

DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of world religious thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of the editors.

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought is published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation. *Dialogue* has no official connection with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Contents copyright by the Dialogue Foundation. ISSN 0012-2157. Dialogue is available in full text in electronic form by EBSCO MetaPress, www.dialoguejournal.metapress.com; and is archived by the University of Utah Marriott Library Special Collections, available online at: www.lib.utah.edu/portal/site/marriottlibrary. *Dialogue* is also available on microforms through University Microfilms International, www.umi.com.

Dialogue welcomes articles, essays, poetry, notes, fiction, letters to the editor, and art. Submissions should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. All submissions should be in Word, and may be submitted electronically at https://dialoguejournal.com/dialogue_submissions/. For submissions of visual art, please contact art@dialoguejournal.com. Allow eight to twelve weeks for review of all submissions.

Submissions published in the journal, including letters to the editor, are covered by our publication policy, under which the author retains the copyright of the work and grants *Dialogue* permission to publish. See www.dialoguejournal.com.

EDITORS EMERITI

Eugene England and G. Wesley Johnson (Vols. 1:1-5:4, 1966-70)

Robert A. Rees (Vols. 6:1-11:4, 1970-76)

Mary Lythgoe Bradford (Vols. 12:1-16:4, 1977-82)

Linda King Newell and L. Jackson Newell (Vols. 17:1-21:4, 1982-86)

F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson (Vols. 22:1-26:4, 1987-92)

Martha Sonntag Bradley and Allen D. Roberts

(Vols. 27:1-31:4, 1993-98)

Neal Chandler and Rebecca Worthen Chandler

(Vols. 32:1-36:4, 1999-2003)

Karen Marguerite Moloney (Vol. 37:1, 2004)

Levi S. Peterson (Vols. 37:1-41:4, 2004-8)

CONTENTS

LETTERS

- Time for Galatians 3:28? *Kyle D Williams* v

NOTES AND COMMENTS

- A Sacrament of Stewardship *Kate Holbrook* vi

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

- The Original Length of the Scroll of Hôr
Andrew W. Cook and Christopher C. Smith 1

- Joseph Smith's Letter from Liberty Jail
as an Epistolary Rhetoric *David Charles Gore* 43

- Wives and Other Women: Love, Sex, and
Marriage in the Lives of John Q. Cannon,
Frank J. Cannon, and Abraham H. Cannon
Kenneth L. Cannon II 71

- In Lieu of History: Mormon Monuments
and the Shaping of Memory *Barry Laga* 131

PERSONAL VOICES

- Ghost Towns *Erin Ann Thomas* 154

POETRY

- Bum Bam Boom *J. S. Absher* 179

- Abracadabra *J. S. Absher* 180

- Blue Glass *Lizzie Skurnick* 181

- Internal Affairs *Lizzie Skurnick* 182

- The Leg *Annette Weed* 183

FICTION

Fish Stories *Annette Haws* 185

INTERVIEWS AND CONVERSATIONS

The Best Place to Deal with Questions:
An Interview with Brady Udall
Kristine Haglund 195

REVIEWS

Terryl Givens and the Shape of Mormon Studies
Terryl L. Givens. *The Book of Mormon:
A Very Short Introduction*
Marc Alain Bohn and James C. Olsen 209

The World according to Golden
Brady Udall. *The Lonely Polygamist*
Phillip A. Snyder 219

The Plan of Stagnation
Elna Baker. *The New York Regional Mormon
Singles Halloween Dance: A Memoir*
Holly Welker 223

FROM THE PULPIT

El problema del dolor/The Problem of Pain
Christian N. K. Anderson 232

CONTRIBUTORS 242

ABOUT THE ARTIST 244

LETTER

Time for Galatians 3:28?

Thanks to Laurel Thatcher Ulrich for her article, “Mormon Women in the History of Second-Wave Feminism” (43, no. 2 [Summer 2010]: 45–63). Is there, I hope, another wave yet to come? Though I am male, I look forward to the day when Galatians 3:28 is fulfilled: “There is neither . . . male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

After twenty years of absence, I’ve been investigating the possibility of reconnecting with my Mormon heritage. The Church’s stifling patriarchy is one of the reasons that I have

not been rebaptized. I am constrained by a dream in which I was ordained to the priesthood by a woman. I will consider joining the Church when my sister has the authority to baptize me and my stepmother has the authority to ordain me to the priesthood.

I continue to pray for the Brethren in Salt Lake City. May they receive whatever revelation is necessary to start treating the sexes with equal dignity, allowing all worthy members to hold the priesthood.

*Kyle D Williams
Woodbury, Tennessee*

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A Sacrament of Stewardship

Kate Holbrook

Carrol and Edwin Firmage contributed papers to the fall issue that review Mormon history during the nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries and scriptural precedent, in an attempt to motivate a Mormon audience toward improved ecological fidelity: Edwin Firmage Jr., “Light in Darkness: Embracing the Opportunity of Climate Change” and Carrol Firmage, “Preserves” (43, no. 3 [Fall 2010]: 100–127 and 128–65).

Readers cannot help noticing in these essays that the Firmages are patient thinkers who allowed the ideas in these essays to germinate and, as a result, have written prose that is moving and rich. The ambitious scope of these papers—scope that provided a stimulating reading experience—brings to the fore methodological considerations that warrant exploration. I offer the following observations for others who might continue to develop these ideas.

Both Firmages write in first person, bringing themselves explicitly into their work by sharing personal anecdotes and declarations about their private spiritual allegiances. The inclusion of personal references has become *de rigueur* in certain kinds of academic writing. Anthropologists, for example, embrace this practice in an attempt to compensate for, and not repeat, the transgressions of their intellectual forebears. This contextualization of their observations can serve the important function of reminding writer and reader that conclusions are always impressions mediated by the mind and emotion of a subjective human being.

By depicting their own thoughts about and interactions with their subjects of analysis, anthropologists offer themselves as objects of study as well. A complex (and not-always-successful) move, bringing attention to observer-writers is ideally an offering of humility, whereby they present themselves as fallible human beings on a par with those they study.

The Firmages write themselves into their texts to a slightly different effect. Their personal references indeed provide context

for their observations and emphasize their subjectivity as writers. In this case, however, where both are trying to convince a specific audience about how better to live, emphasizing how they are different from their readers can undermine their larger objectives. This happens less with Carrol Firmage who, in general, uses personal anecdotes to invoke or engage a tale in which she is inheritor both of a place (Utah) and of agricultural acts (harvesting fruit from desert orchards and preserving the harvest for future consumption).

Carrol feels responsible to the land not only as each person is to the Earth, but because her people—her literal ancestors and their spiritual community—worked this land and responded to a stewardship mandate regarding it. In this context, readers come to understand the nature of Carrol Firmage’s commitment to Utah lands as well as to the roots that nourish and ground that commitment. The occasional statement about her continued allegiance to the land despite her spiritual divergence from the Mormon community is honest and provides important context for readers.

In contrast, Edwin Firmage’s frequent references to himself as heretical or unbelieving tend to undermine the argument he weaves. His allusions to self hint at the forces behind his commitment to Zion and its lands, but more frequently they destabilize his portrait of communal unity. He expounds on the notion of a Zion people and how a Zion people, as interpreted by the Mormons of previous centuries, is one that eschews capitalist norms in favor of an ethic of shared wealth and common prosperity (including the prosperity of Zion’s air, land, and water).

As Firmage states, “Our way today seems to me to embody precisely that worship of the self and of the selfish that is the great sin in biblical thinking” (114). God and His prophets do spend generations—centuries—in the Hebrew Bible trying to engender a Zion people. But the consummate key to their identity as a Zion people is actually not their ability to hold things in common or safeguard the land.

Edwin Firmage shines when he expounds the merits of a communally minded biblical ideal: “*To be meaningful, the biblical ideal of righteousness, of goodness in action, must be embodied in community and not just in individuals*” (114; italics in original). Important as

the concept of community is to the Hebrew Bible, I believe it is trumped by the cause of monotheism: the primary criteria by which people fail or succeed in their efforts as members of Zion.

For example, David is remembered as superior to most of Israel's other kings because of his devotion to God and his reliability in consulting with Jehovah about major undertakings. Even as David suffers the betrayal, insurrection, and loss that are the consequence of his sins against Uriah the Hittite, he relies on God to see him through the toll of his punishment. Both before and after David's great sins, it is his allegiance to God that distinguishes him from Saul and from Solomon. Therefore, when Edwin Firmage speaks of Zion ideals and covenant in the same pages where he declares himself an atheist, his admissions undermine the power of his evidence.

Edwin Firmage briefly mentions his allegiance to the Hebrew Bible as a spiritual guide. Were he to elaborate on how one takes the Bible seriously as a spiritual guide in the absence of religious faith, he might be giving us a reading of value for ecumenically oriented social projects. More specific attention to how he admires the Bible might rally mainstream Mormons to his side. Such a discussion would also enrich ongoing conversations about Mormons who no longer participate formally in the Church but who seek alternative modes of belonging because of the ways Mormonism continues to inform who they are—genetically, culturally, or because of its normative principles.

Another issue of concern in the Firmages' articles is their recording of agricultural history. Edwin Firmage's approach to his topic is mainly conceptual. He analyzes the Hebrew Bible for themes about the ideal of Zion behavior and the practice of contemporary Americans including Latter-day Saints. Carrol Firmage, on the other hand, has written an agricultural history that illuminates both the ideals of past Church leaders and the ecological failures of Church members past and present—though this first installment in a series focuses mainly on the early Utah period.

At times, the sense of change over time becomes muddled in Carrol Firmage's essay, in large part because she insufficiently emphasizes the distinction between a historical ideal and actual historical practice. At some points, she compares the articulation

of a past ideal to current practice. For example, she says Heber C. Kimball taught the Saints to pray for fertile land but that Utahns are now knocking down orchards to build houses, a practice that does not preserve the land: “The path we Utahns are taking now is not the one blazed by Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and John Widtsoe.”¹ This faulty comparison suggests a narrative in which Mormons previously acted as effective stewards of the land while contemporary Mormons do not. But one cannot prudently compare past articulations of ideals to present practice.

Instead, she might compare Kimball’s statement, or one of her intriguing Brigham Young quotations, with the sentiments of a current general conference talk to see how definition of the ideal has changed over time. Because of Carrol Firmage’s conflation of practice and ideal, readers are left to assume that current practice—what she calls, “our heedlessness of take-no-prisoners American capitalism” (148)—is in line with official pronouncements, which is not true. It is true that leaders today do not preach ecological stewardship as fervently as they used to—for example, as when Joseph F. Smith called members to task in general conference for neglecting some of their too-large land holdings.²

But Church leaders today do preach controls against capitalism in a number of ways; they still preach against inequality; they still harbor a communitarian vision. Leaders tell us to leave work at a reasonable hour and spend time with our children or helping the needy, instead of earning more money. In defiance of any god of efficiency, BYU shuts down for a devotional hour each Tuesday to remember the God of love. President Hinckley instigated the Perpetual Education Fund to increase educational opportunities for Saints around the world. Leaders still implore members to pay a generous fast offering. Even as head of an overwhelming bureaucracy, President Monson continues to spend time visiting the sick, the lonely, and the bereaved at private residences, rest homes, hospitals, and funerals.

In addition to differentiating between official teaching and lay practice, Carrol Firmage could also compare practice of the past to current practice, so that we might more clearly analyze the similarities and differences in determining how to proceed and improve—as she vividly convinces us we should. Carrol Firmage does mention failures in the past—the ecological desecration of

Mountain Meadows, for example. But the organization of her information obscures the coherence of the tale she tells and makes it sometimes difficult to draw practical conclusions.

Sometimes it is unclear the extent to which ecologically minded Church leaders led people astray through the ignorant implementation of otherwise lofty ideals (such as Brigham Young's dedication to temporal stewardship that included the importation of noxious plants) or the extent to which leaders' ability to affect members' actions had been circumscribed. Thomas G. Alexander has shown how broader American cultural and political forces during the 1880s and early 1890s forced Church leaders to restrain their oversight of economic matters, eventually coming to focus their teachings on matters of individual morality instead. Church leaders came to limit their direct influence in the operations of local business, including agriculture and grazing practices that were damaging the fragile Wasatch watershed.³ When Alexander defines the ideal, he is careful to distinguish it from lived realities: "In practice, Mormons seemed unable in many cases to follow the dictates of the most environmentally creative tenets of the prophetic teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young: ecological stewardship, sacralized entrepreneurship, and the fellowship of all living things under the fatherhood of God."⁴ Without this distinction, when Carrol Firmage details the habits that destroyed lush meadows in Bluff and Mountain Meadows, readers are left wondering whom to blame—Church leaders or wayward settlers.

In the end, Carrol Firmage concludes that American Indians were more effective stewards than Mormons. Indians certainly preserved water and vegetation more effectively than settlers, but this is an underwhelming conclusion in light of Carrol Firmage's thorough research.

Both Edwin and Carrol Firmage develop an exciting concept of sacrament in their essays, a contribution that I want to explore and highlight. Since Peter Lombard formally defined them in the twelfth century, the seven official sacraments of Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy have included baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction (ministration to the critically ill), order, and matrimony. Protestants since the sixteenth century generally recognize only two official sacraments: baptism and the

Lord's Supper. However, the notion of sacrament is often expanded to include bringing a sense of divine grace, divine communion, and covenant to more experiences than those listed in the formal sacraments, for example writings about the "sacrament of the present moment."⁵

A key aspect of even expanded notions of sacrament is covenant with the divine. Both Firmages propose expanding participation in sacrament even further. They implicitly suggest that the aspects of grace and community that attend sacraments can be enough to overcome essential theological differences. Edwin Firmage states: "Sacraments not only connect people to God but people to people" [115] "It is in the nature of a sacrament to focus eternity in the present moment. . . . In such a community, day-to-day decisions—like how we build our homes, how we raise our food, how we get about, are sacramental decisions, because they impinge on eternity" (116).

Against biblical precedent (and so many current spiritual practices defy that precedent), the Firmages propose a sacrament inclusive enough for those who covenant with God to enjoy a realm of belonging with those who covenant to principle instead of Deity. As Carrol Firmage writes, "To work the land is a sacrament of continuity and caring that links past, present, and future" (149). Maybe the sacrament of the garden is a place where believer and nonbeliever find common cause and common bond. In such a place, the grace is not just what believers receive from their redeemer, but what idealists working together extend to one another.

The Firmage essays enlighten readers about the interplay of past ideals for a contemporary audience. In their execution, they also bring up methodological issues about the allusion to self in academic writing, writing with the intent to change public behavior, and the telling of religious history. I have focused on suggestions for refining these methods because I, too, believe that a potent ecological mandate resides in Mormonism. I hope we can improve our expressions to communicate that mandate to the body of the Church in a manner that will help members to act on it. Like Joseph F. Smith and other Church leaders, I believe that part of the way we prepare the Earth for Christ's coming is through appropriate stewardship of the Earth itself. As the Firmages suggest,

disciplining ourselves both to discover and to perform appropriate stewardship prepares the Earth, but it is also a spiritual exercise. Responsible consumption of resources and nourishing our bodies in a way that honors the lives (animal, vegetable, and human) that make nourishment possible distills our souls at the same time that it improves the quality of the Earth and others' lives.

Notes

1. Several private Utah County orchards have met their doom in just the past ten years. For those interested in the existence of orchards as part of the Church Welfare program, the Church currently has fifty-six production projects that include seven ranches (one turkey, six cattle) and forty-nine orchards and farms. "Welfare Services Fact Sheet," www.providentliving.org (accessed July 30, 2010).

2. See Donald H. Dyal, "Mormon Pursuit of the Agrarian Ideal," *Agricultural History* 63, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 19–35.

3. Thomas G. Alexander, "Stewardship and Enterprise: The LDS Church and the Wasatch Oasis Environment, 1847–1930," *Western Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 341–64.

4. *Ibid.*, 362.

5. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2010, *s.v.* "Sacrament," http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/cgi/entry/50211501?query_type=word&queryword=sacrament&first=1&max_to_show=10&sort_type=alpha&reult_place=1&search_id=e0qD-R6GwFe-2529&hilite=50211501 (accessed July 30, 2010).

The Original Length of the Scroll of Hôr

Andrew W. Cook and Christopher C. Smith

These records were torn by being taken from the roll of embalming salve which contained them, and some parts entirely lost; but Smith is to translate the whole by divine inspiration, and that which is lost, like Nebuchadnezzar's dream, can be interpreted as well as that which is preserved; and a larger volume than the Bible will be required to contain them.—William S. West (1837)¹

[Ed. note—Figures 1–4 and 25–28 contain features not visible in black and white. For the tracings etc., please see the color version of the article online at <http://dialoguejournal.com/2010/the-original-length-of-the-scroll-of-hor>.]

The Story So Far

Early in the second century B.C., an Egyptian scribe copied a Document of Breathing Made by Isis onto a roll of papyrus for a Theban priest named Hôr.² Near the beginning of the document, the scribe penned the following set of ritual instructions: “The Breathing Document, being what is written on its interior and exterior, shall be wrapped in royal linen and placed (under) his left arm in the midst of his heart. The remainder of his wrapping shall be made over it.”³ Hôr’s mummy, with the Breathing Document enclosed, was buried in a pit tomb near Thebes, where it lay undisturbed for two millennia.

Sometime around 1820, Italian adventurer Antonio Lebolo exhumed a cache of mummies, including Hôr. After Lebolo’s death in February 1830, eleven of his mummies were sold to benefit his children. The mummies were shipped to New York and then forwarded to maritime merchants in Philadelphia, where they were examined by medical doctors and exhibited in the Philadelphia Arcade. At some point, the mummies were delivered to a traveling showman named Michael H. Chandler for further exhibition.⁴ Chandler reportedly unwrapped them in search of valuables. On two of the bodies, he found papyrus scrolls wrapped in linen and saturated with a bitumen preservative.⁵ As he extracted

the Hôr scroll from its sticky encasement, the edges were torn, thus imprinting a repeating pattern of lacunae in the papyrus.

Chandler eventually made his way to Kirtland, Ohio, where he sold the Hôr scroll, along with four mummies, a Book of the Dead scroll made for a woman named Tshenmîn,⁶ a Book of the Dead fragment bearing the female name Neferirnûb,⁷ another fragment bearing the male name Amenhotep,⁸ and a hypocephalus belonging to a man named Sheshonk⁹ to Joseph Smith in July 1835 for \$2,400.¹⁰ Shortly after the purchase, Smith claimed that one of the rolls in his possession contained a record of the biblical patriarch Abraham, which he began to translate by the gift and power of God.¹¹ Although Smith died before he could finish the work, his partial translation of the Book of Abraham was canonized in 1880 as part of the Pearl of Great Price. In addition to five chapters of Jacobean English prose, the book includes facsimiles of three vignettes from the papyri: i.e., the hypocephalus of Sheshonk and the introductory and concluding vignettes of the Document of Breathing.¹² The introductory vignette, labeled “Facsimile 1” in the canonized LDS Pearl of Great Price, is said in the text of the Book of Abraham to have appeared “at the commencement” and “at the beginning” of Abraham’s record (Abr. 1:12, 14). This and other evidence points to the Hôr scroll as the papyrus from which Joseph Smith claimed to translate the Book of Abraham.¹³

Prior to Smith’s death, he or one of his associates glued the fragmented outer portion of the Document of Breathing onto stiff paper in an effort to preserve it. Some of the mounted fragments were then cut into shorter sections and preserved under glass.¹⁴ By mounting the outer sections, Smith et al. could work on translating the Egyptian characters without needing to roll and unroll the fragile scroll. After Smith was assassinated in 1844, the mummies and papyri were retained by his mother, Lucy Mack Smith, and briefly taken on an exhibition tour by Joseph’s only surviving brother, William. When Lucy died in 1856, Joseph’s widow, Emma, and her second husband, Lewis Bidamon, sold the artifacts to Abel Combs. Combs divided the collection into two parts. One part, including the intact interior portion of the Hôr scroll, he sold to Wyman’s Museum in St. Louis, which subsequently relocated to Chicago and burned in 1871. The other part,

including the mounted fragments from the outer portion of the Hôr scroll, he retained and eventually left to his housekeeper, whose daughter's widower sold them in 1947 to the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. The museum turned this portion of the collection over to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on November 27, 1967.¹⁵

When the papyri were recovered by the Church, it was immediately evident that the Hôr scroll was the source of Facsimile 1. There are also several 1835 manuscripts in the handwriting of Joseph Smith's known scribes that juxtapose the translated Book of Abraham text with sequential characters from the scroll's extant instructions column, ostensibly as the source from which the translation was derived.¹⁶ Some LDS historians nevertheless maintain that the source from which Joseph Smith derived the Book of Abraham is not among the extant fragments, and that it was probably destroyed with that portion of the collection which burned in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. These authors have argued that the Hôr scroll was much longer in the nineteenth century than it is today and that the source text of the Book of Abraham may have followed the Document of Breathing on the now-lost inner portion of the scroll. In the view of these researchers, the Book of Abraham's placement of Facsimile 1 "at the commencement of this record" should be interpreted to mean the beginning of the *scroll* rather than the record, and the juxtaposition of Breathing Document characters with the Book of Abraham's English text in the handwritten manuscripts should not be understood to imply a translation relationship between the two.¹⁷

The question then becomes whether the undamaged scroll of Hôr was ever long enough to accommodate a hieratic Book of Abraham source text. The main text of the canonized Book of Abraham contains 5,506 English words. The hieratic text in the instructions column of the Document of Breathing translates to ~97 English words.¹⁸ This column is ~9 cm wide. Hence, if the Book of Abraham was written on the scroll in the same hieratic font as this portion of the Document of Breathing, it would have taken up $\sim 9(5,506/97) = \sim 511$ cm of papyrus. Since the Book of Abraham translation is incomplete, the actual space required for a hieratic original would presumably have been even longer.¹⁹

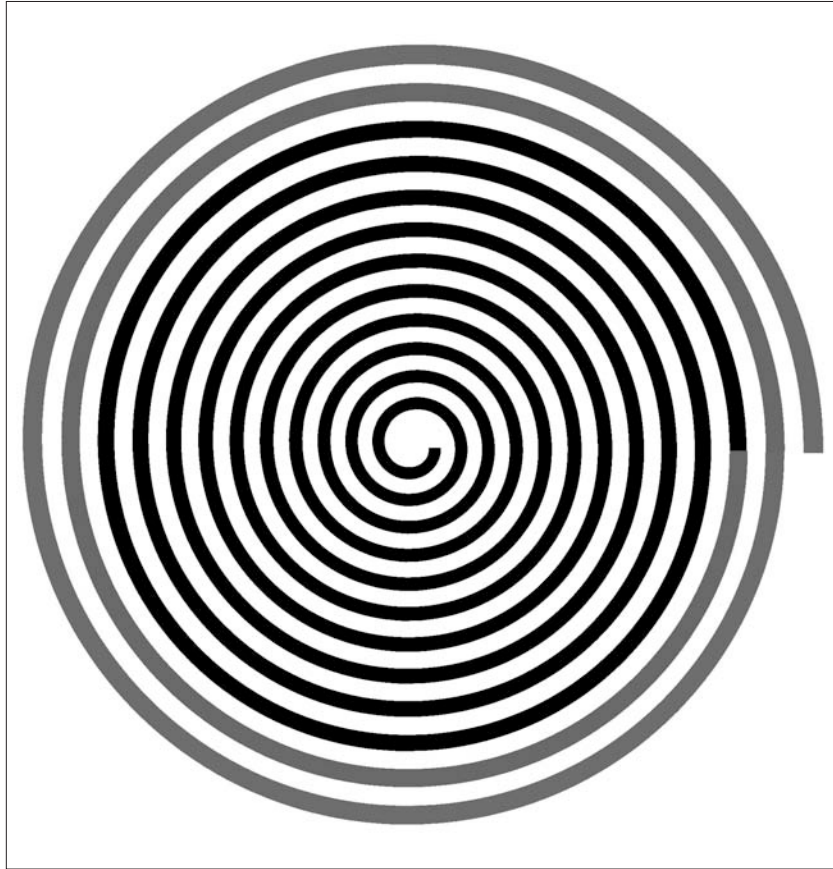


Figure 1. Archimedean-spiral model of a scroll. (For this diagram in color, see www.dialoguejournal.com.)

Recently, John Gee proposed that 1250.5 cm (41 feet) of papyrus could be missing from the interior end of the scroll of Hôr. This is obviously more than enough papyrus to contain the extant Book of Abraham. Gee followed an approach pioneered by Friedhelm Hoffmann, which takes advantage of the fact that “the circumference of a scroll limits the amount of scroll that can be contained inside it. Thus, we can determine by the size of the circumference and the tightness of the winding how much papyrus can be missing at the interior end of a papyrus roll.”²⁰ Gee reported 9.7 and 9.5 cm as the lengths of the first and seventh windings, re-

spectively, but offered no details concerning his method for identifying the winding end-points. When we attempted to replicate Gee's results, we found that his measurements did not seem to be accurate and, in fact, required the papyrus to be impossibly thin.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce a robust methodology that eliminates the guesswork in determining winding locations by visual inspection of crease marks or lacunae features, and to determine whether the missing interior section of the Hôr scroll could have been long enough to accommodate the Book of Abraham. Fortunately, this is a question that can be definitively answered by examining the physical characteristics of the extant portions of the scroll. The haste and greed of Michael Chandler provide the key to unlocking this mystery.

Spiral Integration

A roll of papyrus, viewed from either end, can be approximated by an Archimedean spiral. Such a spiral is illustrated in Figure 1, where the outermost (first) winding is colored blue and the next-to-outermost (second) winding is colored red. (See color illustration, www.dialoguejournal.com.) In an Archimedean spiral, the length and radius of each winding (proceeding inward) decreases by a constant amount per revolution. Note that the first (blue) winding is slightly longer than the second (red) winding and that there are twelve windings in total. We could compute the length of each black winding if we knew the lengths of the blue and red windings. Equivalently, we could compute the radius of each black winding if we knew the radii of the blue and red windings, since the distances across the white gaps (differences in radii between successive windings) are all the same.

Figure 1 is analogous to the Hôr scroll, the interior portion of which is missing (black windings), but the outer portion of which is extant (red and blue windings). The problem at hand involves significant complications to this simple example; nevertheless, our essential task is to determine the lengths of the extant outer windings of the scroll. Once these outer winding lengths are known, they can be fed into the formulas derived below to predict the total length of the missing interior windings. Although our formulas are derived specifically for an Archimedean spiral, the resulting model is valid for almost any topologi-

cally equivalent spiral, since it is hypothetically possible to distort the spiral in various ways, even bend it in half, without changing the winding lengths.

The length of a papyrus scroll can be computed (among other ways) via a path integral along the spiral. To accomplish this, we define the following variables:

θ is the spiral angle, starting from the outside edge and proceeding inward. (Proceeding counterclockwise in the Figure 1 example, θ begins at 0 on the outside edge and reaches a value of 24π at the inner end of the spiral.)

$n = \theta/(2\pi)$ is the winding number; i.e., the number of revolutions around the spiral. (In Figure 1, $n = 0$ at the outside edge, $n = 1$ at the junction between the blue and red windings and $n = 2$ where the blue winding meets the first black winding.)

N is the total number of windings or revolutions from beginning to end. (In Figure 1, $N = 12$.)

$W_n = 2\pi r_n$ is the length of the n th winding; i.e., the distance along the spiral from location $(n - 1/2)$ to $(n + 1/2)$. This centered definition avoids the messy extra terms appearing in Hoffmann's derivation. (In Figure 1, $W_{0.5}$ is the length of the blue winding and $W_{1.5}$ is the length of the red winding.)

W_N is the winding length at the innermost end of the scroll. According to Hoffmann, "The windings cannot be put into practice under 2.5 cm"; hence we require $W_N \geq 2.5$ cm.²¹

$r_n = W_N/(2\pi) + (N - n)T$ is the radius of the angular center of W_n . The angular center corresponds to the point halfway around the winding. (In Figure 1, the angular center of each winding corresponds to its leftmost point. Note that this is not the same as half the distance around each winding, since the radius is continually decreasing.)

$T = (r_n - r_m)/(m - n)$ is the mean effective thickness of the papyrus between winding locations n and m , accounting for wrinkling, inhomogeneities, eccentricity, etc.²² (T is the change of radius per winding, represented in Figure 1 by the white gaps between windings.)

The length of papyrus interior to any n location is (using m as a dummy index)

$$\begin{aligned} L_n &= \int_{2\pi n}^{2\pi N} r_m \, d\theta = \int_{2\pi n}^{2\pi N} \left[\frac{W_N}{2\pi} + \left(N - \frac{\theta}{2\pi} \right) T \right] d\theta \\ &= \pi T (N - n)^2 + W_N (N - n) \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

The number of windings between locations n and N depends on the winding lengths and effective thickness according to

$$N - n = \frac{(W_n - W_N)}{2\pi T} \quad (2)$$

Combining equations (1) and (2) yields

$$L_n = \frac{W_n^2 - W_N^2}{4\pi T} \quad (3)$$

Our primary task therefore, is to determine the effective thickness of the papyrus from the winding lengths; i.e.,

$$T = \frac{W_n - W_m}{2\pi(m - n)} \quad (4)$$

In the following sections, we will describe our method for measuring winding lengths. It is based on a correlation analysis, which eliminates the inherent guesswork of visual observation techniques. Our investigation is somewhat more complicated than the Figure 1 example due to the fact that the increments in winding numbers (obtained from autocorrelation functions of the edges of the extant papyrus fragments) do not correspond to simple integers; i.e., the measured windings are unevenly spaced. Furthermore, we must work around a large gap of unknown width between two of the fragments. The gap width could be estimated from a textual analysis, but this is not precise enough for our purposes. The problem is well posed and the numbers are readily computable; however, in certain parts of the discussion to follow, we find it necessary to trade simplicity and readability for mathematical precision and completeness of detail. Our choices

are based on a desire to provide all details necessary for others to verify our work and duplicate our results.

Gathering the Data

The data required to solve equations (3) and (4) were obtained from the original papyri, located in the Church Historian's Vault at the LDS Church History Library in Salt Lake City.²³ The papyri are stored in a large presentation book, like a giant photo album. The book is designed so that one can look at the front side of the fragments and then, by turning the page, also look at the backside of the mounting paper. The fragments are encased in transparent Mylar and placed inside the presentation book's transparent plastic sheaths. On visual inspection, the Hôr papyrus appears to be substantially thicker than modern paper and about twice as thick as the Tshenmîn papyrus. The papyrus quite visibly stands off the page wherever there is a clean edge. The thickness varies considerably, especially where the top (recto) layer has peeled away from the bottom (verso) layer.

For simplicity, we'll adopt Edward Ashment's naming convention for the Hôr fragments; i.e., pJS 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, corresponding to Nibley's I, XI, and X, respectively.²⁴ We gathered our data by placing plastic transparencies directly over the papyri and tracing the edges of the fragments. The transparencies clung electrostatically to the plastic sheaths, keeping them stationary during the tracing procedure. The end results of this process are illustrated in Figures 2–4.²⁵

We scanned the tracings into Tag Image File (TIF) format and then boosted their contrast to facilitate edge detection. Then we digitized the high-contrast TIF files using software that assigned each pixel a value from 0 (white) to 255 (black). Our next step was to scan along each column of numbers, first from the top down to locate the upper edge of the papyrus and then from the bottom up to locate the lower edge of the papyrus. The end result of this procedure was a set of single-valued x - y functions for the top and bottom edges of each fragment. These functions were cross checked against the original tracings to ensure consistency and accuracy in the discretization. We denote the edge of each fragment as a distance function, $Y(x)$, where x is the horizontal distance along the papyrus and Y is the vertical distance from the



Figure 2. Tracing of original pJS 1.1 superimposed on a scaled photograph of the papyrus fragment.



Figure 3. Tracing of original pJS 1.2 superimposed on a scaled photograph of the papyrus fragment.



Figure 4. Tracing of original pJS 1.3 superimposed on a scaled photograph of the papyrus fragment.

edge to a horizontal reference line through the middle of the papyrus.²⁶ With $Y(x)$ in hand, the winding lengths are determined by computing the autocorrelation function for the edge of each fragment.

Before proceeding with the correlation analysis, we briefly describe how the method works. Recall that damage inflicted on the wound-up Hôr scroll—presumably by Michael Chandler when he removed it from its embalming salve—imprinted a repeating pattern of lacunae in the extant papyrus. The distances between successive matching lacunae in the unrolled papyrus correspond to the lengths of the original windings; hence, the outer windings can be measured by shifting the edge function of each fragment, with respect to itself, until the lacunae match up. For example, imagine a section of papyrus that includes exactly two windings, with matching lacunae in each winding. To determine the average winding length for the section, we could simply shift the left-hand lacuna to the right until it matched the right-hand lacuna, or we could shift the right-hand lacuna to the left until it overlaid the left-hand lacuna; either way, the shifting distance would correspond to the average winding length for the section.²⁷ This could be done by visual inspection if the shapes of the lacunae were very similar; however, a more precise and objective approach is to employ the autocorrelation function for automatic pattern detection. The autocorrelation function quantifies the strength of agreement between lacunae as the edge function is shifted with respect to itself. The shifting distance that produces the highest level of agreement between lacunae is the most probable average winding length for that section. The best agreement is represented as a peak (local maximum), as seen in the graphs on the following pages.

Once the winding lengths for a particular section are determined, we compute the winding numbers (not necessarily integers) to which they correspond. These data make it possible to determine the mean effective thickness (change in radius per winding) for each section. For pJS 1.3, the absolute winding numbers are unknown due to the gap between pJS 1.2 and 1.3. This is not a problem however, since we need only the *relative* winding numbers to calculate a mean effective thickness. Lastly, once the mean effective thickness has been determined for all extant sections, we

examine the consistency of the results and use equations (3) and (4) to find the length of the missing interior portion of the scroll.

Correlation Analysis of pJS 1.1 and 1.2

The correlation function is defined as

$$C(\Delta x) = \frac{\langle YZ \rangle - \langle Y \rangle \langle Z \rangle}{\sqrt{\langle Y^2 \rangle - \langle Y \rangle^2} \sqrt{\langle Z^2 \rangle - \langle Z \rangle^2}} \quad (5)$$

where $Z = Y(x - \Delta x)$ and the angle brackets denote spatial averages; i.e.,

$$\langle Y \rangle = \frac{1}{b - a} \int_a^b Y(x) dx \quad (6)$$

where $x = a$ and $x = b$ are the left and right ends, respectively, of the region where $Y(x - \Delta x)$ overlaps $Y(x)$. (C is defined only in the overlapping region.) The correlation function quantifies the level of agreement between lacunae as the windings are shifted by Δx . For example, if $Y(x)$ and $Y(x - \Delta x)$ are in perfect agreement (which is obviously the case for $\Delta x = 0$), then C will be 1. If there is no agreement whatsoever between $Y(x)$ and $Y(x - \Delta x)$ then C will be near 0. If $Y(x)$ and $Y(x - \Delta x)$ are exact opposites, then C will be -1 . The winding lengths thus correspond to the distances between local maxima of $C(\Delta x)$.

In order to obtain a strong isolated peak in $C(\Delta x)$, it is desirable that the region of overlap, which we'll denote by $\xi = b - a$, between $Y(x)$ and $Y(x - \Delta x)$, be a significant fraction of W_n ; however, ξ should not exceed W_n or else $C(\Delta x)$ will contain contributions from regions unrelated to W_n (which would skew the results). With these principles and caveats in mind, we now proceed to compute $C(\Delta x)$ and W_n for each fragment.

Upper Edge

The autocorrelation function for the upper edge of pJS 1.1 is shown in Figure 5. At $\Delta x = 10.42$ cm, it exhibits a strong local maximum of $C = 0.91$. Such a high correlation constitutes a virtual certainty that the peak corresponds to the local winding length. The similarity of the pJS 1.1 edge functions, $Y(x)$ and $Y(x - 10.42)$, in

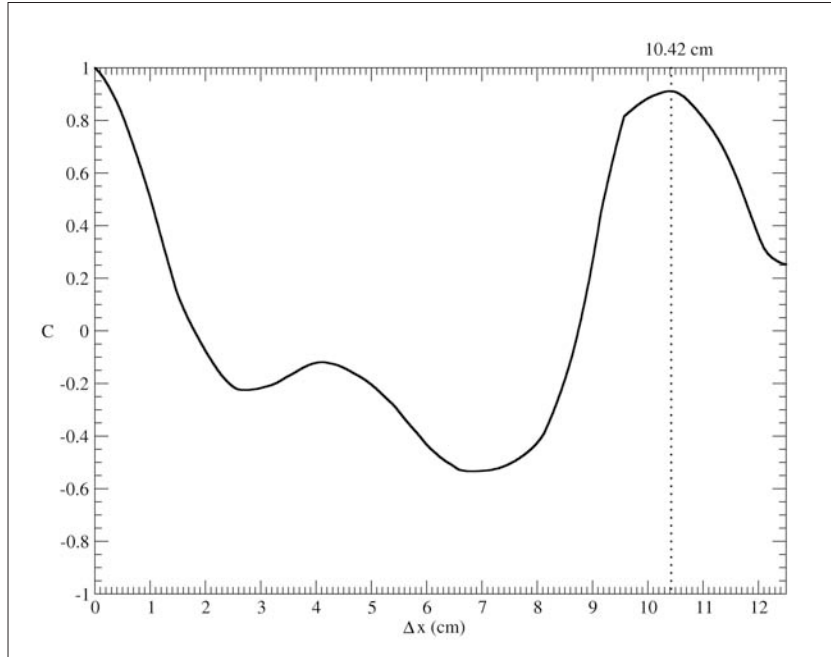


Figure 5. Autocorrelation function for top edge of pJS 1.1.

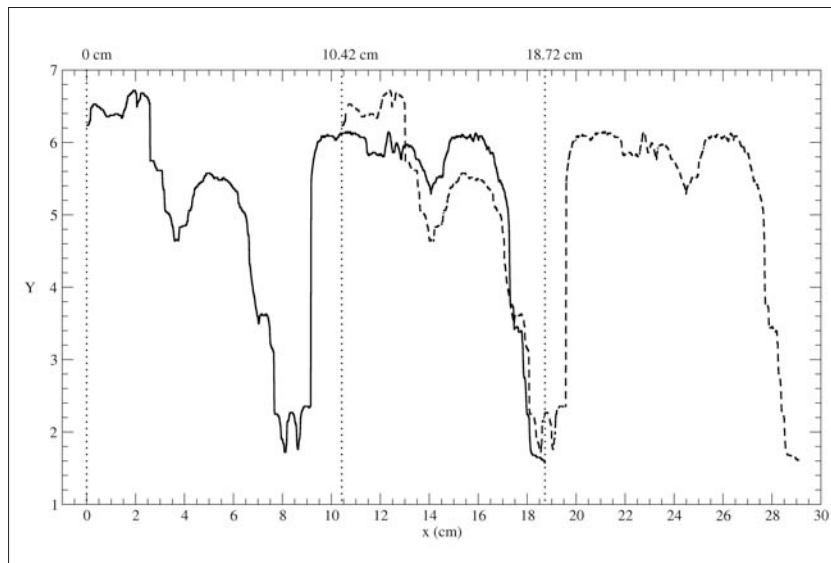


Figure 6. Top edge function, $Y(x)$ (solid line), and shifted edge function, $Y(x - 10.42)$ (dashed line), for pJS 1.1.

their region of overlap, is apparent in Figure 6. Here we have set $x = 0$ to correspond to the (top) junction between pJS 1.1 and 1.2.

The dashed line in the overlapping region, $10.42 \leq x \leq 18.72$, passes through the chest and wrist of Anubis. (See Figure 2.) A few scholars have argued that the portions of the papyrus containing the head and knife were intact at the time Joseph Smith possessed it.²⁸ Among the counterarguments that have been offered against this theory is that, if the edge of the papyrus were extended to include the head and knife, then the agreement between successive lacunae would be considerably degraded.²⁹ The strong correlation shown here adds quantitative weight to this observation.

Now that we have the winding length for this fragment, we need to determine the exact winding number to which it corresponds. This depends on how much of the second winding is contained in the overlapping region. Let n_b be the winding number at $x = b$ (the right end of the overlapping segment), then

$$n = n_b + \frac{W_n + \xi}{2W_n} \quad (7)$$

(Recall that n corresponds to the angular center of W_n .) We have defined the right edge ($x = 18.72$ cm) of pJS 1.1 as $n = 0$; hence, $b = 18.72$ cm, $n_b = 0$, $W_n = a = 10.42$ cm and $\xi = 18.72 - 10.42 = 8.30$ cm. Plugging these numbers into equation (7) yields $n = 0.8983$; i.e., $W_{0.8983} = 10.42$ cm. Since ξ is slightly less than W_n , we have satisfied the overlap constraint discussed earlier.

The autocorrelation function for the upper edge of pJS 1.2 is displayed in Figure 7. Once again we observe a strong local maximum of $C(10.34) = 0.90$. The edge functions, $Y(x)$ and $Y(x - 10.34)$, for pJS 1.2 are given in Figure 8. For this fragment, $\xi = 6.02$ cm and $W_n = 10.34$ cm.³⁰ To get n_b (at $x = 0$), we note that $W_{0.8983} = 10.42$ cm corresponds to the average winding length for pJS 1.1; therefore, $n_b = 18.72/10.42 = 1.797$. Plugging these numbers into equation (7) yields $n = 2.588$; hence, $W_{2.588} = 10.34$ cm. Once again, ξ is slightly less than W_n and we have satisfied the overlap constraint. Figure 9 summarizes the results for the top edges of pJS 1.1 and 1.2. The upper-edge analysis of pJS 1.1 and 1.2 suggests that the mean effective thickness of the outer windings is $T = (10.42 - 10.34)/[2\pi(2.588 - 0.8983)] = 0.0075$ cm.

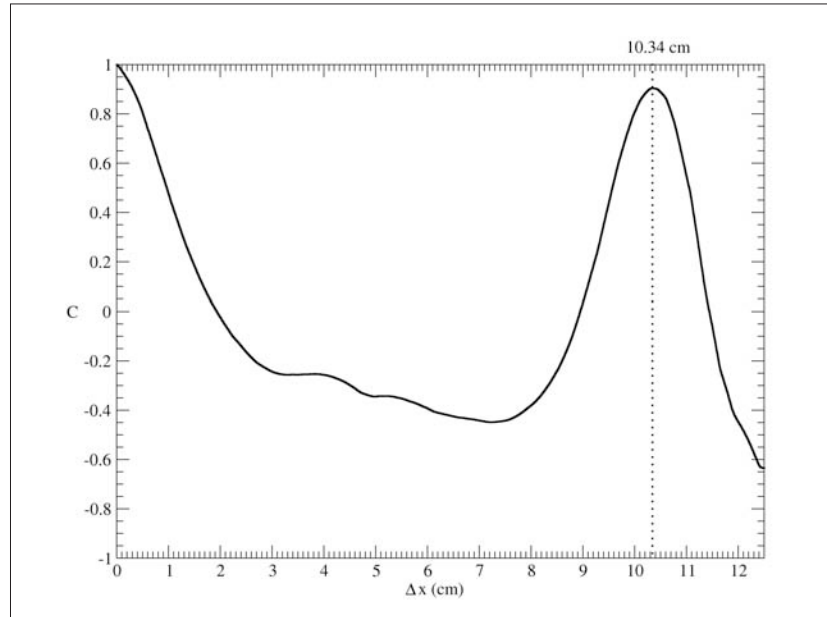


Figure 7. Autocorrelation function for top edge of pJS 1.2.

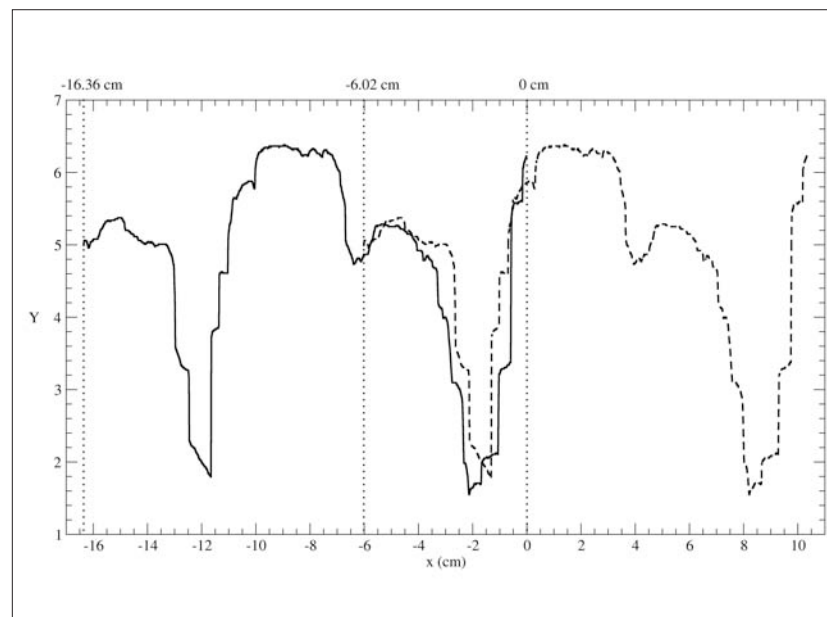


Figure 8. Top edge function, $Y(x)$ (solid line), and shifted edge function, $Y(x - 10.34)$ (dashed line), for pJS 1.2.

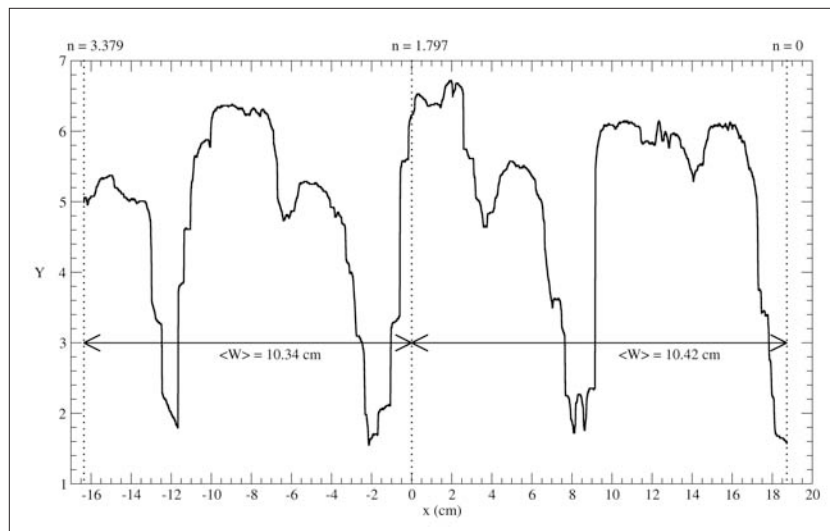


Figure 9. Winding numbers, n , for upper edge of pJS 1.1 and 1.2. This outer section of the scroll comprises 3.379 windings. The horizontal double-headed arrows indicate the regions corresponding to the average winding lengths, $\langle W \rangle$.

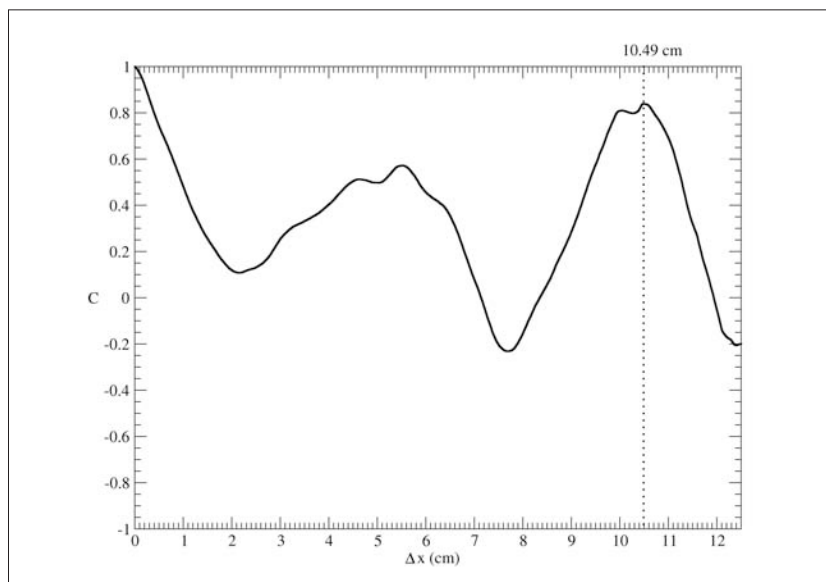


Figure 10. Autocorrelation function for bottom edge of pJS 1.1.

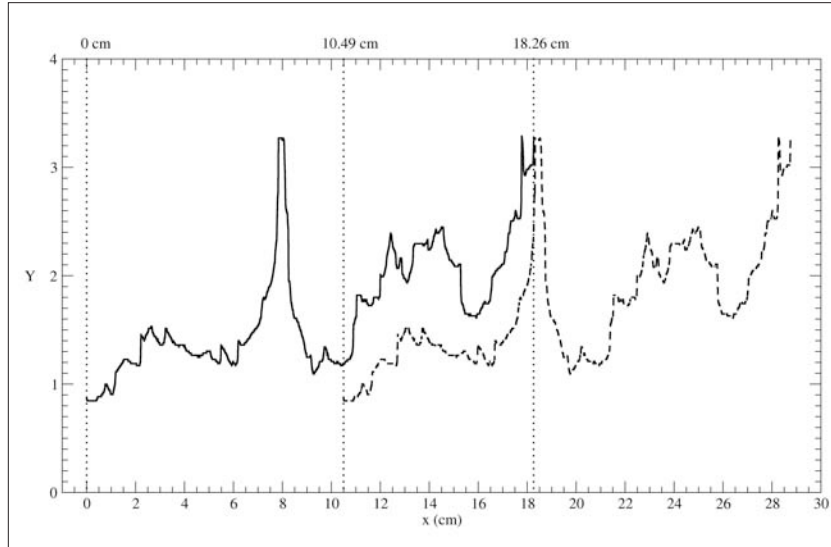


Figure 11. Edge function, $Y(x)$ (solid line), and shifted edge function, $Y(x-10.49)$ (dashed line), for bottom edge of pJS 1.1.

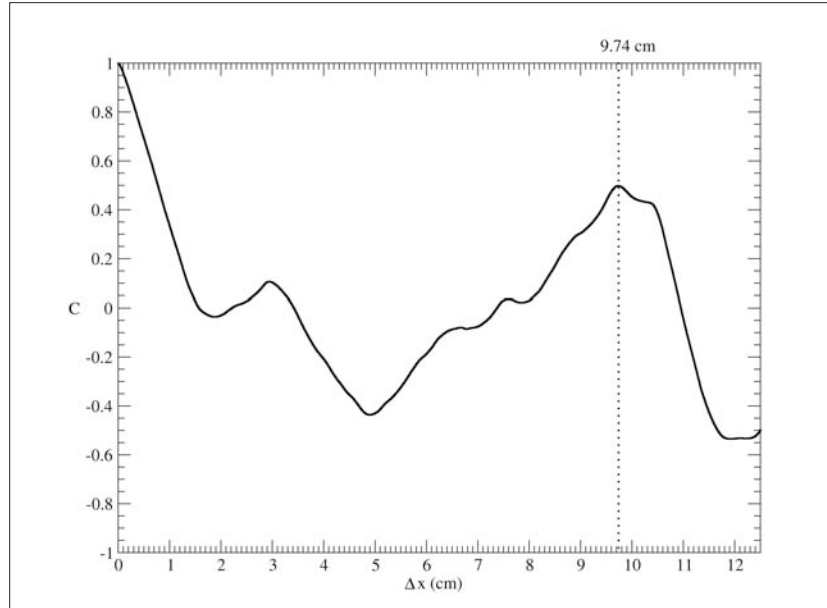


Figure 12. Autocorrelation function for bottom edge of pJS 1.2.

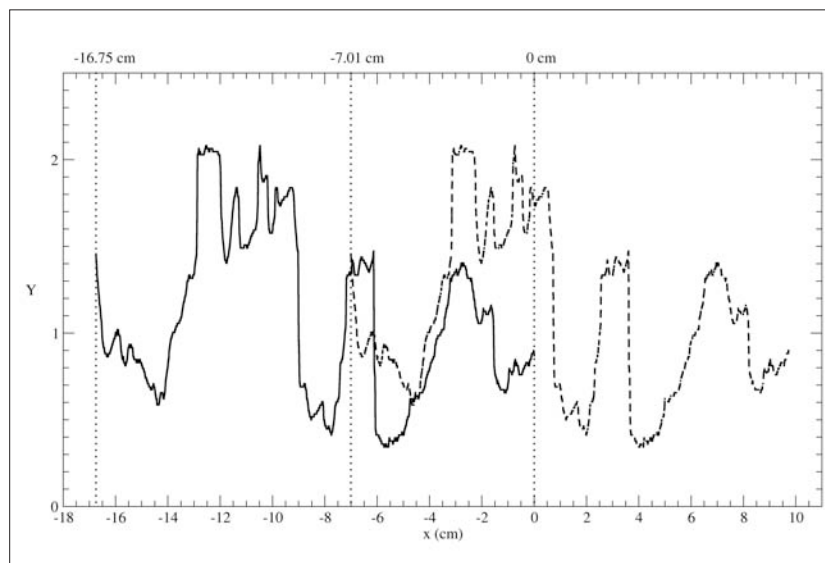


Figure 13. Edge function, $Y(x)$ (solid line), and shifted edge function, $Y(x-9.74)$ (dashed line), for bottom side of pJS 1.2.

Lower Edge

Although the periodicity in the lacunae along the bottom edge is less obvious than along the top edge, it is nevertheless apparent that significant damage to the lower edge occurred while the scroll was still wound up. Much of this damage/decay undoubtedly occurred during the millennia of dormancy in the tomb. Additional damage to this end of the scroll may also have been caused by Chandler grasping/pulling/pushing the scroll from its wrappings. Whatever caused the damage, the distinctive pattern along the bottom edge of the scroll contains important information about the winding lengths.

Proceeding exactly as we did for the top edges, we calculate the autocorrelation function for the bottom edge of pJS 1.1 and find a winding length of 10.49 cm (Figure 10). The repeating pattern of lacunae along the bottom edge of pJS 1.1 is apparent in Figure 11. Here we have once again defined $x = 0$ as the (bottom) junction between pJS 1.1 and 1.2. (Note that this is not exactly the same horizontal location as for the top edge due to the angle of

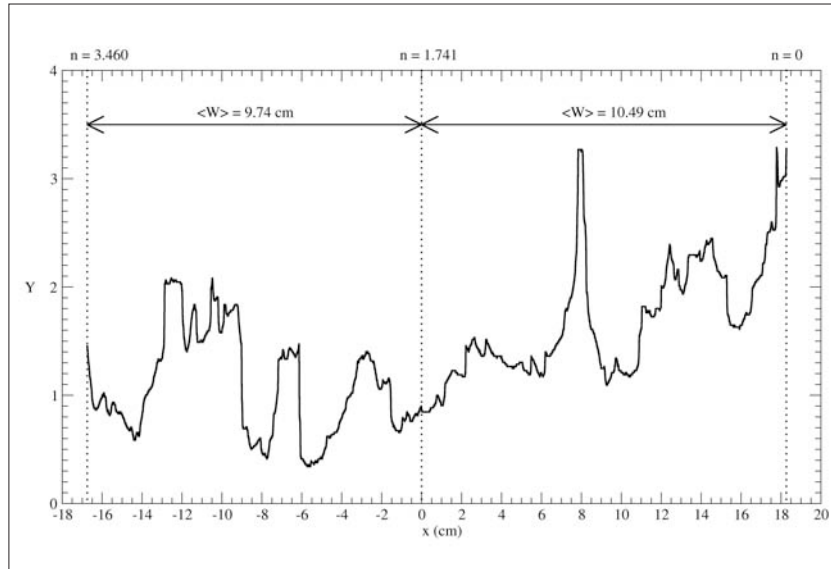


Figure 14. Winding numbers, n , for lower edge of pJS 1.1 and 1.2. This outer section of the scroll comprises 3.460 windings. The horizontal double-headed arrows indicate the regions corresponding to the average winding lengths, $\langle W \rangle$.

the cut between the fragments.) Similarly, we define n and W_n for the bottom edge independently of n and W_n for the top edge, with $n = 0$ again corresponding to the right end of the lower edge. From Figures 10 and 11, we have $b = 18.26$ cm, $n_b = 0$, $W_n = a = 10.49$ cm and $\xi = 18.26 - 10.49 = 7.77$ cm. Plugging into equation (7) yields $n = 0.8704$; thus, $W_{0.8704} = 10.49$ cm. Note how well this result agrees with the top winding. Since ξ is slightly less than W_n , we have again satisfied the overlap constraint.

The autocorrelation function for the lower edge of pJS 1.2 is displayed in Figure 12. And the shifted lacunae for the bottom edge of pJS 1.2 are shown in Figure 13. For this section, $\xi = 7.01$ cm and $W_n = 9.74$ cm. To get n_b (at $x = 0$ along the lower edge), we note that $W_{0.8704} = 10.49$ cm corresponds to the average winding length for the bottom of pJS 1.1; therefore, $n_b = 18.26/10.49 = 1.741$. Plugging these numbers into equation (7) yields $n = 2.601$; hence, $W_{2.601} = 9.74$ cm. Once again, ξ is slightly less than W_n and

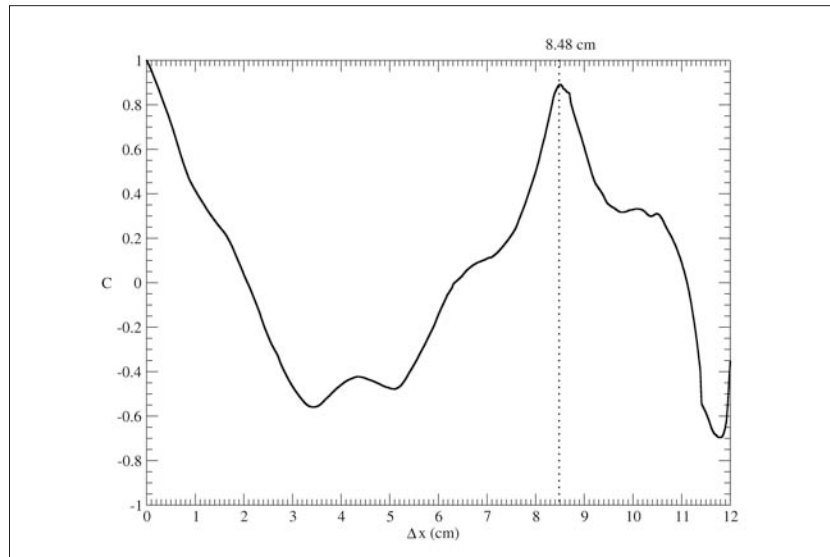


Figure 15. Autocorrelation function for top edge of pJS 1.3A ($5.35 \leq x \leq 20.13$ cm).

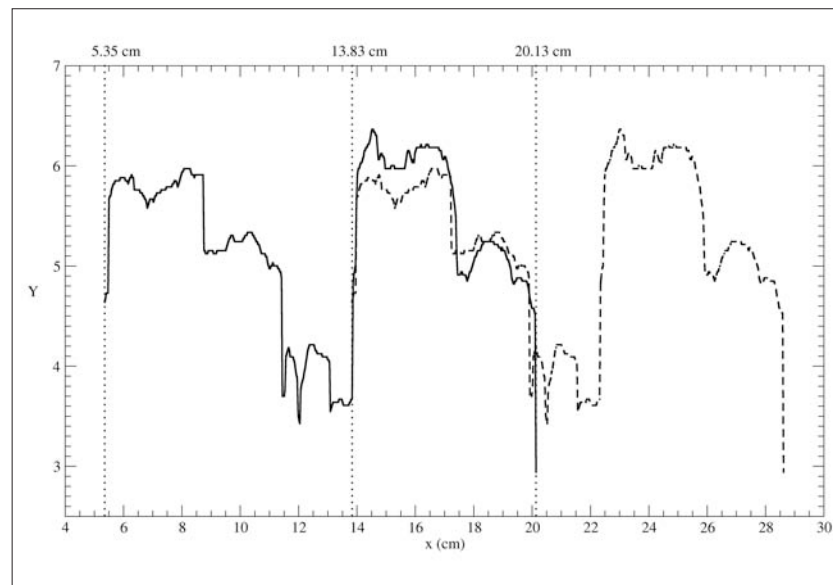


Figure 16. Edge function, $Y(x)$ (solid line), and shifted edge function, $Y(x-8.48)$ (dashed line), for upper side of pJS 1.3A.

we have satisfied the overlap constraint. Figure 14 summarizes the results for the bottom edges of pJS 1.1 and 1.2.

