

Larry C. Porter. *Sacred Places: New York and Pennsylvania: A Comprehensive Guide to Early LDS Historical Sites*. Volume 2. LaMar C. Berrett, general editor. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000. xi, 347 pp. Photographs, maps, bibliography, index. Cloth: \$24.95; ISBN 1-57008-667-2. Paper: \$17.95; ISBN 1-57008-668-0

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*New York and Pennsylvania* is the second book in a projected six-volume series called *Sacred Places*. LaMar Berrett and Larry Porter propose "to bring the history and geography of the early period of the Church to life" (vii) by locating and describing sites of local and national import. Written for a Latter-day Saint audience, the book is organized for those who like to visit Church sites and for local Church members who are interested in historic places in the areas where they reside. For armchair travelers, *New York and Pennsylvania* provides a modern guide to people and places who had an impact on the Restoration movement. Included are helpful maps to the sites and over 150 black-and-white photographs.

The editors have assumed that most readers will be using the book as a research tool or focusing on the sights in just one area, for it repeats many facts that are applicable to more than one site. Duplicate photographs occur of Martin Harris (93, 189) and Sidney Rigdon (298, 303).

This book is a valuable contribution. Still, it contains some errors. The historic sites treated hold an important place to students of Mormon history; presenting especially accurate descriptions of these places is important for our understanding of how the historical documents of the period relate to these sites.

The treatment of historical sites in New York State constitutes the largest segment of the book (1-255), and is divided into sections for New York City, Eastern New York, Central New York, and western New York (Palmyra, the Sacred Grove, the Smith farm in Manchester, and the Hill Cumorah). For Pennsylvania the largest section is on Susquehanna County where Harmony Township (now Oakland) is located. An introduction to both states is included.

The book's two largest individual sections are devoted to New York City and western New York. The essay summarizing the history of the LDS Church in New York City is quite interesting, and the descriptive section that follows deals with more than ninety sites. This section takes up a fourth of the book and contains much that is worth knowing. It is arranged in a way suitable to serve as a guide for a walking or auto tour. Nearly two-thirds of the sites discussed are non-LDS sites, such as the New York Stock Exchange and the American Bible Society. The LDS sites include homes and workplaces of members, even though most of the nineteenth-century buildings are no longer in existence. The list also includes the sites where Church newspapers like *The Prophet* and *The Mormon* were published and the dock from which the *Brooklyn* departed for California. The location of the print shop where David W. Rogers published *A Collection of Sacred Hymns* is mentioned (42). Berrett and Porter did not mention that the hymnal was considered an unauthorized edition.

Of particular interest is the machine shop of Wandle Mace (30-33), who joined the Church in 1837. Some of this information is also repeated in the discussion on his home (75-78). Mace, a New Yorker and a former Presbyterian, was studying Mormonism when his son became deathly ill.

"When Pratt arrived at the Mace home, neighbors and relatives were already there to comfort the Maces, expecting the child to die. Parley first prayed, then he asked Wandle Mace to 'lay on hands' with him, which he did. Parley rebuked the disease in the name of Jesus Christ, and the next day by 10:00 A.M., the child was well and playful" (76). Mace joined the church and became the president of the New York City Branch.

*New York and Pennsylvania* contains research relating to the hundred-acre farm on Lot 1 in Farmington Township (named Manchester in 1822). Included is recent research on land agent Zachariah Seymour (201, 235) who received power of attorney to sell land in 1820. Shortly afterward, Joseph Smith Sr. and Alvin Smith entered into an agreement to purchase this Manchester land on an installment plan called articling. The Smith family later had a frame house built but had to move out of it in 1829. The book states that Joseph and Lucy Smith lived for several months in their former log house in Palmyra Township, which was occupied by Hyrum Smith (146; see also 192, 198-99, 201, 215). This is incorrect, since the house where Hyrum resided was actually in Manchester. The Smith family lived in four locations in Palmyra/Manchester: a house in the village of Palmyra, a log house outside the village on Samuel Jennings's property; the log cabin that the Smiths built as part of improving their hundred acres, which lay in what became Manchester; and the frame house also built on their hundred acres in Manchester.

