

# **Evaluation of Early Mormonism**

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**Sandy, Utah  
2026**

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1. Mormonism. 2. Mormon Church-History-19th Century. 3. Comparative Religions. 4. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 5. Joseph Smith, 1805-1844. 6. Book of Mormon.

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*The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers* (Printing Service, 1981)

*Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (Smith Research Associates, 1994) (co-authored with Wesley P. Walters)

*The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Signature Books, 1999)

*The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844* (Xulon Press, 2005; Second edition 2013)

*The Four Gospels According to Joseph Smith* (Xulon Press, 2007)

*Early Patriarchal Blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (The Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007)

*Later Patriarchal Blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (The Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2012)

*Joseph Smith's 1828-1843 Revelations* (2013); *Joseph Smith's 1828-1844 Revelations* (web version 2020)

*Lost Apostles: Forgotten Members of Mormonism's Original Quorum of Twelve* (Signature Books, 2014) (co-authored with William Shepard)

#### **Web Sites:**

Mormon Central	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/45c4o">http://tinyurl.com/45c4o</a>
Mormon Origins	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/2ovnvb">http://tinyurl.com/2ovnvb</a>
Family and Church History	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/2qtz87">http://tinyurl.com/2qtz87</a>
Breathing Permit of Horus	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/29ar9c6">http://tinyurl.com/29ar9c6</a>
Gospel Texts	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/27glbc6">http://tinyurl.com/27glbc6</a>
Joseph Smith Early Documents	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/247bn5n">http://tinyurl.com/247bn5n</a>
Mormon PDF Web Site	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/4x15s54">http://tinyurl.com/4x15s54</a>

## Common Abbreviations

- 1830 BOM = Joseph Smith Jr., *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the hand of Mormon, Upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*. By Joseph Smith, Junior, author and proprietor. Palmyra, New York: Printed by E. B. Grandin for the author, 1830. Cited with page number and followed by verification of both LDS (2013) and RLDS and Church of Christ (Temple Lot) churches. Text includes selections from the Bible such as Isaiah, Exodus, and Matthew.
- Abraham = The Book of Abraham in *The Pearl of Great Price*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013. First published in 1842 in *Times and Seasons*, Nauvoo, Illinois.
- BC = A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ. Zion [Independence, Missouri]: Published by W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833 [in press 1833].
- BOM = Book of Mormon. Uses shorter chapter numbers: Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013 and Monongahela, Pennsylvania: Church of Jesus Christ, 2001. Uses chapter numbers of 1830 edition: Independence, Missouri: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now Community of Christ], 1908 [Authorized Edition]; 1966 [Revised Authorized Edition, 1992] and Church of Christ (Temple Lot), 1990.
- D&C = Doctrine and Covenants, first published in 1835. Includes some later redactions not in earlier texts, should be compared with early manuscripts and contemporary writings.
- JS Bible = *The Holy Bible* (Cooperstown, NY: H. & E. Phinney, 1828). Oliver Cowdery purchased this printing of the King James Version of the Bible for Joseph Smith and himself on October 8, 1829. It was bought at the Egbert B. Grandin Bookstore in Palmyra, New York. Contains the Apocrypha. Used for Bible revision. Contains markings for words to be omitted.
- JS Revelations = *Joseph Smith's 1828-1843 Revelations* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2013) by H. Michael Marquardt.

- JST = *The Holy Scriptures*. Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now Community of Christ], Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1991; called Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible by LDS Church (JST). First published in 1867.
- KJV = King James Version of the Bible. 1769 or later printings used. First published in 1611.
- LDS = Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- LDS archives = Church History Library, also known as Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City..
- LDS D&C = *The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013.
- Lost Apostles = *Lost Apostles: Forgotten Members of Mormonism's Original Quorum of Twelve*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2014. By William Shepard and H. Michael Marquardt
- Moses = Selections from the Book of Moses in *The Pearl of Great Price*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013. Text: Moses 1:1-8:12; Moses 2:1-8:12 part of revision of Bible. Compare text with Genesis 1:1-5:32 (KJV)
- NT = New Testament of King James Version, 1769 printing or later.
- OT = Old Testament of King James Version, 1769 printing or later.
- PGP = Pearl of Great Price. Published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 2013. First published in 1851, revised edition in 1902.
- RLDS = Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Community of Christ), headquartered in Independence, Missouri.
- RLDS D&C = *Book of Doctrine and Covenants*. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now Community of Christ], 1990.

## A Chronology of the years 1816-1844

### PALMYRA, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

- 1816** Joseph Smith Sr. arrives in Palmyra, New York
- 1817**  
April Joseph Smith Sr., is living on Main Street in the village of Palmyra, New York, on Road District 26.
- 1818**  
January 31 *First Lines in Arithmetic, For the Use of Young Scholars* (Hartford, Connecticut, 1818); book signed "Joseph Smiths Book January 31st, 1818."
- March 27 Joseph Smith Sr. and Alvin Smith signed a promissory note to Jeremiah Hurlbut for sixty-five dollars.
- April Joseph Sr. is residing in Palmyra village. To pay half of taxes on land of Jeremiah Hurlbut.
- ca. July 10 Joseph Jr. works half Day Drawing hay for Jeremiah Hurlbut of Palmyra.
- 1819**  
February 6 Joseph Smith [Sr.] plaintiff vs Jeremiah Hurlbut defendant; Joseph Smith Jr. testifies for plaintiff.
- April Joseph Sr. is still residing in Palmyra village.
- 1820**  
April Joseph Sr. and family are located at the south end of Stafford Road in Palmyra Township; Alvin Smith is residing in the village of Palmyra.
- June 13 The Smith family is living on land owned by Samuel Jennings.
- June 22 Tax on 300 acres of Lot 1 in Farmington (later Manchester), Ontario County, is to be paid by Nicholas Evertson heirs.
- July 14 Power of attorney is given to Zachariah Seymour.
- Summer Joseph Sr. and Alvin article for 100 acres of land in Farmington, Lot 1, from Zachariah Seymour is the land agent for Nicholas Evertson's heirs.

**1820-1821** Joseph Smith, Jr., has a personal forgiveness of sins; he is an exhorter for the Methodist class in Palmyra and attends a local debating club.

**1821**

April Joseph Sr., Alvin, and Hyrum Smith are residing at the south end of Stafford Road in Palmyra.

July 7 Joseph Sr. is taxed for 100 acres of Lot 1 in Farmington (later named Manchester).

July 18 Daughter Lucy Smith is born in Palmyra Township.

April Joseph Sr. and Alvin are listed on south end of Stafford Road in Palmyra.

June 29 Lot 1 valuation is still \$700 for 100 acres for Joseph Sr.

July 2 Zachariah Seymour, the land agent from whom Joseph Sr. and Alvin articulated the 100 acres and to whom they made payments, dies.

**1822**

Joseph Jr. is present when Willard Chase finds a stone in a well on the Chase property. Joseph borrows the stone. He tells that by looking in Willard Chase's stone he can see hidden treasures, all things in caves, in and under the earth, and spirits in ancient dress in charge of the treasures.

**MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK**

**1823**

July 24 A \$300 assessment increase on land shows improvements on the Smiths' Manchester property.

November The Smiths' frame house in Manchester commences to be built.

November 19 Alvin Smith dies.

**September 1824  
to Spring 1825**

Revival of religion commences with the Methodists, followed by the Baptists and Presbyterians, in the Palmyra vicinity. Joseph Jr. hears discourses by Reverend George Lane of the Methodist church and attends meetings.

**1825**

circa Spring

Lucy, Hyrum, Samuel Harrison, and Sophronia Smith join Palmyra's Presbyterian Church. Joseph Jr. is inclined toward the Methodist faith.

October

Joseph goes with his father to southern New York and near Harmony (now Oakland), Pennsylvania, to obtain money to pay off their Manchester farm; they hunt for a gold/silver mine with several treasure seekers. At home of Isaac Hale Joseph Jr. meets Hale's daughter Emma. The treasure seeking company stays at Hale's home in November.

**October 1825 to  
March 1826**

Joseph Jr. works for Josiah Stowell for five months and goes to school. He uses two stones to search for treasure and prays for help in the endeavor.

**BAINBRIDGE, CHENANGO COUNTY, NEW YORK**

**1826**

March 20

During a court examination, State of New York vs Joseph Smith the Glass looker, before Justice Albert Neely, Joseph Jr. states that by looking at a stone he can discover treasures hidden in the bowels of the earth, gold mines, coined money, and lost property.

Fall

Joseph Jr. works for Joseph Knight Sr. at Colesville, New York.

**1827**

January 18

Joseph Smith Jr. and Emma Hale are married in South Bainbridge, New York.

January

Josiah Stowell takes Joseph and Emma to Manchester.

Peter Ingersoll moves Emma's furniture from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Manchester. Joseph Jr. tells his father-in-law he has given up glass looking.

**PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK**

March 10

Joseph Smith Jr. receives a receipt for credit of four dollars on Abraham Fish's account.

