

# **Manchester as the Site of the Organization of the Church on April 6, 1830**

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IN STUDYING LATTER-DAY SAINT HISTORY, we encounter an interesting question regarding the location where the newly organized Church of Christ was organized. Traditions in Restoration studies converge on two locations in the state of New York: Manchester, Ontario County, and Fayette, Seneca County. The date of April 6, 1830, has long been established in the histories of churches associated with the movement established by Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–44). The events that occurred on that day include baptisms in a small brook or creek, confirmations, revelations, ordinations, and partaking of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. There is no mention of travel from one location to another.

This article will present various historical recollections and examine them in the context of where the baptisms and April 6, 1830, organizational meeting occurred. This becomes important as historians revisit their assertions and evaluate their otherwise established traditions. Where a religion started is usually one of the first questions asked by investigators. Consistent with previous studies, the strongest evidence is that the Church of Christ was formally organized on April 6, 1830, at one location only: Manchester, New York.

## **Introduction to Manuscript History**

A draft history was composed in 1839 by church scribe James Mulholland. He then worked a fuller version in the Manuscript History of Joseph Smith, book A-1. This history notes that believers met together on Tuesday, April 6, 1830, in the house of Mr. Whitmer (Peter Whitmer Sr.). The Whitmers lived in the township of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, about twenty-five miles southeast from Manchester. What occurred on April 6 was that Joseph Smith ordained Oliver Cowdery an elder of the church, immediately after which Cowdery ordained Smith an elder. Baptisms were performed for Joseph Smith Sr., Lucy Mack Smith, Martin Harris, and a “Rockwell”—that is, Sarah Rockwell. The location of Fayette, in the Whitmer home, is in error since the baptisms took place in Crooked Brook near the Smith Sr. home in the township of Manchester.

It should be no surprise that some mistakes were made in compiling the history. For example, the dates of the first two church conferences are incorrect. The Manuscript History has

“On the first day of June.”<sup>1</sup> This should be June 9. For the second conference the history says “As a conference meeting had been appointed for the first day of September.”<sup>2</sup> The conference actually commenced on September 26, a twenty-five-day difference.

Revelations were either listed or copied into the history, citing as the source the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (D&C). This book compressed five revelations into one and omitted the day of the month the revelations were stated. The revelation regarding performing the ordinations of Cowdery and Smith contained no location in the 1835 D&C, section 46 (LDS section 21). The version of the revelation found in the Manuscript History when the revelation was copied included the addition of Fayette, Seneca County. Another revelation (LDS section 22) which previously was listed as stated in Fayette was reported in the Manuscript History to have been stated in Manchester. Though this portion of the history does not indicate the role Joseph Smith played in its production, it does follow the first printed location of Fayette that was mentioned in a May 1834 meeting.<sup>3</sup>

Book A-1 of the Manuscript History was first published starting in March 1842 as the “History of Joseph Smith” in the *Times and Seasons*, a newspaper printed in Nauvoo, Illinois. Over time the Fayette branch of the church in the Whitmer home took on a more important role. The first three church conferences were held in the Peter Whitmer home. That history is the source for the baptisms that were performed on April 11 and 18 in the township of Fayette. No source is given regarding who provided the names of those baptized on these two dates. The Whitmer family and friends had about thirteen baptisms performed in April. On April 11 Oliver Cowdery delivered the first discourse of the newly founded church as the “first preacher” (LDS D&C 21:12).

### **Joseph Knight Sr.’s Recollection**

Joseph Knight Sr. (1772–1847), who arrived with Joseph Smith at his father’s home in Manchester, was present at the meeting where the church organization took place and wrote his account prior to his death in 1847. Knight cites two revelations related in Manchester, pages 174 and 177 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (now LDS sections 19 and 21). He was present at the baptisms of Joseph Smith Sr. and Martin Harris. The following is an excerpt from Knight’s account:

Now in the Spring of 1830 I went with my Team and took Joseph out to Manchester to his Fathers when we was on our way he told me that there must be a Church formed But Did not tell when.... we went home to his Fathers and Martin with us Martin Stayed at his Fathers and Slept in a bed on the flore [floor] with me.... in the after part of the Day Joseph and oliver Received a Commandment which is in Book of Covenants Page. 174 I stay[e]d a few Days wa[i]ting for Some Books to Be Bound. Joseph Said there must Be a Church Biltup [Built up] I had Be[e]n there Several Days old Mr Smith and Martin Harris

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<sup>1</sup> Manuscript History, bk. A-1:41, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter cited as Church History Library.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., bk. A-1:54.

