6–8; James E. Talmage, "Archaeological Finds Declared Spurious," *Deseret Evening News*, August 5, 1911, pt. 2, p. 11.
56. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 8; Talmage, "Finds Declared Spurious," 11.
57. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 15; Talmage, Journal, November 20–27, 1909.
58. Talmage, Journal, November 28–30, 1909; "Relics Found Here Branded," p. 2, col. 2.
59. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 15; Talmage, Journal, December 1–10, 1909.
60. Talmage, Journal, December 11–14, 1909.
61. Soper wrote to Talmage on February 10, 1910. James E. Talmage to Daniel E. Soper, February 26, 1910, in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. This letter is incomplete and cuts off in the middle of the above quotation. A typescript of the contents, however, can be found elsewhere in the collection.
62. Soper to Talmage, April 1, 1910.

63. Statement, James E. Talmage, fall 1910, relayed in “Relics Found Here Branded,” p. 2, col. 3; Daniel E. Soper to [the father of Albert L. Spooner], no date [circa January 14, 1919 (the date received)], quoted in Spooner, “‘Cuneiform Tablets’ from Michigan,” 19.

64. Talmage, Journal, June 8, 1910.

65. Talmage, Journal, August 30–October 21, 1910.

66. James E. Talmage to President Joseph F. Smith and Counselors, February 8, 1911, 4, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. See also James E. Talmage to A[rmond] H. Griffith, December 16, 1910, and James E. Talmage to Herbert E. Sargent, January 21, 1911, both in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

67. R[udolph] Etzenhouser to Daniel E. Soper, March 29, 1910, in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection; “To Prove Genuine.” Hoaxes often find themselves an unwitting popularizer. MacDougall, *Hoaxes*, 283–84.

68. J. O. Kinnaman, “Michigan the Storm Center of American Archeology,” *American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal*, 33, no. 1 (January-February-March 1911): 12, 29.

69. Kinnaman, “Storm Center of American Archeology,” 12; Kelsey, “Persistent Forgery,” 26–29.

70. Savage, “Prehistoric Finds,” 21–26. Combining the battle scenes and the fact that indigenous Michigan Christians did not presently exist, Savage reasoned that they had been destroyed in battle. He compared this theory to an alleged Indian legend about killing a white race in the distant past (27–28). Savage also asserted that the scenes from the new relics paralleled known ancient customs (36).

71. Savage, “Prehistoric Finds,” 33. In another dig, a stone pipe was found encircled by a root. Both sides of the root had to be cut to remove the pipe. Spooner, “‘Cuneiform Tablets’ from Michigan,” 20. Similarly, several mounds were overgrown with plants. See, for example, Russell, *Discoveries in Wayne County*, 8; Affidavit quoted in *Historical Background of the Soper-Scotford Collection of Inscriptions and Drawings*, comp. Leonard D. Carter in cooperation with Paul R. Cheesman from the files and papers of Milton R. Hunter (Provo, Utah: Center for Religious Studies, Brigham Young University, 1977), 22.

72. Savage, “Prehistoric Finds,” 37–38.

73. MacDougall, *Hoaxes*, 283.

74. See map on page 212 of Richard B. Stamps, “Tools Leave Marks: Material Analysis of the Scotford-Soper-Savage Michigan Relics,” in this issue of *BYU Studies*. See also Cumming, “Humbugs of the First Water,” 36–37. Dorothy L. Hayden, executive director of the American Institute of Archeological Research, holds that plates of the Michigan Relic type were found in Ohio and Canada. Dorothy L. Hayden, “Introduction [to Deal, “‘Mystic Symbol’ Demystified’],” *On Site* 3 (spring 1992): i. Similarly, Wayne May holds that Michigan Relics of the Scotford type were found “throughout the state” between 1848 and 1920. Wayne May, “Christ in North America?” *Ancient American: The Voice of Alternative Viewpoints* 4, no. 26 (January-February 1999), 6. Claims such as these are never documented.

75. Soper’s financial schemes and Scotford’s former occupations are discussed in Cumming, “Humbugs of the First Water,” 34–36, 41, 42. See also “Mrs. Robson under a Hypnotic Spell Say Scotford Boys,” *Detroit News*, September 7, 1911, p.1, col. 5, p. 2, col. 6.

76. “Soper Plans Extensive Relic Hunt.”

77. W[illiam] C. Mills to Daniel E. Soper, November 9, 1910, in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

78. "Believers in Soper Swear He Found Relics in Highland Park," *Detroit Journal*, June 16, 1911, last edition, p. 21, cols. 4–6; "Prehistoric White Race Preceded the American Indian: Kinnaman Discoveries in Michigan Overthrow Science," *Chicago Examiner*, July 23, 1911, clipping in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

79. The display placards can be found in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

80. "Prehistoric White Race Preceded the American Indian."

81. On Starr's investigation, see "Detroit Relics Interest Starr," *Detroit News*, July 24, 1911; "Starr Finds Soper Relics Interesting; Will Say No More," *Detroit News*, July 27, 1911; "Professor Starr Is Skeptical about Proof of an Ancient Caucasian People in Michigan," *Chicago Examiner*, July 28, 1911; "Relics Found Here Branded," p. 2, col. 3; "Prof. Starr Doubts Relics Are Genuine," *Detroit Journal*, July 28, 1911, last edition, 1; "Scotfords Alone Find Relics, Says Starr," *Chicago Sunday Examiner*, July 30, 1911, pt. 1, 10; "Scotfords Have Fine Relic Scent," *Detroit News*, July 31, 1911, clippings in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. See also "Professor Starr and the Soper Relics," *Detroit Journal*, July 29, 1911, 4. On Starr's suspicion of sleight-of-hand placement, see "Prof. Kinnaman 'Taken In' by Soper Relics, He Admits," *Detroit News*, August 2, 1911, 1, clipping in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection; on Scotford's skill, see "Robson under a Hypnotic Spell," 1–2; see also "[Mrs. May Robson] Lays Bare Fake Relic Industry: Adds Final Word in Fake Relic Expose," *Detroit News*, September 6, 1911. Gillman himself expressed grave suspicions in "Cardiff Giant Brought into Discussion of Soper Relics by Henry Gillman, Scientist," *Detroit News*, July 29, 1911, clipping in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

82. "Kinnaman 'Taken In,'" 1.

83. "A Remarkable Find," *Deseret Evening News*, August 3, 1911, pt. 1, p. 4, col. 1; "The Other Side of the Story," *Deseret Evening News*, August 4, 1911, pt. 1, p. 4, col. 1–2.

84. Talmage, "Finds Declared Spurious," 11.

85. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 2–27.

86. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 22.

87. The reasons are numbered and are found in Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 22–26.

88. See also Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 2, 6, and 20, illus. 4. Talmage noted that the copper tablets had been "impressed with dies" (22). Perhaps this explains the noisy hammering that neighbors of Scotford's involved sons complained of. "Lays Bare Fake Relic Industry," p. 2, col. 7.

89. See also Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 17–18. Herbert E. Sargent, director of the Kent Scientific Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan, also noticed the thin, even corrosion on the Scotford-Soper artifacts as opposed to the uneven corrosion on genuine relics. Furthermore, he examined one piece of the Scotford variety upon which a common housefly became stuck and left its outline in the oxidized layer. "This would hardly have occurred in the earth," noted Sargent. He concluded, "A close inspection of this specimen, microscopic and otherwise, thoroughly convinced me that it was the work of a comparatively unskilled artisan with a sixty-fourth inch machine made file." H[erbert] E. Sargent to J[ames] E. Talmage, January 17, 1911, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection; H. E. Sargent, "Notes on a Notched Point, Submitted by Daniel E. Soper," n.d., attached to Lena E. Baker to J[ames] E. Talmage, July 10, 1911, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

90. See also Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, to J[ames] E. Talmage, May 24, 1910, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

Native Michigan copper is characterized by flecks of silver. E. J. Pranke, a chemist at Ohio State University, analyzed one of the copper Michigan relics and concluded, "The degree of hardness and the absence of silver give to Arizona the preference as its

probable source." E. J. Pranke, "Analysis of a Copper Relic," June 7, 1910, 3, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. The determination of Arizona as the source of this copper is particularly interesting in light of Soper's former residence in that state. Soper was exposed for planting in Arizona genuine ancient artifacts he had discovered in Michigan. Perhaps using a similar ruse, he later planted an authentic Arizona piece in Michigan.

91. This point has been made by several others. See, for example, Morris Jastrow Jr., "To the Editor of the Nation," January 9, 1892, in "Archaeological Forgeries at Wyman," 71; Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," 48, 60; Miriam Brooks [open letter] to "Dr. James E. Talmage," August 8, 1911, in *Deseret Evening News*, August 12, 1911, quoted in Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 28–30. Since not all ancient artists were careful, this argument is a less important one.

In a similar vein, Talmage claimed to have detected anachronisms in a tablet's pictures, such as the allegedly modern nature of a soldier's costume. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 20, illustration 4 on page 6, illustration 17 on page 24. Some of the tablets were clearly intended to represent decalogues. They anachronistically mimic the traditional, though not ancient, conception that the Ten Commandments were written on stones shaped like traditional English Christian gravestones. Cornell, *Discovery of Pre-Historic Relics*, figure between pages 10 and 11; Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 8; Cumming, "Humbugs of the First Water," 36.

92. Here Talmage repeated Francis W. Kelsey's linguistic criticism.

93. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 5; "Finds Declared Spurious," 1. In a historical analysis of the Soper frauds, John Cumming charged Soper and Scotford with fraud and exonerated Savage and Etzenhouser as victims. Cumming, "Humbugs of the First Water," 42–43.

94. "Soper Relics Are Again Denounced as Patent Frauds," *Detroit News*, August 10, 1911, clipping in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection; "Soper Relics Marked by Modern Saw and File, Says Talmage," *Detroit Journal*, August 10, 1911, last edition; "Another Skeptic on the Soper Relics," *Detroit Journal*, August 11, 1911, last edition; "Gives Relics Acid Test," *New York Times*, August 14, 1911, clipping in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

95. Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology*, 185.

96. James Savage, "To the Editor" of the *Detroit Free Press*, November 1, 1911, in "Flow of Twaddle Begs Question," *Detroit Free Press*, clipping in Scrapbook 13, Frederick Starr Papers, Department of Special Collections, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

97. Savage, "To the Editor." See also Savage, "Prehistoric Finds," 37. For example, see the affidavits in Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 2. See also "Prehistoric Tablet of Great Value Found by Dr. Hyvernaut in Michigan," *Washington Post*, September 18, 1916.

98. For example, James Strang slant-planted a set of inscribed metal plates. Roger Van Noord, *King of Beaver Island: The Life and Assassination of James Jessee Strang* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 34–37, 56–57.

99. The Albert L. Spooner collection includes a copper piece that appears to be an old artifact that has been reworked into the shape of a butter knife. Another copper item appears to be an awl that was hammered into a spoon shape. Descriptions of items A89.1-9 through A89.1-10 in Archaeological Collections, Bureau of History, "Catalog: Spooner Donation," in possession of the author. This would not be the first case of manufacture by reshaping; Scotford apparently reshaped some pennies. When Francis W.

Kelsey observed the material, he noticed "a few coins of copper beaten out thin, and adorned with various alphabetic signs. The weight of two coins which have been examined is suspiciously near that of our one-cent pieces." Kelsey, "To the Editor of the Nation," January 16, 1892, 71. Criticisms regarding file and saw marks prompted Scotford to produce allegedly ancient files and saws. Kelsey's criticism of the unbaked clay of the first phase tablets prompted Scotford to make baked clay and then slate tablets. Similarly, Talmage's criticisms of the metal composition could have spurred Scotford to solve this problem by reshaping authentic Native American copper into his type of artifact. There are other examples in the history of American archaeology when authentic items have been reshaped and anachronized as part of a hoax. See Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology*, 120.

100. Savage, "To the Editor." Talmage made the same point in James E. Talmage, "Finds Declared Spurious," 1, quoted in Carter, *Historical Background of the Soper-Scotford Collection*, 31. On the discovery of saws, see Savage, "Prehistoric Finds," 21, 26.

101. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 2, 25.

102. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 26.

103. Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," 59. Francis W. Kelsey, "To the Editor of the Nation," May 31, [1910,] in "A Persistent Forgery," *New York Nation*, June 16, 1910, 603–4; Kelsey, "Persistent Forgery," 29. See also "Starr and the Soper Relics," p. 4, col. 1.

104. Some Protestant ministers also took the bait. See "Men 'Higher Up,'" p. 2, col. 3. In his general study of hoaxes, Curtis D. MacDougall found that hoaxes often take advantage of religious predispositions. MacDougall, *Hoaxes*, 95, 102, 146.

105. Scotford had produced battle tablets like the ones which interested Etzenhouser and Talmage before his contact with either of them. The parallels to the Book of Mormon on such depictions derive from the Mound Builder myth rather than the Book of Mormon itself. European Americans who could not attribute the construction of the more impressive mounds to the Indians, whom they perceived as lazy and savage, reasoned that the mounds must have been built by a "civilized," but now vanished, people. These mythical Mound Builders were conceived of as agriculturist and industrious. They were commonly believed to have been refugees from Babel or the lost ten tribes. To explain their disappearance, many reasoned that the Indians had warred against and annihilated them. This myth was crumbling at the turn of the century. Silverberg, *Mound Builders of Ancient America*; Williams, *Fantastic Archeology*, 23–24, 43–76, 168–75. Dan Vogel argues that the Book of Mormon incorporated the Mound Builder myth. Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon: Religious Solutions from Columbus to Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986). For a Latter-day Saint response, see Kevin Christensen's review in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 2 (1990): 214–57.

Utilization of this myth abounds in the Michigan Relics literature. For example, see Cornell, *Discovery of Pre-Historic Relics*, 8, 9–10, 22, 25, 28; Russell, *Discoveries in Wayne County*, 16–17; Bent, "Bogus Relics," p. XX5, col. 8; "Dan Soper Is Digging Again," *Detroit Journal*, September 9, 1909, last edition, 2; "Chattanooga's Wonderful Collection of Ancient Relics," *The Chattanooga News*, late mail edition, March 1, 1916, p. 8.

106. "Soper Plans Extensive Relic Hunt," 1.

107. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 19, 22, illus. 14.

108. Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 19–20.

109. Talmage journal, quoted in Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 12.

110. These representations followed the traditional conception of the stone tablets—the English Christian gravestone shape. They were divided into ten panels,

with five on each tablet, and script inside of each panel. In figure 3 of Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 8, there is a series of from one to ten dots that mark each panel. Savage held this decalogue tablet as his prize possession. [Denscotter], "Relics Branded Fakes Unloaded," p. 1, col. 8, p. 2, col. 1. Talmage noted that this tablet was "one of the most carefully inscribed artifacts." Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 18. For another decalogue tablet, see Cornell, *Discovery of Pre-Historic Relics*, figure between pages 10 and 11.

111. Stanley B. Kimball, "The Anthon Transcript: People, Primary Sources, and Problems," *BYU Studies* 10 (spring 1970): 325–52, especially 349–50.

112. For a photograph of these characters, see Daniel W. Bachman, "Anthon Transcript," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:44.

113. They appear on seven of the twelve sides of the six Kinderhook plates. For facsimiles of the Kinderhook plates, see Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 5:374–76.

114. It would be a simple error for a non-Mormon to confuse the Kinderhook plates and Cumorah's plates. The mistake has been made on other occasions. When Wilford Poulson found the one extant Kinderhook plate at the Chicago Historical Society, it was on display as one of the golden plates of the Book of Mormon. "Kinderhook Plate" [statements of F. C. A. Richardson and M. Wilford Poulson], fifteenth item in the folder entitled "'Kinderhook Plate' items" in the "Mormon Collection," Archives and Manuscripts Department, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, copied from the museum file corresponding to Accession Number 1920.487, Decorative and Industrial Arts Department, Chicago Historical Society. In 1913, the *St. Louis Times* ran a story about the Kinderhook plates entitled "Book of Mormon Plates 'Planted' by Illinois Man," September 23, 1913, 1. The *Warsaw Signal's* 1844 article about the Kinderhook plates is entitled "New Book of Mormon," May 22, 1844. In 1888, the *Chicago Inter Ocean* ran an article entitled "Second Book of Mormon," morning edition, January 31, 1888, 1. Mormon publications borrowed a news story and its title from the *Quincy Whig*: "Singular Discovery—Material for Another Mormon Book," *Quincy Whig*, May 3, 1843; "Singular Discovery—Material for Another Mormon Book," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, May 10, 1843, p. 2, col. 3; "Ancient Records," *Times and Seasons* 4, (May 1, 1843), 186–87; *A Brief Account of the Discovery of the Brass Plates Recently Taken from a Mound near Kinderhook, Pike County, Illinois*, broadside printed in Nauvoo, Illinois, photocopy in Perry Special Collections.

115. For more information about the Kinderhook plates, see Stanley B. Kimball, "Kinderhook Plates Brought to Joseph Smith Appear to Be a Nineteenth-Century Hoax," *Ensign* 11 (August 1981): 66–74.

116. For a photograph of the piece in question, see Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 5, illus. 3. Actually, the Kinderhook plates are significantly smaller, but their size was not known until 1929 when an extant plate was found (see previous note). Prior to this time, they were always described with the dimensions given in the newspapers at the time of their discovery: "four inches in length, one inch and three quarters wide at the top." "Singular Discovery—Material for Another Mormon Book," *Quincy Whig*, May 1, 1843, p. 187; "Ancient Records," 185–86. These are the dimensions given in Rudolph Etzenhouser's works (see note 118 below). The article Talmage unearthed measures 4³/₈" by 1⁷/₈". Both have a perforation in the middle of the very top. Both have somewhat rounded edges at the top. Both have inscriptions on front and back.