April 16

Samuel Harrison Smith begins to work for Lemuel Durfee, Sr., in payment for use of the house where the Smiths reside.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

- June Joseph Smith Sr. tells Willard Chase that some years previous a spirit had appeared to his son Joseph Jr. and informed him about a book or record of gold.
- August Joseph Jr. works two days mowing for Lemuel Durfee, Sr.
- September 20 Joseph Knight and Josiah Stowell visit the Smith home.
- September 22 Joseph Jr. visits a nearby hill taking Emma with him in Joseph Knight's wagon. He finds gold plates in a stone box and hides the plates in a fallen treetop. He also finds with the plates a sword, breastplate, and a pair of spectacles (later called Urim and Thummim). Joseph tells Joseph Knight the plates "appear to be Gold" and through the glasses or spectacles "I can see any thing."
- September Joseph Jr. goes to Macedon and works for Mrs. Wells.
- September/October Joseph Jr. takes the gold plates from the hiding spot in the fallen tree top and runs home with them. He tells Willard Chase that if it had not been for the stone, he would not have obtained the book. A group of treasure seekers begins looking for the plates. Lucy Smith mentions that Joseph hid the plates in a wood box which was smashed by people searching for the record.
- ca. October 1 The Martin Harris family hears about the gold plates from Lucy. Mrs. Harris and her daughter go to the Smith home. Martin talks to members of the Smith family and Joseph Jr. about how the book was found. Joseph says that an angel appeared to him and told him it was God's work and that he located the plates by looking in the stone found on the Chase property. The angel told him he must quit the company of the money-diggers, translate the plates, and publish them to the world. Martin responds, "If the Lord will show me that it is his work, you can have all the money you want."
- November/December Martin Harris gets Joseph Jr. out of debt and gives him \$50. Alva Hale comes from Harmony to pick up Joseph and Emma. Alva moves them to Harmony. The plates are placed in a barrel containing beans.
- Winter 1827-1828** Joseph Jr. tells his wife's neighbors about the gold plates.

HARMONY, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

**1828**

- ca. January Contents of the book are dictated by Joseph Jr. Scribes of Book of Lehi pages: Reuben Hale and Emma Hale Smith.
- ca. February Hyrum Smith and Martin Harris travel to Harmony to see Joseph Jr. Harris takes a set of characters copied from the gold plates to New York City. Visits Samuel L. Mitchell and Charles Anthon.
- April 12-  
June 14 Martin Harris becomes a scribe and takes over one hundred manuscript pages home. At Palmyra he reads from the manuscript in the evenings to his family and some friends.
- June 15 A male child is born to Joseph and Emma but dies the same day at Harmony. Emma is near death.
- June/July Joseph Jr. travels to Manchester and learns that the manuscript is lost.
- July A revelation concerning the lost pages is given at Harmony (BC 2; LDS D&C 3; RLDS D&C 2). This is Joseph's first recorded revelation.

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

- ca. September Lucy Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Samuel Harrison Smith stopped attending Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra.

HARMONY, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

**1829**

- February Lucy and Joseph Sr. travel to Harmony. A revelation is received at Harmony (BC 3; LDS and RLDS D&C 4).
- March Martin Harris travels to Harmony and wants to know if Joseph Jr. "had, in his possession, the record of the Nephites." A revelation is received (BC 4; LDS and RLDS D&C 5). Harris returns to Palmyra. Isaac Hale describes the manner in which the record was dictated: a stone placed in a hat.
- April 5 Samuel Harrison Smith and Oliver Cowdery arrive at Harmony, Pennsylvania.
- April 7-May 31 Cowdery acts as a scribe to Joseph Jr. Seven revelations are given during April and May (BC 5-11; LDS D&C 6-12; RLDS D&C 3, 6-11). A revelation mentions the Lamanites and states "I will establish my church

among them." Dictation continues during the summer of 1829 at Harmony, Pennsylvania, and concludes at Fayette, New York, about July 1, 1829.

May 15 Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith ordain and baptize each other.

May Samuel Harrison Smith baptized.

#### FAYETTE, SENECA COUNTY, NEW YORK

June John Whitmer becomes a scribe. Joseph Jr. receives revelations for members of the Whitmer family (BC 12-14; LDS D&C 14-16; RLDS D&C 12-14); Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer called to choose twelve disciples or apostles also "instructions relative to building up the church of Christ" (BC 15; LDS D&C 18; RLDS D&C 16).

June 11 Joseph Jr. has deposited copyright for the Book of Mormon.

June 14 Oliver Cowdery writes to Hyrum Smith.

June Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer and probably John Whitmer are baptized by Oliver Cowdery.  
A revelation is received for Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris "previous to their viewing the plates containing the book of Mormon" (LDS D&C 17; RLDS D&C 15).

ca. July 1 About this time manuscript of the Book of Mormon completed.

#### PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

June 26 Title page of the manuscript Book of Mormon is published in the *Wayne Sentinel*.

#### ROCHESTER, MONROE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Summer Martin Harris goes to Rochester, New York, to inquire about printing the Book of Mormon. He reports that Joseph found a gold bible and that "By placing the spectacles in a hat and looking into it, Smith interprets the characters into the English language."

#### PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

August 25 Indenture is made between Martin Harris and Egbert Grandin on land and property for enough money (\$3,000) to print the Book of Mormon.

August 1829 to March 1830 The Book of Mormon is typeset and printed at Grandin's print shop. John Gilbert sets the type and receives manuscript pages from Hyrum Smith.

HARMONY, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

October 4 Joseph Jr. arrives in Harmony and writes to Oliver Cowdery that he has bought a horse from Mr. Stowell and wants someone to come after it.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

November 6 Cowdery writes from Manchester that Harris will pick up the horse in two or three weeks.

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

November 9 Cowdery writes about Joseph Smith as author, inspired writer.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

December 28 Cowdery writes to Joseph Jr. from Manchester: "it may look rather strange to you to find that I have so soon become a printer."

**1830**

January 16 An agreement between Joseph Sr. and Martin Harris on selling the Book of Mormon is witnessed by Oliver Cowdery.

ca. January Joseph Jr. arrives from Harmony; revelation given to sell copyright in Providences in Canada; trip to Canada (not printed in BC or D&C).

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

March 26 The *Wayne Sentinel* advertises the *Book of Mormon* available to purchase. Note: The Book of Mormon is an American Protestant Indian book with a gospel taught during the Old Testament period. Interpretations and language from the Christian New Testament are explained throughout the book. The Bible was used in the composition of the Book of Mormon.

According to some legends Native Americans were believed to have descended from the Hebrews. The Book of Mormon was one such publication that proposed a religious history. The book reports on prophetic history and includes visions about Jesus, John the Baptist, and European Gentiles that will come to the promise land of America. Many wars are included in the storyline including the demise of the Nephite and Jaredite nations near a prominent hill. This hill is in Manchester, Ontario County, New York.

As author of the book Joseph Smith brought to the text some early events of his youth including his participation in treasure seeking. It was also a time in the Smith family where religious questions were discussed. In the process of time and historical research the idea of Israelite or Hebrew origin of the Native Americans is known as an outdated theory.

## MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

- March 26-31 Joseph Smith Jr. arrives in Manchester with Joseph Knight, Sr.; a commandment is given for Martin Harris (JS Revelations, 48-50; LDS D&C 19; RLDS D&C 18).
- April 6 Baptisms of Joseph Smith Sr., Martin Harris, Lucy Mack Smith and Sarah Rockwell in Crooked Brook. Revelations for Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, Joseph Smith Sr. and Joseph Knight Sr. are received (BC 17-22; LDS D&C 21, 23; RLDS D&C 19, 21). Oliver Cowdery was ordained an elder. Joseph Jr. was ordained an elder, also prophet and seer by Cowdery. Church of Christ organized.

## FAYETTE, SENECA CO., NEW YORK

- April 11 At Fayette, New York, branch of the church is established. Cowdery delivers the first public discourse of the church and performs baptisms.
- April 16 A revelation is received regarding individuals who have been baptized in other Christian churches (JS Revelations, 57-58; LDS D&C 22; RLDS D&C 20).
- April 18 More baptisms are performed by Cowdery.
- June 9 The first conference of the church is held; articles and covenants are presented (BC 24; LDS D&C 20; RLDS D&C 17). Baptisms are performed. Joseph Sr. and Hyrum Smith are ordained priests.
- June Revelation of Moses to Joseph Smith  
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 1-3; Joseph Smith dictating  
Text: Moses 1; RLDS D&C 22  
Scribe: Oliver Cowdery  
Note: "A Revelation given to Joseph the Revelator June 1830" (1). No location mentioned.
- ca. June Revision of Genesis started  
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 3-10  
Text: Genesis 1:1-4:18 (KJV); Moses 2:1-5:43; Gen. 1:1-5:28 (JST)  
Scribe: Oliver Cowdery  
Notes: "A Revelation given to the Elders of the Church of Christ On the first Book of Moses given to Joseph the Seer Chapter first" (3); "Chapter 2 A Revelation concerning Adam after he had been driven out of the garden of Eden" (8). No location mentioned.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

June 28 Joseph Sr. appears in Manchester before Justice Nathan Pierce on behalf of his son Hyrum.

COLESVILLE, BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

June 28 Baptisms are performed in Colesville, New York, but no confirmations. The Colesville branch is started.

SOUTH BAINBRIDGE, CHENANGO COUNTY, NEW YORK

July 1 Joseph Jr. is brought before Justice Joseph Chamberlain in South Bainbridge, New York.

COLESVILLE, BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

ca. July Joseph Jr. is arrested upon warrant and appears before Justice Joel K. Noble in Colesville.

HARMONY, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

July 4-31 Revelations received, including one for Emma Smith (BC 25-27; LDS D&C 24-26; RLDS D&C 23-25).

September 4 A revelation is recorded concerning sacrament (BC 28; LDS D&C 27; RLDS D&C 26).

FAYETTE, SENECA CO., NEW YORK

September 5-26 Revelations are given to the church at Fayette and others (BC 29-34; LDS D&C 28-31; RLDS D&C 27-30). A revelation for Oliver Cowdery states "thou shalt go unto the Lamanites ... & cause my Church to be established among them." And that the City (New Jerusalem) "shall be among the Lamanites."

September 26 The second conference of the church commences; total membership is sixty-two.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

October 17 In Manchester a missionary covenant to preach to Native Americans (Lamanites) is issued. About this time a revelation is received for Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson (LDS D&C 32; RLDS D&C 31).

