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“Every Book … Has Been Read Through” The *Brooklyn* Saints and Harper's Family Library

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On February 4, 1846, two groups of Latter-day Saints in the United States began their emigration out of the United States. The main body of the Church was leaving from Nauvoo, Illinois, under the leadership of Brigham Young, going overland to the West. The same day, also under instructions from Brigham Young, Samuel Brannan led a group from New York aboard the ship Brooklyn, going by sea around Cape Horn to San Francisco Bay.¹

At a social the night before the Brooklyn Saints left, Joshua M. Van Cott, a Brooklyn attorney and president of the local Hamilton Literary Society, presented the voyagers with 179 volumes of the Harper’s Family Library (HFL).² When the Brooklyn pioneers reached the Juan Fernandez Islands off the coast of Chile, three months into a six-month voyage, one of them sent a letter back to New York on another ship indicating that “every book in the little library has been read through”³ (see sidebar). The gift of the HFL is a testament to the generosity of Van Cott, but that at least one person had read each of the books during the voyage is an indication of the literacy level and the interests of the passengers.

Independent of the Brooklyn connection, the HFL is a marvelous window into American culture at the time of the Restoration, since it was first introduced in 1830, the year of the Church’s founding. The collection covered a broad literary spectrum and was targeted to meet the interests of the general public. The present article first describes and introduces the HFL and then presents an annotated, categorized listing of all the books in this significant mid-nineteenth-century library.
[Probably Duncan McFarlane,] *Brooklyn*, ca. 1840. On display at the Custom House Maritime Museum, Newburyport, Mass., this painting is the only known image of the *Brooklyn* painted contemporaneously. The *Brooklyn* was a fully rigged ship, built as a maximum cargo trader by the firm of J. & M. Madigan of Newcastle, Maine, in 1834. In the background are Holyhead Mountain on the right and the lighthouse on Skerries Reef on the left, both features of Anglesey Island on the west coast of Wales. The painting hung for many years in the de Young Museum in San Francisco, was lost to the general public for many years, and was recently located by Lorin K. Hansen. It was this painting (then hanging in the de Young Museum) that Arnold Friberg used as a model for his own rendition of the *Brooklyn*, presently in the collection of the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City.
The Scope of Harper’s Family Library

The HFL series was a rich trove of interesting reading, introduced by the New York publisher Harper & Brothers. The series included inspiring stories of explorers, adventurers, and political and military leaders. There were intellectually challenging volumes written by or about scientists, physicians, philosophers, creative artists, and political and social thinkers. Some volumes of the HFL were by American authors. For example, Two Years before the Mast, by Richard H. Dana, was first introduced in this series and quickly became an American classic. To broaden the coverage of topics, Harper’s included many works already published in England—encompassing, in fact, 80 percent of the HFL titles.

The Harper brothers—James, John, Joseph Wesley, and Fletcher—were devout Methodists. They designed the series to be morally uplifting and to inspire faith in God. James Harper was the president of an abstinence society, and so perhaps it is understandable that the poetry collections were especially selected to avoid the topics of “love and drinking.” The series promoted religion, and in fact many of the authors chosen for inclusion in the series were ministers. But the series was not denominationally specific. In the words of the publisher, care was taken to “exclude everything that could in the slightest degree have a prejudicial influence in a moral or religious point of view.” Being intellectually and morally uplifting and transcending denominational differences, the HFL contained material that would have appealed to Mormon readers.

The HFL series was introduced by Harper in 1830, and it reached a maximum at 187 volumes in 1845, shortly before the Mormon exodus. Having received 179 volumes, the Brooklyn passengers had an almost complete set. We have no information about which eight volumes were missing in the gift or why they were missing. The Harper books were compact (about 6¼ in. by 4 in.) and inexpensive (about 45 cents per volume, half a day’s pay for manual labor). The market was receptive: there was a limited supply of inexpensive books in the new nation, and yet there was a high level of adult literacy (by 1830, about 80–90 percent). When John Quincy Adams was asked for an appropriate list of books for a library, the HFL was second on his list, following the Holy Bible. The books, which were sold widely to individuals, schools, and libraries, helped make Harper’s a major American publisher.