The lower-edge analysis suggests that the mean effective thickness of the outer windings is $T = (10.49 - 9.74) / [2\pi(2.601 - 0.8704)] = 0.0690$ cm. Comparing the top and bottom winding lengths of pJS 1.1, we see that $W_{0.8983} = 10.42$ for the top edge agrees well with $W_{0.8704} = 10.49$ for the bottom edge (we expect lower winding numbers to be longer); however, for pJS 1.2, the top winding length of $W_{2.588} = 10.34$ cm appears anomalously large compared to the bottom winding length of $W_{2.601} = 9.74$ cm. Analysis of pJS 1.3 (in the next section) will help adjudicate this discrepancy.

Analysis of pJS 1.3

Upper Edge

Since the pJS 1.3 fragment contains over three windings, applying the correlation analysis to the entire segment would violate the maximum overlap constraint; therefore, it is necessary to divide the fragment into two sections (similar to pJS 1.1 and 1.2). From Figure 4, it is apparent that extra damage occurred to the top edge of this fragment, at both the left and right ends, after the scroll was unrolled. The missing piece at the right end became separated from the backing paper and was subsequently glued upside-down into pJS 2.6 (Nibley's IV); however, its impression is still clearly apparent in the glue and hence we include this section in our analysis. Scattered fragments in the lacuna at the left end indicate that much of the papyrus that was once glued here has since flaked off of the backing paper. Since the original edge here is uncertain, we exclude this segment from our analysis to avoid corrupting the results.

For simplicity, we have again placed $x = 0$ at the left edge of the fragment. We denote the segment extending from $x = 5.35$ to 20.13 cm as section A (or pJS 1.3A), and the segment extending from $x = 13.98$ to 28.89 cm as section B (or pJS 1.3B). In order to make ξ close to W_n , it is necessary to overlap the segments; by doing so, we improve the reliability of the correlation. (Think of ξ as the number of statistical samples.) The overlapping of segments makes the bookkeeping for this section slightly more complicated; nonetheless, the procedure is essentially the same as be-

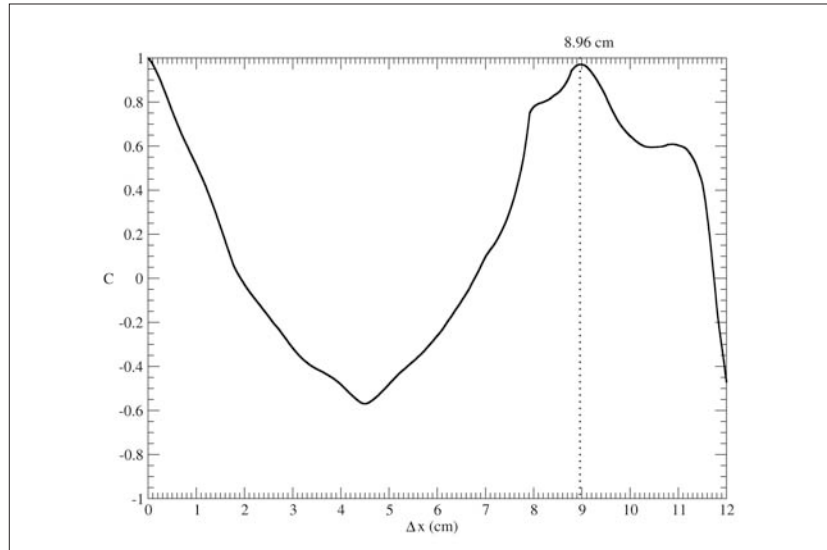


Figure 17. Autocorrelation function for top edge of pJS 1.3B ($13.98 \leq x \leq 28.89$ cm).

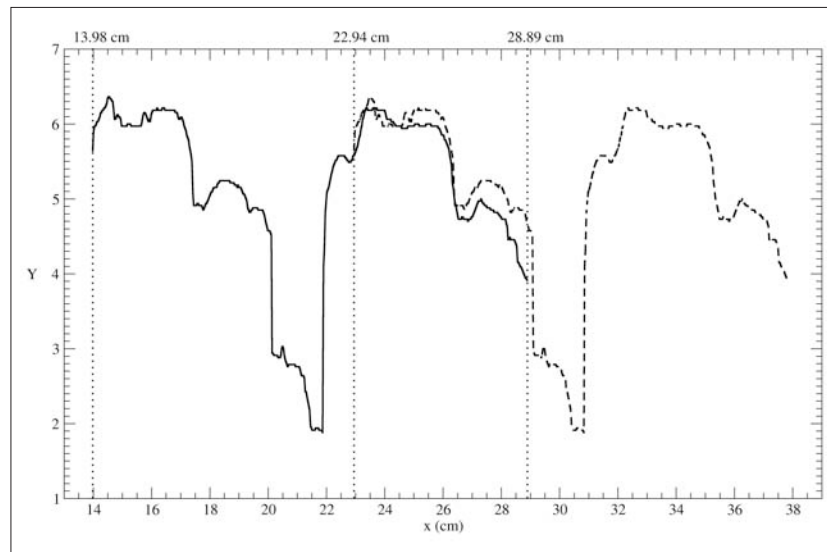


Figure 18. Edge function, $Y(x)$ (solid line), and shifted edge function, $Y(x - 8.96)$ (dashed line), for upper side of pJS 1.3B.

fore. The correlation function for segment A is shown in Figure 15. Figure 16 displays the shifted edge function. We'll denote the winding length for this section as W_A . Since $\xi = 6.30$ is slightly less than $W_A = 8.48$ cm, our overlap constraint is satisfied. The winding number (n_b) at 20.13 cm is unknown at this point, so for now we'll just refer to it as $n_{20.13}$. From equation (7), the winding number for segment A is $n_A = n_{20.13} + 0.8715$.

The correlation function for section B is given in Figure 17. The shifted edge function is provided in Figure 18. For this segment, $\xi = 5.95$ and $W_B = 8.96$ cm. Since ξ is less than W_B , the overlap constraint is satisfied. Once again, the winding number (n_b) at 28.89 cm is unknown; hence, we'll simply refer to it as $n_{28.89}$. From equation (7), the winding number for segment B is $n_B = n_{28.89} + 0.8320$.

Now that we have the winding lengths for segments A and B; i.e., $W_A = 8.48$ cm and $W_B = 8.99$ cm, we must determine the difference between their winding numbers; i.e., $\Delta n_{AB} \equiv n_A - n_B$; then we can use equation (4) to determine the effective thickness of pJS 1.3. Denoting the section from $x = 20.13$ to 28.89 cm as segment Q (the distance from the right end of segment A to the right end of pJS 1.3), the difference in winding numbers is $\Delta n_{AB} = n_{20.13} + 0.8715 - n_{28.89} - 0.8320 = n_{20.13} - n_{28.89} + 0.0395 = \Delta n_Q + 0.0395$, where $\Delta n_Q \equiv n_{20.13} - n_{28.89}$. The spiral length of segment Q is $-\Delta x_Q = 28.89 - 20.13 = 8.76$ cm. Changes in spiral distance are related to changes in winding number according to

$$W_n = -\frac{dx}{dn} \quad (8)$$

Hence, $W_Q = -\Delta x_Q / \Delta n_Q$ or $\Delta n_Q = 8.76 / W_Q$, where W_Q is the mean winding length for segment Q. Although W_n is not a linear function of x , a good first-order estimate of W_Q is obtained via the linear extrapolation

$$\frac{W_Q - W_A}{W_B - W_A} = \frac{x_Q - x_A}{x_B - x_A} \quad (9)$$

where: $x_A = (5.35 + 20.13) / 2 = 12.74$ cm, $x_B = (13.98 + 28.89) / 2 = 21.44$ cm and $x_Q = (20.13 + 28.89) / 2 = 24.51$ cm. Plugging the various lengths into equation (9) yields $W_Q = 9.13$ cm; hence $\Delta n_Q =$

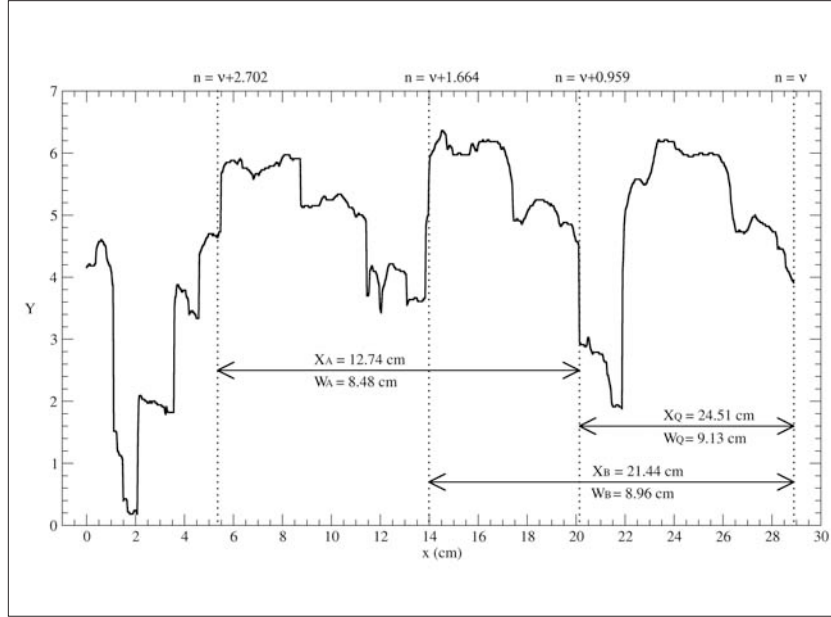


Figure 19. Winding numbers, n , for upper edge of pJS 1.3. The unknown winding number at the right end (due to the presence of the gap between pJS 1.2 and 1.3) is denoted by $n = v = n_{28.89}$. The parameters with subscripts A, B, and Q denote values at the centers of the regions marked by the horizontal double-headed arrows.

0.959 and $\Delta n_{AB} = 0.999$. (Recall that Δn_{AB} is the distance from the angular-center of winding A to the angular-center of winding B.) Equation (4) now gives the effective thickness of pJS 1.3 as $T = (W_B - W_A)/(2\pi\Delta n_{AB}) = 0.0765$ cm. Figure 19 summarizes the results for the top edge of pJS 1.3.

A brief summary of the top-edge results for pJS 1.3 may help clarify the arithmetic. First, recall that the number of windings in a segment is the length of the segment divided by the average winding length for the segment. Segment A is $20.13 - 5.35 = 14.78$ cm long and has a mean winding length of $W_A = 8.48$ cm; hence, the number of windings in this section is $14.78/8.48 = 1.743$. The segment begins at $n = v + 0.959$ and ends at $n = v + 0.959 + 1.743 = v + 2.702$. Segment B is $28.89 - 13.98 = 14.91$ cm long and has a

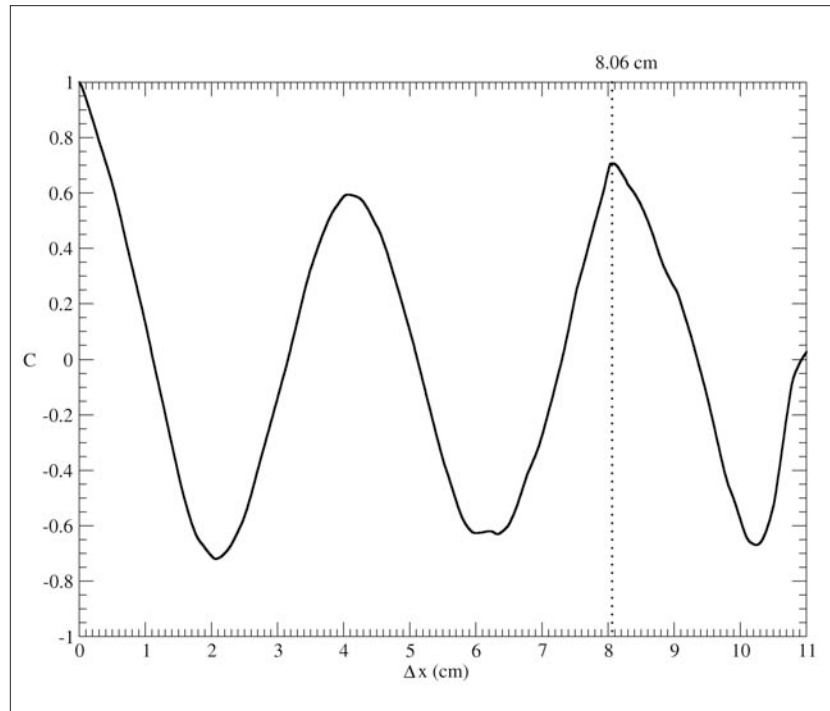


Figure 20. Autocorrelation function for lower edge of pJS 1.3A ($0 \leq x \leq 14.99$ cm).

mean winding length of $W_B = 8.96$ cm; hence, the number of windings in this section is $14.91/8.96 = 1.664$. The segment begins at $n = v$ and ends at $n = v + 1.664$. In Figure 19, n_A would be just to the left of $v + 1.664$ and n_B would be just to the right of $v + 0.959$.

Lower Edge

For the bottom edge of pJS 1.3, we define our x-axis such that the edge extends from $x = 0$ to 29.97 cm. There is no reason to exclude any portion of the bottom edge from our analysis; thus, in order to meet the overlap constraint, we simply divide the entire segment in half. We define section A as the segment extending from $x = 0$ to 15 cm (14.99 due to the finite discretization) and sec-

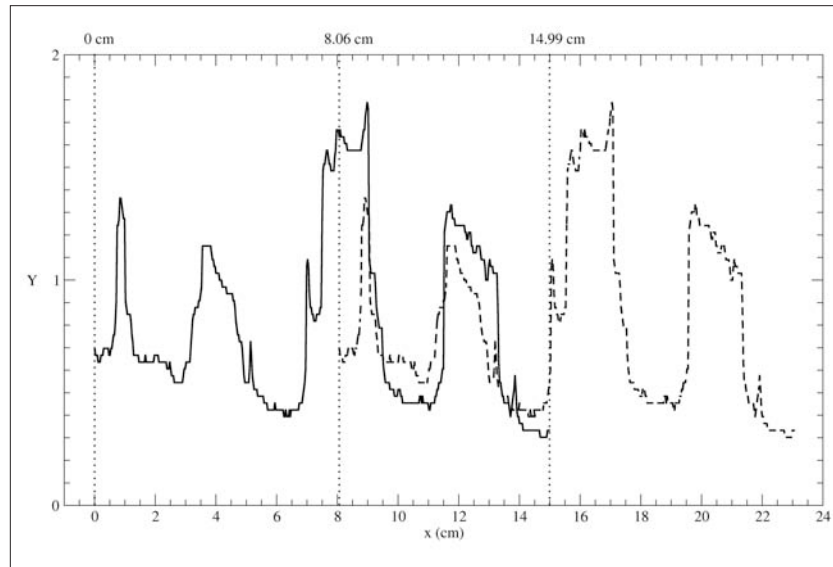


Figure 21. Edge function, $Y(x)$ (solid line), and shifted edge function, $Y(x-8.06)$ (dashed line), for bottom side of pJS 1.3A.

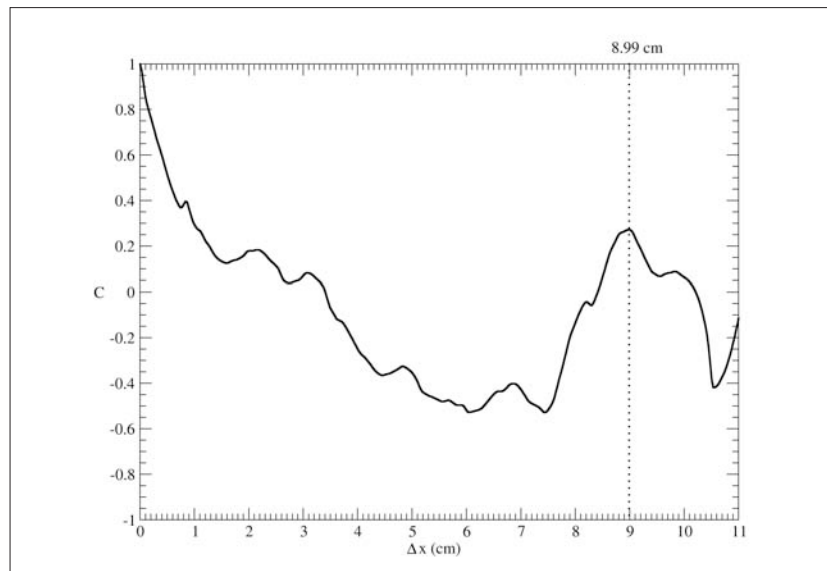


Figure 22. Autocorrelation function for lower edge of pJS 1.3B ($15.01 \leq x \leq 29.97$ cm).

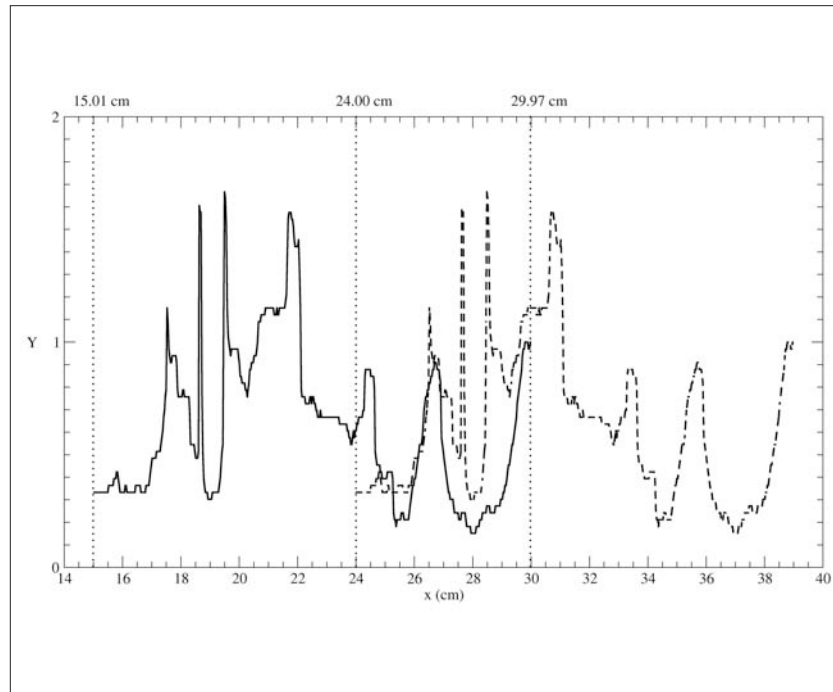


Figure 23. Edge function, $Y(x)$ (solid line), and shifted edge function, $Y(x - 8.99)$ (dashed line), for lower edge of pJS 1.3B.

tion B as the segment extending from $x = 15$ (15.01 due to the discretization) to 29.97 cm. The correlation function for segment A is shown in Figure 20. And the shifted edge function is provided in Figure 21. For this segment, $\xi = 6.30 < W_A = 8.06$ cm, satisfying our overlap constraint. The winding number for segment W_A is $n_A = n_{15} + 0.8908$.

The correlation function for section B is given in Figure 22. The local maximum of $C(8.99) = 0.27$ is significantly lower than the peaks for all of the other segments, which raises some concern. Figure 23 shows that the low correlation is caused by two prominent spikes (due to cracks extending into the papyrus) in the shifted edge function at $x = 27.7$ and 28.5 cm. Except for these spikes, the overall shape of the large dip, centered near $x = 28$ cm, is similar for both curves; hence, we can have confidence in the

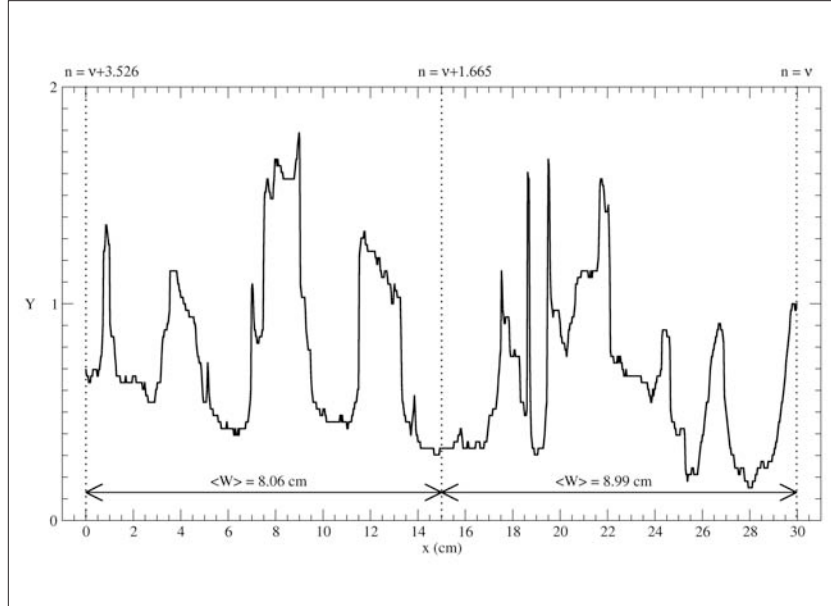


Figure 24. Winding numbers, n , for bottom edge of pJS 1.3. The horizontal double-headed arrows on either side of $x = 15$ correspond to regions A (left) and B (right). The average winding lengths for sections A and B are indicated by the angle brackets.

winding length despite the low correlation. For this segment, $\xi = 5.97$ cm, $W_B = 8.99$ cm (satisfying the overlap constraint), and $n_B = n_{29.97} + 0.8320$ (recall that this winding number corresponds to the angular center of the W_B winding). The winding number at $x = 15$ cm is $n_{15} = n_{29.97} + (29.97 - 15)/8.99 = n_{29.97} + 2.221$. Hence, $\Delta n_{AB} = n_{29.97} + 2.221 + 0.8908 - n_{29.97} - 0.8320 = 2.2798$ and $T = (8.99 - 8.06)/[2\pi(2.2798)] = 0.0649$ cm. Figure 24 summarizes the results for the bottom edge of pJS 1.3.

The pJS 1.2 Top-Edge Outlier

We now have the following four estimates of the effective thickness parameter:

$$T = 0.0075 \text{ cm for the top edge of pJS 1.1 and 1.2}$$

$$T = 0.0690 \text{ cm for the bottom edge of pJS 1.1 and 1.2}$$

$T = 0.0765$ cm for the top edge of pJS 1.3

$T = 0.0649$ cm for the bottom edge of pJS 1.3

Obviously, the first estimate is not consistent with the other three. In regards to the windings, we have consistency between the top and bottom winding lengths for pJS sections 1.1, 1.3A and 1.3B, but not for pJS 1.2. The bottom winding length for pJS 1.2 is consistent with the other bottom winding lengths; however, the top winding length for this section appears too long.

To resolve the discrepancy between the top and bottom winding lengths for pJS 1.2, we note prominent cracks in the papyrus beneath the lacunae in both pJS 1.1 and 1.2. The crack in pJS 1.1 passes just in front of the Horus crocodile and through the belly and nose of the Duamutef canopic jar, as shown in Figure 25. This crack wanders a bit but is located roughly 10.6 cm from the outside edge of the papyrus, which is very close to the expected length of the first winding ($W_{0.5}$). It may be that the scroll's linen binding pressed the outer edge of the first wrapping into the wrappings beneath it, causing these cracks to appear, or the papyrus may have cracked when it was first unwound, as the outer edge was pried loose from the rest of the scroll.

In pJS 1.2, corresponding cracks appear beneath both of the major lacunae (Figure 3). These cracks appear to coincide with the ends of the second and third windings. The distance between them, as shown in Figure 26, is about 9.8 cm. A 9.8 cm winding length agrees well with the 9.74 cm average winding length that we obtained from our lower-edge correlation for this fragment, but not with the 10.34 cm winding length that we obtained from the upper-edge analysis.

The anomalous upper-edge winding length for pJS 1.2 appears to be the result of damage inflicted on the upper-right portion of the fragment after the scroll was unrolled. Although the characters at the beginnings of lines 1 and 2 of the instructions column on pJS 1.2 are now missing, enough of these characters were extant in 1835 that Smith's scribes could copy them into the Book of Abraham translation manuscripts. Additionally, the first two characters on line 1 were copied into the Egyptian Alphabet



Figure 25. Close-up of crack at the end of the first winding.

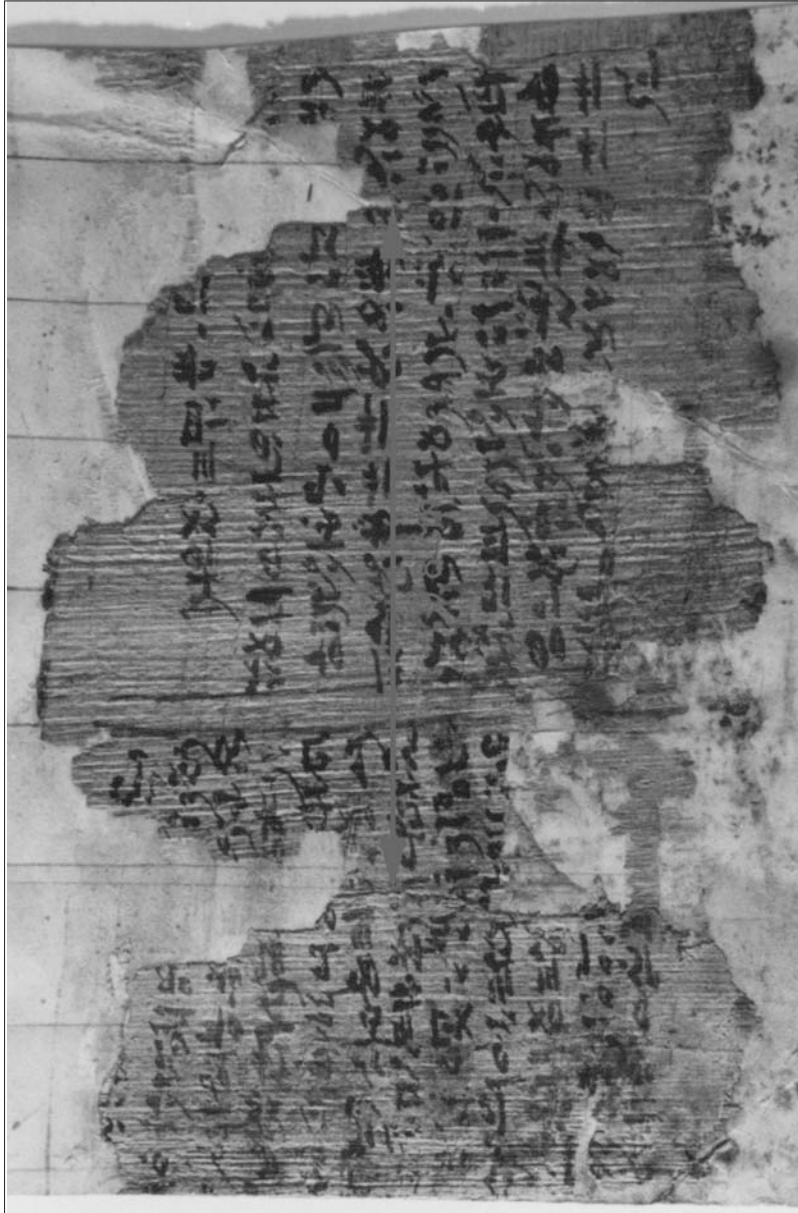


Figure 26. Close-up of cracks beneath the major lacunae in pJS 1.2.

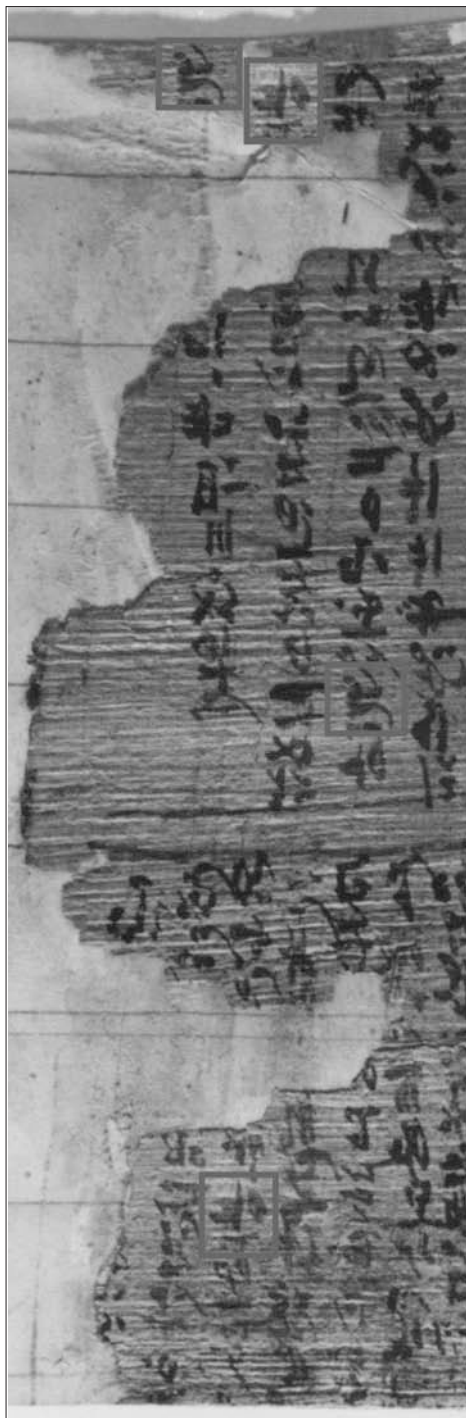


Figure 27. Characters that were extant on pJS 1.2 in 1835 (red boxes) are shown restored, based on other instances of the same character groupings (blue boxes) on the same fragment. For this illustration in color, see www.dialoguejournal.com.

and Grammar manuscripts. Regarding line 1, Edward Ashment writes:

From the beginning of column 1 line 1 of pJS 1.2, Smith transcribed the [first two] (now badly damaged) hieratic characters . . . A parallel Breathing Permit reveals that the [first two] characters . . . originally were part of a three-character group. . . . Unfortunately, the third sign . . . already was missing in a lacuna when Smith worked on his “Egyptian Alphabet” although, near the end of line three of the papyrus, the same sign group appears in its entirety.³¹

With respect to line 2, Klaus Baer observes:

The missing signs occur again on the same photograph in ii, 3, to the left of the break, starting with the group after the short horizontal dash and continuing to the end of the preserved part of the line. Joseph Smith [in the Book of Abraham translation manuscripts] drew four groups, of which the first (“Behold Potiphers hill . . .”) has the expected shape and is still visible in traces at the beginning of the line, while the remaining three (including the one corresponding to Abraham 1:26) are clearly proposed restorations that bear no resemblance to the signs that certainly were on the papyrus before it was damaged; note also the difference in general appearance or style. Our conclusion is essentially the same as before: The papyrus was slightly better preserved at the beginning of the line but otherwise broke off at the same point it does now.³²

Figure 27 shows these characters restored, roughly as they would have appeared in 1835.

The additional damage is not surprising, since this was likely the most frequently handled area of the papyrus. The second character in line 1 (a hieratic “w”) is translated as the name of Abraham in the 1835 Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar and Book of Abraham manuscripts.³³ Joseph was fond of pointing to this character when visitors came to view the papyri. One visitor to Nauvoo in 1840 reported that the Prophet pointed to a particular character and announced, “There, . . . that is the signature of the patriarch Abraham.”³⁴ Others similarly reported being shown “the handwriting of Abraham.”³⁵ It could be that Joseph’s frequent handling of this portion of the papyrus caused some of the damage to this section.³⁶

Whatever the cause, it appears that the extra damage to pJS 1.2 has shifted the rightmost edge of the lacuna in the instructions column over to the right. This means that the lacuna in the

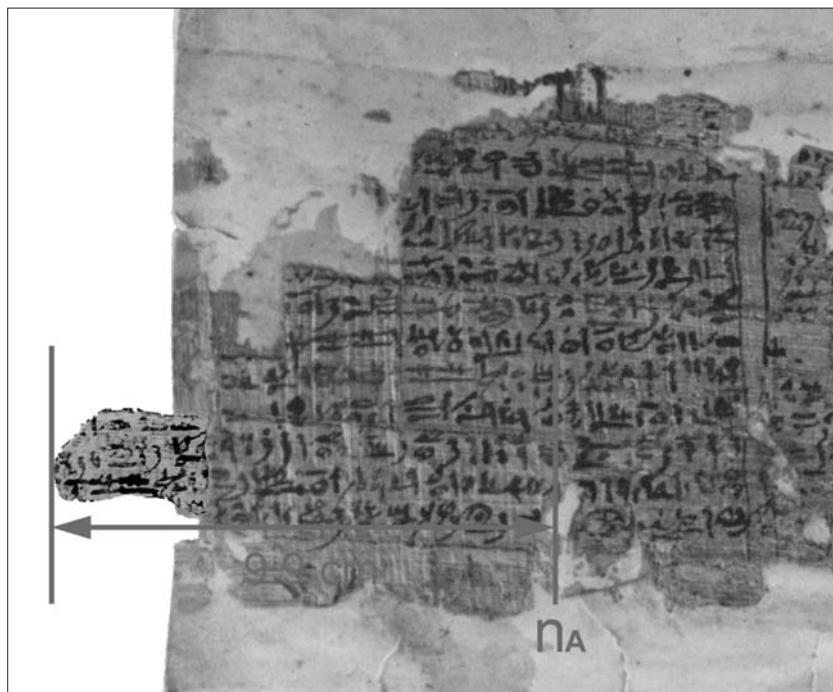


Figure 28. Distance from center of last measured winding to innermost edge of extant papyrus.

next column over has to be shifted by an additional amount in order for the lacunae to match up. The increased shifting distance, needed to obtain a peak in the correlation function, results in an anomalously high winding length, which, in turn, causes T to be underestimated. We thus reject the $T = 0.0075$ cm estimate and take the average of the remaining three measurements to obtain $T = 0.0701$ cm. This effective thickness is in good agreement with the value of ~ 0.8 mm reported by Hartmut Stegemann for most of the Dead Sea papyrus scrolls.³⁷

Lost Papyrus

Plugging our effective thickness estimate into equation (3) returns the maximum possible length of the scroll, interior to winding n_A , on the bottom edge of pJS 1.3:

$$L_A = \frac{8.06^2 - 2.5^2}{4\pi(0.0701)} = 66 \text{ cm} \quad (10)$$

The distance from n_A to the left edge of the innermost extant fragment (a piece glued upside-down into pJS 2.6) is ~9.9 cm. (See Figure 28.) Therefore, no more than 56 cm of papyrus can be missing from the scroll's interior.

Shortly after the papyri were recovered by the LDS Church, Klaus Baer estimated the original length of the Hôr scroll to have been 150 to 155 cm. He arrived at this estimate by comparing the text to other copies of the Document of Breathing, particularly Papyrus Louvre 3284. Baer allowed 21 cm for column iv, of which 14 cm (including the misplaced piece) are extant. He estimated 35 cm for columns v and vi, 16 cm for Facsimile 3, "and a small amount for margin around the latter."³⁸ Assuming half a centimeter margin on both sides of Facsimile 3, Baer's estimate for the length of papyrus missing from the scroll's interior, starting from the left edge of the innermost extant fragment, is $21 - 14 + 35 + 0.5 + 16 + 0.5 = 59$ cm. This estimate agrees remarkably well with the 56 cm obtained from our winding analysis. The 3 cm difference between Baer's text-based estimate and our geometric estimate is within Baer's 5 cm tolerance for the scroll's overall length. Our results thus corroborate Baer's estimate of ~150 cm for the total original length of the scroll of Hôr.³⁹

The lack of sufficient space for a Book of Abraham source text on the Hôr scroll raises the question of whether such a text might have been on another scroll or fragment in the original collection. This hypothesis appears unlikely, since the canonized Book of Abraham specifically places the introductory vignette of the Hôr Document of Breathing at its "commencement" (Abr. 1:12, 14). Moreover, the most reliable nineteenth-century eyewitnesses spoke of only two intact scrolls in Joseph Smith's collection: the scrolls of Hôr and Tshenmîn. It is clear from the witnesses' descriptions of the scrolls that the former was believed to contain the Book of Abraham, and the latter the Book of Joseph.⁴⁰ Several eyewitnesses were also shown mounted fragments that were identified as Abrahamic writings. These were evidently the extant fragments from the fragile outer end of the Hôr scroll.⁴¹ Charlotte Haven's description of "the writing of Abraham and Isaac" as "a long roll of manu-

script” suggests that the Hôr document was the longer of the two scrolls in Joseph’s possession. However, it should also be recognized that, with no congruous reference available to form an impression, “long” to Charlotte likely meant anything longer than the paper on which she wrote to her mother.⁴²

In recognition of the unlikelihood that there ever was a Book of Abraham source text on the inner section of the Hôr scroll, several alternative theories have been put forth to the effect that: (1) the Document of Breathing served as a mnemonic device for the Book of Abraham, (2) the Breathing text served as a catalyst (rather than source text) for the Book of Abraham, (3) the Document of Breathing is a corrupted version of the Book of Abraham, which Smith restored to its pristine state, or (4) the Book of Abraham is simply an imaginative mistranslation of the hieratic script.⁴³ The ultimate success of any existing or future theory will depend on its ability to account for all of the evidence, including the fact that there was simply no room on the papyrus for anything besides the Breathing text.

Irrespective of Joseph’s method of translation, it is clear that he sensed in the Hôr scroll a richness of symbolic and religious potential that contemporary scholars could not see. To the experts who viewed Chandler’s collection in New York and Philadelphia, the Hôr scroll was a cryptic relic of a dead religion from a dusty tomb. Joseph, however, breathed fresh meaning into the crumbling little scroll, giving it new life as powerful scripture for the latter days. Perhaps the Egyptian vision of the afterlife, described in Hôr’s Document of Breathing, is not so far-fetched after all.

Notes

1. William S. West, *A Few Interesting Facts Respecting the Rise and Progress and Pretensions of the Mormons* (Warren, Ohio: Self-published, 1837), 5.
2. Marc Coenen, “The Dating of the Papyri Joseph Smith I, X and XI, and Min Who Massacres His Enemies,” in *Egyptian Religion: The Last Thousand Years*, eds. Willy Clarysse et al. (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1998): 1103–15. The title has been variously translated as “Book of Breathings,” “Breathing Permit,” “Document of Breathing,” and “Document of Fellowship.” See Dee Jay Nelson, *The Joseph Smith Papyri: A Preliminary Translation of the Ta-shert-min & Ter Papyri* (Salt Lake City:

Modern Microfilm Company, 1968), 5; Klaus Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1968): 111, note 7; Marc Coenen, “An Introduction to the *Document of Breathing Made by Isis*,” *Revue d’Égyptologie* 49 (1998): 37–38; John Gee, “Some Puzzles from the Joseph Smith Papyri,” *FARMS Review* 20, no. 1 (2008): 135.

3. Robert K. Ritner, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr among the Joseph Smith Papyri,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62, no. 3 (2003): 170. Ritner’s line and column numbers are here omitted.

4. H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 78–80, 87, 167–77.

5. Oliver Cowdery, Letter to William Frye, December 22, 1835, in Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, 70, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

6. Tshenmîn (*t3-šr.t-mn*)^f is rendered as Semminis by Marc Coenen, “The Dating of the Papyri Joseph Smith,” 1104 note, and by John Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000), 11. In light of criticism of these authors’ Greek-based transliterations by Ritner, “The Breathing Permit of Hor,” 167, we have opted to follow that of Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr,” 111.

7. Ibid. Neferirnûb (*nfr-ir.t-nwb*)^f is rendered as Noufianoub by Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 11.

8. John Gee, “Eyewitness, Hearsay, and Physical Evidence of the Joseph Smith Papyri,” in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, edited by Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000), 189. Amenhotep (*imn-htp*)^m is rendered as Amenophis by Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 11.

9. Michael Dennis Rhodes, “A Translation and Commentary of the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 3 (Spring 1977): 263. Sheshonk (*ššnq*)^m is rendered as Sesonchis by Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 11.

10. Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham*, 7–9.

11. [Manuscript] History of the Church, 2:596, in Richard E. Turley, ed., *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, DVD, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 1:1.

12. Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hôr,” 127.

13. See also Grant S. Heward and Jerald Tanner, “The Source of the

Book of Abraham Identified,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 92–98.

14. Jay M. Todd, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 200–201, 216–17.

15. Jay M. Todd, “Egyptian Papyri Rediscovered,” *Improvement Era* 71, no. 1 (January 1968): 12–16.

16. Heward and Tanner, “The Source of the Book of Abraham,” 92–98.

17. Gee, *A Guide to the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 21–23; Gee, “Eyewitness, Hearsay, and Physical Evidence,” 188–89; Kevin L. Barney, “The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources,” in *Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant, Vol. 3* in *STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM*, edited by John Gee and Brian Hauglid (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2005), 124 note 61.

18. Michael D. Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary*, Vol. 2 in *STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM*, edited by John Gee and Brian Hauglid (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 27–28.

19. Oliver Cowdery, Letter to Frye, December 22, 1835, expected the completed translation to fill “large volumes.” This expectation was apparently influenced by a belief that Egyptian script was an extremely compact (“comprehensive”) form of writing in which a single character might be translated by dozens or even hundreds of English words. This is the understanding outlined in a nineteenth-century Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar (EAG) that seems to have been produced under Smith’s direction. Advocates of the “missing papyrus theory” however, have contested both this interpretation of the EAG and Smith’s role in its production. Missing papyrus theorists assume that the Book of Abraham is a more or less Egyptologically correct translation of a now-lost hieratic or hieroglyphic text, and thus (by implication) that the proportion of Egyptian to English text would not have been exceptional. See Hugh W. Nibley, “The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 350–99; Christopher C. Smith, “The Dependence of Abraham 1:1–3 on the Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 29 (2009): 43–47.

20. Gee, “Some Puzzles,” 120–21; Friedhelm Hoffmann, “Die Länge Des P. Spiegelberg,” in *Acta Demotica: Acts of Fifth International Conference for Demotists* (Pisa, Italy: Giardini Editori e Stampatori, 1994), 145–55.

21. He adds, “The actual value permitted for all intents and purposes lies higher. I might have recommended over 3 cm.” See Hoffmann, “Die Länge Des P. Spiegelberg,” 150. Quotations from Hoffmann are Christopher Smith’s translation from the German.

22. The effective thickness will be larger than the physical thickness of the papyrus, since air, debris, embalming salve, inhomogeneities, etc. may all intervene between windings and increase the radial distance between them. Furthermore, since the moisture content of papyrus drops over time and the parenchyma cell matrix decays from ultraviolet radiation and other forces of erosion, the extant papyrus fragments may be substantially thinner today than they were two millennia ago. The effective thickness more properly characterizes the radial increment between windings for the ancient scroll in its wound-up state.

23. We are grateful to Glenn N. Rowe for his assistance in viewing the papyri on November 23, 2009.

24. Edward H. Ashment, "Joseph Smith's Identification of Abraham in Papyrus JS 1, the Breathing Permit of Hôr," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 121–26; Jay M. Todd, "New Light on Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papyri," *Improvement Era* 71, no. 2 (February 1968): 40–41 and insert.

25. We were not allowed to photograph the papyri during the visit, so here we have superimposed the tracings onto scaled images of the papyri. The slight mismatches in some areas are due to photographic distortion. We are grateful to Brent L. Metcalfe for providing these photographs, which we believe to be the originals on which the *Improvement Era* sepia images were based. The uncropped photographs of pJS 1.2 and 1.3 contain rulers with distinctive tick marks precisely matching the tick marks on the rulers in the *Improvement Era* images. However, the rulers in the uncropped photographs are in different locations than those shown in the sepias, suggesting that they were repositioned sometime later in the production process. The uncropped photograph of pJS 1.1, unlike the *Improvement Era* sepia, does not contain a ruler. The *Improvement Era* prints appear to be photographs of photographs. Measurements taken from the rulers in the *Improvement Era* images do not precisely match the originals.

26. It is possible that the horizontal reference lines are off by a degree or two with respect to the direction of roll. Errors in winding length due to visual misalignment go like $\text{SIN}(\phi)$ (a very small number for small angles), where ϕ is the angle between the reference line and the roll direction. These errors strongly cancel when the windings are subtracted; hence, they are expected to lie well beneath the specified accuracy of our measurements.

27. This is guaranteed by the right-left symmetry of the procedure, provided that all points are weighted equally in determining the agreement.

28. Hugh Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price: Part 5,

Facsimile No 1," *Improvement Era* 71, no. 9 (September 1968): 72; Gee, "Eyewitness, Hearsay, and Physical Evidence," 188–89.

29. Edward H. Ashment, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Reappraisal," *Sunstone* 4, no. 5–6 (December 1979): 34–36.

30. We suspect that this length is anomalous for reasons discussed in the "Outlier" section of this paper.

31. Ashment, "Joseph Smith's Identification of Abraham," 123, 125. See also Nibley, "Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," 384. Baer drew a contrary conclusion in "The Breathing Permit of Hôr," 129, but only because he did not have access to a crucial portion of the manuscript evidence.

32. Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hôr," 129–30.

33. Ashment, "Joseph Smith's Identification of Abraham," 121–26.

34. "A Glance at the Mormons," *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal* 13, no. 43 (July 25, 1840): 342.

35. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past: From the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 386; Franklin, "The State of Deseret," *Warsaw Signal* 6, no. 31 (March 30, 1850).

36. The fragments were reportedly preserved under glass on the above-cited occasions, so if Joseph's handling of pJS 1.2 caused the damage in this area, it was probably at some other time, either prior to framing or after removal from the frame.

37. Hartmut Stegemann, "Methods for the Reconstruction of Scrolls from Scattered Fragments," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin*, edited by Lawrence H. Schiffman, JSOT/ASOR MONOGRAPH SERIES (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1990), 195.

38. Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hôr: A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1968): 112, 127 note 17, 113.

39. We are happy to make our data available to anyone interested in verifying our results.

40. Oliver Cowdery, Letter to Frye, December 22, 1835; W. W. Phelps, Letter to Sally Phelps, July 20, 1835, *Journal History*, Turley, *Selected Collections*, 2:1.

41. Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 386; "A Glance at the Mormons," 342; Henry Caswall, *The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842*, 2d ed. (London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1843), 22–23.

42. Since only the now-lost inner portion of the Hôr document was still intact as a scroll at the time, what Charlotte saw could not have been longer than about two feet. Her use of the term "manuscript" to describe the papyrus suggests that she evaluated the scroll's length relative

to typical nineteenth-century paper manuscripts, rather than to typical Ptolemaic papyrus scrolls. Charlotte Ann Haven, Letter to Mary Tufton Haven, February 19, 1843, published as Charlotte Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," *Overland Monthly* [second series] 16, no. 96 (December 1890): 624.

43. John A. Tvedtnes, "The Use of Mnemonic Devices in Oral Traditions, as Exemplified by the Book of Abraham and the Hor Sensen Papyrus," *Newsletter and Proceedings of the SEHA* 120 (April 1970): 2-10; Karl Sandberg, "Knowing Brother Joseph Again: The Book of Abraham and Joseph Smith as Translator," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 17-37; Todd, *Saga of the Book of Abraham*, 288; Charles M. Larson, *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Institute for Religious Research, 1992).

Joseph Smith's Letter from Liberty Jail as an Epistolary Rhetoric

David Charles Gore

Joseph Smith may not have ever spoken the word “rhetoric,” but his participation in juvenile debating societies probably brought him some contact with rhetoric’s long tradition.¹ Regardless of his knowledge of this tradition, it is obvious that Smith knew how to persuade people through speech and writing. In addition, his writings instruct readers about how to persuade in a manner consistent with the restored gospel of Mormonism. Whether Smith intended to introduce a new theory of rhetoric, this article argues that his theology implies one. While it is probably true that one can be a good communicator without theorizing about what he or she is doing, this paper is on the lookout for a Restoration theory of persuasion.²

The first section of this article compares the communication theories of three prominent LDS intellectuals with a focus on central disagreements within communication theory and thereby on finding a way into the writings of Joseph Smith. The second section, divided into sub-sections, analyzes Smith’s “Letter to the Church at Quincy, 20 March 1839” as an epistolary rhetoric, a letter that instructs its reader in the art of persuasion. Smith’s letter instructs readers in their communion with God, their ordinary conversations with one another and with those “that are not of our faith,” the persuasions appropriate to leaders of the Church, and the Church’s interactions with the world’s political powers, particularly when the Church is in deep distress. The unifying thread between these seemingly disparate topics is Joseph’s desire

for a heavenly city that requires labor in the here and now, an effort of persuasion to realize a change of heart. The centrality of rhetoric to city-building justifies the pursuit of a Restoration theory of persuasion.

Although the “Letter to the Church” never uses the word “rhetoric,” it refers repeatedly to corresponding communicative terms like “commune,” “conversation[s],” “voice,” “persuasion,” “influence,” “flattery,” “fanciful and flowery,” and “frank and open.” It even urges that “every thing should be discussed with a great deal of care and propriety.”³ The letter, like the history of rhetoric, describes speech in all its redeeming and not-so-redeeming qualities. Reading Smith’s “Letter to the Church” as an epistolary rhetoric illuminates the teaching of communication within the letter and promotes a sketch of a Restoration theory of rhetoric.

A Restoration theory of rhetoric could trace the influence of Mormon culture on the communication theories of Mormon scholars as David Frank traced the influence of Judaism on the twentieth-century rhetorician Chaïm Perelman, but it would eventually need to account for Smith’s writings about communication and the Zion-building quest.⁴ To achieve that end, I devote the core of this article to a close reading of Smith’s “Letter to the Church” by way of exploring the relationship between rhetoric and revelation. I thus arrive at a theory that connects our communication with each another to the possibilities of our communication with God and asserts that “love unfeigned” characterizes saintly cities.

Epistolary Rhetoric

Like the ancient Christians, Latter-day Saints know well the power of letters. Just as the Bible preserved and canonized epistles, LDS scripture contains no fewer than fifteen letters, including portions of Smith’s letter from Liberty Jail. These scriptural epistles comprise several chapters of the Book of Mormon and at least five sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.⁵ In addition to canonizing letters, priesthood leaders communicate frequently by letter, which, on occasion, are read aloud to the congregation. Some of these communications are generic, or only slightly modified from previous iterations, like the First Presidency letter that

the Church is neutral on political questions. Others are more individualistic, ranging from the bureaucratic missive to the deeply touching personal note. Inspired by C. S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters*, Apostle Neal A. Maxwell even tried his hand at an epistolary novel, *The Enoch Letters*, a fictional series of letters from Mahijah, one of the inhabitants of Enoch's city, urging his friend Omner to embrace the faith and move within the walls of the city of Zion.⁶ Together, these examples suggest the power and prevalence of the epistle as a rhetorical form for Mormon audiences.

What LDS audiences understand perhaps less well is the theory and practice of rhetoric.⁷ Indeed, the very word "rhetoric" poses problems. The earliest recorded use of the Greek term occurs in Plato's *Gorgias*, when Socrates presses Gorgias to declare who he is and what he teaches. "Gorgias responds initially, and perhaps glibly, that he instructs in rhetoric (Greek: *rhetorike*), an art concerned 'with words.'"⁸ This answer does not satisfy Socrates, who goes on to point out many disadvantages in the haphazard use of words. Meanwhile, Gorgias declares rhetoric to be the art of speaking in the courts, legislatures, or any public gathering, but he fails to convince Socrates that such speech has moral or political value. Socrates holds instead that rhetoric is like cookery, a way to make ideas tasty without regard to their nutritional value. Instead of empty, sophistic talk that merely mimics justice, Socrates argues for a philosophic rhetoric that is "always aiming at what is just."⁹

This ambiguous beginning bequeathed a mixed inheritance to rhetoric. On the one hand, it has long been easy to separate style from substance, to think of style as frivolous embellishment, or to think of truth independent of its persuasive power. On the other hand, rhetoric has always been closely associated with discovering and passing thoughts to others through political and didactic speech. Aristotle conceptualized rhetoric as an art of politics and a companion to ethics. Isocrates, Cicero, Quintilian, and others elevated rhetoric to "the whole range of speech and culture," including moral, historical, and political theory.¹⁰ Isocrates thought of rhetoric as the study of the constitution of a city (*politeia*), meaning a city's way of life, understood not by a written code, but by studying the achievement of custom, habit, and mores.¹¹ Pursuing the art of making and understanding a city's con-

stitution placed Isocrates “in a no man’s land . . . too philosophic for the politician, and too aware of the immediate and the changing for the philosopher.”¹²

Instruction in rhetoric encapsulates what is referred to as public affairs, including the study of ethics, law, public administration, political economy, and society. From ancient to modern times, misunderstanding has arisen over whether such rhetorical instruction is theoretical or practical. Rhetoric is at once a way of seeing the world and a way of acting in it. For just this reason, the history of rhetoric is alive in ways the history of other disciplines is not. Rhetoricians study their history to learn both theory and practice, rendering their approach to history conjectural, if not rhetorical.¹³ Willie Henderson, a pioneer in the application of rhetoric to economics, describes conjectural approaches to history as “less interested in ‘before’ and ‘after’ (i.e.,] start point and end point) and more interested in illustrating the process of change.”¹⁴ Thus, the history of rhetoric is not seen as interesting solely for its own sake, but for an instrumental purpose that mixes theoretical constructs and historical explanations to compare “what ‘was’ and ‘is’ with what could have been and ought to have been.”¹⁵ The intermixture of theory and history is central to understanding rhetoric in ancient and contemporary times.

In recent times, rhetoric has enjoyed a revival as a tool for understanding the complex nature of public discourse, although it has not yet fully shaken off the specter of pseudo-philosophy. Rhetoric is speech intended to persuade; and according to the late Wayne Booth, an LDS professor of English at the University of Chicago, is “the entire range of our use of ‘signs’ for communicating, effectively or sloppily, ethically or immorally. At its worst, it is our most harmful miseducator—except for violence. But at its best—when we learn to listen to the ‘other,’ then listen to ourselves and thus manage to respond in a way that produces genuine dialogue—it is our primary resource for *avoiding* violence and building community.”¹⁶ One may study rhetoric to gain advantage, but one may also study rhetoric to build a better community. Indeed, a strong defense of rhetoric has emerged in recent decades to fill the space vacated by the weakened epistemological foundations of the Enlightenment. This strong defense “reorders the relationship between theory and practice, giving priority to practice.

From this perspective, ethical and political knowledge is not based in *a priori*, abstract truth but is formed through rhetorical engagement in concrete situations. . . . Rhetoric, on the strong view, emerges not as ornamentation, nor as an instrument for disseminating truths gained through other means, but as the very medium in which social knowledge is generated.”¹⁷ This strong defense of rhetoric asserts that most, if not all, of human knowledge, at least in practice, is argument and persuasion in various forms.

Whether we accept rhetoric as the foundation of knowledge, communication problems are, in the words of John Durham Peters, a Mormon linguist, “a permanent kink in the human condition.”¹⁸ As Booth reminds us, not all problems are communication problems. Not all communication problems can be solved, as Peters notes, just as solutions offered by better communication are not always desirable. We are destined to muddle through interpretation, conflict, description, and possibility in our interactions with one another. The process of communication invites us to explore not only the truth proposed by interlocutors, but also to explore the possibility that together we can construct a new reality.¹⁹ “Instead of being an unbearable problem of lonely minds and ghostly apparitions,” Peters writes, “communication should be measured by the successful coordination of behaviors.” Certainly we can and should be concerned about communicating truths, but for Peters “the representation of supposedly unvarnished truth can be just as reckless as outright deception.”²⁰

In contrast to the idea that communication is a difficult process of give and take at the foundation of human knowledge, the problems of communication are often oversimplified. Hugh Nibley’s classic article, “*Victoriosa Loquacitas: The Rise of Rhetoric and the Decline of Everything Else*,” exemplifies this latter view. Nibley presents a history of rhetoric, brilliant in its sweep, which pegs rhetoric’s rise to the Christian apostasy and the decline of Western civilization. He argues that an addiction to rhetoric was the chief culprit in the collapse of moral and professional standards and of the Church’s appetite for revelation. Rhetoric is presented as a mere stylistic device or slippery means of promoting obscurity rather than as disciplined thought. Nibley acknowledges that the Old Sophistic, of which Isocrates was a part, “en-

abled its key figures to match wits and words with a Socrates, a Plato, or an Anaxagoras in a brilliant tussle of ideas,” but that such figures soon faded to be replaced by “a shrewd and studious striving to please.”²¹ Before long, “the first and foremost qualification for the office of a bishop . . . was *eloquentia*.”²²

While Nibley’s argument is learned, forceful, and succinct in its attack on the rhetorical tradition, it has limitations. Nibley’s analysis does not speak to the desire we have to be with other people, the desire we have to be understood by other people, or the desire we have to understand others. He glosses over the fact that our attempts to communicate with one another are often frustrating and that some of the advice given by the rhetoricians is offered in good faith to address these frustrations. Nibley’s work on rhetoric seems to adopt a theory of persuasion in which truth is copied from one mind and pasted to another without the difficulties that arise from intention, perception, and language. In this model, truth stands independent of the human mind and tongue, characterized by a Platonic purity that at times seems at odds with Joseph Smith’s explanation of the relation between God’s word and our language and understanding (D&C 1:24). What Nibley’s work does not speak to, in other words, is the line separating our own efforts as witnesses, preachers, ministers, and persuaders to think and speak the word of God and the power of God to draw the elect toward Him through these various channels of communication. Indeed, this is one of the motives behind Augustine’s realization in *On Christian Teaching* that a Christian rhetoric is both impossible and necessary:²³ impossible because God is truth (the source and convincing power of truth) and we cannot know him well enough, and necessary because of the command to preach, exhort, and prophesy.

By turning from a theoretical description to a practical example, we may better approach this rhetorical puzzle. Consider the following account from the *History of the Church*, in which Joseph describes his and Oliver Cowdery’s earliest attempts to preach the restored gospel. They felt duty-bound to

reason out of the Scriptures with . . . acquaintances and friends. About this time my brother Samuel H. Smith came to visit us. We informed him of what the Lord was about to do for the children of men, and began to reason with him out of the Bible. We also showed

him that part of the work which we had translated, and labored to persuade him concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was now about to be revealed in its fullness. He was not, however, very easily persuaded of these things, but after much inquiry and explanation he retired to the woods, in order that by secret and fervent prayer he might obtain of a merciful God, wisdom to enable him to judge for himself. The result was that he obtained revelation for himself sufficient to convince him of the truth of our assertions to him; and on the twenty-fifth day of that same month in which we had been baptized and ordained, Oliver Cowdery baptized him; and he returned to his father's house, greatly glorifying and praising God, being filled with the Holy Spirit.²⁴

In this account, persuasion depended on Samuel's willingness to ask God and to obtain a revelation for himself, but the narrative makes it clear that this event was unlikely to happen without Joseph and Oliver's energy and exertion in persuading him of "assertions" and the necessity for revelation. Because human influence is not sufficient to bring about conversion, some consider it to be base. What is clear, however, is that Joseph and Oliver were not passive participants. Rather they were active and engaged. They informed, reasoned, labored, persuaded, and explained but were also careful not to interfere with Samuel's pursuit of revelation, respecting his agency, his mind, and the process of obtaining spiritual understanding.

