

Section 1

The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon

Charts 1–12

Joseph Smith on the Correctness and Importance of the Book of Mormon

Explanation In one of the most famous declarations ever made about the Book of Mormon, the Prophet Joseph Smith declares this sacred record to be the keystone of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the best guide available for drawing nearer to God. This statement implies that the Book of Mormon is not only doctrinally but also historically correct. The Book of Mormon brings people closer to God by testifying of Jesus Christ, teaching the importance of obeying the commandments, explaining the plan of salvation, and revealing many other truths conducive to personal righteousness.

Sources Introduction to the Book of Mormon, 1981 edition. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 194.



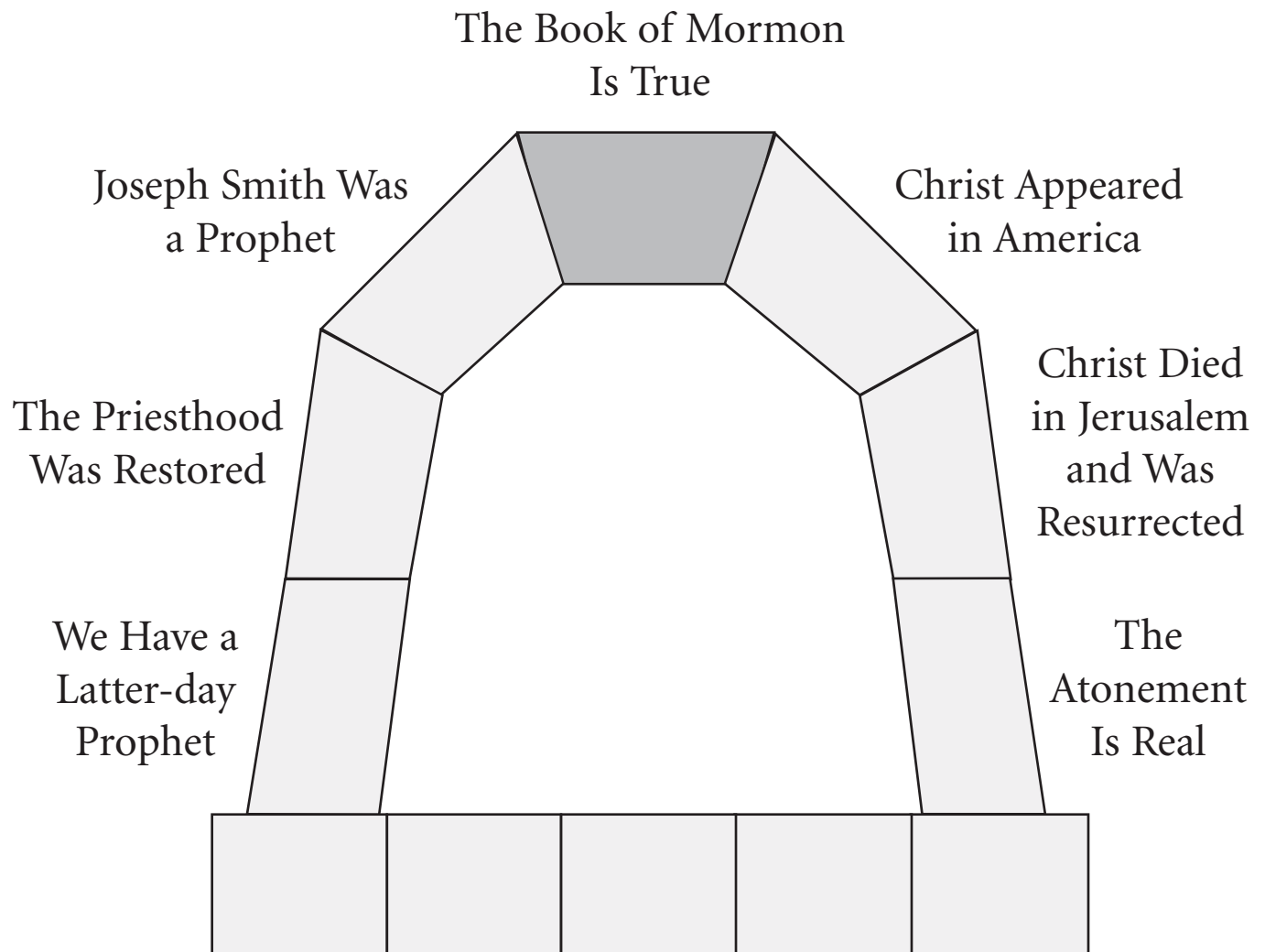
I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.

