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## Rough Stone Rising: The Joseph Smith Papers Project

*Mark A. Mastromarino*

Review of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. Edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, Richard Lyman Bushman, and Matthew J. Grow. 9 vols. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008–.

*Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*. Edited by Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen. 2008. *Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*. Edited by Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson. 2011.

*Manuscript Revelation Books*. Facsimile edition. Edited by Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper. 2009. *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books*. Edited by Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper. 2011. *Volume 2: Published Revelations*. Edited by Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Riley M. Lorimer. 2011.

*Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844*. Edited by Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark Ashurst-McGee. 2012. *Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847*. Edited by Karen Lynn Davidson, Richard L. Jensen, and David J. Whittaker. 2012.

*Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*. Edited by Michael Hubbard MacKay, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, Grant Underwood, Robert J. Woodford, and William G. Hartley. 2013. *Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833*. Edited by Matthew C. Godfrey, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Grant Underwood, Robert J. Woodford, and William G. Hartley. 2013.

A JOB ANNOUNCEMENT FOR A DOCUMENTARY EDITOR appeared five years ago unlike any I had seen in thirty years. Posted by the Joseph Smith Papers Project (JSPP), it reflected in its desired qualifications the professionalism required of the candidate and the maturation of modern documentary editing as a scholarly specialization. Its two final requirements, however, seemed to oppose the very professionalism being sought: Candidates needed to be a “Member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” and “worthy to hold a temple recommend.”<sup>1</sup> The latter requirement in particular demands true commitment, as well as sincere belief in the church’s principles and faith in the church’s local and general leadership. Realizing that revelation persists as a major principle, energizing today’s church as it had earlier powered the controversial life of its founder, Joseph Smith, I decided that it does make sense to rely on the same spiritual tool to edit the records of a self-proclaimed prophet as was used in their creation. Divine inspiration, however, is not the sole inspiration of the church’s long-term and ongoing project dedicated to publishing all of Smith’s extant papers, a massive and messy corpus of documents. The firstfruits of JSPP—5,723 pages in the nine volumes listed above—demonstrate that piety and professionalism, faith and reason, need not be in conflict. The consistent quality and utility of these game-changing publications show that talented candidates with temple recommends have been hired, trained, and molded into a productive editorial team by capable scholars and managers. This documentary edition of the papers of the founding father of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has joined, if not displaced, leading-edge projects dedicated to more secular founders, demonstrating the power of private enterprise, at least.<sup>2</sup>

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1. “Joseph Smith Papers Project—Job Announcement,” 30 December 2009, on the *Religion in American History* blog, <http://usreligion.blogspot.com/2009/12/joseph-smith-papers-project-job.html> (accessed May 30, 2014).

2. I will use as examples of documentary editions the Founding Fathers projects—the papers of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Franklin, and Hamilton—because they were instrumental in laying the foundations of the modern documentary editing endeavor and have traditionally enjoyed greater resources than most projects, enabling them to have a larger role in defining the field’s best practices.

As an LDS Church–sponsored project, JSPP is able to draw on the intellectual, publishing, personnel, (and spiritual?) resources of the church, as well as its financial reserves and administrative infrastructure.<sup>3</sup> Church ownership of most of the documents and the active cooperation of the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which owns some of the important documents published by the project) have made it possible for the historical sources to be instantly accessible for study and editing. And there is a ready, if not captive, market for the sale of the resulting publications. However, since the project can actually be considered a continuation of the LDS Church’s own Histories series, serving to fulfill “Smith’s history-writing initiative that began in 1830” (*Journals*, 1:xi), this folding in on itself naturally gives pause. Understandably, skeptics will automatically discount the project’s validity simply out of distrust for or opposition to its sponsoring institution, but institutions can evolve. I believe, perhaps naively, that the apparent trends of the current hierarchy toward greater sophistication, openness, and liberality in its treatment of its own history seem sincere and sensible. Even if not directly related to the tragedy and controversy surrounding the Mark Hofmann affair of the 1980s, initiatives like JSPP make the study of early American Mormonism safer and more secure for all by developing a much broader base of expertise in manuscript identification and Mormon history. By giving experts the sources, resources, and apparent freedom to work, the LDS Church has contributed to an atmosphere of cooperation and trust among a true community of scholars, regardless of church membership.

Building on the work of a previous edition of Joseph Smith’s papers undertaken by Dean C. Jessee for the Church Historian’s Office and Brigham Young University’s Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History in the 1970s and 80s, the current JSPP began in

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3. I am unaware of any initiatives of other major American religions, such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church or Jehovah’s Witnesses, to publish the papers of their founders, except the online-only edition of *Selections from the Mary Baker Eddy Papers*, a project of the Mary Baker Eddy Library, which the Church of Christ, Scientist, opened in 2002; see <http://www.marybakereddylibrary.org/> (accessed June 4, 2014).

