

ISAAC HALE (1763-1839) STATEMENT OF MARCH 20, 1834

Isaac Hale and Nathaniel Lewis made statements before Charles Dimon, Justice of the Peace. Excerpts from other statements made by Joshua M'Kune, Hezekiah M'Kune, Alva Hale, Levi Lewis, Nathaniel Lewis and Sophia Lewis were made on the same day. These statements were first printed in the *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* (Montrose, Pa.) 9 (May 1, 1834):1, under the title "Mormonism."

The statements were reprinted in *The New York Baptist Register* (Utica, New York) 11 (June 13, 1834) and *North Star* (Danville, Vermont) 28 (August 18, 1834):1-2. Later they were included in a book by E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled: or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Impression and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: E. D. Howe, 1834), 262-66.

Additional correspondence regarding the March 1834 statements were printed in the *North Star* 28 (November 10, 1834):2.

The following was published in the *North Star* (Danville, Vermont), vol. 28, no. 32, August 18, 1834, pages 1-2.

We copy the following sketch of Mormonism into the Star, not to wound the feelings of any one who has honestly, though credulously, become a Mormon—but to give information to our readers. When the foundation is *false*, the superstructure, as it regards religion, is usual [unclear words] [Ma]sonry is founded in falsehood, although professedly the "Handmaid" of religion, and let the public judge whether Mormonism is not based on a similar foundation—on a delusion, a *fatal* delusion.

MORMONISM.

The Mormon Imposture is fully laid open in the following expose from the *Susquehannah Register*, printed at Montrose, Pa. We give it publicity, that it may meet the eyes of some who have given it their credence, and to secure others in the neighborhood of its advocates from being entangled in its shocking folly. We give it, too, with the most perfect confidence in its correctness, from the fact that one of the Judges of *Susquehannah County*, Eld. DAVIS DIMOCK, who certifies to the "moral character and veracity" of ISAAC HALE, the principal witness, we are well acquainted with, and know him to be a man distinguished as a citizen and a Christian. Many of our readers also know him to be a Baptist minister of great worth and consideration. —Where his name is known, the certificate of Isaac Hale will need no further support. Had we not fallen in with one of the followers of Smith, within eighty miles of Utica, and found their papers circulating even in Oneida county, (a file of which we have now before us, entitled "The Evening and The Morning Star,) we should hardly have given so much space in our paper to the following statement. This journal of the Mormons we have given a sufficient glance at to see that it is of the same character with all those things which are thrown out to beguile the hearts of the simple and the ignorant. It is jumbled up with the scriptures to obtain attention, and the misapplication of them, though glaring to the eye of most readers, may not at all times be discovered by those but partially acquainted with their Bibles. Here is the danger. — [New-York Register.]

From the Susquehannah, (Pa.) Register.
MORMONISM.

MR. WARD,

Sir: The sect calling themselves Mormons, which started a few years since at Harmony, in this county, have, you are aware, brought themselves into the public notice in many parts of our country. A gentleman in the state of Ohio applied to Mr. ISAAC HALE, of Harmony, for a history of facts relating to the character of JOSEPH SMITH, Jr. author of the Book of Mormon, called by some the Golden Bible. Mr. Hale sent the facts in a letter, and the Mormons pronounced the letter to be a *forgery*, and said that Isaac Hale was blind, and could not write his *name*; which was the cause of the taking of the accompanying affidavits.

Some of your subscribers, and particularly those at a distance, might feel obliged by your inserting the affidavits that all might judge for themselves as to the *authenticity* of the revelation claimed to have been made to Smith.

A SUBSCRIBER.

Great Bend, March 21, 1834.

PAINESVILLE, O., FEB. 4, 1834.

Mr. ISAAC HALE,

Dear Sir:

I have a letter with your signature, post marked Dec. 22, 1833, addressed to D. P. HURLBUT, on the subject of Mormonism. I have taken all the letters and documents from Mr. Hurlbut, with a view to their publication. An astonishing mass has been collected by him and others who have determined to lay open the imposition to the world. And as the design is to present *facts*, and those well authenticated, and beyond dispute, it is very desirable, that your testimony, whatever it may be, should come authenticated before a magistrate.