FAYETTE, SENECA COUNTY, NEW YORK

October 18-31 In Fayette a revelation to Ezra Thayer and Northrop Sweet is given (BC 35; LDS D&C 33; RLDS D&C 32).

- October 21            Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 10  
Text: Gen. 4:18-24 (KJV); Moses 5:43-51; Gen. 5:29-37 (JST)  
Scribe: John Whitmer  
Note: "October 21st 1830" (10).
- November 4            Orson Pratt arrives in Fayette; Joseph Jr. asks and receives a revelation for  
him by gazing at a stone placed in a hat (BC 36; LDS D&C 34; RLDS D&C  
33).
- November 30           Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 10-11  
Text: Gen. 4:25-5:11 (KJV); Moses 5:52-6:18; Gen. 5:38-6:16 (JST)  
Scribe: John Whitmer  
Note: "November 30th 1830" (10).
- December 1            Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 11-13  
Text: Gen. 5:12-21 (KJV); Moses 6:19-52; Gen. 6:17-53 (JST)  
Scribe: Emma Smith (wife of Joseph Smith)  
Note: "Dec 1st" (11).
- ca. December 2-11    Addition not in Gen. (KJV)  
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 14-15  
Text: Moses 6:52-7:1; Gen. 6:53-7:1 (JST)  
Scribe: John Whitmer
- December 7-11        Revelation instructing Sidney Rigdon to write for Joseph Smith -- "And the  
scriptures shall be given even as they are in mine own bosom, to the  
salvation of mine own elect" (JS Revelations, 87; LDS D&C 35:20; RLDS  
D&C 34:5).
- December 11-15        Revelation is given for Edward Partridge (BC 38; LDS D&C 36; RLDS  
D&C 35).
- December 11-30        Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 15-20  
Gen. 5:22-32 (KJV); Moses 7:2-8:12; Gen. 7:2-85 (JST)  
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon
- CANANDAIGUA, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK
- December 30            In Canandaigua, New York, a revelation to Joseph Jr. and Sidney Rigdon  
instructs them to go to Ohio (BC 39; LDS and RLDS D&C 37).

FAYETTE, SENECA CO., NEW YORK

**1831**

- January 2                    The third conference of the church takes place in Fayette; revelation is received (BC 40; LDS and RLDS D&C 38).
- January 5-6                Two revelations concerning James Covell, a Methodist minister, are given (BC 41-42; LDS and RLDS D&C 39-40).

KIRTLAND, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO

- February 4                First revelation received at Kirtland. Edward Partridge called as church bishop.
- February 9                Laws of the church given (JS Revelations, 95-98; LDS and RLDS D&C 42).
- ca. 9 February 9-  
March 6-7                Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 20-49  
Text: Gen. 6:1-19:29 (KJV); Moses 8:13-30; Gen. 8:1-19:35 (JST)  
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon
- March 6-7                Prophecy mentions that Joseph Smith may now translate the New Testament (JS Revelations, 109; LDS D&C 45:61 and RLDS D&C 45:11).
- March 8-  
April 4                    Revision of Matthew started  
Manuscript: NT 1 (Dictated MS), 1-21; Joseph Smith dictating  
Text: Matt. 1:1-9:1 (KJV)  
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon  
Note: "March 8th 1831 A Translation of the New Testament translated by the power of God" (1).
- March 8                    Revelation for John Whitmer to keep a regular history and assist in transcribing (JS Revelations, 112; LDS and RLDS D&C 47).
- ca. March 8-  
April 4                    Revelation of Moses; Gen. 1:1-19:29 (KJV); Moses 1:1-8:30; RLDS D&C 22; Gen. 1:1-19:35 (JST) from OT 1 (1-49) copied by John Whitmer upon OT 2 (1-49).
- ca. April 4                Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 49-61  
Text: Gen. 19:29-24:41 (KJV); Gen. 19:35-24:42 (JST)  
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon  
Note: "April 5th 1831 transcribed thus far" (61).

- ca. April 5 Gen. 19:29-24:41 (KJV); Gen. 19:35-24:42 (JST) from OT 1 (49-61) copied by John Whitmer upon OT 2 (49-59).
- April 4-7 Matt. 1:1-9:1 (KJV) from NT 1 (1-21) copied by John Whitmer as NT 2, f. 1 (1-16).  
Notes: "Kirtland Geauga Ohio April 4th 1831 A Translation of the New Testament by Joseph Smith Jr." (NT 2, f. 1, 1); NT 2 has four folios; f. 1 (1-49); with sequential page numbers in f. 2-4 (1-154).
- ca. April 7-  
June 19 Manuscript: NT 1 (Dictated MS), 21-63  
Text: Matt. 9:2-26:71 (KJV)  
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon  
Note: "Thus far Transcribed April 7th 1831" (21).
- May 15 A revelation shifted the emphasis of establishing a church and the location of the projected New Jerusalem. The city would now be by the "borders of the Lamanites."
- ca. June-August Matthew 9:2-26:1 from NT 1 (21-59) copied as NT 2, f. 1 (16-49)  
Scribe: John Whitmer
- ca. June 19-  
August 27 Trip to Independence, Missouri.
- HIRAM, PORTAGE COUNTY, OHIO**
- ca. September 26-  
October 11 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 2 (Dictated MS), 1-24  
Text: Matt. 26:1-71 revised again; Matt. 26:71-28:20; Mark 1:1-9:1 (KJV)  
Scribe: John Whitmer  
Note: "September 26th 1831" (NT 2, f. 2, 1)
- ca. October 11-  
February 16, 1832 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 2 (Dictated MS) 24 through f. 4 (Dictated MS), 114  
Text: Mark 9:2-16:20; Luke 1:1-24:53; John 1:1-5:37 (KJV) Scribe: Sidney Rigdon. Note: No date on manuscript. Text is written out in full.
- 1832**
- February 16 Vision of three degrees of glories received by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon during revision of John 5:29 (JS Revelations, 161-65; LDS and RLDS D&C 76).

- ca. February 16-  
March 20      Manuscript: NT 2, f. 4 (Dictated MS), 114-152  
Text: John 5:37-21:25; Acts 1 through Rev. 11 (KJV)  
Scribes: Sidney Rigdon and Jesse Gause  
Note: No date on manuscript. Writing of complete text discontinued on NT 2. Only changes recorded on manuscript pages. Markings in JS Bible correspond with revision of NT starting at John 6. This is known as the short method.
- March 25      Assault on Joseph Smith Jr. and Sidney Rigdon, Hiram, Ohio (Lost Apostles, 21).
- ca. April 1-June 20      Trip to Missouri
- ca. July 8      Sidney Rigdon's license taken away.
- July 20      Frederick G. Williams starts as scribe for Joseph Smith.
- ca. July 20-31      Manuscript: NT 2, f. 4 (Dictated MS), 152-54.  
Text: Rev. 12-22 (KJV)  
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
- July 31      Finished revision of New Testament.
- ca. July 31 -  
September 12      Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 59-73  
Text: About Gen. 24:41-50:26; Exodus-Deuteronomy (KJV)  
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams  
Notes: No date on manuscript. Markings in JS Bible correspond with revision of OT starting at Gen. 25.
- KIRTLAND, GEAUGA CO., OHIO**
- September 22-23      Revelation concerning the city New Jerusalem and the two priesthoods, mentions priesthood of OT Moses and Aaron. (JS Revelations, 182-86; LDS D&C 84; RLDS D&C 83).
- ca. October 1 -  
November 6      Trip to Albany, New York City, and Boston.
- November 6      Joseph Smith III was born.

- ca. November 7-27      Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 73-81  
Text: About Joshua through Nehemiah 10  
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams  
Note: No date on manuscript.
- ca. November 27      Account of Joseph Smith's early vision experiences recorded by Frederick G. Williams and Joseph Smith in Letterbook 1. Kirtland Revelations Book started.
- November 27          Letter to Independence, Missouri, copied into Joseph Smith Letterbook 1 refers to Ezra 2:61-62 (Joseph Smith Revelations, 220; LDS D&C 85:12). Joseph Smith starts his first journal.
- ca. November 27-  
December 5          Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS) 81-83  
Text: Nehemiah 11-13; Esther, all chapters correct; Job, Psalms 1-10  
Written by Joseph Smith
- Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 83-86  
Text: Psalm 11-15  
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
- Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 86  
Text: Psalm 16  
Written by Joseph Smith
- December 1          Joseph Smith "wrote and corrected revelations" in Kirtland Revelations Book.
- ca. December 3      Kirtland Council Minute Book started.
- December 5          Joseph Smith copies "letters and translating."
- ca. December 5-6    Review of Matt. 1-13 on NT 2. Additional revisions written as notes. The notes were pinned onto the appropriate manuscript pages.
- December 6          Revelation as an explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares in Matt. 13 (Joseph Smith Revelations, 220-21; LDS D&C 86; RLDS D&C 84).
- ca. December 6-31-  
Jan. 1833          Review of Matt. 14 through about John 21 on NT 2.  
Additional revisions on notes pinned to manuscript pages. One pinned note written by Joseph Smith.

