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Journals, Volume 2: December 1841-April 1843; Journals, Volume 3: May 1843-June 1844

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Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843

Edited by Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith,
and Richard Lloyd Anderson

The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011

Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844

Edited by Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith,
and Brent M. Rogers

The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2015

Reviewed by James B. Allen

These two volumes complete the important Journals series of the Joseph Smith Papers¹ and once again demonstrate the determination of the Church, through its Church History Department, to make available the full body of the papers of the founding prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Each volume includes a fine historical introduction to the period covered along with an essay on the editorial method that the editors followed when transcribing the original documents. Each volume also reflects a remarkable job of editing, including the voluminous footnotes that add valuable clarifications and supplementary information. The original journals are in the handwriting of various assistants Joseph Smith used to record his daily activities, and in their transcription the editors have identified whose handwriting appears in the journal and each place where the handwriting changes. Their meticulous attention to detail is illustrated by the fact that they even indicate what color ink was used in the various entries and where the color changes.

Volume 2 begins on December 13, 1841, twenty-six months after the completion of Smith's previous journal, found in *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*. During that journal-keeping hiatus, many important things happened. Among them were the Prophet's trip to the nation's capital to seek redress for Latter-day Saint losses in Missouri—an effort that was ultimately unsuccessful. This period also saw the rapid growth of Commerce, Illinois, and its renaming to Nauvoo; the Illinois legislature's

1. For a brief explanation of the whole series see James B. Allen, "Review of *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*," *BYU Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 152–61.

granting of a very liberal city charter that gave the Latter-day Saints unusual autonomy; the Quorum of the Twelve's all-important mission to Great Britain that laid the foundation for a massive immigration program; the expanding of the authority and responsibility of the Twelve; the revealing of the doctrine of baptism for the dead and Church members performing such baptisms, first in the Mississippi River, and then in the baptismal font in the basement of the unfinished Nauvoo temple; Joseph's introduction of the doctrine of plural marriage to members of the Twelve and other trusted associates; and the ever-increasing persecution of Joseph Smith and other Church members. All these events and more created quite a different community than what the Saints had lived in before, and established the background for the developments and challenges of the next two and a half years of Joseph Smith's life.

Volume 2 includes two journals: The first, covering December 13, 1841, through December 20, 1842, is mostly in the handwriting of Willard Richards, though for a short period the journal was recorded by William Clayton, and a few entries were written by Eliza R. Snow and Erastus Derby. The next journal, covering December 21, 1841, through April 30, 1843, was entirely recorded by Richards. Entries and notes related to the attempt to extradite Joseph Smith to Missouri, Smith's attempts to evade authorities, and his ultimate arrest and hearing before a federal judge in Illinois take up more pages than any other topic. The editors therefore included an interesting and valuable twenty-six-page appendix that summarizes the case and provides the full text of the documents most relevant to the extradition attempt (2:377–402). A second appendix features the April 1–4, 1843, entries from William Clayton's personal journal (2:403–6). The Prophet was in Ramus, Illinois, during those days, but Richards, who was keeping Joseph Smith's journal, was not with him. However, William Clayton accompanied Smith, and when Richards made his entries into Smith's journal for those days, he drew on what Clayton wrote in his personal journal. Most of the instructions recorded in section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants are based on the Clayton journal (see 2:403–5). The curious reader will find it interesting to compare what Clayton wrote in his journal to what Richards thought important and recorded in the Prophet's journal—Richards ignored a few things and added others.

In the years covered by volume 2, Joseph Smith received increasing criticism and persecution, much of it related to the still-secret practice of plural marriage. Any specific reference to that practice in the journals is, at best, oblique, but in their introduction the editors take several

pages to responsibly address the topic and some of the problems related to it. For example, a January 25, 1842, entry records a revelation dated December 2, 1841, for Marinda Nancy Johnson Hyde, wife of Apostle Orson Hyde, who was on a mission at the time. The revelation ends by admonishing her to “hearken to the counsel of my servant Joseph in all things whatsoever he shall teach unto her, and it shall be a blessing upon her and upon her children after her” (2:37). The editors explain in their volume introduction that this curious wording may well have been connected to Joseph’s having taught Marinda the “doctrine of celestial marriage,” which included plural marriage, and to the fact that eventually she was married, or at least “sealed,” to the Prophet, as were many other women (2:xxvi). This particularly significant explanation illustrates the importance and breadth of the Joseph Smith Papers Project, for only in recent years have official Church publications been able to discuss such complexities so frankly and openly.