117. It is more likely that Etzenhouser was the intended dupe. Talmage, who had only contacted Soper a few months previously, felt that the mounds he opened in 1909 had not been disturbed for years. Talmage, *Journal*, quoted in Talmage, "Michigan Relics," 11. Etzenhouser became involved as early as 1907. (He wrote that he became involved after James Savage had. Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 5.)

118. R[udolph] Etzenhouser, *The Book Unsealed: An Exposition of Prophecy and American Antiquities* (Independence, Mo.: Ensign Print, 1892), 42–43; R[udolph] Etzenhouser, *From Palmyra, New York, 1830, to Independence, Missouri, 1894* (Independence, Mo.: Ensign Publishing House, 1894), 88–89; R[udolph] Etzenhouser, *The Book of Mormon and Its Translator: Archaeological and Historical Evidences* (Independence, Mo.: Ensign Publishing House, 1899), 6–7.

Compare also the Kinderhook plates with the artifact Soper is holding in the photograph in the introduction to Etzenhouser's book. Etzenhouser, *Engravings of Prehistoric Specimens*, 3. This piece looks similar to the Kinderhook plates and appears to be a slim metal plate. Etzenhouser may have opened his book with this photograph because of the similarity. The book was published after Talmage's visit. The plate in Soper's hand may be another instance of improvement in manufacture.

In a truly bizarre news story regarding the Soper frauds and the Kinderhook plates, the *Quincy Herald-Whig* published an article implicating the Mormons for producing both. "Brass Tablets Found near Kinderhook Believed Planted in Grave by Mormons: Efforts Made to Substantiate Claims to Antiquity of Religion," *Quincy Herald-Whig*, April 14, 1929, 9, 19. James Savage wrote that a Catholic periodical had blamed the Strangites for planting the stuff. Savage to Soper, November 20, 1919, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. At the other end of the uncritical spectrum, Stephen B. Shaffer, a Latter-day Saint author, mistakenly pointed to both frauds "to show the reader the close relationship between the Adamic language, Nephite language, Jaredite language and several other ancient languages of people that populated the North and South American continent before the Jaredites and after the Nephites (but before Columbus)." Stephen B. Shaffer, *Treasures of the Ancients* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 1996), xv–xvi.

119. "Lays Bare Fake Relic Industry," p. 1, cols. 3–4, p. 2, col. 7.

120. "Robson under a Hypnotic Spell," p. 1, col. 5, p. 2, col. 6.

121. James Savage to Daniel E. Soper, November 3, 1914, in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

122. James Savage to Daniel E. Soper, January 19, 1916, in Soper and Savage Artifacts Collection. In the years following the discrediting of the Scotford-Soper artifacts, those with an interest in the material usually contacted University of Michigan professor Francis Kelsey—the first and best known detractor—who would direct them to Talmage's bulletin. Francis W. Kelsey to M[ary] Pellen, December 20, 1914, typescript copy by M. Pellen, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

123. For an example of the hoax continuing after 1911, see "Still Finding Soper Relics," *Detroit Journal*, August 26, 1911, last edition, p. 18, col. 6. See also letters from Savage to Soper in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. Savage refers to "the cause" in more than one of these letters.

124. "College Given Mound Curios," [unknown newspaper], October 13, 1921, clipping in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. The materials were offered to the Anthropology Department of the University of Michigan. The department did not accept them, feeling they were not "worthy of storage space." Henriette Mertz, "Report Re[garding] Savage Collection," 1, in possession of the author.

125. Barry Fell, "The Michigan 'Relics,'" *Epigraphic Society Occasional Publications* 17 (1988): 287–318.

126. Cumming, "Humbugs of the First Water," 39–40; Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology*, 176–86; MacDougall, *Hoaxes*, 81–82.

127. Cumming, "Humbugs of the First Water," 42. See also MacDougall, *Hoaxes*, 81. Albert L. Spooner excavated mounds with his father and Soper as a young boy. Later in life he researched the Scotford-Soper materials and was generally considered an expert on the material. In an unpublished manuscript he concurs with Cumming: "To my knowledge nobody has claimed to have found any in the last 50 years." A. L. Spooner, "The Soper Frauds," manuscript in possession of author, 5; see also Spooner, "'Cuneiform Tablets' from Michigan," 15.

128. See for example, Milton R. Hunter, *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956).

129. On Hunter's acquisition of the Savage collection, see Milton R. Hunter, "Savage and Soper Collections: Ancient American Tablets Testify," 41–44, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. On Hunter's acquisition of the Soper collection, see the letters between Hunter and Ellis Clarke Soper in Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

130. I make this inference based on the fact that Talmage's relevant papers are now in the Hunter collection. Hunter apparently removed them from the Talmage collection.

131. Milton R. Hunter to Ellis Clarke Soper, January 20, 1965, copy in possession of the author.

132. "Letters to Translators and Replys," Soper and Savage Artifact Collection.

133. Hunter, "Ancient American Tablets Testify," 33–40.

134. Hunter, "Deed of Gift," January 8, 1974, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection; Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Agreement," January 8, 1974, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection. The Soper and Savage Collections, together with authentic artifacts Hunter owned, are now classified as the "Milton R. Hunter Archeological Collection." They are currently in a storage room of the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, as are the Talmage artifacts.

135. Carter, *Historical Background of the Soper-Scotford Collection*. Like Hunter, Cheesman authored books about Book of Mormon archeology.

136. The report argued well that the conditions of the mounds appeared undisturbed, but this point had been made before. Carter, *Historical Background of the Soper-Scotford Collection*, 15, 22, 25, 32. Criticizing Talmage's second point, the report stated that since Talmage's day, "shallow graves had been authenticated." Carter, *Historical Background of the Soper-Scotford Collection*, 31. But Talmage never questioned the existence of shallow graves. Rather, he questioned the absence of exposed Scotford material. To refute Talmage, the report also pointed out that saws and files had been discovered, that there were independent discoveries, that Soper was honest (22), and that several articles were found by several people over a wide space (19). These arguments have been addressed above.

137. Carter, *Historical Background of the Soper-Scotford Collection*, 27–32.

138. The blade's copper contained flecks of silver as does raw native lake copper. Carter, *Historical Background of the Soper-Scotford Collection*, 28, 33.

139. MacDougall, *Hoaxes*, 286.

140. Some amateur archaeologists believe the Scotford artifacts are authentic. See Henriette Mertz, *The Mystic Symbol: Mark of the Michigan Mound Builders* (Gaithers-

burg, Md.: Global Books, 1986); and articles on the Michigan Relics in *Ancient American* magazine.

Henriette Mertz and others have mistaken the so-called Newberry stone and its accompanying figurines for Scotford articles. The inscribed stone, discovered in 1896 in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, does not fit within the spatio-temporal context of the Scotford scheme. Scotford worked in the state's main land mass. Except for the first phase of the hoax, which was very localized, Scotford's work took place after 1896. The Newberry tablet bears only a superficial resemblance to the Scotford-Soper artifacts. Figurines of the Newberry type are without parallel among Scotford's known productions. For a brief introduction to the Newberry items, see Betty Sodders, "McGruer's Gods and the Newberry Stone," *The Ancient American* 1 (March-April 1994): 24-26.



Courtesy Church Archives

FIG. 1. Men in search of artifacts, ca. 1911. Daniel E. Soper led groups of interested persons on digs around Michigan. From left to right: Edward Harrigan, James Savage, Reverend Laurentuis, Daniel E. Soper, Charles Allen, and Dennis B. Hays.

Tools Leave Marks

Material Analysis of the Scotford-Soper-Savage Michigan Relics

Richard B. Stamps

Extensive collections of supposedly prehistoric artifacts known as the Michigan Relics or the Scotford-Soper-Savage collection—possibly as many as 3,000 pieces¹—exist across the country. I have personally examined more than 1,000 from four different collections.² What is so special about this collection of artifacts? Why does it merit further study? Although numerous previous studies have suggested that the materials were not made by ancient people but are of modern origin,³ there is ongoing interest in the collections. Dr. John Halsey, the state archaeologist of Michigan, says that his office gets more requests to see these materials than any other single collection.⁴ The Michigan State Archives was responding to queries as this piece was being written in 2000.

Local antiquarians and other interested persons recovered the pieces from approximately 1890 to 1920 (fig. 1). At that time, field techniques and the importance of careful field notes, maps, photos, and documentation had not been firmly established in archaeology. Documentation of any kind, most particularly field notes associated with these finds, is actively being sought, but none has been located. Investigations at eight institutions have failed to provide important information relating to the context of the finds.

People interested in the finds wonder where the sites were located. What does material analysis of the artifacts reveal about their origin? To what time period do the artifacts date? Who were their makers? The purpose of the research reported in this article is an attempt to answer these questions.

MICHIGAN RELIC SITES

The first reported discoveries were made near the villages of Wyman and Edmore in Montcalm County, Michigan, in 1890. While digging postholes for a fence, James Scotford recovered an artifact that Kinnaman and Savage characterized as a “large earthen casket;”⁵ Kelsey calls it “a small cup of clay.”⁶ Additional finds followed, and by 1920, artifacts had been dug up in sixteen counties in the lower peninsula of Michigan (see map).⁷ John A. Russell,



Probable Counties Where Scotford-Soper-Savage
Artifacts Were Unearthed
(Counties are listed in alphabetical order)

who carefully studied the digging and artifacts at the time, reported on the area around Detroit. He states, "In this 40-acre woodlot there appeared to be upward of 1200 mounds, of which something more than 400 have been opened." He mentions other locations around Detroit and notes that 170 of them had been opened. He clarifies that not all mounds produced artifacts—perhaps one in ten. Finally, he states that the mounds varied in size and orientation.⁸

Dr. James E. Talmage, director of the Deseret Museum in Salt Lake City, Utah, participated in diggings in Detroit on November 15, 1909. He recorded in his diary that the mounds were small: "Generally their length is not more than four or five feet, with an average width of two to three feet."⁹ Only a few were more than two or three feet high. Russell describes the construction of the mounds thusly:

The original soil being slightly hollowed out; . . . a wood fire was burned thereupon, whether for the purpose of incinerating the dead or not, being open to question; that upon the ashes and unconsumed charcoals of these

fires, when cooled, were placed the objects which are now being recovered, and that the earth surrounding the mounds . . . was piled thereupon to produce the tumulus.¹⁰

The mounds were ellipsoidal in form and usually on an east-west axis, although north-south examples were recorded. Kelsey and Talmage have suggested that the mounds are in reality naturally occurring hummocks or little knolls—which Michigan lumbermen refer to as “turnouts,” or elevations produced by overturning trees.¹¹ Given Michigan’s extensive forests, this seems like a viable alternative to the theory that the mounds are human made.

Typically, James Scotford and his assistants would dig until they located an artifact, and then the dignitaries who sponsored the work were invited to remove the artifact. On several occasions, the dignitaries signed affidavits stating that the artifacts are genuine because they recovered the artifacts themselves.¹² The majority of the finds seem to have come from the top two feet of the mounds.

MATERIAL EXAMINATION OF THE MICHIGAN RELICS

Given the absence of field notes or documentation concerning the origins of the Michigan Relics, we are constrained to learn as much as we can from the collections themselves. The collections tend to be grouped because of their shared attributes. Although the materials from which they are manufactured differ, they were dug up during a certain period and they have common decorations, design elements, manufacturing techniques, and in most cases an identifying symbol: “IH/” (fig. 2).

Four Major Artifact Groups

Artifacts in the Michigan Relic collections are clay, copper, slate, or other stone. This study will not examine the “other stone” category because they are rather nondescript rocks. They exhibit the “IH/” mark but have few other traits that could answer any of the questions we are posing about origin and authenticity. Although the Michigan Relics share several stylistic and design similarities, the unifying attribute is the “IH/” symbol that appears on almost all pieces.

This defining symbol has been variously referred to as “a tribal mark;”¹³ “the



Courtesy Richard B. Stamps

FIG. 2. The “identification” symbol. Virtually all the Scotford-Soper-Savage pieces have been marked with this “IH/” symbol. No one knows precisely what it stands for, although hypotheses range from “a Mystic Symbol” to a forger’s sign.



Courtesy Richard B. Stamps

FIG. 3. An assemblage of Scotford-Soper-Savage artifacts. This photograph of artifacts in the University of Michigan collection indicates the range of size and shape found in the collection. The central item is a box topped by a sixteen-inch figure holding a large tablet. Courtesy Cranbrook Institute of Science.

‘signature’ of the race or the civilization of which the objects are the historical remains;”¹⁴ “a Mystic Symbol;”¹⁵ I.H.S. (meaning Jehovah);¹⁶ a “brand;”¹⁷ Scotford’s “trademark;”¹⁸ or, as Kelsey suggests, a “sign manual . . . of the forger.”¹⁹ Whatever it is called, the mark appears on almost all of the pieces.

Clay. Clay was used to produce a wide variety of artifacts, including bowls, lids, pipes, cylinders, pendants, grease lamps, figurines, tablets, and boxes (sometimes called caskets or altars, although none is more than two feet long). They range in size from a small $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ inch artifact to a large $13 \times 8 \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ inch box topped with a 16-inch-tall figure holding a $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{4} \times 1$ inch tablet (fig. 3).

The texture of the clay varies from a fine grain with no temper to a coarse paste with sand and large pebbled temper.²⁰ The artifacts were mainly created with slab or modeling techniques, not with a potter’s wheel. Some pieces were sunbaked while others were fired at a low temperature. There is no evidence of glaze, though some pieces seem to have been treated with a slip or wash that included gray and black pigments. The firing temperature was low, and numerous firing clouds of red, orange, and black suggest that the firing temperature was not closely controlled. The manufacturers probably did not use a kiln.

Decorative techniques on the clay artifacts include incising, appliqué, raking, and—most popular—the imprinting of various symbols by small sandstone stamps. Three different sets of stamps have been found: one in the University of Michigan collection and two in the collection held by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Some of the stamps were used

to create repetitive patterns; some have been interpreted as words in an ancient script.

Copper. Numerous copper artifacts are also found in the collections. Copper has been used in the Great Lakes area since the time of prehistoric cultures dating back to the Late Paleo-Indian and Archaic Period some 7,000 years ago.²¹ Nuggets of relatively pure copper had been brought to the region as flow copper by glaciers. Copper was mined in the upper Lake Superior region and has been the source of the majority of the copper found in the North American archaeological record, although other sources are known to exist.²²

Aboriginal copper artifacts include arrowheads, spearpoints, axheads, knives, chisels, punches, celts, spuds, adzes, wedges, gouges, pikes, drills, awls, needles, harpoons, fishhooks, beads, bangles, bracelets, rings, gorgets, pendants, hair ornaments, and earspools. In comparison, the Michigan Relic collections exhibit a wide variety of copper artifact types, including arrowheads, spearpoints, axheads, knives, chisels, swords, punches, a sickle, a trefoil, a saw, a file, a hammerhead, boxes, a can, shoes, bowls, crowns, chains, chain necklaces, amulets, a toy boat, disks, coins, and tablets. There are a few unidentifiable copper pieces as well.

Studies by professional archaeologists over the past one hundred years lead to the conclusion that

of one thing we are certain: no native copper was deliberately smelted. Metallographic analysis of numerous copper specimens from eastern North America has not found the telltale changes in their internal crystalline structure that would have occurred if metals were heated to their liquid state to remove their impurities. Nor have we anywhere seen signs of the furnaces or crucibles needed to melt native copper or of the sulphide copper ores of the Keweenaw [in Northern Michigan].²³

Clark and Purdy conclusively state, "There is no evidence of melting and casting in the artifacts that we examined. This technology apparently did not emerge in North America until the seventeenth century."²⁴

Traditional Michigan prehistoric copper manufacturing techniques include hot and cold hammering, annealing (heating to soften the copper to make it more malleable), grinding, cutting, perforating, polishing and burnishing, molding (sheets pushed or hammered into or around prepared forms), calding (putting thin copper sheets over wood, shell, or clay), riveting, and embossing. Some pieces were likely swadged. To swadge an artifact, one carves out a shape in a stone to form a mold, then pounds a piece of copper into the indentation until the copper assumes the shape of the mold. When analyzing Michigan's prehistoric copper artifacts, McPherron asked, "Why did most of the artifacts look as if they had been made up of several pieces?" and then answered his own question by noting

that the manufacturers folded the material over on itself at least once, creating a laminated appearance in these Native American pieces.²⁵

Slate. The third common raw material found in the Michigan Relic collections is slate. Due to its distinctive cleavage pattern, slate produces relatively thin, flat slabs, and it frequently is found as a raw material in the archaeological record. Slate is a soft stone that can be easily worked and shaped. Most notably, it is used for making pipes, banner stones, bird stones, pendants, effigies, weights, crescents, gorgets, axes, and discoidals.

In laboratory tests conducted for this study, I was able to inscribe lines on a slate sample with soft copper wire (nipped to a sharp edge), hardened copper wire (hammered to produce a cutting edge), a chert stone flake, and a steel blade. Other, harder stone is usually made into functional tools like arrowheads, spearpoints, and knives. In the Michigan Relic collections, almost a third of the pieces I examined were made of slate. Items included effigies, pipes, points, knives, batons, but, most notably, inscribed tablets. The tablets are a variety of different shapes and sizes and are mostly black or dark gray.²⁶

Prehistoric artifacts are made from naturally occurring slate fragments and outcroppings. In the historic period, slate was a commonly used and readily available material. It was used mainly as a roofing material, but it was also used for “sidewalks, hitching posts, steps, foundations, billiard tables, mantels, headstones and electrical switchboards.”²⁷ It was also used to construct windowsills, fireplace hearths, countertops, blackboards, and small student writing slates.

