

THE RISE OF MORMONISM: 1816-1844

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Note: The page numbers are different than the 2013 Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged.

CONTENTS

Preface	iii
Common Abbreviations	iv
Libraries	v
1 Relocation to Palmyra and Manchester, New York.....	1
2 Palmyra Revival of 1824-25.....	9
3 Secular and Religious Background	23
4 Manchester Scryer.....	37
5 The Treasure.....	54
6 Smith Family Activities.....	72
7 Life in Harmony, Pennsylvania.....	86
8 Publication of the Book of Mormon.....	100
9 Literary Dependence in the Book of Mormon: Two Studies.....	118
10 Restoring the Church of Christ.....	147
11 New Jerusalem in America.....	177
12 Revelations through Joseph Smith.....	191
13 Missionary Work.....	210
14 Bible Revision.....	224
15 Priesthood Restoration.....	244
16 Papyri and Writings of Abraham.....	266
17 House of the Lord: The Kirtland Temple.....	282
18 Problems at Kirtland.....	294
19. Dissenters and Danites.....	316
20 Developments in Theology.....	335
21 Building Nauvoo.....	346
22 Priesthood Ordinances.....	365
23 Plural Wives in Nauvoo.....	377
24 Sarah Ann Whitney.....	392
25 Emily Dow Partridge.....	403
26 More on Nauvoo Plural Wives.....	416
27 Tragedy: Death of a Prophet.....	427

Conclusion – Progress of Mormonism.....	438
Select Bibliography	444

PREFACE

When I first conceived the idea of presenting my insights into the development of the genesis of Mormonism, it was with the thought that the various aspects of the founding prophet of Mormonism—Joseph Smith—would have to be examined in the context of his times. What were some of the things he did, what were his claims, and what relationship did he have with his converts? As a prophet, Smith had a following from the time he first told of his experiences with the supernatural.

With these considerations in mind, it became evident that this book would need to be intertwined with the theology of Joseph Smith from his simple teachings through to its more complex development. What we find is that, in the process of time, Smith's story became text, with believers believing, and spiritual experiences becoming physical realities. In presenting this research, I bring into this picture the underlying beginnings not only of the largest church organization, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah), but also Community of Christ, formerly and still officially the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (headquartered in Independence, Missouri). The smaller churches, groups, and individuals are also considered as they also rely in part on the story of Joseph Smith.

In this study, it appears to me that Joseph Smith was motivated by a desire to present his experiences as a basis for others to obtain faith. Story telling became a way of life for him as he was able to explain to family and friends what was most dear to his heart. Consequently this book covers Mormonism's foundational years, its scripture, and theological development.

My interest in Mormonism began in 1961. It was in this year that I was introduced to the story of Joseph Smith's visionary experiences. I was baptized into the LDS Church in March of that year and commenced my study. Fifteen years later I resigned my membership. One of my research principles has been to assist other students and writers of Mormonism. This has been very rewarding as indicated in my papers housed in the Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, in Salt Lake City.

Whenever possible I have used primary sources. These include court records, letters, journals, and contemporary newspapers. The use of these documents has given me a better understanding of the social, economic, and political happenings at the time. This methodology has also been valuable in evaluating the various conflicts that involved the Mormons and those who were critical of their activities and beliefs.

I have followed original spelling as far as possible when quoting various documents. In presenting quotations from manuscripts, I have supplied some punctuation and capital letters to facilitate readability. Initial capitals and terminal punctuation have been added. Words in manuscripts that appear above the line are indicated by angled brackets <>. Crossed-out and repeated words are usually deleted. Source notations and comments are presented in footnotes.

I express special appreciation to the late Wesley P. Walters for his research, which appeared in our co-authored book *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record*.¹ The chapters in the above work have been revised for the current book with new documentation where appropriate. Chapter 9 also received his input.

¹ San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994; paperbound 1998, distributed by Signature Books, Salt Lake City.