In historical and Church materials, we sometimes see references to the “Book of the Law of the Lord,” but many are unaware of what that book was. Annotation in volume 2 clears up any confusion by explaining that an early revelation indicated that a history and “general church record” must be kept that would include a record of people who made consecrations and donations to the Church and also their “manner of life and the[ir] faith and works.” It was to be called “the book of the Law of God,” though when Willard Richards inscribed the title page, he called it “The Book of the Law of the Lord” (2:6–7). It contained not only Joseph Smith’s journal entries but also records of donations as well as names of people who helped the Prophet in other ways. Smith’s first Nauvoo journal was recorded in *The Book of the Law of the Lord* and is the first journal transcribed in *Journals, Volume 2*. The donation records—which are not considered part of the Prophet’s journal—are not included in the publication, though the editors have indicated the spots at which such entries occurred.

Volume 3 covers the last fourteen months of Joseph Smith’s life, from May 1, 1843, until his death on June 27, 1844. All but the last five days were recorded in three books, each in the handwriting of Willard Richards. The first of three significant appendices in volume 3 is an excerpt from Willard Richards’s journal that covers those final days (3:303–30). Smith’s journal ended just before he left Nauvoo for Carthage, Illinois, but Richards accompanied him and remained with him until his death. This journal excerpt provides a valuable firsthand account of the last five days of Joseph Smith’s life. The second appendix is William Clayton’s daily account for June 14–22, 1844, of Joseph Smith’s activities (3:331–33).

Clayton kept a record of his own activities for those days in his personal journal, which also includes references to Joseph Smith's activities, but for some unknown reason he also inserted a longer and more detailed account of the Prophet's activities during those nine days. While much of this account includes the same incidents recorded in Joseph's journal kept by Richards, Clayton's account is, in fact, more comprehensive and includes some events not noted in the journal kept by Richards. The third appendix consists of three "draft notes" made by Willard Richards of some of Joseph Smith's activities that were the basis for what he eventually wrote in the journal (3:341–51). These notes provide the curious reader with a bit of insight into the process of creating at least some of the journal.

Again, the editors present a fine overview of the period in their introduction (3:xiii–xxvii). As they point out, in Joseph Smith's position as President of the Church, trustee-in-trust, mayor of Nauvoo, lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion, and a candidate for the presidency of the United States, his last months were some of the busiest and most complex of his lifetime. He was also involved in building the Nauvoo temple and was drawn into various legal disputes and other activities, all well summarized in the editors' introduction, even though some of these events are less prominent in the actual journal than more mundane activities.

The authors also present a brief discussion of the continuing practice of plural marriage. As in volume 2, references to the practice in the journal are oblique, with the one exception being the indication in the entry for June 12, 1843, that Joseph was married to Willard Richards's sister Rhoda that day and that Richards was married to a second wife, Susan Liptrot (3:35–36). Richards made this entry in shorthand, but the editors transliterated it and placed the transliteration in brackets in the journal. A more oblique reference appears in the entry for July 12, 1843, which says that Joseph received a revelation in his office in the presence of Hyrum Smith and William Clayton (3:57). Though the entry does not say so explicitly, this revelation was on celestial and plural marriage, recorded at the time by Clayton and now known as section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

No doubt scholars will be interested in making comparisons between the text reproduced in these volumes and that in Joseph Smith's six-volume Manuscript History of the Church (later edited and published as the popular *History of the Church*).² The entries in Joseph Smith's

2. For decades, *History of the Church*, edited and published by B. H. Roberts beginning in 1902, has been a standard source for references to Joseph Smith. In recent years, the Joseph Smith Papers has published the original source

journals are often short and terse, sometimes leaving the reader with questions about what was happening. In most cases the manuscript history helps round out these journal entries with considerable additional information based on other sources. In a few instances, dates are skipped in Smith's journals. However, the great value of the Journals series is not always in the daily entries themselves but in the outstanding work of the editors, who provide extensive additional information about what was going on. Frequently, at least half of any given page is filled with footnotes, in small type, expanding on what is said in the journal entry. The entry for May 10 (see 3:247) illustrates the point:

Friday May 10 1844 At hom[e]
rode out after Breakfast
in the course of th[e] day went on the prairie with some breth[r]en to
sell them some Land
9. A M a cou[r]t ma[r]tial was held at the Mayor offic[e] on R[obert] D.
Foster.— For ungentlema[n]ly conduct &c [7 lines blank]

In the manuscript history, this entry was edited and expanded, as follows:

Friday, 10 — Rode out after breakfast to the pra[i]rie to sell some land to some brethren.

The Court Martial was held in the Mayor's Office on the charge against Robert D. Foster, Surgeon General, for unbecoming and unficer like conduct &c. Brigadier General George Miller, presiding. The charges were sustained.