Stone. A wide variety of other Michigan Relics are made of stone. One of the smallest measures 1 x 1½ x ¼ inch. Several small sandstone pieces were carved into stamps for decorating clay. Igneous rocks were ground and polished into pendants and other shaped stones.

Specific Artifacts

A detailed description of several of these artifacts yields the following particular results.

Clay. The ceramic pieces in the Michigan Relic collections are interesting because they are so unlike the materials recovered before 1890 or after 1920 by farmers, local collectors, and amateur or professional archaeologists. Michigan Relics are clearly distinct from traditionally excavated materials in type, shape, size, manufacturing technique, and design elements. Additionally, Michigan Relics exhibit a range of very fine grain clay paste with no temper to very coarse, heavy sand paste with a large-pebble temper that goes well beyond what is usually found in Michigan.

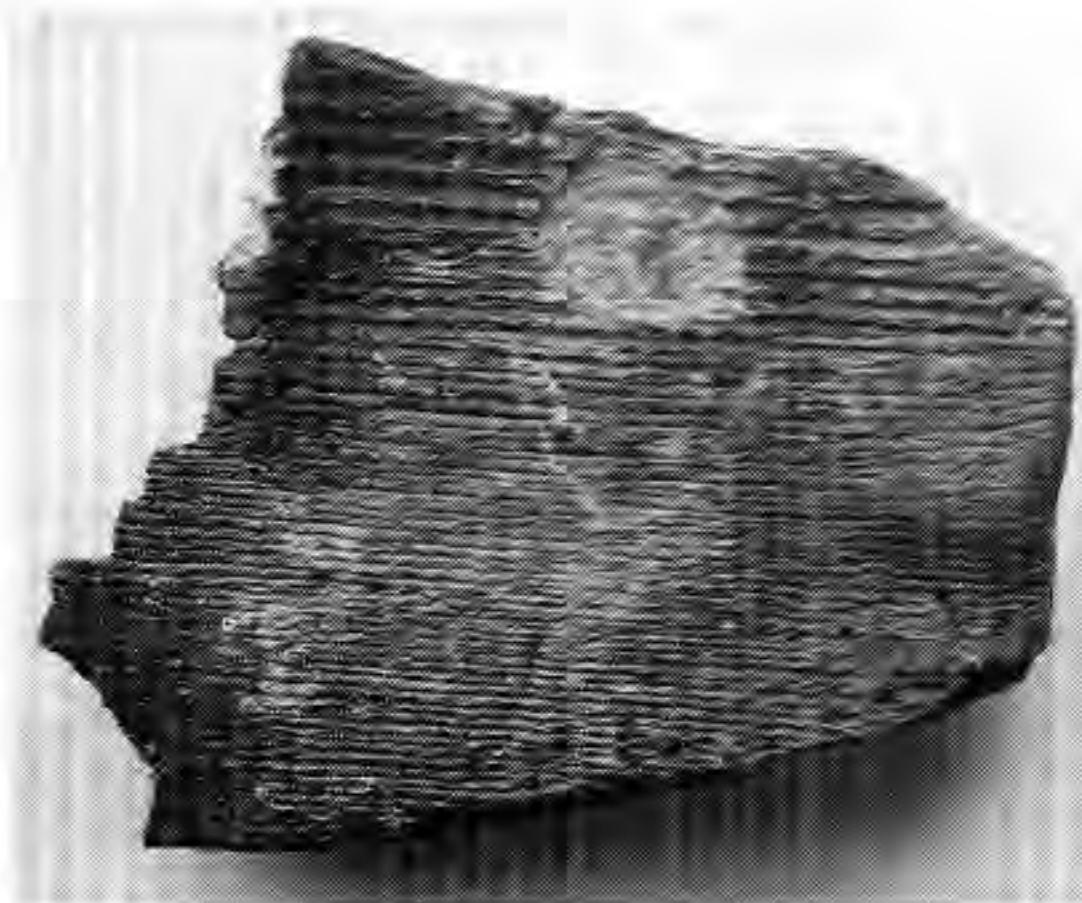
One example is a clay box (U of M #21482) whose walls contain rounded pebbles up to one inch in diameter. Most local temper is angular

and gritty—even on the surface. The Michigan Relic samples are too smooth on the surface to be prehistoric.²⁸ The layered cross-section of the pottery sherds is not typical. The slab technique for manufacturing boxes produced very thick pieces (U of M #21492 and LDS #60-5603), thicker than anything found outside the Michigan Relic context. Additionally, these slabs are too even and flat to be authentic.

Kelsey reports that, in 1891, Alfred Emerson observed the marks of machine-sawed boards imprinted on the bottom of a box.²⁹ Spooner reported the imprint on a clay slab of a board cut by a modern saw.³⁰ I observed saw cut marks from a wooden plank imprinted on a clay lid (U of M, tray 5), a clay box lid (LDS #60-5634), a clay box (LDS #60-5636), a clay oval container (LDS #60-4893), and a clay slab with a figurine (LDS #60-5663) (fig. 4). In addition to the wood impressions, some show the “line of cut” saw marks from rough-cut lumber. LDS #60-5634 shows the marks of a planer from a surfaced or finished piece of wood. Because modern tools leave modern marks, it is logical, with these additional examples, to agree with Kelsey and Spooner that the clay artifacts having the “IH/” symbol on one side and historic period woodprints on the other date to the historic period.

Kelsey asserts that the early clay Michigan Relics dissolved in water.³¹ I repeated this test with clay objects I created myself from local Michigan clay deposits as well as commercially available clay. Three objects, a bowl, a figure, and a 3 x 5 x ¼" slab, were shaped and then allowed to air dry. In forty-eight hours, they were hard to the touch and durable. When placed in water, however, they returned to lumps of mud. Sherd samples measuring less than ½" in diameter from the LDS collection (#5093, #5349, #5634, #5637, and #5663) were placed in water with the same results—they dissolved into heaps of mud (fig. 5).

Relics that dissolve in water could not survive in the Michigan ground with its rainy springs, humid summers, and cold, snowy winters. The winter frost action, combined with the day thaw–night freeze sequence in early spring destroys low-fired prehistoric ceramics from the Woodland period. Water penetrates the porous pottery and, when the temperature drops low enough, it freezes, forming crystals that split the pottery. Many of the unfired Michigan Relic clay pieces have survived for more than one hundred years only because they have been stored in museums or collectors’



Courtesy Richard B. Stamps

FIG. 4. Marks of a modern tool. Imprinted on this clay slab are the marks of a saw-cut board, evidence that this and similarly marked clay objects are not prehistoric.

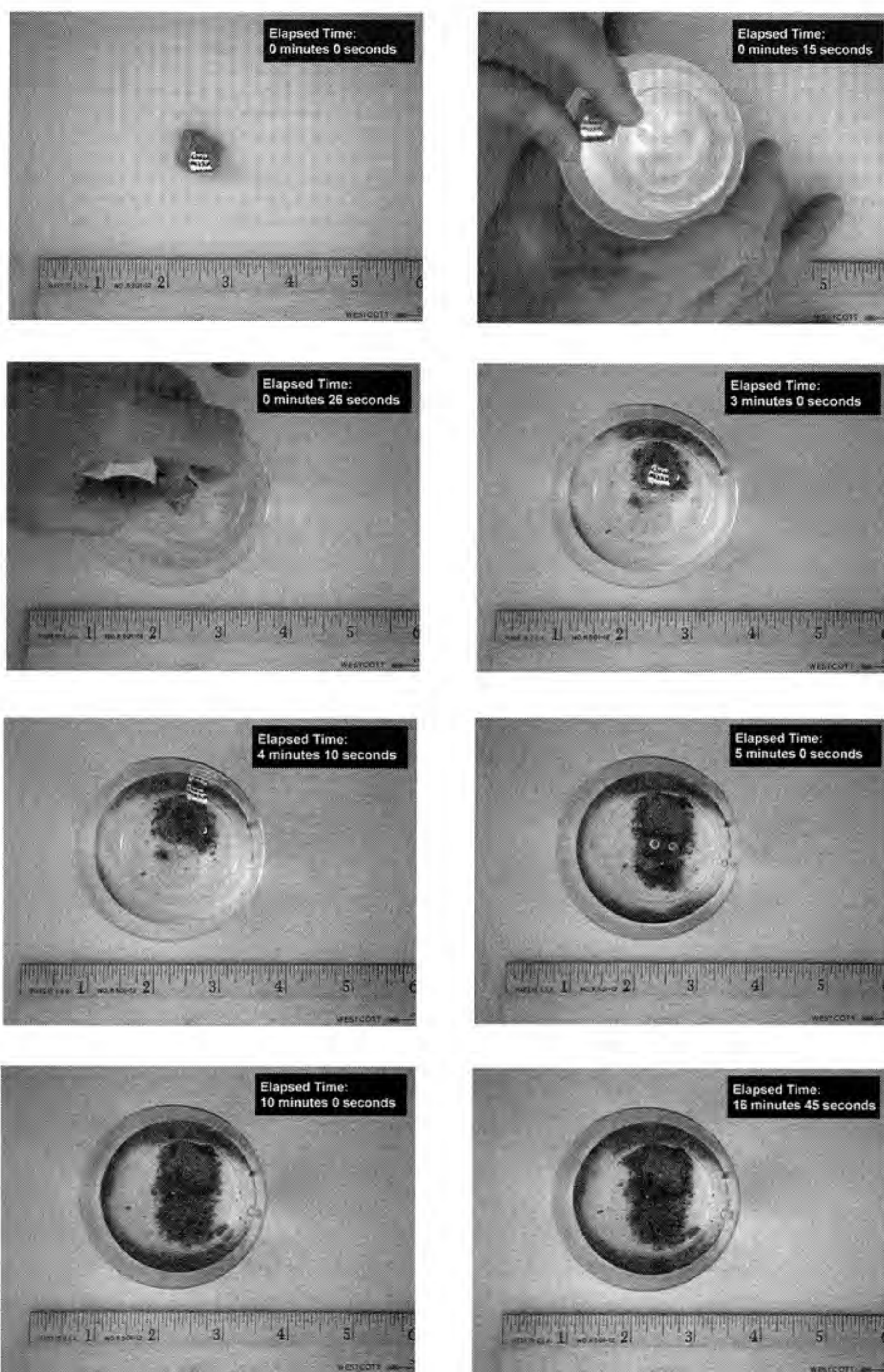
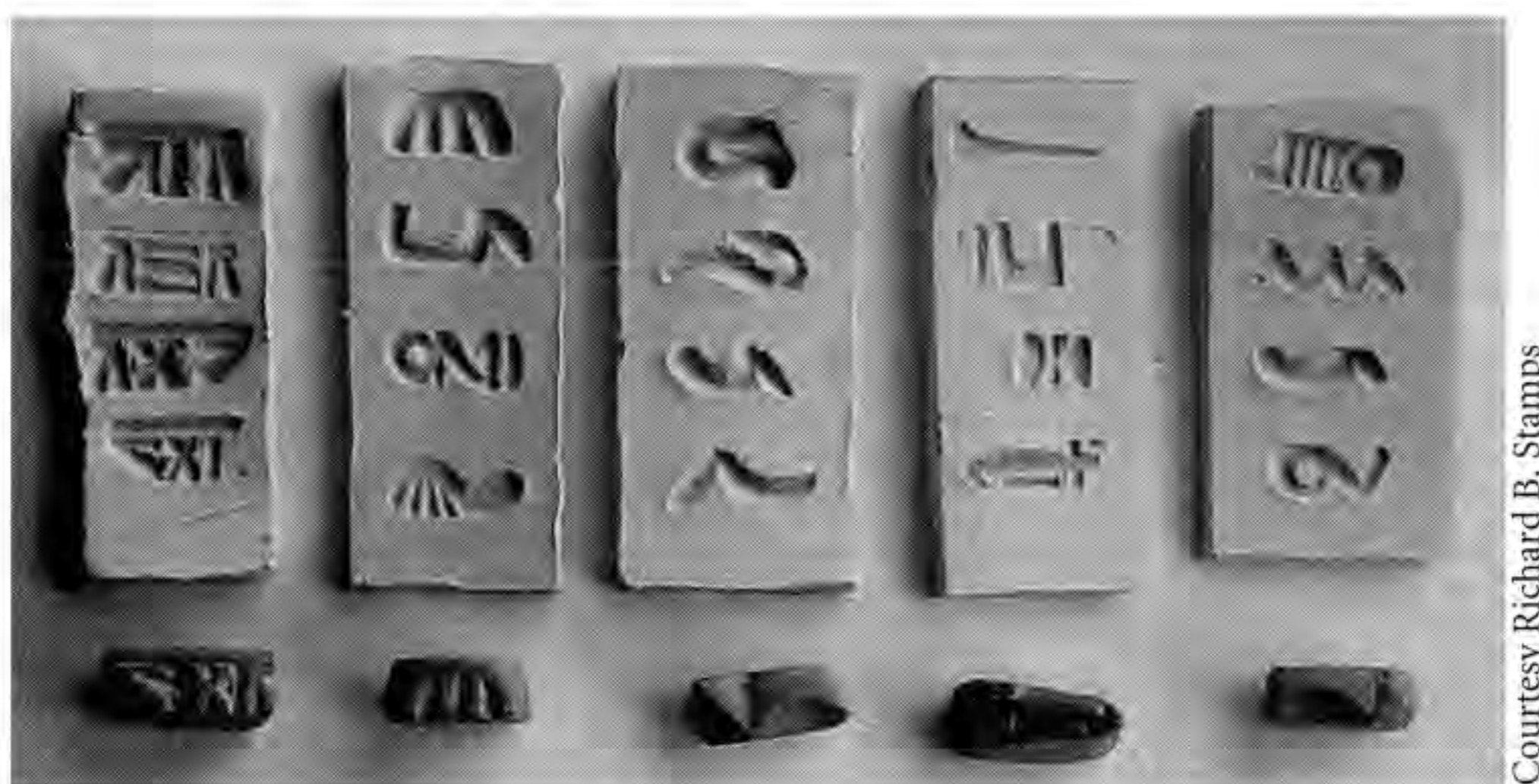


FIG. 5. Time-lapse photograph. In an experiment documented on video with time-lapse photography, a sherd from the Scotford-Soper-Savage collection dissolves into mud within seventeen minutes after exposure to water. Given the nature of Michigan weather, these results show that the unfired clay artifacts could not have survived even ten years of exposure in the ground. Courtesy Richard B. Stamps.



Courtesy Richard B. Stamps

FIG. 6. Typical stamped designs. Many clay Michigan Relics feature designs stamped into the clay before it hardens. Shown here are some of the designs and five of the actual small sandstone stamps used to create them. Stamped designs of this type have never been found on prehistoric pottery in Michigan.

cabinets, protected from the harsh Michigan weather. If placed in the ground, they would not survive ten let alone hundreds of years.

Many pieces in the collections exhibit characteristics of low-temperature firing such as firing clouds and a layered cross-section of the sherds. The firing clouds suggest that developed kilns were not being used.³² Kelsey suggests that the manufacturers were improving their techniques in response to contemporaneous (1890s) criticism.³³ Accordingly, one would expect later examples to have been fired.

Decorations on the pottery include crude cross-hatching and dentate punctures that are similar to local prehistoric Woodland examples. However, the Michigan Relic pieces lack the finesse and attention to detail usually seen.³⁴ The most notable elements are designs created with small sandstone stamps pressed on the shaped but not yet hardened clay. Many of the pieces are decorated in this manner. In addition to the “IH/” symbol, there are circles, semicircles, wedge shapes, straight lines, wavy lines, teardrops, and inscriptions imprinted on the clay (fig. 6). A search of the traditional literature, museums, files, and personal experience locates no stamps used to decorate the outside of prehistoric Michigan pottery.³⁵

The clay figurines, usually found on box lids or smoking pipes, portray both human and animal motifs. The humans appear to be European or Middle Eastern, with hats and dress unlike any North American or Midwestern designs. One clay figurine looks like a lamb and a lion lying down together as in the Bible. Another, a human head with headdress (LDS #60-5623), has a ¼" hole inside the solid piece. The head rests upon a collar-like disk which also has the same ¼" hole. Because a portion of the headdress

was loose, it was removed in the laboratory in order to examine the underside. The previously unexposed section revealed a light-buff-colored paste that looked quite fresh and clean. The piece appears to have been “painted” with a thin gray to black wash or slip to make it appear to be old. Other pieces exhibit this antiquing technique, including a clay container (LDS #60-4893) and a clay slab lid (LDS #60-5663).

Copper. The copper pieces in the Michigan Relic collections provide an interesting study of raw material and manufacturing technique. Michigan has a long, well-documented history of the use of copper for making artifacts. Prehistoric copper artifacts were created from naturally occurring nuggets or mined pieces of pure copper that were then shaped by successive cold hammering (which hardens the copper) and annealing (which returns it to a soft, workable state) until the desired shape was obtained. Our challenge here was to determine if the Michigan Relic copper artifacts were produced from cold-hammered, naturally occurring copper or from smelted stock produced with historic-period technology.