- December 27-28 Revelation for the first elders, mentions another comforter recorded in testimony of John (JS Revelations, 191; LDS D&C 88:3; RLDS D&C 85:1).
- 1833**
- ca. January-February 2 Review about Acts 1 through Revelation 22 on NT 2. Pinned notes written by Frederick G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon.
- February 2 Completed translation and review of New Testament.
- ca. February 2-May 6 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 86-111  
Text: About Psalm 17 to about Isaiah.  
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams  
Notes: "The Songs of Solomon are not Inspired writings" (97). No date on manuscript.
- March 8 Commandment including instructions "when you have finished translation of th[e] prophets" to preside over the church and school (JS Revelations, 201; LDS D&C 90:13; RLDS D&C 87:5).
- March 9 Revelation on Apocrypha, between OT & NT in JS Bible, "mostly translated correct" (JS Revelations, 202; LDS D&C 91; RLDS D&C 88).
- May 6 Revelation with instructions to hasten to translate scriptures (Joseph Smith Revelations, 204; LDS D&C 93:53; RLDS D&C 90:12).
- ca. May 6-July 2 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 111-19  
Text: About Jeremiah through Malachi  
Scribes: Frederick G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon  
Notes: "Finished on the 2d day of July 1833" (119). Lamentations, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephariah, Haggai, and Malachi considered correct.
- July 17 Review of revelation of Moses and revision of Gen. 1:1-11:17; classifying different subjects and review by church presidency on OT 2 (1-34). An index was prepared that included references to the scriptures on the order of the High Priesthood, the Priesthood after the order of Aaron, the Sabbath day, baptism, repentance, and covenants was made. The index pages are scattered in the Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, Joseph Smith Journal 1835-36 and the 1839 draft of the Manuscript History.

July 20                      *The Evening and the Morning Star* printing press destroyed at Independence, Missouri

October 5-  
November 4                Trip to Canada

**1834**

February 26-  
March 28                    Trip to New York to obtain volunteers for Zion's Camp.

May 3                        At a conference the name Church of Christ was changed to The Church of the Latter Day Saints. It was also said that the church was organized on April 6, 1830 at Fayette, Seneca County, New York.

May 5-August 1            Trip with Camp of Israel (Zion's Camp) to Missouri.

ca. October 16-30        Trip to Michigan

PAINESVILLE, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO

November                 *Mormonism Unveiled* published by E. D. Howe. Published affidavits collected in Palmyra and Manchester, New York. Reprints affidavits from Harmony, Pennsylvania area and letters of Ezra Booth. Includes examination of Book of Mormon text. Proposes Solomon Spaulding theory of origin of Book of Mormon text.

KIRTLAND, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO

**1835**

Corrections made to the Dictated Manuscript of Genesis 3-5 (OT 1, 7-19). This includes changes in ages of early Old Testament patriarchs made on OT 1, 11-12, 19. No date mentioned.

February 14                Twelve Apostles chosen by Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris (Lost Apostles, 80); Lyman E. Johnson, Heber C. Kimball, and Brigham Young ordained apostles, Kirtland (Lost Apostles, 82)

February 15                John F. Boynton, Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson, William E. McLellin, David W. Patten, and William Smith received their ordination as apostles (Lost Apostles, 82)

February 21                Parley P. Pratt ordained an apostle (Lost Apostles, 82)

- April 26 Thomas B. Marsh and Orson Pratt ordained apostles (Lost Apostles, 82-83)
- April 28-30 Instructions concerning two priesthoods in the church (JS Revelations, 226-31; LDS D&C 107; RLDS D&C 104).
- May 4 Apostles leave on their first apostolic mission to the eastern states (Lost Apostles, 84, 87).
- June 15 Letter soliciting funds to print New Translation.

#### CHARDON, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO

- June 20 Court case State of Ohio vs. Joseph Smith Jr., with Joseph being acquitted (Lost Apostles, 89-90).

#### KIRTLAND, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO

- June 30 Michael H. Chandler arrives in Kirtland with four Egyptian mummies and some Egyptian papyri.
- July 7 Joseph Smith Jr. receives a certificate from Chandler. The four Egyptian mummies and the Egyptian papyri are purchased for \$2,400.
- ca. July 7-31 Manuscripts and bound book of Egyptian Alphabet started.  
Scribes for manuscripts: Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery and W.W. Phelps.  
Notes: Three separate working papers are produced. Final recording done by Phelps in bound Egyptian Alphabet.  
Alphabet divided into five degrees. Handwriting on 34 pages.  
Scribes for alphabet: W.W. Phelps and Warren Parrish
- ca. July 15-23-  
August Trip to Michigan.
- August 17 General Assembly, Doctrine and Covenants canonized (Lost Apostles, 86-87).
- ca. August 17 –  
September 12 Doctrine and Covenants printed and some copies bound.

- ca. September 22 Joseph Smith's second journal started.
- October 1, 7 Work on Egyptian Alphabet continued.
- October 29 Warren Parrish appointed a scribe.
- November 3 Revelation says Quorum of Apostles under condemnation (Lost Apostles, 101)
- November 14 Revelation for Warren Parrish (Joseph Smith Revelations, 276).
- November 20 Hebrew books and Greek Lexicon obtained from New York.
- November 21 Joseph Smith Jr. studies Hebrew alphabet.
- November 19-20,  
24-25 Manuscripts: Book of Abraham Translation manuscripts; three separate manuscripts  
Text: Abraham 1:1-2:18  
Scribes: W.W. Phelps, Frederick G. Williams, Warren Parrish. Parrish copies text onto longer manuscript  
Notes: Williams and Parrish took down dictation at the same time;  
Compare Genesis 11:28-29; 12:1-6 (KJV).
- December 16 William Smith injures Joseph Smith Jr. (Lost Apostles, 101)
- December 23 Joseph Smith Jr. Studies Greek.
- 1836**
- January 26 Hebrew school starts, Professor Joshua Seixas to teach class.
- ca. March *A Collection of Sacred Hymns* published.
- March 27 House of the Lord (Kirtland Temple) is dedicated (Lost Apostles, 107-108).
- March 30 Received certificate from Professor Seixas on knowledge of Hebrew.
- ca. July 25-  
September 15 Trip to New York City and Salem, Massachusetts. Revelation received at Salem (LDS D&C 111).

## 1837

- ca. January-March Second Edition of the Book of Mormon published. The book includes textual changes.
- January 9 Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company opens and begins circulation of notes.
- April 9 Joseph Smith spoke of judgment on “characters that professed to be his friends & friends to humanity” but had “turned tr[a]itors & opposed the Currency” (Lost Apostles, 140).
- May 23 Parley P. Pratt writes letter of protest to Joseph Smith about temporal management and Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon leading people astray (Lost Apostles, 141).
- May 29 Charges against Joseph Smith Jr. by Lyman Johnson and Orson Pratt; also charges against Joseph Smith Sr. by Luke Johnson (Lost Apostles, 142).
- June Joseph Smith withdraws from Safety Society, apostles Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde leave on their mission to England (Lost Apostles, 144); quorum president Thomas B. Marsh was in Missouri at the time and was not aware of the opening of the English mission (Lost Apostles, 113).
- July 3 Ground broken for building a House of the Lord in Far West, Missouri.
- July Marsh and David Patten rush to Kirtland where they resolve difficulties with and become committed to defending Joseph Smith. Marsh works to resolve problems within the quorum (Lost Apostles, 113-14).
- July 23 Revelation (LDS D&C 112: RLDS 105) for Thomas B. Marsh and the Twelve received at Kirtland which specified Marsh’s exalted standing with the Lord and Joseph Smith (Lost Apostles, 114-15).
- ca. July 28 - August 30 Trip to Canada.
- September 3 Conference held, Luke and Lyman Johnson, and John Boynton not sustained as apostles (Lost Apostles, 151).
- September 4 Joseph Smith sends a message to the church in Missouri with Thomas Marsh indicating David and John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and W. W.

Phelps are in transgression. It stated they may lose their standing in the church if they did not repent (Lost Apostles, 152).

- September 11 Luke and Lyman Johnson and John Boynton received back into full fellowship after acknowledging their faults (Lost Apostles, 152).
- by Sept. 17 Oliver Cowdery leaves for Missouri.
- September 27 Joseph Smith leaves for visit to northern Missouri.
- October 20 Oliver Cowdery arrives at Far West.
- December 10 Joseph Smith returns from Far West where he held meetings in November. While absent from Kirtland a group of dissenters renounced the Church of Latter Day Saints, and claimed to be the original Church of Christ (Lost Apostles, 156)
- December 22 Brigham Young is driven from Kirtland.
- Dec. 24-30 Twenty-eight individuals excommunicated from the church, including Cyrus Smalling, Joseph Coe, Martin Harris, Luke Johnson, John Boynton, and Warren Parrish (Lost Apostles, 158)

### **1838**

- January 12 Revelation for First Presidency to move west, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon flee Kirtland in the evening for Far West, Missouri (Lost Apostles, 158).

### **FAR WEST, CALDWELL COUNTY, MISSOURI**

- March 10 John Whitmer, church historian and witness, excommunicated by the High Council presided over by apostles Thomas Marsh and David Patten. (Lost Apostles, 167).
- March 14 Joseph Smith Jr. and family arrive at Far West. He approves of the disciplinary actions.
- April 12 Oliver Cowdery withdraws from the church, is tried and excommunicated by Bishop Edward Partridge presiding over the High Council (Lost Apostles, 168).  
George W. Robinson starts recording in Scriptorium Book.