Harper’s Family Library and Education in Early America

Education and schooling were important in the early colonies, since colonists wanted their children to be able to read the Bible and live moral lives. Secondary and advanced schools were established to develop spiritual
A Newspaper Report of a Letter from a *Brooklyn* Passenger

**Progress of the Mormon Emigrants from this City.**

Last Winter a company of Mormon families left this city in the ship *Brooklyn*, Capt. Richardson, for California. So far as morality, enterprise, intelligence and habits of industry are concerned, they presented fair specimens of the universal Yankees, and seemed well fitted to lay the foundations of a great nation. The following extracts from a letter by one of their number give a favorable account of their progress:

**Island of Juan Fernandez, May 8, 1846.**

The second day out we experienced a heavy sea, and on the following Tuesday lay-to all day, in a heavy gale of wind, which occasioned a great deal of suffering among the passengers, from sea-sickness, and being rolled from one side of the ship to the other, owing to their weakness; but they bore it without a murmur, or being in any way terrified at the danger, which was not a little.

Capt. Richardson (God bless the man!) and myself stood watching those noble “sticks” that have since done us such good service, with our hearts lifted up to the God of nations to spare them in his mercy. He did so, and the next day the ship flew before a fair wind like a thing of magic. We had a quick passage to Cape Horn, and found that the terrors of the passage round it, which had been depicted previous to our sailing, were all imaginary. Our little children were every day on deck, attending their school, jumping rope, and engaged in all the other amusements resorted to to pass off the time. We had no freezing weather, and at no time was the thermometer in our cabin below 50°. On the deck, at one time, it fell for about three hours as low as 36°, which was accounted for by Capt. R. by our passing near an iceberg. We ran up to the Cape with a fair wind, then took a West wind and ran up to 60° South latitude in four days, then took a South wind till we had made our longitude West of the Cape, and then took a fair wind down the Pacific, which lasted till a few days ago. All was then life, joy and gladness, in the expectation of soon going ashore at Valparaiso. We dealt out fresh water for all to wash themselves and their clothes in. Capt. R. also scoured up the ship.
and anticipated the astonishment of the natives at such a likely load of Yankees; for they certainly look one hundred per cent. better than when they left New-York, and since we started every thing has gone on with harmony and peace. We experienced, however, a heavy gale from the South, and were unable to continue our course with safety; so we scud before the wind, until it hauled to the East, and we thought it best to land at this Island.

There are but two families living on the Island, and they are distant only 20 days’ sail from Fuckywana on the coast above Valparaiso. We found excellent water, and very easy to be obtained, about two rods from the beach; and plenty of fire-wood on the east side of the left hand mountain as you enter the harbor. Goats, hares and pigs abound here. The first settlement on this Island was burnt by the Peruvians six years ago; the fort destroyed, the canoes sunk in the harbor, and the convicts carried away. The last settlement was abandoned four years ago, at the time of the earthquake at Valparaiso, when the Island sunk and rose about fifty feet. I have been informed that ships watering at Valparaiso have to pay one dollar for every thirty gallons from the water-boats. If that be the case, our ships had better water at this Island.