2001 as a collaboration between BYU and the Church Archives, with Jessee as general editor, Ronald K. Esplin (director of the Smith Institute) as executive editor, and Richard Lyman Bushman as chairman of the institute's executive committee. In 2005 the project was reorganized, and its operations were transferred to the Church History Library in Salt Lake City—the main repository of most of the original Joseph Smith documents. Project staff became employees of the Church History Department, and an enriched editorial procedure was adopted (*Journals*, 1:xxxix–xl).<sup>4</sup>

Even in this apparent era of good feelings, we should consider the relationship between the project and the church, particularly the extent of the former's independence of operations, editorial freedom, and financial dependency. The general editors direct about twenty professional editors and historians supported by a shifting staff of up to thirty others. At least one of the general editors sits on an internal church editorial board (which includes two members of the First Quorum of the Seventy, Steven E. Snow and Marcus B. Nash) that reviews each volume before publication. Volumes are also reviewed by a national advisory board of recognized historians, former project administrators, religious studies scholars, and a documentary editor, which in the past has been composed of Richard Lyman Bushman, Terryl L. Givens, Dean C. Jessee, Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Susan Holbrook Perdue, Stephen J. Stein, and Harry S. Stout.<sup>5</sup>

JSP volumes bear the imprint of the Church Historian's Press, created in 2008 to publish historical works that meet the highest standards of scholarship, and are distributed by Deseret Book, a wholly owned subsidiary of Deseret Management Corporation, the holding company for business firms owned by the LDS Church and a for-profit

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4. See also "When did work on the Joseph Smith Papers Project begin?" Frequently Asked Questions: General Questions about the Project, *The Joseph Smith Papers* website, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/faq/1> (accessed May 30, 2014; hereafter JSP FAQ).

5. See "Project Team," JSP website (accessed June 3, 2014); and Matthew C. Godfrey, "Serving Two Masters: The Joseph Smith Papers Documentary Editing Project and Questions of Audience," p. 2, paper presented at the joint Organization of American Historians/National Council on Public History conference, Milwaukee, April 19, 2012, <http://www.academia.edu/> (accessed June 3, 2014).

corporation. In addition to profits from the sale of the print volumes, the project has been funded by Larry H. and Gail Miller, by the Larry H. and Gail Miller Family Foundation since Larry Miller's death in 2009, and, of course, by the LDS Church, first through Brigham Young University and now through the Church History Department. The project apparently receives neither state nor federal funds.<sup>6</sup>

In 2012 the JSPP managing historian, Matthew C. Godfrey, openly discussed, from the perspective of a former public historian, issues related to multiple and contradictory audiences and concerns over credibility. His statements "Producing volumes that appeal to scholars who profess no belief in Smith as a prophet or mouthpiece for God, to historians who disregard Smith's claims as a prophet but who believe he was an integral part of American history, and to members who anchor their religious faith on Smith's prophetic claims is a challenge," especially when among the last-mentioned group are many who have difficulty "when confronted by history that differs from the faith-promoting stories they are told in church meetings and classes," are grand understatements! Godfrey meets the challenge by always striving to produce a fair and balanced edition relying on personal integrity and internalized American Historical Association and National Council on Public History standards of professional integrity. If he and other staff regularly worship in the Salt Lake Temple as permitted by their temple recommends, then I doubt not that they also start each workday with a personal prayer for divine guidance in helping to meet their daily editorial challenges.<sup>7</sup>

The project's public philosophy is Godfrey's strategy writ large. The JSPP website asked, "Can The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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6. "What is The Church Historian's Press?" and "Who is paying for the Joseph Smith Papers Project?," JSP FAQ; and <http://deseretbook.com/about/5110611> (both accessed May 30, 2014). A search of their websites reveals that neither the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)—the grant-making arm of the National Archives responsible for documentary editing and archives and manuscript collections—nor the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has made grants to JSPP. And general competitive grants of up to \$5,000 from the Utah Humanities Council cannot be used for multiyear projects.

