

A “Meeting of the Brethren”: The Discovery of Official Minutes of a 1902 Meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles

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DOCUMENTING THE DAILY IS DIFFICULT. Women save wedding dresses, not house dresses. Men polish the handles of hand-braided buggy whips, but toss worn-out hammer handles into the fire. Nineteenth-century Mormons were historically among the most diligent of record keepers, but they usually wrote down the text of blessings, prophetic pronouncements, and governmental blasts, not routine conversations about working out water turns on the irrigation ditch or the fact that they showed up at priesthood meeting for the fiftieth week out of fifty-two.

Yet the historian who reconstructs history by using only special events misstates and misinterprets the context of ordinariness against which the unusual assumes its luster. In Mormonism the difference between the ordinary and extraordinary is particularly difficult to ascertain when it comes to decision-making among the general authorities, due to the inaccessibility of most research documents. As a result, the discovery among the Rudger Clawson papers, housed in the Manuscripts Division of the Marriott Library, University of Utah, of official minutes of a routine meeting of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1902 helps establish what constituted “business as usual” at the turn of the twentieth century.

THE CLAWSON PAPERS

Rudger Clawson (1857-1943) was a prominent member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving as missionary, church stenographer, folk hero, stake president, apostle, church auditor, mission president, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and counselor in the First Presidency.¹ Born in Salt Lake City in 1857, Clawson was the third child of Hiram B. Clawson by Margaret Gay Judd, the second of his four wives. Being born just ten years after the Mormons arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, Clawson's eighty-six years spanned almost equal periods in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In 1879 Clawson became a Mormon folk hero when he barely escaped the fate of his missionary companion, Joseph Standing, who was murdered by a mob at Varnell's Station, Georgia. After returning to Salt Lake City, Clawson married Florence Ann Dinwoodey in 1882 and Lydia Elizabeth Spencer in 1883. The next year he became the first polygamist Mormon to be convicted and imprisoned for violation of the Edmunds Act of 1882. He served a sentence of three years, one month, and ten days in the U.S. Penitentiary in Salt Lake City, being released from prison by presidential pardon in December 1887.

After Clawson left the penitentiary, he was made president of the Box Elder Stake, at the suggestion of Apostle Lorenzo Snow, a fellow inmate, who became Clawson's mentor. In 1898 Snow, then church president, ordained Clawson an apostle. As junior member of the Quorum of the Twelve, he moved into the leading quorums of the church; even more significantly, Snow chose him as second counselor in the First Presidency and had him sustained at the October 1901 general conference. Snow told the congregation, "I have selected one (through, I believe, the manifestations of the Lord), who, I think, will be energetic and strong, will serve the people, and help me and President Joseph F. Smith along in a proper way; and I hope you will sustain and support him."² Unexpectedly, Snow died only four days later. It was decided, however, not to dissolve the First Presidency until after the funeral on 13 October 1901. Thus Clawson has the distinction of having served in the First Presidency for only seven days—the shortest period on record.³ The new president, Joseph F. Smith,

1. See David S. Hoopes and Roy Hoopes, *The Making of a Mormon Apostle: The Story of Rudger Clawson* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1990), and Roy Hoopes, "My Grandfather, The Mormon Apostle: Discovering a Giant in the Family," *American Heritage* 41 (Feb. 1990): 82-92.

2. *Report of the Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 Oct. 1901 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1901), 62.

3. In the Clawson diary for the meeting of the First Presidency and apostles on 11 October 1901, he lists himself immediately after Joseph F. Smith with the title "President Rudger Clawson." The next day in a special meeting to decide on the funeral arrangements for President Snow, he refers to himself again as "President." On Thursday, 17 October 1901, after the reorganization of the First Presidency, he lists himself in his old position after Abraham O. Woodruff.

called John R. Winder and Anthon H. Lund as counselors; but for the last twenty-two years of Clawson's life, he served as president of the Twelve, only a heartbeat away from becoming the next church president.

In 1983 the University of Utah purchased Clawson's diaries and papers from the estate of his daughter, Lydia Clawson Hoopes, using an anonymous \$30,000 gift.⁴ This collection is an extremely valuable one for documenting Mormon history from one in the inner circle during the closing years of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. Clawson's nineteen-volume diary covers parts of the years 1884 and 1887-1905; and it is unfortunate that he did not continue to keep a diary, for he was a methodical and detailed recorder.⁵ Devoted to the church, he gave its business—rather than his personal affairs or family life—his highest priority. He routinely kept notes on the meetings he attended; and from 1898 to 1905 he recorded minutes of the weekly temple meetings of the First Presidency and apostles. These notes, summaries, and minutes are all available in his diary, which provides a view of his imprisonment for polygamy, his assignment as Box Elder Stake president, and his early years as a Mormon apostle. Significantly, he wrote his diary with an audience of future readers in mind, and frequently begins an entry by explaining: "It might be of interest to the reader to state that ..." and "in order that the reader may have a clear idea. ..."⁶

THE "BLUE MINUTES"

At the invitation of Signature Books, in association with Smith Research Associates, I prepared a one-volume edition of Rudger Clawson's apostolic diaries for their Significant Mormon Diaries series. The book's title, *A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Rudger Clawson* (1993) reflects Clawson's methodical and consistent attention to the meetings in which the church's leading quorums conducted its business. In the pro-

4. The twenty-nine-box Rudger Clawson Collection is known as Ms 481 and located in the Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

5. The first diary is a journal account covering the first month of his imprisonment from 3 November to 1 December 1884. The second diary, labeled "Book O," is a large (9 1/4" x 14") leather volume covering events from 12 December 1887 until 2 April 1892. The first three years are a retrospective account based on various documents in his possession. Daily entries begin 1 May 1891. There are nine small (4 1/4" x 6 3/4") bound diaries, numbered 1 to 9, which cover 3 April 1892 to 2 October 1898. When Clawson became an apostle, he marked the event by purchasing a new and larger (4 3/4" x 7 1/2") diary—known as "No. 10"—and did not finish filling the pages of the previous diary. When this last holographic diary was full on 7 May 1899, Clawson changed from handwritten to typewritten diaries. The remaining diary pages, numbered Books 11 to 17, are loose, typewritten sheets (7 1/2" x 10") and continue the record to 21 December 1905.

