

ironically mirrors the biblical psalmist's self-absorption. But that is just one facet of this well-crafted gem.

Laura Hamblin's "Divorce" (p. 229) has an elliptical feel that is almost oriental. And Richard Tice demonstrates his mastery of the often-abused haiku form (p. 213). This one is exceptional:

night rain
against the water, young rice
into the rain

Lance Larsen writes with clarity, vigor, and control and is a keen observer of the telling detail. "Passing the Sacrament at Eastgate Nursing Home" (p. 237) is an outstanding poem on a religious subject. I also like his "Light" (p. 233) and "Dreaming Among Hydrangeas" (p. 235).

The Papers of the Prophet

The Papers of Joseph Smith: Volume 1, Autobiographical and Historical Writings edited by Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989), v, 557 pp., \$19.95.

Reviewed by Roger D. Launius, command historian, Military Airlift Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois.

IT TAKES A METICULOUS PERSON to edit historical documents. No amount of effort should be too much to obtain the stray fact, to check the transcription, the context, and the details of an edited work. Dean C. Jessee, a research historian in the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History at Brigham Young University, is such an individual. Widely recognized as a leading authority on the documentary records of Mormonism, Jessee has edited two previous book-length collections of documents and has either written or edited numerous articles. His experience and understanding are evident in this inaugural volume of *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, and his efforts will enrich all students of Mormon history.

This publication begins a massive undertaking to make generally available

Other poems I found especially pleasing include Veneta Nielsen's "Nursery Rhyme" (p. 6), Donnell Hunter's "Children of Owl" (p. 69), Vernice Pere's "Heritage" (p. 115), R. A. Christmas's "Self-portrait as Brigham Young" (p. 132), Dixie Partridge's "Learning to Quilt" (p. 150), Clifton Jolley's "Prophet" (p. 167), Mary Blanchard's "Bereft" (p. 198), M. D. Palmer's "Rural Torillas" (pp. 204-5), Timothy Liu's "Paper Flowers" (p. 248), and many more.

Other readers are sure to find a lot of poems to like in *Harvest*. Moreover, the best poems in this collection compare favorably with those of the "first-rate poets" included by the editors. This is an important literary work, a landmark that suggests greater things are yet to come.

in a reliable edition the papers of the founder of Mormonism. Jessee explains that prior to this publication effort, Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* had served as the best source for a study of his life and times. However, limitations in format, completeness, and accuracy underscore the need for a comprehensive edition of his papers" (p. xxxiv). This book of documents, subtitled "Autobiographical and Historical Writings," is the first of a projected three-volume "series in what we hope can become a comprehensive publication of his papers" (p. xxxiv). It is a work intended to present everything Smithian, whether by authorship or relationship.

The work contains twelve documents, written between 1832 and 1844, relating the history of Joseph Smith and the Church. These include:

1. History, 1832, from Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, LDS Archives.
2. "Joseph Smith to Oliver Cowdery," from *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, 1 (December 1834): 40.
3. History, 1832-34, from "History of the Church, A-1," pp. 1-187, LDS Archives.

4. "Extract from the Private Journal of Joseph Smith, Jr.," from *Times and Seasons* 1 (November 1839): 2-9.

5. History draft, 1839, from Unnamed Manuscript, LDS Archives.

6. History, 1839, from "History of the Church, A-1," pp. 1-240, LDS Archives.

7. Orson Pratt, *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* (Edinburgh, 1840).

8. Orson Hyde, *Ein Ruf aus der Wüste, eine Stimme aus dem Schoosse der Erde* (Frankfurt, 1842).

9. Joseph Smith, "Church History," from *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 March 1842): 706-10.

10. "The Prairies, Nauvoo, Joe Smith, the Temple, the Mormons, etc.," from *The Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette* 58 (15 September 1843): 3.

11. Joseph Smith, "Latter Day Saints," from I. Daniel Rupp, *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States* (Philadelphia: N. p., 1844), 404-10.

12. Alexander Neibaur, *Journal*, 24 May 1844, from LDS Archives.

Jessee notes that this seemingly eclectic collection of documents belongs together because they deal either historically or autobiographically with the life of the Prophet and were written either by him or under his direction. The many works in this collection are, according to Jessee, just as much Joseph Smith's as if he had dictated or penned them himself.

By far the two largest documents in the collection, accounting for 317 of the volume's 555 pages, are items 3 and 6, the two histories taken from the manuscript of the "History of the Church."

Items 1, 2, and 9 were also printed in Jessee's *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (1984), but the remainder of the materials collected here have not been conveniently published for a broad audience in recent years.

As always, Jessee's work is a model of historical scholarship. All documents are transcribed as written, faithful to the original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Jessee offers an English translation alongside item eight, the one document written in German. Admirable annotation provides additional background information, and the book includes an extensive biographical register, set of maps, chronology, bibliography, and facsimile reproductions of parts of the most important documents.

Although Jessee indicates that he received the full cooperation of the LDS Historical Department Archives in preparing this volume, the increasingly restrictive policies of that institution have made it virtually impossible for others to review the original documents published here. In this setting, Jessee's work becomes especially significant, since it may be as close as most historians can come to the papers of the Prophet. We can only hope that the distrust on the part of Church leaders toward scholars and followers can be eliminated in Utah as it is now being done in eastern Europe.

In spite of my concern about restrictive archival policies, *The Papers of Joseph Smith* is a first-class work, a major accomplishment, and I look forward to future volumes in the series. The editor, the sponsoring institutions, and Deseret Book Company should be commended for undertaking the project.