To smelt copper, one needs a furnace using coal, forced air, crucibles, and molds, because a temperature of 2,200°F is necessary. Burning coal produces a waste product commonly referred to as clinkers, but none have been documented in the archaeological literature. This evidence supports John Halsey’s assertion concerning aboriginal artifacts: “Of one thing we are certain: no native copper was deliberately smelted.”³⁶

Talmage submitted a copper sample for testing.³⁷ The results were detailed in a letter to him from F. W. Hodge, ethnologist-in-charge, Bureau of American Ethnology, at the Smithsonian Institution. The report, by Dr. Arthur L. Day of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, concluded, “As you perceive, the tests indicate that the sample submitted is a poor quality of smelted copper and not native metal.”³⁸

I analyzed artifact LDS #60-5428, which is shaped like a short sword (fig. 7), because it is representative of many pieces. In the laboratory, a ¼" section was removed from the end of the handle and mounted in a plastic cylinder. The exposed surface was polished with 1200 grit paper and then treated with 6 micron diamond spray abrasive to create an almost mirror surface. To bring up the grain structure, I etched the piece with nitric acid. Microstructural evaluation revealed that in general, the grain structure is uniform in size and shape with no inclusions (fig. 8). This condition is created only when copper is smelted.³⁹ In cross-section, I observed that the temperature difference on the surface differs slightly from the temperature at the center. This difference is another evidence that the piece was made from smelted ingots that had been hot-rolled. Additionally, the piece I studied was too flat to have been built up by the cold-hammer, folding, laminating process that we see in Native American artifacts. This piece

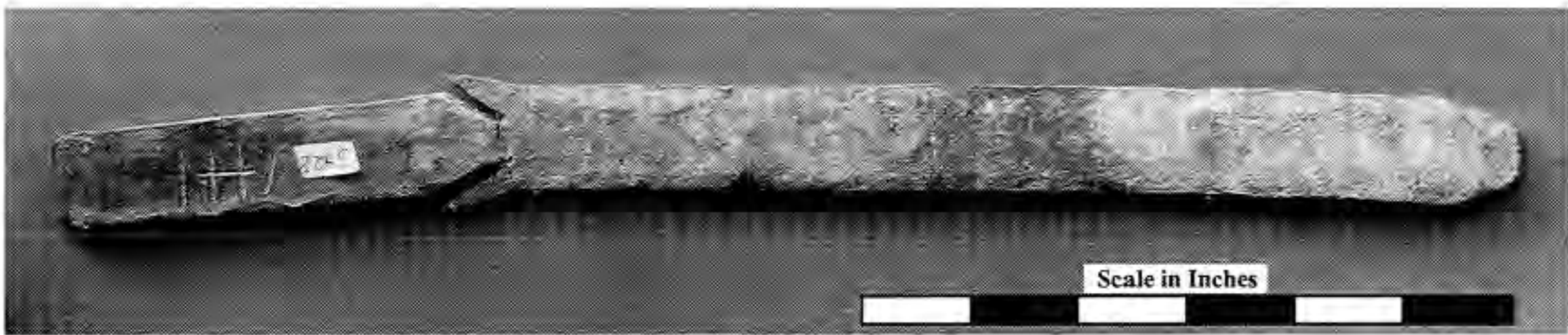


FIG. 7. A representative copper artifact (LDS #60-5428). This sword-shaped artifact was apparently made from commercially produced rolled stock. For a detailed description, see the main text. Courtesy Richard B. Stamps.

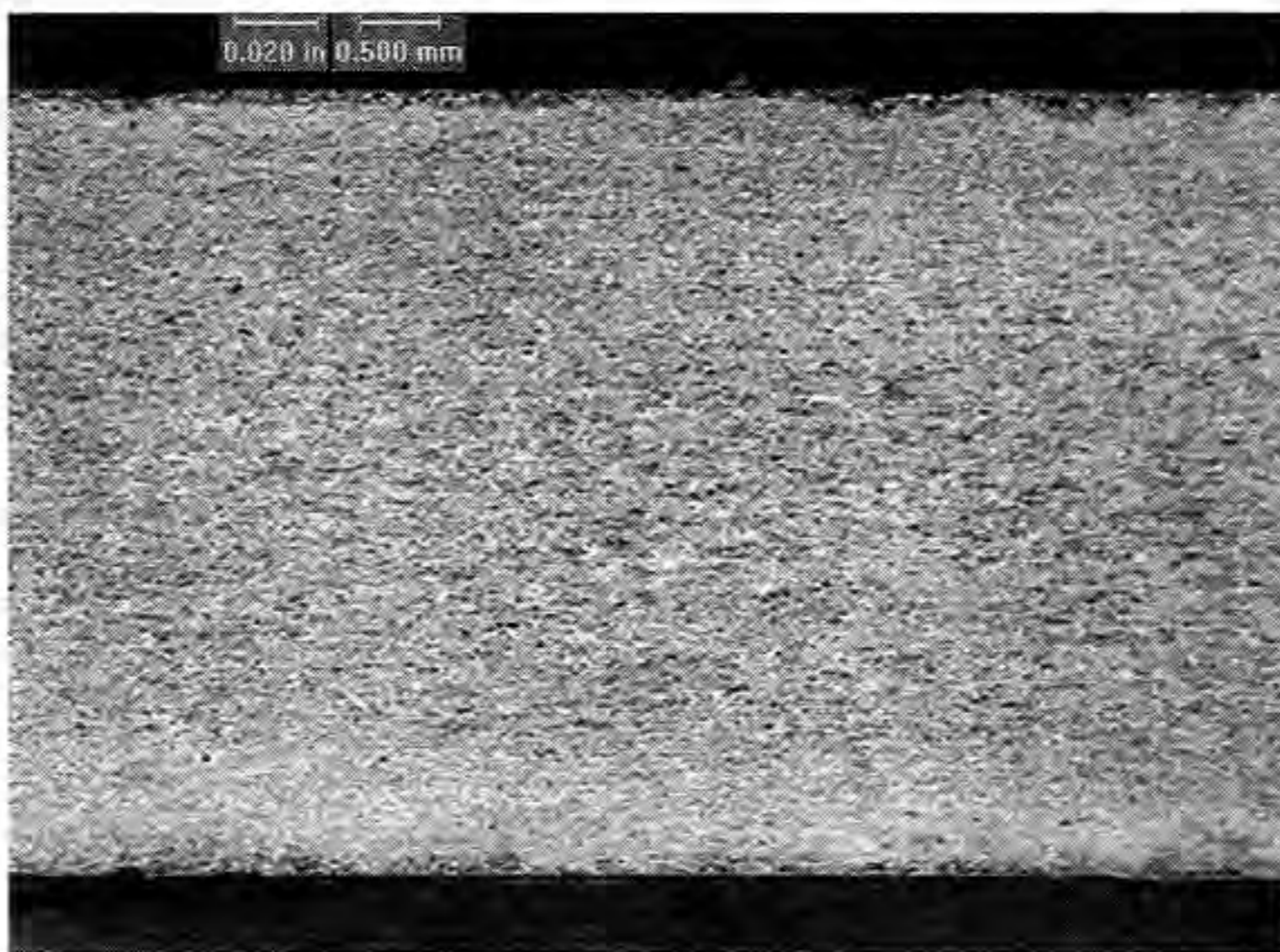
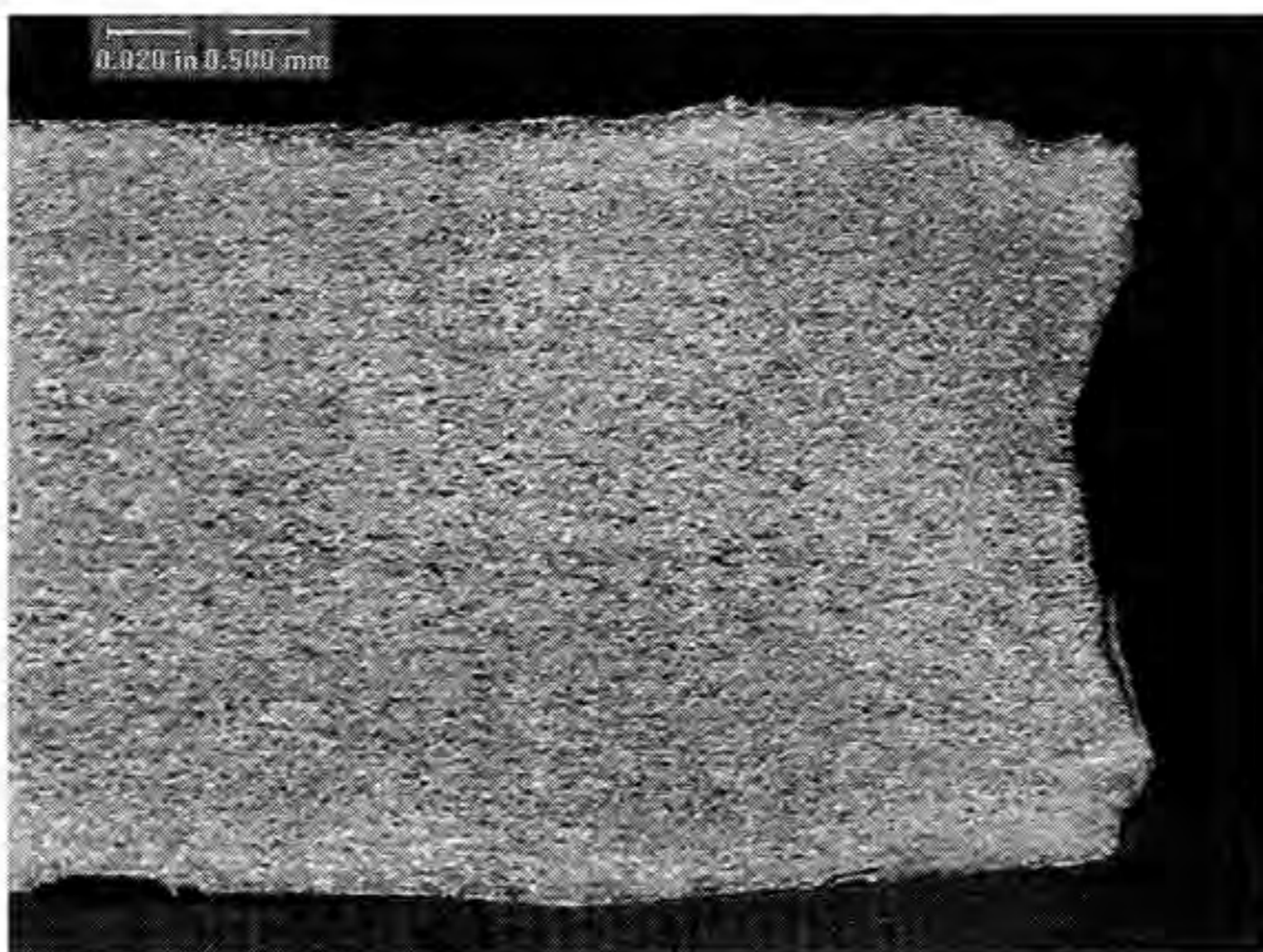


FIG. 8. The grain structure of LDS #60-5428. Generally uniform and containing no inclusions, this grain structure is produced only by smelting the copper. Smelting was not used by prehistoric natives, who shaped copper nuggets or pieces of pure copper they had mined. Courtesy Richard B. Stamps.

clearly has no folds or forging laps. It is also extremely regular in thickness, with a range of .187 to .192 inches. A measurement of .1875 equals $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch—a Standard English unit of measurement and common thickness for commercially produced rolled stock. Even though the edges have been peaned (hammered to remove the straight edges), the sides are parallel, and the corners are right angles. The cross-section is rectangular, whereas most traditional pieces are diamond shaped with a strong ridge running down the center of the blade or point. The blank piece of copper from which this artifact was made appears to have been cut from a larger piece with a guillotine-style table shear or a bench shear.

Regarding the techniques used to shape and finish the artifact, the hilt appears to have been cut open with a cold chisel. (Cold-chisel marks show up clearly on another sword, LDS #60-5464 shown in fig. 9, which was cut, not with a shear, but by successive cuts from a cold chisel.) The edges on piece LDS #60-5428 were slightly peaned. The “IH/” mark was imprinted, and then the piece was treated to produce the green patina to which Talmage refers.⁴⁰ Green patina can be achieved by repeated heating and cooling, acid baths, or the application of a coating of colored materials. Most of the “knives” and “swords” do not have sharp edges; they are too dull for cutting. Additionally, there are no signs of wear or use-polish, as is seen on functional tools.

A projectile point (Lansing, Michigan A89 1-9) is very thin, and the basal notches show the cut was made from top to bottom with a chisel or cutters. The copper coin in that collection (A89 1-8) has a series of small decorative holes that were produced with a harder-than-copper punch. The knife blade (A89 1-11) exhibits chisel cut marks as well as file marks where the manufacturer attempted to sharpen the blade.

File marks also appear on a copper tablet (LDS #60-5320), a copper chisel (LDS #60-5697), and the battle-ax unearthed by Talmage.⁴¹ He notes, “The equi-distant and regular marks of a modern file are revealed by the lenses.” The heavy-gauge wirelike rings in a chain (LDS #60-5374) show wire-cutter shear marks, as do the copper pieces holding together a slate box (LDS #60-5306). Edges of a copper bowl (LDS #60-5412) seem to have been cut with metal snippers.

Drill holes appear on a hammerhead (LDS #60-5698) and a knife (LDS #60-5428). Surface treatment of the copper plates shows the manufacturer’s dependence on the use of a straightedge, probably a metal ruler, and a very sharp, fine, hand tool to scribe lines upon which to “write.” The width of the cut of the scribe line on one tablet (LDS #60-5320) is $.010 \pm .003$ of an inch. In order to make such fine lines, one needs iron or steel tools. This tablet also provides evidence of the use of chisel-like chasing tools that cut out windows in the small building depicted in the lower left corner.

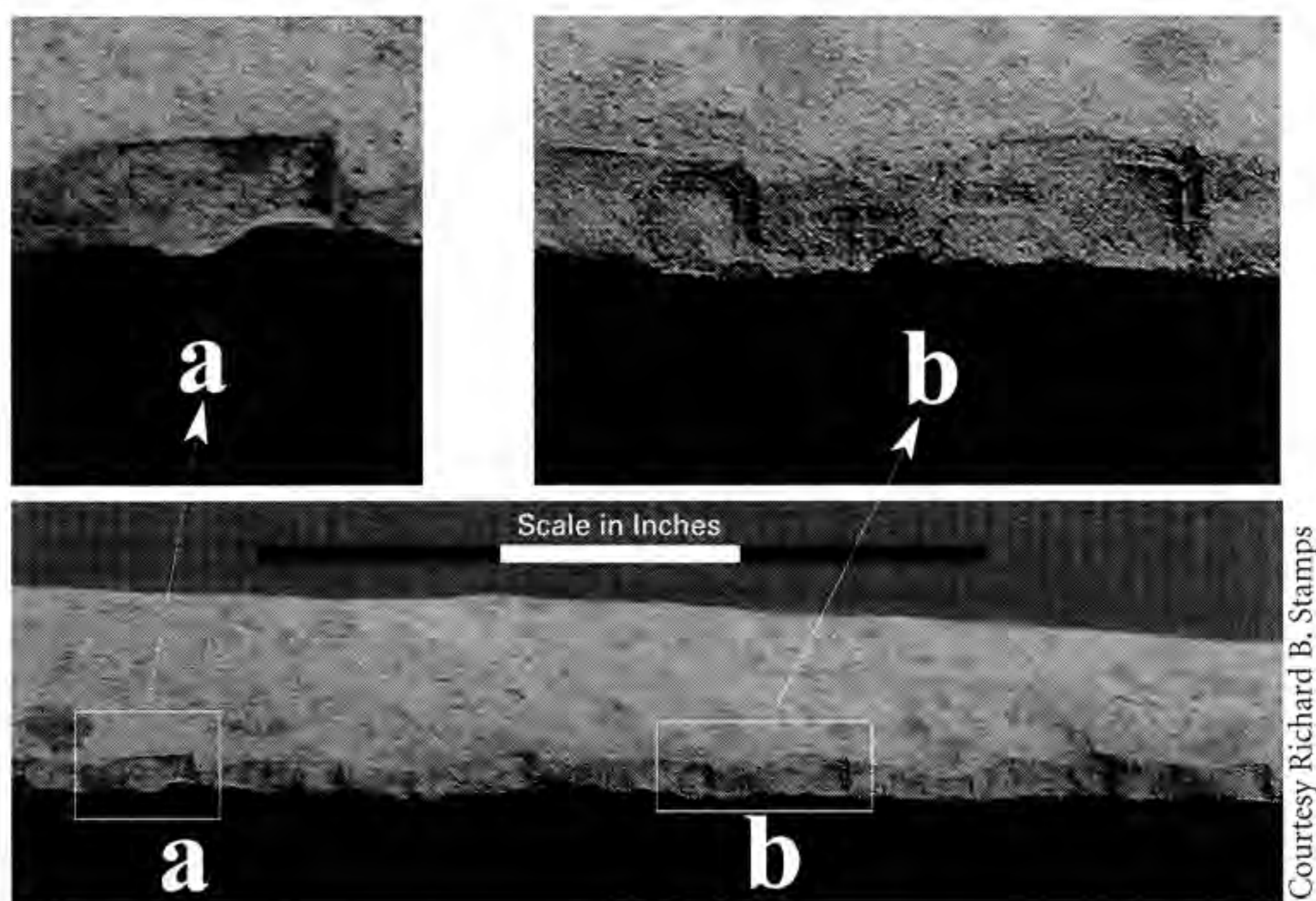


FIG. 9. Marks from a modern chisel. The edge of this sword (LDS #5464) was created by successive cuts with a modern cold chisel. The top images are close-ups of two areas of the edge. The knives and swords in the collection are too dull for cutting and lack signs of use.