This example underscores the importance of conceptualizing and practicing a rhetoric attuned to process, to the space between minds. Where Nibley conceives of the relations between speakers and audiences only in binary terms of communicating pure truths or pandering, Booth and Peters acknowledge how important it is for individuals to respond to what they have heard. For Nibley, the rhetorical tradition primarily concerns self-gratification and increasing one's power through the use of ornament, while for Booth, at times, rhetorology becomes the highest plausible means to harmony.²⁵ Somewhere between these two views, however, is the possibility that attending to our rhetoric helps establish and maintain communities, whether political or religious, and that all messages convey relational elements as well as content. Unlike Booth and Peters, Nibley casts himself as an apologist defending what he considered to be unvarnished truth. Peters and Booth, we may suspect, believe in truth, but their aim is to explain communication in

a world where truth is often compromised by dualisms of subjectivity and objectivity and further complicated by processes of interpretation and mechanistic reproduction. The change in perspective highlights the centrality of audience-receptiveness to the process of meaning-making and community-building.

In a brilliant reading of the parable of the sower, Peters intuites a synoptic Gospels theory of persuasion. The parable of the sower, Peters says, is a parable about parables, and “the meaning of the parable is quite literally the audience’s problem.” The Platonic desire to avoid pandering at all costs meets its match in a rhetoric that gives each member of the audience something to work on, a problem to solve, if he or she will. Where Plato yearns for oneness through knowledge, the parable of the sower illustrates “compassion for otherness,” enjoining “a descent into the pains and wounds of the other. . . . Should we think of communication as perfect contact or as patience amid the imperfections?”²⁶ Peters holds for the latter—for patience amid imperfection that enables the better coordination of compassion and public affairs. The harvest yielded from this model is considerably more complex than one in which pure truths are exchanged for pure falsehoods, but it more closely approximates the puzzling aspects of human communication, including the changes required of preacher and convert alike as well as the challenge of understanding and implementing revelation. Dissemination, therefore, better than dialogue, captures “the weirdly diverse practices we signifying animals engage in and to our bumbling attempts to meet others with some fairness and kindness.”²⁷ Although these bumbling attempts are not synonymous with the tongue of angels, they nevertheless play a role in the processes of preaching the gospel, standing for something, and witnessing—processes that lie at the heart of accomplishing goals in common.

One of those goals, as already noted, is that of building a city. Richard Bushman draws attention to the fact that Joseph was a consummate city-builder: at Kirtland, at Far West, and at Nauvoo.²⁸ In addition, Joseph desired and believed he was building Zion, a city of the pure in heart. An examination of the Prophet’s teachings about persuasion is integral to understanding his city-building aspirations and achievements. He persuaded people. He

persuaded them of religious, political, and economic ideas relating to his vision of Zion. His letter from Liberty Jail exemplifies how the principles of the restored gospel integrate the idea of communicating with God with the practice of communicating with one another. One way to focus on this connection is viewing Smith's letter from Liberty Jail as an epistolary rhetoric.

One specialized way to teach the art of rhetoric is through epistles. Epistolary rhetorics were common in the ancient world but had undergone a significant transformation by the nineteenth century, according to David Randall, who traces the development of medieval and Renaissance epistolary rhetoric into the newspaper and the scientific journal as modern avenues by which private correspondents could influence public affairs.²⁹ My reliance on ancient epistolary rhetoric in this section is consistent with a conjectural approach to history that weaves together theoretical and historical issues relevant to the rhetorical tradition. Of note is the fact that the epistles of Paul, which sometimes resemble epistolary rhetoric, informed the letter-writing of other nineteenth-century Americans, including John and Abigail Adams, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman.³⁰ Although a comparison between Smith's letters and his contemporaries would be fruitful, I follow a different trajectory to highlight certain theoretical dimensions of the Liberty Jail letter.

Letters are a marginal literary form, and critical neglect has long been the genre's fate.³¹ But in the ancient world rhetorical form mattered as much as anything else and "decorum was more highly valued than originality."³² Christianity adapted the Hellenistic and Roman imperial letter formula early, and New Testament letters that follow this form most exactly are 2 and 3 John. The imperial formula included specific methods of address and greeting, health wishes, expressions of joy, arrangement of the body of the letter into specific parts including instructions and recommendations, and a formal conclusion that includes a prospective visit and closing greetings.³³ However, the form was not limited to imperial examples. "Indeed, the letter came to be regarded as a form of conversation. But once this conversational form was established in the private sphere, correspondents (by Hellenistic times at the latest) applied it to the public sphere, trying to use letters to persuade recipients to undertake particular

political actions.”³⁴ By late antiquity (third to eighth century A.D. rhetoricians began theorizing, mostly indifferently, about letters as a separate medium from speech, but the emphasis was on resemblance, especially to the plain style.³⁵

Ambiguity in the term “rhetoric” suggests that any letter intended to persuade may qualify as an epistolary rhetoric. However, a prevailing type in ancient times that Randall does not mention is the letter intended to instruct its reader in the art of persuasion. At least three kinds of this latter epistolary rhetoric were common in the ancient world by the first century AD:

1. A letter intended to serve as a model that the reader could imitate in a quest to find his or her own authentic voice or mode of communication. The epistolary form was useful for illustrating rhetoric in this way because it exemplified a method of direct address, a way to speak intimately and directly to another. Because letters in the ancient world were read aloud, often to a multitude, the connection between the epistle and oratory was more intuitive. The model was to instruct students in a way that enabled them to develop their capacity to address a multitude with the same familiarity that they used to address a dear and close correspondent.

2. A letter from an experienced adult, usually a parent or teacher, instructing the reader in the theory and practice of rhetoric. Examples from the classical world of this genre abound, including the work probably misattributed to Longinus, *On the Sublime*, and the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which was for many years misattributed to Cicero. These epistles function in a textbook fashion, but they maintain a personal concern for the student as well as the writer’s intimate voice.

3. Scriptural letters that connect communication theory with religious instruction, including 1 Corinthians 14 and James 3—sections of letters that instruct readers about effective persuasion and speech with the goal of influencing them to use these techniques.

Joseph’s “Letter to the Church at Quincy” is akin to all three of these ancient examples because portions of the letter model communion with God, while other portions exhort the reader to adopt some ways of communicating over others, and, at the same

time the epistle weaves together rhetorical advice with gospel ideas and is, by many audiences, considered scriptural.

Joseph's letter centered on his desire to reach beyond the strong walls that surround the prisoners. The urgency with which Joseph and his cellmates long to embrace and "lay claim" to the "fellowship and love" of their readers is heart rending. The epistle communicates his ache for a kind word from a friend, a tender embrace, and the refreshing air of freedom. The "Letter to the Church at Quincy" instructs Church members in their communications with God, with other members of the faith, with governments, and with those not of the Latter-day Saint faith. As an epistolary rhetoric that teaches a doctrine of Restoration rhetoric, the letter urges its readers to draw connections between what they say, how they say it, and how it contributes to the community's good.

"Letter to the Church at Quincy"

Incarcerated at Liberty Jail with five other men for nearly five months, Smith wrote or dictated eight surviving letters.³⁶ Some were tender letters to his wife, Emma Hale Smith, or to friends. Others were public letters to the Church. The letter of March 20, 1839, is twenty-nine pages long in the handwriting of Alexander McRae and Caleb Baldwin, with corrections by Joseph Smith.³⁷ During his early incarceration at Richmond and Liberty, Smith's letters expressed anger at those who had betrayed him to the Missouri militia and proclaimed his innocence.³⁸ By March 20, imprisoned now for nearly six months, Smith's anger had turned to boldness.

The letter exhorts readers to open the lines of communication with God, to avoid the power-flexing ways of the world, and to practice the art of rhetorical self-defense. Joseph exhorts the Latter-day Saints to communicate kindly with one another and to avoid vain and trifling speeches which diminish their power to appreciate the things of God. Together with commentary about meaningful speech, he discusses appropriate priesthood persuasion and urges his readers to adopt persuasive modes compatible with Christian action. At the same time, the epistle encourages the Saints to stand up for themselves by making a record of the falsehoods circulated about the Church and to publish their de-

fenses widely. This mixture of communication advice about heavenly revelation, good conversation, effective leadership, and rhetorical self-defense provides a meaningful foundation for understanding LDS attitudes toward persuasion as well as their public stance on controversy. Smith's letter, like the epistles of James and Paul regarding communication, weaves together the Church's public affairs with a way of persuading and communicating that is consistent with religion—in this case, Mormonism's claim that God has again spoken on the earth and the restoration of priesthood keys. The first sub-section addresses how Joseph's letter from Liberty Jail exemplifies what Terryl Givens has called "dialogic revelation."³⁹ The two following sub-sections address priesthood persuasion and public affairs, respectively.

Communion with God

The canonized version of the letter from Liberty Jail in Doctrine and Covenants 121–122 opens with a dialogue between Smith and God that appears on page 3 of the holograph letter.⁴⁰ These questions, joined in the Doctrine and Covenants with another portion from the letter about the love and support of friends, function as a dialogue. The dialogic element emerges from Smith's urgent questions, particularly how long God will make him suffer. Later, God replies that Joseph is not yet as Job. Givens describes prayers like this as "dialogic revelation" and states that they pervade Mormon scripture. Smith's inquiry from Liberty Jail fits the model. This distinctive kind of prayer, says Givens, "is an asking, rather than an asking for, and . . . anticipates a personal response, a discernible moment of dialogue or communicated content . . . that is impossible to mistake as anything other than an individualized, dialogic response to a highly particularized question."⁴¹ Smith inquires, with question following urgently upon question: "O God where art thou and where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place? How long shall thy hand be stayed and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants and thine ear be penetrated with their cries? Yea O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions before thine heart shall be softened towards them and thy bowels be moved with compassion towards them?" (431)

These earnest questions are followed by a declaration that the Saints' present calamity will hasten the coming of "the son of man . . . in the clouds of heaven" and that "our hearts do not shrink neither are our spirits altogether broken at the grievous yoke which is put upon us" (432). The tone following the questions in the letter is more confident than in the canonized portion, but the eagerness to inquire of God remains the same. "When the heart is sufficiently contrite," Joseph says, "then the voice of inspiration steals along and whispers, my son, peace be unto thy soul" (434).

Joseph does not merely tell Church members to ask God for guidance but uses the letter to ask his own questions of God and to demonstrate that God answers. In this respect, the letter serves as a model for Church members to follow in their pursuit of revelation. At the same time that he encourages readers to pursue their desire for knowledge, he gives them advice about how to prepare their minds for such insight:

Thy mind O Man, if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation must stretch as high as the utmost Heavens, and search in to and contemplate the lowest considerations of the darkest abyss, and Expand upon the broad considerations of Eternal Expanse. He must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart? None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. How vain and trifling, have been our spirits, our Conferences, our Councils, our Meetings, our private as well as public Conversations? Too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending, for the dignified Characters of the Called and Chosen of God, according to the purposes of his will from before the foundation of the world. (436)

The communication with God described in this passage requires not so much an open mind as a flexible and expansive one. Stretching and searching, contemplating and expanding are the operative verbs to describe the mental exercise required to prepare for communication with God. The mind must not shrink from learning hard truths, the kind that might come from six months of unjust imprisonment. The dark abyss and the broad expanse of heaven may represent contrasting modes of human experience and thus contrasting modes and means of instruction. *On the Sublime* (Gr., *Peri Hypsous*, lit., On Height) attuned rhetoricians to the transfixing power of heights and depths, natural or rhetori-

cal, including the realization that thoughts and feelings arising from chasms and heights are neither strictly artistic nor strictly in-artistic.⁴² It is well to remember the Sacred Grove, but we must not forget the underground dungeon of Liberty Jail. At times, by turns, life is miserable beyond description or glorious beyond comprehension. Too often our communications fail to acknowledge the inevitable swings and vicissitudes of life or how abysmal experiences can prepare us for universal insights. Sublime revelation does not always come on a mountaintop, and our triumphs are rarely the path to the insights that matter most.

The move from divine communication to rhetorical advice in the passage just quoted is striking, and underscores the relationship between divine revelation and human interaction. The letter contrasts examples of bad communication, on the one hand, with the communication befitting aspiring Saints, on the other. Low, mean, vulgar, and condescending conversation is opposed to honesty, sobriety, candor, solemnity, virtue, pureness, meekness, and simplicity (436–37). The letter insists that the role of private contemplation and public conversation in readying the soul to receive God must not be ignored. The faithful are promised that God “shall give unto you knowledge by His Holy Spirit, yea by the unspeakable gift of the Holy-Ghost that has not been revealed since the world was until now, which our fathers have waited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times which their minds were pointed to by the Angels as held in reserve for the fullness of their glory” (437).

By coupling the promise of revelation to ancestral anxieties, Joseph instantiates a uniquely Mormon way of seeing the world. This approach broadens the concept of audience, establishing a connection to God by way of a connection to family and Church members, past, present, and future. The “anxious expectation” of ancestors characterizes the understanding, application, and communication of truth. The accent is on avoiding those communications that distance us from one another and on embracing those that bring us together. The collapse of interpersonal distance by way of honesty and simplicity appears as a key component of the collapse of distance between God and humankind. The city of Zion cannot be built without a foundation of charitable communication.

Ignorance, superstition, and bigotry are “often times in the way of the prosperity of this church,” Joseph warns (437). A people unwilling to inquire, disposed to credulity, or unduly protective of what they know will find themselves unable to embrace the knowledge of God. The quest for knowledge from heaven is not a competition in which we race one another to the first discovery. Instead, it requires an unlikely cooperation in which we pursue truth collectively in a spirit of mutual tolerance and love. Candor and simplicity of speech, the plain style common to nineteenth-century American discourse and the epistolary form, is at the center of Smith’s way of seeing persuasion. The Mormon rhetor should establish a link of communication to God that depends on his communication with those in his family, congregation, and city.

Priesthood Persuasion

Just as communicating with God is often an interactive process, requiring dialogue and willing response, communication among members of the Church is also a delicate dance in which we coordinate desires, love, and knowledge. Leaders of the Church are, from time to time, required to congratulate or reprove members of the congregation, to counsel or inspire them, or warn them. Their capacity to do so rests on many preparatory messages that make frank and open speech possible and which ensure that members appropriately receive the correction.

The following passage from the letter, familiar to readers of the Doctrine and Covenants, speaks of the difference between those who have been called and those who have been chosen, including, in a roundabout way, the communicative requirements of the chosen:

Behold there are many called but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men that they do not learn this one lesson. That the rights of priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins or to gratify our pride or vain ambition or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men in any degree of unrighteousness behold the heav-

ens withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it has withdrawn amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold ere he is aware, he is left unto himself to kick against the pricks to persecute the saints and to fight against God. (440–41)

Control or compulsion move beyond persuasion; and the interpersonal distance created by pride, ambition, dominion, or self-gratification is a clear misuse of ecclesial office. It creates distance between the official and God.

The curious phrase, “kicking against the pricks,” echoes the New Testament description of Saul’s calling to the Christian ministry and stresses the interplay between interpersonal and divine relations. On the road to Damascus, Saul hears a voice asking why he persecutes Christ. Saul asks, “Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:4–5). The phrase is repeated in Acts 26:14 where Paul recounts his vision and “almost” persuades King Agrippa to be a Christian (Acts 26:28). The phrase probably refers to a driver goading an ox with a sharp instrument to make it move a certain direction and the resistant ox kicking back at the driver. Kicking against the pricks invokes a mental image of the thing pricked kicking back. The scriptural phrase may additionally refer to the influence of the Holy Ghost. When Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, his audience is “pricked in their heart” (Acts 2:37) and desires to do whatever is required. Here, kicking against the pricks connotes one who, out of frustration, fear, or self-doubt “kicks” by resisting communications from God via the Holy Ghost. If this broader connotation is accepted, “kicking against the pricks” describes a particular response or resistance to the influence of revelation. The influence of God is withdrawn when we use our influence for un-Christian self-aggrandizement.

Leadership is highly rhetorical, and leaders are bound to influence others in the best ways possible. But human nature itself contains a warning message for those who hold power and authority:

We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men as soon as they get a little authority as they suppose they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen. No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only

by persuasion by long suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned, by kindness, by pure knowledge which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy and without guile. Reproving betimes with sharpness when moved upon by the Holy Ghost and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprov'd lest he esteem thee to be his enemy that he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. (440–41)

The natural human tendency is to use power and station for self-aggrandizement, whether one is the new dean, boss, or bishop. Offices and their associated duties often create distance between leaders and followers. Sometimes this is their express purpose; but within the Church, this distance must be characterized by charity. Like the flexible and expansive mind required for revelation, priesthood persuasion should “greatly enlarge the soul.” Magnanimity or largeness of soul, which Aristotle characterized as the “crown of the virtues,” requires bearing oneself “with moderation towards wealth and power.”⁴³ In the *Rhetoric*, he added, “Magnanimity is the virtue that disposes us to do good to others on a large scale.”⁴⁴ Joseph’s effort to build cities seems to extend from great confidence that good can and should be done on a large scale.

Yet however large the scale of our service, it still requires many judgments about people. Here again, rhetoric is a useful way to gain insight. “Outward appearance is not always a criterion for us to Judge our fellow man but the lips betray the haughty and overbearing imaginations of the heart. By his words and his deeds let him be scanned; Flattery also is a deadly poison. A frank and open Rebuke provoketh a good man to Emulation and in the hour of trouble he will be your best friend, but on the other hand it will draw out all the corruption of a corrupt heart. And lying and the poison of asps shall be under their tongues and they do cause the pure in heart to be cast in to prison because they want them out of their way” (436).

The last sentence no doubt refers to his imprisonment and the anger that naturally accompanies betrayal. Joseph apparently considered his imprisonment part of a challenge to his leadership. The more relevant rhetorical point is that “lips” and “words,” as well as our response to sharp correction, reveal our true self to others.

Joseph calls upon Church leaders to have their “bowels . . . full of charity toward all men and to the household of faith and let virtue garnish [your] thoughts unceasingly.” Charity and virtuous thoughts increase confidence. The dominion thus derived is everlasting and “without compulsory means it shall flow . . . for ever and ever” (441). Good will is the reward of good leadership. At the same time, Church leaders must not be overcome by a fear of speaking their mind or of clearly pointing out the wrongs of others. While the entire edifice of public discourse rests on arguments disconnected from love, the persuasions available within the Church must be different because they are to be grounded in charity. The leadership rules of the rhetorical tradition are often at odds with charity, which is Nibley’s implicit complaint that the practice of rhetoric fails to improve Christian living—a natural extension of his definition of rhetoric as a sham art. The origins of rhetoric are indeed found in the strained, agonistic culture of ancient Athens where one had to fight for victory or submit to the opposition. This contest for opinion and leadership is anathema to the gospel of Jesus Christ and challenges the claim that rhetoric should play a serious role in Restoration life. However, it is true that we are duty bound to persuade and reason with each other and also that the scriptures—including Restoration scriptures—are full of advice about how to do it. Moreover, the Saints were not (and still are not) immune to agonistic struggle, just as the insights of the rhetorical tradition are not limited to secular application.

Perhaps some insight can be gleaned from the epistolary form on this point. The public letter is a paradox because of its mimicking of the intimate voice, but the private letter is also problematic because even authentic, personal encounters sometimes end in miscommunication or misunderstanding. Most of the time we hold that, the more intimate the communion, the more we have succeeded in overcoming the limitations of Babel, but the truth is that such transcendence, whether public or private, is rare and fleeting. Joseph’s Restoration rhetoric suggests that, in all our communications with one another, our speech either contributes to or detracts from the hopeful possibilities of soul-to-soul contact. Our own efforts play a significant part in but can never determine the outcomes of our interactions. Public letters, like those of the First Presidency, often mimic the confidential and dialogic

tone of both private letters and conversations. There is, of course, no way to answer a letter in the moment it reaches you, which is true of both private and public letters, but public letters are an especially deft form of authority because they enable one to constitute power and influence across great distances with a personal, autographic touch.⁴⁵ Indeed, public epistles both bridge and prove the distance between leader and follower, and between impersonality and the personal touch—as, in most ecclesiastical instances, they are read aloud by one near to us. In this sense, they function as a metaphor for understanding the complexities of relations between Latter-day Saints and Church leaders. The paradox is that leaders of a worldwide church are both near and far away in more than one way. Their public letters are near when read by a bishop or his counselor, yet far away in composition and bureaucratic distance.

Consider a second example. When I asked a former bishop what one thing he would save if his house was on fire and all his family were safe, without hesitation, he said it would be the personal note that Elder Richard G. Scott had sent him years before. This answer suggests that, despite the robust notion of authority that prevails in Mormon culture, the letter perpetuates paradoxes concerning the constitution of authority. Even a diluted, public nearness is still nearness, even as a personal note is nearer still. Paradoxes notwithstanding, both private and public letters are in keeping with Joseph's argument about the need for Church leaders to diminish the distance between themselves and the flock in order to bridge the distance between the Church and God.

Posture toward the World

Joseph's letters from Liberty Jail are deeply personal and express a desire for love to prevail within the Church. When it came to the Church's interactions with the world, however, Liberty Jail was a turning point.⁴⁶ No longer would Church records focus only on internal happenings. From now on, the Church would practice an active public affairs campaign. At the same time that Joseph's epistolary rhetoric encouraged seeking wisdom from God, discipline in ordinary conversation, and the exercise of righteous leadership within the Church, the letter argued that the Church should consider well its interactions with the world—meaning in-

teractions with governments and “all others that are not of our faith” (445). The posture Smith recommends toward these “others” is simultaneously conciliatory and defensive.

The Mormon War of 1838 in Missouri culminated in intense persecution and forced exile. By the time Smith dictated the letter, that intensity had not subsided. Indeed, the letter grows out of his anger and hurt at the unjust imprisonment. Not faintheartedness, but a commitment to publicizing the Latter-day Saint side of the story characterizes Smith’s attitude in these recommendations:

And again we would suggest for your consideration the propriety of all the saints gathering up a knowledge of all the facts and sufferings and abuses put upon them by the people of this state and also of all the property and amount of damages which they have sustained both of character & personal injuries as well as real property and also the names of all persons that have had a hand in their oppressions as far as they can get hold of them and find them out. And perhaps a committee can be appointed to find out these things and to take statements and affidavits and also to gather up the libelous publications that are afloat and all that are in the magazines and in the Encyclopedias and all the libelous histories that are published and that are writing and by whom and present the whole concatenation of diabolical rascality and nefarious and murderous impositions that have been practiced upon this people that we may not only publish to all the world but present them to the heads of the government in all their dark and hellish hue as the last effort which is enjoined on us by our heavenly father before we can fully and completely claim that promise which shall call him forth from his hiding place and also that the whole nation may be left without excuse before he can send forth the power of his mighty arm. (443)

This passage builds to the fiery rhetoric of an Old Testament prophet and verbally calls the whole nation to account. He confidently enlists Almighty God as the champion of his people. There is no clear defendant to receive these charges, but the Saints should leave no stone unturned in documenting the slander and libel, not, apparently, for self-aggrandizement, but for the defense of the Church and the good of the nation. Through the practice of gathering and collecting words, Joseph seems to be gathering fuel for a radical defense of “the political roots of society, its fundamental laws, its foundational principles, its most sacred covenants.”⁴⁷ Joseph’s radicalism opposes his own “society using its own most noble expressions and aspirations.”⁴⁸

His turn to words as a legal force, including the assertion of libel and a call for affidavits, suggests Joseph's awareness that some forms of speech are specifically interdicted by law. The preparation to employ the law against certain rhetorical forms underscores his awareness that communication with those outside the faith is regulated differently than communication within the Church. Yet Joseph importantly frames these duties as part of the cause of opposing evil "that we owe to God, to angels with whom we shall be brought to stand, and also to ourselves, to our wives, and our children who have been made to bow down with grief and sorrow and care under the most damning hand of murder, tyranny, and oppression" (443). While the persecution against the Saints may be a cosmic conspiracy which has been "growing stronger and stronger" over time and is "now the very mainspring of all corruption," the best means of countering it may be the law of the land. The battle is not merely against the Missouri mob but against the "iron yoke," "hand cuffs," "chains," "shackles," and "fetters of hell" (443). Although Joseph advises legal remedies, the Church obviously need not feel obliged to sacrifice prophetic fire or a narrative of cosmic consequence to foster good relations with the outside world.

Respecting the rights of others does not require downplaying their own rights or cherished beliefs. A Mormon right is responding to persecution, rhetorical or physical. Joseph vows that he and the other Church leaders "will not hold their peace as in times past when they see iniquity beginning to rear its head for fear of traitors or the consequences that shall flow by reproofing those who creep in unawares that they may get something to destroy the flock" (444). If caught up in a war of words, the process of collecting evidence—in the form of the enemy's rhetoric—to defend themselves and their friends is crucial to a defense of the faith.

Legal options notwithstanding, the Church should not allow bias or the faults of human nature to color relations with those of other faiths:

And we ought always to be aware of those prejudices which sometimes so strongly presented themselves and are so congenial to human nature against our neighbors, friends, and brethren of the world who choose to differ with us in opinion and matters of faith. Our religion is between us and our God; their religion is between

them and their God. There is a tie from God that should be exercised towards those of our faith who walk uprightly which is peculiar to itself, but it is without prejudice but gives scope to the mind which enables us to conduct ourselves with greater liberality toward all others that are not of our faith than what they exercise towards one another. These principles approximate nearer to the mind of God because it is like God or God like. (444-45)

The tie binding Mormons to each other does not mean that religious bigotry is justified toward those of different faiths. A year later when Joseph laid the legal foundations of the city of Nauvoo, he remembered his own counsel. "Having lived with diversity of belief all his life," Bushman observes, "he had always opened his doors to visitors and shown tolerance for other beliefs. Now with a city of his own, he opened wide the gates."⁴⁹ This was done by extending religious liberty to all sects, inviting "Catholics," "Quakers," "Universalists," "Unitarians," "Mohammedans," and many others, to share "as citizens and friends."⁵⁰

The principle guaranteeing respectful relations between parties and sects derived from Joseph's understanding of the U.S. Constitution. In the Liberty Jail letter, he calls the Constitution a "heavenly banner" intended to protect liberty for all and compares it to "the cooling shades and refreshing waters of a great rock in a thirsty and a weary land" (445). When the law properly regulates relations among those of different faiths, protecting all alike, it redeems the nation from its own worst propensities. The rights of the Mormons to live their faith are just as important as the rights of any other faith, Joseph claims. That assertion includes support for the right to differ in matters of belief. If the Saints want their rights to be protected, they must defend them with rhetoric, but they should also maintain an open rhetorical posture toward those with whom they disagree.

Although Joseph's body was in prison, his mind was active in formulating a defense of his people and his dictation articulated the results of his thought. He claimed due process and equality before the law, urged his people to make a record of the abuses and persecutions inflicted on them, and authorized the publication of that record. He asserted his right to live his faith as identical to the right of all other Americans to believe as they chose. He claimed that governments, laws, and regulations exist to guaran-

tee “to all parties, sects, and denominations, and classes of religion equal coherent and indefeasible rights” (445). The posture he recommends is not supine, but liberal and generous, asserting his people’s rights and defending the rights of others. He does not reject the Constitution as provincial but rather as filled with inspirational and universal claims best realized through active and assertive speech.

Both the law of the land and religious law are constituted to a considerable degree by rhetoric. Without persuasive speech, both our political and religious communities would atrophy and eventually die. Whether for self-defense, internal relations, or revelation, Smith offers the Church rhetorical advice that, although perhaps not comprehensive, he locates as an essential characteristic of the restored gospel. This theory advocates both genuine and personal kindness coupled with bold self-assertion and self-defense. It was liberal enough to protect as sacrosanct the right of individuals to choose and to open the gates of the city as one would open his arms to a friend, while asserting that relations with one another are a key to understanding relations with God.

Conclusion

Smith’s “Letter to the Church at Quincy” is an important vehicle for understanding Smith’s thoughts on rhetoric. The epistle teaches its readers how to seek knowledge from heaven through communication with God, reiterating that such revelation rests on good conversation. The letter teaches the Church how to employ influence with both co-believers and those of different faiths. It also establishes the stance that the Church should take in public affairs.

Specifically, the epistle teaches its readers to seek and how to seek knowledge from heaven. Smith enjoined his followers to prepare their minds to receive God’s word. At the same time, Smith uses the letter to stretch his own mind and to seek heavenly insight about the persecution inflicted on him and the Church. By opening a dialogue with those around us, we better prepare ourselves to interact with God. Smith recommends a system of public affairs in which mutual respect and tolerance pave the way for a deeper appreciation and a deeper application of revelation.

Moreover, Church leaders must ensure that the context of their persuasion is love and a desire to enlarge others. The effec-

tiveness of reproof and warning depend on righteous and virtuous character—for both speakers and listeners; otherwise, rebuke may elicit only anger and a disregard of the warning. Messages frequently carry a relational element in addition to their intended content. Popular understandings of rhetoric often underscore only the importance of the content rather than also recognizing the importance of form and style as elements of relationship. Correction as well as praise must be framed within relationships of love. When it is otherwise, ill-will develops, leading to further distrust, animosity, and hatred.

Smith's epistle, read as a rhetorical work, reinforces the Americanness of the cities he built. The liberal principles of the U.S. Constitution, including freedom of religion and speech, are at the center of his project. Liberty should characterize the relations within and among sects, parties, and denominations. At the same time, the Constitution allows parties to defend themselves through a free press, cataloguing and registering abuses and abatements of liberty. Individual liberty and the right to defend it are what make America great in Smith's eyes, and he recognized that the defense of these rights requires rhetorical action. While Smith interpreted the government's failure to defend his rights as spiritual opposition to his work, he simultaneously urged his people to do all in their power to protect and enlarge themselves. He forthrightly declared that the rights to speak with God and for God were constitutionally protected. His reaction to the government's failure to secure his rights recognized that, at the heart of the American constitutional experiment and his own radical interpretation of the same, lies the right to persuade others *and* a right not to be persuaded.

The frames of Restoration rhetoric, revelation, and love are to some extent the frames of religious rhetoric. What Smith shows is how the frames of revelation and love can be interwoven with rhetorical ideas and practices to lay the foundation of new cities. The possibility of communication with God does not mean that our understanding always proceeds linearly from flawed to perfect comprehension. Instead, like our communications with one another, God may enlighten our understanding piecemeal because of our imperfections, lack of desire, bigotry, or superstition. Communication with God and with one another must proceed in love,

suggesting that our imperfect understanding and our imperfect actions, including symbolic, communicative action, must not deter us from pursuing charity. These contexts or frames are not drastically different from other religious contexts for persuasion except that Smith's vision comes with an assertion of radical agency and at a historic moment in which capacities were tested while real cities were being constituted.

The letter from Liberty Jail models the dialogic revelation necessary to know truth personally, but also demands of its readers that they live according to what they learn in real communities. Dialogues between human beings and God do not take place in a rhetorical vacuum but extend from the larger context of our relationships with others, both within and outside of the Church. In all of this we are to make meaning with others, not in a contest over who is right, but in a context of wanting to know what is right and how we might pursue righteousness together. The truth that emerges from these interactions is pure precisely because we must purify our hearts in its pursuit. Anything less demanding is insufficient to produce the commitment and adherence that should characterize people of God.

Notes

1. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005): 37–38, 72.

2. “Theory” in the context of rhetoric means both a way of seeing the world and acting in it, as explained below. To talk about talking, to communicate about communicating is to do something about what we do, and the relationship is simply more direct than to talk about cooking or chemistry. See also Doctrine and Covenants 88:78–80.

3. “[Letter] To the Church at Quincy, Illinois, 20 March 1839,” in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 440. All quotations of the letter are Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 37–38, 72.

4. David A. Frank, “The New Rhetoric, Judaism, and Post-Enlightenment Thought: The Cultural Origins of Perelmanian Philosophy,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, no. 3 (August 1997): 332–50.

5. Alma 54:4, 11, 14–15, 24; Alma 55:1–3; Alma 56–58, a letter from Helaman to Captain Moroni; Alma 59–61, two letters from Captain Moroni to Pahoran and one from Pahoran to Moroni; 3 Nephi 3, letters from Giddianhi to Lachoneus; Mormon 3:4 and 6:2, declarations of war

exchanged between Mormon and a Lamanite king; Ether 15, a series of exchanges between Coriantumr and Shiz; Moroni 8, Mormon's epistle to Moroni; Doctrine and Covenants 121–123, 127–128, and Official Declaration–2. In the Doctrine and Covenants, only the last three are identified by the editors of the LDS scriptures as epistles. See also Alma 31:4–5.

6. Neal A. Maxwell, *The Enoch Letters* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2006).

7. For introductions to the tradition of rhetoric in the West, see George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, 2d ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Thomas M. Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and James A. Herrick, *The History and Theory of Rhetoric*, 2d ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2001).

8. Quoted in Herrick, *History and Theory of Rhetoric*, 55.

9. Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998): 128.

10. Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001): 27.

11. Allan Bloom, *The Political Philosophy of Isocrates* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1955). This book is the publication of his Ph.D. dissertation.

12. *Ibid.*, 3.

13. Pat J. Gehrke, *The Ethics and Politics of Speech* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2009), 8.

14. Willie Henderson, *Evaluating Adam Smith: Creating the Wealth of Nations* (London: Routledge, 2006), 132. For more on how these problems are handled in historical accounts of the rhetorical tradition, see Herrick, *History and Theory of Rhetoric*, 1–30.

15. Henderson, *Evaluating Adam Smith*, 133.

16. Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication* (Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), xi–xii; emphasis his.

17. Michael Leff, "Cicero's *Pro Murena* and the Strong Case for Rhetoric," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 63.

18. John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 29.

19. Wayne C. Booth, *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 339–49.

20. Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 268.

21. Hugh Nibley, "Victoriosa Loquacitas: The Rise of Rhetoric and the Decline of Everything Else," *Western Speech* 20 (Spring 1956): 59.
22. Hugh Nibley, "Rhetoric and Revelation," in Hugh Nibley, *The World and the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 102.
23. Herrick, *History and Theory of Rhetoric*, 126.
24. Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (6 vols., 1902–12, Vol. 7, 1932; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980 printing), 1:44.
25. Wayne C. Booth, *My Many Selves: The Quest for a Plausible Harmony* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006).
26. Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 61.
27. *Ibid.*, 62.
28. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 331–32, 342–46, 384–85, 403–4, 413–14.
29. David Randall, "Epistolary Rhetoric, the Newspaper, and the Public Sphere," *Past and Present* 198, no. 1 (February 2008): 3–32.
30. William Merrill Decker, *Epistolary Practices: Letter Writing in America before Telecommunications* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 13–15.
31. Decker, *Epistolary Practices*, 20. For more on letters and letter-writing, see Anthony W. Thorold, *On Letter Writing* (London: Isbister and Company, 1896); Jim Villani, *The Epistolary Form and the Letter as Artifact* (Youngstown, Ohio: Pig Iron Press, 1991); David Barton and Nigel Hall, eds., *Letter Writing as Social Practice* (Herndon, Va.: John Benjamins Publishing, 2000); Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Carol Poster and Linda C. Mitchell, eds., *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007). See esp., Carol Poster, "A Conversation Halved: Epistolary Theory in Greco-Roman Antiquity," in *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present*, 22. For a contemporary epistolary novel that makes use of epistolary rhetoric for plot structure and argument, see Peter Dimock, *A Short Rhetoric for Leaving the Family* (Normal, Ill.: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998).
32. Poster, "A Conversation Halved," 22.
33. Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Content and Exegesis*, translated by Daniel P. Bailey (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2006), 28–39.
34. Randall, "Epistolary Rhetoric," 5–6.
35. *Ibid.*, 6.
36. The five jailed at Liberty with Smith were Sidney Rigdon, Smith's counselor in the First Presidency of the Church; Lyman Wight; Hyrum Smith, Joseph's brother; Alexander McRae, a large, thirty-one-

year-old captain of the Missouri militia who had been active in the defense of the Saints; and Caleb Baldwin, a veteran of the War of 1812, who at forty-seven was the oldest of the prisoners. Sidney Rigdon was released in January 1839. Leonard J. Arrington, "Church Leaders in Liberty Jail," *BYU Studies* 13, no. 1 (1973): 1. For the letters written from Liberty Jail, see Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*: to Emma Smith, December 1, 1838; to the Church in Caldwell County, December 16, 1838; to Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young, January 16, 1839; to Presendia Huntington Buell, March 15, 1839; to the Church at Quincy, Illinois, with sections addressed to Emma and Bishop Partridge, March 20, 1839; to Emma March 21, 1839; to Isaac Galland, March 22, 1839; and to Emma April 4, 1839.

37. "To the Church at Quincy, Illinois 20 March 1839," in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 429. All subsequent references to this letter are cited parenthetically in the text from this source.

38. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 369–70.

39. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 217.

40. Segments of this two-part letter were included in the Doctrine and Covenants for the first time in 1876. The criteria used by Orson Pratt and others to determine what should be included or excluded are not known. See Dean C. Jessee and John W. Welch, "Revelations in Context: Joseph Smith's Letter from Liberty Jail, March 20, 1839," *BYU Studies* 39, no. 3 (2000): 130.

41. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 217.

42. Ned O'Gorman, "Longinus's Sublime Rhetoric, or How Rhetoric Came into Its Own," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 78.

43. Richard McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941), 992. This statement appears in his *Ethics*.

44. *Ibid.*, 1354.

45. See also D&C 44:1, 20:84. In light of the second reference, it appears that the temple recommend functions as a truncated epistle.

46. See Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 376–90, on the prison experience as turning point.

47. James Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 9.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, 415–16.

50. *Ibid.*, 416.

Wives and Other Women: Love, Sex, and Marriage in the Lives of John Q. Cannon, Frank J. Cannon, and Abraham H. Cannon

Kenneth L. Cannon II

John Q. Cannon, Frank J. Cannon, and Abraham H. Cannon were the three eldest sons of George Q. Cannon, the man viewed by historians as second only to Brigham Young in prominence in late nineteenth-century Mormon Utah. George Q. Cannon was a man of unusual talents and skills, whose far-flung influence extended to ecclesiastical, political, literary, journalistic, and business matters in Utah and the West, and each of the three sons inherited much of their father's brilliance, culture, and charisma. Although he was often absent from home as they grew up, George Q. Cannon devotedly urged them on, pressured them, provided formal and practical education for each, and made sure each received unusual opportunities for advancement, all in a careful attempt to cultivate the skills and experience to permit them to succeed in church, state, publishing, and business.¹

The three sons were born within two years of each other: John Q., the eldest, was born in April 1857, Franklin J. (he always went by Frank) was born in January 1859, and Abraham H., known as Abram, was born in March 1859. John Q. and Abram were the sons of George Q. Cannon's first wife, Elizabeth Hoagland, while Frank J. was the oldest son of second wife Sarah Jane Jenne. Until 1867, they were the only children of George Q. Cannon who survived



Left: Frank Jenne Cannon, Abram Hoagland Cannon, father George Quayle Cannon, and John Quayle Cannon. Photo by Charles R. Savage, March 31, 1891. Courtesy, LDS Church Library. Savage took another photograph on the same day of George Q. Cannon and fourteen of his sons, including the three shown here; this separate setting of the father and three oldest sons indicates the special place these sons held in the family.

more than a year or two beyond birth, and they were always perceived in the family and by the outside world as the “older sons” and the “older brothers.”² All three showed unusual promise and each rose to prominence at an early age. All shared their father’s gifts for the written and spoken word and all served as editors of newspapers or other periodicals. All participated at least for a time in family businesses (one named George Q. Cannon & Sons and another Cannon Brothers) and managed or were expected eventually to manage those businesses. John Q. and Abram served as LDS General Authorities (George Q. had blessed both of them as young boys that they would become important leaders in the Church “if [they would] only remain faithful to God”), and Frank J. served as one of Utah’s first two U.S. Senators. Each stood out from his contemporaries and likely would have been successful in his own right; but as the oldest sons of George Q. Cannon, they were expected to excel.³

Although they grew up in the same extended household in a prominent family, were near the same age, were given similar educational, political, and cultural opportunities, and were business associates, close friends, and often confidants of each other, the three brothers’ lives ultimately turned out very differently.⁴ Their experiences with love, sex, and marriage profoundly affected them, and many of the differences in their lives are traceable almost directly to these varied experiences. John Q., Frank, and Abram Cannon all married accomplished daughters of prominent Mormon families between April 1878 and March 1880. After that, the brothers’ experiences with love, sex, and marriage diverged.

John Q. Cannon, the eldest, was married for a total of almost fifty years to one woman who bore him twelve children, but that marriage was punctuated briefly, by mutual consent, by a divorce in September 1886 which followed his public confession of an extramarital relationship and the public excommunication that followed. John Q. likely had contemplated a polygamous marriage to the woman with whom he committed adultery, but either the times or higher-ranking Church officials did not permit it. Although his marriage to his first wife’s lovely and talented younger sister (who turned out to be his unidentified adulterous partner) the day after the divorce was short-lived because of her death eight months later from complications of childbirth, and even

though he quickly remarried his first wife and was permitted back into the Church fold, the adulterous episode derailed his promise of extraordinary prominence in Church and political affairs.

Second son Frank J. Cannon was, like John Q., married serially to two lovely and bright sisters, wedding the second after his first wife's death in 1908. But over a period of decades, Frank demonstrated a periodic inability to maintain marital fidelity, which unraveled his career (particularly after his father's death in 1901) as an important advisor and agent to the LDS Church's highest-ranking leaders and the heady political career into which his extraordinary gifts had vaulted him in his mid-thirties. The embarrassment of at least one illegitimate child and his long-term propensity when stressed or bored to go on drunken sprees, often with prostitutes, contributed to his estrangement and excommunication from the LDS Church and ended Church backing for any high political position or business prominence. The mutual contempt that Frank and Church President Joseph F. Smith had for each other also contributed to Frank's downfall. Once displaced in Mormon society, Frank J. Cannon used his considerable talents, first, in attacking the Church locally and, later, in gaining significant national prominence as an anti-Mormon campaigner in the 1910s.

Abram, the disciplined and dutiful third son, was the lone polygamist among the three and the only one not to marry sisters. Abram was an example of a man who was permitted to enter "the Principle" because of his discipline and commitment to duty, thereby proving the lie of the libidinous Mormon polygamist.⁵ He married his second wife a year and a day after his first marriage and eventually married four women (the last one infamously six years after the Woodruff Manifesto). At the same time, Abram was called to high Church office, ultimately as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Although he often confessed to his diary that life seemed "dull" and he had a sometimes stormy relationship with at least one of his wives, Abram steadfastly tried to treat each of his wives fairly and equitably and, unlike his brothers, was always faithful to his marital vows (albeit to four of them).

**John Q. Cannon's Fall from Grace:
"So Good and So Able, Yet So Weak"**

Initially, the most was expected from the eldest son, John Q.

Cannon. John's name reflected the important position he held in the family.⁶ John was groomed from an early age to be a journalist, publisher, and politician. He learned shorthand in his early teens so he could report Brigham Young's discourses. He studied classical languages and served for a time as his father's personal secretary in Washington, D.C., where George Q. was serving as Utah's sole territorial representative in the U.S. House of Representatives. Heber J. Grant later mused: "There probably is not a young man in the whole church who has had more opportunities and advantages extended to him educationally, spiritually, and every other way than John Q. Cannon."⁷

Though the eldest, John Q. was the last of the three to marry. He was sealed to Elizabeth Anne ("Annie") Wells on March 17, 1880, in the Endowment House. Annie was the second daughter of Emmeline B. Wells, prominent Mormon women's rights leader and editor of the *Woman's Exponent*. Her father, Daniel H. Wells, served as a member of the LDS Church's First Presidency under Brigham Young and was also mayor of Salt Lake City and general of the Nauvoo Legion. President Wells performed the ceremony, which was no doubt the marriage of the year among prominent young Mormons. After their marriage, John Q. and Annie lived with Emmeline and with Annie's beautiful and gifted younger sister, Louie, in Emmeline's home for almost a year. After Annie bore their first child, named George Q. after his grandfather, the young family moved to their own home on a farm located southwest of downtown Salt Lake City, near the Jordan River and George Q. Cannon's farm. When John Q. left on a mission in August 1881, Annie and the baby returned to live with her mother and sister.⁸

John Q. was made president of the Swiss Mission at age twenty-six; and near the end of his mission, Annie joined him for several months, leaving baby George Q. with Emmeline and Louie. In addition to missionary work, John Q. and Annie visited the great cities of Europe. Annie also wrote a history of the Relief Society that was published in several European LDS periodicals and travel letters published in the *Woman's Exponent*. While John Q. was serving this mission, he was nominated as a new apostle but was not appointed by his great-uncle, President John Taylor. John Q. and Annie returned to Salt Lake City in June 1884 and,

for a time, lived again in the Wells household. Soon thereafter, Annie bore the couple's second child, a daughter, Louise.⁹

John Q. Cannon ran for and was elected to the Salt Lake City Council and the Utah Territorial Legislature. He was one of three men appointed to go to Washington, D.C., to present President Grover Cleveland with a proposal for Utah's statehood. In October 1884, he was sustained as second counselor to Presiding Bishop William B. Preston, thus becoming an LDS General Authority, the first of George Q.'s sons to achieve that status. At the same time, he was appointed a member of the Council of Fifty, a secret political group of Mormon leaders, and was suggested as a possible candidate for Utah's territorial delegate in 1884. John Q. was well liked by his siblings and well regarded by his peers. In mid-1884, John Q. Cannon seemed poised for success in many different ways.¹⁰

Then in early November 1884, the *Salt Lake Tribune* published a sensationalized report whose source was the "son of a Mormon high up in authority in the Mormon Church," accusing John Q. Cannon of having married his wife's younger sister, Louie Wells, in the recently completed Logan Temple. Louie was unusually talented and attractive, and the *Tribune*, in saucy nineteenth-century newspaper prose, accused George Q. Cannon of pushing John Q. to achieve "Celestial glory" by marrying Louie in the "Principle." A nastier allegation in the story was that John Q.'s father had cleared the way to Louie's heart for his son by calling her boyfriend, *Salt Lake Herald* reporter and budding entrepreneur and intellectual, Robert W. Sloan, on a mission to Great Britain.¹¹ The allegations and counter-allegations in the journalistic firestorm among the *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Deseret News*, and *Salt Lake Herald* no doubt took a toll on John Q. Cannon and his relatives as well as on Louie, Annie, and other members of the Wells family.¹²

While it is not clear that John Q. Cannon and Louie Wells had a romantic relationship when the *Tribune* published its infamous article in November 1884 (although it would not be surprising if they had thought about a future plural marriage), it is evident that, by late 1885, John Q. and Louie were intimately involved. Annie Wells Cannon later testified that she believed her husband and her younger sister had been in love for some time and that she wished John to marry Louie as a plural wife so they all could share

eternal blessings together. She also testified, however, that he consistently denied having such feelings. Martha Hughes Cannon, one of the plural wives of George Q.'s brother Angus, wrote that John Q. had "twice asked to marry the woman he loved," referring to Louie Wells, but had been denied permission.¹³ A third child, Margaret, was born to Annie and John Q. in April 1886.¹⁴

Five months later, in early September 1886, John Q. Cannon confessed to his brother Abram that he had earlier "given" himself to Louie (a nineteenth-century euphemism for sexual relations) and that she had suffered a miscarriage. He was prepared to take whatever punishment would be imposed for this violation of his marriage vows.¹⁵ Abram was shocked, even though he probably had known earlier of some of his older brother's other faults, including drinking and gambling. Abram could not understand why John Q. and Louie had not married and, in anguish, wondered how John Q. "could so far forget himself as to fall when he might long ago have been joined to Louie in honorable wedlock." Abram also confided to his journal that news of John Q.'s death would have been more welcome. He worried that the news "will nearly kill Father." Abram "felt sick at heart" and mourned inconsolably. He had looked up to his older brother as the example for the whole family and believed John Q. the least likely of all George Q. Cannon's children to experience such a fall. He feared that "pride is what caused the temptation to first enter into John's mind."¹⁶

Abram consulted with their father. George Q. went to his brother, Angus M. Cannon, the long-serving president of Salt Lake Stake, on the morning of Sunday, September 5. George Q. told Angus, with "the greatest emotion," that "a great calamity has befallen our house.' I [Angus] enquired its nature when he [George] explained that his son John Q. . . . had written him a letter acknowledging that he had fallen into transgression and committed himself." In a candid statement exhibiting his view of John Q.'s character, Angus emotionally recorded: "I could only say so good and so able, yet so weak! I am moved to the depths of my soul for . . . the most brilliant of my father's house." Angus had been keeping a low profile for some time to avoid federal marshals who were seeking to arrest him for unlawful cohabitation. George Q. instructed him to attend the regular meeting in the tabernacle that afternoon. John Q. planned to "go before the as-

sembled people that afternoon and confess his wrong doing in the Tabernacle and . . . should he do so, it was my [Angus's] duty as President of Stake to be present and propose to the Saints to cut him off from the Church. I was asked if I could think of anything better to do be done and answered I could not."¹⁷

So, at George Q. Cannon's direction, on September 5, 1886, John Q. Cannon confessed to a packed house in the tabernacle that he had "dishonored his priesthood" by committing adultery (although he did not disclose his partner's name). Angus M. Cannon then proposed that his nephew be cut off from the Church for adultery. The congregation unanimously voted to excommunicate John Q.¹⁸ John Nicholson, whose address had been interrupted by the confession and excommunication, then resumed the speaker's podium and counseled that John Q. Cannon's "fall" should be taken as a solemn warning to all.¹⁹ Extensive reports of the September 5, 1886, services in the tabernacle were published in all three of the local newspapers. The *Tribune* had a field day. It expressed pseudo-concern that every "lady acquaintance" of John Q. Cannon would be the subject of gossip.²⁰

Also at George Q. Cannon's direction, Annie Wells Cannon then obtained an uncontested divorce on September 9, 1886, from Elias Smith, Salt Lake probate judge and LDS bishop. Prosecutors later argued that the divorce was not valid because the judge was overly involved, may have prepared some of the papers, and handled the entire matter by himself without the help of court staff. John Q. immediately asked Louie to marry him (she later testified that she had told him she "would think of it") and, on September 10, 1886, just five days after the extraordinary events in the tabernacle, John Q. and Louie Wells were married by Abram Cannon. It is probable that Louie was once again pregnant by the time they married.²¹

Ironically (in light of the divorce), on October 7, 1886, federal deputies arrested John Q. Cannon on the charge of polygamy. At the two-day preliminary hearing that took place on the next two days, prosecutors presented two theories for the charge that John Q. Cannon was a polygamist: either he and Louie Wells had been married for some time, perhaps since sometime in the fall of 1884 as the *Tribune* had reported in November 1884, or the quickie divorce that Annie Wells Cannon had received from a local probate

judge was improperly ordered and, therefore, of no legal effect. In either case, the prosecutors argued, Cannon was married to both Wells sisters and had, therefore, violated the Edmunds Act's prohibition against polygamy. The testimony given at the hearing by the three Wells women (Emmeline, Annie, and Louie) must have been agonizing and humiliating. No witness identified Louie Wells as John Q.'s paramour, and several stated directly that Louie was not the "other woman," even though they knew better.²²

Cannon was bound over for further proceedings on the finding that there was sufficient evidence to give to the grand jury. Bail was set at \$11,000, \$8,000 on the polygamy charge and \$3,000 on the unlawful cohabitation charge, which was added to the original polygamy charge.²³ In December 1886, the grand jury returned an indictment against John for polygamy. Louie Wells, five months pregnant and recognizing that she would be the star witness at the trial, left for San Francisco where she found shelter with her half-sister, Belle Whitney Sears. On April 5, 1887, she gave birth to a stillborn son and died six weeks later from complications associated with childbirth.²⁴

John Q. Cannon was released from the Presiding Bishopric at the time of his excommunication. He did not run for reelection to the Salt Lake City Council or to the territorial legislature. His name was no longer mentioned as one who might be appointed to the Quorum of the Twelve or be elected as territorial delegate to Congress. At Louie Wells's funeral, President Angus M. Cannon, again at George Q.'s instruction, implicated Louie for the first time publicly as John Q. Cannon's partner in adultery. Angus's disclosure was the talk of Salt Lake City Mormon society for some time to come, though it was never reported in the media.²⁵

As Church leaders watched the events of late 1886 and 1887, the "John Q. Cannon matter" seemed to grow worse as more information came to light. In the spring of 1887, Apostle Francis M. Lyman wrote to Joseph F. Smith, then second counselor in the First Presidency, that John Q. had not only committed adultery but had also embezzled Church funds: "[John Q.'s] peculations from Church and Temple funds have reached over 11000\$ the last I heard the amount and still many receipts to be heard from." John also admitted to "gambling on hor[s]es, drinking strong drink, smoking cigars, and playing billiards at the Walker House."²⁶

George Q. Cannon knew of his son's inclinations and worried about the effects that the stresses from the excommunication, the criminal charges, and, no doubt, Louie's pregnancy and death were having on his son. George Q. vowed that John Q. "must not despair" or "take refuge in stimulants."²⁷

In May 1887, at the same time Louie Wells Cannon was agonizingly (and unsuccessfully) fighting death, an unfounded rumor circulated that Annie had become pregnant after her divorce from John Q. In another letter to Joseph F. Smith, Francis M. Lyman confided that "these terrible things will, I fear, prove a death blow to Bro. D. H. Wells and bring his silver locks in sorrow to his grave. There is universal horror felt throughout Israel at the developments in that case." Lyman reported "general sympathy for Prest. Cannon and all the innocent and injured parties" but felt concern that "mortal enmity" between the Wells and Cannon families might erupt. According to Lyman, "John Q's doings" had shocked "all Israel" and things were getting worse. "Nothing turns up to mitigate his offenses but . . . every new rumor seems to blacken the record." Rumors circulating among Wells family members increased animosity toward some of the Cannon clan.²⁸

The handling of the John Q. Cannon affair was controversial in the presiding quorums of the Church for a number of years after the excommunication in September 1886. In 1887, both before and after Louie Wells's death and funeral, several members of the Church hierarchy expressed a lack of confidence in George Q. Cannon, in part because of his handling of John Q.'s "fall."²⁹ Daniel H. Wells, Louie's father, told the assembled Quorum of the Twelve that he had earlier dreamed about a black rattlesnake. One young woman was standing near its head and another young woman was standing near its tail. Wells held a strong hoe in his hands but did not think he could kill the snake with one stroke. He needed to get the girls away, then kill it. He had awakened at this point and had subsequently forgotten about the dream; but when the apostles were discussing John Q., he realized that John Q. Cannon was the snake and the two girls in the dream were his daughters, Annie and Louie. President Wells's concerns were not allayed when George Q. Cannon expressed his view (though the evidence to the contrary was strong) that John Q.'s "fall" had occurred in "an unguarded moment." President Cannon also as-

serted that other allegations against John Q. were false, even though the father had personally repaid the Church \$11,000 for the embezzled funds. George Q. Cannon believed that John Q. had properly repented and deserved to be received back into the Church.³⁰

Daniel Wells's dream of the black snake notwithstanding, he eventually came to terms with John Q. Cannon at Emmeline's insistence, who in May 1888 made "every arrangement" to facilitate the reconciliation. After Daniel and John Q. met in Emmeline's parlor on May 10, 1888, things were "different to what they were before." On May 11, 1888, George Q. Cannon rebaptized John Q. Cannon and reordained him to the office of elder. The senior Cannon and President Wilford Woodruff also restored all of John Q.'s priesthood and temple blessings. Finally, on May 13, 1888, John Q. and Annie were "sealed again" in the Endowment House, with Daniel H. Wells officiating a second time. Immediately thereafter, they were also married civilly in a ceremony performed by Judge Elias Smith, who had earlier granted Annie's overnight divorce.³¹

Although John Q. was quietly sealed to Louie Wells in a vicarious marriage in the Manti Temple in 1892 (with Annie standing as proxy for her sister), it appears that there was little or no mention in the family of John's marriage to Louie (or the affair that preceded it). Genealogical records do not note either John and Annie's divorce or their remarriage.³²

John Q. Cannon moved to Ogden after his excommunication to work with his brother Frank on the *Ogden Standard*. George Q. Cannon for years had published many of the quasi-official LDS periodicals and had served in earlier years as editor of the *Deseret News*. In 1892, he and two sons, John Q. and Abram, leased the *News* from the financially distressed Church. John Q. was appointed editor-in-chief, and he and Annie moved their family back to Salt Lake City. As editor of the Church's newspaper, John Q. could gain a certain amount of public redemption. Abram Cannon was appointed business manager of the paper at the same time.³³ Some high-ranking Church leaders found John Q.'s appointment inappropriate, among them Brigham Young Jr., who found "fault" in a quorum meeting, according to Heber J. Grant's diary, with Cannon's appointment as "the Editor of the Church

paper, and . . . many [other members of the Quorum] felt it was all wrong for a man like John Q. to stand as the editor of a paper representing the mouth piece of the Lord.”³⁴

In 1894, John Q. Cannon became “prominently connected with military affairs in Utah.” Thereafter, he was appointed to lead an investigation into “Indian troubles” in the San Juan areas of Utah Territory in January 1895. In 1898, John volunteered for service in the Spanish-American War. He was commissioned as a lieutenant-colonel in the cavalry and was assigned a contingent of cavalry from the Intermountain West subsequently known as “Torrey’s Rough Riders.” When Colonel Jay L. Torrey fell ill, John Q. Cannon took command. Although he and his troops languished through a hot summer in Florida and never saw action, Colonel Cannon showed the spark that many had seen in him in earlier days. Idaho’s U.S. Senator George Laird Shoup, reviewing the Rough Riders, described Cannon as “one of the most striking military figures that I have ever seen and the men who followed him were well worthy of their commander.”³⁵

Not long after his father died in 1901, John Q. Cannon and his family moved into George Q.’s “big house,” a large Victorian house on Ninth West that was the centerpiece of the Cannon farm. This move reflected his continuing standing in the family. He was accused of and arrested in 1905 for embezzling funds from the Utah delegation, which he chaired, to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition held in St. Louis. He was never tried or convicted. John Q. worked as an editor (usually managing editor but sometimes editor-in-chief) of the *Deseret News* for most of the remainder of his life, proudly watching Annie attain prominence as a state legislator, as a civic leader, as an editor, and as a member of the general board of the Relief Society.³⁶ After their remarriage in May 1888, John Q. and Annie had nine more children—a total of twelve—and apparently had a loving and faithful marriage for the rest of their lives.³⁷

In 1930, John Q. and Annie Wells Cannon publicly celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary, dating from their original marriage. In fact, they had not been married for fifty years because of the divorce between September 1886 and May 1888.³⁸ After his death in 1931, John Q.’s good friend, Les Goates, sports editor

for the *News*, wrote a loving tribute to his colleague and boss. Goates noted that Cannon was

[a] staunch friend and a sporting foe, a born leader, a tactician, . . . [who] had to fight his way for existence in the early days. His life was a triumph over obstacles. By overcoming these he won the success that raised him to the top rating in his profession. . . . A charming conversationalist, a wit of no small boundary, a good friend to young men, and a splendid boss. . . . John Q. Cannon was no paragon of virtue. He never set himself up as one.³⁹

The principal obstacles John Q. had to overcome were of his own making—his adulterous relationship with Louie Wells and at least two serious embezzlements. He appears to have transcended these “obstacles” by settling into what was, by outward appearances, a happy and full life. John Q. Cannon was a good and loving father and an able newspaperman, but he never reached the unusual heights that he might have and which were expected of him.⁴⁰

Talented, Charismatic, but Flawed: Frank J. Cannon

Probably the most naturally gifted of George Q. Cannon’s sons, Frank Jenne Cannon faced the demon of alcoholism much of his life. His infidelity was related in substantial part to his periodic binge drinking, which appears, in turn, to be associated with stress, inactivity, uncertainty, and/or depression. The two challenges, alcohol abuse and infidelity, indirectly led to his alienation from the Church and culture of his youth.