7. Godfrey, "Serving Two Masters," 4, 2.

expect to maintain scholarly credibility while publishing its own works?” Neither acknowledging nor addressing a potential conflict between being “deeply committed to the faith Joseph Smith founded” and also committed “to presenting his documents in the best professional manner,” the response was affirmative and showed how the goal was to be accomplished: by “demonstrating high professional standards in gathering, transcribing, and annotating documents”; by relying on the editors’ expertise in historical methodology and scholarship and in documentary editing; and by consulting with outside experts as needed. This professionalism would establish credibility, and “over time the project’s scholarship will speak for itself.”<sup>8</sup>

And it has. As reported in the above-referenced FAQ, “reviews of the project’s volumes published to date suggest that the project is establishing a reputation for excellent scholarship.” This reviewer, too, is favorably impressed with the quality and quantity of the project’s output. The response of JSP’s major secondary audience, the general membership of the church, has been more mixed. Although the first published volume (*Journals, Volume 1*) immediately sold out the initial printing of 11,000 copies and has sold over 63,000 copies in succeeding printings (amazing figures; typical documentary editing print runs usually number about 1,000), not all purchasers were pleased. “Sandra,” in a review on Amazon.com, accused the volume of playing “right into the hands of the intellectuals who always look for the faults in religious men”; “members of the LDS church all realize that Joseph Smith was ‘human,’ but does that mean we have to read about each of his alleged faults?” She preferred the “Spirit” of B. H. Roberts’s *History of the Church*. Another Amazon reviewer, “D. Shurtleff,” accused JSP of selling out to academia “in order to gain acceptance of the world, [which] is not a worthwhile goal and does a disservice to this work.”<sup>9</sup>

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8. “Can The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints expect to maintain scholarly credibility while publishing its own works?” JSP FAQ.

9. Godfrey, “Serving Two Masters,” 3–4; “Sandra” at <http://www.amazon.com/The-Joseph-Smith-Papers-1832-1839/product-reviews/1570088497/>; “D. Shurtleff” at <http://www.amazon.com/gp/cdp/member-reviews/A6XYFP63ZMVL/> (all accessed June 3, 2014).

In May 2004 its high standards earned JSPP an NHPRC endorsement, the imprimatur of the federal entity dedicated to documentary editing (similar to the seal of approval for American writers' papers awarded by the Committee on Scholarly Editions [CSE]), which has appeared on the copyright page of every JSPP volume. JSPP's 166-page application was subjected to the same thorough, external peer and internal commission reviews that NHPRC grant applications go through, considering the historical significance of the documents to be edited, the coherence and effectiveness of the proposed work plan—including any plans for online publication—qualifications of the project staff and level of proposed cost-sharing contributions, and plans for disseminating project products, including evidence of how these projects will benefit scholars and the public. The project made the most of its endorsement, as an emblem of its scholarly professionalism and as an opportunity to educate the general public about documentary editing and historical scholarship. As the current associate web editor, Kay Darowski, explained to a reporter at the time, "Serious historians always have to go to primary sources, and this will make (research on Joseph Smith) accessible worldwide. . . . They won't have to go to a secondary source; they can go to the primary document to get their information. That's invaluable to have it more accessible and to not have to go to a repository."<sup>10</sup>

If most Americans cannot differentiate between primary and secondary sources of history, then they probably have never heard of

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10. According to the its report "Funded Publishing Historical Records Projects" (<http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/projects/publishing/alpha.html>; accessed June 5, 2014), the NHPRC has endorsed twenty-two such projects over fifty years, but the commission is revising that list to include another eleven projects that were omitted, including JSPP. NHPRC policy on project endorsement can be found in the grant opportunity announcement on its website, <http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/announcement/editions.html> (accessed June 6, 2014; my thanks to communications director Keith Donohue for pointing out this location to me). For CSE standards and endorsements, see Mary-Jo Kline and Susan Holbrook Perdue, *A Guide to Documentary Editing*, 3rd ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 8–10, 13, 17, 21, online at <http://gde.upress.virginia.edu/01A-gde.html> (accessed June 4, 2014). The quotation appears in Amy Choate, "Joseph Smith research gets top endorsement," *Deseret Morning News*, August 12, 2004, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/595083533/Joseph-Smith-research-gets-top-endorsement.html?> (accessed June 4, 2014).



documentary editing and do not realize that its “modern” methodology embraced by JSPP dates to the 1940s. During World War II, microfilm and photocopying advances enabled scholars to assemble bodies of photoreproduced documents. The first of the new editorial enterprises was established at Princeton University. By 1946 Julian P. Boyd and Lyman H. Butterfield had systematized their collection and cataloging of an archive of Thomas Jefferson’s scattered papers there, which enabled them to select the most authoritative version of a Jefferson document for print publication. They devised a system of typographical symbols based on those used by earlier textual scholars to reproduce in printed form such details of Jefferson’s handwriting as deletions and insertions. Footnotes described more complicated textual details, and additional footnotes and editorial annotations based on painstaking historical research provided readers with an understanding of each document within its historical context. The first volume of the Jefferson Papers, published in 1950, revitalized the NHPC (the *R* was added in 1975) and led to the creation of the Benjamin Franklin, Adams family, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison papers projects before the end of the decade. The NHPC could provide only guidance and research assistance until Congress authorized it in July 1964 to receive federal funding and appropriated \$350,000 for grants to documentary editing projects as well as permitted it to administer a Ford Foundation grant of \$2 million to ensure the continuation of the five “priority” projects. Early on, Founding Fathers projects also received large grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, New York Times, and Time-Life Corporation and have since received millions of dollars from the Packard Humanities Institute, the Founding Families Papers Inc., and numerous other foundations and individuals, in addition to the support of their host institutions.<sup>11</sup>

