Joseph Smith Papers: Corrections and Additions

© 2017 by H. Michael Marquardt. All rights reserved.

The following are some, but not all, items that are considered to be historically incorrect or have been omitted in the print edition of the Joseph Smith Papers. It is possible that changes may have been made to the on-line version at josephsmithpapers.org, which is the official site for the Joseph Smith Papers. The various records are over one hundred and seventy years old. They are considered to be foundational documents on the movement originating with Joseph Smith (1805-1844). The publisher is the Church Historian’s Press of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Series

Revelations and Translations [Three volumes at present]
Manuscript Revelation Books (Facsimile Edition) [Revelations of Joseph Smith, July 1828-November 25, 1834]


LDS Doctrine and Covenants 21 (RLDS D&C 19) the revelation for Oliver Cowdery to ordain Joseph Smith was recorded as being "given at Fayette Seneca County State of New York" (26-27). This was corrected in the Book of Commandments chapter 22, to "given in Manchester, New-York." In the Book of Commandments, the day of the month was specific for six revelations given on April 6, 1830, and one message from an angel given on September 4, 1830.

One of the more interesting questions relates to the approximate time when Frederick G. Williams started transcribing copies of documents onto the pages of this volume. The editors speculate that this may have been as early as February or March 1832 (5, 406-9, 676, 684). No historical documentation is cited to support this dating.

Williams wrote, "I commenced writing for Joseph Smith Jr- July 20th 1832." This is confirmed by a July 31, 1832, letter of Smith. A more compelling assessment is that the work of copying commenced about November 1832 near the time Williams and Smith worked together in revising the Old Testament, when they took turns in writing a short sketch of Joseph’s early life and in copying letters in the first of two letter books. Smith wrote in his journal for December 1, 1832, "wrote and corrected revelations &c” reflected in his handwriting appearing on pages 13 to 15 of Revelation Book 2.


One thing of interest is that the errata for the earlier volume in the series, *Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books: Facsimile Edition* has been corrected in this volume. The wording of the notes is not always the same as the *Facsimile Edition* and a few omitted. Also, there are some additional footnotes, a few rearranged, and others revised. The scribal directory at the end of the book omits the handwritten characteristics of each scribe.

The following are transcription errors that are not corrected in the two manuscript books:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript Page &amp; Line No.</th>
<th>BCR Page No.</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57 23</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>into this generation = unto this generation BC 34:4 has “unto”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131 18-19</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>to know the place as to them = to know the place or to them BC 51:5 has “or”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209 15</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>appeared unto some = appeared unto some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213 22</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>I come unto my own = I came unto my own</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other MS.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manuscript Page &amp; Line No.</th>
<th>KRB Page No.</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>433 22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>wherefore verily = wherefore verely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>445 15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>heavenly kings = heavenly [t]hings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>487 13</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>cleaveth unto inteligence = cleaveth unto inteligenc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>493 9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>in this last kingdom = in this last kingdon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>497 21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>the voice of thunderings = the voice of thunderings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Histories**


The first history, the 1832 History (2-22), was written while there were problems with church leadership in Missouri, especially with bishop Edward Partridge. Though there is no date on the six pages this volume suggests “circa summer 1832” (4). The history appears to have been written in November 1832.

**Journals [Journals written by Joseph Smith and also kept for him]**

Vol. 1 1832-1839 (November 27, 1832-December 5, 1834; September 22, 1835-April 3, 1836; March 13, 1838-October 15, 1839)


Typographical errors are few. John H. Boynton should be John F. Boynton (188 note 383) and Oliver Cowdery’s letter is misdated 1837 instead of 1838 (251 note 90). Dean C. Jessee’s earlier edition of *The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volume 2: Journal, 1832-1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 2:288–300, 308–16, included a December 16, 1838, letter of Joseph Smith copied into the Scripitory Book and an additional journal of James Mulholland covering April 22–October 23, 1839; but neither item appears in this compilation.
I was disappointed in the compiled biographical directory near the end of the book. Only a glance shows mistaken information. For example, Lyman E. Johnson died in 1859 not 1856; Luke Johnson arrived in Salt Lake Valley in September 1853 not July 1847; William E. McLellin died on March 14, 1883 not April 24; and Brigham Young was baptized on April 9, 1832 not April 15.