6. Clawson, Diary, 16 Oct. 1900, 17 Nov. 1901.

cess, Clawson's minutes of these weekly meetings were carefully reread, with additional notes concerning unique stylistic phrases, unusual spellings, ink color, and typewriter style. The entry for 8 May 1902 appeared to be an ordinary set of minutes, though typed by a different typewriter using a blue ribbon. These minutes recount yet another routine Thursday temple meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve and, at first glance, appear to be one of Clawson's regular weekly entries. It was later deduced, however, that these minutes are a carbon copy of official First Presidency minutes for that day's meeting, which Clawson received and included in his diary. The strength of circumstantial evidence, internal textual peculiarities, and external documentary substantiation have combined to form a very strong case. I have designated them Blue Minutes to distinguish them from Clawson's routine diary accounts, or personal notes, of weekly quorum meetings in the temple.

The text of the Blue Minutes is reproduced below with the original underlining, spelling, paragraphing, and capitalization. Minor punctuation changes have been made for clarification, with my editorial additions in brackets. The Journal History includes minutes of many of the meetings of the First Presidency and Twelve, and the **bold type** indicates words which are also in the Journal History.⁷ Each of the Clawson temple meetings from October 1898 to October 1904 was compared with the corresponding account in the Journal History, and only at 8 May 1902 is there verbatim agreement. To avoid interrupting the text, discussion of

7. The origin of what would later be known as the Journal History, sometimes referred to as the "Historian's Office Journal," began in December 1895 when the First Presidency, then consisting of Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, appointed Charles W. Penrose as Assistant Church Historian. A few weeks later, on 10 January 1896, the First Presidency "decided we should keep a daily journal of current events and that Bro. G. F. Gibbs [secretary to the First Presidency] should furnish duplicates of his type-written minutes to be incorporated in historical journal." The next day Penrose asked Gibbs for the first set of duplicate minutes. Gibbs resisted until Cannon repeated the instructions, then gave Penrose the first set on 15 January 1896 (Charles W. Penrose, *Diary*, 10 and 16 Jan. 1896, MAN B-130, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City).

In April 1898 Andrew Jenson was sustained as an Assistant Church Historian and assumed some of Penrose's duties with respect to the Journal History. In the early years of the twentieth century Jenson and several individuals working under his direction were compiling the Journal History, a daily chronology arranged in scrapbook format to allow for new information to be added or inserted under earlier dates. Sources were newspaper clippings, reports, minutes, letters, journals, diaries, and other records. In 1906 Jenson assumed full responsibility for the Journal History. In addition to the full on-going documentation, he also directed assistants who began reconstructing a similar chronological record from the church's organization 6 April 1830. For information about Jenson's achievements, see Keith W. Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1974, 211-13; Davis Bitton and Leonard J. Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, Publications in Mormon Studies No. 2 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 41-55.

significant items follows in the next section.⁸

*Thursday, May 8th, 1902.*⁹

Salt Lake City.

Ten a.m. meeting of the brethren at the temple.

Present: Presidents Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund, and Apostles Brigham Young, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, Mat[t]hias F. Cowley, Rudger Clawson, and Hyrum M. Smith, and Patriarch John Smith.¹⁰

The brethren clothed. Song, "Guide us, O thou great Jehovah." Brother Cowley was mouth in prayer, and Brother Merrill at the altar. The brethren disrobed. Song, "Ye who are called to labor and minister for God."

Conference appointments: Wasatch, Brother Grant; South Sanpete, Brother Smoot;¹¹ Bingham, Brother Teasdale.

Reports.

8. In the days before forger-murderer Mark Hofmann, it was customary to accept a document's provenance at face value or at the explanation of the donor; and authentication often consisted of little more than visually scanning the paper, examining the appearance of the ink and the handwriting, and reading through the text for content consistency. Today, however, repositories collecting Mormon historical manuscripts require much greater proof of provenance, whether the document is being donated or offered for sale. In the case of the Blue Minutes, the Marriott Library followed a meticulous textbook procedure for establishing authenticity, consisting of verifying its provenance, analyzing the internal evidence, examining the relationship to the Journal History, studying possible alternate sources, and funding an independent forensic analysis. For readers interested in this multi-faceted process, a more detailed analysis is available in my 1990 paper, "The Discovery of Official Minutes of the Meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles in the Salt Lake Temple, 8 May 1902."

9. The four typed pages of the Blue Minutes are, for security purposes, now housed in the safe in the Manuscripts Division at the Marriott Library, with a photocopy at the proper point in the Clawson diary and a notation that the originals have been moved. See Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 8 May 1902, in *Ministry of Meetings*, 431-36.

10. For biographical information on these general authorities, see "Appendix: Attendees" at the end of this essay. The apostles absent from the meeting were Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, Abraham Owen Woodruff, and Reed Smoot.

11. Reed Smoot (1862-1941) was absent from the meeting but is still assigned to visit the next conference of the South Sanpete Stake. He had been ordained an apostle on 8 April 1900 and was Utah's U.S. senator from 1903 to 1933. The publicity generated by senatorial hearings on whether he should be allowed to keep his seat (1903-1906) forced the church's public renunciation of post-Manifesto plural marriage. Because Smoot sometimes ignored instructions from the First Presidency on politics and was only semi-active in the church during his senatorial years, Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1982), 318, refer to him as a "secular saint." See also Milton R. Merrill, *Reed Smoot: Apostle in Politics* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1990), and Harvard S. Heath, ed., *In the World: The Diaries of Reed Smoot* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1997).

Apostle Teasdale attended the monthly priesthood meeting of the Juab Stake last Saturday at Nephi. Ordained Albert Henry Belliston¹² High Priest and set him apart as second counselor to Bishop Wm. H. Pettigrew¹³ of Nephi. While at the tithing office a small boy came in to pay his tithing. He was¹⁴ very regular in observing this law and he felt to bless him. Reported that a Josephite is flooding that part of the country with tracts, endeavoring to show that Brigham Young had no authority to build up the Church of God.¹⁵

Apostle Heber J. Grant reported the Summit Stake Conference, which was held at Kamas. At the monthly priesthood meeting held last Saturday, all the bishops were present but one and he sent in an excellent excuse. Conference was well attended. He was present at a conjoint meeting Sunday night, and the reports made were very satisfactory. Before leaving, he laid the southeast corner stone of the Kamas new meeting house. \$208 was contributed at the time to assist in the erection of the building. Bishop Danl. Lambert¹⁶ of Kamas makes a good bishop. Brother Moses W. Taylor,¹⁷ he felt, had done a grand work in Summit Stake. Held a meeting Monday night in

12. Albert H. Belliston (1876-1965) was ordained an elder in February 1898, then six weeks later was ordained a seventy and set apart to serve in Hawaii (then the Sandwich Island Mission), where he stayed until May 1902. He was a counselor in the Nephi Ward, Juab Stake, until 1912, and then served as bishop of Nephi South Ward until 1924, as president of Juab Stake, 1924-41, and as president of the Hawaiian temple, 1941-43. Ralph B. Simmons, *Utah's Distinguished Personalities* (Salt Lake City: Personality Publishing Co., 1933), 57.

13. William H. Pettigrew (1860-1941) served in the Southern States Mission, 1890-92, as bishop of Nephi Ward, 1901-12, and as mayor of Nephi 1904-1908. Frank Esshom, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Pioneers Book Publishing Co., 1913), 73, 1103.

14. The typed original says "He is." Clawson, with his black ink pen, changed it to "He was."

15. The last two words, "of God," are written in Clawson's black ink. Utah Mormons used "Josephite," a term which became popular in the 1880s, to refer to a follower of Joseph Smith III, president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. RLDS members referred to a Utah Mormon as a "Brighamite." (*Latter Day Saints' Herald* 1:137, 185, 289; 2:31; 4:10; 25:359; 29:25.) The tracts may have been Amante Luce's *Errors and Inconsistencies concerning the Presidency of the Dominant Church in Utah* and *Joseph Smith [III]: Has He Succeeded His Father, the Seer, in the Presidency of the Church?*, both of which were being advertised in 1902. See *Saints' Herald* 49 (26 Mar. 1902): 296, and Richard P. Howard to Stan Larson, 7 May 1990.

16. Daniel Lambert (1861-1918) served as the bishop of Kamas Ward, Summit Stake, 1901-1908. Roy Lambert, *Kamas with Komets* ([Coalville, UT]: Summit County Bee, 1960), 14, 43.

17. Moses W. Taylor (1862-1922), son of John Taylor and his fifth wife, Sophia Whittaker, and a full brother of Apostle John W. Taylor, served as a Southern States missionary, 1890-93, and president of Summit Stake, from 1901 until he was released for health reasons in 1921. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: A. Jenson History Co., 1901-36), 4:73.

Coalville.

Apostle **John W. Taylor** reported his attendance at the **Jordan Stake Conference** last Sunday and Monday, held in the **Draper Ward**. **Presidents Smith and Lund** and **Apostle Hyrum M. Smith** were present. They had an excellent conference. Brother Taylor said he was well pleased with the spirit of **President Goff**.¹⁸ Attended conjoint meeting Sunday night, at which there was a splendid feeling manifested. **President Smith, Hyrum M. Smith and himself ordained twelve High Priests**. **People of Draper have built a substantial meeting house**. Spoke of the custom of alternating the stake conferences, as result[ing] in good. Some of the meeting houses, however, are too small. Thought the plan of a model meeting house should be drawn up by an architect, which might be used to advantage in wards that were thinking to build.

Apostle **M. W. Merrill** said that, in connection with **Brothers Cowley and Ballard**,¹⁹ he attended conference at **Oneida Stake**, last Sunday and Monday. Although the weather was unfavorable attendance at the meeting was good. Gave the **West Canal Company** enc[o]uragement. Said the canal they were building was one of the largest ever undertaken in **Cache Valley**. There are some **30,000 acres** principally owned by our people under the canal. Ordained **Jos. J. Hill**²⁰ a **High Councilor**. Not being in very good health, he did not attend the Monday meeting.

Apostle **Cowley** reported his attendance at the conjoint meeting Sunday night, and said that the attendance at conference on Monday was larger than on the Sabbath day.

Brother Clawson reported the **Wayne Stake Conference** of last Sunday and Monday. He was accompanied by **Bro. Jos. W. McMur-**

18. Hyrum Goff (1849-1914), president of Jordan Stake, 1901-14, had served six months in the penitentiary from March to September 1886 for unlawful cohabitation. He had been bishop of East Jordan Ward, 1895-1900, and, in 1909, became Midvale's first mayor. See "Passing Events," *Improvement Era* 18 (Jan. 1915): 280, and Rosa Mae M. Evans, "Judicial Prosecution of Prisoners for LDS Plural Marriage: Prison Sentences, 1884-1895," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1986, 122.

19. Melvin J. Ballard (1873-1939), who would become an apostle in 1919, was then a counselor in the bishopric of the Logan Second Ward, Cache Stake, and served as president of the North Western States Mission, 1909-19. See *Melvin J. Ballard, Crusader for Righteousness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966).

20. Joseph J. Hill (1858-1941) was born at Ogden, Utah, and served as a missionary in the Indian territory, October 1888-October 1889. The minutes are slightly in error here, since he was set apart as an alternate high councilor on 5 May 1902. See his obituary in *Deseret News*, 3 Jan. 1941, 6.

rin.²¹ In accordance with instructions of the brethren, he visited the Torrey Ward and carefully inspected the canal that was in course of construction. He was prepared, he said, to verify the statements made by the Presidency of the Wayne Stake in their communication to the First Presidency. The people had shown forth good faith and determination in carrying forward this enterprise. Some \$2200 in labor had already been expended by the people under adverse circumstances, and it would require some \$1,800 to complete the work. Should the people there fail in this undertaking, it means the breaking up of the Torrey Ward. Brother Clawson now recommended, in view of the conditions set forth, that \$1,000 be appropriated to assist the people of the Torrey ward in building the Center Irrigation Company canal, the money to be paid to Bishop John R. Stewart,²² as trustee, as soon as the earth work between the head of the canal and the Torrey Ward (some 6 miles) is entirely completed; the Church to receive \$1,000 in capital stock of the Center Irrigation Company.

Brother Clawson further reported that he had made some inquiries in relation to the case of Nancy Hunt, who had been charged with the crime of incest and whose father was serving a term of ten years in Utah penitentiary, having been convicted of said crime in the district court. From all that could be learned he had every reason to believe that she was guilty, although at the end of a two hours' interview, Bro. McMurrin being also present, she declared her innocence. The story she tells, however, in many respects is very flimsy. It was decided to give her a hearing before the bishop's court, and Bishop White²³ was instructed to take up the matter at an early date.

Patriarch John Smith attended fast meeting at the temple.

President John R. Winder also attended fast meeting at the tem-

21. Joseph W. McMurrin (1858-1932), ordained a seventy on 21 April 1884, was sustained at October general conference as one of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies in 1897. Apostle Anton H. Lund, then traveling to Palestine and Syria, confirmed this office on him in Liverpool on 21 January 1898 according to cabled instructions; however, because he used the words "set apart," not "ordain," a controversy ensued. The Seventies felt strongly that their presiding officers should be ordained, and some members began claiming that McMurrin's ordination was invalid. The First Presidency and Twelve discussed the problem and decided no further action was necessary. Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 18 Apr. 1899. McMurrin also served as president of the California Mission, 1919-32.

22. John R. Stewart (1873-1938), born at Beaver, Utah, served in the Northern States Mission, 1897-99, then as bishop of Torrey Ward, Wayne Stake, 1901-1906. J. Cecil Alter, *Utah: The Storied Domain* (Chicago: American Historical Society, Inc., 1932), 122-23.

23. Levi C. White (1868-1952) was bishop of Giles Ward, Wayne Stake, 1896-1907, and bishop of the Utahn Ward, Duchesne Stake, 1918-22. See Anne Snow, comp., *Rainbow Views: A History of Wayne County*, 3d ed. (Springville, UT: Art City Publishing Co., 1977), 296.

ple and a meeting in the evening at Farmer's ward.²⁴

President Brigham Young attended fast meeting at the temple on Sunday.

The reports of the brethren were received, and their labors approved by unanimous vote.

Apostle John W. Taylor moved that \$1,000 be appropriated in accordance with the recommendation of Bro. Clawson. Seconded.

Brother Merrill thought it not well to make recommendations of this character, where the expenditure of means was involved. He thought the matter ought to be left entirely in the hands of the trustee-in-trust, who is fully posted as to the financial condition of the Church, and who knows whether there is sufficient on hand to meet obligations that arise.

President Smith said that the idea was to assist the people of Torrey in a small way, and he simply desired to know if the brethren of the Twelve felt to approve it. We have not at our disposal sufficient means to make large appropriations for purposes of this nature.

Apostle Taylor took exception to the view expressed by Brother Merrill, and felt that when the brethren were asked regarding such matters they should express themselves freely.

Brother Clawson thought it a simple question. The Presidency of the Wayne Stake had written a letter to the First Presidency in behalf of the people of Torr[e]y Ward asking for help. The letter was referred by the brethren to the Council for discussion and action. Brother Clawson was thereupon instructed to investigate the matter during his visit to the Wayne Stake, and he, therefore, felt perfectly justified in making his recommendation.

President Smith remarked that the reason the Church could not assist the people in building the Cache Valley canal was because they asked for so large an amount; but the people at Torrey are very poor, and without the help sought after would suffer serious results. Therefore, if the brethren felt to sanction it, he would be pleased to make the appropriation. Where we have money in the bank and see an opportunity for investment, such as buying sugar stock, to benefit the Church, the Presidency would feel at liberty to do so. As to matters involving large appropriations, we think it proper and wise to consult the Council. I never would think, he said, of putting up a building like the Deseret News Block without the unanimous approval of this Council.

The motion carrying an appropriation of \$1,000 to the Center Irrig-

24. The Farmer's Ward meetinghouse was located on the west side of State Street at 1100 South and was part of the Granite Stake, formed on 17 January 1900. Henry F. Burton served as bishop of Farmer's Ward, 1886-1914.

gation Company canal was carried by unanimous vote.

President Smith spoke briefly in reference to a tithing report of the Utah Stake, read before the saints of that stake at the last conference. He did not believe, he said, it would be wise and prudent for us to show our hand in these matters. It excites the cupidity, covetousness, and criticism of the people. To show what is received by the Church and not what is paid out is manifestly unfair and imprudent, and should not be done.

President John R. Winder was opposed to such things, and said that aside from the tithing paid by Jesse Knight²⁵ the people of that stake did not pay as much tithing into the Church as was disbursed locally. One third of all the tithing paid into the Church is expended locally.

President Joseph F. Smith referred to financial conditions and said that the trustee-in-trust has on deposit in the bank about \$240,000, but the tithing is falling off, and we will have \$30,000 interest on Church bonds to meet in the near future. There will be some revenue from the Deseret News building, if it is ever completed, but the work goes on very slowly, and something like eight or ten thousand dollars is paid out weekly to meet this obligation.

President John R. Winder said that the erection of the annex means an expenditure of \$100,000, which will be required on or before October 1902.

Brother Clawson said that he desired to mention another subject that was on his mind. He felt that an injustice towards some of the saints existed in Zion. The obligation to preach the gospel rested generally upon the elders of Israel. Some, however, because of the engrossing affairs of life, were exempt in a great measure from this duty. He referred, he said, to the wealthy brethren among our people, and in one case a young man, a banker, was called to take a mission. He reported that to leave home for this purpose would be very hurtful to his affairs and he proffered to pay \$25 a month in lieu of missionary work. He was excused and the \$25 a month, which was paid for two years, was used to assist two of his poorer brethren in their missionary labors abroad. Brother Clawson felt that the obligation to preach the gospel should be borne by the rich as well as the poor, and where the rich cannot go they should contribute of their means to strengthen and assist their needy brethren.

President Smith said he thought it would be well for the brethren

25. Jesse Knight (1845-1921), founder of Raymond, Alberta, and president of the Knight Investment Company, had extensive real estate and mining holdings and contributed generously to the church and to Brigham Young University. Jesse William Knight, *The Jesse Knight Family: Jesse Knight, His Forebears and Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940).

of the Twelve to take this matter into consideration.

Motion for adjournment prevailed.

Benediction by President Brigham Young.

DISCUSSION

By the time the Salt Lake temple was dedicated in April 1893, the pattern had developed for a weekly meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Most of the weekly temple meetings were on Thursdays except when holidays or other special occasions conflicted, then they were moved to another day or postponed until the next Thursday.²⁶ These minutes show the parliamentary procedure and the method of conducting their council meetings. Those present are listed in a formal order: first, the First Presidency, next, the eight apostles present by descending seniority, and then the presiding patriarch to the church. Significantly, George F. Gibbs, clerk to the First Presidency, is not listed as being in attendance, suggesting that someone else—probably Clawson—took that function for this meeting.

The formal meeting began with the brethren donning their white temple robes and caps for the opening service, which included a song. They then encircled the altar for the exchange of "certain signs of the priesthood" and an antiphonal prayer.²⁷ After removing their temple clothing and changing back to street clothes, they sang a second song, then heard a list of assignments to attend upcoming stake conferences.

The next item of business was reports from apostles about their most recent visits to stake conferences and other church duties. Again they spoke in descending order of seniority, from George Teasdale to Ruderger Clawson. John W. Taylor's report included those of President Smith, Counselor Lund, and Apostle Hyrum M. Smith, since all four men had attended the same stake conference. After the reports of the apostles, the church patriarch spoke, followed by the remaining member of the First Presidency (John R. Winder) and the president of the Quorum of the Twelve (Brigham Young, Jr.). Such a routine according to seniority was the custom.

In addition to the obviously routine business of appraising the vitality of the wards and stakes visited and reporting changes in ecclesiastical officers are two discussions which dealt with less routine matters: a case of sexual misconduct and a financial decision. From a late-twentieth-century perspective when incest and other forms of sexual abuse are receiv-

26. Stan Larson, "Synoptic Minutes of a Quarterly Conference of the Twelve Apostles: The Clawson and Lund Diaries of July 9-11, 1901," *Journal of Mormon History* 14 (1988): 99.

27. D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *Brigham Young University Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 80.

ing widespread scholarly attention, the case of Nancy Hunt is particularly poignant.²⁸

Nancy's father, Jonathan Hunt, one of the pioneer settlers of Blue Valley or Giles in Wayne County, Utah, had married three women and fathered a large family²⁹ but had been a widower for four years when his seventeen-year-old daughter gave birth to a baby. Hunt is described in newspaper accounts as "of high standing, especially in church circles; has held high ecclesiastical offices."³⁰ The sexual abuse had been long term, witnesses testifying to "numerous incidents" of seeing Hunt and his daughter "at camps" with only one bed or getting up in the morning out of a single bed, while another news report says the incest had lasted "for years." Hunt and Nancy made no effort to conceal the situation from the younger children of the family. When she became pregnant, she was sent to Nevada where she gave birth to the child.

In June 1901 Levi C. White and Walter E. Hanks, bishops of Giles and Caineville respectively, circulated a petition in Giles, Hanksville, Caineville, and other parts of Wayne County, charging Hunt with incest. A majority of citizens signed this petition. In August A. L. Robinson, county attorney, filed a complaint against Hunt alleging that he "did ... unlawfully and feloniously and incestuously have Carnal Knowledge of the body of the said Nancy Hunt."³¹

28. Jessie L. Embry, "Ultimate Taboos: Incest and Mormon Polygamy," *Journal of Mormon History* 18 (Spring 1992): 108-109, first cited the Nancy Hunt incest case. In relation to uncle-niece marriages among polygamous Mormons, Embry, *ibid.*, 106-107, reports that Samuel Smith, mayor of Brigham City, had five wives, two of whom were nieces; Aaron Johnson, bishop of Springville, had twelve wives, six of whom were nieces; and Henry Sudweeks, who polygamously married his niece, was prosecuted for incest and sentenced to three years in the Utah territorial penitentiary. See Stan Larson, *Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Rudger Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-87* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 26, 228.