<sup>3</sup> “Communicated,” *The Evening and the Morning Star* 2, no. 20 (May 1834): 160.

Come forrod [forward] to Be Babtise [Baptized] for the first they found a place in a Lot a Small Stream ran thro and they ware Babtized in the Evening.... there was one thing I will mention that evening that old Brother Smith and Martin Harris was Babtised Joseph was fild [filled] with the Spirrit to a grate [great] Degree to See his Father and Mr Harris that he had Bin [Been] with So much he Bu[r]st out with greaf [grief] and Joy and Seamed [Seemed] as tho the world Could not hold him he went out into the Lot and appear[e]d to want to git [get] out of Site [Sight] of every Body and would Sob and Crie [Cry] and Seamed [Seemed] to Be So full that he Could not Live oliver and I went after him and Came to him and after a while he Came in But he was the most wrot [wrought] upon that I ever Saw any man But his Joy Seemed to Be full I think he Saw the grate [great] work he had Begun and was Desirus [Desirous] to Carry it out. on the Sixth Day of April 1830 Begun the Church with Six members and received the following Revelation Book of Covenants Page 177 they all kneel[e]d down and prayed and Joseph gave them instructions how to B[u]ild up the Church and ex[h]orted them to Be faithfull in all things for this is the work of God<sup>4</sup>

The correct location of the church's formal organization was the meeting held in the Hyrum Smith/Joseph Smith Sr. home (not owned by the family) in Manchester. Hyrum Smith was taxed in 1830 for fifteen acres on Manchester lot number one.<sup>5</sup> Individuals who resided in Manchester, and who did not associate with the church, but who witnessed the baptisms performed would not have traveled to Fayette—a fifty-mile roundtrip—to attend a baptismal rite. The reason is that the four baptisms were performed near the Smith home in what was locally known as Crooked Brook or Hathaway Creek.

A history of Ontario County describes the stream in terms congruent with the accounts of those who claimed to be present: “Crooked brook, of Mormon fame, runs through the northwest part of the town[ship of Manchester], and it was in the waters of this stream that the Mormons baptized their early saints. Dr. [John] Stafford, an old resident of the village of Manchester, was present at the first baptism.”<sup>6</sup> John Stafford, oldest son of William, “knew the Smith family well, and was present at the first baptism, when old Granny Smith and Sally Rockwell” were baptized.<sup>7</sup> The Stafford and Rockwell families were residents of the township of Manchester and lived within a mile of the Smith home.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Knight, “Reminiscences,” ca. 1835–47, Church History Library; first published in Dean C. Jessee, ed., “Joseph Knight’s Recollection of Early Mormon History,” *BYU Studies* 17 (Autumn 1976): 36–37.

<sup>5</sup> “Assessment Roll, of the Real and Personal Estate in the Town of Manchester in the County of Ontario,” July 5, 1830, Ontario County Historical Society, Canandaigua, New York.

<sup>6</sup> John H. Pratt, in Charles F. Milliken’s *A History of Ontario County, New York, and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1911), 1:418.

<sup>7</sup> *Shortsville Enterprise* (Shortsville, NY), March 18, 1904.

<sup>8</sup> 1830 US Census, Manchester, Ontario County, New York, 169–70.



*Crooked Brook on Smith Farm, Manchester, New York. Photograph by George E. Anderson, August 1907. Published in Birth of Mormonism in Picture (Salt Lake City: Deseret Sunday School, ca. 1909).*

In the early years of the church only the date of the church's organization was given in licenses for those holding offices. At the conference held in Fayette on June 9, 1830, licenses were written out by Oliver Cowdery. None of the three surviving licenses contain mention of any location for the April 6 meeting but does include Fayette and the June 9 date for each individual so ordained.

### **Early Church Confirms Meeting of April 6, 1830, at Manchester**

During preparations for publishing Joseph Smith's revelations, locations were provided where each revelation was spoken and systematically included. We find in the first church periodical, *The Evening and the Morning Star*, the earliest brief history dealing with the month of April.

Soon after the book of Mormon came forth, containing the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the church was organized on the sixth of April, in Manchester; soon after, a branch was established in Fayette, and the June following, another in Colesville, New York.<sup>9</sup>

Below is a small sample of publications that mention Manchester as the location for revelations on April 6, 1830, and/or the site of the church's organizational site. Each of the following individuals attended the meeting. The revelations were published in A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ (in press 1833).

Book of Commandments, chapter 17 (1833), A Revelation to Oliver, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830." [Oliver Cowdery] (LDS section 23:1-2)

Book of Commandments, chapter 18 (1833), A Revelation to Hyrum, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830." [Hyrum Smith] (LDS section 23:3)

Book of Commandments, chapter 19 (1833), A Revelation to Samuel, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830." [Samuel H. Smith] (LDS section 23:4)

Book of Commandments, chapter 20 (1833), A Revelation to Joseph, the father of Joseph, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830." [Joseph Smith Sr.] (LDS section 23:5)

Book of Commandments, chapter 21 (1833), A Revelation to Joseph (K.), given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830." [Joseph Knight Sr.] (LDS section 23:6-7)

Book of Commandments, chapter 22 (1833), A Revelation to Joseph, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830." [Joseph Smith Jr.] (LDS section 21) The Book of Commandments and Revelations manuscript, the source of chapter 22, recorded Fayette when it was copied by John Whitmer. This was corrected in the 1833 Book of Commandments to Manchester.

Oliver Cowdery assisted William W. Phelps in preparing the Book of Commandments for publication in Independence, Missouri (LDS D&C 55:4 and 57:13). The church organization location site of Manchester was clearly reported at this time. When the *Evening and Morning Star* was reissued in Kirtland, Ohio, the location of Manchester was retained in the following issues:

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<sup>9</sup> "Rise and Progress of the Church of Christ," *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1, no. 11 (April 1833): 84. Oliver Cowdery, present at the April 6 meeting, where he received his ordination as second elder, assisted in the printing of the *Star*. In a prior article titled "Prospects of the Church," *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1, no. 10 (March 1833): 76, it was stated "It will be three years the sixth of April next, since the church of Christ was organized in Manchester, New York, with six members."

“Prospects of the Church,” *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 10 (March 1833): 151, Kirtland reprint, May 1836.

“Rise of Progress of the Church of Christ,” *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 11 (April 1833): 167, Kirtland reprint, June 1836.

The assertion of a Fayette April 6 meeting as first claimed in 1834 was continued when the Manuscript History was being worked on in 1839. The draft history written by James Mulholland, with its deletions and insertions, demonstrates how it was not an easy process to write a history that expressed not only what happened but also the church’s current position. While the April 1830 portion of the “History of Joseph Smith,” printed in the *Times and Seasons* in October 1842, has the Fayette location, it did not prevent publications before and after that date from presenting where Smith actually organized the church and held its first meeting. The names of church members belonging to the United Firm, one of the church’s early business ventures, were still concealed in 1843. The names were concealed to avoid being sued for church debts. Willard Richards, as official church historian, copied revelations and letters into the Manuscript History and continued efforts at concealment that were established when the Doctrine and Covenants was published in 1835.

Orson Pratt, an early 1830 convert, wrote: “And on the sixth of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty, the ‘Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints’ was organized, in the town of Manchester, Ontario County, State of New York, North America.”<sup>10</sup> Joseph Smith knew the correct location of church organization, and authorized the printing of the compiled “Church History” (based upon Pratt’s pamphlet) for the *Times and Seasons*: “On the 6th of April, 1830, the ‘Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,’ was first organized in the town of Manchester, Ontario co., state of New York.”<sup>11</sup> In 1844 Jedediah M. Grant wrote, “the rise of said church, which was organized in the town of Manchester, Ontario county, State of New York, on the 6th day of April, A.D. 1830.”<sup>12</sup>

In an article printed in Honolulu, those Mormon passengers on the ship *Brooklyn* understood the origin of the restoration church when it was reported: “*Church of Latter Day Saints* -- This is the name of the society founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. It was organized April 6, 1830, at Manchester, N. Y. Six members originally composed the body, viz. Joseph Smith, senior, Hiram Smith, Samuel Smith, (father and brothers of the leader,) Joseph Smith, Jr., Joseph Knight and Oliver Cowd[e]ry.”<sup>13</sup>

In Utah Territory the Manchester location was still being discussed. Church historian George A. Smith wrote “Church History,” which was printed in the *Deseret News*, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was organized in Manchester, New York, on the 6th of April

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<sup>10</sup> *A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions...* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne and Hughes, 1840), 23–24; changed to Fayette in an 1848 printing.

<sup>11</sup> “Church History,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (1 March 1842): 708; known as the Wentworth letter.

<sup>12</sup> *A Collection of Facts, relative to the course taken by Elder Sidney Rigdon ...* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking & Guilbert, 1844), 5.

<sup>13</sup> “Arrived,” *The Friend* 4 (July 1, 1846), Honolulu, Oahu, Sandwich Islands [now Hawaii]. Joseph Knight Sr. was not baptized until late June 1830.

1830.”<sup>14</sup> “Remarks By President Heber C. Kimball, Bowery, Sunday morning, July 7, 1861,” included, “When the Church was first organized in Manchester, in the State of New York, the people rose up against us.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1884 Benjamin Saunders, fifteen years old in 1830, said that the “<Smiths> held meetings at their house. I was there when they first baptized. Oliver Cowdery did the baptizing. Old brother <Smith> was baptized at that time and I think old Mrs. Rockwell.”<sup>16</sup> A Utah Gazetteer confirmed, “1830. April 6. First Mormon Church regularly organized at Manchester, New York.”<sup>17</sup>

While the above sources demonstrate that Manchester was the location where the church was formally organized, it is equally important to examine why, when, and how the Fayette location became ingrained into the story of the church. Economic obligations were a factor in determining what occurred during 1833–34 that led to changing the name of the church but also the site of its organization.

### **The United Firm—Deeply in Debt**

As early as June 1833 Joseph Smith was concerned about the loans that were obtained from individuals or businesses by the United Firm. The United Firm was an organization that consisted of high priests who were called to serve and conduct business in behalf of the church. The following are extracts from documents regarding the situation: “Say to Bro[ther] Gilbert that we have no means in our power to assist him in a pecuniary point, as we know not the hour when we shall be sued for debts which we have contracted ourselves in N[ew] York”<sup>18</sup> In a letter from Kirtland on December 5, 1833, Smith wrote, “our means are already exhausted and we are deeply in debt and know of no means whereby we shall be able to extricate ourselves.”<sup>19</sup>

On January 11, 1834, Smith and his associates prayed, “That the Lord would provide, in the order of his Providence, the bishop of this Church with means sufficient to discharge every debt that the Firm owes, in due season, that the Church may not be brought [brought] into disrepute, and the saints be afflicted by the hands of their enemies.”<sup>20</sup> Jacob and Sarah Myers sold their land and mill, with water rights, in Richland County, Ohio, on March 27, 1834, for

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<sup>14</sup> “Church History,” *Deseret News*, September 5, 1855.

<sup>15</sup> *Deseret News*, March 19, 1862; also printed in the *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1854–86), 9:181.

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Saunders, interview by William H. Kelley, ca. September 1884, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri. Angled brackets indicate writing above the line.

<sup>17</sup> Robert W. Sloan, ed. and comp., *Utah Gazetteer and Directory of Logan, Ogden, Provo and Salt Lake Cities for 1884* (Salt Lake City: Herald Printing and Publishing Co., 1884), 207.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Smith, et al to Brethren, Jackson County, Missouri, 25 June 1833. Church History Library.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Smith to Dear Brethren, Jackson County, 5 December 1833. A copy of the letter is in Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:68, Church History Library.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Smith journal, 11 January 1834, Church History Library.