- April 26 Revelation on name of the church specified and the House of the Lord to be built at Far West (LDS D&C 115).
- April 27 Draft of Manuscript History started: early pages not extant.
- June Danites organized under the leadership of Jared Carter. A letter credited to Sidney Rigdon, warned Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, William W. Phelps and Lyman E. Johnson to leave Far West. It was signed by Sampson Avard, Hyrum Smith and eighty-one other individuals (Lost Apostles, 177-79).
- June 17 Sidney Rigdon delivers Salt Sermon to frighten the dissenters from Far West (Lost Apostles, 176-77).
- June 19 John Whitmer leaves Far West.
- July 4 Dedication of site for House of the Lord and laying of cornerstones; Sidney Rigdon delivers a militant oration for the Mormons to defend themselves against Gentile infringements. Thomas Marsh and others felt they were being singled out for public ridicule for their passiveness (Lost Apostles, 186-87).
- August 6 Election-day battle at Gallatin, Missouri (Lost Apostles, 183-84).
- October 10 Surrender of the Mormon community at DeWitt in Carol County; non-Mormon militias turn their attention to Mormons in Daviess and Caldwell counties (Lost Apostles, 185-86).
- October 18 Responding to Gentile infringements, Mormon forces sacked Gallatin and Millport (Lost Apostles, 187).
- October 24 Thomas B. Marsh signs affidavit at Richmond against activities of the Mormons, Orson Hyde attests to the truth of Marsh's statement (Lost Apostles, 187-88, 292-93).
- October 27 Extermination order issued by Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs (Lost Apostles, 190).
- October 30 Hawn's Mill massacre (190)

## RICHMOND, RAY COUNTY, MISSOURI

- Nov. 12-29 Court of Inquiry before Fifth Circuit Judge Austin A. King in Richmond, at the Ray County courthouse; Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and other become prisoners of the state because of the testimony given at the hearing.
- November 30 Joseph Smith Jr. and others transferred to Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri.

## LIBERTY, CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI

### 1839

- March 17 Thomas B. Marsh excommunication, Quincy, Illinois (Lost Apostles, 194).
- March 20 Liberty Jail Epistle (JS Revelations, 249-53; LDS D&C 121-23). Mentions plural gods.
- June 27 Orson Hyde readmitted into Quorum of Twelve (Lost Apostles, 195).
- October 29-  
March 4, 1840 Trip to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New Jersey.

## NAUVOO, HANCOCK CO., ILLINOIS

### 1840

- ca. September 13-14 Hyrum Smith ordained church patriarch by his father Joseph Smith, Sr.

### 1841

- January 19 Revelation concerning writing a proclamation to the kings of the earth, building a temple, and a boarding house in Nauvoo, also the organization of the priesthood quorums. William Law was instructed to publish the new translation of the Bible (JS Revelations, 259; LDS D&C 124:89).
- April 6 Cornerstones of Nauvoo Temple laid.
- October 2 The original manuscript of the Book of Mormon was deposited in the southeast cornerstone of the Nauvoo House.

### 1842

- March 1 Publication of Facsimile No. 1 from the Book of Abraham and the Book of Abraham in issue of *Times and Seasons*.

Heading: A TRANSLATION Of some ancient Records that have fallen into our hands, from the Catecombs [*sic*] of Egypt, purporting to be the writings of Abraham, while he was in Egypt, called the BOOK OF ABRAHAM, written by his own hand, upon papyrus.

Text: Abraham 1:1-2:18; Facsimile 1, Figures 1-12..

Scribe: Willard Richards wrote a Printer's manuscript.

Notes: Compare text with Genesis 11:28-29; 12:1-6 (KJV).

Publication of Wentworth letter.

- March 8-9 Book of Abraham dictated  
Text: Abraham 2:19-5:21.  
Notes: Compare text with Genesis 12:7-13 and Genesis 1:1-2:1-10, 15-25 (KJV).
- March 15 Publication of Book of Abraham and Facsimile No. 2 from the Book of Abraham in issue of *Times and Seasons*  
Text: Abraham 2:19-5:21; Facsimile 2, Figures 1-23.
- Publication starts on the History of Joseph Smith.
- March 15-16 Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon join Nauvoo Masonic Lodge.
- March 17 Female Relief Society of Nauvoo organized.
- May 4-5 Higher priesthood ordinances introduced (endowment ceremony).
- May 16 Publication of Facsimile No. 3 from the Book of Abraham in issue of *Times and Seasons*. Text: Facsimile 3, figures 1-6.
- May 17 John C. Bennett resigns as mayor and church membership.
- June 18 John C. Bennett excommunicated.
- July 27 Revelation for Sarah Ann Whitney to be a wife of Joseph Smith (JS Revelations, 265-66).
- 1843**
- February 3 Joseph Smith studies German.
- May 1 Kinderhook plates examined.

- May 26                      Endowment ceremony commenced anew.
- July 12                      Revelation concerning biblical men having wives and concubines, adultery, a commandment for Emma Smith, the law of the priesthood (JS Revelations, 272-76; LDS D&C 132).
- 28 September              Second anointing ceremony introduced.
- 1844**
- March 10-11                Kingdom of God/Council of Fifty organized.
- March 14                    Revelation on name of the Kingdom of God.
- April 7                      Joseph Smith preaches King Follett Discourse at general conference.
- April 11                    In a Council of Fifty meeting members of the Council received “from this time henceforth and forever, Joseph Smith, as our Prophet, Priest & King, and uphold him in that capacity in which God has anointed him.” (Council of Fifty Minutes)
- April 25                    Revelation on Constitution of the Council of Fifty.
- June 7                      *Nauvoo Expositor* published.
- June 10                    *Nauvoo Expositor* printing press destroyed.

CARTHAGE, HANCOCK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

- June 27                    Joseph and Hyrum Smith are murdered, Carthage Jail, Carthage, Illinois (LDS D&C 135).

## Modifications in Joseph Smith's Revelations, History and Story

Over two hundred years ago the Smith family settled in Palmyra, New York. A son, Joseph Smith Jr. studied the Bible and had an interest in biblical themes. In 1832 he wrote about the year 1817 or 1818, "At about the age of twelve years my mind become seriously imprest [*sic*; impressed] with regard to the all important [*sic*; important] concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul, which led me to searching the scriptures." Joseph Jr. attended school, learned to read, write and learn arithmetic.

Latter Day Saint tradition revolves around this family. Individuals have discovered that the story of the Latter Day Saints has changed over time. Different elements were solidified in the early church. Telling the story in a new way should assist believers and non-believers to be on the same page and alleviate arguments. We can agree to disagree and have respect for each other.

What follows tries to include small and large changes based upon historical records. The stories we were told have a history all by itself. It is ok to have an alternative view of events. Religious history includes convictions which may or may not be based upon facts. Usually, individuals do not change their thinking unless presented with documentation, and that does not guarantee any change.

What is important is not who had the most influence or actually made the redactions, but that they were made. We can learn from history and appreciate what it tells us about the past. It is good to know that we are ever learning and do not need to feel embarrassed by learning new ideas.

Problems occur when taking Joseph Smith's official 1838-39 account as historical fact rather than as a faith account of religious significance. A helpful insight into understanding Smith is how he regards the confusion among the churches. Joseph, by having the Palmyra revival take place before a vision, creates an indication of how this story is being told.

If it is maintained that this manuscript history should be read literally, a problem needs to be addressed. It is the story about the angel and the Book of Mormon vision.

The Manuscript History as copied in 1839 was a projection of what Smith wanted to convey to church members and the general public. If we go to earlier texts of the revelations and earlier stories, we can determine that the story of the discovery of gold plates had different elements than the more detailed telling in the official history. The Manuscript History is a faith history. As such it says the meeting of April 6, 1830, had been held at Mr. Peter Whitmer Sr.'s home in Fayette, New York and implies that the baptisms were in that area. But the baptisms of Joseph Smith Sr. and Martin Harris were in Manchester twenty-five miles away. If we look at the history, we can know the general ideas where events took place.

At church conferences in November 1831, it was decided to print revelations that Smith had received. These revelatory documents included those for the church and also to individual members of the Smith, Whitmer and Knight families. While considering this, Sidney Rigdon made grammatical changes to the texts in the manuscript record Book of Commandments and Revelations. Some of these changes were used and some not when they were selected to print in the first church periodical *The Evening and the Morning Star* and the forthcoming Book of

Commandments. Omitted documents included a revelation to sell a Book of Mormon copyright in Canada, and LDS Doctrine and Covenants (D&C) sections 17, 51, 57 and 74.

Included in the Book of Commandments were modifications of a revelation given to Oliver Cowdery that said he had “another gift which is the gift of working with the sprout,” which was the divining rod he possessed. The word “sprout” was changed to “rod.”

Instructions were given to preach to Native Americans and said the city of the New Jerusalem would be built “among the Lamanites.” The word “among” was omitted by being crossed through and “on the borders by” added above the line. Questions asked regarding the church law were omitted. These revelatory texts were modified in the early process of publication.

Sections of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants will be followed in numerical order as Joseph Smith’s revelations are examined.

Section 1 [LDS D&C 1]; source: Oliver Cowdery’s personal copy of the Book of Commandments, chapter 1.

Section 2 [LDS D&C 20]; source: *Evening and Morning Star*, reprint June 1832, printed January 1835. There were references to offices instituted after their acceptance at the conference held in June 1830. Included in the revision were bishops, high counselors, high priests, and president of the high priesthood. The 1835 office of apostle was not added.

Section 3 [LDS D&C 107]

How much of section 3 was presented in its 1835 form to the twelve apostles is not known. The citation to a revelation given on November 11, 1831, illustrates how textual redactions of 1835 could give the impression that the wording used is what the original 1831 revelation contained. The manuscript for the revised text is not known to be extant.

The early text says that “a bishop must be chosen from the high priesthood,” meaning from those who hold the office of high priest. To this is added an exception that is reminiscent of the Old Testament. The idea of a bishop being a descendant of Aaron was also repeated in section 22 [LDS D&C 68], another November 1831 revelatory message.

Section 4 [LDS D&C 84]; source Kirtland Revelations Book: “To go into th[e] covenants” (20).

The early text said that John the Baptist was to be “raised up being fillid [filled] with the holy ghost from his Mother[’]s womb, for he was baptised while he was yet in the womb.” For this section the words “the womb” were omitted and replaced with “his Childhood.”

Section 5 [LDS D&C 102], source KRB: “To go into the coven[an]ts” (111), a pinned note is not extant.