This chasing tool cut rectangular holes that are $\frac{1}{16}$ inch wide, are flat on the bottom, and have vertical sides and a curved lip where the waste filing was cut off. This feat could not have been accomplished with anything less hard than an iron or steel tool. Williams observes that the graphics on the copper “show a dependence on the straightedge and compass, and the inscriptions are punched into the metal, not engraved.”⁴²

The Michigan Relics were produced from commercial copper-stock pieces by hammering, cutting, filing and indenting. This method differs noticeably from Native copper artifacts, which are enlarged by folding over, laminating, and building up. Traditional pieces have protrusions, while Michigan Relics have indentations. Reducing large blanks to finished artifacts requires an anvil or hard metal surface and a smooth-faced steel hammer. Hammer stones used by Native Americans did not produce the smooth surfaces seen on Michigan Relic copper artifacts (for example, LDS #60-5689). These smooth surfaces have been treated to make them look ancient. Treatments included hammering with a tool that left reoccurring dents and patterns (LDS #60-5316, 5317, 5319, 5416, 5482, 5518, and 5330; Lansing, Michigan A89 1-11) and treating the new copper with chemicals to create the typical green patina of aged copper.

Of special interest is artifact LDS #60-5689 (fig. 10). This copper piece is in the outline shape of a flat hand file; the sides are roughly parallel, one end

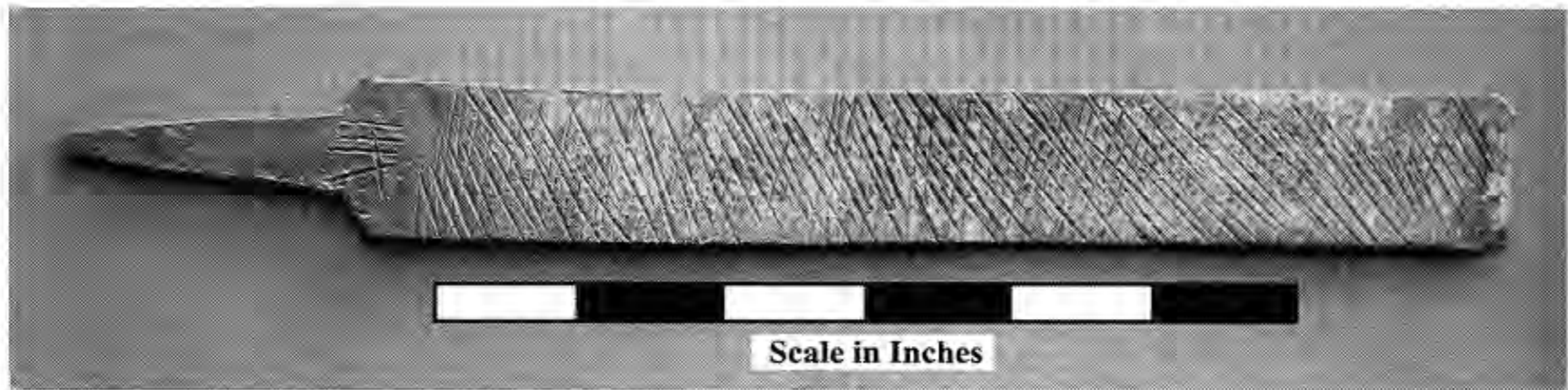
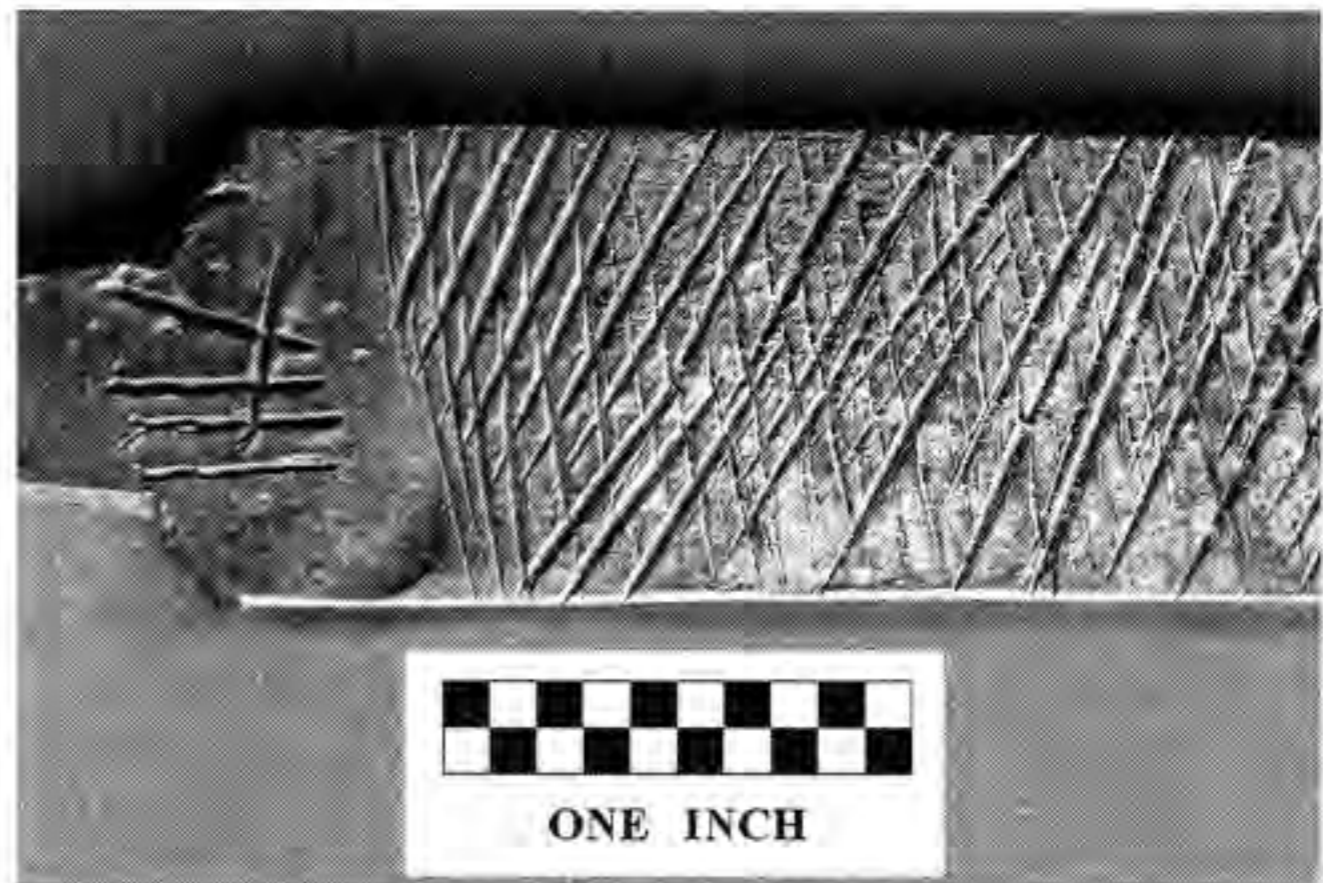


FIG. 10. A purported copper file (LDS #60-5689). Courtesy Richard B. Stamps.

is square, and the other end steps into a pointed tang handle at the heel. The back-side is smooth, with the “IH/” mark at the junction of the blade and the handle. The working surface has the immediately recognizable cross-hatching cut of a file. Close examination reveals, however, that the cuts are vertical, creating a series of repetitive V-shaped cuts along the smooth surface. The cuts are quite irregular in spacing, depth, and angle (fig. 11). The result is something that looks like a file but has no cutting capability.



Courtesy Richard B. Stamps

FIG. 11. The file's cross-hatching. The cross-hatching departs significantly from a functional design. The cuts merely spread the metal rather than creating the curled-up pieces of metal composing the cutting edges. Also note the irregularities in spacing, depth, and angle.

Traditional steel files are made from a blank, into which cuts are made with a cold chisel. The blows of the cold chisel are cut, not vertically (at a 90-degree angle to the surface), but from a 45-degree angle, which produces a sharp, curled-up piece of metal—a cutting edge. The tool used to cut this artifact was V shaped and merely spread the blank. This Michigan Relic file is interesting to look at but is totally nonfunctional.

The extreme contrast between the smooth, bright, copper color of the tang and the bright green patina of the blade is noteworthy. The green patina is created by the uneven application of a thick mixture of green chemicals. In several locations, it stretches from ridge to ridge; it is clear that this is not a chemical growth from the inside but rather an application from the outside.

Also of interest are the cold-chisel-shaped copper artifacts (fig. 12) (LDS #60-5692, 5693, 5696, and 5697). They are sturdy and are shaped like modern tools. The top end mushrooms out, as one would see on a well-used chisel. The cutting edge, however, shows no sign of use or wear. There is no use-polish, nor are there scratch marks. LDS #60-5696 has a cutting

end that was folded together while the blade was flattened by hammering. Hammering would harden the copper but not create a sharp cutting edge. The inconsistency here is puzzling. For what purpose would the tool be used? The mushroomed-out end demonstrates that great force was applied, probably with a hammer or stone, but to what end or purpose? What was to be cut? Not ceramics, not slate. Perhaps the “tool” was used as a wedge—but there is no use-wear on the ends. The top end must have been mushroomed before the cutting edge was fashioned. A square tipped punch with a round hole in the middle (LDS #60-5694) likewise has a mushroomed-out end, showing that it was hammered as were the chisels.

Also problematic is the placement of the “IH/” symbol. If this were a religious symbol, one would expect to see it on ceremonial items like crowns, swords, and ornaments, or perhaps on items of personal jewelry to express one’s faith or request divine protection. The symbol’s presence on tools to make tools, however, seems inappropriate. If, however, the mark reflects a national or ethnic origin like the “Made in Japan” label on U.S. imports, who required the makers to put it on? What function did the mark fulfill?



Courtesy Richard B. Stamps

FIG. 12. Nonfunctional “cold chisels.” Although the edges of these tools are dull and lack signs of use, the top ends incongruously mushroom out as if the tools had been well used. This inconsistency is probably not explained by symbolic functions, as prehistoric tools for making other tools were rarely used symbolically.

Finally, it has been suggested that clearly nonfunctional tools could have been used in rites, rituals, or ceremonies. There are numerous examples of status or power symbols in the ethnographic record. The use, however, of tools whose function is to make other tools (such as a file) being used symbolically is rare.

Sometime before 1911, Daniel E. Soper submitted for analysis a copper spearhead (with the "IH/" mark) to Herbert E. Sargent, director of the Kent Scientific Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Sargent's results confirm the use of a file in the manufacture of the piece, as well as the artificial oxidation process. He notes file marks in two different locations:

The [spearhead] bears evidence, to my mind, of being a recent manufacture for the following reasons. At point 1 on the diagram, especially, and at numerous other points there is distinct evidence of the use of a 64th inch file having been used in its make, the minute scratches being uniform and of this gauge. Experiment on metal reveals that in the hands of a careless (intentional or otherwise) workman, the file produces the regular appearance of these notches. The flanging appearance of the edges of the notches is also reproduced by the use of the file on metal. This evidence is to me conclusive of the use of a machine-made file, which of course was not available at the time of the supposed manufacture of this point.

The oxidation by comparison with our specimens revealed the following facts. It differs materially in color from any of ours, being more of a blue-green. The oxidation on this specimen is remarkably thin and uniform while ours is in many cases very thick and irregular. Of the two, the more antique should be the more oxidized, other conditions being equal. This specimen does, however, have a heavier deposit in places in the notches, irregularly subjected to such an acid solution would naturally accumulate fluid and hence oxidize deposits.

Upon point 2 in the diagram there is a distinctly unoxidized impression of what bears good evidence of having been produced by the body of a fly. Query: When the oxidation was taking place, did the fly fall upon its back on the specimen and prevent the natural oxidation. There is a distinct etching of what was probably the veins of the fly's wings. There is also some evidence of the entangling in the oxide in the notches of fibrous material coated with the oxide. This would hardly have occurred in the earth.⁴³

Slate. The slate artifacts in the Michigan Relic collections merit study in three areas: raw material, manufacturing technique, and design elements. Slate was transformed into effigies, pipes, points, knives, batons, and inscribed tablets. The tablets are most unique. They are made from very sophisticated blanks or pieces of raw material. They exhibit exact right angles, parallel sides, and smooth surfaces. Talmage observed the marks of a modern saw on an artifact: "On one long edge, the equidistant, double-line marks of a saw, almost surely a machine-made saw, are plainly seen."⁴⁴ Fredrick Starr also notes that "one of the finest tablets . . . has the lower edge still plainly cut by a slate saw."⁴⁵



Courtesy Richard B. Stamps

FIG. 13. Marks made by a saw. The equidistant marks on this slate artifact (LDS #60-4983) indicate it was cut by a modern saw.

I confirmed saw cut marks (fig. 13) on several artifacts (LDS #60-4983, 5011, and 5576). Most of the pieces also display a high degree of smoothness. LDS #60-4889 shows the telltale marks of having been milled. Welch and Izatt note the exact rectangular shapes; highly polished edges on all sides; uniform thickness; six-inch saw-blade marks visible on LDS #60-5035 and 5332, and an 8½ inch saw blade on LDS #60-5585; file marks on LDS #60-5576 and 5597; drill holes that were perpendicular and uniform; extremely sharp right angles and perfectly smooth edges on LDS #60-5591; and one piece that was a perfect square with 12-inch sides. Welch and Izatt also note the reoccurrence of the English measuring system in feet and inches.⁴⁶ Although there are many exceptions, English measurements occur repeatedly.

The wide variety of shapes, widths, lengths, and thicknesses suggests that the slate came from a large mill or factory's rejects and scraps. Detroit was a booming town at the turn of the twentieth century, when Scotford, the successful relic finder, was living there and had ready access to raw material from slate companies. Slate artifacts appear in the Michigan Relic collections in the later period (referred to by Spooner as the third phase, which started around 1908).⁴⁷ LDS #60-5576 is a piece of cut and milled slate, probably rejected by the factory, which was picked up and engraved by the maker. The timing of the engraving is clearly indicated by engraved lines that go off the milled surface into the fractured portion of the slab. Had the scribed lines been made before the fracture, they would have been on the fragment, not the core piece from which the flake was removed (fig. 14).

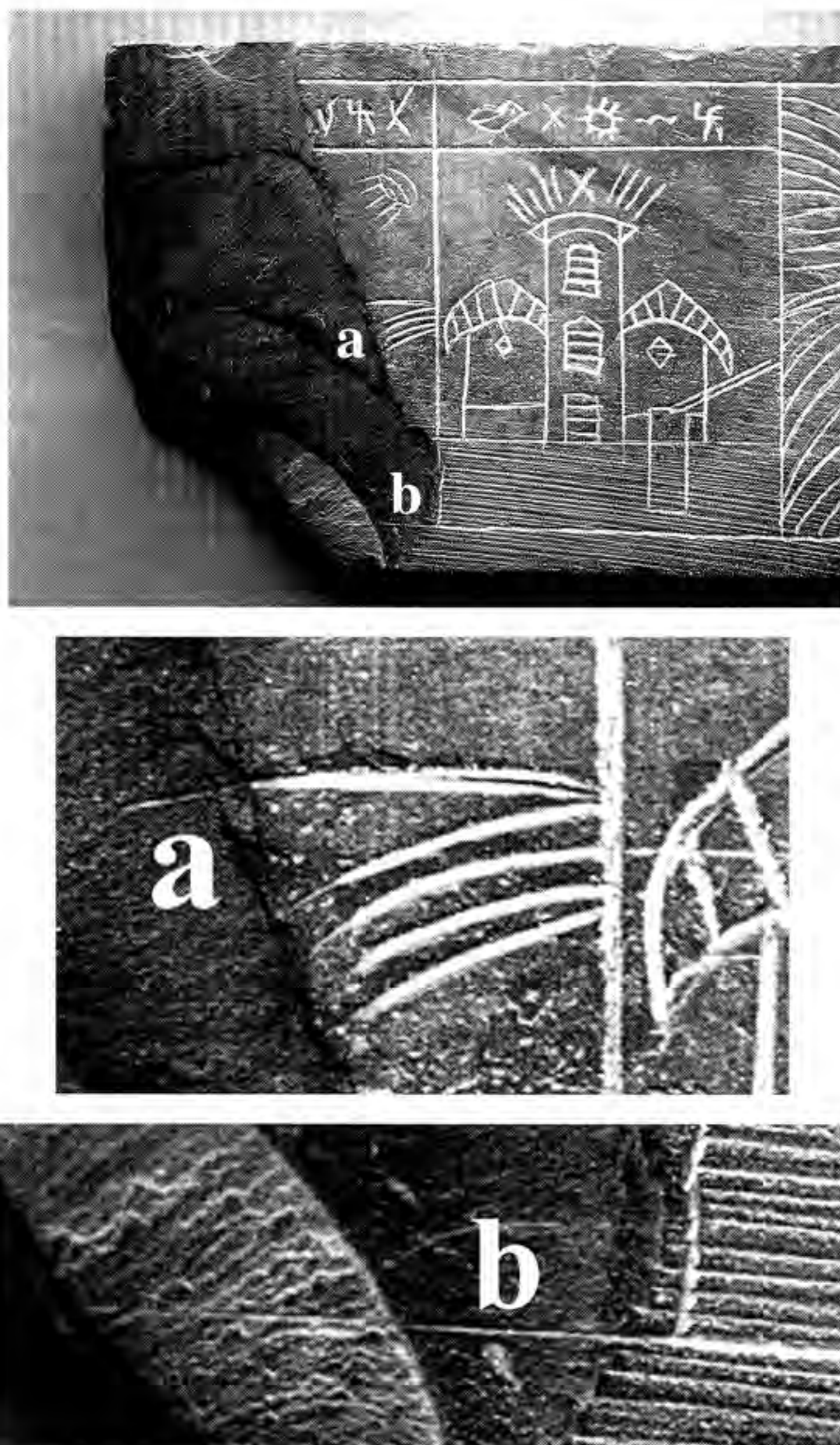


FIG. 14. Artifact made from a rejected piece of commercially cut and milled slate. The piece displays the smooth surface achieved by milling. Another evidence of the item's modern construction is the engraved lines that extend from the milled surface onto the fractured surface. The lines would stop at the fracture's edge if the artifact had been broken after it was created. Courtesy Richard B. Stamps.