\$10,250.<sup>21</sup> Joseph Smith wrote to leaders in Missouri: “we have run into debt for the press, and also to obtain money to pay the New York debt for Zion.”<sup>22</sup>

Frederick G. Williams (1787–1842) wrote in Joseph Smith’s journal: “on the 7th day of April [1834] Bros Newel [K. Whitney] Oliver [Cowdery] Frederick [G. Williams] Heber [C. Kimball] and myself meet in the council room and bowed down before the Lord and prayed that he would furnish the means to deliver the firm from debt.” On April 10 the United Firm met and “it was agreed that the firm should be desolved [dissolved] and each one have their stewardship set off to them.”<sup>23</sup> The Newel K. Whitney and Company borrowed funds the next week:

We owe Eight Thousand dollars, which must be paid by the first of Sept next. but if we can get 4 or 5 Thousand this month I can pay our debts here & so much of our debts in New York that they will wait till Sept for the balance & I also shall be able to purchase some goods this Spring for to make my assortment more compleet [complete] through the summer—

At any rate we must have 4 thousand dollars this month

[blank space]

The bearer hereoff [sic] Joseph Smith Jr is authorised by us to borrow from One to Eight thousand dollars & sign a note for the same in the name of N. K. Whitney & Co which note we will hold ourselves bound to pay

Kirtland 18 apl 1834      N. K. Whitney & Co<sup>24</sup>

A revelation instructed, “pay all your debts ... humble yourselves ... write spe[e]dily unto New York, ... I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, that it shall be taken away out of their minds to bring afflictio[n] upon you.”<sup>25</sup> The revelation continues:

Inasmuch as you obtain a chance to loan money by hundreds, or by thousands, even until you shall loan enough to deliver yourselves from bondage, it is your privilege, & pledge the properties which I have put into your hands this once by giving your names by common consent, or otherwise as it shall seem good unto you. I give unto you the privilege this once<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Deed Book, vol. 11:464, Richland County Recorder, Recorder’s Office, Mansfield, Ohio.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Smith to Edward [Partridge], William [Phelps], and others of the firm, 30 March 1834, Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, 34, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Smith journal, 7 and 10 April 1834, Church History Library.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Smith Collection, Financial Papers, bx. 5, fd. 3, Church History Library.

<sup>25</sup> Book of Commandments, Laws and Covenants; book C, Church History Library; LDS D&C 104:78–79, 81, April 23, 1834.

<sup>26</sup> Book of Commandments, Laws and Covenants; book C; LDS D&C 104:84–86.

Oliver Cowdery recorded for April 23, 1834: “Assembled in council with breth[r]en Sidney [Rigdon], Federick [G. Williams], Newel [K. Whitney], John Johnson, and Oliver [Cowdery] and united in asking the Lord to give bro. Zebedee Coltrin influence over our bro. Jacob Myres [Myers Sr.], and obtain from him the money which he has gone to borrow for us, or cause him [Myers] to come to this place & give it himself.”<sup>27</sup> Zebedee Coltrin was to see only one person, viz. Jacob Myers.<sup>28</sup> The plan was to borrow money from Myers to pay the debts. Another revelation gave instruction on what to do:

Kirtland 28 April 1834

Verily thus saith the Lord concerning the division and settlement of the United Firm: Let there be reserved three Thousand Dollars for the right and claim of the Firm in Kirtland for inheritances in due time, even when the Lord will; and with this claim to be had in remembrance when the Lord shall reveal it for a right of inheritance, Ye are made free from the Firm in Zion and the Firm of in Zion is made free from the firm in Kirtland: Thus Saith the Lord Amen

Copied from the original by Orson Hyde<sup>29</sup>

The United Firm was dissolved and separated into two firms; one in Missouri and the other in Kirtland. The firm in Kirtland was to divide up property as instructed in an April 23, 1834 revelation (LDS D&C 104).

### **Kirtland Firm printed change to Fayette location**

Members of the Kirtland firm attended a conference and published the following in the May 1834 issue of *The Evening and the Morning Star* (Kirtland, Ohio).

*Communicated.*

*Kirtland, Ohio, May 3, 1834.*

MINUTES of a Conference of the Elders of the church of Christ, which church was organized in the township of Fayette, Seneca county, New-York, on the 6th of April, A. D. 1830.

The Conference came to order, and JOSEPH SMITH JR. was chosen Moderator, and FREDERICK G. WILLIAMS and OLIVER COWDERY, were appointed clerks.

After prayer the Conference proceeded to discuss the subject of names

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<sup>27</sup> Joseph Smith journal, 23 April 1834, Church History Library.

<sup>28</sup> This was brought to my attention by Rick Grunder.