29. Jonathan Hunt (1845-1922) was born in Kentucky. His parents joined the LDS church and the family moved to Utah about 1850. Jonathan married Clarissa Ann Leavitt in Clover Valley, Nevada, in 1864, and they moved to southern Utah in 1866. Clarissa died in 1879, leaving seven children. Later that year he married Mary Ann Hughes, who also gave birth to seven children. Nancy, their second child, was born in January 1884. In 1883 Jonathan took a plural wife, Josephine Chidester, by whom he had nine children. Mary died in 1895 and Josephine in 1897, one and a half months after the birth of her last child. Hunt Family Research Association, *Heritage Builders: Descendants of John Hunt Who Married Jane Coates* ([Salt Lake City], 1961), 99, 122-24.

30. Unless otherwise specified, information about the case comes from the following newspaper accounts: "The Hunt Incest Case," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 Nov. 1901, 7; "Will Atone for Crime: Jonathan Hunt Will Spend Ten Years in Pen for Incest," *Deseret Evening News*, 20 Nov. 1901, 7; "The Dreadful Incest Case: Hunt Convicted and Sentenced to Ten Years in State Prison," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 Nov. 1901, 7.

31. "Complaint," 21 Aug. 1901, *The State of Utah vs. Jonathan Hunt*, Sixth Judicial District Court, Wayne County, Loa, Utah.

No one had interfered earlier because "his neighbors have lived in very fear of their lives if they should complain to the officers," but they freely testified that the family lived in the "the most deplorably destitute circumstances" and that he treated the children "brutally and harshly, bruising and choking them. He has been domineering and harsh, using his authority with a high hand, especially in his own family. It is said that when his last wife died her last words were, 'You will go to hell for this, Jonathan Hunt,' she having been made to suffer greatly from harsh treatment in her last illness."

In November 1901 the fifty-six-year-old farmer was tried at Sixth District Court in Loa; and because he was "impecunious," a court-appointed lawyer represented him. Hunt denied the charge. Nancy, who was present with her baby in her arms, obediently rose when asked, so that witnesses could identify her. The reporter describes her as having "a simple grin on her face, seemingly pleased at the notoriety she was receiving." At the conclusion of the trial, Judge William M. McCarty instructed the jury that "incestuous intercourse" constituted the crime they were to focus on, not the paternity of the child. The jury deliberated for fifty minutes, found him guilty, but recommended mercy. The next day, 16 November, the judge sentenced him, imposing a ten-year sentence instead of the legal limit of fifteen years. Jonathan Hunt, who had already been disfellowshipped for "biting a man's nose off and for illicit whisky making and selling," was excommunicated in 1901. Hunt entered the Utah State Prison, located in the Sugarhouse area of Salt Lake City, two days later as convict No. 1369. It is not known if he served the full sentence or was released early for good behavior. Hunt was rebaptized and reconfirmed on 13 August 1922, one week before his death.

In May 1902 Apostle Ruder Clawson, with Joseph W. McMurrin of the First Council of the Seventy, had been assigned to attend the quarterly conference of the Wayne Stake in Loa. After Nancy's father had been in prison for several months, she came forward to unidentified church leader(s)—presumably her bishop, Levi C. White, and/or possibly her stake president, Willis G. Robison—and proclaimed her innocence of the crime of incest with her father. Instead, she tried to convince them that the child was the result of rape by a stranger.

The complex psychology of incest suggests that the conflict among Nancy's love for her father, her fear of him, her abhorrence of the incestuous relationship, and the psychological disorientation produced by this repeated trespass of her personal boundaries led to this delayed effort to redeem her father's reputation and, in a way, her own.³² Accord-

32. Karin C. Meiselman, *Incest: A Psychological Study of Causes and Effects with Treatment Recommendations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1991).

ingly, after the stake conference sessions on Sunday, 4 May 1902, the visiting general authorities, Clawson and McMurrin, had a two-hour interview with seventeen-year-old Nancy. Clawson records in his diary: "She gave birth to an illegitimate child but claims that she was drugged and ravished by some stranger [i.e., a non-Mormon]. Her story is very loose, and rather convinces one that she is lying."³³ McMurrin and he then decided that she should be tried by a bishop's court for incest and instructed Bishop White to make arrangements for this at his earliest convenience. That Clawson reported Nancy's having "been charged with the crime of incest" implies that he, at least, felt she was a guilty participant, not an innocent victim; he seems to have felt that the robber of virtue and the one robbed were both criminals. The records of the bishop's court are unavailable, but family tradition holds that Nancy was excommunicated.³⁴

This meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve also dealt with a less routine matter: making a financial commitment and, even more interestingly, giving a glimpse into the decision-making dynamics involved. The trustee-in-trust held \$240,000 cash in the bank. That total may seem like a considerable amount for that time period, but the church had a great deal of indebtedness, and it was not until 10 January 1907 that President Joseph F. Smith announced that the church was entirely free from debt.³⁵ The requested appropriation of \$1,000 for the Center Irrigation Company to finish the canal at Torrey was approved, even though initially resisted by Marriner W. Merrill, who was concerned that the Cache Stake was not getting church money for its canal.

A valuable insight into the thinking of church leaders is found in Joseph F. Smith's comments about the tithing report that was read to the members at the Utah Stake Conference. He opposed such public disclosure because "it excites the cupidity, covetousness, and criticism of the people." The tithing report, read by Lafayette Holbrook, second counselor in the Utah Stake presidency, was printed in the account of the stake conference by the *Deseret News*—a standard news item for the times. This newspaper account, interestingly, supplies more information, since Hol-

33. Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 4 May 1902. Jonathan Hunt offered the court the following explanation of his daughter's illegitimate child: "At conference at Cainesville in August of 1900 she one night after dark met a tall man who threw some kind of powder in her face, whereupon she immediately became unconscious and knew not what happened thereafter until she found herself an hour later sitting alone on the river bank." "The Dreadful Incest Case," 7.