The minutes of the first, February 17, 1834, meeting of the Kirtland High Council, were read at least twice two days later and corrected. Though Joseph Smith was authorized to make corrections at the time, the text was corrected and recorded in the Kirtland Revelations Book. Eight months later, after April 28, 1835, a reference was added to the minutes about “a distinction between the high council of travelling high priests abroad, and the travelling high council composed of the twelve apostles.”

Section 6 [LDS D&C 86]; source Kirtland Revelations Book: “To go into th[e] covenants” (31).

Section 13 [LDS D&C 42]; source: Oliver Cowdery’s Book of Commandments; BofC 44, 47; EMS 1 (July 1832):9, reprinted February 1835; and 1 (October 1832):34; reprinted June 1835.

This section is a revision of instructions given four years previously. (1) 1835 D&C 13:1-19 compared with BC 44:1-54; (2) 13:20 compare with BC 47:21-24; (3) 13:21-23 compare with BC 47:1-20. omitted part – BC 44:55-57 includes “Thou shalt contract no debts with the world, except thou art commanded”

When this section was first reprinted in February 1835, changes were made to the law of consecration. The words “high council,” not in the revelation of 1831, were added; wording relating to Joseph Smith’s Bible revision (JST) was again modified, and the office of “high priest” inserted. Section 22 [LDS D&C 68]; source BCR, 113-14, EMS 1 (October 1832):73, reprint June 1835.

The 1831 text stated that other bishops could be set apart and they would need to be “an high priest who is worthy” and “be appointed by a conference of high priests.” The conference is changed to being appointed by “the first presidency of the Melchizedek priesthood, except they be literal descendants of Aaron.” A descendant of Aaron would have legal right to the bishopric. In this addition there is further clarification than what is found in section 3. The male descendant would have to be “the first born among the sons of Aaron: for the first born holds the right of presidency over this priesthood, and the keys or authority of the same.” Those who qualify, and are worthy, and obtain approval by the first presidency can claim their anointing or ordination because of the “decree concerning their right of the priesthood descending from father to son.”

Again, the incorrect impression is that this is the identical revelation given on November 1, 1831 to Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson, Lyman Johnson, and William McLellin. The early wording gave the instructions, “These sayings are true and faithful: wherefore transgress them not, neither take therefrom.” In the revision words like “conference” and “high priests” were omitted and replaced. The reason why these words were changed is because since January 1832 there was a new council known as the presidency of the high priesthood and designated in 1835 as the first presidency, usually composed of three high priests. This redaction was done after May 16 and near the end of June 1835 with the printing of the reprint of the *Evening and Morning Star*. Section 24 [LDS D&C 65]; source BCR, 112.

Another revelation of interest is a prayer that was revealed and copied in the BCR, KRB, and printed with the same wording in Independence, Missouri in 1832 and in Kirtland, Ohio in 1835. The BCR contains the minor change which helps us determine that the words crossed through “hewn from” and replaced with “cut out of” would have been done shortly after May 16 in time to set the type for the D&C.

Section 50 [LDS D&C 27]

The shortest text supports the basic wording that was printed in the Book of Commandments. Of all of the revision this one was very important since the organization of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, completed at the end of April 1835. The large addition to the early wording adds to the comfort of the individuals for whom the revelation was originally given who were promised of the Lord to “drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth” and others who “my Father hath given me out of the world.”

Besides listing Moroni, Elias [Gabriel], John the Baptist, Elijah, and other patriarchs, Michael (or Adam), the names of Peter, James, and John who held “the keys of your ministry” are also to join those who would partake of the fruit of the vine with Jesus. Peter, James, and John now first appear in a Church record. Though there is no known account of the Peter, James, and John

being sent to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, the names of the three apostles were added to an 1830 revelatory message after May 16, 1835. The redaction makes sense in advancing the idea of priesthood keys. Moroni holds the “keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim,” and others having their keys committed to men on the earth. Each key would help in the restoration of all things.

The 1835 printed text is not the message presented by an angel in the voice of Jesus given in September 1830. No church member is known to worry that this revelation represented a new tradition of changing earlier messages in the light of new understanding since the Church had its own quorum of twelve apostles.

Book of Commandments chapter 28 “was greatly expanded when it was printed in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. The material added to the 1835 version included updated and expanded doctrine on priesthood keys that was not known at the time the revelation was originally dictated.”

Section 75; LDS D&C 78; source, BCR, 145-46, in part

This revelation given in Kirtland, Ohio on March 1, 1832, included pseudonyms, so the heading for the 1835 D&C said: “The order given of the Lord to Enoch, for the purpose of establishing the poor.” While this is not a revelation given to ancient Enoch it gave the impression in the heading that it was. The words “Jesus Christ to” were changed to “the Son Ahman.” The largest insertion mentioned the Lord God “who hath established the foundations of Adam-on-di-Ahman; who hath appointed Michael, your prince, and established his feet, and set him upon high; and given to him the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is without beginning of days or end of life.” It is possible that the addition was on a pinned note in the BCR. This addition is of interest regarding the place of Adam in Latter-day Saint theology. W. W. Phelps shortly after this composed a hymn titled “Adam-on-di-Ahman.”

The above historical examples help establish the original texts and shows us how changes were made to those revelations. The textual history of the revelations as a living document shows them changing and growing. Every stage of the development provides us with valuable insights. However, the earliest texts are essential in uncovering the original intentions and meanings of the revelations and of the historical circumstances surrounding them. A better text leads to a greater appreciation of the early history of the Restoration movement.

Besides revising his own commandments and revelations Joseph Smith also revised the Holy Bible, and the first edition of the Book of Mormon. It should not be any surprise that Smith revised the early story of his visionary experiences. This is evident in the accounts of a number of persons who heard him tell about his early life. At times events were modified, omitted, and expanded. There are basically four Church accounts that come from Joseph Smith, (1) 1832 recorded in a record book by Frederick G. Williams and Joseph Smith; (2) 1834-35 Oliver Cowdery letters, containing information that came from Joseph Smith; (3) 1835 account written into Joseph Smith’s Journal; and (4) 1838 History of Joseph Smith, commenced in 1838 and copied by a clerk in 1839, and considered Smith’s official journal or manuscript history.

Joseph Smith told in his 1838-39 history about an excitement on the subject of religion (a revival) taking place before his first vision. He placed it in the spring of 1820 before his brother Alvin Smith’s death in 1823. He said that he was told that all churches were an abomination. Members of his family joined the Presbyterian Church because of this religious excitement. Later an

angel appeared to him and gave him instructions and he said that he eventually recovered a religious and historical record which was written on plates of gold. Like the revelatory messages that were changed the early story was revised. An examination into the various accounts provides us with an insight into why changes were made to the events in his early life.

The first published history of early Mormonism was written by Oliver Cowdery and printed in the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*. This consisted of a series of eight letters to W. W. Phelps. The third letter explains what occurred in the fifteenth year of Joseph Smith's life in 1820:

One Mr. Lane, a presiding Elder of the Methodist church, visited Palmyra, and vicinity. Elder Lane was a tallented man possessing a good share of literary endowments, and apparent humility. There was a great awakening, or excitement raised on the subject of religion, and much enquiry for the word of life. Large additions were made to the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches.

Cowdery continued, "In this general strife for followers, his mother, one sister, and two of his natural brothers, were persuaded to unite with the Presbyterians." In his fourth letter Oliver Cowdery says there "was an error in the type" and corrects the date to Smith's seventeenth year which he says "would bring the date down to the year 1823." The excitement or revival was said to have occurred before a personage or angel appeared in vision and revealed to Smith the location of the gold plates. Peter Crawley wrote, "Whatever was intended in Letter III, certain problems persist. Joseph Smith's seventeenth year was 1822, not 1823. And Rev. George Lane was most prominent in the Palmyra area in 1824-25. It is conceivable that Cowdery shifted the date after realizing he had introduced Lane at the wrong time."

When Joseph Smith described his first vision in his 1838-39 account, he dated it to the spring of 1820 and affirmed that this vision was the result of a religious revival—"an unusual excitement on the subject of religion." Smith stated that the excitement that stirred him also led his mother (Lucy Mack Smith), two brothers (Hyrum and Samuel Harrison), and one sister (Sophronia) to join the Presbyterian Church, while he was drawn to the Methodists. An examination of newspaper accounts, religious periodicals, church records, and personal narratives shows that there were no significant gains in church memberships or any other signs of excitement or revival in Palmyra in 1820. There was a stirring and momentous revival there with all the features that Joseph Smith's history mentions during the fall and winter of 1824-25.

At the beginning of his manuscript history Joseph Smith stated:

In this history I will present the various events in relation to this Church in truth and righteousness as they have transpired, or as they at present exist, being now the eighth year since the organization of said Church.

The Palmyra excitement or revival is the backdrop for Joseph Smith's first vision. This history is a theological or faith account telling the events "as they have transpired, or as they at present exist." David Thelen wrote concerning memory, "What is important is that the memory

be authentic for the person at the moment of construction, not that it be an accurate depiction of a past moment." Another historian, Marvin S. Hill, concluded that the 1838-39 account was "streamlined for publication," making the story "more logical and compelling."

As Joseph Smith explained there was an "excitement on the subject of religion" that preceded his visionary experience. Since the Palmyra revival occurred during the period 1824-25 it creates a problem by including the first vision at a period of time after the revival occurred. Since Lucy Mack Smith and three of her children joined the Palmyra Presbyterian Church during the excitement, their affiliation calls into question whether the message in Joseph Smith's first vision included the information about the churches being an abomination. From Joseph's 1832 and 1835 accounts it appears that his quest was for a personal forgiveness of sins and that he received mercy and was forgiven.