<sup>29</sup> Book of Commandments, Laws and Covenants; book C, Church History Library.

and appellations, when a motion was made by SIDNEY RIGDON, and seconded by NEWEL K. WHITNEY, that this church be known hereafter by the name of THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS. Appropriate remarks were delivered by some of the members, after which the motion was put by the Moderator, and passed by unanimous voice.

*Resolved* that this Conference recommend to the Conferences and Churches abroad, that in making out and transmitting Minutes of their proceedings, such minutes and proceedings be made out under the above title.

*Resolved* that these Minutes be signed by the Moderator and Clerks, and published in *The Evening and The Morning Star*.

JOSEPH SMITH JR. *Moderator*.

FREDERICK G. WILLIAMS, Clerks.

OLIVER COWDERY.<sup>30</sup>

Those at the conference who had been members of the Kirtland firm were Joseph Smith Jr., Frederick G. Williams, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and Newel K. Whitney. Although there was no longer a church United Firm, the changes to the name and founding location of the church, as stated in the minutes, nonetheless have prevailed in tradition. The change to Fayette is also reflected in a copy of a deed from John Johnson to Joseph Smith Jr., May 5, 1834:

Made 5<sup>th</sup> Day of May 1834 John Johnson to Joseph Smith Jr President of the Church of Christ organized on the 6 Day of April 1830 in the township of Fayett[e] and was called the Church of Latter Day saints by a Conference of the Elders of the said Church Assembled in the township of Kirtland on the 3<sup>d</sup> day of May 1834 . . .<sup>31</sup>

The idea of breaking up the United Firm, changing the name of the church, and the April 6, 1830, location, functioned to steer creditors away from suing the church or firm members, if only for a short time. The use of pseudonyms in the 1835 D&C, including changing “United Firm” to “United Order,” (1835 D&C sections 93 and 98; LDS D&C 92 and 104), show the continued concern regarding debts after the firm was divided in 1834. The sections were said to be a “Revelation to Enoch” and a “Revelation given to Enoch” but were actually proclaimed by Smith.

Publishing that the church was “organized in the township of Fayette, Seneca county, New-York, on the 6th of April, A. D. 1830” created an elusive location for the April 6 meeting. This may have been done intentionally to throw creditors off. In fact, this seems evident since Manchester was still printed in church works after the 1835 D&C was printed.

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<sup>30</sup> “Communicated,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, 160; emphasis in original, Oliver Cowdery, editor.

<sup>31</sup> Lyman Cowdery Collection, Church History Library.

The Manuscript History followed the 1834 designation. There was no organizational meeting in Fayette because the May 3, 1834, conference was using this location as a distraction to its actual place. In compiling the draft and final Manuscript History in 1839, Peter Whitmer Sr.'s home was said to be the place where the meeting occurred. When the writing continued in 1843 Willard Richards copied the 1835 D&C pseudonyms of the United Firm members into the history. The impression that the April 6, 1830, meeting was held at the Whitmer home took hold in the tradition of the Latter-day Saints. But the real location—Manchester—was still known.<sup>32</sup>

### Summary

A church was not formed at Fayette, Seneca County on April 6, 1830. The first two elders, Joseph Smith Jr. and Oliver Cowdery, were not at that location. Also no member of the Whitmer family was in attendance at the Smith home in Manchester on April 6 as there were no revelations included for them. No solid evidence has been produced of a meeting in Fayette, New York on that day. The majority of early sources do not suggest that there was a meeting establishing the Church of Christ at Fayette on April 6, 1830. The only sources that affirm a Fayette meeting are intentionally calculated to conceal the real location.

The Kirtland firm met on May 3, 1834, and made changes to protect the church from creditors and from being sued for debts not paid. They stated that the April 6, 1830, meeting occurred in Fayette, New York. This was done for the same reason pseudonyms were used in revelations published in the 1835 D&C: to protect the church.

We have the correct names of individuals mentioned in the revelations for the firm. We know the original name of the church, and can appreciate having individuals think the church was organized at a different location for the above reason. I hope that by exploring this topic in greater detail it will make it easier for future historians to use the correct location of Manchester as the place where the organizational meeting was held and where the baptisms were performed.

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<sup>32</sup> For more information on the Manchester location see Mormon PDF Web Site, (accessed January 11, 2013), <http://tinyurl.com/4x15s54>.