The hundred-acre farm that Joseph Smith Sr. and Alvin Smith articed for in 1820 has become an important religious shrine where some guides tell visitors that Angel Moroni appeared to young Joseph in the Manchester frame house. Porter quotes President Gordon B. Hinckley as saying that this visitation occurred instead in the upstairs room of the log house (now reconstructed) in Palmyra (196-98). But it appears that the visitation would have occurred in the log house that the Smith family built in Manchester, as indicated in the heading of LDS Doctrine and Covenants 2, not in either of their two previous residences in Palmyra.

Some errors of fact that should be corrected in a second edition include: (1) James Arlington Bennet was of foreign birth (81). Bennet was actually born in New York. (2) Two places are given for the meeting between Parley P. Pratt and Hyrum Smith—in Palmyra (90) and in Manchester (204). Manchester is correct. (3) Prescinda Huntington married Henry Bailey Jacobs (107). Henry's wife was Prescinda's sister, Zina Diantha Huntington. (4) Joseph Smith was "acquitted" of the charge of being "a disorderly person" by Justice Albert Neely in March 1826 in South Bainbridge, New York (119). It is true that no punishment was administered, but the proceeding was a preliminary examination, not a trial; nor was Smith acquitted. The charges were sustained. (5) A list of baptisms for 9 June 1830 from the *History of the Church* includes "Peter Rockwell" (142). There was no Peter in the Rockwell family. (6) A caption of a small photograph of 1 Nephi 7:12-16 in holograph indicates that it is from the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon (171). It is instead from the original manuscript.

Other points needing correction include: (1) The date of 2 December 1827 when Sophronia Smith married Calvin Stoddard (200). According to the Stoddard family Bible, the date was 30 December. (2) The author dates Brigham Young's baptism as 15 April 1832, based on Young's remarks in 1862 (227, 279). However, Brigham Young's journal, housed in the LDS Archives, gives the date as 9 April 1832. (3) The date of 10 June 1831 is given for William W. Phelps's baptism (236). The actual date was 16 June 1831. (4) In explaining the marriages of three daughters of Alva and Sarah Beman, *Sacred Places* states that Louisa became a plural wife of Joseph Smith and married Brigham Young at Winter Quarters in the fall of 1846 (240). According to Young's

journal, she was sealed to him on 19 September 1844 in Nauvoo with a second sealing following on 14 January 1846 in the Nauvoo Temple.

Further, in the section on Fayette Township in Seneca County, New York, the book states that the reconstructed log house of Peter Whitmer Sr. stands on the exact site where the Church was organized on 6 April 1830 (134-37, see also 124, 140). While an organizational meeting did occur on that date, it was not in Fayette and it was not an incorporational meeting. (New York statutes did not require a church to incorporate but specified the procedures to follow if it did, primarily to oversee property held by that church.) Joseph Smith left Harmony, Pennsylvania, and arrived at Manchester during the last week of March 1830. Because there was no property to be turned over to trustees, there was no need to incorporate.

The second point at issue is the location of the establishment meeting. Rather than occurring in the Whitmer home in Fayette, it actually took place twenty-five miles away in the log house where the Hyrum Smith and Joseph Smith Sr. families resided in Manchester Township, Ontario County, New York. Hyrum and Jerusha moved into this house after their marriage in November 1826, and their first two daughters were born there in 1827 and 1829. Lemuel Durfee purchased the farm in December 1825, but the Smith family arranged to stay on until April 1829. At that point, Joseph Sr., Lucy, and their children moved in with Hyrum and Jerusha and stayed there until October 1830, six months after the Church was organized. Their location here is attested by Lucy Mack Smith's recollections, descriptions by visitors to the Smith home in 1830, and revelations Joseph Smith received in March, April, and October 1830 (see headings for LDS D&C 19, 23, 32).<sup>1</sup> Joseph Knight Sr., who brought Joseph Smith Jr. to Manchester at the end of March, witnessed the baptisms of the initial members at Hathaway Brook in Manchester, took a Book of Mormon home with him to read before being baptized in June, and does not mention traveling to Fayette. Nonmember neighbors who never joined the Church also witnessed the same baptisms in Manchester. Smith received a number of revelations in Manchester on that historic day. Thus, *Sacred Places* perpetuates an erroneous traditional location, apparently overlooking recent scholarship on the location of the Church's organization.<sup>2</sup> We need not be ashamed to tell the story of the humble and crowded cabin where the parents of the prophet resided nor to claim it as the Church's birthplace.