Frank was living in Ogden, Utah, working for his cousin, Franklin S. Richards, the Weber County recorder, and also reading law with Richards when he met Martha (“Mattie”) Anderson Brown, the daughter of prominent Ogden parents. Nineteen-year-old Frank married the lovely and lively twenty-year-old Mattie in the Salt Lake Endowment House on April 8, 1878, shortly before he graduated from the University of Deseret. Their daughter Jenne was born in February 1879, but died a few weeks later.⁴¹

According to Orson F. Whitney, George Q. Cannon took Brigham Young’s disdain for lawyers to heart and discouraged Frank from pursuing his childhood dream of becoming a lawyer. After Frank served briefly as a reporter for the *Deseret News*, he and Mattie returned to Ogden where he began reporting for the

Ogden Junction. They moved to Logan in August 1879 where Frank edited and managed the *Logan Leader*, which was published by the Junction Printing Association. In January 1880, Mattie bore their second daughter, Dorothy (“Dot”).⁴²

In Logan, Frank and Mattie employed a young Englishwoman, Maud Baugh, to help Mattie with the house and the baby. By early summer 1880, twenty-one-year-old Frank began an adulterous relationship with twenty-year-old Maud. In mid-October 1880, Maud’s father, George T. Baugh, a Logan painter and father of seventeen, approached William B. Preston, Cache Valley Stake president. As President Preston related the meeting to George Q. Cannon, “Bro Baugh” is “the father of the girl who lived at Franks for 6 or 7 months past.” Baugh informed President Preston “that his daughter is encienta [sic; he meant “encinta,” Spanish for “pregnant”] and charges Frank with it, he having overcome her during the absence of his wife on a visit in Ogden some 3 or 4 months since.” When Maud “told him [Frank] her situation, before he left, he said to her ‘he was not Mormon enough to marry two wives yet’ so she says.” Frank had also left town.⁴³

George Q. Cannon quickly investigated the allegations. Over the next several days, he received telegrams from William B. Preston in Logan indicating that “diligent enquiry” had not yet yielded further information and that Frank, although he had promised to return to Logan, had not done so. Mattie, no doubt worried about Frank, likely took their baby, Dot, and went to Ogden to stay with her mother. Finally, Frank sent his parents separate letters about the matter. Frank’s letter to his father, dated October 27, 1880, survives. The son pleaded with his father: “Don’t proceed in relation to that terrible affair. All that may be done will be accomplished without any action on your part.” Frank also confessed that he had purchased some goods at the “Co-op” on George Q.’s account because he had no money and sadly concluded: “God bless you, Father, and give you yet many years of joy with your dutiful children, is my earnest prayer.” He signed the letter “Franklin,” his christened name but one he never used.⁴⁴ The furious George Q. sent Frank’s mother, Sarah Jane, and John Q. Cannon to Ogden and Logan searching for Frank.⁴⁵

Abram’s wife Sarah wrote her husband, then in Germany on a mission, that his brother Frank had “been too intimate” with a

woman from Logan and that George Q. had angrily told family members that “he did not care if Frank never came near him again.”⁴⁶ Though Frank returned to Logan briefly, he soon relocated to San Francisco to take a job with the *San Francisco Chronicle*. George Q., who had edited the Church’s *Western Standard* in San Francisco, may have facilitated Frank’s obtaining this position. Mattie and Dot went with him.⁴⁷

Nor did George Q. heed his son’s plea to take no action. At some point within the next few months, the pregnant Maud Baugh was brought to the Cannon farm southwest of Salt Lake City. There, on April 24, 1881, she gave birth to a son. Frank’s mother, Sarah Jane Jenne Cannon, had delivered her last child, Preston J., just twelve days earlier. She and George Q. took in Frank’s illegitimate child, named him Karl Q., and raised him as the twin of their own infant. This act indicates both the Cannons’ genuine concern for their grandchild and their desire to treat him as their own.⁴⁸

Frank’s intimate relationship, the birth of an illegitimate son, and the reactions to it—from his father, from Logan residents, from his brothers, and perhaps from Mattie—may have left lasting psychological scars. By most accounts, he was extremely sensitive from childhood and intensely emotional.⁴⁹ He responded to most experiences feelingly. His younger brother, Joseph J., years later observed: “Unfortunately, there were certain conditions in his [Frank’s] own life that barred him, or he felt that they barred him, and had done from early youth from full enjoyment of the spiritual blessings of the gospel.”⁵⁰ Perhaps the sad episode in Logan was one of these “conditions,” perhaps *the* condition, that kept Frank from certain experiences such as serving a proselytizing mission, that John Q. and Abram (and most of their younger brothers), had, and which contributed in some small part to Frank’s periodic unhappiness and his resulting drinking and infidelity.

When Frank and Mattie returned to Utah in 1882, the Logan community’s negative feelings had not abated, especially since he had quickly left town instead of staying to—in the parlance of the times—face the music like a man. Confronting consequences squarely was obviously George Q.’s preferred mode. In June 1882, George Q. Cannon instructed Frank to “go to Logan, and

clear up, as far as possible, the disgrace which was still attached to his name." Frank promised to do so, and requested Abram, recently back from his mission, to accompany him.⁵¹

When Frank and Abram arrived in Logan, they first met with Apostle Moses Thatcher, who was ailing but offered to provide whatever help he could. They then visited the stake president, William Preston, who told Frank that "a public confession before the saints of the ward in which the sin of adultery was committed would be necessary and he (Frank) could then ask forgiveness for the same. He also advised Frank to see the parents of the injured girl, and make matters right with them." Frank was willing to see the parents, "but he argued that a public confession was unnecessary as the revelations of God did not require it. He considered the sin a private one, and should not therefore be made public." Abram noted in his diary that he disagreed with his brother and agreed with the local leaders that a public confession was in order. A "Bishop's court" was scheduled for that evening. According to Abram, he and Frank then visited Benjamin Lewis, bishop of the Logan First Ward who, with "his councilors also demanded a public confession of Frank, and said that nothing less than this would satisfy them." Abram was "called upon to express my ideas, and in doing so was forced by the Spirit to coincide with the views of the authorities. Frank demurred to comply with these requests at present; three months time was then given him in which to put matters in order." The bishop and his counselors determined that, if Frank "did not do so within the allotted time he will be excommunicated." Abram unhappily concluded that "Frank is apparently not humble enough."⁵²

Abram returned to Ogden and recorded nothing more in his diary about the matter until the following September, when Frank told him he had "made his affair in Logan right and now has a good recommend."⁵³ What had happened in the interim was that Apostle Franklin D. Richards had traveled to Logan and intervened in the local Church proceedings involving Frank Cannon. It was unusual, perhaps extraordinary, for an apostle to intervene in this way. He likely did so at the request of George Q. and Sarah Jane Cannon, though he may have initiated the action himself, since his first wife, Jane Snyder Richards, was Sarah Jane Cannon's aunt, and Richards later married Sarah Jane's mother, Sa-

rah Snyder Jenne, as a plural wife after she had divorced Sarah Jane Cannon's father, Benjamin Jenne. Franklin D. Richards was thus not only an associate and close friend of George Q. in the Quorum of the Twelve, but also Frank J. Cannon's great-uncle and, through the sometimes-convoluted relationships associated with plural marriages, Frank's step-grandfather. It is likely that Frank was named for Franklin D. Richards. Furthermore, the Richardses lived in Ogden and knew Frank and Mattie Cannon and Mattie's parents well.⁵⁴ Franklin D. Richards sometimes recorded in his diary during this period that he had had long conversations with George Q. Cannon; or that he and his wife, Jane, and George Q. and his wife, Sarah Jane, had had confidential discussions regarding Frank.⁵⁵

On July 20, 1882, Elder Richards took the train to Logan, where he stayed at the home of President Preston, future LDS Presiding Bishop.⁵⁶ Richards recorded in his diary the following plea: "O Lord help me I pray thee to . . . bring about benefit and blessings to all by obtaining an adjustment of Frank J. Cannon's unpleasant affair in accordance with principles of righteousness & salvation as I feel rather strained & feeble." The next day, Richards consulted with Preston and Bishop Lewis. Finally, the three Church leaders, together with Frank Cannon, who had arrived in Logan by train, called priesthood holders from the First Ward, where the young woman had lived, to consider how to deal with Frank. Seventeen men from the ward gathered. Under Elder Richards's direction, this unusual assemblage decided that Frank would not be required to make a public confession. Rather, as Richards recorded in his diary, "The brethren voted unanimously to forgive [Frank] & admit him to membership by rebaptism which was administered by Br. Peter O. Petersen. Preston Card and I confirmed him & then Bp. Lewis gave him a certificate of membership & standing & we returned with rejoicing & gratitude to God."⁵⁷ (Frank had not been excommunicated; his rebaptism was intended to symbolize recommitment to gospel principles.)

Moses Thatcher, who lived in Logan and, like Franklin D. Richards, was an apostle, and was also William Preston's brother-in-law, later expressed a very different view of this July 1882 action. During a meeting of the Twelve held shortly after John Taylor's death in July 1887, while George Q. Cannon was explaining

his handling of the “John Q.” case, “brother Moses Thatcher denounced in strong terms the course of Apostle Franklin D. Richards when he came to Logan and covered up the crimes of Frank Cannon.” After Elder Thatcher made this accusation, “some warm feelings were manifest by Bros Thatcher and Richards.” Apostle Heber J. Grant confided to his diary that “I felt in my feelings to sustain the position taken by Moses.”⁵⁸

Frank appears to have suffered some remorse about his actions in Logan (much to Abram’s relief) and apparently tried to improve his relationship with Mattie. Abram sometimes chronicled Frank’s cycle of errant behavior followed by periods of remorse and repentance.⁵⁹ However, it was not long before Abram began receiving troubling reports that Frank had failed to come home in the evening and sometimes was gone for a day or two. Almost unquestionably, he would be on one of his “drunks,” as his brothers and father invariably called them. Even more troubling, Abram learned the “horrible information” that, when he would go “on drunks,” Frank was “spending money very lavishly with fast women,” that he was spending time “in Kate Flint’s establishment and that his associations with that notorious prostitute are well know[n] to several police officers.” Several days later, Abram was in Ogden checking on the brothers’ book and stationery store, which Frank was neglecting. He had dinner with Mattie, who admitted that she had not seen Frank for several days. On the train home, he “found Frank, who had received permission from the conductor to sit in the baggage car, as he was so intoxicated that he wished to avoid seeing” Abram. To Abram’s aggravation, “Mary Weld, Kate Flint and another prostitute were on the train and I was reliably informed that Frank has been in their company since yesterday and is now accompanying them to the city.” Frank denied “the truth of the assertions that he has been guilty of committing adultery,” but to add insult to injury, Abram “found a letter . . . from Kate Flint which stated that Frank was in debt to her and that unless he paid her, she designed suing him. She desired me to intercede and save Frank the disgrace of a suit.”⁶⁰ Even four years later, John Q. told Abram that Frank had “been seen walking on the streets of Ogden in the company of two prostitutes the parasol of one of which he was carrying.”⁶¹

Perhaps not surprisingly, the rather lenient Church discipline

in Logan in 1882 was not Frank's last. Abram noted in his diary in June 1885 that "Frank made confession of his follies before the evening meeting at Ogden on Sunday and was forgiven. He will be rebaptized." It was shortly thereafter that Frank reported having a "good recommend from his bishop." It is not clear if this 1885 episode involved Frank's patronage of prostitutes or other "follies" on his part.⁶²

In October 1892, David H. Cannon, a younger brother of John Q., Frank, and Abram, died while serving a mission in Switzerland. In 1894, George Q. Cannon sought to have one of David's brothers marry Lillian Hamlin, a beautiful and intelligent young woman, with whom David had a romantic understanding although the two were not formally engaged. In this way, George Q. explained to his sons, by the levirate principle, they could "raise children" to David.⁶³ Frank reportedly eagerly volunteered to marry the lovely Lillian. As historian D. Michael Quinn has observed, however, George Q. Cannon "could entrust [Frank J.] with diplomatic missions on behalf of the Church but not with 'the Principle.'" Eventually, at George Q.'s request, dutiful Abram courted and married Lillian Hamlin.⁶⁴

Rumors of Frank's infidelity, both with prostitutes and in adulterous relationships, continued through the remainder of his years in Utah. According to a local political newspaper, after his election to the U.S. Senate in 1896, "his immorality was so gross and notorious that he was asked by a multitude of his constituents to resign his seat." During state legislative deliberations in 1899, when Frank was seeking reelection to the Senate, he reportedly "disappeared from public view, but was soon located in a house in the tenderloin district [of Salt Lake City] which he refused to leave for about a week." In 1905, near the time of his excommunication from the LDS Church, Frank was accused of being a "wrecker of homes and a despoiler of women."⁶⁵ Although Frank was excommunicated for two particularly vicious editorials he published in the *Salt Lake Tribune* against the Church and its prophet, Joseph F. Smith, in March 1905, Joseph F. was also acutely aware of Frank's sexual peccadilloes and noted in private correspondence that the *Salt Lake Tribune* had been presented with a "bill of some magnitude from the . . . 'red light district' to pay for Frank's activities there." In 1911, several years after Frank left Utah, the *Salt*

Lake Herald-Republican, a paper controlled by Reed Smoot's "Federal bunch," described Frank as a "libertine" and as "a man who preaches on morality and has illegitimate children in the streets of Salt Lake at the present time, a man who preaches morality and is a despoiler of homes."⁶⁶

It is apparent that Frank's challenges with marital fidelity were exacerbated by his heavy drinking. Almost all descriptions of his encounters with prostitutes included the mention that he had been drinking at the time, which probably reduced his inclination or ability to maintain marital fidelity. The binges he would sometimes go on may have been in response to boredom or insecurity. Frank could be very focused and unusually hard-working when he had a cause to pursue, particularly when he was leading the charge, calling forces to action, and actively working for an important result.⁶⁷

In spite of her husband's frequent (and sometimes extended) absences and errant behavior, Mattie stayed married to him and, as far as is known, stayed in the marital home in Ogden, during her relatively short life and, despite what must have been periods of intense personal turmoil and sorrow, raised their four children. She served with her sister-in-law Annie Wells Cannon, and her mother-in-law, Sarah Jane Jenne Cannon, on the general board of the LDS Church's Relief Society organization for years (even after Frank began publishing vicious attacks in the early twentieth century against the Church, President Joseph F. Smith, and Reed Smoot), and was virtually legendary in Ogden for her charitable works. In fact, the prominent Ogden Charity Society renamed itself the "Martha Society" in her honor after her death in 1908. Almost twenty years later, the Martha Society was still going strong and continued to remember the woman for whom the society had been renamed. Mattie was described as "being loved by all who knew her. Hers was a loving, kindly nature, filled with sympathy for all mankind. She will be mourned by thousands . . . for she was a humanitarian of the truest type, devoted to the uplifting of the races."⁶⁸

It is not clear that Frank and Mattie always lived together. Frank kept rooms in the Alta Club in Salt Lake City at the time he was editing the *Salt Lake Tribune* while she lived in their home in Ogden, and he would sometimes leave the state for extended peri-

ods of time.⁶⁹ Some of Frank and Mattie's children attended the Weber Stake Academy and Frank Q. ("Que"), their only son, served an LDS mission in Germany (January 1903–January 1906), a period that coincided with his father's vitriolic editorial attacks against the LDS Church and his excommunication.⁷⁰ It is difficult to understand why someone like Mattie would stay with Frank, given his drinking and infidelity. Her unusual loyalty, and Frank's considerable charm, charisma, and prominence in Utah society likely all played a part. He may have been very caring and attentive when he was not drinking. Furthermore, after Mattie died in 1908 at age fifty, Frank married her younger sister, May, who likely would not have accepted his proposal had she felt him completely lacking in any redeeming qualities. May remained married to Frank until his death in July 1933.⁷¹

During the 1880s and '90s, while George Q. was still alive, Frank Cannon maintained a high profile in Church and political circles. He worked in Washington, D.C., for John T. Caine, who served as Utah's Congressional delegate after George Q. Cannon. Frank asserted that he had been very involved in the negotiations with members of Congress and with the Grover Cleveland administration that resulted in the official end of plural marriage in 1890. He then edited the *Ogden Standard* (named after the *Western Standard*, the Church newspaper his father had published and edited in San Francisco in the mid-1850s), he ran as a Republican for territorial delegate to Congress twice (once successfully), and he was elected as one of Utah's first two U.S. Senators. He was widely known as one of the greatest orators in the United States. He acted sometimes as a lobbyist and as a financial agent for the LDS Church and its First Presidency in New York City and Washington, D.C., as the Church struggled with the double financial effects of the Edmunds-Tucker Act and the financial Panic of 1893. He also induced the Church (no doubt through his father) to provide financial support for his Pioneer Electric Company in the mid-1890s.⁷²

Not surprisingly, when Frank J. ran for office, he had to combat rumors of alcohol abuse and infidelity. For example, in 1892, when Frank ran unsuccessfully for the office of territorial delegate to Congress, it was reported that Ben E. Rich, his campaign manager, "carries a bishop's recommend vouching for Frank Cannon's good record."⁷³ Actually, what Rich was carrying was a let-

ter from Frank's bishop, Thomas J. Stevens of the Ogden Fifth Ward, which had been written in response to a request by Joseph F. Smith, who was concerned that "certain influential persons have, in public and private, attacked the moral character of Brother Frank J. Cannon, the Republican candidate for Delegate to Congress, for the purpose of defeating him." Bishop Stevens, himself a Weber County Republican office holder, stated that a Church "charge" had been preferred against Frank years before based on his confession of serious transgression, that Frank had confessed publicly, and that the bishop had not "witnessed in any person" a "more humble, penitent spirit" than Frank had exhibited on the occasion of his public confession. Stevens had been a counselor in the bishopric in June 1885 when this serious transgression was considered. He had been made bishop in 1887 and during the four years since, while Bishop Stevens had been Frank's local ecclesiastical leader, Frank had "manifested upon many occasions his devotion to the work of the Lord," was a liberal tithe payer, and had donated a great deal to help the poor. Stevens did acknowledge, however, that Frank had confessed twice during that period of "being guilty of taking too much strong drink and being intoxicated," but Frank had "been working hard to overcome his appetite for strong drink, and I fully believe that he has finally succeeded."⁷⁴ Joseph F. Smith sent Bishop Stevens's rather extraordinary letter to bishops in the Church and asked them, "in the interest of fairness, [to] give it proper publicity leaving the people to judge as to the worthiness of Brother Cannon to be Utah's Representative in the Congress of the United States."⁷⁵ Apparently, Frank neglected to mention to his bishop his interactions with Ogden and Salt Lake City prostitutes in the late 1880s. It is doubtful that one with Frank's history could have obtained such a letter from a bishop without urging from a high-ranking Church authority such as Joseph F. Smith. George Q. Cannon may have also requested the positive letter from Frank's bishop and the elder Cannon otherwise vigorously defended his son during the 1892 campaign. George Q. threatened to "withdraw fellowship" from William H. Seegmiller, Sevier Stake president, a "rock-ribbed' democrat," for spreading rumors "against Frank's character" when Seegmiller refused to tell President Cannon where "he got his information concerning

Frank's character." Seegmiller also told Cannon "that he intended to do all in his power to defeat Frank."⁷⁶

Several years later, some LDS apostles, already concerned about John Q.'s visibility given shadows on his reputation, found equally inappropriate Frank's involvement in Church affairs and Church support for some of his business enterprises. Joseph F. Smith, Lorenzo Snow, Brigham Young Jr., and Heber J. Grant all expressed concern and doubt about Frank's serving as agent for the Church with potential lenders in the East in the mid- to late 1890s. Heber J. Grant, after recording a number of negative references by his fellow Church leaders in 1897 and early 1898, confided to his diary on January 4, 1898, that he

did not feel that it was right for men like Frank J. Cannon to be selected to represent the Church. Felt it was an outrage that Frank was used as he was. . . . I expressed it as my opinion that we should ask the Presidency in a respectful manner for a knowledge of the affairs of the Church, and protest against such men as Frank Cannon being employed [by the Church and First Presidency], and then if the Presidency did not wish to make any changes . . . I was in for sustaining the Presidency. I explained that there was no malice in my heart and that I did not want to injure any man, but neither did I want any man to have the honor of the Church intrusted [sic] to him that was not worthy.⁷⁷

Brigham Young Jr. agreed: he "[f]elt outraged in his feeling to have a drunkard representing the Church as its agent in the east. I believe that it is the duty of the twelve apostles to ask the Presidency to correct these mistakes." Joseph F. Smith, second counselor in Wilford Woodruff's First Presidency, and Lorenzo Snow, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, intimated that they shared the same feelings about Frank.⁷⁸

Frank achieved election to high office, acted as financial and political agent for the Church, and worked successfully as a journalist in spite of rumors and reports of his errant behavior in no small part because George Q. Cannon knew his second son's many talents and actively aided Frank's career. Frank did not need too much help because of his own abilities. Although father and son clashed somewhat over which of them should be elected as one of Utah's first U.S. Senators in 1896 (most Church leaders

supported George Q. Cannon for the position), the elder Cannon eventually provided at least tacit support for his son's election.⁷⁹

The major shift in Frank Cannon's fortunes in the LDS Church and culture began with Wilford Woodruff's death in September 1898 and became final with his father's death in 1901. Shortly thereafter, Joseph F. Smith became president of the Church. President Smith and Frank had tangled in the late 1890s over marketing bonds to raise money for the Church and over businesses for which Cannon sought Church investment. Smith was an ardent Republican, while Frank had switched from Republican to Silver Republican while serving as U.S. Senator and to Democrat and American Party thereafter. Smith thought Frank was both greedy and lacking in business acumen. Perhaps most important, President Smith found Frank's personal life revolting. He was unwilling to provide financial or other support for Cannon's business ventures. Frank did not like Joseph F. Smith any better than the new Church president liked him and began making his views known. Thomas Kearns, a Catholic who had made a fortune in Park City mines, blamed the LDS Church for blocking his reelection to the Senate in 1905. He had quietly purchased the *Salt Lake Tribune* in late 1901 and now hired Frank J. Cannon as editor of the popular morning paper to wage war on those he blamed for ending his Senate career. Frank began publishing vitriolic editorials that became increasingly critical of the Church and its president. The attacks were sufficiently aggressive that Cannon was excommunicated by a high council court in Ogden in March 1905. Frank widely publicized both the allegations against him and his responses. After that, Joseph F. Smith often referred to Frank J. as "Furious Judas."⁸⁰

In early 1908, Mattie Cannon became ill with pneumonia and died shortly thereafter. Frank J. Cannon moved to Denver and somehow renewed friendships with Thomas M. Patterson and Judge Ben Lindsey, prominent politicians and Progressive reformers who were residents of that city. Frank soon was employed as an editor of the *Denver Times*, one of two Denver newspapers that Patterson owned. In June 1909, fifty-year-old Frank married Mattie's younger sister, thirty-four-year-old May, in a ceremony performed in the Colorado State Capitol by Colorado Chief Justice R. W. Steele. Tom Patterson, like Frank a former U.S. Senator,

was an honored guest. Soon thereafter, Patterson moved Frank to his flagship newspaper, the *Rocky Mountain News*, and in January 1910 made Frank managing editor.⁸¹

Frank and May moved into the Logan Court apartments directly behind the Colorado State Capitol building. In December 1910, Frank began publishing "Under the Prophet in Utah," serialized in nine installments in *Everybody's Magazine*.⁸² In 1911, Frank parlayed the success of the magazine articles into lecturing nationally on the Chautauqua and Lyceum circuits, spending at least nine months a year giving five or six lectures a week and staying in a different hotel virtually every night. Occasionally, May would accompany Frank; but most of the time, she remained in Denver. Frank and May never had children together and his children with Mattie were adults, although Que did live and work in Denver near his father for a few years. Although there is no clear evidence to settle the question, it is intriguing to speculate whether Frank remained faithful to May during these years of extended separation as he experienced constant train travel, hotel stays, and regular meetings with well-to-do women with an antipathy for Mormon polygamy from whom Frank was seeking contributions for his anti-polygamy "Crusade."⁸³ Nor have I found any firm historical evidence that Frank drank heavily during these extended absences. There is no indication in the Redpath Chautauqua Collection of Frank missing lectures, arriving tardily, or blundering as he delivered them. Possibly he was sufficiently absorbed in his anti-Mormon crusade that he controlled his drinking habit.

From 1908 until his death in 1933, Frank J. Cannon generally resided in Denver, edited several newspapers, published anti-Mormon articles and books that were read by hundreds of thousands of Americans, spent 1911 to 1917 on the road giving hundreds of impassioned anti-Mormon lectures a year around the country, fed the anti-polygamy frenzy which helped groups such as the National Reform Association almost succeed in pushing through a Constitutional amendment prohibiting polygamy, continued to be active in other political issues he believed in such as the remonetization of silver, and invested in mining properties.⁸⁴ May Brown Cannon, like her older sister, stayed with Frank through thick and thin until he died in 1933.

Dutiful Son: Abram H. Cannon

Abram, the youngest of the three brothers (though by less than two months), showed from an early time a dutiful disposition and close adherence to LDS practices. He was sealed to Sarah Ann Jenkins on October 16, 1878, in the Endowment House. Almost exactly a year after that, he was sealed in the Endowment House to his cousin Wilhelmina Mousley Cannon, on October 15, 1879. His entry into the Principle at the age of twenty is indicative both of his devotion to Church responsibility and of Church leaders' perception that he was worthy to assume such responsibility. Six days after his second marriage, he left on a mission for Europe, first serving in Great Britain and eventually being assigned to Switzerland.⁸⁵

Abram was careful in virtually every way. His unusually consistent and detailed diary kept in a beautiful hand is representative of how he lived his life. He regularly wrote letters to both wives from the mission field. Upon his return to Utah in mid-1882, he alternated spending nights with his wives, first Sarah, then Mina, and carefully recorded that he had done so. He took music lessons with Mina, attended church with Sarah, and sometimes took both to the theater together.⁸⁶ At one point, in September 1886, Mina exchanged her furnished downtown house for Sarah's unfurnished house on the outskirts of town. Abram vowed, "I told them I then consider them equal financially and would hereafter divide the means I might acquire equally between them."⁸⁷

In spite of his care, there were sometimes rifts with his wives. Mina was the more volatile and vocal in complaining to Abram. Abram provided a stabilizing influence on his wives and siblings and was periodically called upon to help his brothers, even acting occasionally as the family banker. George Q. Cannon confided in him more than the other sons, had Abram coordinate hiding places for him on the Mormon Underground while George Q. was avoiding arrest, and had him oversee family businesses.⁸⁸

In April 1885, at the same time that Abram was worrying about his brother Frank's associations with prostitutes, Abram was arrested and charged with unlawfully cohabiting with Sarah and Mina. Tried ten months later, he was given the opportunity to plead guilty for a light sentence. Instead, he pled not guilty, took

the stand in his own defense, and when asked if both Sarah and Mina were his wives, replied, "They are, thank God." Abram served five months in the Utah Territorial Penitentiary (March–August 1886), meeting with dignitaries, including Governor Caleb West, conducting business, and writing articles from his jail cell.⁸⁹

Abram confessed quite often to his diary that many things seemed "dull" to him.⁹⁰ He looked forward to new experiences and developed interests in popular cultural activities such as the theater and "base ball." He attended an "able" lecture by Wad-el-Ward on "Mohammedan customs." He worked hard to develop his singing voice.⁹¹ Sometime within the first few months after his release from prison, he began courting Mary ("Mame" or "Mamie") Croxall, a relationship that obviously provided him with the type of excitement that his complaints about "dullness" revealed a need for: "M. is a girl whom to know is to love, and the more I see her the better I like her." Abram received his father's permission to marry Mamie, instructed her to be endowed at the Logan Temple, and wrote to Erastus Snow, then living in Mexico, inquiring about the best route for him and Mamie to travel there for a certain "purpose." Abram recorded many days in which he would have "supper" with Sarah or Mina, visit Mamie, then spend the night with one of the first two wives.⁹²

In January 1887, Abram, Mamie, architect Don Carlos Young, and Marion Penelope Hardy traveled together to Mexico, where, on January 11, 1887, Apostle Erastus Snow sealed both couples, with Apostle Moses Thatcher acting as witness. Abram was twenty-seven, Mamie was twenty. They spent their wedding night in "Bro. Snow's light wagon which was made quite comfortable with a feather bed and the curtains being all fastened down." Abram mused: "Altogether our union has been rather romantic."⁹³

Abram worked very hard to continue to spend equivalent time with his three wives; but not surprisingly, Abram's new marriage to a woman a number of years younger than Sarah and Mina created some resentment and friction, particularly with Mina, who sometimes exhibited "a very wrong spirit" and often "felt badly" toward him. Mina also met with "Madam Mispah," a psychic who allegedly had "double sight." She told Mina that she would eventually divorce Abram, move to California, and become wealthy.

Abram and Mina were able to work through these periodic flareups, and Abram often wrote of how well they were getting along in spite of the challenges of integrating a new “sister wife” into the family.⁹⁴

Although Abram was shy and reserved—or at least viewed himself that way, and expressed concern about speaking publicly to large groups—he rose quickly in LDS Church leadership positions. He was called to the First Council of the Seventy at age twenty-three and to the Quorum of the Twelve at thirty. He also increasingly took over more responsibilities in the family businesses as John Q. and Frank proved unreliable. When he and John Q. assumed control of the *Deseret News* in 1892, or when he took over control of the *Contributor*, or as he edited and published the *Juvenile Instructor*, none of his fellow Church leaders felt the same reservations that they expressed about John Q. No doubt one reason that Heber J. Grant, Brigham Young Jr., Joseph F. Smith, and others known to have misgivings about John were willing to let the Cannons lease the *Deseret News* was because they knew that Abram, who was universally liked and respected, would manage the business.⁹⁵

Abram was unusually hard-working and his detailed diaries carefully record the time he spent on his duties: reviewing and proofreading magazine and newspaper articles, meeting with other Church leaders, attending professional meetings, and overseeing a number of family businesses. Wilford Woodruff described him as a “peculiar man. . . . He has been willing to take a great load upon him, and to do all that he could for the benefit of [the] Church and of his brethren wherever he has been.”⁹⁶ By the 1890s, he had little time to spend with his three wives and growing number of children (there were eventually eighteen, though three died in early childhood).⁹⁷

No doubt because of Abram’s devotion to spiritual, business, and family matters, George Q. Cannon relied heavily on his third son. Abram was aware of his father’s reluctance to face the end of new plural marriages after the 1890 Manifesto. When John Q. and Abram’s full brother, David H., died on October 17, 1892, in Germany, the family was devastated.⁹⁸ George Q. was particularly concerned that David had died without children. President Cannon knew that Mary Davis, a young woman in Salt Lake City’s

Nineteenth Ward, had been infatuated with Abram and had decided she would never marry anyone else. The elder Cannon suggested her when he talked to Abram “about taking some good girl and raising up seed by her for my brother David.” Abram responded somewhat evasively that he “knew but little of her character.” According to George Q., President Wilford Woodruff had decided that new plural marriages could occur in Mexico. Ten days later, Abram visited his father in the “President’s office” and suggested that his cousin Annie Cannon (Mina’s younger half-sister)⁹⁹ would be a “good person” for David to be sealed to “for eternity.” The suggestion “pleased Father very much”; and Angus, Annie’s father, agreed, “providing Annie is willing.” Wilford Woodruff and Joseph F. Smith, the other members of the First Presidency, “were willing for such a ceremony to occur, if done in Mexico, and President Woodruff promised the Lord’s blessing to follow such an act.”¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately, parts of Abram’s diary that may have recorded Annie’s answer have been excised.¹⁰¹ Thereafter, Abram and Annie attended lectures, went to the theater, and sometimes had a meal, both alone and with other family members. Abram was undoubtedly fond of Annie and may have courted her briefly but there is no indication that Abram visited Mexico during this period with Annie Mousley Cannon (or anyone else), and family genealogical records give no indication that she ever married.¹⁰² Possibly Annie was sealed to David for eternity but not married to Abram for time, although such a step would have defeated George Q.’s purpose of providing mortal children for David.

While Abram did not marry Annie, it is clear that he did eventually marry his younger brother David’s former girlfriend, Lillian Hamlin, with the intent of raising children to David. On June 17, 1896, Lillian was sealed to David “for eternity” in the Salt Lake Temple, with Abram presumably acting as proxy for his deceased younger brother. As Michael Quinn has persuasively argued, Abram and Lillian were probably married in the same ceremony for time. The person officiating in the sealing and marriage was likely Joseph F. Smith, though in testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Privileges and Elections, which was hearing protests to the seating of Reed Smoot in the U.S. Senate, President Smith denied performing the sealing, although he carefully

chose his words in phrasing that denial. In 1911, Lillian Hamlin also denied that Joseph F. Smith had performed her marriage to Abram, although she was also careful to use language that did not preclude the possibility that President Smith had performed her marriage to David.¹⁰³

According to a widely circulated story, Abram and Lillian were married by Joseph F. Smith on a boat bound for Santa Catalina Island, off the coast of Los Angeles, in late June or early July 1896 when they were all in southern California on a “business trip.” One of the people who circulated this story was Abram’s cousin, Angus M. Cannon Jr. Angus Jr.’s story seemed somewhat credible because he and Abram were first cousins, near the same age, and relatively close friends; and in fact, Abram and Lillian did take a business/pleasure trip with Joseph F. Smith and one of his plural wives, Edna, in late June 1896 that included a boat trip to Catalina.¹⁰⁴

However, Abram fell ill in California, and his condition worsened even before he arrived back in Salt Lake City from what amounted to a honeymoon with Lillian. Within days, he was confined to bed with intense headaches and earaches. Seymour B. Young, a close friend and a medical doctor, diagnosed Abram’s ailment as meningitis of the brain. On July 19, 1896, Abram died at age thirty-seven. Mina later testified that Abram’s decision to marry in a post-Manifesto polygamous union had created substantial tensions in his life, and she attributed his death to the stresses that he must have felt.¹⁰⁵

At the time of his death, Abram was a well-respected apostle, family member, publisher, and business leader. He was almost universally well-liked. He was consistent and was a peacemaker in presiding Church quorums and in family matters. His death must have come as a terrible blow to his father, his four wives, his children, his many brothers and sisters, and members of the Church in general. He was eulogized as one of the great men in the Territory of Utah whose untimely passing had taken one from whom so much more had been expected. Several of the high-ranking Church leaders who spoke at his funeral worried that he had worked too hard, contributing to his demise. The *Deseret Weekly News* “conservatively” estimated at 30,000 the number of people who thronged the tabernacle for Abram’s funeral, visited Temple

Square during the services, and crowded the cortege as it went up South Temple Street. Church President Wilford Woodruff was sufficiently concerned about Abram's death that he prayed for and received a vision that Abram had been called to more important missions in the hereafter. President Woodruff went so far as to relate his vision in October general conference.¹⁰⁶

Abram faced none of the embarrassing personal controversies that had troubled his brothers John Q. and Frank. Abram's most infamous act was to be convicted of unlawful cohabitation in March 1886, for which he spent five busy months in the territorial "pen." Fellow church members lionized rather than criticized him for his courageous willingness to accept the punishment related to his adherence to Church teachings.¹⁰⁷ Only Abram's post-Manifesto marriage to Lillian Hamlin created notoriety for Abram, and that was after his death, when it contributed significantly to the controversy over Reed Smoot's keeping his seat in the U.S. Senate.

At the time of Abram Cannon's death in 1896, all three members of the Church's First Presidency and at least seven members of the Quorum of the Twelve strongly supported the continued solemnization of new plural marriages on a limited, secretive basis. Virtually all of the apostles opposed the abandonment of plural wives and children from pre-Manifesto plural marriages, but most did not oppose a broader continuation of the practice, particularly if it could be done without generating serious criticism against the Church. Generally, performing the ceremony in Mexico was considered enough of a buffer to maintain secrecy.¹⁰⁸ At least six apostles—Marriner W. Merrill, George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, Matthias F. Cowley, Abram Cannon, and Abraham Owen Woodruff, and perhaps more—entered into polygamous marriages after the Manifesto.¹⁰⁹ Abram Cannon's late marriage became the best known of these marriages and was made the more controversial because it was allegedly performed by Joseph F. Smith.

Within a few years of Abram's death, however, the leadership of the Church had changed substantially and his post-Manifesto polygamous marriage to Lillian Hamlin became an important element for hearings by the U.S. Senate's Committee on Privileges and Elections to consider whether Reed Smoot, a monogamous

apostle who had been elected senator by the Utah State Legislature in January 1903, could retain his seat. At issue were claims that the Church had failed to honor its pledges to formally abandon plural marriage in 1890 and to avoid controlling the political views and activities of its members. The Salt Lake Ministerial Association and a number of Gentiles and estranged Mormons in Utah objected to Smoot's seating because of the Church's alleged duplicity and his acting, essentially, as the Church's representative in the U.S. Senate. Many Senators and more Americans believed Smoot knew of the Church's duplicity and was sent to Washington to protect the Church.¹¹⁰

Ironically, a leader in the campaign against Smoot was Frank J. Cannon, who was the same age as Abram and probably Abram's best friend growing up.¹¹¹ The Senate committee heard accusations of a young apostle marrying six years after Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto in a ceremony performed by a member of the First Presidency—who was now Church president—as evidence that the LDS Church had failed to abandon polygamy as it had promised. Nineteen witnesses were eventually grilled about Abram Cannon's last marriage, including Joseph F. Smith, four apostles, relatives of Cannon and Hamlin, and others.¹¹²

Joseph F. Smith was the first witness at the hearings when they opened in January 1904. Following his somewhat evasive testimony, President Smith returned to Salt Lake City and, three months later, read the "Second Manifesto," in April 1904 general conference. In this formal statement, the LDS Church reiterated an official end to new plural marriages.¹¹³

Had Abram been alive in 1904, he would likely have been near the top of the Senate committee's list of witnesses. He might have moved out of the country (as Apostles John W. Taylor, Matthias F. Cowley, and George Teasdale did) to avoid testifying, he might have been called on a foreign mission (as Heber J. Grant was and as Abraham Owen Woodruff was preparing for at the time of his death), or he may have otherwise avoided testifying (as Marriner W. Merrill did by asserting ill health).¹¹⁴

By April 1904, the makeup of the presiding quorums of the Mormon Church had changed dramatically from 1896, when Abram died. While a large majority of senior Church leaders supported (or at least did not oppose) continued new plural mar-

riages in 1896, by 1904, many of the old guard had passed away and most Church leaders recognized the need at least to stop solemnizing new plural marriages. New members of the Quorum of the Twelve were all monogamists.

Joseph F. Smith was easily the most enigmatic LDS Church leader in the context of post-Manifesto polygamy because of his strong support for it in the 1890s and early 1900s, his sometimes misleading public denials, and his apparent failure to pursue for a number of years those who continued to solemnize new marriages. But the scorching experience of his public testimony in Washington and the general attention directed at the Church during the Smoot hearings apparently brought him to accept the necessity of a more formal distancing from the practice of plural marriage. By the time the full senate overturned the committee's negative recommendation and voted to retain Senator Smoot on a 42–28 vote on February 20, 1907, the member of the Church's highest councils who had had the most significant close involvement with post-Manifesto polygamy was Joseph F. Smith, and he appears to have found a way to reconcile himself to the genuine, official cessation of new polygamy.¹¹⁵

Where would Abram Cannon have found himself? The U.S. Senate would have tried very hard to compel his attendance and testimony regarding his marriage to Lillian Hamlin. Like others, he may have avoided testifying; but more likely, I believe that his ability to accommodate would likely have served him (and perhaps the Church) well. Abram would have remained in the good graces of Joseph F. Smith and the Church, acting as Smith's close ally in making the difficult transition from polygamy.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the notoriety surrounding his union to Lillian Hamlin would have complicated his life and made his public involvement in Church and business somewhat challenging.

Conclusions

The Cannon brothers had the same background and the same unusual opportunities for education and advancement. All were gifted and were expected to rise to great heights in a number of pursuits, and all three gained extraordinary prominence at an early age—John Q. in Church, state, and journalistic affairs, Frank

J. in political, financial, and journalistic matters, and Abram in Church, business, and publishing.

John Q. Cannon, the heir apparent, was groomed for greatness. From all accounts, he had the abilities but not the inner drive to attain it. His meteoric rise was halted by his adulterous relationship with Louie Wells. Unlike Frank's moral transgressions, though, John and Louie appear to have truly loved each other and likely contemplated a polygamous marriage, with Annie's blessing. Their inability to accomplish such a union remains mysterious. While they were awaiting or anticipating such a union, however, they succumbed to temptation. Most of Salt Lake City loved Louie Wells, and no one was surprised that John Q. Cannon did as well. However, Louie's position as sister-in-law and John and Louie's premarital sexual relationship were problematic, and Louie's early and agonized demise made the entire affair distasteful; but observers, even Mormon observers, had some understanding of what had happened.

Frank's fall from grace in Mormondom was accelerated by his adultery, but his infidelity was harder for family and fellow Church members to understand. His adultery was substantively different from John Q.'s—an illicit relationship with a young woman living in his home who gave birth to his illegitimate son, rumors of other adulterous relationships, and his ongoing associations with prostitutes—were extremely unsavory. Although only a small group of people, including some family members and close associates, were fully aware of Frank's actions, rumors of his sexual activities were persistent; and when credible public allegations were made, they must have been quite shocking, particularly to Church members. True to his better nature, Frank sometimes experienced dramatic periods of genuine contrition and humble penitence for his actions in the 1880s and 1890s, during which he sought and received formal absolution from Church officials. In spite of his erratic extramarital sexual behavior, Frank's abilities and charismatic personality meant that he always had many friends and admirers within Mormon culture, particularly before he declared open warfare on the Church and its leaders. Perhaps the strongest point in his favor is the continuing loyalty of his two wives.

John Q. Cannon experienced an abrupt downward shift in status after the disclosure of his adultery; but even the absence of the

affair would probably not have compensated for the equally shocking facts that he embezzled funds twice, both from organizations in which he served in positions of trust. This pattern suggests that the roles for which he was groomed were not what he really wanted in life. An amiable relative and friend, he was popular company but exhibited little interest in holding high Church office. He also showed little interest in status, except for the trappings of material wealth such as living in a large ornate house.

Frank's change in status developed more gradually, and it was his sexual peccadilloes that first created questions about his character. Those questions were resoundingly answered by Joseph F. Smith after the deaths of Abram Cannon, Wilford Woodruff, Franklin D. Richards, and George Q. Cannon when the Church president withdrew all Church support for business ventures proposed by Frank and also refused to give Frank any political and financial responsibilities for the Church.

Notwithstanding these shifts in status experienced by both John Q. and Frank, both benefited significantly from their place in the Cannon family. John Q. spent most of his life as a senior editor at the *Deseret News*, reflecting his talents but also reflecting his important place in a powerful family. He and Annie raised their large family in the Cannon mansion on the farm. He received commendation as a military leader, but this evidence of natural leadership was again coupled with an apparent lack of ambition in using it as a springboard for higher position. Frank, in contrast, parlayed his position as a favored older son of George Q. Cannon, Mormon insider, and former U.S. Senator to prominence on the national lecture platform and in the publishing world, although as a militant anti-Mormon agitator. His attacks on the Church and Joseph F. Smith were credible because of his position and because he was a master at presenting his allegations in a believable matter.

Like his brothers, Abram gained the prominence expected of him, serving as an apostle, prominent journalist, and rising businessman. He never lost status, but his life was cut short at age thirty-seven, curtailing what he might have built on such a foundation. He was the product of his upbringing and labored diligently to meet what was expected of him. His virtues cannot be gainsaid—he was stalwart, steady, and hard-working. He believed in treating wives, children, friends, and even employees equitably.

He was generally as talented as his brothers, but he was intent on utilizing those talents in fulfillment of the aspirations his father had for him (and for his brothers). He fearlessly represented his Church and, when faced with choices such as seeking a lighter sentence for unlawful cohabitation, proudly acknowledged his two wives and served a prison sentence. The controversies that grew around Abram came after his death so there is no certain way of knowing how he would have dealt with them. One suspects, however, that he would have found a way to successfully weather them.

Perhaps the most intriguing question on which to speculate is whether Abram could have found a way to reconcile Frank J. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith. Could he have convinced the Church president to find a place in which Frank could continue to contribute to the progress of Mormon society and thereby avoid the destructive animosity between the two? Could he have had a calming influence on Frank that would have kept him from attacking the Church president so viciously? A related question is whether Abram could have maintained the family's business enterprises and found a continuing place for John Q. and Frank in those enterprises. No one will ever know.

John Q. Cannon found peace in work he liked and a family he loved. He was probably happier in the life he led than in the life he was raised for. He was revered as a patriarch by his children and younger siblings. Frank gained the fame he craved, but at a cost. He remained surprisingly close to his extended family—surprising because his activities were so hurtful to many in the family, including his mother, who died in 1928. Still, he broke most of his other ties to Mormondom. His religious alienation and dissolute personal life stood in stark contrast to the pattern of his father's values; and given his idolization of his father, this discrepancy suggests psychological issues that can only be guessed at. He remained as courageous in maturity as in his youth, but he also remained intensely sensitive and emotional. Such unbridled emotions led to his difficulties with Joseph F. Smith and his estrangement from his former culture.

Abram in some respects represents the best of both his older brothers. He dutifully attained what was expected of him, thereby earning his father's unqualified approval; but like most unusually

successful people, he was probably forced to neglect many in his far-flung family, perhaps even among his own children, who would have preferred closer contact as he worked hard to fulfill his responsibilities. That he so often found his life “dull” makes his dedication to responsibility the more laudable.

Each of the three Cannon sons and brothers was critically affected by his varied experiences with love, sex, and marriage. Their father’s careful hopes and plans for all three went awry in some respects, in no small part because of these experiences.

Notes

1. The standard biography of George Q. Cannon is Davis Bitton, *George Q. Cannon: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999). The *New York Times* was especially fond of referring to George Q. Cannon as next in prominence to Brigham Young. “Cannon’s Expected Coup, Will He Seize the Mormon Church Presidency?” *New York Times*, September 27, 1896, 13; “Mormons Break Up Enemies’ Meeting,” *New York Times*, April 14, 1914, 14. Though he was genuinely admired and loved by his people, George Q. Cannon could also be controversial with his fellow Church leaders and was known as the “Richelieu of Mormonism” or “The Premier” by detractors outside the Church. “George Q. Cannon Dead,” *New York Times*, April 13, 1901, 9; Arthur I. Street, “The Mormon Richelieu,” *Ainslee’s Magazine* 4 (January 1900): 699–706; “Some Conundrums,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 10, 1886, 2. The three brothers were the oldest of thirty-six children who lived to adulthood. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 463–64.

2. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 373–90. During her relatively short life, Elizabeth Hoagland was treated as the first and favored wife: living with her husband on foreign assignments, traveling with him, living in the largest house, and overseeing the other wives. During the 1850s, four children of George Q. and Elizabeth died before reaching age two. Three of them were named George or a form thereof (a daughter was named Georgianna) and the fourth was named Elizabeth. After Abram was born in March 1859, the next child of George Q. Cannon who lived to adulthood was Mary Alice, who was born in October 1867. *Ibid.*, 373–74, 463; Family Group Records of George Q. Cannon and Elizabeth Hoagland, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008).

3. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, ix, 185–86, 259–60, 385–89; Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1892–1904), 4:682–86; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 644–49 (here-

after cited as *Extensions of Power*); Andrew Jenson, "John Q. Cannon," *Latter-day Saint Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901–36), 1:243; Abraham H. Cannon, Diary, April 20, 1882, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections). Frank, whose mother was the second wife, did not receive a blessing promising future Church leadership. Only sons from George Q. Cannon's first marriage, John Q., Abram H., and their younger brother, Sylvester Q., served as General Authorities of the LDS Church. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 644–50.

4. George Q. Cannon and his first wife, Elizabeth, left their two oldest children, John Q. and Abram H., with second wife Sarah Jane Jenne, the mother of Frank, when they moved to London in 1860, for George Q. to assume his position as president over the European mission for four years. Thus, at a very early age, all three sons were left to the care and tutelage of the same woman. John Q. and Abram spent their teen years in the "Big House," a Second Empire mansion on South Temple and First West (200 West). Frank spent part of his teens in Ogden, living and working with his cousin, Franklin S. Richards. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 390; Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:682. John Q., Frank, and Abram were old enough that, unlike their younger siblings, they did not grow up on the Cannon farm, where, by the 1880s, most of the Cannon wives and children lived. The farm was located near the Jordan River south of modern-day California Street and west of 900 West in Salt Lake City. The farm was an extended family compound, with a number of houses for the wives and a schoolhouse where the children attended school together. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 107–39, 390–401.

5. This is ironic in light of allegations in the popular press and widespread views in the non-Mormon world of rampant licentiousness among Mormon men compelling them to marry multiple women. It was Abram's less-faithful and Church-disciplined brothers who were not permitted to marry polygamously.

6. John Q. was given the name of his father's maternal grandfather (John Quayle) and his father's younger brother, who had passed away as a young boy in England. John was also the name of George Q. Cannon's uncle and mentor, John Taylor, who was married to George Q. Cannon's aunt, Leonora Cannon, and who had proselyted and baptized George Q.'s parents in Liverpool. As the oldest, John Q. was given the same middle name as his father, Quayle, rather than his mother's birth name, Hoagland, like many of his younger full brothers. Beatrice Cannon Evans and Janath Russell Cannon, eds., *Cannon Family Historical Treasury*

(N.p.: George Cannon Family Association, 1967), 22–24, 30, 32–33; Family Group Records of John Quayle and Ellinor Callister, Family Group Records of George Cannon and Ann Quayle, Family Group Records of John Taylor and Leonora Cannon; www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008).

7. Kenneth L. Cannon II, “The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon,” *Journal of Mormon History* 35 (Spring 2009): 145–47; “Heart Attack Proves Fatal to Utah Editor, Colonel John Quayle Cannon, Managing Editor of *Deseret News*, Dies,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 15, 1931, 3; “Letter on ‘Mormonism’ and the ‘Mormons,’” *Deseret Weekly News*, April 19, 1871, 129; Jenson, “John Q. Cannon,” *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:243; Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 185–86; Heber J. Grant, Letterpress Diary, September 7, 1886, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church History Library).

8. Kenneth Cannon, “The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon,” 148–49; Margaret Cannon Clayton, “Our Mother: Biography of Elizabeth Anne Wells Cannon (Annie Wells Cannon), December 7, 1859–September 2, 1942,” unpublished typescript, Perry Special Collections, 15; Annie Wells Cannon, Diary, February 17, 1881, Perry Special Collections; Family Group Record of John Q. Cannon and Elizabeth Anne Wells, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008); Salt Lake County Probate Court Docket, E:93, Western States Marriage Record Index; Emmeline B. Wells, Diary, January 8, 16, February 5, 12, 17, May 3, 1881, Emmeline B. Wells Collection, Perry Special Collections; John Q. Cannon, Diary, January 3, 10, 11, 15, 27, February 15, 17, April 2, May 4, August 18, 1881, Perry Special Collections. Daniel H. Wells was a counselor to Brigham Young from 1857 until the death of Brigham Young in 1877. George Q. Cannon served as an assistant counselor to Brigham Young and as first counselor to John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 645–47, 711–12. On Emmeline B. Wells, see Carol Cornwall Madsen’s *An Advocate for Women: The Public Life of Emmeline B. Wells, 1870–1920* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2006); and her “A Mormon Woman in Victorian America” (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1985). Emmeline later remembered the grandeur of Annie and John Q.’s wedding reception. Emmeline Wells, Diary, March 17, 1889.

9. Kenneth Cannon, “The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon,” 149–50; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 5:90–91; *Deseret Weekly News*, June 11, 1884, 9; Clayton, “Our Mother, Elizabeth Anne Wells Cannon,” 2; Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 648–49; Annie Wells Cannon, “Letter One” “and Letter Two,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12 (December 15,

1883): 108–9; “Letter III,” “Letter IV,” and “Relief Societies Abroad,” *Womans Exponent* 12 (February 1, 1884): 132–33, 158–59; “Letter V” and “Letter VI,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12 (March 1, 1884): 148–50; “Letter VII,” “Letter VIII,” and “Letter IX,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12 (April 1, 1884): 165–66; “Letter X,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12 (May 15, 1884): 188–89; “Letter XI,” *Woman’s Exponent* 13 (June 1, 1884): 5–6; “Letter XII,” *Woman’s Exponent* 13 (June 15, 1884): 13–14; “Letter XIII,” *Woman’s Exponent* 13 (July 1, 1884): 21. Louise was probably named for Louie, whose real name was Louisa.

10. Jenson, “John Q. Cannon” and “Annie Wells Cannon,” *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:243, 3:334–36; Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 6:151; *Deseret Weekly News*, June 11, 1884, 329; “Editorial Notes,” *Woman’s Exponent* 13 (July 15, 1884): 15; “Utah Territory,” *Salt Lake Herald*, September 28, 1887, 3; Territory of Utah Legislative Assembly Rosters, Twenty-Seventh Session, 1886, Members of the House of Representatives, www.archives.state.ut.us/research/guides/legassembly21-31.html (accessed September 2008); Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 648–49; Kenneth Cannon, “The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon,” 149–50. John’s mother-in-law, Emmeline B. Wells, always wrote very highly of John Q., except on several occasions when she complained to her diary about actions he had taken that had caused her daughters heartache. Emmeline Wells, *Diary*, January 24, March 10, March 17, May 18, 1887, February 6, April 29, 1888, April 24, 1892. The Council of Fifty had lost much of its power and importance by the 1880s.

11. “On the Quiet, John Q. Cannon Enters Polygamy Very Stealthily, and His Reasons for So Doing,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 2, 1884, 4. On the background and tragic story of Louie Wells as well as a fuller treatment of John Q. Cannon’s involvement with her, see Kenneth Cannon, “The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon,” 150–52. The informant for the report was John Q. Cannon’s first cousin, Angus M. Cannon Jr., a somewhat notorious character in Salt Lake City. “Matter vs. Mind, in the Contest, the Former Comes Off Victorious, the Facts Concerning Cannon’s Polygamous Marriage, Cannon’s Trial for Assaulting a ‘Tribune’ Reporter,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 11, 1884, 4. Angus Jr. had not wanted his name used because he had just been made deputy county recorder by his brother, George M. Cannon, and was concerned that the story could result in his being dismissed from that position. *Ibid.* Rob Sloan is referred to but not named in the *Tribune* article.

12. The *Tribune* eventually published a half-hearted retraction of the story after Emmeline B. Wells and her well-respected non-Mormon lawyer son-in-law, Major W. W. Woods, accosted its editor-in-chief, accusing him of printing utter lies and “demanding a retraction.” “Card from Ma-

gor Woods,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 4, 1884, 4. The firestorm that soon ensued among the three papers was memorable for its escalation of rhetoric, with the *Herald* referring to the *Tribune* as an organ of “filth,” “venality,” and “disrespect for character,” and to Joseph Lippman, the *Tribune* reporter who wrote the article about John Q. Cannon and Louie Wells, as a “dirty, rotten apostate Jew.” Within the week, John Q. Cannon attacked and beat Lippman in the intersection of First South and First East, between City Hall and the Social Hall. “A Reporter Rawhided,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 10, 1884, 3; “Chastised. The ‘Tribune’ Local Editor Soundly Thrashed. The Penalty of Lying,” *Salt Lake Herald*, November 9, 1884, 9; “Early Tribune, Deseret News Made Trash Talk an Art Form,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 14, 1996, A1. A week later, the *Tribune* published what amounted to a retraction of its retraction. “Matter vs. Mind,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 11, 1884, 4. See Kenneth Cannon, “The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon,” 152–55.

13. “A Curious Case! John Q. Cannon’s Marriage, Divorced One Day and Married the Next,” *Salt Lake Herald*, October 9, 1886, 8; “The Examination,” *Deseret Weekly News*, October 13, 1886, 620; Martha Hughes Cannon, Letter to Angus M. Cannon, September 26, 1886, in Constance L. Lieber and John Sillito, eds., *Letters from Exile: The Correspondence of Martha Hughes Cannon and Angus M. Cannon, 1886–1888* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 49.

14. Family Group Record of John Q. Cannon and Elizabeth Anne Wells. John Q. and Annie eventually had twelve children, one of whom died as a small child. Their children, with birth month and year, are George Q. (January 1881), Louise B. (July 1884), Margaret (April 1886), Daniel H. (March 1889), Eleanor Addy (January 1891), Emmeline (February 1893), Cavendish W. (February 1895), Katherine (May 1897), twins David W. and Abraham H. (July 1899), John Q. (October 1901), and Theodore C. (November 1904).

15. Abram H. Cannon, Diary, September 4, 1886.

16. *Ibid.*, September 4, 1886; Kenneth Cannon, “The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon,” 161–62. George Q. Cannon had some knowledge of John Q.’s “faults,” including drinking. George Q. Cannon, Letter to Angus M. Cannon, September [11], 1886 (date derived from internal evidence), Angus M. Cannon Collection, LDS Church History Library. Later, it came to light that John Q., a counselor in the LDS Church’s Presiding Bishopric, had also engaged in extensive “peculations” (embezzlement) of Church funds. Francis M. Lyman, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, May 25, 1887, Joseph F. Smith Incoming Correspondence, LDS Church History Library; Francis M. Lyman, Letter to

Joseph F. Smith, June 27, 1887, Joseph F. Smith Incoming Correspondence, in Richard E. Turley, ed., *Selected Collections of the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols., DVD (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2002) (hereafter *Selected Collections*), 1:27. There is some indication that President John Taylor, at least temporarily, forbade several Church leaders, including John Q. Cannon, from marrying polygamously in the mid-1880s. Franklin D. Richards, Diary, January 30, 1888, Franklin D. Richards Collection, *Selected Collections*, 1:36. Bitton's excellent biography of George Q. Cannon does not address the John Q. Cannon matter.

17. Angus M. Cannon, Diary, September 5, 1886, LDS Church History Library, emphasis in original. Curiously, Angus also recorded that he viewed it as his duty, as one of the "nearest of kindred" to "cast the first stone" at his nephew. George Q. subsequently expressed his appreciation to Angus for the risks he had taken by appearing in public to preside over John Q. Cannon's excommunication. George Q. Cannon, Letter to Angus M. Cannon, September [11], 1886.

18. Abram Cannon, Diary, September 5, 1886; "Sunday's Sensation. John Q. Cannon's Excommunication," *Salt Lake Herald*, September 8, 1886, 4; "Sunday Services," *Deseret Weekly News*, September 8, 1886, 533; Kenneth Cannon, "The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon," 163–65. Having completed his task of excommunicating his nephew, Angus Cannon, fearing arrest, literally ran out of the meeting, climbed a tall fence, and took refuge in the nearby Gardo House. Angus Cannon, Diary, September 5, 1886. Such public excommunications were not unprecedented. In January 1857, standing at the pulpit of the "Old Tabernacle," Heber C. Kimball moved that John Hyde Jr. be "cut off, root and branch" from the Church and "be delivered over to Satan to be buffeted in the flesh." The motion was unanimously approved by the congregation. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1854–86), 4:165. Hyde had publicly lectured against the LDS Church in the Sandwich Islands, to which he had been sent by Brigham Young to do missionary work. Elder Kimball also decreed a divorce between Hyde and his wife in an attempt to save the fruit from the "limb" that had been "cut off" because Mrs. Hyde stayed with the Church in Salt Lake. Kenneth L. Cannon II, "A Strange Encounter: The English Courts and Mormon Polygamy in *Hyde v. Hyde*," *BYU Studies* 22 (Winter 1982): 73, 76; "Discourse," *Deseret Weekly News*, January 21, 1857, 364.

19. George Q. Cannon expressed the same sentiment in a letter to his brother Angus: "Had the whole proceedings been pre-arranged they could not have had a more dramatic effect. I sincerely hope that it will

prove an impressive warning to all of the terrible and appalling consequences of transgression. I feel that we have acquired strength from the Lord, and before the officers and members of the Church, by this act of summary justice. Let the public confession of sin be required for drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, profanity and the entire catalogue of sexual sins, and I believe these violations of God's law will be checked." George Q. Cannon, Letter to Angus M. Cannon, September [11], 1886.

20. "John Q. Cannon Cut Off," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 7, 1886, 4; "No Brutus He," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 8, 1886, 2; "Jake and Joe," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 12, 1886, 2; "A Specimen Case," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 9, 1886, 2; "Infamous," *Salt Lake Herald*, September 8, 1886, 4; Kenneth Cannon, "The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon," 165–66. The *Tribune* seemed overly happy at the fall from grace of the fair-haired oldest son of the "Mormon Premier." See, for example, "Some Conundrums," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 10, 1886, 2.