Errata:
page 235 Delete the multispectral image
page 234-235 Delete wording “Later, the final page of the roster was washed in order to provide space to prefix a title page to the Scriptor Book, The image to the right demonstrates the recovery of the original text made possible by multispectral imaging.” (Joseph Smith Papers Errata for Journals, Volume 1)

In addition to the above there was a problem when the editors read other text in the Scriptor Book kept by George W. Robinson. Historical Introduction, page 229: “JS’s letter of 29 March 1838, copied on pages 23-26 of the journal, indicates that the motto was already inscribed in the journal by that date.” Also page 237, note 50.

The letter copied into the record book included the following words: “I transmit to you the following motto of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints Recorded on Pages 16 & 17 of J Smith Jr Scriptor Record Book A.” (page 247) The interpretation that the “Motto of the Church of Christ of Latterday Saints” was already written in the Scriptor Book by 29 March is incorrect. The recording by Robinson of the 29 March 1838 letter only shows that instead of copying the motto Robinson refers to what he had previously written on pages 16-17 of the Scriptor Book and he does not need to copy the motto again.


Footnote 62 mentions “the official notice informing the public of Bennett’s excommunication” printed in the Times and Seasons, June 15, 1842 issue (xxviii). This is not correct as the May 11, 1842 notice was not an excommunication. This notice is repeatedly used as though it is the date Bennett was excluded from the church (55 n207; 60 n229; 63 n249; 411 and 443). There is no discussion regarding John C. Bennett’s formal withdrawal. The records are clear that he withdrew from the church on May 17, 1842, and was finally excommunicated a month later. The May 11, 1842, document referred to in footnotes was written by Willard Richards and signed by members of the presidency, some apostles, and the bishops. The signatures of three members of the Quorum of the Twelve were not their own.¹

¹ “Notice,” box 5, folder 16, May 11, 1842, Joseph Smith Collection, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City. Willard Richards wrote in the names of John E. Page, William Smith,
The following is a copy of John C. Bennett’s withdrawal from the church:

May 17th 1842. Br. James Sloan; You will be so good as to permit Gen. Bennett to withdraw his Name from the Church Record, if he desires to do so, and this with the best of feelings towards you and General Bennett. Joseph Smith.

In accordance with the above I have permitted General Bennett to withdraw his Membership from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, this 17th day of May 1842. the best of feelings Subsisting between all Parties. City of Nauvoo. May 17th 1842. James Sloan. General Church Clerk & Recorder. (Copy) Genl. Bennett has the original, which was signed by Joseph Smith.2

June 18, 1842, is the correct date of Bennett’s excommunication. Bennett wrote a little over a week later, “On Saturday, the 18th of June, I was excommunicated from this holy sect.”3 The date is confirmed by a number of sources. The church record of members lists the name of John C. Bennett. His name was later crossed out with words added twice: (1) “done at his request May 17th 1842.” and (2) “& cut off afterwards.”4 Patty Session mentions the same date as summarized in the Woman’s Exponent, “on the 18th she says Joseph spoke concerning Dr. Bennett and cut him off the Church.”5 William Mendenhall’s Memorandum also states: “June 18th John C Bennett was cut off from the church.”6


In the journal entry for October 5, 1843, one word “preaching” was transcribed incorrectly; the word recorded was “practicing” and was not crossed out by 1855 when

and George A. Smith. Page was not in Nauvoo but in Pittsburgh. Orson Pratt’s name was also added by Richards and crossed out.

2 Letters Sent, box 2, folder 5, Joseph Smith Collection, LDS Church History Library. For John C. Bennett’s printed copy see Bennett, History of the Saints, 40-41, with the added notation the same day: “The above is a true copy from the original. Orson Pratt.” When Bennett joined with James J. Strang he produced his withdrawal. “Conference Minutes,” Voree Herald 1 (October 1846):1.

3 John C. Bennett, to the Editor of the Journal, Letter [No. 1], 27 June 1842, Sangamo Journal, July 8, 1842. See also Andrew F. Smith, The Saintly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 91.

4 “Certificates of Members” (outside binding title), contains the 1842 Nauvoo census. Far West and Nauvoo elders’ certificates, CR 100 402, LDS Church History Library; microfilm 889,392, US and Canada Record Collection, LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

5 Patty Session Journal, extract printed in “Patty Sessions,” Woman’s Exponent 13 (November 1, 1884):86.

6 William Mendenhall diaries, MS 6975 1-3, LDS Church History Library
the draft history was prepared. Willard Richards wrote in the journal that Joseph Smith walked up and down the street with him “and gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or practicing the doctrin of plurality of wives. on this Law. Joseph forbids it. and the practice ther[e]of— No man shall have but one wife” (see xix, 107).

Documents [Four volumes at present]


For example, Smith’s known activities and his treasure seeking adventures are omitted. The documents for the period 1819-1827 are listed below.

The location of the Smith families is important since the volume repeatedly wants the reader to believe that Palmyra was the place where the log house was located. The editors/authors want to divert where the Church of Christ was established on April 6, 1830. The way they do this is first, to change the date of LDS D&C 19 from March 1830, received at Manchester, New York, to the summer of 1829. Second, in connection with Hyrum Smith’s residence, they maintain that the house was located in the Township of Palmyra. One reason they do this is because the volume uses a later account for the location of the church organization as occurring in Fayette, New York. They do not follow the earliest sources that proclaim that the church was organized in Manchester.

Though there are no known minutes of the April 6 organizational meeting, it was held in Manchester. What the volume editors want the reader to think is that anyone who says the church was organized in Manchester, at the Smiths' residence, would be stuck with that location being in Palmyra. The book does not refer to the U.S. Census for 1830 that enumerates the Smiths in Manchester.

Part 1: July 1828-March 1829 (3 items)

The editors state that “No JS documents created before the fall of 1827 have survived” (3). A note does mention the possibility of a November 1, 1825 printed agreement found in Appendix 1. However, there were significant pre-autumn-1827 records that mentioned Joseph Smith, which the volume fails to include:

A) 1819 Case of Joseph Smith [Sr.] vs Jeremiah Hurlbut, January 22, 1819. JS Jr testifies on behalf of his father. Record of Joseph Smith Sr., summer 1818, “To Joseph half Day Drawing hay 0.25.” Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

---

7 Dan Vogel, ed., History of Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: A Source- and Text-Critical Edition. 8 vols. (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2015), 7:315. Additional words were added to the draft not recorded in the original journal.


D) Docket Book of Albert Neely (original not extant, printed text only). Examination of Joseph Smith, March 20, 1826, to be included in the first volume of the Legal and Business Records series of the JS Papers. Joseph Smith (“Prisoner”) made the following statement in his defense as a treasure seer before Justice of the Peace Albert Neely:

   Prisoner examined: says that he came from the town of Palmyra, and had been at the house of Josiah Stowel[l] 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[l] 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 under ground, and had looked for Mr. Stowel[l] several times, and had informed him where he could find these treasures, and Mr. Stowel[l] 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, made them sore; that he did not solicit business of this kind, and had always rather declined having anything to do with this business.


E) Receipt by Joel and Levi Thayer of Joseph Smith Jr. to Abraham Fish’s account, Palmyra, New York, March 10, 1827. Receipt listed in Calendar of Documents, 392. JS pays $4.00 to the account of A. Fish at the Joel and Levi Thayre’s store on Main Street: “Rec[eive]d of Joseph Smith Jr Four dollars which is credited to the account of A[braham]. Fish.” Joseph Smith Collection, LDS Church History Library.

F) Account Book of Lemuel Durfee, entry for August 1827: “august Credit by Joseph Smith [Sr.] by Mo[w]ing three days & Joseph Smith, Ju Jnr. two days Mowing & Hiram Smith one day Mowing even.” Palmyra’s King’s Daughters Free Library, Palmyra, New York.

Part 2: April 1829-March 1830 (23 items)

   In a footnote the editors explain that the JS history may have skipped a few months. “During the period from June 1829 to the end of March 1830, only one JS
revelation is known” (the Canadian copyright revelation). They are able to state this because they suggest that LDS D&C 19, traditionally attributed to March 1830, was somehow actually given during the summer of 1829 (27n32; nonetheless stipulating, “though possible Mar. 1830” [85]).

The authors say, “By the end of March, when “JS returned to Palmyra in company with Joseph Knight Sr.” and “their arrival in Palmyra” (28) the pair met Martin Harris. This idea that the Smith home was located in Palmyra is repeated again and again to make the reader believe their assertion. Joseph Knight’s reminiscence is clear that in the spring of 1830 he took JS “out to Manchester to his Fathers.” Again volume 1 says that “JS soon left for Fayette, where the church was organized on 6 April 1830” (28). Knight and Smith “arrived in Palmyra in late March” (106). This is incorrect as the only source is Joseph Knight’s account, and he mentions that he took JS to Manchester and witnessed Joseph Sr.’s baptism.