The raw material must have been shipped into the area, because there are no Michigan slate quarries. Archaeological excavations at Jamestown, Virginia, have unearthed roofing slate in the strata dating from 1625 to 1670. Slate roof examples show up in Boston (1654) and Philadelphia (1699). Early slate was imported from North Wales, but by 1785 the first quarry was opened in Pennsylvania. Slate production increased dramatically following the Civil War, and new quarries were opened in Maine, New York, Vermont, and Virginia. "The U.S. roofing slate industry reached its

highest point between 1897 and 1914”⁴⁸—in 1899, there were over two hundred slate quarries operating in thirteen states. Pennsylvania was the largest producer of all. Replaced by substitute materials such as asphalt, slate roofing became less popular but was being used for other architectural purposes such as window sills and flooring as well as in switchboards, panels, and other electrical insulators. Bowles notes that slate is “easily cut and drilled.”⁴⁹ Thus by the turn of the twentieth century, an easily worked stone material was readily available for the production of artifacts in southeastern Michigan.

The raw material shows up in the Michigan Relic collections in the form of both roofing slate (which is split with chisels and wedges and shaped by percussion trimming) and finished pieces (which are saw cut and milled). The University of Michigan collection has nine large slate artifacts (points, knives, and an axhead, collection #21492). Five are marked with the “IH/” symbol. The LDS collection has numerous slate tablets.

The slate Michigan Relics were produced by splitting, trimming, sawing, milling, filing, and polishing. After the artifact was shaped, the inscriptions, designs, or drawings were created. One question arises: what tools were used? Talmage notes that the engraved lines were very fresh and clean: “The lines made by the graving tools, when examined microscopically, show fresh fractures, practically indistinguishable from others made in the course of experiment at the time of the examination.”⁵⁰

As I sought to replicate Talmage’s evaluation, I found I could not mark the slate with my thumbnail, but I could cut lines with a chert blade tool, hardened copper, and even the sharp edge of a piece of copper wire cut with wire-cutting pliers. The copper cuts, however, left a copper-colored residue along the inside of the cut. The steel blade of an exacto knife produced the clearest, sharpest lines. I agree with Starr, Kinnaman, and Talmage that the “incisions on the slate . . . were made with edged tools of steel.”⁵¹ As with the copper tablets, it appears that the designs were cut with a steel tool and a straight edge ruler.

Additionally, the shape and character of a piece of milled slate often determined the design. Specimen LDS #60-5597 is a prime example. The profiled head’s headdress is expanded to fill the available space. The holes on this piece are not used with the profile and only one is used on the reverse side. Why expend tremendous energy to drill the holes if they have no function? These drilled holes, which are parallel sided and more precise than usually found on prehistoric pieces, also appear on other Scotford-Soper-Savage artifacts.

Though a thorough analysis of the iconography that appears on the slate, copper, and clay artifacts is beyond the scope of this article, it is noteworthy that, in general, the character of the images is unlike anything

found in the Midwest. The physical characteristics of the people (LDS #60-5119, 5325, and 5558), their apparel (LDS #60-5116, 5119, and 5322), palm trees (LDS #60-5324 and 5602), chariots (LDS #60-5325 and 5602), as well as other details (LDS #60-5106, 5112, 5114, 5242, 5292, 5325, and 5557) have no local parallels.

Byzantine domes, pyramids, buildings, doors with windows on the sides, and double-hung, framed windows suggest Masonic Hall architecture. The use of perspective in drawings is a concept that did not appear in Europe until the fifteenth century—much too late to have come to Michigan with the lost ten tribes or even the fifth-century Coptic Christians—two of the theories concerning the artifacts' origins. There is also a question about the graphic depicting the image of deity.

The model for the script used on the Relics comes from at least three different languages.⁵² James E. Homans in a letter to James E. Talmage on March 28, 1916, writes:

I have studied them attentively, and am confident that they mean nothing at all. For example, the "plate" numbered 16 in your pamphlet is evidently an imitation of Egyptian work, both in the drawing and in the "inscription." The latter contains a number of real Egyptian signs, showing that the author had carefully studied hieroglyphic inscriptions somewhere or other. I find on careful study, however, that these characters closely resembling Egyptian hieroglyphics spell nothing at all, or, at least nothing that is decipherable. They are also mixed up with a lot of feather-shaped figures suggesting Irish "ogams" rather than "runes", which are quite foreign to any Egyptian inscriptions. The most suspicious thing about this particular plate is that the animal figures, mostly of correct shape, face to the left, instead of to the right, as in hieroglyphic inscriptions. They are made to face the left in grammars and reading books intended for instruction in the language. The author of this plate must have seen some such book, and was ignorant of the fact that all figures face in the direction from which the reading begins. As Egyptian, like Hebrew and Arabic, reads from right to left, all figures should face to the right in ordinary inscriptions. The only exception is where an inscription is twice repeated from a common center. . . . On the Scotford "relics", however, I consider that this "error" shows conclusively that the man who traced the "inscription" had no knowledge of Egyptian.⁵³

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Many times in the archaeological record, we have a hole, a missing piece of the puzzle. In the case of the Michigan Relic collections, it seems that we are not missing anything but instead have extra pieces that do not fit into the puzzle. After a careful review of the pertinent literature, correspondence, interviews, reports, and the artifacts themselves, I find that the Scotford-Soper-Savage Michigan Relics reveal themselves as modern artifacts.

Evidences of Fraud

1. The finds were reported to have come from the top one to two feet from the surface. If this were the case, numerous finds would have been documented by local nineteenth-century farmers, who, walking behind their horse-drawn plows, carefully observed and collected thousands of arrowheads now in museums and collections across the state. Thirty years of personal fieldwork and museum and private collection studies in Michigan has located nothing that fits the criteria of the Michigan Relics.

2. Early believers of the Relics' authenticity said they came from burial mounds: "A great cemetery stretched from Jackson County through Washtenaw and into Wayne. Thousands of burial mounds have already been definitely located and will eventually be explored."⁵⁴ The area was said to be a "great necropolis." But as Talmage notes, "Not even a single tooth has been found."⁵⁵ Although many burials have been located, none contain Michigan Relics.⁵⁶ The photograph of the University of Michigan collection contains bones, but there is no evidence to prove that they came from the diggings that produced the Relics. Even cremations leave behind evidence that a trained eye can detect. I agree with Kelsey and Talmage that these so-called mounds were naturally occurring turnouts or elevations.⁵⁷

3. If these are the burial grounds of a great civilization that produced metal and cut and polished the slate that has been examined, where are the evidences of their buildings, homes, villages, towns, farming and manufacturing centers, furnaces, and religious and civic structures? These simply do not exist. There are larger mounds, earthworks and effigies to the south in Ohio, but none of them have produced Michigan Relics.

4. The clay tablets, boxes, figurines, and other items are very fragile and break easily. They could survive only in a sedentary place like a temple, church, museum, or a collector's cabinet. Nomadic people would not have carried such heavy, fragile items as they moved around. A sedentary people must have produced them. Where are the settlements?

5. The finds appeared only when Scotford or Soper were on the scene. Gillman, who worked extensively in southeastern Michigan, reports that none were found before 1890.⁵⁸ From 1890 to 1920, they were found only by Scotford, Soper, or family and associates. The Michigan Relic phenomenon follows Scotford in time and space. After Scotford's death and Soper's retirement to Chattanooga, Tennessee, no new examples were dug up. Al Spooner, long-time member of the Michigan Archaeological society who as a youth dug with Soper; John O'Shay of the Anthropology Museum at the University of Michigan; and John Halsey, state archaeologist of Michigan, all concur that no new finds have been reported since the 1920s. Halsey's office has documented some ten thousand prehistoric sites in Michigan. None of them have produced Michigan Relics.

6. In North America, prehistoric communities were linked in multiple ways with their neighbors. Martin notes, “Without a doubt there existed, across prehistoric northeastern North America, a continuous stream of human interactions, belief, behavior, and trade that is visible in archaeological deposits.”⁵⁹ Why do Scotford-Soper-Savage collections with their unique art style, glyphs, symbols, and artifacts not show up as trade goods or trophies in the surrounding sites?⁶⁰ I suggest that Scotford-Soper-Savage materials are absent because they were not created until modern times, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

7. The copper artifacts are made from ordinary, commercial smelted copper that has been hot rolled.

8. Several of the slate pieces are made from blanks that have been cut and polished with modern tools and technology. Many of the pieces are cut at exact right angles.

9. The clay specimens vary widely, but the first-found pieces dissolve in water, which would make it impossible for them to survive in Michigan’s harsh climate.

10. Modern tools leave modern marks. The appearance of saw cuts on the slate and saw-cut imprints on the clay are evidence of saws. Planer marks on finished wood show up on clay artifacts. Files are evidenced by their marks on copper and slate pieces. Cut marks on copper artifacts were made with cold chisels. Iron graving tools, a compass, and a ruler left their mark on copper and slate tablets.

11. Talmage observed the freshness of the cuts on the slate.

12. Close examination reveals a poor attempt to antique or age the pieces. The copper was hammered to remove the smooth surface, then corroded by a rapid chemical process, by heating and cooling, and/or by the application of chemicals. Fresh-looking, new clay pieces were treated with a gray wash to “age” them.

13. The collection contains several “nonfunctional” tools. Nonfunctional tools are the ones that have the shape of a modern tool, but the material from which they are made is inconsistent with the function of the tool. Copper, even when hardened, is too soft to be used as a file, saw, cold chisel, or knife.

14. On the copper artifacts, no wood remains show up in handles of tools, nor copper oxidized wood fragments show up in handles as we see among the Mound Builder Adena and Hopewell peoples.

15. The use of feet and inch measurements suggests connections with the historic English system used in tools and measurements in late nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Michigan.

16. The designs, images, scenes, and inscriptions are totally out of context for Michigan.

17. The simplistic drawings on the slate tablets are incongruent with the highly precise machining of the tablets.

18. The use of the “IH/” symbol on everything (even the soles of copper sandals) defies a logical explanation.

Motives and Means

Any successful venture requires a motive, means, and opportunity. According to Scotford’s son Percy, Scotford “got about a hundred dollars’ worth the last time he dug, up at Crystal Lake.”⁶¹ The *Detroit News* reported that collectors paid “a good, stiff price” for the relics.⁶² Scotford declared in a 1907 interview with the *Detroit News*, “I haven’t a relic left; I sold them all to Father Savage.”⁶³ Martin notes, “There were also roving entrepreneurs who sometimes paid good money for their acquisitions.”⁶⁴ “Articles were sold on the railroads in Michigan and innocent persons were made victims.”⁶⁵

Talmage notes, “James O. Scotford was named to me as the most desirable man to hire as a digger. . . . I decided to engage Scotford.”⁶⁶ When Scotford claimed ownership of a Michigan Relic found while he labored for Talmage in Michigan, Talmage stated that the piece was rightfully his, “as the piece was unearthed by a digger [Scotford] in my employ, whose services were engaged and paid for by me.”⁶⁷ Scotford made money locating digging sites that were productive. He also sold pieces to collectors. In addition to money for himself and family members, Scotford developed a certain fame and reputation. Kelsey notes, “He manifested a skill in finding relics that made him the envy of the region.”⁶⁸ As Kelsey, Jastrow, Emerson, and others declared the first-found artifacts to be fakes,⁶⁹ Scotford may have had in mind confounding the experts. Cumming also speculates that Scotford may have been trying to provide “amusement as well as a spirited argument.”⁷⁰ All of these are possible motives.

The opportunity was ripe. There was much discussion concerning the origin of the mound builders to the south, the origins of the American Indians and the location of the lost ten tribes of Israel. Journal articles such as these in the 1890s demonstrate the interest in the extraordinary: “The Sphinxes of Michigan”⁷¹; “Pre-Columbian Discovery of America”⁷²; “Was There Contact with Asiatic Countries?”⁷³; and “Ancient Assyrians in Michigan.”⁷⁴ Many mounds, earthworks, and enclosures were being explored. People were interested in any new finds. Drawings of artifacts, designs, and ancient scripts were in dictionaries, journals, and encyclopedias of the day.⁷⁵

As far as means to carry out his activity, Scotford at first had ready access to local clay to create ceramic artifacts while he lived in rural Michigan. His later move to Detroit brought him close to a supply of copper that was used in early machine shops as well as rejects and scraps from the slate

yards. Detroit was a booming town with lots of construction. Scotford had it all: a motive—money; an opportunity—an inquiring public; and the means—the raw materials, the tools, and the models necessary to create all of the pieces found and now included in the Michigan Relics collections.

The motivation for Daniel Soper may have begun as a genuine interest in collecting artifacts; however, in the end I believe he was involved in the scam. He probably provided the diversion while Scotford planted the finds.

The case of Father Dean Savage is a more sorry one. He seems to have been drawn in to believing the relics to be genuine out of his sincere desire to prove and promote his belief in the Bible and the lost ten tribes. People get so caught up in trying to interpret the religious elements of the pictures that they turn their attention “away from consideration of the material and the crass incongruities in design and technique.”⁷⁶ It is unfortunate that Savage’s name is often now connected with this extensive collection of fraudulent artifacts.

In quantity of pieces and the length of its thirty-year span, this fraud was probably the largest perpetrated on the American people in history. Interest in the collection lingers on. However, it is now time to recognize the collection for what it is and display it in the proper “fakes and frauds” sections of our museums.

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1. “Last Big Dig Was Soper Fraud,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 27, 1977, pages 3A and 12A.

2. The four collections are the LDS collection, Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City; University of Michigan; Michigan Historical Museum, Lansing, Michigan; and Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

3. See Francis W. Kelsey, "Archaeological Forgeries at Wyman, Michigan," *The Nation* 54 (January 1892): 71; Francis W. Kelsey, "Some Archeological Forgeries from Michigan," *American Anthropologist* 10, no. 8 (1908): 48–59; Francis W. Kelsey, "A Persistent Forgery," *The Nation* 90 (May 1910): 603–4; Francis W. Kelsey, "A Persistent Forgery," *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 33, no. 1 (1911): 26–31; Stephen D. Peet, "A 'Stamp' Tablet and Coin Found in a Michigan Mount," *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 16 (September 1894): 313; Frederick Starr, J. O. Kinnaman, and James E. Talmage, "The Michigan Archaeological Question Settled," *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 33, no. 3 (1911): 160–64; John Cumming, "Humbugs of the First Water: The Soper Frauds," *Michigan History Magazine* 63 (March/April 1979): 31–43; Stephen Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology: The Wild Side of North American Prehistory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 180–85.

4. John R. Halsey, personal communication with author, October 23, 2000.

5. J. O. Kinnaman and James Savage, "Michigan: The Storm Center of American Archaeology," *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 33, no. 1 (January-February-March 1911): 21; James Savage, "Dactylic Alphabet," 28, Soper and Savage Artifact Collection, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

6. Kelsey, "Some Archaeological Forgeries," 49.

7. Kinnaman and Savage, "Storm Center of American Archaeology," 24.

8. John A. Russell, "Notes on Prehistoric Discoveries in Wayne County, Michigan," *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* 33, no. 3 (1911): 135–43; quote on 138.

9. As quoted in James E. Talmage, "'The Michigan Relics': A Story of Forgery and Deception," *Deseret Museum Bulletin* n.s., 2 (September 1911): 10.

10. Russell, "Notes on Prehistoric Discoveries," 139.

11. Kelsey, "Some Archaeological Forgeries," 50; and Talmage, "Story of Forgery and Deception," 10.

12. Kelsey, "Some Archaeological Forgeries," 54.

13. Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology*, 182.

14. Russell, "Notes on Prehistoric Discoveries," 182.

15. Henriette Mertz, *The Mystic Symbol: Mark of the Michigan Mound Builders* (Gaithersburg, Md.: Global Books, 1986).

16. Savage, "Dactylic Alphabet."

17. Notation in the register of the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City.

18. Williams, *Fantastic Archaeology*, 182.

19. Kelsey, "Some Archaeological Forgeries," 57.

20. Temper or grog refers to other substances added to clay used to make ceramics. These materials make the clay less sticky and easier to work. The temper also opens the texture of the clay to allow for even drying before firing.

21. Susan R. Martin, *Wonderful Power: The Story of Ancient Copper Working in the Lake Superior Basin* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 151–52.