— *Joseph Smith, 1841*

The Keystone of Our Religion

Explanation Just as a keystone holds an arch in place, knowing that the Book of Mormon is true holds together the edifice of faith built on the sturdy foundation of apostles, prophets, and the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, one cannot fully accept the Book of Mormon without also accepting the means by which it came forth—the Prophet Joseph Smith. In this chart, the archway stones representing the restored priesthood and living prophets are similarly reinforced by the keystone truth, as are the stones representing the reality of Christ’s redemptive mission. In addition, the Book of Mormon ties together the New and Old Testaments by overtly explaining how the law of Moses was fulfilled in Christ, and it further upholds and complements the Bible by serving as another divinely inspired covenantal testament of Jesus Christ.

The Keystone of Our Religion



“Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

Joseph Smith on How the Book of Mormon Will Prove Him a True Prophet

Explanation Although proof alone does not create testimonies or convince souls that the Book of Mormon is true, circumstantial evidence does support Joseph Smith's claim that the Book of Mormon is an ancient record written by former inhabitants of the Americas. In this editorial comment, Joseph Smith explained that the Book of Mormon would stand as circumstantial evidence of the validity of his prophetic calling. As Moses and Elijah were proved to be prophets through miracles they performed, so will Joseph Smith be vindicated through evidences for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

Sources Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 267; excerpt first printed in *Times and Seasons* 3 (15 Sept. 1842): 922.



We can not but think the Lord has a hand in bringing to pass his strange act, and proving the Book of Mormon true in the eyes of all the people. . . . It will be as it ever has been, the world will prove Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence, in experiments, as they did Moses and Elijah.

— *Joseph Smith, 1842*

Emma Smith on the Book of Mormon Translation Process, Quote 1

Explanation In an interview conducted by her son Joseph Smith III in 1879, Emma Smith, wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith, expressed her faith in the restored Church of Jesus Christ, which was established in 1830 after the Prophet had translated the Book of Mormon and published it to the world. As a firsthand witness of the translation process when she acted as his scribe, Emma could testify that her husband had no notes, drafts, or books with him while he translated that ancient record. She, like the Three and Eight Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, never wavered in her testimony of the book's authenticity.

Sources Joseph Smith III, "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Advocate* 2 (Oct. 1879): 51. For additional source information and related discussion, see John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 14–15.



Q. *What is the truth of Mormonism?*

A. I know Mormonism to be the truth; and believe the church to have been established by divine direction. I have complete faith in it. In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.

Q. *Had he not a book or manuscript from which he read, or dictated to you?*

A. He had neither manuscript or book to read from.

Q. *Could he not have had, and you not know it?*

A. If he had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me.

— *Emma Smith, 1879*

Emma Smith on the Book of Mormon Translation Process, Quote 2

Explanation Answering a question posed by her son Joseph Smith III in 1879, Emma Smith indicated that the Prophet Joseph Smith could not have been the author of the Book of Mormon, for he had neither the writing abilities nor adequate knowledge of ancient Israel. In fact, so limited was Joseph's knowledge when he translated the plates that he feared he had found an error when he read from the plates of Nephi that the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by a wall.

Sources Joseph Smith III, "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Advocate* 2 (Oct. 1879): 51; Edmund C. Briggs, "Interview with David Whitmer," *Saints' Herald* 31 (21 June 1884): 396–97. For additional sources and related discussion, see John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 8–9, 15.



Q. *Could not father have dictated the Book of Mormon to you, Oliver Cowdery and the others who wrote for him, after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book?*

A. Joseph Smith could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, . . . it is marvelous to me, “a marvel and a wonder,” as much so as to any one else.