*Sacred Places* gives the date when Joseph Smith moved from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York, as during the last week of August 1830 (269). However, he was buying land

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1 I explain the evidence for concluding that he received Section 21 in Manchester rather than Fayette in *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 57-61.

2 H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 153-72, discusses the evidence for the Manchester site and some of the reasons why Church leaders in 1834 identified the site as the Whitmer farm at Fayette; Fayette was recorded as the site in the Manuscript History of Joseph Smith in 1839. As another piece of evidence, Harris obtained copies of the Book of Mormon from Grandin about 26 March 1830 and apparently stayed in the Palmyra/Manchester area trying to sell them until his baptism on 6 April. He was in this area when a commandment was given to him before the end of March (Book of Commandments 16; LDS D&C 19). There is no indication that Harris went to Fayette.

from his father-in-law, Isaac Hale, on 25-26 August; he and John Whitmer wrote a letter to the Colesville Saints on 28 August; and on 4 September Smith received a revelation in Harmony (date in Book of Commandments 28, but dated as "August 1830" in the 1981 edition of LDS D&C 27). This error seems to have developed because the manuscript history of the Church dates the second conference as beginning on 1 September when it was actually twenty-five days later.

Porter ascribes a direct role in the Palmyra/Manchester revival of 1820 to Rev. George Lane (281). Lane attended the annual meeting of the Methodist Genesee Conference at Vienna, New York, in July 1819, although there is no record that he preached or that a camp meeting was held. Lane was the presiding elder of the Ontario District from July 1824 until January 1825. In his report, written in the latter month, he mentions holding meetings in Palmyra on 25-26 September 1824 and a quarterly meeting he held in December.

*Sacred Places*, Vol. 2, does not include historic sites in Chautauqua County in western New York. This omission is unfortunate, for it contains sites rich in Mormon history. In this county the first Mormon to die on a mission, Joseph Brackenbury, died in 1832. Benjamin F. Johnson was one of the sixteen children of Ezekiel Johnson and Julia Hills Johnson who grew up in this county; a sister, Delcena, became a plural wife of Joseph Smith. The home of Addison and Louisa Barnes Pratt is still standing beside Route 5. The tombstone of Keziah Cowdery, Oliver's stepmother, is at Bemus Point Cemetery in Ellery. MHA member Wayne Mori has identified a dozen locations that could be visited or read about in Chautauqua County. Perhaps this omission will be corrected in a revised edition.

The Pennsylvania section fails to mention the Latter Day Saint Research Center, located in the building of the Philadelphia Congregation of the Community of Church (formerly RLDS Church) in Jenkintown, close to Philadelphia. The library contains books, periodicals, and scriptures of Restoration churches that have a heritage through the Book of Mormon.

I would encourage readers of *New York and Pennsylvania* to incorporate more precise details about Church history, realizing that correcting past assumptions does not detract from any spiritual feelings associated with Mormon sites detailed in this volume of *Sacred Places*. Part of the task of historians is the investigation of past assumptions and the correction of errors. Readers with an interest in New York and Pennsylvania Church history sites will find this book a good guide to these states. Although it is not free from problems, they can be corrected in a future edition. Does the book bring to us an appreciation of the early history and geography of the early period of the Church? For the most part it does.