22. George Rapp Jr., Eiler Hendrickson, and James Allert, "Native Copper Sources of Artifact Copper in Pre-Columbian North America," *Archaeological Geography of North America*, ed. Norman P. Lasca and Jack Donahue, Centennial Special vol. 4 (Boulder, Colo.: The Geological Society of America, 1990), 479; and Mary Ann Levine, "Native Copper in the Northeast: An Overview of Potential Sources Available to Indigenous Peoples," in *The Archaeological Northeast*, ed. Mary Ann Levine, Kenneth E. Sassaman, and Michael S. Nassaney (Westport, Conn.: Bergan and Garvey, 2000), 183.

23. John R. Halsey, "Miskwabik—Red Metal: The Roles Played by Michigan's Copper in Prehistory North America," *Michigan History Magazine* 67, no. 5 (1983), 35.
24. David E. Clark and Barbara A. Purdy, "Early Metallurgy in North America," in *Early Pyrotechnology: The Evolution of the First Fire-Using Industries*, Theodore A. Wer-time and Steven F. Wertime, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982), 56.
25. Allen McPherron, *The Juntunen Site and the Late Woodland Prehistory of the Upper Great Lakes Area* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 166.
26. John W. Welch and Jason Izatt, "A Recent Physical Examination of the Michigan Relics in the LDS Collection," unpublished notes from 1994, in author's possession.
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28. Richard Zurel, personal communication with the author, October 25, 2000.
29. Kelsey, "Some Archeological Forgeries," 50.
30. A. L. Spooner, personal communication with the author, October 1977.
31. Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries," 71.
32. Richard Zurel, personal communication, October 25, 2000.
33. Kelsey, "Archeological Forgeries," 55.
34. Richard Zurel, personal communication, December 9, 2000; James E. Fitting, *The Archaeology of Michigan: A Guide to the Prehistory of the Great Lakes Region* (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1910), 103, 124, 138, 159; Robert G. Kingsley, David S. Brose, and Michael J. Hambacher, "The Middle Woodland Period: A Golden Age of Mound Builders and Fishermen," in *Retrieving Michigan's Buried Past: The Archaeology of the Great Lakes State*, ed. John R. Halsey and Michael D. Stafford (Bloomfield Hills, Mich.: Cranbook Institute of Science, 1999), 164.
35. Richard Zurel, personal communication, December 9, 2000.
36. Halsey, "Miskwabik—Red Metal," 35.
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- Some interpretations of the Scotford-Soper-Savage tablets suggest that this group of Caucasians was overrun and defeated by groups whose descendants would later be called the American Indians. If this were the case, one would expect to see Scotford-Soper-Savage materials or design elements showing up in the sites of conquerors. They are not there.
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Home Production

Christin L. Porter

The sickly sweet smell of fermentation reminds me of the overripened fruit that would sit in my childhood garage waiting for autumn canning. Mom, and whoever she could guilt into helping her, would bottle the salvageable fruit from bushels picked weeks earlier. Bottling was drudgery. I loathed sitting next to the kitchen sink, paring knife in hand, the sticky juices of apricots, peaches, or pears splashing all over my arms and face.

Fall processing was the last step in a process that filled my free time from early spring. Cultivating and seed planting in newly thawed soil gave way to the laboriously long days of summer with work that was back-break exhausting—bending and hoeing and weed pulling in our quarter-acre garden. I looked forward to when the sweltering days of summer would give way to pleasant Indian summer days of picking raspberries or scavenging for banana squash or cucumbers in a maze of itchy elephant ears.

Unpleasant as my childhood summer labors seemed, they included small doses of gratification. When we huddled around a bowl of newly shelled peas or freshly blanched peaches, Mom would tell me teasingly that I was to “delight in the fruits of my labors.” Over time her unfailing pleasantness gradually wore me down. I learned to delight in the autumn rituals of harvest, especially when fall labors bore such rewards as a tangy bowl of apricots served with a side of warm cinnamon toast and hot chocolate on a cold January night or a bottle of cherries shared with Mom after school while devouring *The Count of Monte Cristo* or *The Three Musketeers*. Shelling peas, shucking corn, or pouring melted paraffin on top of raspberry preserves, Mom was slowly teaching me to appreciate the meaning of “home production.” It became more than just work; in some small way it was beginning to illuminate a way of being.

This past June I packed my little family into our aging Dodge minivan for the sixteen-hour drive to Grandma Dickson’s home nestled in the North Cascade Mountains of western Washington. Imposing Douglas firs, huckleberries, and wild ferns surround the perimeter of a lot accented by carefully tended flower and vegetable gardens. Under a canopy of moonlight, her vegetable gardens teemed with ever-bear strawberries, early raspberries, and blossoming Big Bertha tomatoes. The trees in her orchard already bent with green John-a-Gold apples, Bartlett pears, and Elberta peaches. Flowering iris, honeysuckle, columbine, lilac, and rose bushes perfumed the landscape.

And inside, down in the fruit cellar, stood row after row of bottles: king salmon, huckleberries, applesauce, grape juice, blackberry and boysenberry jam, corn off the cob, pickled beans and beets, cucumbers and onions, even bottles of carefully preserved animal fats used for making soap during leaner times. It was a monument to thrift, to self-sufficiency, and to Grandma's life.

The day before we left, Grandma's arthritic hands prepared us grilled salmon in a homemade dill sauce, with new potatoes, freshly baked bread, and home preserves from her cellar. Eating Grandma's blackberry pie was like eating a slice of heaven, so good it erased the guilt of watching Grandma all afternoon, bent over her walker, struggling from sink to cabinets to stove.

Two months later, I sat in a small chapel with pine benches and floors worn by a lifetime of parishioners with four generations of Grandma's direct descendents. Aunt Betty, Grandma's oldest child, delivered the eulogy. She shared with us what she called the many "passions of Geneva." "You knew Mom loved you," suggested Betty, "if you were fortunate to receive a slice of her warm homemade bread smothered in butter and her handmade boysenberry jam. But," Betty elaborated, "you truly knew Mom loved you if you were blessed with one of her homemade blackberry pies." I had been so blessed at our Last Supper in June. I realized that Grandma had materially left a part of herself in me. Her decades of work had made her love corporeal. Her years of labor had transposed themselves into my flesh and my blood.

The day following her interment, I was once again in Grandma's cellar, assigned the task of removing all those carefully placed bottles, shelf by shelf. We discovered many bottles had broken seals, their contents long since rotted. My sister Jane and cousin Jody worked with me the good part of the morning, pouring out the contents of the unsalvageable bottles, making new compost for future soil. We carefully divided among us the glass-hooded Ball jars.

That evening, during a dinner of pan-fried fish, Mom walked into the kitchen carrying Grandma's stainless-steel canning bath. She asked Grandpa if he thought it would be all right if she were to have Grandma's canner. With a catch in his voice and a quick wipe with his hankie, Grandpa told Mom that he would like to keep it a little longer but promised it to her when the time was right.

The following morning, I said my good-byes, tightly embraced Grandpa and Mom, and headed back home to Grandma's forty-sixth and seventy-eighth great-grandchildren. When I unpacked my suitcase, I secured the glass hood on Grandma's Ball jar and set it on the counter next to a bottle of pasta. My life soon returned to familiar routines—taking

Caleb to soccer games and Emma to dance, reading in the light of an August evening, and beginning anew the autumn rituals of home production. The bushels of peaches my wife and I had bought at Stratton's before leaving for Grandma's funeral were still waiting for us in the garage, beginning to get that familiar overripe smell. We coaxed Caleb and Emma up to the kitchen counter and began the process of blanching, peeling, slicing, and bathing bottles of Elbertas to store up for winter.

Caleb immediately began to complain. He said he hated handling the sticky peaches, hated home production. But as I began pulling up the first batch of peaches from the canning bath, the familiar plaints echoed, then faded. The epiphany I experienced during Grandma's funeral returned, and through the steamy mist of the autumn ritual of doing and making, my eyes fixed on a glass-hooded Ball jar filled with memories of Grandma.

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Learning to Be a Woman

We watch our mother empty pockets for the wash,
 slide cookies into the oven,
 vacuum the avocado carpet,
 wipe dust from the kitchen sill, all
 with cube steaks frying,
 (baby sister tucked under her ribs)
 and singing a hymn front to back.
 She reigns in a cotton dress; smells
 of soup, shampoo and bleach.

She knows where it is,
 whose turn to be first,
 how to spell *amnesia* and *cooperation*,
 that carrots brighten our eyes.

We see her butter the edges,
 set one more plate,
 thaw chicken parts under the tap.

When an aunt or neighbor stops by
 and Mother must sit,
 her hands reattach a black snap,
 shape meatloaf, measure paper for lining the shelves.
 Sometimes we're shooed away.
Little pigs have big ears, they say,
 but they laugh, and the house swells
 with the happiness of women.
 They hug both arms, bob forward and back,
 pink with glee.

Sometimes Mother wears lipstick,
rubs lotion over her legs, dances her flesh
into an elastic girdle.

Sometimes radish roses and little cube cakes
dot kidney-shaped plates.
The club ladies say *Oh! Shirley, your house is NEVER
a mess, or Now, which one is this?
Is this one the twin?*

Somehow we drew the straw
(while our brothers sweat loudly outside)
to be framed by flickering curtains
or stiff winter ice on the glass,
to sit very still on a kitchen stool
while Mother dips a comb in a glass
and persuades our hair into curls.

—Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

The Quiet Ones

Guard the quiet ones—
 the son whose pencil
 touches the lines of his letters
 ever so lightly,
 the daughter whose doleful songs
 weave within the ordinary
 language of her speech.

Their hearts do not burn before us,
 nor shine,
 hard and definite
 like children's pointed stars,
 but blur within a smokey broth of sky.

Frugal, quick, their needs
 are hints, whispers
 at the corner of an eye.

They speak without punctuation,
 what they say drops away
 like an interrupted symphony.

Theirs is the faith of seeds,
 seeds that sprout in the night
 bothering our sleep:
What was it she wanted to say?
What did he mean?
What must I remember?

—Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

Book Reviews

JAN SHIPPS. *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000. xiii; 400 pp. Notes, index. \$34.95.

Reviewed by Leslee Thorne-Murphy

Jan Shipps's newest contribution to Mormon history, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons*, is a collection of essays that gives us a retrospective not only of her work as a historian, but also of her personal experience as a friendly observer of the Saints. The most innovative aspect of the book is the parallel she draws between her own growth and that of the Church during the past forty years. Her journey from "gentile" to "sojourner," she reasons, has occurred at a time when the Church itself has been expanding from an intermountain-based enclave to a global entity.

Shipps's personal observations combined with her scholarly essays give her collection a multi-layered approach. At one level, *Sojourner* is a straightforward collection of essays written at different times throughout her career. The essays she chose were composed over the course of two and a half decades and represent a wide range of genres and intended audiences.

The second level of her book consists of autobiographical reflections on her time and work with Mormons and Mormonism. She has not, however, written a memoir of her work in Mormon history along the lines of Leonard Arrington's *Adventures of a Church Historian*.¹ Rather, she has organized her work thematically in five sections, each of which has an introduction outlining the topic and giving autobiographical details about when, why, and how she wrote each essay. In addition, a few of the essays are autobiographical or contain autobiographical elements. Perhaps most important to this autobiographical level are her general introduction and her epilogue. The general introduction outlines her experience and rationale for compiling the collection, and the epilogue gives a delightful account of her introduction to Mormonism, including the adventurous drive she and her husband took when moving to Utah in the first car either had ever owned or driven.

This concluding travel story reflects the theme of the entire collection. From her earliest exposure to and curiosity about the Mormon world to her current emeritus status, Shipps explains, she has traveled along with the Saints as the Church has made its own journey. The third level of her book, then, is metaphorical and analytical. She relates the changes that have come about in the Church to her scholarly work and to her own personal

experience. This is the thematic aspect of the book that compels Shipps to name herself a “sojourner,” a fellow traveler with the Saints who has experienced dramatic as well as nearly imperceptible changes along with members of the Church. This comparison of her own work with the Church’s journey during the last forty years is at once the most innovative and yet the most elusive aspect of the book. This element often functions in the background, coming forward upon occasion when Shipps explicitly outlines her project in the introduction, when she includes essays that specifically address changes in the Church over the past few decades, or when she wraps up her thoughts in the epilogue. The greatest strength of this metaphorical aspect is in offering us a glimpse into how Shipps reads her work in retrospect and where her work is heading from here.

With this multilayered approach Shipps certainly has gone beyond the requirements of compiling a collection of essays. She presents us with a work that represents her current thinking as a historian alongside her past scholarly work and her autobiographical material. Even if she had not gone to these extra lengths, however, the collection would be valuable solely for the essays it contains. Several of these essays are previously unpublished; those published previously, as she explains, appeared in venues that scholars of Mormon history would not normally consult.

The essays were written for audiences as varied as history buffs, attendees of Western History Association conferences, and the readership of the *Wilson Quarterly*. The essays also vary in genre; Shipps has included book reviews, narrative histories, statistical analyses, autobiographical essays, and even encyclopedia entries. This variety naturally indicates that some are short and rather informal while others show all the scholarly rigor Shipps is well able to muster. In this respect, her section introductions serve a valuable purpose in providing her explanation of each essay’s original audience and purpose, as well as her rationale for combining essays that may appear disparate in theme, tone, and genre.

Thus the five sections of *Sojourner* represent the wide range of Shipps’s academic work. Although she could have presented the essays chronologically by composition date to enhance the autobiographical and metaphorical elements, her decision to present the essays thematically gives the collection much more order and cohesion.

Part I, “Studies in Perception,” presents essays discussing how Mormons and non-Mormons perceive each other. An article previously circulated as an unpublished manuscript forms the first essay of this section. Entitled “From Satyr to Saint: American Perceptions of the Mormons, 1860–1960,” it studies attitudes toward Mormons as represented in print culture. Part II, “History, Historiography, and Writing about Religious History,” explores how history is both written and received. This section

includes, among other essays, a brief bibliography of Mormon history, a narrative analysis of BYU's decision not to invite Laurel Thatcher Ulrich to speak at its women's conference in 1992, and typically insightful comments on the academic community's response to John Brooke's *Refiner's Fire*. Part III, "Putting Religion at the Heart of Mormon History and History at the Heart of Mormonism," examines the role of history within the Church as well as discussing changes in Mormonism. Part IV, "Deciphering, Explicating, Clarifying: Exercising an Inside-Outsider's Informal Calling," presents two examples of how Shipps explains Mormon history and doctrine to non-Mormons. Part V, "How My Mind Was Changed and My Understanding Amplified," is self-avowedly the most personal section of the collection. In it she reprints her conclusions on whether Mormonism is Christian and also offers a reflection on how she mourned over the excommunication of one of her many Mormon friends and colleagues, Lavina Fielding Anderson.

These five sections demonstrate why, after all the honorary titles suggested for Shipps's position in the field of Mormon history (den mother, celebrated Mormon watcher, and so on), she has settled on a title for herself. By showing us her personal growth over forty years among members of the Church, Shipps makes it clear that she is not merely the "inside-outsider" of several years ago. She is now a fellow "sojourner" with the Saints.

In its rich variety and depth of insight, this collection will enhance the library of all those interested in Mormon history. Those familiar with Shipps will find a substantial sampling of the work that has shaped the writing of Mormon history over the past two and a half decades, and those new to her work will discover her remarkable ability to write accurately and clearly about her subject.

Although *Sojourner* is a retrospective, Shipps has not finished writing about the Saints: she has announced that the project currently occupying her time is a history of the Church since World War II, in which she will expand her exploration of the dramatic changes the Church has experienced during the past half-century. It promises to be full of the same insight and careful investigation that has always been a hallmark of her work.

I, for one, couldn't be happier that she will continue to sojourn with us.

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JAN SHIPPS. *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000. xiii; 400 pp. Notes, index. \$34.95.

Reviewed by Randall Balmer

For more than four decades Jan Shipps, now *professor emerita* at Indiana University–Purdue University at Indianapolis, has been the most reliable source for non-Mormons about Mormonism. Whenever journalists or academics go searching for an explanation of Latter-day Saint theology or try to deconstruct the latest pronouncement coming out of Salt Lake City or understand some cultural or political development in Utah, we call Jan for the inside scoop because she knows the ins and outs, the nooks and crannies, of Mormondom. Chances are very good that she knows the principals as well, and she can leaven her explanation with some pithy aside that provides invaluable insight into one of the most fascinating—and confounding—movements in all of American religious history.

On the face of it, Jan Shipps is an unlikely insider to the machinations of Mormonism. She is devoutly and resolutely Methodist, not Mormon, and she has the unprepossessing demeanor of somebody's favorite aunt or grandmother, rather than the attitude of a single-minded and relentless sleuth that one might expect from someone who has gained so much inside information about the workings of the Latter-day Saints. But looks can be deceiving, of course, and those who underestimate Shipps do so at their own peril. Her *modus operandi* is more Columbo than James Bond, but she is an excellent historian, as *Sojourner in the Promised Land* demonstrates.

This delightful book contains some of her best work over the past forty years, but it also offers occasional, usually offhand, insight into the author's remarkable life (including where she acquired her storied driving skills). Jo Ann Barnett was born and reared in Alabama and took the nickname Jan as a sixteen-year-old when she entered the Alabama College for Women (now Montebello University) in 1946 because so many other students were named Jo Ann (we learn this from a footnote). Her first exposure to Mormonism came when she and her husband, Tony Shipps, moved from Detroit to Logan, Utah, where he became a librarian at Utah State University. Jan's curiosity was so piqued by this alien people—she thought of Logan as a “twilight zone”—that she determined to study the Latter-day Saints further, earning her Ph.D. from the University of Colorado in 1965. That same year the Mormon History Association was formed by a distinguished group of Mormon scholars and “at least one prominent non-Mormon historian,” Shipps (3).