The harbor here is said to be much the safest in a gale from the North—it lying on the North-east side of the Island, which makes it easy for ships to put to sea, if they do not lie too near the shore. We took on board 18,000 gallons of water yesterday, and to-day we are getting our wood on board, and we expect to sail to-morrow. We came to anchor in the harbor on the 4th day of May, 1 o’clock, P.M. The ship has proved herself to be better than she was represented, and our Captain and first mate have been good and kind to our company. I believe every book in the little library has been read through.

and political leaders for the colonies. However, many years passed before schools were made available to all potential students and the curricula expanded beyond religion and civics. Schools were a local issue and took a variety of forms, depending on the nature of the particular colony. While schools in coastal colonies were developing, the population was moving westward faster than schools inland could be established. Schools were often disrupted during the Revolutionary War. After the war, curricula began to emphasize the development of loyal citizens for a unified nation and the teaching of practical skills. Only by the 1830s and 1840s, however, did education begin to take the form of a general public education with the development of the national Common School system. Thus, in 1846, when the Brooklyn sailed, an adequate, general public school system was long in development but was still in the process of being formed. Adults of that generation of Americans, Brooklyn passengers included, often had missed opportunities for a basic education and thought of education as something they would have to achieve or complete on their own. Harper’s Family Library was designed to help fill that need.

As the school systems improved, so did literacy levels. Even as early as 1791 a London bookseller was surprised to find that in America, “all ranks and degrees now read.” Along with the increased ability to read came an increased affordability of reading matter. Steam-driven printing presses were introduced in 1830, and book prices dropped dramatically. Books were coming into the reach of almost everyone. As a result, beyond the formal school system, whether for self education, entertainment, or just making good use of long winter evenings, the United States was becoming a nation of readers.

Across the Atlantic, England in the late eighteenth century saw a decrease in access to education because of the industrial revolution and other factors, and an increase in great social unrest and potential political revolution. Because of this situation, Thomas Dick and others in England established the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, which offered a program to overcome social problems through education of the masses. As part of his activity in the society, Dick composed the book On the Improvement of Society by the Diffusion of Knowledge, or an Illustration of the Advantage Which Would Result from a More General Dissemination of Rational and Scientific Information among All Ranks. In the book he claimed that “the diffusion of knowledge among the general mass of society would eradicate those false and superstitious opinions which have so long degraded the human intellect; would introduce just conceptions of the attributes of the Deity, and of his operations in the system of nature; and would avert, or, at least, greatly mitigate, many of those physical evils to which the human race has been subjected.” Part of that diffusion of
knowledge was to be achieved by self education. America had not yet experienced social unrest from an industrial revolution, but the advantages of education were thought to be just as real for America. This was the purpose of the HFL, and so Harper’s included Dick’s book in the series.

Perhaps the greatest example of self education in early America was Benjamin Franklin, who—with a year of grammar school, a year of private tutoring, and a fondness for reading—progressed to become a master printer, an internationally recognized scientist, a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, and the primary ambassador of a new nation. The HFL included two of his works, Autobiography and Memoirs. The Autobiography told of his thirst for reading, of the Junto he and his friends created for social improvement and shared learning, and his program for achieving moral perfection and skills of tact. For other examples of self education, the HFL provided readers with George Craik’s The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties: Its Pleasures and Rewards. Craik’s volumes showed, “by adducing numerous and striking examples of individuals distinguished by great intellectual attainments under circumstances the least favourable, that knowledge is not necessarily confined to any class or condition of men; but that it is open to and within the reach of all; so that whoever will, even under difficulties the most discouraging, may, by the help of courage and perseverance, apply himself successfully to its pursuit.”

The message of Craik’s books was, “If these people can succeed, so can you.” Craik’s volumes, first published in England, were once called the “favorite food of a generation of young Americans.”

Other volumes of the HFL addressed the topic of education. For example, Henry Immanuel Smith’s Education gave the history of education from ancient to “modern” times and discussed the purposes of education: vocational preparation, patriotism, and moral refinement. Alonzo Potter’s Handbook for Readers and Students to Assist Private Individuals, Associations, School Districts etc. in the Selection of Useful and Interesting Works for Reading and Investigation provided for the self taught a list of recommended reading for a full spectrum of intellectual fields of enquiry. And Harper’s included John Locke’s essay Of Conduct of the Understanding, which was essentially a manual for clear thinking and a discussion of the necessary habits involved in true education.