Your letter has already been pronounced a forgery by the Mormons, who say you are blind and cannot write even your name. I hope no one has attempted to deceive us; decaption [sic; deception] and falsehood in this business will do no good in the end, but will help build up the monstrous delusion. We look upon your connection with Smith, and your knowledge of facts, as very important, in the chain of events; and if it be your desire to contribute what facts you have, in so desirable an undertaking, I hope you will without delay have drawn up a full narrative of every tran [unclear words] ed, and attest them before a magistrate. This is our plan.

E. D. HOWE.

Statement of Mr. Hale.

I first became acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. in November, 1825. He was at that time in the employ of a set of men who were called "money diggers;" & his occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see by means of a stone placed in his hat closed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure. His appearance at this time was that of a careless young man, not very well educated and very saucy and insolent to his father. Smith, and his father, with several other "money diggers" boarded at my house while they were employed in digging for a mine that they supposed had been opened and worked by the Spaniards, many years since. Young Smith gave them great encouragement, at first, but when they had arrived in digging, to near the place where he had stated an immense treasure would be

found, he said the enchantment was so powerful that he could not see. They then became discouraged, and soon after dispersed. This took place about Nov. 17, 1825; and one of the company gave me his note for \$12[.]68 for his board, which is still unpaid.

After these occurrences, young Smith made several visits at my house, and at length asked my consent to his marrying my daughter Emma. This I refused, and gave my reasons for so doing; some of which were that he was a stranger, and followed a business that I could not approve; he then left the place. Not long after this, he, returned, and while I was absent from home carried off my daughter into the state of New York, where they were married without my approbation or consent. After they had arrived at Palmyra, N.Y. Emma wrote to me inquiring whether she could have her property, consisting of clothing, furniture, cows, &c. I replied that her property was safe and at her disposal. In a short time they returned, bringing with them a Peter Ingersol, and subsequently came to the conclusion that they would move out, and reside upon a place near my residence. Smith stated to me that he had given up what he called "glass looking," and that he expected to work hard for a living, and was willing to do so. He also made arrangements with my son, Alva Hale, to go up to Palmyra, and bring his (Smith)'s furniture, &c. to this place. He then returned to Palmyra, and soon after, Alva, agreeable to the arrangement, went up and returned with Smith and his family. Soon after this, I was informed they had brought a wonderful book of plates down with them, I was shown a box in which it was said they were contained, which had, to all appearances, been used as a glass box of the common sized window glass. I was allowed to feel the box, and they gave me to understand that the book of plates was then in the box, into which, however, I was not allowed to look.

I inquired of Smith who was to be the first who would be allowed to see the book of plates? He said it was a young child. After this, I became dissatisfied, and informed him that if there was any thing in the house of that description, [sic; description] which I could not be allowed to see, he must take it away; if he did not, I was determined to see it. After that, the plates were said to be hid in the woods.

About this time Martin Harris made his appearance upon the stage, and Smith began to interpret the characters or hieroglyphics which he said were engraven upon the plates, while Harris wrote down the interpretation. It was said that Harris wrote 116 pages, and lost them. Soon after this happened, Harris informed me that he must have a greater witness, and said that he had talked with Joseph, informed him that he could not, or durst not show him the plates, but that he (Joseph) would go into the woods where the book of plates was, and that after he came back Harris should follow his track in the snow, and find the book, and examine it for himself. Harris informed me afterwards, that he followed Smith's directions, and could not find the plates, and was still dissatisfied.

The next day after this happened, I went to the house where Smith lived, and where he and Harris were engaged in their translation of the book. Each of them had written a piece of paper which they were comparing, and some of the words were "my servants seeking a greater witness, but no greater witness can be given him." "three that were to see the thing"—meating, [sic; meaning] I supposed, that book of plates, and that if the three did not go exactly according to orders, the thing would be taken from them." I inquired whose words they were and was informed by Joseph or Emma (I rather think it was the former) that they were the words of jesus Christ. I told them then that I considered the whole of it a delusion, and advised them to abandon it. The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the "money diggers," with the stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the book of plates was at the same time hid in the woods!