— *Emma Smith, 1879*

Emma Smith on the Physical Characteristics of the Book of Mormon Plates

Explanation In an 1879 interview, Emma Smith described the plates of Mormon, which she had once felt beneath the linen cloth that covered them. She recalled that they were pliable like thick paper but rustled with a metallic sound when they were moved. Though Emma did not directly see the plates, she stands as yet another witness verifying the Book of Mormon's authentic origin.

Sources Joseph Smith III, "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Advocate* 2 (Oct. 1879): 51. For additional source information and related discussion, see John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 14–15.



Q. *Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?*

A. The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb.

— *Emma Smith, 1879*

Elder B. H. Roberts on the Holy Spirit and Scholarly Evidence

Key Scripture Moroni 10:3–5

Explanation This is one of the plainest statements ever made about the roles of the Spirit and scholarly evidence in knowing and stating the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. As Elder B. H. Roberts stated, secondary evidences can help make truth more clear and complete, thereby creating an atmosphere in which the Holy Ghost may more easily testify of it.

Source B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1909), 2:vi–vii, viii.



This [the Holy Ghost] must ever be the chief source of evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon. All other evidence is secondary to this, the primary and infallible. No arrangement of evidence, however skillfully ordered; no argument, however adroitly made, can ever take its place. . . .

To be known, the truth must be stated and the clearer and more complete the statement is, the better opportunity will the Holy Spirit have for testifying to the souls of men that the work is true. . . .

Secondary evidences in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena, may be of first-rate importance, and mighty factors in the achievement of God's purposes.

— *Elder B. H. Roberts, 1909*

Austin Farrer on Rational Argument and Belief

Key Scripture Moroni 10:3–5

Explanation Elder Neal A. Maxwell once quoted philosopher Austin Farrer, who stated that although rational argument—that is, reasoning based on careful study of relevant evidence—does not necessarily create belief, it fosters an atmosphere conducive to it. Research in scientific, archaeological, and linguistic fields often elucidates ancient texts, the Book of Mormon included. Scholars who argue in favor of the ancient origins and character of the Book of Mormon maintain a climate in which people may take that book seriously as a historical record, helping them to embrace and receive it.

Sources Quoted by Neal A. Maxwell in “Discipleship and Scholarship,” *BYU Studies* 32/3 (1992): 5. The statement also appears in Austin Farrer, “The Christian Apologist,” in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, ed. Jocelyn Gibb (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965).



Though argument does not create conviction, the lack of it destroys belief. What seems to be proved may not be embraced; but what no one shows the ability to defend is quickly abandoned. Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish.

— *Austin Farrer, 1965*

Events Surrounding the Translation of the Book of Mormon, 1827–1828

Key Scripture Joseph Smith—History 1:59–65

Explanation After Joseph Smith obtained the gold plates in September 1827, opposition threatened to stop the work of translation. Several attempts were made to steal the plates, and mounting persecution forced Joseph and Emma to move to Harmony, Pennsylvania. In early 1828 Professor Charles Anthon in New York certified in writing that the characters copied from the plates and Joseph’s translation of them were correct, but he tore up the certificate upon hearing that an angel had told Joseph where the plates lay buried. June 1828 saw the death of Joseph and Emma’s newborn first child. Another setback occurred when Martin Harris lost 116 pages that Joseph had translated from the book of Lehi and, as a result, the Lord chastened Joseph and suspended his translation privilege for a season. While on a business trip to Palmyra in December 1828, David Whitmer met Oliver Cowdery, who would become Joseph’s chief scribe. Although the years 1827 and 1828 presented obstacles to the translation effort, the stage was being set for Oliver’s arrival in Harmony in April 1829.

Sources *History of the Church*, 1:18–28. For additional sources and related discussion, see John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, “The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information” (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 3–15; and John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, “How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 1–8.