Education and Literacy among the Brooklyn Saints

Mormons as a people have always emphasized education. They, of course, acquired that emphasis from early American culture. But the interest was reinforced when they received commandments to select and write books for the schools of the Church (D&C 55:4) and to “teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of
wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). They were told that “the glory of God is intelligence” (D&C 93:36) and to “study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people” (D&C 90:15). The Church began an education program for priesthood leaders in 1833 called the School of the Prophets (a biblical title that had already been used by the Harvard and Yale divinity schools). The school was given the broad charter to study “things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and... of countries and of kingdoms” (D&C 88:79). Mormons came from a culture that emphasized education, shared that view, and received additional motivation through what they accepted as divine directives.

Generally speaking, the passengers on the ship Brooklyn were literate and displayed a commitment to education, as shown by their letters and by their subsequent history: Caroline Joyce kept a diary. At least two of the passengers, Hannah Buckland and Mary Poole, were fond of writing poetry. Sam Brannan and his assistant, Edward Kemble (a non-Mormon), had published a newspaper in New York, and Brannan and Kemble continued that effort in San Francisco. Angeline Lovett became the first teacher in an English-speaking school in San Francisco. Olive Coombs emigrated to Utah soon after landing in California and became a schoolteacher in southern Utah. She was well educated and knew some foreign languages. Susan Savage also became a schoolteacher after emigrating to the Salt Lake Valley. Clarissa Moses aspired to be a teacher but became a dressmaker instead when she learned that women teachers were paid only half what the men earned. She was an avid reader, however, and developed a fondness for reading college textbooks. Daniel Stark bought surveying instruments and manuals in New York, taught himself surveying while on the voyage, and subsequently became a surveyor in southern Utah. Quartus Sparks had been a teacher on Long Island and became a teacher and principal in San Bernardino. John Horner had been a schoolteacher in New Jersey and, upon reaching California, built the first English-speaking school in Alameda County. He subsequently moved to Hawaii, became a prolific correspondent in the Hawaiian newspapers, was elected to the Queen's House of Nobles, and authored a book proposing a system of national finance for Hawaii.

The passengers' interest in education was evident also from the abundance of books other than the HFL in the hold of the Brooklyn. These were mostly school books for the children: “spelling books, sequels [for
example, McGuffey Readers], history, arithmetic, astronomy, grammar, Morse’s Atlas and Geography, and a Hebrew Grammar and Lexicon,” as well as music books and dictionaries. All of these were purchased by Sam Brannan and were the property of Sam Brannan & Co.

Thus the books of the HFL, those explicitly on education as well as the whole library with its breadth as a general education, were of great interest to the Brooklyn passengers. And the interesting content of the HFL surely helps explain the glowing report from Juan Fernandez Island.

For ourselves, the list of books expands our window into the cultural environment of the Restoration and gives us insight into the experiences of that significant voyage, that historic segment of the exodus west.

Harper’s Family Library
(Arranged by general topic and then by volume number. Volume number appears in brackets.)

World History

Nineteenth-century Americans had a special interest in their own culture and history. However, they never lost their interest in their total western heritage nor their fascination with faraway, exotic cultures. Concerning the sweeping grandeur of events, the wise lessons of history, and the enlightenment of special interpretations, the HFL included many substantial volumes.