After this, Martin Harris went away, and Oliver Cowdry came and wrote for Smith, while he interpreted as above described.—This is the same Ol[i]ver Cowdry whose name may be found in the book of Mormon. Cowdry continued a scribe for Smith until the book of Mormon was completed as I supposed and understood.

Smith resided near me for some time after this, and I had a good opportunity of becoming acquainted with him, and somewhat acquainted with his associates, and I conscientiously believe from the facts I have detailed, and from many other circumstances, which I do not think it necessary to relate, that the whole “Book of Mormon” (so called) is a silly fabrication of falsehood and wickedness, got up for speculation and with a design to dupe the credulous and unwary, and in order that its fabbricators [sic; fabricators] might live upon the spoils of those who swallowed the deception.

ISAAC HALE.

Affirmed to and subscribed before me, March 20, 1834.

CHARLES DIMON Justice of the Peace.

State of Pennsylvania,
Susquehannah County, ss.

We, the subscribers, Associate Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, in and for said county do certify that we have been for many years personally acquainted with Isaac Hale, of Harmony township in this county, who has attested the foregoing statement; and that he is a man of excellent moral character, and of undoubted veracity. Witness our hands.

WILLIAM THOMPSON.
DAVIS DIMOCK.

Date March 21, 1834.

I have been acquainted with Isaac Hale for fifty years, and have never known him guilty of wil[l]fully, or deliberately telling a falsehood. His character for truth and veracity has never been questioned. He has been supervisor, assessor, and collector; has kept his own accounts, and made his own returns, satisfactory to all concerned. But he is now old, and his arms are somewhat palsied, so that when he desires any thing written, he usually employs one of his sons, although he retains his sight, and is still capable of writing.

NATHANIEL LEWIS.

Affirmed to and subscribed before me, March 20, 1834.

CHARLES DIMON,
Justice of the Peace.

State of Pennsylvania,
Susquehanna County, ss.

I do hereby certify that I have been acquainted with Nathaniel Lewis, who affirmed to and subscribed the above certificate, for these twenty-seven years, last past, and during the whole of that time he has been a respectable minister of the Methodist Episcopal church, a man of veracity, and good moral character. Witness my hand, March 21, 1834.

WILLIAM THOMPSON,
Associate Judge.

Eld. Lewis also certifies and affirms in relation to Smith as follows.

I have been acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. for some time; being a relation of his wife, and residing near him, I have had frequent opportunities of conversing with him, and of knowing his opinions and pursuits. From my standing in the Methodist Episcopal church, I suppose he was careful how he conducted or expressed himself before me. At one time, however, he came to my house, and asked my advice, whether he should proceed to translate the book of plates (referred to by Mr. Hale) or not. He said that God had commanded him to translate it, but he was afraid of the people; he remarked that he was to exhibit the plates to the world at a certain time, which was then about eighteen months distant. I told him I was not qualified to give advice in such cases. Smith frequently said to me that I should see the plates at the time appointed.

After the time stipulated had passed away, Smith being at my house was asked why he did not fulfil his promise, show the golden plates and prove himself an honest man? He replied that he himself was deceived, but that I should see them if I were where they were. I reminded him then, that I stated at the time he made the promise, I was fearful "the enchantment would be so powerful" as to remove the plates, when the time came in which they were to be revealed.

These circumstances, and many others of a similar tenor, embolden me to say that Joseph Smith, Jr. is not a man of truth and veracity, and that his general character, in this part of the country, is that of an impostor, hypocrite and liar.

NATHANIEL C. LEWIS.

Affirmed to and subscribed, before me, March 20, 1834.

CHARLES DIMON,
Justice of the Peace.

We subjoin the substance of several affidavits, all taken and made before Charles Dimon, Esq., by credible individuals, who have resided near to, and been well acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr., illustrative of his character and conduct, while in this region.