Events Surrounding the Translation of the Book of Mormon, 1827–1828

1827	Sept.	Joseph obtains the plates from the angel Moroni
	Oct.	
	Nov.	
	Dec.	Joseph and Emma move to Harmony, Pennsylvania
1828	Jan.	Joseph translates some characters from the plates
	Feb.	Martin Harris takes sample of characters and Joseph's accompanying translation to Charles Anthon
	Mar.	
	Apr.	Book of Lehi translated (April 12–June 14)
	May	
	June	Joseph and Emma's first child is born and dies Martin Harris loses 116 pages
	July	Joseph travels to Manchester, New York Interpreters and plates are taken away from Joseph
	Aug.	
	Sept.	Joseph reobtains interpreters and plates
	Oct.	
	Nov.	
	Dec.	David Whitmer makes business trip to Palmyra, where he meets Oliver Cowdery

Events Surrounding the Translation of the Book of Mormon, 1829–1830

Key Scripture Joseph Smith—History 1:66–67

Explanation This chart, highlighting some of the events of 1829 and 1830, illustrates the sacrifices of those who were instrumental in helping bring forth the Book of Mormon in a miraculously short period of time. Oliver Cowdery spent the two months of April and May, 1829, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, assisting the Prophet Joseph Smith as scribe for most of the Book of Mormon translation. Prejudice against the Prophet made it difficult for him to find a willing printer for the controversial “gold bible.” Fortunately, Martin Harris gave much support to this cause, mortgaging his farm to secure payment for the cost of printing five thousand copies of the first edition of the Book of Mormon. Despite such challenges, in March 1830 the ancient Nephite record was published, opening the way for the organization and growth of the restored Church of Jesus Christ.

Sources *History of the Church*, 1:28–33, 71–80. For additional sources and related discussion, see John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, “The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information” (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 16–32.

Events Surrounding the Translation of the Book of Mormon, 1829–1830

1829	Jan.	
	Feb.	Joseph receives D&C 4 in Harmony, Pennsylvania The Lord appears to Oliver Cowdery
	Mar.	Joseph translates a few pages of the Book of Mormon Martin Harris of Palmyra visits Joseph in Harmony
	Apr.	Oliver arrives in Harmony to meet Joseph
	May	April 7 Book of Mormon Translated
	June	End of June
	July	E. B. Grandin and T. Weed decline to print Book of Mormon
	Aug.	Grandin agrees to print; typesetting begins Martin Harris mortgages his farm
	Sept.	
	Oct.	
	Nov.	Printer's manuscript is prepared through Alma 36
	Dec.	
1830	Jan.	
	Feb.	
	Mar.	Printing is finished
	Apr.	Restored Church of Jesus Christ officially organized