[23] View of Ancient and Modern Egypt with an Outline of its Natural History by Michael Russell
[24] The History of Poland from the Earliest Period to the Present Time with a Narrative of the Recent Events Obtained from a Polish Patriot Nobleman by James Fletcher
[25] Festivals, Games, and Amusements, Ancient and Modern by Horatio Smith
[31] A Description of Pitcairn’s Island and Its Inhabitants, with an Authentic Account of the Mutiny of the Ship Bounty and the Subsequent Fortunes of the Mutineers by John Barrow
[32, 72, 84] The Sacred History of the World Attempted to Be Philosophically Considered in a Series of Letters to a Son (3 vols.) by Sharon Turner [Rational exposition of history from the Creation to the Deluge, written as the divine unfolding of events]
[47–49] Historical and Descriptive Account of British India, from the Most Remote Period to the Present Time (3 vols.) by Hugh Murray and others
[43–44] Sketches from Venetian History (2 vols.) by Edward Smedley
American History

The early colonists of America were still attached emotionally and intellectually to the Old World. But after forming a new nation, they felt an urgent need to establish their own national identity and national purpose. They did this in part through state and local histories. By restating their past and describing their
peculiarities as Americans, they attempted to define their national character and project their destiny.

- History of the United States from Their First Settlement or Colonies to the Close of the Administration of Mr. Madison in 1817 (2 vols.) by Salma Hale
- History of Connecticut from the First Settlement to the Present Time by Theodore Dwight Jr.
- History of Michigan from Its Earliest Colonization to the Present Time by James H. Lanman
- Border Wars of the American Revolution (2 vols.) by William L. Stone
- History of Louisiana from the First Discovery and Settlement to the Present Times by E. Bunner
- History of the Discovery and Settlement of America (Abridged Edition) by William Robertson

Biography and Memoirs of World Personalities

Biographies were very popular in the new nation. Many of the early biographies in the HFL were of world figures and were written and first published in England.

- The History of Napoleon Bonaparte (2 vols.) by John G. Lockhart
- The Life of Nelson by Robert Southey
- The Life and Actions of Alexander the Great by John Williams
- Life of Lord Byron by John Gait
- The Life of Mohammed, Founder of the Religion of Islam and the Empire of the Saracens by George Bush
- Life and Times of His Late Majesty George the Fourth: With Anecdotes of Distinguished Persons of the Last Fifty Years by George Croly
- Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors (5 vols.) by Allan Cunningham
- Life of Mary Queen of Scots (2 vols.) by Henry Glassford Bell
- Life of Sir Isaac Newton by David Brewster
- Memoirs of the Empress Josephine by John S. Memes
- The Court and Camp of Bonaparte: Comprising Memoirs of the Bonaparte Family, of Napoleon’s Brothers, Sisters, Ministers, Generals and Portrait of Talleyrand
- Memoirs of Celebrated Female Sovereigns (2 vols.) by Anna Jameson
- Lives of Celebrated Travellers (3 vols.) by James Augustus St. John
- Life of Frederick the Second, King of Prussia (2 vols.) by George Agar-Ellis
- History of Charlemagne by G. P. R. James
- Life of Oliver Cromwell (2 vols.) by Michael Russell
- The Life of Peter the Great by John Barrow
- Samuel Johnson: Life and Writings (2 vols.)
- Life of Oliver Goldsmith and Selections from His Writings by Washington Irving
- Distinguished Men of Modern Times (2 vols.) by Henry Malden
- The Life and Adventures of Bruce the African Traveler by Francis B. Head
- The Martyrs of Science, or The Lives of Galileo, Tycho Brahe, and Kepler by David Brewster
- Lives of the Ancient Philosophers by Francois de Salignae de la Mothe Fenelon
Biography and Memoirs of American Personalities

Biographies were also useful in defining the national character and promoting patriotism. In the early years of the United States, Harper’s and other publishers sold hundreds of thousands of biographies of national heroes. The HFL included some key American biographies.