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11. See Kline and Perdue, *Guide to Documentary Editing*, 4–8. The George Washington Papers began as recently as 1968, as only his outgoing correspondence had been published by the 1930s. For the history of the NHPRC, see *ibid.*, 7, 15–16, 24–25; “Forty Years of Publishing,” *Annotation: NHPRC Newsletter* 32/3 (Fall 2004): 1, 4–6, <http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/annotation/2004/fall-04.pdf>; and Kathleen Williams, “The NHPRC: Extending the Archives’ Reach,” *Prologue* 41/2 (Summer 2009), <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2009/summer/nhprc.html> (both accessed June 5,

The JSPP has an even closer relationship with the other major pillar of documentary editing, the Association for Documentary Editing (ADE), founded in 1978 as a forum where literary and historical editors could exchange ideas and set “the highest professional standards of accuracy of transcription, editorial method, and conceptual indexing” for publishing edited texts. It has since grown to three hundred members and has assumed all the trappings of larger scholarly organizations, with annual awards, elected officers and appointed committees, advocacy efforts, publications—a newsletter, scholarly journal, website, and a free online open-access manual, now in its third edition—educational opportunities, annual meetings, and archives.<sup>12</sup> Susan Holbrook Perdue, past president of the ADE and coauthor of its *Guide*, serves on JSPP’s national advisory board. At least nine of JSPP’s editors and staff are members of the ADE, and several have served on committees, including the important nominations committee. At least six project personnel have learned the principles of scholarly editing under ADE mentors at Camp Edit.<sup>13</sup> JSPP editors have contributed pieces to ADE publications,

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2014). The NHPRC expanded its focus beyond elite white male political leaders in the 1970s and 1980s even as it drew less financial support from the federal government because of tightened budgets beginning in the 1980s. Its website claims that it has funded or endorsed 296 publications projects, 229 of which have been completed, bringing important primary source materials of American history to millions of scholars and laypeople around the world, and trickling down into important historical and biographical works and into television programs and movies and documentaries (<http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/projects/publishing/alpha.html>; accessed June 5, 2014). The Hamilton Papers is the only Founding Fathers project to have been completed so far, thanks in large part to Aaron Burr’s bullet shortening the life of one of the most prolific and ambitious of them, but the Franklin Papers and Washington Papers, at least, will be completing their final volumes early in the 2020s.

12. See Kline and Perdue, *Guide to Documentary Editing*, 20; and the ADE website at <http://www.documentaryediting.org/wordpress/> (accessed June 6, 2014). For the ADE archives, at Southern Illinois University’s Morris Library Special Collections, see Meadow Campbell’s finding aid, “Association for Documentary Editing Records, 1977–2004 | Manuscripts” at <http://archives.lib.siu.edu/?p=collections/findingaid&tid=496&q=&rootcontentid=9181#> (accessed June 6, 2014).

13. ADE members have served as the faculty of the NHPRC’s annual Institute for Editing Historical Documents, fondly known as “Camp Edit,” since the 1970s. In 2010

and ADE members have reviewed project volumes and undoubtedly served as confidential peer reviewers of JSPP's NHPRC endorsement application. This collegial relationship was cemented when JSPP and the Church History Library served as gracious hosts to the 127 members who attended the ADE's thirty-third annual meeting, which was held in Salt Lake City on October 20–22, 2011.<sup>14</sup>

The Salt Lake City meeting demonstrated that the JSPP “had arrived,” but its nine volumes published since 2008 are what has chiefly earned it the respect of the documentary editing community. They represent the first third of a projected two dozen or so volumes of a definitive and comprehensive scholarly edition of all known and accessible Joseph Smith documents, dating from 1828 to his murder in 1844. The editors have collected around 7,000 manuscripts, many of which are various versions of a basic set of about 2,500 documents (ranging from one page to hundreds of pages), and are transcribing, verifying, and researching and annotating them. The criteria for what is considered a Smith document are authorship and ownership. Authored documents include not only manuscripts in Smith's own hand but also those dictated by him or written by his scribes in his behalf, as well as records created under his direction or that reflect his personal instruction or involvement. Owned documents are those received by him and kept in his office, including incoming letters (*Documents*, 2:xxxiii).<sup>15</sup>

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the commission made its first three-year grant to the ADE to take over the administration of the institute and also to offer advanced seminars and workshops for midcareer editors. See “The Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents” on the NHPRC's website at <http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/partners/editing-institute.html>; and the fall 2011 issue of the ADE's e-newsletter at <http://www.documentaryediting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Fall2011.pdf> (both accessed June 6, 2014).

