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## Villages on Wheels: A Social History of the Gathering to Zion

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Documented Accounts of the First Vision” by Jesse and “Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith’s First Vision in Mormon Religious Thought” by Allen. Newer scholarship is also included, such as Anderson’s chapter on the historical setting of the First Vision, a chapter by Allen and Welch comparing the multiple accounts of the First Vision, and Harper’s response to three common arguments made by those who dispute the First Vision narrative.

Each chapter of this book works together to create a sharper picture of the First Vision. The previous scholarship enriching this volume acts as a foundation on which the new First Vision scholarship stands. Together they make this volume the most thorough approach to date for studying this axial gospel event.

While *Exploring the First Vision* is valuable because it brings the best scholarship, once diffused in sundry books and journals, into a single volume, the book is especially valuable for Latter-day Saints who have struggled to make sense of the different accounts of the First Vision. For instance, the evidence in the chapter by Allen and Welch demonstrates that the multiple accounts of Joseph’s First Vision consistently harmonize, and moreover they possess a casual quality to them that lends credence to their authenticity. As the studies in this book show, these are honest accounts, hardly the writings of one bent on perpetrating any kind of fraud.

All who are interested in the spiritual roots of Latter-day Saint historical and religious experience can welcome this book as an enlightening and up-to-date resource. It takes Joseph’s prophetic calling far beyond its basic details and opens valuable pathways to new vistas of understanding.

—James T. Summerhays

*Villages on Wheels: A Social History of the Gathering to Zion*, by Stanley B. Kimball and Violet T. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011).

With all that has been said and written of the pioneer heroes of early Mormonism, *Villages on Wheels* beats down the partition of dates and facts to channel the voices of those who were “called to pass through it.” Uniquely organized to attract both the scholar and lay reader, *Villages on Wheels* presents the unadulterated history of the pioneers through hundreds of diaries, journal entries, and poems written by those who blazed the trail. Unlike other works on the exodus, *Villages* is a social history—a history of the common man told by the common man—independent of the political and economic approach that is more commonly discussed in academia. This characteristic makes the book accessible, educating and entertaining readers of all interest levels and disciplines.

*Villages* is clearly not a devotional work; the Kimballs include the good, the bad, and the ugly to honor the reality of the journey and give human dimension to the experience. The authors realize such human dimension in the book’s focal point: the daily life of those on the trail. The title itself encapsulates the development of community identity that grew among the Saints during the period of the migration. No longer were these early members of the Church defined by their individual heritage or nationality, but rather as a traveling faith-culture united in purpose and eternal inheritance—a concept that is key to the book’s thesis.

A distinguishing feature of *Villages on Wheels* is its chapter entirely dedicated to the lives of the unsung heroes of the trek—the draft animals that paved the trail with their hooves. Explaining journal entries of those who

owned and cared for the animals, the Kimballs pay homage to the grit and resilience of these animals.

Featuring thousands of firsthand records never before compiled, *Villages* reaches beyond the Sunday School stories, strips away the romanticism, and sinks the reader deep into the day-to-day experiences of the Saints. With copious references to these personal accounts, the Kimballs step back and allow the Saints to tell their own tales of suffering, love, humor, tragedy, and joy. *Villages on Wheels* is a riveting compilation for any reader looking to discover this monumental and defining experience in Mormon history through the accounts of the common people who lived it.

—Haleigh Cole

Scripture Bibliography: A Database for Scholarly Research of Topics in the LDS Scriptures, compiled by Ryan Combs (<http://guides.lib.byu.edu/scripture>).

This new scripture bibliography database, compiled by Brigham Young University Religion and Ancient Studies librarian Ryan Combs, allows users to access bibliographic entries for over seven thousand books, book reviews, pamphlets, tracts, speeches, talks, journal articles, and other media. These publications span 1830–1996, and the database is not yet complete; materials leading up to the present are still being added and eventually will give users ready access to an even greater library of resources.

Users can make good use of the scripture bibliography database in many

ways. Researchers can search a specific publication for materials related to a given topic, thus accessing the relevant contents in each of these resources. Included titles are the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, the *Book of Mormon Onomasticon*, *BYU Studies*, *FARMS Review*, and the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, among others.

In addition, a useful feature of this database is its reverse scripture index, which allows users to search the standard works by book, chapter, or verse. Results will show what specifically has been said about a certain scripture or where citations to verses appear in the different materials. Users can also search by author, title, keyword, and range of years.

Other reverse scripture indexes are available, though they differ in scope and format. Perhaps the best known of these is the LDS Scripture Citation Index. That database, created by two BYU professors, draws solely from the *Journal of Discourses*, general conference talks, and *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. That citation index also has a mobile app for iOS and Android.

Though not yet designed for mobile devices, the Scripture Bibliography compiled by Ryan Combs is more expansive and much of its material is academic in nature. This database is available to all and will be especially helpful to researchers, seminary and institute teachers, Gospel Doctrine teachers, and anyone wanting to engage in a serious study of scholarly research on topics found in the LDS scriptures.

—Mark Melville