

Alexander L. Baugh and Andrew H. Hedges, editors. *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York and Pennsylvania*. Provo, Utah: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 2002. v, 240 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, index. Paper: \$12.95; ISBN 0-8425-2537-8.

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Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New York and Pennsylvania is the third in a series of essays published by Brigham Young University's Department of Church History and Doctrine. As the introduction states, the essays are based upon papers presented during a tour of LDS Church historical sites in June 1999. The ten essays are "separate papers, from separate authors, on discrete topics in early Church history" (v). Dale L. Berge's study included in this book was not presented on the tour. The essays will be reviewed in the order they appear.

"Presbyterianism in New York State to 1838" by Roger R. Keller summarizes Presbyterianism in New York to 1838. One fact not generally known which Keller describes is the relationship of Congregationalists and Presbyterians (15-19). The paper shows how a segment of the Presbyterian Church moved into the revivalism in New York State.

While the Geneva Presbytery membership figures for 1808-32 is of regional interest (25), no primary research was done for individual congregations and problems with their reported numbers. The interested history student should notice that the membership figures for the Presbyterian Church in Palmyra (of which Lucy Mack, Hyrum, Samuel Harrison, and Sophronia Smith were members) were not considered. If we look at the local church where Smith family members affiliated, it would have shown a local revival for 1824-25, the time most congenial with their association with the Presbyterian denomination.

"Early Church History Sites along the Susquehanna River: A Photographic Essay" by Craig J. Ostler is the only essay dealing with Pennsylvania. It contains one map and seventeen photographs (only three of them dated). His essay is a simple recital of events along the Susquehanna River relating to Latter-day history sites. Since it is a photo essay, he does not cite early historic documents.

The location of the Church's organizational meeting is the traditional one of Fayette (29, 42), rather than the more probable site in Manchester. Joseph and Emma Smith left Harmony, Pennsylvania, in early September 1830, rather than in August (42-43). Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery's trip to preach in Colesville, New York, is mistakenly dated as late May 1829, rather than June 1830 (37).

"Lucy Smith's History and Abner Cole's Piracy of Extracts from the Book of Mormon" by Andrew H. Hedges is one of the most interesting essays in the book. Hedges attempts to determine how accurate Lucy Mack Smith's account about *The Reflector*, a Palmyra newspaper that published extracts of the Book of Mormon text. Lucy Smith is not clear about how many issues of the newspaper were published that contains Book of Mormon excerpts. She may not have known, since the editor, Abner Cole (alias Obadiah Dogberry), distributed *The Reflector* through the mail (58).

In her memoir Lucy Mack Smith describes encounters between Cole and Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, and Joseph Smith Jr. Since she was not present, the information comes from others

who were also quite possibly over-excited in their retellings. Lucy tells of Joseph Smith Jr. making two trips from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to deal with Book of Mormon printing problems. The trip that seems most likely to have occurred was concerning Cole's publication. The other reported trip related to a problem in local citizens boycotting the book's publication. Hedges did not report on this aspect of Lucy's history except in an endnote (67 note 39).

Martin Harris mortgaged his farm in August 1829. Oliver Cowdery, writing from Manchester on December 28, 1829, mentions that Joseph Sr. would be making a trip to Harmony. Exactly when Father Smith made the trip (before, during, or after the printing of extracts from the Book of Mormon) is a question that Hedges tries to resolve. Hedges affirms that Oliver Cowdery and Hyrum Smith discovered Cole working on his newspaper before printing the first extract (62).

Unfortunately, Hedges omits relevant items that would give a fuller picture. That there was some concern within the Smith and Harris families about the proceeds from selling the Book of Mormon when printed and bound is evident. Joseph Smith Sr. signed an agreement with Martin Harris (January 19, 1830) relating to sharing the profits of the book. When Joseph Jr. arrived from Pennsylvania, he reported receiving a revelation (ca. January 1830) on the possibility of selling the book's copyright in Canada and having the Smith family retain what was left over after paying for the book's publication. What is clear is that this revelation failed and no sale was made.¹

The January 13 issue of *The Reflector* mentions the title of the book "as appears from the copy-right." Since the Smiths had passed out a number of printed sheets freely to those who asked for a copy, it may be inaccurate to say, that Cole had obtained his material illegally. It is true, however, that he did not receive permission from Joseph Smith Jr., the copyright holder, to republish them. The third of Cole's three installments appeared in the January 22, 1830, issue, thus providing an approximate date for Joseph Jr.'s confrontation with Abner Cole and threat of legal action.

"The Early Latter-day Saints in Livingston County, New York" written by Cynthia Doxey, quotes Edwin Holden's 1892 recollection of an 1831 meeting held in a barn in Genesee in which he saw Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. Holden may have been mistaken and the meeting may have taken place in 1834 (73-74). Edwin Holden may have been referring to the March 1834 meetings held in Genesee, Livingston County (included in what was known as the Genesee country) while Rigdon and Smith were there.