- Indian Biography, or An Historical Account of Those Individuals Who Have Been Distinguished among the North American Indians as Orators, Warriors, Statesmen, and Other Remarkable Characters (2 vols.) by B. B. Bussey Thatcher [Biographies of seventy-four prominent Indians, challenging myths of barbarism and sentimentality]
- A Life of Washington by James Paulding
- Autobiography (with a Sketch of His Public Services by Rev. H. Hastings Weld) by Benjamin Franklin
- Memoirs by Benjamin Franklin [A selection of letters, essays, and philosophical (scientific) papers]
- Life of DeWitt Clinton by James Renwick
- Life of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry (2 vols.) by Alexander Stidell MacKenzie
- Lives of John Jay and Alexander Hamilton by James Renwick
- American Biography (3 vols.) by Jeremy Belknap [Short biographies of the many men involved in the early discoveries and the founding of the beginning colonies]

Adventure and Exploration

Like the biographies, the stories of adventure and discovery were entertaining and informative and also helped define the national character. Again, although the HFL had many Europeans entries, these were matched by corresponding stories of American adventure and exploration.

- Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the Polar Seas and Regions with Illustrations of Their Culture, Geology and Natural History and an Account of the Whale Fishery by John Leslie, Robert Jameson, and Hugh Murray
- Narratives of Discovery and Adventure in Africa from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time by Robert Jameson, James Wilson, and Hugh Murray
- Drake, Cavendish, and Dampier: Lives and Voyages of, including an Introductory View of the Earlier Discoveries in the South Seas and the History of the Buccaneers by Christian Isabel Johnstone
- Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Course and Termination of the Niger with a Narrative of a Voyage down That River to Its Termination (2 vols.) by Richard Lander and John Lander
- The Travels and Researches of Alexander von Humboldt: Being a Condensed Narrative of His Journeys in the Equinoctial Regions of America and in Asiatic Russia by Alexander von Humboldt with an analysis by W. Macgillivray
- An Historical Account of the Circumnavigation of the Globe: And the Progress of Discovery on the Pacific Ocean from the Voyage of Magellan to the Death of Cook
- The Life and Travels of Mungo Park: With the Account of His Death from the Journal of Isaacs and the Substance of Later Discoveries Relative to His Tormented Fate, and the Termination of the Niger by Mungo Park
Geography and Societies

Americans were curious about cultures of the world, but with trade opening up to the Pacific, they were especially interested in the Far East.

[27] Palestine, or The Holy Land by Michael Russell
[132] The Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the Nineteenth Century: From the Accounts of Recent Dutch Residents in Japan and from the German Work of Dr. P. F. von Seibold

Philosophy, Natural Theology, and Principles of Personal Living

The HFL was designed to promote faith and moral living without introducing contentious theological and denominational issues. This goal was accomplished through the many volumes that supported faith and religion in general, volumes presenting the historical and geographical foundations of the Judeo-Christian faith. It was accomplished by works on natural theology, that is, works promoting faith through natural design arguments. And it was promoted by philosophical works that were written using the approach of Scottish commonsense realism, designed to counteract rising skepticism and materialism.

[37] Inquiries concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth by John Abercrombie [A popularized analysis of our ultimate process of knowing as analyzed in the school of Scottish commonsense realism]
Science and Natural History

The character of science and the role of science in society at this time was changing rapidly and stimulating high public interest. There were vast areas of unknown territory to be explored, studied, and cataloged. Therefore, through this period, much of American science was necessarily practical and descriptive rather than analytical. The HFL sampled the breadth of science of this period. It showed that Americans were dependent on the English for a time but became increasingly scientifically independent.

[8, 74] The Natural History of Insects (2 vols.) by James Rennie
[55-56] Letters on Different Subjects of Natural Philosophy: Addressed to a German Princess (2 vols.) by Leonhard Euler
[57] A Popular Guide to the Observation of Nature, or Hints of Inducement to the Study of Natural Production and Appearances in Their Connections and Relations by Robert Mudie
[71] The Principles of Physiology, Applied to the Preservation of Health and the Improvement of Physical and Mental Education by Andrew Combe
[78] The Earth: Its Present Condition and Most Remarkable Phenomena by W. Mullinger Higgins
[85] Animal Mechanism and Physiology, Being a Plain and Familiar Exposition of the Structure and Function of the Human System, Designed for Use of Families and Schools by John H. Grescom, MD
[98] Natural History of Birds: Their Architecture, Habits, and Faculties by James Rennie
[100] Outlines of Imperfect and Disordered Mental Action by Thomas Cogswell Upham