A Prospectus of the Nauvoo Expositor was distributed among the people by the apostates.

The Jury of Lee County, Illinois, awarded \$40 damages and the costs against Joseph H. Reynolds and Harmon T. Wilson for illegal imprisonment and abuse which I suffered from them last June in that county.³

for that publication, the Manuscript History of the Church, which is readily available online at <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/the-papers/histories/jspph3>. The references that follow are to the manuscript history as opposed to the later published version. See "Introduction to History, 1838–1856 (Manuscript History of the Church)," The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/intro/introduction-to-history-1838-1856-manuscript-history-of-the-church>.

3. "History, 1838–1856, Volume F-1 [1 May 1844–8 August 1844]," 16 (May 10, 1844), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-f-1-1-may-1844-8-august-1844/22>.

The last two paragraphs of the manuscript history entry clearly came from sources other than Smith's original journal and are therefore not included in the journal entry, but in both instances the reader is left wondering what Robert D. Foster's court-martial was all about. In footnote 118 on page 247 of volume 3, the editors clarify the matter and identify the sources for their information:

Foster was accused of publicly making "ungentlemanly and unofficer like observations" about JS and others, including allegations that JS "kept a gang of Robbers and plunderers about his house," received "half the spoils" of their activities, and has asked him, Foster, to kill former Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs. After hearing the evidence, the court voted unanimously that Foster "be cashiered & disqualified to hold any office in the Nauvoo Legion." (Aaron Johnson, Statement, 2 May 1844; Court-Martial Proceedings, Nauvoo, IL, 10 May 1844, Nauvoo Legion Records, CHL [Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City].)

The entries for May 11 in the manuscript history and Smith's journal are similar, but in volume 3's transcription of the journal entry, the editors have provided some historically valuable information. Both sources say that Joseph talked with Thomas Lyne that day about the theater, but the average reader would have no idea who Lyne was. The editors explain that he was a well-known tragedian who had joined the Church in April 1844 and helped produce at least one play in Nauvoo to help Joseph Smith pay off a debt. Joseph attended that play on April 26, something not even alluded to in the entries in either the manuscript history or the journals, and he also attended several other plays produced by Lyne (3:248 n. 1121). Both sources also indicate that Joseph Smith attended a prayer meeting on May 11 and that Sidney Rigdon and John P. Greene were there. The history says that the two men were "present," while the journal says "were admitted," which has a different implication and illustrates the value of original sources as opposed to edited sources such as the manuscript history.⁴

This and other prayer meetings were special meetings in which the temple ordinances were being introduced and only specially selected individuals were allowed to attend. As the editors explain in footnote 1122 on page 3:248:

Five months later, in October 1844, Wilford Woodruff reported hearing JS say before his death that Rigdon had been admitted to these prayer meetings "without his [JS's] wish or invitation, as he had no confidence

4. See "History, 1838–1856, Volume F-1," 16 (May 11, 1844).

in him.” In addition, William W. Phelps reported that Rigdon received “only a small part” of the temple ordinances in the meetings he attended. At the time Woodruff and Phelps made their reports, however, Rigdon was claiming to be JS’s proper successor—a claim they disputed and that may have influenced their accounts.

Finally, the journal entry for May 11 notes an event not even alluded to in the manuscript history. It indicates that John P. Greene complained about James Blakeslee and Francis M. Higbee “abusing” Joseph and the Twelve in the Quincy, Illinois, courthouse. Footnote 1123 on page 3:248 explains:

This passage probably refers to the meeting reported eleven days later in the *Quincy Whig*, in which Blakeslee and either Chauncy or Francis M. Higbee, “representing the dissenters” in Nauvoo, addressed a “large number” of citizens in Quincy. Higbee and Blakeslee “made out that Joe Smith was pretty much of a rough customer” and “painted Smith, as any thing but the Saint he claims to be.” Greene defended JS two days later when he told “a crowded house” that “such doctrines as were ascribed to Smith by his enemies, had never been taught to him” and “strongly insinuated, that the characters of the individuals, who had assailed Smith on the second evening previous, were none of the best.”

Such editorial comments comprise the bulk of both volumes and, together with the ability to see exact transcriptions of the original journals, make these volumes of exceptional value to students of history, whether professional or otherwise.