14. See, for example, Kenneth P. Minkema's review of *Journals, Volume 1* in *Documentary Editing* 31 (2010): 120–22, and *Histories, Volume 2* in *Journal of American History* 100 (September 2013): 508–9; and Hobson Woodward's review of *Journals, Volume 2* in *Mormon Historical Studies* 13/1–2 (Spring/Fall 2013): 239–41. For the Salt Lake City annual meeting, see ADE e-newsletter, Winter/Spring 2012, at <http://www.documentaryediting.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Spring2012.pdf> (accessed June 6, 2014). JSPP's Joseph and Kay Darowski deserve recognition as the primary movers and heavy lifters on the local arrangements committee.

15. “How many Joseph Smith documents still exist?,” JSP FAQ; and “Documents in Joseph Smith's Handwriting,” <http://josephsmithpapers.org/site/documents>

Of the six separate but interlocking series into which the project was organized in 2005, only four have published volumes so far, and only one series has been completed (Histories).<sup>16</sup> The JSPJ Journals series consists of journals kept by Smith and various scribes and clerks from 1832 to 1844 that were intended as primary sources for the documents in the Histories series, which consists of the entire manuscript history that Smith began composing in 1838 and that was continued by clerks after his death. The Documents series will account for half of the total number of volumes. It publishes early versions of revelations, incoming and outgoing correspondence, sermons and other addresses, selected minutes and proceedings, editorials and articles in periodicals, and official declarations and pronouncements. (This series is most similar to the majority of historical documentary editions, which focus on a subject's incoming and outgoing correspondence.) Of most potential significance to faithful church members, the Revelations and Translations series will present the earliest manuscript texts of the Joseph Smith revelations and those published during his lifetime. These include the Book of Mormon and the printer's manuscript from which it was produced. In contrast to the Documents series, this series will present the texts of the revelations as units—without other Smith documents interspersed—and will focus mainly on textual, not contextual, annotation. The Legal and Business

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-in-joseph-smiths-handwriting (both accessed May 30, 2014). In comparison, the editors of *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (who lived to be forty-seven before he, too, was shot to death) published 12,500 documents in twenty-seven volumes from 1961 to 1987. See <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/ARHN.html> (accessed May 30, 2014).

16. Concurrent series is a common strategy of the Founding Fathers projects with their massive documents bases and impatient funders, for it brings documents from the endpoint of a subject's life into print much earlier and enables projects to use personnel and areas of particular expertise to best advantage. Autobiographical material is usually published first, as it provides an overview of the subject's life and familiarizes editors with sources and potential issues. Legal materials and business records often form a series in many projects because of their specialized nature. The Papers of George Washington just initiated an online edition of his business records. Sometimes series change in the middle of a project's lifespan, as with the Papers of Thomas Jefferson, when the Retirement Series was broken off of the ongoing Princeton project and located at Monticello in 1999 to help speed along production. See <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/editions/financial-papers-project/>; and <http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/series-introduction> (both accessed June 16, 2014).

Records series will reproduce legal papers from the judicial proceedings in which Smith was involved and business records of Smith's personal or family finances and those relating to his enterprises in behalf of the church, including notes and other loan documents, land records, and mercantile accounts. The Administrative Records series will publish minutes and other records pertaining to institutions that were established under Smith's direction and that contain his personal instruction and involvement (*Journals*, 1:xl–xli).

The project's first volume, published in 2008, was *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, covering the Missouri, Ohio, and early Nauvoo periods. *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*, published in 2011 after the appearance of intervening volumes in the Revelations and Translations series, continues in Nauvoo, with entries from “The Book of the Law of the Lord” and the first two of four memorandum books in Willard Richards's handwriting. Of the series' projected 1,500-plus manuscript pages, only 35 or so are in Smith's hand (conveniently bold-faced in the transcripts); another 250 pages were dictated by him. The remainder—over 80 percent—was primarily in the hands of Warren Parrish, George W. Robinson, James Mulholland, Willard Richards, and William Clayton. The value of the series lies in its reference material and its documents' clarification of misconceptions stemming from B. H. Roberts's six-volume *History of the Church*, first published in 1902, by differentiating between first-person material referring to Smith and that referring to his scribes, who often wrote with Smith as an implied first person. While the journals were used as the foundation for much of the text of the manuscript history that was published beginning in 1902, its early compilers inserted materials into the narrative and presented the entire work as a seamless first-person account by Smith. The JSPP Journals series presents the complete text of the original manuscripts without any of the other editorial insertions.