21. Kenneth Cannon, "The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon," 166–67; *Annie W. Cannon v. John Q. Cannon*, Docket, Case No. 1673, Salt Lake County Probate Records, August 6, 1877–February 28, 1887, Series 3944, Reel 10, p. 749, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City; "The Mills of the Gods," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 9, 1886, 4; "A Curious Case!" *Salt Lake Herald*, October 9, 1886, 8. The complaint and waiver of issuance of summons were filed on September 8, the findings and decree of divorce on September 9, 1886. Kenneth Cannon, "The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon," 182–83.

22. "John Q. Cannon Nabbed," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 8, 1886, 4; "John Q. Cannon Arrested," *Deseret Weekly News*, October 13, 1886, 12. "A Curious Case!" *Salt Lake Herald*, October 9, 1886, 8; "The Mills of the Gods," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 9, 1886, 4; "The Cannon Case," *Salt Lake Herald*, October 10, 1886, 8. "Held in \$11,000 Bail," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 10, 1886, 6; "The Examination," *Deseret Weekly News*, October 13, 1886, 12; Edmunds Act, 33 Stat. L. 30 (1882).

23. *Ibid.* Bail against George Q. Cannon had been set at \$45,000, an astonishingly high amount considering that the maximum monetary criminal penalty for unlawful cohabitation was \$300. George Q. Cannon had jumped bail and was on the lam at the time of John Q. Cannon's preliminary hearing, which certainly affected the court's rulings and the high bail. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 276–78.

24. *United States vs. John Q. Cannon*, Indictment for Polygamy, Case No. 168, December 1, 1886, Third District Court, Territory of Utah, National Archives and Records Administration, Rocky Mountain Region, Archival Operations, Denver, Colorado; "John Q. Cannon Indicted,"

Salt Lake Herald, December 8, 1886, 8; Kenneth Cannon, "The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon," 178–83.

25. Andrew Jenson, *Church Chronology: A Record of the Important Events Pertaining to the History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1899), xvii, xix; Kenneth Cannon, "The Tragic Matter of Louie Wells and John Q. Cannon," 183–84; Francis M. Lyman, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, May 25, 1887; Richards, Diary, May 22, 1887.

26. Francis M. Lyman, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, May 25, 1887.

27. George Q. Cannon, Letter to Angus M. Cannon, September [11], 1886.

28. Francis M. Lyman, Letter to Joseph F. Smith, June 27, 1887; Ronald W. Walker, "Grant's Watershed: Succession in the Presidency," in *Qualities That Count*, special issue of *BYU Studies* 43, no. 1 (2004): 222.

29. Grant confided to his diary: "Unless I am greatly mistaken . . . [President Cannon's] action has been wrong and someday there will be a squaring of accounting that will be anything but pleasant." Grant, Letterpress Diary, June 26–27, 1887, as quoted in Walker, "Grant's Watershed," 205. Grant, obviously disgruntled, later added: "Bro Wells was not satisfied with the explanations of Geo Q. on the John Q. case and yet our quorum forgave Geo Q." Grant, Letterpress Diary, October 5, 1887, as quoted in Heber J. Grant Diary Excerpts, 1887–99, www.signaturebookslibrary.org/journals/grant4.htm (accessed September 2008). I have been permitted to review copies of the original typed diary entries (and, in some cases, correspondence) from the Heber J. Grant Papers, LDS Church History Library, and believe the entries quoted and/or cited herein are accurate.

30. Grant, Letterpress Diary, August 3, 1887.

31. Emmeline Wells, Diary, May 10, 11, 12, 13, 1888; Western States Marriage Record Index, marriage of John Q. Cannon and Elizabeth Annie Wells, May 13, 1888, Salt Lake County, A:400; John Q. Cannon and Elizabeth Anne Wells, Family Group Record. Although his priesthood and temple blessings were restored, John Q. Cannon never again held a prominent Church position.

32. Emmeline Wells, Diary, April 25, 26, 28, 29, 1892; John Q. Caunow [sic] and Louisa M. Wells, Family Group Record, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008).

33. Abram H. Cannon, Diary, September 12, 13, 15, 26, October 1, 10, 1892; Jenson, "John Q. Cannon," *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:243; Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1941), 187.

34. Grant, Letterpress Diary, October 4, 1894. Frank Cannon tem-

porarily resigned his position at the *Ogden Standard* in the fall of 1892 when he received the Republican nomination to run for Utah's territorial delegate to Congress. At precisely the same time, John Q. moved back to Salt Lake to edit the *Deseret News*. J. Cecil Alter, *Early Utah Journalism: A Half Century of the Forensic Warfare Waged by the West's Most Militant Press* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1938), 154–55; Jenson, *Church Chronology*, October 1, 1892, 199.

35. Jenson, "John Q. Cannon," *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:243; "Torrey's Rough Riders, Senator Shoup Visits the Regiment at Jacksonville, Praise for Col. Cannon," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 15, 1898, 2; Clifford P. Westermeier, *Who Rush to Glory: The Cowboy Volunteers of 1898, Grisby's Cowboys, Roosevelt's Rough Riders, and Torrey's Rocky Mountain Riders* (Caldwell, Ida.: Caxton Press, 1958). About the time John Q. Cannon volunteered for service in the Spanish-American War, control of the *Deseret News* reverted to the Church. As noted above, some Church leaders had been concerned about John Q. acting as editor of the paper and were reconciled to the Cannons' control largely because of the regard they held for Abram, who acted as the paper's business manager at the same time. No doubt, Abram's death in July 1896 resulted in greater concerns on other General Authorities' part, and John Q.'s volunteered army service in the Spanish-American War probably reflected his understanding that Church leaders would not let him carry on the newspaper alone.

36. *Polk's Directories for Salt Lake City* begin listing John Q. Cannon in the "big house" on the west side of "8th West" one block south of "10th South" in 1905. *R. L. Polk Co.'s Salt Lake City Directory 1905* (Salt Lake City: R. L. Polk & Co., 1905), 220. This is the "big house" which in slightly altered form still stands today in Salt Lake City on the corner of modern coordinates 1000 West and California Street. The embezzlement story was reported widely, including in the *New York Times*. "Utah Fugitive Is Caught," *New York Times*, July 20, 1905, 2.

37. John Q. Cannon and Elizabeth Anne Wells, Family Group Record.

38. "Colonel and Mrs. Cannon Observe Golden Wedding," *Deseret News*, March 17, 1930, Sec. 2, p. 1. All told, John Q. and Annie were married just over forty-nine years when he died in January 1931.

39. Les Goates, "Time Out for the Colonel," *Deseret News*, January 15, 1931, Sec. 2, p. 2; Hugh J. Cannon, "John Q. Cannon," *Deseret News*, January 15, 1931, 4.

40. "Colonel John Q. Cannon," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 16, 1931, 6; "Speakers Named for Cannon Rites; Friend Pays Editor High Tribute," *Deseret News*, January 16, 1931, Sec. 2, p. 1.

41. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:682; Franklin J. Cannon and Martha

Anderson Brown, Family Group Record, www.familysearch.org (accessed October 2008); Utah Burials Index, www.history.utah.gov/apps/burials (accessed January 2010); headstone of Jenne Brown Cannon, Ogden City Cemetery. Annie Wells Cannon, Diary, July 19, 1877, commenting on Mattie as a teenager, thought she was “the funniest girl I ever did see.” Frank Cannon’s diploma, University of Deseret, June 18, 1878, Frank J. Cannon Collection, Colorado State Historical Society Archives, Denver, Colorado.

42. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:682; Alter, *Early Utah Journalism*, 100, 148; Franklin J. Cannon and Martha Brown Anderson, Family Group Records.

43. William B. Preston, Letter to George Q. Cannon, October 16, 1880, copy available at GeorgeQCannon.com/GQC_Docs.htm (accessed October 2008), copy in my possession. A scan of the envelope addressed to “Hon. Geo. Q. Cannon, S.L. City, Utah” with a three-cent stamp and postmarked “Logan City, Utah, October 18, 1880,” in which the letter was mailed, is also included on this website. William B. Preston was married to Harriett Thatcher, the sister of Apostle Moses Thatcher. William B. Preston and Harriett Ann Thatcher, Family Group Records, www.familysearch.org (accessed October 2008). Preston was called as LDS Presiding Bishop in April 1884; John Q. was his counselor until his excommunication in September 1886. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 680. George Baugh’s suggestion that Frank may have seduced or even raped Maud (“having overcome her”), if true, would significantly increase the seriousness of Frank’s actions. Frank’s alleged comment to Maud of not being “Mormon enough to marry two wives yet” is vintage Frank Cannon—clever and sarcastic.

44. William B. Preston, Telegram to George Q. Cannon, October 26, 1880; William B. Preston, Telegram to George Q. Cannon, October 27, 1880; Frank J. Cannon, Letter to George Q. Cannon, October 27, 1880; scanned copies at GeorgeQCannon.com/GQC_Docs.htm (accessed October 2008); copies of all three in my possession.

45. Richards, Diary, October 28, 1880.

46. Abram Cannon, Diary, November 26, 1880. George Q. Cannon later commiserated with his brother, Angus M. Cannon, about wayward sons. According to Abram Cannon, Diary, May 14, 1883, Angus’s oldest son, Angus Jr., “lies, steals, drinks and even commits adultery without scruple.” Referring to their respective sons, Frank J. and Angus Jr. (who were sometime drinking companions), George Q. wrote to Angus that “I certainly looked for no such wickedness in either my own family or your family as we have had. It ought not to be. There is nothing to extenuate it, much less so to justify it.” Casting about for an explanation, he contin-

ued: "If children do wrong, upon them the load must rest. They have their agency and are responsible for its exercise, and while it is difficult to avoid taking part of their load, I am sure it is not right for us to do so to our own injury or unhappiness. Pride of family has always been a strongly-developed trait in our stock; but I find I have nothing to be proud of, and there are many more families in the same condition. In fact, there are none so perfect they can afford to taunt others for their lapses and defects." George Q. then wisely advised Angus and his wife Amanda to avoid both "improper sympathy" and "improper severity" in dealing with their own wayward son. George Q. Cannon, Letter to Angus M. Cannon, May 30, 1882, Angus M. Cannon Collection, LDS Church History Library.

47. Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:682, provides the detail that Frank left for San Francisco but does not mention the cause of Frank's hasty departure from Logan.

48. George Q. Cannon and Sarah Jane Jenne, Family Group Record, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008), indicates that Karl Q. Cannon was born at the "Cannon house in Salt Lake City." Maud remained in Salt Lake after the birth and, in January 1882, married Peter Hansen in the Endowment House as a plural wife. Hansen had been married twice before; his first wife, Roseanna Jenne, Sarah Jane's younger sister, had passed away in 1872, and Hansen had then married Esther Isabella Hardy in 1877. Peter Hansen was forty-five and Maud was twenty-one at the time of their marriage. Maud and Peter had seven children and lived in Salt Lake City's Forest Dale neighborhood. Peter died in 1923. Maud, who did not remarry, remained in their Forest Dale home until her death in 1942. Family Group Records of (1) Peter Hansen and Ellen Maud Baugh, (2) Peter Hansen and Roseanna Jenne, and (3) Benjamin Jenne and Sarah Snyder, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008). See also *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Salt Lake City Directory, 1903* (Salt Lake City: R. L. Polk & Co., 1903), 383 (hereafter *Polk's Directory*); *Polk's Salt Lake City Directory, 1918*, 400; *Polk's Salt Lake City Directory, 1925*, 569; *Polk's Salt Lake City Directory, 1935*, 423. Karl Q. Cannon was periodically in the news and was always identified as George Q. Cannon's son, with no reference to being adopted. "Miraculous Escape," *Deseret News*, August 24, 1895; "Saved His Life," *Ogden Standard*, August 3, 1897. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 375, notes without explanation that Preston J. Cannon and Karl Q. Cannon, adopted, were raised and treated as twins.

49. Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:682, went to elementary school with Frank and remembered that, though he was courageous, he was "exceedingly sensitive, [and] would quiver like an aspen if spoken to harshly or subjected to any nervous strain."

50. Joseph J. Cannon, "An Inquiry and a Reply: Two Self-Explanatory Letters Dealing with the Anti-'Mormon' Crusade by Frank J. Cannon," *Deseret News*, April 21, 1917, 3:8.

51. Abram Cannon, Diary, June 29, 1882. Although George Q. Cannon sometimes enabled his sons, he usually made them face serious challenges head on. Thus, when John Q. Cannon wanted to flee Utah after his confession, his father counseled against it. When Frank J. Cannon balked at returning to Logan to address his actions with Maud Baugh, his father pushed him to go to Logan to make amends.

52. *Ibid.*

53. Abram Cannon, Diary, September 1, 1882. This is the first reference I have found to a Church "recommend" for Frank. I believe that the "recommend" referred to here and later was in the nature of a certificate that could be presented to Mormon congregations outside of one's own ward to vouchsafe the holder's standing in the Church and worthiness to participate in priesthood ordinances and is not directly analogous to a modern temple recommend.

54. Family Group Records of (1) Franklin D. Richards and Jane Snyder, (2) Franklin D. Richards and Sarah Snyder, (3) Benjamin Jenne and Sarah Snyder, and (4) George Q. Cannon and Sarah Jane Jenne, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008). Sarah Jane Jenne Cannon was named for her mother Sarah and her aunt Jane Snyder Richards.

55. Richards, Diary, October 28, 1880, March 29, 31, 1881.

56. Richards, Diary, July 20, 1882. Edward W. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1889), 2:361, describes Preston as in the "class and type" of Brigham Young and George Q. Cannon: "Take the portraits of the three and notice the power of their physique, their leonine face and capacity of brain. It would be difficult to find three better specimens of the leonine type of men in any State than Brigham Young, George Q. Cannon and Wm. B. Preston, which signifies that they belong by nature to the class of historical personages who are born to lead society and found cities and states." Ironically, as presiding bishop, Preston called John Q. Cannon as his second counselor in October 1884. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 649. One can only imagine that Preston felt considerable disappointment in the two oldest Cannon sons after dealing with their infidelity.

57. Richards, Diary, July 20, 21, 22, 1882. As evidenced by John Q. Cannon's excommunication in the tabernacle in September 1886, Church discipline was not always meted out by a bishop's court or high council court. Here, Franklin D. Richards simply summoned priesthood holders in the ward to consider whether to discipline Frank Cannon.

58. Grant, Letterpress Diary, August 3, 1887.

59. Examples are Abram Cannon, Diary, June 6, 1882 (“Frank returned from California some time ago, and is, apparently very sorry for the course he took since I last saw him”), March 3, 1885 (Frank “expressed the deepest penitence for his folly and said he designed making an application for baptism, thinking that by closely uniting himself with the Church, he would be able to overcome his weakness for drink”); June 5, 1885; January 10, 1886 (Frank “expressed great sorrow at his weakness”). See also Grant, Letterpress Diary, January 8, 1896 (“Abraham H. Cannon testified that he had perfect faith in the honesty and integrity in his brother Frank J.[.] felt that Frank’s repentance was sincere and honest, and that he was worthy of our confidence”).

60. Abram Cannon, Diary, March 18 and 22, April 1 and 28, May 9, 1885.

61. *Ibid.*, June 13, 1889.

62. *Ibid.*, June 5, 1885. Again, the rebaptism was symbolic of recommitment and did not signify that Frank had been excommunicated. During this period of Frank’s cycles of sin and penitence, Mattie gave birth to three more children, Rosannah, Frank Q. (usually called “Q” or “Que”), and Olive, in 1882, 1884, and 1886, respectively.

63. In this revival of an Old Testament practice, if a man (the biblical assumption is that he was married) died without issue, his next brother had an obligation to marry the widow and have children by her, with the understanding that the children would be considered the dead brother’s (Deut. 25:5–10). A Mormon variation is that a woman sealed to one man could have children by a second husband but the children were considered to be those of the sealed husband. The best-known example is Rachel Ridgeway Ivins Grant, who was sealed to Joseph Smith posthumously but married to Jedediah M. Grant, with the result that her only child, Heber J. Grant, was considered to be the son of Joseph Smith.

64. D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904,” *Dialogue, A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Spring 1985): 78; B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 237–38 note 67. The evidence of Frank’s volunteering to marry Lillian as a plural wife is an affidavit of George F. Gibbs, secretary to the First Presidency, in 1912, which may or may not be credible, since Church leaders had reason at that time to make Frank uneasy about his attacks on post-Manifesto polygamy. See Kenneth L. Cannon II, “The Modern Mormon Kingdom’: Frank J. Cannon’s National Campaign against the Mormon Church, 1910–1918,” Paper presented at the Mormon History Association conference, Kansas City, Missouri, May 28, 2010. Lillian Hamlin was the val-

editorial of her class upon graduation from the University of Utah in 1891 after David left on his mission. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 334, 515 note 131. Ironically, in *Under the Prophet in Utah*, written in 1910, Frank expressed shock that Abram had married Lillian in 1896 and asserted that Joseph F. Smith had not only performed the marriage but had also obtained Wilford Woodruff's "acquiescence" to the marriage and, furthermore, had convinced Abram to marry Lillian. Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah: The National Menace of a Political Priestcraft* (Boston, Mass.: C. M. Clark Publishing, 1911), 176–79. Frank knew that it was his father, not Joseph F. Smith, who sought to have one of his sons marry Lillian Hamlin.

65. "Consummate Blackguardism," *Truth*, April 15, 1905, 1; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Frank J. Cannon," in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, edited by Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 70. *Truth* was a local political periodical operated and edited by John W. Hughes, who, while not LDS, had a clear animus toward Frank Cannon. Hughes, a Republican and a supporter of Reed Smoot, testified in support of Smoot before the Senate. U.S. Senate, Committee of Privileges and Elections, *Proceedings before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator from the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat*, 4 vols., 59th Cong., 1st sess., S. Rept. No. 486 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904–6), 3:162–64 (hereafter *Smoot Hearings*). In 1905, the weekly paper published a number of articles condemning and attributing bad acts and behavior to Frank J. Cannon, Thomas Kearns, and Joseph Lippman (who was long associated with the *Salt Lake Tribune* and was sometimes associated with Kearns). "Consummate Blackguardism"; "More about the Knockers," *Truth*, April 22, 1905, 1; "Triumvirate Going to Pieces," *Truth*, April 29, 1905, 1; "That Unclean Triumvirate," *Truth*, May 6, 1905, 8; "The Knockers Abroad," *Truth*, May 13, 1905, 1. The Utah legislature deadlocked over the election of a senator in 1898 with the result that the state had only one U.S. Senator for the next two years. Cannon and O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah*, 223–35; Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 428.

66. Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Heber J. Grant, April 26, 1905, Joseph F. Smith Letterpress Copybooks, in *Selected Collections*; "The Unspeakable Frank J. Cannon," *Salt Lake Herald-Republican*, April 21, 1911, 4. Not surprisingly, given Cannon's vociferous opposition to Smoot's seating as a Senator (and Frank's earlier abandonment of the Republican party), Reed Smoot and his political cronies were avowed enemies of Frank Cannon, and the *Herald-Republican* was anything but objective about him. Nevertheless, while the newspaper may have overstated some

of its allegations against Cannon and used vitriol in its choice of words, it was accurate on many of those allegations.

67. Abram Cannon, Diary, March 18, 22, April 18, 1885, June 13, 1889; "Consummate Blackguardism," *Truth*, April 15, 1905, 1. Frank's happiest times were when he was negotiating amnesty for Mormon polygamists or for admission of Utah as a state, arguing for the free coinage of silver in the late 1890s and the early 1930s, writing a series of articles or a book attacking polygamy, passionately lecturing to hundreds of thousands of rapt listeners in Chautauqua or Lyceum programs, or working on a new plan to develop a mining venture or an electric utility or other business venture. See Kenneth Cannon, "The Modern Mormon Kingdom," 31–32. The Colorado Historical Society in Denver has an extensive collection of Frank Cannon's correspondence and speeches from the late 1920s and early 1930s, when he was a national leader in the silver remonetization movement.

68. "Death Claims Mrs. F. J. Cannon," *Deseret Evening News*, March 2, 1908, 6; "Annual Field Day Held at Martha Home," *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, August 2, 1925, 6; *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, October 6, 1899 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 66 (hereafter cited as *Conference Report*); *Conference Report*, October 6, 1905, 24.

69. At times during the early 1900s, Frank was listed in Salt Lake City directories as residing in Ogden, and sometimes at other addresses, usually the Alta Club. See *Polk's Salt Lake Directory for 1902*, 191; *for 1903*, 213; *for 1905*, 219; *for 1906*, 216; and *for 1908*, 249. The Ogden directories of the same period also list him at his longtime home: 663 25th Street. See *Polk's Ogden Directory for 1903–4*, 135; *for 1905*, 91; *for 1907*, 138; and *for 1908–9*, 130.

70. "Ogden Briefs," *Salt Lake Herald*, January 18, 1903, 7; "Returned Missionaries," *Deseret Evening News*, January 27, 1906, 6.

71. Joseph F. Smith, for one, felt that Mattie still "clings to [her husband]" and that the only explanation was that she "has so long been blemished by association with him, [she] has lost all conception of the depths to which he has fallen, and to which he has dragged her down." Joseph F. Smith, Letter to Heber J. Grant, April 26, 1905. Smith was not objective about Frank J. Cannon and was incapable of seeing anything good about him. Cannon had the same problem with Smith.

72. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:682–86; Kenneth M. Godfrey, "Frank J. Cannon, Declension in the Mormon Kingdom," in *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History*, edited by Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 241–61; Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 511 note 140; Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance:*

The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 99–100, 131–32, 227, 239–40, 257–58, 280, 283; Cannon and O’Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah*, 91–93, 95–111, 176; Grant, Letterpress Diary, January 4, 1898.

73. “The Lord’s Politics in Cache,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 24, 1892, 3. Ben E. Rich was one of Frank’s best friends from Ogden and a close political advisor who authored a number of books and pamphlets and later served as an LDS mission president, first in the Southern States Mission, then in the Eastern States Mission, for approximately fifteen years. Jenson, “Benjamin Erastus Rich,” *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 3:206–7.

74. “Joseph F. Smith’s Letter,” “Stevens’s Recommendations,” submitted to the U.S. Senate’s Committee on Privileges and Elections by Judge Orlando W. Powers, *Smoot Hearings*, 1:826–27; Abram Cannon, Diary, March 3, June 5, 1885. “Thomas Jordan Stevens,” *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:248–49.

75. “Joseph F. Smith’s Letter,” *Smoot Hearings*, 1:826–27. Joseph F. Smith also created an important Church and state tempest in the election of 1892 by publishing a pamphlet, *Nuggets of Truth*, that displayed Frank’s photograph along with photographs and political writings of all the LDS Church presidents and encouraged Utah voters to elect Cannon. *Nuggets of Truth* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1892). Abram Cannon, Diary, October 23, 24, 26, 1892. Frank quickly recognized that the pamphlet had caused resentment among some Church members and withdrew it within a few days of its publication. Lyman, *Political Deliverance*, 201. Smith’s support for Frank in 1892 is ironic in light of the bitter enmity between the two a decade later.

76. Abram Cannon, Diary, October 25, 1892; Noble Warrum, Charles W. Morse, and W. Brown Ewing, “William H. Seegmiller,” *Utah since Statehood: Historical and Biographical*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: S. J. Clarke Publishing, 1919–20), 4:121; Jenson, “William Henry Seegmiller,” *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:521; “Wm. H. Seegmiller Heads Democratic Ticket,” *Deseret News*, November 1, 1909, 5. Seegmiller was a member of the Utah Territorial House of Representatives, serving as Speaker in the 1892 session, and it was likely through legislative contacts that he learned of Frank’s character flaws. Territory of Utah Legislative Assembly Rosters, Thirtieth Session, 1892, Members of the House of Representatives, www.archives.state.ut.us/research/guides/legassembly21-31.html (accessed July 2010). Seegmiller was not, in fact, disciplined for spreading stories of Frank Cannon’s immorality. He served as stake president from 1888 through 1910, as mayor of Richfield, and as a member of both legislative houses in Utah.

77. Grant, Letterpress Diary, January 4, 1898.

78. Ibid.

79. Lyman, *Political Deliverance*, 282–85; Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 369–72, 415–16.

80. Grant, Letterpress Diary, December 22, 23, 1897, January 4, 5, 1898; O. N. Malmquist, *The First 100 Years: A History of the Salt Lake Tribune, 1871–1971* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1971), 200–203, 236–37, 241–43; “Try to Stifle Free Speech, Attempt of the Hierarchy Abortive, Church Disfellowships Former Senator Frank J. Cannon,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 7, 1905, 1; “Smith’s Hatred! He Has Gratified It at His Danger, High Council Joins the Game, Free Speech Is Denied to Mormons, Editor of The Tribune Excommunicated for His Writings,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 15, 1905, 1; Joseph F. Smith, Letter to George C. Smith (a son), October 27, 1906, Joseph F. Smith Letterpress Copybooks, in *Selected Collections*, 1:30. Frank was first disfellowshipped by a bishop’s court presided over by Bishop John Watson (Bishop Thomas Stevens’s successor) for the worst *Tribune* editorials. He participated fully in the bishop’s court, discussing matters with the bishopric members for several hours. A high council court was then convened to consider excommunication. Frank refused to participate when the high council did not permit him the opportunity to prove the allegations he made in the editorials. The high council excommunicated him on March 14, 1905.

81. Sybil Downing and Robert E. Smith, *Tom Patterson: Colorado Crusader for Change* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1995), 122, 174–75, 187; “Frank Cannon Married, the Bride Is Miss May Anderson Brown of Ogden,” *Salt Lake Herald*, June 30, 1909, 1; “Ogden Society,” *Salt Lake Herald*, July 4, 1909, 10; *Ballenger & Richards Denver City Directory for 1909* (Denver, Colo.: Ballenger & Richards, 1909), 303 (hereafter *Ballenger & Richards*); Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, February 10, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection, Special Collections, University of Iowa Library, Iowa City, Iowa. Lindsey, a judge, had, like Frank, written a popular muckraking book with Harvey J. O’Higgins, about corruption in Denver and Colorado political affairs: *The Beast* (New York: Doubleday Page & Co., 1910). The Redpath Chautauqua Collection contains numerous records on Frank’s services as a lecturer, including scores of letters between him and Redpath officials, particularly Harry P. Harrison, head of Redpath’s Chicago bureau and treasurer of the national bureau.

82. Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O’Higgins, “Under the Prophet in Utah: The National Menace of a Political Priestcraft,” *Everybody’s Magazine* 23 (December 1910): 722–37, 99–104 (advertising section); 24 (January 1911): 29–35; 24 (February 1911): 189–205; 24 (March 1911):

383–99; 24 (April 1911): 513–28; 24 (May 1911): 652–64; 24 (June 1911): 825–35; “The New Polygamy,” 25 (July 1911): 94–107; “The Prophet and Big Business,” 25 (August 1911): 209–22.

83. Cannon, “The Modern Mormon Kingdom,” 6; Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, October 28, 1912, Redpath Chautauqua Collection; *Ballenger & Richards for 1910*, 303, *for 1912*, 289, *for 1913*, 623, *for 1914*, 625; Frank J. Cannon, Letter to L. B. Crotty, November 22, 1911, Redpath Chautauqua Collection. Frank often referred to his anti-polygamy campaign as a “grand cause” or as a “holy crusade.” Frank J. Cannon, Letter to Harry P. Harrison, July 20, 1916, Redpath Chautauqua Collection; “A Brief Word,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 7, 1905, 4.

84. Frank Cannon Dies in Denver at Age of 74,” *Denver Post*, July 26, 1933, 1; “Frank Cannon Dies in Hospital,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 26, 1933, 1; Obituary, *New York Times*, July 27, 1933, 17; “The Modern Mormon Kingdom, the Newest National Peril as told by Senator Frank J. Cannon,” broadside, 1911–12, Redpath Chautauqua Collection; French Stother, “The Great American Forum,” in *The World’s Work*, September 1912, 563; Harry P. Harrison, *Culture under Canvases: The Story of Tent Chautauqua* (New York: Hastings House, 1958), 131, 132, 146, 272. Frank remained affiliated with the National Reform Association from early 1914 until at least 1925, first as its national anti-polygamy spokesman and later as chairman of its Publication Committee. He even lived in Pittsburgh, the association’s national headquarters, for several years in the mid-1920s. “Frank J. Cannon,” *Christian Statesman* 48 (February 1914): 87; Frank J. Cannon, Letter to William A. Colledge, February 27, 1925, Redpath Chautauqua Collection.

85. Family Group and Individual Records of Abraham H. Cannon and Sarah Ann Jenkins; Family Group and Individual Records of Abraham H. Cannon and Wilhelmina Mousley Cannon, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008); Abram Cannon, Diary, October 21, 1879.

86. See, e.g., Abram Cannon, Diary, June 9–20, 22, 25, July 5–6, 8–9, 11, 19, 27, 30, September 7, 1882.

87. *Ibid.*, September 26, 1886.

88. *Ibid.*, September 22, 1886, December 25, 31, 1886, January 2, 1887, January 24, 30, February 14, 24, March 1, 10–11, April 10–11, 1887, November 5, 1892, January 1, 1895, February 3, 5, 13, 1895; George Q. Cannon, Journal, typescript, June 18, 1891, LDS Church History Library, quoted in Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 409–10. The father wrote, “Abraham has always stood by me and done all in his power to assist me, and I felt to bless him for it.”

89. Abram Cannon, Diary, April 28, 1885, February 17, March 17,

July 5, August 16, 1886; William H. Seifrit, "The Prison Experience of Abraham H. Cannon," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 53 (Summer 1985): 223–36. Interestingly, if Abram had been charged under the Edmunds-Tucker Act, he could have faced significantly harsher punishment because that act made incestuous marriages within the fourth degree of consanguinity punishable by imprisonment for not less than three years nor more than fifteen years. As first cousins, Abram and Mina were related within the fourth degree of consanguinity. Edmunds-Tucker Act, 22 Stat. L. 635–641 (1887).

90. See, for example, Abram Cannon, Diary, March 17, 1885 ("everything is . . . frightfully dull"), April 1, 1885 ("Everything is very dull in [Ogden]"), April 18, 1885 ("Business is exceedingly dull").

91. Abram Cannon, Diary, February 26, May 22, 1885; October 12, 1886.

92. Abram Cannon, Diary, November 3, December 21, 1886. Abram's whirlwind courtship of Mame likely began in late September or early October 1886. Unfortunately, pages with diary entries for the periods September 30 to October 10, from October 17 to October 24, and October 26 to November 3, 1886 have all been excised from the diaries. There was likely a good deal of information regarding the courtship (as well as possible reactions to it from his first two wives) in the missing pages.

93. Abram Cannon, Diary, January 4, 5, 11, 1887. Abram spent weeks planning his and Mame's trip to Mexico. *Ibid.*, November 3, 5, December 10, 19–20, 23, 25–31, 1886, January 1–3, 11, 1887. Abram and Mamie's marriage date was, as Abram noted in his diary, George Q. Cannon's sixtieth birthday. Abram's account of the couple's trip to Mexico provides details of the Mormon Mexican colonies, which were in an early stage of development at the time.

94. Mina had sometimes been volatile before Abram's marriage to Mamie Croxall, but the new marriage clearly created new challenges. *Ibid.*, January 19, March 14 and 18, April 11 and 17, 1887. Several years after Abram died, Mina married Fred Ellis, a non-Mormon. Fred Ellis and Wilhelmina Cannon, Family Group Records, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008).

95. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 645; "Abraham Hoagland Cannon," *Deseret Weekly News*, July 25, 1896, 168–70.

96. Abram Cannon, Diary, February 2, 1892; "Funeral of Abraham H. Cannon," *Deseret Weekly News*, August 1, 1896, 209–14; Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 5 vols. (Woodland Hills, Utah: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987–92), 5:169. Joseph F. Smith echoed President Woodruff's words: "I feel that we have done him [Abram] wrong. I feel

that I have contributed to doing him wrong, in that he was willing to do, and he was capable to do, and because he was willing and capable we put upon him burdens that we ourselves should have borne, or should have helped him to bear more than we did. We have weighed him down by these labors and these responsibilities that we have heaped upon him, and we come to the realization of this fact too late, too late!" "Funeral of Abraham H. Cannon," *Deseret Weekly News*, August 1, 1896, 213; Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 5:172.

97. Family Group Records of (1) Abraham H. Cannon and Sarah Jenkins, (2) Abraham H. Cannon and Wilhelmina Cannon, (3) Abraham H. Cannon and Mary Eliza Young Croxall, and (4) Abraham H. Cannon and Lillian Hamlin, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008). Abram's fifteen children who survived to adulthood, with wife, birth month, and year were: with Sarah, George J. (July 1879), Elizabeth H. (September 1883), Abraham H. Jr. (March 1886), and Lester J. (July 1888); with Mina, Claude Q. (March 1883), Wilhelmina A. (June 1888); Hazel (February 1891), David H. (January 1893), and Munn Q. (May 1895); with Mame, Mary C. (November 1887), Lillian C. (December 1888), Willard L. (April 1890), Claire C. (November 1892), and Spencer C. (December 1894); and with Lillian, Marba (March 1897).

98. Abram called David "perhaps the smartest and best son Father had. He was always of a most lovable nature and made friends with all people with whom he came in contact." Abram also quoted in his diary George Q.'s comment about David: "I cannot recall a single act of his life that ever gave me any pain." Abram Cannon, *Diary*, October 17, 1892.

99. This Annie Cannon is Abram's cousin Ann Mousley Cannon, not Annie Wells Cannon, first wife of John Q. Cannon. Annie Mousley Cannon served for years as the general secretary, as a board member, and, eventually, as second counselor in the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association. See, for example, *Conference Reports* for October 7, 1900, 42; October 6, 1908, 125; and October 10, 1920, 175.

100. Abram Cannon, *Diary*, September 8, 11, 1891, October 19, 24, 27, 1894.

101. All volumes of Abram's diaries before 1896 were donated to Brigham Young University in the early 1970s. The last few years of the diaries are typewritten and some pages are redacted, although it is not possible to tell by whom or when. The entire 1896 volume is missing. Some of the donated volumes are also missing pages. Of interest, the photocopy of the Abram Cannon diaries at the Utah State Historical Society have parts of certain pages that the originals at BYU do not have, meaning that that photocopy was made before the donation to BYU. An entry in Abram's diary potentially critical to understanding his relationship

with Annie Cannon is October 30, 1894. The Historical Society's photocopy of that page has a portion of the relevant page whited out, while the original at BYU has most of that page cut out, including part that is shown in the Historical Society's photocopy.

102. Abram Cannon, Diary, November 21, December 11, 1894, July 23–24, December 17, 1895; Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 212–17; Ann Mousley Cannon, Ordinance Record, www.familysearch.org (accessed March 2009).

103. Quinn, "New Plural Marriages," 83–84. In response to the question, "Did you marry them [Abram and Lillian]?" Joseph F. Smith responded, "No, sir; I did not." *Smoot Hearings*, 1:110, see also 1:111–12, 127–28, 476–77. Quinn points out that President Smith may have viewed the ceremony he was performing as the eternal union of David Cannon and Lillian Hamlin with Abram and Lillian's earthly union as a by-product of this sealing, thus permitting President Smith to split hairs in his Senate testimony. After *Under the Prophet* began to be published in installments in *Everybody's*, Lillian responded to Frank Cannon's allegation that her marriage to Abram had been conducted by Joseph F. Smith. Lillian stated: "Joseph F. Smith did not perform the marriage ceremony between Abram H. Cannon and myself." After her denial, she went on to say, somewhat cryptically, "You might just say, however, that if anybody else should ever be accused wrongfully, of performing the ceremony which united Abram H. Cannon and myself in plural marriage, I will also, if asked, exonerate that person." "Lillian Hamlin Says Jos. F. Smith Did Not Perform Ceremony," *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, March 2, 1911, 10. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 522 note 18, mentions only that "Abraham H. Cannon married Lillian Hamlin less than a month before his death" but, like his silence on John Q. Cannon's ill-fated affair with Louie Wells, does not address Abram and Lillian's marriage or its notoriety after Abram died.

104. "One Case," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 16, 1899, 4, alleged as early as February 1899 that Abram and Lillian had been married "in California, or on the sea a marine league from the California shore . . . by an ecclesiastical officer of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" after Utah gained statehood "or at least after the enabling act was granted." It further stated that Lillian had shared in Abram's estate as one of his widows. In Angus Jr.'s testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee, he admitted telling "drinking friends" that he had personally witnessed the marriage on the "high seas" but that, in fact, he had not witnessed the ceremony and did not know who performed it, although he understood that Abram and Lillian had been married in June 1896. He had told the story to his anti-Mormon friends simply to amuse them.

“Angus Cannon, Junior’s, Jokes Cause Trouble,” *Ogden Standard*, May 2, 1904, 6; “Story of a Romantic Marriage on High Seas,” *Ogden Standard*, May 3, 1904, 8; “Young Cannon Perjured Himself,” *Deseret News*, May 3, 1904, 7; *Smoot Hearings*, 1:1059–68, 1078–79. Smoot’s attorneys called a number of witnesses to attack Angus Jr.’s trustworthiness.

105. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 407–10, 522 note 16; *Smoot Hearings*, 2:143–44. Abram’s 1896 diary is not available, but it is unthinkable that he did not keep his usual careful account of the last six and a half months of his life. This diary may well have been destroyed. During the few days (or weeks) of their marriage, Lillian became pregnant and, on March 22, 1897, gave birth to a daughter, Marba (“Abram” backwards), in Philadelphia. Abraham H. Cannon and Lillian Hamlin, Family Group Records, www.familysearch.org (accessed September 2008). In 1901, Lillian Hamlin married Abram’s cousin (and Mina’s brother), Lewis M. Cannon, as a plural wife. Lewis M. Cannon and Lillian Hamlin, Family Group Records, www.familysearch.org (accessed May 2009).

106. “Funeral of Apostle Abraham H. Cannon,” *Deseret Weekly News*, August 1, 1896, 209–14. The funeral speakers were Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith; apostles acted as pallbearers. Undoubtedly John Q. Cannon wrote the extensive reports in the *News* about Abram’s death, the family gathering at Mina’s home, the funeral, the procession, and the burial. For Wilford Woodruff’s October 4, 1896, conference talk, see Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 5:187–91.

107. On Abram’s experience in the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, see Seifrit, “The Prison Experience of Abraham H. Cannon,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 53 (Summer 1985): 223–36.

108. Kenneth L. Cannon II, “After the Manifesto: Mormon Polygamy, 1890–1906,” *Sunstone* 8 (January–April 1983): 28–29, a slightly revised version of which is reprinted in D. Michael Quinn, ed., *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 204. Those who, by their actions or private words indicated their support of new marriages as of 1896 were Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, Brigham Young Jr., Anthon H. Lund, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, John W. Taylor, Marriner W. Merrill, and Abram Cannon. Perhaps the most intriguing is Anthon H. Lund, a lifelong monogamist who reportedly performed several post-Manifesto polygamous marriages. Quinn, “New Plural Marriages,” 62–63. Abraham Owen Woodruff replaced Abram Cannon and Matthias F. Cowley replaced Moses Thatcher in the Quorum in 1897. Clearly, both Woodruff and Cowley were supporters of new polygamy. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 653, 718; Lu Ann Faylor Snyder and Phillip A. Snyder, eds, *Post-Manifesto Polygamy: The 1890–1904 Correspondence of Helen, Owen,*

and Avery Woodruff (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009), 34–38. Both Abram and George Q. Cannon kept meticulous diaries. Abram's diaries have been one of the richest sources of important insights into LDS Church affairs during the critical 1880s and 1890s. George Q.'s diaries probably contain even more information and impressions but have not been generally available to scholars after Abram's younger brother, Sylvester Q. Cannon, donated them to the Church in 1932. Only a few family members and historians (most notably Davis Bitton) have been permitted access to the George Q. Cannon diaries since then. The courtship and marriage of Abram Cannon and Lillian Hamlin was sufficiently sensitive that the family did not donate Abram's part-year 1896 diary and George Q.'s full-year 1896 diary with the other volumes. The current location of these significant documents is not known. Quinn, "New Plural Marriages," 78 note 275.

109. Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 188 note 32; Quinn, "New Plural Marriages," 63–65, 72, suggests that Brigham Young Jr., Rudger Clawson, and Wilford Woodruff may also have taken new plural wives after 1890.

110. See Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity*. An excellent abridgment of the hearings with important background and annotations is Michael Harold Paulos, *The Mormon Church on Trial: Transcripts of the Reed Smoot Hearings* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008). Initially, some of Smoot's opponents made untrue allegations that he was a polygamist.

111. Michael Harold Paulos, "Opposing the 'High Ecclesiasts at Washington': Frank J. Cannon's Editorial Fusillades during the Reed Smoot Hearings, 1904–1907," Paper presented at the Mormon History Association conference, Kansas City, Missouri, May 28, 2010. As Paulos documents, Frank did not testify but played a critical behind-the-scenes role in the Smoot matter and inflamed emotions, first through articles and editorials in the *Daily Utah State Journal*, then through his dramatic editorials in the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

112. *Smoot Hearings*, 1:110–12, 127–28, 476–77 (Joseph F. Smith), 1:438 (Francis M. Lyman), 1:785 (Angus M. Cannon Sr.), 1:1059–68, 1078–79 (Angus M. Cannon Jr.), 2:57 (George Reynolds), 2:68–73 (John Henry Hamlin), 2:98 (Josiah Hickman), 2:141–47, 265 (Wilhelmina Cannon Ellis), 2:249–52 (John Nicholson), 2:287–90, 306 (John Henry Smith), 2:694 (J.W.N. Whitecotton), 2:717 (Hiram Booth), 2:747 (Arthur Pratt), 2:752–56 (James E. Lynch), 2:801 (John P. Meakin), 2:816–22 (Judge James A. Miner), 2:943–44 (A. S. Condon), 2:956–59 (Richard W. Young), 3:96–99 (James E. Talmage), 3:542–48, 551–53, 565–66, 674; "Abram Cannon Was in Polygamy," *Ogden Standard*, December 14, 1904,

1; "Swears Mormon Chief Broke Polygamy Pact, Apostle Cannon's Widow Tells of Plural Marriage in 1896, Implicates President Smith," *New York Times*, December 15, 1904.

113. *Smoot Hearings*, 1:110–12, 127–28, 476–77. Joseph F. Smith stated in his "Second Manifesto": "I hereby announce that all such [plural] marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church and will be liable to be dealt with, according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom." *Conference Reports*, April 6, 1904, 75. After issuing this formal statement, President Smith then stated: "They charge us with being dishonest and untrue to our word. They charge the Church with having violated a 'compact,' and all this sort of nonsense. I want to see today whether the Latter-day Saints representing the Church in this solemn assembly will not seal these charges as false by their vote." *Ibid.*, 76. At this point, Francis M. Lyman presented a resolution to the congregation approving and endorsing the "Second Manifesto." B. H. Roberts spoke in favor of the resolution after which "the resolution was then adopted, by unanimous vote of the Conference." *Ibid.*

114. Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity*, 92–95, 104–8, 164; Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 262–68; Quinn, "New Plural Marriages," 99–101. One of the most difficult elements of the Smoot investigation for the Church was the committee's inability to find certain members of the Quorum of the Twelve to require their testimony.

115. Flake, *Politics of American Religious Identity*, 104–8, 139, 144; Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 666–69; Quinn, "New Plural Marriages," 86, 102; Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Kidnapped from That Land: The Government Raids on the Short Creek Polygamists* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 9–13; "Smoot Is Sustained after Long Struggle," *Salt Lake Herald*, February 21, 1907, 1.

116. Joseph F. Smith said of Abram at his funeral in July 1896: "I rejoice in my acquaintance with him. I am proud of my association with him. Although I am twenty years his senior, yet I deferred to his judgment, and to his wisdom, and to his strength of mind and of character. I have drawn strength and encouragement to myself from his examples and from his labors, and they have been to me as a tower of strength in days that have passed and gone. I thank God that we have had an Abraham Cannon." "Funeral of Apostle Abraham H. Cannon," *Deseret Weekly News*, August 1, 1896, 213; Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 5:173.

In Lieu of History: Mormon Monuments and the Shaping of Memory

Barry Laga

The farther I go the more certain I am that the path towards my object does not exist. I have to invent the road with each step, and this means that I can never be sure of where I am. A feeling of moving around in circles, of perpetual back-tracking, of going off in many directions at once. And even if I do manage to make some progress, I am not at all convinced that it will take me to where I think I am going. Just because you wander in the desert, it does not mean there is a promised land. —Paul Auster, The Invention of Solitude¹

As a missionary in France and Belgium, I frequently encountered devout Catholics who would describe their journeys to Lourdes or Fatima. “Ah, oui! J’ai vu la grotte, la grotte où la Vierge s’est apparue à Bernadette! J’étais là!” While these humble women, dressed in robin-egg-blue housecoats, could not bring home a piece of the cross, they could show me their holy water, rosary beads, or skinned knees, emblems of their devotion and commitment. Their pilgrimage was no trite tourist trip. They didn’t watch the spectacle with ironic detachment, rolling their eyes at the commodification of sacred space. *Non!* They walked on holy ground. I nodded and smiled. But I confess that the stories amused me. Holy water indeed.

Those fanciful narratives were a counterpoint to the dull sermons I heard preached in off-white cinder-block chapels as a child. Speakers would often disparage such pilgrimages, emphasizing the holiness that is available to all of us here and now. What these sermons expressed, with an almost uncanny echo of nine-

teenth-century nationalism, was the core American myth. Emerson himself would have nodded in agreement, for the advice I heard as I sat on my oak pew merely echoed the Transcendentalist's observation that "the soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home."² We need not travel to Jerusalem and walk the paths of Jesus, gawking into empty tombs, imagining the voice of angels proclaim, "He is risen!" And we shouldn't feel compelled to place our Nikes in the footsteps of our pioneer ancestors whose wagon wheels carved ruts through limestone in Wyoming. I eventually realized that these sermons were earnest attempts to create identity by emphasizing difference. Like seventeenth-century Puritans, Mormons like to separate themselves from Catholics and their "Popish rituals."

Ironically, this particular difference has dwindled in recent years as the LDS Church pours money into historical sites that serve as Mormon pilgrimage destinations. The development of these places encourages families to visit, take guided tours, serve missions, and read about these sites in the *Ensign*, the *New Era*, and the *Friend*. Perhaps those Catholics were on to something.

I recently took my own pilgrimage to New England, visiting not only nationalist monuments like the Freedom Trail, Lexington and Concord, and Plimoth Plantation, but also Sharon, Palmyra, and Fayette, the Ur-locations of Mormonism. Of course, I'm not the first to make this pilgrimage, even with academic lenses. LDS geographer Michael H. Madsen provides a useful history of these sites, noting that in 1880 the Church largely ignored the eastern sites and didn't attempt to commemorate them during Mormonism's fiftieth anniversary. But twenty years later, Joseph F. Smith began to reacquire key historical sites, ultimately deciding that they could be "potential proselytizing hubs."³ Following the model of heritage tourism sites like Williamsburg, leaders like David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball became more aggressive in acquiring the sites. Madsen reminds us that these sites initially had historical value, not an inherent spiritual value. In fact, some leaders, Bruce R. McConkie in particular, resisted the idea of sacred places or shrines, insisting that the Sacred Grove, for example, "is not a shrine in the sense that many denominations have shrines, nor is

there any sanctity now attached to the trees and the land there located. But it is a spot held sacred in the hearts of those who believe in the truth of salvation, because they glory in the transcendent event that took place there.”⁴ As Madsen summarizes, “Only the event that transpired there is sacred.”⁵

This attitude changed, and “by the end of the twentieth century, . . . this historical emphasis began to give way to a more spiritual interpretation of Mormon historical sites.”⁶ President Gordon B. Hinckley led the movement, investing enormous sums in acquiring and restoring land, homes, barns, stores, and other buildings. Also, “the post-1995 emphasis has definitely focused on members of the Church, deepening and strengthening their commitment to the Church through their personal spiritual experiences,”⁷ a change due to the fact that more members visit the sites than nonmembers.

During his site-visits, Madsen observed that the “rhetoric currently employed by the missionary guides at Mormon historical sites is a contributing factor in the sanctification of these places and . . . the missionaries often quote President Hinckley to authenticate the site’s holiness.”⁸ Madsen quotes one missionary who confirmed: “They’ve changed the focus of these sites from what happened here to what it means to us.”⁹ Madsen further notes that many claim that the building of LDS temples near these historical sites contributes to the sanctification of the landscape.

These Church sites are very different from, say, sites like Pearl Harbor, Gettysburg, or Concord in that civil monuments are not only sites of veneration, but, as battlefield historian Edward Tabor Linenthal reminds us, sites of defilement and redefinition. They are “civil spaces where Americans of various ideological persuasions come, not always reverently, to compete for the ownership of powerful national stories.”¹⁰ Linenthal insists that, “at a time in which Americans—often grudgingly and all too haltingly—recognize the strengths of cultural pluralism, no one can be allowed to win the struggle for exclusive ownership of these places. Indeed, no one should.” He asserts that Americans demonstrate their “ideological maturity” once they recognize that “there is more than one story to be told, and that these stories convey diverse, often conflicting interpretations of cherished patriotic orthodoxies.”¹¹ As a result, the National Park Service,

among other organizations, often invites multiple interpretations, and Linenthal hopes that this clash of voices will be creative and more inclusive. For example, Native American voices respond to those who honor Custer, guardians of the Alamo contest with Tejano ancestors, and Pearl Harbor is both a cautionary tale and an opportunity for reconciliation. The combination testifies to the complexity of the sacred places.

In contrast, the orthodoxy of one official story is what the LDS Church seeks. Perhaps it's a sign of immaturity and a rejection of pluralism, but the LDS historical and missionary departments use their sites to unify, define, and limit. One of the most important insights in Madsen's work is his observation that the Church is "using the physical places in which Mormon history occurred to nurture the 'geographic memory' of Latter-day Saints, hoping to promote a common sense of identity among an increasingly diverse membership. Place does matter in establishing and maintaining a Mormon identity tied to a prophetic and sacrificial past, perhaps even more so for those Church members who have no familial link to that past."¹² An identity rooted in geography makes sense, for this nexus of texts, geography, and spirituality—all packaged within a Restoration framework—should resonate with Mormons, given the connection among spiritual visions, books in mountainsides, and nearby woods. There is no Mormonism without reference to the Sacred Grove, the Hill Cumorah, or the Susquehanna River.

What interests me is how the LDS Church seeks to harmonize the potential conflicts, limiting the number of narratives available to visitors. This article explores the ways the Church prevents visitors from gathering the information they collect at the sites into stories that are at odds with officially sanctioned stories. It also probes the paradoxes and contradictions, the dilemmas and problems, embedded in the Church's constructions of its spiritual landscape. While I don't deny that the Church "promotes Mormon historical sites as sacred places,"¹³ I'm also interested in the ways these sites construct Mormon identity by denying the very historicity of these sacred places: Place, it turns out, doesn't really matter in the way we think it does.

Geography as Memory

As my eighteen-year-old daughter and I visited the Grandin Press in Palmyra, Joseph's boyhood home in Manchester, and the Peter Whitmer home in Fayette, what struck us is the fact that so little remains of the original structures. In a nod toward authenticity, workers used period tools to work bits of old and new materials to reconstruct from scratch the Joseph Smith log home. Eighty-five percent of the frame house his brother Alvin began is a reconstruction. The Peter Whitmer home was rebuilt from scratch. The Grandin Press shell is largely intact, but the Church acquired property next door and built around the back to make room for a visitors center. Nearly all the items within the press are facsimiles. The displayed copies of *Charlotte Temple*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Aesop's Fables*, for example, are full of blank paper. The same is largely true at other sites I've visited recently: The Liberty Jail, aside from a few stones found at the lowest level, is a replica. Nothing remains at the Joseph Smith birthplace at Sharon, Vermont, beyond holes and the semblance of foundation stones. In short, the buildings—these structures where key spiritual events took place—are approximations and reconstructions. But there is nothing sinister about this, and the missionaries and guides do not hide the fact that we are looking at restorations and reconstructions. There is no deception here.

I ponder the significance of these pseudo-artifacts. While these simulacra may disappoint some visitors eager to walk where Joseph walked, I expect nothing more. As Plato insisted and as postmodern theorists, New Historicists, and anti-foundationalists of many stripes have reminded us, we do not have unmediated access to the past. Literary theorist Linda Hutcheon, among others, points out that we need not deny the existence of the past, but we should question whether we can ever know that past other than through its textualized remains. "Past events existed empirically," Hutcheon insists, "but in epistemological terms we can only know them today through texts."¹⁴ We not only learn of the past through incomplete representations (language and images being the most common, of course); but the narratives and reconstructions, no matter how helpful and informative, shape the meaning and significance of those events as well. Images of Joseph translat-

ing the Book of Mormon, finger running across the characters inscribed on the golden plate, plumed quill pen in hand, makes an extraordinary event almost homey and familiar, while an image of Joseph, face down in a hat peering at seer stones, unsettles us, casting the act of “translation” as bizarre and unseemly, even embarrassing. And there is no direct route. We cannot escape the “textual traces” and “mediators” that come between us and the empirical events and figures. Artists and historians become our docents.

And the missionaries certainly inserted themselves between us and the events. While we were keenly aware—told even—that we were staring at reconstructions, what I find interesting is the apparent disregard for this fact. As my daughter and I visited the second floor of Joseph’s cabin, Sister North, a young sister in a white shirt and light-blue skirt (all names are pseudonyms) proclaimed, “It was right here that the Angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith four times in one night.” As we visited the Smith home in Palmyra, Sister South pointed to a facsimile of a toolbox and explained that Joseph hid the plates in it. She pointed to the reconstructed fireplace and explained that Joseph buried the plates beneath the hearthstones when a mob approached. Referring to the reconstructed shed, she explained that the plates had been hidden there, too.

As I stood in Smith home on that friendly summer afternoon, watching the missionaries use these physical objects like cue cards, I recognized a relationship between memory and a particular place. That our experience of the past is mediated is especially relevant when we discuss personal and cultural memory, for memory is the result of this filtering and shaping process, a connection that has its roots in classical oratory. *Loci mnemonics* uses the structure of a place—real or imaginary—to recall people, places, events, and speeches. In fact, the connection between our idea of “topics” and its Greek root “topoi” (or place) should be familiar to anyone who has ever taken freshman composition. Following the Roman tradition, *loci* is Latin for “place,” as in our “location,” and the mnemonic is based on a famous story in which the Greek poet Simonides was at a large dinner party.

Called outside to talk with two men, Simonides watched as

the roof of the house caved in, killing everyone. No one could identify the bodies except Simonides who could recall his fellow guests by remembering where they were sitting. Using this story as a model, Greek and Roman rhetoricians memorized a great deal of information by associating what they wanted to say with rooms in a house or specific spots along a path. Orators already knew the design of their homes, so when they spoke to an audience, they just needed to imagine that they were walking through their own homes, remembering what section of their speech went with each part of their house. The idea is that we “walk through our house” and “pick up” information as we go. It is this process of associating what we want to remember with a specific place that is important to any discussion of place and memory, for the process reminds us that memory is tied to specific locations—that memory itself can be conceived spatially. So the sister missionaries were merely modern versions of Simonides, responding to the prompts as they rehearsed their script. And who says that classical mnemonics have lost their place?

But the strategy has its ripple effect: While the location may prompt the memory, the location also itself helps construct and organize the memory. Landscapes—the physical landscapes we use to invoke memory or the conceptual landscapes we use to remember events—shape the memories themselves. Place is yet another shaping force, yet another mediator of experience. While the past is irredeemably remote, it is also always undeniably contemporary, for our experience of the past occurs simultaneously with our perception of the past at the moment we locate it. Not only is the past mediated in the particular way it is presented to us, but the frameworks we bring to the experience shape the very way that we make sense of these mediations. This is a knot that needs unraveling.

The reconstruction of a place amounts to a creation of memory which entails a reshaping of the past. Imagine a diorama depicting a father pulling a handcart while a son pushes from behind. A mother and daughter walk side by side. This simple recreation invokes a cultural memory but also simultaneously shapes our perception of the experience. The event is a family affair. We must keep in mind, however, that reality could be otherwise. Families were often broken, and a spirit of unity did not always pre-

vail. Thus, readers learn rather quickly that a new framework—we could call it a “lens”—changes the significance of the same event.

I’m not claiming that our descriptions alter the world itself; rather, our descriptions change its meaning and value. The past is not rewritten in the sense that we are more aware of what happened, a progressive notion of history informed by the Enlightenment. Instead, contemporary reconstructions provide new ways of seeing that, in the parlance of the academy, recode and resignify these representations retroactively. Put more conventionally by Marcel Proust, “The only true voyage of discovery, the only really rejuvenating experience, would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred universes that each of them sees, that each of them is.”¹⁵

And Mormons need not go to early twentieth-century France when they have LDS artist James Christensen inscribing as part of several paintings the Latin phrase *Credendo Vides* or “By believing, one sees,”¹⁶ a claim that reverses our traditional notions of perception and evidence. We don’t see, then believe. We believe, then we see a different world, or we see the same world saturated with different meanings and significance.

What Sister North and Sister South provide during their tour is not new information, a new set of ideas, or even “revealed truth.” Rather, these missionaries are trying to fit us with a new set of glasses. To the unconverted with blurry vision, the restored homestead with its Indian corn hanging from the mantle, the tin plates and cups lying on the oak table, and the quilt with its log cabin design spread over the fluffed-up, straw-stuffed mattress are merely facsimiles of items owned by a poor nineteenth-century family whose son has a talent for spinning tales. The items reflect a sanitized basic farm life, perhaps enviable in its Disneyesque simplicity. Viewed through another lens, these household items—the very same items—offer a glimpse into the humble circumstances of a boy-prophet’s origins and testify of God’s willingness to work with the weakest among us. Proselytizing amounts to a lens-fitting, not a new message. Just as Jonathan Edwards finds God in a common thunderstorm,¹⁷ Mormons find a prophet be-

neath a shake roof. The evidence is always available to those who can see with new eyes.

Madsen argues that the acts of reclaiming and recoding these sites “nurture the ‘geographic memory’ of Latter-day Saints.”¹⁸ Yes, the LDS Church reframes and reconstructs the geography in an effort to reshape Mormon identity. And Madsen maintains that “new generations of Mormons cannot avoid understanding that the Church’s history unfolded at places made sacred by that history and that they themselves, by virtue of their membership in the Church, both own and belong to those sites.”¹⁹ While I can’t disagree with the claim that members’ identity is tied to these sites, it’s the particular process of reclaiming these sites that interests me.

My claim is that the Church, in a paradoxical move, avoids the messy historical contexts that ground events in specific times, places, and complicated cause and effect relationships. The Church decontextualizes and recontextualizes these sites so that they can speak to the present and the future. As physical sites, Palmyra, Harmony, Kirtland, Nauvoo, Winter Quarters, and Martin’s Cove still do not matter. Perhaps I’m putting too fine a point on this, but I would insist that the physical places are mere launching pads to offer a narrative that then constructs LDS identity. We still have not strayed too far from McConkie’s emphatic declaration that events, or the narrative describing the events, matter more than the places themselves.

Packaging the Past

My daughter and I return to Main Street, Palmyra, eat a few slices at Mark’s Pizza, and find our way again to the Grandin Press. I’m taken by the ruddy red brick with the window-trim in bright white decorating the front. A large sign, with gold and white lettering, announces “Book of Mormon: Historical Publication Site.” We pass through the front door and find ourselves in a lobby to be greeted by beaming sister missionaries in tan and taupe dresses. They ask if we are interested in a visit—“Of course”—and they ask us to watch a short video that describes Joseph Smith’s working relationship with Egbert B. Grandin.

Sister West, the older of the two, then initiates the tour. She presents a painting of Grandin and his wife, and then points out

that Grandin was born one year after Joseph was born and died the year after Joseph died. She explains that, for her, this is not a coincidence. This proximity of dates suggests a kind of cosmic/spiritual connection. "Some say it's coincidence, but I think they were meant to meet each other. It was part of a divine plan."