The first systematic text published in America on abnormal psychology
Literature, Poetry, and the Arts

In poetry and art, because of the struggles of the new nation, Americans were slow in turning their energies and creativities to significant output and a unique style. They enjoyed English poetry as represented in the collection by Halleck. For their own poetry they would imitate English styles and learn from such English poets as James Montgomery. A beginning of American poetry was assembled for the HFL by William Cullen Bryant, the first American poet to receive international acclaim.

Politics, Law, and Economics

The HFL included works presenting a rationale for the basic political and economic principles of the Republic in order to promote national identity and informed patriotism.
Political Economy: Its Objects, Uses, and Principles: Considered with Reference to the Conditions of the American People by Alonzo Potter [Extolled the American system of broadly held property, capitalism, free enterprise, and free trade]

Education

The HFL added works on education to promote self education focused toward moral, cultural, occupational, and patriotic purposes.

On the Improvement of Society by the Diffusion of Knowledge, or An Illustration of the Advantages Which Would Result from a More General Dissemination of Rational and Scientific Information among All Ranks by Thomas Dick

The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties: Its Pleasures and Rewards by George L. Craik

The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties: Illustrated by Anecdotes by George L. Craik

Education: Part I—History of Education, Ancient and Modern; Part II—A Plan of Culture and Instruction Based on Christian Principles and Designed to Aid in the Right Education of Youth, Physically, Intellectually, and Morally by Henry Immanuel Smith

Handbook for Readers and Students to Assist Private Individuals, Associations, School Districts in the Selection of Useful and Interesting Works for Reading and Investigation by Alonzo Potter

The Principles of Eloquence by Jean Siffrein (Abbe) Maury [The basic principles of eloquent delivery, the variety of styles, and examples from great speeches]

The Supernatural and Magic

Two volumes of the HFL were added to help overcome the superstitious imaginings of credulous people, that is, to discourage their seeing of the demonic or supernatural without recognizing the natural. For author David Brewster, the natural world was already one grand miracle. And rather than being deceived through it by charlatans, the public was encouraged to understand and thereby feel enthusiasm and love for such a grand and sublime universe.

Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft Addressed to J. C. Lockhart Esq. by Sir Walter Scott

Letters on Natural Magic: Addressed to Sir Walter Scott, Bart. by Sir David Brewster

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5. Exman, Brothers Harper, 137.


8. It is unusual for a library today to have more than a few of these titles, and some of the titles are quite rare. Another set of the HFL reached California after the Brooklyn, with many volumes printed as late as 1846 and 1847. That later and nearly complete set, consisting of 184 volumes, was eventually donated to Stanford University and is located in the Cecil H. Green Library, Special Collections. I express appreciation to the Green Library for their generous help in allowing me to study their set of the Harper's Family Library.


10. Exman, Brothers Harper, 120.


17. Brigham Young sent instructions to pioneers headed west to bring "the most valuable works, on every science and subject, for the benefit of the rising


19. Hannah D. Buckland, Notebook; 1872–1875, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. This notebook contains about 300 pages of her poetry and writings, some from as early as 1832.


31. When Brannan gave up hope of the Church coming to California, and the New Hope farming colony (a Mormon settlement in the California Central Valley) was disbanded, Brannan disposed of the assets of Sam Brannan & Co. All the books were offered for sale September 27, 1847, in the California Star by W. G. Love, Daniel Stark, and John R. Robbins. The latter two had been passengers on the Brooklyn. Incidentally, this sale was perhaps the beginning of the book trade in California. See Hugh Sanford Cheney Baker, “A History of the Book Trade of California: 1849–1859, Part 1,” California Historical Society Quarterly 30, no. 4 (1951): 97–99.