"The Huntington Family: New York Beginnings" by Robert C. Freeman and Ray L. Huntington tells about the conversion of the William and Zina Huntington family in Jefferson County. Their neighbor, Joseph Wakefield, traveled to Seneca County, where Joseph Smith lived, and returned with a copy of the Book of Mormon (95), which he shared with the Huntingtons. In 1835 William and Zina Huntington were baptized. A photograph caption of William's ordination certificate is misdated September 25, 1835, while the document and transcript read September 3. This license was signed by Hyrum Smith and David Whitmer (96).

"The Knights at Castle Garden: Latter-day Saint Immigration Agents in New York" by Fred E. Woods is a good article explaining that the "knights" were Church agents who helped the Saints arriving at the port of immigration in New York City. He also gives a brief history of these agents' role. Agents included John Taylor, Thomas B. H. Stenhouse, George Q. Cannon, Nathaniel V.

¹ Discussed in my *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 372-74.

Jones, Horace S. Eldredge, William C. Staines, Thomas Taylor, and James H. Hart.

David F. Boone wrote "Palmyra Revisited: The New York Mission of Willard W. and Rebecca P. Bean, 1915-1939." Willard Bean was, for twenty-four years, a special missionary to the Eastern States Mission. He resided in the Smith frame home in Manchester, New York, and farmed the property of approximately one hundred acres. He enjoyed showing visitors the historic sites, frequently abandoning his farm chores to do so. Alvin, the son of Willard and Rebecca Bean, also often explained the significance of the area and the Restoration story. Sometimes the visitors attempted to pay Alvin Bean for his time:

Money was scarce, especially to a young boy on the farm, but he would reluctantly refuse the reward offered him. On one occasion, Alvin asked his father's counsel on the matter. His father told him he "did right in refusing but [he] didn't need to hold out [his] hand while [he] was doing it." On another occasion, Alvin reportedly returned the nickel given him for his guide service and asked the visitor for a dime instead. Not really trying to be a shrewd business man, the boy later explained his actions by suggesting that he wanted to pay his tithing on the income, but he didn't know how to figure ten percent on a nickel (134).

Willard Bean was instrumental in the purchase of the following historic properties for the Church: the Hill Cumorah, the Peter Whitmer Sr. farm, the Martin Harris farm, and sixteen acres adjacent to the Joseph Smith Sr. farm. Over 30,000 trees were planted by "Willard, his sons, hired men, missionaries, Church members, and other volunteers" on the Hill Cumorah (143).

"Harold and the Hill: Harold I. Hansen and the Hill Cumorah Pageant, 1937-1977" was written by Mary Jane Woodger. This famous pageant began as an Eastern States Mission attempt to interest potential converts in Mormonism (158). Even after its supervision was transferred out of direct mission responsibility, pageant participants considered it a sort of "mini-mission." Except for six years (1942-47) the pageant has continued to the present time. Rain has prevented the play from being performed a few times.

"The 1982 Archaeological Investigation at the Joseph Smith Sr. Log House, Palmyra, New York" is by Dale L. Berge. Before Joseph and Alvin Smith articulated for one hundred acres of land in Manchester Township, they resided in a log house in Palmyra Township on property owned by Samuel Jennings. A highway survey states that Joseph Smith Sr. lived there.²

Alvin commenced building a permanent frame house for his parents before his death in November 1823. The Smith family had moved into the new structure by 1825 and lived there until April 1829. Berge explains an archeological dig conducted at the site in 1982 that unearthed 2,469 artifacts. Seventy-seven percent were ceramics (193). Several tables list the artifacts. Of particular interest was a button from a uniform of the Fourth Regiment of Riflemen between 1792 and 1796 (202). Also recovered was a clay pipe with a stem hole measuring 1/16 of an inch that was dated between 1750 and 1800 (205). The article mentions that Lucy Mack Smith smoked tobacco in a clay pipe. The text indicates that Orsamus Turner refers to Mother Smith loading her pipe with tobacco. The endnote, which is correct, cites Thomas Gregg's book *The Prophet of Palmyra*,

² H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 4, 10-11 note 9.

quoting the statement of Stephen H. Harding, who visited the Smiths in the summer of 1829.³ These two artifacts therefore date to before the Smiths' occupancy.

Berge mentions the "boyhood home-site of Joseph Smith Jr. where he lived between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five years (1819-1830)" (177). Actually, Joseph and Emma were living in Harmony Township, Pennsylvania, in northern Pennsylvania from December 1827 to September 1830, except for family visits, completing the Book of Mormon, and meetings at the Peter Whitmer Sr. home in Fayette, New York.

Veneese C. Nelson wrote the last essay, "The Palmyra Temple: A Significant Link to LDS Church History." It describes the purchase of the Smith farm and other properties in the Palmyra/Manchester area and describes the authorization and construction of the Palmyra Temple. It took less than a year to complete and dedicate this sacred structure (226), whose construction is described as a miracle of miracles.

These essays cover a wide range of topics and a broad chronological scope that may be of interest for readers of New York LDS history. While the work contains some factual errors and a few incorrect dates, it is refreshing to have this compilation made available to a larger audience.

³ Reproduced in Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996-2003), 3:159. Harding wrote this recollection in February 1882.