This recoding of events reminds me of novelist and theorist Walker Percy's "The Loss of a Creature," where Percy explores the effects of this kind of mediation as he discusses travel, nature, and classrooms. He comments on the way, say, material gathered at a travel bureau provides a "symbolic package" that mediates our experience of the Grand Canyon. Percy claims that this "general surrender of the horizon to those experts within whose competence a particular segment of the horizon is thought to lie" amounts to a loss of sovereignty, a loss of openness, thus rendering us a "consumer of a prepared experience."²⁰ Sadly, the pleasure of encountering a raw experience is replaced by an experience that satisfies "by the degree to which the canyon conforms to the preformed complex."²¹ We arrive at some version of, "Oh, I see what they mean. I see what they are talking about." Percy acknowledges that an unmediated encounter with raw experience is problematic, but it's a question of submission and subordination, a question of what role the paratext or "symbolic package" asks us to play.

Admittedly, we are not free of all forms of mediation. I suppose I'm less optimistic than Percy about the possibility of becoming completely sovereign. At the same time, however, Percy's observation that "symbolic packages" make us consumers of prepared experience contains a great deal of sense, especially in the context of Church historical sites. The presence of explanatory plaques that often accompany the site and the missionaries who narrate the events provide a framework that limits possible connections, even as the narration clarifies and enriches our experience. This process may be comforting, a kind of buoy that keeps us afloat as we ride the waves of Church history, but it limits the proliferation of significance, undecidability, and indeterminacy. In short, these symbolic packages circumscribe meaning. The narratives take away even as they provide meaning. The missionaries, for example, do not remind us of Joseph's claim that he

found two stones in 1822 while digging a well that allowed him to see buried treasure and lost items, used magic circles, and penned multiple versions of the First Vision. The missionaries may not knowingly create gaps in the historical record, but the result is a simplified and sanitized portrayal of Joseph that shapes our perception.

Sister West's packaging demonstrates a kind of creative reading that generates connections based on chronological proximity. Assuming that people are pieces that God plays with on a game board has its appeal, I suppose. She is able to endow seemingly random events—birth and death dates—with meaning. Had Jonathan Edwards been standing with me on that hunter green carpet, he would have applauded her reading skills. I confess, however, that her conclusions were underwhelming. For the person who does not believe that God, like a divine puppeteer, controls every aspect of our existence, her correspondence theory seems less than compelling. She also eliminates other explanations: disease, accident, age, mere chance. She asks us to make sense of these dates within a spiritual framework, her symbolic package. Significance saturates the coincidental.

We encounter a more elaborate symbolic package near the Smith cabin. Next to a fence is a small placard that provides three kinds of information. One segment states that "On 22 September 1823, Joseph Smith Jr. was harvesting wheat with his father and brothers when he was overcome by exhaustion from the visits of the angel Moroni the previous night in the log home. His father sent him home to rest. His mother explained that the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph again as he rested under an apple tree." The prose's neutral tone—so matter-of-fact, conveyed in third person—roots the event in a historical context. Another segment recounts the events from Joseph's point of view: "I started with the intention of going to the house, but, in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground. . . . I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head. . . . He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received." This edited passage frames the experience from Joseph's point of view, yet

there is little sense of the experience being a vision *per se*. Although Joseph is exhausted, the description doesn't encourage us to think that he is dreaming. The third element is a drawing of Joseph crossing the fence. This image of the wooded fence frames what we see in the present.

Each element—the reconstructed fence, the image of Joseph climbing the fence, the explanatory notes—reinforces the other. The physicality of the fence verifies the narration while the narration grants the fence spiritual significance. What is, at one level, a graying cedar fence is reframed as a form of evidence of a spiritual manifestation. We become, as Percy claims, consumers of a prepared experience. Everywhere I turned that weekend—the Smith homestead, the Hill Cumorah, the Grandin Press, the Peter Whitmer home—I surrendered a degree of my sovereignty; but the experience was still satisfying because what I saw and read echoed my expectations, expectations that the site, in fact, created in the first place through its use of symbolic packages.

I had occasion to ruminate on this experience during the remainder of the summer when I stumbled upon French historian Pierre Nora's notion of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), a concept that allows us to understand this play of presence and absence. Nora suggests that monuments and memorials function only as *lieux de mémoire*, for sites of memory are "entities" that, thanks to human will or time, become a symbol of a community's heritage. Nora contrasts a "site of memory" with "real memory," which is characterized by "the gigantic and breathtaking storehouse of a material stock of what it would be impossible for us to remember, an unlimited repertoire of what might need to be recalled."²² In short, "real memory" is the totality of what actually happened while "lieux de mémoire" are what we encounter. But it's still not that simple. Punning on the phrase *au lieu de*, which suggests both "to the location" but also "instead of," Nora insists that *lieux de mémoire* occur "at the same time that an immense and intimate fund of memory disappears, surviving only as a reconstituted object beneath the gaze of critical history."²³ The image replaces the reality, for we embrace the representation *in lieu of* what really happened. Visitors do not root themselves in the past;

rather, they root themselves in a substitution, a replacement, a surrogate. Thus, acts of memory are really acts of forgetting.

But are we all dupes? Are we all so weak-willed that the Church architects can fit us with lenses without our knowing? Admittedly, there are moments when this process is interrupted, when we can see fingerprints on the glass. While my daughter and I were touring the Vermont site, Sister East told a detailed story of how Church leaders bought the property and how they worked to bring the monument—that large obelisk—to the site. At one point, she explained, the rutted muddy road froze so hard that the wagons could carry the obelisk to its destination. But unlike Sister West at the Grandin Press, she merely said, “Depending on what you choose to believe, some say it was coincidence and some say it was divine intervention.” With a single sentence, she draws attention to the process of sacralizing an event, making visitors conscious of the constructed nature of these narratives as she reminds us that the meaning of an event depends on one’s epistemology, not on empirical, unmediated artifacts that can supposedly speak for themselves. Madsen, too, insists that “efforts to sacralize space are efficacious only in the degree to which individuals respond personally.” He acknowledges that many Mormons do not “notice, heed, or respond” to their efforts and that some families may recode these sites differently, especially if they have a family connection to the site. He points out, however, that new converts may be “the most responsive to the Church hierarchy’s efforts to consecrate space and anchor their membership to a sacred historical geography.”²⁴

This conclusion makes a great deal of sense in that new members are the least rooted of all members. To the degree that they have conceptually or physically distanced themselves from family members, networks of friends, and even homelands, new members are in a less defined space, best described by Linenthal and Chidester as a “frontier,” for a frontier is “not a line, border, or boundary; it is a zone of intercultural contact and interchange.”²⁵ Of course, rather than generating and celebrating this position of possibility, Church historical sites attempt to limit and restrict them. While frontiers are opened when two or more previously closed cultures come into contact, a “frontier zone closes when one has established hegemony.”²⁶ The last thing the Church

wants is an ambiguous, polyvalent site, reveling in its own multiplicity of meaning. The Church takes us by the hand and keeps us on the gravel path. We can let go, but why would we? Who is tugging on the other hand?

Dis-Membering the Past

“Would any of you like to express your feelings about the Book of Mormon?” We wait in silence, awkwardly, no doubt hoping another will respond. We seem unprepared for the question. We are tourists after all. We came to look at log homes, printing presses, barns, and a grove of trees, not to participate in a fast and testimony meeting. At last, bless her, a woman in dark slacks speaks up: “It teaches us how to live.” The comment, no matter how superficial, gets us off the hook. I want to thank her.

Of course, the missionaries have a script of sorts provided in a “site manual.” There seem to be three basic moves. Part 1 usually describes the historical context. For example, as we entered the Smith frame home in Manchester, missionaries recounted the persecution that Joseph experienced at a particular place and time. “Joseph was mocked by his friends. Mobs pursued him and would break into his home to search for the plates.”

Part 2 recontextualizes the events in a moral context. As the missionary tells the story, she explains that Joseph felt prompted to move the plates to another hiding place. Sister South concludes: “We should always be attentive to the promptings of the Spirit. If we don’t, then we may not be protected.” Part 3 completes the process for, in every case, the missionary either expresses gratitude for the plates or testifies of the truthfulness the gospel and restoration: “I know that God prepared Joseph for this work, and I’m grateful that I can be a member.” This pattern repeats itself in each room.

As we moved into the kitchen, another missionary relates how Martin Harris lost the 116 pages of the manuscript. The missionary turns this event into a moralistic tale, warning us about the need to be obedient. Finally, the missionary testifies of the importance of the work and the truthfulness of the message, inviting visitors to share their feelings about the need for prophets in these latter days.

My daughter and I encountered this process of abstraction in

the Grandin Press as already mentioned. Birth and death dates were important because they suggested the presence of a divine plan operating in the present. Workmanship on the Book of Mormon testified to the divine importance of the project in the present; pirated segments of the Book of Mormon published in Abner Cole's paper *The Reflector*, which he printed in Grandin's shop on Sundays, testify to the reality of Satan's opposition that continues today. Missionaries at the Peter Whitmer home explained that Joseph knew Oliver who knew the Whitmers, a link that became a story about "sharing the gospel with your friends" and "you never know the influence you might have on each other." The missionaries' testimony about the priesthood and priesthood authority uses a contemporary analogy: "Without proper authority, it would be like someone charging on your credit card without permission."

I couldn't help wondering if the Church site manual contains a stolen page from the Dominican monk Augustine of Dacia's theoretical works, for medieval exegesis encourages readers to move from the literal, to the allegorical, to the moral, and finally to the anagogical, an arrival point that describes a passage in relation to the spirit of the age, or part of a world historical totality, or as part of the spiritual afterlife. Or as the conventional medieval quatrain credited to Augustine of Dacia explains, "The letter teaches events, allegory what you should believe, Morality teaches what you should do; anagogy what mark you should be aiming for."²⁷ The movement, of course, is increasingly abstract.

What do we make of this movement toward the abstract? Does it not make more sense to ground truth in a particular time and place? If not, why spend millions buying and restoring historical sites? How do we explain the appeal of the intangible, the metaphysical, the transcendent?

Against Madsen's seemingly common-sense claim that "place does matter in establishing and maintaining a Mormon identity tied to a prophetic and sacrificial past, perhaps even more so for those Church members who have no familial link to that past,"²⁸ I want to claim the opposite: To reduce the inevitable divisions in a worldwide church, to create a common identity, the Church dehistoricizes and decontextualizes its past. What I am suggesting here is that place—that log home, that grove of trees, that press—are, in fact, obstacles. Allow me to explain.

Aristotle sums it up quite neatly. He argues in his *Poetics* that the difference between poetry and history is that “one tells of what has happened, the other of the kinds of things that might happen. For this reason poetry is something more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history, for poetry speaks more of universals, history of particulars.”²⁹ This attention to fundamental principles and to universals is what makes poetry so appealing to Aristotle, but the transformation also appeals to many a Mormon visitor who desires to follow the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi’s lead: “I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Ne. 19:23). Missionaries and visitors, in effect, translate the stories told at these sites, shifting the emphasis from the concrete to the metaphorical, from the historical to the poetic. This endowing of objects, dates, and events with spiritual significance—enough to make early Puritan typologists proud—shifts the focus from the artifact itself to a transcendent, abstract truth.

These sister missionaries want to transform a specific event about, say, enduring false accusations, hiding plates from the mob, and allowing a friend to borrow manuscript pages, into a mythic story about the value of obedience, persistence, and faith—or their failures. The stories become myth in the sense that they offer a narrative representing the values, interests, and aspirations of the Mormon community. The stories lose their historical moorings and drift out to sea, but this portability actually makes them more useful to those seeking ethical, didactic, and timely instruction. The stories about Joseph and Moroni, golden plates and lost manuscripts, log cabins and the Burned-Over District are no longer history but poetry. But if the actual cabin, house, press, and grove are not what we encounter, then whose shores do we land upon?

We run aground upon a spiritual landscape. We drop our anchor in a pool of feeling. Madsen describes how missionaries during his visit explained that “lots of historical things happened here, but I want to focus on the spiritual things.” Another guide began by saying, “I will tell you lots of historical stuff, but I want you to remember what you’ve felt. Don’t try to remember everything I say.”³⁰ Another of Madsen’s missionaries explained that

“they [the missionary department leaders] changed the focus of these sites from what happened here to what it means to us.”³¹ And when I asked a missionary whether it’s odd to bear testimony to members—in essence, preaching to the choir—she explained that she hadn’t even thought about it. Her job is to bear her testimony, and that includes “perfecting the Saints.” These admonitions explain why the historical elements are largely irrelevant. To redeem a memory, one must decontextualize it, resituate it. The new conceptual landscape graces it with new meaning and significance.

I return to Madsen’s claim that the Church is “using the physical places in which Mormon history occurred to nurture the ‘geographic memory’ of Latter-day Saints, hoping to promote a common sense of identity among an increasingly diverse membership. Place does matter in establishing and maintaining a Mormon identity tied to a prophetic and sacrificial past, perhaps even more so for those Church members who have no familial link to that past.”³² As I try to demonstrate above, I want to argue that the exact opposite happens. Members, new or not, do not find their identity among the ruins of the past. Instead, they contemporize the past, and this act of taking an event out of its historical context is an act of redemption. When we re-member, when we re-attach a lost appendage, is not this act an act of redemption? Literary scholar Terry Cochran points out that “redemption is simply the present’s opportunity to ‘indicate’ the past in a way that places a claim on the future.”³³ In other words, the moment we bring an event to the present or the future, we redeem it. We buy it back. We reclaim it. We recover it. We possess it once again.

While we redeem an event by resituating it, there is another interesting process involved. The sacred, by definition, is that which can transcend any particular time and place. The sacred is mobile, for the “wind bloweth where it listeth” (John 3:8). Scholars of the sacred point out that the “sacred” has to do with the act of “setting apart” a designated space. The sacred is a site “set apart from or carved out of an ‘ordinary’ environment to provide an arena for the performance of controlled, ‘extraordinary’ patterns of action.”³⁴ Religious studies scholar Gerardus Van der Leeuw explains that sacred places become “transferable metaphors,”³⁵ and French sociologist Henri Lefebvre adds that “abstract space”

tends toward “homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities.”³⁶ In sum, abstract space transcends a particular time and place and eliminates difference in the name of sameness, for sameness allows visitors to connect to others who hail from another time and place, for all are “Latter-day Saints.”

Historical figures become spiritual types as well. As latter-day prophet, Joseph becomes a Moses, a Noah, an Abraham. As a location where Joseph encountered heavenly beings, the Sacred Grove becomes the same as, say, the banks of the River Jordan or the Mount of Transfiguration. The significance of a particular time and location—Palmyra, Jerusalem, Sinai—becomes irrelevant, for they all collapse into one homogenous event: God speaks to his prophets. In this case, sacralizing a cabin, a printing press, a grove of trees, or a barn pulls them out of the historical narrative. Instead of, say, placing the tarring and feathering of Joseph in Hiram, Ohio, in the context of anti-Mormon sentiment caused by competing religious views, disdain of social class difference, fear of new settlers from the East, or fear of changing relations of power, missionaries reframe the story in spiritual terms, and by “spiritualizing” or sacralizing the place and events, these sites and experiences are liberated from a particular historical context. They become morality lessons, principles, and precepts—patterns of action—that transcend time and place. In short, the very act of setting apart a place or event allows it to circulate more freely. The sacred is born.

Walking the Labyrinth

During this same trip my daughter and I were also pilgrims of another sort. Of course, LDS Church sites are not the only sites that construct and reshape memory. The Freedom Trail, Concord and Lexington, and Plimoth Plantation all speak to national myths of American exceptionalism, justice, and industry. The Holocaust monument in Boston transforms genocide into moral responsibility, a desire for justice, and an admonition to care for our neighbors. The Emily Dickinson house celebrates a misunderstood genius, a gifted individual trapped by social conventions. I am not suggesting that every historical site functions in the same way, but a discussion of LDS historical sites should make visitors sensitive to the ways in which their experiences are mediated and

packaged for them. Pilgrims should note when sites and individual people become types or abstract patterns. While I discuss sites in New York, I invite travelers to re-read their experiences in Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wyoming, and Utah.

To claim that a site is a kind of symbolic package or inauthentic experience does not mean that visitors are dupes, mindlessly internalizing every message. Some letters never arrive. Stamps fall off. Addresses don't exist. And as noted earlier, guides may draw attention to the constructedness of a site. Visitors' own experiences and interpretive frameworks may conflict with "official" versions. Critical theorist Denise Riley also reminds us that an excessive amount of repetition can ironize the simulation itself: "Say it, read it, echo it often enough and at short enough intervals . . . [and] it begins to look somewhat comical or grotesque in its isolation."³⁷ And here we arrive at a central paradox in Mormon culture: Fear of multiplicity of meaning leads to a seemingly endless repetition of the same truth claims, yet these frequent restatements draw attention to the insecurity itself, rendering what is sacred comical and grotesque. Joseph is a prophet, is a prophet, is a prophet, is a prophet. Surely there is an alternative.

Not surprisingly, geographic metaphors abound in the Bible, and Christians in particular are familiar with two kinds of paths. On the one hand, we have the "strait and narrow." As Jesus proclaims, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matt. 7:13-14). Much is made of this route, and we see echoes of it in the Book of Mormon's image of the iron rod (1 Ne. 8:20). And even in our collective culture, we associate "crooked" with deceit and lawlessness.

"To wander" suggests a lack of purpose, drifting aimlessly, holding one's faith too loosely. In medieval Christian folklore, the "Wandering Jew" was condemned to walk the earth because he insulted Jesus on His way to Golgotha. Cain was cursed to wander the earth for killing Abel and for denying his brotherly responsibilities. The children of Israel had to wander in the wilderness for forty years because of their disobedience. Old Testament prophets and writings—the Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Hosea in particular—are fond of using "wandering" as a metaphor for spiritual decay, stubbornness, and disobedience.

Clearly, a circuitous and delayed journey manifests a wayward soul, and wandering becomes a form of damnation itself.

But an equally compelling religious symbol is the labyrinth, best exemplified on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France. Near the opening of the nave, often covered by wooden chairs, is a round labyrinth that is part of the stone floor itself. The circle is divided into quadrants, but the sinuous path allows one to move from section to section seamlessly as it meanders toward the destination, a six-petaled flower at the center. Writer Rebecca Solnit reminds us that, unlike mazes that are made to “perplex those who enter,” a labyrinth “has only one route, and anyone who stays with it can find the paradise of the center and retrace the route to the exit.” She reveals the key moral of these curvy paths: “Sometimes you have to turn your back on your goal to get there, sometimes you’re farthest away when you’re closest, sometimes the only way is the long one.”³⁸ Like the strait and narrow path, the labyrinth has only one path that takes one to paradise—we’re not talking about wild abandonment or romping through the wilderness—but unlike the direct route, one moves about within a larger pattern, and this symbolic journey reminds us of “the complexity of any journey, the difficulty of finding and knowing one’s way,” of the need to be humble and patient, for the way “cannot be perceived as a whole all at once,” and it “unfolds in time.”³⁹ Of course, we cannot deny the pleasure in the journey as we meander from place to place, gaining new perspectives and insights. Unlike the pragmatic and mechanical “straight” and narrow that ignores the route itself, reducing the scenery to distracting noise or seductive buildings, the labyrinth celebrates the journey, recognizing that the pilgrimage—the meandering, curvy, indirect path that it is—defines the purpose itself. The source of pleasure is not solely in the destination, but walking the path itself.

While we can yearn for some kind of raw, unmediated experience—a time before guides, placards, and images—we can safely tell ourselves that such a prelapsarian condition is a fantasy at best. What we can embrace, however, is time and space to reflect. I’m not surprised, then, that despite all the chatter—Mormons never miss an opportunity to hold a meeting—that our most sacred sites are largely silent and empty. While I hesitate to offer an

ode to the Sacred Grove—oh, how clichéd—what I found appealing about the place was the absence of symbolic packages. Admittedly, a variety of docents have certainly packed our bags before we step into that grove. Surely we stumble under the weight of large and small packages prepared by others and ourselves. Our eyes are encased in lenses. And yet . . . and yet we encounter little else but trees, dirt, our thoughts, and maybe another person upon one of the many paths. No one is queuing up behind us. No one is telling me what to think or asking me what I feel. Yes, Joseph came to the woods alone with a question in mind, and I suspect that he might have been disappointed had he left that grove with nothing more than dirty knees. There is something heroic about his quest, and I've read enough Emerson and Thoreau that I can understand the desire to be a seer for others. But for some reason, I don't need all my questions answered. I'm content to ruminate, to ponder, to turn over ideas as I would stones in my hand. I enjoy walking the labyrinth. And as my daughter and I meander through the trees—in a rain storm, no less—laughing as we dodge huge rain drops and leap over brown puddles, I cannot help but conclude that our stroll together is the destination. We share a space, and that's what makes the site holy.

Notes

1. Paul Auster, *The Invention of Solitude* (New York: Penguin, 1988), 32.
2. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," in *The Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson and Jean Ferguson Carr (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 46.
3. Michael H. Madsen, "The Sanctification of Mormonism's Historical Geography," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 235. This article is drawn from Michael H. Madsen, "Mormon Meccas: The Spiritual Transformation of Mormon Historical Sites from Points of Interest to Sacred Space" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 2003), 234.
4. Madsen, "The Sanctification of Mormonism's Historical Geography," 235. The McConkie quotation comes from *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 711.
5. Madsen, "The Sanctification of Mormonism's Historical Geography," 235.
6. *Ibid.*, 236.
7. *Ibid.*, 240.

8. Ibid., 241.
9. Ibid., 244.
10. Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 1.
11. Ibid., 217.
12. Madsen, "The Sanctification of Mormonism's Historical Geography," 253.
13. Ibid., 255.
14. Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 81.
15. Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past: Volume 3. The Captive, The Fugitive, and Time Regained*, translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, and Andreas Mayor (New York: Vintage, 1982), 260.
16. See, among others, James Christensen, *The Voyage of the Basset* (New York: Greenwich Workshop, 1996).
17. Jonathan Edwards, "Personal Narrative," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Series: Letters and Personal Writings*, Volume 16, edited by George S. Claghorn (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).
18. Madsen, "The Sanctification of Mormonism's Historical Geography," 253.
19. Ibid., 252.
20. Walker Percy, "The Loss of the Creature," in *Ways of Reading*, edited by David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1996), 518.
21. Ibid.
22. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26, no. 1 (1989): 13.
23. Ibid., 12.
24. Madsen, "The Sanctification of Mormonism's Historical Geography," 253.
25. Edward Linenthal and David Chidester, *American Sacred Space* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 25.
26. Ibid.
27. Henri De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: Vol. 1, The Four Senses of Scripture*, translated by Mark Sebanc (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 1.
28. Madsen, "The Sanctification of Mormonism's Historical Geography," 253.
29. Aristotle, *Poetics in Classical Literary Criticism* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 69.
30. Madsen, "The Sanctification of Mormonism's Historical Geography," 242.

31. Ibid., 244.
32. Ibid., 253.
33. Terry Cochran, "History and the Collapse of Eternity," *Boundary 2* 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 53.
34. Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*, 9.
35. Geraldus van der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, translated by J. E. Turner (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 53.
36. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991), 52.
37. Denise Riley, *The Words of Selves: Identification, Solidarity, Irony* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 158.
38. Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 71, 69.
39. Ibid., 71–72.

PERSONAL ESSAYS

Ghost Towns

Erin Ann Thomas

George Borrow, an English travel writer, descended from the hills one evening in 1854 to report on Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, at that time the busiest iron smelting and coal town in the commonwealth. I imagine he used a walking stick, picking his way through the mountain brush of the South Wales hills to a valley of light and a hillside of blazes. On reaching the valley, he identified the source of brilliance to be lava-like material that zigzagged down the hill above him.

“What is all that burning stuff above, my friend?” George Borrow asked a Welshman leaning against the front door of his cottage.

“Dross from the iron forges, sir!”

At the time of Borrow’s visit, the Merthyr iron trade was at its peak, and the coal trade was gaining strength over the Northern England market, Welsh coal having been proved superior in trial after trial conducted by steamships. And in this cityscape that represented Welsh industry in its throb and finest, Borrow noted some resemblance to hell. The vast wealth pouring into this area was absorbed into the fortunes of the iron masters and collier owners. While they lived in elaborate estates, the common person’s lot was meager, dark, and filthy. Merthyr by day struck Borrow as being as damned as Merthyr by night, only less magnificently hellish. He reported that it had a somewhat singed look and expounded on the satanic character of the buildings. Of the people who inhabited this infernal architecture, he related little, only that they were numerous and spoke mostly Welsh. He described *throng[s] of savage looking people talking clamorously* and admitted that he *shrank from addressing any of them*.¹

Merthyr, like many towns built around the iron and coal industries, attracted mostly young men at first, who in turn at-

tracted the establishment of prostitution and public houses. These young men drank a lot of liquor, but given the level of sanitation at the time, that was healthier than drinking water. In 1849, T. W. Rammell conducted a public inquiry into the town concluding, *Merthyr . . . sprung up rapidly from a village to a town without any precautions being taken for the removal of the increased masses of filth necessarily produced by an increased population, not even for the escape of surface water . . . A rural spot of considerable beauty has been transformed into a crowded and filthy manufacturing town with an amount of mortality higher than any other commercial or manufacturing town in the kingdom.*² The main drag, High Street, was a morass of mud, and sewage pumped into a local river would flood into the homes when it got backed up. During one month in 1849, 1,000 people died of cholera.

This was the home of my great-great-grandparents: Margaret Davis who was six, and Evan Thomas who was seven at the time of Borrow's visit. The people milling about him as he minced his way through the filthy streets of terraced housing and narrow alleys were their neighbors. Details about the early years of Margaret and Evan are scarce. Margaret was the daughter of John Davis, and Evan was the son of Frederick Thomas who was the son of Evan Thomas. On census records each of these men's profession is listed as "collier" or "miner." Neither Margaret nor Evan wrote accounts of their lives. Margaret survives through the voice of her daughter and granddaughter, who wrote short accounts of their memories of her. Small scraps of detail about Evan are included in the personal histories of his grandsons, and the stories of the family that have been passed on, sketching out only a vague caricature. But these female descendants preserved a fuller portrait of Margaret—that she was strong, and she was kind.

Otherwise for a broader view, I am left with Borrow's perspective, which represents one of few eyewitness accounts of the city my ancestors lived in and the people they lived among. Thirty years later and ten years after Evan and Margaret sailed for America, Wirt Sikes, the U.S. Consul to Wales, provided a more positive observation of the inhabitants of Merthyr: *The Welsh population of Merthyr is gathered in large part from the mountains and wildish valleys hereabouts, and includes some specimens of the race who (as the saying goes) have no English, with a very large number of specimens who have but little*

*and utter it brokenly. Those of the lower class who can read . . . are far in advance of Englishmen of the same state in life, who often can read nothing. To hear a poor and grimy Welshman, who looks as if he might not have a thought above bread and beer, talk about the poets and poetry of his native land, ancient and modern, is an experience which, when first encountered, gives the stranger quite a shock of agreeable surprise.*³

Poetry was not the only thing that distinguished Welshmen, but also putting these lyrics to music. Singing was a way these miners and their families expressed community. As former agriculturalists and grazers gathered from the hills into cities to mine, chapels were built and formed the locus of Welsh social life outside the pubs. Here thick-set and coal-stained men gathered and sang parts. Competitions between the choirs of different cities made big events, and medals were awarded to the winning choir. During strikes and later, during the depression, miners out of work went singing door to door for donations to feed their families. At frequent town festivals, where bakers sold pastries and the locals set aside their daily chores to dance, balladeers sang tunes based on peasant sounds from the countryside.⁴ Merthyr was a dirty and crowded town, but a musical one.

My progenitors were of the grimy class of folk described so condescendingly by Borrow; they were perhaps even socially lower than those Sikes described due to their lack of any education or literacy. Of their poetic spirit, I have no indication except that my great-great-grandfather Evan Thomas was renowned for an eloquent temper, which may have arisen in part from the difficult circumstances of his life.

At age five Evan first entered the mines, clinging to his father piggyback, as they were lowered down into the shaft. Children often had to work with their fathers to support the family. A collier's wages did not usually suffice to cover the costs of living, which included rent of a miner's cottage and daily rations of bread and cheese—vegetables and bacon were Sabbath-day fare. On the Lord's Day, miners were granted a bit of meat and a respite from labor. Children, deprived of any other kind of education, could go to Sunday school.

Evan's daily labor was to load the coal his father cut from the seam into a cart, although this was a task usually given to boy much older. His hands would have been barely large enough; his

coordination just developing. I can imagine his desire to feel helpful, and his fear of the dark without his father close. Other children in Welsh mines would pull these carts that Evan loaded, many down tunnels that were so small they had to crawl, dragging the cart behind them with a harness around their waist. The youngest children often would have to sit by the doors in the dark and listen for the sound of horses and trams. They were in charge of opening and closing the doors. Sometimes an exhausted child would fall asleep, rolling into the tracks where he was crushed by oncoming traffic.

In 1842, having heard of the wretched conditions in the mines, two government inspectors journeyed to South Wales to interview the children. David Harris, a little boy of eight who worked in the Llancaiach mine, told the inspectors: "I have been below for two months and I don't like it. I used to go to school and I liked that best. The pit is very cold sometimes and I don't like the dark."⁵ A little girl who worked in the Plymouth mines in Merthyr Tydfil was asleep against a large stone when the inspector came to speak to her. She was a door keeper and explained that she had fallen asleep because her "lamp had gone out for want of oil. I was frightened for someone had stolen my bread and cheese. I think it was the rats."⁶ One recurring response among the children was that "they hadn't been hurt yet," as if this idea weighed on their minds with a sense of fear and even expectation.

After the government inspectors returned with their reports, Great Britain outlawed the employment of women and children in the mines in the Act of 1842. Many took the news hard. Depression hit the country in 1843, and many families had no way to survive without the extra income from their children. Although many Welsh evaded the law for years, in 1855 when little Evan first piggybacked on his father down the mine shaft, he was one of the few children still working in the mines. He and his father were lowered into the mines before the sun rose and ascended after it had set. They followed this routine six days a week.

My great-great-grandmother Margaret Davis lived in Pontypridd, a town in Merthyr County which, according to Welsh poet John L. Hughes was "Nothing special": *Even the name of this place is forgettable. Pontypridd. A shamble of mystic Welshness. Pontypridd. Something to do with a bridge (there is a bridge). Pontypridd. Something*

*to do with the earth (black stuff) . . . There being nothing special much around this town. Nothing at all except perhaps the river. . . Swilling down from Merthyr same as some kind of whip. Dirty candle-coloured by day down through Aberdare of torrents. Grunting sucking lashing whirlpools blackened through by mining trash and coal no man could burn.*⁷

In this middling coal village during the age when the river Taff had just begun to take on its blackness, Margaret's mother Ann, like most coal miner's wives, must have kept her small household, pinched in a morose terraced row, scrubbed white and raw. Cleaning was the bane of a collier's wife, black dust being tracked in at least once daily. I imagine there were nights that she cried when her husband John came home with trousers that were stiff and thick with sweat and coal dust for her to wash and mend. But then she would settle into a chair and callus her thumbs pushing a needle through the begrimed fabric to stitch up holes in the knees and backside. In 1858, Margaret's father died in a cave-in, most likely in a coal mine associated with the Plymouth Ironworks. I can find no record of the accident. Mining incidents involving fewer than four miners were never recorded, such deaths absorbed by a mining town's routine of loss.⁸

Margaret, who was only ten when her father died, worked as a nanny for the wealthy families of the Merthyr to help support her family. While tending the children of a superintendent from one of the local mines, she learned to read and write. "Let me help you with your schoolwork,"⁹ Margaret said when the children came home from school; recognizing her little intrigue, they taught her to read from their schoolbooks. During this time, Margaret was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a fledgling religion only thirty years in existence in the States. Dan Jones, a Welshman who had joined the Mormons under the leadership of Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, and stayed with him the night before his martyrdom, had returned to his native land to convert his countrymen to his newfound gospel.

Dan Jones began his proselytizing in an era of religious revival. During the industrial age, new religions spread fast in the densely populated coalfields. Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists were the main sects of Welsh non-conformist religion. Dan Jones was only the most radical—instead of reformation, he claimed to preach restoration of the first-century

church established by Christ's apostles. Of the preachers who drew crowds to these houses of worship, it is said: *All these great Nonconformist preachers of Wales, in person, manner and peculiarities differed from their English brethren of the pulpit, as the rugged and awe-inspiring mountains differ from smooth and undulating uplands. Their talents were many, and highly varied. Some were mightier reasoners and profound expositors—others were strong voiced thunderers, whose overwhelming appeals moved congregations to deep reflection and contrition—others possessed the pathetic power to melt and subdue, while many were gifted with brilliant imagination and vivid imagery that gave effect to apt and telling illustrations.*¹⁰

“Captain” Dan Jones, as they called him, enthralled audiences for three hours at a time, bringing them alternately to tears and laughter. He is reputed to have converted an entire Protestant congregation with one sermon. He led missionary efforts in Wales in the 1840s and 1850s, converting a total of 5,600.¹¹ My great-great-grandmother joined later in 1861, at the age of thirteen, to the dismay of her mother and relatives, who like most Welsh, regarded the religion with suspicion.

When Margaret was sixteen, she was offered a job weighing and selling coal by a local mine owner named Mr. Lewis. This was a technical task that involved a great deal of skill and precision. Though only the poorest working women were employed by mines, Margaret was pleased to have this job because it showed that Mr. Lewis trusted her. While working there, she remained active in her new religion and attended worship meetings that were held in the houses of members. At one of these cottage meetings, where religious feeling was high and Welsh voices lilted in the deep beauty of hymn, she met Evan Thomas. Four years later, they decided to marry. When Margaret informed Mr. Lewis that she was quitting her job, he told her: *My son is very fond of you. He was thinking of asking for your hand in marriage. If you will give up this silly religion and that young man you are planning to marry, I will fill your apron full with gold. My son will someday own this mine and you will never want for anything. Your life will be a success, and your home the envy of every girl in Glamorganshire.*¹²

Margaret married her poor LDS miner on February 21, 1870, in the Merthyr Tydfil Parish Church. According to the *Merthyr Express*, the hills and rooftops were covered with snow that day and

“Poor Tom the Cabby” was trampled by his horse and killed after “*having passed successfully though more than one ordeal.*”¹³ There is no notice of the wedding in the newspaper, but it is evident from the contents of the paper that since George Borrow’s visit, Merthyr had gentrified. The advertisements include: “Kernick’s Vegetable Pills,” “Artificial Teeth from H.W. Griffiths, Surgeon Dentist,” and the “newest styles in Gentlemen’s hats, caps, ties, collars etc. from M. Samuel.” Merthyr Tydfil in 1870 had plenty to offer the *nouveau riche*, but it is difficult to determine what actually awaited Margaret had she accepted Mr. Lewis’s “golden” proposal. In the annals of the South Wales mining industry, there are many Mr. Lewises. The most likely candidate for the Mr. Lewis of Margaret’s story is an Elias Lewis, a man who owned several small, profitable mines in the Pentrebach area, and had a son named Jenkin Lewis who was eight years older than Margaret. At that time the Elias Lewis family lived in Genthin Cottages, a property with its own grounds, which was significant because most mining families of the day lived in terraced housing. However, the grounds of Genthin Cottages were of modest size. Later, Elias Lewis’s visions of his up-and-coming prosperity materialized as he upgraded to Plymouth House, a large residence with substantial grounds that belonged to one of the former iron masters.¹⁴

One hundred and thirty-five years after Margaret and Evan married in the Merthyr Tydfil Parish Church, I came to Wales in search of them. Merthyr Tydfil contained 40,000 inhabitants in 1840; in 2000 the population totaled 30,000. The filthy hive of industrial activity had taken on a more genteel countenance. From the windows of the train, I saw rows of connected cement houses with tall chimneys clumped into the shallow valley. George Borrow had described them as *low and mean, and built of rough grey stones*,¹⁵ but efforts were under way to improve these old miners’ houses. Window frames and doorways had been painted in accent colors and the cement walls had been overlaid with colored gravel. Potted flowers hung out front, adding a country loveliness to the solemn rows. The hills Borrow described as having *a scorched and blackened look* were no longer black with smut, but there were marks on the natural landscape difficult to ameliorate. The woods with ground covers of brambles and wild berries left off at times to barren landscape measled with small heaps. The

yellow grass on top took on an unnatural hue from the black soil that showed through. These piles of dark earth, loosely packed and eroding in places, are called “tips,” where slag from the mines had been carted out and dumped on the hillsides.

Before I left the United States, I had found a picture of Plymouth House on the internet, indicating that the structure still stood. In order to find more information, I had corresponded with Carolyn Jacob, a member of the Glamorgan Historical Society, who worked from the Merthyr Central Library. Shortly after I arrived, I took a bus to the Merthyr Tydfil City proper to meet her. The buildings downtown, like the miners’ houses, had fresh coats of paint. Flowers hung from lamp posts, and the sun moved in and out of white clouds—a very different image than a photograph from 1910 of High Street I had found on a Welsh genealogical site on the internet. In this photograph, the atmospheric effect on the buildings in the distance is significant. A stormy day could have caused this, but the people are hardly blurred, indicating a quick snap of the aperture. It must have been bright, the fuzziness of the buildings resulting from the particulate matter pumped into the air by the smokestacks. Puddles on the street gather, and the tracks of a streetcar narrow into the distance. Men and women dressed in black line the walks next to the storefronts.

From the retail outlet downtown, I turned onto High Street toward the library and walked past St David’s Church. The street seemed deserted, hardly a thoroughfare. Only a group of teenagers slouched in front of the central library where a statue of Henry Seymour Berry, Baron Buckland of Bullich, stood. A rich collier owner, he was granted peerage in 1926 but inconveniently fell from his horse and died two years later without an heir, thus beginning and ending the Lordship of Berry. I walked past this coal-made man to the collections of the library, pursuing the history of the nameless—the dark shapes who might have strolled the sidewalks of High Street one afternoon in 1910.

I found Carolyn Jacob, a short, compact woman who contained as much information as the library itself, on the top floor of the library holding Merthyr’s history. She hardly paused for breath as she recited an elaborate depiction of mid-nineteenth-century Merthyr in response to my questions. When I mentioned

Plymouth House, she pulled out an old map and stretched it the length of a table. She touched points on the map comparing them to a modern map; younger librarians looked over her shoulder offering bits of advice, but she shook her graying head. She determined the location of Plymouth House after an hour and scribbled the cross streets in my notebook.

By the time I left the library, dusk hung over the city, and I had little hope of finding Mr. Lewis's mansion. I stopped at a small convenience store across from Merthyr Tydfil's Parish Church, discussing my plight with the Welshmen in line. A small woman with strikingly white hair and a young-looking face glanced at the address and calmly told me she would take me there. As it neared dark, I hurried to keep up with her rapid stride, cutting up and across a hill through neighborhoods of terraced housing from various time periods. The higher we climbed, the more I realized that I never would have found Plymouth House on my own. I asked questions, and she answered simply: unemployed, had never left Wales, lived with her parents. She left me at the entrance of a stone gate to a structure that was significantly larger than the surrounding homes—too extravagant, in fact, for a single family in contemporary Wales. It had been divided into two homes, marked by differing architectural details and paint colors that met midway between two wings. "Go, Grandma," I whispered, my breath freezing in the cool air.

To marry into such a family would have been a rare offer to a working woman like Margaret. Her own family, headed by a widow, would have been among the poorest. Employment for women was scarce; Ann might have taken in boarders or laundry, but this would have been from other miners and turned in small profits. All the other income of the household would have been provided by hiring out the children: the girls as household servants, the boys in the mines. I can imagine that Ann, who did not approve of Margaret's religion, put considerable pressure on her daughter to accept Mr. Lewis's proposal. Not only would it have saved Margaret from future labor, but it would have assured her family stability and a place in society.

In the one portrait we have of Margaret, she appears to be in her forties. Her hair is pulled back tightly from a square face with broadly cut features. Even lifting the corners of her mouth that

have begun to sag, erasing the lines under eyes, or rounding her cheeks would not make her a striking woman. At a glance there is nothing that distinguishes her from the myriad of black-and-white images that illustrate the past, but there is a softness in her eyes that suffuses her whole expression. The only physical description that survives in our records is that these eyes were intensely blue. There must have been something behind this un-extraordinary face that was remarkable: unique enough to draw the admiration of a rich, young man, and courageous enough to turn him down for a religion and a poor miner that she loved better.

Margaret's daughter Mary Jane wrote the history of her mother, and it is through her that the story of Mr. Lewis has been passed down. In a life sketch no longer than a page, Mary Jane has included this episode in detail. Margaret must have repeated it to her children often. Margaret's family always struggled financially; perhaps she retold it to remind herself and her children that love was more valuable than a life of ease.

After marrying in Merthyr Tydfil parish church, Margaret and Evan moved to Pentrebach, where Evan continued to work in the mines. Margaret taught Evan to read from a Book of Mormon given to them by missionaries. In Wales, they raised five children. Then, in 1874, they sailed with Evan's father Frederick to join the growing LDS community in Utah. "Pa bryd y cawn fyned i Seion?"¹⁶—*When may we go to Zion?*—many of the Welsh would ask the missionaries who baptized them. By the end of the nineteenth century, 12,000 Welsh had converted to this new religion, the majority from Merthyr Tydfil, and 5,000 had emigrated to America, many forming the core of the now world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The history of Welsh migration is traced even in the chromosomes of the Saints—it is estimated that one-fifth of contemporary Utahns are of Welsh descent.¹⁷

I can only imagine the anticipation of Margaret and Evan as they hurried their five children up the plank to board the steamship *Wyoming*. They would have had few belongings to carry with them to the new world: the clothes on their backs, a dish or two from their terraced house in Merthyr, and leather-bound scriptures wrapped in a rag. After leaving the fiery furnaces and charred hills of Merthyr, they hoped to find a better life with the Saints. Evan, on leaving Wales, meant never to descend a mine

shaft again. When the Thomas family docked on the eastern shore of the United States, they continued their journey, traveling west on a railroad that had been first invented in their hometown to transport coal. The iron of the tracks that first canvassed this new world was forged with the coke fired from Welsh coal, coal that had passed through the hands of Thomases for three generations.

With their five children and Evan's father Frederick, they settled in Logan, Utah, a small community north of Salt Lake in the valley of the Rockies below pine-covered mountain slopes, where snowmelt trickled down into the summer months. Here my great-grandfather Zephaniah was born in 1883, the second American to join this poor Welsh immigrant family. Evan and Margaret were determined to make a break from their past in coal, so Evan found work on the railroad, a job that afforded the pleasure of light and air, but was otherwise not a far cry from the back-breaking labor of the mines. One day after working twenty-four hours, Evan was ordered back onto the tracks by his supervisor. Exhibiting the fiery temper he was known for, Evan refused and was fired on the spot.

Evan had heard of the excellent wages paid to experienced colliers by the Pleasant Valley Coal Company that mined in Emery County. By this time, Evan and Margaret had seven children; to feed his family, Evan was forced back into the trade he knew best. In 1886, the Thomas family moved 200 miles south to Winter Quarters, a coal mining camp above the city of Scofield. At the time, Scofield housed 1,800 residents. It was a coal town like the one the Thomases had left behind in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales—the men who exited the mines in the evening continued their comradeship in seventeen busy saloons. The young women whose beaus and husbands spent their days underground looked for every excuse to plan parties. According to a local resident of the time: *People would get out and make their own good times. They had dances in the meetinghouse, for instance. The dances were usually on Fridays because on Saturdays they made them stop at midnight. The next day was Sunday and there was always a squabble about closing up the dance.*¹⁸ Much of the social life surrounded the local chapels—prominent in Winter Quarters was the Latter-day Saint meetinghouse. The many Welshmen employed at the mine expressed their love of music by gathering at the houses of their neighbors who owned instruments to sing in the evenings.

But a piano was rare; most of the residents of Winter Quarters had few possessions, their one-room cabins equipped with a stove, beds, a table, and chairs. Some families had rockers, and occasionally a phonograph. Still, these miners' homes would have been a few paces set off from their neighbors. Americans in their characteristic love of "space" made sure that even coal villages had free-standing houses. They were small and unelaborated, but had their own grounds, a mark of status in Wales where most miners were packed into company-owned blocks of terraced housing. In Scofield and Winter Quarter's most families built their houses with wooden boards cut from a sawmill and placed vertically, topped by a peaked roof. Though privately owned, these houses were built on company land and families paid a monthly land rent.

Margaret would have had a very similar life to that of her mother, Ann, in Wales. Fighting back the dust of the coal mines, she would spend many hours scrubbing her wooden floors white and stirring the clothes of her men in a big copper pot of boiling water, to release the body and earth grime ground into the cloth. Aside from preparing meals, chores like these would occupy her days, wearing her hands as rough as her husband's. Margaret's rejection of Mr. Lewis's son, her voyage across the ocean, and renunciation of her former life would come to mean only one thing: At night the man she loved would emerge from the mine and they would gather with their children to read the Book of Mormon in a community of Saints in hills more commanding, even perhaps more remote, than those she had left behind.

Miners from the British Isles, especially Welshmen, formed one of the largest ethnic groups employed in the Winter Quarters mine. Among the more exotic inhabitants were a sizable number of Finns imported by the company due to a shortage of labor. Regarded by the miners from the British Isles and France as "non-white" because of their perceived foreignness and superstitions, these new immigrants were relegated to rows of houses farther up the canyon, which came to be known as "Finn Town." This sector of town was located right next to the settlement of Greeks who had immigrated previously. It was in Finn Town that a murmur began late in the year of 1899. Miners began to speak in low voices about "bad spirits" near the Winter Quarters mines.

At the turn of the century, Americans in general had great

faith in their frontier and their factories. In the coal industry in particular, miners were paid better than any other working men, and the national market had never been better. The previous year, Utah had not had any accidents and every mine had met regulations. As a result, the fears of the Finnish miners were dismissed by the others as the superstitions of a backward people.

On May 1, 1900, Evan Thomas and his three boys awoke at 5:00 A.M. to put on warm clothing. Even in the spring and summertime, the interior of the mountain was cold and wet. Margaret likely wiped the sleep from her eyes, packed their lunches in tin buckets, kissed them, and sent them off to the mine, glad to have some peace for “Dewey Day” preparations. Two years earlier, General Dewey had defeated the Spanish fleet in the Philippines in five hours without one loss of man or ship. This victory fed into America’s sense of “manifest destiny,” and the repercussions of this were even felt in this small mountain town. Winter Quarters had just received a contract for 2,000 tons of coal a day from the U.S. Navy. Miners were only required to work a half-day, and later that evening they would celebrate with a party, a dance, and “Dewey Cakes” at the church house.

My great-grandfather Zephaniah, or Zeph, as he was known, woke with his older brothers, Frederick and Evan Jr., to work with his father. He had been afforded the chance to graduate from primary school but, after sixth grade, was expected to help earn his keep. In 1900, he was seventeen years old and had been working in the mines for five years. The already sizable Thomas family had expanded by another member since the move to Winter Quarters, and multiple sources of income were doubtless a necessity to feed a family of eleven.

The workday would start with the fireboss who carried a torch by hand through the tunnels to burn the mine clear of flammable gases accumulated overnight. After that, the foreman would assign each miner a room, and all would then turn to the mouth of the mine, walking or taking a mantrip, a line of cars pulled by horses or mules yards or even miles into the mountain to where they would lay down their tools. Their path would be lit by oil-powered lanterns attached to their soft cloth hats. The open flame rose out of an oil lamp shaped like a small tea-pot and extended six to eight inches above the brim, flickering off the

roughly cut black walls of the tunnels. That day, Frederick and Evan Jr. divided off into their assignments in Mine 1, but Evan Sr., feeling he had been given an inferior room, *rose to his full five foot three inches and roundly denounced the foreman, the superintendent and the Pleasant Valley Coal Company generally before taking his youngest working son and heading home.*¹⁹

In Mine 4 at 10:28 o'clock, the exact hour kept on the watch of a dead Finn, miner Bill Boweter overheard two miners in a room adjacent to him say they were going to light some dynamite. They had overestimated the thickness of the wall that divided their room from the next, and the ensuing blast brought the entire wall down. The coal dust exploded into a surge of white flame, which lifted Bill off his feet and threw him against the wall. The cloud of coal dust billowed and burned, orbs of fire rotating in the middle of this onslaught that thundered from room to room igniting miners' powder kegs with bangs and light.²⁰

The town did not react immediately; it was Dewey Day and some thought the boom was fireworks being shot off early. Evan had doubtlessly returned home to repeat his tirade, rising up on his toes and shaking his finger, adding additional color to his denunciations to impress his wife. Margaret shook her head, peered at him knowingly, and hoped they would take him back tomorrow. At the sound of explosions, Evan must have paused in his cursing and Margaret in her pounding of dough—was it fireworks? Or—a sharp intake of the breath and a rush of terror—the mine? Zeph must have perked up from where he sat, safely slumped in the corner with nothing to do now that he had been pulled from both work and school. Both Evan Jr. and Frederick were still in the mine. The family must have run from their home just as the air was beginning to take on the reek of coal dust and a cloud of smoke was rising from the hillside.

Men who outran the explosion went back in for their comrades. Rescue crews had not yet been assembled with protective equipment, so a man would walk as far in as he could until he dropped. Others behind him would put their hats to their mouths, dash forward, grab hold of his feet and drag him out. This is how the poison content of the air was tested out, and progress into the depths of the mine was made in increments. Most of the men recovered from Mine 4 were already dead, the few that

showed signs of life died soon after being brought to the air. All were burnt badly—to a cinder—reported a local school girl.

Later rescue teams were assembled wearing helmets that resembled those of early astronaut suits: two thick tusks emerged from the helmet and connected to an oxygen tank strapped to the front. Once rescuers penetrated through to the far reaches of mine 4, they moved to mine 1, where the afterdamp (carbon monoxide) had filled earlier, making it impossible for rescuers to enter. Moving forward slowly, rescuers followed in line by the back corridor downhill from Mine 4 to Mine 1. In the first room, no larger than the size of a frontier living room, thirty-five men lay dead. They had fallen in positions revealing a scramble toward fresh air.

Frederick and Evan Jr. were working in Mine 1. Evan Jr. was working near the entrance and could have joined the miners escaping to safety, but he turned back into the mine to find his younger brother. The rescuers found the two dead hand in hand. Evan Jr. was twenty-five and Frederick was nineteen. Forty years later, Zephaniah could still barely speak of the incident. Fred was just two years older than he and was his idol.

During rescue efforts it had begun to drizzle and hundreds of women and children gathered around the mouth of the mine, moaning and crying, trying to catch glimpses of the bodies carried out in burlap sacks and piled in the mantrip. The rescuers carried the dead miners to a storeroom, and then to a boarding house where Clarence Nix, the company store manager, a quiet and shy man of twenty-three, tagged each, identifying the men he had sold gunpowder, tools, and canned goods to every day over the past months. Then, to spare the feelings of the women, these rough men carefully removed the battered and burned clothing from their friends. With sponges soaked up in tubs, they washed their mutilated bodies of soot and blood, finally rolling them in old quilts. Ready for burial, the dead miners were carried to the schoolhouse or meetinghouse, where they would be taken by their families.

The Winter Quarters mine explosion topped the charts as the most devastating mining accident of its time and still ranks as the fourth deadliest in U.S. history. On May 2, 1900, the *Salt Lake Tribune* ran the title: MOST APPALLING MINE HORROR: Greatest Calamity in the History of Mining in the West. EXPLOSION AT

SCOFIELD KILLS 250.²¹ This original estimate is closest to the 246 counted by the men carrying the bodies out of the mine, but 200 is the number settled on by the company. Even after the final count, the Finns maintained that fifteen of their men were never found. Since many of the Finns were single men distanced from their families by thousands of miles, there is no way to confirm or reject this assertion. These men were so unassimilated to their new environment that it was possible that some still lay buried in the Winter Quarters mine, unaccounted for by the company or their co-workers.

There wasn't a family in town without a personal connection to the tragedy. An eighteen-year-old bride of not many months lost her father, her two brothers, and her husband. The Hunter family lost ten men, all the male members in the family except two. The Louma family's story is particularly terrible. Seven sons had left Finland to make their fortunes in America, finally settling deep in the Wasatch Range to mine coal at Winter Quarters. They sent for their elderly parents, writing that they could earn enough money in America so that Abe Louma and his wife would never have to work again. Three months before the tragedy, the Loumas arrived in Scofield and began to adjust to life in a new country surrounded by their children and grandchildren in the small miner's house in Finn town. Six of their sons and three of their grandsons were killed in the explosion. After burying his posterity, Abe Louma told his wife: *If I don't live longer than a cat, I am not dying in America.*²² The Loumas rode the train back through the mountain pass in the Rockies escorted by their only living son. From California, they returned to Finland by ship, repeating in despair a journey they had undertaken months earlier with anticipation.

Four days after the explosion, the day of burial was overcast with scattered rain and a stiff wind. A photograph shows two Finns in shiny black caskets lined in shimmery white cloth scattered with bouquets of flowers. The face of one is half covered, and one arm, doubtless scarred, is wrapped in linen. The man in the casket beside him appears unmarred. His eyes close over a short nose and an enormous black handlebar mustache. His arms cross his chest; the hands displayed in handsome white gloves. In death, he appears to have had a much more genteel occupation in life than wielding a miner's pick.

Fifty volunteer grave-diggers from Provo were hard at work preparing the graves, some as little as three feet apart to accommodate the numerous burials. As the wagons carried the caskets to the graveyard, flowers were handed out from the railroad cars, bunches placed on the coffins and handed to the children and women. Reverend A. Granholm, a Finnish Lutheran minister from Wyoming, honored the sixty-two Finnish miners who died in the accident with a service conducted in their native tongue. An interfaith funeral was led by three Mormon apostles. An image from the later interments shows a large crowd of mostly men just removing their hats. Piles of earth are stacked up in between the grave markers—cut out of boards by the local sawmill operator and labeled with the names of the dead written in lead pencil. In the foreground a boy leans against a heap of dirt, looking for a clear view of the man being lowered into the ground. I think of Zeph watching his brothers buried in soil turned from the mountain that betrayed them. He was a quiet man with measured emotions when he grew up, but as a boy, looking down into those graves dug side by side six feet down, Zeph must have felt the whole weight of his anguish and the doom of the dark mining corridors of his future.

Evan and Margaret received \$2,240 in payment from the Pleasant Valley Coal Company for the death of two sons. Instead of using it to spare the rest from work in the mines, they erected a monument. An eight-foot marble obelisk inscribed “THOMAS” stands above the resting place of Evan Jr. and Frederick in the Scofield graveyard. Its size suggests their parents were more consumed with the grief of the moment than the practical challenges of the life that would follow afterwards. Perhaps the thought of buying flour with funds procured by the death of their boys was too much for Evan and Margaret—investing in such a grave-marker might have seemed the only way to dispose of it properly. Work commenced a week after the accident to put the mine back into operation. The miners who stayed and a number of new recruits spent long hours clearing out the debris and shoring up the roof. I can only imagine the feelings of Margaret who watched Evan leave every morning with the awful memory of a rumble. Evan walked to the mine these dreary mornings alone; after the accident, Zeph did not follow behind him.²³

* * *

The two-lane highway to Scofield cuts through the tops of mountains that, from a base altitude of over 6,000 feet, look like hills. Now a ghost town, Winter Quarters is reported to be haunted; miners started reporting sightings a year after the explosion. An article from *The Utah Advocate* of 1901 reads: *The superstitious miners, who are foreigners, have come to the conclusion that the property is haunted, inhabited by a ghost. Several of them have heard a strange and unusual noise, and those favored with a keener vision than their fellow workmen have actually seen a headless man walking about the mine and have accosted the ghost and addressed it or he [sic]. . . . Many supposedly intelligent men have claimed this and some twenty-five or forty have thrown up their jobs in consequence. These same people and others have seen mysterious lights in the graveyard on the side of this hill where many victims of the explosion of May are buried. Efforts to ferret out the cause have been fruitless. . . . These lights are always followed by a death. . . . Tombstones where the light appeared have been blanketed, but the light remains clear to the vision of those who watch from the town.*²⁴

These days hikers and campers report hearing moaning and crying near the opening of the old mine where the women waited in the rain for their men to be carried out in gunnysacks. I traveled to Scofield in search of ghosts, but there is more than one way to approach the dead. Scofield attracts not only those interested in the occult but those seeking communion with their ancestors. This sort of other-worldly link is an accepted aspect of LDS religion. Occasionally members will talk of the “veil being thin,” meaning the veil between this life and the afterlife, this earthly existence and the heavenly existence. We believe in a realm of the dead where our ancestors have passed on only in body but maintain their individuality in spirit, and that this realm is not far from where we are. Visiting Merthyr Tydfil and Scofield was not only a way of gaining understanding of my ancestors’ lives, but also growing emotionally closer through a physical connection to the towns they lived in.

On my first visit to Scofield at nine or ten, I had stood at an overlook, my eyes bouncing from each blare of red, orange, and blue sheet-metal roof that popped out of the summer dun-colored landscape. I don’t remember why I was there or who had brought me, only the connect-the-dot game I played with the colorful roofs

in the valley below. More people lived there then than now; according to the year 2000 census, Scofield is home to twenty-eight people who live in twelve households in a town of seventy-eight households. Some of these households are vacation homes that stay empty for most of the year. Others are just abandoned. In order to serve these twenty-eight residents, Scofield maintains five operating saunas, bearing testimony to a lingering Finnish character.

These homes make up the few streets of a community wrapped around a railroad. Under the eastern mountains on a main street called "Commerce" is a little white LDS chapel. Across on the west, a graveyard is more peopled than the current town. The last saloon marks the end of Commerce Street. Religion has lasted longer as a town gathering theme than drink; although the church still draws a small crowd on the Sabbath, the saloon has been boarded up.

I visited Scofield in 2007 on a fall afternoon when the hills were sprinkled with rows of gold-leafed quaking aspens, set off by the green-black of pines. I stepped from my car and shivered a little in the air with cold moist edge and jiggled the door of the saloon. I don't know that I would have entered had it yielded—above the bar was a sign that said "No checks" and a clock stopped at 2:25. Stools stood vacant over a floor where the white tiles had begun to curl up like brittle sheets of paper. A cabinet was stocked with ancient bottles of Raid and Scope.

I stepped away from the saloon windows and crossed back to my car to drive up to the graveyard. Scattered between the houses with colorful sheet-metal roofs, outhouses and boarded-up shacks crouched that nobody had ever bothered to take down. A few feet from the end of the road stood a sign that said: Open range. Once a booming mining town, this town had reverted to its original purpose of feeding livestock. A half a mile away at the other end of Commerce, a tall, lean dog stared me down. It was the only living creature I had seen yet that day, but it was strangely immobile—not turning its gaze or moving its tail.

There is no lush patch of grass in the Scofield graveyard because there is no gardener to tend it. Tombstones poke irregularly out of mountain grasses—wild, tall, and dry. Even so, in the disarray there are signs of remembrance. A plaque was erected in 1987 with the names of all the miners who died in the Winter Quarters

explosion. The bronze relief above the names expresses a sense of torque, clamor, and night in the faces of coal miners that seem to be craning into a thick haze, their oil-powered lamps on their caps failing to light the path to escape.

At the dedication, Leslie Norris, former poet in residence at BYU and one of the most important Welsh poets of the post World War era, read a poem he had written for the occasion. I met this man while I attended BYU. My writing teachers would invite him to class, to show him off, I suppose, but more because listening to Leslie speak in his Welsh accent with his careful gesture and vibrant imagery was a beautiful experience. It was as if something dew-kissed and green-smelling had burst into the rooms, and the white painted bricks of the basement classrooms were breaking into verse. Once in poetry class he peered over the top of my poems and smiled at me. He was born in Merthyr Tydfil from mining stock just like my ancestors. His father died in a cave-in there.

In 1983, he moved to the U.S. to lecture at BYU for six months. He and his wife, Catherine Morgan, never left. I suppose he found the Mormon community under the rise of the Rockies a little like the land of his countrymen—the people cut off from the rest, a little peculiar with a set of idioms all their own.