34. In 1904, at age twenty, Nancy married George H. Pierce of Huntington, Utah, by whom she had four children. Four years after his death in 1912, she married David F. Durfee of Loa, Utah, by whom she also had four children. She died in December 1925, age forty-one, just eighteen days after the birth of her last child. Nancy Ellen Hunt Pierce Durfee Collection, Ms 601, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library.

35. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 100.

brook explained that the 1901 tithing was lower than that of previous years because the Alpine and Nebo stakes had been formed out of the Utah Stake in January 1901. As a comparison, Holbrook provided the tithing of Utah Stake for the previous five years: 1897, \$67,826.16; 1898, \$82,646.68; 1899, \$112,597.26; 1900, \$109,304.07; and 1901, \$100,117.50.³⁶ Despite Smith's discomfort with such reports, the church continued to announce annual tithing totals until April 1959, the date of the last public financial report, when President David O. McKay stopped the practice, because the church was deficit-spending to the tune of \$8 million by the end of 1959. A few years later, when the church experienced great financial success, there was no incentive to revert to the former disclosures.³⁷

In short, these minutes provide both a unique record of how an ordinary, routine meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve would proceed weekly and also glimpses of how they dealt with two of the persistent problems of people in religious communities: sexual conduct and financial decisions.

CONCLUSION

In December 1899 Apostle Francis M. Lyman told members of the Malad Stake that during the general authorities' weekly meetings "the most important business of the Church [is] considered."³⁸ By their very nature these meetings have a limited number of participants. The minutes are not housed in the archives of the church's Historical Department but in the First Presidency's and Twelve's office vaults. Consequently, attempts to understand the historical decision-making processes of the highest councils of the church are circumscribed by the inaccessibility of these documents. The Blue Minutes are, to my knowledge, the only publicly available set of official minutes of the First Presidency and Twelve during this period.³⁹

36. "Utah Stake Conference," *Deseret News*, 14 Apr. 1902, 7.

37. D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Finances from the 1830s to the 1990s," *Sunstone* 19 (June 1996): 25.

38. Rudger Clawson, *Diary*, 17 Dec. 1899.

39. For the pre-Utah period, there are numerous summaries of meetings of the First Presidency and/or twelve apostles in Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell, ed., *Kirtland Council Minute Book* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1996), Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), and Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932-51). However, sufficient contemporary diary or other sources are lacking to determine how completely these minutes were recorded and, hence, how full the published accounts are. Based on a comparison of the Journal History summaries for this period with the Anthon H. Lund and Rudger Clawson diaries, the Journal History is consciously circumspect. In virtually every case, the Clawson diary report of a quorum meeting is longer and more detailed than the Journal History version, even though it cannot be considered complete either; not infrequently, the Lund and Clawson accounts contain items unique to each.

Inevitably, the question arises about the propriety of publishing the Blue Minutes, given the reluctance of the First Presidency to allow researchers access to these documents. Confidentiality may be a legitimate concern, and church councils, large corporations, and government departments have a right to confidentiality concerning decisions made behind closed doors. Some Mormons may wonder: "When a private document is discovered, should it be published and presented if the originators of the said document prefer that it remain private?"⁴⁰ This use of the present tense assumes that the general authorities of 1902 are still around to make their wishes known or that their wishes are reflected in the decisions of the continuing corporate body of the quorum.

There is evidence that earlier quorums held more moderate views. For instance, Francis M. Lyman, at the Twelve's quarterly conference in the temple on 3 April 1900, not only affirmed the importance of that body but also urged a plan of future publication: "Said that as the body cannot live without the spirit, so the church cannot live without or exist without the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Thought it important to keep a journal. Had written nothing he would be ashamed to read to the Brethren. If we don't write our own history—that is, furnish the data—nobody will."⁴¹ As we have seen, Clawson kept his diary with a future audience in mind.

However, in the interests of scholarship and historical accuracy, such restrictions should have a built-in time limit. For example, the closest possible parallel is that since 1978 the minutes of the meetings of the RLDS First Presidency, Twelve Apostles, Presiding Bishopric, and the Joint Council (consisting of these three quorums together) have been made available to researchers after fifty years have elapsed.⁴² In the case of the Blue Minutes, the last of those in attendance died in 1945 and ninety-six years have passed since the meeting was held.

Actually, Joseph Smith himself was in favor of publishing the minutes of apostolic meetings. At his home in Kirtland on 27 February 1835 he gave instructions to nine of the ten newly chosen apostles about the importance of keeping the minutes of meetings and recording their decisions. Smith continued: "an item thus decided may appear, at the time, of little or no worth, but *should it be published, and one of you lay hands on it after, you will find it of infinite worth, not only to your brethren, but it will be a feast to your own souls.* ... Now, if you will be careful to keep minutes

40. See Garth L. Allred, paper presented at the Mormon History Association annual meeting, Laie, Hawaii, 13 June 1990, 2.

41. Clawson, *Diary*, 3 Apr. 1900. Ironically, Lyman's journals are currently unavailable for historical researchers; whatever life history might be written about Lyman now would not reflect the documents that he himself created and preserved with that end in mind.

42. Richard P. Howard to Stan Larson, 10 Oct. 1991.

of these things, as I have said, it will be one of the most important records ever seen; for all such decisions will ever after remain as items of doctrine and covenants."⁴³

A more open policy would increase historical accuracy and understanding, not only among professionals but also among Mormons at large. Meanwhile, the Blue Minutes provide a rare, unimpeded glimpse into the procedures and deliberations of a routine weekly temple meeting of the Mormon hierarchy.