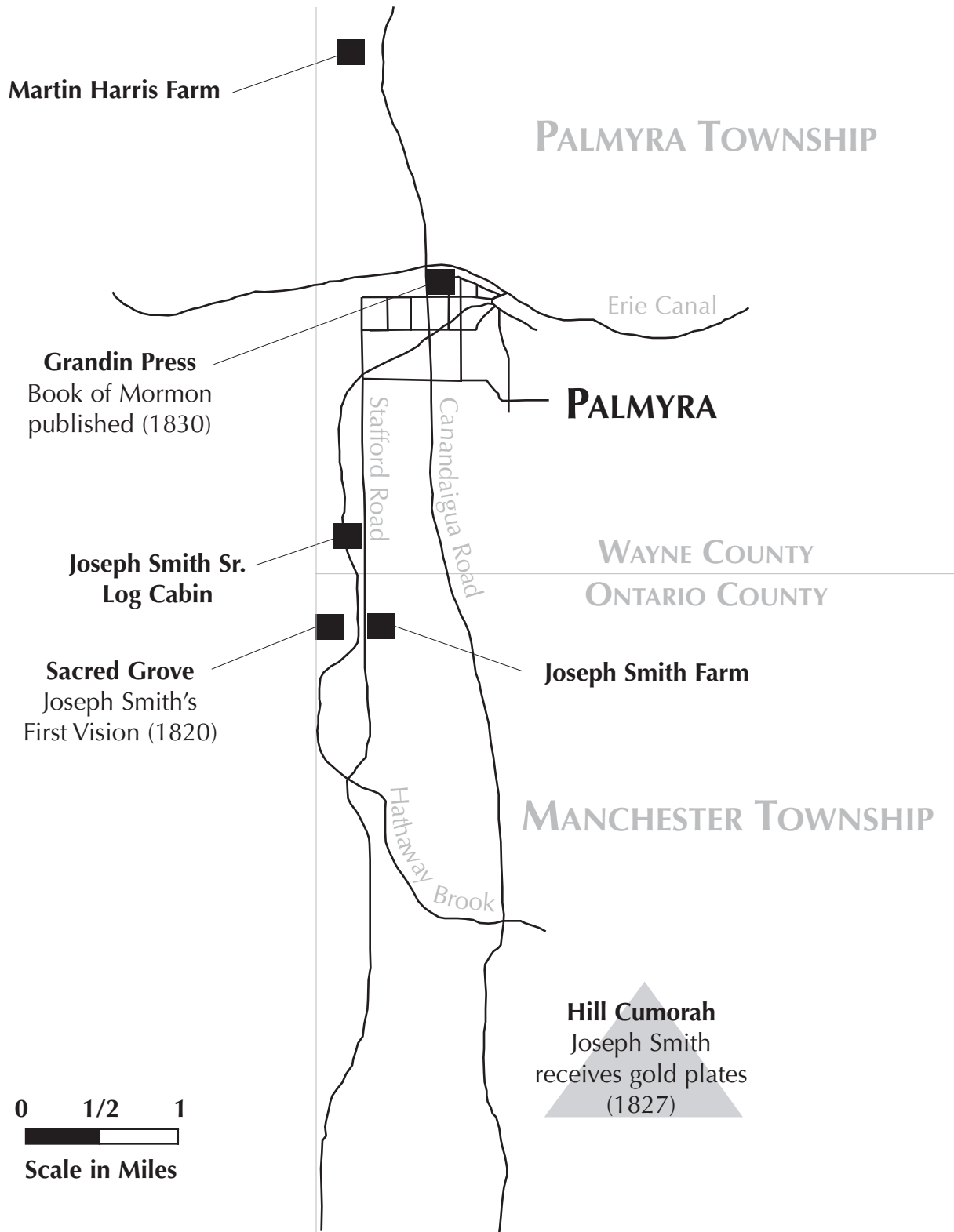
Church History Sites near Palmyra, New York, 1820–1831

Explanation This map shows historical sites connected with the Book of Mormon, such as the Hill Cumorah, where Joseph Smith received the gold plates from the angel Moroni; the Joseph Smith farm, where Joseph and Emma lived for nearly a year after their marriage in January 1827 and where the plates were concealed in various places to safeguard them from ransackers; the Martin Harris farm, which was mortgaged and later sold to cover the expense of printing the Book of Mormon; and the Grandin print shop, where the Book of Mormon was printed in 1830.

Source John W. Welch and Jeff Bird, “History of the Church,” in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 2:599.

Church History Sites

near Palmyra, New York, 1820–1831



Church History Sites in Western New York, 1820–1831

Explanation This area map of New York and Pennsylvania highlights locations linked to the Book of Mormon and the establishment of the restored church. Fleeing persecution in Manchester, New York, in December 1827, Joseph and Emma Hale Smith settled in Harmony, Pennsylvania, where Joseph would translate most of the plates. In June 1829 Joseph (and probably Emma) moved about one hundred miles to Fayette, New York, where that same month the Three Witnesses were shown the plates (a few days later the Eight Witnesses saw the plates in Manchester) and, in the Peter Whitmer home, the translation was completed. It was in the Whitmer home that the church was organized on 6 April 1830. Other church history sites in southern New York include South Bainbridge, where Joseph and Emma were married on 18 January 1827; Seneca Lake, where several people were baptized during the early years of the restoration; and Colesville, where the church's first branch was formed in October 1830.

Source John W. Welch and Jeff Bird, "History of the Church," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 2:599.

Church History Sites in Western New York, 1820–1831