Volume 1 of the Journals series includes a preface by the general editors and essays introducing the project and the series. In addition, the front matter for volumes 1 and 2 comprises introductions to the journals that appear in each volume, a clear statement of editorial method, a timeline of

Joseph Smith's life, and a map of his residences. Other reference material includes a chronology for the years covered by each volume; geographical and biographical directories; maps; pedigree charts; ecclesiastical, militia, and municipal organizational charts; glossaries; correlations of section numbers in editions of the Doctrine and Covenants; and chronological presentation of revelations canonized as scripture. This material is supplemented throughout by annotations in the form of source notes describing each document, its construction, and provenance; footnotes providing identifications of people, places, events, and scriptural allusions mentioned in the journals; and descriptions of textual features. Helpful editorial notes for the sake of narrative continuity explain gaps in the journals.<sup>17</sup> All of this is based on thorough research in the secondary literature as well as in primary sources, as demonstrated by the essays on sources and by the lists of works cited. Both volumes are also heavily illustrated with a total of ninety-eight contextual and textual images. All of this supplementary material makes these volumes *the* starting point for anyone, scholar or layperson, in or out of the LDS Church, seeking a convenient entrée into Joseph Smith's world and worldview.<sup>18</sup>

My favorite volume of those under review is the second volume published by JSPP: the facsimile edition (2009) of the *Manuscript Revelation Books*, which is the first volume of the Revelations and Translations series. According to the statement of the general editors in its preface: "Of the thousands of items in the Joseph Smith papers, his revelations are among the most significant and contested. . . . Although the revelations have religious meaning to us as Latter-day Saints, we present

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17. Volume 2 also has two appendixes with selected documents and commentary on the Missouri extradition attempt, 1842–43, and a three-page excerpt from William Clayton's personal journal, April 1–4, 1843, which served as a source for Smith's journal entries for those dates (*Journals*, 2:377–402, 403–6).

18. My only complaint about the two Journals volumes is their lack of back-of-book indexes, which limits their utility as self-contained research tools. The intention was to publish a cumulative index in the final volume of the series, with downloadable PDFs of the indexes available on the project's website in the interim. Fortunately, however, JSPP has offered to provide free to anyone requesting them a printed and bound index to each volume.

them in these volumes without comment on their ultimate source. In the tradition of documentary editing, our aim is simply to reproduce the documents and their historical setting so far as we can reconstruct it” (p. v). This volume essentially duplicates all the material presented in volume 1 of the series, both documents and editorial apparatus. But this oversize volume includes a full-color, almost full-size, high-quality photographic facsimile of each page of the two Manuscript Revelation Books, among the most important historical documents owned by the church, with each facsimile page facing its correlated page of transcription. The layout and the photographs bring so much more to the table, and the table consequently groans under the weight of the volume’s eight pounds. The full-color printing enables the editors to peel back the layers of revision and trace the complicated textual history of the writing. They accomplish this by printing each revision in a different color ink, according to who made it, and having a marginal code box on each page reminding readers which color represents which writer (with Smith’s handwriting always in boldface black, and unidentified handwriting in red). I found very informative and interesting the accompanying seven-page “Note on Photographic Facsimiles” (xxxviii–xliii). This is an effective system but must be very expensive to produce.

The project’s transcription rules, carefully spelled out in the statement of editorial method presented in the front matter of each volume, show their value especially in the Journals, Revelations and Translations, and Histories series. The project’s approach to transcription is a generally conservative diplomatic text. It preserves substantive revisions made by journal keepers by using strikethrough for cancellations and angle brackets for insertions, employs other symbols and font treatments for illegible writing and editorial insertions, and retains original punctuation and paragraphing, with exceptions noted in the editorial method (*Journals*, 1:lxix). It is flexible enough to be used in the multicolor system described above. It is impossible to tell if end-of-line hyphens appear in the original document or were inserted by the modern typesetter, but concerned readers can easily check suspect hyphenation to images of the documents either in the facsimile edition or on the project’s website. To



ensure accuracy of the texts, the *raison d'être* of any documentary edition, project editors undertake three independent levels of text verification for each manuscript, including a final verification against the original. A different staff member uses a different method for each verification stage. The first two verifications rely on high-resolution scanned images: the first is a visual collation of the document images with the transcripts, while the second is an independent and double-blind image-to-transcript tandem proofreading. The third and final verification of the transcripts is a visual collation with the original document, with the verifier employing magnification and ultraviolet light as needed with problematic originals. Examples are given of when multispectral imaging provided a better view of obliterated text (Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition, xliii). Transcripts that have been through all three stages of verification meet or exceed NHPRC transcription and verification requirements (*Journals*, 1:lix–lx).