A further example of this editorial diversion occurs when the authors discuss letters written by Oliver Cowdery from Manchester to Joseph Smith on November 6 and December 28, 1829. “At the time he wrote this letter,” they claim, "Cowdery was likely at the Hyrum Smith residence in Palmyra. If this is the case, the letter was written in Palmyra, not in Manchester” (98n382, 103n407).

Concerning the revelation to sell a copyright of the Book of Mormon in Canada the book says that “Hiram Page recalled that a small group of church leaders were assembled at the Smith 4 log home in Palmyra Township when this revelation came” (109). What Page wrote, spelling not corrected, is that “ it was told me we were to go by revilation but when we had assemble at father Smiths; the[re was] no revilation for us to go but we were all anctious to get a r[evila]tion to go; and when it came we were to go to kingston,” nothing about Palmyra. In fact the revelation was received at Manchester, Ontario County as the copy of the revelation states. Besides this the Smith’s log home was located in Manchester as Hyrum Smith was taxed in 1830 for 15 acres on Lot 1. The editors do not mention anything concerning the use of the 1830 U.S. census for Manchester in the book. The census does list Joseph Smith [Sr.] as living in Manchester along with his neighbors.

Another indication that the authors were not careful is when they say that “Joseph reportedly enquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim and according to [David] Whitmer received a revelation” (110). Whitmer did not mention the use of Urim and Thummim but said that “Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it ... the following revelation came through the stone.”

Again it is stated, “Page, however, left no indication in his recollection that he was bitter about the revelation or his trip to Canada.” The reason Hiram Page wrote to William E. McLellin was that he considered that Joseph erred in this and other revelations and had a desire for filthy lucre. The volume is correct that those who went to Canada “failed to obtain a copyright.”

Part 3: April 1830-September 1830 (26 items)

Besides the Manuscript History of Joseph Smith which mentions at meeting at Fayette, New York on April 6, 1830, the book cites David Whitmer saying the church was “established at his father’s house in Fayette Township.” Whitmer’s recollection fits
more closely with the June or September 1830 church conference rather than a small
group in Manchester. Revelations printed in the Book of Commandments (in press in
1833) that had a date of April 6 (except for LDS D&C21) and others with the location
of Manchester are said to be “erroneously associated with Manchester” and
“erroneously associated with 6 April when first published in 1833” (113n1). This is just
guess work on the part of the editors. They present no solid documentation to support
such assertions.

Now comes the interesting part as the authors call the Joseph Knight Sr. and Lucy
Mack Smith accounts “problematic,” expecting specific dates and lawyer-like precision.
But the “unpolished and disjointed narrative” of Joseph Knight Sr., “clearly claims that
Joseph Smith Sr. and Martin Harris were baptized near the Smith farm in Manchester
Township but offers no concrete timeline” (114n7). The authors do not want to write
that the baptisms occurred on April 6. They also state: “JS’s history nonetheless allows
for the possibility that JS returned to his parents’ home shortly after the organization in
Fayette. If so, the stay was a short one. JS was probably back in Fayette on 11 April,
when Oliver Cowdery preached the first sermon of the church to a large crowd and
baptized several people” (114).

**Documents, Volume 1** accepts the locations given in Revelation Book 1 (A Book
of Commandments and Revelations). There is no suggestion that Joseph Smith and
Oliver Cowdery traveled from one location to another on the same day. There is only
one location where at least four events (baptisms, ordinations, church organization and
revelations) occurred, and that is Manchester.

In discussing the first of five revelations given to individuals on April 6, 1830,
the book indicates that “the editors of the Book of Commandments printed the
revelations separately and gave each the date of 6 April 1830, that date appears to be in
error and was dropped two years later, in 1835 . . . JS’s history and other sources
suggest that the revelations date between the 6 April organization and an 11 April
meeting” (131). While it is possible errors could occur in printing any text the most
likely reason why specific dates and locations were omitted in the 1835 Doctrine and
Covenants is because that book was to be like a church manual and not like the more
careful publication of the Book of Commandments. Besides Oliver Cowdery, who was
present on April 6, worked on the Book of Commandments. The history of Joseph
Smith was compiled using the 1835 D&C which was not attempting to be very specific
in historical matters as texts were altered for that publication.

As mentioned in Part 2, the wording “likely at Hyrum’s residence in Palmyra” is
repeated over and over (131n108, 132n113, 133n117, 134n126, 136n134).