His poem to the Scofield miners was published in a run of lithographs:

*I make this poem for the men and boys
whose lives were taken wherever coal is cut,
who went too early to the earth they worked in.
I have brought with me to Winter Quarters
Echoes of the voices of mourning women.
. . . Let the men from Finland,
The Welsh, the Scotts, Englishmen, Frenchmen,
Dying far from their countries a hundred years ago
Let them be united in the rough brotherhood
Of all tragic mines. . . .
I make this poem for the men who died
When darkness exploded, and for their families
And for those of us who come after them.²⁵*

I walked to the back corner where a marble obelisk engraved

with THOMAS marked the resting place of Evan Jr. and Frederick. The stone itself stood six feet tall and was mounted on a two-foot piece of concrete. Red lichen grew on the base, and the inscription listed only names and dates of birth, followed by “sons of E.S. and M.D. Thomas.” The first burial of a Thomas in the new world, it was executed under both the greatest poverty and the most pomp and ceremony. In the whole of Scofield cemetery, only one stone rose more imposing. Bearing the name of Edwin Street, its inscription had worn away so that a couplet was barely legible: “To forget is vain endeavor. Love’s remembrance lasts forever.” An inscription similar to those on a couple other stones throughout the graveyard, this must have been a popular epitaph at the time. The few other massive grave markers in the cemetery belonged to Welsh and English families.

Most of the miners killed were laid to rest in the front of the graveyard in rows. Each grave spanned wide enough for the coffin and a wall of earth between the next. Some families had replaced the original wooden markers with six-inch cement markers engraved with initials, but many of the original wooden markers remained until 1999, when Ann Carter, a local resident, decided to beautify the graveyard to commemorate the 100th year anniversary. She and her husband, Woody, enlisted the help of the Utah Historical Society and x-rayed the gray, splintered tombstones for the original penciled names written by the blacksmith in 1900. Many of them had fallen over and split into pieces.²⁶ Now new wooden markers stand beside the old, engraved with names like Lasko, Kevlcaho, Kitola, Warla, Koloson, Heikkila, Jacobson, Maknus, Niemi, Bintella. In front row of the graveyard, five small cement blocks mark the remains of the six Louma brothers.

The Finnish in Winter Quarters kept their connections with the old world; and later, when the mine closed in 1922, many moved up to Salt Lake City, where a large community thrives to this day. They were among the 2,000 people who came on May 1, 2000, to commemorate the death of their ancestors; the blast of a cannon at 10:25 signaled the beginning of ceremonies. After graveside services, descendants shared their oral histories of the Winter Quarters explosion.²⁷ Word reached the great-grandchildren of Mataho Louma, the only spared son of Abe Louma, who accompanied his parents back to their homeland. These two

Loumas, a brother and sister, came from Finland to participate in the celebration.²⁸

Ann Carter descended from a Finnish miner, who came to Winter Quarters a month after the explosion to take the place of a dead miner. After I visited the graveyard, I sat bent over a hand-drawn map of Winter Quarters with the Carters in their living room. Scofield is located in a flat valley between the tops of mountain ranges; and on the far south side of the town, a small road leads up to Winter Quarters. It can be hardly called a valley, the indentation between the two mountain faces is so slight. Tucked away and inconsequential, if it weren't for the accident, Winter Quarters would have disappeared from history. I would know little of the circumstances that Evan, Margaret, and Zeph encountered in their first mining experience in the new world. Winter Quarters is recorded only as a consequence of tragedy. Ann Carter would never have grown up in Scofield if not for the accident that brought a new wave of Finnish immigrants to the area. The Carters and I leaned over the map. Ann pointed to the schoolhouse, the superintendent's home, and the church.

My ancestors might have lived in Scofield or in Winter Quarters. In an area so small it seems hardly worth making a distinction. However in those days, it might have added a mile or so to the morning and evening trudge to and from the shaft where the miners would descend and walk another mile into the side of the mountain. Winter Quarters is private property now, and I arrived in Scofield unwittingly in the middle of hunting season. I drove to the edge of the town and parked in front of a gate. A thick hunter in camouflage was loading a four-wheeler into the back of a truck and, according to an old farmer in faded cap standing by, was the owner of Winter Quarters canyon. He ignored me for fifteen minutes while the farmer and his daughter warned me I might get shot. I insisted, and the hunter turned and waved his hand. I walked up the road to Winter Quarters, convinced my pink and white striped shirt would set me off from the deer.

A farm snuggled into the mouth, but from there the canyon thinned. A creek ran down the middle. Willows sank their roots into the banks, and the woods climbed down the hill covering where telephone poles used to carry energy up to the mine. It was such a narrow canyon that I couldn't imagine how so many small

wooden huts could have clung to the sides of the hill, the cool wind asserting itself through the cracks between the boards where the gum had worked free. I walked the path that Zeph and his brothers would have walked every morning to the mine, trailing behind Evan. I know so little of this man, only that there was something in him that Margaret loved and that he was short and tempestuous. There are a few foundations of outhouses on the outskirts of town and some other lines of stones visible through plant growth. The town was dismantled when the mine closed, every bit of stone and wood hauled out for other enterprises. Only two walls remain of the company store, cutting a lonely silhouette against the deeper canyon where the Finns and Greeks thrived away from the families of the other coal workers.

This intimate, wooded canyon seemed fitting as the ghost town of my ancestors. A deer ran across my path, and then another, in hunting season worse luck than black cats. I shivered, thinking of the hunters in the woods and the shot that could echo at any moment from the trees. I was so sure of my pink and white stripes, but watching the deer dash out of the overgrowth diminished my bravado. The cool air held a light, and a creek lined with willows trickled in the silence of the canyon. The colors of the forest deepened with the approaching dusk. I wasn't insensitive to the beauty or the danger; my heart beat loudly and my breath fell short as I climbed the trail of my ancestors. Fear, wonder, and love—the latter quickening my pulse the most. It was a grasping love of ghosts, spirits I wished would appear so I could say: Yes, this is Evan and this is Margaret, and they lived here, and I long to know them still.

In the photos of Winter Quarters taken just after the accident in 1900, it is early spring, and the quakies are leafless. They make thin stick figures against the evergreens. At that time the willows were cleared from the side of the river to make room for the railroad. Compared to most trees, aspens have short life spans, somewhere between 70–100 years, but the pines live longer. The pines that seemed to crowd closer into the slender valley as dusk deepened could be more than a century old. These same pines might have lined Evan and Zeph's early morning walks to the mine. These pines could have blocked the winter wind coming through the cracks of their cabin. It was possible that in this moment my

life and the lives of Evan, Margaret, and Zephaniah were contemporary in the life of a tree.

Notes

1. George Henry Borrow, *Wild Wales: Its People, Language, and Scenery* (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1888), 459.
2. T. W. Rammell, quoted in Joseph Gross, "Water Supply and Sewerage in Merthyr Tydfil, 1850–1974," *Merthyr Historian* 2 (1978): 68.
3. Wirt Sikes, *Rambles and Studies in Old South Wales* (London: S. Low, 1881); quoted in "Merthyr Tydfil," Genuki.org, <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/GLA/MerthyrTydfil/> (accessed July 25, 2010).
4. Huw Williams, "Brass Bands, Jazz Bands, Choirs: Aspects of Music in Merthyr," *Merthyr Historian* 3 (1980): 100–110.
5. Quoted in R. Meurig Evans, *Children in the Mines, 1840–42* (Cardiff: National Museum of Wales, 1979), 15.
6. *Ibid.*, 7.
7. John L. Hughs, "Nothing Special," in *Coal: An Anthology of Mining*, edited by Tony Curtis (Bridgend, Wales: Seren, 1997), 44.
8. For the information on the South Wales mining industry, see J. Y. Morris and L. J. Williams, *The South Wales Coal Industry, 1841–1875* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1958).
9. Margaret Wilding Thomas, "History of Zephaniah Davis Thomas," in my possession.
10. Marie Trevelyan, *Glimpses of Welsh Life and Character* (London: J. Hogg, 1893), 240.
11. For information on Dan Jones, see Mike Cannon, "Festival Celebrates Welsh Heritage," *LDS Church News*, March 13, 1993.
12. Mary Jane Thomas Jones, "Margaret Davis Thomas: My Mother," in my possession.
13. "Local Intelligence," *Merthyr Express*, June 22, 1870.
14. Borrow, *Wild Wales*, 460.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Welsh Mormon History, <http://welshmormonhistory.org/> (accessed July 25, 2010).
17. *Ibid.*
18. Quoted in Robert N. Reid, *The Scofield Mine Disaster* (Lincoln, Neb.: BR Enterprises, 2002), 27.
19. Margaret Wilding Thomas, "History of Zephaniah Davis Thomas."
20. Quoted in Reid, *The Scofield Mine Disaster*, 42.
21. "Most Appalling Mine Horror!" *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 2, 1900, 1.

22. Kimberly Mele, "Part II: 'One Spark of Time': The Winter Quarters Mine Disaster," *Holmes Safety Association*, July 2007, 22, <http://www.holmessafety.org/2000/july00.pdf> (accessed July 2010). Additional sources used on the Scofield Mine disaster include J. W. Dilley, *History of the Scofield Mine Disaster: A Concise Account of the Incidents and Scenes that Took Place at Scofield, Utah, May 1, 1900, When Mine Number Four Exploded, Killing 200 Men* (Provo, Utah: Skelton Publishing, 1900); "The Death Toll Had Reached 250," *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 4, 1900; Utah's Castle Country, "Winter Quarters Coal Mine Disaster," http://www.castlecountry.com/what_to_do/mining_winter_quarters.html; Ronald G. Watt, "Explosion of Pleasant Valley Coal Company," *Utah History to Go*, http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/statehood_and_the_progressive_era/explosionofpleasantvalleycoalcompany.html.

23. The information on Evan, Margaret, and Zephaniah Thomas was obtained from the following family history documents: (1) Mary Jane Thomas Jones, "Margaret Davis Thomas: My Mother"; (2) Cornel Thomas, "Years of Violence, Years of Growth: A Chapter in the Life of My Grandfather, Zephaniah Davis Thomas"; (3) Margaret Wilding Thomas, "History of Zephaniah Davis Thomas."

24. *Utah Advocate*, January 17, 1901, quoted in Troy Taylor, "The Haunted Winter Quarters Mine: Near Scofield," *History and Hauntings of America: Haunted Utah*, http://www.prairieghosts.com/w_quarters.html (accessed July 2010).

25. Leslie Norris, *Elegy: For the Men Killed at Winter Quarters, Scofield Utah* (Provo, Utah: Tryst Press, 2000).

26. Brent Israelsen, "Mine Disaster in Carbon County Won't Be Forgotten," *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 31, 1999.

27. "Remembering Winter Quarters: Commemoration Will Be One to Be Remembered," April 25, 2000, *Sun Advocate and Emery County Progress*, 2.

28. Information obtained by interview with Ann Carter, 2007.

POETRY

Bum Bam Boom

J. S. Absher

After school the Greer boy and I
run home past the bottling plant
where I glimpse through the plate-glass
the endless capping of mouths.
As a semi chugs past, we notice
the trailer looks funny—cocked back

on its haunches—when we hear the thud
of its rear tire, freed from the lug nuts,
leaping the curb behind us. The tire
races across a yard and half knocks down
one fence before it bursts through airborne
and rolls across the next yard to stop

upright against the far fence. *If we hadn't
been running, we'd a-been squashed flat,*
whispers the boy. *Jesus saved us.* His brother
says he's slow, *under-growed
and pigeon-toed, with one long horn
and one big eye,* and the boy throws me

down the steps when I call him retard.
I cry myself to sleep for shame. Daddy
calls it rough justice. In the woods he shows me
a white fawn. A freak of nature, he says,
a goner. It looks at me with big pink eyes.
It glows in the laurel like snow.

Abracadabra

J. S. Absher

The missionaries stay in an old apartment.
The shades are yellow as runny yolk.
The afternoon sun is beating to get in.

When I help them practice teaching, they
call me little Mister Brown, like in the book
they've brought from Salt Lake. They fold out

the flannelboard like a square umbrella
and set it on its side. As they rehearse
their dialogue, they stick to the black flannel

colored cutouts they pretend to pull from my ear.
One cutout, a business man in blue suit and short-
brimmed hat, they set at the top and call God.

Surprised, I ask who's His Daddy—and *His* Daddy:
who's the God of God? They say, Have faith.

Blue Glass

Lizzie Skurnick

Of course that's seen
behind a screen. The lake
by day is patternless gray,

the O of breath-stoked
mirror or a chain-smoked
sky, slim fingers

rising, as smoke lingers.
Anyway, it's burning.

I'm still learning
to snap and send
and recommend

these shot-staggered
panes when how suddenly
strange it seems not to know

how at all to reach you
with even one of these
wide fish bellies

bumping up against
the screen.
Fenced-in,

penned, poor trout
keening, thrashing to get out.

Internal Affairs

Lizzie Skurnick

You'd like to maintain innocence—
The mushroom path of fingerprints

Impressing your distinct presence
Now entered into evidence;

You want only to give yourself up.
Now, how did ripe interrogation

Turn to one-way conversation?
A facing mirror's shimmering cusp

Conceals no dark interior press
Of those who'd like you to confess.

You were prepared to be inspected
And how brilliantly reflected

Is this abject pantomime
Of one who cared to solve your crime.

The Leg

Annette Weed

Mud to the horse's knees,
miles with only the moon
and then his patient screaming,

the leg red and swollen
and only amputation to offer.
He would not do this again,

would not only offer loss,

where to go from there
always his question.

His mind working
turning possibilities
must have been touched
by God, led

to consider the dead bone—
what he called the sequestra—
its removal,

it might work,
and then the mother, Lucy
pressing him, her question
what can you do to save it?

He describes his procedure,
really an experiment,
with some success and the boy wants
only for the mother to leave the room,
the father to hold him.

He proceeds, the cutting
always hurts his heart
though he knows it can help,
places his assistants
strategically to block the boy's view

knowing this must be quick careful complete
knowing as weeks go by of the leg's improvement
not knowing what the boy went on
to do or why he needed the leg.

Fish Stories

Annette Haws

Although it had never been formally declared or written in cursive on a piece of parchment, Jolene understood her place in the family hierarchy. She was right there between the ancient golden retriever and the cat. She had chosen, at an earlier date, not to be a recalcitrant complainer but to bask in the reflected achievements of her husband and sons. Their job was to perform on the world's stage; her job was to sell popcorn, pom-poms, and programs and cheer loudly from the stands. Okay, she could do that. That she consumed a little too much of her products—candied popcorn, cookies, cakes, amazing garlic mashed potatoes, and an endless variety of soups and stews—was no one's fault but her own.

Years ago, after she mentioned Lauren and Alan's third trip to Paris in four years and the Hamiltons' plans for their twentieth anniversary, a Caribbean cruise with their entire family, Boyd had held her plump palms in his strong hands and said in a hushed tone, "I can't do all the things I need to do if you're unhappy." She had solemnly nodded and pushed all thoughts out of her head of strolling along the Seine holding hands or walking along a deck in white linen resort wear as the moon rose over the ocean.

Boyd was tall and handsome and smart and important, and he was married to her. Other women might have more romance in their lives, but she had Boyd. When the chitchat at her quilting group or Church socials turned to exotic locales, she deftly turned the conversation to the wonderfulness of Boyd.

Every evening after dinner, he closed the study doors and worked into the night, sacrificing himself, sacrificing his time with her; but she didn't complain. His work was too important—to them all, family and friends alike. Her husband was CEO of a major company developing green technology. She didn't come right out and say it to her friends—but she certainly implied it—that if

some of those technologies were successful, the planet would be saved, including the charming Hotel Lutèce on the Ile Saint Louis in Paris, the entire Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, and Mopion, a dollop of sand surrounded by translucent water that Jeannie Hamilton had described once too often. Conversations over the colors for the nine-patch block ceased when the other women realized that Boyd saving the planet trumped them all. Trips, dress sizes, doting children—all were trivial in comparison to a husband who was not only running the stake (six congregations and two small Spanish-speaking branches) but was also saving Mother Earth. Only once had she caught Lauren flashing Mary a look, but Mary had politely turned her head.

So Jolene had stood open-mouthed when Boyd announced his intention to take her with him to a conference in Hawaii. *You could have knocked me off my pins with a feather*, her great-aunt's favorite expression, bounced around in her head.

Early in August, she peered out the airplane window at the Kona Coast as they soared over clumps of palm trees hiding luxurious resorts. She held her breath. In six hours, she had not fluttered once about her fear of flying. Boyd neatly replaced the sheaf of papers he'd been studying in his leather briefcase.

"We're here," he said, smiling expansively.

With only a moment's trepidation, she felt the plane's tires touch down on the runway at Kailua Airport. Stepping down from the plane's aluminum stairs, she clutched her carry-on in her arms until she noticed the other women swinging their bags, laughing, and getting into the island mode. She relaxed her grip on the handle and hurried to keep up with Boyd's long strides.

An orchid, a resort ID card, and a smiling concierge gesturing toward the pools and the lobby were almost as wonderful as the moist air touching her skin. Jolene had shriveled up in the past two years, she was sure of it. Parched skin that no lotion could soften relaxed in the fragrant humidity. When she inhaled audibly on their way to their hotel room, Boyd turned to her and raised one disapproving eyebrow.

Muttering anxiously, almost to himself, he followed her into Room 235. He rattled off his list as he opened the screen door to the lanai and watched the surf hitting the sand. He needed to register, talk with Bob Greer from United Technologies, get the lay of

the land, arrange for a working breakfast, and probably schedule a golf game or two. Down on the beach, children were making sand castles or chasing the waves, and dozens of heads bobbed in the water near the reef.

“Did you bring a book?” he asked, glancing over his shoulder.

“Oh, don’t worry about me. I’ll wander around and unpack. Get settled, you know.”

Boyd unbuttoned his starched white shirt and dropped it on the bed. Jolene’s heart started to pound expectantly until he pulled a fresh polo shirt from his suitcase and slipped his iPhone into his pocket. “Do you have your phone? Is it charged?”

She nodded.

“I’ll call you later. Choose a place to have dinner.” And then he was gone. She crumpled onto the edge of the bed and pulled a Ziploc bag of chocolate chip cookies out of her carry-on.

Each morning Jolene ate banana-macadamia nut pancakes on the terrace. In the afternoon, she reclined in a lounge chair and sipped a strawberry smoothie by the pool. At night Boyd arrived back at their room, tired and worried and hungry. After dinner, he promptly fell asleep while she watched old movies on mute.

Some nights Jolene sat wrapped in her new pink cotton robe on the lanai, listening to the sounds of the waves and watching people in the adjacent restaurant. Torches lit the entrance, and shadows fell across the sand. She could hear laughter and the clinking of glass. One night she thought she saw Bob Greer and a slender woman with silver-white hair and tanned skin. A fringed, turquoise shawl around her shoulders and her sandals caught in her fingers, the woman leaned against a tall palm watching the white breakers pound against the sea wall. When Bob touched her shoulder, the woman turned, smiling at something he said. Jolene heard Boyd’s gentle snoring through the sliding screen door.

He’d promised her, and perhaps himself, an outing on Thursday.

“If things go well, we’ll take off and go snorkeling. I’ve booked an excursion,” he’d said, “to the bay where Captain Cook was clubbed to death.” Leafing through a stack of paper proposals, Boyd smiled expectantly, as though she should be pleased. As though she didn’t hate swimming and wasn’t afraid to put her

face in the water. Plus she'd seen what women wore around the pool, and her suit had a generous skirt.

"Go to that little bay," he'd suggested. "Rent some gear and practice." But the bay was a half-mile walk, and the attendant was surly, and the water was cold, even after she stood in the waves up to her knees for ten minutes. She'd smiled at the little children frolicking in the water and splashing in the waves, but then she'd pulled the mask off her face and headed for the small strip of sand between the water and the fringe of grass.

Thursday morning, Jolene ordered a bowl of oatmeal and a selection of island fruits. She tried to suck in her stomach, but the effort involved more than just her abdominal muscles, and her shoulders and neck were sunburned and uncooperative.

As a piece of mango melted between her molars and her tongue, she remembered dreaming about Will Grant the previous night. He'd been swimming with her in the little bay. Her body, lithe and young, had webbed toes; no fussing with flippers as she backed into the surf. Will had held her hand, and they'd laughed and splashed water at each other before diving beneath the waves and swimming effortlessly, without gills or a snorkel. When Boyd's alarm buzzed, she'd squeezed her eyes shut and tried to slip back into the dream.

Pouring another packet of Splenda on the oatmeal, she wondered if Will was still teaching third grade in Beaver, a parched town in the middle of Utah. Such a pretty boy, with blond hair and a quick smile. They'd been so desperately in love.

"You're an attractive girl," her mother had said. "Lose a few pounds. You can do better." Boyd equaled better. A serious student from an excellent family, good, long-standing members of the Church. "Boyd will go far," her mother had said, and he had, but had she? She crossed her ankles neatly under the wrought iron table and sat up a little straighter.

Why did she still dream about Will? It must be almost thirty years since she'd seen him last, the day he had found her in the stacks on the third floor of the Merrill Library. She'd been studying for her abnormal psychology final; her papers and books were spread on the table in front of her, and she was crying. She always spent a fair amount of time crying during test week, but she shouldn't be crying now. A lovely diamond was prominently dis-

played on her left hand. Her degree would be more of a decoration. Her father had paid the deposit at the reception center. Peach and pale green were the colors she'd chosen.

People bumped in and out of tables during finals, so she didn't look up when a wooden chair scraped across the linoleum. She balled up the tissue in her fist, pressed it under her nose, and glanced across the table. There he was. Will. He reached over and touched her free hand.

"Jo." Her name coming out of his mouth sounded like the lyric in a song. The right side of his mouth curled up in a half smile. "Your dad told me you were here studying."

She glanced anxiously over her shoulder, as she slid her left hand under the edge of her notebook. Inhaling deeply, she said, "I'm getting married. The end of June."

He nodded. "You're the millionth person to tell me."

Catching a tear sliding down her nose with the tip of her finger, she sniffed loudly. "When did you get home?"

He cocked his head to one side. "Two years after I left. Pretty much standard."

Her face flushed hot. He'd been home three months and she hadn't heard from him. She'd never delivered the winsome post-engagement speech or flashed the tragic smile she'd rehearsed in the bathroom mirror. Now, here she was, red-faced, blubbery, her only tissue a soggy rag.

He pressed her knuckle above the ring. "This is a mistake. I've thought about this a lot. We're supposed to be together. You and me. Like before."

Her mother's voice spewed out of Jolene's mouth. "Only 10 percent of girls end up marrying their missionaries. People change. Two years is a long time."

He covered her mouth with his palm. "I was more than just your *missionary*. Have you told Boyd that? Have you told your bishop?" He dropped his hand.

She shook her head. He'd let his blond hair grow again. It curled over the edge of his collar, but he didn't look the same. His jaw was more pronounced, more mannish. He'd grown up. He clenched and unclenched his fist until his knuckles turned white.

"If I tell Boyd, it will put a stop to all this, won't it?" His eyes searched her face.

She shuffled the papers on the table.

“I spent two years in Bolivia,” he said, “because you wanted me to go. You promised me you’d wait, Jo.” His voice was low and insistent. “What happened? We were best friends.”

At first she leafed through her notebooks as if she’d lost something important, some pertinent bit of information, then she rested her forehead on her palm. She tried to think, but memories choked her. It had been spring their senior year. They’d sluffed class to wander along the canal bank behind the high school. She’d given Will a little push, caught him off guard, and he’d fallen into the water. Off went her yellow patent leather shoes, and she jumped in. Water running down his face, his blond hair plastered to his forehead, he’d kissed her. Right there in the middle of the canal—in freezing water from the spring run-off—he’d kissed her soft and long, and then they’d laughed and hidden in the tall grass.

She started to smile, “Do you remember—”

“Of course, I do,” he whispered. “I remember everything.”

She squeezed her eyes shut and remembered the watery smell of the canal on his skin and shaking grass seed out of her hair. She bit her bottom lip.

“Boyd’s brilliant,” she whispered. “He’ll make a wonderful father.”

Will winced as though she’d slapped him. He pushed the chair back and stared down at her. “But Jo, does he ever make you laugh?”

As the waiter passed her table and a gentle breeze rustled the palm fronds, she shoved the oatmeal away and reached for a poppy seed muffin.

Boyd returned promptly at 12:15, his tight features belying the broad smile on his face. “Ready?” he asked needlessly. Jolene had learned long ago to be punctual, her beach towel tucked under her arm, her sunscreen, glasses, a comb, and granola bar hidden in her bag. Nodding pleasantly, she exhaled slowly. Hyperventilating irritated Boyd.

A red-striped canvas awning covered the sightseeing shuttle that transported them to the dock where a jaunty sign invited them to join *Captain Jack and His All Girl Crew* for a *Scuba and Snorkeling Adventure*. A green plastic slide curved around the side of

the boat from the top deck into the water. Jolene's stomach lurched. Fifteen passengers made their way across the plank and found seats among the red-cushioned benches. She clutched the railing until Boyd loosened her fingers as the boat moved out and motored along the coast.

Lean, toned girls in bikinis so small they were almost irrelevant sauntered back and forth serving drinks and glimpses. Each taut fanny made Jolene's suit feel a little tighter. Boyd declined the drink. Captain Jack—and Jolene decided that, thirty years ago, the name “Jack” must have been a requirement for birthing baby boys on the islands—described in delightful pidgin the hotels on shore.

When she spotted dolphins racing alongside the boat and leaping out of the water, she touched Boyd's shoulder, but he didn't acknowledge her. His hand shielding his eyes, he scanned the coastline as the captain described the multi-million-dollar properties.

“He probably graduated from MIT,” Boyd whispered, nodding toward Captain Jack. Jolene smiled, and Boyd patted her thigh absent-mindedly.

Kealakekua Bay was finally in view. Captain Cook's memorial, a white obelisque marking the spot where the clubbing actually took place, jutted up from the black rock base. Across the bay, sheer lava cliffs dove into the water. Another boat with another Captain Jack and another green plastic slide was anchored a quarter mile away. Jolene watched the tourists on the other boat climb the steps and, laughing as they slipped down the slide, splash into the undulating water. Preschoolers, Jolene thought as she tightened her life belt and adjusted her mask.

Breathing slowly in and out, she stood on the flimsy ladder a few moments too long. Boyd nudged her. “Go,” he mouthed, and so she did. As she eased herself into the water, her white T-shirt billowed out around her, and she forced herself to breathe into the mouthpiece.

Moving his flippers rhythmically, Boyd passed her, gesturing with his arm that she was to follow. Both arms stretched out to make her more buoyant, she kicked her legs tentatively and swam away from the boat. Face down, she searched the clear, cold water for signs of sharks or sting rays. She didn't like swimming with fish. She'd seen them before. In aquariums, large fish and small,

probably in the kids' pediatrician's office. Or postcards. People loved pictures of exotic fish on postcards. She reminded herself that all she had to do was keep from freezing to death or turning into lunch until Boyd had seen enough fish and headed back to the boat where he could pretend he wasn't ogling the bikini-clad crew. She kicked her legs, stopped, breathed in and out slowly, and kicked a little more.

A black-and-gold-striped fish swam behind her. She could feel its tiny eyes. She glanced out of the corner of her mask to watch its little cheeks glub in and out. She swam a little farther, the fish following closely. Holding her arms and legs perfectly still, Jolene bobbed up and down with the motion of the waves. She was perfectly calm until the fish touched her leg. Bolting straight up out of the water, she jerked her head around looking for the boat or Boyd, or another snorkeler—someone, anyone. Salt water up her nose, she sputtered and coughed.

Pouring the water out of her mask, she twisted around and spotted the green slide on the side of the boat. Wet hair stuck to her forehead and got in her eyes. Forget the mask, she thought. She pushed it up on her forehead and swam the breaststroke kicking with her flippers, until she reached the side of the boat and the ladder.

Her wet T-shirt clinging to her torso, she shook her head and sent a spray of water over the cushions. She didn't care. She wasn't going back into that ocean. She'd fake it. She'd describe every fish postcard she'd ever seen. She was a world-class faker. A pro. She hugged herself and waited for the sun to return her core temperature to normal.

"Screw this," she muttered. "A vacation. I'm supposed to be on a vacation, not on some death-defying, sexless adventure on the high seas. This is supposed to be fun. Dammit."

She stewed angrily for more than an hour, watching the surface of the water for Boyd to reemerge. But he didn't. Other people were climbing into the boat, finding their beach towels, making wisecracks to one another, and popping open bottles of beer. She searched under the bench for her bag and her flip-flops. Her matted hair had dried and was probably beyond hope, but she could at least run her comb through it.

She bent down on one knee and searched again. No bag. No

towel. No Boyd. She tried to glance inconspicuously at the other swimmers and the bikini-clad crew, but she hadn't really noticed faces earlier in the day. She walked around to the front of the boat and looked up at Captain Jack lounging in the checked plastic lawn chair with a diet Coke in his hand.

The guy with the red hair and the Vikings T-shirt wasn't her particular Captain Jack. Her shoulders slumped wearily. Wrong man. Wrong boat.

She stared across the bay at the other boat a quarter mile away. The boat's engines were engaged and a soft spray of water churned in the wake. Feeling betrayed, she slid into the water, adjusted her mask, and paddled furiously across the bay, stopping every few minutes to make sure she was headed in the right direction and not out to sea. Her legs ached. She fought to keep from gagging on the mouthpiece.

Finally, she drew close enough to the boat to hear Captain Jack ranting over the microphone about the missing fifteenth diver. Ranting, it seemed, about her. When one of the crew spotted her in the water, the captain spun the wheel and closed the distance. Several hands pulled her up the ladder. Goose bumps covered her arms and thighs, and her suit wedged uncomfortably in her crotch.

Boyd glowered under the awning, his jaw clenched. She could see the muscles in his cheek twitch. Everyone's eyes were on her. The captain was yelling at the girl at the bow to haul anchor; they were going to be forty minutes late for the dinner cruise. A thickish sort of woman with an off-center ponytail sidled up to Jolene. "You need to say something to your husband, honey. For a half hour, he didn't realize you were missing, and the captain ripped him a new one."

What, exactly, was Jolene supposed to say? But there it was—out on the deck—what everyone was thinking, why everyone was staring at her. Her husband hadn't noticed she was missing or didn't care. Or worse, he hoped she was lost under the water with all the fish.

Her hands shook. She scurried over to Boyd's side as though her proximity could erase the tension on board. His nostrils flared, and he hissed, "I am so sick of your obvious plays for atten-

tion.” He handed her the striped bag, dropped onto the cushions, and spoke to her in monosyllables until the next morning.

A week later, on Thursday, Jolene arrived at Mary’s for quilting group. She had bought a new short-sleeved yellow top to display her peeling neck and arms, undeniable evidence of island travel. She knocked on the door, holding her head high. Jeannie answered the door and hugged her quickly. “So how was Hawaii?”

Jolene launched into the preamble she’d rehearsed in the dressing room mirror at Macy’s. “Wonderful. We had such a good time. Boyd finally relaxed a little. He’s been working so hard lately.” She looked around and tried to breathe more slowly. “The hotel was beautiful.” As warm tears began running down her cheeks, she glanced from face to embarrassed face. These were words she’d been enduring for years; but now when it was her turn to say them, she couldn’t form the words in her mouth, couldn’t make a coherent sentence, couldn’t stop crying.

Jeannie guided Jolene toward a brown chenille sofa. Lauren overheard the sobs while she was slicing tomatoes in the kitchen. She leaned over to Mary and whispered, “Poor thing. Stuck on an island with Boyd for ten days.”

The Best Place to Deal with Questions: An Interview with Brady Udall

Note: Brady Udall's most recent novel, The Lonely Polygamist (reviewed this issue), published by the W. W. Norton Press in May 2010, explores ideas of home and family by inhabiting the space of a Mormon polygamous household in which the title character is lonely—even with four wives and twenty-eight children. Kristine Haglund, editor of Dialogue, interviewed Brady Udall, May 18, 2010, at the Elliot Hotel in Boston, two weeks after the release of the novel.

Kristine: As you well know, Mormons are always interested in famous Mormons' relationship to the Church. From what I've read, it seems that you like the Church, like Mormons, but never were really a believer, never "gained a testimony," in the vernacular.

Brady: That's right. I grew up in the Church, went on a mission. I'm proud to be a Mormon. I did what you're supposed to; I prayed and hoped to be a believer, but it just never took.

Kristine: And that's a problem for Mormons, theologically. That's not supposed to happen.

Brady: Right. It's not supposed to happen, and yet we open the possibility when we tell people—like, as a missionary, I told people—to ask. We tell them that if you ask God, you'll get an answer. Of course, the idea is that there's only one answer; but implicitly, there's this other possibility. And I just never got that answer. But it has never really bothered me that much. I think many of us, if

we're in that really difficult place, we worry about it, we obsess about it, and I see people go through that, and I've felt it somewhat—some of the conflict with family and so on—but it never really bothered me as much as it bothers others.

Kristine: I think that situation of wanting to believe but never getting there is a lot more common than we usually think, more than anyone admits. There are a lot of people in any congregation who don't get up on Fast Sunday.

Brady: Right, right. And it's so painful for some people—when they feel that they can never be completely honest about their feelings. And I think it's just too bad. It's too bad there's not an open place for people like that. There's not really a place for those of us who feel that way.

Kristine: Do you think that has to do with the fact that Mormonism is still a new religion? Do you think we'll ever mature enough as a faith that there will be that space?

Brady: Yes, absolutely. We're really just a teenage religion. We're so worried about what other people think. It's weird, in the history of a church, to go so quickly from being a peculiar oddity to being mainstream and worried about image. It's bizarre, and it hasn't been entirely healthy for the Church to make that leap so quickly.

Kristine: And also strange for a religion to come of age in a time when data get stored, when everything is recorded. There are some good things about having your founding documents lost!

Brady: Yes! Media has become so prevalent, and everything's instantaneous and worldwide. But I think it will come with maturity. All of these issues just need time.

Kristine: It seems to me that although you describe yourself as not being a believer, you *get* believers just right. I'm thinking especially of one of the children in *The Lonely Polygamist*, Faye, in her little prayer cave. That rings so true to me, that certain kind of melancholy, mystical child, who's prone to that kind of fervent belief that is right on the edge of something darker.

Brady: Maybe. She's a damaged child. That's what she's responding to. She's damaged in some way or another, and she's trying to heal herself, I guess. I'm not sure that I really get belief any more

than anyone else, but there's such a dearth of religious or spiritual or searching (however you want to put it) people in modern American fiction. If someone's naturally religious or spiritual, they're usually looked down on, or they're a villain. Whether it's a priest or a pastor at church or a religious family, they're somehow suspect.

Kristine: Zealots.

Brady: Somebody asked me to name a book, or a few, with religious characters who were sympathetic, and I can barely think of any. It's hard to think of contemporary books where a religious character is treated with depth or respect. And that's too bad. I don't entirely understand it. So I guess one of the things I try to do is write books with people like that.

Kristine: It does seem like a real failure of imagination that we somehow can't think ourselves into that space where a sane, good person could be religious.

Brady: It might have to do with the nature of writers maybe?—that we keep ourselves a little detached, look at everything a little skeptically. We're a little distrustful of the simplicity of belief and may be inclined to think there's something dark behind it.

Kristine: Is it a difficult task, technically, to develop a character whose faith is simple or whose worldview seems maybe uncomplicated?

Brady: No, not really. Like in my last novel, Edgar Mint has this very, very simple faith, even though all these terrible things happen to him.

Kristine: And yet no one could say he's one dimensional.

Brady: I hope not. I know people like that. He says somewhere, "I believe in God. I just don't have faith in him." And that's sort of like a play on words, but it's also how I know a lot of people must feel—that there's just this innate belief there; but what the world, or God, has done to them is hard for them to comprehend or make sense of. So they believe, but they don't have what they'd call faith.

Kristine: Why is fiction a good place to explore the search for God? Why not personal essays or reporting? Why fiction?

Brady: That's a good question, and I actually think fiction is the best way to understand humans' personal attempts at connection with God. And that's because fiction can only be about one person, or two people, or maybe one family; and in its specificity, we can see this search for connection at work. That's why we love stories, why the Bible is full of stories, why Jesus spoke in stories. We can only understand truth in its human context or form, I think. That's not to say that philosophy or theology isn't worthwhile, just that for most of us, what touches us, what's meaningful about God—it sounds corny—but it's in our hearts. It can't be intellectualized.

Kristine: Yeah, and fiction is the right form to get at the specificity of that experience, and that particularity, the physicality of things. And your books are very concrete; they pay close attention to physical details, as a way of getting at the metaphysical.

That's something I somehow didn't understand until I had children—that most of what we really care about is embodied. We don't love "Love" as an abstraction. We love the people around us whom we touch. Pretty soon after my first baby was born, I had to quit watching *ER* on television. George Clooney was cute and all, but I just couldn't handle watching an injured or very sick child. So, of course, your books are hard to read, and, I imagine, excruciating to write, as you explore that detail, pay attention to what happens to physical bodies.

So why do you go there? Why does the search for God go to children hurt and dying, and to such particular descriptions of them?

Brady: Yeah, I go there, and I'd like to say I have no idea why, but I'm drawn to it, by that same fear you mention. It's such a strange thing; it's something I think about and worry about every day. It's there all the time. If we had a psychologist here, she could maybe tell me why I have to do that. But when I start writing about it—start writing about people who are going through it—I feel like something meaningful is happening.

Writing about somebody's love interest in a book, I kind of have to force myself to do that. I don't feel compelled. But when Golden [the protagonist in *The Lonely Polygamist*] loses his daughter, that's exceptionally compelling. I can barely even stand it, it's

so compelling. It's probably my way of dealing with my own fear. It might seem twisted or weird. I guess you might wonder why I'd do that in such a public way. But I really do believe that, just as fiction is the best place to deal with the question of God, it's also the best place to deal with the questions of why we lose the people that we love, and where do they go, and how do we just keep on going when they're gone? I don't think we'll ever understand God in the way that we'd want to, but I think we can at least try to understand what it means to lose someone that we love.

Kristine: I think this is the one part of parenthood that nothing can ever prepare you for—that knot of fear that you live with all the time. I think that fear drives a lot of cultural weirdness, and I think you're probably right that fiction is a much better place to explore it than, say, car-seat manufacturing or school-lunch policies.

Brady: I think you're right, and I've had people write letters or emails that mean a lot to me, that say, "I lost a child" or "I had something terrible happen to me when I was a child" and "this is comforting," or "reading this, I felt less alone." Something just that simple tells me that fiction can provide that consolation. It can give at least a suggestion of understanding what's inside someone else, and that, in turn, provides understanding of oneself. I don't know. I think there's value just in that kind of comfort it can offer.

Kristine: Yeah. While I was reading your book and rereading *Edgar Mint*, and thinking about these questions, we had a terrible thing happen in our town. There was a freakish windstorm that lasted maybe twenty-five minutes. Some little boys were playing outside, and a tree limb fell on a third-grader from my son's school and killed him. And what I noticed in the aftermath is that there's *nothing*—no generalization, no theological statement, nothing that is worth saying—in that situation. And what you do in the book, you say, "This is physically what happened. This is what people did . . ." And fiction can do that, simply bear witness; and in a way, that's so much more helpful—more meaningful—than trying to theorize it.

Brady: I think it's more meaningful than trying to simplify it, because there's no simplifying it or making sense of it, is there? It has to be the worst thing that could happen to a human being,

having your child hurt or abused or killed. And I'll continue to write about it. It sounds crazy, but I know I will. When I sit down to write, that's what drives it. *The Lonely Polygamist* is about a lot of things, but really—Golden losing his daughter, and Trish with her lost children—that's what drives them, what drives the novel. You can have twenty-eight children, or you can have one; but if you lose one, that's what your life is about, and it doesn't make a bit of difference to anyone how many other children they have.

Kristine: I have a friend who started a career in public policy and ended up writing fiction, and she said that the thing that was hardest for her about working on policy was that you had to compare, had to decide what was least bad. And she said fiction felt more real to her than “real-world” policy, because she could say that one person's death was infinitely horrible. One person is the whole universe, and no one's death or pain is less or more than another's. You can't count that.

Brady: I agree.

Kristine: Another place where you go to really explicit physical detail is with the fallout scenes. Why go there? Why set this in the '70s so that the nuclear testing is the backdrop?

Brady: Well, when I was doing the research, I met any number of polygamist families. And as I was talking to them and just being around them, mostly in southern Utah and northern Arizona, I heard all these stories about their cancers and their children with birth defects. And I sort of knew all that stuff; but when I was there—looking right at it—it really got under my skin, and so I started doing the reading and the research. I was just beyond horrified that the facts are as they are. I knew right away that this would be part of the book, and I knew that it would be at the very center of the book. And in fact, the scene with the explosion is right at the numerical center.

I thought the editor would probably make me take it out, and at least one reviewer has said it's not necessary and shouldn't have been included. I sort of assumed that would happen more, actually. But it works because that's just part of that story to me, and that's why it's set in the '70s. There's no other reason. I don't like symbolism, really. I don't find it useful usually, but here it works very nicely—the correlation between the nuclear family, the tree

of life, all these things—and it seemed very easy to make it work that way if you want it to. But to me, that’s just extra. It’s really secondary to the fact that it’s part of these people’s lives, part of their stories.

And clearly, it wasn’t just polygamists who experienced this. It was other Mormons, too, patriotic people who did not speak out, so they were the easiest people to abuse. When the wind was blowing the other direction, toward Las Vegas, they didn’t set off bombs, only when it was blowing toward Utah.

Kristine: It doesn’t seem like mainstream Mormons have even remotely begun to deal with this, and I don’t even know if they can.

Brady: They haven’t. They haven’t dealt with this at all. My own father grew up in Fredonia, Arizona, and his sister—my aunt—has uterine cancer, and she actually got part of a settlement from the government. I didn’t know this until recently. I was talking to my dad about it, and he still spoke as though it wasn’t really a problem. And I asked if they’d watched the blasts, and he said yes, but it happened a long time ago—fifty years ago, eons—and it’s not a big deal. And that bothers me.

If there’s a Mormon mindset, at least in the Intermountain West, it’s “Let’s just let those bad things be, keep our chins up, and keep movin’ on.” And that’s [laughing], it’s an old-fashioned way of doing it, and it’s maybe hard as younger people for us to understand. So this was just a way of doing my small part to let people know about this, to start looking at it. And I’m shocked by how many people ask if this is real, if it really happened.

Kristine: I don’t know if I’ll be able to articulate the way this is connected in my head, but I’ve been thinking about it: about Mormons’ ambiguous relationship with the physical landscape they inhabit and the American political landscape. It’s as though the requirement of being überpatriotic to prove their American-ness somehow alienates them from the land they inhabit. You would think Mormons more than anyone would identify with their abused landscape and love it, but they mostly don’t. And maybe that’s because it was the landscape of exile. There’s this constant sense that it ought to be something else, some *place* else—it’s supposed to blossom as the rose, be something it’s not.

Brady: The relationship is almost a confrontational one. I think it

comes from that pioneer background, where we're gonna come fight the elements, and make the desert bloom—right?—but it's a fight, rather than a real relationship.

Kristine: There's something about identifying with the government, with (at least in the case of the Nevada tests) the destroyer of the land that is strange to me.

Brady: It is strange—and disturbing. And you see it in other cultures or subcultures, too—the crappy little shack with a flagpole flying the American flag. And you think, there are some people who have benefited from being Americans, but it's not clear that you have—and yet still, that's the person who's affirming, "I'm here, I'm part of this," and that's part of the Mormon mindset that's kind of disturbing sometimes. We want to be affirmed, want to fit in so badly that we'll look aside when something like this happens to our own children, our own parents and brothers and sisters. We won't complain. We won't make anything of it.

Kristine: So, one of the things that inevitably happens when a Mormon writes an important book is that someone (like, say, my cousin in his piece in *Slate* yesterday)¹—

Brady: Ah, he's your cousin. I was wondering . . .

Kristine: —brings up the question of the Great Mormon Novel. And it seems to me that the Great Mormon Novel needs to be, or would most likely be, "Western" in some way, and yet we can't do it, because we don't know or love the land in the ways that regional fiction writers seem to.

Brady: That could be, but I'd suggest the opposite, actually—that the premise that Western literature has to do with the land is mistaken. It's a problematic assumption, even though it's widely held, and it's something that I try to work against as a writer.

Kristine: Okay, so is there a regional literature, or does good writing always transcend place?

Brady: No, there *is* regional literature, but it has little to do with the land. To me, it's about the people. And it seems to be particularly about the West that people make this assumption—Midwestern literature, Southern literature, it's about Midwesterners, about Southerners—but then when we get to the West, it's all about the land. The land comes first. And that's never going to

work. Especially not for a Mormon literature, it's not going to work. It might work for Native American literature, it might work for some other kinds, other staples of Western literature, but I don't think it will work for Mormon literature at all.

And I don't want to beat this subject to death, but even the idea of the Great Mormon Novel is deeply problematic; and bringing up Milton and Shakespeare is a little misleading, and maybe kind of provincial. Nobody asks: Where's the Jewish Shakespeare or the Catholic Milton? Besides, we've been around a little less than two hundred years. Give us some time! And, as far as the Great Mormon Novel, it's clear that *everyone* has something in their head about what that should be; and to most people it's a social novel, or even sociological—your cousin suggests that in his review—and that is something I completely reject.

Good literature—great literature—is specific. Take *Huckleberry Finn*. A sociologically minded critic might say that it doesn't take on the important questions, doesn't deal with slavery, doesn't talk about the Civil War, it's only about a kid and a slave on a raft going the wrong direction. And yet it's probably the greatest work of American literature we have. So the great Mormon novel will show up sometime, and nobody will know. It'll be a book like *The Backslider*, that doesn't announce itself as “great,” but simply is. Someday it will happen.

Kristine: And probably being noticed and called “the Great Mormon Novel” would be its death.

Brady: Right. What will have to happen is that it will have to be around for fifty years, and then people will suddenly look around and realize they've got it. And maybe it will never happen, I don't know. But I will say it's a little disturbing to me that there are so few books you could even put in the running. There are more Mormons in this country than Jews; and when you think of the arts—movies, plays, literature—you'd just never know we're even here. When it comes to the arts, we've got a problem, and it's hard to define exactly what it is.

Kristine: There are all kinds of things people have posited as the source of the trouble—our prudishness, our busy-ness . . . But I think it might be even more the kind of self-consciousness that

tries to figure out if the Great Mormon Novel is here yet. And you can't create when you're that concerned about reception.

Brady: It's like a teenager. "Everybody's watching me! Am I doing it right?" And then when somebody does it, three-quarters of everyone wants to say, "No, that's not quite right. That's not quite Mormon." Once we get a little more comfortable in our own skin, swearing in a novel or a sex scene in a movie is just not going to bother us so much.

Kristine: One hopes!

Brady: One has to hope, because if that's really what it comes down to, it's just never going to happen.

Kristine: Another question about Mormonness raised by this novel, of course, is whether polygamists are our kin. To me, your novel reads very "Mormon." I don't know what it would feel like to read it as a non-Mormon—I just don't have access to that consciousness—but to me, I recognize these people. These seem like people whose mindset I get. And maybe that's because you are writing from a perspective that kind of straddles the two groups. But most Mormons, I think, don't want to understand polygamists or don't want to acknowledge that there are shared habits of mind. We really, really want to distance ourselves.

Brady: And I think that it's completely hypocritical and dishonest for us as a Church to say that these are people who don't have anything to do with us. The Church has put out any number of statements, and I've been attacked for not making a clear enough distinction between "polygamists" and "Mormons"; and yet, whether you like it or not, these people are doing and believing the exact same thing as our forebears, whom we hold out as heroes—our founders. My great-great-grandfather [David King Udall] was put in prison for doing this. My great-great-grandmother, his second wife [Ida Hunt Udall], lived on the Underground, and they suffered mightily for this belief. They didn't want to do it, but they did it because they believed God had told them to. It's absurd for us to turn around and cast scorn on people who are doing and believing the same thing.

And it's still part of our theology. We can't deny it. If anyone denies it, they're lying. So I don't know why we can't at least ac-

knowledge the similarity. If you decide to excommunicate people, well, okay, but at least own up to what you believe. Do we not believe it? Then let's disavow it.

Kristine: As soon as possible, please.

Brady: It would be terribly uncomfortable to say Joseph Smith was wrong, and Brigham Young was wrong . . .

Kristine: The Community of Christ has done just that, and of course it really changes the whole nature of their church.

Brady: Yes, but otherwise, we just have to own up and say, "Yes, this is who we are." But I won't hold my breath for that.

Kristine: But aside from the question of hypocrisy, it just seems a little comical to me. Because from the outside, we just don't seem all that different from the FLDS, but we're pointing at them saying, "They're *really* weird. We're not weird."

Brady: Right, and you can see how it is. It's like that embarrassing younger brother who's doing stuff you just can't stand. But he's still your brother; and at some point, you have to say, "Yeah, that's my brother; we come from the same mother and father." And I just don't think we're ready to do it.

Kristine: Everybody has remarked on how *Big Love* uses polygamy to do a family drama on a massive scale. But it seems to me there's more at work in choosing this family than wanting to amplify family dynamics.

Brady: Well, for one thing, *Big Love* is cheating, because—I've never actually seen it—but aren't there, like, only *six* children? So it's not really about family. It's about relationships between adults. And I'd say that my novel is really about family, more than about polygamy. I'm not really exploring polygamy's roots, or what it really, truly means, or its theological implications or any of that. I really was interested in looking at a very big family—exaggerating the bigness of it, but thereby understanding not big families, but just families in general, and how we negotiate them. And that's what fiction is, really—an exaggeration, a stylization of reality. And to me that's what this story does.

Kristine: Talk a little more about children, about their development in families. One of the things I love about the novel is the de-

scription of the track around the dining room and the living room, because every child who has ever lived has figured out where the biggest loop is in the house, and every parent who has ever lived has said, “Quit running around in circles,” and it was just such a perfect illustration of the essential futility of parenting. I think parents really can’t ever do as much as they think they can, or as much as they’d like to, to shape their children’s character or even their behavior. (Or *especially* their behavior!) And that problem is magnified by the enormousness of this family.

Brady: Exactly. The parents’ ability to control their children goes way, way down in a big family. The more children there are, the less control there is. As a writer, it’s like playing with your own situation. I have four kids, and I’m pretty overwhelmed with that. So let’s multiply that, by say, ten, and it’s barely conceivable; but it’s kind of fun for me—at least as an intellectual exercise—to try and make sense of that. But there really are people who are doing this. It’s not just a fantasy or an abstraction. Somebody’s out there right now who has thirty-five children. It’s crazy, and yet it works somehow. It can work. It’s very difficult, obviously. The kids probably aren’t getting enough attention and the parents are overwhelmed, but I’ve seen it up close, and it can work.

Kristine: I was thinking as I read that what having fewer children does is not really to give you that much more control but just a stronger illusion of control. You can mistake your *involvement* in their lives for *influence*, but it isn’t really.

Brady: Good point.

Kristine: And, ultimately, I think that might be the most hopeful thing in your book—that people, children, even left mostly to themselves, turn out pretty well. They build something good, they’re resilient to even the deepest griefs of childhood.

Brady: Right, and think about the correlation between Golden and Rusty: Golden’s an only child, and sits looking out the window waiting for his dad to show up, and Rusty’s one of twenty-eight kids and sits looking out the window waiting for his dad to show up. The correlation is obvious, and it just came to me strongly that it doesn’t matter—it just doesn’t matter—if you’re one of twenty-eight or one of one. It’s up to your parents and you.

You can be just as lonely and lost as an only child as you can be in a huge family. I grew up in a family of nine kids, and I know some of my brothers and sisters felt comfortable and secure in that, but I felt a little at odds, on the margins. Why? I don't know. But I don't think it would have made a difference if I'd been one of two or three. Yet I can hear my brother saying life sucked because there were so many of us and we didn't get any attention. And I just don't think fewer kids would have changed things all that much. My parents would have still been busy, and life would have been similar for me because I am who I am. I guess you can take a certain sort of comfort in that.

Kristine: I think the profusion of therapists maybe suggests that childhood is painful for lots of people, and it may or may not have all that much to do with bad parenting or weird sibling relationships. Growing just hurts.

Brady: One thing I will say, though, is that, even though people tend to think of the women living in polygamy as suffering the most, my book is sort of an argument that it can be pretty difficult for the husband, too. But in the end, it's really the children who get the short end of the stick when there are twenty-eight of them and only one father. I think it can happen, but you've got to be quite a man—it's a very rare person who can actually be a father to that many kids. And I think it's probably especially difficult for boys in that family situation.

Kristine: Yeah, Golden's reciting his children's names is so poignant. He's really trying to love them all, but really, remembering their names is almost all he can do.

Brady: I think he understands; and it's the way I feel a little bit—even though it sounds slightly corny—that when I'm doing things I shouldn't be doing, or thinking things, my mind goes to my children. My mind doesn't go toward God or my parents, I think of my children first. And that is what happens for him, kind of. His children are the force that both pushes him away and pulls him back in, brings him back to himself.

Kristine: I can't imagine that, after weeks on a book tour and constant interviews, there's anything you still want to say about this book, but I thought I should ask.

Brady [laughing]: Yeah, I can't think of anything. I guess I will just say that I've known about *Dialogue* for a long time, and I'm just glad there's a place like that for people—I'll say people like me, even though I haven't really been an active participant, haven't needed that space exactly—a place to sit on the fence and not be pushed out or pulled in, just sit and think and talk for a while.

Kristine: Thanks. That's kind of you. I'd like to think we do that. But I guess I also hope that people find a way, as you seem to have, to get down from the fence one way or the other and make a bigger world for themselves. Maybe the fence is a good place to get a little wider view, to see that the pasture's broader than you thought . . .

Brady: You're right. Hopefully, you eventually get to a place where you can just say, "This is who I am." It's not simple. It never will be. But all your readers know that.

Note

1. David Haglund, "The Great Mormon Novel," *Slate*, May 17, 2010, <http://www.slate.com/id/2253914/> (accessed August 1, 2010).

REVIEWS

Teryl Givens and the Shape of Mormon Studies

Teryl L. Givens. *The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 140 pp. Appendix (“Manuscripts, editions, and timelines”), Book of Mormon Timeline, references, further readings, index. Paper: \$11.95. ISBN 978-0-19-536931-1

Reviewed by Marc Alain Bohn and James C. Olsen

In response to a review by Jan Shipps of Richard Lyman Bushman’s *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, Bushman remarked: “As more and more historians work to situate Mormonism in American history, Mormons like me want to join the discussion. We will write better if we are less defensive, more open to criticism, more exploratory and venturesome, but even with our inhibitions and parochialisms, we should come to the table with our Mormonism intact.”¹

Bushman here and throughout his career outlines an approach to Mormon studies that largely defines the attitude of at least two generations of Church members who take intellectual engagement with Mormonism—and not just Mormon history—seriously. However, the most successful scholar to embrace this approach is perhaps not Bushman himself, but Teryl L. Givens, a professor of literature and religion, who currently holds the James A. Bostwick Chair of English at the University of Richmond. While Givens’s writings currently help to define the space of Mormon studies, his appeal transcends academia, extending to everyday Latter-day Saints. If Bushman is a sort of Mormon studies Moses, with potent insights into how Mormonism can profitably and honestly reflect on itself in a greater context of religious and American studies, Givens is something of an Aaron, a dynamic and highly articulate spokesperson bringing this insight to the masses—both the academically initiated and uninitiated.

Like Bushman, Givens takes Mormonism seriously and implicitly demands that his audience follow suit. He is committed to understanding the poignant questions that lie at the core of the Mormon tradition, but his work seems wholly uninterested in the

outcomes of the apologetic debates that rage over Mormon origins, heresy, and truth claims. Instead Givens is passionate about honestly exploring the richness and complexity of this “new world religion.” He brings a scholar’s candor to the discussion without feeling obliged to defend, qualify, or bracket his religion’s claims and eccentricities. As he comments:

I have never set out self-consciously to push the envelope or challenge the orthodox boundaries of Mormon studies or historiography. I don’t think I have engaged in particularly controversial questions, but neither have I deliberately avoided them. It’s just that I find myself fully occupied trying to address questions that I find personally urgent: Was there more to Mormonism’s contentious relations with the mainstream than traditional historical accounts tell us? How does one explain the potent capacity of the Book of Mormon to draw millions into its orbit, while simultaneously outraging other millions? Is there really such a thing as Mormon culture? What kind of philosophical and theological depth do we find when we examine Joseph Smith’s thought? Generally, I find much more to celebrate than to deplore when I attack these questions.²

While Givens speaks the language of academia fluently enough to repeatedly court Oxford University Press, his articulate prose is nevertheless accessible to and hailed as familiar by everyday Mormons. One is tempted to accredit Givens with an uncanny bilingualism in pulling off such a feat, but this would be misleading. Givens does not translate between audiences; he closes the gap by crafting a message that speaks directly and convincingly to both Mormons and non-Mormons, to academics and to those who do not take (and are occasionally quite skeptical of) an intellectual approach to Mormonism. This ability is particularly true of *The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction*, which has the same definite impact no matter where you stand with regard to Mormonism’s (or any religion’s) claims—a demand to recognize the depth and significance of the Mormon venture.

Quite as conspicuous as the fact that a Mormon academic like Givens repeatedly publishes substantive examinations of Mormon doctrine and history with Oxford is that fact that these same works have largely remained unavailable at Deseret Book, the main LDS publishing and distribution company. Rather than embracing with excitement what was unquestionably the shattering of a publication glass ceiling, Deseret Book turned a cold shoul-

der on Givens's first Oxford publication, *Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), which explored the popular and unfair ostracizing of Mormons in American culture.

Released before internet booksellers such as Amazon gained a significant market share, the book struggled to reach an LDS audience and quickly went out of print. Skepticism about Oxford University Press itself and the type of book it would be willing to publish on anti-Mormonism—as well as a lack of familiarity with Givens, a relative stranger to Mormon studies at the time—all may have played a role in Deseret Book's decision not to carry *Viper*. For reasons that are not entirely clear, however, the book chain has continued to ignore Givens's subsequent Oxford publications. (Currently, only *A Very Short Introduction* is listed in its online inventory—and this itself is a new development, as no Givens titles were available when we called Deseret Book earlier this year.) We highlight this point simply to illustrate the magnitude of what Givens has succeeded in accomplishing. Oxford was impressed enough with Givens and the quality of his scholarship that, *Viper's* weak sales notwithstanding, it has published four more books from Givens over the last ten years—three of which deal exclusively with Mormonism—and is rumored to have more projects in the works.

Ironically, the Oxford University Press imprimatur that may underlie Deseret Book's rejection of Givens has likely made non-Mormon scholars more willing to read and even require their students to read the works of a Mormon scholar on Mormonism—in many instances for the first time. One interesting consequence of this development is that exclusively Mormon-related outlets such as the Maxwell Institute (formerly the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies or FARMS), which have produced a rich reservoir of high-caliber research and scholarship that Givens frequently uses, are reaching a much broader audience than they have been able to previously.³

Fortunately for Givens, the rapid growth of internet retailers has made his books easily available at modest prices to the broader Mormon audience. Combined with the positive response his works have received from diverse readers, such accessibility has made Givens prominent among Latter-day Saints interested in

supplementing devotional studies of their religion. His *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) won the Mormon History Association's 2008 "Best Book Award," and his landmark *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), has become standard reading for those interested in Mormon studies.

Helen Whitney's 2007 PBS documentary *The Mormons* further fueled Givens's popularity among Latter-day Saints, introducing his thoughtful insights and historical assessments to a broader audience within the Church. While the documentary as a whole received mixed reviews from Mormons, Givens's contributions regarding Mormon life and beliefs resonated deeply with mainstream Latter-day Saints, at the same time striking a chord among non-Mormon viewers. Even years later, viewers are likely to remember Givens's vivid description of dancing and the centrality of the physical body in Mormon belief. In a documentary sequence that Whitney claims is her favorite,⁴ Givens's response to a question about the "dancing God" is set against a blended montage of pioneers dancing on the trek westward and images of the Brigham Young University ballroom dance team:

I think that there's a connection with the place of dancing in Mormon history and the concept of an embodied God, because we believe that God the Father as well as Jesus Christ are physical, embodied beings; that elevates the body to a heavenly status. . . . Brigham Young once said that he supported and endorsed any activity that tended to happyfy, and I think that there's a kind of exuberance and celebration that is in many ways a result of that same collapse of sacred distance that was so central to Joseph Smith's thinking. Instead of denigrating the things of the body in order to elevate the things of the spirit, Joseph always argued that it was the successful incorporation of both that culminated in a fullness of joy. So dancing is, I think, in many ways just an emblem or a symbol of a kind of righteous reveling in the physical tabernacle that we believe is a stage on our way to godliness itself.⁵

Givens's 2005 forum address at Brigham Young University, "Lightning Out of Heaven: Joseph Smith and the Forging of Community,"⁶ has also been widely read and further evidences his appeal among mainstream Latter-day Saints. In this speech, Givens touched on ideas of community and relationships, the conception

of a “weeping” God, personal revelation, human nature, and faith. The address, appropriate for Sunday School quotation, is not an example of Givens’s ease in switching between academic and devotional settings as much as it is emblematic of the ease with which Mormons of all stripes digest Givens’s eloquent perspective.