JOSHUA M'KUNE states, that he "was acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. and Martin Harris, during their residence in Harmony, Pa., and knew them to be artful seducers;" that they informed him that Smith had found a sword, breast plate, and a pair of spectacles, at the time he found the gold plates;" that "these were to be shown to all the world as evidence of the truth of what was contained in those plates;" and that "he (M'Kune) and others should see them at a specified time. He also states that the "time for the exhibition of the plates, &c. has gone by, and he has not seen them." 'Joseph Smith, Jr. told him that his (Smith's) first born child was to translate the characters and hyeroglyphics, upon the plates, into our language, at the age of three years; but this child was not permitted to live to verify the prediction." He also states that "he has

been intimately acquainted with Isaac Hale twenty-four years, and has always found him to be a man of truth and good morals."

HEZEKIAH M'KUNE states that "in conversation with Joseph Smith, Jr., he (Smith) said he was nearly equal to Jesus Christ; that he was a prophet sent by God to bring in the Jews, and that he was the greatest prophet that had ever risen."

ALVA HALE, son of Isaac Hale, states "that Joseph Smith, Jr. told him that his (Smith's) gift in seeing with a stone and hat, was a gift from God;" but also states "that Smith told him at another time that this '*peeping*' was all d——d nonsense. He [Smith] was deceived himself, but he did not intend to deceive others; that he intended to quit the business, [of peeping] and labor for a livelihood." That afterwards Smith told him, he should see the plates from which he translated the book of Mormon," and accordingly at the time specified by Smith, he [Hale] called to see the plates, but Smith did not show them, but appeared angry." He further states that "he knows Joseph Smith, Jr. to be an imposter and a liar, and knows Martin Harris to be a liar Lik[e]wise. That his father [Isaac Hale] can both see and write, the declarations of the Mormons to the contrary notwithstanding; and that the letter sent by his father [Isaac Hale] to D. P. Hurlbut, was written by Jesse Hale, his [Isaac Hale's] son, and was correct and true."

LEVI LEWIS states that he has "been acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. and Martin Harris, and that he has heard them both say adultery was no crime. Harris said he did not blame Smith for his [Smith's] attempt to seduce Eliza Winters, &c.:" Mr. Lewis says that he "knows Smith to be a liar: that he saw him intoxicated at three different times while he was composing the book of Mormon, and also that he has heard Smith when driving oxen use language of the greatest profanity." Mr. Lewis also testifies that "he heard Smith say he (Smith) was as good as Jesus Christ; that it was as bad to injure him as it was to injure Jesus Christ." "With regard to the plates, he (Smith) said God had deceived him, which was the reason he (Smith) did not show the plates."

Eld. NATHANIEL C. LEWIS states that "he has always resided in the same neighborhood with Isaac Hale, and knows him to a man of truth and good judgment." He further states that "he has been acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr., and Martin Harris, and knows them to be lying imposters."

SOPHIA LEWIS certifies that she "heard a conversation between Joseph Smith, Jr., and the Rev. James B. Roach, in which Smith called Roach a d——d fool. Smith also said in the same conversation that he (Smith) was as good as Jesus Christ: and that she "has frequently heard Smith use profane language. She states that she heard Smith say "the book of plates could not be opened under penalty of death by any other person but his [Smith's] first born, which was to be a male." She says she "was present at the birth of this child, and that it was still born and very much deformed."

We certify that we have long been acquainted with Joshua M'Kune, Hesekiah M'Kune, Alva Hale, Levi Lewis, Nathaniel C. Lewis, and Sophia Lewis the individuals furnishing the [unclear word] statements above referred to, and that they are all persons of good moral character, and undoubted truth and veracity.

ABRAHAM DUBOIS, Jus. Peace.

JASON WILSON, Post Master.

HERBERT LEACH.

Great Bend, Susquehannah Co., }

Pa. March 20, 1834. }

The following was published in the *North Star* (Danville, Vermont), vol. 28, no. 44, November 10, 1834, page 2.

FOR THE NORTH STAR.