The next JSPP volumes to appear, in 2012 in the two-volume Histories series, also didn't publish any newly discovered material, but provided further background documents to B. H. Roberts's *History of the Church* and are valuable for tracing the history of the writing of that history. *Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844* comprises eight historical pieces written, dictated, or signed by Smith or created under his direct supervision. The four documents in *Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847* were begun under his official direction but did not receive his sustained supervision. The balance of the series is being published electronically on the project website, the 2,332-page manuscript in six volumes that Smith initiated in Missouri in 1838 and that church historians concluded in Salt Lake City in 1856, which was the basis of Roberts's publication. Three of the documents in volume 1, "History Drafts, 1838–circa 1841," are presented in parallel columns, with a fourth column reserved for annotation, which conveniently shows similarities and differences between the drafts. Of particular helpfulness in volume 1's reference materials are charts labeled "History Creation Dates, Narrative Spans, Scribes, and Precursor Documents" and "Relationships among Histories and Precursors" (pp. xxxiii, xxxiv). As in other series' volumes, reference



materials also include chronologies, maps (and an index to the maps), a Smith pedigree chart, biographical directories, glossaries, essays on sources, lists of works cited, and a list of corresponding section numbers in editions of the Doctrine and Covenants. I am glad to see a cumulative index in the back of volume 2.

The first two volumes of the Documents series, covering July 1828 through January 1833, were published in 2013. Their 177 total documents consist mostly of revelations (about 70 percent of the total), but also letters, agreements, notes, minutes of meetings, deeds, licenses, and the copyright for and title page of the first printing of the Book of Mormon (*Documents*, 1:63–65, 76–81). Only a few documents are in Smith's hand, including letters to his wife (with images of the complete documents as well as transcripts; 2:246–57, 304–14). The documents in the series are presented in chronological order and handled individually, with some items appearing in volume 1's appendixes.<sup>19</sup>

Each transcript is accompanied by a source note and a historical introduction, as well as annotation, as necessary. In addition, editorial apparatus includes source notes and detailed descriptions and provenances of multiple-entry documents, such as Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, 1832–1835, in the Church History Library (1:431–34). The volumes

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19. One appendix consists of the 1 November 1825 agreement between Josiah Stowell and Joseph Smith and others. It does not appear in chronological order because project editors have been unable to authenticate it (the original manuscript has never been found and is known only through the text's reprinting from a Pennsylvania paper by an anti-Mormon newspaper in the 1880s). This would have been a perfect candidate for sweeping under the rug, if the church or the project were so inclined, not only because of its dubiousness but also because it was a contract for the Smiths' treasure-seeking and money-digging services, a sensitive topic. The editors instead present a facsimile and transcript of the newspaper article and a balanced essay on the reasons for and against its authenticity (*Documents*, 1:345–52). Neither the source note and annotation nor the calendar records a particularly nefarious version of the document—a transcript of the manuscript agreement produced by Mark Hofmann in 1983 to bolster the sale of a June 18, 1825, letter from Smith to Stowell, which would have been the earliest Smith holograph if it hadn't been a forgery (Hofmann later admitted it was). The typescript of the agreement did not appear in the calendar because it did not meet the project's criteria, but the letter, acquired by the church, is the calendar's first entry: “[Created] Ca. 1983; Historical Department, Materials Received from Mark W. Hofmann, CHL [Church History Library]; handwriting of Mark Hofmann forging handwriting of JS. FORGERY” (1:392).

are divided into chronological parts, each of which has an introduction that sets the stage for the period. An image of each document appears on the project website, which also has images and interim transcripts of the 613 documents to date.<sup>20</sup> Some may object to so much commentary. With a series introduction in volume 1, along with a volume introduction, part introductions, and a historical introduction for each document, the ratio of essay to document pages is about one to one. If footnotes, source notes, and 353 pages of reference materials in volume 1 (illustrations, appendixes, calendar, source notes for multiple-entry documents, geographical and biographical directories, maps and charts, glossary, essay on sources and list of works cited, and volume index) are added, the ratio of editorial apparatus to documents is closer to three to one. But since this is the first volume of the series, there is more groundwork needing to be laid. And the scholarly contributions are always purposeful and neither pedantic nor obtrusive.