Thus was launched a remarkable career, the tracings of which appear in this collection. Shipps tries to account for why Mormons have been so conspicuously absent from histories of the American West, and she recalls, almost wistfully, the days of Camelot when the Church opened its archives to scholars, both Mormons and non-Mormons, under the stewardship of Leonard Arrington. One of her best essays, "From Satyr to Saint," based on prodigious research, shows how the public perception of Mormonism evolved from that of a dangerous cult into a kind of paragon of American goodness and righteousness. By the 1960s, she concludes, "it seemed to many of the nation's citizens that Mormons were exemplary figures. As the mountain curtain turned into a scrim, observers were able to see that the Saints were truly saints; and the satyrs were in the world outside" (73).

Shipps records beautifully how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints refashioned itself from an enclave into a worldwide entity, noting that, in the nomenclature of the church, she herself started out as a *Gentile* historian and, "without changing my religious status in the slightest, I became a *non-Mormon* historian who studies Latter-day Saints" (40). This new openness on the part of the church—including, not incidentally, the decision to ordain men of color—transformed what it means to be a Mormon "from peoplehood to church membership" (41), and this transformation should ensure that Mormons will find their place in the historiography of the American West.

Shipps predicts, however, that such inclusion will come at a cost. As the media gain a fuller understanding of the Latter-day Saints, as it sets aside the two-dimensional caricatures of the past, the church will come under more scrutiny. The 1993 excommunications of the September Six or Brigham Young University's treatment of Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, the author suggests, provide a case in point. If the church leadership expected that these actions would be treated simply as an internal matter, they were mistaken. The press took notice, as did the academy.

Sojourner in the Promised Land is full of insights on the Latter-day Saints, on religious studies, and on the writing of religious history. These observations are useful to historians generally, but they have particular application to writing Mormon history. Shipps recognizes that insiders—in any tradition—have an advantage, "for they speak the language and can recognize nuances easily missed by scholars unfamiliar with a denominational idiom," but any worthwhile account "requires insiders to become 'outside-insiders,' who know their denominations intimately but are willing to develop the ability to see them from the disinterested perspective of the outside" (187). An insider, she believes, needs "somehow to bracket and suspend judgment about a faith community's truth claims" in order to write responsibly: "A willing suspension of belief (or disbelief) makes it less

likely that what a historian writes will be confused with efforts at faith promotion or exposé” (188).

It is precisely this approach that has characterized Jan Shipps’s own work throughout the decades, and this is what makes it so valuable. Shipps has been willing to bracket Mormon truth claims and to suspend her own belief—or disbelief—without being either congratulatory or censorious. The result has been a fascinating “inside-outsider” look at Mormonism. Through books, articles, interviews, and conversation, she has translated the theology, culture, and mores of the Latter-day Saints to those of us outside the movement, but she has also held up a mirror to Mormons so they have a better understanding of themselves.

As Shipps is quick to point out, her pilgrimage among the Mormons has transformed her, even though she remains a Methodist (much to the confusion and the consternation of some church leaders). But she in turn has also, almost single-handedly, transformed the entire field of Mormon studies, adding new legitimacy to the field, encouraging younger scholars, and admonishing Mormons themselves to greater care in their scholarly pursuits.

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STERLING B. TALMAGE. *Can Science Be Faith-Promoting?* Ed. Stan Larson. Salt Lake City: Blue Ribbon Books, 2001. lxiv; 253 pp. Bibliography, index. \$18.95.

Reviewed by Noel L. Owen

Interesting questions arise when science advances theories that conflict with traditional understandings of creation, the age of the Earth, and the first humans. Sterling B. Talmage (1889–1956), a faithful Latter-day Saint scientist and son of Apostle James E. Talmage, tackled these issues and others as he sought to bring opposing views into harmony. In 1934–36, he produced thirty-two short essays on various aspects of faith and science; he also wrote to and received replies from four Church leaders on these topics. *Can Science Be Faith-Promoting?* brings Talmage’s insights to light and adds information that makes the discussion relevant in our time.

The logical arguments presented in the book are generally clear and cogent, and they are made more readable by the inclusion of Sterling Talmage’s letters, stories, and personal observations. I especially enjoyed the story in essay 25, “The Principle of Evolution,” in which he describes the reaction of a mother hen who has successfully incubated a brood of duck eggs. His narrative begins when the hen and the ducklings come close to the bank of a pond:

The ducklings, expressing their satisfaction by tiny quacks, joyously entered the water, and the poor hen on the bank nearly took a fit. . . . She warned and threatened; she scolded and pleaded; she demanded and besought. . . . *She knew for a fact* that her offspring were endangering their lives by entering deep water. But the ducklings knew for a fact that they could progress in the water even better than on the land. (116, italics in original)

Talmage uses this incident to show that there was really no conflict in the “facts,” only in the points of view—and that “knowledge” based on instinct rather than on reason prevented either one from understanding the other.

Besides such colorful illustrations, the most intriguing section of this book may well be the twenty-seven letters written between Sterling Talmage and Elders James E. Talmage, John A. Widtsoe, Joseph Fielding Smith, and President Heber J. Grant. They illustrate some of the complex concerns faced by Church authorities from 1931 to 1935; Church leaders often struggled to comprehend all the nuances of science, and it was sometimes difficult to believe the main antagonists and proponents of theories. These letters also show Sterling Talmage’s regard not only for truth but also for Church leaders. For example, in a letter to Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, Talmage wrote a passionate treatise that, while vehemently disagreeing with many of Elder Smith’s statements, still clearly reflected the respect Talmage had for the position and authority of Elder Smith as an Apostle.

Seven of the letters were written to and from Sterling's father, Elder Talmage, and it is apparent that the latter respected his son's professional opinion on matters related to geology and geochemistry. These letters conclude the book; the main body consists of Sterling Talmage's essays. Modern essays that provide context for the current reader form the introduction.

The first essay, by David M. Bailey, masterfully reviews many of the conflicts that have emerged between the beliefs of some early Church leaders and scientific discoveries and theories. In addition to summarizing Talmage's essays, Bailey describes past, current, and future issues in religion and science that may interest Latter-day Saints. There is always danger in quoting General Authorities out of context, but the author has managed to be fair and objective.

In the second essay, William E. Evenson writes a well-balanced report about how the theory of evolution impinges on Church doctrine, and he gives an up-to-date account of how faithful Mormon scientists view the principle of evolution. This is followed by a shorter article by the late William Lee Stokes outlining the position on evolution expressed to him personally by President David O. McKay.

The introduction concludes with the editor's account of the Talmage essays set in a historical context, including some of the concerns that were being argued within the Church hierarchy during the mid 1900s. In my opinion, the editor has contributed greatly to the success of this book. Besides giving the historical context, he describes the dissension between the main protagonists on topics such as the age of the Earth and pre-Adamic beings, and he explains how some Apostles chose a moderate stance. He has also inserted numerous footnotes to Talmage's essays, clarifying what the author originally wrote vis-à-vis how they appeared in the *Deseret News* and commenting constructively when Talmage's facts do not tally with modern discoveries. Some of the footnotes include statements by General Authorities given at recent general conferences of the Church.

After this introduction, Talmage's essays are presented in four sections. The first nineteen essays are short, easy-to-read articles, each titled by a question, such as "What Is Creation?", "What Is Science?", "What Is an Evolutionist?", "What Says Astronomy?", "What Says Chemistry?", "What Says Physics?", "What Says Paleontology?", and so on. Throughout these writings, Talmage never lost sight of his overall goal, namely, to give a satisfactory answer to the central question: can science be faith-promoting? He writes extremely well, with clear and cogent arguments, and takes pains to define terms carefully. Inevitably, some of the essays are better than others, and occasionally his strong bias toward geological and paleontological evidences emerges in his writing.

Essays 20–24 come from an article in the *Deseret News* in 1934 in which Talmage refutes clearly and passionately the arguments of Major Howard S. Bennion, whose article “Is the Earth Millions of Years Old?” had appeared previously in the same paper. Talmage’s analysis of the problems he encountered in Bennion’s treatise serves as an excellent example to today’s young scientists of a carefully written, logical, and factual dismantling of an article that attempts the impossible task of determining the age of the Earth solely from the scriptures.

In essays 25–29 Talmage tackles the question, “Is evolution a faith-promoting principle?” He draws a clear distinction between the “principle” and the “theories” of evolution. The *principle* of evolution is the fact that species change over time. Talmage explains the evidences of biology and paleontology in some detail, concluding that he felt compelled to accept the principle of evolution by the paleontological evidences found in the rocks. The *theories* of evolution, on the other hand, are conclusions drawn from the facts, including conclusions about the origin of the human species.

With regard to human creation, Talmage makes the point that we err in assuming that man’s body is the only aspect of man that has to be considered:

In speaking of the origin of man, we generally have reference to the creation of man’s body; and, of all the mistakes that man has made concerning himself, one of the greatest and gravest is that of mistaking the body for the man. The body is no more truly the whole man than is the coat the body.¹

Talmage’s own theory marries scientific evidence with scriptural evidence to produce the idea that true human creation occurred only when God first placed a human spirit in a human body; the body was created according to natural law by God’s design. Because the crucial scriptures for this theory are found in the Pearl of Great Price, Talmage believes that Latter-day Saints will find it easier to accept further evidences of evolution than any other faith.

Talmage also believes that the scriptures do not preclude the principle of evolution precisely because the scriptures do not discuss evolution at all. In support of this position, he stresses the difference between the terms *unscriptural* (meaning “against the scriptures”) and *nonscriptural* (meaning “not found in the scriptures”). The principle of evolution is supported by thousands of nonscriptural facts, and for him these facts support faith as well as science:

I find my faith strengthened by the demonstration that God has operated through countless ages according to a “secondary cause” that I am beginning to understand, which seems controlled at every point by an eternal and immutable law, which law is included as a part of the principle of evolution.

I find such a concept far more faith-promoting than the old idea that every organic species simply came into existence by divine fiat. (129–30)

These essays on the origin of the human race includes selected quotes from his father's semi-authoritative pamphlet *The Earth and Man*; the pamphlet is also quoted elsewhere in the book several times. One of the intriguing issues the book explores is the question of whether this pamphlet was ever authorized by the Church and sanctioned by the First Presidency. The editor's introduction outlines the details pertaining to this issue, and the correspondence section includes letters involving the First Presidency and relating to this pamphlet.

In the final essay section (numbers 30–32), Talmage discusses the concept of pre-Adamic men and the question of “time” as applied to the age of the Earth and to mankind's duration on the Earth. In the end, he admits that as he wrote it he gained an insight that almost made him discard his previous chapter on the Earth's time. Having a strong belief in the antiquity of the Earth, Talmage states that he found it difficult to correlate his views with the words of Doctrine and Covenants 77:6:

Q. What are we to understand by the book which John saw, which was sealed on the back with seven seals?

A. We are to understand that it contains the revealed will, mysteries, and works of God; the hidden things of his economy concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence.

His epiphany revolved around the two phrases “God's economy” and “the Earth's continuance.” After pondering these verses, Talmage concluded that they refer to God's management and dealings with men on the Earth rather than the age of the Earth itself, and that the word “continuance” implies that there was an undefined time associated with the Earth before God's dealings with man.

Each of the three main sections (the introduction, the Talmage essays, and the correspondence) makes excellent reading for any member of the Church interested in science and religion. Even though “S. B. Talmage's scientific arguments are dated,” as Larson recognizes (lxiii), taken together these materials generate a riveting book.

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1. James E. Talmage, “The Earth and Man,” an address delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, August 9, 1931, reprinted in James Harris, ed., *The Essential James E. Talmage* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 241–55.

Brief Notice

Out of Obscurity: The Church in the Twentieth Century (Deseret Book, 2000)

At century's end, Brigham Young University's College of Religious Education presents "a commemorative volume in remembrance of the century" (ix). *Out of Obscurity: The Church in the Twentieth Century* includes twenty-six papers from the twenty-ninth annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium.

In his keynote address, "May the Kingdom of God Go Forth," Elder Marlin K. Jensen, a President of the Seventy, lauds the Church's devotion to record keeping:

Perhaps no other religion from its earliest beginnings has enjoyed a greater abundance of both primary and secondary sources from which to analyze and reconstruct its past. If, as some of our critics allege, the Prophet Joseph Smith committed a fraud on the world, he certainly made no effort personally, and left no instructions to his followers, to conceal the evidence! (1)

Elder Jensen goes on to highlight the tremendous demographic differences in Church membership and circumstances between 1900 and 2000, while at the same time emphasizing the "constancy amid change" (8) in the Church's basic doctrines, procedures, standards, and care for the poor and needy.

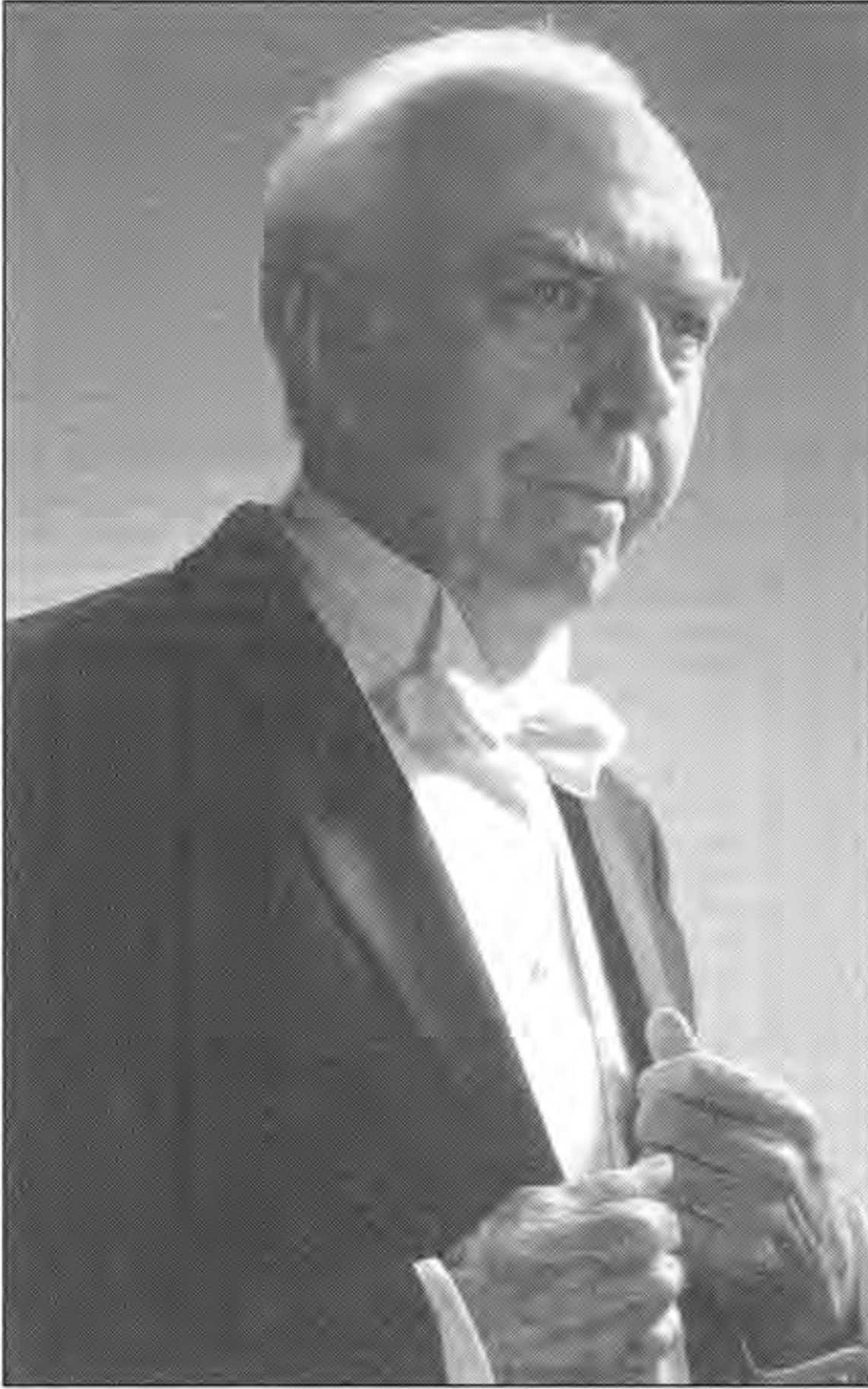
Remarkable in this collection are pieces by individuals who were participants in—or were greatly affected by—historical transitions. Barbara Smith and Shirley Thomas, former members of the Relief Society general presidency, discuss the Church's women's organization in the twentieth century. Similarly, the first mission president in Russia, Gary Browning, contributes "Russia and the Restoration"; Reed Benson draws from first-hand

experience in "Ezra Taft Benson: The Eisenhower Years"; choir member Cynthia Doxey gives us "International Tours of the Tabernacle Choir"; African American BYU religion teacher Juan Henderson presents "A Time for Healing: Official Declaration 2"; Dale LeBaron, "The Church in Africa"; Lloyd Newell, "Richard L. Evans, a Light to the World"; Honam Rhee, "The Korean War and the Gospel."

Other topics include "Early Missions to Ottoman Turkey, Syria, and Palestine," "A Lengthening Stride, 1951 through 1999," "Latter-day Saints in the World Wars," "Theodore Roosevelt and the Latter-day Saints," "The Changing Face of the Quorum of the Seventy," and "David O. McKay, Father of the Church Educational System."

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