“Lightning Out of Heaven” showcases Givens’s ability to zero in on themes of particular consequence to everyday Mormons. This trait is particularly true of his discussion about the necessary interplay between faith and doubt. Often seen as at odds with one another, Givens reassesses faith and doubt—and their critical interdependence—through the lens of Alma’s banner sermon on faith (Alma 32) and various statements from Joseph Smith. Maintaining unassailable faith throughout one’s life, in Givens’s experience, is quite rare. Rather than condemning doubt as normatively inferior to faith, however, Givens states:

There must be grounds for doubt as well as belief in order to render the choice more truly a choice—and, therefore, the more deliberate and laden with personal vulnerability and investment. The option to believe must appear on our personal horizon like the fruit of paradise, perched precariously between sets of demands held in dynamic tension. One is, it would seem, always provided with sufficient materials out of which to fashion a life of credible conviction or dismissive denial. We are acted upon, in other words, by appeals to our personal values, our yearnings, our fears, our appetites, and our egos. What we choose to embrace, to be responsive to, is the purest reflection of who we are and what we love. That is why faith, the choice to believe, is, in the final analysis, an action that is positively laden with moral significance.⁷

Within contemporary Mormonism, reframing faith and doubt in this way refines our understanding of the core doctrinal concept of agency and has the potential to affect how we understand the very purpose of life. It is this sort of insight, which speaks to pressing issues facing most Latter-day Saints, that has resulted in the expanding circulation of Givens’s works and has made him something of a household name among many Mormons.

The breadth of Givens’s appeal is particularly evident in *The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction*, an eminently accessible book intended to reach a broad audience. In his opening paragraph, Givens writes, “Any attempt to distill into a plot summary a

religious text as multilayered as the Book of Mormon would necessarily misrepresent its meaning and significance” (3). This description appears to be Givens’s main message to all readers of the Book of Mormon. *A Very Short Introduction* acquaints its readers with a tantalizingly brief taste of these multiple layers. The book’s greatest drawback is likewise its strength—that it is, in fact, a *very* short introduction; it succeeds in part because it makes abundantly clear to its reader that its discussion barely scratches the surface. Despite the brevity, however, this insightful look at the Book of Mormon’s structure, themes, narrative, genre, teachings, and historical reception succeeds by convincing the reader that the book’s depth and complexity go well beyond whatever the reader—Mormon or not—may have thought coming in.

In *A Very Short Introduction*, Givens insists on a treatment of the Book of Mormon that doesn’t get lost in the historical controversy over the book’s origins. At the same time, however, he recognizes the significance of this controversy and devotes the final third of the book to exploring it—but only after he has led the reader through the Book of Mormon itself. As Givens writes, “This volume will . . . go against the grain of many Book of Mormon treatments by serving, first and foremost, as an introduction to the Book of Mormon itself, by which I mean the narrative between the covers” (5). Interestingly, this is something that not even Givens himself has done before. *By the Hand of Mormon* focused on the scholarly commentary and criticism of the Book of Mormon over the years, with little examination of the book’s actual contents.

A Very Short Introduction opens by stressing the Book of Mormon’s intimate, personal nature, a characterization that is hammered home by the heavy emphasis on provenance that pervades the record. Givens then analyzes the six initial visions in the Book of Mormon, thereby outlining five central themes presented consistently throughout the scripture: (1) personal, dialogic revelation, (2) the centrality of Jesus Christ, (3) the varieties of wilderness and Zion, (4) new configurations of scripture, and (5) the centrality of family. He also provides a sampling of characters and stories, giving readers a brief taste of the narrative.

He next considers the Book of Mormon as literature before quickly running through the scripture’s basic theology. Despite

the succinct treatment required by a book like *A Very Short Introduction*, Givens manages something remarkable here. Considering the text on its own terms, he has drafted a concise introduction to the Book of Mormon that Latter-day Saints will find nearly as instructive as nonmembers will. The result is the rarest of books: one that average members can comfortably give to curious friends and also one that professors of religious studies will have no compunction about assigning to their students.

The power of *A Very Short Introduction* to play this role—introducing the Book of Mormon to multiple audiences—comes, in part, from the way in which Givens situates the scripture within familiar historical and religious contexts before illustrating how the book morphs the familiar into the new. While readers are left to draw their own conclusions about this transformation—inspired or subversive, innovative or exploitative, revelatory or evolutionary—Givens’s portrayal of the Book of Mormon implicitly demands they recognize it as a rich, multi-layered text worthy of serious consideration.

For example, Givens’s reader is not left with the option of understanding the book’s Christology as a mere fanciful relocation of New Testament Christianity to an ancient American setting. Instead, Givens helps the reader to see the full significance of this relocation, which “explodes [the New Testament’s] sublime historical uniqueness by reenacting Christ’s ministry and ascension,” not merely in the New World, but to “others besides.” In other words, an important theme of traditional New Testament theology is the singular event of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. Rather than a singular, unique welding of heaven and earth in the mystery of the incarnation as described by the New Testament, the Book of Mormon describes the appearances of an embodied Jesus at multiple times and in multiple contexts. Again, one can make of this message what one will, but Givens insists on the magnitude and theological significance of this change. In its Christology as well as in other traditional New Testament themes, “the Book of Mormon occupies the unusual position of invoking and affirming Biblical concepts and motifs, even as it rewrites them in fairly dramatic ways” (6; see also 25–31 and, for other revisions, 13–25, 31–47).

By making explicit these common Christian themes and their

Book of Mormon revisions, and by focusing on the theological significance of these revisions in merely descriptive prose, Givens's message is universal. He helps the particular reader—whether he or she views these rewritings of biblical and Christian concepts to be inspired, heretical, or merely curious—to understand why other readers might evaluate the normative significance of the text differently. Specifically, *A Very Short Introduction* helps the non-Mormon understand what may appear to be eccentric Book of Mormon themes against the backdrop of the more familiar landscape of historical Christianity. At the same time, this approach helps Mormons situate some of their most familiar and prized themes within what is often an unfamiliar greater world context. Importantly, however, the universal nature of Givens's style—his facilitation of mutual understanding—never becomes itself an explicit theme. Givens does not moralize to his reader; his straightforward analysis of the Book of Mormon itself is enough.

We are not saying that everyone will agree with Givens's analysis. To the contrary, readers, particularly those already familiar with the text, will surely find themes they think Givens ought to have included or disagree with the analysis of themes he did include. There is plenty of room to challenge Givens on both a literary and theological level. For example, Givens's claim concerning the Book of Mormon's preeminent character as a tribal or familial record, only secondarily aware of its global significance, is provocative, but also a bit of a hard sell given plenty of textual evidence to the contrary. For example, Book of Mormon prophets not only write to "all men" but their theological and historical prophecies are global in scope. Although Givens focuses primarily on Nephi's comments at the very beginning of the record, Nephi himself gives counter-examples, revealing at least a growing understanding of the global significance of his writings (1 Ne. 6:4, 19:19; 2 Ne. 33:10, 13). Now that Givens has staked out the territory, however, highlighting significant themes and making specific claims about features of the text he finds consequential, others are free to jump into the fray. Whatever the response, Givens's analysis in *A Very Short Introduction* has focused the ensuing debate on content rather than the hoary obsessions with historicity or heresy. This is perhaps *A Very Short Introduction*'s greatest contribution.

A Very Short Introduction's shaping of the debate concerning Book of Mormon content parallels the way in which Givens's other books have already worked to shape Mormon studies generally. As noted above, Givens's analyses in his various publications have enjoyed broad appeal. While much could be said on this note, we will point out two more specific examples.

Givens first described in *By the Hand of Mormon* (chap. 8) his concept of "dialogic revelation"—the revolutionary notion of personal revelation introduced by Joseph Smith and showcased in the Book of Mormon. Givens notes that the Book of Mormon includes a plethora of examples of God speaking to individuals other than prophets or on matters other than those typical of prophetic discourse. For example, Lehi and Alma pray to know about the welfare of their sons, Nephi and Enos pray to know about principles of the gospel, Nephi prays about where to hunt, Moroni prays to know where the Lamanites will invade, the brother of Jared prays about how to light the barge, etc. Importantly, in each and every case, God responds in articulate, discernible human speech. Givens's discussion is meant to describe the Mormon notion of revelation as something new on the theological scene. His careful, incisive description, however, reads like an edifying discourse to those within the Mormon community, where this form of revelation is often an intimate part of their religious lives.

Another example may be found in his *People of Paradox*. Here Givens explores what he terms as "four especially rich and fertile tensions, or thematic pairings, in Mormon thought." These are the (1) "polarity of authoritarianism and individualism," (2) "epistemological certainty" and Mormonism's "eternal quest for saving knowledge and . . . Perfection," (3) the "disintegration of sacred distance," and (4) "exile and integration, and a gospel viewed as both American and universal" (xiv–xv). In a handful of concise chapters, Givens takes what, for the everyday Saint, typically remain existential paradoxes implicit in their religious experience and makes them explicit. It is these dynamic tensions, Givens argues, that "give [Mormon] cultural expression much of its vitality" and have "inspired recurrent and sustained engagement on the part of writers, artists, and thinkers in the Mormon community" (xiv).

While the relevance, usefulness, and even doctrinal accuracy

of each paradox that Givens identifies is debatable (as are the examples he provides to sustain them), his analysis nevertheless offers profound insights into tensions at the root of the Mormon beliefs that set Latter-day Saints apart as a people. While we might question its ultimate efficacy, this explicit analysis at least has the potential of helping average members relate more deeply to their own religious experience and possibly even better understand the deep anxiety often felt by intellectuals and artists in the Church.

In *People of Paradox*, Givens hails the disintegration or collapse of sacred distance as one of the most culturally and theologically “potent innovations of the Mormon world view” (xv). Though not the first to notice it, Givens is perhaps the most thorough and compelling author to describe Joseph Smith’s radical collapse of the banal and the holy. In his interview with Helen Whitney, he noted:

One of the hallmarks of Mormonism, and of Joseph Smith in particular, is the collapse of sacred distance. Joseph insistently refused to recognize the distinctness of those categories that were typical in traditional Christianity, the sense that there is an earthly and a heavenly, a bodily and a spiritual. . . . He did this in ways as divergent as commenting on the fact that God himself was once as we are, that He is embodied; by arguing that when revelations came to him, they came through vehicles as palpable and earthly as seer stones, or Urim and Thummin, or gold plates. . . . Every time that we think we have found an example of what we think is a dichotomy, Joseph collapses it into one.⁸

In Mormon studies, Givens accomplishes something analogous: collapsing devotional and academic distance. In his work, he consistently manages to apply an academic lens to Mormonism in a way that satisfies both the believer and the skeptic. Givens’s ability to resonate with such diverse audiences is the proof in the pudding of Bushman’s call for a new approach to Mormon studies and may well be Givens’s defining contribution to the discipline. Mormon scholars can indeed be less defensive, more open to criticism, more candid, and yet more successful at the academic table with their Mormonism fully intact.

Notes

1. Richard Lyman Bushman, “What’s New in Mormon History: A Response to Jan Shipps,” *Journal of American History* 94, no. 2 (Septem-

ber 2007), <http://www.historycooperative.org/cgi-bin/justtop.cgi?act=justtop&url=http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/94.2/bushman.html> (accessed August 7, 2010).

2. Interview: Terryl Givens and Richard Bushman, Part I, *By Common Consent*, March 1, 2007, <http://bycommonconsent.com/2007/03/01/interview-terryl-givens-and-richard-bushman-part-i/> (accessed August 7, 2010).

3. This description is particularly true of *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), in which Givens spends Chapter 5 (117–54) showcasing much of the important Book of Mormon research done by FARMS and BYU scholars. *A Very Short Introduction*, discussed below, likewise makes use of this scholarship and refers its reader to other Mormon research sources.

4. Terryl Givens, interviewed in Helen Whitney, *The Mormons*, PBS documentary, <http://www.pbs.org/mormons/etc/whitney.html> (accessed August 7, 2010).

5. Ibid.

6. Terryl L. Givens, “Lightning Out of Heaven: Joseph Smith and the Forging of Community,” *BYU Speeches*, November 29, 2005, <http://speeches.byu.edu/reader/reader.php?id=10924> (accessed August 7, 2010). The address’s popularity is highlighted by its being reprinted in condensed form under the title “Lightning Out of Heaven” in *BYU Magazine* (Summer 2006), <http://magazine.byu.edu/?act=view&a=1851> (accessed August 7, 2010).

7. Ibid.

8. Givens, Interview, *The Mormons*. On the collapse of the sacred in Mormonism, see also his *Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 82–93; *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 37–51; and “Lightning Out of Heaven.”

The World According to Golden

Brady Udall. *The Lonely Polygamist*. New York: Norton, 2010. 572 pp. Hardcover: \$26.95. ISBN 978-0-393-06262-5

Reviewed by Phillip A. Snyder

Brady Udall has always been a highly readable writer, one who en-

gages his audience with the immediate appeal of his narrative voice and the sometimes quirky attraction of his narrative settings and semi-misfit characters. Like John Irving, the writer to whom he's most commonly compared, Udall fills his fiction with great energy and humanity, softening the pathos of near-tragedy with a warmth and humor that betray a deep affection for the messed-up human race. His short story collection, *Letting Loose the Hounds* (New York: Norton, 1997), features stories first published in an unusual variety of venues—*Aethlon*, *Gentleman's Quarterly*, *The Midwesterner*, *The Paris Review*, *Playboy*, *Story Magazine*, and *Sunstone*—attesting to the widespread appeal of his fiction.

His first novel, *The Miracle Life of Edgar Mint* (New York: Norton, 2001), develops along a narrow tragicomic line with its character-driven, first-person narrative delivered by a brain-damaged, mixed-blood boy whose faulty memory screens him from the core mission of his life for much of the novel. A broad contemporary rewriting of the Dickensian *bildungsroman*, *Edgar Mint* demonstrates Udall's facility for creating characters whose earnest intentions are undone by their offbeat incompetence in executing those intentions, especially toward Edgar's well-being in this case, as well as Udall's tendency in his writing to wrap up catastrophic and chaotic events within the truly miraculous by the novel's graceful conclusion.

Udall's newest novel, *The Lonely Polygamist*, joins its predecessors as a story of Irvingesque and Dickensian scope and temperament, but with a jocular narrative voice, an unconventional *mise-en-scène*, and various malcontent-but-yearning characters—all elements colored by Udall's own personal vision. The protagonist, Golden Richards, struggles to preside over and support a huge family consisting of four wives and twenty-eight children in a fictional fundamentalist community located somewhere in southern Utah, one that corresponds very broadly with the infamous FLDS communities of Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah, recently featured in *National Geographic* (February 2010). However, it would be a mistake to consider *The Lonely Polygamist* another iteration of the current preoccupation with polygamy in American popular culture because Udall uses polygamy, not for its prurient appeal, but primarily as a familial milieu against which individual isolation and estrangement can be measured and explored—thus

the hint of oxymoronic tension in his title which raises the obvious question: How can a polygamist possibly be lonely?

The novel begins with a typical Udall passage that pulls its readers into the narrative by asserting the story's basic theme and then instantly complicating it, foreshadowing at the same time the novel's irresistible opening scene:

To put it as simply as possible: this is the story of a polygamist who has an affair. But there is much more to it than that, of course; the life of any polygamist, even when not complicated by lies and secrets and infidelity, is anything but simple. Take, for example, the Friday night in early spring when Golden Richards returned to Big House—one of three houses he called home—after a week away on the job. It should have been the sweetest, most wholesome of domestic scenes: a father arrives home to the loving attentions of his wives and children. But what was about to happen inside that house, Golden realized as he pulled up into the long gravel drive, would not be wholesome or sweet, or anything close to it. (16)

This paragraph also underscores the juxtaposition of a polygamous family against the traditional nuclear family values celebrated in mainstream American culture, again hinting at oxymoronic tension and raising another obvious question: How can a polygamous family possibly act out a domestic scene that can be described accurately as wholesome or sweet? Actually, Golden's homecoming and the denouement of this "family home evening" gone "awry" (to repeat the term Golden uses with Wife #1, Beverly) partake fully of the familial wholesomeness and sweetness often lying beneath the turbulent surface of ordinary domestic life. The scene unfolds like a big family reunion taking place in a huge (7,000 square feet) vacation rental—with assorted kids running all over, girls monopolizing the bathrooms, women commiserating with each other in the kitchen—the only difference being that everyone belongs to one lone and earnest man who feels like a helpless outsider in his own home and whose general emotional discomfort is matched by the physical discomfort of a bladder in desperate need of emptying. With no immediate hope for a conventional means of relief from either distress, Golden nevertheless presses forward that evening with pluck and improvisation, trying ineffectively to put his house in order; but what ails this

house and its inhabitants lies beyond his powers of perception and remediation.

Much like Edgar Mint, Golden lived an isolated childhood, deserted by his ne'er-do-well father, Royal, ignored by his martyred mother, Malke, and sequestered from the outside world. Udall describes young Golden as the "boy at the window"—a description he also uses for Golden's son Rusty, aka "The Family Terrorist," who shares his father's alienated status within the family—to accentuate his loneliness and dissociation. Indeed, to demonstrate the pervasiveness of this same sense of individual alienation within the family, Udall divides the novel with four italicized chapters titled after a different family domicile—"Old House," "The Duplex," "Big House," and "Doll House"—each of which focalizes its omniscient observations on the internal preoccupations of the characters who inhabit them.

Golden and Rusty are not unique in their dissociation; everyone seems to be a lonely polygamist of some kind, mostly incapable of comprehending, let alone bearing, each other's lonesome burdens. Trish, for example, Wife #4, mourns her stillborn children (Daniel, Martine, and Jack) and carries that ache in much the same way that Golden mourns the death of Glory, the handicapped daughter on whom he doted; but the two never manage to connect emotionally over their common grief except in the brief aftermath of Jack's stillbirth. Golden takes the dead infant in his arms, the only child he and Trish have together, and, rocking him tearfully, sings the only song he can think of, a love ballad about a girl named Cushie Butterfield—but even here theirs remains a grief apart.

As usual, Udall balances the soberness of his theme with an intertwining of both subtle and ribald humor throughout the novel, as in the foregoing tableau which uses an amusingly inappropriate song to illustrate Golden's fundamental character and, thereby, deepen the pathos of the scene. While Golden's intentions tend to be pure and guileless, his actions tend to be earnestly inadequate, often to humorous but humane effect.

He shares this trait with a number of other characters as well. For example, when Trish decides to take the love-making advice she reads in an article from a *Cosmopolitan* (miraculously found in sister-wife Nola's beauty salon) during one of her nightly "turns"

with Golden, her plans inevitably go “awry” with hilarious results that, in typical Udall fashion, also help prevent Golden from consummating his “affair” which, in turn, keeps open the possibility for the inevitable but limited happy ending we’ve come to expect from Udall. When the remaining evidence of her aborted seduction of her husband reveals itself to Trish during her fecund late-night reconciliation with Golden, she responds with deep and cleansing laughter, the full meaning of which she understands only as a gift returned to honor and humor her previous good intentions. All may not be well at the end of the novel, which features the ritual catharsis of both a funeral and a wedding, but at least the entire Golden Richards family will be living together at the newly renovated Big House under one expansive roof in yet another valiant attempt to achieve family unity.

This humane blending of the tragic and comic in his plots and characters may be Udall’s greatest strength as a writer worth reading and rereading. Like Flannery O’Connor, he knows that grace must be available to even the most grotesque character and that fundamental human empathy can ameliorate even the most sorrowful situation. *The Lonely Polygamist* fulfills the promise clearly evident in Udall’s excellent previous work and reveals a fine novelist working in full narrative power.

The Plan of Stagnation

Elna Baker. *The New York Regional Mormon Singles Halloween Dance: A Memoir*. New York: Dutton, 2009. 276 pp. Cloth: \$25.95. ISBN 978-0-525-95135-3

Reviewed by Holly Welker

The New York Regional Mormon Singles Halloween Dance: A Memoir by Elna Baker is a book about Mormons for an audience of non-Mormons; for that, everyone who works in the field of Mormon literature should be grateful. It attempts—and more importantly succeeds in—making Mormons human and complex to outsiders; it even makes us somewhat intelligible. Baker addresses the impact of “preconceived notions” about Mormons on her rela-

tionships: As soon as she acknowledges her religion, she goes “from being anything they can imagine to being defined. Immediately we stop talking about books or films. Instead, every question is about whether I’m a polygamist, whether I’ve had sex, whether I wear magic underwear, and whether I believe in dinosaurs” (18). As fascinating as those questions might be to non-Mormons, the book’s primary value may nonetheless be in what it reveals to Mormons, about ourselves—or more specifically, what it reveals about “our bodies, ourselves” (though admittedly not in quite the same way as the book by that title published by the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective), as well as our reluctance to examine some of the implications of embodiment, not merely with a speculum, but even in a full-length mirror.

Baker, a twenty-something stand-up comedienne with a degree in drama from New York University, has written what many people consider a very funny book. A triumphantly hilarious moment involves Baker impulsively lobbing a tangerine at a particularly snide, mean-spirited family home evening group leader, hitting the evil woman so firmly between the eyes that her chair tips over backwards.

Throughout the book there’s situational humor; there’s good comedic timing; there’s wit. A striking example of all three involves Baker’s “brilliant” plan to attend the titular Halloween dance dressed as a fortune cookie. Unfortunately, after a long subway ride, she realizes to her utter horror and shame that her costume actually looks like a giant vulva. She then does what she must: “I took my vagina off and hid it in the broom closet (which I guess is what is what you do every time you go to church)” (182–83). She asks someone to find her sister, who is also at the dance; her sister “emerged dressed as a black cat. While we hadn’t planned it, we’d both chosen to go as pussy” (183).

Not all the humor is quite so risqué, but a good deal of it is. The book is primarily about sex, and the ambivalence it arouses in people who desire it but adhere to inviolable rules about who can have it, whom they can have it with, and under what circumstances. As a result, the book is also about bodies, those transformative objects that the plan of salvation tells us we come to earth to obtain.

The female body is central not only to Baker’s book, but to the story of the Fall, one of the primary scriptural texts Mormons rely

on for their understanding of the plan of salvation. Therefore it's worth deviating momentarily from Baker's memoir in order to underscore certain aspects of female embodiment as set forth in the story of the Garden of Eden—specifically, that Eve's punishment for her transgression is focused on and through her body. In Genesis 3:16 God tells Eve, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." The translation offered in the New Oxford Edition is more to the point: God says, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Thus, according to Genesis, women live with a bodily conflict: they desire their husbands, and this desire exists because without it women would not risk the divinely decreed pain and suffering involved in childbirth. In other words, the punishment is not merely the pain and suffering of childbirth, but the conflict of desire and pain felt in and by a single body, a conflict that is both theologically mandated and capable of causing a profound alienation from the source and site of the conflict: one's body. No doubt this conflict affects individual women differently, depending in part on the extent to which they internalize the story of Eve; and no doubt some women manage, either by sheer luck or persistent hard work, to inhabit their bodies as comfortably as any woman can in a culture obsessed with physical beauty and perfection. Regardless of whether Baker would accept my assessment of the theological issues underpinning some of the anxiety and distress women in our society can feel about their bodies, she nonetheless presents one of the more dramatic stories of alienation from one's body—and the damage that such alienation does to both body and soul.

Early on, Baker explains the plan of salvation to her readers and offers her reaction to it: "The primary purpose of life on earth was for me to get a body, any body; to appreciate it, make choices with it, 'to shuffle off this mortal coil' and return to God. By the age of five I had learned the meaning of life. There was only one problem: I got the wrong body—and I'd been hating it ever since" (51).

Baker's body, you see, was fat. At one point, she weighed 260

pounds. In an orientation session for a rigorous, doctor-supervised, weight-loss program, Baker looks down at her body and realizes that she hides behind her clothing. She then asks herself, “*But what do I look like naked?* I searched my brain for an image of my body—not the one I saw in pictures, my real body. Nothing. My mind was blank” (83; emphasis hers). Only after carefully probing her memory is she able to recall a bath during which she had been unable to submerge all of herself; no matter how deep she sank into the tub, part of her stomach “floated above the water like a soft white hill. I looked at it and decided it was not part of me” (84).

Baker’s weight eventually drops to 145 pounds; she is not just thin, she is beautiful. This success, however, does not result in her being at home in her body. On a date with a man she has pursued aggressively, Baker excuses herself to use the ladies’ room, only to encounter a thin blond woman approaching her in a dim corridor. Not until she has traversed the length of the corridor does she “realize I was ten inches away from smacking into a full-length mirror” (140). She doesn’t recognize that this thin blond woman is in fact herself. What she *does* recognize about the woman is that “*She’s kind of a bitch*” (140; emphasis hers), knowledge so unassimilable that she does “the only thing I could: I put this information in a locked vault in my brain, and decided to forget it” (141).

The diet that let her achieve such dramatic weight loss is difficult to maintain; eventually, Baker regains some of the weight. Anxious to lose it without returning to the clinic that managed her diet in the first place, she finds a website that sells phentermine, the medication prescribed by her doctor to control her appetite; she can purchase it provided she lies about her weight, so she states that she weighs 250 pounds and orders two bottles. About a week later, she ends up in the hospital with dangerously low blood pressure and a bruise on her head from passing out, the result of abusing amphetamines. Initially Baker tries to tell a friend that she is “not the kind of girl who diets her way into the hospital” (204), but the statement is self-evidently false. Furthermore, Baker realizes that the miracle of grace, the divine strength she discovered when she began her diet in earnest, the “*BIG miracle*” that had been “*the closest thing I had to evidence of God’s existence, was actually just me—ON SPEED!*” (204; emphasis hers).

Eventually Baker undergoes plastic surgery to take care of the excess skin left on her torso after her weight loss. In a consultation, the surgeon warns that “one of the side effects of getting breast implants is that you may lose your nipple sensation.” Baker’s shocked response: “Your nipples have sensation?” (231) The line is played for laughs, but the fact that she chooses to risk losing sensation in her nipples before she even discovers how pleasurable and illuminating that sensation can be is, I must point out, really quite sad.

It is not only Baker’s body but at times her psyche that seems foreign to her. She acknowledges several times that she lies “consistently” (136) for reasons that elude her. For instance, she impulsively tells a boy she has a high school crush on that she has never seen snow, even though she has been skiing in the Alps (41). Like most people, she occasionally engages in behavior that she realizes is ridiculous and unappealing, but she certainly depicts her bouts of this affliction as fairly severe and long-lasting—and not especially amusing. When that cute boy from high school offers, a few years later, to be her boyfriend, she is “transformed . . . from an intelligent articulate person into a semiretarded schoolgirl” who repeats everything the boy says and blows bubbles in her milk glass, until he breaks up with her after only a few hours (47). As an adult, when asked if she believes in evolution or creationism, she answers, “I don’t know.” Pressed for an answer, she can only state, weakly and ineffectually, “I guess it’s one of those things I try not to think about” (158).

Not surprisingly, confusion about what she really wants or believes is most severe in matters of love and sex, matters that involve the body she has ignored for so long. In the midst of trying to seduce Matt, her atheist boyfriend, and lose her virginity, she finds herself derailing the enterprise by telling him, “You need to pray and find out if God exists” (172). And when she finally acquires the Mormon boyfriend she has longed for all her life, she realizes he’s not what she wants after all. She prepares to break up with him, only to hear herself say instead, “I love you” (228), a statement that the text does not explain or comment on in any way. Baker doesn’t tell us if the statement was sincere, or how she reacts to hearing those shocking words come out of her mouth.

She merely states that she says the words, closes the chapter, and moves on to another chapter about plastic surgery.

I realize I'm presenting a skewed version of the book here—one that ignores many of its wise and charming aspects—and that I'm using Baker to make a larger point about self-knowledge, embodiment, and faith. But the point is worth making, and worth understanding, so I'll persist.

Baker does her best to explain, sincerely and responsibly, her sense of her spiritual life. Of her decision to be baptized at age eight, Baker writes, "I prayed about it. After my prayer, I tried to be as still as possible so that I could hear my heart. I listened, my heart felt warm, and I felt good inside" (10). Certainly this adheres to the Mormon formula for recognizing "truth." But this truth is recognized through Baker's *body*: It is her visceral, embodied response to a mental question she has posed. And as she herself states repeatedly, both her body and her mind confound and confuse her; they do not provide her with reliable information, and she often refuses to assimilate the information they do provide.

Consider, for instance, Baker's reliance on the Mormon truth-recognizing formula in the matter of marriage. When her Mormon boyfriend proposes, she fasts for two days, then goes to the temple and offers the following prayer: "God, I've decided to marry Hayes. Is this the right thing to do?" Soon, she gets a response: "*Yes, Yes, Yes*, all through me, *YES, do, do, do*" (241; emphasis hers). Which seems pretty conclusive, except for two things: (1) the boyfriend decides soon thereafter not to propose; and (2) Baker realizes she doesn't really want to marry him after all (244). Eventually, she even acknowledges that he never made her happy (246). I must ask: How unaware of your own mind and motivation must you be to need an answer from something outside you to tell you whether to marry a person who has never made you happy?

But despite the fact that Baker's unreliable body and unreliable mind conspire to offer unreliable spiritual advice, the book discusses spiritual experiences—which, I must repeat, are mediated through our bodies—as if they are ultimately and conclusively intelligible, infallible, and immutable. They are not merely testimony of what matters to us at a particular time, of our investment in our own lives, and of our need to seek self-knowledge; they are an absolutely reliable basis for embracing and affirming not just

one decision at one moment in time, but an entire belief system—forever.

After a painful breakup with Matt, the atheist boyfriend she'd fallen in love with, Baker begs God for "*a spiritual experience that will anchor me. Give me something that for the rest of my life I can look back on and say, 'When I was twenty-three I had a moment—and I've never looked back since.'* I will walk in any direction you tell me, but please God I need a direction" (210; emphasis hers). In response, she notices "a warm feeling in the center of my chest" and hears a series of questions, the final one of which is, "Is everything you want in life available to you within this church?" (211)

"Yes," Baker answers, knowing it's true as soon as she says it. But there are questions neither she nor the voice asks, including, "Are you going to want the same things all your life? Are there things you haven't allowed yourself to want, desires you haven't allowed yourself to acknowledge, needs you claim aren't part of you, just as you didn't allow yourself to see your own body?"

Baker concludes the book by recounting a visit to Zambia to visit Matt. Once again she attempts to seduce him, a plan that goes awry when he asks her if what they're doing is okay and she admits that she has no idea what she's doing. Analyzing the situation later, she writes:

It wasn't Matt's fault that things didn't work out. He didn't hate me or think I was repulsive. He simply asked me if I had made up my mind. Which I hadn't. So we were back at square one. And the thing is, I think I'm courageous for staying true to myself but really I'm deathly afraid of making the wrong choice. For good reason. Either way I choose, my life will become so much smaller. If I stop being Mormon, I won't be allowed to attend my brother's and sisters' weddings in any Mormon temple. I'll break my mother's heart and I won't be with my family for eternity. But if I stay in the church, I can't wear the sleeveless dress I wore last night, I'll have to say fetch instead of fuck, and I won't get to live the rest of my life with any of the men I love most. (272)

I must point out the differences in the equations Baker sets up: Stop being Mormon = excluded from family weddings, break mother's heart, and separated from family of origin for all eternity, while stay in the Church = no sleeveless dresses, less profanity, and disappointment in love. But it's not as if disappointment

in love can't happen anywhere, to anyone, no matter what their relationship to religion; it's not as if leaving the Church guarantees that a person will fall in love with a fabulous atheist who will love her back. And the larger point is that, while Baker has a clear sense of the negative consequences of leaving the Church, she has little sense of positive consequences, aside from how they affect her wardrobe and, possibly, her love life. The truth is, there's an entire world of questioning and discovery and connection and depth and *grace* (a term that Baker has no real sense of when she first encounters it in Ether 12:27, since it is historically under-emphasized in Mormonism) that becomes available when you finally choose the world—or, more accurately, acknowledge what you've chosen.

Grace, after all, is the unmerited love of God, freely given; knowing that we are accepted by divinity no matter what our faults and flaws, we supposedly find it easier to accept ourselves. Nonetheless we all question our choices from time to time; we all second-guess ourselves. But if Baker had made the right choice by staying in the Church, the need to remake that choice would not be so frequent, so fraught, and so painful. It's so easy to see that Baker has made what is the right choice for her—the choice to leave—but she can't follow through, so she lives as if she's made the opposite choice. Her plea for a spiritual experience from God that will eradicate any need to regret or seriously revisit her refusal to leave follows weeks and weeks of Sunday meetings during which Baker sits in church and thinks, “*I gave up an incredible person for stale bread and an uncomfortable pew*” (208; emphasis hers). It's hard not to respond, “Yes, Sister Baker, that's exactly what you did, and the world is a poorer place because of it.”

I do not mean to imply that leaving the Church is the only way anyone can experience grace. I don't think that's true, though I do think it's clear that Baker finds little sense of grace in Mormonism and should be free to search for it elsewhere. I therefore also think that it's important to reject the false dichotomies Baker establishes: body versus soul, Mormon versus non-Mormon, and the easy corollaries she attaches to them: body = pain; soul = happiness; Mormon = everything you *really* want in life; non-Mormon = great sex and fun in this life, but loneliness and grief in the next.

The world is more complex than that, even for Mormons, and we need literature that acknowledges that fact.

What Baker ultimately ends up describing is a plan not of salvation but of stagnation. It's designed, as she acknowledges, to provide anchors, to ensure that we never revise youthful decisions or outgrow our earliest ideologies. These theological implications are probably not what the non-Mormons for whom the book is intended will focus on, but they are hard to miss for someone who has actually made the choice Baker dilly-dallies over.

A pivotal moment in the memoir involves Baker seeing herself in an amusement park mirror—and not just any mirror, but a mirror that makes her skinny, a mirror that offers her a clear vision of a better version of herself. It is this vision that gives her the resolve to pursue her diet. Both before and after the diet, Baker has great talent and enormous appeal, just as she has talent and appeal whether she writes from the point of view of an active or an inactive Mormon. I will certainly read her next book. I can't help hoping, however, that it will introduce us to the person Baker can be once she makes a choice she can live with. In the meantime, *The New York Regional Mormon Singles Halloween Dance* offers Mormons a glimpse into a mirror with a different perspective, one that helps us see some of what we do not recognize about ourselves until we attempt to explain ourselves to others.

El problema del dolor/ The Problem of Pain

Christian N. K. Anderson

Note: This sacrament meeting talk was delivered in Linda Vista Third Branch (Spanish-speaking), San Diego Third Stake, on June 15, 2010, where Christian and his wife, Marina Capella, served as Primary teachers. Christian was also the pianist for sacrament meeting, Primary pianist, and the Webelos leader. For citations, see the English translation following.

Buenos días, hermanos y hermanas. Para los que no me conocen, me llamo Cristian Anderson. Nací en el Lago Salado, Utah, y viví allí hasta los 18 años cuando fui a San Francisco para estudiar biología. Después de un año de estudios salí de misión a Houston Sur en el estado de Texas. Al regresar a la universidad conocí a mi esposa, Marina Capella. Ella nació en Los Ángeles y pasó la mayor parte de su vida en un suburbio que se llama Fontana, hasta que salió a estudiar en la misma universidad que yo. Nos conocimos en octubre y nos casamos en septiembre del siguiente año en el Templo de San Diego, hace 7 años. Todavía somos estudiantes, pero en menos de dos meses Marina recibirá su doctorado de médica pediatra y vamos a mudarnos a Boston, al otro lado del país donde ella estudiará medicina en Harvard y yo trabajaré en el Museo de Historia Natural.

Me asignaron hablarles sobre un discurso que Henry B. Eyring dio hace dos conferencias, titulado “La adversidad”. Me siento hipócrita al hablar sobre este tema. Recuerdo hace algunos meses que el Hermano Chávez habló sobre el agradecimiento, y le preguntó a algunos miembros de aquí por cuáles cosas se sentían agradecidos. No recuerdo la lista, pero cada quien mencionó un

problema grave que tenía (el cual era impresionante) y que todavía no se había resuelto (lo cual era aún más impresionante).

Es una cosa si uno está sufriendo y dice, “Gracias, Dios, por enseñarme”. Pero es una cosa distinta si uno ve a otra persona sufrir y dice, “Gracias, Dios por enseñarle a él”. Cuando el Presidente Aguilar me dijo el tema de mi discurso, no pude pensar en nada que me pusiera en el grupo de los que están sufriendo. Mientras que muchos de Uds. están expresando su agradecimiento en medio de sus aflicciones, por lo menos yo siento agradecimiento por lo que aprendí después de la experiencia, pero no siento agradecimiento por la experiencia misma en el momento en que paso por ella; lo que yo siento NO es agradecimiento.

Pero casi la primera cosa que dice el Presidente Eyring es, “Con todas las diferencias que pueda haber entre nosotros, tenemos por lo menos una dificultad en común: todos enfrentamos a la adversidad. Habrá períodos, a veces largos, en que nuestra vida parezca tener muy pocas dificultades; pero, por nuestra condición de seres humanos, es natural que lo agradable dé paso a la aflicción.” Pensar en esto me hizo recordar que las palabras que más me han ayudado en tiempos difíciles fueron escritas por hombres que tenían muy pocos problemas. De hecho, el Presidente Eyring mismo nació en una de las familias más prestigiosas de Utah (es sobrino del Profeta Spencer W. Kimball e hijo de uno de los químicos norteamericanos más importantes de su generación), y logró mucho éxito en su vida personal. Así que aunque a algunos nos toquen tramos lisos y a otros tramos ásperos, estamos todos en el mismo camino, y espero que no piensen que soy cien por ciento hipócrita al compartir algunas palabras con quienes tienen más experiencia que yo sobre cómo enfrentar la adversidad.

Primero, el Presidente Eyring habla sobre el propósito de la adversidad. En filosofía, esto se conoce como “el problema del dolor”: si Dios es completamente bueno, él nos quiere dar felicidad; si Dios es todopoderoso, puede hacerlo. Pero es obvio que no somos siempre felices. Las cosas no siempre salen bien. Sufrimos. Nos pasan cosas malas. Entonces o Dios no es bueno o Dios no es todopoderoso, o ambas cosas. Pero, dice Eyring, “la oportunidad de enfrentar la adversidad y la aflicción es parte de la evidencia de Su amor infinito. [Si queremos llegar a ser Dioses], debemos transformarnos al tomar decisiones justas cuando éstas sean

difíciles de tomar.” Como dice C. S. Lewis, “somos como bloques de mármol del cual El Escultor esculpe las formas de Dioses. Los golpes del cincel que tanto nos duelen son lo que nos perfecciona. El padecimiento en el mundo no es el fracaso del amor de Dios, sino es ese amor en acción.” En otras palabras, Dios tiene que refinarnos. Si no nos amara, no lo haría.

Pues bien, podemos tener fe en que hay un propósito en nuestro dolor. Pero aún así nos duele. El mismo Lewis escribió estas poderosas, pero arrogantes palabras en una época de abundancia. Pocos años después, cuando su esposa murió de cáncer, ni él creyó en su propia filosofía: “Vayan a Dios cuando realmente lo necesitan, ¿y qué encuentran? Una puerta que se cierra de un portazo y, del otro lado, el sonido de la llave cerrándose con dos vueltas. No hay luz en las ventanas. Parece una casa abandonada que quizás jamás fue ocupada.”

Entonces, ¿qué debemos hacer para enfrentar la adversidad? La respuesta del evangelio, como Eyring lo dice, es sorprendente: debemos *aumentarla*. Ya que esto es bastante difícil de entender, él nos da tres ejemplos de adversidad: la pobreza, el aislamiento y la muerte.

1. *Pobreza*: Eyring cuenta la historia de Alma y los Zoramitas pobres. Esta gente era tan pobre que los demás no los dejaban entrar en los templos y adorar a Dios. Alma lo sabía, pero él les dijo (34:28): “si...volvéis la espalda al indigente y al desnudo,...y si no dais de vuestros bienes, si los tenéis, a los necesitados...sois como los hipócritas que niegan la fe.” En el versículo 29 dice, “Por tanto, si no os acordáis de ser caritativos, sois como la escoria que los refinadores desechan (por no tener valor) y es hollada por los hombres.” Si Dios nos da pobreza, es para que aprendamos a compartir lo poco que tenemos. Claro que es mejor aprenderlo sin la aflicción, pero me parece que a Dios el método de aprendizaje le importa menos que el hecho de que aprendamos. Pensémoslo bien: ¿habrá alguna manera de llegar a ser muy rico que sea, en lo moral, completamente admirable? Muchas veces los que tienen mucho dedican la vida a proteger sus riquezas; los que tienen poco lo gastan y se preocupan menos por cómo lo van a recuperar. Muchas veces las cosas que poseemos en realidad nos poseen a nosotros. Lección número uno: si no tenemos mucho, compartamos lo poco que tenemos.

2. *Aislamiento*: De la necesidad de dinero pasamos a la necesidad de amor y atención. Eyring comparte la historia de una viuda anciana que se sintió inspirada a visitar a una viuda joven que había perdido a su esposo recientemente. Las dos se sentían aisladas y habían orado para tener consuelo. Así, Dios contestó dos oraciones a la vez. C.S. Lewis, cuando no podía hallar alivio a su tristeza por el fallecimiento de su esposa ni en sus propios escritos ni en los libros más sabios, lo encontró en una sencilla conversación con su hijastro, el joven huérfano de su esposa. Lección número dos: Si nos sentimos solos y aislados, ¡no somos los únicos! Cuando quienes se sienten aislados se unen, el aislamiento termina.

3. *Enfermedad/Muerte*: Eyring termina su discurso hablando de su ex-obispo, quien también fuera su vecino. Ese hombre murió lentamente: cuando necesitó usar un bastón para caminar, usó la otra mano para ayudar a los vecinos acarreándoles la basura. Cuando no podía salir de la casa y los miembros del sacerdocio venían a darle bendiciones, él siempre oraba pidiendo que ellos también fueran bendecidos. Y cuando el Presidente Eyring le dio una bendición en su último día de vida, él le dijo, “voy a recibir mi galardón”; el mensaje implícito era: Tú también lo recibirás. Lección número tres: cuando no tenemos fuerza, entonces nuestras palabras y acciones tienen un máximo de poder.

¿Pueden ver la pauta? Cuando tenemos una prueba grande, muchas veces una de las mejores maneras de enfrentarla es actuar como si fuera una oportunidad. La clase de adversidad que tenemos nos enseña qué clase de compasión debemos sentir por los demás. ¿Por qué es esto así? Porque eso es lo que Jesús hizo por nosotros. Él no tenía que padecer por sí mismo para saber cómo consolarnos. Pero Él lo hizo para que supiéramos que Él realmente nos comprende cuando sufrimos. Por medio de su gran conocimiento y la revelación, Él podría haber sabido lo que sentimos cuando perdemos algo u oramos por alguien que nos es importante; pero por medio de sus propios padecimientos en la carne, nosotros sabemos que Él está con nosotros y que el dolor tiene un propósito.

Voy a añadir un cuarto ejemplo de mi propia vida. Les dije antes que hice la misión en Houston Sur. Como misionero, siempre

me sentí un fracaso casi completo. Hice todo lo que pude por seguir las reglas, aprender todas las charlas y escrituras, hablar bien el español, leer todos los libros de la iglesia que podía, y abrir el corazón para amar a las personas que encontraba en la calle. Ayuné pidiendo un testimonio firme hasta que bajé 30 libras, y pueden ver que no soy tan grande. A pesar de todos mis esfuerzos, Dios no me usó como instrumento para que ni una sola persona se bautizara. Houston es en un área donde cientos de personas se bautizaban cada mes. Pero tras todo este fracaso, aprendí qué difícil es una misión; aprendí a identificarme con los misioneros que se habían desanimado y tuve experiencias para compartir con ellos. La semana que terminé la misión, otro élder también volvía a su casa. Yo había hablado mucho con él, pero no mucho sobre los problemas misionales. Él era una estrella; por medio de él, más de cien valientes personas se habían unido a la iglesia. Él me llamó una noche algunos días antes de terminar la misión, y me sorprendió por completo cuando me dijo que muchas veces al comienzo de su misión, él estuvo a punto de regresar a su casa, y que fue por causa de mi amistad que se quedaba. Y me dijo, “Mira todo el éxito que logramos juntos.” Lección número 4: A veces hay que sufrir, llorar con los que lloran y consolar a quienes necesitan de consuelo. A veces el ayudar a otros a que se salven también nos salva a nosotros.

Hermanos y hermanas, espero que recuerden que muchas veces Dios nos quita mucho para que nos enfoquemos en compartir lo poco que nos queda. Para terminar, les dejaré este mensaje: mi testimonio es pequeño y frágil, pero lo comparto esperando que Dios lo pueda usar de maneras que todavía no conozco. Oré, trabajé y ayuné mucho para saber si la iglesia era verdadera o no. Y ahora sí lo sé, por medio del Espíritu Santo, y por medio de mis propios experimentos con las promesas de las escrituras. Sé que Dios vive y que nos ama; sé que José Smith fue un profeta y que las escrituras que él tradujo tratan de cosas reales y constantes; sé que todos tendremos grandes pruebas en la vida, pero éstas no serán eternas. Nosotros sí lo somos. Un día volveremos a vivir. La vida que nos espera dependerá de cómo enfrentamos estas pruebas. Oré, trabajé y ayuné para llegar a saber estas cosas, y se las testifico en el nombre de Jesucristo, Amén.

* * *

Good morning, brothers and sisters. For those who don't know me, I was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, and lived there until I was eighteen when I went to Stanford University to study biology. After one year of study, I left for the Texas Houston South Mission. Returning to school, I met my wife, Marina Capella. She was born in Los Angeles and lived most of her life in a suburb called Fontana until she also became a biology major at Stanford. We met in October, and married in the September of the following year in the San Diego Temple, now seven years ago. We are still students; but in two months Marina will get her M.D. in pediatrics, and we will move to Boston on the other side of the country, where she will begin a program of medical pedagogy at Harvard and I have a post-doctoral appointment at the Museum of Natural History.

I was assigned to speak to you on a talk by Henry B. Eyring, "Adversity," which he gave last year.¹ I feel like a hypocrite talking about this subject. I remember a few months ago when Brother Miguel Chavez, first counselor in the branch presidency, spoke about gratitude. He had asked a few members here what things they felt grateful for. I don't remember the list, but everyone mentioned a serious problem that they had (which was impressive), and that had not yet been resolved (which was even more impressive).

It's one thing if someone who is suffering says, "Thank you, God, for teaching me." But it is a different thing if someone sees another person suffering, and says, "Thank you, God, for teaching *him*." When President Santiago Aguilar told me the topic of my talk, I couldn't think of anything that I could say that wouldn't make me into this second person. While many of you are expressing thankfulness in the midst of affliction, at best I feel grateful for what I learned after the experience is over, but not for the experience itself, and certainly not while it is still going on.

So I wasn't sure what to say. But almost the first thing President Eyring says is, "With all the differences in our lives, we have at least one challenge in common. We all must deal with adversity. There may be periods, sometimes long ones, when our lives seem to flow with little difficulty. But it is in the nature of our being human that comfort gives way to distress, periods of good health

come to an end, and misfortunes arrive.”² And thinking about this, I remembered that the words that had most helped me in difficult times were written by men who had very few problems at the time. In fact, President Eyring himself was born into one of Mormonism’s first families (nephew of Prophet Spencer W. Kimball and son of one of the most famous chemists of his generation), and he achieved a considerable amount of success in his personal life. So, though some of us are in difficult patches and some are in easier, we are all on the same road, and perhaps you will not think I am 100 percent hypocritical in offering advice to those with more experience in confronting adversity.

First, President Eyring speaks about the purpose of adversity. In philosophy, this is known as “the problem of pain,” the classical description of which is: If God is good, He wants to give us happiness. If He is all-powerful, He could do it. But obviously, we aren’t continually happy. Things go wrong. We suffer. Bad things happen to us. Therefore either God is not good or not all-powerful, or both. But President Eyring says, “The opportunity to confront adversity and affliction is part of the evidence for His divine love. [If we want to become Gods], we must transform ourselves by making righteous decisions *when they are difficult to make*.”³ As C. S. Lewis is quoted as saying: “We are like blocks of stone, out of which the sculptor carves the forms of men. The blows of his chisel, which hurt us so much, are what make us perfect. The suffering in this world is not the failure of God’s love for us; it is that love in action.”⁴ In other words, God must refine us. If He didn’t love us, He wouldn’t take the trouble.

Okay, then, we can have faith that there is purpose in our pain. But even so, we still hurt. This same C. S. Lewis wrote similar powerful-but-smug words at a time of abundance in *The Problem of Pain*. Only a few years later, when his wife died of cancer, he didn’t believe his own philosophy: “Go to God when you really need him and what do you find? A door slammed shut and the sound of it being bolted and double-bolted from the other side. There are no lights in the windows. It could be an abandoned house. Was it ever occupied?”⁵

So if philosophers find little comfort in their understanding of pain, what are we to do? The gospel answer, as Eyring explains it, is a surprise: We should *add to it*. This is radical and very diffi-

cult to understand, so he gives three examples of adversity: poverty, isolation, and death.

1. *Poverty*. Eyring recounts the story of Alma and the poor Zoramites. These were people so poor that their countrymen refused to let them into synagogues they had built themselves in which to worship. Alma, knowing this, nevertheless taught them:

If . . . ye turn your back on poor and naked . . . and do not give of your goods, if ye have them, to those that need them . . . ye are as the hypocrites that deny the faith.

Therefore, if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are like the dross that the refiners throw out, having no worth, and is trampled under the foot of men. (Alma 34:28-29)

If God gives us poverty, it is so we learn to share what we have. Of course, it is better to learn this without the affliction, but it seems that God cares less about pedagogical methods than the learning itself. Think well: Is there any way to become extremely rich that is also totally morally admirable? Many times, those who have much spend their time protecting their wealth; those who have little use it and worry less about how they will get it back. Many times the things we own end up owning us. Lesson #1: If we have little, we should share that little.

2. *Solitude*. Eyring tells the story of an old widow who felt alone. She prayed and felt inspired to visit a young widow who had recently lost her husband. This young woman had also been praying to feel less alone. Thus, God answered two prayers at once. C. S. Lewis, when he could not escape his grief over his wife's death in his own writings, nor in the wise books he studied, found it instead in a simple conversation with his young stepson.⁶ Lesson #2: If we feel alone and isolated, we are not alone! When the lonely join together, loneliness ends.

3. *Sickness and Death*. Eyring ends his talk with the story of his ex-bishop who was also his neighbor. This man died slowly. When he needed a cane to walk, he used his other hand to take the trash cans out to the curb. When he couldn't leave the house and elders came to bless him, he always prayed aloud to bless them as well. When President Eyring gave him a blessing on the last day of his life, the bishop grasped his hand and said firmly, "I'm going to make it," with the implication, "You will, too."⁷ Lesson #3: Our physical weakness gives our words and actions more strength.

Can you see the pattern? When we have a big challenge, often the best thing to do is to treat it as if it were the opposite. The kind of adversity we have shows us the kind of compassion and sympathy we should have for others. Why would this be so? Because it is what Jesus did for us. He did not need to suffer Himself to know how to comfort us; He suffered so that *we* would know He understands our suffering. Through His great knowledge and revelation, He could have learned exactly what we feel when we lose something or someone important to us; but through the suffering of His own flesh, *we* learn that He suffers with us, and that this suffering has purpose.

I'm going to add a fourth example from my own life. Earlier, I mentioned my mission in South Houston. As a missionary, I was more or less a complete failure. I did everything I could to follow the rules, learn all the discussions and scriptures, speak Spanish well, read all the Church books I could, and open my heart to love the people I met on the streets. I fasted for a strong testimony until I lost thirty pounds, and I'm not a big guy. But despite all my efforts, God did not use me as an instrument to baptize even one person until almost the very end of my mission. But through all this failure, I learned how difficult a mission is. I learned to see burn-out and depression in the other missionaries and had experiences I could share with them. The week I went home, another elder had also completed his mission. He was a star: through him more than a hundred strong people had joined the Church. I had talked with him often but usually not about missionary problems. He called me one night a few days before I went home and completely surprised me when he said that, if not for my friendship, he would have left his mission early. And he said, "Look at the success we had together." Lesson #4: Sometimes, it is necessary to suffer—to cry with those who cry, and comfort those who stand in need of comfort. Sometimes, helping them save themselves will save you.

Brothers and sisters, I hope you remember that many times God takes much away from us so that we will focus on sharing the little that remains. I will end by applying this lesson: My testimony is small and weak, but I share it, hoping that God can use it in ways I don't see. I prayed, worked, and fasted to learn the truth of the gospel. And though many questions and frustrations remain, I

know enough, through the Holy Ghost, and through my own experiments upon the word. I know that God is, and that He loves us; I know that the scriptures Joseph Smith translated speak of true and vital things; I know that we will have great trials and suffer death; but they are not eternal. We are. We will live again someday, and the kind of life we will then have depends on how we deal with our problems now. I prayed, worked, and fasted to know these things, and I share them in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Notes

1. Henry B. Eyring, "Adversity," *Ensign*, May 2009, 23.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 23–24.
4. Attributed to Lewis in William Nicholson, *Shadowlands: A Drama* (New York: Samuel French, 1989), 9.
5. C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1961), 9.
6. Attributed to Lewis in Nicholson, *Shadowlands*, 100–101.
7. Eyring, "Adversity," 26.

CONTRIBUTORS

CHRISTIAN N. K. ANDERSON {senka@ucsd.edu} is a graduate of Stanford University in biology, an IGERT Fellow at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego, where he earned his Ph.D. in marine biology. He thanks Myriam M. Capella and Hugo Olaiz for Spanish assistance and Blair Hodges for assistance with some C. S. Lewis citations.

MARC ALAIN BOHN {marcbohn@gmail.com} is an attorney in the Washington, D.C., area, where he lives with his wife, Melissa, and two sons. Marc served in the Washington D.C. South Mission, then earned a political science degree from Brigham Young University and a law degree from the George Washington University. In his limited free time, Marc enjoys spending time with his family and blogging at the Mormon-themed *Times & Seasons*.

KENNETH L. CANNON II {kcannon@djplaw.com} is a lawyer in private practice in Salt Lake City. During law school, he also completed a master's degree in American history and published a number of historical articles on post-Manifesto polygamy, vigilantism against seducers, polygamy under English common law, and baseball in early Salt Lake City. Ken has recently published articles in *Journal of Mormon History* and *Utah Historical Quarterly*. He is working on a biography of John Q., Frank J., and Abraham H. Cannon, who are his first cousins twice removed through his grandfather, and also his great-great-uncles, through his grandmother.

ANDREW W. COOK {awcook@sbcglobal.net} is a computational physicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. He received his undergraduate degree at the University of Utah and his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from the University of Washington in 1996. He grew up in Bountiful, Utah, and served a Greek-speaking mission in Melbourne, Australia. He and his wife, Ann D. Cook, have six children.

DAVID CHARLES GORE {dgore@d.umn.edu} is assistant professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Minnesota Duluth. He presented an early draft of this paper at the 2009 Mormon Scholars in the Humanities Conference. David and his wife, Kathy Foti Gore, are the parents of five children. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: I would like to thank the editors of *Dialogue* and the anonymous reviewers for their many helpful comments and suggestions. I also thank my family, especially my uncle, J. Christopher Larsen, for many wonderful letters over the years that no doubt prompted reflection on the epistolary form.

ANNETTE HAWS {annette_haws@yahoo.com}, a native of Logan, is a graduate from Utah State University and did graduate work at the University of Iowa and the University of Utah. Her novel, *Waiting for the Light to Change*, won Best of State in 2009, a Whitney Award for Best

Fiction, and the Diamond Quill from the League of Utah Writers. She has also published in *Sunstone*.

BARRY LAGA {blaga@mesastate.edu} is professor of English at Mesa State College in Grand Junction, Colorado, where he teaches American literature, literary theory, and cultural studies.

JAMES C. OLSEN {jamescolsen@gmail.com} and his wife, Erin Fairlight Olsen, are the parents of four children and live near San Diego. After serving in the Missouri St. Louis Mission, he completed an undergraduate degree in philosophy at Brigham Young University and an M.A. in international affairs at George Washington University. He is currently working to complete a Ph.D. in philosophy from Georgetown University.

LIZZIE SKURNICK {lizzie.skurnick@gmail.com} has published poetry in *Barrow Street*, *Daily Intel*, and *Morning Edition*, among others. A recipient of fellowships from Yaddo, Ucross, the VCCA, and many other residencies, she is the author of a poetry collection, *Check-In* (Pittsburgh, Pa., Caketrain, 2005), and of *Shelf Discovery* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), a memoir of teen reading. She lives in Jersey City.

CHRISTOPHER C. SMITH {chriscarrrollsmith@gmail.com} is a Ph.D. student in history of Christianity and religions in North America at Claremont Graduate University. He received his M.A. in history of Christianity from Wheaton College, and his B.A. in Biblical studies from Fresno Pacific University.

PHILLIP A. SNYDER {phillip_snyder@byu.edu} is an associate professor in the English Department at Brigham Young University, where he specializes in autobiography, contemporary literature, and western studies. Recent publications include *Post-Manifesto Polygamy: The 1899–1904 Correspondence of Helen, Owen, and Avery Woodruff*, co-edited with Lu Ann Faylor Snyder (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009), and a review essay on Douglas Thayer's *The Tree House*, *BYU Studies* 49, no. 1 (2010): 171–79. He also serves on the board of the Association for Mormon Letters.

ERIN ANN THOMAS {erinanthomas3@gmail.com} earned an MFA in creative nonfiction from George Mason University and has also published poetry and taught at Northern Virginia Community College. She currently lives in Alexandria, Virginia, and is a technical editor for IBM. Her essay is from *Coal in Our Veins: A Personal Journey*, a creative nonfiction narrative (forthcoming).

HOLLY WELKER {holly.welker@gmail.com} is a writer, editor and scholar living in Salt Lake City.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

THOMAS D. AARON {www.thomasdaaron.com} lives in Salt Lake City with his wife, Michael, and daughter. He sees his abstract paintings as having roots and perhaps a destination in the landscape of the Southwest and comments: “I am searching for a way to move toward my experience of homecoming—not as a corporeal matter but a conscious one. Raised in the West, I was given the privileges, experience, and baggage that comes from the western ethos. Themes of conquest, brutality, reinvention, self-determination, triumph, and redemption are interleaved in the western myth, yet underlying it all is a narrative of land—of space.

“My conscious wanderings have always led to me to desire lands and spaces far from my home; but recently, I have felt an irresistible pull toward the land—not a simulacrum of pretty views but an investigation into the unsympathetic disconnected patterns and layers of people on the land, viewed as an expression of time. I articulate those patterns as the vastness of space constantly interrupted by our hand—as layer over layer, a palimpsest, as use and reuse, cultivation and fallowing. This new awareness of the land and my place in it was a threshold experience, propelling me into a new sphere.

“My artistic process is not dissimilar to my content. I reference papers on mathematical theory in urban planning, old city plats, found photographs, thousands of aerial images culled from our vast media universe as well as time spent in the landscape observing the patterns and underlying structure of human involvement on the land. Beyond traditional painting and drawing mediums, I incorporate raw materials: sand, coal, salt, iron, copper, and silver. My approach is intuitive. I just start—make a move, not unlike the surrealist notion of automatic drawing that begins a back-and-forth of layers, responses to former movements and obliteration of others. Eventually the automatic is left behind for more precise formalist conventions of abstraction.”