APPENDIX: ATTENDEES

Joseph F. Smith (1838-1918) was the son of Hyrum Smith and Mary Fielding. He was ordained an apostle and counselor to the First Presidency on 1 July 1866 by Brigham Young, though not set apart as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve until 8 October 1867. He served as second counselor to John Taylor from 1880 to 1887, as second counselor to Wilford Woodruff from 1889 to 1898, and as second and then first counselor to Lorenzo Snow from 1898 to 1901. To escape arrest for polygamy or unlawful cohabitation, Smith spent most of his time during the years 1884 to 1891 in Hawaii. On 17 October 1901 he was sustained as president of the church and died in 1918. For transcripts and photocopies of Joseph F. Smith's letters, see the Scott Kenney Collection, Ms 587, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith, Sixth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938).

John R. Winder (1821-1910) was ordained a high priest on 4 March 1872 by Edward Hunter and sustained as second counselor to the Presiding Bishop on 8 April 1887. On 17 October 1901 he was set apart as first counselor in the First Presidency. Winder served in this position until his death in 1910. He was never a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, nor an ordained apostle outside the quorum. Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, [and] Anthon H. Lund, "The Priesthood and Its Offices," *Improvement Era* 5 (May 1902): 549. Consequently, John Henry Smith's statement that Winder was "ordained an Apostle under the hands of us all President Smith being mouth" is problematic. John Henry Smith, *Diary*, 17 Oct. 1901, in Jean Bickmore White, ed., *Church, State, and Politics: The Diaries of John Henry Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1990), 496.

Anthon H. Lund (1844-1921) was ordained an apostle on 7 October 1889. He was a counselor to Joseph F. Smith from 1901 to 1918 and then to Heber J. Grant from 1918 until his death in 1921. *In Memoriam, Anthon*

43. *History of the Church*, 2:199, emphasis added.

Henrik Lund: Biographical Sketch [by J. M. Sjødahl], Funeral Services, Resolutions of Respect, Letters of Sympathy, Editorial Expressions (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1921).

Brigham Young, Jr. (1836-1903) was the son of Brigham Young and his second wife, Mary Ann Angell. He was secretly ordained an apostle by his father sometime in November 1855 and became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve on 9 October 1868. He served as a counselor to his father from 1873 to 1877. On 5 April 1900 the decision was made to base seniority on entry into the Quorum of the Twelve instead of ordination as an apostle. Because of this ruling, Joseph F. Smith became president in 1901 instead of Brigham Young, Jr. George A. Smith Family Papers, Ms 36, Box 14, fd. 12, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library.

George Teasdale (1831-1907) was ordained an apostle on 16 October 1882. He served as president of the Indian Territory Mission in 1883, as president of the British Mission from 1887 to 1890, and as president of the Mexican Stake from 1890 to 1895. Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon, 1892-1904), 4:272-74.

Heber J. Grant (1856-1945) was the son of Apostle Jedediah M. Grant, second counselor to Brigham Young, and his seventh wife, Rachel Ridgeway Ivins. In October 1882 he was accepted as the last member of the Council of Fifty and, less than a week later, was ordained an apostle. He served as president of the Japanese Mission from 1901 to 1903, president of the European Mission from 1903 to 1906, and president of the church from 1918 until his death in 1945. Bryant S. Hinckley, *Heber J. Grant: Highlights in the Life of a Great Leader* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951), and Francis M. Gibbons, *Heber J. Grant: Man of Steel, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979).

John W. Taylor (1858-1916) was the son of John Taylor and his fifth wife, Sophia Whittaker. He was ordained an apostle on 9 April 1884, resigned on 28 October 1905, and was excommunicated on 28 March 1911. Fred Collier and Knut Knutson, eds., *The Trials of Apostle John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1987). For the posthumous restoration of priesthood and blessings on 21 May 1965, authorized by David O. McKay, see Samuel W. Taylor, "Out of Limbo," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 7 (Summer 1972): 85-87.

Marriner W. Merrill (1832-1906) was set apart as president of the Logan temple on 21 May 1884, ordained an apostle on 7 October 1889, and served as Cache Stake president 1899-1901 to counter the Moses Thatcher faction in the Logan area. Melvin C. Merrill, ed., *Utah Pioneer and Apostle: Marriner Wood Merrill and His Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1937).

Matthias F. Cowley (1858-1940) was ordained an apostle on 7 October 1897, resigned 28 October 1905, was deprived of his priesthood on 11

May 1911, but was returned to full membership (but not his apostolate) on 3 April 1936, four years before his death. See the interview with Joseph F. Cowley, a son of Matthias F. Cowley, in the Everett L. Cooley Oral History Project, Accession 814, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library.

Rudger Clawson (1857-1943) is identified in the main text.

Hyrum M. Smith (1872-1918) was the son of Joseph F. Smith and his fourth wife, Edna Lambson Smith. He was ordained an apostle on 24 October 1901. *Tributes to the Memory of Hyrum M. Smith* [Salt Lake City: n.p., 1918].

John Smith (1832-1911) was the son of Hyrum Smith and Jerusha Barden Smith. On 18 February 1855 he was ordained Patriarch to the Church, the only lineal church office. Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., reported that during his father's presidency "Patriarch John Smith would have been asked to resign or keep the Word of Wisdom" had it not been for the special pleadings of his half-brother, Joseph F. Smith. Abraham H. Cannon, *Diary*, 4 and 7 Oct. 1894, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library. When Joseph F. was sustained and set apart as president of the church on 17 October 1901, John Smith, for the first time, attended meetings of the First Presidency and Twelve and pronounced his brother's setting-apart blessing. John Smith served as patriarch until his death in 1911, giving nearly 20,000 patriarchal blessings to members. E. Gary Smith, "The Patriarchal Crisis of 1845," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16 (Summer 1983): 24-35, and Irene M. Bates and E. Gary Smith, *Lost Legacy: The Mormon Office of Presiding Patriarch* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).