The account written by Smith in 1832 a revival was not the motivation factor for his first vision and receiving forgiveness of his sins. Likewise in his 1835 telling he mentioned "a personage appear[e]d in the midst, of this pillar of flame which was spread all around, and yet nothing consumed, another personage soon appear[e]d like unto the first, he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee, he testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; <and I saw many angels in this vision>." Once it is realized that the revival and the first vision are two separate events we begin to get closer to the personal experience of Joseph Smith in his religious quest. The 1838-39 history included the following information, "I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the Personage who addressed me said that all their Creeds were an abomination in his sight."

How much of Smith's 1838-39 account recalls his feelings near the time of this vision is hard to determine. But when other events are taken into consideration, it appears that using the word "abomination" in reference to the creeds is language too strong, especially since members of Smith's family joined the local Presbyterian Church after 1820.

When it comes to Smith's second vision about gold plates and providing the wording of the messenger it is clear that the words are post-1823. Using Joseph's story as a guide, we can see more clearly how the words in his history fit 1838 rather than pre-1827. The reason for this is that in 1836 Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery reported a vision of the Old Testament prophet Elijah. A comparison of the words said to be from Malachi 4:5, that the priesthood would be revealed by the hand of Elijah, with the Book of Mormon and Bible revision, suggests that they would not have been spoken in the context of 1823. As will be explained, this indicates that the retelling of the historical context and words spoken by the angel of the second vision does not have to coincide with history. It is a sure sign that we are dealing with a theological issue and not a historical event.

Joseph Smith dictated his longest (1838) account of what he said he had repeated many times to family and friends. Joseph stated that in September 1823 a personage appeared to him at night in his bedroom. This personage (named Nephi in the history) told him that there was a book deposited in a nearby hill written in an unreadable language upon gold plates and that this record contained an account of the former inhabitants of America. A vision opened to his mind and he saw where the plates were deposited.

The messenger repeated his message to Smith twice that night. These visions led Joseph to find the gold plates in the morning. He removed them from the ground four years later in September 1827. Joseph Smith then dictated the contents of the gold record to his scribes. This personage is represented to have quoted Old Testament passages in instructing Joseph. The messenger quoted Malachi 4:5 as: "Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

Is it correct that the personage would have spoken these words in 1823? If these words were not spoken in the vision, then their absence would confirm that we are dealing with a theological story. It means that those actual words were not spoken during the visionary experience. It is a story of faith to those who embrace it.

A simple examination makes it clear that the angel would not have spoken these words in 1823 but at a time beyond the publication of the Book of Mormon. There would have been no reason to quote the passage differently. Sidney Rigdon in 1830 was looked upon as a preparer like John the Baptist to prepare the way "before Elijah which should come."

When one of the early commandments received on September 4, 1830, was prepared for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, wording was added relating to biblical individuals who would drink wine with the returned Savior, indicating that Elijah held priesthood keys with the words, "and also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse."

On April 3, 1836, it is recorded that Elijah the prophet appeared in a glorious vision to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and committed to them "the keys of this dispensation." Looking back to 1836 Smith explained that the promise of Elijah coming to reveal priesthood keys was a fulfillment of a promise made in connection to the time he first learned about the Book of Mormon plates. The added words relating to the future promise of obtaining the priesthood from the hand of Elijah are an anachronism. Joseph perceived his 1823 experience as an important indicator of his prophetic role. As he retold the story to family, acquaintances, and eventually to church members, the initial experience took on special characteristics.

Another project was a Bible revision. The majority of the work took place from June 1830 to July 1833. This was called a "new translation" and was for church members.

With more openness in recent years, it is easier to understand that revelatory texts along with the founding stories have been modified. It is no longer useful to hold onto outdated views. It serves no purpose and besides how important are events generations ago? Many of the key documents have been altered. What one generation considered correct is said to be incorrect or disowned. Mistakes have been made and do not need to be repeated. Here are some examples of changes made that show the human element at work.

By May 1833 additional historical and theological redactions were being considered within the church leadership. Some issues included changing the requirements of the church's law of consecration to give all to the bishop. The early text of a February 9, 1831 revelation stressed that one was to "consecrate all thy property, that which thou hath unto me with a covenant & a deed which cannot be broken." The altered portion weakened the requirement to

demand only that one "consecrate of thy properties," leaving the percentage--all or part--ambiguous. In fact, it seemed to imply that the amount might be a matter of personal preference.

Changes were made by church leaders in May 1834 prior to the departure of the Camp of Israel (Zion's Camp) proposed to redeem Zion in Missouri. This included changing the church's revealed name from the Church of Christ to Church of the Latter Day Saints and by extension the location of the April 6, 1830 meeting.

Even though the church was not yet in existence five years modifications were made in revelations, first appearing in the reprint *Evening and Morning Star*. By January 1835 what had been voted on at the first conference held in June 1830 and known as the Articles and Covenants of the church, was added to. This included rewording of the baptismal prayer, adding priesthood offices that commenced afterwards such as bishop, high priests, high counselors and president of the high priesthood.

The publication of the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants included many alterations in the second part titled Covenants and Commandments of the Lord. The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants could be considered the first church handbook of instructions. Most church histories use the modified revelations in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants as their base text.

Since the altered texts of revelations are used these histories are less dependable for accuracy than what might be provided by reference to the earlier texts. Reliable church histories would require information contained in the original revelations for that early period when their recorded events took place.

Revisions like these in the early revelations were only the start of a revamp of the important story regarding Joseph Smith and the gold plates of the Book of Mormon. Early missionaries heard about an angel revealing the location of a record in a hill not too far from the Smith home. Joseph Smith talked about his experience and had it recorded in 1832. Later Oliver Cowdery, in a series of published letters, expanded in some respects the message of the angel.

Mormonism started with Joseph Smith, the stories he repeated, the revelations he proclaimed. His first recorded revelation gave him a warning: "how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men."

How one reacts to learning new information is always an individual choice. Most persons want to be told in the best possible way what occurred. As others have said bring on the truth because nothing is of higher value.

To understand Mormonism, it is necessary to know something about its founder Joseph Smith Jr. His stories, activities, and teachings are the foundation of this movement. From Smith comes the religious authority for all fragments of the Latter Day Saint tradition. They believe the starting proposition that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. The Book of Mormon is a Christian work and is considered produced by Smith by divine assistance. This book established him as a prophet and seer.

Joseph Smith organized the Church of Christ in Manchester, New York on April 6, 1830. The largest church among believers in his prophetic calling is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or Mormon) with headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. There are many smaller churches who believe in the Book of Mormon. Some accept portions of Joseph Smith's revelations and reject other teachings.

Theologically the teachings of the founding prophet moved away from the Book of Mormon and by the Nauvoo period included ideas that were a different or a special form of Christianity or even of early Mormonism. The doctrine of the Trinity for example started from belief in one God. It underwent transformation to two Gods or personages, then three Gods with multitude Gods before them. Monotheism at first and polytheism is still the higher belief of the religion.

It was said within the Joseph Smith Sr. (1771-1840) family since 1823 that a record would be forthcoming. Later a story was in circulation regarding how the book was obtained from a repository in the ground. Part of the early story was that the location of the record or plates was revealed through the medium of a stone. Special instructions had to be followed in order to retrieve the record from its hiding place. What follows is a basic outline of elements to the first telling of the story. Later terminology like Urim and Thummim is omitted since it was not in use at the time of telling.

Joseph Smith Sr. believed in treasures supernaturally buried in the earth which could be obtained only through magical rituals. His son Joseph was also involved in searching for buried treasures. Martin Harris (1783-1875) heard from family members and Joseph Jr. that where the gold plates were located was revealed through a stone. Called by some a seer stone.

In the fall of 1825 Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. traveled to southern New York and northern Pennsylvania in search for hidden treasure. There was a group of treasure seekers who at one time stayed at the home of Isaac and Elizabeth Hale, parents of Emma Hale who Joseph Jr. would eventually marry.

The Smith family had made arrangements to purchase the approximately 100 acres of land where the family had settled. Joseph Sr. and Jr. did not obtain any valuable treasure like gold or silver during the time they searched with Josiah Stowell in 1825. While spending their time away from their Manchester home they lost the one hundred acres of land that the family planned to own. The land was purchased soon after in December 1825 by Lemuel Durfee Sr.

While Joseph Jr. worked in southern New York for Josiah Stowell, a complaint was made against Smith. This occurred in March 1826 before Justice of the Peace Albert Neeley. Joseph Jr. was examined and said that he “had been at the house of Josiah Stowel in Bainbridge most of time since; had small part of time been employed in looking for mines, but the major part had been employed by said Stowel on his farm, and going to school. That he had a certain stone which he had occasionally looked at to determine where hidden treasures in the bowels of the earth were; that he professed to tell in this manner where gold mines were a distance underground, and had looked for Mr. Stowel[1] several times, and had informed him where he could find these treasure[s], and Mr. Stowel[1] had been engaged in digging for them. That at Palmyra he pretended to tell by looking at this stone where coined money was buried in Pennsylvania, and while at Palmyra had frequently ascertained in that way where lost property was of various kinds; that he had occasionally been in the habit of looking through this stone to find lost property for three years, but of late had pretty much given it up on account of its injuring his health, especially his eyes, making them sore; that he did not solicit business of this kind, and had always rather declined having anything to do with this business.”

The Justice of the Peace found Joseph Jr. guilty, but he was not fined.

While Smith worked for Joseph Knight Sr. it was said that a personage had previously revealed the location in a hill not far from the Smith home where a record could be found written on gold plates. This was told to Joseph Jr. by a treasure guardian or angel.