Mr. Eaton,

Dear Sir—soon after the statements and affidavits appeared in the North Star, of the 18th of August last, relating to the origin of Mormonism, and the character of Joseph Smith, I was solicited to write to Jason Wilson, Esq. Post Master, at Great Bend, Pennsylvania, and ascertain whether his name and others, who testified to the credibility of the witnesses, who testified to the statements, aforesaid, were genuine or were a forgery. I accordingly, on the 22nd of August last, addressed a letter as follows, with the omission of the date as appears from Wilson's letter, to Jason Wilson, Esq. which you are at liberty to publish, together with the answers, if you think it will add to the cause of truth.

Yours Respectfully,

THOMAS BISHOP, P.M.

North Danville, Oct. 15th, 1834.

North Danville, Caledonia Co. Vt., }

August 22, 1834. }

Jason Wilson, Esq.—

Dear Sir, I take the liberty to send you a weekly paper, printed in this town, by the name of "North Star," dated the 18th of August 1834, which contains several statements and affidavits respecting the origin of Mormonism; and among those who have testified to the respectability [sic; respectability] of the witnesses, your name, as Postmaster, is among the rest. —As we have In this neighborhood quite a number who have fallen in with this new doctrine I and some others who are anxious to know the origin and truth of these revelations and miracles, you will confer a favor upon me and many others, if you will, by return of mail, or as soon as possible, inform me if your signature, to the credibility of those witnesses, is genuine or a forgery. —And also whether those numerous affidavits, sworn to before Charles Dimon, Esq. are true or a forgery; and get, if convenient, his certificate to that effect. By complying with the above, you will greatly oblige your friend.

THOMAS BISHOP, P.M.

Great Bend, Sept. 10th, 1834.

SIR—

Yours without date, enclosing a copy of the "North Star," being a copy of several statements, affidavits, &c. taken, is duly received. My signature to the credibility of the witnesses, *is genuine and no forgery*.

The numerous affidavits, sworn to before Esq. Dimon, concerning Joseph Smith's Mormonism, is undoubtedly true. I say so because I am personally acquainted with every individual, and know they sustain characters that are unimpeachable for veracity. Hale and Lewis, (i. e.,) Isaac Hale and Nathaniel Lewis are elderly gentlemen, who have been residents of this vicinity from the earliest settlements, and are known to be men of undoubted characters, in every respect. Joseph Smith, Harris, and others, Joe's accomplices, are well known here, and their Mormonism, all which and whom, are considered most contemptible by people generally,

Esq. Dimon's certificate was had to the affidavits, and I believe the identity of his signature, as well as the others, was certified to by the County Clerk of this County, and the County Seal affixed to the certificates.

Yours &c.,

J. WILSON, P. M.

Great Bend, Susquehannah Co., }

Penn., Sept. 11th, 1834. }

Thomas Bishop, Esq. —

Dear sir; Jason Wilson, Esq. Post Master, of this place, called on me today, with your request that I should forward on to you a certificate of the fact that Messrs. Isaac Hale, Nathaniel Lewis, Joshua McKune, Hezekiah McKune, Alva Hale, Levi Lewis, Nathaniel C. Lewis and Mrs. Sophia Lewis, they did actually testified, as stated in the 'North Star,' of the 18th of August last, before me, on the 20th of March last. I do therefore certify that the above named witnesses did actually appear before me, the subscriber, an acting Justice of the Peace, in and for the County of Susquehannah, in the State of Pennsylvania, and were in due form of law affirmed, and after being affirmed, did actually subscribe their names to affidavits, that of Mr. Isaac Hale's and Rev. Nathaniel Lewis being in full, as taken before me, and the residue being the substance of what the others testified to in relation to the same subject, *Mormanism*; and I further certify, that all the witnesses above are persons of good standing in society, and I have not heard a single doubt expressed in this part of the country as to any thing stated in any of their affidavits. I have every reason to believe that the motives of those persons are wholly disinterested, and that the cause of truth was their only motive in exposing what the people here believe to be, a *monstrous delusion* in the followers of Joe Smith, and, in him the greatest imposition.

Yours with respect,

CHARLES DIMON.