Though most daily entries in Joseph Smith’s journals do not provide all the information found in Joseph Smith’s manuscript history, in some cases the journal entries provide interesting additional information that, for some reason, the compilers of the history chose not to include. On January 4, 1842, for example, Joseph Smith made a harsh “prophecy” concerning Warsaw, Illinois, and Thomas Sharp, editor of the bitterly anti-Mormon *Warsaw Signal*, in which he threatened to bring in “capitalists” from the eastern states who would do what he said and drive his enemies out of business (2:23–24). On January 1, 1843, Joseph and other Church leaders were in Springfield, Illinois, and were allowed to use the hall of the Illinois House of Representatives for a Sunday meeting. This is noted in both the journal and the history, but the journal entry includes an interesting summary of a long address by Orson Hyde that was not recorded in the manuscript history (2:206–9).⁵

5. See “History, 1838–1856, Volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843],” 1433 (January 1, 1843), Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 13, 2018, <https://www>

As another example, in the entries for March 2 and 3, 1843, the manuscript history makes only brief reference to a court trial, *Dana v. Brink*, over which Joseph Smith presided. The compilers of that history chose not to include the full journal entries for that day and thus provided no indication of what the trial was about. It was summarized only by a March 3 statement that it “was a very tedious suit.”⁶ The journal entries, however, are full and extensive, covering forty pages in the original manuscript. Only here do we discover that the trial concerned a medical malpractice suit. The details have little to do with Church history, which is probably why they were eliminated from the manuscript history, but at least they help us understand why the history says the trial was “very tedious.” Interestingly, the Journals series editors speculate that Willard Richards (who was writing Smith’s journal at the time) included all this information because, like the defendant William Brink, he was a Thomsonian physician and therefore had a professional interest in the medical details.

The Journals series often includes the original transcriptions of various Joseph Smith sermons. Perhaps the most important was the famous King Follett sermon, given on April 7, 1844, part of which suggested that God was once a man and that man could become like God (3:216–22). Willard Richards’s transcription of the sermon in the journal is very rough and sometimes not entirely clear. However, Wilford Woodruff, Thomas Bullock, and William Clayton also recorded the sermon, and the slightly differing accounts were later amalgamated for inclusion in the manuscript history. In several footnotes the editors have clarified parts of the sermon by quoting from the other transcriptions (see, for example, 3:217 nn. 956–57; 218 nn. 964–66; 220 nn. 969–71; 221 nn. 974, 977–78; and 222 nn. 979, 984).

If the editors of these journals had gone no further than providing great transcriptions along with exceptional editorial work, these would be valuable and worthwhile publications. But they have gone further by adding important reference material that is of inestimable value to scholars and others seeking to know more about the Prophet and his experiences. Each volume includes a chronology for the period covered, a geographical directory describing most of the places that were mentioned in Smith’s journals, a series of maps showing the location of nearly every town mentioned along with other information about

josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843/76.

6. “History, 1838–1856, Volume D-1,” 1487 (March 2–3, 1843).

geographic features of the time, a Joseph Smith pedigree chart, and an extensive biographical directory containing biographical sketches of nearly everyone mentioned in the journal entries found in the volume. The volumes also feature organizational charts showing the ecclesiastical officers, Church appointees, Nauvoo city officers, and the officers of the Nauvoo Legion during the period covered. The volumes also contain a glossary of terms appearing in the volume.

Scholars will also be grateful for the essay on sources and the list of works cited that appear in each volume, as well as a valuable section identifying corresponding section numbers in the Book of Commandments and various editions of the Doctrine and Covenants. Finally, volume 3 concludes with a 118-page index covering all three volumes. A minor problem with this index, and perhaps most indexes, is that the indexer might not always have the same idea as the reader on how to refer to a particular topic. Someone looking for something on the infamous Kinderhook plates, for example, would not find that term in the index. Instead, the location of that information is listed under “Brass plates dug out of mound near Quincy, Ill.” (3:532).

Only the highest commendation and sincerest thanks must be given to the editors and staff of the Joseph Smith Papers Project for these and all the other volumes issued from the Church Historian’s Press and to Church leaders for allowing it all to happen in this marvelous new era of historical transparency.

James B. Allen was a teacher and administrator in the seminary and institute programs from 1954 to 1963, then joined the faculty of Brigham Young University. He was Assistant Church Historian, 1972–1979, chair of the BYU History Department, 1981–1987, and the Lemuel Hardison Redd Jr. Chair in Western American History, 1987–1992. He retired in 1992. He has authored, coauthored, or coedited fourteen books or monographs and around ninety articles relating to Western American and Latter-day Saint history. He is married to the former Renée Jones, and together they have five children, twenty-one grandchildren, and twenty-one great-grandchildren. They served a full-time Church Educational System mission at the Boston Institute of Religion, 1999–2000, and served as officiators in the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple, 2004–2013.