Joseph Knight Sr. (1772-1847) believed in Smith's story and later baptized in June 1830, wrote in his recollection what he heard:

From thence he [Joseph Smith] went to the hill where he was informed the Record was and found no trouble for it appeared plain as tho[ugh] he was acquainted with the place it was so plain in the vision that he had of the place he went and found the place and opened it and found a plane Box he oncovered [uncovered] it and found the Book and took it out and laid [it] Down By his side and that he would Cover the <place> over again thinkinking [thinking] there might be Something else here But he was told to take the Book and go right away

and after he had Covered the place he turned round to take <the> Book and it was not there and he was astonished that the Book was gone he thot he would look in the place again and see if it had not got Back again he had heard People tell of such things and he opened the Box and Behold the Book was ~~gone~~ there he took hold of it to take it out again and Behold he Could not Stur the Book any more then he Could the mount[a]in

he exclaimed why Cant I Stur this Book[?] and he was answer[e]d you have not Done rite you Should have took the Book and a gone right away you cant have it now

Joseph Says when Can I have it[?] the answer was the 22nt Day of September next if you Bring the right person with you Joseph Says who is the right person[?] the answer was your oldest Brother

But before September Came his oldest Brother Died then he was Disap[po]inted and did not [k]now what to do But when the 22nt Day of September Came he went to the place and the personage appeared and told him he Could not have it now But the 22nt Day of September nex[t] he mite [might] have the Book if he Brot with him the right person

Joseph Says who is the right Person[?] the answer was you will know then he looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale[,]Daughter of old Mr Hail [Hale] of Pensylvany a girl that he had Seen Before for he had Bin Down there Before with me (Joseph Knight Reminiscences, LDS archives)

Other individuals heard the same basic story. They include Willard Chase (1798-1871) who heard the story in 1827 from Joseph Smith Sr. Fayette Lapham (1794-1874) who recalled talking to Joseph Smith Sr. about 1829-1830. His published account was printed forty years later in 1870.

In 1884 Lorenzo Saunders (1811-1888) was interviewed by William H. Kelley. Saunders was a teenager at the time he heard the story. The interview occurred over fifty years later. And Catherine Smith Salisbury (1813-1900), sister to Joseph Jr., in 1895 remembered part of the story.

In summary, the forgoing recollections included the following topics relating to magical treasure seeking practices:

**Treasure Spirit gives Commands**

To receive the treasure, you had to do exactly what you were told.

**Break the Spell: Bring someone with him to the Hill**

Had to have someone accompany Joseph Smith to receive the object.

**Glass Looking and a Hat**

Joseph Jr. looked in a hat at a glass or stone to find out who to bring to the hill.

**Had to be Married and bring wife to the Hill**

He would not get the treasure unless he was married. He married Emma Hale.

Joseph Smith Jr.'s religious accounts omitted the treasure seeking content about how to get the plates. Rather than trying to obtain the plates each year by following the instructions Smith mentioned that he was told at the beginning of his quest there would be a four-year period before he could obtain the plates.

**1832 Account**

The angel told Joseph Smith "in his own due time thou shalt obtain them." Nothing about being told to bring a person with him.

**1838-39 Account**

Joseph Smith in this account, the instructions to bring someone with him was again omitted. He was told to wait four years. He did not tell about taking the plates from the repository and laying them on the ground, but was forbidden "to take them out."

I made an attempt to take them out but was forbidden by the messenger and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would untill four years from that time, but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so untill the time should come for obtaining the plates.

Rodger I. Anderson commented on why such details were omitted from Smith's historical accounts:

“His earlier story of the mobile plates which vanished and reappeared so mysteriously was not mentioned because of its similarity to the elusive treasures he was accused of hunting; the spirit's command to bring Alvin to the hill and after Alvin's death, Emma, was deleted because it smacked more of ritualistic magic than religion "pure and undefiled"; and Joseph Knight's recollection that Smith had "looked in his glass" to find the right person was discarded because of its resemblance to the glass looking charge he had been convicted of in 1826. Smith had learned from bitter experience that not all regarded such activities as divine.” (*Journal of Pastoral Practice* 4 [1980]:98)

If there were no plates then the story of finding them, having custody of them and translating from them would not be factual and accurate. This short study will examine problems relating to real plates not being relied upon to help produce the religious work, the Book of Mormon.

The text of the Book of Mormon relates that its contents were engraved upon plates of gold. These plates were used by Mormon and his son Moroni to write the final version from which Joseph Smith obtained the events recorded for the Book of Mormon.

The claim that these plates were used when Joseph Smith "translated" has major problems. Martin Harris, who had been a scribe from April to June 1828, did not see the plates during this time. When he wanted to be shown them in March 1829, he was promised a view of them. Joseph Smith wrote that Oliver Cowdery saw them in vision prior to meeting him in April 1829. Emma Smith, also a scribe, did not see them.

The problem becomes this: authentic documents could be shown to anyone whether a believer or non-believer. If the plates existed and were exhibited this would not necessarily convert anyone since most individuals would probably want to know if they were translated correctly. By viewing the plates no one would have sound reason to doubt their existence and the story of how they were obtained would at least be a good possibility. Not all of Joseph Smith's associates were shown the plates, many later recalled they handled something which was contained in a box or under a cloth or in a pillowcase, but they did not see the actual artifact. Why do you include a testimony in a book which asks you to accept the book by faith?

Do purported ancient documents need to be in actual existence to produce a text? Can a person render the correct meaning from an ancient document without being fluent with language skills? The Book of Mormon is one example where no physical document was needed. Another example during the time period when the Book of Mormon was produced is a parchment written by John the Beloved. Though it was claimed to have been written anciently it was not present for Joseph Smith to see. In fact, if the document was in the Greek language, it would not matter since Smith did not have knowledge of the language. Joseph Smith said that he translated the parchment, and he also said he translated the gold plates.

The problem is with Joseph Smith's story. The evidence from all sources points to there being no ancient plates in existence contrary to the story told by Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon text is not based upon any ancient record found by Smith.

Many scholars have realized that there are problems regarding the claim that it is a history of peoples of ancient America that would place the Book of Mormon and its people in a Christian setting.

The Book of Mormon not only Christianizes the Old Testament portion of the work but incorporates an interpretation that goes far beyond what the biblical text says. Most modern versions of the Bible permit the Old Testament to stand on its own and do not compromise its integrity by transforming it into a Christian product.

By dictating the Book of Mormon Joseph Smith Jr. expressed some of his religious beliefs through the text of the book. A few examples are: (1) America is a promised land, a land of liberty, a Zion; (2) the Bible was brought to America; (3) the Bible was brought to the Indians; (4) the ordinance of baptism is to be performed by immersion; (5) infants are not to be baptized; (6) the name of the church is to be the Church of Christ; (7) Hebrew/Israelite origin of American Indians; (8) the book of Isaiah was important to the Indians; (9) visit of Christ to America after his crucifixion; (10) the Sermon on the Mount used to help document this event; (11) there is one God; (12) current Christian churches were corrupt and have false teachers and doctrines; (13) a New Jerusalem is to be built in America with the help of the Indians; (14) Christianity existed in America prior to the birth of Christ; (15) revival experiences; (16) the Bible has been tampered with; (17) Isaiah 29 a prediction of the Book of Mormon; (18) a seer to be raised up by the name of Joseph, after his father's name. These are some of the many ideas embodied in the text of the 1830 Book of Mormon. Remember the Bible was used in the production and composition of the Book of Mormon.

While some have considered the Book of Mormon to be an ancient record, we today can look at the book considering modern research. It is because the Book of Mormon's historical, religious, and doctrinal ideas are known to be drawn from a nineteenth century setting rather than an ancient setting that a new position can be made. The teachings of the Book of Mormon, archeology, geography, Hill Cumorah, gold plates, and angel all go together.

The modifications to Joseph Smith's revelations, in his history and in the story regarding the gold plates have been presented. This helps in identifying the need to assist others in understanding the fuller historical evaluation that has been researched and published.

### **The Bible in the Book of Mormon**

The Bible was used in the composition of the Book of Mormon. The book states that it was in the language of the Egyptians. If you don't know the language you are translating, you cannot translate. A person would also need to know the English language. Remember – translation is the most misused word in Mormonism.

No one translates a real language by looking at a seer stone or spectacles in a hat. To translate a person needs to correctly know the language he or she is translating. There is no shortcut method to spending the time to learn a language before making a translation.

It appears that at times Joseph Smith would read from the King James Bible. The plates would not be in his possession but away from the building where he was composing the Book of Mormon. If the plates were not needed to dictate the writing of the book, then an important inquiry would be why Smith would need an ancient record in the first place.

It is a faith story. Joseph Smith claimed to have found buried gold plates with writing engraved on them which he supernaturally interpreted by placing a stone in a hat. Using a hat indicates that Smith does not need plates. This method was like some who pretend to find treasures hidden in the ground in the same way. To write the Book of Mormon a person does not need physical plates. The scribes who wrote the text of the religious book did not say they saw Smith using the plates while taking dictation.

Joseph Smith promised to give up glass looking. He also promised others that they would see the gold plates. But no non-believer ever saw physical plates. No plates are needed if you can obtain the text by revelation. It is a matter of religious faith if a physical artifact is needed. If you change the text of revelations, you can change your story. The early story was told in a treasure seeking content. Nothing of value was ever found, no gold or silver.

If something of value was found there would be no need for Martin Harris. Harris mortgaged his farm for \$3,000 to have the five thousand copies of the Book of Mormon printed. The idea was to sell copies for \$1.75 and the farm would not have to be sold. The price was lowered to \$1.25 but some books were given away. The book costs .60 to print and bind. Joseph Smith was the author and proprietor of the Book of Mormon. As such Smith received a revelation to sell a copyright to his book in Canada, but no sale was made.

Readers acquainted with the Bible know how to compare it with the Book of Mormon. It is impossible to identify and locate Book of Mormon cities. The central event in the book is having Jesus teach but the words come from the Bible, especially the New Testament.