The most useful reference feature is the calendar of documents, also placed online.<sup>21</sup> It lists in chronological order all known Joseph Smith documents of the period covered by the volume. Each entry provides the creation date and a brief description of the extant, nonextant, or partially extant original document, including identification of its author, genre, and place of creation and a list of later versions of the document that contribute to the understanding of an original nonextant text or a later version that was authorized by Smith.

One cannot conclude a review of JSPP volumes without at least mentioning the project's website ([josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)), which has grown in size, functions, and usefulness over the course of the project's history. It is likely to have a much wider and longer-term impact than the print edition. The church has always been an early adapter of new technology, and the website has grown from a PR platform to a supplement to the print publications and a successful online edition in its own right, following a trend of the Founding Fathers projects,

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20. See <http://josephsmithpapers.org/the-papers#/D2L> (accessed June 14, 2014).

21. See <http://josephsmithpapers.org/back/calendar-of-documents> (accessed June 14, 2014).

individually and collectively.<sup>22</sup> Reference materials reprinted from the volumes, indexes for indexless volumes, and errata lists were early useful features.<sup>23</sup> Soon the addition of document images with accompanying transcripts further enhanced the website, which now offered a more portable electronic facsimile edition of the Joseph Smith Papers. The intention is to upload all of the papers included in the printed volumes (as interim transcripts until they receive their third level of verification when the printed volumes are published) as well as accompanying reference materials. The website will also include material not available in the print edition, including, as part of the Histories series, the entire multivolume manuscript history of Joseph Smith; as part of the Documents series, a number of certificates and other routine documents; as part of the Legal and Business Records series, about two additional volumes' worth of material not included in print; as part of the Revelations and Translations series, Smith's Bible revision manuscripts; as part of the Administrative Records series, transcripts of minute books, letterbooks, and other institutional records (already uploaded are images and interim transcripts of Letterbooks 1 and 2; Minute Books 1 and

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22. See, for instance, Rotunda's scholarly digital edition of the Papers of George Washington (paid subscription at <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN.html>) and the Mount Vernon guest version (<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN.xqy>); Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive (<http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/>); Adams Papers Digital Editions (<http://www.masshist.org/publications/apde/index.php>); Rotunda's Adams Papers Digital Edition (paid subscription at <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/ADMS.html>); Papers of Benjamin Franklin Digital Edition (<http://franklinpapers.org/franklin/>); Rotunda's Papers of James Madison Digital Edition (paid subscription at <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/JSMN.html>); Papers of Alexander Hamilton Digital Edition (paid subscription at <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/ARHN.html>); Rotunda's Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition (paid subscription at <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN.html>); Thomas Jefferson Retirement Series Digital Archive (<http://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/about-retirement-series-digital-archive>); Thomas Jefferson Papers: An Electronic Archive (<http://www.masshist.org/thomasjeffersonpapers/>); and Founders Online (<http://founders.archives.gov/>).

23. For indexes, see <http://josephsmithpapers.org/bc-jsp/content/jsp/pdf/index-for-journals-vol-1.pdf>; and <http://josephsmithpapers.org/bc-jsp/content/jsp/pdf/index-for-journals-vol-2.pdf>. For errata, see "Additional Materials" at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/publishedVolumes> (all accessed June 16, 2014).

2; Record of the Twelve, February 14–August 28, 1835; Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book; and the first published hymnal [1835]). Users can sign up for e-mail announcements about the availability of new material, which is also listed on the website's home page.

Simply stated, The Joseph Smith Papers Project is indeed a marvelous work and a wonder. Its editors are committed people of faith who are also rigorous scholars of early Mormon history and professionals trained in the best practices of the modern documentary editing tradition and who rely on the latest in modern technology and are supported and sustained by a resourceful and history-minded church. They are making widely available, electronically and in printed volumes, accurate transcripts of and research-quality images of documents created by the founding father of their church. Joseph Smith was a translator, revelator, church president, city builder, mayor, city council member, judge, militia leader, and presidential candidate, and his surviving papers reflect all those roles, though they unfortunately afford relatively rare glimpses of the husband, father, son, brother, and friend. The project also shares with scholars, the general public, and the world the results of its editors' exhaustive and balanced research, not only providing a knowledge base that historians of the early American Republic can draw on to transform and intensify their study of the era, but also restoring confidence to practitioners in the field by serving as a clearinghouse for information on forgeries and the like. JSPP's essential resources for the study of Joseph Smith's life and times provide for laypeople the context, complexity, nuance, and layers that scholars have been providing each other for years.

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