The historical introduction for LDS D&C 27 presented challenges for the editors
as indicated in their comments:

In his later history, however, JS said that the first paragraph of the 1835 text “was
written at this time [early August 1830], and the remainder in the September
following.” JS, then, affirmed that the first part should be dated August 1830 and
the remainder September 1830, in which case the date of 4 September 1830 found
in the earlier printed versions may have reflected the date of dictation of the
The reason for this suggestion is that the 1835 publication was for church members and well over 400 words, including priesthood restoration, were added to the words of the angel. The shortest text and the exact date of September 4, 1830 is preferred by scholars prior to the words being modified. The idea that there were two portions of the revelation, as explained in JS’s history, is not historical but was used to explain the additional wording inserted in 1835.

Part 5: February-June 1831 (24 items)

In documenting a letter that Joseph Smith sent to his brother Hyrum the authors indicate that “Hyrum and his family moved from their log house in Palmyra to Newel Knight’s house at Colesville, New York.” A footnote states, “At the time, Levi Daggett, a resident of Palmyra, was attempting to collect a debt from him for shoeing horses. (Daggett v. Smith [J.P. Ct. 1830], Pierce, Docket Book, 77.)” (268n152) This provides additional evidence, ironically, that Hyrum 6 Smith in fact lived in Manchester rather than Palmyra, since Nathan Pierce was a Justice of the Peace (J.P.) in Manchester (522).

On the whole Documents, Volume 1 has problems with the historical record. It does mention that Joseph Smith’s history “must be used with caution” (507). The background to the documents for the most part repeats information over and over. The errors pointed out in this review will likely not be corrected. Readers should be careful in taken everything as fact


Part 1: February-March 1833
The volume does not include “Sang by the gift of Tongues & Translated” by Joseph Smith (February 27, 1833) recorded in the Kirtland Revelations Book, pages 48-49.

...
his voice with the heavenly throng Hozana [Hosanna] Hozana [Hosanna] the sound of
the trump around the throne of God echoed & echoed again and rang and reechoed until
eternity was filled with his voice

he saw yea he saw and he glorif[i]ed God the salvation of his people his city
cought up through the gospel of Christ

he saw the begin[n]jing the ending of man he saw the time when Adam his
fathe[r] was made and he saw that he was in eternity before a grain of dust in the
ballance was weighed

he saw that he emanated [emanated] and came down from God he saw what had
passed and then was and is present and to come

therefore he saw the Last days the Ang[e]l that came down to John and the
Angel that is now flying having the everlasting Gospel to commit unto men - which in
my soul I have recivd [received] and from death and bondage from the Devil I[']m freed
and am free in the gospel of Christ and I[']m waiting and with patience I[']ll wait on the
Lord hozana [hosanna] loud sound the trump cause eternity to wring hozana [hosanna]
for ever I[']m waiting the coming of Christ a mansion on high a celestial abode a seat on
the right hand of God

Angels are coming the holy Ghost is falling upon the saints and will continue to
fall the saviour is coming yea the Bride groom prepare ye prepare yea the cry has gone
forth go wait on the Lord the Angels in glory will soon be descending go join you in
singing the praises of God the trump Loud shall sound the dark vail [veil] soon shall
rend heaven shall shake the earth shall tremble and all nature shall feel the power of
God, gaze [gaze] ye saints gaze [gaze] ye upon him, gaze upon Jesus hozana [hosanna]
loud sound the trump his church is caught up

hozana [hosanna] praise him ye saints they stand at his feet behold they are
weeping they strike hands with Enoch of Old they inherit a city as it is writ[t]en the City
of God. Loud sound the trump, they receive a celestial crown hozana [hosanna] hozana
[hosanna] the heaven of heavens, and the heavens are filled with the praises of God
Amen

p. 99   no description given; also no papyrus illustration (P JS III) is included
p. 101 photo of papyrus Fragment 4 (Recto) is printed upside down

Matthew C. Godfrey, Brenden W. Rensink, Alex D. Smith, Max H Parkin, and
Alexander L. Baugh, eds., Documents, Volume 4: April 1834-September 1835. Salt
Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2016.

Legal Records [no volumes have been published]
Administrative Records [One Volume]


Council of Fifty Minutes March 1844-January 1846
(Joseph Smith Period: March 10-May 31, 1844; Events of June 1844; Brigham Young Period: February 4-May 10, 1845; September 9-October 4, 1845; January 11-13, 1846)

Biographical Directory
p. 587 Bennett, John Cook  Excommunicated for adultery, 11 May 1842 = no charges of adultery, excommunication date 18 June 1842
p. 630 Young, Brigham baptized into LDS church by Eleazer Miller, 9/15 Apr. 1832 = 9 Apr. 1832