Common Abbreviations

- 1830 BOM = Joseph Smith, *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the hand of Mormon, Upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*. By Joseph Smith, Junior, author and proprietor (Palmyra, New York: Printed by E. B. Grandin for the author, 1830), cited with page number and followed by LDS and RLDS chapter and verse
- Abraham = Book of Abraham in *The Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981)
- BC = A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ (Zion [Independence, Missouri]: Published by W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833)
- BCR = Book of Commandments and Revelations
- D&C = *Doctrine and Covenants*
- CCLA = Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri
- CHL = LDS Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah
- JST = *The Holy Scriptures* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1991); also known as Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible [revision of King James Bible]
- KJV = King James Version of the Bible
- KRB = Kirtland Revelations Book
- LDS = The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah
- LDS D&C = *The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981)
- Moses = Selections from the Book of Moses in *The Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981)
- NT = New Testament
- OT = Old Testament
- RLDS = Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (known as Community of Christ), headquartered in Independence, Missouri

RLDS D&C = *Book of Doctrine and Covenants* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1990)

Libraries

I would like to give special thanks to the following repositories where research was conducted. I express my appreciation to these institutions and their staffs.

Illinois:

Hancock County Historical Society, Carthage
Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield
Land Records Center, Nauvoo
Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb
Lovejoy Library, University of Southern Illinois at Edwardsville

Missouri:

Genealogy and Local History Branch, Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence
Jackson County Historical Society, Independence
Library-Archives of Community of Christ (RLDS archives), Independence
Mercantile Library Association, St. Louis
Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis
St. Louis Central Library, St. Louis
State Historical Society of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia
Thomas Jefferson Library, University of Missouri, St. Louis
Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, Ellis Library,
University of Missouri, Columbia

New York:

Baker Library, Fredonia
Board of Supervisors, Chenango County Office Building, Norwich
Broome County Public Library, Binghamton
Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society Research Library, Buffalo
Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, Buffalo
Chenango County Clerk's Office, Norwich
Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Carl A. Kroch
Library and Olin Library, Cornell University, Ithaca
Green Library/Moore Memorial Library, Green
Guernsey Memorial Library, Norwich
Office of History, Chenango County Historical Society, Norwich
Ontario County Clerk's Office, Canandaigua
Ontario County Historical Society, Canandaigua
Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua
Oxford Memorial Library, Oxford

Palmyra King's Daughters Free Library, Palmyra
Palmyra Village Offices, Palmyra
Richmond Memorial Library, Batavia
Rochester Public Library, Rochester
Seneca County Clerk's Office, Waterloo
Seneca Falls Historical Society, Seneca Falls
State University of New York (SUNY) Fredonia
State University of New York (SUNY) Geneseo
Town Clerk's Office, Bainbridge
Town Clerk's Office, Manchester
Town Clerk's Office, Palmyra
Warren Hunting Smith Library, Hobart and William Smith
Colleges, Geneva
Waterloo Library and Historical Society, Waterloo
Wayne County Clerk's Office, Lyons
Wayne County Historical Society, Lyons
Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, Palmyra

Ohio:

Chardon Public Library, Chardon
Geauga County Archives and Records Center, Chardon
Geauga County Clerk's Office, Chardon
Kirtland Stake Family History Library, Kirtland
Kirtland Temple Historic Center, Kirtland
Ohio Historical Society, Columbus
P. K. Smith Research Library, Lake County History Center, Lake
County Historical Society, Mentor
Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland

Pennsylvania:

Erie County Public Library, Erie
Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
Latter Day Saint Research Center, Jenkintown
Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia

Utah:

Family and Church History Department of the Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church History Library), Salt Lake City
International Daughters of Utah Pioneers Library, Salt Lake City
LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City
L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham
Young University, Provo
Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of
Utah, Salt Lake City
Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan
Salt Lake Public Library, Salt Lake City

Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City

Other repositories include:

American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts

Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale Collection of

Western Americana, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Oxford, England

Boston Public Library, Boston

Daughters of American Revolution Library, Washington, D.C.

Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines

State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison