JOSEPH SMITH III AND THE MORMONS OF UTAH

A dissertation by
Charles Millard Turner

presented to
The Faculty of the
Graduate Theological Union
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Berkeley, California
January 25, 1985

Committee Signatures

[Signatures]

Coordinator

[Signatures]

[Signatures]
CONTENTS

PREFACE ........................................ iii
INTRODUCTION ................................... 1
CHAPTER I. BOYHOOD: 1832-1844 .................. 8
CHAPTER II. CRISIS AND CONFLICT: 1844-1846 .... 37
CHAPTER III. AFTER THE EXODUS: 1846-1853 ....... 95
CHAPTER IV. VOCATIONAL CRISIS: 1853-1860 ....... 134
CHAPTER V. THE NAUVOO PRESIDENCY: 1860-1866 ... 192
CHAPTER VI. THE PLANO YEARS: 1866-1881 .......... 250
CHAPTER VII. THE LAMONI YEARS: 1881-1906 ....... 327
CHAPTER VIII. OLD AGE: 1906-1914 ............... 463
CONCLUSION .................................... 492
ILLUSTRATIONS .................................. 504
ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT FORMS ............... 510
NOTES ........................................ 512
BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................. 628
ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Map of Nauvoo, Illinois ............................ 504
2. Map of Hancock County, Illinois ................. 505
3. Family of Joseph Smith III .......................... 506
4. Smiths in the RLDS Hierarchy ..................... 507
5. Smiths in the LDS Hierarchy ...................... 508
6. Smith Family Tree .................................... 509
Joseph Smith III (1832-1914) was the oldest surviving son of Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon prophet. He was a youth of eleven years when his father was murdered by a mob in Carthage, Illinois. When the bulk of the Mormon population, led by Brigham Young, departed the Mormon city of Nauvoo, Illinois in 1846, Joseph Smith III remained behind with his mother, Emma Smith. In 1860 he assumed the presidency of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS Church), a rival to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah (LDS or "Mormon" Church). The RLDS Church repudiated Brigham Young's leadership and certain doctrinal tenets which attained notoriety under Young, chiefly polygamy. This dissertation explores Joseph Smith III's relationship to the Mormon Church. It investigates (1) the causes for his alienation from the Church in Utah which led up to his affiliation with the Reorganization, and (2) his adversarial relationship with Mormonism from 1860 until his death in 1914.

Throughout his years as president of the Reorganized Church, Joseph Smith III sought to distinguish the non-polygamous RLDS Church from the polygamous LDS Church in the eyes of the public. He also sought to gather "Old Saints" who had never accepted Brigham Young's leadership into the RLDS fold, sought to establish the Reorganization's claims among "Brighamites," and in every possible way sought to combat polygamy.

Today the RLDS Church is the second-largest body of Latter Day Saints. The personal history of Joseph Smith III and his stance toward the LDS Church
proved critical in the RLDS Church's growth into a permanent, coherent alternative to the theology and practice of the Utah Church.

The last two decades have witnessed a great outpouring of scholarly studies of Mormonism. Only a small percentage of this scholarship has focused on the RLDS Church and its history, however. Among non-Mormon historians, the neglect has been almost total. No standard biography of Joseph Smith III exists, and to cover his lengthy and eventful life we have only one dissertation (by an RLDS scholar) and one thesis (by an LDS student). Even the monograph literature bearing on his career is surprisingly limited. This neglect of Joseph Smith III, by scholars of American religion, is unfortunate. Not only was he a figure of great importance in nineteenth century Latter Day Saint history, but he figured in the larger story of American social, political, and legal history.

This dissertation demonstrates the importance of Joseph Smith III not only in the development of the RLDS Church but in its larger realm of Mormon history. No more can one understand nineteenth century Mormon history apart from the life of Joseph Smith III than one can understand sixteenth century Catholicism apart from Luther or Calvin. But Joseph Smith III was an important figure beyond the realm of religious history per se. He played a prominent role in the protracted federal struggle to suppress polygamy in Utah. His lawsuits over the Kirtland Temple and the Temple Lot in Independence, Missouri raised fascinating issues concerning the relationship of church and state which have been neglected hitherto by scholars. His argument that polygamy was a civil rather than strictly a religious question ultimately was adopted by the U.S. Supreme Court and led to the demise of Mormon polygamy. Beyond his significance to American political and constitutional history, his life contains valuable clues for social history. Students of American sexual and marital mores will find much
valuable information in his life. So too will historians focusing on religious social history.

This study therefore fills a scholarly lacuna. Its methodology is biographical, focusing on one critical (and arguably the dominant) aspect of Joseph Smith III's life. No attempt has been made to tell the entire story of his life. Neither has any attempt been made to write a complete history of the RLDS Church through the year 1914.

Several problems have have arisen in writing this dissertation. First, there was the problem of semantics. There is a long history of polemical warfare between the RLDS and LDS Churches. This writer has attempted to avoid using semantically loaded expressions favored in this warfare by one side or the other. Nevertheless, certain choices were unavoidable. For example, the Utah-based LDS Church prefers the spelling "Latter-day Saint," while the Missouri-based RLDS Church prefers the spelling "Latter Day Saint." Since this dissertation deals with the first president of the Reorganized Church, the latter spelling generally has been employed. The word "Mormon" poses another problem. Originally this term was applied derisively to the followers of Joseph Smith, but over the course of years it lost its pejorative connotation. Today it is employed freely by members and non-members to refer to the LDS Church. But in order to distinguish themselves from the larger LDS Church, members of the RLDS Church generally resist identification as "Mormons," preferring to be called "Saints" or "Latter Day Saints." This aversion is sometimes awkward, resulting in circumlocutions such as "Latter Day Saintism." From the death of Joseph Smith onward, this dissertation employs "Mormon" exclusively with reference to the LDS Church headed by Brigham Young and his successors. However, during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, "Mormon" is freely employed with reference to the
movement he headed. Another semantic problem arises from the fact that the Mormon Church split into a great number of factions after Joseph Smith's death in 1844. Members of each faction claimed to be the true "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." To solve the obvious problem of how to distinguish between so many Churches of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, it became common to refer to the various factions after the names of their leaders. Thus James J. Strang's followers were called "Strangites," Alpheus Cutler's followers were called "Cutlerites," Brigham Young's followers were called "Brighamites," and Joseph Smith III's followers were called "Josephites." While such shorthand designations often were used pejoratively during the Nineteenth Century, they are extremely convenient devices for the Twentieth Century historian and are used freely in this study.

Another problem relates to citations from sacred books common to both the RLDS and LDS Churches. Both churches publish their own editions of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. Chapter numbering, section numbering, and versification are not compatible between the RLDS and LDS editions. In this dissertation, all citations from Latter Day Saint scriptures are from the current editions, and scriptures common to both churches are cited from both RLDS and LDS editions.

Another class of problems involves the relatively unstandardized orthography, grammar, and punctuation found in nineteenth century manuscripts. The following policy has been observed: (1) Eccentricities of spelling, grammar, and punctuation are reproduced verbatim in quotations; all editorial insertions or alterations are contained in brackets. (2) "Sic" is employed sparingly. (3) Whenever it is impossible to ascertain whether or not the writer of a manuscript intended to pen a comma or a period, a capital or lower case letter, or similar
ambiguities, the ambiguous character is interpreted in accordance with accepted contemporary usage.

One feature of nineteenth century manuscripts—initially confusing to the uninitiated—concerns the name, "Joseph Smith." There are three "Joseph Smiths" in this story. Joseph Smith, Sr. (1771-1840) was the father of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805-1844). The prophet's son was named Joseph Smith III (1832-1914). After the death of the eldest Joseph Smith in 1840, it was not uncommon to refer to the prophet as "Joseph Smith, Sr." and his young son as "Joseph Smith, Jr." To further complicate matters, in his mature years Joseph Smith III usually referred to himself simply as "Joseph Smith." To avoid confusion, this dissertation refers to the three individuals as "Joseph Smith, Sr.," "Joseph Smith, Jr.," and "Joseph Smith III." The use of the bare name, "Joseph Smith," refers to Joseph Smith, Jr. in all cases. The reader should bear in mind, however, that quoted material does not always observe this convention.

Spelling of personal names in the nineteenth century was relatively unstandardized. To complicate matters, later historians often have substituted alternative spellings for those personally favored by the individuals in question. In this dissertation, preference has been given to the spelling employed by the historical figure in question (when known).

A problem facing religious historians is how to approach accounts of supernatural events. In Latter Day Saint history one faces such questions as whether Joseph Smith received golden plates from an angel, the methodology and accuracy of his translation of the Book of Mormon and his revision of the Bible, and the reality or legitimacy of reported charismatic manifestations (revelations, tongues, healings, etc.), to name several. This writer generally has adopted a phenomenological approach, preferring to let readers form their own conclusions.
about such questions.

Linda Newell King and Valeen Tippett's Avery's definitive biography, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804-1879*, appeared in the fall of 1984. The chapters of the dissertation dealing with material treated in the biography were already completed at this time. Many of the biography's important conclusions were anticipated in this dissertation through reference to other writings of the co-authors, however. In several instances references to the biography have been added to the notes.

I am indebted to the staffs of the following institutions for their assistance, advice, and courtesy: the Library-Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the Common Library of the Graduate Theological Union; the Hubert Howe Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; the Willard J. Marriott Library, University of Utah; the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; the Utah State Historical Society Library; the Henry E. Huntington Library; the Frederick Madison Smith Library, Graceland College; and the Illinois State Historical Library.

I wish to tender special thanks to a number of individuals. Sara J. Hallier, Librarian at the RLDS Library-Archives, filled numerous requests for materials on inter-library loan, replied graciously to repeated requests for information, and generally rendered assistance far beyond the call of duty. L. Madelon Brunson, Archivist at the RLDS Library-Archives granted me many favors and helpfully rendered advice. Richard P. Howard, RLDS Church Historian, offered expert advice when I was embarking upon my initial research. At the LDS Church Historical Department, James L. Kimball, Jr., Supervisor of the Archives Search Room, brightened many a long day of research with his humor and offered many
useful suggestions. The rest of the staff in the Archives Search Room was unfailingly courteous and helpful. Following my return to California, Glenn Rowe of the Historical Department kindly answered all of my requests for additional information. Nancy Young, in the Special Collections Department at the Marriott Library, University of Utah, faithfully tended to my many requests for archival material. Dozens of persons at the Graduate Theological Union's Common Library have assisted me, and I cannot name all of them. Three, however, deserve a special word of thanks: Mary E. Garrett, Georgie Moe, and Oscar Burdick.

Those who have completed a doctoral program will understand that one's debts are not confined to the realm of academe. I could not have completed this dissertation without assistance in the realms of housing, finances, and employment. Among those who rendered such help were Mary Jo Kingshury, Ken and Katharine Reed, Bob and Barbara Francis, Ken Whitham, Lothar Heinz, and my parents.

This dissertation was prepared on a Xerox 860 word processor belonging to Siemens Medical Laboratories, Walnut Creek, California. It would be difficult to calculate the considerable value—in saved time, increased accuracy, and improved editing—of this word processor to my work. To Mr. Volker Stieber, the president of Siemens Medical Laboratories, I tender thanks for his kindness in granting me access to this machine.

I owe a debt of thanks to my dissertation committee: Eldon Ernst (coordinator), John Dillenberger, Albert Rabateau, and Claude Welch. Eldon Ernst has assisted me throughout most of my doctoral program, including general and special comprehensive examinations, and to him I express a special word of gratitude.
INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a boy whose whole life was shaped by paternal aspirations and maternal morality. It is the story of a youth who lived in a maelstrom of tragedy, intrigue, conflict, and high drama. It is the story of a young man who discovered that he could not escape his religious heritage in worldly pursuits. It is the story of an adult who overcame his timidity as a preacher to become a prominent ecclesiastical reformer and moral crusader. It is the story of an old man who could look back with satisfaction upon a lifelong campaign to clear his father's name of obloquy.

The boy, the youth, the young man, the adult, and the old man were all one and the same individual. His name was Joseph Smith III, the eldest son of Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon prophet. This is the story of why and how he spent his life campaigning against Mormon polygamy and heading a reformed ("reorganized") church in opposition to the Mormon Church in Utah.

But before taking up the course and causes of our protagonist's career, the stage must be set and the *dramatis personae* introduced. The story commences in early nineteenth century America.

To many nineteenth century Europeans, the United States of America seemed a curious, even dangerous, experiment. Not only had the young American republic discarded the venerable institution of monarchy, but the tradition of religious establishment, as well. To many, the latter step may have appeared more radical than the former. The phenomenon of a nation without an official church was a departure from centuries of Western tradition. Not only that, but it
seemed to pose practical dangers. It was commonly held that morality and social cohesion were dependent upon the authority of a shared religion. Could order and virtue survive in America?

So wondered a young French nobleman when he landed in America in 1831. To his pleasant surprise, Alexis de Tocqueville discovered an underlying unity beneath America's apparent religious diversity. Despite the multiplicity of churches, he found a common core of teachings. He concluded that disentangling religion from official connection with the state had worked to the advantage of religion, that Americans were a highly religious people, that Christian morality undergirded American society, and that in America "the sovereign authority" was religious.¹

Another visitor to America was decidedly less impressed by American religion. The same year that Tocqueville arrived in America, Frances Trollope returned to England. Her three and one-half years in the United States had convinced her that Americans were uncultured, according to the standards of genteel English society. Where Tocqueville had marvelled at the pervasive influence of American religion, Mrs. Trollope lamented its vulgarity. She complained of the "almost endless variety of religious factions," in which leadership usually devolved upon "the most intriguing and factious individual." In her opinion, the most lamentable feature of American religion was revivalism. She found much to complain of in revivals: emotionalism, uneducated clergy, familiarity between the sexes, and—above all—lack of good breeding.²

However much Alexis de Tocqueville and Frances Trollope may have differed in their reactions, their observations pinpoint three important facts about Antebellum American religion. First, Americans were free to preach and practice their religious beliefs without interference from the state. Second,
denominationalism flourished in this "free church" environment. Third, revivalism was the principal vehicle by which the expanding young republic was evangelized. Revivalism emphasized the primacy of the individual experience of conversion. As such, it was uniquely adapted to an environment of religious freedom. Methodist, and like-minded Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregationalist preachers actively promoted revivals and taught their listeners that they must personally choose to become Christians. According to their understanding, all regenerated individuals were members of the Universal Church, and each denomination was a legitimate part of the true church. Preachers from various denominations would cooperate in the work of revivals, but once converts had been won, there was often fierce competition to secure their adherence to a particular denomination.3

When Alexis de Tocqueville and Frances Trollope visited America, the nation was undergoing tremendous religious ferment. The popular evangelical denominations, fueled by revivalism, were experiencing rapid growth, but unconventional forms of religion were flourishing also. One historian has described this as a time of "eager expectancy, unbridled enthusiasm, and restless ferment," in which "many new ways to heaven . . . were being fashioned." It was also an era in which advocates of reform and community attempted to give earthly embodiment to heavenly idealism. America's freedom, open space, and spirit of experimentation provided an ideal environment for the development of new religious movements.4

Ironically, revivalism itself contributed to the growth of new religious sects in Antebellum America. In the wake of revivals there were always some who had not gained assurance of salvation. These anxious individuals were likely to prove receptive to new prophets who offered alternative pathways to spiritual happiness. Not only the climate of religious searching and excitement, but
several distinct emphases of revivalism contributed to the birth of new religious movements.

The spirit of evangelical revivalism contained four distinct emphases: first, emotionalism and direct inspiration; second, perfect sanctification as a possibility or necessity for Christians; third, universalism (as opposed to Calvinist particularism), and fourth, millenarian expectation. The reforms, communal experiments, and new sects spawned in the wake of revivalism took one or more of these emphases to an extreme. Nowhere was this more apparent than in upstate New York.

During the first four decades of the nineteenth century, upstate New York was one of the most heavily evangelized areas in America. Wave upon wave of revivals swept over the western part of the state, until the revivalists themselves came to call it the "Burned-over District." For a variety of social and religious reasons, the Burned-over District was given to radical enthusiasms. Many new sects flourished in the Burned-over District. Among these were the Shakers, Jemima Wilkinson's Community of the Public Universal Friend, Millerism, the Oneida Community of John Humphrey Noyes, Spiritualism, and Swedenborgianism. Revivalistically oriented offshoots of evangelical denominations also flourished, as did the "Christian" movement. Other "isms" found a ready following, ranging from mesmerism and phrenology to abolitionism and feminism to temperance and health reforms.

Viewed retrospectively, the most important of the sects spawned in the Burned-over District was Mormonism. A remarkably eclectic religion, Mormonism drew together numerous strands of religious, social, political, and folk beliefs current in the Burned-over District in the 1820s.

The prophet-founder of Mormonism was Joseph Smith, Jr. Born in 1805 in
Sharon, Vermont, the future prophet's family joined the westward stream of migrating Yankees following the disastrous farming season of 1816 ("Eighteen-hundred-and-froze-to-death"). Ten year-old Joseph and his family settled in Genesee County, New York, in the heart of the Burned-over District.

As a young man, Joseph Smith, Jr. was acutely aware of the religious claims and controversies which agitated the Burned-over District. He himself held aloof from joining any of the competing denominations. According to a retrospective account, he was anxious about which church taught the truth. He sought divine guidance and was instructed to remain apart from all of the churches in preparation for a special mission.9

The first step in this special mission was the translation of the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith's later account stated that after a period of testing he was guided by an angel to the location of long-buried golden plates. These plates—which were delivered back into angelic hands upon the completion of the translation—contained a history of pre-Columbian America. According to the Book of Mormon, a Jew named Lehi left Jerusalem with his family around 600 B.C. and sailed across the Pacific to America. His numerous progeny peopled the continent, built great civilizations, and fought many wars. While the Book of Mormon embraced the then-popular notion of the Hebraic origins of the American Indians, its principal appeal to Joseph Smith's contemporaries lay in its religious teachings. The book related that the Gospel was known in ancient America, and that Christ's Church once flourished among some of the continent's inhabitants. The Book of Mormon supplemented the Bible, and explained clearly many points of theological controversy. Some critics thought that it explained them too clearly. Alexander Campbell complained that the Book of Mormon gave precise answers to all the great controversies which had agitated the Burned-over District in the
1820s:

infant baptism, ordination, the trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, the fall of man, the atonement, transubstantiation, fasting, penance, church government, religious experience, the call to the ministry, the general resurrection, eternal punishment, who may baptize, and even the question of free masonry, republican government and the rights of man . . . .

In 1830 the completed Book of Mormon was published. On April 6, 1830, a small band of believers in the new revelation formally organized the "Church of Christ" in Fayette, New York. Joseph Smith was the acknowledged leader of the church. Already he was receiving revelations to deal with problems as they arose in his fledgling church.

Almost from the start, Joseph Smith's followers were the objects of scorn and persecution. They were referred to derisively as "Mormons." Most Protestants scoffed at the idea of a new revelation in addition to the Bible. The Mormon exercise of charismatic gifts such as tongues and healing seemed radical to many of their neighbors. Their millenarian beliefs were unique: not only did they hold to premillennialism at a time when postmillennialism was the dominant Protestant interpretation, but they held that Christ would reign for one thousand years from an American City of Zion. The Latter Day Saints—as they preferred to be called—had separatistic and exclusivistic tendencies which tended to foster resentment among their neighbors.

To a minority of Americans, however, the new Mormon religion proved appealing. Amidst the contention of the competing denominations and sects, Mormonism claimed to be the divine restoration of the one true church, a church with authoritative answers to disputed questions, a church which enjoyed the charismatic gifts of apostolic Christianity, a church answering to the pattern found in the New Testament.

Soon after the organization of the Church of Christ, Sidney Rigdon
became a convert. Rigdon was a prominent Campbellite preacher in the Western Reserve who recently had broken with Campbell because of his advocacy of premillennialism and communitarianism. Most of Rigdon's community at Kirtland, Ohio followed him into Mormonism.  

In the spring of 1831, Joseph Smith and the small band of New York Saints moved to Kirtland. The nucleus of about one hundred Mormons in Kirtland provided a stronger base for the church. For about seven years Kirtland was to be the de facto headquarters of Mormonism. By 1835 the Mormon colony at Kirtland had grown to between fifteen hundred and two thousand souls.  

In Kirtland, Joseph Smith continued to receive revelations. Many of these were collected and published in the Doctrine and Covenants, a third volume of Mormon scripture ranking alongside the Bible and Book of Mormon. Both Mormon theology and ecclesiastical organization underwent continuing evolution in Kirtland, as more and more revelations were received. Out of "freedom's ferment" in the Burned-over District, a uniquely American religion had arisen.  

It was in Kirtland that a son was born to Joseph Smith and his wife Emma in 1832. He was named "Joseph," after his father and grandfather. From both parents the lad inherited a quick intelligence. From his mother he derived his dark hair and brown eyes. From his father he inherited a muscular constitution and an aquiline nose. More than his physical and intellectual attributes, however, little Joseph Smith III inherited a religious legacy. Neither he nor his contemporaries could forget that he was the son of the Mormon prophet. What follows is the story of his struggle with that legacy.
CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD: 1832-1844

Joseph Smith III was born on November 6, 1832. He was the first child of Joseph and Emma Smith to survive infancy. His parents had been married since 1827, but all of their previous children had died in infancy. After losing twin babies in 1831, they had adopted Joseph and Julia Murdock, motherless twin infants born on the same day as their own, to assuage Emma's sense of loss. Early in 1832, Joseph Murdock died. Hence, Joseph III grew to adulthood as the oldest son of the Mormon prophet. His father's name and legacy were to shape his destiny.

Little Joseph lived with his family in Kirtland until early in 1838. Many important events in Mormon history took place in Kirtland, but of these Young Joseph—as the prophet's son came to be known—had no comprehension. His later memories of Kirtland were of such important boyhood events as catching his first fish in the Chagrin River. During his childhood in Kirtland, a little brother joined the family, Frederick Granger Williams Smith, born in 1836. Also during the years in Kirtland, little Joseph witnessed the construction of the Kirtland Temple, a magnificent architectural accomplishment for its time and place.

Late in 1837, the prophet faced a crisis in Kirtland. Legal, financial, and ecclesiastical problems had reached a boiling point. The prophet's unchartered bank, the "Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company," collapsed in the midst of the Panic of 1837. Creditors and lawsuits hounded Joseph Smith, Jr.'s heels.
The church in Kirtland was racked with dissent. Some of the prophet's followers were convinced that he had fallen from grace.3

On January 12, 1838, Joseph Smith, Jr. and his counselor, Sidney Rigdon, fled from Kirtland in the night. The prophet had received word that a warrant for his arrest on a charge of banking fraud had been issued. The next day, Emma and the three children also left Kirtland. They joined the prophet and traveled together eight hundred miles to the west, in a covered wagon. Finally they reached their journey's end in the middle of March. The journey was made more difficult for Emma, since she was pregnant. Their destination was the Mormon settlement in northern Missouri known as Far West.

To the Mormons, Missouri was the land of "Zion." Located in the middle of the North American continent, but also on the then frontier of the United States, the Mormon prophet had taught his followers that Missouri was a specially consecrated spot. Here converted American Indians ("Lamanites," in Mormon nomenclature) would gather together with other believers in the Latter Day Gospel. At the designated central spot, Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, a great temple would be built. Independence would be the location of the New Jerusalem ("Zion"). Here Christ would reign during the millennium. In the meantime, the Saints hoped to gather to Missouri as a place of refuge from the world and eschatological tribulations, and to begin construction of an ideal society.

From an early date in the Mormon Church's history, Saints had begun gathering to Zion. But the initial Mormon settlers in Jackson County had been driven out by the "old settlers" of Missouri. A complex set of political, economic, social, and religious factors led to constant tension between the Missourians and
the Mormons. After a series of conflicts, these early Mormon settlers had relocated in the relatively unoccupied lands around Far West.

Just when it appeared that the Saints might have a chance of living in peace with their neighbors (whom they called "Gentiles"), Joseph Smith and other refugees from Kirtland arrived in Far West. Almost immediately, troubles flared up again. The Missourians feared the political influence of the concentrated body of Saints. Indiscreet statements by some of the Mormon leaders about their determination to defend themselves added to the problems.

By October 1838, the troubles between the Mormons and the Missourians had escalated into civil war. Governor Lilburn Boggs—an inveterate enemy of the Latter Day Saints who had done nothing to protect them from earlier depredations—seized the opportunity to treat them as outlaws. On October 27th he issued his infamous "Exterminating Order," which declared: "The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good. Their outrages are beyond all description."4

After some armed skirmishing, the Mormons in outlying areas fled into Far West for protection. Crops were burned and property ravaged. Saints in the small settlement of Haun's Mill were massacred in cold blood. Finally the "Mormon War" came to a climax when the outnumbered Mormon forces in Far West were surrounded by approximately twenty-five hundred Missouri militiamen. Joseph Smith was taken prisoner. On November 1, 1838, the commanding general of the Missourians issued an order to shoot the Mormon prophet and seven other prisoners. They were saved only by the defiant reply of Brigadier General Alexander W. Doniphan, a subordinate officer, who stated: "It is cold-blooded murder. I will not obey your order... if you execute these men, I will hold you responsible before an earthly tribunal, so help me God."5
Instead of executing the prophet, it was determined to take him and some others away for trial. On November 2nd, before marching them away, they were allowed to say good-bye to their families. An armed guard brought Joseph Smith to his home, but would not allow him to enter the house. When Joseph Smith III ran out the gate to greet his father, the guard thrust him away with brandished sword, uttering an oath. Emma was holding her infant son, Alexander (born June 2nd), in her arms, but the guard would not allow the prophet to hold his baby son in his arms for a word of farewell. Emma was not allowed to approach her husband to kiss him good-bye. As Joseph Smith III later recalled with bitterness: "With careless profanity and coarse brutality he thrust mother and children from the side of husband and father, and marched his unresisting prisoner back into the custody of sworn enemies." This was Young Joseph's first encounter with Anti-Mormonism, a phenomenon with which he would contend for the rest of his life.

After a hearing at Richmond, Missouri, eleven prisoners were jailed to await trial. Five were kept at Richmond Jail. Six, including the prophet, were sent to Liberty Jail, in Clay County. On November 30th, the prophet and the others began their confinement. Liberty Jail was a small, fortress-like structure, built of oak logs and stone, with negligible lighting or ventilation. For six months the prisoners endured the miserable conditions there.

Joseph Smith, Jr. did not know whether or not he would emerge from prison alive. It was possible that he might be lynched. Or, he might be convicted and executed by the authorities, since he faced charges of treason and murder. He could entertain legitimate skepticism about the possibility of obtaining a fair trial in Missouri.

**Blessing In Liberty Jail**

Under the circumstances, Joseph Smith had to consider what would happen
if he were to die. What would be his family's fate? Would his followers be scattered? Who would assume the leadership of the church?

This last question was particularly important, since the prophet had given a revelation in 1831 which declared that no one but himself could act as prophet for the church, and that a successor must be appointed by himself.8 Prior to his imprisonment, he had designated more than one successor (or possible successor). In 1833 and 1834, he had given some indication that his first or second counselor in the First Presidency might preside "in the absence" of the prophet. But this probably referred to temporary administrative duties to be assumed while the prophet was occupied elsewhere, not succession to his office upon his death. Furthermore, both of his counselors—Sidney Rigdon and Hyrum Smith—were imprisoned with him, in November, and their fates were as uncertain as his own. On July 8, 1834, the prophet secretly designated David Whitmer to succeed him if he should die, but this possible successor had been removed from consideration by his excommunication for apostacy in 1838. Later in 1834, Joseph Smith had named Oliver Cowdery associate president, with the right to succeed to the presidency. But Cowdery also had become disaffected and had been excommunicated in 1838.9 Therefore, as he began his imprisonment at Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith's church was left without a clear successor if he should be killed. Such considerations moved him to designate his oldest son, Joseph Smith III, as his successor while in prison.

The prisoners were permitted to receive visitors. Family and associates frequently took advantage of this privilege. Emma Smith visited her husband on three occasions: December 8th, December 20th, and January 21st.10 On the first of these visits, Sidney Rigdon's wife Phebe accompanied her. They each took one of their sons with them: Joseph Smith III and John Wickliffe Rigdon.11 On the
second or third visit, Young Joseph again accompanied his mother and stayed overnight with his father. During this visit the prophet (with one of the other elders) laid his hands upon his son's head and blessed him, as his eldest son, to the blessings which had come down to him through his progenitors. Of the adults present in the room, only one left a record of the blessing: Apostle Lyman Wight. In 1855 Wight wrote a letter upholding the right to Joseph Smith III to succeed his father, in which he stated:

Now Mr Editor if you been present when Joseph called on me shortly after I had been in jail to lay hands with him on the head of a youth and heard him cry aloud you are my successor when I depart and heard the blessings pored on his head I say had you heard all this and seen the tears streaming from his eyes you would not have been led by blind fanaticism or a zeal without knowledge.

Joseph Smith III was too young to remember the words with which he was blessed. However, he was able to recall the visit and some of the attendant circumstances.

**Ecclesiastical Dynasticism**

Why did the prophet designate his six-year old son to be his successor? Paternal love and pride were perhaps factors. But this action reflected something deeper: a sense of familial destiny and a policy of ecclesiastical dynasticism.

To begin with, Joseph Smith believed that he and the Smith family were a specially chosen family, descended from the Biblical patriarch Joseph. The Book of Mormon contained the following prophecy, purportedly uttered by Joseph of old, foretelling the advent of a latter day prophet bearing the name "Joseph:"

"A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins . . . . And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father." A similar prophecy was inserted by Joseph Smith, Jr., into his inspired translation of the Bible.
Not only did Joseph Smith believe that he was a descendant of the patriarch Joseph, an heir of his blessings, and one specially chosen to restore the Gospel in the latter days as foretold of old, but he also believed that the Smith family was specially blessed. This sense of familial destiny was particularly apparent in his appointment of his father, Joseph Smith, Sr., to the office of presiding patriarch on December 18, 1833. Joseph Smith, Jr. declared that the office belonged to his father by right of lineage, because he was a descendant of Joseph, son of Jacob, unto whom the birthright in Israel had descended. Furthermore, the Mormon prophet declared, the office of presiding patriarch—with the right to hold the keys of the patriarchal order—was to continue forever through the posterity of Joseph Smith, Sr., passing on from father to son, from generation to generation. The seer prophetically foretold that his father would have a multitude of nations descending from him and that his father one day would stand in their midst as a prince, because all the blessings of Joseph his progenitor should come upon his head and upon his seed after him.  

This belief that the Smith family was specially chosen and blessed had practical consequences. Between 1833 and 1843, as more and more offices were added to the Mormon hierarchy, Joseph Smith advanced a series of relatives into positions of hierarchical authority. These included his father, his brothers Hyrum and William, his uncle John, his aunt's first cousin Amasa M. Lyman, his first cousin George A. Smith, and several distant cousins, including Brigham Young.

Joseph Smith clearly intended his descendants to occupy prominent positions of ecclesiastical leadership. This is evident in a revelation he gave in 1832 which included the statement, "Therefore your life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things ..." The right to preside in the church by right of
lineage was a general principle taught in Joseph Smith's revelations. His appointments reflected this principle of ecclesiastical dynasticism.

It is therefore unremarkable that he entertained hopes that his oldest son someday would occupy a position of leadership in the Mormon Church. Just as his parents had been impressed that someday Joseph, Jr. would play an important role in the divine economy, so similar hopes were entertained for Joseph III. These hopes were reflected in a blessing which Joseph Smith, Sr. pronounced upon the head of Joseph III, in Kirtland. The blessing declared:

Your name is after the name of your father. You are Joseph the third. You shall live long upon the Earth. And after you are grown up you shall have wisdom knowledge and understanding. And shall search into the Mysteries of the kingdom of God. Your heart shall be open to all men. And your hand shall be open to relieve the wants of the poor. You shall be admired by all who shall behold you. You shall be an honor to your Father and Mother. And a comfort to your Mother. You shall be a help to your brothers and you shall have power to carry out all that your Father shall leave undone. When you come of age you shall have power to wield the sword of Laban.

Implicit in this blessing was the belief that the Smith family had been appointed by God to carry out an important mission in the history of redemption. This was especially apparent in the promise that little Joseph would "have power to carry out" all that his father should leave undone.

The blessing in Liberty Jail was consistent with Joseph Smith, Jr.'s theology and previous appointments. While languishing in prison—his fate uncertain—it was natural for him to wish to pass on the blessings of the seed of Joseph to his oldest son, including the right to preside in the church.

Life in Illinois

After the imprisonment of Joseph Smith, the Mormons were compelled to abandon their homes and property and to leave Missouri. After her third visit to Liberty Jail, Emma Smith departed Far West for Illinois. When she reached the
frozen Mississippi River, on February 15, 1839, for safety's sake, she got down from the wagon and walked across the river. In her arms she carried Frederick and Alexander. Julia and Joseph clung to her dress on either side. With several thousand other Saints, she found temporary refuge near Quincy, Illinois.

In April 1839, Joseph Smith and his fellow prisoners were allowed to escape by their captors. Opinion had turned against Missouri's mistreatment of the Mormons, and the continued captivity of the prophet (who had never been tried) was an embarrassment. Joseph crossed the Mississippi and joined his family. He immediately began looking for a new location to which the Saints might gather and soon settled upon a tiny hamlet named Commerce, in Hancock County, Illinois. Arrangements were made to purchase the surrounding land, and soon the Saints busily were engaged in turning Commerce into a populous city.

Commerce grew rapidly. It occupied a strategic location at the head of the Des Moines Rapids on the Mississippi River. These rapids formed a barrier to many of the larger vessels which trafficked the river, necessitating unloading and transporting of cargoes overland between the foot and the head of the rapids. Commerce was also a beautiful location, lying on a horseshoe-shaped bend in the Mississippi. Commerce soon was renamed "Nauvoo," from a Hebrew word signifying beauty. The city was platted, and plans were laid to build an imposing temple upon the highest point in the center of the city. From there the white limestone structure would dominate the view for miles around. But the city had one disadvantage. Low-lying ground (along the river) and poorly drained areas were ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. During the initial warm seasons there, the Saints suffered terribly from "ague," as malarial chills and fevers were then denominated.
The Smith family moved into one of the few original homes in Nauvoo. This came to be known as the "Old Homestead." It was located on the southern part of the bend in the river, on low ground very close to the Mississippi. The first summer there, the Old Homestead was filled with Saints afflicted with ague. Emma Smith put her famous nursing skills to good use, energetically tending to the sick, who eventually overflowed into the yard. Young Joseph was pressed into service carrying buckets of water to assuage the thirst and fever of the ague-sufferers.

Although the years spent in Nauvoo witnessed the introduction of important new teachings by the prophet Joseph Smith, these were not the events which impressed themselves upon the memory of Joseph Smith III. He viewed life through a boy's eyes. He was, of course, struck by various deaths in the family: that of his sixty-nine year old grandfather, Joseph Smith, Sr. on September 14, 1840, that of his twenty-five year old uncle Don Carlos Smith on August 7, 1841, that of his infant brother Don Carlos on August 15, 1841, and perhaps most forcefully by that of his beloved cousin and playmate, seven-year old Hyrum Smith, on September 21, 1841.22

One of the most important aspects of Young Joseph's life in Nauvoo was his schooling. As yet there was no common school system, and various teachers established private schools as they saw fit. Scholars of various ages occupied the same classroom. Benches and tables were relatively primitive. Guill pens and homemade ink were the order of the day, and writing lessons were enscribed in copy-books which the teacher retained until it was time for the next lesson. Young Joseph had a terrible struggle in his initial attempt to master longhand, employing the "pot-hook system," which he ever afterwards regarded as a form of torture. He attended a series of schools, taught by teachers such as Julia Durfee,
Miss Wheeler, Howard and Martha Coray, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Cole, and James Madison Monroe. He made strides both in academic studies and in his social development. He was a strong boy and learned to defend himself, but he was no bully and always came to the defense of weaker classmates when they were unfairly preyed upon. No troublemaker, boyish exuberance nevertheless earned him an occasional lesson from "Assistant Birch."

There was plenty of time for boyish activities, such as ball games, a secret club, skinny-dipping in the Mississippi in the summer, or sliding on the ice in the winter. Young Joseph also learned his way around domestic animals, mastering the art of cow-milking and horseback-riding. Visits of Indians to the city fascinated him. He also loved to explore the temple as its construction progressed. Carpenters, stone-cutters, masons, and other workmen abounded in Nauvoo in those days, and Young Joseph watched them work and made friends with them. He also drilled and paraded with the boy's auxiliary of the local militia, the Nauvoo Legion, in which he was an officer.23

Nauvoo's population grew as converts continued to immigrate there. The prophet's house constantly was flooded with visitors. In 1842, a handsome two-story frame house was built for the Smith family, coter-corner across the street from the Old Homestead. The prophet decided to convert his new dwelling into a hotel, capable of accommodating the crowds of visitors. A new wing was added to the structure to provide additional rooms, and the hotel opened for business in October 1843. It was named "The Nauvoo Mansion," but more commonly was referred to as "the Mansion House," or simply "the Mansion." As mistress of the house, Emma Smith supervised the staff of domestic help, and the hotel became noted as one of the finest on the Mississippi River. With its fine dining room, excellent cuisine, and noted occupants, the Mansion House also became a center
of social life in Nauvoo.

The Mansion was just one of numerous new structures which Young Joseph watched pop up across Nauvoo's landscape. These varied in quality from shanties and outbuildings to substantial brick structures. The prophet acted as a land agent, buying and selling city lots. Thousands of dollars worth of property passed through his hands. He also became a store-owner. In 1841, he opened his "Red Brick Store," on the flat, just west of the Old Homestead. The store's second story had a large meeting room, where Masons and other groups could conduct meetings. Also upstairs was Joseph Smith's private office, in which he attended to church business and where the church records were stored. In effect, this office functioned as the headquarters of the church. Joseph Smith III was quite familiar with the office and the scribes employed there: Willard Richards, William Clayton, W. W. Phelps, and James Whitehead. For a time, a school was conducted in the upstairs meeting room, which Young Joseph attended. When class was dismissed, the schoolboys would dash noisely down the stairs, much to the annoyance of Dr. Willard Richards. An extremely avaricious man, Dr. Richards once or twice demonstrated his displeasure at the ruckus by standing at the foot of the stairway and refusing to let the boys pass until they promised to be quieter. Because of his frequent presence in the Red Brick Store and the office, Young Joseph became acquainted with many of the church's leading elders. He personally was familiar with all of the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

When he was around ten years old, Joseph Smith III was baptized by his father in the Mississippi River. Young Joseph was among a group of fifty or sixty young people immersed in the "Father of Waters" that day. His religious instruction also included family prayers; attendance at outdoor worship services in
the grove next to the unfinished temple on Sundays, weather permitting; and Sunday School. It was his Sunday School teacher, Almon W. Babbitt who confirmed him, after his baptism.24

Critical Developments in Mormonism

While Young Joseph went about his boy's life, critical developments were occurring within Mormonism. Between 1839 and 1844, his father introduced significant additions to the Mormon faith.

Fusion of church and state. The Latter Day Saints had imbibed the communitarian mead which flowed freely in Ante-Bellum America. A vision of religious community lay behind their early experiments with the Law of Consecration and their continued attempts to gather together to build holy cities. Their belief in latter-day revelation through a prophet naturally led to an ecclesiastical structure which concentrated power in the hands of the divinely designated authority-figure, Joseph Smith. The Mormons also believed that the parousia was drawing near. This millennialist strain in Mormon thought—the confidence that the Saints would soon be enjoying millennial bliss while the Gentiles would undergo tribulation and judgment—lent itself to a form of religious exclusivism.

Not only were the Saints close-knit and authoritarian, but they had undergone relentless persecution. Under the circumstances, they joined themselves together ever more tightly for self-protection. By 1840, a new convert named John C. Bennett had won his way into the confidence of Joseph Smith. Bennett was ambitious and persuasive. The prophet put him to use in Springfield, the state capital, to secure a municipal charter for Nauvoo. Having a charter was nothing unusual for larger cities, but Bennett secured important concessions from the legislature. The two most important were the power to
raise a municipal militia largely independent of state control, and the power of
the municipal court to grant writs of habeus corpus "in all cases arising under the
ordinances of the City Council." On their face these provisions were
unexceptional, but the Saints employed them to insulate and protect themselves
from external authority and threats.25 As one historian has noted, Nauvoo
represented an attempt to form an independent and quasi-sovereign government, a
tendency which was carried much farther in Utah.26

In practice, church and state became fused together tightly. In Nauvoo,
members of the city council not only passed ordinances but also sat on the
municipal court. So did the mayor. In effect, the legislative, executive, and
judicial powers were vested in the prophet and his designees. Under the Mormon
practice of "obeying counsel," whomever the prophet designated was a certain
victor in municipal elections. In the first mayoral election, in 1841, John C.
Bennett was elected without opposition. Later Joseph Smith himself became
mayor. Joseph Smith made prompt use of the city's authority to raise a militia,
which was named the "Nauvoo Legion." The Legion was intended to protect the
Saints (and the prophet) from any more arrests, raids, kidnappings, or mobbings.
Joseph Smith himself became the commander of the Legion—the only Lieutenant
General in the United States—and saw the Nauvoo Legion become more powerful
than the militia of any other near-by city, over two thousand strong.

Nauvoo's position created jealousy in the eyes of her neighbors, particularly
Warsaw, Illinois. Warsaw lay at the foot of the Des Moines Rapids, and regarded
herself as a commercial rival of Nauvoo. Not only Nauvoo's economic strength,
but her military and political power were soon seen as dangers by the other cities
in Hancock County. The Mormons engaged in bloc-voting, as directed by the
ecclesiastical authorities, and held the political "balance of power in the county.
As their numbers grew, they became increasingly important in congressional and state-wide races. Initially candidates looked upon the Saints as a group to be courted, but soon they came to be resented and even hated (particularly by the losers).

The repeated use of the Nauvoo Municipal Court to quash warrants issued by other jurisdictions became a great source of irritation. If the State of Missouri, for example, issued a warrant for the arrest of Joseph Smith, and an officer served him with the warrant, the Court could issue a writ of habeus corpus, and the prophet would be free of his captors. Repeated use of this device infuriated the prophet's enemies, who were convinced that he could never be brought to justice, since he controlled the Municipal Court.27

Toward the end of his life, Joseph Smith took a bold new step. He created the secret Council of Fifty, in March 1844. Composed of fifty trusted men—mostly Mormon elders but also a few friendly Gentiles—the Council of Fifty was supposed to represent the embryo of the Kingdom of God on earth. Not strictly speaking an ecclesiastical organization, it was nevertheless a creature of the church. After organizing the Kingdom, Joseph Smith had himself secretly crowned King.28

Organizing the Council of Fifty was highly secret. But the other developments which manifested the Mormon tendency to merge church and state were visible and highly irritating to Nauvoo's neighbors. Ultimately, these tendencies led to the prophet's death.

**Plural marriage.** Joseph Smith introduced important new religious teachings in Nauvoo. The most notorious was plural marriage. Joseph Smith secretly took plural wives while in Kirtland, but it was in Nauvoo that he began systematizing his teaching upon the subject, teaching it to his closest disciples,
and expanding its practice to include those trusted elders. The prophet stated that he had been commanded to restore the "patriarchal order of marriage," and that it was necessary to the restoration of all things.\textsuperscript{29}

Polygamy—as plural marriage was popularly called—became a source of great conflict between Joseph and Emma Smith. "While Joseph might argue that he proposed it by divine command, Emma's genuine love for her husband coupled with her own pious upbringing allowed no place in her life for another wife for her husband."\textsuperscript{30} Despite the strains which polygamy created in his own household, the prophet entered into numerous plural marriages. One biographer counted forty-eight such marriages, but it is impossible to ascertain the exact total.\textsuperscript{31}

Emma Smith alternately rebelled against plural marriage and acquiesced in it. A recent study documents that Emma knew of seven of her husband's marriages, and may have known about others.

Of these, six women lived in Emma's home. Under persistent pressure from Joseph, Emma finally agreed to "give" him four wives and she chose Emily and Eliza Partridge and Sarah and Maria Lawrence, two pairs of sisters who came to live with the Smiths after their families were unable for various reasons to keep them. A fifth woman, Eliza R. Snow, was Emma's age, well educated, and periodically lived with the Smiths both in Kirtland and Nauvoo. Several of the Walker children also lived with Emma and Joseph, and he married Lucy Walker after asking her brother for her hand . . . but Emma was in St. Louis during this time purchasing goods for Joseph's store.\textsuperscript{32}

In 1843, after "giving" the Partridge and Lawrence sisters to Joseph as wives, Emma grew more and more bitter about polygamy. She began exerting increasing pressure upon her husband to abandon the practice. In an effort to quiet her opposition, the prophet dictated the revelation on plural marriage on July 12, 1843.\textsuperscript{33} His brother Hyrum took it to Emma, hoping that she would submit to the word of the Lord, but returned chastened and wiser about the depths of Emma's opposition to polygamy. Only after the other young wives were expelled from the Smith household did Emma find some measure of peace.\textsuperscript{34}
The practice of plural marriage was kept secret from all outsiders and most Mormons. The practice was illegal, unpopular, and regarded by almost everyone as immoral. Persistent rumors about Mormon polygamy created a problem, however. The church responded by denying the rumors. But the denials were couched in such language as to convey one meaning to the uninitiated and another to the initiated:

Joseph and the other church leaders developed a system of code words that enabled them to discuss plural marriage without being direct in their speech. Believing that God did not intend for practice of plural marriage to be public knowledge, but pressed to make some response to the rising clamor about the issue, church leaders began to find indirect ways to refer to "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage."35

The use of ambiguous language served to protect the church for the moment, but it laid the groundwork for schisms after the prophet's death, when many uninitiated Saints broke fellowship with those who taught and practiced the principle.

Other religious developments. Plural marriage was part of a larger complex of doctrinal developments during Joseph Smith's years in Nauvoo. He initiated endowment and sealing ordinances which promised that earthly ties between parents and children and husbands and wives would continue eternally. In theory these rites were to be performed in a temple, but in the absence of a temple they were performed elsewhere. Baptism for the dead was introduced, whereby living proxies could ensure that the dead had an opportunity to complete their obedience to the gospel. Joseph Smith also elaborated upon the concept of plurality of gods. In Joseph Smith's cosmology, there were myriads of spirits in a pre-mortal state. These awaited bodies into which to be born. Mortal existence was a probationary period. Those who complied with the Gospel, were sealed in celestial marriage, and proved worthy, could advance to godhood in the afterlife. In this scheme, plural marriage was no mere afterthought. Those elders who took
additional wives increased their own glory in the celestial kingdom, and added numerous children to the great chain of sealed members of a celestial family stretching from Adam to the last generation.36

**Blessing of Joseph Smith III**

It was within this larger doctrinal context that the prophet Joseph Smith blessed his oldest son on January 17, 1844. In this blessing, the prophet again stated that the Smith ancestral blessings would find realization in Young Joseph. He distinctly stated that Joseph Smith III would be his successor as president of the church, a position which belonged to the lad both by blessing and right of lineage. This blessing incorporated the prophet's belief in lineal transmission of blessings and priestly authority. It reflected his belief in the divine selection of the Smith family for a special role in the history of redemption, as foretold in prophecy. It also was integrally related to his recent teachings about families: upon this view the spirits who were born into the Smith family were specially chosen in their pre-existence to be part of the line of Joseph, were to be specially blessed on earth, and were to be joined together as a royal family in eternity.

The blessing took place upstairs in the Red Brick Store, at a private council meeting.37 Approximately twenty-five persons were present. Besides the direct participants in the ceremony, they included John Taylor, Willard Richards, Reynolds Cahoon, Alpheus Cutler, Ebenezer Robinson, George J. Adams, W. W. Phelps, and John M. Bernhisel. Bishop Newel K. Whitney held the horn of oil.38 Patriarch and Counselor Hyrum Smith anointed the lad. President Joseph Smith pronounced the blessing upon his son. His scribe Thomas Bullock recorded his words:

A blessing, given to Joseph Smith, 3rd, by his father, Joseph Smith, Jun., on January 17, 1844
Blessed of the Lord is my son Joseph, who is called the third,—for the Lord knows the integrity of his heart, and loves him, because of his faith, and righteous desires. And, for this cause, has the Lord raised him up;—that the promises made to the fathers might be fulfilled, even that the anointing of the progenitor shall be upon the head of my son, and his seed after him, from generation to generation. For he shall be my successor to the Presidency of the High Priesthood: a Seer, and a Revelator, and a Prophet, unto the Church; which appointment belongeth to him by blessing, and also by right.

Verily, thus saith the Lord: if he abides in me, his days shall be lengthened upon the earth, but, if he abides not in me, I, the Lord, will receive him, in an instant, unto myself.

When he is grown, he shall be a strength to his brethren, and a comfort to his mother. Angels will minister unto him, and he will be wafted as on eagle's wings, and be as wise as serpents, even a multiplicity of blessings shall be his. Amen.39

This blessing was common knowledge among the leading elders of the church. James Whitehead, one of the clerks in the office did not attend the meeting in the council room, but recollected that it was freely talked over in the office.40 Decades later, when the LDS and RLDS churches were locked in polemical warfare over whether the blessing ever took place, the elderly Whitehead elaborated upon his core-recollections of these discussions. After telling and retelling his testimony to appreciative RLDS audiences, he transformed himself into an eye-witness of the blessing.41

George J. Adams had a conversation with Emma Smith shortly after the council meeting. According to Emma's later recollection, Adams rejoiced that the matter was settled and they now knew who the prophet's successor would be: "it was little Joseph—he had just seen him ordained."42 In 1880, Adams told T. W. Smith that Joseph Smith III was the true and only lawful successor to the presidency of the church, adding:

I know more about that matter than any other man living, for I was present and held the horn of oil while his father laid his hands upon young Joseph's head and prophesied that he should be his successor in the presidency of the church and in the prophetic office, and blessed him to that end.43

Joseph Smith III, being almost twice as old as he had been when blessed at
Liberty Jail, had a much clearer recollection of this latter blessing than of the former. He remembered the anointing, laying on of hands, and blessing by his father and uncle Hyrum, assisted by others, upstairs in the Red Brick Store. He was aware of the significance of the ceremony, but could not recall "the form of words used."\textsuperscript{44}

The blessing of Joseph Smith III to succeed his father as president of the church took place on a Wednesday. The following Sunday, January 21st, the Saints gathered for worship next to the unfinished temple. Joseph Smith frequently took his oldest son up into the stand with him. Young Joseph was a bit sensitive about such attention and preferred to sit with his mother in the congregation.\textsuperscript{45} However, on this Sunday he accompanied his father and sat at his right hand while he preached to the Saints. From the stand the prophet addressed his listeners upon the subject, "sealing the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers," a topic which naturally called forth reference to the blessing of the previous week.\textsuperscript{46} When he had finished preaching, Joseph Smith, Jr. turned to his son, placed his hand upon his head, and said: "This is your prophet. I am going to rest."\textsuperscript{47}

This was not the first occasion that the prophet had told Mormons outside his immediate circle that he intended that his son should succeed him. After escaping from Missouri, in 1839, the prophet said in the hearing of George Reals and his wife that he might be killed by his enemies. He then placed his hand on Young Joseph's head and said that if he should be killed, "this boy will carry on," or "finish the work in my place."\textsuperscript{48} However, January 21, 1844 was the first time Joseph Smith made such a public announcement.

James Whitehead was present at the meeting on January 21st. Late in life, he added embellishments to the telling of this story, just as he did in the case of
the blessing on January 17th. By 1893 he had added a public vote of acclamation to the proceedings:

The church did take action as a body on the question of the ordination of young Joseph as his father's successor; the church consented to it. That was done first by the indorsement of the High Council, and then it was brought up before the whole body of the congregation, the whole people; and there were thousands there. That was done at the meeting held in the grove at the east end of the temple. I should think there were three thousand (3,000) there. There was a record kept of it, but the record was taken to Salt Lake. I was present on that occasion. There was a vote taken, the congregation voted, and agreed to the appointment of young Joseph as the successor of his father. The vote was taken by raising the right hand I think. A negative vote was taken, but nobody voted in the negative; Joseph Smith had been preaching that day, and at the close of the sermon made the announcement to the congregation that his young son Joseph had been appointed as his successor.49

As Michael Quinn has pointed out, Whitehead's embellishments are incredible:

Although it is reasonable that Joseph might have made some verbal reference or physical gesture to young Joseph after the sermon of 21 January 1844, and that the diarists and minute keepers at the meeting failed to record it because of its incidental nature . . . . It is inconceivable that the minutes of that Sunday meeting in the journals of Joseph Smith and Wilford Woodruff would omit reference to such a dramatic church action, whether or not the minute keepers understood the full significance of such alleged vote. Moreover, Whitehead testified under oath that the Nauvoo High Council officially endorsed Joseph Smith III as successor prior to the Sunday meeting, when in fact the complete manuscript minutes of the Nauvoo High Council in 1844 make no reference whatever to such action or to the blessing of Joseph Smith III, even though the minutes make at least an oblique reference to the far more explosive action of Hyrum Smith's reading to the high council the revelation on plural marriage.50

Others who witnessed the prophet's public reference to his son as his successor make no reference to a vote being taken. Joseph Smith III himself simply stated, "A public attestation of the same blessing was made from the stand in the grove in Nauvoo, some time prior to the murder in Carthage."51 John H. Carter stated that Joseph Smith brought his son onto the stand with him, and sat the boy down on a bench at his right hand. Carter recollected that the prophet then got up and began to preach, and "the question he said was asked by
somebody, 'If Joseph Smith should be killed or die, who would be his successor?'

And he turned around and said, pointing to his son, 'there is the successor.'\textsuperscript{52}

As the last eye-witnesses to this meeting in the grove approached death, the Reorganized Church gathered affidavits of their recollections. The following picture emerges from these affidavits: Not long before his death, Joseph Smith took Young Joseph up into the stand with him. He made a physical gesture toward his son. In doing so, he stated that he had been asked what would happen if something should befall him. The prophet answered that in this case his son would be his successor.\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{Impending Crisis}

When Joseph Smith, Jr. designated his son to be his successor, in January 1844, it might have seemed to a casual observer that the Mormon prophet was at the pinnacle of success. He was the undisputed head of his own church. Nauvoo was prosperous and growing. He was mayor of the city, judge of the municipal court, lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion, trustee-in-trust of the church, steamboat owner, real estate agent, the husband of plural wives, and the king of the earthly kingdom of God. Shortly, he would send his Apostles throughout the land to campaign to elect him president of the United States.\textsuperscript{54}

But in reality Joseph Smith's position was precarious. The non-Mormon population in Hancock County contained growing numbers of Anti-Mormons. The Mormon experience in Ohio and Missouri was being repeated in Illinois. After the initial period of good feeling, conflicts with the Gentiles had arisen. Mormonism's anti-pluralistic spirit, its religious heterodoxy, and its theocratic tendencies produced a certain amount of hostility. In Hancock County, politics was the chief source of conflict. The Mormons held the balance of power in every election, and this caused deep resentments. Civic rivalry between Nauvoo and her smaller
neighbors, Warsaw and Carthage, for pre-eminence in the county also played a role. Thomas Sharp, editor of the *Warsaw Signal*, for years kept up a steady drum-beat of opposition to Joseph Smith and his followers. Fears about the size of the Nauvoo Legion and the martial spirit among the Mormons contributed to Gentile anxiety. Nauvoo's separate municipal government and judicial system made for constant conflicts, because "any Mormon in the county accused of crime could get a Mormon jury which would acquit him, and an anti-Mormon could do the same. Each was entitled to a jury of the county, and the state had no power to change the venue."

This encouraged lawlessness on both sides, as well as providing opportunity for a criminal element which took whichever side suited its purposes. Law enforcement in the rural areas of Hancock County suffered greatly. Joseph Smith's escapes from officers from Missouri with warrants for his arrest—via going into hiding or writs of *habaeus corpus* from the Nauvoo Municipal Court—led many to conclude that he could not be brought to trial by legal means; by 1844 many of his enemies were beginning to think in extra-legal terms.

A pair of headline-making incidents, in 1842, had added fuel to the fire. First Joseph Smith and John C. Bennett had fallen out. After leaving Nauvoo, Bennett began publishing lurid stories about Mormon polygamy. For their part, the Saints denied his allegations and charged that Bennett himself had been excommunicated for sexual licentiousness. Then, on May 6, 1842, ex-Governor Lilburn W. Boggs of Missouri was shot and badly wounded by an unknown assailant. Circumstantial evidence led many Anti-Mormons to conclude that Joseph Smith had ordered his friend Orrin Porter Rockwell to assassinate Boggs, but the charges were never proven.
Young Joseph's View of His Father's Troubles

Young Joseph was aware of some of his father's troubles. He had vivid recollections of seeing his father being taken prisoner in Missouri, visiting Liberty Jail, and the flight across the Mississippi River. In both the Old Homestead and Mansion House, secret compartments had been prepared in which Joseph Smith might hide from his enemies. These naturally aroused Young Joseph's boyish curiosity. The attempts by Missouri to extradite the prophet impressed themselves upon his memory. He recalled, for example, that in 1842 his father had been harassed by warrants stemming from the shooting of Boggs. His father avoided arrest for a time,

but, growing tired of dodging from place to place, and of the constant harassing by being hunted, he surrendered and was taken to Springfield, where he was tried before Judge Pope and discharged, the judge holding him guiltless ... and the Governor refusing to grant a writ of extradition ..., it clearly being contrary to law ....

He proudly recalled his mother's defiant refusal to allow a deputy sheriff named Pitman to search their home without a warrant. Most of all he remembered the family's visit to relatives in Lee County, Illinois, in June 1843, when the prophet was arrested at the instigation of the governor of Missouri. After gaining entry to the house by posing as visiting Mormon elders, the officers seized Joseph Smith at gunpoint, without serving writ or warrant. They cursed him, threatened him, abused him, and had every intention of taking their prisoner to Missouri. The injustice of the scene struck Young Joseph: "Here, as in Missouri, Joseph Smith was taken from the presence of wife and children without explanation, and without opportunity to bid the agitated and tearful wife good bye." Young Joseph rejoiced in his father's subsequent rescue from the high-handed officers. Young Joseph also spent time with his father in seclusion at Bishop Hunter's, staying out of the way of officers with warrants.
A sense of foreboding hovered over the family, however. Neither the
prophet nor his family experienced much peace. Joseph Smith III recalled that his
father was:

... always on the alert, frequently away from home, and when there he
was under constant surveillance of both friends and enemies. His wife,
sharer of his joys, his companion, his helpful mate in times of sorrow,
lived in continual consciousness of his peril, and in the shadow of her
possible loss, should he be taken from her by violence of wicked men.64

Young Joseph never entertained the slightest doubt that his father was a
good and guiltless man, unfairly persecuted by his enemies. Of his father's
involvement in plural marriage he knew nothing. He was acquainted with a
number of his father's plural wives, but knew them not as wives but simply as
boarders at the Mansion. He observed his parents' deep love for one another but
was shielded from their conflict over polygamy. To Young Joseph, his father was
loving, kind-hearted, buoyant, strong, and generous.65 The lad was uninitiated
into the mysteries of the kingdom and not privy to the conflicts arising therefrom.

The Prophet's Final Crisis

By 1844 the ingredients for another Mormon-Gentile war were in place.
But the catalyst which precipitated the final crisis in the prophet's life came from
within Nauvoo, not without. In the spring of 1844, a group of Saints became more
and more dissatisfied with Joseph Smith's leadership. The most prominent
dissident was William Law, a counselor in the First Presidency. Law and the other
dissenters were alarmed at the introduction of plural marriage. Likewise, they
were disgusted at the prophet's high-handed concentration of economic and
political power within his own hands. Matters came to a head when William Law,
his wife Jane, his brother Wilson, and Dr. Robert D. Foster were excommunicated.
William Law and Foster had accused the prophet of making sexual advances to
their wives under the guise of spiritual wifery. Joseph Smith denied the charges
and claimed that Jane Law had tried to seduce him. Unlike John C. Bennett, the Laws and Foster did not leave Nauvoo. They had valuable business interests in the city which they did not wish to abandon. Also, they had not given up their faith in Mormonism. They felt that Joseph Smith was not a false, but a fallen prophet. They wished to reform Mormonism, not to destroy it. To that end, they established a reformed church, with William Law at its head. Plans were laid to proselytize within the Mormon ranks. Their most fateful action was to launch an opposition newspaper within the city. Its name was the \textit{Nauvoo Expositor}. On June 7, 1844, the first and only issue of the \textit{Expositor} was published.

Rather than sensational and lurid attacks such as those of John C. Bennett, the \textit{Expositor} laid out the dissenters' complaints with relative care and restraint. They described how a young woman might be initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom by the prophet, after arriving in Nauvoo from England. William Law, Jane Law, and Austin Cowles submitted signed affidavits testifying that they had seen or heard read the revelation granting elders the privilege of marrying ten virgins. Not only polygamy, but Joseph Smith's union of church and state and his financial maneuvers came in for criticism, as well as his alleged abuse of the privileges granted by the Nauvoo charter.

The paper created a sensation within the city, both among the initiated and the uninitiated. Outside of the city, a furor also ensued. Joseph Smith faced a crisis. His problems were compounded by the fact that William Law had gotten the grand jury in Carthage to indict him for adultery and polygamy, and Foster had brought a charge against him for false swearing. The prophet had only a few options. In the end, he chose the worst possible strategy. He brought the matter before the city council. On June 10th the council denounced the \textit{Expositor} for
publishing libels, declared it a nuisance, and directed Mayor Joseph Smith to abate the nuisance. The prophet ordered the city marshal and a contingent of the Legion to destroy the press.⁶⁷

There was a furious public reaction against the destruction of the Expositor's press. Joseph Smith and seventeen others were charged, at Carthage, with instigating a riot. But Joseph Smith managed to have the case tried in Nauvoo and was immediately acquitted. Soon the county was turning into an armed camp. Governor Thomas Ford intervened, and attempted to find a legal resolution of the conflict. Briefly, Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, Willard Richards, and Orrin Porter Rockwell fled across the Mississippi, only to return shortly thereafter. Despite his awareness that he might never return alive, the prophet decided to go to Carthage and face all the charges against him.⁶⁸

Joseph Smith went home to his wife and children. At 6:30 A.M., Monday, June 24th, the prophet and seventeen others charged with riot in destroying the press of the Expositor set out for Carthage. About 10:00 A.M., when four miles west of Carthage, the party encountered a company of mounted militiamen, commanded by Captain Dunn, with an order from Governor Ford. The order directed that all state arms held by the Nauvoo Legion be surrendered. Joseph Smith countersigned the order. At the request of Captain Dunn, the prophet returned to Nauvoo to facilitate compliance with the order.⁶⁹

Back in Nauvoo, the Legion surrendered three cannons and approximately two hundred firearms which had been issued by the state. But Joseph Smith ordered that all personal arms be stored secretly in a warehouse, to be ready in an emergency.⁷⁰

Before leaving this time, he again said farewell to his family. He would never see them again. In the north room of the Mansion House, he placed his hands upon the head of Young Joseph and blessed him. Years later, Joseph Smith
III remembered the import of this blessing:

Just before his leaving Nauvoo for the trip to Carthage, from which he did not return, he called me to him, in what was called the north room of the Hotel Nauvoo Mansion, and there, laying his hand on my head, solemnly said to those present, "If anything should happen to me, you will know who is to be my successor. This, my son, has been blessed and set apart, and will in time succeed me."

John P. Greene, the city marshal, witnessed this blessing, according to a statement of his widow in 1880. Then living in Utah, she related the details to RLDS missionary Joseph Luff, who sent an account of the conversation to Joseph Smith III:

In a late conversation with the widow of John P. Green, I was informed by her, that on the day when your father left Nauvoo for Carthage, he & others returned, after proceeding a short distance, and on his coming to your mother and the family, he took you and the rest up into the attic room, and blessed each in turn. He also ordained you as Prophet, Seer & Revelator, to succeed him in the Presidency of the Church. She says that none but John P. Green knew of this matter. She knew of the other anointing and setting apart; but this one was done on the very day he left for Carthage.

About 6:00 P.M. the prophet and his party remounted and started again for Carthage. Upon arrival, they were greeted by whooping and cursing from their enemies. After spending the night in a hotel, the Mormons had a preliminary hearing on the 25th and were released on bail. At 8:00 P.M. Joseph and Hyrum Smith were surprised to be served with a writ of mittimus to be held in jail upon a charge of treason, signed by a local justice of the peace. The procedure was illegal, but nevertheless the prisoners were taken to Carthage Jail.

On the afternoon of June 27th, Joseph Smith found himself housed in the second story of the county jail. With him were his brother Hyrum, and the only two members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles then in Illinois, John Taylor and Willard Richards. Governor Thomas Ford, who had been trying by some means to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, had left Carthage and had gone to Nauvoo to address the Saints about the situation. He left the jail guarded by the Carthage
Greys, among whom were some of the prophet's worst enemies, and who proved to be no protection at all. 74

About 5:00 P.M., a mob of approximately four hundred men with blackened faces stormed the jail. The four jailed men attempted to bar the door, but with only limited success. Richards and Taylor used their canes to try to deflect the muskets which bristled through the partially opened door. Hyrum Smith prepared to shoot his pistol—which had been smuggled into the jail—at the mob, but was felled by a shot in the left side of his nose. He collapsed to the floor, exclaiming, "I am a dead man."

Seeing that his brother was dead, Joseph Smith discharged his six-shooter into the mob, wounding three or four of his attackers. This gave the mob a moment's pause, but soon they renewed their assault on the door. John Taylor could hold back the gun barrels no longer and attempted to leap out of the window. He was hit by shots from inside and outside the building, and fell to the floor severely wounded. Remarkably, three-hundred pound Willard Richards was unscathed. Richards was caught behind the door when it was forced completely open.

Joseph Smith now attempted to spring from the window, but he too was hit by shots from both directions and fell to the ground a dead man. 75 The Saints had lost their prophet. In Latter Day Saint history, June 27, 1844 would go down as the date of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.
CHAPTER II

CRISIS AND CONFLICT: 1844-1846

Joseph Smith had been murdered. Reports of his death had reached his home at Nauvoo, Illinois, during the night of June 27, 1844. As dawn broke through the darkness, the following morning, a dozen or so men already had gathered in the Mansion House, the prophet's elegant residence overlooking the Mississippi River. Everyone wondered whether the reports could be true. Had not the governor of Illinois just left the city, after counselling the Latter Day Saints that their only safety lay in obedience to law? Would the Anti-Mormons be so rash as to kill the prophet while Governor Ford was in Nauvoo, surrounded by Mormons who might take him captive or kill him, in retaliation? Had not the governor left armed militiamen guarding the jail in which Joseph Smith was housed at Carthage? No one could be certain of the truth of the reports.

As the men continued their discussion, a messenger rode up to the Mansion House. His name was Arza Adams, and he carried a terse note signed by the two survivors of the lynching:

CARTHAGE JAIL, 8 o'clock, 5 min., p. m., June 27.
Joseph and Hyrum are dead. Taylor wounded, not badly. I am well. Our guard was forced as we believe, by a band of Missourians from 100 to 200. The job was done in an instant, and the party fled towards Nauvoo instantly. This is as I believe it. The citizens here are afraid of the Mormons attacking them. I promise them no. W. RICHARDS.
JOHN TAYLOR.

The note was not completely accurate in its details. Willard Richards had deliberately minimized the extent of John Taylor's wound in order not to create
additional alarm. The murderers were citizens of Hancock County, Illinois, not the prophet's old enemies from Missouri. And the killers would hardly flee toward Nauvoo, where the city's famous militia, the Nauvoo Legion, resided. But the message put to rest any doubt about the essential fact: Joseph Smith, Jr. and his brother Hyrum were dead, cut down in the prime of life.

Later in the morning a second message arrived from Carthage:

12 o'clock at night, 27th June,
CARTHAGE, HAMILTON’S TAVERN,

To Mrs. Emma Smith and Major-General Dunham, &c.:

The Governor has just arrived; says all things shall be inquired into, and all right measures taken.

I say to all the citizens of Nauvoo, my brethren, be still, and know that God reigns. Don't rush out of the city--don't rush to Carthage--stay at home, and be prepared for an attack from Missouri mobbers. The Governor will render every assistance possible--has sent out orders for troops. Joseph and Hyrum are dead. We will prepare to move the bodies as soon as possible.

The people of the county are greatly excited, and fear the Mormons will come out and take vengeance. I have pledged my word the Mormons will stay at home as soon as they can be informed, and no violence will be on their part, and say to my brethren in Nauvoo, in the name of the Lord, be still, be patient, only let such friends as choose come here to see the bodies. Mr. Taylor's wounds are dressed and not serious. I am sound.

WILLARD RICHARDS,
JOHN TAYLOR,
SAMUEL H. SMITH,2

Joseph Smith III was among the onlookers as various friends and officials entered and departed the Mansion. The eleven and one-half year old lad's world had been shattered. Young Joseph was witnessing events which would shape his life inexorably and in ways which his young mind could little imagine. The sudden and unexpected death of his father was to leave him a central figure in the question of succession to his father's office. And the deep-seated enmity which was to develop between his mother, Emma Smith, and the man who would assume control of the church's affairs, Brigham Young, was to color his life for years to
come. But none of this could have been on Young Joseph’s mind. He was a boy, a boy suddenly without his father! He later recalled the scene as his grief-stricken mother sat in the living room of the Mansion House. Sitting with her were her four children: Julia Murdock Smith, her adopted thirteen-year old daughter; eleven-year old Joseph; eight-year old Frederick; and six-year old Alexander. Joseph recounted that his mother was overwhelmed with grief, and that the children stood by,

... sympathizing as children will without fairly comprehending the importance of such an event. I remember the hours of seclusion of the family from intrusion, the gloom and the dread of the time, awaiting until the bodies were brought home ....

Nauvoo became a city in mourning as the news spread. At 2:30 P.M., two wagons entered the city, bearing the corpses of the brothers Joseph and Hyrum Smith. They had been covered with foliage and placed in makeshift coffins, to protect them from the hot summer’s sun, during the slow 18-mile trek from Carthage to Nauvoo. The small procession was met at Mullholland Street by a large crowd of dignitaries and citizens. Amidst a scene of lamentation, the procession slowly moved toward the Mansion House, where the remains of Joseph and Hyrum were deposited and the doors immediately closed. The people were told that the bodies could be viewed the next day.

The throng of mourners, estimated at ten thousand, was addressed by several dignitaries from a platform erected across the road from the Mansion on the south side of Water Street. From the house, Young Joseph watched the assembled multitude and the speakers. He particularly remembered seeing Dr. Willard Richards upon the platform, when Richards counselled the people to keep the peace and to trust to legal redress for their wrongs, but the lad did not go outside to hear the speech.

The bodies were not viewed by the family immediately. Several trusted
friends first washed them thoroughly and placed cotton, soaked in camphor, into
the wounds. They were then dressed and laid out for viewing.

Now came a tremendously emotional scene. The families of Joseph and
Hyrum Smith were admitted to see the bodies. Emma Smith, who was midway
through a pregnancy, upon first seeing Joseph's body, screamed and fell back, but
was caught and supported by Dimick B. Huntington. She then fell forward to his
face, kissed him, called him by name, and begged him to speak to her. Her son
Joseph later recalled:

After leaning over the coffin, she placed her hand upon the cheek of my
father, and in grief-stricken accents said, "Oh! Joseph! O my husband,
my husband! have they taken you from me at last!" Friendly hands
ministered to us, and mother was assisted to her room again . . . .

Other relatives and close friends were permitted to view the remains during the
evening. The plural wives of Joseph and Hyrum Smith had to be content to
mourn their loss, unacknowledged publicly as wives. Joseph Smith III, who in his
maturity denied that his father practiced polygamy, took solace in this in his old
age:

In view of the contention of President Brigham Young and those
afterward with him in the exodus to the West, and the charge made by
the enemies of my father and the opposers to the faith, it is a source of
gratification to me now to remember that no other woman bowed beside
the bodies of these brothers, as they were waiting the passing of the last
rites which the living could pay to the dead, as wives to mourn and
exhibit their grief before relatives and friends, save my mother at my
father's side, and Aunt Mary at the side of my Uncle Hyrum. The scene
was sacred to their grief and theirs alone.

On June 29th, the bodies were placed on public display in the Mansion
House. At eight in the morning, the multitude of heavy-hearted Saints began
filing past the coffins. On and on they came, until the doors were finally closed
at five in the afternoon. Now the families were admitted for a last look at Joseph
and Hyrum. The bodies were then hidden in a side bedroom, and boxes filled with
sandbags were nailed up, carried to the graveyard, and deposited there in a mock-
burial. Young Joseph did not join the funeral procession, which followed the hearse from the Mansion House to the graveyard for the "burial." Around midnight, the coffins containing the actual bodies were secretly taken from the Mansion, carried a short distance to the partially completed Nauvoo House, and buried in the basement. Fears were entertained that the prophet's body might fall into the hands of his enemies.7

**Aftermath**

In the wake of the killings, Nauvoo was a city devastated with grief. As for the non-Mormons of Hancock County, Illinois, they initially feared retaliation. In fact, the city of Carthage had been evacuated hastily, after the murders, when a false rumor was received that the Mormons were marching in force upon the city. After the initial fears of civil war had subsided, a shocked calm prevailed. There was a respite in Anti-Mormon activities. It would be some time before the inveterate enemies of the Latter Day Saints, such as Thomas Sharp, the fire-eating publisher of the *Warsaw Signal*, again could raise widespread public clamor against the Saints. Besides, the harvest season was approaching, and many of the "mobocrats" of Hancock County had to be busy about their farms.8

If the killers had hoped that killing the Mormon prophet would spell the end of Mormonism, they were mistaken. The church now had a martyr. Converts continued to swell the Mormon ranks in Hancock County, and Gentile fears and envy would not remain dormant for a long time. The cessation in hostilities was merely the calm before the storm.9

In Nauvoo, the initial shock of the tragedy at Carthage did not last forever. Within a week, contention was beginning to surface inside the city. This contention centered around two basic questions: the prophet's financial affairs and his successor.
Joseph Smith's church was hierarchical. "The whole structure of authority was geared to Smith's pre-eminence as charismatic leader . . . . Furthermore, the assassination was almost totally unexpected . . . ." The problem of a suddenly headless hierarchy was compounded by the absence of most of the leading elders of the church. Of the prophet's associates in the First Presidency, William Law had apostatized, and Sidney Rigdon was in semi-exile in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles--the quorum ranking next in authority to the First Presidency--only two members were in Nauvoo. The other ten had been dispatched to the eastern states to promote Joseph Smith, Jr.'s campaign for president of the United States. Of the two apostles in the city, John Taylor lay gravely wounded, leaving only Dr. Willard Richards able to exercise any responsibility for leadership. The church could not long function without someone at its head. Apostle Richards was determined to see that his quorum assumed leadership. To this end, he set about waging a rear-guard action to delay all major decisions until key members of the Twelve could return and assert their supremacy. Richards, therefore, was in no hurry to reach any final decisions concerning the prophet's estate or the naming of a successor.11

The Prophet's Estate

Joseph Smith left a tangled web of financial confusion when he died, intestate, in the prime of manhood. His personal finances were so intertwined with those of the church that it took years of legal wrangling to unknot the confusion. The prophet had acted as "Trustee-in-Trust" for the church, and much church property had been deeded to him in that capacity. The prophet, in his mind, may have known which parcels belonged to the church and which did not, but if the deeds failed to spell matters out, the opportunity for misunderstanding was almost limitless. Also, in his capacity as Trustee, he had borrowed
substantial sums of money. Again, if the notes did not specify that the debts were the church's, disputes were almost inevitable.

Emma Smith early moved to protect her rights to the estate. She had spent considerable time assisting her husband with financial matters, and she now recognized some of the difficulties she would face. Accordingly, she called in James W. Woods as legal council. July 3rd and 4th she spent going over the books with lawyer Woods and William Clayton, the prophet's secretary. After two days of examination, Clayton recorded that the situation appeared gloomy. "The property," he wrote, "is chiefly in the name of the Trustee in Trust while the obligations are considered personal." Furthermore, he worried that any show of dispute over the estate would bring a herd of creditors down upon it all at once, and "use up all the property there is." Not only that, but Woods had concluded that title to property recorded in the Nauvoo Recorder's Office might be clouded, and all such property should be recorded again at the county seat, Carthage, presumably in Emma Smith's name.

In order to secure her rights to Joseph Smith's estate, Emma needed to have a friendly person acting as Trustee-in-Trust for the church. If the Trustee were unsympathetic to her claims, she would be in a vulnerable position. Accordingly, she urged that her friend and confidant, William Marks, be appointed to that office. Marks held the prestigious position of president of the Nauvoo Stake, and initially Emma's suggestion found favor with William Clayton, Alpheus Cutler, and Reynolds Cahoon. However, others were not of like mind. Willard Richards prevailed with his argument that no such important decision should be made while most of the leading elders were absent from Nauvoo.

The Prophet's Successor

While Emma Smith—a widow with four dependent children and another
expected in the fall—was intent upon protecting her financial rights, others were more concerned with the larger question of ecclesiastical control. At least in matters financial, the laws of the state of Illinois would eventually determine the division of the estate. But what of matters spiritual? Here, also, the prophet had left a clouded legacy. Over the course of his career, he had designated a variety of successors or methods of succession to the presidency. Some of the persons so designated had fallen into disfavor. Later designations had superseded earlier ones. In all, the question of succession was left in a state of confusion. No revelation had been canonized spelling out precisely what was to be done upon the prophet's demise. Evidence indicates that Joseph Smith intended that leadership of the church finally should devolve upon his eldest son, with interim leadership exercised by another during the boy's minority. However, the prophet had made a sufficient number of differing statements during his career, that there was no consensus or clear understanding concerning what exactly should be done.

When the ruler of a state dies without a clearly designated successor, or a generally accepted scheme of succession, a struggle for power generally ensues. This is precisely what occurred in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The problem was compounded by the absence of most of the leading elders. There was a vacuum of power in Nauvoo, Mormonom's capital city. Within the city, speculation was rife. Perhaps four or five potential successors to the prophet had been discussed by leaders then in the city within a fortnight of Joseph Smith's death.

The first possible successor to receive consideration was William Marks. Emma Smith favored Marks. The justification for Marks succeeding to the presidency of the church was that he was the officer next in line of command, being the president of the High Council in Zion. This reasoning held that the
Quorum of Twelve held missionary authority only, presiding over the branches in the world, but holding no authority over the church as a whole or within Nauvoo, a stake of Zion. It also held that Sidney Rigdon was simply a counselor to the president and held no power in his own right. Whatever the theoretical justification for favoring Marks, there were practical considerations: Marks was in Nauvoo and able to take control immediately, Marks was a trusted friend of Emma Smith, and Marks had been one of a handful of leading elders who had withstood Joseph Smith on the subject of polygamy. This last consideration qualified Marks in Emma Smith's eyes in a way like no other candidate (including her brother-in-law, William Smith). In the week following the assassination, Emma was able to convince a few of the leading elders that Marks was the rightful successor, but her success was only temporary. There is no evidence that William Marks himself strongly aspired to the leadership of the church. More importantly, his opposition to the prophet's teaching of plural marriage disqualified him in the eyes of those leading elders who loyally embraced the principle as an integral part of the restored Gospel. On July 12th, William Clayton, who had been working closely with Emma Smith for the past fortnight and had fallen temporarily under her influence, was approached by Bishop Newel K. Whitney. Whitney reasoned against the appointment of Marks as follows:

He referred . . . to the fact of Marks being with Law & Emma in opposition to Joseph & the quorum.—And if Marks is appointed Trustee our spiritual blessings will be destroyed inasmuch as he is not favorable to the most important matters[.].”

That evening, the leading elders then present in Nauvoo held a council. It was concluded that the Trustee should of necessity be the president of the church, and Emma Smith's plan for the immediate appointment of a trustee (Marks) was therefore rejected. With this decision of an informal council, hopes that Marks might lead the church effectively were dashed. The elders felt they had no
authority to act unilaterally. Willard Richards' policy of delay was succeeding.

In the coming weeks, Emma Smith was busily involved in matters relating to the estate of her late husband. But there is no evidence that she actively played any further role in the succession-struggle. The possibility of her playing the role of "king-maker" depended solely upon prestige. She could not hope to win over those leading elders who already had embraced polygamy, and with every passing day the possibility of her influencing the succession grew more dim. Some writers have suggested that she advocated the succession of her son, Joseph III, to the presidency. There is no evidence extant to support this view. Her silence concerning what became, in later years, a partisan cry ("the lineal rights of Joseph Smith III") is not so surprising under the circumstances. Her husband had just been murdered in cold blood, and the threat from Anti-Mormon forces was very real. To advocate her son's "rights" would expose him to potential danger. Furthermore, should Young Joseph be groomed for the presidency under the tutelage of the leading elders, he would be indoctrinated to believe in plural marriage. Her later course of action demonstrated that this possibility was anathema to her. Emma Smith's only hope lay in swiftly securing the presidency for an opponent of polygamy. Failing at that, she could only watch the power-struggle from the sidelines, keep silent about her son's claims, and look to her family's financial interests.

The next prospective president of the church to be removed from consideration was the prophet's brother, Samuel Smith. Bishop Whitney had informed William Clayton that the late prophet had said that "if he and Hyrum were taken away Samuel H. Smith would be his successor." Lucy Mack Smith, the aged mother of the prophet, was already urging Samuel's right to the patriarchal office and to financial support from the church. Prior to June 27,
1844, there were four living Smith brothers: Hyrum (b. 1800), Joseph (b. 1805), Samuel (b. 1808), and William (b. 1811). Joseph had told Bishop Whitney that if the two oldest brothers—Hyrum and himself—were removed, the principle of lineal succession would place Samuel next in line of authority, at least during the minority of Joseph Smith III. Samuel H. Smith's claims to the presidency were never to receive consideration, however. At the time of the killings in Carthage, he had made a perilous escape from the mob. He never recovered from the overexertion of that night, and died on July 30th. This left only one living Smith brother, William, and he was in the East, far from Nauvoo. Willard Richards—intent on securing authority for the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, had written a letter which warned that William Smith's life was in danger if he returned to Hancock County. William remained in the East. In time, William Smith would assert his rights to the presidency, but that would not be for another year.22

As word of the prophet's death reached the scattered leaders, they hurried back to Nauvoo. The vacuum of power in the city was about to be transformed, and a struggle for power between the two chief contenders, Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young, was about to commence.

Sidney Rigdon's Claims

Sidney Rigdon, the only remaining member of the First Presidency, was living in semi-exile in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.23 Learning of the assassination, he hastened to Nauvoo to press his claims for leadership. On August 3rd, he arrived in Nauvoo. He had been preceded by Apostles Parley P. Pratt (July 10th) and George A. Smith (July 28th). They, together with Willard Richards, attempted to negotiate with Rigdon, but he spurned them. Sidney Rigdon had not returned to Nauvoo to become one cog in the machinery of collective leadership. He did not desire to share power but to claim the throne. His avowed intention
was to present himself to the Saints as "Guardian" of the church; he claimed to have received a vision on the day of Joseph Smith's demise, instructing him to step forward in this manner.24

On Sunday, August 4th, Sidney Rigdon preached to a large gathering of Saints. This was his great opportunity, and he knew that he had to muster all of his legendary oratorical skills to enlist the assembly under his banner.

Rigdon claimed, in his sermon, that the ancient prophets had spoken of him as a leader of God's people in the last days. Preaching upon the text, "For my thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord," he developed his favorite apocalyptic themes: the time was nigh when God's enemies would be overthrown, when blood would be up to the horses' bridles, and when he, Sidney Rigdon, would lead the armies of God. One of his listeners recalled him saying:

He was going to take Queen Victoria by the nose, dethrone Kings and Emperors and lead the armies of Israel to fight the great battle of Gog and Magog. He had seen the battle fought and won. The principal actors in it were then in the congregation before him.

The captain of Jehovah's hosts was the logical leader of the church. Rigdon specifically justified his presidential claims by legal analogy: the church was now fourteen years old and had a right to choose its own guardian. Lest there be any doubt, he informed his listeners that it had been made known to him that he was the man.25

Following the sermon, a hundred or so persons gathered around Rigdon's house to receive further instruction about the impending great battle. In the evening he ordained and commissioned captains and generals for the apocalyptic struggle, and kings and emperors to rule over the nations during the millennium.26

Apparently William Marks had never possessed any burning desire to head the church. He now threw his support to Sidney Rigdon, who had also resisted the
prophet's polygamous teachings. William Marks made a public announcement of
a special meeting to be held on the 8th, for the purposes of choosing a "Guardian"
for the church. Rigdon was pushing for a rapid decision, before Brigham Young
could return to Nauvoo. Those of the Twelve who were in Nauvoo argued for
delay. But how could they prevent the people from assembling to hear a counselor
in the First Presidency speak?

Brigham Young's Triumph

How many times has the course of history hinged upon timing, when a
slight delay might have altered its course? Perhaps this was such a moment.
Apostle Brigham Young arrived in Nauvoo just in time to oppose Rigdon's
schemes, arriving on the evening of August 6th, together with Apostles Heber C.
Kimball, Lyman Wight, Orson Pratt, and Wilford Woodruff. Nine of the Twelve
Apostles were now in Nauvoo. The timing seemed providential to Rigdon's
opponents.

Immediately Brigham Young, President of the Quorum of the Twelve
Apostles, challenged Rigdon in a general council, on August 7th. Rigdon
presented his claims, based on a command received in a vision. Young then spoke.
"I do not care who leads the Church, even though it were Ann Lee," he declared,
"but one thing I must know, and that is what God says about it. I have the keys
and the means of obtaining the mind of God on the subject."

Thursday, August 8th, came. Sidney Rigdon's conference was held as
scheduled. But instead of a coronation, it was to be his requiem. Rigdon spoke
from 10:00 to 11:30 A.M., advancing his claims before the assembled multitude.
When he had finished, Brigham Young arose. Instead of rebutting Rigdon's
arguments, he adjourned the meeting. In the afternoon, after the effects of
Rigdon's oratory had cooled, Young replied to his claims. He clearly contrasted
Rigdon's claims to lead the church with those of the Twelve, stating,

Here is President Rigdon, who was counselor to Joseph. I ask, where are Joseph and Hyrum? They are gone beyond the veil; and if Elder Rigdon wants to act as his counselor, he must go beyond the veil where he is...

If the people want President Rigdon to lead them they may have him: but I say unto you that the Quorum of the Twelve have the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world.

The Twelve are appointed by the finger of God. Here is Brigham, have his knees ever faltered? Have his lips ever quivered? Here is Heber and the rest of the Twelve, an independent body who have the keys of the priesthood—the keys of the kingdom of God to deliver to all the world: this is true, so help me God. They stand next to Joseph, and are as the First Presidency of the Church.30

Brigham Young's address was lengthy. It had its desired effect. His remarks were:

a masterful mixture of indirect references to Rigdon's exile and former instability, affirmations of the acknowledged authority given by Joseph Smith to the Quorum of the Twelve, appeals to the Mormons to retain stability in the Church by relying on established authorities rather than appointing new ones, and warnings about the consequences of not following the Twelve Apostles.31

Other speakers followed, supporting the leadership of the Twelve. Brigham Young had not claimed to take the fallen prophet's place. He merely claimed to stand in the place in which Joseph had placed him, holding the keys, with which he proposed to go on building up the kingdom. Here were no radical claims; Brigham Young simply appealed to the people to uphold the constituted authorities. When Brigham concluded his speech, Sidney Rigdon sensed that he was a defeated man, and he declined to speak again. The conference voted to sustain the Twelve Apostles as the presiding authority in the church. Perhaps twenty persons dared to cast dissenting votes.

Rigdon remained in Nauvoo until the fall, trying to rally his supporters within the city. His was a losing rear-guard action, however. Brigham Young was taking control of the church's administrative machinery, step by step. On September 8, 1844, Rigdon was tried for opposing the authority of the Twelve. It
was voted that he be "cut off from the Church, and delivered over to the buffetings of Satan."32

Sidney Rigdon retreated to the friendlier regions of Pennsylvania. Here he established a rival ecclesiastical organization, with himself as president. His new publication, the Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate, attacked the Twelve and "moral corruption" in Nauvoo. It was claimed that Joseph Smith, Jr. had appointed Sidney his successor, and that Joseph had been a fallen prophet since around 1841, clandestinely practicing polygamy. For a time, Rigdonism posed a threat to the leadership of the Twelve in the east, where Sidney Rigdon had his roots, but by 1846 his movement was collapsing. His own instability, eccentricity, and lack of balanced judgment were largely responsible. His rash prophecies failed of fulfillment. His claims that Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet were not apologetically attractive. His scheme for "gathering" his followers proved abortive. Finally Sidney Rigdon retired into semi-seclusion at Friendship, New York, where he died in 1876. Through the remainder of the 1840s through the 1870s, an indefatigable spokesman, Stephen Post, conducted a largely vain crusade to gather proselytes to the banner of Rigdonism, until his own death in 1879.33

After the conference of August 8, 1844, there was finally a clear line of authority in Nauvoo. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was in control. The very next day, the question of a trustee was resolved. Bishops Newel K. Whitney and George Miller were appointed joint Trustees and instructed to settle the affairs of the late Trustee-in-Trust, Joseph Smith.34

A stream of decisions soon began to issue from the church's new leadership. Elders were appointed to missions; vacancies were filled; construction of the Temple and Nauvoo House was pushed forward; and firmer organizational control
was established over the United States. (The Twelve already had supervisory control of foreign missions.) Baptisms for the dead were resumed, upon instructions of Brigham Young. He assumed command of the Nauvoo Legion, with Joseph Smith's rank, lieutenant general. Significantly, in a council on August 27th, it was decided to "carry out all the views of our martyred prophet," the apostles feeling "very spirited on the subject." Several of the apostles—including Brigham Young—had already taken plural wives at the prophet's behest. There would be no turning back from this yet-secret teaching.35

**Growing Conflict between Emma and the Twelve**

Emma Smith had been frustrated in her attempts to gain unilateral control over her husband's estate, when her plan to place an ally in the office of Trustee-in-Trust was rejected. Even before the return of Brigham Young to Nauvoo, her future relations with the church authorities looked stormy. She felt that Willard Richards, Parley P. Pratt, and W. W. Phelps, the triumvirate then pushing the interests of the Twelve in Nauvoo, were abusing and trampling upon her interests. On July 13th, she had threatened, if a favorable Trustee were not appointed, that she would do the church all the injury she could by retaining church property in her own name. Determined to control her own financial destiny, she unilaterally drove to the county seat, on July 17th, and obtained letters of administration as administratrix of Joseph Smith's estate. She was accompanied by her lawyer, James W. Woods, and her nephew, Lorenzo Wason.36

One of the first things done by Brigham Young after his return was to attempt to establish better relations with the prophet's widow. Apostle Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young's alter ego, paid her a fence-mending visit on August 8th, bringing Willard Richards and William Clayton with him. He there and then paid her $1,000 which had been in dispute, and "bore testimony to her of the good
feelings of the Twelve toward her." Emma's feelings were assuaged, for the moment.

The _entente cordiale_ lasted only a week. Advised by her lawyer, on August 15th, the new administratrix demanded of the church a lengthy accounting of her late husband's financial transactions, to include a list of:

- all titles in the name of the Trustee in Trust, & not conveyed away, whether deeded or bonded, and by whom conveyed to the Trustee. Also a list of all lands conveyed to him as Trustee & by him conveyed away & to whom conveyed. Also a list of lands in his individual name. Also a full list of such personal property as was in his name as Trustee at the time of his death. Also a list of all notes & accounts and given their value and whether good or bad. Also a list of all property both real or personal belonging to the heirs[.]

Emma Smith and her lawyer also demanded to see the papers relating to title to the little steamboat, _Maid of Iowa_. Basically, lawyer Woods, through Emma, was demanding to see all of the church's financial records, to determine precisely which items of property were held in the name of Joseph Smith, and whether they were held in his name only, or in his name as "Trustee-in-Trust" for the church. This in itself was threatening enough, but the demand could lay all of the church's financial doings open to inspection. William Clayton refused to open the books. Instead, he went to see Brigham Young, who counselled him to continue to refuse all such demands.

Later that day, Clayton and Emma conversed some more on the subject. Emma stated that there must be "no secrets," and that the church "must keep [nothing] back from the public." She wanted an immediate settlement. Clayton replied that there were many things which he was unwilling to publicize about the church's affairs. The conversation grew extremely heated. Emma demanded a public accounting. Clayton asked if she really wanted _all_ of the church's affairs opened to public scrutiny. As he recorded in his journal, the debate fairly raged:

I said I knew things that she did not want the world to know. She said if I
harbor'd any idea that she had ever done wrong it was false. I answered "what I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears I could believe." She said, if I said she had ever committed a crime I was a liar and I knew it. I replied sister Emma I know I dont lie and you know better what I know I know and although I never have told it to any soul on earth nor never intend to yet it is still the truth and I [shall] not deny it. She then several times c[a]led me a liar and said she knew I was her enemy and she never had been so abused in all her life. I told her I was not her enemy nor never had been. She said I neglected her and spent my time in the secret council of the Twelve and it was secret things which had cost Joseph and Hyrum their lives and says she "I prophecy that it will cost you and the Twelve your lives as it has done them". She repeated this two or three times in a threatening manner, and said it in a manner that I understood that she intended to make it cost us our lives as she had done by Prest. Smith.

The argument continued. Clayton tried to make peace with the prophet's widow, but she would have none of it. She continued to threaten and abuse him. Clayton was in despair at the end of the interview. Emma was in a position to do the church much damage, both financially and by revealing the "secret things" of the church. He concluded that she was blind to her own best interests, did not know who her true friends were, was "putting her life into the hands of traitors and murderers," and could do great harm to the church. But when he faithfully reported the whole conversation to Brigham Young, Brigham seemed unperturbed.38

By August 18th, Emma's relations with William Clayton, who formerly had been of great assistance in handling the paperwork relating to the estate, were frigid. Clayton was by now receiving his instructions from Brigham Young, who cautioned him to be very careful in dealing with her. Finding him uncooperative, Emma resorted to verbal abuse, threats, and charges of wronging her out of her rightful possessions.39

During her husband's lifetime, Emma Smith had been accustomed to conducting many of the family's business affairs, and she did not propose to lose her independence now that she was a widow. One property which the prophet had
left to her oversight was the Cleveland farm, near Quincy. At the end of July, she had traveled to Quincy to inquire about her interests there. On August 20th, James H. Ralston, a lawyer whom she had consulted concerning the title to the farm, reported upon the results of his title search. He suggested that she, not the church, might hold the title, because the conveyance of Joseph and Emma Smith to Joseph Smith, Trustee-in-Trust for the church (in 1841), was illegal. He pointed out that Illinois law prohibited churches from owning real estate other than for church-grounds and burying-grounds. Ralston also urged his widowed client to look well to her own legal interests, "for the comity of interest & indulgent consideration which existed between yourself & the late Head of the Church will not be always found in those who may succeed him." His immediate advice was to negotiate a new lease with her tenant on the Cleveland farm before any of the ecclesiastical authorities were in a position to challenge her right to do so. This particular piece of property was only one of many with unclear titles, but the advice which Emma Smith received reinforced her own inclination to preserve her own interests and those of her children. Significantly, Ralston's letter suggested that she possessed one tremendously powerful "ace-in-the-hole"--the Illinois statute limiting ecclesiastical holding of property--which might be played against the church's hierarchy at a critical moment. This is precisely what happened some years later.

Emma Smith seems to have flirted briefly with the idea of supporting the claims of Sidney Rigdon, whom William Marks was still supporting in late August. But nothing more is heard of this following a meeting of the Twelve on August 29th. Here William Marks and Sidney Rigdon were summoned to appear and answer charges. Marks came; Rigdon did not. Marks saw the handwriting on the wall and totally recanted, lamely denying that he had been supporting Rigdon
clandestinely. He frankly admitted that he did not agree with all that the Twelve had been doing, but promised not to speak against them.\textsuperscript{41}

On the ecclesiastical front, Emma Smith's strategic options were now exhausted. The church's affairs increasingly were controlled by the Twelve, thereby guaranteeing continuation of the hateful doctrine of plural marriage. In the months to come, she would quietly counsel those whom she trusted that the Twelve should not lead the church, but her chances of playing the part of power-broker were finished.

On the financial front, her strategy soon suffered another major reversal. In September, Emma Smith was unable to post an additional bond required by the court, and the presiding judge revoked her authority as administratrix. On the 19th, Joseph W. Coolidge, one of the estate's creditors, was appointed in her place. A recent study has shown that Coolidge was basically a do-nothing administrator. For four years, he allowed matters to languish. He sold about $1,000 worth of property, to settle immediate claims, and assembled a list of creditors' claims, totalling around $5,000. Joseph Smith's complicated affairs demanded more vigorous administration than this, but Coolidge did not provide it. After 1845, he neither paid additional claims nor assembled assets to pay those already received.\textsuperscript{42}

Emma Smith was convinced that Coolidge was the cat's paw of the Twelve, placed in the position of administrator through their influence. She communicated her distress to her son, Joseph III, who decades later recalled that under Coolidge's management, "things were done that could not have occurred except they had been approved by the powers in control and directed by that spirit of hostility which early seemed to develop against my mother." The Smith family—on paper possessing large holdings of real estate—was at Coolidge's
mercy, to realize any monetary benefit from the property. This was precisely the position of helplessness which Emma had sought to avoid. She communicated her sense of frustration to her eldest son, and to the end of his life he remembered the situation with bitterness:

In the settlement of the estate as administered by Joseph W. Coolidge, Mother was allowed, besides her household goods, two horses, two cows, her spinning-wheels, and one hundred and twenty-four dollars per year for the support of the family. We formed the impression that while Joseph Coolidge was, under ordinary circumstances, an honest man, in this matter he was under the domination of others. Our family was subjected gradually to a series of injustices at his hands and disagreeable experiences which became almost unbearable.\(^{43}\)

Emma suspected that Coolidge was Brigham Young's instrument to bend her to his will. She refused to bend.

A series of additional disagreements added fuel to the fire. First there was an ongoing dispute about Joseph Smith, Jr.'s papers. Most of these papers were housed in Joseph's office, upstairs in the Red Brick Store. The Twelve controlled these papers--financial as well as ecclesiastical--and denied Emma Smith access to them, contending they were the property of the church. Also included were his "private records, biography, portions of history--family and general--manuscripts, memoranda, and parts of his library." Emma Smith, for her part, rebuffed the requests of the Twelve that she turn over one very important manuscript which she had kept in her possession since the troubles in Missouri: Joseph Smith's "inspired translation" (or "new translation") of the Bible.\(^{44}\) Here was a classic standoff, one which had significance beyond the immediate conflict. Joseph Smith III's later religious career was significantly colored by this dispute over his father's papers. Those papers held by the Twelve, and finally coming to repose in Salt Lake City, influenced him negatively. Coming to maturity, he had to rely upon his own recollections, the statements of his mother, and published records such as found in the church's paper, the *Times and Seasons*, for his knowledge of
his father's teachings in Nauvoo. Not having access to his father's papers—some of them sensitive—and far away from most of his father's closest disciples, he began his own religious career with an incomplete and sometimes erroneous conception of what his father had actually taught.

The disputed manuscript of the "Inspired Translation" was jealously kept by the prophet's widow, who regarded herself as its divinely appointed guardian. In later years, she was to surrender it to her son's church, for publication, which event was heralded by the Reorganized Church as proof that it was continuing Joseph Smith, Jr.'s work.

There were other sources of irritation, as well. One episode resulted in Joseph Smith III developing a burning dislike for Brigham Young. It happened shortly after the President of the Twelve had triumphed over Sidney Rigdon. In solidifying his leadership, Brigham not only assumed Joseph's position as commander of the Nauvoo Legion, but also tried to emulate his appearance, to foster the image of being his successor. Accordingly, he sent a request to Emma Smith, that he be allowed to ride the late lieutenant general's dark sorrel pacer, Joe Duncan, at a parade. Emma Smith complied with the request, and ordered Young Joseph to saddle the horse. The youth remonstrated with his mother, reminding her that he had just spent considerable effort in nursing the poor horse back to health after some visitors had overridden him frightfully. Nevertheless, she ordered him to prepare the horse. Joseph grew angrier and angrier as he readied the horse in the stable. An additional request came, that the prophet's "full military housings" be put on the horse, including the holsters and pistols. Joseph recalled his feelings:

It was with a considerable and rising sense of outrage I obeyed the dictatorial request, and caparisoned the horse, fitting on the military saddle and housings, holsters and bridle.

I did not approach the parade grounds that day . . . . Mother
preferred that I remain at home and I had no inclination to go.

By late afternoon, the horse had not been returned. Young Joseph was deeply disturbed, and when he saw George Q. Cannon, Brigham Young's clerk, racing the horse through the streets, he was thoroughly outraged. Emma sent a terse note to Brigham Young requesting that Joe Duncan be returned. In another hour, the poor horse was back in Young Joseph's care, "in a most pitiable plight," his hair "matted with sweat," hungry and thirsty from having received no care during the day, and "his vigor, already at pretty low ebb, . . . he was surely what was termed a 'used up horse.'"

His young master was furiously angry, as he cared for the horse:

All the while I was caring for him and trying to comfort him, I was crying bitterly. I removed his gay trappings and sponged his coat with warm water, as he stood with drooping head and legs sprawled apart in the attitude characteristic of horses when they have been overworked. I gave him food and drink and sympathy. . . .

I made a vow then and there, while washing that horse and giving him proper nourishment, that never again would I put saddle or bridle upon him for Elder Young. Going to the house, I told-Mother so, adding that if ever in the future she wished to loan one of our horses to that man she would have to get someone else to saddle it, for I would not do it.43

This is the first recorded instance of disharmony between Brigham Young and Joseph Smith III. In his memoirs, Joseph recalled that in earlier days, he thought Brigham a pleasant man to meet, "neither liking nor disliking him particularly."46 His own personal experience was now added to his mother's growing dislike for the President of the Twelve, however.

From the fall of 1844 to the spring of 1845, the conflict between Emma Smith and Brigham Young was quiescent. Emma had entered the third trimester of pregnancy. On November 17th, her last son, David Hyrum Smith, was born.47 As the child's birth approached, it was natural that Emma would have less and less opportunity or inclination to carry on her dispute with Brigham. Not until the
following spring do documents again begin mentioning Emma opposing Brigham Young's policies.

Joseph Smith III, Schoolboy

Friendship with Oliver B. Huntington. In November 1844, Emma Smith took in Oliver B. Huntington as a boarder. She had moved out of the busy Nauvoo Mansion during her confinement, leasing it to William Marks, the first of a series of tenants over the next two years. Emma and her family moved back into the home they had originally lived in, upon moving to Nauvoo, the Old Homestead. An able-bodied young man was useful around the house, and Oliver attended to many chores. Emma Smith was short of cash and could not afford to pay him for his work, but he received room, board, and occasional presents.

There was no such thing as a common school system in Nauvoo, and education was a haphazard affair. Twenty-one year old Oliver and twelve-year old Joseph Smith III soon found themselves classmates in James Madison Monroe's school, at that time conducted upstairs in the Red Brick Store. They also received helpful training in memorization and etiquette from Dr. John M. Bernhisel, another boarder.

Oliver soon became a virtual member of the Smith family. He became a father-figure for the children, and a particularly warm attachment developed between Joseph and himself. Oliver would romp with the younger children, tell stories, make toys, and protect them from bullies at school. But with Joseph he developed an extremely close relationship. Oliver's diary provides a vital glimpse into Young Joseph's development during this critical period.

One of Joseph's traits which impressed Oliver was his maturity, seemingly well beyond his twelve years. Oliver recorded:

He was a boy in stature, yet a more than common man in great
qualifications of mind. Was very quick of understanding, and penetrating in discerning the feelings and thoughts of others. Had great power and genius with his tongue (or language) to the changing of another's mind or diverting their attention from any particular course.

He was wise, without any show thereof. And cheerful without being vain or trifling, was sober without gloominess and candid and grave (for a youth) with despondency.

He had a tender heart and uncommonly fine feelings. Knew how and when to grant a favour, and also how to receive one. Was very devout in all his actions and at all times and places, had the fear of God before his eyes. He was perfectly obedient and subject to his mother, tutor or the "powers that be;" and put great confidence in no one until he had well proven them; and found little use for what is called intimate friends.

In short, he was the son of a prophet, and justly inherited his standing; and merited his birthright.

Oliver recorded several incidents illustrative of Joseph's maturity. On one occasion, Julia Murdock Smith, Joseph's adopted older sister, was induced to make amends to Oliver, through the lad's peacemaking efforts. On another, he respectfully accepted correction from Oliver, who urged him to cease his screaming "quail calls," which were popular among the neighborhood boys. After reflecting upon the criticism, Joseph simply quoted the adage, "Open rebuke is better than secret love," and ceased playing quail. On yet another occasion, he displayed his generous nature. Oliver asked him for an Indian money purse that the prophet had in his pocket when shot in Carthage Jail. One might naturally be reluctant to part with such a memento, but after pondering for a moment, Young Joseph handed the purse to Oliver, saying, "Cast your bread upon the waters, and after many days thou shalt find it again."

When Oliver ceased boarding with Emma Smith the following March, he was very reluctant to leave, because this would mean that he would see less of Joseph. Leaving the Old Homestead was almost like leaving home. As he put it,

... I sincerely hated to leave there; for I wanted to be where I could see Joseph all the time. As we had been so intimate, with perfect love, never allowing an angry word to pass between us, and having kept together all winter. In fine we were almost one in our feelings, interests and actions; and it seemed like cutting my heart strings, to part with, as
he called himself, my best friend.49

James M. Monroe. Oliver Boardman Huntington was not the only one impressed with the lad. His teacher, James M. Monroe, kept a diary in the spring of 1845, which reflected highly upon his young scholar. At this time, Monroe was conducting school at Emma Smith's residence, with about a dozen pupils, including the children of Emma Smith and Apostle John Taylor. Joseph, he recorded, was a model student. The teacher wrote weekly letters to him, emparting rules of conduct, e.g., April 24th, "Eat only at meal time. Retire by nine and rise by five. Have a time to do every thing and do every thing at the time." On April 27th, he was extremely pleased with the maturity of Joseph's judgment, as reflected in a resolution he made, viz., "to obey his parent and his instructor and alter his course of life according to their advise." Teacher Monroe thought Joseph "some different from most other boys, with more judgment, more manly, and intellectual. I have great encouragements, that he will make a very useful and highly talented man." These commendatory remarks were in sharp contrast to those recorded about other students. Monroe complained of Julia Murdock's rebelliousness, Alexander H. Smith's lack of ambition, and John Taylor's truancy.

Soon a bond of attachment had developed between Joseph and his teacher. Monroe was in the habit of rising before dawn and walking into the woods to a favorite retreat, where he would perform exercises, practice declamation, and sing. In this manner, he hoped to improve his voice, and, incidentally, to review matters which he had been studying. Soon Young Joseph and Oliver B. Huntington were rising early in the morning and going out with their teacher to practice elocution and reading.50

Young Joseph, by every surviving account, was mature beyond his years.
Being the son of the prophet and being the eldest son may have contributed to this process, although history is filled with examples of crown princes who responded irresponsibly rather than responsibly to the weight of expectation surrounding their birth and future station. Perhaps the trials he had witnessed in twelve years had a sobering effect. His father's premature, calamitous death doubtless contributed to his sober outlook upon life.

**Formation of character.** As he entered adolescence, he was schooled in principles of behavior which would serve him well throughout his life. In January 1845, he composed a series of "Rules of Behavior for Youth." It is not known whether these rules were suggested to him by Dr. Bernhisel, James M. Monroe, an unknown party, or whether the youth worked them up on his own initiative. Whatever their origin, they give insight into his developing character. Many of the rules treat simply of etiquette, such as the following injunctions:

- In the company of others, sing not with a humming noise, to yourself; or drum with your fingers or feet
- Listen when others speak—Sit not when others stand.—
- Turn not your back to others,—especially when speaking.
- Read no letters or books in company—but when there is a necessity for doing it, ask leave.

It is those rules which embodied principles of civilized behavior and rules of morality which are most interesting, and show the direction in which Joseph's character was being molded. Some examples follow:

- Every action in company ought to be with an air of respect to those present.
- Many questions, remarks and sarcasms may be better answered by silence than by words—by silent contempt.
- Lean not on any one. Be no flatterer, neither play with any one who delights not to be played with.
Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another, though it be your enemy.

When a man does all he can, though it succeed not well, blame not him that did it.

Being about to reprimand any one, consider whether it ought to be done at present or at another time; in publick or in private, and in reproveing, show no signs of choler but do it in mildness and sweetness. Take all admonitions kindly, but when not culpable, take a time and place convenient to let him know it, that gave it. . . . Break no jests sharp or biting. . . . Wherein you reprove another be unblameable yourself, for example has more influence than precept.

Use no reproachful language against any one, neither curse nor revile.

Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any one. Asciosate [sic] with men of good character and remember it is better to be alone than in bad company.

In all causes of passion, admit reason to govern.

Speak not injurious or reproachful words; in jest nor in earnest.

Speak not against the absent, for it is unjust.

Let your recreations be manful;—not sinful.

Never attempt anything but what you can do openly; free from fear of the consequences.

Never be guilty of anything little or mean; but let all your actions be noble and humane.51

Here was a code of gentlemanly values. By and large, Joseph Smith III’s later life reflected these values. Much more so than his brother Alexander, he learned to control his naturally fiery temper, even in the face of severe provocation; to hold his tongue, and not to speak evil of others, even those who had abused or wronged him. In regards two of the rules, however, his later practice failed to conform, viz., "if you deliver anything witty and pleasant, abstain from laughing thereat yourself . . . . Laugh not aloud . . . ," and, "Be not obstinate in your opinion." Joseph was noted for his sense of humor, heartily enjoying a good joke or pun. As for abstinence in his opinions, once set in his
convictions, he was as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar.

Young Joseph's sense of right and wrong became more finely honed in the course of school-activities and play with other children. He hated to see smaller children bullied and would intervene on their behalf, even though doing so might mean a fight. He insisted that established rules be followed, whether on the playground or in the classroom; on one occasion he had a confrontation with his teacher when the teacher unfairly played favorites in a spelling contest. He was willing to accept punishment, when he had done wrong. But when he felt an adult was not acting fairly, he was willing to stand up for his rights.52

This highly developed sense of right and wrong, combined with a stubborn unwillingness to retreat from principle, was instilled in him by his mother. As he put the matter, himself:

From my mother I inherited an intense hatred of oppression—of any kind, but more especially the kind displayed by the strong against the weak—and a hatred of arrogance, haughtiness, and that peculiar quality which some people exhibit when they appear to say, "Stand aside; I am holier than thou." With this attribute inherited from my mother, I also received a strong and active repugnance to untruthfulness in either man or woman. To me my mother was ever the embodiment of truthfulness, for she hated intensely any lie, whether spoken or acted, and refused steadfastly to submit to any proposition which was opposite to the truth.53

Sexual ethics. Emma Smith, deep within her heart, had never been reconciled to plural marriage. On occasion, she had bowed before her husband's authority, accepted his teaching as the word of the Lord, and attempted to subordinate her sense of moral disquietude to prophetic fiat. More often, she had been sullenly quiescent. On occasion, her resentment boiled over into episodes of active resistance, espionage, threats, or raging defiance. Now that her husband was dead, her original instincts encountered no opposition. She became more and more firmly determined to raise her children under the strictest rules of propriety—monogamous propriety.
Despite Joseph Smith III's later claims that he was old enough to have known if his father were involved in polygamous activities, the fact is that the prophet had been discreet, and most of his polygamous liaisons occurred away from the Mansion House. Under the leadership of the Twelve, a steady growth in the number of plural marriages was occurring, and Emma's policy was to guard her children against contamination from what she viewed as a moral contagion. There is no record that the children continued to receive Sunday School instruction. Several times, in his memoirs, Joseph Smith III makes mention of an important meeting, with the additional remark, that he personally did not attend. The younger children--Frederick, Alexander, and David--were never baptized under LDS auspices, although Frederick was considered old enough to receive the ordinance before the exodus.54

Concomitant with this policy of religious isolation, Emma instilled in Joseph a strict code of behavior toward the opposite sex. Young men, he was taught, should view marriage as a sacred covenant; violations of that sacred trust were serious sins which invited the judgment of God. He was brought up to honor and esteem women. Late in life, he recalled his mother's womanly code with pride:

My mother was a type of a grand woman, and those with whom we were associated, with whom I was associated as a boy and young man, I look back along my life now, and I can see plainly that I knew no lax [sic] of virtue among those with whom I was associated. Every woman with whom I was associated and knew anything about, was an honest, virtuous, upright lady. I was taught so to treat them, and there grew up in my heart that instinctive regard and love for womankind that I have never forgotten; and I do not believe I will while I live.55

Authority of the Twelve Consolidated

Brigham Young had pursued a conservative course. On August 8, 1844, he had simply asked the people to sustain the Twelve in their calling. He made no radical claims for himself or his quorum. He had opposed Sidney Rigdon's wild,
visionary claims, and had proposed to leave things much as they were, with the quorum next in authority to the first presidency providing leadership for the church. But what of the future? Apostle John Taylor, by now sufficiently recovered to be about his duties as editor of the church paper, on September 2, 1844 counselled those who were anxious to know who would be the prophet's successor: "...we say, be patient, be patient a little, till the proper time comes, and we will tell you all. 'Great wheels move slow.'" The Twelve had been sustained at the conference on August 8th, and "when any alteration in the presidency shall be required, seasonable notice shall be given; and the elders abroad, will best exhibit their wisdom to all men, by remaining silent on those things they are ignorant of."56 Brigham Young's policy was to exercise power and avoid theoretical discussions.

"Hush, or we will have little Joseph killed." Those who recalled the late prophet's designation of his son as his successor were willing to accept the authority of Brigham Young and the Twelve, upon the understanding that it was of an interim nature. Bishop George Miller was one such person. He was not enthusiastic about Brigham Young leading the church, but he saw no better alternative. While accepting the Twelve as temporary leaders, he sought to receive some assurance that Young Joseph would eventually succeed his father. Whenever he brought up the subject, however, the new leaders put him off, claiming such talk would endanger the boy's life. Miller recalled:

...I had frequent attempts at conversation with Brigham Young and H. C. Kimball in regard to Joseph's leaving one to succeed him in the prophetic office, and in all my attempts to ascertain the desired truth as to that personage, I was invariably met with the inuendo, "stop," or "hush," brother Miller, let there be nothing said in regard to this matter, or we will have little Joseph killed as his father was, inferring indirectly that Joseph Smith had appointed his son Joseph to succeed him in the prophetic office, and I believe this impression was not alone left on my mind, but on the brethren in general, and remains with many until this day.57
John D. Lee, who was unsurpassed in his devotion to Brigham Young, was convinced that Joseph's mantle had fallen upon Brigham at the conference on April 8th. Yet Lee, also, recalled the rights of Young Joseph, and believed that Brigham Young, in time, would step aside in favor of the prophet's eldest son. Lee was convinced that Brigham was:

the man to lead us until Joseph's legal successor should grow up to manhood, when he should surrender the Presidency to the man who held the birthright. After that time, if he continued to claim and hold the position, he could not be considered anything else than an usurper, and his acts would not meet the approbation of Heaven.58

Lucy Mack Smith, the sixty-nine year old mother of the prophet, shared Lee's concern that Young Joseph's rights be protected. One day at the Masonic Hall, in 1845, Lee overheard Mother Smith plead tearfully with Brigham Young concerning her grandson. Lee recounted that the aged matriarch made an impassioned plea:

not to rob young Joseph of his birthright, which his father, the Prophet, bestowed upon him previous to his death. That young Joseph was to succeed his father as the leader of the Church, and it was his right in the line of the priesthood. "I know it," replied Brigham, "don't worry or take any trouble, Mother Smith; by so doing you are only laying the knife to the throat of the child. If it is known that he is the rightful successor of his father, the enemy of the Priesthood will seek his life. He is too young to lead this people now, but when he arrives at mature age he shall have his place. No one shall rob him of it."59

Whatever Brigham's ultimate intentions, there was wisdom in his policy. Word of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s designation of his son as his successor had reached the secular press; it would hardly do to deny the matter before the Saints.60 Whether he intended to step aside when Young Joseph reached maturity, or whether he had no intention of ever yielding power, his policy made sense. Furthermore, times were uncertain, and potential danger might have resulted from too freely talking about some future succession; that this was Brigham Young's primary motive, in pursuing the policy that he did, is doubtful, however.
Administrative control consolidated. Brigham Young acted quickly to take control of the church's administration. One of his immediate goals was to counter centrifugal tendencies. This strategy found several tactical expressions: (1) discouragement of the proposed expeditions of Lyman Wight and James Emmett; (2) encouragement of continued "gathering" to Nauvoo; (3) continued effort to complete the Nauvoo Temple; and (4) division of North America into administrative districts, with a direct chain of command back to the Twelve.61

Growth of polygamy. During all this time, more and more celestial marriages were being sealed by the leading brethren. For many, the principle was difficult to accept. Some only did so after a period of inner struggle. Others never did and left the church. Secrecy surrounded the practice. For example, on May 19, 1845, Hosea Stout entered into a polygamous marriage with Lucretia Fisher, but in his diary he simply recorded, "Myself and wife and Lucretia Fisher, went to Brother John D. Lee's to a social meeting."62 By continuing to teach and practice celestial marriage, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and others who had been privy to Joseph Smith's secret teachings, were loyally following his instructions. Many of the Twelve initially had been shocked at the idea of polygamy, but having accepted the teaching upon the prophet's authority, they now proved faithful disciples. As D. Michael Quinn has pointed out, the teachings of the Twelve concerning marriage, the endowment, the political kingdom, and other doctrines and practices, were simply perpetuations of instructions they had received from the prophet.63

Revival of Anti-Mormon Activity

After a period of relative calm, in the wake of the murders at Carthage, Anti-Mormon agitation began to increase in intensity, by September of 1844. That month, notices appeared in newspapers of Hancock and surrounding counties
of an upcoming "wolf hunt," a coded euphemism for depredations against the Mormons. Governor Ford acted to put down any such disorders by bringing an outside militia force into the county, the Saints organized for self-defense, and for the time being, the danger passed. The militiamen, under General John J. Hardin, kept the peace through the winter.64

In Springfield, the capital, however, there was a bipartisan clamor for repeal of the Nauvoo Charter. There was general sentiment that the special provisions of the charter had been much abused, e.g., the Nauvoo Municipal Court's use of writs of habeus corpus to enable Saints to escape from writs issued by other, higher, jurisdictions. Despite the arguments of Governor Ford that the solution was to amend the charter, not repeal it, the entire charter was revoked on January 29, 1845. Without a legal government, Nauvoo had to be reorganized under the general law providing for the incorporation of towns, despite the severe restrictions in the statute which made it an impractical instrument for governing a large city. In practice, if not in theory, there had never been a clear line of demarcation between church and state in Nauvoo. Now, Brigham Young set about using the governmental machinery of the church to govern and secure order in the city.

The storm broke in late June. Dr. Samuel Marshall, a bitter Anti-Mormon, was killed by Sheriff Minor Deming. Deming, a "Jack Mormon"—the unflattering appellation coined to describe Mormon sympathizers—had acted in self-defense. But the passions of the Anti-Mormons were aroused, and they swore revenge. A number of other factors inflamed passions, including a rash of thefts curing the summer of 1845. Early in September, a series of burnings began in outlying areas of Hancock County. Numerous Mormon farmers were driven from their homes and forced to flee to Nauvoo. For some weeks the lawless mob of three hundred
continued its depredations. There was a new sheriff in Hancock County now, however, Jacob B. Backenstos, elected with Mormon votes, and he responded to the incendiary mob with determination. For a time, Backenstos even occupied Carthage with a Mormon posse. The Anti-Mormon leaders fled, for the moment. Men had been killed on both sides. Here was a case of civil insurrection, with Hancock County's peace preserved only by martial law enforced by a Mormon posse. Feelings were running very high. Neighboring counties were now alarmed that Hancock County would fall totally under Mormon control, and they demanded that the Mormons must either leave voluntarily or be expelled from the state. Governor Ford, who arranged to have General Hardin bring in another peacekeeping force, also was working to negotiate such a removal.

To the demands of an Anti-Mormon assembly, on October 1, 1845, that the Saints leave Illinois, Brigham Young responded favorably. Westward emigration had been considered by the hierarchy for some time, and in the face of implacable opposition from militant enemies, Brigham Young now negotiated an agreement to vacate the city. The wheel of an epic saga was thereby set in motion.\textsuperscript{65}

\textbf{Surveillance}

After the repeal of Nauvoo's municipal charter, Brigham Young faced problems from within and from without. Internally, he faced the problem of how to deal with dissenters (members of the church and former members). Externally, Anti-Mormon forces were a constant threat, and some method of insuring the city's security had to be found. Additionally, a city of Nauvoo's size had to have a police force to enforce the law, quite apart from the religious conflicts which beset the Saints. The ecclesiastical leadership solved these problems and maintained its control of the city in the following ways: First, the "New Police," an ecclesiastically controlled guard, which received little or no pay, kept watch
over the city. Second, in March 1845, the whole city was divided up into quorums of twelve deacons, with a bishop at the head of each. A young man, belonging to such a quorum, performed guard duty at the corner of every block in the city, from dusk until dawn. Third, there was the "Whistling and Whittling Brigade."

The "Brigade" operated to clear the city of those regarded as undesirable. If someone regarded as suspicious—either as a possible criminal, an apostate, or an Anti-Mormon spy—entered the city, the Brigade would "whistle and whittle" him out of town. The technique was an ingenious form of intimidation. The victim would be surrounded by a large company of boys, wielding large bowie knives, with which they would casually whittle, in close proximity to the unwanted person. They would not converse with him, but would set up a cacophony of whistling, possibly adding insults, all designed to hurry him out of town. Whistling and whittling became a very effective form of social control in the short run, but in the long run probably added fuel to the fire of those working to drive the Saints from Illinois.66

Young Joseph disliked the new system of security. On April 27, 1845, Austin Cowles was run out of town by the Whistling and Whittling Brigade. To the hierarchy, Cowles was an apostate, but to Young Joseph he was simply remembered as a friend. Joseph remonstrated with the youthful whittlers to desist and let the man go about his business. It was to no avail. Austin Cowles was driven from Nauvoo. The whole episode filled his heart with indignation:

... a guard of some thirty young men and boys ... followed him the whole of the day, urging him from place to place, annoying him by whistling, and whittling towards him with wicked looking knives; saying nothing to him, except to tell him to move on when he stopped to speak to any one. I saw him in the afternoon about four o'clock, when despairing of honorable entreatment from his before time brethren, broken down with infirmity, and stricken with grief, he had turned his face from the city and was going to the ferry to cross the river. I spoke to him, when his escort struck up their din of whistling and whittling, hustling the poor old man with the ends of broken boards and the sticks
they were whittling. I remonstrated with them for this using him; but to no purpose, they were only the more offensive; so with tears of pain in the eyes of the old man, and tears of indignation in mine, we parted, never to meet again.57

Joseph Smith III had even more direct encounters with the new security measures. By the summer or fall of 1845, relations between Emma Smith and Brigham Young had deteriorated to the point that she was held in deep suspicion. A "seige mentality" prevailed in Nauvoo, and those whose loyalties were suspect were placed under surveillance.

The Mansion House was placed under watch, since William Marks' sentiments were known to be questionable. One of his boarders, Washington Peck, was also under suspicion by the ecclesiastical authorities. On February 27, 1845, Peck was assaulted as he left the building. It was late in the day, and as he stepped into the glare of the late afternoon sun, and could not see his assailants, he was clubbed to the ground and covered with human excrement.58

While the Mansion House was rented to Marks and a series of other tenants, the Smith family lived in the Old Homestead. This house also was placed under watch by the authorities. Some visitors might simply be observed. Others might find themselves turned away at the door. Still others, who were allowed to enter, found themselves followed, once they left. On one occasion, Charles Smith, a friend of the family, came visiting in the evening. The policeman stationed in the yard attacked him with a knife, but Smith was able to fend off the attack with his heavy ebony cane, assisted by Major, Joseph's dog, who came running to the rescue upon hearing the disturbance. The old white mastiff, however, received an ugly knife wound, which had scarcely healed by the time of the the faithful dog's death in the spring of 1847.

On another occasion, Emma received a message to vacate her home within three days or have it burned over her head. Emma was determined not to be
driven from her home by threats. The evening of the third day arrived. It was a warm evening, and some of the children were to sleep on the floor, downstairs, beneath their mother's room. To cool the room, the south door was left open. Emma instructed her children to be quiet, and if they heard anything unusual, to awaken her, upstairs. Evening prayers were said, the nervous children commending themselves to God's care. Finally, nervousness gave way to weariness, and they fell asleep. The dreaded night passed, and the house was still standing. But the threat had not been an idle one. Investigation revealed that incendiary materials had been piled against the north side of the building. A fire had been started, which had scorched some of the siding before it went out.

Through 1846, no one was allowed to visit the Smiths without passing the police cordon. The widow Smith, through her refusal to bend to the will of Brigham Young and her open hostility to certain of his policies, had become obnoxious in his eyes. This surveillance was the result.69

The Elect Lady's Fall from Favor

Brigham Young had not sought a conflict with Emma. One recent study has argued persuasively that the introduction of plural marriage--rather than longstanding personal enmity--was the basis of the conflict, Brigham remaining loyal to the prophet and Emma remaining loyal to traditional morality. This fundamental difference led to disagreement over who should succeed Joseph Smith, Jr., as well as to a prolonged and bitter struggle over the estate of the late prophet. Brigham Young desired to preserve property which rightly belonged to the church and to employ that resource on behalf of the stream of poor Mormon immigrants and to prepare for the westward exodus. Emma Smith, on the other hand, desired to preserve her financial independence, hold what was rightly her own, and defend properties which she had helped to buy and administer during her
husband's lifetime. 70

The conflict was an ever escalating one. Emma Smith continued to voice her dissatisfaction with Brigham Young's leadership. Long after there was any possibility of William Marks leading the church, she obstinately continued to express the opinion that he was the proper man for the job. For example, on April 24, 1845, she engaged in a lengthy conversation with her children's teacher, James M. Monroe, upon the subject. She argued that temporal things are patterned after the spiritual, and that just as the vice president succeeds the president of the United States, so the next officer below the president of the church should succeed him, upon his decease. That officer, she reasoned, was the president of the High Council in Zion. It was not Sidney Rigdon, who was only a counselor, like the secretary of state. Neither was it the Twelve, who held authority to conduct missions, not to govern the church at Zion. The High Council held power within Zion. The Twelve were overstepping their authority by meddling in the affairs of Zion, seizing the leadership without "such instructions or commands or ordinations as would authorize them to take that office," while Joseph Smith, by the ordination he pronounced upon William Marks, contemplated him to succeed him in governing the church, but not as a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator, which office she doubted would be given to another. 71

Emma's outspokenness was no secret. Lucy Meserve Smith—a secret plural wife of Apostle George A. Smith—did spinning for Emma in August and September, 1845. She held her tongue, while Emma denounced the measures of the Twelve, claiming that original Mormonism was true, but that the Twelve were "making Bogus of it." 72

There were other sources of irritation, as well. When Apostle William Smith returned to Nauvoo, in May of 1845, he took up residence with Emma
Smith. William was soon warring with the Twelve over the rights of the Smith family to lead the church, and Emma was harboring William. Then there was the matter of Brigham Young's wounded pride. The leading elders proceeded to marry the late prophet's plural wives—for time, not eternity—Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young taking the lion's share. Emma would not consider entering into such a marriage with Brigham Young. The Relief Society, of which Emma Smith was president, was allowed to lapse into dormancy, since Emma had used it as a platform from which to oppose plural marriage.73

One further incident which might have soured relations even more, but apparently did not, was the notorious letter in the New York Sun of December 9, 1845. The paper contained a letter—purportedly from Emma Smith—denouncing the current leadership in Nauvoo as "petty tyrants," and stating a determination not to follow those leaders to the west. Emma Smith stoutly denied the genuineness of the letter, and there are strong reasons to believe, as convincingly demonstrated by Valeen Tippett Avery and Linda King Newell, that the letter was a forgery of the unscrupulously ambitious James Arlington Bennet. Brigham Young himself suspected that Bennet had forged the purported letter from Emma.74

Emma Smith, by the summer of 1845, had stamped herself an outcast. Her opposition to the measures of the Twelve became common knowledge, and she began to be referred to as an "apostate." Young Joseph felt the sting of such epithets, and developed a lifelong distaste for what he viewed as "the intolerance of bigotry." He described Nauvoo as a hotbed of "rabid venom against the 'apostate' and recalcitrant." From this time onward, he never had any stomach for tactics of ostracism, and became a strong defender of the right to hold differing opinions within the church.75
William Smith and the Rights of the Smith Family

It is significant that Emma Smith did not choose to assert the claims of her eldest son, Joseph, to the presidency, although she was aware of his father's blessing, pronounced upon the lad's head. After years of persecution, wanderings, and worry, culminating in the tragedy at Carthage Jail, she did not choose to place her son in a position of danger.76

There was another member of the Smith family who shared no such reluctance about advancing the family's claims to leadership in the church. Apostle William Smith, younger brother of the prophet, returned to Nauvoo on May 4, 1845, and almost immediately set about stirring up a storm of controversy. Although William was to be unsuccessful in his personal quest for power, the doctrinal basis for his claims, together with his later schismatic activities, constituted the seedbed from which the Reorganized Church later sprang.

William Smith, then in his mid-thirties, was unpredictable and fiery-tempered. He had not returned to Nauvoo, following his brothers' murders, but had remained in the east. There he had clandestinely taught and practiced plural marriage, together with elders Samuel Brannan and George J. Adams. Their indiscreet behavior became known in Nauvoo, and Brigham Young ordered Apostle Parley P. Pratt to go east and put matters in order. William was ordered to return to Nauvoo.77

William returned to Nauvoo, now styled by the Saints the "City of Joseph," together with his mortally ill wife Caroline and two daughters. He temporarily took up residence with Emma Smith. The following Sunday, William, who lacked discretion while possessing determination to the point of self-destruction, preached from the stand. In this initial sermon he managed to step upon Brigham Young's toes. He criticized some of the measures employed against enemies of
the Saints and intimated that he was intent of asserting his privileges as a Smith.\textsuperscript{78}

After a long and painful illness, Caroline Smith died on May 22nd. William Smith's period of mourning was abbreviated in the extreme. On June 22nd he married Mary Jane Rollins, with Brigham Young performing the ceremony. He did not wait that long to take up the struggle for power. Church secretary William Clayton, who was privy to the inner workings of the hierarchy, recorded in his diary, the day after Caroline's death, his fears that William Smith was bent on ruling the church and monopolizing power for himself:

\textit{Wm. Smith is coming out in opposition to the Twelve and in favor of Adams. The latter has organized a church at Augusta, Iowa Territory with young Joseph Smith for President, Wm. Smith for Patriarch, Jared Carter for President of the stake and himself for spokesman [sic] to Joseph. Wm. says he has sealed some women to men and he considers he is not accountable to Brigham nor the Twelve nor any one else. There is more danger from William than from any other source, and I fear his course will bring us much trouble.}\textsuperscript{79}

Caroline Smith was buried on May 24th. That afternoon an important meeting of the Twelve Apostles took place. A reconciliation was affected between William and the rest of the Twelve, after which William Smith was ordained Presiding Patriarch of the church.\textsuperscript{80}

The office of presiding patriarch was passed on from father to son among the male members of the Smith family. It first had been conferred upon Joseph Smith, Sr., who held it from 1833 to his death in 1840. Prior to his death, he conferred it upon his eldest son, Hyrum. Hyrum had died without naming a successor, and William now claimed the office by virtue of being the sole surviving son of Joseph Smith, Sr. The Twelve acknowledged his right to the office, by lineage, and now ordained him.

The office of presiding patriarch involved administration of prophetic blessings (for which remuneration was received), as well as presiding over regional
patriarchs who performed similar blessings. The late prophet had once ambiguously described the office as "the highest office in the church," but in what sense it was "highest" was never spelled out. Certainly the patriarch had never functioned as the presiding officer in the church. Now, however, this ascription of honor (if not authority), coupled with the removal of the prophet-president, made the office a potential base of power for William Smith. 81

If it had been hoped that ordaining William Smith to the patriarchal dignity would satisfy his personal ambition and concern for the honor of the Smith family, such hopes were immediately shattered. William desired authority as well as dignity. James M. Monroe, now employed by William to record blessings, noted in his diary a series of quarrels with the Twelve, all portending a coming rupture. These incidents were symptoms of an underlying conflict over William's rights as a Smith, and Brigham Young's leadership of the church:

He [William] says also that B. Young is not a whit beyond himself or any other of the Twelve. That he is merely President by courtesy. That he has no higher keys and that the whole Twelve are presidents over the Church and not B. Young and that he does not stand in Joseph's shoes. His words seem to portend a rupture between him and the Twelve, but I hardly know how it will come out. Most probably to his disadvantage, as the authority of the Twelve is too firmly rooted to be broken up very easily. 82

With her hopes for William Marks frustrated, Emma now toyed with the idea of supporting her brother-in-law as a rallying point against Brigham Young's leadership. Again, she aired her thoughts to her children's teacher. Monroe recorded the conversation:

She said he [William] talked well upon the subject and seemed to have correct principles. I told her that his character had not stood very high and that would have some influence among the world and that we should be quite cautious about [believing] that a man had met with a sudden change, as it was rather difficult for a man to change his nature. She said it had been done, and if a man wished to change his course of conduct he should be encouraged. 83

By the end of June, William was utterly at odds with Brigham Young's
leadership, denouncing the Twelve and claiming the authority to do as he pleased, and making no effort to conceal his differences with the Twelve.84 Lucy Mack Smith, his mother, was allied with him in an effort to secure the rights of the Smith family. It was during the summer of 1845, that she dictated to her scribe, Martha Coray, her recollection of Joseph Smith, Sr.'s patriarchal blessing of Joseph Smith III, in Kirtland, Ohio. While there is no reason to doubt that Joseph Smith, Sr., actually gave such a blessing, certain details seem to have been the product of the summer of 1845, such as the references to the boy comforting his (widowed) mother, and the implication that the boy would carry on his father's work only after waiting a period of time, to "become of age." The document is consistent with what might be styled the "Theology of the Smith Family," held and promulgated by her husband, herself, Joseph Smith, Jr., and William Smith. The timing of the document, is directly related to fears that the rights of the Smiths were in danger of being eclipsed. The document specifically states that Joseph III would have power to carry out all that his father should leave undone, when the boy became of age. The lad's claims are not too explicitly spelled out, for "to write such things endangered the boys life."85

Lucy Mack Smith, taking advantage of her reputation as a "Mother in Israel," also announced that she had received revelations backing the claims of the Smith family. On June 28, 1845, William Clayton recorded, "A new revelation has come to light from mother Smith, corrected and altered by William Smith so as to suit his wishes by representing him as the legal successor of Joseph in the presidency." Apostle George A. Smith—who opposed his cousin William in this matter—recorded in his journal that Mother Smith's vision taught that "her son, William Smith, was Patriarch and President over the whole Church and that President Young and Brother Kimball were black-hearted, &c., &c." George A.
and John Smith tried to dissuade William from his antagonistic course, but he refused to discuss the question of his mother’s visions. "He spoke," George A. Smith recorded, "very hard against Brother Brigham and said he had the right, by birth, to lead the Church and that all he wanted was his rights and he would have them at all events." In essence, on the basis of the visions, William claimed that he was already president of the church.86

On Monday, June 30th, Brigham Young and a large contingent of the leading elders called on Lucy Mack Smith. The subject of conversation was her purported vision of the previous week, which depicted William Smith as president over the patriarchs to guide and council the church. Perhaps sensing danger in her position, the prophet’s mother refused them permission to copy the record of the vision, claiming it was imperfectly recorded and intended only for the eyes of her family. William Smith did not attend the meeting, but instead sent a letter, complaining that he had sought peaceful relations with Brigham Young, but would not pursue such a policy at the price of surrendering his rights. Lucy Mack Smith proved an uncertain supporter for William. She was elderly, her finances were precarious, her health was poor, and her position was anything but secure. Only one of her sons remained alive. She had lived through trying scenes. To break openly with the Twelve would leave her terribly vulnerable. Furthermore, she would forfeit the opportunity to play the role of "Mother in Israel," which she dearly loved.87

Brigham Young was willing to honor the Smith family, so long as his right to preside over the church was not challenged. He made every effort to enlist the favor of Lucy Smith and the rest of the clan, and, in this, he was partially successful. On July 9th, John L. Smith, a cousin of Young Joseph, was married to Augusta B. Cleaveland. The occasion provided the opportunity to hold a great
feast at the Mansion House, at which the Smiths were honored guests. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, John Taylor, N. K. Whitney, and George Miller waited upon the tables. Seven Smith widows were present, and about fifty members of the family. Lucy Smith was in all her glory, addressing the gathering "in a feeling and pathetic manner." Only William Smith and a few of his friends skulked while the others partook of the festive spirit.88

In a letter to Jesse C. Little, August 20, 1845, William stated some of his dissatisfaction with Nauvoo: the threat of invasion made the place unsafe, it was filled with poor people, he found it difficult to make much money giving patriarchal blessings there, and the environment was oppressive. His greatest dissatisfaction lay in the refusal of Brigham Young and the rest of the Twelve to acknowledge what he conceived was the proper place of the Smith family in the church, complaining of "a severe influence working against me and the Smith family." He then gave a succinct statement of his notions regarding the succession:

Emma is well and also little Joseph his fathers successor although some people would fain make us believe that the Twelve are to be the perpetual heads of this church to the exclusion of the Smith family, but every one who has read the book of Doctrine and Covenants must be aware that Priesthood authority is hereditary and descends from Father to son and therefore Josephs oldest son will take his place when he arrives to the age of a maturity. The twelve are however the Presidents for the time being but when Josephs successor comes they take their former place. I merely make these remarks lest c false impression might get abroad concerning this matter.89

While Patriarch William Smith's position within the hierarchy deteriorated, Brigham Young and Lucy Mack Smith developed a symbiotic modus vivendi. She demanded concessions from the church, such as a lot, a house, and a carriage, which Brigham Young promised to provide out of church funds, with the tacit understanding that she would produce no more such "revelations."90

On Sunday, August 17th, William preached from the stand, on what he
called the first chapter of the "Epistle of Saint William," or the "Gospel according to Saint William." Here he boldly proclaimed his belief in the doctrine of plurality of wives—to the disgust of many of his listeners—and implied that the Twelve were clandestinely practicing what he, William, was brave enough to teach openly. Such teaching by William Smith, Samuel Brannan, and George J. Adams already had caused the church much difficulty in the east. Such preaching was intolerable. The apostles flatly rejected William's request to go on another tour of the east, and he soon left Nauvoo, openly feuding with the Twelve.

After a short stay with his old friend and ally, G. J. Adams, at Augusta, Iowa Territory, he headed south to St. Louis, which he made his base of operations for some months. His mood was one of high dudgeon. Brigham Young, he furred, was a tyrant and usurper.92

On October 6, 1845, a general conference was held in the partially completed Nauvoo Temple. During the votes to sustain the general authorities, William Smith was unanimously rejected as both an apostle and as patriarch. At this same conference, on October 8th, Lucy Mack Smith addressed the Saints, giving her testimony and expressing a desire to go west with the Saints. Delighted at this sign of support, Brigham Young asked all the Saints whether they considered Lucy Smith a "mother in Israel," to which the multitude shouted, "Yes." Brigham Young publicly promised the prophet's mother that she would be given financial assistance, and intimated that William would be welcomed back, if only he would be cooperative. But William was bent on war, not compromise. His incendiary written remarks about the Twelve led to his excommunication, on October 19, 1845.93

Thomas Sharp, inveterate Mormon-hater and publisher of the Warsaw Signal, watched all these developments with glee, reporting every new hint of
dissension in Nauvoo. In October, when William Smith wrote a lengthy indictment of the Twelve, Sharp was overjoyed to publish it in the October 29th number of the Signal.

Entitled, "A Proclamation," this denunciatory piece charged the Twelve with moral corruption, accused Brigham Young of usurpation and tyranny, complained of the treatment of the Smith family, made intimations of Brigham Young's complicity in the murder of Irvine Hodge, related in grisly detail how Brigham's police had threatened his life, and attacked the spiritual wife doctrine. The tenor of William's invective was such that any hope of healing the breach must have been dim indeed. Nevertheless, Apostle Orson Hyde made the attempt, only to be rebuffed via William's open letter in the Warsaw Signal, dated November 12, 1845, filled with loud and long complaints that his rights had been abused, denying that the Twelve held the Keys to govern the church, condemning the wickedness afoot in Nauvoo, and scaring all prospects of reconciliation.94

William was disappointed not to receive support from those Smiths who remained in Nauvoo, although Wilkins J. Salisbury, husband of William's sister Katharine, favored William's claims. He felt that he had been cut off for advancing the claims of the family, and the family failed to support him. Particularly galling was the attitude of Emma Smith. In a letter dated "St. Louis the 21st 1845" (of October, November, or December) William wrote Emma that he was disappointed at her refusal to support his cause:

Judge my surprise Emma when you now refuse to help me to reform the Church after the many times I have talked with you on this subject and asked what I should do to save my fathers familey and all my friends and the answer was for me to come out and proclame against the spiritual wife doctrin the usurpation of the 12 &c &c[.] now Emma I have don it and all hell is in rage and evrey lie that can be set on foot is on hand, and will you believe them, did I not tell you this would be the case . . . .

Apparently William Smith's brother-in-law, Jedediah M. Grant, had carried word
back to Nauvoo that William had engaged in an illicit affair in St. Louis. Emma Smith was in no mood to countenance such behavior. William wrote in pleading tones, recounting his various places of residence in the city, and fairly begging for her to trust him. "I am," he assured her, "strongly opposed to that damnable doctrin &c and I mean just what I say . . . ." He concluded that he would gladly live "under your Protection or Eye," if it were safe for him to remain in Nauvoo, but as it was not, he was "determined never to speak to a woman," until he could see the Smith family standard raised in majesty and glory. If Emma, who stood to benefit by his policy, was willing to abandon him, "why thats all," he indignantly signed off. William's indignation was wasted on Emma. She had witnessed too much of spiritual wifery to lend her support to William Smith, who denounced polygamy out of one side of his mouth and endorsed it out of the other.

After some attempts (during the winter) at organizing a rival church in St. Louis and Cincinnati, William Smith joined forces with another pretender to the slain prophet's office in the spring of 1846. This was James J. Strang, with headquarters in Voree, Wisconsin. The activities of J. J. Strang and William Smith were to shape the future of Joseph Smith III in ways neither he nor his mother could imagine at this time.

**Preparations for Departure**

Following the fall conference, in which William Smith was excommunicated, the energies of the Saints were directed toward preparations for departure to the west. To bring a halt to hostilities, Brigham Young had promised that the Saints would leave Nauvoo "so soon as grass would grow and water run" the following spring. To remove such a large body of people was no small undertaking. Nauvoo's population was over ten thousand people, and there were several thousand more Saints in Hancock County, outside the city.
It was estimated that a family of five adults would require one good wagon, three yokes of oxen, two or more cows, one thousand pounds of flour, a bushel of beans, one hundred pounds of sugar, one musket or rifle—with ammunition—for each man, twenty-five pounds of salt, a tent and furniture for each two families, farming tools, clothing and bedding not to exceed five hundred pounds, sundry tools, cooking utensils, and other items. Each wagon was not to be loaded beyond one ton (exclusive of passengers). Additionally, each company would need a certain number of horses, equipment for crossing rivers, fishing gear, dried food, and seasoning.96

The Saints were divided into companies, under captains. By November, every company had established one or more wagon shops. Through the winter of 1845-46, the Saints worked feverishly at preparations for the impending exodus. From dawn to nightfall, and into the night, the blacksmiths worked. The whole city seemed like a wagon-making factory. Provisions, cattle, carriages, seeds, farming implements, and all else which was thought necessary for beginning life anew in a distant land were gathered.

Further adding to the beehive-like atmosphere were the efforts to complete the Temple. This required great physical and financial sacrifice, but the Saints believed that the Lord had commanded them to complete the sacred structure and to perform their ordinances before they left. Only one story had been completed at the prophet's death, but now the beautiful white sandstone edifice, standing on the highest ground in the city, towered over its surroundings. It was visible for miles, and represented a stunning architectural accomplishment on the American frontier.

The interior was still incomplete, but enough progress had been made that on December 10, 1845, the administration of temple ordinances began. The
ordinances continued day and night, while workman continued their more mundane tasks of plastering, laying floorboard, and installing pulpits and seats.

Open only to full tithe payers, the ordinances included covenants and blessings, washing and anointing with consecrated oil, marriages and the "sealing" of family members for eternity and ceremonies of adoption (no longer performed) in which men and their families were sealed to a particular leader of the church as their own children. More than five thousand men and women went through the ceremonies in great urgency.

Various members of the Smith family worked actively in the Temple, but Emma Smith was conspicuous by her absence.

Efforts were made to sell the city, as a whole, but without success. Maps and accounts of western explorations were studied. Then pressure from outside the city caused the leaders to depart before the end of winter. Brigham Young feared that if he waited until spring to depart, officers with writs for his arrest would enter the city. Furthermore, there were rumors that the Mormons did not really intend to leave and, therefore, the Anti-Mormons reasoned, it would be necessary to drive them out. An early departure would put such rumors to rest.

Brigham Young made one last attempt to persuade Emma Smith to join the departing Saints, sending Newel K. Whitney and Benjamin F. Johnson to make the appeal. Emma refused, as did her mother-in-law, Lucy Mack Smith.

Several incidents connected with the exodus impressed themselves upon Young Joseph's mind. Brigham Young, George A. Smith, and Newel K. Whitney made gifts to the prophet's son, before the exodus. Brigham sent word that he wished to leave Joseph "something to remember him by," and when the lad called at his house, handed him a small, single-shot, duelling pistol, with unguarded hammer and trigger. Twice Joseph nearly wounded himself with the weapon, before his mother took it away from him. Hearing that Brigham Young had given Young Joseph a gift, George A. Smith felt he should do the same, and handed the
lad a large bowie knife, or "Arkansas toothpick," as they were then called. Emma Smith was disgusted with the dangerous gift and heartily encouraged her son to trade it for something more useful: a rolling pin. Bishop Whitney made a different sort of gift, viz., a handsome writing desk. While some speculated that Brigham Young harbored hopes that the boy would shoot himself with the pistol, Joseph considered that the gun and the knife simply reflected the spirit of the times. He was impressed with Bishop Whitney's gift, however, and ever considered that the bishop had aimed to teach him that "the pen is mightier than the sword," by this gift which contrasted so with the previous two.99

Another incident left a bitter taste in his mouth. At the time of the exodus, money was scarce. Emma Smith was hard pressed financially. She put up a fine cloth cloak for sale, thinking it would serve someone well in the wintery trek. Heber C. Kimball sent her a note, asking the price of the cloak and requesting that it be sent to him for inspection. The cloak and a note stating the price, fifteen dollars, were sent via messenger to Elder Kimball, but neither cloak nor money was returned. Upon investigation, it was discovered that Kimball had crossed the river into Iowa. Seven decades later, Joseph Smith III still recalled what followed with bitterness:

She [Emma Smith] was in distress and trouble, and hardly knew what to do. Finally a messenger ... went across the river to try to locate Mr. Kimball and ask him for the payment for the cloak, taking it for granted that having taken the garment with him he wanted to retain it.

Instead of bringing back the money the messenger returned with the cloak, and a surly word from Mr. Kimball to the effect he would think Sister Emma could afford to give him that one garment.

Mother was in no condition, either monetarily or mentally, to bestow charity of that sort upon Elder Kimball, for in our close circumstances we were obliged to use every penny, and we were aware of nothing he had ever done to deserve at our hands that which would require further sacrifice and economy.100

The winter had been extremely mild, and it was feared that the Mississippi might soon be open to steamboat traffic, and that federal officers might suddenly
appear with warrants for the arrest of the church's leaders. Rather than take the risk of delay, the Twelve decided to move forward their timetable for departure.

The Exodus

On February 4, 1846, the first group of church authorities and their families—including polygamous wives—crossed the river on skiffs and flatboats. Soon the work of ferrying the Saints across the river was going on day and night. Those who crossed formed a camp beside the river. On Sunday, February 15th, Brigham Young crossed the river. The entire body then traveled inland nine miles to a location beside Sugar Creek, Lee County, Iowa, to form their first "Camp of Israel." There were to be fifteen of these stopping places—each styled a "Camp of Israel"—established across southern Iowa during the Mormon trek of 1846.101

The mild weather did not continue. Late in the month, a severe snowstorm struck. This enabled some of the departing Saints to cross the Mississippi on foot, but for those without adequate shelter, it caused intense suffering.

The population of Nauvoo was dwindling. By the middle of May, an estimated 12,000 Mormons had crossed the Mississippi. Meanwhile, in the city, work continued on the temple, which was simultaneously dedicated and abandoned in April. Over 5,000 Saints had received endowments in the Nauvoo Temple, and Brigham Young had promised that temples would be built in the west, for those who had not received the sacred ordinances.102

Much property had been sold at sacrificial prices to incoming "New Citizens," looking for a bargain. The temple itself had been offered for sale, but no buyer or renter could be found. The magnificent edifice—which had cost so much—was simply being abandoned. While Emma Smith faced financial uncertainty, on paper she possessed considerable holdings of land. She also owned a fine hotel, which enjoyed revived business as spring weather arrived and the
number of New Citizens grew. To the departing Saints, "Sister Emma" did not seem to be sharing in the sacrifices. She had a roof over her head, while they shivered in tents:

When the exodus west began, everyone was forced to sell fine homes and beautiful farms for a pittance in order to outfit a wagon. It was easy for those crossing the river to look back at the expansive Mansion House, the Homestead, the red brick store, and the foundations of the Nauvoo House, which Emma was not abandoning, and make their private judgements about her generosity. Brigham anxiously looked at her holdings in terms of the cash equity the church so desperately needed.103

Another Crisis in the Beleaguered City

Less than a thousand Mormons remained in Nauvoo. These included those charged with supervising the church's business affairs, as well as the poor, the infirm, and the elderly. Also, there were those who refused to follow Brigham Young for one reason or another, such as Enima Smith and her family. Their ranks were augmented by the New Citizens. These were a mixed group, but the better element included merchants, doctors, and lawyers, seeking economic opportunity in the wake of the exodus. Among these were two who were to play prominent roles in the later life of Joseph Smith III: L. C. Bidamon, a businessman from Canton, Illinois, and George Edmunds, a lawyer of New England ancestry. For the moment, optimistic hopes were entertained about the city's future. The city's new paper, the Hancock Eagle, actively promoted Nauvoo as a city of opportunity and filled its pages with optimistic accounts of the availability of housing, the formation of a new civic government, the start of schools, and even the encouraging intelligence that the earlier municipal shortage of grog shops and tobacconists was being supplied. The editor enthusiastically reported on the influx of newcomers:

Not a boat arrives from either above or below, that does not land a greater or less number of persons at this city. Some are visitors only,
but many come amongst us with the intention of making Nauvoo their permanent place of residence. The present week has added to our former assortment four or five new merchants, about half a dozen doctors, three or four lawyers, two dentists, and perhaps two or three hundred citizens and laborers.

He also observed, "We have yet room for 10,000." 104

The Anti-Mormons were anxious over the fact that there were still Mormons in Nauvoo. Their continued presence might invite a mass return at some future date. More immediately, there were sufficient numbers of Mormons to hold the balance of power in the August elections. An invasion of the city by "Regulators" seemed imminent, but a compromise was reached whereby the Mormons agreed not to vote in the elections, and the crisis was averted for the moment.

The summer’s crisis discouraged further immigration to Nauvoo. In June, shopkeepers and residents had boxed up their possessions, preparatory to a quick getaway if an invasion had taken place. A visitor in July described the city as desolate, melancholy, and virtually deserted. Significantly, he found that Mormons within the city were now subject to persecution. One complained to him: ". . . my little children cannot go into the streets without being pelted with stones, and my daughters cannot go to the well after a pail of water without being insulted by the young and noble among our persecutors." 105

When Almon W. Babbitt reneged upon the election agreement, and the Mormons voted as a bloc for the Democrats, the Whigs were furious. The situation deteriorated rapidly toward civil war in Hancock County. Writs were sworn out for the arrest of leaders in both the Mormon and Anti-Mormon camps. Posses were raised on both sides. Governor Thomas Ford observed: "Here was writ against writ; constable against constable; law against law, and posse against posse." 106
Last ditch negotiations by the governor's agent, Mason Brayman, led to an agreement that the Mormons would evacuate the city within two months and immediately surrender their arms.\textsuperscript{107} Joseph Smith III was present when the authorities came to the Old Homestead, and his mother delivered up the only semblance of arms they owned, an old Queen Ann musket and a short, machette-like sword, which were never returned.\textsuperscript{108} All this proved futile, however, because the Anti-Mormon mob rejected the treaty's terms, by a small majority. Many of the minority now withdrew, and leadership of the motley "posse" passed to one Thomas S. Brockman, whom the governor described as a dishonest, violently prejudiced Campbellite preacher, who was "a large, awkward, uncouth, ignorant semi-barbarian, ambitious of office and bent upon acquiring notoriety."\textsuperscript{109} After last-ditch negotiations failed, it became apparent to all that the issue would be resolved by armed conflict.

On the morning of September 10th, the mob approached the city. The volunteers in Nauvoo manned their defenses. Brockman's force numbered about eight hundred well-armed men and included a battery of six-pounders. The city's defenders were outnumbered and poorly armed. For two days the opposing forces faced each other and exchanged fire occasionally. Then, on September 12th, the battle for the city commenced. From extreme range, the two sides exchanged fire, with only a handful of casualties on either side, until, finally, Brockman's forces had exhausted their ammunition. H. H. Bancroft dryly observed that "the expense of ammunition in proportion to casualties" was "greater than has yet been recorded in modern warfare." One resident of Hancock County described the scene in a letter the next day:

A state of war does actually exist between a mob commanded by Col. Brockman of Brown Co. & our county sachems, and the citizens of Nauvoo. . . . They had a battle yesterday . . . lasting about two hours,
the result of which I do not fully know. Men were killed & wounded on both sides. It is said (& I presume it may be true) that the mob shot away 180 cannon balls and demolished or battered down several brick houses near the Temple . . . . The anti shot away all their cannon ball yesterday & are now waiting the receipt of more from Quincy in the mean time skirmishes occasionally take place . . . .

Flight to Fulton City

The situation was perilous. It was obvious that the New Citizens and the remaining Mormons could not hold off the mob for long. Dr. John M. Bernhisel and other friends, including William Marks, urged Emma to leave the city, for safety's sake, at least temporarily. Marks had already left the city and had settled at Fulton City, Whiteside County, Illinois. To this small haven, some one hundred-and-thirty to one hundred-and-forty miles up the Mississippi from Nauvoo, she decided to remove. Since spring, she had been renting the Mansion to Dr. Abram Van Tuyl, a New Citizen from New York. She now arranged for him to continue renting the hotel during her absence.

Emma Smith gathered together some of her household goods, and booked passage on the steamboat Uncle Toby, on September 12th, the day the fighting commenced. Other refugees also piled on board. Among these were a small band of friends, who had decided to accompany the Smiths. They were: the five members of the Wesley Knight family, the four members of the Lorin Walker family, Angeline and Nancy Carter, and William C. Clapp. The captain took the Uncle Toby across the river to the safety of Montrose, Iowa, for the evening. The next morning, as the steamboat plied its way north upon the "Father of Waters," the group of refugees watched Nauvoo fade from sight. They had left none too soon. The city fell to the invaders shortly thereafter.

Fall of Nauvoo

After the mob was resupplied, the firing began again. A vast quantity of
ammunition was expended, an estimated 700-900 cannon balls and "an infinite number" of bullets. Despite the paucity of casualties, the odds were hopelessly against the defenders, and public sentiment was such that they could expect no relief. A negotiating committee secured an agreement that the Mormons would evacuate the city and that Brockman's forces could enter Nauvoo on September 17th.\textsuperscript{113} On the night of September 16th, many of the remaining Mormons began a desperate exodus from the city, leaving most of their possessions behind. Emma Smith had chosen wisely to depart when she did.

Brockman's forces and a horde of curiosity-seekers entered the city the next day. Brockman set himself up as a self-constituted tribunal, deciding the fate of the remaining Mormons, who were hunted up and dragged before him. Most were given no more than an hour or two to leave Nauvoo. New Citizens also began to be expelled. "Some of them were ducked in the river," recalled Governor Ford, "being in one or two instances actually baptized in the name of the leaders of the mob . . . ." Some pillaging occurred, but houses and buildings were generally left unmolested.\textsuperscript{114}

The Mormon refugees were unprepared for the expulsion, and many suffered terribly, exposed on the Iowa shore. Deaths were frequent. Finally public sentiment turned against the mob, and Governor Ford was able to bring a militia force into Nauvoo and restore order. These troops remained until the onset of cold weather, in December, insuring that there would be no more depredations. Ironically, one of the Anti-Mormon rogues whom the governor found opposing his policy in Nauvoo was Abram Van Tuyll. Ford described Van Tuyll as "an old, wornout, broken-down democratic New York politician." Van Tuyll and other Anti-Mormon activists were kept in line by orders to shoot or hang those who opposed martial law in the city.\textsuperscript{115}
CHAPTER III

AFTER THE EXODUS: 1846-1853

Emma Smith, her children, and the other twelve Mormon refugees disembarked from the Uncle Toby at Fulton City, September 18, 1846. Near the edge of town, a quarter of a mile from the river, she found a cottage owned by a doctor, which she rented. The two young women soon found work and married. William Clapp returned, after a time, to Nauvoo. This left approximately fifteen people in the small home. Some more of the household goods were hauled in, overland, having been packed by longtime household helper, Servilla Durfee. They settled in for the winter. It was cold, and the quarters were cramped, but the children, including Young Joseph, did not mind. As children are wont to do, they quickly made new friends among their peers at Fulton City. The older children immediately began attending school. Young Joseph enjoyed attending parties and other social functions involving the young people of the town. He already was learning to live in the midst of Gentiles and to find friends among them. This ability served him well throughout the rest of his life.¹

The Smith family now was scattered to the four winds. Part of the family, including soon-to-be Patriarch John Smith, Apostle George A. Smith, and Hyrum Smith's widow, Mary Fielding Smith, had joined the westward trek. Others had refused to acknowledge the leadership of Brigham Young. But even in this Emma Smith stood alone, both geographically and theologically, because she refused to follow the lead of William Smith. By the time Emma joined the evacuation from

95
Nauvoo, William Smith had forged an alliance between a substantial part of the Smith family and James J. Strang.

James J. Strang, Prophetic Claimant

James J. Strang was a thirty-one year old elder who had been baptized only four months before the prophet's death. Fired with a vision of personal glory, this relative unknown stepped forth with the claim that he was Joseph Smith's rightful successor as president of the church. Remarkably, he emerged (in the short run) as the most successful rival to Brigham Young's leadership of the Saints. One reason for his success lay in the very extravagance of his claims. He claimed no role as caretaker. He advanced no legalistic arguments about lines of succession or chains of command. He did not claim—as did Brigham Young initially—simply to be carrying out the prophet's legacy. Strang claimed more than presidency over the church. He boldly claimed to be a prophet, seer, and revelator. In proof of his calling, he said that an angel had appeared to him, around the time of Joseph Smith's death, and had ordained him the prophet's successor. To bolster his claim, he laid in evidence a forged letter of appointment, dated June 18, 1844, supposedly written by Joseph Smith, designating him his successor. To believing Latter Day Saints, Strang's story had a certain inherent appeal. His story of angelic commissioning resembled that of Joseph Smith. His story of visions and divine revelations likewise was what the Saints expected from the leader of their church. In 1845, another link in the chain of similarities to the late prophet was added, when Strang engineered the discovery of some ersatz "ancient records" enscribed on brass plates, to which he was supposedly directed by an angel. Strang proceeded to "translate" the plates, which were found to contain a prophecy of Joseph Smith's successor: "The forerunner men shall kill, but a mighty prophet there shall dwell. I will be his strength, and he shall bring forth
thy record. Record my words and bury it in the hill of Promise."³ By 1845, Strang was beginning to attract a good number of followers among American Saints who lived some distance from Nauvoo, particularly in the vicinity of his own residence, Voree, Wisconsin.⁴

Initially an unknown among the Saints, Strang actively sought to attract to his banner those who possessed recognizable names. Among the prominent dissidents who enlisted under his banner (with their former offices) were John C. Bennett (member of the first presidency), John E. Page (apostle), William E. McLellin (apostle), George Miller (bishop), William Marks (president of the Nauvoo Stake and High Council), George J. Adams (seventy), and William Smith (patriarch and apostle). With William Smith came other members of the Smith family.

Besides his prophetic claims and the support of prominent Saints, Strang had several other attractions. He denounced polygamy (initially). He offered an alternative gathering place, Voree, Wisconsin, which did not involve a long trek through the wilderness.⁵ He vigorously denounced some perceived abuses of the Twelve, such as suppressing freedom of expression, personal use of church resources, sexual misconduct, and the use of ungodly means to build up the church.⁶

Strang's platform was one which might have appealed to Emma Smith on several of these counts. He was anxious to gain her favor and support. On February 22, 1846, he made overtures to her in a letter. In it he expressed sadness at the sentiments expressed in the __New York Sun__ letter—taking it to be genuine—and expressed the notion that her faith had been shaken by the "many evil deeds done by those who usurp authority in the Church." He offered to help her should she desire assistance. If he should ever move to Nauvoo, he assured her, things would be different than under the Twelve. In conclusion, he stated:
Now sister I do not know your intentions, nor feel disposed to be inquisitive in your affairs; but if you intend to remain in Nauvoo, you cannot well imagine how much I should rejoice in your full and hearty cooperation in my efforts for the regulation and salvation of the city. Will you not write me, and communicate your ideas on this subject. I beg to assure that in this matter I have only the good of my fellow creatures at heart, and from what I have seen and heard of you I am led to believe that from your influence and inclination you would be able to accomplish much.  Don't fail to write me. And accept herewith the assurance of my highest considerations[.]

Whatever Emma Smith may have thought of the pretender's claims, it was dangerous to espouse his cause in Nauvoo. The previous month, the Twelve had issued a lengthy letter in condemnation of his claims, and a Strangite elder had been run out of Nauvoo. There is no record of Emma Smith responding favorably to Strang's overtures.

Alliance of William Smith and James J. Strang. During the fall and winter of 1845, William Smith attempted to forge a rival church, but enjoyed only marginal success. He conducted conferences in St. Louis and Cincinnati, which condemned the Twelve for a variety of offenses and upheld William Smith as rightful patriarch in Hyrum Smith's place. Significantly, both of William's conferences passed resolutions concurring with the sentiments expressed in the "High Council" conducted by George J. Adams, at Augusta, Iowa, March 10, 1845, which acknowledged:

... Joseph Smith, the son of Joseph Smith, the deceased Prophet, Seer and Revelator to the Church, also first Presidency of the High Priesthood, and successor of his father, holding the keys of this dispensation, with power and authority from his father, according to Book of D. & C.; also, Emma Smith, wife of Joseph Smith, martyred Prophet, to stand in her place as Counsellor in the Church, appointed her by her husband, should she claim it[.]

When the Twelve departed Nauvoo, William returned, in March 1846. He attempted to raise a following and to secure the church property by virtue of being "the real church." He was somewhat more successful in extorting some
concessions in real estate for his mother and sisters from the church's trustees. Knowing that he could secure no more property without making peace with the Twelve, William then forged an alliance with Strang. In exchange for supporting Strang, William was to be recognized as patriarch. He also hoped to secure financial assistance for his mother and sisters.\textsuperscript{10}

In the July 1846 number of the Strangite paper, the \textit{Voree Herald}, William Smith's acknowledgment of Strang's claims was published. William stated that he had discussed Strang's claims with Emma Smith in Nauvoo, and tried to put the best possible face upon her unwillingness to acknowledge Strang. Emma, he stated, recalled that Strang and the prophet had communicated via letter, that her son, Joseph III, once had a dream about the church removing to the north country, and that Joseph Smith, Jr. once said that Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball would lead the church to hell if they became its leaders. William added his own recollection, that at the last meeting of the Twelve in council, Joseph Smith had never appointed them to succeed him. The letter closed with his prestigious endorsement of Strang, with that of his mother and three sisters:

\begin{quote}
This is to certify that the Smith family do believe in the appointment of J. J. Strang.
\begin{itemize}
  \item WILLIAM SMITH, Patriarch
  \item LUCY SMITH, Mother in Israel.
  \item ARTHUR MILLIKEN.
  \item NANCY [sic] MILLIKEN.
  \item W. J. SALISBURY.
  \item CATHERINE SALISBURY.
  \item SOPHRONIA McLERIE.\textsuperscript{11}
\end{itemize}
\end{quote}

At some time before the fall of Nauvoo to the mob, Lucy Mack Smith sold her property and removed to Knoxville, Illinois, about fifty miles north-east of Nauvoo. She took with her the Egyptian papyri, from which Joseph Smith had translated the Book of Abraham, and the Egyptian mummies, one of whom was believed to be the pharaoh of the exodus. Her daughters Sophronia and Lucy also
moved there with her, together with their families.\textsuperscript{12} Her daughter Katharine Salisbury was in Churchville, Missouri, where Willkins J. Salisbury was desperately ill, and the family destitute.\textsuperscript{13}

During the winter, William Smith joined his mother and sisters in Knoxville, promising Strang that they would move to Voree in the spring, when the weather permitted and the roads were better. His correspondence during this time shows urgent concern that the family receive financial assistance. More ominous notes also appear, such as his attempts to secure a divorce from his second wife, his desire to allay rumors about his involvement in "spiritual wifery," and an uneasiness that Strang was not granting him his full patriarchal dignity.\textsuperscript{14}

By Christmas there were definite signs of impending rupture in the alliance. George J. Adams—one of the strongest advocates of the rights of Young Joseph—and Willi

marks—friend of Emma Smith—had joined forces with Strang, and their influence began to be felt in ways William disliked. John C. Bennett may have had a hand in the matter, as well. The problem was that there were not enough important offices to go around. It was proposed to make William Smith Chief Patriarch of the Church, standing in the place of Joseph Smith, Sr., by virtue of which he was to have a seat in all the councils of the first presidency. It was also proposed to make Young Joseph a counselor and patriarch, in place of his uncle Hyrum Smith. William fretted and fumed that he was not receiving sufficient recognition, that a proliferation of patriarchs would create competition for the available blessing-revenue, and that the patriarchal office did not pass through Joseph Smith, Jr.'s line. Furthermore, he argued, Young Joseph was only a boy, and would not defend his claims, and granting him such recognition would reap no benefits:

Joseph is but a boy and will not defend his— rights whatever they are (if he has any) neither will his mother let him have any thing to do with
mormonism at present neither would she give her name in testimony of
your appointment and the affect will be (most ashuredly) to drive them
further from the Church....15

Nevertheless, James J. Strang was determined to make an attempt to win
over an even more important endorsement from the Smith family than that
represented by William.

Strang's visit to Fulton City. During the winter of 1846-47, James J.
Strang decided to visit Fulton City, the residence of his new ally, William Marks,
and his hoped for allies, Emma Smith and Young Joseph. Upon his arrival in town,
Joseph was introduced to the Voree prophet, and the two conversed briefly.
However, Joseph Smith III did not attend Strang's preaching services in Fulton
City, owing to a severe earache. Besides conducting preaching services, Strang
visited with Emma Smith, no doubt again urging upon her the propriety of
enlisting under his banner. While Strang and Marks visited with his mother, Young
Joseph retired to his room, unwell. There his old dog Major slept beside him,
keeping watch over his young master. Ever since the prophet's death, the faithful
mstiff had attached himself closely to Young Joseph, following him everywhere
and showing the greatest reluctance to let him out of sight. Old Major insisted on
sleeping next to the lad on a pallet. In years to come, after the assassination of
Strang in 1856, some of his now shepherdless flock, searching about for a new
leader, claimed that Strang had "ordained" Joseph Smith III his successor at Fulton
City. This was the only time that the two ever met, and Joseph Smith III strongly
denied that any such ordination took place. To the strained reasonings of those
who conjectured that the ordination took place while Joseph was sleeping, he later
retorted, "I was sure then, as I am now, that no human being could have entered
my room and have laid hands upon me without receiving immediate attention from
that dog, so vigilant was he."16
Emma Smith, as William Smith had noted, would not hear of placing her son in such a position. Strang's mission had been in vain. Henceforth the lad would be raised unconnected with any Latter Day Saint faction.

**Hasty Return to Nauvoo**

During the winter, Emma Smith received letters from Dr. John M. Bernhisel and other friends in Nauvoo, containing word that her renter, Abram Van Tuyl, was building a houseboat and planning to leave Nauvoo in the spring. After the exodus and the "Mormon War" of 1846, the number of transients in Nauvoo had fallen off, and the hotel was not proving profitable for landlord Van Tuyl. The reports to Emma indicated that Van Tuyl intended to strip the Mansion House of its furnishings and make off down the Mississippi for Texas.17 Here Emma Smith showed her determined character. She decided to surprise her dishonest tenant before he could carry out his plans. To be sure of success, she could not wait for the Mississippi to clear of ice. Her means of travel, therefore, would have to be overland. The journey would be about 140 miles, over the primitive roads of that day, and in the face of the uncertain Illinois winter. Still, she determined to make the effort. With Lorn Walker driving the black horse Charlie and accompanied by her five children, Emma Smith risked the journey. Encountering mild weather and good roads most of the way, she drove up in front of the Mansion House on February 19, 1847. Van Tuyl was astonished and discomfitted: Soon, she was again mistress of the city's finest hotel, having lost no more than the rent owed by Van Tuyl, some pieces of furniture, and a quantity of chamber linen.18 An advertisement in the *Nauvoo New Citizen*, February 24, 1847, announced, "EMMA SMITH is again in her old residence, the Mansion House."

This episode strongly impressed Young Joseph with admiration for his
mother. In later years, he would reflect upon her courage and resolute determination to hold on to her property in Nauvoo:

It was, under the circumstances, a daring thing for mother to do; but as she expressed it, All that she had was her home; she had no friends greater than her God. She knew no reason why she should not live in her home. She would not stultify her faith and her womanhood by submitting to the rule of Brigham Young. She had been vilified and harassed by those who should have been her friends, because she dared herself to defy oppression and denounce wrong, and to counsel others to do the same thing. Her husband's last counsel to her was to keep her children together; to remain in her home, or somewhere near it, and wait the termination of events. This counsel she thought she ought to heed, and determined to attempt it.19

Life among the New Citizens

Nauvoo had flourished as a religious mecca. But now it had lost its raison d'être. There would be no more throngs of immigrants arriving on the docks. The once great city was now reduced to one among many towns along the Mississippi, only so large and prosperous as local trade and agriculture would support. Though hardly a ghost town, there was a sense of ominous quiet about its once bustling streets. Numerous shops and homes stood vacant. Many of the surrounding farms and orchards began to fall into disrepair. There was a sense of decline and decay about the place.20

The city's population was much reduced by February 1847. Few Mormons remained. The majority of the inhabitants were New Citizens, who had moved into Nauvoo in the wake of the Mormon hegira, attracted by the prospect of snapping up bargains in real estate. Among the New Citizens were entrepreneurs, who thought Nauvoo an excellent location for growth and trade. Others were attracted by the city's beauty and reputation. But, inevitably, Nauvoo attracted a good number of "undesirables." It was a Mississippi River town, and it now took on all the characteristics of a wide open city. In his Memoirs, Joseph Smith III recalled Nauvoo in those days:
From 1846 to as late as 1855 Nauvoo, which once enjoyed a good reputation, was a place of disgrace and disorder. Saloons were many and ran wide open, proprietors and patrons alike being shiftless, thieving, drinking, boisterous, and thoroughly unprofitable citizens. Among the boarders at our hotel could be found men of all classes. Considerable transient traffic moved to and fro up and down the river, and the Mansion drew its share of this sort of public patronage. In the winter season we usually had, in addition to regular boarders, numbers of such patrons whom we termed "river men."21

It was in this environment that Young Joseph grew into manhood. He came into contact with a wide variety of people and learned, of necessity, to coexist with them. Emma Smith viewed saloons, their patrons, and barkeepers with distaste,22 yet Nauvoo now had a substantial number of these. Among her regular boarders were a Mr. Hanna, who owned two saloons, and John Rowe, a bar-keep. Young Joseph learned to see that even such men had good as well as bad qualities.23 Along with this liberal and charitable disposition, another aspect of Joseph's personality developed during these formative years. From his mother he had learned to hate injustice of every sort. Though not a fighter by nature, he was no coward. Even in childhood, he would risk a fight to protect the weaker children from bullies. As a teenager, his sense of justice became more finely honed. Patrons who would take advantage of his widowed mother, by not paying their bills, were viewed with indignation. On at least one occasion he served successfully as her bill-collector from a dishonest boarder. The man was a relatively well-to-do doctor, named Stark, who contemptuously put off the lad's request for payment of fourteen dollars, with the words:

"Well, I cannot pay it. Just tell your mother to go down into that old stocking of hers and get out some of the coin that is rusting away there and use that, if she needs any, and not come bothering me."

Joseph was now grimly determined. He refused to leave the doctor's room, sat in his seat, and out-waited the dishonest physician, who finally capitulated
with disgust, exclaiming:

"I'll see that I never owe your mother anything again."

To this Joseph quickly replied:

"Thank you, sir. We will take good care of that ourselves!"

In the face of injustice, Joseph learned to stand stubbornly for the right. His mother schooled him to temper his tendency toward outbursts of indignation and coolly to face the foe. When he returned with the money collected from Dr. Stark, she quizzed him about his conduct, admonishing him never to show disrespect in such cases, however great the provocation.24

In this environment, Joseph Smith III grew into manhood. Despite limited opportunities for formal schooling, he early acquired the habit of reading and thereby accumulated a store of knowledge far above average for his time and place. He learned to champion the underdog and to befriend and aid foreign emigrants. His personal code was to live honestly, honorably, and uprightly.

He reacted against the values of the idlers, grog-shop denizens, scalawags, and brothel patrons. He held dear the middle-class values of industry, fidelity, and respectability, and in later life became a temperance lecturer.

Living in a socially and religiously mixed environment, he learned to coexist with a wide variety of people, and to count people of all religious persuasions (or even none at all) his friends. His family must have sensed its vulnerability—his father and uncle having been lynched, the city having been invaded by an Anti-Mormon mob, and the very name "Mormon" having become an epithet of opprobrium—as they lived in self-imposed isolation from their former brethren. To people in such circumstances, toleration and liberality are cherished virtues. The contrasting styles of leadership of two cousins—Joseph Smith III and Joseph F. Smith, in their later roles as presidents of rival Latter Day
Saint bodies—was rooted partially in the different environments in which they were reared. Raised amidst the Gentiles, Joseph Smith III was far more liberal and tolerant than was Joseph F. Smith, who was reared in the relatively homogeneous environment of Zion in the Rockies, in which there was no greater sin than apostasy.

**Joseph's Stepfather, Lewis Crum Bidamon**

On December 23, 1847, Emma Smith remarried. Her bridegroom was Lewis Crum Bidamon, two years her junior. Major Bidamon—he came by the title through service in the Illinois militia—had been one of the most prominent among the New Citizens attempting to avert the mob's invasion of Nauvoo the previous year.25

The marriage of the city's most famous resident was the social event of the Christmas season. Sarah M. Kimball wrote of it, from a Mormon viewpoint, to her friend Nancy Marinda Hyde, at Winter Quarters:

> The marriage of Mrs Smith is the all absorbing topic of conversation. She was married last Thursday eve the groom Mr Bidimen is I believe looked upon with universal contempt he was a widower wears a wig has two daughters young ladies, a Mrs Kinney who credits him with one child says he still loves her but married Emy for her property but Mrs Smith manifested the confidence she had in her intended husbend by employing attorneys to execute a marriage contract & cecure to her all the property the ceremony was performed by th[e] Rev Methodist Mr Haney the bride was dressed in plum colored sattin a lace tuck handkerchief gold watch & chain no cap hair plain, we were not honored guests but were told that things passed off verry genteely little David H Smith was verry sick at the time. The eve brought a grand shiverse & the following night a ball was given[.]26

This marriage marked a definite break with the past and established Emma Smith Bidamon's course for years to come. The prophet's widow had married a Gentile, with the ceremony performed by a Methodist preacher, William Haney.27 By this act, she ended all hopes or speculation that she yet might marry one of the leading Utah elders, as had other wives of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. By
marrying a man who had bravely faced the Anti-Mormon mobbers, she served notice that she intended to remain in Nauvoo and that her future lay among the Gentile populace of Hancock County, not among the body of Saints in the west. She declared her independence of Brigham Young's leadership and permanently set her own course. 28

"The Major," as he was familiarly known, was not only a Gentile, but an irreligious one at that. He styled himself a Deist, and loved to declare that his creed was, "I believe in one God who has neither partners nor clerks!" Although he came from a strong Methodist family, Major Bidamon was in no sense a churchman. Emma's marriage to Lewis would shock pious Mormon minds not only for this reason, but for others as well. The Major had been married twice previously, and was once widowed and once divorced. He had fathered an illegitimate child, and later would father another. He was fond of tobacco and alcohol, and was given to swearing. To add insult to injury, the marriage ceremony was performed on December 23rd, the birthday of the prophet. 29

But the Major had many strong qualities which proved attractive to Emma. He was six feet tall, had a fine bearing, dressed well, and was handsome despite his baldness. He was an inventive businessman. His personality was mercurial and passionate. He was personable and made friends easily; his sense of humor was legendary. His disposition was generous and hospitable.

Here was a widow—living in a town now filled with a "river" population, and in a county populated with mobbers who had killed her husband and recently overrun the city. She had five dependent children. A husband, a brave and resolute one, was something to consider seriously, whatever his religion. With her tangled financial affairs, a man with business ability would be a welcome partner. The two of them were without mates, and courtship soon developed into love.
Emma decided to marry, whatever additional antagonism such a move might create among the Latter Day Saints.\textsuperscript{30}

The Major entered Young Joseph's life at a critical juncture. The youth was just past his fifteenth birthday, in the midst of what he later deemed "the formative period of my life." At the end of his life, he reflected, "It is certain that whatever I may have done later, of a character to challenge the attention of men, resulted largely from such experiences, influences, and preparation for service as marked those years [1844-1855]." The Major's entry into the family circle left its impress upon everyone in the family:

He was a man of strong likes and dislikes, passionate, easily moved to anger, but withal ordinarily affable in manner, decidedly hospitable, and generous in disposition. He made friends easily, but, unfortunately for him, lost them quite as easily. His love for intoxicating liquors and his lack of religious convictions were the two most serious drawbacks to the happiness of our home, and tended to affect and color materially the after-events of our lives. While his moral character might not be considered to be of the highest quality he did possess a certain pride of manhood, a deeply-rooted dislike of being in debt or under obligation to anyone, and so far as the ordinary transactions of life are concerned, a desire to deal honorably with his fellow men.

With brief interruptions when it was run by others, Emma and the Major operated the Mansion House hotel. As Nauvoo faded into relative insignificance, the transient traffic proved an undependable source of income, but with many young hands available to tend the family farm, east of town, and gardens in Nauvoo, they never lacked food on the table. L. C. Bidamon proved skillful in supervising these farming and gardening operations.\textsuperscript{31} Joseph later recalled:

Under his care and instruction as a farmer, my brothers and I learned a great deal, for which I am pleased to give him credit both as to his knowledge and system and to their satisfactory results. In our farming concerns our labors were all as one family, and up to the time of my marriage in 1856 I had scarcely anything which I called my own, my whole interest and labor having been cast into the common family affairs. The fact that we were keeping the hotel and that I was the oldest and the one upon whom fell the larger part of the work (next to my stepfather) made our interests one. It had a somewhat disastrous effect upon my brothers and myself when our marriages separated us
from this family relation, for we found, as we entered upon our own individual family responsibilities, that we were nominally indebted to our stepfather for that property to which otherwise we should have had an inherited right. Out of consideration for our mother, however, we accepted things as they were and settled affairs with our stepfather, so far as possible to do so, without incurring family quarrel.32

The Major's entry into the household not only shaped Joseph's financial future, but his character and values, as well. L. C. Bidamon's sociable nature, his ability to win friends easily, and his willingness to open his table to others, were all traits displayed by his stepson in later life. His Whig sympathies later blossomed into Union sentiments, and Joseph Smith III became a staunch, life-long Republican. He was industrious, independent, loathed indebtedness, valued manliness, and had a highly developed sense of humor, all traits shared by Joseph.

But the Major served as a negative example, as well. His Deist creed—"I believe in one God who has neither partners nor clerks"—left no permanent mark on his stepson, nor did his disbelief in the Bible and his professed dislike for all preachers. His swearing, tippling, and tobacco-using habits had no permanent effect in molding Joseph's own practices.33 While Joseph shared with him a certain gallantry toward women, he held his stepfather's extramarital affairs in contempt. The Major's threat to divorce Emma—as a result of a quarrel with Joseph—he regarded as abhorrent, and told the Major as much. The Major's sociable nature failed to distinguish friends from "human sponges," while Joseph Smith III proved a far more astute judge of human nature. The Major easily lost his temper—and his friends—while Joseph was noted for great calmness and patience in the face of extreme provocation. He knew how to forgive his debtors, and as a result his friendships tended to be permanent. Both on a positive and negative level, then, L. C. Bidamon was a significant formative influence upon Joseph Smith III.34
Ongoing Controversy with the Twelve

Emma Smith Bidamon faced continuing legal difficulties of great complexity. Had she seen eye-to-eye with the church's leaders, the problems would have been serious enough, but with a deep rift separating them, dispute fed dispute, and antagonism led to antagonism. By the time of her marriage to Major Bidamon, relations were extremely bitter.

John S. Fullmer, one of the church's trustees in Nauvoo, wrote to Brigham Young on January 27, 1848, concerning Emma. Of her recent marriage, he noted caustically, that "a certain widow" had been given, as the orthodox would say, "in holy matrimony" to one of his Satanic Majesty's high priests, to wit: one Lewis Bidamon." Fullmer then relayed details of the newlyweds' legal and financial doings:

Now they twain being one flesh, concocted a grand scheme by which they could effectually block our wheels and enrich themselves. They hit upon the idea that the Church could hold only ten acres of land, according to a limited construction of one of our state laws, and that consequently, the deed from Emma and Joseph Smith, to Joseph as a "Trustee" was illegal. They have therefore, now jointly conveyed all the lots that were ever in her name which she had not previously conveyed to others. This, you will see at a glance, places the Trustees in the extremest difficulty, as to title, while it destroys the confidence of every one, and prevents those who would have purchased, from doing so. There is, to be sure, a statute of 1845 legalising the sales of Joseph Smith as Trustee in Trust, and consequently also legalizes all his titles from which he did convey; but this act, I should think, does not affect any subsequent conveyances made to the Church. In either case, it requires a judicial decision to restore confidence; during this [interval], business, by way of sales, will be entirely closed.35

Illinois law made it lawful for a trustee of a religious society "to receive by gift, devise or purchase, a quantity of land not exceeding 10 acres . . . ."36 James A. Ralston had pointed this out to Emma in 1844, but only now when relations had reached a point of no return, did she finally play her trump card. There is no evidence that the church's leaders ever had been aware of this ten-acre limitation on ecclesiastical land-holdings.37
The pugnacious Almon W. Babbitt, another of the church's trustees in Nauvoo, also sent word to Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball of Emma's maneuvers, giving some additional details. Emma had made a deed conveying all of the church's land in Nauvoo to her lawyers, with the intention of breaking up the church's claim to the property, on the basis of the state law limiting such holdings. Babbitt glumly concluded that until her claims were tested in court, title to the land would be clouded and further sales would be impossible. "It operates," he wrote, "as a perfect estoppel to the sale of more city property until the matter is tested in the courts of Law."38

Almon W. Babbitt launched a legal counter-offensive. If Emma could reach for the church's financial jugular vein, he would reach for hers. Joseph W. Coolidge, after initially going about his duties as administrator of Joseph Smith's estate in desultory fashion, had done nothing after 1845. Most of the major claims against the estate were still unresolved. Additional creditor's claims had not been received, and further property had not been sold off to settle the claims already received. Finally he left Illinois, with the estate hanging in limbo.39 Now Babbitt successfully petitioned to have John M. Ferris replace Coolidge as administrator of the estate. Ferris assumed his duties on August 8, 1848 and immediately set about his task with vigor. By January 4, 1849, he had filed a lengthy inventory of real property owned by the decedent.40

Emma Smith Bidamon was convinced that Almon Babbitt and Brigham Young were conspiring to defraud her by initiating false claims against the estate. During Coolidge's administration, only one claim of over $1,000 had been entered against the estate, and that had been by Babbitt, acting as attorney for the heirs of Edward Lawrence. Now, four years after Joseph Smith's death, at least nine
new creditors filed claims, most of them for large amounts. Total claims filed under Coolidge had been $4,872.49. Under Ferris, the total quickly ballooned to a grand total of $25,023.45. The most careful study upon this subject speculates that the sudden possibility of additional assets encouraged creditors to step forward at this time. Emma's view was radically different. She was convinced that the lately filed claims had been settled during her husband's lifetime and were only being revived as a means of damaging her.\(^{41}\)

Shortly before or after these legal broadsides began to be exchanged, Emma and Babbitt conversed about the situation.\(^ {42}\) Babbitt had driven up to the Mansion House ostentatiously, in a light open carriage drawn by a team of four, replete with a dandy harness and a pair of bells which jangled as the carriage passed through the streets. Calling upon the prophet's widow, he inquired whether she, with her children, would not follow the church westward and led her to do so. He pointed out the advantages to be realized by such a move: life among friends instead of Anti-Mormons, financial assistance, and the opportunity to worship and rear her children among followers of her husband's religion. Emma flatly refused. It was true that the conditions in which she lived were far from ideal. It was also true that there might be certain financial, social, and religious advantages to life in Utah. But what of the disadvantages? She would be required to submit to the leadership of Brigham Young, and all that his leadership entailed. Furthermore, her children would be raised among advocates and practitioners of polygamy, who might indoctrinate them in the system. She adamantly told Babbitt that she would never go to Utah, "that she could never abide the evil conditions that had been established there nor could she countenance the false doctrines introduced."\(^ {43}\) The discussion turned to argument, and the argument became heated. Finally, either losing his temper, or as a premeditated threat,
Almon W. Babbitt rose from his seat and stated, "Well, if you will not go as requested, it is resolved to make you so poor that you will be glad to go, and I have been appointed to do this." When he had accomplished his mission, she would be glad to come to Deseret for protection, beg pardon of the Twelve, and follow them. Young Joseph, who witnessed the episode between his mother and his former Sunday School teacher, recalled his mother's spirited reply: "Well, sir, it may be possible for you to make me poor, but you will never be able to make me so poor that I will follow Brigham Young to the valleys of the mountains." With this defiant reply ringing in his ears, Almon W. Babbitt retired in anger from the house.44

The breach between the Twelve and Emma had become permanent. Young Joseph was old enough to understand the dispute and definitely considered his mother to be the aggrieved party and Brigham Young the villain. He viewed his mother as courageously standing her ground against injustice:

She did not at that time, nor did she afterward have reason to doubt, that the love the Twelve bore to her and her family was of that character that if they could have compelled her to accept their favors and their protection, at the price of her faith and womanly dignity, they would have done what they dared to do to bring it to pass; and she had reason to know that he who, as their messenger and agent, had dared to threaten her, was fully equal to the task assigned to him—a good man in a good cause, an efficient one in a bad cause. Mother, grand in her independence of thought and character, gravely weighed the situation and dared the issue; and though she died unblest in life or death with the luxuries of competency or wealth, she died herself and her sons untrammeled and uncursed from the tyranny of priestly rule and domination. She was not yet "so poor" that she had "begged pardon," or followed the Twelve, whose rule she believed to be destructive, whose doctrine she believed to be corrupting and false, and whose oppression and tyranny she hated and opposed.45

**Grim Financial Picture**

Emma Smith Bidamon's unwillingness to reach an accommodation with Brigham Young placed her in a precarious position. She faced a bleak financial
situation. She stood an excellent chance of gaining eventual title to much property in an around Nauvoo. But in the meantime, she lacked liquid assets. Claims against her late husband's still unsettled estate were mounting, while the value of the land she claimed was declining. Between creditors, legal costs, and declining land values, she might eventually end up with nothing.46

The Federal Lawsuit

At this point both Almon W. Babbitt's strategy and Emma Smith Bidamon's were rendered moot. On August 19, 1850, U.S. Attorney for Illinois Archibald Williams filed a complaint, United States v. Smith. This suit sought to obtain payment of an old judgment of $4,866.38 against Joseph Smith.47 As a result of the suit, both the church and Emma lost most of their holdings, which were sold to satisfy the debt.

The U.S. government had originally obtained judgment for the debt in 1842, but the matter had been complicated by bankruptcy proceedings and the death of the prophet. Now the court held that all property which Joseph Smith had conveyed to others after the original judgment (June 11, 1842) was subject to a judgment lien. The government's lien took precedence over all subsequent sales, gifts, inheritances, or claims of creditors. The only claim taking priority over the judgment lien was his widow's right to dower. According to the legal formula employed in Illinois, Emma Smith Bidamon was entitled to one-sixth dower interest in the property. The court ruled that Joseph Smith's real property be sold, with five-sixths of the proceeds being used to satisfy the judgment and one-sixth being paid to Emma.48

The church suffered a more serious reversal. All land Joseph Smith held as trustee-in-trust for the church was ruled covered by the judgment lien. Here James A. Ralston's old argument was found to be correct. Since a religious
society was prohibited by state law from holding more than ten acres of land, the extensive church holdings in Joseph Smith's name were ruled to be personal property. As such, one-sixth of the proceeds from the sales of all church properties would be paid to Emma.49

The Role of George Edmunds

The man who helped to rescue this much of Joseph Smith's estate for his family was George Edmunds. Edmunds was a young lawyer of Quaker ancestry, although espousing no particular creed himself. He was an expert in property law and had been in partnership with Almon W. Babbitt for several years, beginning in 1845. Much of his time had been devoted to sales of the church's property. During the winter of 1846-1847 he went east with Babbitt, attending to business while Babbitt spent most of his time preaching.50 The date and causes of his rupture with Babbitt are unknown. In any case, his sense of fair play led him to intervene on behalf of the prophet's widow. He was unwilling to see her left destitute and voluntarily offered her his legal assistance. In Young Joseph's grateful eyes, Edmunds was saying to those who "oppressed" the Smiths: "You shall not do this thing! I will not submit to such an outrage being performed here."51 A bond of affection developed between the two which lasted into old age.

Through George Edmunds' legal skill certain pieces of property were saved for the family. He successfully argued that the properties deeded to Joseph Smith's children were separate from the rest of the estate. Edmunds convinced the court that the 129-acre "Smith Family Farm," on the prairie just east of Nauvoo, was paid for by other members of the church and conveyed directly to the Smith children out of "great and tender regard" for the prophet's family. The farm therefore was held free from the judgment lien. The Cleveland Farm (approximately 200 acres) near Quincy was likewise not subjected to execution on
technical grounds. But forty-six Nauvoo lots which Joseph had conveyed to Emma and the children were sold at auction.

The foreclosure sales were held in 1851. Of the proceeds, Emma Smith Bidamon received $1,809.41 for dower rights and the U.S. government $7,870.23 (the original $4,866.38 plus interest). George Edmunds, representing the Bidamons, bid successfully for four tracts which Joseph Smith had owned personally. Other parcels in Nauvoo were also purchased by Emma and L. C. Bidamon with the proceeds. Those who suffered the greatest losses in the foreclosure sales were the land speculators (who had purchased large tracts from the church trustees) and the creditors of the estate, since there was little left to cover their claims.

Through skillful use of the law and alert bidding at auctions, George Edmunds and the Bidamons had been able to preserve some of the property Emma regarded as rightfully her own. Unfortunately, the holdings had been reduced to a fraction of their former value. But the family would not starve. They owned a hotel, operated a store, raised gardens, farmed, bought and sold lots, and generally made the best of their situation.

Joseph Smith III, Store Clerk

Major Bidamon had managed to purchase a considerable amount of property, in the wake of the Mormon exodus. He had also opened a small dry goods store, in partnership with a Philadelphian, named Hartwell. Soon after his marriage to the widow Smith, he and Hartwell dissolved their partnership. The Major continued to operate the store until the summer of 1848. During this time, Young Joseph clerked in the store, but because the stock was run down and unattractive, sales were slow.

In the face of flagging sales, the Major determined that a change in
strategy was necessary. He proposed to his wife, Emma, that they become partners in the store. He estimated the value of his goods at $1,000 and proposed to his wife that she invest a similar amount of cash, to replenish the stock. Emma agreed, and the newly replenished stock was moved into a new location, the Red Brick Store, which had formerly belonged to the prophet. The Red Brick Store was located on the flat, not far from the Nauvoo Mansion. Joseph Smith III was installed as clerk and manager of the newly outfitted store. The idea was to establish a business for the lad. A room was fixed up for him in the second story, with desk, books, and a bed. There he slept, doubling as the store's night watchman.

Fifteen year-old Joseph's entry into the world of business proved a failure. The population of the city had entered a decline which would not level out for years. The Red Brick Store was not centrally located and suffered accordingly. The town's center of business activity had shifted to the higher ground near the Temple. The Major's idea of breaking into the Mississippi grain trade was unsuccessful, as this important business was controlled by established merchants. The Major's business practices were cavalier and something to which the more orderly mind of Joseph Smith III could not adapt readily. Significantly, the youth found he lacked skill as a salesman. He disliked dickering over prices, making concessions in order to win further business, or coaxing and persuading customers. In general, he found that he had no "clerical palaver." In later years, both he and members of the RLDS Church would lament that he "lacked business sense."

Slowly but surely, the store failed as business venture. The stock of goods ran down, the equity was absorbed, and no profit was realized. One future avenue was closed to Young Joseph. He would not be a businessman. The failure of the store cannot have been a great trauma for the lad, who dreamed of blacksmithing,
not clerking. Life went on for this teen-aged bearer of a famous name.

**Burning of the Temple**

On the evening of October 8, 1848, Joseph Smith III was sleeping upstairs in the Red Brick Store. Suddenly he was aroused by shouts of "Fire!" Arising from his bed to go to the window at the north side of the room, he ran into the wall on the west side. The light from the conflagration was so bright that in his semi-wakened state he had mistaken the reflection on the wall for the window.

The jar completely awakened Joseph. A passerby informed him that Nauvoo's famed Temple was ablaze. Dressing hastily, he ran down to the Mansion House but found that Major Bidamon had already been awakened and gone up to fight the fire. Young Joseph stood guard at the Mansion. In the morning, the Major returned exhausted, covered with ashes, and smelling of smoke. The whole interior of the Temple had been gutted. The Major, although no believer in organized religion, expressed a profound sense of loss.57

Any hope of rebuilding the temple was dashed soon after its burning by a violent storm which blew down parts of the south wall. Its structural integrity weakened, the temple began to fall down, piece by piece. Finally, only the south-west corner remained standing. This was regarded as unsafe, and the city council ordered it razed. The stones from the temple were gradually carried off by residents, for use in other structures, until finally "not one stone was left upon another."

The burning of the Temple was a catastrophe for Nauvoo. At the time of its construction, it was the tallest building in the western United States. A costly edifice, and a religious curiosity to non-Mormons, it was a tourist attraction of the first order. Rumors were rampant as to the causes of the fire. It was believed, generally, that surrounding towns had feared that a soon-to-be-
established school in the Temple would again establish the preeminence of Nauvoo over surrounding communities. In later years, the arsonist, a drunken "river rat" named Joe Agnew, confessed that he had been hired to perform the crime.58

The burning of the temple accelerated Nauvoo's decline. It was no longer a gathering place for the Saints, and a magnificent tourist attraction was gone. Population and property values were in decline. Much of the population was less than civic-minded. And its strategic commercial location was about to be undercut by railroads. In short, Nauvoo had been removed from historical center-stage.

Departure of Major Bidamon for California

In the spring of 1849, L. C. Bidamon was seized with "gold fever" and left Nauvoo for California. He and a partner procured a team and provisions and began the long, hard journey overland for the west.59 But upon arrival in the new-found El Dorado, the Major found that he could only secure work as a common laborer at "the diggin's." Being a skilled workman in wood and iron, he went into business mending axe and pick handles, sharpening tools, mending machinery, and providing such auxiliary services as were needed by the miners. During his stay in California, he managed to accumulate a goodly sum of money in this fashion.60

While the Major was away, Emma rented the hotel to her adopted daughter, Julia, and her new husband, Elisha Dixon, and moved across the street to the Old Homestead. After approximately a year, the young couple left Nauvoo for Galveston, Texas, and Emma resumed management of the Mansion House.61 In a letter to L. C. Bidamon, in which she expressed her anxiety for his well-being, she told him plainly that conditions in Nauvoo were depressed and that running a boarding house was lean business. Both the untrustworthy nature of the city's
population and her continuing illegal difficulties received graphic description:

Now my dear do not think I am complaining, as I do not complain of any thing but the treacherous designing knavery of a pack of cutthroat swindlers as ere is congregated here. I have been trying to save some property but I can assure you that my chance of saving property is just as good as a woman's chance would be, in the fifth story of a burning building in Broad Way N.Y. when you might see her standing in the front window holding her most precious goods in her hands, hesitating whether to throw her goods back into the flames, or throw them into the streets among the thieves. Now you must not be surprised if in such a dilemma I should throw some into the fire and some into the hands of thieves, for it is impossible for me to know and fore know everything, and if in spite of all the combinations of lazy lawyers, and treacherous hypocrites, I do succeed in saving enough soil to raise our corn and potatoes on I do believe that you in the goodness of your generous soul will say that I have not done as bad as I might, for I think there is some in the world that would not have stuck to the turf here as long as I have but you may rest assured that I shall do the best I can.

Both her fears of and antipathy toward the authorities in Salt Lake City were plainly evident in this letter. She related that Almon W. Babbitt had visited her, and informed her that Bidamon had no right to marry her, and that she had no right to marry the Major. "All that I can find that they have against you is they think that you occupy a situation here that you have no business to." She expressed gratitude that he had not gone to California via Great Salt Lake, cautioned him that their correspondence might be intercepted and examined by hostile eyes, and warned him about the future:

I want you should be particularly cautious of those Mormons for I believe they intend that I shall not enjoy anything without trial. Perhaps you do not need any caution from me. You might have seen enough to convince you that their intentions are any thing but good, yet I must say again keep a good wash towards them. it may seem strange and ungrateful to you that they should even wish you harmed, and so it is, but I can tell you they are capable of as infamous ingratitude as any other beings[.].62

After over a year's absence, Major Bidamon returned home to Nauvoo.63 He had accumulated about $1,000 in California, but upon arrival at the Mansion House he had but $800 in worthless Missouri banknotes and some hard-earned experience to show for his efforts. On the return trip, the Major had fallen in
with a swindler who made off with all his hard earned money.

An Overture from the West

Joseph was now sixteen years old. At such an age, it would not be uncommon for a lad to begin to make his way in the world. With his growing maturity in view, his second cousin, Apostle George A. Smith, wrote him a letter from Winter Quarters. It read:

Kanesville, Pottawattamie County, Iowa.
March 13, 1849.

Cousin Joseph: It is with pleasure I take the present opportunity of addressing you a few lines. Myself and family are at present in good health, as also the rest of our friends in this country. The last news I had from my father's family was through Mr. Egan, who left the Salt Lake City the 13th of October last. They were all well, and much pleased with the country. They had raised a sufficient crop to supply their wants until another harvest, and had considerable grain to spare. The widows and family of your uncle Hyram Smith, were in good health. Also cousin Samuel was well. We have had a very severe winter here; about four feet of snow has fallen during the winter. The weather has been very cold. But the snow is now fast disappearing before the sun; the creeks are overflowing their banks and sweeping away bridges, which makes it difficult to get about the country just at present.

It is my present calculation to move, with my family, to the Mountains this summer. I should be happy if you could find it convenient to accompany me. One great work accomplished by your father was the building up of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. About five thousand of that body are already congregated in the Mountains, who would be much pleased to see you in their midst. Consult your mother on this subject, and do as wisdom shall direct. But if you should conclude to make the journey, I should be much pleased to enjoy your company, as will many of your friends in this region who are going on. As soon as fifty wagons are ready and organised they will start with the first grass. Companies will continue to leave from the first of May until the first of July. I expect to start about the middle of June. Please remember me to your mother and brothers. Your Aunt Agnes is living in this place. Herself and family are in good health. Please rem[em]ber me to your Grandmother and her family. I should be very happy to receive a letter from you, and if I were not struggling with poverty and many difficulties I would visit you before leaving for the west. If you cannot go on to the valley with me, I should be very much pleased to receive a visit from you, at this place, if you can make it convenient, before the time of my starting.

With sentiments of friendship,
I remain your's affectionately

L. O. L. Geo. A. Smith
This was evidently a personal appeal from the avuncular G. A. Smith to Joseph Smith III. There was nothing of an official character about it. No doubt that branch of the Smith family which went west with Brigham Young would have been delighted if the prophet's son had chosen to emigrate to Utah. George A. apparently entertained hopes that when Joseph was old enough to decide for himself, he would choose to carry on his father's work.

Such was not to be the case. Throughout his life, Joseph Smith III entertained genuine affection for most of his Utah cousins, but religiously he was poles apart from them.

There was no Latter Day Saint preaching in Hancock County. Emma Smith Bidamon evidently made no effort to indoctrinate her children in the distinctive beliefs of the Saints, after 1844. There is evidence that Emma at one time contemplated uniting with the fledgling Methodist work in Nauvoo. Her children were brought up according to a strict moral code. They were free to attend the preaching services of various denominations. But concerning Mormonism, their mother maintained a tight-lipped silence. She had not lost her faith in her husband's prophetic calling, but she had suffered so much as a result of her faith that she left her children free to chart their own course. She explained her reasoning to a visitor in 1856:

I have always avoided talking to my children about having anything to do in the church, for I have suffered so much I have dreaded to have them take any part in it. But I have always believed that if God wanted them to do anything in the church, the same One who called their father would make it known to them, and it was not necessary for me to talk to them about it...  

Visitors

Even after the destruction of the Temple, Nauvoo still attracted a certain number of tourists. Mormon missionaries going to and from Utah were likely to
visit the Mansion House, as were curious Gentiles. It was only natural that such visitors should ask questions. While the Bidamons were happy for patronage at their hotel, the questions must have touched a raw nerve deep within Emma's soul. Different visitors caught her in different moods, but every record of such conversations reflects an underlying alienation from the church in Utah. For example, Jonathan C. Wright visited Nauvoo in February 1848. He wrote:

Afterwards I called to see Madam Emma. She received me very coolly; she says she don't pity them that suffer there; they might have known better, for she told them better and they knew she never told them a lie in her life. She says the first thing that Brigham teaches his followers is to lie well, etc, etc.68

She was glad to welcome her old friend, Dr. John M. Bernhisel, but the doctor wrote that "she did not make a single inquiry in relation to the Valley, the Church, or any of its members." This was in sharp contrast to Lucy Mack Smith, who retained an active interest in the church.69

An English convert, passing through Nauvoo on her way to Utah in 1853, found Lucy Smith bearing a testimony to the Latter Day work and giving "a mother's blessing" to pilgrims. Emma, on the other hand, "seemed to have shut her eyes to the light & knowledge she once possessed, and how great is the darkness that now encloses her--she seems to be absorbed in the past, and to take no cognizance of passing events or people..."70

To these Mormon visitors, Emma's silence seemed like indifference or even apostasy. But for her it was a policy born of deep emotional wounds, as well as a necessity if she were to succeed in shielding her children from the perceived evils of Utah Mormonism.

Freethinking Phase

Given the freedom by his mother to set his own religious course, Joseph Smith III explored a variety of options. For a time, during his teen-aged year, he
drifted toward becoming a free-thinker. How greatly Major Bidamon influenced him in this direction is difficult to say, but it is clear that Young Joseph's skeptical tendencies were those of an intelligent, questioning youth. The Major's professed disbelief in religion, on the other hand, smacked of pragmatism; a profession of religion would require reformation, deprive him of many cherished pleasures, and generally inconvenience him. Shortly after the Major came into the household, Young Joseph took up reading law, and his associations with local members of the bar--many of whom were "profane men"--may have influenced his religious views.

Joseph was frequently in attendance at the Methodist services in Nauvoo. He also interested himself in various reform movements of the day, particularly the temperance movement. The local temperance association met in the Methodist Church, and one day, while returning from such a meeting, he fell into conversation with the Reverend Richard Haney, the presiding elder of the Methodist conference in that area. Elder Haney suggested that the youth should profess religion. Joseph later recalled the course of the conversation:

"You are a well meaning young man, you have these moral reforms at heart, why not unite with us and take part in the church work as well as the temperance meetings? You have the cause at heart, why not unite with us?"

I said, "Mr. Haney, I would prefer not to tell you."

He insisted upon the answer. I was but a boy. Finally I told him that the principle reason was I could not believe the doctrine that he taught.

"Oh, tell us what peculiar doctrine it is, and perhaps this difficulty may be removed."

I told him plainly that I did not believe in the hell fire that he taught.

To Young Joseph, the doctrine was unreasonable and inconsistent with the loving character of God. He could not accept the damnation of infants or of heathen who had never heard the Gospel. Neither could he accept the notion that probation ended at death. He could not accept the orthodoxy of the Methodists or Presbyterians with whom he came in contact. For a time he "took upon himself
the idea of running a free lance against everything that came along, especially if it
took the guise of a claim to religious teaching . . . ."

During these years his reading included a variety of liberal thinkers. He
subscribed to the Phrenological Journal and acquainted himself with proponents of
phrenology such as Combe, Hall, and O. S. Fowler. He familiarized himself with
the writings of Thomas Paine. He was a subscriber to various "advanced journals"
of the day. But the same habits of thought which led him to question the
orthodoxy of his day also prevented him from embracing infidelity.

The incident which permanently dissuaded him from atheism occurred
during his reading. He was reading a story set in Arabia, involving a Bedouin and
a European traveler. The European daily observed the Muslim saying his prayers.
Finally he asked the Arab why he bothered, informing him that there was no God.
It was early morning, and the follower of Islam looked up, swept forth his hand,
and declared, "That sky, this earth," stamping his foot, "they never came by
chance." Young Joseph found the argument compelling. There must be, he
concluded, a first cause and a designer of all creation.

But this conclusion led to further questions. If there was a God, what was
one's religious duty? The hell of orthodoxy seemed unreasonable. What then of
universalism? While orthodoxy seemed too narrow, this seemed too broad.
Eventually Joseph rejected this alternative as well. He was too imbued with the
notion of justice to accept it:

... my every day experience brought me into contact with men that
were not worth saving, and it was throwing away the clemency of God to
save them, and put them side by side with them that had all their life
time conserved that which was good among their fellow men. For him to
take the humanitarian; for him to take the lover of his race; for him to
take the man of good deeds, or the woman of good deeds, of just and
pure life, and put that individual side by side in the realms of glory with
them that were covered with crime and infamy, that had sought to
defraud their fellow men, or that had imbued their hands with the blood
of their fellows, I could not do it, and I would not do it.
Joseph looked for a via media between orthodoxy and universalism. Perhaps his childhood religious training was having some influence on his thinking. Ultimately he was to find the synthesis he sought in Latter Day Saint doctrine. But for the meantime, as he approached adulthood, he embarked on a quest for answers to his religious questions. That quest soon led him to investigate Spiritualism, a craze which swept America by storm in the 1850s.

Investigation of Spiritualism

The Fox Sisters "discovered" the secret of the "Rochester-rappings" in 1848. Two years later, publicity surrounding their appearances in New York created widespread interest in Spiritualism. A Spiritualistic tidal wave swept across America in 1850. Americans in astounding numbers began delving into the subject, including the citizens of Hancock County, Illinois. Seances, spirit-rappings, automatic writing, levitation, spoken messages from the dead, and other Spiritualistic manifestations became the subjects of extensive curiosity. Interest in Spiritualism was not confined to a handful of crackpots. "Scarcely another cultural phenomenon affected as many people or stimulated as much interest as did Spiritualism in the ten years before the Civil War . . . ."72

Spiritualism was a truly popular phenomenon in the 1850s. Informal investigations were carried on among friends and neighbors, throughout the country. Henry Spicer, an Englishman who traveled widely in the United States in 1852, reported that it was "impossible to visit town or city, in any direction, without the matter being brought to one's notice." The investigations appealed to every strata of society and included people of all religious persuasions, even come-outers, infidels, and atheists. In Cincinnati, the editor of the Daily Times estimated that there were 1,200 mediums in the city, following the Fox sisters' visit. James Sargent, a journalist traveling through the west in 1853, wrote, "It
was not by any means unusual on entering a log cabin to find the good, simple people seated round the rude table upon which the raps were being made. 73

James Chadsey and his family, who lived next to the Smith farm, became caught up in Spiritualism. Joseph was working on the family farm, located just east of Nauvoo, when the Spiritualistic craze broke out. In the course of visiting the neighbors, he was introduced to spirit-writing by Mrs. Chadsey. Another neighboring farmer of skeptical bent, named James Richardson, became a convert to Spiritualism. He and Joseph conversed frequently upon the subject and attended Mrs. Chadsey’s seances. Together they read and discussed various Spiritualistic writings. They also attempted to induce various occult manifestations, but with little success. 74

These investigations continued for three years. Joseph read some of the works of Andrew Jackson Davis, including The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind (1847) and much of The Great Harmonia: Being a Philosophical Revelation of the Natural, Spiritual, and Celestial Universe (a multi-volume work, first appearing in 1851). 75 He also read various Spiritualistic newspapers and derived a bit into the works of Emanuel Swedenborg. But Joseph never moved beyond inquisitive dabbling, reading, and observation. Like many other Americans of that day, he gradually concluded that much of the evidence and reasoning in Spiritualistic literature was unconvincing. His appeals to the departed spirits of various deceased relatives failed to bring any response. His suspicions grew, based upon the purely "physical and gross" nature of the spiritual phenomena. These growing doubts were shared by many critics, who "failed to see anything spiritual in the average seance . . . . Too often sitters ordered the heavens down to earth, never encouraging their own souls to soar any higher than the furniture flying around the room." Critics also complained that
the communications were unverifiable, that the manifestations were often fraudulently produced, or that they were of demonic origin. In the midst of these doubts, an incident occurred which brought the reading, the seances, the questions, indeed, the whole Spiritualistic phase of Joseph's life to a close.

The incident took place at a seance in 1852. Mrs. Chadsey received a purported communication from the dead. The "departed" spirit was none other than Joseph's old friend, Oliver B. Huntington, who related that he had died of cholera in Watertown, New York. The communication was most convincing, since the handwriting seemed to resemble Oliver's.

Here was the perfect opportunity to test the validity of the communications. Joseph wrote to the Huntington family. In due time, he received replies, including one from Oliver himself, with assurances that all was well.

The letter from Oliver B. Huntington closed Joseph's investigation of Spiritualism. His friend Richardson reverted to skepticism. Joseph felt disgusted with performances which he now considered unreliable at best and "humbug" at worst.

By 1855 he was counselling others against Spiritualism. In the course of his correspondence with a childhood friend—now an eligible young woman—he set forth his conclusions upon the subject:

I have never had the pleasure of ascertaining what those laws were that enabled us to distinguish Good from Evil spirits the only criterion I have to go by is my own individual perceptions of that which my conscience told me must be either right or wrong. I know of no fixed rules no signs or marks by which to know whether the spirit professing to actuate the medium is either one of those Good spirits that inhabited a fleshy body here and which has now [?] degenerated or one of those restless uneasy evil ones never contented except when leading astray the spirits of others I have seen considerable of medium experience not so much as thousands of others however and I must confess that I cannot see the probability or conceive the reason why when those better spirits who while possessed of a body here with all its passions and affinities for evil
together with its incentives to untruth under certain circumstances—were yet free from that ... [unclear] and scorned the idea of an untruth should after all the shackling influences of the body were left behind stoop to tell a discriminating mortal spirit an indirect or direct falsehood neither do I admit it. I know that Evil spirits abound here on earth and they cannot entirely lose their all of evil upon first entering the spirit world yet I doubt not but they lose that desire to mislead others which seemed to actuate them here and I feel that it is not a part of the divine plan to all such spirits to communicate with mortals and I can scarcely see how we can have real tangible intercourse with departed spirits I do not doubt their existence I feel that it must be so yet I fear we are cheating ourselves when we think that we are conversing with them—in regard to Clairvoyants I do not know I never saw one I can say nothing of them I have said thus much not with any intention of endeavoring to weaken your belief in regard to the matter but in order that you might not be led to believe that all what I wrote before was the whole of my belief.78

**Farming**

By 1850, Joseph Smith III had grown into a stockily-built young man. He had inherited his father's exceptional physical strength but not his height. In that year and the subsequent one, Joseph got his first taste of farming on the Smith Family Farm. His physical endurance proved a welcome asset at harvest time. In 1852 it was decided not to lease the farm any longer, and the family undertook to work it. Joseph Smith III and his brothers performed the labor, and Major Bidamon directed operations. Joseph relished the physical labor and seemed to have a special understanding of farm animals. In later years he always recalled his years spent in farming with pleasure.79

**Social Development**

These were also important years for Joseph Smith III's social development. He had grown to love social functions during his sojourn in Fulton City. Now, Major Bidamon acted as a genial, popular host, and the Mansion House became the central gathering-place for social events of Nauvoo's younger set. The young folk would gather there for apple-parings, corn-huskings, taffy-pulls, various "bees,"
and parties. Joseph naturally became a leader among the young people and later recalled:

There was a good spirit of comradeship among all the young people there, and the group included Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Lutherans, as well as those of no religious affiliations. All of these mingled freely in the social activities of the place without friction arising from denominational proclivities. I was a constant attendant at church services, usually the Methodist and Presbyterians, though occasionally attending Catholic services...80

The spirit of mutual toleration which he imbibed in these years never left him, and it served him well after he became president of the Reorganized Church.

There was still the unsettled question of Joseph's future vocation. His career as a storekeeper had been short-lived. He had assisted around the family hotel and family farm, but his ultimate course was still unsettled. In 1853 he seized an opportunity to engage in railroad building.

**Railroad Contractor**

Nauvoo occupied a strategic geographical location, as did her civic rival, Warsaw. Warsaw lay at the southern end of the Des Moines Rapids, and Nauvoo the northern end. Navigation between the two cities was limited by a vessel's displacement, the fluctuating depth of the river, and navigational hazards. Warsaw formed the northern terminus of trade on the lower Mississippi, and Nauvoo the southern terminus for the upper trade. Various schemes to link the two cities by railroad were put forward over the years, beginning with the proposed Des Moines Rapids Railroad Company in 1839. After the conclusion of the Mormon troubles, the idea was revived, and a charter was granted to the Nauvoo and Warsaw Railroad Company by the Illinois legislature, February 24, 1847. This act was amended in 1849 and 1852, and the right-of-way conferred upon a larger proposed line, the Warsaw and Rockford Railroad.81

At the urging of Major Bidamon, Joseph Smith III subcontracted to grade a
half mile of the Warsaw and Rockford Railroad in 1853. This work, during the summer and fall, involved the expenditure of $800. Due to the failure of the original contractors and mismanagement, his returns were meager: one alpaca coat valued at $4.00; an iron crow-bar and a log chain with a combined value of $12.00; and $2.50 cash.82

The railroad between Warsaw and Nauvoo was never built, despite a successful bond election in 1855. Warsaw became a railroad terminus, but Nauvoo was bypassed. With the rapid expansion of rail commerce, the importance of river trade would be eclipsed. In years to come, Nauvoo, once a vital commercial junction on the Mississippi, a religious mecca, and the largest city in Illinois, increasingly faded into commercial insignificance.

Character Formed; Vocation Unsettled

The years 1846-1853 were formative ones for Joseph Smith III. While the great mass of Nauvooans who followed his father's religious teachings evacuated the city, his mother and family remained. In a position of vulnerability, he learned to coexist with those holding other religious views. Nauvoo was now ethnically, socially, and religiously pluralistic. By the time he reached manhood, Joseph Smith III regarded liberality, cooperation, and fair treatment of minorities as prime virtues.

His character was well formed by 1853. By all accounts, he deeply revered his mother. From her he learned to forewarn drinking, profanity, and carousing. She taught him to honor women and avoid sexual impropriety.

He also came to share his mother's distaste for Brigham Young. He witnessed at first hand Almon W. Babbitt's threats to ruin the family financially, and felt that many of their financial misfortunes were a result of a calculated policy on the part of Brigham Young to pressure his mother into subjection. He
had not been privy to his father's secret councils, nor had he observed his mother's anguish over Joseph Smith, Jr.'s practice of plural marriage. Joseph could not share the deeper bases for his mother's enmity with the Twelve, but he saw the practical consequences of the quarrel, and came to share the antipathy.

He acquired social skills which would stand him in good stead for the rest of his life. From his step-father he acquired the graces of sociability and hospitality, while avoiding many of his faults. He became an excellent judge of character, learned to forgive others, and gained mastery over his temper.

Religiously, he received little additional training in the specific tenets of the Latter Day Saints. His mother deliberately maintained silence concerning her husband's church and her children's possible future roles in it. He received a healthy dose of old-fashioned ethical instruction from her, however. As he approached maturity, he attended the services of many different denominations, without affiliating with any of them. He could not accept Protestant orthodoxy of that day, but his youthful skepticism never hardened into infidelity. He read extensively in liberal publications. When the Spiritualistic craze reached Nauvoo, he dabbled in it for several years, only to discard it as untrue. As he approached his majority, his religious formation was incomplete. Fundamental questions remained unanswered.

His future career also remained unsettled. He had tried several professions, but as yet had made no lasting decision about his future course.

He had been through several romantic experiences, but as yet remained unmarried. Here was another unresolved question.

Although he was unaware of it at the time, there was another unanswered question would soon cause him great internal debate. As will be seen, members of various Latter Day Saint factions remembered that his father had designated him
as his successor. Others concluded that passages in the Book of Mormon and 
Doctrine and Covenants taught the principle of lineal succession in the priesthood, 
and, therefore, Joseph Smith, Jr.'s son ultimately should become their prophet.

Joseph Smith III's character basically was formed. But he faced a series of 
conflicts and unanswered vocational questions. On November 6, 1853 he would 
celebrate his twenty-first birthday. The unresolved questions were about to force 
themselves upon his attention.
CHAPTER IV

VOCATIONAL CRISIS: 1853-1860

Joseph Smith III never consciously rejected his father's religion. But during his teen-age years he apparently was not overwrought with religious searching. For reasons of her own, his mother maintained a silence upon such questions. His step-father scoffed at religious profession. The young man and his brothers worked in the hotel, at gardening, and on the family farm. There were the woods and the great "Father of Waters" to explore. Social life was gay around the Mansion. Joseph's interest in young women was awakening. And there was the world of books to explore, besides.

Not only this, but memories of persecution, forced exile, civil disorders, and the murders at Carthage Jail were still fresh. Anti-Mormon sentiment in Hancock County was still potentially explosive. Joseph's cousin, Solomon Salisbury, encountered repeated examples of religious persecution in various parts of the county.¹ Joseph himself was more insulated against such sentiment, living in Nauvoo, but only relatively so. For years, wisdom dictated keeping a low profile concerning the Latter Day faith. There was no opportunity to meet with other Saints for worship services or prayer meetings. To have held such services in Hancock County would have created an uproar.

If Joseph Smith III was not actively practicing his father's religion, others of that faith had not forgotten him. As he approached his majority, a number of Saints grew anxious that he take up his father's work. Various people in Utah
looked for him to join them, and members of several factions entertained similar hopes.

**Developments in the West**

After evacuating Nauvoo in 1846, Brigham Young led the Mormons to "Winter Quarters," in the vicinity of modern-day Council Bluffs, Iowa. The following spring, the first group of pioneers set out for the Rocky Mountains, the main detachment arriving in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake on July 24, 1847. Although the season was late, they immediately planted crops. They also platted a future city, designated the site of a future temple, and chose their "inheritances." Then the leaders returned to Winter Quarters, leaving some of the Pioneers in the valley under the leadership of John Smith, uncle of Joseph Smith, Jr. The trek across Iowa, the stay at Winter Quarters, the hegira to the mountains, and the planting of Zion in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake were filled with hardship and heroism.

Back at Winter Quarters, Brigham Young suggested to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles the advisibility of forming a separate First Presidency. Heretofore, the Twelve had governed the church as a quorum. There had been no claim to succeed Joseph Smith in his unique office, for, as the *Times and Seasons* had proclaimed, "Let no man presume for a moment that his place will be filled by another; for, remember he stands in his own place, and always will." On August 8, 1844, the assembled Saints had not voted to sustain the Twelve to succeed the prophet, but to govern the church as the next ranking quorum. Nevertheless, Brigham Young soon had become *de facto* president of the church, by virtue of being the president and senior member of the Twelve. Long before the exodus from Nauvoo, he was signing himself "President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." Now Brigham Young suggested formalizing his hitherto *de*
facto presidency over the church.

Brigham Young's suggestion that a separate First Presidency be formed represented a new departure. There was neither precedent nor revelation authorizing the Twelve to appoint a separate First Presidency. This would give Brigham Young and his two counselors administrative authority over the rest of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It took nearly two months of discussions before Brigham Young could overcome the opposition to this proposal. Apostle Orson Pratt led the opposition.

Finally on December 5, 1847, Brigham Young prevailed. After a five hour meeting, the apostles voted unanimously that Young and two other apostles be set aside to comprise a separate First Presidency. Brigham chose as counselors, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards. Subsequently, at a conference on December 27, 1847, the Saints at Winter Quarters sustained the formation of the new First Presidency.2

Brigham Young never claimed to be the successor of Joseph Smith as prophet. He always maintained that he was president of the church by virtue of his position as senior apostle. Although the First Presidency was administratively autonomous, in reality its rule under Brigham Young and all subsequent LDS presidents has been a specialized extension of the rule of the Twelve: an "apostolic presidency." Down to the present day, when an LDS president dies, rule devolves upon the whole Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, which then designates its senior member as the new head of the church.3

In 1848, Brigham Young and many more companies of Saints left Winter Quarters for the basin of the Great Salt Lake. Emigration from "Kanesville" (as Council Bluffs was then known) continued for years, augmented by converts from Europe and the eastern states, who used this as their point of departure for the
difficult western trek.

In Utah, a provisional government, the State of Deseret, was organized. The Mexican War, with the subsequent settlement in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had upset the Mormon plans for an autonomous Zion in the Mountains. Deseret found itself within the boundaries of the United States. Nominal federal authority was asserted with the formation of Utah Territory, with greatly reduced boundaries from those of "Deseret." But U.S. authority was tenuous in the early days, and for years the Mormon theocracy operated as a state within a state.

Plural marriage was practiced openly in Utah. Outside of Utah, Mormon spokesmen denied its existence, despite widespread rumors of its practice, including exposés by disaffected Mormons and reports of federal officials. The most famous denial was made by Apostle John Taylor, in 1850, during a debate with some Protestant clergymen in Boulogne, France. "We are accused here of polygamy," said Taylor, himself long a pluralist, "and actions the most indecorate, obscene, and disgusting, such that none but a corrupt and depraved heart could have contrived. These things are too outrageous to admit of belief." Finally, however, further denials proved futile, and plural marriage was acknowledged.  

On August 29, 1852, Brigham Young published to the world the revelation on celestial marriage, dated July 12, 1843. A special conference was held at the (old) Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. Young nominated Orson Pratt to preach the first public discourse in defense of celestial marriage. Then, that afternoon, while the sacrament was being distributed, Brigham himself delivered a discourse upon the subject. In it he gave some of the history of the revelation:

The original copy of this revelation was burnt up. William Clayton was the man who wrote it from the mouth of the Prophet. In the meantime it was in Bishop Whitney's possession. He wished the privilege to copy it, which Brother Joseph granted. Sister Emma burnt the original. The reason I mention this, is because that the people who did know of the revelation, suppose it is not now in existence. The revelation will be
read to you. The principle spoken upon by Brother Pratt, this morning, we believe in. And I tell you—for I know it—it will sail over and ride triumphantly above all the prejudice and priestcraft of the day; it will be fostered and believed in by the more intelligent portions of the world, as one of the best doctrines ever proclaimed to any people. Your hearts need not beat; you need not think that a mob is coming here to tread upon the sacred liberty which the Constitution of our country guarantees unto us, for it will not be. ... One of the Senators in Congress knew it very well. Did he oppose it? No! But he has been our friend all the day long, especially upon that subject. ... Many others are of the same mind; they are not ignorant of what we are doing in our social capacity. They have cried out, "Proclaim it;" but it would not do a few years ago; everything must come in its time, as there is a time to all things. I am now ready to proclaim it. This revelation has been in my possession many years; and who has known it? I keep a patent lock on my desk, and there does not anything leak out that should not.5

The Millennial Star, the church's official paper in Great Britain, published the text of the revelation in its first number for 1853. Orson Pratt was dispatched to Washington, D.C. to begin publication of The Seer. For two years, Elder Pratt served the difficult role of apologist for plural marriage in the national capital. John Taylor was sent on a similar mission to New York City, where he published The Mormon. Orson Spencer published a pamphlet on the Patriarchal Order of Marriage, and Parley P. Pratt weighed in with an effort entitled, Marriage and Morals in Utah. These apologetic efforts did little to counteract the growing tide of anti-Mormon sentiment, however. For decades sexual license and Mormonism were to be linked in the popular imagination.

**Factional Developments**

At the time of the announcement of the revelation of plural marriage, in 1852, there were thousands of Mormons in Utah. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, a distinctively Mormon society was being created in the wilderness. Temples were planned, endowments were performed, the church's organization was functioning, and a large missionary force was in the field.

Out of the confusion of 1844, a variety of contenders for the fallen
prophet's mantle had emerged. One by one, they proved themselves unable to lead the church. Some of the Saints scattered through the United States followed one factional leader and then another, only to be disappointed again and again. Others withdrew from organized religion. Still others joined one of the Protestant churches. Others continued to hope that some day the church would again be organized in what they viewed as the proper manner.

These rival Latter Day Saint organizations included Sidney Rigdon's Church of Christ. For a brief time it threatened to become a serious rival to the leadership of the Twelve, but it soon began unravelling due to Rigdon's erratic leadership.

James J. Strang's church at its peak of prosperity numbered over three thousand members. However, Strang's secret introduction of polygamy, his coronation as King on July 8, 1850, his settlement on isolated Beaver Island, his political embroglios with neighboring Gentiles, his poor judgment in selecting associates, and the too obviously fraudulent nature of some of his claims circumscribed and eventually doomed his movement. He was mortally wounded by an assassin on June 16, 1856, and steadfastly refused to name a successor, despite the importunities of his followers. Upon his death, only a handful remained true to the Strangite legacy.

Smaller Latter Day Saint factions were lead by Alpheus Cutler, Charles B. Thompson, James C. Brewster, and others. None of these groups, however, proved a lasting threat to Brigham Young's leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 6

Two of these splinter movements were of particular importance to Joseph Smith III's personal history, despite their ephemeral character. In the years prior to 1853, both Lyman Wight's and William Smith's ecclesiastical organizations
promulgated the doctrine of lineal succession in the priesthood and taught their followers to look for the day when "Young Joseph" would assume his father's office. Unbeknownst to Joseph Smith III, seeds were being planted which eventually would lead to his assuming the presidency of a rival to the polygamous church in Utah.

**Lyman Wight's Colony in Texas**

Lyman Wight was the junior member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, at the time of the prophet's death. The "Wild Ram of the Mountains," as he was nicknamed, had been a member of the secret Council of Fifty. Before Joseph Smith's death, the council had discussed various locations to which the church might remove to escape its troubles in Nauvoo. One possible location was Texas—then not a part of the United States—and Wight had been commissioned to establish a colony there. After June 27, 1844, Wight tenaciously insisted that he must fulfill this mission, and that the rest of the Twelve had no right to countermand an order from the late prophet. Eventually he led a hearty band of followers into the wilds of the Texas frontier.7

Wight held to several different theories of succession, during the course of his career. Initially, he supported the Twelve (of which he was a member), until he was asked to depart from his mission to Texas. Then he maintained that the Council of Fifty had the right to reorganize the church. In 1849 and 1850 he entered into an ecclesiastical alliance with William Smith, acknowledging William as interim successor to the prophet. But all these he regarded as interim measures until Joseph Smith III should finally succeed his father, by patrilineal right.8

For some years, the Twelve held out hope that he would weary of his pioneering in Texas and rejoin the Saints in Utah. However, when he published a
pamphlet highly critical of Brigham Young and the Twelve in 1848, he was excommunicated.9

Lyman Wight sincerely believed that Joseph Smith III was the proper successor to his late father. Whether he would have continued to support the claims of Young Joseph, if the young man had claimed the presidency of the church and ordered Wight to leave Texas is another matter. Wight was pursuing a policy of "ecclesiastical solipsism."10 If the authority he theoretically adhered to had, in practice, countermanded his own stubbornly-held plans, it would have been an interesting conflict. Lyman Wight was willing to acknowledge William Smith as interim president of the church, as a member of the Smith family, but always maintained that the right finally belonged to Joseph Smith III.11

Of all the advocates of the "lineal rights" of Joseph Smith III, Lyman Wight's beliefs possessed the deepest theological roots. As already noted, he had witnessed Joseph Smith, Jr.'s blessing of Joseph Smith III in Liberty Jail. But his beliefs went beyond loyalty to a designation by the late prophet. He believed that lineal succession of Joseph's son was based on events in the cosmic past. The Smith family, he held, was called in heaven, before the foundations of the world, to carry out the work of the seventh and last dispensation of God on earth. Each member had been chosen specially to be born into that mortal family, to carry out a particular appointed mission. According to Lyman Wight's understanding, lineal succession was no arbitrary principle. God designated worthy spirits to be born into leading priestly families to carry out essential ministries in this seventh, and last, dispensation.12 On November 5, 1849, when choosing eight apostles, he chose men whom he claimed were "of the pure blood of Joseph, who was sold into Egypt, without the amalgamation of blood; [who] saw and heard the ordination of Br. Joseph before the foundation of the world was laid, and the instructions that
were given him. I should be utterly opposed to any other lineage standing with the
Twelve."13

After the breakup of William Smith's church, Lyman Wight's pioneer colony
continued its life in the wilds of Texas. In his own way, Wight was stubbornly
loyal to the teachings of Joseph Smith. He initiated endowment ceremonies in a
primitive temple, practiced a limited form of polygamy, lived communistically in
a manner reminiscent of earlier Mormon experiments, remained loyal to the
teaching concerning succession he received from the prophet's lips, and stubbornly
insisted on fulfilling a mission given him by Joseph Smith, long after the reasons
for carrying it out had ceased to exist. But when Wight died in 1858, his colony
broke up. Some of his followers joined the Utah Church; some joined the
Reorganized Church; and some joined no church at all.14

Lyman Wight was, in many respects, a lone "voice crying in the
wilderness." He left no disciples. But his legacy helps us to understand the
reasons for the persistent continuation, among Latter Day Saints, of the idea that
one of Joseph Smith's sons must succeed him in the presidency of the church.

William Smith

By the spring of 1847, William Smith and James J. Strang had fallen out
with one another. William had not received the full patriarchal dignity to which
he felt entitled. He had concluded that the luminous spiritual manifestations at
Strang's endowments were fakery produced with oil and phosphorus. Strang, for
his part, was informed of William's continued sexual escapades. William Smith
was placed on trial for adultery in the spring and was excommunicated at the
conference of October 1847. He was not alone. John C. Bennett, William
McLellin, James M. Adams, and John Greenhow—all prominent Strangites—
suffered the same fate at the fall conference.15
In June 1847, William made overtures to Brigham Young and the Twelve, to see if he might be received back into fellowship. Unhappy with the replies, he concluded to go his own way again.16

By the end of 1847, he was denouncing both Strang and Young and attempting to form his own ecclesiastical organization. He designated Palestine, Lee County, Illinois, as a temporary locale to which his followers should gather. Smith loyalists acted as agents in various eastern cities. William established himself as both patriarch and interim president of the church. For several years he enjoyed modest success, until knowledge of his clandestine practice of polygamy became common knowledge among his followers in the early 1850s.

Emma Smith Bidamon and her children had nothing to do with William Smith's activities during this time. There is no record that his three sisters--Sophronia, Lucy, and Katharine--actively supported him after his rupture with Strang. Lucy Mack Smith, his mother, returned from Knoxville to Nauvoo, to spend her declining years in as much peace as possible.17

Despite only marginal support from the rest of the family, William Smith's activities proved important to Joseph Smith III's future, because it was at this time that he began to articulate more clearly the theological basis for his claims: the doctrine of lineal succession in the priesthood. This doctrine survived the wreckage of William Smith's organization and formed one of the foundations upon which the fledgling Reorganized Church was built.

Before joining Strang, William had set forth his lineal claims to leadership in general terms. Now he became much more explicit. In A Revelation Given to William Smith, in 1847, on the Apostacy of the Church and the Pruning of the Vineyard of the Lord, he set forth his basic axioms. The Lord is reported to have told William:
I said unto my servant Joseph that his blessing should remain upon the head of his posterity, and be handed down through the lineage of his father's house according to the flesh; therefore the true Church continueth with this priesthood—that same high-priesthood with which thou art invested and to which thou hast been ordained by my servant Joseph, thy brother, and which thou dost inherit by lineage from thy father Joseph Smith, Jr., who was a descendant of Joseph the son of Jacob who was sold into Egypt; and no power on earth can deprive thee of thy authority and priesthood. . . . and thou shalt be the Prophet, Seer[,] Revelator, and Translator unto my church during the minority of him whom I have appointed from the loins of Joseph thy brother . . . . Now let the elders understand the true order of Heaven, for the kingdom cannot be perfect without a president of the high-priesthood, inherited by lineal descent . . . .

A paper, the Melchizedek and Aaronic Herald, was established in 1849 to advance the claims of William Smith. It was published in Covington, Kentucky, by Isaac Sheen, a British convert who rejected the rule of Brigham Young and polygamy. One of the paper's principal themes was lineal succession in the priesthood. A sample of the publication's tenor may be seen in William Smith's letter to the editor, published in the second number. After commending Isaac Sheen for his correct understanding of the doctrine of lineal priesthood, William continued:

This doctrine of a lineal priesthood was so universally taught and believed by the church, that there was not a single individual member but what looked towards the Smith family (this family being first called) to continue their lead at the head of the church; until the plan was conceived of by either Brigham or his associate council in the spring and summer of 1845, to seize hold on the throne of the presidency, which was done at the same time and maintained at all hazzards, as they said they would do right or wrong. 19

William Smith continued by observing that Brigham Young and the Twelve freely acknowledged his (William's) right to the office of Patriarch to the whole church, as a legal right by descent, "until the work of usurpation commenced," in 1845. William Smith's polemical stance emphasized his rights, as a Smith, and the violation of those rights by Brigham Young and the Twelve. Those factors (other than Brigham Young's desire to "usurp" power) which led to William's falling out
with the Twelve and his eventual excommunication were passed over in silence.

Isaac Sheen began delving into Latter Day Saint scriptures, to discover what justification might be found in them for the doctrine of lineal succession in the priesthood. He found a great deal.

He searched the Book of Mormon "to find what testimony it contains concerning the lineal rights of those who stood at the head of the Nephites, and who held the records and sacred things, and handed them down from age to age." This investigation showed that "(except in three instances) the plates, &c., were handed down from father to son, or from brother to brother, from Nephi to Moroni who hid them in the earth." These holders of the plates, "are frequently called high priests over the church," and at one point are styled "seers holding the interpreters or Urim and Thummim." The inference for Isaac Sheen and his readers would be plain enough: if the prophetic and presidential offices in the Nephite Church descended on a lineal basis, the same should hold true in the Latter Day Church. He noted with particular interest an instance in Nephite history in which the priesthood was handed down from brother to brother, "somewhat analogous to the present circumstances in which the church is placed."

...it appears that Helaman died, and Shiblon his brother took possession of the sacred things, although Helaman had a son named Helaman. Shiblon held them three years and conferred them upon his nephew Helaman and died. It appears probable that his nephew was a minor when his father died.

Again, Latter Day Saints reading Sheen's comments could not fail to see the desired application: Joseph Smith, Jr.'s presiding office eventually should be passed on to his minor son, Joseph III, and in the interim William Smith (brother to the slain prophet) should preside.20

The Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald directed its fire not only against Brighamite "usurpation," but again that of James J. Strang as well. Isaac Sheen
argued that the letter of appointment which Strang claimed to have received from Joseph Smith, Jr., shortly before the prophet's death, was fraudulent. Furthermore, such an appointment, he reasoned, would have violated the law of lineal succession:

That there was to be another appointed to receive revelations for the church we do not deny, but this appointment must be in strict conformity to the law of lineage which belongs to the presidency of the church of God. It is beyond the power of Strang or B. Young or any other imposter to take the birth-right from the tribe of Joseph, or disannul the lineal rights of the Smith family. Strang admits in his forged letter that Joseph is the Shepherd the Stone of Israel. Did not Jacob also predict that the Shepherd the Stone of Israel would come from the tribe of Joseph? We have yet to learn that Strang or any other usurper makes any pretensions to be of the tribe of Joseph much less to inherit any right to the presidency, by lineage.

Was not the birth-right conferred upon that tribe by an unchangeable decree? Was not the blessing conferred upon the tribe of Joseph, that from that tribe should be raised up the Shepherd the Stone of Israel, because that tribe possessed peculiar, lineal rights?

What has the tribe of Joseph done that the birth-right can be taken away from it?

Did not the Prophet Joseph receive his appointment as prophet and seer as a lineal descent from Joseph the son of Jacob? What has the Smith family done that they are to be cast off?

What has Brother William Smith done that his claim as the lineal successor of his brother is rejected?

Is it because he has manfully defended and demonstrated his right to that office? Until young Joseph or some one of the posterity of Joseph the Prophet came forward and claim their right to the presidency it is his indisputable right to stand in that office. No man that knows any thing about lineal rights can for a moment justly oppose this position.

If all the members but one in the Smith family had so awfully transgressed as to forfeit their birth-right, still that would not disinherit the last male member of that family who had not forfeited his birth-right.

The transgression of Esau did not disinherit Jacob. What was the transgression of Esau? Was it for contending for his birth-right? Surely it was for esteeming a mess of pottage more than his birth-right. When Reuben transgressed and lost his birth-right, it could not be taken from the family of Jacob, because this birth-right was an hereditary right that Jacob had inherited from his fathers, therefore it was retained in the family and placed upon the head of Joseph.

It was therefore a lineal right pertaining to the tribe of Joseph that from thence should the Shepherd the Stone of Israel be raised up...

In accordance with this lineal order the following revelation was given to the Prophet Joseph:
"Thus saith the Lord unto you, with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers, for ye are lawful heirs according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God;—therefore your life and the priesthood hath remained and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began."...

Those who are unacquainted with the testimony that the Prophet Joseph was of the tribe of Joseph will find it clearly set forth in the Book of Mormon...

William Smith was in the process of formalizing a merger of his organization with that of Lyman Wight, in the spring of 1850, when his church began to disintegrate. Editor Isaac Sheen withdrew from fellowship with him over the issue of clandestine polygamy. Sheen wrote an angry letter to the editor of the Cincinnati Daily Commercial, explaining that William was "a hypocritical libertine," whose professed hostility to polygamy was a sham. Sheen reported that on April 18, 1850, William had thrown off his mask and claimed the "right to raise up posterity from other men's wives." This was not all:

He said that the Salt Lake Mormons had no authority to do such things, but that the authority belonged to him, and that I might have the same privilege. He offered me his wife on the same terms that he claimed a partnership in other men's wives.

Sheen reacted with indignation, telling him that their fellowship with one another was at an end, and that he considered the proposal "dreadful iniquity." To clinch his argument he concluded by quoting from "Wm. Smith's Fornication Letter," in which William argued that there were two types of marriage, those covenanted according to the law of God and those contracted according to the law of man. Only those marriages sealed according to the authority of divine priesthood were binding, argued William. It was no crime to take another to wife who had been unequally yoked to a man by mere human authority. When this letter became common knowledge among William's followers in Covington, Kentucky, his organization there collapsed.
A similar fate befell his organization in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Although his stake at Covington had collapsed, William Smith continued to enjoy success a while longer at his stake in Palestine, Illinois. He succeeded in converting some Strangite branches in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin to his cause. Part of his appeal was the way his doctrine of "lineal priesthood" cut through all the underbrush of contention among the many contenders to the presidency of the church. One of his followers recalled:

This principle, though pretty clearly shown in the books, had been almost entirely overlooked, or forgotten by the Saints; but when their attention was thus called to it, many at once received it as the solution of the question of "Presidency."23

Part of his appeal lay in his strong denunciation of polygamy.24 But in 1851 word began to spread among the faithful in Illinois and Wisconsin that William Smith and some of his associates believed in the principle of plural marriage and secretly practiced it. Finally, in October 1851, the secret was openly acknowledged to a group of elders. One of them recalled: ". . . at a conference held at Palestine, in October 6th of that year, (1851), they threw off the mask, in a council called to Priests' Lodge, and confessed to the belief and practice of polygamy in the name of the Lord."25 This caused another hemorrhage of followers, just as it had at Covington, Kentucky. William Smith's movement foundered upon the rocks of polygamy and never recovered.

Little is known of William Smith's movements through the rest of the 1850s. During the Civil War he served in the Union Army. Then he settled in Clayton County, Iowa, where he farmed. In 1878, after some intricate negotiations, he joined the Reorganized Church and spent his last years stoutly denouncing polygamy.

But the wreckage of William Smith's organization did not spell the end of his teachings. William Smith's teachings--minus the erratic William Smith--
formed the nucleus for what came to be known as the "New Organization" or, somewhat later, the "Reorganization."

Nucleus of the Reorganization

Jason W. Briggs presided over a branch at Beloit, Wisconsin. Previously a follower of James J. Strang, he had been delighted with William Smith's teachings and had brought the Beloit branch into William's fold. The discovery that the shepherd was a polygamous wolf in sheep's clothing left him in emotional consternation. How could such truth be mixed with such error? How could the manifestation of so many spiritual gifts coexist with immorality? How could such light be mingled with such darkness? Briggs turned to God "in fervent and continued prayer" for answers to his dilemmas. Finally the answer he had sought came to him on November 18, 1851. He experienced a revelation:

... the Spirit of the Lord said unto me, 'Verily, verily, saith the Lord, even Jesus Christ, unto his servant, Jason W. Briggs, concerning the church:—Behold, I have not cast off my people; neither have I changed in regard to Zion.... Wolves have entered into the flock, and who shall deliver them? Where is he that giveth his life for the flock? Behold, I will judge those who call themselves shepherds, and have preyed upon the flock of my pastures. And because you have asked me in faith concerning William Smith, this is the answer of the Lord thy God concerning him. I, the Lord, have permitted him to represent the rightful heir to the presidency of the high priesthood of my Church by reason of the faith and prayers of his father, and his brothers, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, which came up before me in his behalf; and to respect the law of lineage, by which the holy priesthood is transmitted, in all generations, when organized into quorums. And the keys which were taught him by my servant Joseph were of me, that I might prove him therewith. And for this reason have I poured out my Spirit through his ministrations, according to the integrity of those who received them.

But, continued the revelation, William had despised his birthright, transgressed God's laws, and forfeited his rights in the church by running "greedily in the way of adultery." The elders were instructed to go about their business of preaching the gospel, and "in mine own due time will I call upon the seed of Joseph Smith, and will bring one forth, and he shall preside over the high priesthood of my
Church . . ." The elders were instructed to denounce William Smith's so-called "celestial law," which was really the "doctrine of Baalam." Jason W. Briggs' revelation concluded:

And the Spirit said unto me, Write, write, write;--write the revelation and send it unto the Saints at Palestine, and at Voree, and at Waukesha, and to all places where this doctrine is taught as my law;--and whomsoever will humble themselves before me, and ask of me, shall receive of my Spirit a testimony that these words are of me. Even so, Amen.26

All of the branches in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin which formerly acknowledged William Smith's interim presidency over the church threw off his yoke. But they were not so quick to endorse Jason W. Briggs' revelation, for the Doctrine and Covenants prohibited anyone from receiving a revelation for the whole church other than the church's president. This hesitancy eventually was overcome through the argument that since there was no president of the church, it was not illegal for another to receive a revelation.27

By the spring of 1852, enough of the Saints in Illinois and Wisconsin had accepted Briggs' message that a conference was called, which finally met on June 12 and 13, 1852, in Beloit, Wisconsin. On the second day of the conference, a set of resolutions was adopted which formed the foundation of a new church organization. To begin with, the question of ecclesiastical organization was addressed:

Resolved, That this Conference regard the pretentions of Brigham Young, James J. Strang, James Collen Brewster, and William Smith and Joseph Wood's joint claims to the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, as an assumption of power, in violation of the law of God; and consequently we disclaim all connection and fellowship with them.

Resolved, That the successor of Joseph Smith, Junior, as the Presiding High Priest in the Melchisedec Priesthood, must of necessity be of the seed of Joseph Smith, Junior, in fulfillment of the law and promises of God.28

Additional resolutions filled out the ecclesiastical platform of the New
Organization: the church was held to exist wherever six or more Saints were organized into a branch according to the pattern in the Doctrine and Covenants, and the question of whom among the factions had the right to ordain men to offices in the priesthood was deferred by agreeing to recognize "all legal ordinations." This represented an interesting departure in Latter Day Saint history. William Smith's theory of succession was taken up, but applied with more consistency to the prophet's son rather than to his brother. At one stroke, all claimants to the prophetic mantle were excluded from consideration except the seed of the prophet. The vexing Gordian knot of succession was severed. But while this solved one problem, it created another, because no son of the prophet actually occupied the presidency of the New Organization. Could an organization without a presiding high priest claim to be the true church? A prophetless church was an anomaly in Latter Day Saint ecclesiastical polity. The immediate solution was a theory of diffused authority, in some ways analogous to Protestant ecclesiology. Rather than all authority filtering down from the living head of the church, all members of the priesthood could exercise their authority independently when there was no president. Individual Saints could and ought to organize into branches and go about the business of preaching the gospel, despite the temporary vacancy in the presidency.29

The conference also established the doctrinal basis for the church. The "whole law of the Church" was declared to be "contained" in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.30 The Saints attending the Beloit conference did not include any of Joseph Smith's intimate disciples. The doctrinal platform which they erected was built upon the foundation of his published works. The great bulk of Joseph Smith's canonized writings antedated the Nauvoo period. During the Nauvoo period, Joseph Smith depended less and
less upon canonized revelations and increasingly resorted to teaching the "mysteries of the kingdom" orally to a trusted circle of disciples. Many of those esoteric teachings had been incorporated into James J. Strang's and William Smith's organizations, and were the very features against which the Reorganites reacted in disgust, never imagining that they had their source in Joseph Smith, Jr.

Therefore, by establishing the written scriptures of the church as its doctrinal basis, the New Organization, without realizing it, turned its back on Joseph Smith's Nauvoo teachings. Its theology would come to emphasize those themes which had been prevalent during the middle period of Joseph Smith's career, roughly 1833 to 1838.31 This was not a result of a deliberately conceived policy. With no prophet at their head, it was natural to emphasize the written oracles.

The conference appointed a committee, consisting of Elders Jason W. Briggs, Zenas H. Gurley, Sr., and John Harrington, to write a pamphlet setting forth the platform of the New Organization. By the time the next conference met, in October, the committee had prepared a manuscript. The conference approved the manuscript and ordered two thousand copies printed.32 Before it was printed, however, an issue of Orson Pratt's The Seer reached the fledgling New Organization, with word of the conference in Salt Lake City, August 29, 1852. In light of this acknowledgement of polygamy, it was deemed important to append a denunciation of polygamy to the pamphlet.33 This was done, and A Word of Consolation to the Scattered Saints was published early in 1853. It argued that the church in Nauvoo had fallen into wickedness and that God had therefore rejected the church, that the martyrdom of the prophet and patriarch were signs of this rejection, and that the right to preside in the church belonged to the next highest authority after the president. The next highest authority—a counselor to
the president, or the president of the Twelve Apostles—should have stepped in as an interim head of the church, but instead, one grasping aspirant after another had tried to seize power which did not belong to him. Brigham Young's assumption of the presidency was a coup d'état. The Mormon scriptures, it was argued at great length, established the principle of lineal succession in the priesthood, and therefore one of the sons of the prophet should lead the church. All others were usurpers.34

The condemnation of polygamy was unequivocal. "We cannot forego this opportunity to raise our voice against an evil which has well nigh completed the overthrow of the Church—which Sampson like hath lain hold upon the very pillars of society." The systems of Brigham Young, James J. Strang, and William Smith were all attacked. Scriptural arguments were adduced against the practice, with a warning to "deceivers, and deceived together," that transgression would reap the whirlwind of divine judgment.35

A comparison of A Word of Consolation to the Scattered Saints with Isaac Sheen's writings in the Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald demonstrates a direct line of continuity between the two. William Smith's organization collapsed, but his public teachings survived in the Reorganization, except that in the New Organization, the regent William was to be replaced with a crown prince of the royal blood.

There was still the problem of how to organize a hierarchical church, in the absence of the highest members of the hierarchy. This was resolved at a conference in April 1853, amidst great manifestations of spiritual gifts which persuaded the Saints that their actions were approved by God. The offices of the hierarchy were partially filled, including seven Apostles and twenty Seventies. Jason W. Briggs was chosen president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and
president pro tem of the church, in the absence of the prophet's son and heir. This
conference at Zarahemla, Wisconsin can be seen as the founding conference of the
Reorganization. Those present did not consider that they had founded a new
church. They held that the church had become disorganized in 1844, under divine
judgment, and that they were simply reorganizing the priesthood quorums under
divine revelation and approbation. They were careful not to usurp the
prerogatives of the vacant presidency.36

At first the Reorganization's growth was slow. As the 1850s neared their
end, however, the rate of growth increased. Other rivals to the Utah church were
collapsing, and the Reorganization, virtually by default, became the only logical
alternative for Saints who could not accept the leadership and teachings of
Brigham Young:

With James J. Strang's death in 1856, the collapse of Rigdon's movement,
the illness of Alpheus Cutler, Lyman Wight's death in 1858, revolt among
the followers of C. B. Thompson from 1855 on, and disaffections in Utah
as well as anti-Utah Mormon sentiment developing in the United States
the "field was white and ready for harvest."37

There was only one problem. Joseph Smith III displayed no interest in
accepting the office proffered him by the Reorganization. Initial feelers were
rejected by him. A church was built up for seven years, on the platform that a
son of the prophet was its proper leader. All the while Joseph Smith III remained
in isolation and apparent indifference to these developments. Nevertheless the
band of Reorganized Latter Day Saints waited, preached, sent out missionaries,
and prayed.

Religious Crisis

Developments of two different sorts were converging to create a religious
crisis for Joseph Smith III. On one hand, many Saints expected him to take up his
father's work. His relatives in Utah wished that he would join them. Brigham
Young had intimated that he would some day lead that church. Some old Nauvooans remembered that his father said he was to be the president of the church. Other Mormons simply expected this on the basis of others' testimony. Various factions hoped Joseph Smith III would join them. And the Reorganization actually held its presidency vacant, waiting for him to occupy it. As he entered his majority, he could not escape their questions and entreaties. These external forces were contributing factors in a great religious crisis in 1853.

On the other hand, a tension was growing within his own soul: "the great questions of life began pressing upon him for solution, and the platform upon which he would stand and make his mark in the world, questions that every young man or woman must ultimately examine for themselves and determine what course they will pursue, were presented to him."38 He was approaching his majority. What direction would he take in terms of vocation and religion? He had explored a number of religious options and rejected them, including evangelical Protestantism, free-thinking, universalism, and Spiritualism. But what of the baptism of his youth, the faith for which his father died, and the church which paternal blessing foretold he would one day lead? A series of events soon awakened the long dormant question of his relationship to his father's religion.

1. First confrontation over polygamy. There was, as yet, no telegraph linking Utah with the United States. It took time for news to travel from Salt Lake City to the east. It is unknown when Joseph Smith III first learned of the announcement of the revelation on polygamy. Whatever the exact date, he definitely spoke about it with Utah Elder William Walker, when the latter passed through Nauvoo in November 1852, on a missionary journey to the Cape Colony.39

Walker was then thirty-two years old. He was an old friend of the Smith
family. He, his brother Lorin, and his sister Lucy all had lived and worked in the Mansion House during Nauvoo's halcyon days. In addition, Lorin had married Hyrum Smith's daughter, Lavira, and Lucy had been a secret plural wife of Joseph Smith, Jr. William naturally came calling, while passing through Nauvoo, on his way to the east coast.40

During the course of conversation, the topic of polygamy arose. The doctrine was now public knowledge. William Walker upheld the doctrine, while the prophet's son denied it. He later termed this his "first serious disagreement about polygamy."41 No extensive record of this conversation exists, but William Walker told Joseph that the prophet both taught and practiced plural marriage. Joseph emphatically told William that it was a lie, "unqualifiedly a lie."42 One may well imagine William claiming his sister Lucy Walker had married Joseph Smith, Jr., and Joseph Smith III vehemently denying the suggestion.43

Joseph Smith III was now confronted with an unpleasant dilemma, one which would stalk him for the rest of his life. He himself had no first-hand knowledge of plural marriage. He had never conversed with his mother upon the subject, for the topic was extremely distasteful to her.44 He knew, however, that she regarded polygamy as perniciously wicked. His own moral upbringing was such that the thought of plural marriage was obnoxious to him. Yet here was an elder who claimed that the hitherto denied dogma was being practiced in Utah, and that the practice was based upon a revelation received by his father. This clashed with Joseph's cherished memories of his father as a good and decent man. There were only three logical possibilities: (1) The prophet really received the revelation on polygamy, and it was a righteous principle. This would mean that Joseph's own ethical beliefs would require a major readjustment. (2) The prophet really practiced polygamy, but it was a false revelation or a cloak for immorality. This
would mean that Joseph's beliefs about his father would have to undergo substantial and painful change. (3) The prophet never sanctioned polygamy, and the "revelation" was a later invention cunningly attributed to him, to lend authority to a wicked practice. This would mean that Brigham Young and the leaders of the church in Utah were both immoral and deceitful men.

Joseph instinctively adopted the third possibility, the one which required no change in his moral convictions and no change in his view of his father. But what of the assertions of those former Nauvooans older than himself, who claimed personal knowledge of the prophet's teaching and practice of plural marriage? How could their testimony be reconciled with his convictions? Somehow the dilemma must be resolved, but how?

2. Conversation with a Mormon immigrant. In 1853, there was a large immigration to Utah. Many of the immigrants camped at Keokuk, Iowa, twelve miles below Nauvoo on the Mississippi. Naturally enough, some of the immigrants at Keokuk took the opportunity to visit Nauvoo. One of them fell into a long conversation with Young Joseph, now only months away from reaching his majority, respecting Mormonism.

I had talked with many upon the matter; but had never taken the subject into very earnest consideration. This person urged that I was possibly doing a great wrong in allowing the years to pass by unimproved. I stated to him that I was ready to do any work that might fall to my lot, or that I might be called to do. I had no fellowship with the leadership in the Salt Lake church, and could not then give my sanction to things there; my prejudices were against them.45

Here was a further seed of conflict planted in Joseph's mind. He was approaching the time when life-decisions could no longer be deferred. A series of existential tensions begged for resolution. He had learned to coexist among Gentiles, to whom his father's religion was anathema, yet he held his father in reverential memory. Would he continue to avoid his religious birthright? He held the marital
arrangements then practiced in Utah in contempt, but was he thereby rejecting his own father's teachings on the basis of prejudice? He had practical reasons for hating Brigham Young and others among the leading elders in Utah, but was his personal distaste alienating him from the true church into which he was baptized and called to serve? And had not his father blessed him and designated him to assume the presidency of the church? Had not various of the factional leaders declared that theirs was an interim leadership, until such time as "Young Joseph" should mature and assume his proper role? A seed had been planted. Additional events soon caused it to germinate.

3. Conversation with Putnam Yates. Putnam Yates was the son of a prominent Jack Mormon, Christopher E. Yates. He had crossed the plains to California and had visited Salt Lake City and other parts of Utah. From conversations with Mormons, he had concluded that Joseph would be well received if he chose to go to Utah. Young Yates was on good terms with the prophet's son, and the two of them frequently discussed aspects of Mormonism while working together on the Smith farm. These friendly chats also served to awaken Joseph's questions about his connection with the church in Utah.46

4. A severe fever. At the end of the long, hot harvest, Joseph fell ill with a fever, "billious or intermittent fever" in the imprecise Antebellum medical lexicon. In two week's time, he lost thirty-three pounds.47 This sickness was a very dangerous one, and brought him close to death. For weeks afterward, while recuperating, he was too weak to work. There was much time for reflection—serious reflection. The twin questions of vocation and religion bore heavily upon his mind. He had been reading law, under the supervision of a local lawyer named William McLennan. Would he continue and make law his profession? He retained a latent faith in the Mormon gospel, so far as he understood it. Would he ever
have anything to do with Mormonism, and if so, what? 48

5. Spiritual manifestations during recuperation. Internal questioning now combined with a severe illness. Joseph had come face to face with death. Under the circumstances, religion occupied a foremost place in his thoughts. He went through a severe struggle during his recuperation, which he later described:

After the crisis of my sickness had passed; and before getting upon my feet convalescent, I studied in long and painstaking review and thought, what my course of life should be. In this review, the question whether I was not doing violence to my birthright, and losing my opportunity for right choice of life, by not going to Utah and casting my fortunes with the people there, was of frequent and persistent recurrence. I had no means of deciding it within my reach known to me. After this had continued for some time, I remembered that my father had made application to Deity when pressed in a similar strait in his youth; and so I thought I might be directed if I applied to the same source. I had been baptized, was a member of the church, so far as baptism could make me one, and had this additional right to ask for direction. I sought to God as earnestly and devoutly as I could; told him that I was ready to do what might be my duty. If to go west, cast my fortunes with the church there, accept and adopt polygamy, or plural marri[a]ge, as a part of the principles of the church, was a part of my duty I was ready to go. If it was not to be my lot to have any part in the religion my father taught, and duty led elsewhere, I would be content, if it should so be made manifest by him whom I addressed. I asked further, that if Mormonism, the faith of my father, was an error, the Book of Mormon a delusion and a snare; the principles taught by the Church as the Gospel an imposition and false, and it . . . should so be shown me; I would be content; but if the faith was true, the mission of my father authorized of God, and I had anything to do in promulgating it, either soon or late, whenever it was so made manifest I was ready to do as I should be directed. This prayer was answered. I had not asked for any peculiar thing to transpire as a sign, I only asked that whatever the manifestation was, it should be clear, and of such a character that I should not make a mistake and thus jeopardize my salvation and thrown away my life labor. When the answer came, I was charged not to go west; not to unite with the church under Pres Young, and to oppose polygamy, plural, or spiritual wifery. The manifestation was to me clear, so far as the church in the Valleys was concerned. My duty elsewhere was not pointed out until afterward, I was simply to wait. 49

One day, when recovery was assured, Joseph laid down to rest in his room. After awakening, refreshed, with the window open to the south and the fresh breeze sweeping in through the trees and half-closed blinds, he again turned over the constantly recurring questions of religion and vocation.
... the room suddenly expanded and passed away. I saw stretched out before me towns, cities, busy marts, court houses, courts and assemblies of men, all busy and all marked by those characteristics that are found in the world, where men win place and renown. This stayed before my vision till I had noted clearly that choice of preferment here was offered to him who would enter in, but who did so must go into the busy whirl and be submerged by its din, bustle and confusion. In the subtle transition of a dream I was gazing over a wide expanse of country in a prairie land; no mountains were to be seen, but far as the eye could reach, hill and dale, hamlet and village, farm and farm house, pleasant cot and home-like place, everywhere betokening thrift, industry and the pursuits of a happy peace were open to the view. I remarked to him standing by me, but whose presence I had not before noticed, "This must be the country of a happy people." To this he replied, "Which would you prefer, life, success and renown among the busy scenes that you first saw; or a place among these people, without honors or renown? Think of it well, for the choice will be offered to you sooner or later, and you must be prepared to decide. Your decision once made you can not recall it, and must abide the result." 

As suddenly as it had come, the vision was gone. Joseph Smith III sat on his bed, contemplating the idyllic beauty of the afternoon sun's rays shimmering upon the Mississippi, glad to be alive. Thereafter he constantly kept the choice before him, whether at work or at leisure. At length he would resolve the question. Several points were implicit in this vision: (1) Eventually he would have to choose whether or not to pursue worldly success. His legal studies might bring him fortune, perhaps even high political position. But such success would be bought at the cost of a frenetic life amidst the hustle and bustle of urban life. (2) He might secure peace of soul and live among contented rural folk by foregoing worldly ambition. (3) Neither choice involved immigrating to Utah. The agrarian locale was set in a prairie land which contained no mountains.

At the end of 1853, Joseph resolved part of his dilemma, at least for the moment. On the basis of prayer and spiritual manifestations, he felt it was not his duty to go to Utah and unite with the church there. This conclusion was not based upon study. It was reached after an intense period of internal struggle. He was now content to await developments, to see what answers might come to the
rest of his questions, and whether they would come in similar fashion.

Maternal Influence

In confronting his spiritual crisis of 1853, Joseph Smith III did not consult his mother. In later years, when Utah Mormons claimed that Emma Smith Bidamon had "poisoned" his mind against them, he adamantly denied that she had determined his course:

This condition of mind antagonistic to Pres Young, especially to plural marriage, has been charged by him, and others, . . . to the influence of my mother; whose teachings it is alleged were given to me with a view to poison my mind against Pres Young. Whatever sins my mother may have to answer for, the determination of my course religiously will not be among them, if my course be finally found erroneous & wicked. . . . The determination was the result of causes that my mother personally had nothing to do with.53

Despite this denial, his mother's influence, albeit indirect, significantly influenced Joseph's decision. When the Mormon artist Frederick Piercy visited Nauvoo in November 1853, he drew the portraits of Lucy Mack Smith, David Hyrum Smith, and Joseph Smith III. He explored Nauvoo, took sketches of noteworthy scenes, and inquired about the town's history and circumstances. During this time he had an opportunity to form an estimation of the Smiths. He found the whole family had a reputation in the neighborhood for integrity and industry. Of Joseph Smith III he wrote:

He is a young man of a most excellent disposition and considerable intelligence. One prominent trait in his character is his affection for his mother. I particularly noticed that his conduct towards her was always most respectful and attentive.54

Values are conveyed by example as well as by spoken precept. His mother's example spoke louder than a thousand words. She trained him to honor women and to regard deviations from a strict code of sexual ethics with disgust. This deeply rooted training eventually prevailed over any intellectual arguments about the supposed propriety of Mormon polygamy.
Her religious beliefs, largely unspoken, were conveyed to her son also. Like many other scattered Saints, Emma Smith Bidamon retained her faith in Joseph Smith's prophetic mission, but found no immediate ecclesiastical home in which to practice that faith. Her situation was exacerbated by her location, in the midst of Anti-Mormons. Her position was even more anomalous than that of other ecclesiastically homeless Saints, since she was the prophet's widow. Reserved and cautious, she spoke but little of her religious convictions. Prudence, bitterness, and sorrow all combined to keep her silent on matters religious. Only within her own home was she willing to break this silence. In response to the inquiries of her skeptically-minded second husband, Major Bidamon, she was willing to relate various historical details concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and her answers showed that she still believed in the supernatural origin of that book.

With those few whom she felt she could trust, she spoke endearingly of her late husband. With the publication of the revelation on celestial marriage, she now faced increased curiosity about that unwelcome subject. She developed the policy of abruptly terminating such inquiries by bluntly denying that her late husband ever taught or practiced polygamy.

Of Brigham Young, she had nothing good to say. To one friend she said:

I was threatened by Brigham Young because I opposed and denounced his measures and would not go west with them. At that time they did not know where they were going themselves, but he told me that he would yet bring me prostrate to his feet. My house was set on fire several times, and one time wood was piled up at the side of the house and set afire. . . . but I never had any fear that the house would burn down as long as the Inspired Translation of the Bible was in it. I always felt safe when it was in the house, for I knew it could not be destroyed.

If Saints would come to visit her, seeking her advice, she would always counsel against going to Utah. She harbored the hope that a non-polygamous church, under the leadership of someone other than Brigham Young would yet
arise, and while the Brighamites were gathering to the west, she counselled the Saints to look not west (under Brigham Young's rule) or south (where the Saints had been mobbed) but north, as a place of temporary refuge.

Her children received strict moral training. But Emma Smith Bidamon spoke but little to them of the church. Policy and emotion combined in this regard. She once reflected upon her reasons:

I have always avoided talking to my children about having anything to do in the church, for I have suffered so much I have dreaded to have them take any part in it. But I have always believed that if God wanted them to do anything in the church, the same One who called their father would make it known to them, and it was not necessary for me to talk to them about it; but I never had confidence in Brigham Young, and Joseph did not for some time before his death.\(^5\)

By rejecting polygamy and the leadership of Brigham Young, Joseph Smith III followed his mother's teaching and example, whether spoken or unspoken. In his religious and vocational crisis, he did not turn to her for advise, but her training nevertheless shaped his possible responses.

**Overtures**

Having reached his majority, various Saints recalled Joseph Smith III's paternal blessing. While a minor, movements headed by George J. Adams, William Smith, James J. Strang, and Lyman Wight had expressed the hope that he might join them. His Mormon relatives in Utah still hoped that he would join them there and eventually assume some role in the church's leadership. Now that he had passed his twenty-first birthday, the overtures became more serious. The first came from Jason W. Briggs.

**A letter from Jason W. Briggs.** On November 20, 1853, Jason W. Briggs wrote a letter to Joseph, from Beloit, Wisconsin. "Unknown to me by sight," he began, "I am nevertheless moved to address you . . . ." He went on to relate the story of how he had been a Latter Day Saint for over thirteen years and had
sought for the proper principle of succession since the death of Joseph Smith, Jr., and how finally, in the winter of 1850-1851 he felt that he had discovered the answer for which he had been searching, when he became acquainted with William Smith's preaching concerning lineal succession:

... I received [sic] him as a leader by virtue of the law of lineage & yet it was clear that, by that law he never could be the Successor of Joseph his brother. But to obviate this he constantly pleaded the right to stand as the Guardian of the real heir, which he admitted was yourself. But at the same time endeavored to inculcate the idea that he was the Successor of his brother Joseph in the 1st Presidency of the church & in six months after my receiving him he threw off the reserve, which he had maintained on that subject & openly avowed his rights to be, the only legitimate Successor of Joseph... In the mean time some seven or eight Branches of the church had received him numbering several hundred Saints, in this region. Together with this self contradiction -- claiming himself by the law of lineage, what that law plainly gave to another--there was teachings and practices by him which no man of God ever taught or practiced without cursings[.]

This last phrase was a delicate allusion to the discovery of William Smith's clandestine teaching and practice of polygamy. Briggs related how the discovery had been a crushing emotional blow to him, how he had besought God what to do, and how the answer finally had come in the form of a revelation. Among other things, the revelation said that God had permitted William Smith "to represent the rightful heir" to the church's presidency. William's iniquities had caused him to forfeit his calling, and the elders were instructed to go about their business of preaching the gospel until "in mine own due time" the Lord would "call upon the Seed of Joseph Smith" to preside over the church. While waiting for Joseph Smith III to respond to his calling, Briggs related how various Saints in Wisconsin had thrown off fellowship with Strang and William Smith and had begun an embrionic new organization, with the presidency left vacant, of course.56

The letter alluded to the fact that Jason W. Briggs previously had sent Joseph Smith III and Emma Smith Bidamon a copy of A Word of Consolation to the Scattered Saints. Apparently neither Joseph nor his mother responded to
this earlier communication. Likewise, there is no record of Joseph Smith III's having responded to Briggs' letter of November 20, 1853. Outside forces might impel him to consider his relationship with his father's work, but he would not act until he had received internal evidence of his calling.

**Letter from George A. Smith & John L. Smith.** The obscure group of Saints headed by Jason W. Briggs was not alone in wanting the prophet's son to join them. His relatives in Salt Lake City earnestly hoped that he would emigrate there, now that he had reached his majority. On June 24, 1854, George A. and John L. Smith sent word that their father (Patriarch John Smith) and mother had passed away. In the course of relaying this sad news, they informed Joseph that Salt Lake City was growing, that work on the Salt Lake Temple had begun, and that they would be very happy to see him there. They added that they were endeavoring to carry out Joseph Smith, Jr.'s measures, and wished his son to join them:

... the people here are universally endeavoring with all their might with the President at their head, to carry out all the instructions councils & plans given them by your father, & to roll on the work which he commenced, to bear the fulness of the Gospel to all nations kindreds tongues & people & gather the Saints, to Zion. we know he was a true Prophet of God & did reveal the true Priesthood unto the Church. Therefore we say come over & help us, all your fathers friends would be glad to see you in our midst & none more than the Presidency.

If Joseph Smith III ever responded to this unofficial overture from the west, no copy of the letter is known to exist at present. However, his upbringing, personal preference, and spiritual manifestations the previous year all led to a similar conclusion. He would remain in Illinois.

**Legal Studies**

Major Bidamon had long desired that his step-son enter the legal profession. As a teen-ager, Young Joseph had concluded to become a blacksmith, but the Major had other ideas. The law offered a ready avenue of advancement
for young men, both financial and political. As with the ministry and medicire, a
college education was not regarded as essential for Antebellum legal practice.
One could acquire the necessary training via personal study and tutelage under an
older member of the bar. This was the method another young man from Illinois,
Abraham Lincoln, had pursued. Soon after Emma's marriage to the Major, Joseph
began reading law, sometimes under the direction of a local lawyer. Emma Smith
Bidamon acquiesced in this decision, but it is probable that Major Bidamon was
the prime mover.⁵⁸

In January, 1855, Joseph Smith III went to Canton, Illinois, to undertake
more systematic legal study under the direction of William Kellogg.⁵⁹ L. C.
Bidamon previously had resided in Canton and still had family there.
Arrangements now were made for Joseph to board with some of the Major's
relatives, Christian Bidamon (his older brother) and Abel H. White (his brother-in-
law).⁶⁰

Upon leaving home, his mother presented him with a Bible. As she did so,
she said:

My son, I have no charge to you, as to what your religion shall be. I
give you this book with this admonition, Make it the man of your counsel;
live every day as if it were to be the last; and you will have no need to
fear what your future shall be.⁶¹

While at Canton, Joseph secured work as clerk of the city council. He also
augmented his meager funds through part-time work at the post office. William
Kellogg's political influence may have assisted him in securing these positions. He
wrote reassuringly to his mother, shortly thereafter, "I am studying hard as I can,
and will try hard to acquire the mysteries of the law."⁶²

In a playful letter to his brother Alexander, he provided a glimpse of his
daily routine in Canton. He mentions going to the office and making "Old Chitty's
dry bones rattle."⁶³ In the afternoon, following dinner, "I read some helped Mr
Emmons some that is looked on and saw him help himself till time to go to supper which you of course know I would not miss for any thing." The intensity of legal study receives mention: "I am also well except my head and I very much believe that it is swelling at least it ought I put enough into it to make it—from twenty five to forty pages of Chitty per day besides such a supply of bread and meat as serves to make me weight about one hundred and seventy . . . ." His limited finances precluded such extravagances as attending a minstrel show: "... there was a neg[r]o show here night before last but your own dutiful brother was too poor and to[o] careful of his quarters to let them slip for a nigger show. . . ." Diversions which cost nothing, however, were a welcome relief from his daily routine, such as attending an address by Representative Joshua R. Giddings.64

Joseph Smith ill acquired many friends while in Canton.65 Intelligent, interested in the reforms of the day, given to reading, he nevertheless found time for socializing. His sense of humor was already well developed.

This phase of his life came to an end in 1856. Lack of funds made it impossible for him to continue his studies in Canton.66 He returned home to Nauvoo.

At home, he found his grandmother in failing health. Lucy Mack Smith was eighty years old and terribly crippled with arthritis. For some time she had made her residence with her daughter-in-law at the Mansion House. When she died, May 14, 1856, Joseph was at her beside.67

He never attempted to secure admission to the bar. Faced with the question whether to join the bar, he decided not to make the attempt. His reasons were ethical: "... in Hancock County, the practice before the lower courts was so flagrantly dishonest and corrupt that I felt no inclination to put myself into their ranks or be officially called upon to practice in the profession there."68 He
was not done with the law, however. In future years he would put his training to
good use as a justice of the peace. More significantly, his legal training would
color his lifelong habits of thought and action. Both as an ecclesiastical leader
and as a religious apologist he displayed definite tendencies toward a legal mind-
set.

Religious Credo at Mid-Decade

During his stay at Canton, Joseph began corresponding with Emma Knight,
a friend from childhood days. These letters provide an important glimpse into his
religious development at this time. Not only had he discarded his old infatuation
with Spiritualism, but he had passed negative judgment on Salt Lake Mormonism:

    The mormons of Salt Lake are not the mormons of my Father's
faith. They teach doctrines which are bound to carry those believing and
practising them to eventual destruction but my Father never taught or
believed them and so they are well aware but they have taken such
precausions as keep the truth hidden but time will sooner or later do
them Justice[ . ]

Joseph went on to opine that the notoriety of Brighamite doctrines resulted
in skepticism about the whole of Mormonism, but quickly went on to disclaim any
intention of making a Mormon of Emma Knight, observing, "I know not what the
minutia of the doctrine consist of . . . ." What he was certain of, he said, was that
obedience to the ethical norms of the New Testament was the safest religious
course:

    . . . my conscience tells me whoever follows the maxims laid down in the
new Testament and will confarrm to what is there commanded doing
justice to all using charity mercy & Love will stand a much more certain
chance to see the celestial city than those whose professions are loud
and their prayers long and faces longer who think it wickedness for youth
to mix in the pleasant pastimes of the day . . . .

Beyond warning against Brighamite Mormons and long-faced religious
hypocrites, he advised the following when others tried to convert her to one
church or another:
I would just say to you that you examine all doctrines faithfully and carefully weighing well the merits and demerits before you commit yourself to any and after a thorough examination just ask yourself the question if the person who liveth uprightly and honestly before the world having a conscience void of reproach is not a true Christian whether they have joined the tenets of any church or not and you will come to the conclusion that by being truly honest with uprightness of spirit and exercising the humane faculties you or any one else is actually fulfilling the destiny for which you were placed on earth. . . . I would rather see you independently pursuing an honest and consistent path without being trammled by the forms of any sect for in all my experience I have never yet found harmony in any creed . . . . resolve not to accept any thing for granted but examine closely and the errors will invariably disclose themselves[.].

During the summer and fall of 1855, at Canton, Joseph attended the preaching of a Universalist minister named Westfall. Westfall was eloquent. His young auditor considered him "one of the best preachers that I ever heard in my life." He graphically explained "the saving of sinners from the depths of misery by the goodness of God." But however moving this Universalist's sermons might be, Joseph found the position illogical. He remained convinced that divine justice demanded future rewards and punishments based on one's deeds in the flesh.

Here then was Joseph's religious credo: rejection of evil Brighamite accretions to primitive Mormonism; a confessed ignorance of the "minutia" of Latter Day Saint doctrine; belief that true religion must conform to the dictates of conscience and the ethics of the New Testament; distaste for religious hypocrites of all stripes; skepticism about competing dogmatic systems and devotion to open-mindedness; commitment to ethical living as the essence of good religion; and rejection of both hell-fire and universalism.

Romance and Marriage

In the spring of 1856, Joseph became engaged to Emaline Griswold. The couple had been courting for about two years. There was the problem of religion to be canvassed, however, before marriage. Joseph's prospective mother-in-law
was a Methodist, but Emaline was not. The young couple, like many others of their day, attended Methodist worship services and revivals together, but Emaline showed no inclination to join her mother's church.71

The direction of Joseph's religious thinking is plainly discernible in the terms of his proposal to his future wife. He spoke of his uncertainty about his possible religious vocation, and requested assurances that he would be free to pursue such a calling. He vowed, however, that he would never embrace the most notorious feature of Utah Mormonism, polygamy. As he later recalled their conversation,

I ... told her also that at that time I had no special intention of engaging in church work of becoming a minister, but added that it was possible I might do so. I told her plainly that as a child I had been baptized by my father, was a member of the church over which he presided at his death, and—a statement I wished her to distinctly understand and most carefully consider—if at any time I should feel it my duty to take up in an active way the religion of my father and to become its advocate and defender, I must be at perfect liberty to do so. ... I asked her to think over very carefully this whole matter of church affiliation and religious preference, and if she found she could not marry me with the definite understanding that I must be left at liberty to follow my own convictions in such matters, even to the point of becoming active in the religion of my father if so led, I should prefer not to have her consent to marry me.

I made her this solemn promise, however, and assured her that she might rest securely upon it, viz., that I would have nothing to do with either the teaching or the practicing of polygamy or plural marriage, for I regarded the doctrine as utterly false and repulsive.72

After considering the matter for a week, Emaline consented to marry Joseph. But while an understanding concerning religion may have been reached by the couple, the prospect of Emaline marrying the son of the Mormon prophet alarmed various members of the Griswold family. When letters of entreaty failed to dissuade her, Ambrose Griswold, an older brother, journeyed to Nauvoo to make a personal appeal. The marriage was set for October 22, 1856. On the eve of the ceremony, Ambrose persuaded Mrs. Griswold and a sister to leave Nauvoo for a friend's, five miles away. He tried to get Emaline to come along. She refused.
The next morning he returned and made another attempt to frustrate the marriage. Persuasion failing, he turned to threats. Still, Emaline remained true to her affianced who bore that notorious name, Joseph Smith.

When Joseph reached the Griswold home, he found his bride foresaken by all her family. Only a neighbor girl and the local Presbyterian clergyman who performed the ceremony, the Reverend Mathew Waldemeyer, were witnesses to the marriage.

An incident occurred at the end of the ceremony. Joseph's recollection of it offers some clues as to his chivalrous views of marriage. The genial Rev. Waldemeyer pronounced the couple man and wife and leaned forward to kiss the bride. Joseph quickly intervened, saying, "After me, if you please," which seemed to delight the pastor! Reminisced Joseph:

That kiss which I placed upon the lips of my bride upon this occasion was the second I had ever given her, the first being given at her mother's gate as the seal of our troth, on the evening she consented to become my wife. No holier kiss than that first kiss in pledge was ever placed upon woman's lips, nor have I yet forgotten the swelling of my heart in acknowledgement of and tender gratitude for the maiden love of so beautiful and kind-spirited a woman. . . . I have never regretted a single experience of my early married life or the great and adoring love I gave to my first companion.73

Full flushed with the joy of young love, the couple settled on the farm, two-and-one-half miles east of Nauvoo. They soon experienced some of the sorrows of life, but for the moment, life was filled with joy.

**Religious Crisis of 1856**

Joseph Smith III was twenty-three years old. He was a poor, newly-wed farmer, in an out-of-the-way town on the Mississippi. But he bore a famous name, and his father's religious legacy would not leave him to farm in quiet obscurity. Members of various factions remembered his paternal blessing, designating him as eventual successor to the prophetic office. As such, many hoped for him to step
forward and take his "rightful place." But Joseph Smith III was determined not to be forced into a hasty decision.

He was impatient with those who impertuned him to act, while he felt no divine calling, or in conjunction with policies he considered wicked. Earlier in 1856, he had written:

I am beset once in a while by salt Lake mormons asking me in reference to what my opinions are in regard to their welfare and the affairs of the church generally. I have refused to gratify their wishes altogether and have sometimes been almost insulted by the importuning me[.]

The Smiths had barely settled into their farm home, when the question of Mormonism again intruded itself upon Joseph's soul. A sequence of events in quick succession fostered this second religious crisis:

1. Putnam Yates' suggestion. Putnam Yates and Joseph Smith III frequently discussed Mormonism. Yates' favorite idea was that Joseph could assume the leadership of the church in Utah if he emigrated there. Yates speculated that the prophet's son could:

   do a great and an excellent work by going to Utah, and as he put, it, "Taking the lead away from Brigham; breaking up that system of things there," or to "fall in with the style of things there[.]
   become a leader, get rich, marry three or four wives and enjoy yourself." Though not a religious man himself, he thought it might be a duty that I owed the people of Utah. He further thought, that from his experience in Utah, and the expressions he had heard among the people there, that I would be received with open arms and could succeed.

   The question of going to Utah again forced itself upon Joseph, despite his earlier conclusion that polygamy was wrong and that he was not to go to Utah. The earlier decision had been based upon deep-seated values instilled during his upbringing, personal antipathy towards some of the leaders in Utah, and a series of spiritual manifestations during a severe illness. Now rational considerations intruded themselves into his thinking. Was prejudice keeping him from his duty?

   Why not go to Utah? There are the men who were with my father, or a
great many of them. There, a large part of the family; there, also, seem to be the only ones making profession of belief in Mormonism who appear to be doing anything. Does not duty demand that I go there and clear my name and honor of the charge of ingratitude to my father's character? Is not polygamy, against which you object, a correct tenet? Is not your objection one of prejudice only? These and a thousand others of similar import were suggested, and added their weight to the difficulty of the situation.

In the midst of this mental struggle, the scriptural text to which his father had appealed, impressed itself upon his mind: "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God." It seemed perfectly adapted to his situation. Now satisfied that Spiritualism rested upon a foundation of sand, he determined to trust to divine wisdom rather than his own intelligence.

I believed that He who had enabled my father to decide which of all [churches] should receive his attention, could, if he would, enable me to decide whether I should, or should not, have anything to do with Mormonism; and if so, what. I proceeded upon this conclusion.

Joseph continued to ponder the matter. One day, he experienced a vision, which he ever after took to be the definitive answer to the question, "Why not go to Utah?" While mulling over the unanswered question, he suddenly found himself sowing wheat. Putnam Yates and Frederick G. W. Smith were harrowing behind him. As they worked, Yates again asked him, "Why not go to Utah?" Stopping to answer, a rushing noise caught Joseph's attention. He looked upward and saw a bright, luminous, funnel-shaped cloud descending rapidly toward him. Soon the cloud had enveloped him, and he stood within its radiance.

As the cloud rested upon the ground at my feet, the words "Because the light in which you stand is greater than theirs," sounded in my ears clearly and distinctly. Slowly the cloud passed away and the vision closed.

A few days after the vision, Joseph and Putnam Yates had an actual conversation. Yates again urged his friend to go to Utah. Joseph replied that he would not, on the grounds given in the vision.75

Joseph Smith III ever afterwards considered himself divinely instructed not
to join himself to the Utah church, and that the Mormon practice of polygamy was wrong. Ignorance of his father's secret teachings, values instilled by his mother, a determination to redeem his father's name from ignominy hardened by years of ostracism, combined with a series of visionary experiences to mold his lifelong course.

2. Visit of Elders Snow and Smith. Events were now moving rapidly. On November 1, 1856, the newlyweds received visitors from Utah. Apostles George A. Smith and Erastus Snow were on a preaching tour and passed through Nauvoo. This was a social call. Although both men were prominent Utah elders, they were visiting in a personal rather than an official capacity. They brought with them a copy of Frederick Piercy's *Route to Great Salt Lake*, compliments of the author, in gratitude for Joseph's having posed for a picture in the book.

Erastus Snow took the lead in the conversation and asked whether Joseph did not intend to come to Utah. Elder Snow observed that the young man had many friends there who had been friends to his father, and that they expected and desired him to come, feeling that his place was with them. Joseph replied that he might come to visit if his wife were willing, after a railroad was completed and he could come and go without hindrance. The conversation continued:

Erastus Snow: "But we want you to come and stay."

Joseph Smith: "I can not do that . . . so long as such things are taught and practiced there as I believe are taught and practiced."

Snow: "You refer to plurality."

Smith: "Yes, I refer to the doctrine of polygamy as it is called in the states."

Snow: "Why, you believe in the Book of Mormon; do you not?"

Smith: "I believe in the book; but do not believe the construction that you
Utah people put upon it."

The conversation continued for an hour or so. Non-religious subjects were touched upon. The feeler from two of the leading elders in Utah had been rebuffed. For the third time, George A. Smith had tried and failed to persuade his kinsman to join the church in the valleys of the mountains. That half of the Smith family which had emigrated to Utah and that half which had remained behind were travelling along separate spiritual pathways. For years each would entertain hopes that the other would "see the light," but unknown to either, their pathways had parted permanently.

Upon leaving, the two Utah elders concluded that Joseph Smith III had been evasive about his view of the Book of Mormon. They inferred that he lacked solid belief in the book and in his father's divine mission. Joseph Smith III viewed the matter differently. He believed in the Book of Mormon and in his father's prophetic calling, but was unwilling to accept polygamy as consistent with either.

3. Visit of S. H. Gurley and E. C. Briggs. A visit from a relative might be welcome, but religious pressures were unwelcome to Joseph Smith III. He was a newlywed and preferred to set aside the question of religion. Nevertheless, the question continued to force itself upon him.

A month later, on December 6, 1856, representatives from another group of Latter Day Saints came calling. Elders Samuel H. Gurley and Edmund C. Briggs had been sent by the Reorganization with a message for Joseph Smith III. After stopping at the Nauvoo Mansion, Elders Gurley and Briggs walked out from Nauvoo to visit Joseph at the farm, introduced themselves, and handed him the following letter to read:

*The Church of Zarahemla, Wisconsin, to Joseph Smith: Our faith is not unknown to you, neither our hope in the re-gathering of the pure in*
heart enthralled in darkness, together with the means, to the accomplishment of the same; viz, that the seed of him, to whom the work was first committed should stand forth, and bear the responsibility (as well as wear the crown) of a wise master builder, to close up the breach, and to combine in one a host, who, though in captivity and sorely tried, still refuse to strengthen the hands of usurpers. As that seed, to whom pertaineth this right, and heaven-appointed duty, you cannot be unmindful nor indifferent. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob covenanted with them and their seed. So the God of Joseph covenanted with him and his seed, that his word should not depart out of his mouth, nor out of the mouth of his seed, nor out of the mouth of his seed's seed, till the end come. A Zerubbabel in Israel art thou. As a nail fastened in a sure place, so are the promises unto thee to make thee a restorer in Zion, to set in order the house of God. And the Holy Spirit that searcheth the deep things of God hath signified to us that the time has come, for through fasting and prayer hath the answer from God come unto us, saying, Communicate with my servant Joseph Smith, son of Joseph the Prophet. Arise, call upon God, and be strong, for a deliverer art thou to the Latter Day Saints, and the Holy Spirit is the prompter.

The apostles, elders and Saints who have assembled with us have beheld the vacant seat, and the seed that is wanting, and like Ezra of old with his brethren, by the direction of the Holy Spirit have we sent faithful messengers to bear this our message to you, trusting you will by their hands notify us of your readiness to occupy that seat, and answer to the name and duties of that seed. For this have our prayers without ceasing been offered up for the last five years. We are assured that the same Spirit that has testified to us, has signified the same things to you. Many have arisen perverting the work of the Lord. But the good and the true are throughout the land waiting the true successor of Joseph the Prophet as president of the church and of the priesthood. In our publications—sent to you—we have shewn the right of successorship to rest in the lineal descendants of the chosen seed to whom the promise was made, and also the manner of ordination thereto. We cannot forbear reminding you that the commandments as well as the promises given to Joseph your father, were given to him and to his seed. And in the name of the master, even Jesus Christ, as moved upon by the Holy Ghost we say: Arise in the strength of the Lord and realize those promises by executing these commandments, and we, by the grace of God, are thy helpers in restoring the exiled sons and daughters of Zion to their inheritances in the kingdom of God, and to the faith once delivered to the Saints.

Holding fast that which is good, and resisting evil, we invoke the blessings of the God of Israel upon thee and upon all Saints, for whom we will ever pray.

J. W. BRIGGS,
Representative President of the Church and the Priesthood in Zarahemla.
ZARAHEMLA, November 18th, 1856. 80

After reading the message of the emissaries, Joseph told them that he could not accept it, because he lacked proof that it was the word of the Lord for
him. Handing the letter back to Elder Gurley, he said, "Gentlemen, I will talk with you on politics or any other subject, but on religion I will not allow one word spoken in my house."

Samuel Gurley responded, "But we wish to tell you what we believe."

Joseph exclaimed, "I will not allow one word spoken on the subject to me in my house."

This emphatic declaration fairly crushed Gurley's hopes, and he burst into tears.

Feeling himself the bearer of a divine commission, E. C. Briggs became insistent, and strongly declared that Joseph must heed the message, upon peril of divine judgment. He said, "Mr. Smith, while we respect your feelings as a man, and do not wish to injure your feelings yet we will not allow you to hinder us in doing our duty, as we have been sent by the command of God to tell you what we know and most surely believe in relation to your calling as the successor of your father."

This was too much for Joseph to bear from guests in his own house. He was about to show Briggs and Gurley the door, when Emaline's calmer head prevailed. The storm abated, and calm was restored.

The conversation continued in more subdued terms. To the statement that it had been revealed that he would succeed his father in the church, Joseph continued to refuse discussion, saying, "I do not allow myself to talk on such matters in relation to my own calling, or what I may do in the future." The one note of encouragement he did offer was the observation that George A. Smith and Erastus Snow recently had visited, and that he would have nothing to do with the Utah church or its corrupt doctrines.81

Briggs secured a promise from Joseph that he would discuss the matter
again in the morning. On Sunday morning, December 7th, at the Mansion House, the matter was aired some more. Joseph told Gurley that he had received no spiritual testimony that the message was from God. Could they not go about their callings without reference to himself? This was another crushing blow for Gurley, who again began weeping. Briggs told Joseph that they might do without other men, but that his was a special calling. Joseph replied that he needed personal testimony of his own. He later recalled his answer:

> What they came to bring might be the word of the Lord; I could not say that it was not. I had, however, no testimony that it was. That I was prepared to do what God required of me, if he would make it known to me what it was. That I believed that he could reveal himself if he would. That I believed that my father was called of God to do a work; and that I was satisfied that that work was true, whether I ever had anything to do with it or not. That I did not then know whether I should ever be called to take any part in that work; but that if I were, I was ready, and that it would have to be made clear to me, in person, as well as to others what that work was; that I could not move upon the evidence given to others only. That they might be assured that I should not go to Salt Lake to affiliate with them there. And finally, that if it should be made clear to me that it was my duty to cast the fortunes of my life and my labor with the work and the people that they were representing, I should without hesitation do it, but that I could not then do so.82

Samuel H. Gurley returned home, bearing word of the result of the mission. E. C. Briggs, perhaps desiring further opportunities to reason with Joseph, stayed in Nauvoo and environs for nearly a year and grew to know the Smith family well. Part of the time he worked with Joseph and Frederick on the farm. E. C. Briggs had opportunity, later, again to give the letter from Zarahemla to Joseph, and this time he kept it.83

**Reflections**

This succession of events set Joseph Smith III to reflecting and studying. His personal life was terribly unsettled. He had been forced to terminate his legal studies due to lack of funds. Then he had watched his grandmother die. He had just experienced all the pressures incident to matrimony, together with extreme
hostility from his new in-laws. The recurring question of his relationship to his father's religion immediately disrupted his married life. Then, in 1857, the disruptions continued.

To begin with, there were the financial pressures. Joseph and his brother Frederick were in partnership. Bad weather and army worms combined to produce a series of bad harvests for the two young farmers. As a result, they found themselves deeply in debt. Eventually they were forced to dissolve their partnership. Joseph moved off the farm, and Fred and his new bride moved in.

Then there was Emaline's pregnancy. She had become pregnant almost immediately after marriage. Never robust, she was having a difficult time. The couple took up residence in the Mansion House, where she might receive better care. On July 28, 1857, she gave birth to a daughter, Emma Josepha, but Emaline continued seriously ill for months to come.

In the spring of 1858, Emaline was recovered sufficiently that the couple moved across the street into the Old Homestead. Joseph now managed to bring in enough income to keep the wolf from the door through his new duties as justice of the peace and from various laboring tasks. He remained in debt for decades, however.84

Through all these pressures and trials, Joseph continued to ponder his religious future. Previously he had prayed about his future. Now he began to study, as well:

Up to this time, I had not paid any marked attention to the book of Covenants, and had only my reading of the Bible and B of Mormon, to direct my thoughts; and had been very close to infidelity, being saved from it only by my inability to account for known facts, as existences, without acknowledging a God. My attention was directed to the Doc. and Covenants, and I became fully impressed that the basis of the work my father was called to perform, in reference to the salvation of man, was to be found in that book. I accepted this as true, and in reading I became satisfied that, so far as the published revelations to my father were concerned, polygamy was not a tenet of the church; nor could it
become so, except by an absolute abrogation, in terms, of the law given during his life time. Research into the Book of Mormon; and the "Times and Seasons," which I was fortunate enough to secure, gave me further to understand that both of the foremost men in the church had publicly denied and denounced it; as had also "An Old Man in Israel," endorsed by Eld John Taylor, at the time Editor of the Times and Seasons.85

Joseph Smith III's study involved only the public teachings of the church prior to the death of his father. He had no access to his father's private papers, which were housed in Salt Lake City, nor did he have access to many people who had been his father's intimate disciples, who might have informed him of many of Joseph Smith's private teachings.86

With only Joseph Smith, Jr.'s public pronouncements to work with, Joseph Smith III pondered the logical alternatives. What arguments might be made in favor of polygamy? Four occurred to him: (1) Joseph Smith (reportedly) had a revelation authorizing polygamy; (2) Joseph Smith (reportedly) entered into polygamous marriages; (3) Hyrum Smith, the prophet's brother, also (reportedly) entered into polygamous marriages; and (4) the Biblical patriarchs also practiced polygamy.

But if Joseph Smith both taught and practiced plural marriage, as the Utah Mormons now proclaimed, why had he not published it openly to the church? Why did he deny polygamy? Why had the section on marriage in the Doctrine and Covenants not been amended to eliminate its monogamous restrictions? The prophet's son continually mulled over these questions.

The Utah church urged four reasons for Joseph Smith's secrecy concerning plural marriage: (1) Joseph Smith did not dare to make public the revelation; (2) the time had not yet come to make it public; (3) deception was permissible if necessary for self-protection; and (4) Emma Smith was violently opposed to the revelation and burned it.

To Joseph Smith III, these explanations seemed to impugn the characters of
both God and the prophet. He was unwilling to admit such consequences. He reasoned:

To accept these statements as true, it seemed to me then, as it does now, that I must admit that Joseph and Hyrum Smith were, morally and physically, cowards. This, their lives and former history deny. To admit that the time had not come, is to deny the revelation, or that it was a premature thing. This charges God with mistaking the time to reveal &c. To admit that Joseph and Hyrum publicly denied, but secretly practiced polygamy, or plurality of wives, was to admit that they were deceivers, double-dealing, two-faced men. . . . this made my ears tingle with shame. To think, to be compelled by his so-called friends to think, that my father, my uncle, were cowards, afraid to declare what God revealed to them; that they secretly practiced as a religious tenet & right what they publicly denounced; that they lied, to screen themselves from censure and blame; that they let a woman, (my mother) defeat the purpose of God, in revealing his law—it made me heart sick. I could not, I can not believe it. To me, if I admit all that is claimed; there is only the one alternative, to think him imposed upon by false revelation, or that he had fallen from his high estate as a man and had given way to lust and sought an excuse for it.37

Both logically and emotionally, to admit that his father clandestinely taught and practiced plural marriage was more than Joseph Smith III could accept. He chose to believe his father's public disavowals and thereby preserve his father's honor and integrity.

Joseph was not one to act hastily concerning the religious questions before him. He prayed, contemplated, and reasoned about his options for a long time. As he did so, the conviction grew that he was to have something to do with his father's work. If this were the case, he must determine with which group of Saints he was to cast his lot.

The more he gave serious consideration to his options, the more objections came to mind against casting his lot with the Mormons of Utah. A host of problems would confront him if he went west.

First, there was the problem of rebaptism. If Joseph were to immigrate to Utah and unite with the church there, he would have to be rebaptized. Brigham Young had decreed that "all passing over the rim of the basin" should submit to
this rite. But Joseph had been baptized by his father, the prophet. Despite the
hiatus in his training as a Latter Day Saint and his freethinking phase, he had
always retained faith in the efficacy of that baptism under his father's hands.

... I believed that the baptism I had received at the hands of my
father had been as sacred and effective as any baptism performed since
the days of the Savior could possibly be, and that the ordinance of laying
on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, which ordinance was
administered by my Sunday school teacher, had been efficacious for the
purpose designed, and that I had, indeed, received that gift. Did I wish,
then, to forfeit what spiritual blessing, power, and standing these
ordinances had given me? Could I afford to throw discredit upon either
by casting it aside and submit to a readministration?

Joseph's feelings strongly revolted against such a procedure, since he reasoned
that it would be a tacit repudiation of the efficacy and sacredness of the baptism
administered by his father, the prophet. He feared that to be rebaptised might
actually forfeit the spiritual blessing, power, and standing he had previously
received, and that it would certainly tend to discredit his childhood baptism.88

Second, polygamy posed an obvious problem. If he united with the Utah
Church, Joseph knew that it would signify his reception of polygamy and
concomitant theories. To do so was, he said, "repugnant to me in countless ways,"
and was a course "which I could not admit even to contemplation."89

Third, there was the issue of criminality. Joseph felt that rebaptism and
reconfirmation in Utah might require him to receive laying on of hands from
Brigham Young or those under him who were responsible for or countenanced the
shedding of innocent blood, as, for example, in the Mountain Meadows Massacre of
1857. "Could I bring myself to accept baptism, confirmation, or other ordinances
administered by or under such hands?," he asked himself.90

Fourth, there was the problem of Joseph Smith's good name. Uniting with
the Utah church, felt Joseph, would be tantamount to admitting the truth of the
assertion that his father was the human author of polygamy. Not only had he
never observed anything in his youth to indicate that his father was so involved, but the very thought was repulsive to him. It contradicted his most dearly held picture of what sort of a man his father was. As he put it: [It] was contrary to my knowledge of, and belief in him, would serve to neutralize at once the intention I had formed to redeem his memory from false accusations and make honorable in the sight of men the religion for which he became a martyr, and would result in an utter failure on my part to accomplish that which I felt divinely urged to do.91

Redeeming the good name of Joseph Smith from the odium attached to polygamy and Utah Mormonism was to remain a lifelong objective.

Fifth, there was the problem of chivalry. Joseph embraced a "high regard for womankind," both by upbringing and by conviction. To embrace the Utah system would violate his deepest convictions about male-female relations.92

Sixth, there was the question of obedience to God. The foregoing considerations would have been sufficient to block affiliation with the church in Utah. But Joseph had also concluded that to do so would violate the will of God, both the scriptural injunctions against polygamy and a divine directive, personally received, prohibiting union with the Brighamites.93

Such reasoning eliminated the Utah church as a possible group with which to unite. But there were other factions about. Several of these would have received him gladly. But one by one, Joseph ruled them out. The small band of Cutlerites in Iowa—while morally unobjectionable—held that the redemption of Zion was imminent, and were therefore economically careless. Joseph had seen enough of poor Saints gathering together and finding themselves without means of support, that such a rag-tag organization held no appeal to him.

Other groups which might have received him had broken up upon the deaths of their leaders and/or upon the shoals of polygamy. Maverick apostle Lyman Wight had died in 1858, and his followers had scattered. In addition, Wight's group
had practiced plural marriage on a limited scale. William Smith's organization had disintegrated, in 1851, after the discovery that he clandestinely practiced polygamy. James J. Strang's movement had flourished for a time, but had broken up upon King Strang's assassination in 1856. Pockets of Strangites still hoped that Young Joseph would assume leadership of their cause and revive the work, but Joseph would not consider the possibility, because of Strangite adherence to polygamy and the introduction of the idea of an earthly King. Joseph reasoned that this was an alien and undemocratic office, wrongly grafted into the gospel economy. Relying on his boyhood memories and his reading of the standard works of the church, he little dreamed that his father had secretly introduced such an office.94

There were other factions, as well. One by one, Joseph eliminated them from consideration.

There was no opportunity or place for me in any of these groups . . . , imbued as I was with certain ideals and standards irreconcilable with their doctrines. Their elimination from consideration, as I sought earnestly to determine where to cast my religious lot, served to direct my attention and interest more pointedly to the little band known as the "reorganizers" or the "Reorganization" as it was usually called. To "make assurance doubly sure," I made the whole matter a specific study and subject of prayer, laying it before the Almighty in the plain question: "To which body of believers shall I unite myself?"95

**Religious Crisis of 1859-1860**

To take up work on behalf of his father's religion was no small step for Joseph Smith III. He had good reason to approach the matter deliberately. Beyond his personal inclination not to act in the absence of settled conviction, there was the question of how others would react. His father had been lynched. Would he face hostility from Anti-Mormons? Would his family be in danger? What of the reaction of his in-laws?

The burden of personal circumstances grew greater. There was the burden
of debt from the repeated losses of crops on the Smith farm. A second daughter, Evalyn Rebecca was born in January 1859, adding to the economic pressures. Emaline Griswold Smith showed no interest in religion and gave her husband no support in his investigations. And then there was the problem of Joseph's mother-in-law, Mrs. Griswold.

One day, Joseph took Emaline to visit her mother. Returning to pick her up in the evening, he found his wife upset, with traces of tears on her face. A bit of conversation revealed the cause. Mrs. Griswold and some neighbors had spent the afternoon gossiping about Joseph, going over his economic failures and pejoratively referring to his having "turned Mormon." After listening to an afternoon of such talk, Emaline was distressed, particularly since she had no answers for some of the criticisms. In a no-holds-barred confrontation, Joseph told his mother-in-law never to interfere in his family affairs again. He gave his weeping wife an ultimatum: either get in the wagon with him and go home or stay with her mother. He gave her five minutes to decide. Before the deadline had expired, Emaline gathered together the two little girls and got in the wagon for the homeward trip to the Old Homestead. Thereafter, Joseph had a more felicitous relationship with Mrs. Griswold.96

The underlying economic, vocational, and religious tensions were still present, however. Their urgency was exacerbated by a family tragedy in the fall of 1859: the death of Evalyn Rebecca. She died after a heartbreaking illness marked by recurring convulsions. The baby's death broke Emaline's heart. Joseph, for his part, harbored strong feelings of resentment toward the attending doctor, who prescribed some medicine and then left the child to her final death throes, unable to help her and apparently indifferent.97

Bereavement over Evalyn Rebecca's death brought on another family crisis.
Emaline had no religious resources on which to draw during her grief. To her eyes, Joseph's reaction seemed uncaring:

I had a latent confidence in the final triumph of goodness and had learned to be more stoical than she. I tried to comfort her as best I could, but discovered that my stoicism aroused in her a degree of displeasure, for she thought me callous and indifferent to the grief into which we had been plunged. By contact with those who were at enmity with the church and with Father during his lifetime I had early learned the necessity for the repression of my feelings, and it had become more or less habitual with me that no matter how deeply I was feeling or how greatly suffering I did not allow my emotions to appear upon the surface.98

The succession of crises through which Joseph Smith III went undoubtedly added to the urgency of his religious quest. Additionally there was the sense of passing time. Before, he had hesitated to commit himself. Now he felt a growing sense of unease, a feeling that he could not remain forever a spectator, that it was time to reach a decision, that further inaction was not right, and that he must be about the business of continuing his father's work.

Having ruled out various other groups of Latter Day Saints, he turned his attention to the "Reorganized" church. In truth, there were few other options left open to him. He had ruled out the possibility of affiliating with several other groups. Factions which denounced polygamy but held that his father had fallen into wickedness later in his career--the Hedrickites, for example--held no appeal to him. Short of starting a new work of his own, the Reorganization was the only place remaining for him to go. He had some general knowledge of the Reorganization and of their desire that he should become his father's successor. But he knew only a handful of the the movement's leaders. Ironically, he was unaware of the growing anticipation among the small band of Reorganites--fed by prophecies and glossalalia--that he would soon assume their presidency.99
Decision to Join the Reorganization

There were several stages to Joseph Smith III's decision to join the Reorganization. First, of course, there was the process of elimination by which he sorted out the contending factions of Latter Day Saints. This involved a series of test-questions. The Reorganization passed all of them. They rejected polygamy. They practiced no community of goods. Their form of government was democratic, not kingly or autocratic. The members were generally poor, but hard working, not lazily awaiting the millennium. They did not antagonize their Gentile neighbors with irritating plans for gathering into one location. The Reorganization passed all questions.

Second, in the fall of 1859, he received another spiritual manifestation, similar to those previously received. He was told:

The Saints reorganizing at Zarahemla and other places, is [sic] the only organized portion of the Church accepted by me. I have given them my Spirit, and will continue to do so while they remain humble and faithful.100

In answer to his questions, he was told "clearly and specifically" to unite with the Reorganization.

Third, his mother voiced no objection to his uniting with the Reorganization. At this decisive juncture, Joseph consulted with his mother. In later years, some in Utah were to charge that Emma Smith Bidamon determined his religious course, which Joseph vigorously denied. This consultation seems to reflect the true state of their relationship: Emma left her son to make his own decision, but Joseph's foundational values, the bedrock of assumptions upon which his reasoning proceeded, were deeply influenced by his mother. He loved and trusted her. Having come this far in his own thinking, he now sought her advice. Would she see things as he did? He valued her opinion at this critical moment. Emma's response is not recorded, beyond the fact that she approved.
Fourth, Joseph Smith III decided to approach the leaders of the Reorganization, to see if they were men with whom he could work and to see how they would respond to his overtures. Perhaps it was at his mother's suggestion that Joseph wrote to William Marks, now keeping a hotel at Shabbona Grove, Illinois, telling him of his intentions and asking for consultation. 101

The letter read as follows:

Nauvoo, March 5th, 1860

Mr William Marks,

Sir;

I am soon going to take my father's place at the head of the Mormon Church, and I wish that you, and some others, those you may consider the most trustworthy the nearest to you, to come and see me; that is, if you can, and will. I am somewhat undecided as to the best course for me to pursue and if your views are, upon a comparison, in unison with mine and we can agree as to the best course, I would be pleased to have your cooperation. I would rather you would come previous to your conference in April at Amboy. I do not wish to attend the conference but would like to know if they as a body would endorse my opinions. You will say nothing of this to any but those who you may wish to accompany you here.

With great regard, I subscribe myself

Yours most respectfully,

Joseph Smith. 102

After joining forces with Strang in 1846, William Marks had affiliated with a succession of factions, only to be disappointed with each in turn. Recently he had united with the fledgling Reorganization, perhaps for many of the same reasons as would Joseph Smith III. Marks long had been a confidant of Emma Smith, was trusted by Joseph, and still retained considerable prestige from his position as president of the Nauvoo Stake and High Council at the time of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s death. 103

Upon receiving Joseph's letter, William Marks consulted with two other leaders of the small "New Movement," Israel L. Rogers and William W. Blair. The three of them travelled to Nauvoo on March 19th and stayed until the 21st. Their interview with Joseph Smith III passed off agreeably. William Marks frankly
expressed one area of apprehension: "We have had enough of man-made prophets, and we don't want any more of that sort. If God has called you, we want to know it. If he has, the Church is ready to sustain you; if not, we want nothing to do with you." Marks and many other Reorganites had followed one pretender to Joseph Smith's mantle after another, only to be disappointed by evidence of clay feet in each successive leader. In spite of such disappointments, they still retained their hope that the Latter Day work was true. Young Joseph--no longer so young--was probably their last realistic hope. But they needed assurances that he would not mislead them as had the others. They believed that Young Joseph was divinely called to his father's office, but they were committing themselves to an unknown quantity. Would he later take advantage of them? Would he first deny polygamy, as had J. J. Strang and William Smith only to secretly practice it later? William Marks expressed a strong need for reassurance on this count. Joseph Smith III proved receptive to his concerns. The meeting concluded, and it was decided that, contrary to earlier intentions, Joseph would attend the upcoming Reorganite conference at Amboy, Illinois.\textsuperscript{104}

A Last Ditch Appeal from a Utah Relative

Joseph's cousin, John Smith (1832-1911), visited Nauvoo in February 1860. Six weeks older than Joseph, John was the eldest son of Hyrum Smith. The two cousins had not seen each other since John left Nauvoo in September 1846. After a stay at Winter Quarters, John had crossed the plains to Utah in 1848, with his step-mother, Mary Fielding Smith, and his half-brother, Joseph F. Smith. Following the death of his uncle and namesake, John Smith, in 1854, Hyrum Smith's son had become presiding patriarch of the church.\textsuperscript{105}

John Smith had departed Salt Lake City on September 16, 1855, to visit Florence, Nebraska and Hancock County, Illinois. His sister Lovina, her husband
Lorin Walker, and their family lived in Florence. John intended to bring them to Utah. In Illinois he intended to visit his relatives, the Smiths, Salisburys, and Millikins. After an initial visit in Florence, he pushed on to Nauvoo, arriving in February 1860. His cousin Joseph welcomed him. During his visit of nearly a month, he made Joseph's home his base of operations. Relations between the two "sons of the martyrs" were cordial and frank. Joseph confided in John his intentions concerning the Reorganized Church.\textsuperscript{106}

After giving his team sufficient rest for the long westward trek, John decided to return to Florence. The day before his departure, he had a long, serious discussion with Joseph. Joseph was working at cutting wood. While Joseph chopped, John chatted. He urged his cousin to come to Utah for a visit. After this line of thought had been developed a while, Joseph asked whether it would be safe for him to go to Salt Lake City. Of course it would be, his cousin answered; the leaders of the church would welcome the prophet's son. Joseph was not so sure. What if he expressed himself too freely, he wondered. He then asked what was, for him, the critical question:

"Cousin John, suppose I should visit Salt Lake City and should be invited to speak from a public stand. Would I be safe in expressing my opposition to the doctrine and practice of polygamy and plural marriage, and in freely stating my opinions in reference to them and their origin?"

"Well, Cousin Joseph, I do not think you would be so foolish as to speak against the doctrine in so public a place and manner as that, and in the presence of those who would be likely to be on the platform with you."

I dropped the axe I was using, and with all the force and fire, and love of freedom which I had inherited from my New England ancestors, at once awake and alert in my soul, I exclaimed:

"Cousin John, I am a free man--was born free--and my opinions and my tongue are my own, and I am telling you that if I should be asked my opinion about polygamy and stood in a pulpit along with Brigham Young himself I should speak it out, plainly and unmistakably, as I would to you here and now!"

He looked at me steadily and thoughtfully a moment, and then said, soberly:

"I think you had best not go out to Utah yet!"
There was a tacit, unspoken understanding between the two cousins, that it would be unsafe for Joseph Smith III to express anti-polygamous sentiments in Utah in 1860.108

After a difficult trip across Iowa--he complained of difficulties with the mud--John Smith reached Council Bluffs. Despite their ecclesiastical differences, he entertained a fond regard for his cousin and made one last-ditch attempt to dissuade him from joining the Reorganization. He wrote a letter on April 3rd, attempting to avert an open breach between the prophet's son and the Utah Church:

I have been here about a week and while here I have lerned something about that matter which we talked about while I was there it is in the mouth of every body all most and I have seen some of the parties and by what I can learn it is all a specculation and they do not care a d----d for you only to make a tool of you to carry out there scheems that they may get gain and I hope you will not take a step in the matter without fully considering the importance of such a [s]tep as for my part I cannot sanction any such a thing for I fear it will leaede us in a difficulty that would bring a stain upon us where in we might suffer loss Cousin Joseph these are my sentiments well I wish you would come over here soon fore I would like to see you very much.109

John Smith added a postscript, begging his cousin, "pleas write to me as soon as you recieve this." But it was too late. The die was cast. By the time he read the letter, Joseph Smith III had been ordained president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.
CHAPTER V

THE NAUVOO PRESIDENCY: 1860-1866

The appointed day drew near. Joseph Smith III and his mother made the necessary preparations for their trip to the RLDS conference at Amboy, Lee County, Illinois. On April 4, 1860, they crossed the Mississippi to Montrose, Iowa, to catch a steamboat. The weather was tempestuous. The oarsmen bent their backs to propel the small craft across the mighty river. Emma Smith Bidamon remarked that "thus it had been all through her life; that whenever she set out to do anything for the gospel's sake, the old boy seemed to be in the elements trying to prevent." The prophet's widow and son arrived safely on the western shore. From there they traveled by boat and by rail to Amboy.¹

Amboy was a small town on the Illinois Central Railroad. Ironically, it was not far from Palestine, the site of William Smith's "stake of Zion." It also lay close to the homes of many of Emma Smith Bidamon's relatives who had migrated there from Pennsylvania. Amboy was chosen as the site of the conference because several families of Reorganized Saints lived in the area.

Mother and son attended the evening prayer meeting on April 5th, at the home of one of the local Saints. There Joseph Smith III discovered for the first time that it had been foretold, via tongues and prophecies, that he would attend the conference. He found a sense of expectancy in the air. At the prayer meeting, Z. H. Gurley arose and gave an impassioned exhortation in which he stated that Joseph's being there fulfilled the word of the Lord. Those attending
the prayer meeting arose and sobbed for joy as the prophet's wife and son entered the room.

At a rented meeting place, Mechanics Hall, three hundred or so Saints gathered on April 6th for the opening of the conference. Many had waited years for this moment. In the afternoon, Joseph and his mother entered the hall for the first time. At 1:30 P.M., Zenas H. Gurley, Sr. introduced him in a voice choked with emotion:

"I present to you, my brethren, Joseph Smith."

One of the Saints in attendance left a contemporary record of the conference:

... on the 6[th] Joseph presented himself as successor to his Father and was received [sic] as such by the Church, and to undertake to portray to your mind the scene that then transpired is beyond any power that I posses, there was a time of universal rejoicing among the Old Saints of whom there was a large gathering, they were there from Ohio from Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri & a great many from Illinois attended. Joseph gave a history of the past two or three years of his life which seemed to satisfy all present, that the Lord had ordained that he should lead the Church. Joseph was baptized into the Church when about ten years old, and ordained by his father to be his successor shortly before his death. Joseph is unlike his father in every particular he is quite dark in complexion, very long featured & short in stature, but he is the soberest looking person that I have seen for years, he is a good speaker and appears to be very honest & sincere.2

Joseph Smith III then addressed the conference. Both the speaker and his hearers were in tears a good part of the time. He began with the declaration, "I came not here of myself, but by the influence of the Spirit." For some time past, he declared, he had been receiving spiritual manifestations pointing the way toward uniting with the Reorganization. True to his own principles, he had refused to come at the beck and call of others, but had awaited inner testimony before acting. Neither paternal blessing, lineal rights, scriptural argument, prophesying, nor importunity had been able to move him until he received this last confirmation. Now he was satisfied as to his duty. As he put it, "I have come
here not to be dictated by any man or set of men. I have come in obedience to a power not my own, and shall be dictated by the power that sent me."

Those deputations which had urged him to assume his father's station had been turned away out of conviction that he first must have an inward testimony that this was God will. He would never act without such assurance and thereby "trifle with the faith" of the people who looked to him in expectation. To those who urged him that the presidency was his simply by right of lineage, he protested:

... if I attempted to lead as a Prophet by these considerations and not by a call from Heaven, men would not be led to believe who do not believe now. And so I have come not of my own dictation to this sacred office.

He specifically disavowed any intention of amassing wealth through leadership of the church. Some, he knew, would not hesitate to seize the opportunity to exercise power and accumulate wealth, but he disclaimed all such motives. Rather, he wished to be welcomed freely by the people and to receive the benediction of God.

He explained that he had stood aloof from all factions and had endeavored to keep himself unbiased concerning all of them. In fact, he deliberately had ignored the various written works which had been sent to him, for fear that they might wrongly influence his ultimate course of action. His decision, he felt, had to be free of "any taint of sectarianism, or taints from thoughts of the various minds I have come in contact with," and had to rest upon an inward testimony. The only principle taught by any of the L.D.S. factions which he abhorred was polygamy:

I have been told that my father taught such doctrines. I have never believed it and never can believe it. If such things were done, then I believe they never were done by divine authority. I believe my father was a good man, and a good man never could have promulgated such doctrines.
Besides this fundamental opposition to polygamy, he declared his intention to be guided by honesty and truth and to "promulgate no doctrine that shall not be approved by you or the code of good morals." He promised to employ the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants as his doctrinal standards. Confessing that he was not very conversant with those books—as he pointed to a volume in front of him—he promised to study them diligently.

Having sought to quiet fears that their new prophet later might foist a revelation sanctioning polygamy upon them—a possibility that some of them had experienced more than once—Joseph Smith III sought to put to rest several other possible concerns. First, he specifically disavowed any intention of using his position to personal advantage, to become wealthy or a dictator. Second, he avowed his belief in obedience to the laws of the land. And, third, he stated his intention to continue his policy of living peaceably and mingling freely with all Gentiles, even those known for strongly Anti-Mormon sentiment. All this was designed to allay fears that he might govern after the fashion of Brigham Young. Were he to imitate Brigham, he declared, he knew he would soon "be wholly deserted," and concluded, "if the same Spirit which prompts my coming, prompts also my reception, I am with you."³

Then, on motion of Isaac Sheen, it was "resolved, that Brother Joseph Smith be chosen Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of the Church of Jesus Christ, and the successor of his father." Emma Smith Bidamon was also received into fellowship by unanimous vote. Joseph Smith III was then ordained president of the high priesthood of the church.⁴

The conference dismissed, and the Saints left Amboy rejoicing. Missionaries began carrying word of Joseph Smith III's ordination to scattered Latter Day Saints, particularly in Illinois and Iowa. But life for the new Prophet,
Seer, and Revelator did not change immediately. He received no remuneration as president. He returned to Nauvoo and went about the business of providing for his family. On weekends he tried his fledgling wings as a preacher.

Suddenly he was a leader, albeit one with a small following. He had staked out a platform at Amboy, one which he followed with remarkable fidelity throughout his life. But it was one thing to articulate a philosophy and quite another to put it into practice. It would be some years before Joseph Smith III actually provided the direction, the strategy, the impetus for the efforts of the RLDS Church. In the meantime, the elders—used to operating autonomously for many years—went about their business with little direction or interference from the new prophet.

**Visit of Cousins Joseph F. and Samuel H. B. Smith**

At the same time the RLDS Church was meeting in Amboy, the LDS Church was conducting its annual general conference in Salt Lake City. Among the elders called to go on missions were two cousins of the new RLDS president: Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) and Samuel H. B. Smith (1838–1914). On April 27th, in a company of eastward-bound missionaries, the two cousins set out for their mission to England. They stopped at Florence, Nebraska, where John Smith provided them with some details concerning the relatives in Hancock County. On June 20th and 21st, they visited Nauvoo. Six Smith cousins were momentarily united. Joseph F. Smith, son of Hyrum, was a newly ordained seventy in the LDS Church. Samuel H. B. Smith, son of Samuel, was an elder in the LDS Church. Joseph Smith III, of course, was the new president of a rival body of Saints. His brothers Frederick G. W., Alexander Hale, and David Hyrum were all unbaptized, and Frederick and Alexander were indifferent or unsympathetic to their older brother's ecclesiastical endeavors.\(^5\)
At the Old Homestead, Joseph greeted his cousins cordially. At the Mansion, Frederick and Alexander were equally glad to see their Utah relations. Major Bidamon, in Joseph F. Smith's view, was not overjoyed to see them, and Emma he found "very cold and distant." They ate dinner together. Joseph F. and Samuel were accompanied on a tour about the city by Frederick and Alexander. After supper, Joseph and the two Utahns discussed their mutual faith in the Latter Day work as well as their differences. They all expressed themselves freely.⁶

After supper, Joseph took a light and showed his cousins to their quarters upstairs. Joseph Smith, Jr.'s portrait hung in one of the rooms upstairs. Joseph Smith III told his cousins that one day he went upstairs to show someone the oil painting, and that as the group left the room, he had turned around, looked at the picture, and saw his father present in the room. Before the two cousins retired, Joseph Smith III related another vision. While debating whether or not to go to Salt Lake City, "he felt his Father's hands upon his head, and then he thought the reason why he didn't go . . . ." Joseph III specifically asked his cousins to remember their dreams that evening, evidently attaching spiritual significance to them.⁷

The next morning, Joseph III, Joseph F., and Samuel again canvassed the religious question. Joseph III invited his cousins to ask him any questions they might have, promising to answer them if he could, and if he could not to wait until he could.

What, they asked, were his feelings toward the Mormons in Salt Lake City? Joseph F. Smith recorded Joseph Smith III's reply:

...his feelings were good toward them and he wished them well, but he believed they were in darkness on some things, owing to the teachings they have had, & the influences that surrounded them. we asked if he believed the doctrines they taught were right. he said he believed they
were,—but one,—but that they were abused by those holding authority. We told him our feelings in regard to the authorities of the Church and bore our testimony to mormonism. He was glad we felt so well but hoped that we should think differently before long on some things. He sa's that he is not concerned at all as to the result of the step he is taking. He does not claim to have had any thing of importance revealed to him. Still he sa's he has something to reveal in the proper time and place, that is very singular to him, but did not speak to us, as tho' there was any great importance attached to it. He spoke of the defilement of the temple, believed it was defiled by the authorities, and in concurrence of their sins and transgressions they were driven from Nauvoo, and brought "Coursings, wrath, indignations, and judgment upon them. believes the people to be in bondage, and oppressed by the Authorities.

He sa's he is not afraid but what he will come off right, and that he will take no counsel but from God, for the Lord, if he has a work for him to do—will make his will known to him, before he will to any body els[e].

Samuel H. B. Smith also recorded his impressions of the conversation with his Nauvoo cousin. Interestingly, he seemed to acknowledge that Young Joseph had been designated by his father as his successor. "We . . . saw the young Prophet," he wrote, "for I suppose that is the name he goes by, having been ordained by his Father previous to his death and called by the Spirit (of late) he steps forth to do a work . . . ." Samuel found his cousin uncertain about the particulars of his future policy, but intent on being "dictated by the Spirit in all things," and leaving the result in the hands of God. Joseph III told Samuel and Joseph F. that the Spirit had been "working on his mind" for two years, leading him to conclude that he had "a work to do." The primacy of spiritual experience, including several visions, in determining his course was clearly indicated.

Samuel H. B. Smith recorded two important observations, based upon their conversations. In the first place, in freely expressing his attitudes about polygamy, Joseph III told his cousins that he could uphold every principle in the Utah church but plural marriage. This, he said, "he cannot uphold and sustain with the knowledge that he has, and said that he didn't believe his Father ever taught and practised that principle . . . ." Samuel concluded that Joseph III was
wasting his time talking to them in such fashion, "for any one that knows any thing about mormonism at all knows better then that, by the testimony of thousands whose testimony no one has a right to deny according to the way that I understand it ...."9 The two Utah Smiths based their views upon the testimony of those who had learned the principle from the late prophet. The prophet's son based his views upon his sense of right and wrong, his conceptions of what his father—as a good man operating within the laws of morality—could have done, his mother's example and training, and his own spiritual experiences. The two approaches were antithetical. One was based on the head, the other on the heart. One was based on what had happened, the other on what ought to have happened. One was based on authority, the other on conscience. Although when questioned, Joseph expressed his willingness to change his mind if presented with additional evidence or spiritual light, in reality his course was set. In the coming decades, he would be confronted with a mass of evidence supporting his cousins' historical position. But no accumulation of such evidence could move him. The ground upon which he stood was moral and spiritual, not historical.

In the second place, Samuel H. B. Smith's analysis struck to the core of Joseph III's relationship with his mother. He observed:

it is evident that Joseph has been under the influence of his mother altho he sais that his mother has never tried to influence his mind one way or the other, but has let him take his own course, that may be to and her influence work in a nother way, so that it would have as much weight as though She was to converse with him personally on the subject, and I don't know but a great deal more ....10

The cousins parted on friendly terms. Joseph F., Samuel H. B., and Joseph Smith III were three sincere young men, honestly seeking to do the will of God. Impressed with each other's sincerity, they hoped that the "unenlightened" branch of the family yet would see the light and "come out straight in the end." The meeting left them torn internally; ties of kinship and affection drew them
together, while their religious pathways were veering apart in radically different directions. 11

Joseph F. and Samuel H. B. Smith continued on their way. They would not return to Hancock County for three years. 12 While they made their way eastward across the continent, their cousin faced the prospect of revived Anti-Mormonism in Hancock County, brought on by fears that the Saints were going to regather there.

The Gathering

One of the most important questions to face Joseph Smith III at the outset of his religious career was that of the Gathering. The Book of Mormon told of at least a dozen or more gatherings of the righteous, who traversed oceans or deserts to escape the wicked. Likewise the Doctrine and Covenants called upon the elect to gather together, to "Zion." The gathering of the Saints was a multi-faceted concept. Preparation for the eschaton, escape from persecution and wickedness, and building up a godly society were concomitant motives for the modern Children of Israel to gather together. According to Latter Day Saint eschatology, America was the land of Zion, and Independence, Missouri was the "center stake." All good Saints expected to return to Missouri prior to or at the beginning of the Millennium, there to rule with Christ a thousand years. But when the Saints had been driven from Missouri, it had been necessary to appoint Nauvoo, Illinois as a temporary gathering place, a stake of Zion, but not the center stake. Prior to the exodus in 1846, thousands of converts, particularly from England, flooded into Nauvoo. 13

After the exodus, Brigham Young led thousands of Saints to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake and proclaimed Utah to be the new Mormon Zion. It was not intended to supplant Jackson County, Missouri, but to be another temporary place
of refuge. Prior to his death, Joseph Smith had contemplated removal from Nauvoo and had considered the Rocky Mountains as a possible gathering site. Faced with the prospects of civil war in Hancock County, Brigham Young had settled upon the Rockies as the site of the next stake of Zion. Once settled in Utah, energetic missionary efforts brought a constant stream of European immigrants to Zion.¹⁴

One of the foundational premises of the Reorganized Church was that the church in Nauvoo had fallen into wickedness, that God had visited it with judgment, and that the church had been rejected, dispersed, and disorganized. If Brigham Young was a wicked apostate, it hardly could be that Utah was Zion and the gathering there a work of God. Accordingly, early RLDS publications were filled with tales of wicked doings in Utah and arguments against the "salt land" being the land of Zion.¹⁵ But it was one thing to reject the Brighamite gathering place and another to determine upon an alternative. Initially, in 1852, the Reorganization had finessed the question by stating that:

... there is no stake to which the saints on this continent are commanded to gather at the present time, but... the saints on all other lands are commanded to gather to this land preparatory to the reestablishment of the church in Zion, when the scattered saints on this land will also be commanded to gather and return to Zion... and it is the duty of the saints to turn their hearts and their faces towards Zion and supplicate the Lord for such deliverance.¹⁶

The concept of gathering was deeply ingrained in the Latter Day Saint psyche. Many looked for the new prophet to designate a site. Lyman Wight, William Smith, James J. Strang, and many other factional leaders had done this. What would be the policy of Joseph Smith III?

Joseph Smith III initially operated upon the premise that a new gathering site must be selected. After notifying William Marks of his intention to become president of the Reorganized Church, Joseph Smith III had informed his mother
and step-father of his decision. The three of them discussed the possibility of removing from Nauvoo to a new location, to which Saints might gather and build a town. Major Bidamon was going to Independence, Missouri on some other business and was told to investigate discreetly along his line of travel to see if there might be a likely location. But the Major took a speculative view of the enterprise. There was the potential of realizing considerable profit through the purchase and resale of lands at the new gathering-site. He proceeded on his own authority to Weston, Missouri; Council Bluffs, Iowa; and Florence, Nebraska. He violated his instructions by speaking of his mission to local businessmen and by entering into a tentative agreement at Florence, Nebraska that the Josephites would gather there. When he returned to Nauvoo and reported to Joseph, the young man disavowed everything the Major had done.¹⁷ His condemnation of speculative motives in his inaugural address was a repudiation of Major Bidamon's activities and all similar profiteering endeavors.

From his reading of early Latter Day Saint history, Joseph concluded that over-hasty gathering had entailed serious mistakes. He had possession of some account books from the church's days in Kirtland, Ohio. Examination of these books convinced him that religious communitarianism was economically perilous. Some of his father's economic activities he regarded as unwise. He disliked the idea of a religious leader becoming involved in speculation, and he had personally experienced some of the consequences of his father's signing notes for large sums of money.¹⁸ All these factors, coupled with Major Bidamon's exuberant visions of profit, set Joseph Smith III on his guard. He determined to be very careful.

This decision was wise. When the outside world learned of the Amboy Conference, he began receiving offers and advice. James Arlington Bennet sent him an offer of 160 acres of land in Livingston County, Illinois.¹⁹ A
correspondent signing himself "Keokuk" informed him of available land not far from Nauvoo. In the end, Joseph decided to do nothing precipitous.20

George Edmunds, the family's legal Sir Gallahad, urged Joseph to stay in Nauvoo. Edmunds had come to Nauvoo when the city still offered prospects of becoming a major urban center. He had stayed on in the city, promoting various improvements designed to revive the civic economy. Now he saw one last chance to restore Nauvoo to her former greatness. Something of the nature of his discussions with Joseph Smith III are apparent in a letter Joseph sent him in July 1860:

In answer to your inquiry as to my future location, as also the location of my church, I would say that while personally I would prefer to remain here--I shall not let me personal preferences controll my action when I am satisfied it would be against the interests, either of my church or people--

As to my self I can do well enough here or else where with my individual means--but in starting my church great expense must be incurred, which personally I am unable to bear--and many of my pople [sic] are poor--

Large inducements are held out to me to locate my church else where which I shall do, unless the citizens & property holders here think it for their interest to say to us that they desire us to settle here, and will do suffissienit at least to erect publick buildings & guarantee us against exorbitant prices [?] for ground to settle upon--21

While Edmunds and some other citizens hoped to revive the city's economic fortunes via a return of the Saints, some of the Saints believed that the town was their proper gathering place. These two factors, together perhaps with Joseph's personal links to the town, induced him to enter into an agreement with George Edmunds not to remove from Nauvoo for five years. They thought that this would be a sufficient length of time to determine whether regathering to Nauvoo was feasible or whether the city would remain forever a shadow of its former self.22

But if some citizens were enthusiastic about the prospect of the Saints returning to Hancock County, others were fearful that the events of the 1840s would be re-enacted. In a short time, Joseph Smith III, rather than wondering
whether the local citizens would offer him sufficient inducements to remain, was faced with the question of whether he would be permitted to stay. There was a reawakening of Anti-Mormon rhetoric, with threats to drive the prophet's son from his home.

**Hostile Reaction in Hancock County**

Assuming the presidency of the Reorganization and returning to Hancock County required a certain degree of courage. Sixteen years earlier, citizens of the county had slain Joseph Smith, Jr. Subsequent to his death, they had driven most of his followers from the county. Those Saints who remained had maintained a low profile. There was no organized ecclesiastical structure among them, and certainly no active preaching of "Mormonism." Joseph Smith III had learned how to co-exist among the Gentiles. But he was treading, now, on uncertain ground. No one could foretell the reaction to a new "Mormon prophet" in Nauvoo. Would old fears and animosities be aroused? The answer was not long in coming.

A small band of Joseph Smith III's friends called for a meeting to be held on the evening of May 10, 1860, in Nauvoo. Their objective was to rally support for the return of the Saints to Nauvoo, which, they hoped, would revive the local economy. To their chagrin, when the citizens of Nauvoo gathered together that evening, they overwhelmingly passed a series of resolutions opposing such a return. The resolutions declared that it would be wrong for any branch of the Mormon Church to relocate in Nauvoo, because past history showed that they would destroy social harmony and economic prosperity. Mormonism in all forms, the resolutions declared, was "inimicable to American institutions," "opposed to social order," and pandered to "the most gross Licentiousness, and sensuality." Mormon pledges could not be relied upon, they declared, and the overwhelming majority of Nauvooans were unwilling to see them return "to play out the old game of humbug
which has already caused so much disturbance and injury to the people of Hancock county." 23

Within Nauvoo, former Mayor R. W. McKinney spearheaded the opposition to Joseph Smith III. His articles in the local press opposed Mormonism in general and Joseph Smith III in particular. He charged that the newly ordained prophet was shiftless, and that he had failed at every previous enterprise he had undertaken. Joseph Smith III, he suggested, was probably good for little else besides being a prophet. McKinney reasoned that the citizens of Illinois had little need of a prophet who produced anti-polygamous revelations, since "no body ever taught the plurality wife system but his brother fanatics who started this diabolical humbug." McKinney agreed with Joseph Smith III, "most true O most modern and greenest of all the prophets," that polygamy sprang from the devil, "yet the devil who originated it bore the same name as yourself." McKinney felt that Joseph Smith III denied his father's involvement in polygamy out of ignorance. "Every one who knows anything of the matter, knows that spiritual wifery originated with old Joe." McKinney suggested that Young Joseph's anti-polygamous ministrations were most needed in Salt Lake City and criticized him for not going there:

... the prophet thinks that valley would not be good for his health.... He has not as much faith as Jonah, he is going to preach against polygamy to all the old Bachelors in Illinois, who are so cross and ill tempered they never could get any wife, much less a harem full of the article.

McKinney raked Abraham Van Horn Yates, publisher of the Nauvoo Democratic Press, over the coals for encouraging the return of the Latter Day Saints. He confidently predicted that the citizens of Hancock County would never stand for it. Alternately he castigated Joseph Smith III as naively sincere or mercenarily cynical. But the object of McKinney's vilification had long since learned to
is due.

I know that many stories are now being circulated in reference to what will be the result of the step I have taken. I know that many believe that I will emigrate to Salt Lake. To those who know me, it is needless for me to say that I am not going to do any such thing while the doctrine of polygamy and disobedience to the laws are countenanced there; to those who do not know me personally, and to whom my principles are unknown, I must say, withhold your censure until such time as I shall, by some flagrant act of disobedience to the law of the land, or some striking breach of morality, deserve the just indignation of society; when I do either one or the other, I am ready for the opening of the vial of wrath of outraged society, and shall cheerfully receive the condemnation I shall merit.

He went on to say that readers of the Democratic Press who knew him personally were well aware of his hostility to the "obnoxious features in Utah Mormonism," and they could be assured that his future actions would conform to those sentiments. Religious toleration, he reminded his readers, was a cherished American principle, and he demanded his rights under the law so long as he remained law-abiding. He asked to be judged by his deeds, not by rumor or prejudice.27

While Joseph Smith III was appealing to his neighbors to trust him as a man known for morality, obedience to law, and reliability, the embers of Anti-Mormonism were being stirred up in the rest of Hancock County. David Mack, a prominent lawyer and Democratic leader in Carthage, was one of the ring-leaders. In a letter to Jarius G. Stark of Augusta, Hancock County, Illinois, he summed up the fears of the Anti-Mormons and their proposed strategy:

Dear Sir: It is represented to us by reliable citizens of Nauvoo that about Two hundred Mormons are expected at Nauvoo within a few days, where they intend to locate; and certainly will do so unless some strong and unmistakable demonstration on the part of the people of Hancock County, shall be made as soon as possible. It is represented to us that George Edmunds has recently purchased some land in that place near the steam boat landing on which these deluded or villainous wretches are about to be settled by him, as is supposed, greatly to his own pecuniary advantage. Joab Green will probably be able to inform you that Edmunds has expressed himself in favor of the settlement of Mormons in this county.--There was Mormon preaching on Sunday last at Nauvoo, and their intention to establish a church there was announced.--
Upon consultation with many persons it has been thought best to hold meetings in every township in the county to denounce the return of the Mormons and pass resolutions expressive of the feelings and wishes of the people and of their determination that the evil of Hancock shall never again be polluted by Mormonism. — A meeting for these purposes was held last night in Warsaw and we will hold one here to night. Unless this wicked scheme is soon abandoned and the people soon become satisfied that the Mormons will stay away from our county you will see the prairies on fire all over old Hancock with our universal blaze of indignation and wrath which will surely consume the projectors of it. I have had conversation with many persons and . . . there seems to be but one feeling and one determination in every mind. Now will you not hold a meeting at [your?] place as soon as possible for the purpose indicated above, and start the thing in the adjoining Townships of Chili & St Marys. Let the proceedings and resolutions of the meetings be reported in full and published in all the papers of Hancock County and particularly the paper at Nauvoo which is supposed to be friendly to the return of the Mormons. 28

That evening, August 21, 1860, an "indignation meeting" was held in the Carthage County Court House. The court room was packed. All political parties were represented. David Mack explained the purpose of the meeting, and a series of resolutions was adopted unanimously:

Whereas, a report is in circulation, that the Mormons have an idea of returning to Nauvoo, in Hancock County, Illinois, for the purpose of re-settling at that place; which re-settlement in the unanimous opinion of this community would be a great calamity to the future prospects of said county; therefore,

Resolved, by this mass meeting assembled, without respect to political parties, that we earnestly protest against the return of the Mormons to Nauvoo. And that they will not be allowed by the people of Hancock county, to return and make such settlement.

Resolved, That the secretaries of this meeting be directed to forward without delay, a copy of the proceedings of this meeting to Joseph Smith Jr.; and also to furnish one copy to each one of the newspapers of Hancock County, with a request to publish the same. 29

Similar meetings were held in Montebello, on the 22nd of August, and Basco, on the 25th. Both meetings passed similar resolutions to those adopted at Carthage, with some additional material. The Montebello resolutions specified that renewed Mormon settlement in the county would be a violation of the agreement to leave the county and would endanger Hancock County's peace and prosperity. The Basco resolutions condemned a return of the Mormons as "a
retrograde movement in the morals as well as a political curse to the
inhabitants of said county." Both threatened the use of force to resist renewed
settlement of Latter Day Saints in the county and made pointed threats against
"Jacks" who sought to profit by a return of the Saints.

Joseph received varying pieces of advice. Some friends worried about his
safety. He was warned to be on his guard, to avoid traveling across the county,
and to be as quiet as possible. His brother-in-law, John J. Middleton, virtually
begged him to leave the county, out of fear for his safety. Others gave him
different advice. As news of the indignation meetings spread, various parties
approached him and told him not to worry, that they would support his right to the
free exercise of religion. Even some men who had been prominent Anti-Mormons
in the 1840s supported him. Thomas Sharp flatly refused to sign a threatening
letter which had been gotten up against Joseph Smith III. "No, sir!" he stated, "I
have lived through one Mormon war and certainly don't propose to get mixed up in
another!"

Several factors were operating in Joseph's behalf, which had not favored
his father. First, he was a long-time resident of the county, one who had gained
the trust and respect of his fellow citizens, even to the point of being elected to
public office by non-Mormons. Second, the nation's attention was riveted on the
opening phases of a far deeper internal conflict; the presidential campaign then
commencing would issue forth in civil war. Third, the old antagonisms had healed
over the years; the sources of conflict lay in memories of the past, not in present
conflict. Fourth, Hancock County had moved well beyond the "frontier" stage of
its history; there was greater respect for law, and fear of the consequences of
flagrantly violating another's religious and civil rights. Fifth, and last, Joseph
Smith III posed no threat—in reality, as opposed to the immediate misperceptions
because he led no Nauvoo Legion, controlled no dominant bloc of votes, presided over no economic colossus, harbored no real or imagined band of thieves and cut-throats, and had no large following. As he was careful not to designate Nauvoo a place of gathering, not to tell his followers how to vote, not to initiate secret, esoteric rites, and not to embrace anything smacking of "spiritual wifery," the perceived threat gradually faded away.

The meetings came to nothing. Rumors and threats died down. Sentiment quieted. Joseph Smith III refused to be bluffed and courageously stood his ground. As fall turned to winter, he continued to go about his business, unarmed and unmolested. By 1861, his policy had succeeded.

The conclusion of this outcry in Hancock County was highly symbolic. President Buchanan, only two years earlier, had sent Johnston's army to assert federal authority in Utah Territory. During the Civil War, a garrison was kept overlooking Salt Lake City, partially to control the Mormons, who were suspected of disloyalty. Press, politicians, and religious leaders regularly attacked Brigham Young, polygamy, and Mormonism in general. But in Hancock County, which earlier had been the scene of a miniature civil war between Gentiles and Mormons, all was quiet. Joseph Smith III pursued a policy of accommodation with the Gentiles, rather than one of confrontation. Those among whom he had lived for so many years recognized that here was a different sort of Latter Day Saint, one who posed no threat. The prophet's son and the RLDS Church were seen as different from the Utah Church. And in fact they were different; they were more acculturated, more in tune with the dominant values of American culture, less "sectarian," and closer in theology and praxis to the great body of American Protestant churches. The cessation of the outcry in Hancock County also represented a personal triumph for Joseph Smith III. His character was well
known for probity and sobriety. Repeatedly, throughout his career, his personal integrity and sincerity won friends for his church, in contrast to the elders of the Utah Church who were perceived by the public in anything but a wholesome light for decades to come.31

The New Prophet's Daily Routine

Joseph Smith III's daily life underwent no immediate transformation by virtue of his having become president of the RLDS Church. The church's membership was small—perhaps in the neighborhood of one thousand—and its administrative machinery was rudimentary. The new prophet received no salary, and his day-to-day ecclesiastical responsibilities consisted chiefly of attending to correspondence and meeting occasional visitors. Initially he and his mother were the only members of the church in Nauvoo, so there were no regular church services.

A picture of his daily routine can be pieced together from his journals.32 His principal source of income came from legal work. As a justice of the peace, he conducted trials at his home. Larger cases were conducted at an office upon the hill. Preparing and acknowledging legal papers also provided income. There were daily chores to attend to, including animals to feed. Wood-chopping and wood-hauling were frequent tasks, and every so often a load of hay or manure had to be hauled. The pace of life was slow during the winter months, but during spring the amount of work increased as the gardens around the Old Homestead had to be prepared. First peas and radishes were sown, then onions and potatoes, and finally melons and beans when the ground was quite warm. There were also fruit trees and berries to be cared for. Additional work, while the river was free of ice, came from loading barges with limestone from a local quarry. Joseph's
duties as a school director receive occasional mention, ranging from enumerating
the number of children in the city to working as a carpenter to repair the school
facilities. Wash days were a major undertaking for the woman of the house;
Joseph assisted and cared for the children, while Emaline washed. A less than
arduous form of work was fishing in the Mississippi River.

All was not work. Joseph frequently enjoyed a game of chess, as well as
working on chess problems. Playing checkers, cards, reading, smoking, shooting
small game, and playing with the children were other diversions, as well as
loafing. An occasional visit to or from his cousins—the Salisburyys or Millikins—
was a welcome treat, and so was taking a meal at the Mansion House. One
gathers that the frequent trips up the hill to take Emaline to visit her mother
were less welcome. Joseph enjoyed socializing with a variety of friends, his step-
father, and his brothers Fred and Alex. Reading about and discussing the great
political happenings of the day greatly interested Joseph.

All of these activities continued after 1860, as they had before. Prayers
were added to Joseph's routine. It would be interesting to know whether
Emaline—still an unbeliever—participated in these. Joseph carefully read the
fledgling RLDS monthly, The True Latter Day Saints' Herald. By the beginning of
1861, Joseph still preached only occasionally. In fact, many Sundays he remained
in Nauvoo and did nothing by way of church work. One important thing he did,
however, was to receive inquirers about the Latter Day work, such as John Shippy
and Ebenezer Robinson, and to win their allegiance. Joseph Smith III's affiliation
with the RLDS Church had not been precipitous, and his assumption of the reins of
power was equally deliberate.34

Reaction of the Family

Initially, Joseph Smith III and his mother were the sole members of their
family to affiliate with the Reorganization. Major Bidamon was a self-proclaimed skeptic and remained one until, as an elderly invalid, he expressed an interest in religion. His adopted sister Julia's second husband was a Catholic and strongly opposed to Mormonism. Julia became a convert to Catholicism and moved to St. Louis with her husband. 35 Joseph's three brothers had never been baptized. The first to receive that ordinance was the youngest, David Hyrum Smith, in October 1861. Each of the brothers had a distinct personality. David was tall and thin, musical, poetic, artistic, and a lover of books. He was enthusiastic in the cause and even wrote a poem chastizing his brother Frederick for not joining the church. 36 When Brigham Young told the Utah Mormons not to look for Young Joseph to become their leader, but that David H. Smith, the "son of promise," was the man, David shot off a poetic retort. 37 He was ordained a priest in March 1863, and an elder in October of the same year. Thereafter he took up missionary labors. 38

Frederick G. W. Smith was extremely close to his older brother, Joseph. The two had been partners until financial reversals forced them to go their separate ways. Fred was muscular and high-spirited. His personality was effervescent and winsome. But religious questions did not trouble his merry soul. Then tragedy struck. Late in 1861 he was taken seriously ill, and his wife abandoned him. Around Christmas, Joseph removed Fred to the Mansion House, where Emma nursed him. Fred died, unbaptized, on April 13, 1862. They buried him in the family plot near the Old Homestead. Toward the end he had expressed an interest in baptism, but had been too weak to be immersed. 39

Alexander Hale Smith, the smallest of the brothers, was nevertheless an athletic outdoorsman. Never possessing the bookish interests of Joseph or David, he revelled in his rod and gun and jackknife. If Frederick had been religiously
careless, Alexander was disinterested. "He cared nothing for religion, and besides was of an extremely skeptical turn of mind." The dangerous illness of his wife, following the birth of their first son, January 19, 1862, and the subsequent death of Frederick shook Alexander's soul. Confronted with death, he began to ponder the questions of religion and the hereafter. Comforted by the assurance provided by the Latter Day Saints' doctrine of baptism for the dead, that Fred's soul was not damned, he embraced that faith. On the 25th of May, he was baptized in the Mississippi River by Joseph Smith III. Contrary to his own expectations, he was ordained an elder in 1864, and in 1866 he was appointed to carry out an important mission to the west.

Emaline Griswold Smith remained unconverted to her husband's faith. In 1863, Joseph wrote concerning her that she was "an unbeliever" who did not sympathize with his religious endeavors. A visitor in December 1862 found Emaline to be beautiful, intelligent, and kind-hearted, but also "a little proud," and apparently caring "but little for the truth." "Joseph never agitates her mind on the subject, but leaves her to think for herself. She is no doubt a good wife, and she treats the Saints well."

**Reaction in Utah**

Up until 1860, Brigham Young left the door open for Joseph Smith III to come to Utah, cast his fortunes with that church, and assume a position of leadership there. E. W. Tullidge, who before his apostacy from the Mormon Church had known many members of the hierarchy and had done research in sensative primary source-documents, commented:

In the earlier discourses of the President of the Twelve there are many evidences, well marked, to justify the conclusion that had young Joseph come up to him to claim his father's office, he, Brigham, would have given him that office; thenceforth he would have stood to the son as he had done to his father—as President of the Twelve.
Thus in fact has President Young positively declared his intention in the most circumstantial words; and it is fairly due to him in history to give the record of that intention without invalidating its integrity and truth.

But there was in Brigham Young's mind attached an absolute and irrevocable condition, which was that "Joseph's seed" should come to himself as the Chief Apostle holding the keys to the kingdom. From his hands Joseph II. was to receive his anointing, his ordination, his office. The Prophet in his son must acknowledge on earth what the chief apostle Brigham had done. With this condition obeyed, he, Brigham, would faithfully keep his word and deliver up the "keys" unto Joseph to receive them from him back to rule the Church as long as he lived, in Joseph's name.44

Brigham Young's counsel, Heber C. Kimball, declcled on June 29, 1856, that the prophet's sons yet would participate in the work of the kingdom: "At present the Prophet Joseph's boys lay apparently in a state of slumber, every thing seems to be perfectly calm with them, but by and bye God will wake them up, and they will roar like the thunders of mount Sinai."45 Brigham Young always claimed that he was an Apostle, not a Prophet, Seer, and Revelator;46 there was always the possibility of his stepping back into the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles if one of the prophet's sons should come to occupy the presidency. Only five weeks before the Amboy Conference, Brigham Young remarked to his brother Phineas that he believed the prophet's son yet would have a position of prominence in the church.47 Many Mormons in Utah entertained the expectation that one day Joseph III or another of the prophet's sons would step forward to lead the church.48

When word of his ordination at Amboy reached Utah, there were two different reactions. A small minority—some dissatisfied with polygamy or other aspects of life in Utah—rejoiced at hearing the news. The immediate reaction of the majority was probably summed up in the letter of William H. Folsom, informing Brigham Young of the event: "A strange affair indeed, the Lesser has ordained the greater."49 Aside from questioning the right of the Reorganization to ordain Joseph Smith III, however, his affiliation with that group posed a serious
dilemma for Brigham Young. As one disaffected Utahn commented to Joseph Smith III, after learning of the Amboy Conference, the members of the Utah church had been "earnestly and anxiously watching for many years, for the Lord through you, to make a prominent movement in the church. Brigham has invariably taught the people that such would be the case in the own due time of the Lord." The letter-writer entertained the hope that the majority of Mormons in Utah would abandon the rule of Brigham Young and embrace the leadership of Joseph Smith III. Some sort of response to the Amboy Conference clearly was required.

In a discourse at the Tabernacle, June 3, 1860, the president of the Mormon Church continued to hold out hope that Joseph Smith III or one of his brothers would come to Utah. He specifically disclaimed the idea that he was the prophet's "legal successor:"

We are all the elect, if we will only keep the commandments of God and work righteousness. If we turn away from the holy commandments of the Lord, we shall be accounted as reprobates. What of Joseph Smith's family? What of his boys? I have prayed from the beginning for sister Emma and for the whole family. There is not a man in this Church that has entertained better feelings towards them. Joseph said to me, "God will take care of my children when I am taken." They are in the hands of god, and when they make their appearance before this people, full of his power, there are none but what will say--"Amen! we are ready to receive you."

The brethren testify that brother Brigham is brother Joseph's legal successor. You never heard me say so. I say that I am a good hand to keep the dogs and wolves out of the flock. I do not care a groat who rises up. I do not think anything about being Joseph's successor. That is nothing that concerns me. I never asked yet, or had a feeling as to what kind of great man, O Lord, are you going to make me? But, Father, what do you require of me, and what can I do to promote your kingdom on the earth, and save myself and brethren? I do not trouble myself as to whose successor I am."

However, as hope of Joseph Smith III's affiliating with the Utah church faded, the reaction changed. First, it was felt necessary to provide some indication of divine approbation attached to Brigham Young's presidency over the
church. Orson Hyde, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, provided such an *apologia*. On October 7, 1860, he told a tale which long would occupy a revered niche in Mormon hagiography. Alluding to the fact that many aspirants to the presidency of the church had arisen over the years, he observed that all their apologetic writings were characterized by "cold, dry, technical, husky, and spiritless reasons . . . resembling the bile ejected from a disordered stomach." But, argued Apostle Hyde, they lacked evidence of the Spirit. Brigham Young, by contrast, had never "laboured to establish his right and claim to the Presidency . . . . God pleads his own cause . . . ." He then told a tale of spiritual manifestations at the time of Brigham's selection as president:

In the month of February, 1848, the Twelve Apostles met at Hyde Park, Pottowattamie County, Iowa . . . . We were in prayer and council, commingling together; and what took place on that occasion? The voice of God came from on high and spoke to the Council. Every latent feeling was aroused, and every heart melted. What did it say unto us? "Let my servant Brigham step forth and receive the full power of the Presiding Priesthood in my Church and kingdom." This was the voice of the Almighty unto us . . . . It has been said by some that Brigham was appointed by the people, and not by the voice of God. I do not know that this testimony has often, if ever, been given to the masses of the people before; but I am one that was present, and there are others here that were also present on that occasion, and did hear and feel the voice from heaven, and we were filled with the power of God . . . .

We said nothing about the matter in those times, but kept it still. [After seating myself in the stand, I was reminded of one circumstance that occurred which I omitted in my discourse. Men, women, and children came running together where we were, and asked us what was the matter. They said that their houses shook, and the ground trembled, and they did not know but that there was an earthquake. We told them that there was nothing the matter—not to be alarmed; the Lord was only whispering to us a little, and that he was probably not very far off. We felt no shaking of the earth, or of the house, but were filled with the exceeding power and goodness of God.] We knew and realized that we had the testimony of God within us. On the 6th day of April following, at our Annual Conference, held in the Tabernacle at Kanesville, the propriety of choosing a man to preside over the Church was investigated. In a very few minutes it was agreed to, and Brigham Young was chosen to fill that place without a dissenting voice, the people not knowing that there had been any revelation touching the matter . . . . Brigham went right ahead, silently, to do the work of the Lord, and to feed his sheep and take care of them like a faithful shepherd, leaving all vain aspirants to quarrel and contend about lineal descent, right, power, and
authority.52

There are strong reasons for believing that Orson Hyde's account was an apologetic invention. The Josephite publications reaching Utah claimed that their president had been designated by scripture, revelation, paternal blessing, and later tongues and prophecies. Hyde's account countered the RLDS position: the Spirit had clearly designated Brigham Young as president! Contemporary journals do not support Hyde's account of what took place in Iowa, and Wilford Woodruff and Orson Pratt flatly contradicted its truthfulness.53

Second, the focus of hope shifted from Joseph Smith III to his younger brother, David Hyrum Smith. Joseph Smith, Jr. had introduced a series of secret rites and instructions to a trusted group of associates in Nauvoo. One of the most important was the marital rite of sealing for time and eternity. In 1843 Emma Smith was sealed to Joseph for time and eternity and anointed to him as an eternal wife, queen, and priestess. "Joseph taught that the first son born to a couple after they entered into this new and everlasting covenant of marriage had a special promise superior to any children not 'born under the covenant.'"54 When he learned that Emma was pregnant, in 1844, Joseph Smith, Jr. had a premonition that the child would be a son, a "son of promise."55 He specifically desired that the son should be named "David," because he would be a prince who would exercise theocratic rule.56 Brigham Young more and more took the approach that David H. Smith was the son of the prophet who would eventually lead the church. This expectation was found as far away as Switzerland.57 However, he insisted that David also could become the leader of the Saints only by coming to Utah, accepting the doctrines and ordinances of the LDS Church, and generally accepting the prophet's legacy as transmitted through Brigham Young.58

As time passed, it became more and more obvious that David H. Smith
would not comply with such conditions. He wrote a poetic response to such talk:

Little Herald stop a moment
    Ere you journey on your way;
I have something of importance,
    That I wish that you would say,
Unto those who not contented,
    With the leader God hath sent,
Still declare that I shall lead them,
    Though I gave them no consent.

Go and tell them I am loyal,
    To the counsels of the Lord;
Tell them I have no desire,
    To dispute His mighty word.
Joseph is the Chosen Prophet;
    Well ordained in God's clear sight,
Should he loose [sic] it by transgression,
    Alexander has the right.

Joseph, Alexander, David,
    Three remaining pillars still;
Like the three remaining columns,
    Of the Temple on the hill.
Joseph's star is full and shining;
    Alexander's more than mine;
Mine is just below the mountain;
    Bide its time and it will shine.

Shame then! work no more with Satan,
    Tempt me not to leave this band,
For as long as we're united,
    We in faith and strength may stand.
Go to Strang, and go to Brigham,
    No false prophet make of me;
In the name of Jesus, Satan!
    Get the[e] gone. It shall not be.

Little Herald, go and tell them,
    To cast out this Devil dark,
Then come follow after Joseph,
    And to truth and reason hark.
Bid them quit their evil dreaming,
    Thus to mar my joy and peace,
And destroy me and my brother;
    Bid these loud ones hold their peace.

Then thou Herald, come and tell me
    What the poor deceived ones say;
Tell me if they are not willing,
    To help Zion on her way,
And not strive to clog her rudder,
Cut her ropes, or strain her mast,
But "aboard and help cast anchor,"
That she may outride the blast.59

Third, the Mormon population of Utah was strongly warned that members of the Reorganization were apostates, and strong measures were taken to block RLDS missionary efforts. Prior to 1863, there were no RLDS missionaries in Utah. All word of the Reorganization had been conveyed via letters and the printed page. Anyone interested in the Reorganization could only receive baptism or find fellowship by leaving the Territory of Utah. In 1863 the first RLDS missionaries arrived in Utah. Elders Edmund C. Briggs and Alexander McCord made the long trek to Salt Lake City, arriving on August 7th. Four days later they had an interview with Brigham Young at his office. Flanked by an array of his most powerful associates, Brigham Young warned the intrepid missionaries of the opposition they would face in Zion. The session was stormy. President Young stated that:

he knew more of that family than they knew of themselves, that Emma is a "wicked, wicked, wicked" woman and always was, that Joseph is acting under the influence of his mother, that she is at the bottom of this work, and our mission here, that the heavens have nothing to do with that family at the present, but they shall be felt after in time, but they are under the influence of the devil now, that all Joseph wants is to associate with the murderers of his father, &c. He said, "I do not want any of your preaching here or your doctrine, and I will immediately write and advertise you and warn the people not to receive you or your doctrine into their houses, and while I have influence over the Bowery you cant hold meetings," and then he threw out some intimidations to us, and gave us to understand we should be watched, that he wanted us to be gentlemen, and other low insinuations.60

The RLDS missionaries refused to be intimidated. Despite closed meeting houses, ostracism of converts, and threats, they won converts. Some of the Gentile element in Salt Lake City assisted them, and General Connor at Camp Douglas offered protection to those who felt themselves in danger. However, the early RLDS missionary efforts suffered from one fundamental problem which
would plague the RLDS Church in Utah for many years: their branch organizations were unstable and frequently short-lived due to frequent emigration of members. Converts to the RLDS Church found life in Utah uncongenial in the extreme.61

**Initial Steps toward an RLDS Theological Identity**

During the Civil War years, missionaries carried the RLDS message to many of those Saints scattered through the Upper Mississippi Valley who had never accepted the leadership of Brigham Young. Missionary efforts were extended beyond this area to some Eastern cities, the West Coast, Utah, and even to Great Britain, but the small size of the missionary corps and lack of funds caused the church to focus its attention on those areas where the most immediate results were realized. Latter Day Saints who had never affiliated with any of the factions were proselytized. Former Strangites, Rigdonites, Smithites, Wightites, Baneemyites, Morrisites, and others were gathered into the RLDS fold. Some Brighamites were won to the cause, as well. One of the more notable successes was the conversion of the better part of Alpheus Cutler's followers to the Reorganization. By the end of the Civil War, the RLDS Church was the only viable alternative to the Utah Church, among Latter Day Saints.62

The RLDS Church was composed of disparate elements. It was a home for people who wanted to retain their identity as Latter Day Saints without having to embrace the system of theology and practice found in Utah. But what precisely was a "Josephite" Latter Day Saint? Certainly a Josephite was a non-Brighamite, one who adhered to the leadership of Joseph Smith III and not Brigham Young. But what else did it entail? The problem was compounded by the fact that Young Joseph entered into the work with only rudimentary theological conceptions. It was compounded additionally by the fact that the members of the church held a
varied views among themselves. Both Joseph Smith III and his church spent a period of years searching for a more precise theological definition.63

In contemplating joining the Reorganization, Joseph Smith III felt himself confronted with what he called a "triangular problem."64 The Reorganization stood between the Utah Church on the one hand and the non-Mormon world on the other. He realized that there was a dialectical tension to be resolved. The Reorganization was neither fish nor fowl; it was something distinct. The young RLDS president knew that acceptance of the principle of ongoing revelation set his church apart from the popular Protestant denominations which held to a closed canon of scripture, rejected latter-day revelation, and denied the necessity or possibility of Joseph Smith's "Restoration of the Gospel." But his acquaintance with the church's three standard works—the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants—convinced him that the Utah Church had fallen into false doctrine and immoral practice.

At the Amboy Conference he confessed that he was not thoroughly versed in the Latter Day Saint scriptures, but promised to remedy this deficiency. This he set about doing during the relative quiet of his remaining years in Nauvoo. He began to study all three sacred works, as well as those early Latter Day Saint newspapers, pamphlets, and books which he could obtain.65 Mastering these works and defining a distinct RLDS theological platform seemed a formidable task, at the outset. Nevertheless he made the effort, feeling it his duty:

... I knew that I had been divinely led to connect myself with the Reorganization, earnestly engaged in trying to reassemble the scattered elements of the church. Knowing this, I had faith to believe that there was sufficient truth to be found in the Written Word, both ancient and modern, to justify my belief in the religion of Jesus Christ as it was revealed in the bible, in its revelation in the Book of Mormon, and in the later revelations given to guide our church in its formative period. I believed this truth was there, and thus it became my clear duty to study these books, inform myself about the sacred revelations, and to set about this serious task with consecrated assiduity.66
He was confident that primitive Mormonism—minus "the grievous errors" which had led to a grave apostacy from the true faith—was defensible. He felt an assurance that whatever was true in Mormonism would abide, and whatever was false would fail. He also felt confident that polygamy eventually would be tested before the bar of justice and would be punished. He felt that his stance in opposition to polygamy would be vindicated in the end.67

Joseph Smith III's methodology determined his conclusions. By taking the three standard works as definitive, he automatically excluded those teachings which his father had imparted orally—and often secretly—in Nauvoo and which had never been canonized. By taking the written word as his standard, the prophet's son as a matter of course excluded many Nauvoo developments and reverted to the Kirtland period of Mormonism, when the prophet regularly delivered revelations which were canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants.68

By the time Joseph Smith III left Nauvoo, the RLDS Church had begun to define itself vis-à-vis the Mormon Church on several counts. In many cases the definition was embryonic, but the initial steps were being taken. The most important such questions were polygamy and succession, but there were others as well.

The question of polygamy. The RLDS Church was united in its denunciation of polygamy. Hostility to plural marriage, rejection of Brigham Young's leadership, and the doctrine of lineal succession in the priesthood were the foundational stones upon which the Reorganization was built in the 1850s. Joseph Smith III stood united with the rest of the church in his abhorrence of polygamy, but with one great difference. As he declared at Amboy, he refused to believe that his father had taught polygamy: "I believe my father was a good man, and a good man never could have promulgated such doctrines."69
Joseph Smith Ill's new approach was to go beyond mere opposition to polygamy, to try to clear Joseph Smith, Jr. of any connection with its origin. Within the general membership of the the RLDS Church and within its leadership, this was not generally accepted in 1860. The prevailing view was expressed in the first number of the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald*, the official publication of the church. William Marks wrote as follows:

About the first of June, 1844, (situated as I was at that time, being the Presiding Elder of the Stake at Nauvoo, and by appointment the Presiding Officer of the High Council) I had a very good opportunity to know the affairs of the Church, and my convictions at that time were, that the Church in a great measure had departed from the pure principles and doctrines of Jesus Christ. I felt much troubled in mind about the condition of the Church. I prayed earnestly to my Heavenly Father to show me something in regard to it, when I was wrapt in vision, and it was shown me by the Spirit, that the top or branches had overcome the root, in sin and wickedness, and the only way to cleanse and purify it was, to disorganize it, and in due time, the Lord would reorganize it again... A few days after the occurrence, I met with Brother Joseph. He said that he wanted to converse with me on the affairs of the Church, and we retired by ourselves. I will give his words verbatim, for they are indelibly stamped upon my mind. He said he had desired for a long time to have a talk with me on the subject of polygamy. He said it eventually would prove the overthrow of the Church, and we should soon be obliged to leave the United States, unless it could be speedily put down. He was satisfied that it was a cursed doctrine, and that there must be every exertion made to put it down. He said that he would go before the congregation and proclaim against it, and I must go into the High Council, and he would prefer charges against those in transgression, and I must sever them from the Church, unless they made ample satisfaction. There was much more said, but this was the substance. The mob commenced to gather about Carthage in a few days after, therefore there was nothing done concerning it.70

In that same initial number of the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald*, editor Isaac Sheen reprinted an article he had first composed in 1852. This article also embraced the idea that Joseph Smith had been connected with the introduction of polygamy into the church, but held that the prophet had repented of it before his death:

The Salt Lake apostles also excuse themselves by saying that Joseph Smith taught the spiritual-wife doctrine, but this excuse is as weak as their excuse concerning the ancient kings and patriarchs. Joseph Smith
repented of his connection with this doctrine, and said that it was of the devil. He caused the revelation on that subject to be burned, and when he voluntarily came to Nauvoo and resigned himself into the arms of his enemies, he said that he was going to Carthage to die. At that time he also said, that if it had not been for that accursed spiritual wife doctrine, he would not have come to that. But his conduct at that time proved the sincerity of his repentance, and of his profession as a prophet. If Abraham and Jacob, by repentance, can obtain salvation and exaltation, so can Joseph Smith.71

Joseph Smith III later recalled that his view of the matter was definitely in the minority. During the mid-1850s, he had formed his "outline casts of faith and procedure so far as doctrine was concerned," as a contingency in the event that he should be called to take up his father's work. He based his decisions upon spiritual manifestations and his sense of the Holy Spirit's guidance. "It is possible," he reflected, "if the revelation of God had been made to me polygamic, I should have been steeped ten wife deep in the 'Celestial' sweets of Matrimony." But his spiritual course was set in precisely the opposite direction:

When my duty was made plain, and I was directed to the Reorganization then already begun, I found its policy in some things, I thought at fault—notably the admission that my father taught polygamy. I found no proofs sufficiently clear to prove it to me. I adopted a different theory, and was at first much decried for it. It was charged as being the result of pride in family name.72

Joseph Smith III stubbornly set about to rehabilitate his father's name. Sometimes he was confronted with evidence difficult to reconcile with his position. Former Apostle William McLellin, for example, wrote him a disconcerting letter which contradicted some of the statements Joseph Smith III had made at the Amboy Conference. McLellin attacked the statement that Joseph Smith, Jr. was "a good man." McLellin—who shared the view that polygamy was evil—challenged Joseph to ask his mother about the facts. If he would do so, McLellin reasoned, she would tell him that his father taught and practiced polygamy, produced a revelation to sanction, regulate, and establish it, and that finally the revelation was burned before her very eyes by the prophet.
Emma could also relate a "rather black catalogue" of the prophet's doings dating back to the days in Kirtland. "Your mother told me these items when I was in Nauvoo," he defiantly asserted. Furthermore, William Marks could tell him that the revelation had been read in the High Council, when Marks presided over it. Basically, McLellin dared the young RLDS president to ask those who were older and better informed about the subject. "Then, Sir," he wrote, "if you are honest before the Heavens yourself, never, no never proclaim again publickly or privatily [sic] that 'I believe my father was a good man', whilst the means to know his real character lies so near You—even in the bosom & memory of your Mother!" But whether out of fear, timidity, a sense of delicacy, or respect for his mother's feelings, Joseph never questioned her about the matter until the end of her life. The extent of his discussions with William Marks or other old-time Nauvooans is not known.

With those who could not contradict his position, he conversed freely. Gradually he won converts to his point of view. For example, in December 1862, before departing on a mission to England, Charles Derry visited Nauvoo. Derry had been converted to Mormonism in England, immigrated to Utah, and left in disgust at what he found there. He was converted to the RLDS Church in Nebraska and soon became a tireless laborer in the cause. He knew he would face questions about polygamy back in England and sought Joseph Smith III's counsel. The young prophet replied:

Brother Derry, I was but about twelve years of age when my father was killed, and I am not supposed to know all the privacies of my father's family, but this I do know, that there were other females in Father's family besides my mother. I knew them before my father's death, I knew them two years afterwards, and I do know that during those years they never bore children. Now the whole world knows that my father was a proper man. My mother, of course, bore him children, and if these other women had stood in the relation of wives to him, or had been used as such, it is reasonable to suppose they too would have borne children.
Derry, who had never lived in Nauvoo, considered this answer decisive, particularly in light of the Mormon claim that plural marriage was intended to raise up "righteous seed." The question, "Where are the offspring?," was to become a leading weapon in the RLDS apologetic arsenal.

For some time, anti-polygamic articles in the True Latter Day Saints' Herald built upon the commonly-shared assumptions in the Reorganization, viz., polygamy was morally wrong; polygamy was contrary to the Bible; polygamy was contradicted by the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. Joseph Smith III never forced others within the Reorganization to accept his point of view. He was content to bide his time and slowly to win converts to his own position.75

On May 2, 1865, a joint council of the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency discussed the question of polygamy. The minutes record:

The Question arose as to whether Joseph the Martyr taught the doctrine of polygamy. President Marks said Brother Hyrum came to his place once and told him he did not believe in it and he was going to see Joseph about it and if he had a revelation on the subject he would believe it. and after that Hyrum read a revelation on it in the High Council and He Marks felt that it was not true but he saw the High Council received it.76

It is unfortunate that the minutes do not record which members of the RLDS hierarchy held what views on the subject. But it is clear, as Richard P. Howard has observed, that there was a polarity emerging among the leaders of the RLDS Church over whether the battle against polygamy should also include attempts to establish the innocence of Joseph Smith, Jr. with respect to its origin. "Joseph III's stance, i.e., that his father had been a good man and therefore could not have promulgated such doctrines, was inconsistent with the recollections of others of his RLDS colleagues who had been adult members of the Nauvoo church."77 In 1867, another joint council grappled with the issue and tabled a resolution denying that Joseph Smith, Jr. was either "the author or excuser" of polygamy. The
resolution was tabled on the grounds that such an apologetic tack would be counter-productive, "because of the almost universal opinion among the Saints that Joseph was in some way connected with it."

Throughout the years of his presidency in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith III quietly bided his time. As time passed, and he grew firmer in his control of the church's administrative machinery, as the older generation gradually passed from the scene, and as the number of members converted under his auspices grew, he eventually would see his view of the matter triumph. But the time was not yet.

The question of succession. The doctrine of lineal succession had been the second foundational doctrine of the Reorganization. Z. H. Gurley, Sr. continued to champion this teaching in the 1860s, but, if possible, he was eclipsed in his zeal by Isaac Sheen. When Sheen began editing the True Latter Day Saints' Herald in 1860, in Cincinnati, the paper was the only publishing endeavor of the church. As such, it was extremely influential among the Reorganized Saints. Sheen, who had mastered the arguments for lineal succession in 1849 and 1850 while editing the Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald on behalf of William Smith, now reproduced and elaborated upon all his old arguments. He ransacked the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Book of Abraham for evidence that both the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods had been handed down from father to son from the time of Adam onward, and that this rule had applied in ancient Israel, among the Nephites, in the primitive Christian Church, and in the last dispensation. In 1864 and 1865, Sheen broke new ground in his apologetic efforts with a fanciful reinterpretation of the New Testament and Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, in light of the doctrine of lineal succession. First, he anachronistically read Latter Day Saint ecclesiology back into the history of the early church. Then he imaginatively demonstrated that James and John the sons
of Zebedee were actually brothers of Jesus. He was then able to argue that when Jesus Christ had departed, James, John, and Peter constituted the First Presidency of the Church, that authority having been passed on according to lineage from Christ to his brother James. The martyr James, who presided over the church at Jerusalem, was the same James who had been present upon the Mount of Transfiguration. When James died, the presidency passed to John, and when John died, it disappeared from the earth.80 The Herald also carried the familiar arguments of Z. H. Gurley on the subject, as well as others.81

The Herald exchanged fire with the Mormons in Utah on the question of succession. Early in 1861 came a reply to Orson Hyde’s conference address of October 7, 1860. Sheen spent considerable effort in rebutting the argument that the Spirit testified to the selection of Brigham Young as president of the church, appealing to some arguments ad hominem as well as some more telling points. How, asked Sheen, could Orson Hyde’s testimony that the voice of God designated Brigham Young president at Kanesville be relied upon? If true, why had the testimony been withheld until 1860? He challenged Hyde to name those people who felt the ground tremble and heard the voice of God. Why should Hyde’s testimony be trusted, when the Utah apostles consistently had lied about polygamy until 1852? The “voice,” concluded Sheen, was nothing more than the inner voice of those captive to the devil. The voting to accept Young as president was a sham, because none dared oppose it, and the church so voting was not the true church because captive to iniquity.82

In June 1861, the Herald carried an anonymous letter from Utah, stating that Brigham Young and his followers were now “preaching against young Joseph, and the New Organization,” saying that “Joseph is not the man, but David is the man to lead this Church.” Commented Isaac Sheen:
When Brigham and his colleagues organized their church, he acknowledged that Joseph would take his father's place, and we are in possession of good evidence that he said, (not much more than a year since) "when Joseph comes out to take his father's place, he will come out right." Brigham now repudiates the truths he has uttered concerning Joseph, and says, "David is the man to lead this church."\(^{83}\)

The previous policy of ignoring the Reorganization was not working, in Sheen's opinion, so it was now necessary to adopt more active counter-measures.

In April 1864, Sheen published a letter from James Burgess, stating that in the confusion and disorder in Nauvoo, after the death of the prophet, "there was an idea generally entertained by the saints, that Joseph's oldest son was the one appointed to succeed his father as President of the whole church, and in consequence of his youth they saw no alternative but to wait until the time appointed by infinite wisdom."\(^{84}\)

What was remarkable about this polemical stance was the quietude of Joseph Smith III. He spoke little about the subject during his final years in Nauvoo. The readiness of other RLDS elders to speak about the question makes his silence all the more perplexing, particularly since he spoke about it readily in later years. This silence was a damaging strategic blunder in the RLDS struggle with the Utah Church. The most advantageous moment for "Young Joseph" to press his claims to leadership was at the beginning of his career, not years later. In 1860 his position was novel; it attracted attention. There were those who until recently had been led to believe he someday would lead the Utah Church. There were others who remembered the general expectations concerning him in Nauvoo. As years passed, these memories faded or became less important. With the passage of time, Mormons came to view him not as the heir of the beloved prophet, but as his wayward son. The year 1860 was the most opportune time to press such arguments, but Joseph Smith III did not do so.

The reason Joseph Smith III said so little about the subject, during his
initial years as president of the RLDS Church, lay in his personality. Seeking publicity, calling attention to himself, anything which smacked of self-promotion or egotism, was alien to him. He was diffident about seeming to push his own claims. With his legal training, he may have preferred to rely upon the testimony of others concerning his calling, rather than emphasize his own testimony, which might be regarded as self-serving. It took him some years before he felt comfortable as a preacher, and this same self-consciousness lay at the root of his diffident course. Naivete and inexperience also were factors, since Joseph once told W. W. Blair that he hoped that those elders in Utah who knew of his setting apart by Joseph Smith, Jr. would step forward and bear testimony. In later years, he would know better.85

Disbelief in his calling was not the cause of his relative silence. At Amboy he stated that he came in obedience to a higher power. In his "First General Epistle," dated July 19, 1861, he approached the subject negatively, arguing against the series of claimants to Joseph Smith's mantle:

Almost every one of them, too, knowing the true order of the law, claimed respectability, sanction, guardianship, regency, or a holding of the rule subject to, and looking for a coming forth of one of the true descent, to take a place in authority. Claims were made, in almost every instance, that sooner or later, one of Joseph's sons would come forth and unite his destiny with that particular faction.

Some acted, as they declared, with my knowledge and sanction; some took upon themselves, by right, a guardianship over my spiritual welfare, and dared to say with my approval; and still another, more bold but scarcely less honest, claimed to receive letters from me, saying that my mother's influence kept me from their midst—that I was with them in faith, &c.

Now, be it known, that up to the spring of 1860, no faction of the church, no claimant to the honors of leadership, no party or sect ever received endorsement, sanction or authority from me. I never selected a spiritual guardian, or appointed an agent, nor recognized any regency or guardianship whatever; and that, at that time, I only acted as I was impelled; that I acted by dictation, and that of no man; that I have kept my own counsel...86

But as to his own right to the presidency, he declared, "Now I have not a word to
say in advocacy of my right, or my calling. I ask none to believe upon my say so; let each and all examine carefully and without prejudice, asking his God for wisdom to judge aright, and as I have said, so say I now, I have no fears as to the result." When inquirers came to visit him in Nauvoo, and asked him why they should believe he was a prophet, he told them to pray about the matter: God would give them a testimony.87 This, after all, had been the method by which he had come to occupy the presidency, and he recommended it to others. As he put it in the "First General Epistle," "I would not that men should hastily run without tidings, nor do I ask that any should place the stake of their salvation upon an earthly arm." Human testimony was insufficient; divine testimony was necessary. Accordingly, when he did speak about the subject, he bore testimony that God had called him to stand in his father's place.

The approach of Isaac Sheen and Z. H. Gurley, Sr. to the question of succession, based on an accumulation of proof texts, might convince some, but it was overly legalistic and based on a complex series of inductive and deductive arguments. It did not rest upon an explicit dictum that Joseph Smith III should succeed his father. The approach of Jason W. Briggs and Joseph Smith III, emphasizing the inward testimony of the Spirit and spiritual signs, might convince others, but followers of Brigham Young also could make such appeals. "Pray about the matter," was hardly a conclusive argument. There was another approach—readily at hand—which avoided the problems in both these approaches, but it lay dormant until 1865.

W. W. Blair, a young and energetic RLDS apostle, pioneered this third approach to the question of succession. In his missionary journeys he visited many old Saints. More and more, he accumulated evidence that Joseph Smith, Jr. had blessed his oldest son and designated him as his successor. These testimonies
came not from one faction, but from a variety of scattered sources. As he traveled, he recorded the testimonies in his journal. In the October 1, 1865 issue of the True Latter Day Saints' Herald, he put the testimonies in print. Here was an appeal to authority which every Latter Day Saint would understand. The prophet himself had set apart Young Joseph to be his successor. Blair recounted the evidence. In Nauvoo, he visited the prophet's widow, and Sister Emma told him that George J. Adams told her, in the spring of 1844, "The matter is now settled, and we know who Joseph's successor will be: it's little Joseph, for we have just seen him ordained by his father." In Alton, Illinois, James Whitehead, formerly a clerk to the prophet, told Blair that shortly before his death the prophet and others, in a council, anointed Joseph Smith III to be the prophet's successor. Whitehead's testimony was the more convincing, since he named those who had been present in the council. Whitehead also recalled that shortly after this anointing, the prophet stated to the people from the stand that he was no longer their prophet, placed his hand on Young Joseph's head, and said, "this is now your prophet, I am going to rest!" In 1861 Blair was told by former members of Lyman Wight's colony that "Lyman in their conferences took great pains to teach them that Young Joseph would yet lead the church; he said he knew it, for when himself, with Joseph and Hyrum were in Liberty Jail, Mo., they put their hands on the lad's head (then but 6 years old,) and the martyr then and there sealed prophetically that calling and blessing upon him." Blair then placed Joseph Smith III's testimony in evidence. This was the first time it appeared in print:

The first opportunity I had, I asked young Joseph if he remembered such an occurrence [i.e., being blessed in Liberty Jail], he said he did not, though he well remembered staying in the jail with his father and the brethren while his mother was attending upon business in the town, but he said he remembered being in a council in the spring of 1844, at Nauvoo, and that his father declared to the council that he (young Joseph) would be his successor in the leadership of the church. He furthermore stated that G. J. Adams was in that council, with many that
are now in Salt Lake; that the reason why he had not made this matter known before was, that he did not wish to be first and alone in bearing witness to his own appointment, and that he had hoped that those in Utah and elsewhere, who knew concerning this matter, would have come forward and borne record of the fact.

Blair concluded his treatment of the succession by stating that some to whom he related the above facts remarked that it was strange that Joseph Smith III had waited until 1860 to step forward. This would be a frequently heard objection. Blair replied, "It is no more strange than that David should be chosen of God and anointed, many years before he was called to the active duties of his office, or that John the Baptist should be ordained by the angel of God when he was only eight days old...."

Blair's apologetic approach to the question of succession became a ready weapon in the hands of RLDS missionaries. By the end of the century, it had become an apologetic mainstay and a central point of contention between the two churches. But for the moment, Joseph Smith III was still reluctant to utilize this approach.

The question of loyalty. On one issue, during his presidency in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith III was definitely the leader of the RLDS Church. This was the question of loyalty to the federal government. During the Civil War, there was considerable question raised in national political circles and in the press concerning the loyalty of the Mormon leadership in Utah. Joseph Smith III was determined that there should be no such confusion concerning the RLDS Church.

Joseph Smith III had always entertained a lively interest in political and social issues. The presidential election of 1856 was the first in which he was eligible to vote, and he cast his ballot for John C. Frémont of the young Republican Party. He did not consider himself a Republican, however, for another four years. Up until 1858, he entertained considerable sympathy for Stephen A.
Douglas, largely in gratitude for Douglas' assistance to his father in the 1840s. However, in 1858, both Douglas and Lincoln spoke in Carthage. Lincoln impressed him favorably, but he lost respect for Douglas when the Senator had to discontinue his speech as the result of inebriation. During the 1850s, Joseph increasingly found himself radicalized on such questions as the slave trade in the District of Columbia, the Dred Scott decision, and the State of Illinois' Black Code. Once when a fellow citizen was looking for a fugitive slave, Joseph declared that if he came across the runaway he would give him some money and help him make his escape. During the heated political discussions of 1860, he declared that if given the choice between an educated, gentlemanly Negro or an uneducated, profane Caucasian, he would prefer to vote for or be tried by the black man. When his opponent in discussion retorted by questioning what he would do if his daughter wished to marry a black man, Joseph bit the bullet and replied that he would respect his daughter's wishes. In the 1860 election he voted for Lincoln, and remained a lifelong Republican. His hostility to slavery, his New England heritage, and his distaste for the character of many of the leading Democrats in Hancock County all contributed to his decision. The pledge in the Republican platform to extirpate the "twin relics of barbarism"—slavery and polygamy—from U.S. territories doubtlessly made the new party even more attractive in his eyes.89

As the secession crisis of the winter of 1860 escalated into armed conflict, Joseph watched developments with intense interest. His father had predicted, in 1832, that civil war would break out in South Carolina. He wondered whether or not the prophecy would prove true.

Joseph Smith III became a strong advocate of the Union cause. In response to President Lincoln's call for volunteers, a recruiting rally was held at the
Nauvoo City Hall, in the fall of 1861. Numerous speeches were made, but to little effect. Enthusiasm was ebbing. Against his wishes, he was called to speak, to see if he could kindle the flames of patriotism. He became carried away with excitement and gave an impassioned patriotic oration. When he finished, seventeen young men enlisted for service.  

Soon he faced a dilemma, however. The war dragged on. He already had committed himself to religious work, yet he felt the pull of patriotic duty. He believed in the Union cause, yet his religion taught him that shedding innocent blood was an unforgivable sin. If he enlisted and killed a Southern soldier, would he have committed that sin? If he and his able-bodied brothers failed to enlist, what would neighbors think of them?  

Finally, after considerable prayer and discussion with others in the church, he felt led to the following conclusion:

Do not enlist. Enlisting makes your military service an individual and voluntary action, whereby you will be responsible for the blood you might shed while in the service. Wait; if drafted, the responsibility is lifted. In such case do not hesitate to take your places in the ranks and to do your full duty as good soldiers and citizens, supporting the Government to the best of your powers. In such an event do not shirk any duty the service requires, even should it mean the shedding of human blood, for through the conscription the deed becomes a national sin instead of a personal one. The Nation as a whole will have to suffer for its sins, but you will not be held personally under moral obligations in the matter if you do not voluntarily enlist.  

Toward the end of the war, Alexander H. Smith was drafted. He reported for training, but was discharged without having to go to the front. Neither Joseph nor David was conscripted.  

The Mormon War of 1857-1858 had left doubts about the loyalty of Utah's Mormon population, in the minds of many in the East. Federal officials had reported a long series of disputes with the Mormon leadership, which was probably inevitable, since the church in theory and in fact functioned as a state within a state. With the advent of Civil War, many in Utah regarded Joseph Smith's
prophecy of 1832 as in the process of being fulfilled. It was expected that the remainder of the prophecy, which foretold worldwide tribulation, would come to pass shortly, and then the Millennium would begin. Some also viewed the conflict as national atonement for the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. With the removal of federal troops from Utah, in 1861, it was decided to reestablish the State of Deseret, early in 1862. This church-dominated shadow government coexisted alongside the regular territorial government for the next eight years. To protect the overland mail and telegraph routes, guard against the Indians, and to maintain federal presence in suspect Utah Territory, Lincoln ordered Colonel P. Edward Connor's Third California Volunteers to the territory in 1862. Throughout the rest of the Civil War, Connor's troops kept watch over Salt Lake City from the heights of Camp Douglas, east of the city. An often acrimonious truce was maintained between Federal and Mormon authorities for the duration of the war.94

Brigham Young also was angered by the passage, in 1862, of the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act by the Republican-dominated Congress. This act levied penalties against anyone practicing plural marriage in federal territories.95 Republican doctrine held no sympathy for Democratic notions of popular sovereignty in the territories. Republicans in Washington might legislate against the second "relic of barbarism" as well as the first. Brigham Young, in anger, publicly berated the "rank, rabid abolitionists whom I call black-hearted Republicans," whom he blamed for meddling in Utah's affairs as well as bringing on the Civil War. Unsympathetic to slavery, Young was deeply suspicious of abolitionists. Suspicious of the Republicans in Washington, he nevertheless continued to push for Utah's admission into the Union.96

While many denominations were split asunder by the Civil War, and while the Mormons under Brigham Young viewed the armed struggle with decidedly
mixed emotions, the RLDS Church enthusiastically declared its support for the Union. Without a southern constituency, this produced little conflict. The Annual Conference of 1863 directed a committee to draft an article explaining the church's views on loyalty. Joseph Smith III, Jason W. Briggs, and W. W. Blair performed this task. Entitled, "The Declaration of Loyalty to the Government of the United States, by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints," it was published in the True Latter Day Saints' Herald the following month. "When it is admitted, and indeed declared, that South Carolina and the Southern States are in rebellion, it is easy for us to tell where our government is," they reasoned. They declared rebellion against lawful authority to be a sin and obedience a duty. "The fact is, God has always called his people to peace—-to be obedient to kings, governors and rulers in general, except when they dictate in matters of religion—in matters pertaining to the salvation of the Soul." The duty of every Saint, they concluded, was to render unto Caesar that which was Caesar's, and to pray for those in authority.97

Unfortunately, little has survived to indicate Joseph Smith III's view of the Morrill Act, at the time of its passage. One brief reference in a letter written in 1863 indicates that he hoped enforcement of the federal legislation would bring about a crisis in Utah's affairs which would result in elimination of polygamy, if not the rule of Brigham Young.98

The question of ordaining Negroes. Joseph Smith, Jr. left a confused legacy for his followers concerning Negroes. On the one hand, several passages in Latter Day Saint scriptures teach that dark skin is a mark of divine displeasure, and Joseph Smith strongly dissociated the Saints from abolitionism. But on the other hand, Mormon scriptures contain egalitarian passages which make it clear that salvation is universally available, regardless of race. One passage in the
Book of Mormon repudiated slavery. The revelation of December 25, 1832 foretold civil war in America, which would be accompanied by slave uprisings. While no abolitionist, Joseph Smith proposed various ways in which slavery might be eliminated.99

Joseph Smith's ecclesiastical policy toward blacks was likewise ambivalent. On the one hand, the church had Yankee roots and drew its converts largely from the Northern states and Europe. There were few black members. To avoid troubles in the South, Joseph Smith instructed missionaries not to ordain blacks to the priesthood or to baptize slaves without their masters' permission. He is reported to have said, "the spirit of the Lord saith the Negro has no right nor cannot hold the Priesthood." When Joseph Smith produced the Book of Abraham, in 1835, it contained a passage denying that the descendants of Ham could hold the priesthood, because they were a cursed race. On the other hand, Joseph Smith permitted his Negro friend Elijah Abel to be admitted to the priesthood in 1836 and to be ordained a Seventy in 1841. The prophet was inconsistent.100

Under Brigham Young, the Mormon Church perpetuated the racist aspects of Joseph Smith's teachings. Brigham Young publicly proclaimed that a man with African blood in him could not hold the priesthood. The black race was held to rest under a divine curse. Negroes could be baptized into the church, but could not receive ordination as priests.101

Joseph Smith III inherited the egalitarian aspects of his father's legacy. Before his father's death, the lad had studied his father's views on government, which were sympathetic to the plight of the slave. He had observed his father's humane and anything but racist treatment of various black people. As he grew up, he found himself more and more radicalized on the question of freeing the slaves.102
As the Civil War wound down, the question of the status of Negroes naturally addressed itself to the RLDS Church. At a joint council meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve, on April 1, 1865, Apostle John Shippy raised the question whether it was permissible to ordain Africans to the priesthood. The question was also raised whether a Saint could be ordained without a favorable vote of the branch in which he held membership.103 No decision was reached.

The next evening, however, at a prayer meeting, Joseph Robinson spoke in tongues. Joseph Smith III interpreted the tongue and said "we would have peace for a season & that the prejudice of race color & caste would be done away among the Saints and that every nation and people would soon have their gospel ministers."104

In the coming weeks, it became increasingly obvious that the Civil War had been decided. On April 4th, the soon-to-be-assassinated Abraham Lincoln toured the captured Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia. Later in the month, Lee surrendered to Grant, and Johnston surrendered to Sherman. Jefferson Davis was in flight with the Confederate treasury. Would the RLDS Church move, with the nation, to recognize the altered status of blacks?

At the beginning of May, in another council meeting, the question was canvassed. A resolution was offered, "that the gospel makes provision for the Ordination of men of Colour who are received into the Church." Apparently there was division of opinion within the council, because a substitute resolution was passed: "Resolved that we refer the question respecting the ordination of men of Colour to the Lord and that we come together fasting and praying that God may reveal His will on this matter unto us through His servant Joseph."105 After time to reflect, pray, and sleep, Joseph Smith III returned to the council on May 4th with a revelation which stated, in part:
Concerning the Matter you have asked of me: Lo it is my will that my Gospel shall be preached to all nations in every land, and that men of every Tongue should minister before me; Therefore it is expedient in me that you ordain priests unto me of every Race who receive [sic] the teachings of my Law and become heirs according to the promise.

Be ye very careful for many elders have been ordained unto me and are come under my condemnation by reason of neglecting to lift up their voices in my cause....

Be not hasty in ordaining men of the negro race to offices in my Church, for verily I say unto you all are not acceptable unto me as servants, nevertheless I will that all may be saved, but every man in his own order and there are those who are chosen instruments to be ministers to their own race[.]

The question of segregated congregations was addressed the following year. An informal council of the Twelve Apostles met prior to conference. A resolution was adopted stating that "the Author of Life and Salvation does not discriminate among His rational creatures on account of colour neither does the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," and it was agreed to place the matter before the conference.107

At this time, neither the Utah Church nor the Reorganization had canonized the Book of Abraham. The Utah Church eventually canonized the Book of Abraham, with its curse upon the Hamitic peoples. But with Joseph Smith III's revelation of May, 1865, the Book of Abraham rapidly fell into eclipse within the RLDS Church.

Under the leadership of his son, the Reorganized Church was true to one aspect of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s racial legacy. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, the Mormon Church was true to another aspect of that legacy. Throughout the lifetime of Joseph Smith III, the two churches would remain poles apart on this question.

The question of democratic church government. The RLDS Church, under Joseph Smith III's presidency, operated in a more democratic fashion than the Mormon Church in Utah. There were several reasons for this.
In the first place, the Reorganized Church had operated for the better part of a decade, until April 1860, without a president and prophet. This vacuum at the apex of the hierarchy inevitably fostered a more democratic method of conducting business at conferences, whereas Mormon tradition called for unanimous votes to sustain positions already determined by the hierarchy. Without a First Presidency, conferences became the highest authority in the church. Vigorous debate became an accepted tradition. Disagreement with the majority was not viewed as grounds for excommunication.

In the second place, Joseph Smith III was democratic both by temperament and conviction. He was approachable and affable. He had no lordly spirit about him. His years in Nauvoo—as a member of a despised minority—had taught him to respect the rights of minorities and to value freedom of thought and expression. His years among the Gentiles had also taught him how to guard his tongue, how to conceal his emotions, and how to proceed deliberately, even cautiously. These qualities made him an excellent presiding officer, especially when debate was intense. One thing he insisted upon was that good order be observed in debate. He never held it against a member for voting contrary to his own sentiments. Sometimes he even found his brother Alexander voting on the opposite side of a question. Doctrinally he was willing to tolerate a certain latitude of opinion within the church.108

In the third place, the Reorganized Church was pluralistic by design. It aimed to reunite in one flock the scattered sheep of Israel who had followed so many different shepherds since 1844. Members of the different factions inevitably brought with them a variety of views and expectations. Hence, toleration of diversity was both wise and necessary.

In the fourth place, the relatively liberal spirit of the Reorganization was
one means whereby it distinguished itself from the Utah Church. Liberality became part of its identity, in contradistinction to the Mormons of Utah. The True Latter Day Saints' Herald kept up a constant criticism of intolerance and "oppression" in Utah. A particularly inviting target was the financial status of the Utah hierarchy. Brigham Young, it was claimed, lived in luxury while the poor were taxed and tithed mercilessly. "Wealth and power, rule and dominion, are the only objects in view," it was claimed. Stories of those who had left Utah in disillusionment were publicized. Ex-Utahn Charles Derry claimed that the settled policy in Utah was "oppression, ambition, gold and lust." The secrecy of the temple rites was criticized. When E. C. Briggs and Alexander McCord began RLDS missionary work in Utah, they found the meeting houses closed to their preaching. RLDS apologists complained about this policy for decades. On occasion, the missionaries faced physical intimidation in Utah, and the Reorganized Saints were quick to raise the cry of persecution. Willingness to open their own meeting houses to others and willingness to debate with other denominations became hallmarks of the RLDS Church under Joseph Smith III's presidency. A relatively impoverished hierarchy and an aversion to anything smacking of clerical dictation in politics likewise became RLDS distinctives vis-à-vis Utah. After leaving Utah, Charles Derry was particularly impressed with Joseph Smith III, because of the great contrast he observed between the RLDS president and the Utah hierarchy: Joseph was no power-seeker, he concluded.

The question of tithing. The question of tithing was closely connected to the foregoing question of democratic church government. The Doctrine and Covenants required the Saints to tithe, but the manner in which that law would be applied was of extreme concern to the early members of the Reorganization.
Earlier experiences of the Saints in consecrating or tithing their substance to the Lord had left some bitter memories. Ex-members of the Utah church felt that Brigham Young used the tithes for personal aggrandizement. As practiced in Utah, Mormons were expected to tithe one tenth of their gross income to the church. However, there was precedent in the Doctrine and Covenants for regarding tithing as an initial consecration of one tenth of all that one possessed with an annual tithe of one tenth of all one's increase. Different interpretations of this law were widely discussed in the RLDS Church. In 1861, the Twelve and Joseph Smith III called for the Saints to resume tithing. They endorsed the interpretation that tithing was to be an initial consecration of one tenth of one's substance, followed by periodic donations of one tenth of one's "surplus" (net income after necessities; net increase). Responsibility for administering the law of tithing was diffused rather than concentrated. Joseph Smith III wrote a warning against self-aggrandizement, "be he whomsoever he may be." He later recalled the conditions which brought forth this warning:

There had grown up in the minds of those with whom the Reorganization movement began a strong and active repugnance to the idea of what was called a "one-man" rule or power. The history of the church had shown that the policy of having the church properties held by a trustee-in-trust had in some ways and under certain influences been made an instrument of oppression upon the people. The serious question in the minds of the Saints was, Will there occur in the Reorganized Church a repetition of such experience?

Thus it was that this revelation, placing as it does responsibility for the execution of the temporal law upon others besides the President or Presidents of the Priesthood, was timely and contributed to the spirit of confidence needed.

Various questions concerning the exact mode of administering the law of tithing continued to agitate the Reorganized Church for years. But its fundamental direction, in distinction to the Utah Church, was firmly set. To this day, the RLDS Church is relatively poor, open, and democratic in its financial administration. The Utah Church is wealthy, secretive, and authoritarian by
contrast.

**Assorted other questions.** By rejecting plural marriage, the Reorganized Church deliberated stepped backwards from what one scholar has termed "the Nauvoo experience." In doing so, certain corollary doctrines, beliefs, and practices became vestigial remnants. The Reorganization did not set out to abandon them, but gradually they became superfluous. The beginnings of this process can be seen during the first six years of Joseph Smith III's presidency.

The doctrine of plurality of gods was widely held early in the history of the Reorganization. The Utah Mormons held that celestial marriage was the *sine qua non* for future exaltation to godhood; there were myriads of spirits in the universe at varying stages of progression along the ladder to godhood. Belief in a plurality of gods was integral to the Mormon system. But because some early members of the Reorganization remembered Joseph Smith's teachings--in the Book of Abraham, the King Follett Discourse, and in his revised translation of Genesis--concerning plurality of gods, they did not reject the concept immediately, despite its logical connection to polygamy. Isaac Sheen cited the Book of Abraham as scriptural authority, reprinted it in the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald*, and later offered it for sale as a pamphlet.

At a joint council of the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve, May 1 through 5, 1865, two anomalous positions were adopted. Joseph Smith III told the council that "some teach that [polygamy] will yet be a law of this Church," and requested the brethren to condemn it, which they did unanimously. Later he proposed for discussion the question, "Are there a plurality of Gods?" Apostle W. W. Blair took the lead in advocating the doctrine. After discussion, a resolution was passed affirming belief that "the doctrine of the plurality of Gods is scriptural." Whether Joseph Smith III understood this to mean myriads of gods
is not known. In later life he defended the idea, found in Latter Day Saint
scriptures, that there are two personages in the godhead, God the Father and
Christ the Son. One episode in his memoirs shows that he held such a view in
1863. Perhaps it is in this limited sense that he could accept the council's
resolution.

Brigham Young gave a peculiar twist to the doctrine of plurality of gods.
In conjunction with the LDS doctrine of eternal progression and belief in sealing
of children to parents (eventually to form a great celestial chain from the first
generation to the last), he developed the idea that Adam was God. This Adam-
God doctrine never received universal acceptance in Utah, although those who
could not accept it were wise not to publicize their views. Later leaders of the
Utah Church repudiated the doctrine, which was too clearly at variance with LDS
scriptures. This peculiar doctrine was rejected and condemned by the
Reorganization from the beginning, since it had developed after the Mormons
reached the Great Basin.

Connected with the doctrines of celestial marriage and exaltation to
godhood were certain temple rites inaugurated by Joseph Smith. In the first
Mormon Temple, at Kirtland, washings and anointings were introduced. The
Doctrine and Covenants included references to these ceremonies and to an
"endowment" from on high. The Doctrine and Covenants also included references
to temples. The Reorganized Church did not repudiate belief in temples or
temple rites. But they possessed no temple and performed no washings or
anointings. There was a general expectation that the Lord would gather them to
Jackson County, Missouri, soon, and that a great temple would be built there. The
whole question of temples and temple ceremonies tended to be deferred into the
future.
The Reorganized Church soon developed a hostile attitude toward the more highly developed rites which had been introduced in Nauvoo. These rites—including secret passwords, secret grips, secret oaths, enactment of scenes from sacred history, sacred garments, sealing in marriage for eternity, sealing of children to natural or adopted parents for eternity, etc.—had been taught and practiced secretly in Nauvoo but never had been canonized. Already during the early years of Joseph Smith III’s presidency, there were moves to dissociate the Reorganization from these practices.129 In later years, the repudiation would become explicit.

One temple rite which the Reorganized Church did not repudiate under Joseph Smith III’s presidency was baptism for the dead. In the first place, the doctrine had been canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants.130 In the second place, it had been practiced for a time in Nauvoo. Emma Hale Smith had been baptized for a number of her dead relatives.131 In the third place, Frederick G. W. Smith had died unbaptized, and the family had taken comfort in the thought that he could be baptized vicariously, when God again permitted such baptisms. In the fourth place, the doctrine had no logical connection with polygamy, plurality of gods, or the more esoteric temple ceremonies.

Winding up 'n Nauvoo

Following his initial enthusiasm for gathering the Saints to Nauvoo or some other location, Joseph Smith III developed an extremely cautious attitude toward the gathering. His experiences with Major Bidamon and others taught him to beware of speculators who would attempt to use the Saints to their own advantage. His experience with the indignation meetings in Hancock County taught him that better relations with the Gentiles might be fostered by not gathering to one location. During his early travels in the 1860s he observed
numerous instances of Saints who were careless in their financial affairs because they expected to return to Jackson County imminently. He began to warn the Saints against such carelessness. Buy land where it was cheap, put down roots, make improvements, and await the Lord's good pleasure was his advice. When the proper time came to gather, God would reveal it.132

Gradually a small branch of Saints grew up in Nauvoo. A number of Saints did gather there from other locations. For a time services were held in the rented premises of Benjamin Austin. When this was outgrown, they moved to the old William Marks home. Then a meeting place was fitted up in the Red Brick Store. By 1864 the branch had grown to seventy-five members.133 Joseph, Alexander, and David received valuable ministerial training by preaching in Nauvoo and the surrounding countryside.

At first Joseph felt a certain diffidence about preaching. Distractions could cause him to lose his concentration. For many years he felt uncomfortable when preaching in a new place before strangers. But gradually he overcame his inhibitions and gained in confidence and experience as a preacher.134

Additional children were born to Joseph and Emaline: Carrie Lucinda (1861), Zaide Viola (1863), and Joseph Arthur (1865). Emaline did not possess a robust constitution, and after the birth of Joseph Arthur her health began to decline.135

From his quiet pace in the early days of his presidency, Joseph Smith III gradually took on more and more responsibilities. He presided at conferences, attended to correspondence, presided for a time over the local branch and district, and traveled about on short missionary journeys.

The two most important ways the Reorganized Church spread its message were through the preaching of traveling elders and distribution of the True Latter Day Saints' Herald. In 1863, editor Isaac Sheen had moved to Plano, Kendall
County, Illinois, where the church had located its first press. The church was not content to have an individual member solely in charge of this important organ, and early insisted that Joseph Smith III assume supervisory responsibility. In 1865 the Annual Conference went farther and directed that he move to Plano and become editor of the Herald and manager of the Herald Office.\(^1\)36

Joseph had proven a point by staying in Nauvoo. He was a free citizen and he asserted his right to live where he pleased and to practice his own religion. He had continued to hold the confidence of his fellow-citizens and had been re-elected Justice of the Peace in 1862 by a two-to-one margin. He had promised George Edmunds he would stay five years, to see if Nauvoo might prove a good location for the Saints. The time had expired, and Nauvoo had failed the test. Those few families of Saints who had moved to Nauvoo found it economically disadvantageous. The value of land continued to decline, and they saw their investments slipping away. Gradually the Saints moved away again.\(^1\)37

The time was right for Joseph to move, as well. The railroads had by-passed Nauvoo. It was isolated and stagnating. He was ready for a more active role in the work as editor of the True Latter Day Saints' Herald. He had studied the church books and felt confident in the RLDS position.\(^1\)38 His apprenticeship was over.

Joseph made preparations for the move to Plano. He resigned his office as Justice of the Peace. The household goods were packed and sent on to Plano. After a brief visit with the Millikin relatives in Colchester, the Smith family boarded a train for Plano. A new chapter in Joseph's life was about to begin.\(^1\)39
CHAPTER VI

THE PLANO YEARS: 1866-1881

Early in January 1866, Joseph, Emaline, and their four children arrived in Plano. After moving into their new home, purchased for them by Bishop Israel L. Rogers, Joseph took up his new routine as editor-in-chief of the Herald. He was embarking on duties which would occupy the better part of his adult life.¹

Not long after their arrival, Emaline became homesick. She took little Joseph Arthur with her on a trip back to Nauvoo. As he saw them off on the train, Joseph Smith III had a terrible premonition that he would never see mother and son alive together again. His sense of foreboding came to pass. The following week he received an urgent summons to Nauvoo. Making his way as quickly as he could upon the transportation of that day, he arrived in Nauvoo on March 13th. But he was too late. His infant son had passed away the previous day.

A funeral service was conducted for the infant in the dining room of the Mansion House. An RLDS elder preached the sermon. Then the small body was laid to rest in the family plot next to the Old Homestead.

Joseph's bereavement was bittersweet. Emaline greeted him with the welcome news that she had been baptized into the RLDS Church shortly before Joseph Arthur died. In his memoirs, Joseph recalled:

...because of some manifestations to herself, the nature of which she never disclosed to me, my wife had received the ordinance of baptism at the hands of my brother, David. This news was a great joy to me, and I was happy to know she had at last joined me as a member of the church I loved. I think she found great comfort in it, as well.
His wife's baptism was a great solace to Joseph, particularly since her health began to decline seriously about this time. They remained in Nauvoo for a while, visiting friends and relatives.²

During Joseph Smith III's absence in Nauvoo, an important caller came looking for him. On March 22nd, General P. Edward Connor stopped in Plano on his way east, hoping to visit the RLDS president.³

First Visit to Washington, D.C.

Connor had developed strong opinions about Mormonism during his stay in Utah.⁴ He disliked polygamy and the rule of the Mormon hierarchy. During his command in Utah, he had encouraged the development of the territory's mineral wealth—an idea which Brigham Young opposed—hoping that profitable mines would attract an influx of Gentiles, and that this in turn would undermine the political and social domination of the Mormon hierarchy.⁵ He outlined his views in a letter to Lt. Colonel R. C. Drum in 1863:

Entertaining the opinion that Mormonism, as preached and practiced in this Territory, is not only subversive of morals, in conflict with the civilization of the present age, and oppressive on the people, but also deeply and boldly in contravention of the laws and best interests of the nation, I have sought, by every proper means in my power, to arrest its progress and prevent its spread. As a question for the civilian, I can conceive of but two ways of striking at its root and annihilating its baneful influence. The one, by an adequate military force, acting under martial law and punishing, with a strong hand, every infraction of law or loyalty; the other, by inviting into the Territory large numbers of Gentiles to live among and dwell with the people. The former, I am aware, is at the present time impracticable, even though it were deemed advisable. The latter, if practicable, is perhaps, in any event, the wiser course. With these remarks I desire to inform the Department Commander that I have considered the discovery of gold, silver, and other valuable minerals in the Territory of the highest importance . . . .⁶

Connor favored a multi-faceted assault upon the Mormon hierarchy's power, utilizing political, military, economic, social, and religious tactics. He had lent his protection to RLDS missionaries and saw in the RLDS Church a weapon to
be used against Brigham Young.7 He particularly hoped that David H. Smith might be sent on a mission to Utah, since he was aware of Brigham Young’s statements that David someday would lead the church. Connor hoped that a "son of the prophet" could detach the loyalty of the Mormon populace from the hierarchy. His hopes were no secret. On February 28, 1866, Joseph F. Smith wrote contemptuously of Connor’s plan:

I understand that Gen. Conner has gon to Washington to favor, if possible the plan, of getting Cousin David out here with a vew to break down the power & influence of Prest. Young and in that way ablish polygamy. Whew! what a Coup-d’etat!! don’t we "mormons" quake!!

Connor proceeded on to Washington, where he canvassed the Mormon question with prominent members of the federal government. Afterwards, he wrote to Joseph Smith III, informing him that some of them favored the idea that Joseph go to Utah. He related that Joseph, David H. Smith, and E. C. Briggs were likely to be summoned to appear before the House Committee on Territories. He also requested copies of the True Latter Day Saints’ Herald, particularly those containing extracts of Brigham Young’s sermons. He planned to use the extracts to demonstrate his twin complaints of Mormon disloyalty and continued practice of polygamy. He concluded by stating that he would not return west for some weeks, and inquired if Joseph would be willing to join him.9

Connor’s strategy aroused the interest of at least one powerful congressman. James M. Ashley of Ohio was a leading radical Republican.10 As chairman of the House Committee on Territories, he was in a position to initiate legislation aimed at eliminating the "twin relic of barbarism" in the Territory of Utah. On May 10th, Ashley wrote to Joseph Smith III, summoning him to Washington to testify to the committee.11

The RLDS president left Plano on May 30th and arrived in the nation’s capital on June 2nd. He was unable to see Representative Ashley immediately,
due to the chairman's being out of town on vacation. Joseph took the opportunity to do some sightseeing. He watched both Houses of Congress conduct their business. He was favorably impressed with the progress of the Negroes he observed and concluded that they would make rapid educational and social advances if given the opportunity.12

On June 6th he was able to talk with Ashley for the first time. Ashley informed Joseph that he wished to enact legislation which would end the practice of polygamy in Utah. After some general discussion of the situation, he posed the question which underlay his calling Joseph Smith III to Washington:

"Mr. Smith, what legislation would you, from your knowledge of the situation, recommend to congress for enactment?"

He offered Joseph time to think about the matter and requested his answer in writing. Several more such interviews took place during the following week. Finally he had Joseph write out his testimony, in the form of answers to fifteen questions. Rep. Ashley urged Joseph to suggest specific legislative enactments aimed at Mormon polygamy, but Joseph's objectives were different than the congressman's. Ashley desired to crush Mormon polygamy. Joseph Smith III desired to see the demise of polygamy, but he also sought to dissociate "primitive Mormonism" from contemporary Mormon practice and to ensure that any Anti-Mormon legislation was not so loosely drawn as to include the Reorganized Church.13 He was embarking on the first of a long series of ventures in public relations. He sought, by his testimony, to create a distinction in the mind of Congress and the public between pristine Latter Day Saint faith and practice under his father (and under himself) and the apostacy and wickedness prevailing under Brigham Young. Joseph Smith III never appeared before the committee proper; Ashley conveyed his testimony in written form.14
In reply to the question, "On the death of your father, who, under the rules prescribed in the Mormon book of Doctrine and Covenants, became his constitutional successor?," he answered: "His eldest son." He went on to explain that the Twelve Apostles had been the next ranking quorum in the church, after the First Presidency, and that most members of the church had acquiesced in their leadership, since he himself had been a minor, "upon the declaration publicly made, that such right was exercised by said quorum during the minority of young Joseph Smith,' and with reference to his attaining to proper age, and the ultimate reorganization of the first presidency in accordance with the rules of the book of Doctrine and Covenants . . . ." But, in 1847, Brigham Young was elected president by a portion of the Saints, and he "thereupon assumed the right and attempted to lead and control the whole church." However, not more than one-third of the Saints ever followed Brigham Young to Utah, he estimated.

The most sensational part of his testimony was his repudiation of polygamy. To the reading public, Mormonism and polygamy were practically synonymous. But here was the prophet's son, not only denouncing polygamy as morally wrong, but denying that it was any proper part of the Latter Day Saint faith. He quoted extensively from the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants to show that both books "explicitly condemn and forbid" polygamy. For the first time, he laid before the general public his belief that polygamy was an innovation introduced under Brigham Young. The introduction of the doctrine of polygamy and kindred teachings constituted "an apostacy" from primitive Mormonism, he charged. Brigham Young and his close associates had apostatized and led many innocent people astray. Joseph held out hope, however, that the majority of Brigham Young's nominal followers—who had never entered into polygamy—would abandon their theoretical allegiances if properly informed and if
"secured in the safety of their persons and property."

Besides arguing that Brigham Young had usurped the presidency of the church and introduced polygamy, Joseph Smith III tried to establish another line of demarcation between the RLDS Church and the Mormon Church. To the question whether the church under his father or himself taught hostility to the government of the United States, he replied:

The church under the presidency of my father did not teach hostility to the government of the United States, as I have every reason to believe. Neither does it now, under my presidency, so teach; but to the contrary, we hold it to be a cardinal virtue to "be subject to the powers that be." And furthermore, that it is our duty to uphold good men in office; honoring magistrates and rulers as such; denouncing sedition and strife as unbecoming to the Christian and punishable by legitimate process of law.

He declined to answer the question whether the Mormon leaders in Utah taught hostility to the government on grounds that he had no personal knowledge of the subject. Nevertheless, the distinction was plain enough, especially when General Connor testified that "Mormonism, in Utah, teaches disloyalty and treason to the government as a practice enjoined by their religion."15

Joseph Smith III refused to recommend additional legislation aimed at the Mormons of Utah. He maintained that all that was necessary was enforcement of existing laws and protection of dissidents and non-Mormons. Additionally he recommended removal of "such governmental appointees as have only strength enough to suck the 'pap' patriarchal, and the appointment of such men as have had no affiliation with treason and the evasion of the law . . . ." In his view, the problem was not so much lack of legislation as failure to enforce federal authority.

The Committee on Territories had been directed to investigate conditions in Utah by two resolutions adopted in January 1866 and to make recommendations whereby "this great and remaining barbarism of our age and country should be
swept (like its twin system—slavery) from the territories of the republic.\textsuperscript{15} However, after taking testimony, the committee was unable to agree on any plan or legislation which would "promise a practical solution of the abuses and evils complained of, and which are admitted to exist." The committee specifically rejected the idea of dividing the territory and annexing the parts to surrounding territories. However, the committee's report to the House was a damaging piece of publicity for the Utah Church. It stated:

The testimony discloses the fact that the laws of the United States are openly and defiantly violated throughout the Territory, and that an armed force is necessary to preserve the peace and give security to the lives and property of citizens of the United States residing therein.\textsuperscript{17}

When Joseph Smith III left Washington on June 11th, he could take satisfaction in having accomplished—at least in part—his objectives in going there. First and foremost, he had aimed to create a distinction in the eyes of the public and Congress, between his church and Brigham Young's: the one true to primitive Mormonism and the other apostate, the one led by a "true son of a true father" and the other by a usurper, the one loyal and the other disloyal, the one monogamous and the other polygamous. Second, he had sought to place the onus of introducing polygamy upon Brigham Young, not Joseph Smith, Jr. Third, he had sought to prevent any enactments which might be so broadly constructed as to include the RLDS Church within its proscriptions. Fourth, he had sought to steer a middle course between the advocates of radically punitive measures and those who would adopt a "hands-off" policy toward Utah.\textsuperscript{18} Fifth, he had desired to show that Mormon polygamy was a social, not a religious evil. He reasoned that polygamy was not properly a part of Mormonism, and therefore not subject to protection as a religious principle, under the First Amendment.\textsuperscript{19}

His trip to the nation's capital marked the opening shot in a lifelong
campaign to convince the public that Joseph Smith, Jr. was not the author of polygamy. When the committee's report was issued, in July, Joseph Smith III received some favorable publicity. For example, the Chicago Tribune's story of July 27th cast Utah Mormonism in a highly unflattering light, but devoted a favorable paragraph to the testimony of the son of the prophet:

Among the witnesses examined was Joseph Smith, the son of the founder of the Mormon Church, who says the Book of Mormon explicitly condemns and forbids polygamy, which was not known, acknowledged or held as an article of faith until Brigham Young became the leader of that part of the church which went west with him. The church did not, under the presidency of his father, nor does it now under his (the witness') presidency, teach hostility to the Government of the United States.20

The Inspired Version of the Holy Scriptures

One project which was on Joseph's mind, even before leaving for Washington, D.C., was the "New Translation" of the Bible. At his death, Joseph Smith, Jr. had left a revision of the Bible in manuscript. Although often referred to as a "translation," the prophet did not employ conventional methods of translating, since he could read neither Greek nor Hebrew. His method was to read and study passages in the King James Version and then to indicate inspired additions, deletions, or alterations to his scribes.21

When Emma Smith fled from Missouri—Joseph Smith, Jr. was imprisoned in Liberty Jail at the time—she carried the manuscript in two cotton bags, fastened to her waist and concealed under the folds of her dress. Thereafter she guarded the manuscript as a sacred treasure. She adamantly refused to turn it over to Brigham Young, prior to the exodus from Nauvoo, despite numerous requests that she do so. She considered herself divinely appointed to protect the manuscript, much as David Whitmer felt about the manuscript of the Book of Mormon.22

The Saints had not forgotten the manuscript of Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible. At the Annual Conference of 1866, the following resolutions were
adopted:

Resolved, That the church ought, as speedily as possible, to publish the translation of the Scriptures made by Joseph Smith.
Resolved, That the time has arrived for the church to publish the New Translation immediately.

It was also resolved that local leaders should solicit subscriptions and donations for the work, that a committee should wait upon Emma Smith Bidamon "respecting the relinquishment of the manuscripts of the New Translation of the Scriptures, for the purpose of publishing the same to the church and to the world, ... that said committee be empowered to enter into and fulfill the contract for the same," and that the printer's copy be engrossed so that the original might be preserved.23

When the appointed committee—Israel L. Rogers, William Marks, and Ebenezer Robinson—called upon Emma Bidamon, they found her quite willing to release it for publication. Accordingly, the church began soliciting subscriptions and donations. This task occupied the rest of 1866. The RLDS Church was small. To undertake publication of such a large work strained the church's financial resources. Finally the church considered that it had a sufficient number of pledges and cash to proceed with publication.

A second committee was entrusted with the work of preparing the printer's manuscript. Joseph Smith III, Israel Rogers, Ebenezer Robinson, and W. W. Blair began the laborious task on January 2, 1867. Despite a series of problems, not the least of which was the complex task of correlating markings in the prophet's Bible with the appropriate notations in the manuscript, the project was finally completed.24 Stereotyped plates were secured, and arrangements were made for printing. At last, the tiny church presented to the world The Holy Scriptures, Translated and Corrected by the Spirit of Revelation, by Joseph Smith, Jr., the Seer.25
Joseph felt that he had discharged a sacred obligation. The manuscript had been entrusted to his mother by God, and at the proper time the family of the prophet had brought it forth and presented it to the world. When the committee began its work on the manuscript, in January 1867, he composed a lengthy poem to his mother, entitled, "To the Elect Lady, on Her Faithful Care of the MSS. of the New Translation," commending her for her faithful care of the documents. It read, in part:

    Our day has come, as raptured Enoch saw.
    The visits of the Angels once again
    Are had, to bring to earth the treasured word.
    And thou, elect, art worthy found, to hold
    These priceless treasures in a sacred trust;
    To keep them safe for sore tried Israel's weal;
    And bartered Judah's self-made wound to heal.
    Hail, mother, hail. Thou best of mothers, hail!
    For so, must greet thee Israel's children, blest . . .
    And when these pages with their truths sublime,
    Are placed within the hands of Israel's host,
    My father, smiling on his earthly son,
    Will shout the victory over Death and Hell;
    And pointing with his spirit hand to earth,
    Will ask the Master, is my crown now won,
    Through faithful ministry, of wife and son?26

Through most of 1867, the committee labored diligently at its task. It was a large undertaking, occupying much of Joseph Smith III's time and thought. With anticipation the Saints awaited the result: a perfect translation produced by the power of God.27 Isaac Sheen produced a series of articles for the True Latter Day Saints' Herald, quoting from the work of the committee. He aimed to show that Joseph Smith's translation was an improvement over the King James Version, since it explained many difficulties and eliminated contradictions and absurdities. At last, in the December 15, 1867 issue of the Herald, Joseph Smith III was able to announce that the Herald Office had received the first shipment of the New Testament (Inspired Translation).

The Inspired Version was seen as validating the ministry of the RLDS
Church. Joseph Smith III called the Holy Scriptures "the crowning mercy of God unto us . . . one of the strong testimonies in favor of the divinity of the latter day work . . . ." The scriptures which had been entrusted to the prophet and his wife had come forth at last. Joseph Smith, Jr. had proclaimed that the Saints believed in the Bible "insofar as it is correctly translated." No other church in Christendom possessed such a correct translation, one authenticated by divine inspiration, not mortal scholarship. The Mormon Church employed the fallible King James Version of the Bible, but the RLDS Church proclaimed the pure Word of God. RLDS elders delighted to press home the distinction, to the embarrassment of their Mormon counterparts.

The Utah Church felt the force of such arguments. Even before the Inspired Translation had come off the press, Alexander H. Smith reported that rumors were afoot that Joseph Smith III "was now changing the manuscript of the New Translation." W. W. Blair encountered similar rumors soon after publication, and indignantly denied them. He even quoted a verse from the Doctrine and Covenants to prove that such alteration was impossible, because it had been foretold that the translation would be "preserved in safety." Blair called publication of the Holy Scriptures "one of the strongest of proofs that the Reorganized church is the church of Christ." God had honored the Reorganization by causing the New Translation to be brought forth by its auspices. No other faction could make this claim:

The Brighamite, Rigdonite, Hedrickite, and all other churches, are dependent on the Reorganized church for the New Translation.—God has chosen that it should be the source, and its elders the ministry from whence the fulness of the scriptures should go forth to all men, hence it is the Lord's church, and its elders are the Lord's elders.

Another tactic of the Mormon Church was to claim that the Reorganized Church possessed a spurious copy of the New Translation. RLDS missionary
Thomas Job encountered this rumor in Southern Utah:

On this trip I first heard what I had been looking for for some time, and that is, that the original manuscript of the Inspired translation of the scriptures in in the possession of Brigham Young, and that it endorses polygamy in the most clear manner. The genuine had to come out before the spurious counterfeit could make its appearance. I heard Brigham telling that the copy you have over there, had been through the hands of the Gentiles. It is a fact that the Brighamites will not receive the Inspired translation.31

Later in 1868, Thomas Job reported additional moves taken to discredit the Inspired Translation:

Brigham lately brought the Inspired Translation of the Scriptures, as a present from you, into the School of the Prophets, and requested Orson Pratt and George A. Smith to pass their verdict as to its merits. It [sic] was compared with some extracts that they had before in the Pearl of Great Price, and as it was not exactly worded the same, it was pronounced spurious.

Your cousin Joseph was preaching in Provo last Sunday week, and he said that the New Bible was pronounced spurious by the President of the Church; and that you thought of making your fortune by the speculation; that the imposition was intended to be palmed upon this people; that the book has been examined, and does not agree with the original in their possession; but this is nothing but what I expected, for it would not do to be otherwise. Now this people is warned against the imposition, but I find that the more they are warned, the greater is their anxiety for seeing the book . . . .32

During his visit to Salt Lake City in 1885, Joseph Smith III visited Orson Pratt's widow, Sarah. She told him that her husband had been elated at first seeing the Inspired Translation and had stated in public that the work was accurate. Brigham Young summoned him to his office and demanded that he retract his endorsement of the New Translation, which Pratt was compelled to do, reluctantly and with embarrassment.33

Up until recent times the LDS Church has refused to make official use of the Inspired Translation, maintaining that the manuscript was never finished by the prophet. After the death of Brigham Young, some overtures were made to the RLDS Church to be allowed to compare the manuscript with the published version, but the request was denied due to a dispute over the protocol to be observed in
such an inspection.34

Alexander Hale Smith's First Visit to Utah

The Annual Conference of 1866 appointed Alexander H. Smith to take charge of the California Mission. This entailed passing overland through Utah. It would be the first time that one of the prophet's sons had set foot in the territory. Despite Alexander's inexperience as an elder, Emma Smith Bidamon's displeasure at the thought of one of her sons going to Utah, and the difficulty of the journey, there were compelling reasons for sending one of the sons of the prophet to the "Salt Land." The possibility that one of the Smith brothers might be called to serve in the Union Army was no longer a restraining factor. General Connor had tried to persuade Joseph Smith III himself to make the trip earlier in the year, thinking that his appearance might undermine Brigham Young's authority. One of the Smith brothers might attract more publicity, draw larger crowds, and win more converts than any other RLDS missionary.

Alexander set out for the west in May. The long journey did not daunt him. He was an outdoorsman and possessed a spirit of adventure. He took with him two companions: James W. Gillen (appointed to labor in Utah) and William Anderson (appointed to California). At Fort Laramie they joined a train of Mormon emigrants and were unfavorably impressed with the lack of piety they observed among the Bringhamites. Toward the end of August they reached Salt Lake City. Alexander was warmly welcomed by his cousin John Smith, presiding patriarch of the Utah Church. John insisted that Alexander stay in his home so long as he was in Salt Lake City. Their religious differences did not affect his friendliness. John Smith, however, deflected all attempts at religious discussion. John Smith held a prestigious title, but he possessed no power within the Mormon hierarchy. This was driven home the first Sunday Alexander was in the city. The two cousins
attended services together at the Tabernacle. John asked if Alexander would like to sit on the stand. Alexander was willing but indicated he did not expect to receive an invitation. John went confidently to the stand but returned to their seats chastened and wiser. "They said it wouldn't do," he told Alexander.35

Soon after arrival, Alexander reported to Joseph: "I have seen nearly all the big bugs here; they all strive to win my confidence, professing love for the family to a fabulous degree." He was not convinced, and requested David Hyrum Smith to write to him, giving a "strong testimony." Alexander found it necessary to combat a variety of rumors:

The people here do not believe that either you, or David, are indeed in good earnest, nor working yourselves, but simply giving your leave and names to some one else. They are taught from the stand by their masters that David will be a Prince and ruler of this people; yet I heard yesterday, that in a private meeting B. Young ordained his son to the office he himself holds.36

Alexander was surprised at some discoveries. All immigrants were rebaptized upon arrival in the Great Basin. Their comrades in the emigrant train were taught to ostracize them as soon as they arrived in the city. He reported that some newcomers were compelled to sign a note to the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, despite having paid for the journey in advance. He was shocked to hear his arguments for the RLDS position—from the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants—dismissed out of hand: "The books are a dead letter. They are not worth the ashes of a rye straw. We have the living oracles." Most alarming was the physical danger in which the RLDS elders felt themselves.

Alexander H. Smith's visit accomplished little until the last week. A new amusement park was opening in town, and the owners thought nothing could attract a larger crowd for the opening than having Alexander give an address. It was as expected. A huge throng gathered to hear Alexander speak at Line and
Fox's Gardens. Brigham Young and Joseph F. Smith were in attendance. Alexander spoke boldly, denouncing polygamy. At the end of his address he asked why his listeners continued to sustain Brigham Young as prophet, seer, and revelator when Young publicly had said he was "neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet." A voice from the rear shouted that the reporters had made a mistake; Brigham Young had said no such thing. Alexander asked why the mistake had never been corrected. There was quite a commotion as numerous voices shouted that they had heard Brigham Young make the remark. Having finished, Alexander opened the floor to discussion. Joseph F. Smith arose and defended polygamy and Brigham Young's leadership of the church. He prophesied that Joseph III and David would yet come and endorse Utah Mormonism and claimed that the hierarchy had great love for the prophet's family. When he finished, Alexander roundly castigated him. After the meeting, Joseph F. and Samuel H. B. Smith continued to discuss their differences with Alexander until late in the night.\(^{37}\)

Alexander H. Smith's visit to Utah accomplished little. He was the object of great curiosity. He put to rest some of the rumors that the prophet's sons were not really associated with the Reorganization. And his presence brought the first public demonstration of the cleavage between the two branches of the Smith family. Relations between Joseph F. Smith and the prophets sons would never be cordial again. But there were no mass conversions and no shaking of the power of the Mormon hierarchy. Hopes that this particular son of the prophet might work a revolution in Utah had proven illusory. On September 15, 1866, Alexander Hale Smith and William Anderson left Salt Lake City for California.

**Campaign against the Smith Family**

Until 1860, many Mormons in Utah expected Young Joseph to assume leadership of their church someday. Brigham Young had fostered this idea. But
after 1860, David Hyrum Smith was said to be "the coming man." 38

By 1863 Brigham Young was becoming more and more blunt in his criticisms of Joseph Smith III. In private he told E. C. Briggs that Emma Smith was a "wicked, wicked, wicked woman," laboring under the influence of the devil, who had misled her sons. God, he told Briggs, had nothing to do with the prophet's family at present. But in public he still held out hope that David Hyrum Smith would come to Utah and lead the Mormon Church, despite what he called the "humbug" of "Young Josephism." Joseph Smith III would never lead the Mormon people, and if he truly had a revelation from God he would be told to come humbly and meekly to the Lord's servant, Brigham Young. He roundly attacked Joseph III's character, calling him a money-seeking hypocrite, a lawyer, and an infidel. He vilified Emma Smith for allegedly trying to destroy the church, poison the prophet, and alienate the prophet from the Twelve. 39

This was a harbinger of things to come. In 1865, Brigham Young moved to suppress Lucy Mack Smith's *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations*. Lucy Smith had dictated this work to her amanuensis Martha Jane Coray in 1845. Eventually the manuscript had passed into the hands of Apostle Orson Pratt, who had published it in England, in 1853. It had been recognized for some time that a number of factual inaccuracies had crept into the work, but up until 1865 it had continued to enjoy popularity among Mormon readers. In that year Brigham Young issued orders that the work be suppressed. The *Deseret News* of June 21, 1865 carried Brigham Young's request that all copies be turned in to the church. A series of subsequent notices appeared to the same effect. The *Millennial Star* of October 21st carried a lengthy condemnation of the work. Ecclesiastical authorities were urged to gather up and destroy every copy of Mother Smith's book, "so that it will never be
read by any person again." In particular the account of William Smith's behavior after leaving Missouri was condemned as inaccurate. Brigham Young felt that the book painted all too favorable a picture of the Smith family, particularly those members who had rejected his leadership such as William and Emma.\textsuperscript{40}

The suppression of Lucy Mack Smith's book did not go unnoticed by the Reorganization. The \textit{Herald} printed a biting letter from Thomas Job in Utah, which reported that Brigham Young had lately traversed the Territory collecting copies of the book:

He said that they are nothing but falsehoods, that there were "more lies in them than Lucifer ever told," that he was going to grind those books over again. But the chief cause is (as one observed) that that book gives a little more favorable account of Sister Emma than Brigham Young does. His exertion is to hurry that family into oblivion, if possible. His wrath towards that family is without bounds.\textsuperscript{41}

By 1866, the prophet's family was the subject of a widespread whispering campaign of vilification, rumor, and innuendo. It was said that the leaders of the Reorganized Church were impersonating the sons of the prophet. The characters of Emma and Joseph Smith III were slandered. Joseph was said to have visited Washington, D. C. for the purpose of getting federal troops to come to Utah and kill off the Mormons.\textsuperscript{42}

After Alexander's visit to Salt Lake City, Brigham Young vented his spleen at the Semi-annual Conference. He reiterated in public a long list of calumnies against the Smith family. Emma Smith he called the "damndest liar that ever lived," one who had raised her sons in lies. As for Joseph Smith III, Brigham Young claimed that he was a confirmed Spiritualist.\textsuperscript{43}

In the December 15, 1866 issue of the \textit{True Latter Day Saints' Herald}, Joseph Smith III replied to Brigham Young's remarks, questioning the propriety of one in his position descending to vituperative attack. As for Young's particular accusations, he responded:
The statement made by Pres. Young, that Joseph Smith... is "a confirmed spiritualist," lacks but one essential ingredient to be fearfully effective in the hands of those opposed to the tenets held to by us, and that one essential is truthfulness. It is false in inception, false in theory, and false in facts, and has no sort of foundation save the isolated truth that he did once endeavor to investigate Spiritualism, and finding no good in it for him, at once and entirely discarded it.

He challenged Brigham Young to enquire of Oliver Boardman Huntington concerning the truth of this account.

He dismissed the report that he went to Washington to bring soldiers down upon Utah. To support his contention, he appealed to the report of the Committee on Territories.

He replied to the attack on his mother with characteristic understatement when under fire. He diplomatically suggested that perhaps Brigham Young had been misreported and added that Brigham Young might rectify the mistake by publishing a correction in the press. In any case, Brigham Young's statement that Emma Smith Bidamon was a liar was "unqualifiedly false."

As to Brigham Young's motives in making such statements, Joseph Smith III concluded that he desired "to counteract the influence which may have obtained through the efforts made by my brothers and myself to recall the saints to the practice of virtue and the paths of righteousness." Vituperation against the wife and sons of the prophet—professedly the objects of great love—would not be returned in kind, he promised. He would continue to rebuke error and vice, without any need to take refuge in lies.44

Joseph Smith III rarely replied to the rumors which spread concerning himself. However, when Sophia Jewks, the only member of the RLDS Church in the small town of Fountain Green, Utah, wrote him asking for a statement which she could show to her neighbors, in reply to the "disgracing and calumniating" rumors she encountered, he published a response. Sophia Jewks had reported that
her LDS neighbors taunted her, "But is not your prophet a lawyer, a man guilty of receiving bribes for allowing the publicity of his name as a prophet . . . ?" Joseph replied:

To the accusation of being a lawyer, (heinous crime?) we reply that we did study law; but have never practiced it as a profession.
To the one charging us with receiving a "bribe" for the use of our name, we reply: no bribe has ever been offered, no overtures made to induce us to permit the use of our name in the manner named. . . .

For good measure he contradicted the common rumor that he received a handsome salary and added that no officer of the Reorganized Church received any salary for his duties. "There is not," he concluded, "an orthodox minister, of any celebrity, in the United States, that does not receive a more adequate support from his ministerial labors than we do." 45

**Life in Plano**

The battle with the Mormon Church now was joined in earnest. Joseph already was hearing the cry, in 1866, that he should go to Utah. But it would be another decade before he undertook such a mission. The reasons for this delay were largely of a personal character. His situation in Plano did not permit him to be away from home for extended periods of time.

Since the birth of Joseph Arthur Smith, in 1865, Emaline Smith's health had been poor. Her decline was hastened by a miscarriage in Plano. Joseph felt that he must stay close to home because of Emaline's illnesses. The situation was a great strain upon him:

For five years I carried the ever-present consciousness that she whom I loved so dearly . . . would not remain with me, and for two whole years I never knew an undisturbed or unbroken night of rest and sleep. . . .

The last two years of her life she spent in the peaceful consciousness that she had done what she could to prepare herself for the transition from this life to another. During her last sickness, which lasted some ten weeks, I did not have my clothing off except for purposes of cleanliness and change, and the only rest I knew was that obtained in the semi-consciousness condition of an anxious watcher,
aware of her every move. . . .46

The long-anticipated stroke occurred on March 25, 1869. Emaline Griswold Smith's body was taken back to Nauvoo and laid to rest next to those of her departed children. Joseph Smith III was now a widower at the age of thirty-six.

Life as a widower was not to Joseph's liking. He had loved Emaline deeply.47 He was left with three young children. His home-loving, domestic instincts rebelled at the idea of breaking up his home. As a stop-gap measure he employed a housekeeper to oversee household duties and care for his children. Her name was Bertha Madison. She was the daughter of Norwegian immigrants, a member of the RLDS Church, mature, and responsible.48

Having a live-in housekeeper soon set gossiping tongues to wag, despite the fact that Joseph had hired an assistant housekeeper to forestall just such criticisms. Joseph made the situation a matter of intense prayer and received his answer in a dream. In the dream he was instructed to marry Bertha. After a period of courtship, they were married on November 12, 1869.

Joseph's first marriage had been born of romance. His second marriage was born of more pragmatic considerations. Nevertheless, Joseph and Bertha grew to love each other and enjoyed years of married life together. Joseph trusted Bertha's managerial abilities and felt it safe to leave domestic affairs under her supervision while he traveled to distant locations.

During their stay in Plano, Bertha bore seven children: David Carlos (August 14, 1870), Mary Audentia (March 23, 1872), Frederick Madison (January 21, 1874), Israel Alexander (February 2, 1876), Kenneth (October 6, 1877), Bertha Azuba (October 15, 1878), and Hale Washington (February 22, 1881). Kenneth died in infancy. The others moved with the family, in 1881, to Lamoni, Iowa.49

Plano assumed the character of an unofficial church headquarters. The
president of the church and various other members of the hierarchy lived in or near the town. A number of annual conferences were held there. But it was the presence of the Herald Office more than anything else which gave Plano its position of prominence.

Joseph Smith III received no remuneration as president of the church. His livelihood came from his salary as editor of the Herald, fees received as justice of the peace in Plano, and gifts from members of the church.

Joseph Smith III had been reluctant to assume the position of editor of the True Latter Day Saints' Herald. He felt that he lacked qualifications. Nevertheless, he yielded to pleas that he undertake the task, recognizing the strategic importance of the church's publishing arm. More than merely an "editor," he managed the Herald Office. Under his leadership, the Office offered an ever expanding list of publications, mainly tracts. In 1869 the church acquired a steam power press, which greatly increased its publishing capacity. Also in 1869, the Office began issuing a new periodical, a children's paper entitled Zion's Hope.

Since 1863 the Herald had been a bi-weekly. This required constant editorial supervision. Isaac Sheen continued to render assistance, but he was growing elderly. Without an assistant editor, Joseph was tied closely to the office. Beginning in 1870 a series of assistant editors allowed him to begin making longer missionary journeys without having to worry that editorial duties were being neglected. Mark H. Forscutt served as assistant editor from 1870 to 1872, M. B. Oliver from 1874 to 1876, and Henry A. Stebbins from 1876 to 1880.

Given this additional freedom, Joseph gradually expanded the scope of his missionary journeys. His journeys took him into neighboring states. The entries in his journals are sporadic and brief, but it is evident that he was a busy man during
his years in Plano, attending to office duties, preaching, corresponding, attending conferences, baptizing converts, performing weddings and funerals, "administering" to the sick, and receiving money from the Saints for publications. Gradually he gained confidence in his abilities as a preacher. However, during these years he always preferred to address a familiar congregation. He later recalled:

... I still knew what it was to have my knees quake under me when rising to address a new congregation. I was tortured by an almost uncontrollable fear when meeting strangers to the faith, to whom I was under the necessity of explaining it, for experience had proved that thereby I often exposed myself to their contempt and abuse. These fears and qualms can only be explained by the fact of those unhappy early experiences in my life, when I was surrounded by unbelievers who not only had a disrespect for our faith but allowed their aversion to be extended to those who presented it—apparently believing that "Mormons" had no rights they were under obligation to recognize or treat with tolerance.52

He was terribly sensitive to slights received from Protestants. Anything smacking of religious prejudice raised his hackles. When Methodists in Plano tried to have the Saints evicted from Academy Hall, a public building, Joseph Smith III demanded that they receive the same privileges as any other religious group. It irritated him when local pastors warned their congregations not to attend RLDS meetings; Joseph countered by telling the Saints that they were perfectly at liberty to attend the meetings of other churches. Snubs from ministers particularly galled him. He complained of clergymen who ignored or avoided the Saints, "giving us no countenance or recognition as coworkers with God and the church on earth." Such ministers were willing to make common cause with him in temperance work, but "evidently feared to soil their ministerial garments by touching elbows with us in religious affairs..." The Methodist preacher, James T. Hanna earned his enmity through persistent attacks on the faith of the Latter Day Saints.53
When the Saints built what came to be known as the "Stone Church" in Plano, they took subscriptions from the community. In return they promised that the building would be open, whenever they were not using it, for the free use of others, without restriction as to sect or association. When a visiting Utah elder came through Plano, Joseph made a point of offering him the use of the Stone Church, much to the chagrin of Isaac Sheen.⁵⁴

He strongly desired to win the good opinion of his Gentile neighbors. Not only did he wish everyone to know that the Saints were not polygamists, but he also took pride in the reputation they won among local businessmen for honesty and fair-dealing.⁵⁵

While engaged in this quest for respectability, calls continued for the "seed of the prophet" to come to Utah. During the last years of Emaline's life, Joseph never left her side for an extended period of time. Nevertheless the cry was heeded. At the Annual Conference of 1869 it was decided to send Alexander Hale Smith and David Hyrum Smith on a mission to Utah and the Pacific coast.⁵⁶

Mission of Alexander and David to Utah

Late in May 1869, Alexander Hale Smith left Plano and went to Nauvoo to meet his brother David and to visit for a few days. Before the brothers left for the west, Emma Smith Bidamon warned them that she would be attacked and be called a liar. She wrote to Joseph, telling him of her warning to Alexander and David:

I tried before they left here to give them an idea of what they might expect of Brigham and all of his ites but I suppose the impression was hardly sufficient to guard their feelings from such unexpected falsehoods and impious profanity as Brigham is capable of. I hope they will be able to bear with patience all the abuse they will have to meet. I do not like to have my children's feelings abused but I do like that Brigham show to all both saint and sinner that there is not the least particle of friendship existing between him and myself.⁵⁷
While Emma worried about her sons, others in the Reorganization rejoiced at their going to Utah. Apostle W. W. Blair expressed the high hopes of many when he wrote from California that all were pleased at their mission. "No one," he said, "can do the same amount of good in that mission, as the sons of your honored father."^58

Alexander and David departed Nauvoo early in June. They stopped and preached at various places along the way. Their journey west was made easier by the near-completion of the transcontinental railroad. In the middle of July they arrived in Salt Lake City. John Smith again greeted his cousins cordially and persuaded them to lodge at his house.^59 The following day John took his cousins to visit their older cousin, the portly and genial Apostle and Church Historian, George A. Smith. They called upon him at the Church Historian's Office. George A. told his Illinois cousins that he was their friend, however much they might differ religiously. On July 17th they called at President Brigham Young's office to inquire whether they might have the use of the Tabernacle for preaching services. After a long wait they were ushered into the office. Brigham Young had sent for the leading elders in the city, thus occasioning the delay. After Alexander had requested the Tabernacle, the discussion turned to the points of difference between the two churches. Differences over polygamy naturally turned the conversation to Emma Smith Bidamon. Brigham Young was convinced that she had poisoned her sons' minds against the doctrine. Alexander was naturally hot-tempered and had to exercise the greatest restraint as President Young opened this topic of discussion. Young launched into an abusive attack on Emma, calling her "a liar, yes, the damndest liar that lives," claimed that she had tried to poison the prophet, and also claimed that she had stolen Hyrum Smith's portrait and gold ring. Alexander and Brigham exchanged bitter words, Alexander
all the while making a deliberate effort not to lose his temper. David said little. The Tabernacle was denied to them. Both brothers wrote letters describing the interview which were published in the True Latter Day Saints' Herald.60

Since John Smith was patriarch cf the church, Alexander and David felt they might be imposing upon him if they continued to lodge at his house. They moved out and received room and board from members of the RLDS Church.

Although denied the use of the Tabernacle, the influential Gentile merchants, the Walker Brothers, secured the use of Independence Hall for the Smith brothers. Although street preaching was illegal, they conducted meetings in private residences.

Joseph F. Smith spearheaded the opposition to his cousins. He had been ordained an apostle in 1866. In that same year he had taken Julina Lambson as a plural wife, having been counselled to do so by Brigham Young. In 1868 he had taken another plural wife, Sara Ellen Richards.61 He was completely committed to the revelation on celestial marriage. On Sunday, July 29th, Joseph F. attended the crowded meeting at Independence Hall. He interrupted Alexander's discourse, to the disgust of both Alexander and the crowd, which shouted, "Shame! Put him out! Silence!" On August 3rd, Alexander reported to Joseph III that Joseph F. had armed himself with affidavits of women claiming to have been plural wives of the prophet. Joseph F. had spent time working in the Church Historian's Office and was far better posted on the history of plural marriage than were his cousins. George A. Smith, the Church Historian, may have been working with him in compiling these affidavits of those who had first-hand knowledge of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s teaching and practice of plural marriage.62

Joseph F. Smith began holding meetings throughout the wards of Salt Lake City, to counteract the influence of Alexander and David. In an address on
August 8th he replied to their citation of Joseph and Hyrum Smith's published denials of polygamy. He began by stating that he possessed twelve affidavits of living women who had been "spiritual wives" of Joseph Smith, and he further stated that he knew that Hyrum Smith, his father, had taken two plural wives. The correspondent for the *Utah Daily Reporter*, who wrote an account of the meeting, noted that Joseph F. seemed "powerfully wrought up," as he launched into an explanation of why Joseph and Hyrum Smith had published denials of polygamy. "I cannot help the position this places my father and Joseph in as to their denials," he said. "I only know these facts." The denials were necessary because the people were not ready for the doctrine, because the Mormons were in the midst of their enemies, and because public disclosure in Illinois would have resulted in imprisonment.62 He went on to claim that Emma Smith was responsible for luring her husband back to Nauvoo and to his death, after he had crossed the Mississippi. "And I say in plain fact, that the blood of Joseph and Hyrum is upon the souls of Marks and Emma Smith, and there it will remain until burned out by the fires of hell!" He acknowledged that these statements might hurt Alexander and David, but if they did not want to hear them, he suggested that they "go away and keep their mouths shut."63

The Gentile-owned *Reporter* (of Corinne) was the only paper in Utah which opened its pages to the RLDS missionaries. David prepared a reply to Joseph F., dated August 13th, which was published in the *Reporter*. He testified to the good character of his brother Joseph III. He argued that Joseph Smith, Jr. anointed, appointed, and dedicated his eldest son to stand in his place as president and prophet to the church, as many in Utah could testify. He then replied to those who said to him, "My dear young friend, your father taught polygamy and practiced it, and I know it." He argued against such statements by citing the
public denial of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, appearing in the February 1, 1844 Times and Seasons. He appealed to the gospel and the sacred books, in opposition to the evil of polygamy. He urged his readers to shake off oppression and bravely embrace the gospel.64

Alexander and David spent the latter part of August in Malad, Idaho, attending an RLDS conference there. Malad was in southern Idaho. Malad's Welsh population included a goodly number of Josephites. All through the nineteenth century, Malad served as a sort of safety-valve where RLDS converts from Utah might locate.

They returned to Salt Lake City on September 2nd. Joseph F. Smith reported to his third wife, Sarah:

David and Alex. got back to the City last week and held forth as usual yesterday, D. occupying the time. He said B. Y. was in the habit of "cutting off people from his church because they investigated the Book of Mormon & D. and Covenants." Meaning Mrs. Sargent I suppose, who you know asked to be cut off, and her desire was complied with. Their insolence and misrepresentation has not diminished by their visiting Malad, one of the filthiest stink-holes outside of christiandom, where I understand they have met with considerable success; baptizing about 20 persons.65

If David earned Joseph F.'s enmity, Alexander antagonized many more Mormons. David was the "son of promise," and many women longed to meet him. David attempted to be more diplomatic in his discourses than Alexander. The one referred to "plural marriage" or "polygamy," while the other attacked Brighamite "adultery." The one criticized "blood atonement," while the other accused the Mormons of "murder."66

There was reason for the enmity directed against the sons of the prophet. They baptized scores of converts during their stay in the Great Basin. In the face of this threat, the Mormon hierarchy marshalled its resources. Not only was the son of Hyrum Smith designated to lead the defensive polemical warfare, but a
variety of measures were employed to deprive the brothers of a hearing. David H. Smith concluded that there was, in Utah, "a system of intolerance, and a policy the like of which I never before experienced, and at which I am the more astonished, practiced as it is by a people who have complained so bitterly of the like spirit exhibited towards them by the world." He complained of the policy which shut every meeting room but one, in a city of twenty thousand, to the two brothers. He complained of their letters being barred from all papers but one; of being denied water in which to perform baptisms; of coercion; of ostracism; of economic measures directed against Josephites; of book-burning; of slanderous rumors; of surveillance; and of heresy-hunting. This letter, written toward the end of his stay in Utah, was published in the Herald. It reflected personal frustration and the enormity of the task facing any RLDS missionary in Utah.67

Alexander and David Smith boarded a west-bound train at Corinne on December 5, 1869 and headed for California. They had won converts, but not in the great numbers which would be necessary to portend any mass movement toward the Reorganized Church. Their visit demonstrated that the mere appearance of a "son of promise" would not be sufficient to alter the loyalties of the Mormon people. Their visit widened the fissure between the Illinois and Utah branches of the Smith family. And their visit marked the first shot in a long "war of affidavits," in which the two contending churches sought to marshall evidence of witnesses to prove that Joseph Smith either was or was not involved in polygamy. The first generation of Saints was growing old. Leadership was gradually passing to those who had no first hand knowledge of affairs in Nauvoo. With the passing of the "old Mormons," and the presence of increasing numbers of newer Saints, it was becoming easier for Joseph Smith III and his brothers to maintain their argument that their father was not the author of polygamy. Joseph
F. Smith felt the necessity of gathering first-hand testimony to the contrary while he might.

David H. Smith's Last Mission to Utah

After arriving in California, David H. Smith became ill. This was anything but unusual for missionaries in the field. The two brothers returned to Illinois, not because of David's illness, but because Alexander's wife had been seriously ill with "lung fever." March 2, 1870 found Alexander and David in Plano, Illinois. At the Annual Conference, in Plano, Alexander gave a glowing report of the progress in Utah and California. They had spoken to crowded assemblies. Now, he argued, was the time to strike. W. W. Blair, who had stayed in the west with E. C. Brand, wrote encouragingly from Utah. Liberty of thought and freedom of speech were increasing, reported Blair, materially aided by the Smith brothers' efforts. An effort was made at the conference to return Alexander and David to Utah, but Alexander quietly objected and the matter was dropped for the time being.68

Even before leaving for the west, David had been thinking of matrimony. By May 10, 1870 he had recovered sufficiently from his illness to marry nineteen year-old Clara Charlotte Hartshorn. The couple took up residence in the Nauvoo Mansion. Alexander and his family also returned to Nauvoo and made their home at the Mansion. Emma and Major Bidamon moved across the street to the newly completed Riverside Mansion, where they spent their remaining years. In Nauvoo, David continued to be haunted by the illness which had first struck him in California. Unbeknownst to anyone, this was the opening stage of a lifelong affliction. However, he was well enough to continue working on a new hymnal for the church, entitled The Saint's Harp.69

Pressure continued to be exerted for the Smith brothers to come to Utah. Both Gentiles and members of the Reorganization believed that their presence
would contribute to diminishing the power of Brigham Young. Mark H. Forscutt wrote a reply to J. W. Shaffer, Utah's territorial governor, on July 6, 1870, explaining why none of the brothers could come at the time: "Joseph cannot be spared from this office, Alexander is so engaged in business matters that he can hardly leave until late fall if then. David the youngest of the three is recently married and can hardly be expected to leave under the circumstances." But Forscutt told the governor he shared his wish that one of the brothers could reside in Utah.70

Joseph Smith III was under increasing pressure to send David H. Smith back to Utah. His close friend, Apostle W. W. Blair, had been to Utah and observed conditions there. In 1871, Blair's report to the Annual Conference noted a change in strategy in Utah. Hitherto the RLDS missionaries had encouraged their converts to leave Utah and gather to the "regions round about" the land of Zion, i.e., to Iowa, Illinois, or Missouri. As late as 1870 they sent back six companies of emigrants from Utah. But political, economic, and religious changes were occurring so quickly in Utah that Blair now believed it best for RLDS converts to remain in Utah to strengthen the work there. Blair felt that the time was ripe for a "speedy emancipation of the masses from the thraldom of priestcraft." To that end, he recommended sending well-qualified elders to Utah. The most qualified would be the sons of the prophet: "None would be more acceptable as ministers in Utah, by all classes of the truth-loving, than Brs. A. H. and D. H. Smith, except, perhaps our beloved President, Joseph Smith."71

During 1871, Alexander and David used Nauvoo as their base of operations. At the Semi-Annual Conference of 1871, Joseph Smith III reported that Alexander H. Smith and David H. Smith had been laboring in the String Prairie and Nauvoo District. Earlier it had been planned that they would go to Utah, but
circumstances had prevented their going, he told the conference.72

At the same conference, W. W. Blair personally reported on the Utah Mission. He argued that it was of strategic importance. He reasoned that "the brothers of the President, Alexander H. and David H. Smith should take that mission, and that if the President himself were to go, it would result in great benefit to the cause." The delegates agreed, and a resolution was approved that a telegram be sent to the absent brothers Alexander and David, to ascertain whether they would accept a mission to Utah. Joseph Smith III was reluctant to send David back to Utah. After behind-the-scenes maneuvering, the motion was reconsidered and rejected.73

Joseph's reluctance centered around David's declining mental health. He feared that a return to the fiery furnace of the Utah Mission would upset David's precarious balance. The conflicting demands—to strike while the iron was hot versus concern for David's well-being—are evident in a letter from David to Joseph, written November 19, 1871:

I have so much to say to you that I scarcely know how to begin, the interests of the Church and private concerns are so mixed up in my confused mind that my ideas shoot in so many directions it is hard to begin. . . . You have given me a mission to western Iowa well it is a good mission. But there is one thing I feel to tell you every man of business of sagacity says to me why are you not in Utah, why is Alex and especially yourself [not] in Utah, now is the time the very best time why do you not go immediately there. Well this is the universal opinion. . . . I have been . . . distressed with a haunting idea that we were letting the very best time slip by us, for a raid on Utah. Then again something says to me, . . . he distrusts your health.

David then replied to possible objections to his return to Utah. His health was as robust as ever, he argued. He promised that he would not allow himself to be overworked or over-excited, as in his first mission to Utah. He admitted that he lacked sufficient funds for the trip to Utah, but reasoned that he could secure the necessary assistance. Above all, he argued that the time was ripe for his return
to Utah, unless Joseph were planning to go there himself. In that event, David did not wish to steal his brother's thunder.\textsuperscript{74}

Joseph turned over the matter in his mind. Despite the difficulties which would be entailed, he himself gave serious consideration to making the trip to Utah. David—perhaps preferring to go himself—warned his brother that this would mean administrative headaches and potential embarrassments. "Yet," he conceded, "your influence is great with the people, and . . . the good (overestimated by many) that will probably be done" might justify the trip.\textsuperscript{75}

Finally, under pressure from his own church, Joseph Smith III acquiesced in David being called back to the Utah Mission at the Annual Conference of 1872. He later recalled the forces at work:

\ldots the church [saw] fit to send my youngest brother, David Hyrum, on a mission to Utah. The brethren regarded him as a "child of promise," one who, like some of olden times, having been named before his birth, had been blessed above the average with a rich endowment of grace and gifts. They were of the opinion that among the misguided but often earnest people in that mission, he would be given a more cordial reception than would be accorded either Alexander or myself.\textsuperscript{76}

On July 4, 1872, David H. Smith arrived in Ogden, Utah. His co-workers in Utah were Apostle Josiah Ellis and Judge A. D. Boren of San Bernardino. Both were chosen as old-time Saints whose personal testimonies would bolster the cause.\textsuperscript{77} But David was the center of attention, the "son of promise," whom Brigham Young had taught possessed the right to lead the Mormon Church.\textsuperscript{78}

Again the RLDS elders were able to hold meetings in the Liberal Institute. Crowds filled the building to capacity; excitement was intense, and the newspapers reported the controversy. David related: "We receive the support of many noble minded, not of our ranks, and the sympathy of all opposed to the tyrannical rule here; besides, the secret sympathy of many in the ranks of the polygamists." David wrote that the RLDS missionaries aimed their arrows at
"polygamy, secret penal oaths, and wicked covenants for binding the people under penalty of death," and avoided personal attacks and abuse.79

As for their relatives in the Great Basin, David found that John Smith remained congenial, as did Samuel H. B. Smith. Two other relatives were viewed negatively, however:

Joseph F. is—well, he is uncongenial to me. I retain too vivid a recollection of his abuses to Alexander to mingle freely with his spirit. . . . as for George A., his false and slanderous assertions in regard to yourself are too much for my charity. He called you in public a drunkard, a horse racer, a gambler and a lawyer. I shall keep clear of him as I fear the results of an interview with him. He is much despised here.80

During the summer, Judge Boren repeated a rumor that George A. Smith, in 1856, had invited Joseph Smith III to come west and assume the presidency of the Utah Church. George A. Smith and Joseph F. Smith denied that such an offer ever was made. David wrote a letter to his brother Joseph, asking whether the rumor cited by Judge Boren were true.81 There is no record of Joseph's response, but it must have been negative. If he had responded affirmatively, his response would have received extensive publicity.

An ominous note appeared in a letter David wrote on July 27th. Apparently a member of the RLDS Church in Pontiac, Michigan had written David in Salt Lake City, asking for information about polygamy. David's response revealed that he had come across discomfitting evidence:

It is an unpleasant subject to me if I knew in regard to the subject I would tell you the truth, you I think know me well enough to know I never would deceive you in any thing cost what tears it would I would tell you if I thought my brother was a deciever I would save you from deception. I know my Mother believes just as we do [?] in faith, repentance, baptism and all the saving doctrines, in the books of the church and all, but I do not wish to ask her in regard to polygamy, for dear brother God forgive me if I am wrong I how can I tell you if I did not love you I could not. I believe there was something wrong, I dont know it, but I believe it, the testimony is too great for me to deny. . . . if my father sinned I can not help it. The truth to me is the same he must suffer for his sin. I do not know that he did, and if I had not recieved such convincing testimony of the gospel my faith might fail but it does
not even though he did sin... I hope you will burn up this letter, and
not let it shock your faith, if I could tell you otherwise I would oh how
gladly... When I was with you before I did not know as much as I do
now in regard to my fathers life. Even if he did wrong he repented and
told the saints that polygamy was a false and wicked doctrine.82

One likely source of David's new information was Amasa M. Lyman.
Lyman had joined the Mormon Church in 1832. Joseph Smith, Jr. had intended to
drop Sidney Rigdon from the First Presidency and replace him with Lyman.
Brigham Young made Lyman a member of the Quorum of Twelve. But in 1870
Amasa Lyman was excommunicated.83 He had embraced liberal theological
tenets and Spiritualism, and became associated with the Godbeerite movement.84

Lyman became a friend of David Smith. During their visits he had
opportunity to tell David about his personal knowledge of polygamy. In the Lyman
home, David probably heard first-hand testimony about his father's actual
involvement, because Amasa M. Lyman had married Eliza Partridge, one of the
prophet's plural wives.85 Evidence indicates that David, probably armed with
names and information from Amasa M. Lyman, sought out and interviewed other
plural wives of his father.86

The association with Amasa M. Lyman had another serious consequence for
David Hyrum Smith. In the fall of 1872, Lyman traveled about with David. David
began to imbibe his liberal views. The extent to which David was influenced by
Lyman is suggested by his attendance at Lyman's seances.87

David's theological foundations were shaken. The discoveries about
polygamy rocked him. He was introduced to an entirely different view of spiritual
phenomena from that in which he had been reared. Personally, he was depressed
by the RLDS Church's failure to provide adequate care for his family.88 The
hostile reception of his colleagues, Josiah Ells and Judge Boren, also disturbed
him. Judge Boren in particular was grossly insulted. Not only was he treated
with contempt and vilified as "an old apostate," but he was even attacked at night and daubed with human excrement. Boren returned to California in humiliation and died soon afterwards.89 And through all this, the stress on David's fragile system was approaching the breaking point.

Signs of unorthodoxy began to appear in David's writings. He even expressed his liberal sentiments in a letter to Joseph III. By November, David was becoming an extremely popular speaker with the liberal element in Salt Lake City. His speeches were well received by the Salt Lake Tribune, the liberal organ.

A disturbing announcement appeared in the Tribune on February 6, 1873: "We regret to learn of the serious illness of Mr. David H. Smith, from an attack of brain fever. He was, however, improving rapidly yesterday afternoon." Within a week, the Tribune was advising its readers of David's return to health and urging them to attend his lectures. Despite the paper's optimism, however, David was seriously ill. His biographer has written:

The David Smith that his family and friends knew and loved so well would be no more. His mind unable to function properly, David wandered from lucidity to irrationality and back again until his insanity dominated his life.90

In March, there was a flurry of rumors about David. He was reported to be ready to accept baptism in the LDS Church. However, later in the month, David wrote a lucid letter to Joseph, advising him concerning ecclesiastical affairs, in tones which suggest total loyalty to his brother and the RLDS Church.91

Written in the form of a revelation, David's letter urged that the quorums of the RLDS Church be filled, in order to strengthen the church's mission. Joseph and other RLDS leaders had reached the same conclusion. Joseph received a revelation directing him to appoint a first and second counselor and seven new apostles. Not knowing that David was suffering from a serious mental illness, Joseph designated David one of his new counselors. Joseph's revelation, dated
March 3, 1873 stated: "Behold, it is wisdom in me, and expedient in my church that the chief quorums should be more nearly filled, and their organization more nearly completed. Thus saith the Spirit. Let my servants William W. Blair and David H. Smith, be chosen and ordained to be counselors to my servant, the presiding elder of my church."92

Sometime in the spring of 1873, David Hyrum Smith left Utah for Plano, Illinois. The "son of promise" would never return to Utah. Instead of becoming a "prince" over Israel, he would spend the last three decades of his life in an insane asylum. An apocryphal tale has it that when he first saw his mother, after returning, he rebuffed her embrace with the harsh query, "Mother, why have you deceived us?"93

**David H. Smith's Insanity**

The point at which Joseph Smith III became aware that his brother was suffering from a serious mental malady is not known, but it must have been shortly after David's return. David's illness was a severe trial for him. Joseph undoubtedly rebuked himself for having consented to the mission. He also laid the blame at the feet of David's associates in Utah:

The effect of this unfortunate mission upon my brother David was even more deplorable. He had formed some acquaintance among a certain class of so-called "free thinkers," which included some leading spiritualists. In these circles he was to some extent—and possibly through seemingly good intentions—made the object of much flattering attention. For reasons still unknown to me his health, including the spiritual side of it, failed, and it became necessary for him to return home. . . . While I could never get a very comprehensive idea as to the nature of the conversations he used to hold with them, . . . I have concluded that they were concerned largely with matters pertaining to manifestations of spiritism. I am convinced that insidiously there was inculcated into my brother's mind the idea that his father was either a polygamist in practice or that he was the spiritual author of the Utah plural marriage philosophy.

There is reason to fear, also, that under the influence which surrounded them, they indulged in seances and listened to so-called communications from an unseen world, none of which were favorable to
the claims of the Reorganized church in regard to those matters, and most of which were decidedly contrary thereto.

From my knowledge of his character I do not believe my brother had the power to resist such insidious teaching, nor to perceive the danger of thus submitting himself to the uncanny will and influence of unseen spirits which, according to the teaching of the philosophy itself, lurk around in the twilight zone of human consciousness ready to take advantage of people still tabernacled in the flesh.\(^4\)

David was unfitted for ministerial work. The family attempted to care for David as best they knew how. He busied himself with activities such as fishing and gardening. Finally, in 1877, the family felt that they could no longer cope with David. Both Joseph and Alexander felt that he had become dangerous to their wives and children. In his demented state, he made a nuisance of himself at the Plano train station and elsewhere in town.

In what he described as "the most trying vicissitude" of his life to that time, Joseph Smith III decided to institutionalize his youngest brother. On January 19, 1877, David Hyrum Smith was committed to the Northern Illinois Hospital for the Insane at Elgin. Here he would remain, except for brief visits to the outside world, for the rest of his life.\(^5\)

Committing David to a mental hospital was a blow to both the RLDS and LDS Churches. Joseph Smith III had appointed his mentally ill brother to the First Presidency. That the appointment had come in the form of a revelation proved an embarrassment. Authorities in the LDS Church long had foretold that David one day would become their leader, and these prophecies were now doomed to disappointment. Ugly rumors and accusations were exchanged, such as the belief of some Reorganites that David had been poisoned in Utah, or the suggestion of some Mormons that Joseph had David put away to keep him from becoming a Mormon or because he feared David as a rival.\(^6\)

At the Annual Conference of 1885, when David had been hospitalized for eight years, Joseph Smith III was asked to inquire of God concerning David's
status. He received the following answer: "The voice of the Spirit is that David H. Smith be released. He is in mine hand."97

However, Joseph Smith III held out hope that his brother might some day recover and left David's position in the First Presidency vacant. At the General Conference of 1894 he delivered a revelation declaring that it was not yet expedient for another counselor to be appointed to the First Presidency. The revelation stated: "My servant David H. Smith is yet in my hand and I will do my will in the time for its accomplishment. Be not troubled or fearful in this matter for it shall be well for my work in the end."98

Finally, in 1897, Joseph Smith III received a revelation appointing two counselors in the First Presidency. This was an admission, in effect, that David H. Smith would never again occupy that position.99

On August 29, 1904, David Hyrum Smith died at Elgin, Illinois. Joseph Smith III comforted himself with the belief that his brother had improved in the final two years of his life, and finally was "emancipated."100 His death certificate listed diabetes melitus as the immediate cause of his death, and chronic mania as the contributory cause.101 Joseph Smith III always viewed his brother's suffering as the result of associations formed in Utah. In a tragic way, David H. Smith was a casualty of the war against polygamy.

**First Extended Missionary Journey**

During the summer of 1875, Joseph Smith III undertook his first extended missionary journey. Hitherto he had confined himself to short forays within striking distance of home. Now he accepted an invitation to assist in dedicating an RLDS church building in Jonesport, Maine. He had a trusted assistant editor who could attend to the *Herald*, his wife Bertha was efficient and able to care for the home and children, and his confidence as a preacher had increased.
Furthermore, the visit would coincide with the centennial celebration of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Joseph's patriotic instincts were always moved by such celebrations.

Nevertheless, he had to force himself to make the trip. He was needlessly self-conscious about his homiletical ability, and was deeply insecure about defending his faith before strangers. Years of insults had left deep scars. But he forced himself to set aside his fears. He made the trip and thereby prepared himself for numerous missionary journeys in the years to come.102

In and around Jonesport, Maine, there was a scattering of old Saints, remnants from George J. Adams' abortive Jaffa colony. It was part of Joseph Smith III's policy to gather together all the disparate elements into which the church had broken following the events at Carthage, Illinois. Preaching among these former followers of Adams was part and parcel of Joseph's strategy.

Joseph left Plano on June 10, 1875. He reached Boston two days later, where he enjoyed visiting all of the historic sites associated with the American struggle for independence. On June 17th he witnessed the parade marking the one hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, and ever afterwards considered it a rare privilege to have been there, "to pay honor to the memory of those intrepid patriots who had so bravely stood and fought for emancipation from kingly rule and for this noble country..."103

From there he went by sea to Jonesport, Maine. He overcame his fears and preached in various locations, reaping a small harvest. The value of this journey was not measured in numbers of converts, however. It was a personal triumph. Joseph Smith III had taken a large step toward overcoming his own insecurities. He was now prepared to embark on a greater missionary trip: the one which had been urged upon him for so many years but which he had feared to undertake.104
First Missionary Journey to the West

Joseph Smith III had received an invitation to attend an RLDS reunion in Santa Ana, California. He had heard much in praise of California's beauty and weather, and he desired to see the state. He therefore made preparations to visit the Golden State, which contained a goodly scattering of RLDS branches. When he left Plano and headed west, on July 17, 1876, he had not committed himself definitively to visit Utah, but he left the option open. With him was his brother David H. Smith, whom he left with his brother Alexander at Chariton, Iowa. Alexander had heeded the call to "gather to the regions round about the land of Zion" and was farming in Northern Missouri. Joseph continued on by train to California, taking careful note of the many sites along the way.

California. He stayed in California from late July until November 1st, ministering in both the northern and southern halves of the state. In the north, he made San Francisco his base of operations. From there he visited Saints around the Bay Area and in outlying areas such as Santa Rosa, Healdsburg, Stockton, and Sacramento. In the south, he visited Anaheim, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Pomona, and other locales. 105

In San Bernardino, he interviewed two old-time Saints who had lived in Nauvoo: an elder named Seeley and Caroline Huntington. In both cases, Joseph attempted to verify rumors that they had first-hand knowledge connecting his father with polygamy. He found Seeley evasive. Finally he put the matter bluntly:

Mr Seeley, I am extremely anxious to know the truth about those matters. I have been told, repeatedly, that you are one who can tell me positively whether or not my father was connected with the doctrine of plural marriage .... I wish, if you have definite information about this matter, you would give it to me in a straightforward and positive manner.
To his astonishment, the older man replied, "Brother Smith, I wish I did know!" Despite additional attempts to elicit information from him, Seeley continued to maintain that he did not know.

The interview with Caroline Huntington, ex-wife of John Huntington, proceeded similarly. She had separated from her husband when he took a plural wife—her own sister—against her wishes. Joseph asked her what she knew of his father's involvement in polygamy, telling her that it had been reported frequently that she had made statements in regard to the matter. She refused to make any statement about the subject and denied having made any statements to others. Joseph concluded that "she either knew nothing herself which would implicate my father, or for reasons known to herself preferred not to tell the story." He felt that her information might have been based solely on hearsay.106

In the future, particularly during his trips to Utah, Joseph Smith III had a number of similar interviews. He concluded that the "knowledge" many boasted of possessing about polygamy in Nauvoo was based on rumor and hearsay. In a number of cases this may well have been the case. But the explanation does not fit all cases. Particularly when interviewing those who had grown to abhor polygamy, there was another motive for refusing to speak candidly to the son of the prophet. When those being interviewed sympathized with Joseph's attempts to return the Latter Day Saints to monogamous pathways, they faced a dilemma. If they spoke candidly to Joseph Smith III, they risked undermining his polemical stance. To tell him the truth might turn him from his present course. A powerful warrior against polygamy might retire from the field.

Nevada. On November 1, 1876, Joseph boarded a train for Nevada. There were clusters of Latter Day Saints scattered about this thinly populated state. He visited those along the route of the Union Pacific Railroad, in the Reno-Carson
City area and at Battle Mountain. At Battle Mountain, he visited his boyhood friends, Albert and Alpheus Haws. He met a polygamous daughter of Brigham Young, who had earned her father's displeasure by marrying a Gentile, and assured her that he did not look down upon her because she had been born in polygamy. He also met Mrs. Davis, who was a daughter of William Walker. In his journal he recorded: "She says that Lucy Walker told her that she lived with J Smith as a wife."

On November 20th, Joseph left Battle Mountain. He had reached a critical decision. Despite the possibility of encountering similar testimony in the "City of the Saints," he had decided to detour south from Ogden to Salt Lake City. Members of the RLDS Church there had invited him to visit.

Decision to visit Utah. He had been urged many times to go to Utah. Why did he decide to do so in 1876? A visit shortly after his ordination in 1860 would have had a far more dramatic impact, yet he had delayed. Several reasons suggest themselves, explaining Joseph Smith III's delay:

1. Initially Joseph Smith III was a novice, both as an elder and as a church president. He was inexperienced and unsure of himself: as a leader, as a preacher, and in his knowledge of Latter Day Saint history and doctrine. He would have had great difficulty defending his position in earlier years. Only after a period of study and practical experience did he feel secure enough to attempt work in Utah.

2. Until the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the journey to Utah was lengthy, difficult, and dangerous. Alexander H. Smith's first journey to Utah demonstrated as much. As early as 1856, Joseph Smith III had indicated that he would await the completion of a railroad to Utah before attempting such a journey, and he was true to his word.
3. Earlier, the uncertainty of the Civil War years precluded such a journey. The possibility of being drafted, the unsettled state of affairs in Utah, and the shortage of troops along the plains to guard against Indians were all considerations dictating a stay-at-home policy.

4. In earlier years, Joseph Smith III may have feared that his life would be in danger in Utah. Tales of Utah Danites and "avenging angels" were given widespread publicity in the eastern states. Anti-Mormon writers had pointed out the existence of oaths of vengeance in the Mormon endowment ceremonies. Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders had taught the doctrine of "blood atonement." The Mountain Meadows Massacre and the slaughter of the Morrisites lent credence to the belief that such measures were practiced. Closer to home, Joseph Smith III had first-hand knowledge of the measures employed against apostates in Nauvoo and was aware of the dangerous situations Alexander H. Smith and other RLDS missionaries had encountered in Utah. But by 1876, such fears were fading from view. RLDS missionaries had operated in Utah for some years. Reports from Utah indicated that Brigham Young's monolithic control of society had weakened significantly.

5. Communications had improved immensely by 1876. Mail between Plano and Salt Lake City now travelled quickly over the rails. In an emergency there was always the telegraph. And, if need be, Joseph Smith III could return home in a matter of days, not months. Ecclesiastical administration would not be endangered by his absence.

6. In earlier years he felt unprepared to debate polygamy with the Mormons. By now he had worked out his basic apologetic position. He might fear that he would be confronted by a polygamous wife of his father, while in Utah, but mentally he felt prepared for such a contingency. Earlier revulsion against
polygamy had flowered into a developed polemical position. If Brighamites relied upon testimonies of his father's involvement in polygamy, the prophet's son would reply that it was still wrong. The sacred books were against it.\textsuperscript{111}

7. Others had blazed the trail for him. There were RLDS branches in Utah. Elders such as E. C. Briggs, Thomas Job, Alexander H. Smith, David H. Smith, E. C. Brand, and W. W. Blair all had conducted successful missionary work in Utah. Ever cautious, Joseph now knew that he was not attempting the impossible and that he would be among at least a handful of friends.

8. Personally, Joseph felt free to make this and other extended missionary journeys in a way he had never felt free before. The responsibilities for managing the Herald Office were now another's.\textsuperscript{112} Henry A. Stebbins had become assistant editor of the Herald in April 1876, and could be trusted with the church's most important publication.\textsuperscript{113} His wife was capable of caring for the family in his absence. And his eastern trip in 1875 had increased his confidence.

Arrival in Utah. On November 21, 1876, Joseph Smith III entered Utah for the first time. At Ogden he switched trains and headed south for Salt Lake City. There he was met by members of the RLDS Church. Throughout his stay in the city he was lodged by members of his own church, not his Utah relatives.

Early in November, Joseph Smith III had been stricken with an attack of facial neuralgia. Extracting a tooth at Carson City had failed to relieve the pain. As he walked down the streets of Mormondom's capital, he was in no condition to preach. The left side of his face was swollen, and eating was tortuous. It was three weeks before he felt able to talk with reasonable freedom from pain.\textsuperscript{114}

Nevertheless, he felt that he had reached an epochal moment in his life. Although in pain, he was intensely aware of his surroundings. As he walked through the streets from the train depot, he was aware of being an object of
curiosity but hardly of cordiality. He noted that none of his relatives came to greet him.\textsuperscript{115}

Joseph visited about the city, but avoided public speaking for some time. The ostracism he encountered discomfitted him. People would avoid meeting him on the street. While unable to engage in missionary work and coolly greeted by the citizens of the city, he grew more and more depressed.\textsuperscript{116} He turned over and over in his mind how to approach the controversy when he was able to speak. Finally a conversation with an optimistic RLDS member named Sister Browning cheered his spirits, and at once the "clouds of distress and homesickness, of doubt, uncertainty and bewilderment" departed. Suddenly the course to pursue became clear in his mind:

\begin{quote}
I decided to present the attitude and beliefs of the church at the time of the death of my father and Uncle Hyrum, as I knew them to be from my own personal understanding and reading of the public documents of the church and from the teachings I had received through hearing the doctrine preached from the stand as a child, or from study of the \textit{Book of Mormon} and \textit{Book of Covenants}, later. . . .
\end{quote}

No one knew better than I the exact position I occupied in the controversy and the delicate one in which I found myself in the city of Salt Lake. I knew that by the major and controlling portion of the people there, I was regarded as being recreant to the rights and privileges of my heritage and as having forfeited the respect and esteem they might have accorded me as the son of Joseph the Seer. By Brigham Young I had been openly branded as an apostate, and, evidently to make the charge more substantial, more to his liking, and more impressive upon his people, he had added that I was a lawyer and a spiritualist.

Joseph decided to adopt an "affirmative attitude" in his public addresses. His position would be to stand upon the platform of Latter Day Saint scripture. He would supplement his arguments with citations from Latter Day Saint publications. In his heart, he felt he was no apostate, but rather one who stood upon the faith and doctrine of the church left behind by his father, as indicated by published records.\textsuperscript{117}

He had learned, by rumor, that he would meet with well organized
opposition in his meetings. It was said that ten women would be seated in the hall who would testify that they had been wives of his father. This prospect was disconcerting, but Joseph determined to put his legal training to good use if confronted by such witnesses:

I had made up my mind that . . . I should plainly, publicly, and persistently cross-question them with all the art and skill I could command, using every method within my legal knowledge and ability in an effort to discover the truth or falsity of their statements. I felt I could also judge a great deal by their manner and appearance as well as by their spoken words.118

There was a strong element of legalism in Joseph Smith III's position. He viewed statements that his father had practiced polygamy as charges against the prophet's moral character, charges which must be sustained by weight of evidence. He viewed himself as an attorney charged with the defense of his father's name, one duty-bound to cross-examine hostile witnesses and to subject their testimony to rigorous scrutiny. He refused to accept "testimony" which did not conform to courtroom rules of evidence. He legalistically relied on a set of books—the standard works of the church—and insisted that no purported revelation could be accepted which contradicted previous revelation. He reasoned that oral tradition purporting to emanate from his father was devoid of authority if it contravened previously validated revelation.

Finally he was healthy enough to speak in public. He held forth several times at the Liberal Institute, before large crowds. As rumored, he found seven women seated in the front row at his first meeting. But when the opportunity was given for comments and questions, not one of them said a word. During none of his visits to Utah did a woman ever arise in public and state that she had been married to the prophet Joseph Smith.

In his addresses in Utah, Joseph steered a middle course between that of Alexander H. Smith and that of David H. Smith. He avoided Alexander's warm
speech and invective, but he did follow David's conciliatory course. He plainly stated his objections to Mormon marital practices, basing his position upon the standard works and published statements of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. His policy was to be fair but forthright.

Besides his talks at the Liberal Institute, Joseph Smith III also spoke once at Union Fort, which was the only time he was allowed to speak in a Mormon meeting house. He did not seek permission to speak in the Tabernacle. His addresses created considerable publicity but no rush of conversions. There is no record of Joseph Smith III baptizing anyone while visiting Utah in 1876.119

Reception by relatives. Joseph was taken aback by his relatives' failure to greet him when he arrived in the city. Even after this initial aloofness, he sensed that an uncomfortable cloud hung over their relationship. The Utah relative with whom he felt least comfortable was Joseph F. Smith.

He was invited to supper once by Joseph F. Smith. After chatting amiably, the two men entered the dining room. Joseph III was introduced to his cousin's plural wives: Julina Lambson Smith, Sarah Ellen Richards Smith, and Edna Lambson Smith. Absent was Joseph F.'s first wife, Levira, who had separated from him in 1868. This was to be Joseph III's last face-to-face social contact with Joseph F. until 1913.

This was Joseph III's first opportunity to observe a polygamous household at firsthand. He did not enjoy the experience. As they sat down to dinner, he felt an almost overpowering feeling of revulsions:

The very fibers of my being seemed to cry out in protest, and so strong was my prejudice and antipathy that I seemed to feel almost physically ill as I contemplated the scene. . . .

Reared as I had been in a home and environment which would never have brooked or tolerated such associations as were there evident, I could see nothing of the "sanctity of marriage" in such relationships.

The conversation was desultory. The undercurrent of tension was uncomfortable.
Joseph III had concluded from Joseph F.'s defiant tone, when introducing his wives, that it would be impolite to broach the subject of polygamy. However, he thought he detected a hint of embarrassment in two of Joseph F.'s wives concerning their domestic situation.\textsuperscript{120}

As the two cousins parted that December evening, they did not realize that they would not visit with one another for decades. In the future they would maintain an outward show of decorum toward one another, as demanded by kinship, but their correspondence was marked by an air of frigid propriety devoid of warmth. The differences which separated the two cousins were fundamental and deeply felt by both.

The relative who greeted Joseph most cordially was Utah Patriarch John Smith. Just as he had welcomed Alexander and David with warmth, so he welcomed Joseph. John Smith was a monogamist, and Joseph quickly perceived one of the reasons why. John's wife Helen and daughter Lucy showed themselves strongly opposed to plural marriage. While John discreetly avoided discussing their religious differences, Helen delighted in talking about Mormonism and passed along many items of interest.\textsuperscript{121}

As for the other relatives, George A. Smith had died in 1875. Samuel H. B. Smith was a polygamist, but greeted Joseph with friendship. So did John Henry Smith and Elias Smith.\textsuperscript{122}

\textbf{Was the situation dangerous?} Some people feared that Joseph Smith III's life might be in danger. One member of the RLDS Church went so far as to give him a revolver. After carrying the unfamiliar weapon around for three days, Joseph decided that it was a waste of time. He encountered no threats or uncomfortable situations.

However, on one dark night, John Smith insisted on walking home with him.
Halfway home, Joseph told him that the procedure was unnecessary. Nevertheless, John warned him to stay in the middle of Salt Lake City's wide streets, to avoid shadows, and to stop and talk with no one.

In Sandy he met one Josephite whose blunt ways had earned him a number of death-threats. The man always kept a number of firearms primed and loaded in his home, ready for use at a moment's notice. Shortly after Joseph's visit, the man's son was shot to death. Called upon to preach the funeral sermon, Joseph took the occasion to denounce violence and lawlessness in strong terms. He felt that he had learned something of the meaning of the inscription in the ward meeting house at Union Fort: "Brigham lives/The Kingdom grows/The stone is rolling/Mind your toes." Joseph felt that he was in no personal danger, but concluded that in earlier days this might not have been the case.123

Conversations with old Saints about polygamy. More than physical danger, Joseph feared the discovery of evidence implicating his father in polygamy. Not only did he run this risk in public meetings, but in private conversations with old Nauvooans. He had a number of such talks.124

One such conversation was with Dr. John M. Bernhisel, his old teacher and friend. The elderly gentleman had no desire to engage in controversy, however. They chatted pleasantly about the family and old times. Joseph did learn that the doctor's experience with plural marriage had been unhappy, which reinforced his own anti-polygamous convictions.

Vienna Jacques was another elderly visitor. Outwardly, she was a spinster. Secretly, however, she had been one of Joseph Smith's plural wives in Nauvoo.125 Vienna Jacques was known to have been a defender of plural marriage, and when she visited Joseph she informed him that she had come to "tell him what she knew." Unfortunately, the only record of this conversation is contained in Joseph
Smith III's memoirs, where—in typical fashion—he records only those points favorable to his own side of the controversy. During his cross-examination, he obtained an account of controversy among the women in the Relief Society in Nauvoo. One faction spoke favorably of the new doctrine of plural marriage, while the uninititated reacted with horror. Vienna Jacques was one of the latter group. She reported the talk to Emma Smith who denounced the doctrine. In all likelihood, Vienna Jacques was telling a true story. But she never got around to telling of her own subsequent conversion to the doctrine and marriage to the prophet. Perhaps Joseph Smith III's moral indignation or force of personality intimidated her. His account of the interview seems to indicate some embarrassment on her part. Ironically, he came away from this conversation, with one of his father's plural wives, convinced that he had "one more testimony" that his parents were "free from blame regarding the institution of plural marriage."

Henry Lawrence and several other leading Godbeites visited Joseph one day. Several times Lawrence interrupted Joseph, stating that he did not care what Joseph believed about polygamy, "for he knew so-and-so, and so-and-so." Finally Joseph rebuked him for the interruptions and reminded his visitor: "I know that I am older than you, for I knew you at school when you were much younger and smaller than I. . . . I had a much better chance to be aware of what went on in my own father's family than you could possibly have had . . . ." He let the Godbeites know that he would not condone evil, even in his own father, but that he would not accept second-hand accounts of his alleged misdeeds as evidence.

Joseph met William Clayton on the streets of Salt Lake City. Clayton was broken down with age and alcoholic dissipation. They passed a few words, but nothing more. Whether by design, by accident, or simply through lack of opportunity, Joseph Smith III never interrogated the man who transcribed the
revelation on plural marriage at the prophet's dictation. There would never be another opportunity. Clayton died in 1879.

Bishop Edward Hunter was another old acquaintance whom Joseph encountered on the street. He assured the old man that he remembered him. Hunter turned to his companions and commented tellingly: "If we had listened to Sister Emma we wouldn't have gotten into this mess." One of them warned him to be careful, but Hunter retorted: "I know what I am saying, sir; Sister Emma Smith was a noble, good woman, and things would have been very different for us all if she had been listened to."

Brigham Young was not in the city, having gone south to St. George for the winter. Joseph did have the opportunity to hear Orson Pratt preach on December 10th, but had no chance for a lengthy conversation.

None of these conversations shook Joseph Smith III's conviction that his father was "not guilty" of polygamy. In fact, they reinforced the opposite conviction.

On December 12, 1876, Joseph Smith III left Ogden and headed east. The long called-for visit of the prophet's son had taken place. But the anticipated results had not occurred. The prophet's son had been ill with facial neuralgia and unable to speak during much of his visit. His legalistic arguments failed to spark the flames of revolt against "Brighamism." He went home with little to show for his efforts, save the conviction that he could withstand the "testimonies" of the Utah Mormons concerning polygamy. He had developed the art of "cross-examining" such testimonies, an art which he would finely hone in coming years.

William Smith's Affiliation with the Reorganization

One aspect of Joseph Smith III's strategy was to war relentlessly against polygamy. Another was to gather together the scattered fragments of Latter Day
Saint factions under the umbrella of the Reorganization. Yet another aspect of his strategy was to gather the members of the Smith family into the RLDS fold. With those members who had not emigrated to Utah, he experienced great success. Eventually the Millikin and Salisbury families enlisted under his banner, including the two surviving sisters of the prophet. But his greatest triumph occurred in 1878, when the sole surviving brother of the prophet, William Smith, cast his lot with the Reorganization.

The breakup of William Smith's church in Illinois and Wisconsin had provided the nucleus for the Reorganization. William himself had held aloof, refusing to join any church which did not recognize his prerogatives as the sole surviving son of Joseph Smith, Sr. During the Civil War he served in the Union Army. After the war he settled down to life as a farmer in Elkader, Clayton County, Iowa. There he lived in strict monogamy, attended to his temporal affairs, and built a good reputation among his neighbors.

Eventually William mellowed and engaged in friendly correspondence with his nephew Joseph Smith III. In 1878 Joseph invited him to attend the Annual Conference at Plano, hoping that his uncle would be ready, at last, to join the Reorganized Church. William was nearly seventy years old, and there was no prospect of his forming another church of his own. If he were to do anything, religiously, with the rest of his life, the RLDS Church was his last significant option.

But there were some differences to be negotiated before affiliating. William would have preferred to have been recognized as patriarch of the church (which position he had always claimed by right of lineage), or at least as an apostle. He also insisted that he should be received into membership on the basis of his original baptism, and that his church work since 1844—baptisms,
Saint factions under the umbrella of the Reorganization. Yet another aspect of his strategy was to gather the members of the Smith family into the RLDS fold. With those members who had not emigrated to Utah, he experienced great success. Eventually the Milliken and Salisbury families enlisted under his banner, including the two surviving sisters of the prophet.128 But his greatest triumph occurred in 1878, when the sole surviving brother of the prophet, William Smith, cast his lot with the Reorganization.

The breakup of William Smith's church in Illinois and Wisconsin had provided the nucleus for the Reorganization. William himself had held aloof, refusing to join any church which did not recognize his prerogatives as the sole surviving son of Joseph Smith, Sr.129 During the Civil War he served in the Union Army. After the war he settled down to life as a farmer in Elkader, Clayton County, Iowa. There he lived in strict monogamy, attended to his temporal affairs, and built a good reputation among his neighbors.

Eventually William mellowed and engaged in friendly correspondence with his nephew Joseph Smith III. In 1878 Joseph invited him to attend the Annual Conference at Plano, hoping that his uncle would be ready, at last, to join the Reorganized Church. William was nearly seventy years old, and there was no prospect of his forming another church of his own. If he were to do anything, religiously, with the rest of his life, the RLDS Church was his last significant option.130

But there were some differences to be negotiated before affiliating. William would have preferred to have been recognized as patriarch of the church (which position he had always claimed by right of lineage), or at least as an apostle. He also insisted that he should be received into membership on the basis of his original baptism, and that his church work since 1844--baptisms,
ordinations, etc.—be accepted as valid.

Joseph strongly desired that his uncle lend his prestigious name to the cause. But these demands presented him with difficulties. Although he never admitted it in public, he was well aware that polygamy had led to the demise of his uncle's ecclesiastical organization. To acknowledge the validity of all the ordinances performed by William—ordinances performed while he was practicing polygamy—would contradict a basic tenet of the Reorganization. Joseph had left the office of patriarch vacant—probably with William's situation in view—but to admit him to that office or to the apostleship would risk antagonizing influential members of the church who were intimately familiar with William's earlier transgressions. Some of these would prefer that he undergo rebaptism before admission into the church.

After days of stubborn negotiation, a comprise was reached. On April 9, 1878 the Annual Conference received William into membership on his original baptism. On April 10th he was recognized as a high priest.

Until his death in 1893 William lent his name and energy to the cause of the Reorganization. He occasionally preached, went on missions, and attended conferences. He lent his pen to the cause and took every opportunity to excoriate Brighamites as apostates. At Joseph's urging, he even signed an affidavit affirming that Joseph Smith, Jr. had never advocated polygamy.

There was an element of symbiosis in the relationship between William Smith and Joseph Smith III. William obtained legitimacy and a certain amount of vindication from his affiliation with the Reorganization. Joseph obtained something more: the last surviving brother of Joseph Smith, an apostle in the old church, lent his prestigious name to the cause. One more member of the Smith family added his voice to the chorus of denunciation against "the Utah apostasy."
Sister Emma's Last Testimony

But there was one member of the family who might render a far more influential word of testimony than William Smith. This was Emma Smith Bidamon. Unlike William, who loved the limelight, Emma spent her last years avoiding notoriety as much as possible. But Joseph felt that he must obtain her testimony to counterbalance discomfiting statements by those who claimed that his father had taught and practiced plural marriage.

Tentatively at first, but now with increasing confidence, Joseph Smith III advanced the proposition that his father had not taught or practiced polygamy. Isolated as he was from his father's intimate disciples and plural wives, he found few in Plano, Illinois who could contradict his position with first-hand evidence to the contrary. But there was one weak link in his apologetic armor. Repeatedly he had been told: "You were too young to know anything about it. Ask your mother. She knows better."

Joseph Smith III knew that he had embarked on his religious career without thorough investigation of this factual question. In 1860 his moral and spiritual certainty that polygamy was wrong was sufficient to determine his course. But in Utah, in his correspondence with his relatives, and in pointed questions from others, the embarrassing factual questions had popped up repeatedly: Did the prophet sanction polygamy, and did his mother have first-hand knowledge of it? 134

Early in 1879, Joseph Smith III discussed with some of his key associates the advisability of questioning his mother. He was aware that his mother's health was fragile. If ever he were to ask her the fateful question, he knew it must be soon. Intellectually, he was prepared for the worst. Even if his father had practiced polygamy, he reasoned, it was still wrong. But emotionally, to ask such
a question was extremely difficult. Nevertheless he determined to ask. The interview with his mother would provide an opportunity to settle some other disputed questions about early Latter Day Saint history, as well. Accordingly, a list of some of the more important questions was drawn up, and Joseph departed Plano for Nauvoo on February 4, 1879. The next day, he interviewed his mother. The record in his journal is quite simple: "Wrote up from mother's recollections." He later gave a fuller description of the scene:

Sister Emma answered the questions freely and in the presence of her husband, Major Lewis C. Bidamon, who was generally present in their sitting-room where the conversation took place. We were more particular in this, because it had been frequently stated to us: "Ask your mother, she knows." "Why don't you ask your mother; she dare not deny these things." "You do not dare to ask your mother."

Our thought was, that if we had lacked courage to ask her, because we feared the answers she might give, we would put aside that fear; and, whatever the worst might be, we would hear it. . . .

We apologized to our mother for putting the questions respecting polygamy and plural wives, as we felt we ought to do.  

This was a dramatic scene. For nineteen years he had avoided such a discussion, but he felt he could postpone it no longer. He knew he was breaching a family taboo. He and others in the family had heard his mother's terse denials to unwelcome questions from visitors about polygamy. But they had far too much respect for her to raise the unpleasant subject themselves. But now apologetic necessity demanded that a statement be derived from the prophet's widow before she died. Perhaps there was a nagging doubt, as well, in Joseph's own mind. So he screwed up his courage and dared to trespass upon the forbidden territory. And having gone this far, his deep-seated integrity (and perhaps his legal training) caused him to have a witness present during the questioning. The interview began. Joseph apologized for the necessity of some of the questions. And then, rather than plunge immediately into the main issue, he began with some less painful questions, asking about details of her marriage, her children who had died
in infancy, and her recollections of Sidney Rigdon. At last, he came to the long unasked questions about polygamy:

Q. What about the revelation on Polygamy? Did Joseph Smith have anything like it? What of spiritual wifery?
   A. There was no revelation on either polygamy, or spiritual wives. There were some rumors of something of the sort, of which I asked my husband. He assured me that all there was of it was, that in a chat about plural wives, he had said, "Well, such a system might possibly be, if everybody was agreed to it, and would behave as they should; but they would not; and, besides, it was contrary to the will of heaven."

Q. Did he not have other wives than yourself?
   A. He had no other wife but me; nor did he to my knowledge ever have.

Q. Did he not hold marital relation with women other than yourself?
   A. He did not have improper relations with any woman that ever came to my knowledge.

Q. Was there nothing about spiritual wives that you recollect?
   A. At one time my husband came to me and asked me if I had heard certain rumors about spiritual marriages, or anything of the kind; and assured me that if I had, that they were without foundation; that there was no such doctrine, and never should be with his knowledge, or consent. I know that he had no other wife or wives than myself, in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise.\footnote{137}

Some additional questions were posed, but the great hurdle had been traversed.

Joseph Smith III must have greeted his mother's answers with an internal sigh of relief. Her answers relieved him of lying upon a procrustean bed. He held two irreconcilable positions. In his heart he believed that his father had not been a bad man and could not have taught or practiced something so wicked as polygamy. But whenever he was confronted with difficult evidence to the contrary, he fell back upon his second line of defense, i.e., that the truth of the Latter Day work was independent of Joseph Smith's character. But these two positions left an unresolved dilemma. What if the prophet, qua prophet, had declared polygamy to be God's will? Logically, if Joseph Smith, Jr. did promulgate such a revelation, either plural marriage was a righteous principle sanctioned by heaven, or the prophet had produced a false revelation sanctioning
wickedness.

Emma's testimony resolved the potential dilemma. Joseph now had the testimony of the one who had known the prophet most intimately. With this testimony he could counterbalance the testimonies of those who claimed the contrary.

Joseph Smith III departed Nauvoo on February 10th and returned home. On April 30th, Emma passed away. In October 1879 the Saints' Herald and the Saints' Advocate (a missionary paper edited by W. W. Blair) both published the interview of February 5, 1879, under the title, "Last Testimony of Sister Emma." The accounts bore the signature of Joseph Smith III.

When copies of the Saints' Advocate reached Utah, there was a swift reaction. The Mormon Church was fighting a war on two fronts to defend its practice of plural marriage. The "Last Testimony of Sister Emma" posed a strategic threat on both fronts. On one front, the LDS Church was fighting federal anti-polygamy laws by claiming that plural marriage was an integral part of the Mormon religion and therefore protected under the First Amendment. But the "Last Testimony" buttressed the arguments of those who claimed polygamy was no part of Mormonism proper. On the other front, RLDS missionaries in Utah were seeking converts on the grounds that the LDS leadership was in apostacy. The "Last Testimony" strengthened the RLDS claim to be the true church.

Apostle Joseph F. Smith spearheaded the Mormon counterattack. For some time he had been collecting affidavits from those who had first-hand knowledge of Joseph Smith's teaching and practice of plural marriage. Now he made devastating use of the information he had accumulated. Joseph F. Smith submitted a lengthy letter to the Deseret Evening News, reproducing many of the sworn affidavits. The effect of his letter was to contradict the whole of his Aunt
Emma’s testimony concerning plural marriage.

For example, the affidavit of Joseph B. Noble stated that the Mormon prophet had taught Noble the principle of plural marriage in 1840 and that the prophet affirmed that an angel from heaven commanded him to practice the principle. Benjamin F. Johnson swore that the prophet taught him the principle in 1843, entered into plural marriage with Johnson’s sister, counseled Johnson’s widowed mother to enter into a plural marriage, and secretly cohabited with two plural wives at Johnson’s residence. Apostle Lorenzo Snow swore that the prophet taught him the principle in 1843, and that his sister Eliza R. Snow was sealed to the prophet as a plural wife. John Benbow swore that the prophet taught him the principle in 1843 and housed one of his plural wives at Benbow’s house. Two of Joseph Smith, Jr.’s plural wives—the sisters Eliza M. Partridge Lyman and Emily D. Partridge Young—testified that they were sealed to the prophet in 1843, in the presence of Emma Smith. Lovina Walker, niece of Emma Smith, swore that in 1846, her Aunt Emma told her that she had witnessed the sealing of four young women to Joseph Smith, Jr. as plural wives.

Apostle Joseph F. Smith concluded that these affidavits asserted "quite as strong claims for belief" and presented "a much better appearance of veracity" than Sister Emma’s Last Testimony. His numerous witnesses were, for the most part, still living and could be cross-examined, while Emma was dead and was "represented as denying facts which it can be abundantly proven, were well known to her." In death, her son was making her to assume "hazardous and untenable ground." Such a denial should have been publicized years ago, he reasoned, if true.139

Joseph F. Smith’s letter was followed in the same issue by one from Eliza R. Snow, the most prominent woman in Utah. She argued:
If what purports to be her [Emma's] "last testimony" was really her testimony, she died with a libel on her lips . . . and in publishing that libel, her son has fastened a stigma on the character of his mother, that can never be erased. . . . Even if her son ignored his mother's reputation for veracity, he better had waited until his father's wives were silent in death, for now they are her living witnesses of the divinity of plural marriage . . . [He has] through a sinister policy [branded his mother's name] with gross wickedness—charging her with the denial of a sacred principle which she had heretofore not only acknowledged but acted upon—a principle than which there is none more important comprised in the gospel of the Son of God.¹⁴⁰

The letters of Joseph F. Smith and Eliza R. Snow point up several historiographical problems which are still of interest. These include:

Why was the "Last Testimony" published posthumously? Joseph F. Smith implied that his cousin waited until Emma was safely dead and could not be cross-examined before publishing her testimony. Did Joseph Smith III deliberately file away the testimony until after his mother's demise so that she could not be cross-examined? Or was it a matter of accident rather than policy? Joseph F. Smith and Eliza Snow both implied that the Last Testimony had been withheld as a matter of policy, for safety, and to lend an air of finality to the statement. Eliza R. Snow even implied that the whole story might have been put into his late mother's mouth by her designing son.

Unfortunately, neither Joseph Smith III's journals nor his letters reveal the reason for the delay. However, there are certain inferential reasons for believing that the posthumous publication was accidental. Upon his return to Plano, Joseph Smith III almost immediately became caught up in the hectic activity incidental to moving the Herald Office into new quarters.¹⁴¹ Then came the incessant round of activities associated with the Annual Conference, held at Plano, beginning April 6, 1879. The conference was not long concluded when the fateful telegram arrived on April 20th, calling him back to Nauvoo, because his mother was passing away.¹⁴² She died on April 30th. There simply was very little time
to prepare the matter for the press between February 4 and April 30, 1879. That such a crowded schedule was a factor is suggested by the additional delay of five months before the Last Testimony appeared in print.143

Is the text of the Last Testimony trustworthy? One recent study states that the manner in which the text was edited is unclear.144 While it is true that the printer's manuscript has gone the way of its kind, the original notes of the interview are extant and can be compared with the published account.145 Both questions and answers are in the unmistakable hand of Joseph Smith III and give every indication of being authentic notes of a conversation.146

Comparison of the published version with the longhand notes reveals close correspondence between the two. There is no indication of editorial liberties having been taken. The most significant change, in the printed version, is the rearrangement of the rambling discussion into a more coherent sequence. In substance, the printed version faithfully represents the notes.

There are several other reasons for believing that the Last Testimony accurately reflects the actual interview. First, the controversial assertions made in it are consistent with statements Emma Smith Bidamon made to others. Second, the interview was conducted in the presence of Major Bidamon, who lived until 1891 without contradicting its truthfulness. Third, however stubborn Joseph Smith III may have been on the subject of polygamy, he was no liar. A fabrication would have been out of character.

Why did Sister Emma fail to tell the truth about polygamy? This was the question which vexed Eliza R. Snow, who had lived with the Smith family in the Mansion House and was well acquainted with Emma's character. Eliza knew that her own marriage to the prophet was known to Emma. How could Emma lie?

The problem was compounded by Emma's reputation for veracity. George
Edmunds—who was convinced that the prophet both taught and practiced polygamy—was asked to explain this very discrepancy, toward the end of his life. He told his interviewer emphatically: "I tell you, sir, no man could look Emma Smith in the face and tell a lie! She would detect it at once, and he knew it!" The interviewer then asked, "Judge, if Emma Smith was the kind of woman you say she was, how do you account for her statement that her husband had had nothing whatever to do with polygamy . . . ?" The old man replied, with an odd smile, "That's just the h--- of it! I can't account for it nor reconcile her statements with what I had been led to believe. Nevertheless, she was just the kind of woman I have said she was."  

A strong clue to her motives is found in her reaction to her second husband's infidelities. Major Bidamon fathered an illegitimate son by a local widow named Nancy Abercrombie. While never acknowledging that her husband had fathered the child, Emma took the boy into their home and raised him. In an sketch of his mother's life, Joseph Smith III recalled that if Emma "ever did suspect her husband in this unfortunate business, neither her own children nor any one else ever knew it, so strong was her self control and her sense of right under conditions of suspicion only."  

Faced with infidelity on the part of her husband, she maintained her dignity by steadfastly refusing to acknowledge that anything was amiss. In the case of her denial that Joseph Smith, Jr. was involved in polygamy, such stern-willed determination to maintain her dignity undoubtedly played a role.

Recently published material from William Clayton's diaries shows that Emma Smith, when not cowed into submission, offered vigorous opposition to her husband's practice of plural marriage. When she was confronted with the revelation on celestial marriage, she declared that she did not believe a word of
it. Moral revulsion and a sense of personal betrayal by her husband were fundamental motives for her opposition to polygamy. They operated as strongly in 1879 as they had in the 1840s.149

Practical considerations also entered into the equation. Nauvoo was something of a mecca for Mormons and curious non-Mormons. These visitors naturally would stop at the Mansion House. In the face of repeated unwelcome questions, Emma naturally developed some standard, terse denials concerning an episode she preferred not to discuss.150 In the 1840s and 1850s there was the practical matter of shielding her growing children from the evil practice; denial and silence were the simplest means to this end. After 1860 there was the matter of upholding the apologetic position of the RLDS Church. Protecting herself, her children, and her church were all practical reasons for her policy.

Granted that Emma Smith Bidamon was motivated by her desire to shield herself, her children, and her church, there remains the problem of how to reconcile her Last Testimony with her reputation for honesty. Three possible explanations suggest themselves.

First, psychological or physical factors may have altered her memory of the past. The passing of time, failing memory, and psychological denial may have changed her recollections. In a similar case of historical misstatement in old age, Richard P. Howard suggested that "the endless nuances of the polemic process" distorted James Whitehead's memory, "encouraging anomalies in statements over time and under tumultuous conditions."151 But this hardly explains Emma's denials spanning several decades.

Second, the "Last Testimony" may contain half-truths, term-switching, and ambiguously-worded references to actual incidents.152 The accounts of the prophet's denials of polygamy probably reflect actual conversations between
Joseph and Emma prior to 1843, when he first spoke to her about plural marriage openly. The statements that there were "no other wives" and "no revelation" may be ways of saying, "There were no true wives but myself and no true revelation on polygamy." The phrase, "that ever came to my knowledge," may be akin to Emma Smith Bidamon's refusal to acknowledge the existence of the affair between L. C. Bidamon and Nancy Abercrombie.

Third, and last, the denials may be regarded simply as lies. In the final analysis, this is exactly what they were. However much the prophet's first wife may have justified her answers as technically true but semantically evasive, the bald fact remains that, by design, they conveyed to the reader or listener an idea which was false. In the case of one noted for her integrity, only extremities could have driven her to such dissimulation. The hateful doctrine of plural marriage was just such an extremity. In the eyes of the prophet's widow, the truth was too painful, too dangerous, and too wicked to testify to, even as she approached death in 1879.

The Accession of E. W. Tullidge to the Reorganization

After obtaining his mother's "Last Testimony," Joseph Smith III returned to Plano to prepare for the Annual Conference in April. Held in Plano, the Conference of 1879 witnessed the accession of the most famous Mormon ever to join the Reorganization: Edward Wheelock Tullidge (1829-1894). Tullidge had been converted to Mormonism in England in 1848. Later he was employed on the editorial staff of the Millennial Star. In 1861 he immigrated to America. Here he put his literary talents to good use in both Utah and New York. Disillusioned with Brigham Young's rule, he became associated with the Godbeite movement for a time, believing that it might be the vehicle to restore the Latter-day Saints to the paths of truth and virtue. Tullidge had written a Life of Brigham Young and The
Women of Mormondom, but his lifelong dream had been to write a biography of Joseph Smith. This he published in 1878 under the title, *Life of Joseph the Prophet*. He sent a complimentary copy to Joseph Smith III, who sent him a thank-you note. Apparently this favorable response, coupled with a negative reaction to the book by some of the authorities in Utah, moved Tullidge to consider affiliating with the Reorganization. He long before had concluded that lack of a leader had contributed to the failure of the Godbeite movement, and he also had been considering the claims of Joseph Smith III to the mantle of his prophet-father. In April 1879 he travelled from Utah to Plano to attend the RLDS Annual Conference. After discussions with Joseph Smith III, he was baptized and ordained an elder.¹⁵³

Tullidge remained in Illinois for a time. He labored actively as an elder, while continuing to write for a living. In the fall of 1879 he became involved in a movement, the brain-child of certain editors and others opposed to Mormon polygamy, to install Joseph Smith III as Governor of Utah Territory. Writing to President Rutherford B. Hayes, he argued that such an appointment would undermine the Mormon theocracy. He extravagently forecast that 20,000 to 50,000 Mormons would join the crusade against polygamy, if the prophet's son were installed in Utah's gubernatorial chair.¹⁵⁴

At the Annual Conference of 1880, Tullidge was appointed to serve in the Rocky Mountain Mission along with W. W. Blair. He returned to Utah in the summer, but soon drifted away from church work and began publishing *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*.

Before E. W. Tullidge's departure for Utah, Joseph Smith III had arranged for the RLDS Board of Publication to reissue his *Life of Joseph the Prophet*. The RLDS president long had felt the need to publish a church history, but the project
had languished for years. If some of the references to Utah doctrines such as polygamy and plurality of gods could be removed, he reasoned, Tullidge's laudatory portrait of the prophet might fill the void. The revisions were made. Text was added scoring Brighamite usurpation and iniquity and recounting the history of the Reorganization. Joseph Smith III himself appended an autobiographical chapter. Plates were secured and the RLDS edition of the *Life of Joseph the Prophet* was published in the fall of 1880.

To Joseph Smith III's chagrin, the accession of E. W. Tullidge to the Reorganized Church brought him nothing but trouble. Others of Tullidge's intellectual circle in Salt Lake City did not follow him into the ranks of the RLDS Church. The publication of Tullidge's book severely strained the Board of Publication's limited resources. To make matters worse, the Church was unable to recoup its costs. Hundreds of copies were left in the Herald Office gathering dust, due to a controversy within the church over the book.\textsuperscript{155} Opponents of the book, including a majority of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, charged that the book's portrait of Joseph and Hyrum Smith was an unrealistic panegyric, and worse, that it portrayed Brigham Young and other Utah leaders in favorable light.\textsuperscript{156} Sales of the book were stopped. Personal distaste for Tullidge, based upon suspicions of opportunism and his unreformed drinking habits, also contributed to the book's demise. In Utah, Tullidge lapsed farther and farther into alcoholism. He contributed nothing to the RLDS cause and drifted away from all church association. The Mormon authorities, headed by John Henry Smith and Joseph F. Smith, "effectually stopped every intellectual or business enterprise in which Mr. Tullidge engaged. They proscribed the sale of his works, and the community generally refused to support his publishing ventures."\textsuperscript{157} Joseph Smith III would have liked to have forgotten the entire episode of the abortive
publication of Tullidge’s *Life of Joseph the Prophet*. However, there was one final chapter in the whole sorry affair. The RLDS Board of Publication used engraved portraits of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in the book, obtained from Edward W. Tullidge. Joseph F. Smith claimed a personal interest in these plates. Joseph Smith III rejected his claim, insisting that the plates were solely the property of the RLDS Board of Publication. A nasty controversy ensued between Joseph III and Joseph F. Smith, each adamantly insisting that the other was in the wrong.\158

E. W. Tullidge died in Salt Lake City on May 21, 1894, his idealism disappointed, a victim of alcoholism. Rather than a useful worker in the RLDS cause, he had proven a personal disappointment to Joseph Smith III.

**Vindication in Hancock County**

If the accession of Edward Tullidge to the Reorganized Church in 1879 and the publication of his *Life of Joseph the Prophet* in 1880 proved embarrassments to Joseph Smith III, two other events in 1880 more than compensated for the disappointment. In this year his long struggle for respectability and legitimacy culminated in two strategic victories. The first victory was his successful preaching mission in Hancock County. The second was a favorable judicial opinion in a lawsuit over the Kirtland Temple. The second received greater publicity and was of more apologetic value to the church, but the first was a personal triumph which Joseph Smith III richly savored for years to come.

The better part of January 1880, Joseph Smith III engaged in a preaching mission in Illinois. His confidence having increased with experience, he now found himself filled with enthusiasm and a desire to present his message wherever possible. This mission particularly fired his zeal, because part of the time was to be spent in Hancock County.

First he visited Burnside, near the homes of his Aunt Katharine Salisbury
and her children. After preaching there he went to Colchester, home of his Aunt Lucy Millikin. At both locations Campbellite preachers tried to deny him the use of local church buildings. One succeeded; the other did not. Sharing church buildings with other denominations was commonplace at that time. Joseph Smith III always resented it when this courtesy was denied to RLDS elders. The clerical opposition only fed the interest of the local citizens. Joseph's meetings were well attended in both Burnside and Colchester. Joseph was pleased at his friendly reception.159

His great triumph occurred at Carthage, however. There he spoke at the Hancock County Court House, January 16, 17, and twice on Sunday, January 18, 1880. As he approached these meetings, his mind was filled with recollections of past indignities and questions about how he would be received now:

... I had thought a great deal about this contemplated effort at Carthage, and had speculated considerably, remembering my father's death in the jail there, the causes ..., all the trials and difficulties which ensued, the later occupants of the county, the legal affairs at Carthage taken over by many who had been at enmity with my father and the church he sponsored, and—perhaps over and above all—the public opposition to me which had once been shown in that city. I constantly asked myself the questions, How would I be received? What course should I pursue in my discourse there? Would the people listen to me?

All his apprehensions vanished on January 16th. He had a large and attentive audience. There were no disruptions or signs of hostility. Near the very spot where his father had been murdered, he spoke freely. In the location where an indignation meeting had passed resolutions forbidding him to preach Mormon doctrine in the county, he fully and calmly expounded his belief in latter day revelation, the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the church, and the RLDS understanding of the gospel.160

Many of his listeners congratulated him warmly, particularly for his affirmative manner which was free of accusation, rancor, or bitterness. The
local press commented favorably on his meetings. The editor of the Carthage Republican commented that he had good audiences which behaved respectfully. The editor also noted Joseph Smith III's improvement as a public speaker since leaving Hancock County. The editor of the other Carthage newspaper, the Gazette, was none other than Thomas C. Sharp, former editor of the Warsaw Signal, and violent enemy of Joseph Smith, Jr. Editor Sharp commented:

The lectures of Elder Joseph Smith, of the Reorganized Mormon Church . . . were attended by crowded audiences. We were not present at any of the lectures, but learn from those who were, that there was nothing said, at which any person could take offense. He simply argued religious questions from a Mormon standpoint, but repudiated polygamy. Mr. Smith has the reputation of being a gentleman and a good citizen, and received from our people the courteous treatment which every man, irrespective of his religious views, is entitled to.¹⁶²

Joseph Smith III felt himself vindicated. Years of good citizenship, moral conduct, faithful preaching, and calm replies to Gentile hostility had produced the desired result. Even in this former hotbed of Anti-Mormonism he could preach freely. He had succeeded in dissociating the RLDS Church from much of the opprobrium attached to the name "Mormon." His quest for respectability and vindication was reaping dividends at the very time when the Utah Church was under increasing attack for its practice of polygamy. His reception in Hancock County demonstrated that he had managed to convince many Gentiles that the RLDS Church was composed of non-polygamous, moral, law-abiding citizens who differed from their neighbors only in certain theological tenets.¹⁶³

Favorable Opinion in the Kirtland Temple Suit

One month after his gratifying reception in Hancock County, Joseph Smith III scored a second major victory, this one also in a court room. In Lake County, Ohio, Judge L. S. Sherman ruled that the RLDS Church was the legitimate successor of the church established in 1830. The occasion for Judge Sherman's
ruling was a lawsuit over the Kirtland Temple. Judge Sherman's favorable opinion demonstrated that Joseph Smith III's arguments for legitimacy were gaining greater credance among Americans outside the Latter Day Saint camp. Based on documents published during his father's lifetime, he set forth convincing arguments that the Mormons of Utah had apostatized from the original Latter Day Saint faith.

Joseph Smith III's apologetic stance owed much to his legal training, and it was well suited to courtroom proceedings. As previously noted, his legal mindset extended to the question of his father's involvement in polygamy. It also colored his approach to his duties as president of the RLDS Church. In disciplinary cases he always insisted that proper rules of evidence and procedure be followed. At conferences he demanded orderly debate and adherence to proper parliamentary procedure. His theology also displayed strong legalistic tendencies.

Early in his career Joseph Smith III sensed that the law might be employed to validate the Reorganization's position vis-à-vis the Utah Church. In April 1867, while visiting Nauvoo, he discussed this possibility with his old friend George Edmunds. After returning to Plano he sent Edmunds a request that he draw up an abstract concerning a number of questions they had discussed, including the following:

1st In the event of a controversy arising between the so called, Brighamite branch; and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; what would be necessary upon the part of the latter, to show that they were the parties in rightful succession to the church, organized by Joseph Smith Jr and others in A. D. 1830?

2nd What steps, if any, are necessary for the Reorganized C. of J. C. of L. D. S. to take, to enable them to hold property in any and all the state[s] of the U. S?

3rd What Steps, if any, are required to be taken by Church organizations, to become persons, or corporate bodies, known to the law?

4th What effect, if any, will the action of congress forbidding the
consummation of marriages by Mormons authority have, upon said Reorganized Church? 175

The last point illustrated a constant theme of Joseph Smith III's when dealing with the Federal Government. He was concerned—in 1866 and later—that legal proscriptions aimed at Utah Mormonism not be drawn so broadly as to include the Reorganization.

The first three points focused on the question of the church's legal identity as the successor of the original church organized by Joseph Smith, Jr. This letter demonstrates that early in his career, Joseph Smith III was contemplating a strategy whereby he might achieve legal recognition for the Reorganization as the legitimate successor to the church established by his father. Part of this strategy involved incorporating the church and establishing its right to hold property. Of course there were other reasons for incorporating the church, but the letter to Edmunds shows that the questions of incorporation and a legal test against the Utah Church were linked in the thinking of Joseph Smith III.

At the Semi-Annual Conference of 1872, the RLDS president secured approval of Articles of Incorporation for the church. The articles provided that the church be incorporated under the laws of Illinois under the name, "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." Significantly, the first article stated: "The church adheres to the doctrines and tenets of the original 'Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,' as organized by Joseph Smith (the martyr), now deceased, on the 6th day of April, A. D. 1830, as the same has been reorganized by Joseph Smith, now of Plano, Illinois, . . . and many others." The fourth article provided that the corporation might hold property. The fifth article provided that the corporation might "sue and be sued, defend and be defended in all courts and places—but all shall be done in said corporate name." The sixth article provided that all trustees holding property for the church
transfer title for same to the corporate body, and that "said corporation shall by operation of law succeed to all property now owned by said church or held for its use; and may sue for and recover the same, in the name of said corporation." 166 This last provision closely followed the text of the Illinois statute governing incorporation of religious bodies, which stated that an incorporated religious body was entitled to "all the real and personal estate" of the previously incorporated or unincorporated body which it succeeded. 167

On February 5, 1873, the appropriate papers were filed with the Recorder of Deeds in Kendall County, Illinois. 168 Thereafter, the church was officially incorporated, claiming to be the true successor of the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. If that claim could be established in a court of law, it might convey the right to property held by the church prior to the death of Joseph Smith, Jr. This laid the groundwork for the legal contest in 1880 concerning ownership of the Kirtland Temple.

The glory of the Kirtland Temple had passed. After the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo, in 1846, the trustees would have sold it had they been able to find an appropriate buyer. In 1862 it had passed into private possession as the result of a probate sale. The probate sale had resulted from revived court proceedings against Joseph Smith, Jr.'s estate. The temple had been sold because Joseph Smith, Jr. held title to it as sole trustee in trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Possession had then changed hands via a succession of quit claims. In 1873 a member of the Reorganized Church came into possession of the temple and conveyed possession to Joseph Smith III (president of the church) and Mark H. Forscutt (secretary). 169

Both Joseph Smith III and Mark H. Forscutt were in debt. The temple was in need of repairs. When municipal officials in Kirtland suggested, in 1875, that
they would like to purchase the structure to convert it into a town hall, the offer was favorably received. Joseph Smith III and Mark Forscutt were willing to sell the temple for $2,500. In July 1875 Joseph Smith III went to Kirtland to complete the sale, only to have it fall through because the town feared that the title was clouded.170

Joseph Smith III then initiated research into who held title to the property. George E. Paine, an Ohio attorney specializing in real estate law, was employed to make an abstract of title. Paine concluded, from his research, that the title to the temple, in 1841, belonged to Joseph Smith, Jr., as trustee for the church. Since April 1862, he reported, possession of the property was under the quit claim resulting from the probate sale. As for the present situation, Paine concluded:

It seems to me there can be no question as to the claim of the legal representatives of "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" . . . . to the property, if said claim is prosecuted within twenty one years from April 19 1862—but it will be necessary to show . . . .at the claimant is such legal representative of said Church . . . . Since Joseph Smith III and Mark Forscutt were affiliated with the Reorganized Church, Paine suggested leaving the probate sale undisturbed until the title was perfected by twenty-one years' possession. He warned that if legal proceedings were initiated to recover the property in the name of the church, it would be necessary to prove "that those who now claim to recover the prope[r]ty are the legal representatives of said original church . . . ."171

Joseph now came under pressure from some Saints to transfer title to the church. Bishop Israel Rogers in particular desired him to do so. The matter became the subject of debate at conference, but the RLDS president adamantly insisted that if he simply transferred possession to the church, it would leave the church's claim open to legal challenge. He proposed an alternative approach. He persuaded Bishop Rogers and the conference of the wisdom of his strategy.172
What he proposed was that the church file suit to establish its title to the Kirtland Temple. The premise upon which the suit was to be built was that the probate sale illegally treated the temple as personal property of Joseph Smith, Jr., whereas it actually had belonged to the church, of which he was trustee-in-trust. The Reorganized Church then could claim to be the rightful owner as the successor of the church organized in 1830. If the court ruled that the probate sale properly treated the temple as personal property of Joseph Smith, Jr., then Joseph Smith III and Mark Forscutt would hold clear title, and nothing would be lost. The temple still could be transferred to the RLDS Church. But if the court ruled the probate sale improper, then the RLDS Church would be in a position to enter its claims as the true church in succession.

There was the potential danger that the Utah Church—or some minor Latter Day Saint faction—might make an appearance in court and claim to be the true church in succession. This might make for a long and risky court battle. The possibility was minimal, however. According to the requirements of Ohio law, notice to the defendants was made by publication of a notice in the local press, in August 1879. No papers were served upon John Taylor or any official of the Mormon Church, even though "the Mormon Church, and John Taylor, President of said Utah Church" were named as defendants. 173

On February 17, 1880, RLDS attorney E. L. Kelley—assisted by non-member J. B. Burrows—argued the case in the Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio. Kelley was confident of the result, because when Judge L. S. Sherman took the case under advisement he stated that the evidence showed "a very wide departure from the laws and usages of the original church by that body of Mormons in Utah Territory."174

On February 23, 1880, Judge Sherman handed down his ruling in the case.
He ruled that Joseph Smith, Jr. never held the temple as personal property, and, therefore, no title passed to other parties at the probate sale. Joseph Smith III and Mark Forscutt therefore held no legal title to the property.

The judge then ruled on the question of which church was the successor of the original body organized in 1830. Since only the Reorganized Church's lawyers had presented evidence, his decision was a foregone conclusion, but it provided powerful apologetic ammunition for future battles. He found that the church organized in 1830 had "certain well defined doctrines, which were set forth in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and book of Doctrine and Covenants." He found that the church became disorganized in 1844 and broke up into fragments, each claiming to be the original and true church. Furthermore, he found that only a fraction of the members in 1844 ever followed the leadership of Brigham Young, and that the Utah Church "has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances, and usages of said original Church... and has incorporated into its system of faith the doctrines of celestial marriage and a plurality of wives, and the doctrine of Adam-god worship, contrary to the laws and constitution of said original church." On the other hand, he found that the RLDS Church represented a legitimate reorganization of the original body, begun by members of the church disorganized at Nauvoo, and largely incorporating all of the fragments of the disorganized church except the one in Utah.

Therefore, the judge concluded:

... the plaintiff the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints is the true and lawful continuation of and successor to the said organized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints organized in 1830, and is entitled in law to all its rights and property. And the Court do further find that said defendants Joseph Smith Sarah F. Videlon and Mark H. Forscutt are in possession of said property under a pretended sale thereof made by order of the Probate Court on the petition of Harvey Holcomb as the Administrator of said Joseph Smith as the individual property of said Joseph Smith and the Court finds that said Smith had no title to said property except as the Trustee of said Church and that no
title thereto passed to the purchasers at said sale and that said parties in possession have no legal title to said property.

And the court further finds that the legal title to said property is vested in the heirs of said Joseph Smith in trust for the legal successor of said organized church. And that the plaintiff are not in possession thereof. And thereupon the court finds as matter of law that the plaintiff is not entitled to the judgment or relief prayed for in its petition. And thereupon it is ordered and adjudged that this action be dismissed at the costs of the plaintiff.175

This ruling gave Joseph Smith III virtually everything he had sought. Because the plaintiff (the RLDS Church) was not in possession of the Kirtland Temple, the judge ruled that, as a matter of law, he could not give them legal title. He could not do so, he ruled, because legal title had devolved upon the heirs of Joseph Smith. Therefore, he dismissed the case.176

However, despite the fact that the RLDS Church's suit was dismissed, the ruling was highly favorable to the church. First, the court ruled that the RLDS Church was the true church in succession. This ruling had immense potential as a weapon in polemical warfare. Second, fears that the Utah Church or some other faction might lay claim to the temple were put to rest. Third, Joseph Smith III was left with a free hand to transfer the property to the RLDS Church whenever he desired. Despite the fact that the suit was dismissed, the ruling was an instance of losing the battle while winning the war. For years to come, the RLDS Church proudly cited Judge Sherman's ruling as evidence of its position as the true church in succession.177

Joseph Smith III set the precedent in this regard. He immediately began putting the ruling to good use. He sent letters to the four leading papers in Chicago and the Burlington Hawkeye triumphantly announcing the decision.178 The important polemical use to which he intended to put the decision is clearly visible in a letter he wrote ten weeks after the decision:

Utah Mormonism is not the legitimate result of the teachings of Joseph Smith, and here you err; as many have done, and are doing, Utah
Mormonism is a departure, and secular lawyers can see this, while you, who persist in judging all Mormonism from its Utah phase can not, or will not.179

Moving to Lamoni

From the beginning of his ministry, Joseph Smith III had sought to make the name "Latter Day Saint" respectable. During his final years in Plano he enjoyed the fruit of his labor. Not only did the citizens of Carthage welcome him as a preacher and the Lake County Court of Common Pleas deliver a favorable opinion, but his fellow-citizens in Plano voiced their esteem for him and his church.

For some years, the Saints had been preparing Lamoni, Iowa, as a gathering place. When it became known in Plano that the Saints were likely to move their publishing operation to Lamoni, there were expressions of regret. In 1876 the Plano Mirror editorialized:

Should this people leave Plano they will be a loss to the village; they are good citizens, and number over two hundred in Plano and vicinity. Elder Smith is a good man, and however much others may dissent from his Mormon views, all who know him respect him.180

The citizens of Nauvoo, learning that Plano might be abandoned as the semi-official church headquarters, petitioned the church to return to Nauvoo, in December 1877, in hopes that this might rebuild the city's economic fortunes. The list of signers, in double columns, was three and a half yards long. The petition stated that "the odium rightfully attached to the Brighamite Mormons in the infamous practice of polygamy is detached from the Reorganized Church," and promised a cordial welcome from the citizenry. Joseph Smith III visited Nauvoo on January 2, 1878 and discussed the possibility of returning to the city. He felt an exhilarating sense of vindication, but could make no commitments.181

When the Saints finally departed Plano the Kendall County Record
observed that Joseph Smith III took with him "the good will of Plano's citizens." In his fifteen years' residence, he had "always borne the reputation of a good citizen. Always to be found on the side of right, he maintained his position to the end, and goes to his future home with sad farewells and good wishes of his many friends."182

Two issues before the last Herald to be published in Plano, Joseph Smith III observed:

Scarcely a day passes without newspapers being sent us showing up the difference between the original faith of the Church, as taught by the Reorganization and the schismatic branch led away into sin by Brigham Young, and urging the government to put the law in force against the Utah Church."183

During the years in Plano, Joseph Smith III had succeeded in slowly winning respectability for the RLDS Church. Those who knew him personally respected him. Those who knew members of his church recognized that they were not polygamists. And the press was becoming aware of the difference between the Mormons in Utah and the Saints led by the prophet's son. He had also succeeded in making the Reorganization the only significant alternative to the LDS Church in Utah. As he and his family left for Lamoni, Iowa, on October 7, 1881, he was about to embark on a new phase of his warfare against "the Utah apostasy." Now that his voice was recognized as a legitimate alternative to the Utah Church, he was in a position to become a leader in a growing national crusade to abolish polygamy.
CHAPTER VII

THE LAMONI YEARS: 1881-1906

Joseph, Bertha, and the children travelled by train to Lamoni. Despite torrential rainstorms, within a week or so they and their household goods were installed in their new home, nicknamed "Liberty Hall." Liberty Hall was a spacious two-story wooden structure, located a short distance west of town. The house lay on a sixty-acre tract of rich farmland. Here the Smith children grew to adulthood. Births, marriages, and deaths; joy and sorrow; and the constant round of domestic activity incidental to raising a large family took place in Liberty Hall. Here two more children were born to Joseph and Bertha: Blossom (1883) and Lucy Yeteve (1884). But tragedy stalked the family, as well. Blossom died at birth. Effervescent little Bertha Azuba—Joseph's favorite child—died after a playground accident, October 14, 1884. David Carlos—Joseph's eldest son—passed away on January 24, 1886 following years of suffering with heart disease brought on by rheumatic fever.¹

But Lamoni was a good place to raise a family. Located in Decatur County, Iowa, just north of the Missouri border, it was named for a good king in the Book of Mormon. Lamoni germinated out of two recurring themes in Latter Day Saint history: gathering and communal experiments. Virtually every faction of Latter Day Saints had engaged in such experiments. The drive to gather, pool resources, and build a righteous society was rooted in historical precedents dating back to the earliest days of Mormonism. Due to many sorry experiences
associated with earlier experiments in gathering, the early Reorganization had been extremely cautious about the concept. Joseph Smith III, after an initial naive burst of enthusiasm, quickly learned the virtue of caution concerning gathering. While many Reorganites were growing impatient to designate a new gathering site (or to return to an old one), the RLDS president issued caution after caution. Previous experiments had foundered, he reasoned, because the emphasis had been placed on preparing a location. This inverted the correct sequence. First the Saints themselves must become righteous, and then they could gather. Holiness attached to persons, not places. Besides, he had seen too many Saints lose their substance in hasty experiments in gathering. He urged them, instead, to buy good land, improve it, and wait for the Lord to speak sometime in the future. While some Reorganites were impatient with their president’s caution, the one thing they all agreed was that Utah was neither Zion nor the appointed gathering place.²

The concept of gathering would not die, however. In 1871 an RLDS colony was begun in Decatur County, Iowa. This location was chosen because it was relatively isolated, because the rich farmland was relatively cheap, and because the location was within the prescribed "regions round about Zion" to which the Saints were to gather.³ This experiment was known as the "United Order of Enoch." It was based on sounder business principles than many earlier experiments: settlers purchased their own land from the Order and were responsible for their own financial success or failure. After a railroad line was extended through the lands of the RLDS colony in 1879, the town of Lamoni rapidly sprang up. By 1881 its population was approximately three hundred people. In 1900 it had swollen to over fifteen hundred. Ultimately the Saints in Lamoni hoped to return to Jackson County. But in the absence of a command
from God, Joseph Smith III felt that prudence must govern the Saints' gathering schemes. By 1880 he was convinced that Lamoni was a viable experiment. Simultaneously, Plano was experiencing economic depression. Now, he reasoned, was a good time to move closer to the center place of Zion. Accordingly he spent copious amounts of time and energy in 1881 supervising construction of his new home and the new brick Herald Office. For decades to come the Herald Office in Lamoni would function as headquarters of the RLDS Church. Liberty Hall, for its part, would receive a constant stream of visitors and generally witness a beehive of social activity.

Developments in the West

By the time Joseph Smith III and his family moved to Lamoni, the RLDS Church had achieved a measure of respectability in the eyes of its fellow citizens. The same was not true of the LDS Church. Mormonism was associated with immorality and disloyalty in the eyes of many Americans.

In Utah the Mormon Church was increasingly on the defensive. Brigham Young died on August 29, 1877, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the public announcement of the revelation on celestial marriage. Even before his death, the authority of the Mormon hierarchy had been eroding. Symbolic of this erosion was President Young's jailing for one day in 1875 and the contentious and widely publicized divorce suit filed against him by Ann Eliza Young. The end of the Civil War, the influx of Gentiles attracted by Utah's mineral wealth, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad had all hastened the demise of Utah's isolation from the rest of the nation. Utah's petitions for statehood were repeatedly rebuffed by Congress, long after a non-Mormon state would have entered the Union. The reason was polygamy. It was feared that if federal control were surrendered to local authorities, Mormondom's "peculiar institution"
would never be extirpated. Both economic and political power in the territory were becoming ever more diffuse.

Upon the death of the Lion of the Lord, John Taylor, president of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, assumed leadership of the Mormon Church. Under his administration, certain of Brigham Young's most criticized doctrines and practices were quietly abandoned. Privately, even members of the Twelve had been critical of Brigham Young's vast accumulation of wealth. John Taylor took steps to separate the church's finances from his own. Under President Taylor and his successors, Brigham Young's Adam-God doctrine gradually was relegated to the realm of historical memory. There was increasing use of the standard works of the church under John Taylor. Significantly, whatever dynastic hopes Brigham Young may have entertained for his sons were put to rest under John Taylor and his successors.

John Taylor waited until Apostle Orson Hyde died, and then he reorganized the First Presidency. He chose George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as his counselors. John Taylor helped to establish the principle of succession which has been followed in the Mormon Church to this day. Upon the death of the president, rule devolves upon the Quorum of the Twelve. The president of the Twelve then establishes a new First Presidency. By repeating the procedure which had been adopted as an ad hoc solution to the succession crisis of 1844, Taylor established a precedent which has now assumed dogmatic overtones in the LDS Church. In any case, the lines were drawn clearly between the LDS and RLDS Churches. The Brighamites followed the principle of apostolic succession to the First Presidency, and the Josephites followed the principle of lineal succession.

John Taylor's administration also coincided with a rising tide of sentiment against Mormon polygamy. Taylor was tenaciously loyal to the principle, but
he found himself fighting a rear-guard action. He died in hiding at Kaysville, Utah, on July 25, 1887. A great federal crusade against polygamy had turned the president of the Mormon Church into a hunted fugitive.

The Crusade against Polygamy

Joseph Smith III's years in Lamoni were coterminous with a great nationwide crusade against Mormon polygamy. Newspapers, magazines, and books had convinced the American public that Utah was a den of sexual iniquity. Now that Southern Reconstruction was coming to a conclusion, national political attention was turning to the other "twin relic of barbarism," Mormon polygamy.

In 1879, in the test case of Reynolds v. U.S., the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Morrill Act of 1862, which outlawed plural marriages in U.S. territories. The court rejected the Mormon contention that laws against polygamy interfered with their free exercise of religion, reasoning that, "Laws are made for the government of actions and while they cannot interfere with mere religious belief and opinions they may with practices."11 The way was now clear for additional federal legislation aimed at Utah's peculiar institution.

In his last State of the Union message, in December 1880, President Rutherford B. Hayes urged stronger measures to root out Mormon polygamy. As a minimum, he recommended that "the right to vote, hold office, and sit on juries in the Territory of Utah be confined to those who neither practice nor uphold polygamy."12 President Garfield urged similar measures prior to his assassination. His successor, Chester A. Arthur, urged congressional action, because Mormonism was expanding beyond the confines of Utah. The Congress of 1881-1882 was flooded with petitions concerning Mormonism. Generally, Republicans supported additional legislation designed to transfer political power to the non-Mormon minority in Utah, while Democrats advocated stricter
enforcement of existing laws against polygamy, hoping to maintain political
friendship with the Mormon majority.13

The Edmunds Act. The most important piece of legislation to be
introduced was a bill by Senator George F. Edmunds of Vermont. Edmunds was a
Radical Republican who had been active in the Reconstruction of the South.
After visiting Utah, he concluded that it was time for federal action. As he
explained to the readers of Harper's Magazine, in the January 1882 issue, it was
time to resolve "the irrepressible conflict between polygamous Mormonism and
the social and political systems" of the American people generally. He had
concluded that the Mormon Church dominated political life in Utah, and that if
Utah were admitted as a state without polygamy first having been eliminated, it
would be impossible to stop the practice, because the Mormons "would be
absolutely beyond the legal reach of the people of other States." Edmunds' bill
provided that polygamy be a felony punishable by up to five years' imprisonment
and/or a $500 fine. An important provision called for six months' imprisonment
and/or a $300 fine for the more easily proven misdemeanor of polygamous living
together ("unlawful cohabitation"). Polygamists were to be disfranchised and
ineligible for public office. Those who practiced or believed in polygamy were
disqualified from jury duty. Elections were to be under the supervision of a
federally appointed commission.14

The Edmunds Bill was the opening political shot in a nationwide campaign
against polygamy. Nationwide rallies were held in its support early in 1882. A
mass rally was planned in Chicago. So successfully had Joseph Smith III planted in
the minds of the Chicago press the distinction between the Mormons of Utah and
the anti-polygamous RLDS Church that the organizers invited him to attend and
address the rally.15
Speech at Farwell Hall. The night of February 22, 1882 found Joseph Smith III seated on the platform at Chicago's Farwell Hall, together with a collection of political and religious dignitaries. The building was crowded. Similar anti-polygamy rallies were being held in other cities that night to whip up enthusiasm for the Edmuns Bill.

John Wentworth introduced Joseph Smith III to the people. He called the prophet's son "a man who has suffered more from Mormon influence than any man in the United States." He styled him an honorable man, an indefatigable opponent of polygamy, one who refused offers of wealth and power as president of the Utah Church because principle was more important to him than power. As Joseph Smith III arose to speak, the crowd greeted him with warm applause. His long quest for respectability was again reaping a rich harvest.

In his address he made the following major points. First, polygamy was not an original tenet of Mormonism. It was introduced after 1844 by licentious men who claimed an earlier origin to "sanctify their crime." They had immigrated to Utah, because polygamy would not have been tolerated in any of the settled areas of the country. Second, he attacked polygamy as a moral blemish, "a horrible and almost nameless stigma upon the fair name and fame of the United States." Third, he argued that Congress had both the right and duty to suppress polygamy. The supposed immunity from governmental control—on grounds that plural marriage was a religious practice—was specious. He suggested that Chicago's confidence-men, gamblers, and burglars could claim similar immunity on the grounds that their avocations were part of their religion. The remark brought laughter and applause from the crowd. Congressional action against polygamy need not involve persecution of the Mormons, since only a fraction were polygamists. Society had a right to protect itself from the spread of a moral and
social contagion. Radical surgery on the polygamous cancer was needed, he concluded. As he moved to his seat, reverberating applause echoed in his ears. The speech in Farwell Hall was a personal triumph for Joseph Smith III.16

**The Reorganized Church and the Federal Government.** Joseph Smith III was always sensitive to political developments in Washington. In numerous editorials in the *Herald* over the years, he commented on the political situation as it related to Utah. In 1866 he had testified before the House Committee on Territories. In 1870 he had headed an RLDS Committee which memorialized Congress and the President concerning Mormon polygamy. The purpose of the Memorial was to distinguish the RLDS from the LDS Church: the one monogamous, law abiding, and the true church in succession; the other polygamous, disloyal, and apostate.17 In 1878 he participated in a lobbying effort to secure appointment of Phineas Cadwell, an RLDS elder, as governor of Utah.18 He also corresponded with prominent politicians, including Rutherford B. Hayes and James A. Garfield.19 The debate over the Edmunds Bill occasioned additional such activity on the part of the RLDS Church.

**Gurley and Kelley in Washington.** Joseph Smith III dispatched Apostles Zenas H. Gurley, Jr. and E. L. Kelley to Washington, that whatever blow might fall, it would fall only upon the polygamous Mormons and not the monogamous Reorganites. They testified in favor of the Edmunds Bill before the House Judiciary Committee. They presented themselves as the representatives of original, pure Mormonism.20 Joseph editorialized of their mission:

> We have long foreseen that the opportunity for such presentation would come; and prepared for it. We believe that the brethren sent will attend strictly to the business entrusted to them; which is not as alleged by the Utah people to "incite the Government to hostility against" them; but to secure the immunity of True Mormonism from complicity with Utah wrong doing and the punishment due therefor[.] As a people, we of the Reorganization have chafed too long under the ban of ostracism and social injustice, wrought by reason of a "departure from the faith," not
to strike now when the opportunity offers.\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Enactment and aftermath.} The Edmunds Bill was passed by both Houses of Congress. On March 22, 1882, President Arthur signed it into law. The stricter enforcement of anti-polygamy laws long advocated by Joseph Smith III was about to become a reality. The days of Washington's benign neglect of Utah were finished.

The RLDS Annual Conference in April 1882 unanimously passed a resolution commending Congress and the President for the Edmunds Act, "by which the 'twin relic' is to be removed from the institutions of the country, to the honor and dignity of the nation, and to the especial good of all true Mormons, who abide in the original faith of the Church."\textsuperscript{22}

But while the RLDS Church rejoiced, the leaders of the LDS Church gnashed their teeth. Privately, Second Counselor Joseph F. Smith fumed at newspaper accounts of Joseph Smith III's speech in Chicago. He wrote:

It is truly astonishing to see the audacity and unblushing mendacity of the degenerate son of the martyred Prophet. I cannot believe that he is ignorant of the facts he denies; and can account for his determined hostility towards the revelation on plural marriage, only on the grounds of willful and malicious hatred of the principle and of the people who are and ever have been the only true friends of his martyred father. Perhaps his ambition for popularity and fame may have much to do with the unfriendly course he has chosen to pursue. But his ambition will fail, and his glory will depart, and become like the vision of a dream! His name will go down to infamy and his works will perish with him.

Joseph F. Smith pondered whether it might not be an opportune moment to publish some of his affidavits concerning the origin of plural marriage. He knew that this might add fuel to the already burning fires of the anti-polygamy crusade, however. It might, he wrote, "enrage to exasperation the infamous apostate clique who are leagued with Joseph. No matter about that. We can afford to abide by the truth for we know that in the light of facts error must subside."\textsuperscript{23}

Publicly, Joseph Smith III's speech at Farwell Hall was subjected to
scathing denunciation in the Deseret News. The editor, Charles W. Penrose, reprinted the Chicago Tribune's account of the address, offering it as proof that the leader of the Reorganization was "allied with the enemies of his father, and of the church," seeking to overturn the principle of celestial marriage introduced by his father. The Deseret News particularly found fault with a "vile and filthy falsehood about the contamination of women" by Mormon bishops. "No one but a depraved and corrupt being, whose conscience is seared as with an iron heated in the infernal pit, could utter such calumny," declared the News.24 Joseph Smith III claimed that he had been misquoted, but it is doubtful that Charles W. Penrose or the other smarting proponents of polygamy were persuaded.25

Joseph Smith III's Second Trip to Washington, D.C.

While in Washington, D.C., Z. H. Gurley, Jr. and E. L. Kelley had opportunity to discuss the Mormon question with various governmental officials. At the Semi-Annual Conference of 1882, they brought to the delegates' attention the circular letter of Secretary of State William M. Evarts, dated August 9, 1879. This letter, which was sent to American diplomats in European capitals, pointed out that European converts were swelling the ranks of "the law-defying Mormons of Utah." Since polygamy in Utah was a federal crime, the Secretary argued that such missionary activity was "a deliberate and systematic attempt to bring persons to the United States with the intent of violating their laws . . . ." He instructed American diplomats to intercede with the European governments to suppress Mormon missionary activity. Mormon emigrants--"drawn mainly from the ignorant classes . . . influenced by the double appeal to their passions and their poverty"--were used to buttress polygamy in America, in violation of both civil and moral law. Secretary Evarts urged that measures be taken in Europe to halt Mormon emigration, insofar as legally possible. At the least, he wished the
European governments to publicize the fact that polygamy was illegal in America.26

Upon a motion of Gurley and Kelley, the Semi-Annual Conference adopted the following resolution:

Whereas, the circular letter of Hon. William M. Evarts, while Secretary of State, [asked] all foreign governments to prevent the immigration of Mormons . . . , as they come to practice crime, being polygamists; and, whereas, this has conducd to the injury of the body of Latter Day Saints who affirm the original faith under which no such practice is tolerable, and because such distinction has not been had, and we have been confounded with that people whom this letter very properly brands as criminals; therefore be it

Resolved, That we ask the present Secretary of State to correct this error, and place us in our proper light before the world.27

Joseph Smith III and Z. H. Gurley, Jr. were appointed to present the preamble and resolution to Secretary of State Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, Evarts' successor. Their objective was to prevent anti-Mormon measures from being applied to their own church.

On February 28, 1883 Joseph Smith III detrained at Washington, D.C. for the second time in his life. With him were Apostle Z. H. Gurley and Bishop George A. Blakeslee. Gurley and Blakeslee were acquainted with prominent members of Congress, and it was thought that these acquaintances could be used as intermediaries to secure an interview with F. T. Frelinghuysen. Their visit was overshadowed from the outset by disturbing news contained in a telegram which they found awaiting them in Washington. Lawrence Conover, secretary of the Board of Publication, had absconded with all the money in the Herald Office's safe. Blakeslee immediately returned to Lamoni to assist in the crisis there. President Smith and Apostle Gurley stayed in Washington to carry out their mission. For several days, they worked out the memorial they were to present to the Secretary. Gurley was responsible for the first draft, and the two had a heated argument over Gurley's desire to include some pejorative language with
reference to the Utah Church. Joseph Smith III was experienced enough to know that such language might be counter-productive. Finally he delivered an ultimatum to Gurley and secured deletion of the offending terms.28

Through the good offices of Senator J. C. Burrows of Michigan and Senator W. B. Allison and Representative W. P. Hepburn, both of Iowa, an interview with Frelinghuysen was arranged for March 5, 1883. Rep. Hepburn handled the introductions, telling the Secretary of State that he had known the two residents of Lamoni for several years, and that they were good citizens. They were also—he added with a twinkle in his eye—"good Republicans." It had been arranged for Joseph Smith III to deliver the memorial to Frelinghuysen and for Z. H. Gurley to hand him a copy of the Book of Mormon. Quickly sizing up the Secretary as a busy, intelligent, and efficient man, Joseph Smith III handed him the memorial, stating that it contained the matter they wished considered. Gurley handed Frelinghuysen the Book of Mormon and—misreading the secretary—began to make a speech. The Secretary quickly cut him off, much to Zenas Gurley's chagrin. "That will do, Mr. Gurley, that will do. Mr. Smith has said all that is necessary," he said, with a wave of his hand.29

The interview was quickly ended. On March 6th Joseph Smith III left Washington, D.C. for Lamoni.

In due time, Joseph Smith III received a response from Frederick T. Frelinghuysen. He stated that Evarts' circular letter was intended to apply only to polygamous Mormons and that low-abiding RLDS immigrants were not encompassed by it. "Law-abiding immigrants are secure against interference," he assured the RLDS president.30

Once again Joseph Smith III felt vindicated. His cautious, reasoned, diplomatic approach had secured the desired assurance from the Secretary of
State. RLDS immigrants would not be affected by federal measures aimed at the Mormons of Utah. A high governmental official again had grasped the difference between the two churches and had acted accordingly.

Joseph Smith III's Mature Polemic against Polygamy

By the 1880s Joseph Smith III felt confident in his apologetic position vis-à-vis polygamy, whether discussing the subject with high governmental officials, members of his own church, or Mormons. It had not always been thus.

Early in his presidency, he had attempted to avoid discussion of polygamy. At the Annual Conference of 1863, he proposed a resolution that "the members and ministry avoid alluding to, or discussing the subject of polygamy when it is not imperatively necessary." During discussion of the resolution, which eventually was adopted, he explained that the topic divided and weakened members of the church. Symptomatic of this attitude was the conference's decision to change the motto of the True Latter Day Saints' Herald. Since its inception the paper had carried beneath its masthead a quotation from the Book of Mormon: "Hearken to the word of the Lord, for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife: and concubines he shall have none."  

Joseph Smith III was acutely aware that his view—that the prophet never taught or practiced polygamy—was not that of the majority of the small band of old Saints which formed the nucleus of the Reorganization. At a meeting of the RLDS Council of Twelve, April 9, 1867, it was proposed to adopt Joseph Smith III's viewpoint as the official position of the Quorum. The minutes read:

The following Resolution was put and tabled.
Resolved that we do not believe [sic] that the revelation, alleged to have come through Joseph Smith, the Martyr, authorising polygamy or spiritual wifery came from God, neither do we believe that Joseph Smith was in any wise the author or excuser of these doctrines; J W Briggs, Z H Gurley, E C Briggs and John Shippy defended the resolution, Wm W Blair, Jashiah Ells & C Derry opposed it on the grounds that its passage would be
more injurious than good because of the almost universal opinion among
the Saints that Joseph was in some way connected with it. J. W. Briggs,
moved it be tabled, and hence the resolution was lost. President Smith
then told us that the passage of the resolution would do more injury than
good.33

Joseph Smith III probably realized that it would be counterproductive to
try to force the general membership to accept his own view of the matter.
He was willing to bide his time, publicize his own stance, and make converts
among the newer, younger members of the church. Time was his ally.

Gradually he gained confidence in addressing the question of polygamy.
More articles began appearing in the Herald on the subject. The old motto
eventually found its way back beneath the masthead. In 1869 he published his first
tract aimed at polygamy.34 In 1870 he published another, entitled Reply to Orson
Pratt, answering some of Apostle Pratt’s remarks at the LDS Semi-Annual
Conference of 1869. Joseph Smith III’s basic argument was fourfold: (1) Polygamy
could claim no protection under the First Amendment. (2) The Bible and Book of
Mormon offered no support for polygamy. (3) Emma Smith and her sons had not
"apostatized," because they adhered to the original faith of the church. (4) Census figures contradicted Pratt’s claim that there was an excess of females
over males, thereby justifying polygyny. In his Reply to Orson Pratt he made only
passing mention of his belief that his father did not author the revelation on
celestial marriage.35

When he visited Utah in 1876, he had steeled himself against the possibility
that he might be confronted by women claiming to have been his father’s plural
wives. He had laid down the gauntlet, but the feared public challenge from his
father’s plural wives had never come to pass. Although the mission itself was a
failure, Joseph Smith III returned with greatly increased confidence in his
conviction that his father was "innocent" of polygamy.
His mother's "Last Testimony" in 1879 gave a powerful new weapon with which to counter polygamous testimonies in Utah.

By the time of Joseph Smith III's move to Lamoni, many Reorganites accepted his view of polygamy. The church had grown to over 10,000 members, most of whom had no personal recollections of Nauvoo. Joseph Smith III could recall with satisfaction the long battle he had waged to persuade the church:

In 1864 I tried openly to direct the warfare against Utah into my channels of thought. I failed, the elders preferring other methods. I did not do as some have done, grow surly and decline to work because I was thwarted; I accepted the situation and bided my time—I have my reward, time having vindicated my view and I am content. . . . I expect to go to Utah not long hence, and I feel that I am better prepared in theory and fact to strike effectively than ever before. My vertebrata have been materially strengthened, and my general resources augmented.36

Controversy with Lyman O. Littlefield

Joseph Smith III was now prepared for an all-out debate over polygamy. In the midst of the great national crusade against polygamy, the son of Joseph Smith had honed and tested a series of arguments against the "twin relic." He aimed to do nothing less than to clear his father's name, to redeem the name "Latter Day Saint," and to show the RLDS Church to be in direct continuity with pure, original Mormonism.37

In 1883 Joseph Smith III and Lyman O. Littlefield of Logan, Utah engaged in an extended controversy over a wide range of issues, the chief of which was polygamy. In this debate Joseph Smith III displayed his mature polemic against polygamy. In later years he added refinements here and there, but the basic argument remained unchanged.38

The debate began in the spring of 1883, when Littlefield published an open letter in Logan's Utah Journal. This piece was reprinted in the Deseret News, Joseph Smith III responded, and the controversy was on.
Littlefield's "Open Letter." In "An Open Letter, Addressed to President Joseph Smith, Jr.," dated April 27, 1883, Littlefield attacked the proceedings at the RLDS Annual Conference in Kirtland, Ohio. He showed some ill-disguised pique that the Josephites were holding conferences in such sacred spots as Kirtland and Independence.

He then launched into a long attack on Joseph Smith III, claiming that while Young Joseph had been playing ball in the streets of Nauvoo, he (Littlefield) and other elders were receiving the prophet's secret teachings. He asserted that he knew that Joseph Smith both taught and practiced plural marriage. The prophet had understood the principle of plural marriage as early as the days in Kirtland, but he had kept the matter quiet due to prejudice and persecution. Upon reaching maturity, both Joseph III and his brothers had full opportunity to learn the truth about polygamy during their trips to Utah. Women had told Joseph III and David H. Smith that they had been plural wives of the prophet. How could anyone ignore such evidence? Joseph Smith III was "wilfully and persistently [placing] his father before the world in a false attitude." Littlefield challenged the son of the prophet to be frank and honest enough to face the evidence and uphold the prophet in his true character, because someday he would face him in eternity.

He contrasted the positions of the LDS and RLDS Churches. The LDS Church was carrying out the Lord's work by building temples and performing temple work. The RLDS Church was content to repair the Kirtland Temple to gain prestige in the eyes of the wicked who had persecuted Joseph Smith. The LDS Church had fulfilled the prophet's prophecy of becoming a mighty people in the midst of the Rockies, while the RLDS Church had remained behind and built no cities or temples. He directed a withering blast against factionalists who
sought the applause of wicked Gentiles by denouncing the most sacred Mormon doctrines from the pulpit of the Lord's House in Kirtland.39

Joseph Smith III's "Reply." After reading Littlefield's "Open Letter," in the Deseret News of May 11, 1883, Joseph Smith III fired off a reply to the Utah Journal. After some preliminary remarks, he addressed the main issue. L. O. Littlefield had claimed that Joseph Smith III's doctrines and principles were opposed to those for which Joseph Smith, Jr. laid down his life. But Joseph III pointed out that the RLDS Epitome of Faith was precisely the same as the one written by Joseph Smith, Jr. in 1842, with the exception of the final article opposing polygamy, which the RLDS Church had added. Here was the real "stone of offense," he concluded. But it was perfectly consonant with numerous public repudiations of polygamy by the prophet.

He strongly denied the contention that irrefutable evidence of the prophet's involvement in polygamy had been shown to him in Utah:

No proof that Joseph Smith taught and practiced polygamy, (publicly or privately), of an "incontrovertible character" was ever presented to me; and from the nature of the subject and the facts connected with the introduction of the doctrine as a church tenet, it is doubtful if such proof exists.

He flatly denied that any woman had told him she was married to Joseph Smith.40 One woman had come to affirm that she knew all about polygamy, but upon cross-examination her testimony fell to pieces.41 She admitted that she neither saw the prophet married to, nor heard nor saw him treat any woman as his wife in any sense, except Emma Smith. Likewise, one elder had waited upon him in 1876, to "tell him what he knew," but he too broke down upon cross-examination.42

True, he had been a boy in 1844. But upon reaching mature years he set about investigating the question of his father's involvement in polygamy. He found many rumors and stories, but they always collapsed upon thorough
investigation. Not only had no woman testified to him in 1876 that she was a plural wife of the prophet, but his public challenge for evidence had gone unanswered.

But even if reliable evidence were produced that Joseph Smith taught and practiced plural marriage, the sons of the prophet stood by his revelations in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants. The Book of Mormon condemned polygamy as an "abomination" in God's sight. The Doctrine and Covenants stated that one man should have one wife. No clandestine teaching or practice could bind the church contrary to the books. All revelations must be properly authenticated and received by the church as such. In the absence of such, polygamy was contrary to church law and therefore was transgression.

It is no argument in your defense to urge that because Joseph Smith did practice "plural marriage," therefore it was and is right. God condemned it in bringing the Book of Mormon to light in 1830; Christ condemned it in the law of 1831; Joseph and Hyrum Smith condemned it in 1842 and '44; John Taylor condemned it in 1844 and 1850; and I, for these and other reasons equally potent, have condemned it from my earliest entrance into public life to the present.

Yes, he told Littlefield, he expected to see his father in eternity, but he proposed to be judged upon his personal faithfulness to the gospel. His father would be judged in the same way. He admitted that sealing ordinances for celestial marriage may have existed in Nauvoo, but denied that these were synonymous with the later development of plural marriage. He accused Littlefield of making the prophet a coward, by claiming he concealed the practice of polygamy.

As for temples, he urged that the one in Kirtland was the only one begun by divine command, finished, dedicated to the worship of God, and blessed with a divine "endowment." The Nauvoo Temple was commanded by God but never completed, except for the baptismal font. The temples in Utah were not built at
the command of God. He stated that he was proud of the RLDS work in repairing the Kirtland Temple, because "in the places where you and your co-workers have made the name of Joseph Smith and the doctrines he taught odious, we have made converts to the truth he died to attest."

He denied that Joseph Smith ever uttered the "Rocky Mountain prophecy," but even if he had, that redounded to the credit of the prophet, not the Mormons. "The same man predicted that polygamy would prove to be the destruction of the church; and that Brigham Young would lead the people astray; both of which predictions may have been fulfilled upon the same people." For his own part, he resolved, he would continue to fight the reproach of polygamy loaded upon the church and the Smith name by Brigham Young.43

**Littlefield's second letter.** Contrary to the previous practice of Mormon-controlled newspapers in Utah, the _Journal_ published Joseph Smith III's answer to Littlefield. However, the _Journal_ gave Lyman D. Littlefield the opportunity to prepare a rebuttal, dated May 23, 1883, which was printed in the same issue.

After some preliminary skirmishing, Littlefield came to the main issue between himself and Joseph Smith III: polygamy. He confessed amazement that Joseph could have been in Salt Lake City and have come away ignorant about his father's plural wives. There were universally accepted reports of such women living in the city. These reports were of long-standing and had never been denied by the women themselves. On the contrary, they had frequently testified to the same, and thousands had heard them. If none of them waited upon Joseph in 1876, this was still no excuse for his continued ignorance. He had only to call upon them and question them. "Your assumed character as the vindicator of your father's name . . . made such a course incumbent upon you." His failure to conduct such interviews "proved that this was exactly what you were afraid to do,
and that you purposely and studiously avoided them and all other persons competent to bear you a testimony based on personal knowledge, that your father taught and practiced plural marriage."

Littlefield stated that investigation would have shown incontrovertible proof of the following: (1) Elders then living in Salt Lake City had read, heard, wrote, or copied the revelation on celestial marriage. (2) Others such as John Taylor, Lorenzo Snow, and Erastus Snow had been taught the principle personally by Joseph Smith. (3) Elders such as Joseph B. Noble had sealed plural wives to the prophet. (4) Witnesses to such ceremonies were still alive in Utah. (5) Women such as Eliza R. Snow, Eliza Partridge, Emily Partridge, and Lucy Walker were ready to testify that they were the wives (with all the name implies) of Joseph Smith.

L. O. Littlefield then addressed the troublesome denials of polygamy, published up until 1852. John Taylor's denial at Boulogne in 1850 was typical. Taylor's denial was perfectly true, he argued casuistically, because he denied not the righteous Mormon practice of celestial marriage but "utterly false" slanders to the effect that the Mormons practiced common polygamy.

The prophet had not been a coward to conceal the doctrine of plural marriage. He had been commanded not to disclose the secret by the Lord.

As for the scriptural condemnations of polygamy, that in the Book of Jacob reproved the Nephites for sexual wickedness. They were practicing polygamy without divine sanction and justifying their misconduct by appealing to the doings of David and Solomon. But the condemnation did not apply to the Latter-day Saints, because they were obeying a divine commandment, not disobeying one. The Doctrine and Covenants' statement about one man having one wife was intended as a condemnation of Shaker celibacy and was not directed at plural
marriage. Furthermore, II Samuel 12:8 said that the Lord gave David the wives of Saul. If plural marriage were a sin, this made God an abettor of sin. David did no wrong in accepting what God gave him.

Joseph Smith III argued that even if the prophet taught and practiced polygamy, it was still wrong. Littlefield considered this utterly fallacious:

The law of the Church is that if God can reveal one thing He can reveal another; and His Saints are required to live by every word that proceeds out of His mouth. If the Prophet went against Church procedure by receiving the revelations of God and acting upon them, then the Church shuts the mouth of God by such an arrangement; or Joseph by his course, became a fallen prophet.

If the prophet did teach and practice polygamy, either he received a true revelation from God (which meant that the Utah Church was the true church), or he was a fallen prophet (in which case Joseph Smith III was claiming to receive authority from a contaminated source). "You may accept which ever horn of the dilemma you choose," Littlefield announced.

Littlefield concluded with the assertion that the Nauvoo Temple was indeed completed. He argued that there was no need for a specific command to build individual temples in Utah, because the general commandment to perform ordinances presupposed that the Saints would construct them. The prophet was the human author of plural marriage, he contended, and the Utah temples were in accordance with a standing commandment to the church.

Joseph Smith III's second reply. Joseph Smith III's "Second Reply" to Littlefield was dated June 15, 1883. Again the Utah Journal printed it accompanied by a refutation from Lyman O. Littlefield.

After the usual preliminary skirmishing, he again took up the issue of polygamy. He pointed out that Littlefield had been unable to locate any woman who had "told him what she knew," because there was no such woman. Littlefield's appeal to "universally accepted reports" was improper. If such
"Proofs" were to be admitted into evidence, one would be led to the additional conclusions that Joseph Smith had been a mountebank, Brigham Young a thief and murderer, and Salt Lake City a sink of iniquity. Joseph Smith III demanded proof, not rumor. In 1876 he had not hidden in some corner. He went about the city publicly. He threw down the gauntlet in a public meeting, placing the burden of proof on the polygamists to show his father’s connection with the practice. But the proof had not been forthcoming.

He returned to John Taylor’s public denial of polygamy at Boulogne, refusing to allow Littlefield to slip off the hook. As for his father’s alleged delay in publicizing the principle, Littlefield himself had stated that danger to his life was one of the reasons. Was this the reason Brigham Young delayed until 1852? And if the prejudices of the brethren also dictated delay, whence came such prejudices?

Joseph Smith III then turned to the strongest part of his case: scriptural arguments against polygamy. He reasoned that on three occasions God proposed to people the world or a continent: at the creation of Adam and Eve; when Noah and his family were preserved in the ark; and when Lehi and his family sailed to America. On each occasion the pattern was one man and one wife. Polygamy was denounced in the Book of Mormon in no uncertain terms. It declared the polygamous marriages of David and Solomon to be "abominable." The Nephites were told, "there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none." The Doctrine and Covenants’ section on marriage, adopted in 1835, was strictly monogamic. It was true that David and Solomon practiced polygamy, but the Bible demonstrated that they suffered disastrous consequences as a result.

There was an important underlying premise throughout Joseph Smith III’s
polemics against plural marriage. He insisted that God was unchangeable and could not alter his moral laws. If God once declared it contrary to law to take plural wives, it would remain forever wrong. If it were wrong before 1843, then it was wrong after 1843. It was inconsistent for God to inspire a deceitful revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants, as Littlefield suggested, which had a hidden double-meaning, viz., it is "lawful that a man shall have one wife and a woman but one husband" (taking it to be permissible for men to take additional wives besides the "one").

Turning to the question of his father's involvement in polygamy, he cited William Marks' report that the prophet told him to go before the High Council and prefer charges against those teaching polygamy. The testimonies cited by Littlefield were familiar, said Joseph Smith III, but many would not bear cross-examination, "as I could easily demonstrate if I had the witnesses in a court where hearsay, mental reservations and other men's statements can not be affirmed as knowledge."

But, he said, it was pointless to pursue this line of argument. If it were proven that the prophet taught and practiced plural marriage, this simply proved that he had sinned. It would "lessen my respect for him as a man, and give me one more heart pang to bear through life." If it were proven that he dictated the revelation on celestial marriage, that would not prove the revelation or doctrine to be of God. It would be contrary to God's changeless character. And it would inconsistently offer celestial exaltation to a chosen few, rather than to everyone. This would be cruel and unjust, the very opposite of a universal gospel.

After some arguments about Brigham Young never being authorized as Joseph Smith's successor, and further denials that the Utah temples were accepted by God, Joseph Smith III closed with the renewed assertion that God
could not reveal one thing in 1830 and another in 1843. A changeable God would be an untrustworthy God. 45

**Controversy with the Deseret News.** Contrary to practice under previous editors, Charles W. Penrose of the Deseret News took notice of the controversy between Littlefield and the president of the Reorganized Church. He reprinted Littlefield’s articles, and added comments of his own.

In the May 11, 1883 number of the Deseret News, Penrose attacked the Reorganized Church’s claim that the original Mormon Church had become disorganized. When the church was expelled from Nauvoo, he reasoned, it simply changed its location. Its organization remained intact. To the familiar Josephite contention that the Doctrine and Covenants commanded the Saints to build the Nauvoo Temple quickly, upon penalty of being rejected as a church along with their dead, he replied that the temple had been completed and ordinances for the dead had been performed in it. Penrose also attacked the Reorganized Church’s position concerning succession to the presidency. The Lord had promised that the latter-day work would prevail. The keys had been given to the Twelve as well as to Joseph Smith. The Twelve had authority equal to that of the Presidency and continued to exercise that authority after the Presidency became disorganized. The son of the prophet had no automatic right to preside over the church, since heirship applied to priesthood and not presidency. Joseph Smith III had never been ordained validly to the Melchisedek Priesthood and utterly lacked authority. He headed, Penrose concluded, a sect devoid of divine authority. 46

**Joseph Smith III’s reply to the Deseret News.** In the Saints’ Herald of June 23, 1883, Joseph Smith III replied to C. W. Penrose, but tried to shift the field of battle to plural marriage. This, he insisted, was the fundamental point of division between the two churches. He quoted his father to the effect that priesthood
authority and righteousness were inseparable.

Penrose had asked when the church was disorganized. The prophet's son replied: "Whenever that which was contrary and adverse to the revealed word and rules given to the church at its origin was introduced into its formulated creed, or its well understood faith . . . ." When the church failed to comply with the divine commandment to build the Nauvoo Temple, the threatened rejection occurred.

As for the question of succession, Joseph Smith III agreed with a good deal of Penrose's analysis. He began by quoting the published statements of the Twelve after the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith that their places would not be filled, but that the responsibility to carry on the work rested with the Twelve. This, said Joseph, was a sound argument, and if the Twelve had remained true to the original principles of faith, no disorganization would have taken place. But by 1847, that portion of the Twelve which followed Brigham Young had changed its tune. Rebaptisms were conducted at Salt Lake City. The First Presidency was reorganized. A rump conference at Winter Quarters ratified the reorganization without proper notice to the church as a whole. After this improper reorganization of the Presidency, only six members remained in the Quorum of Twelve, onto which Joseph Smith had "rolled the work," thereby disorganizing it.47

In 1856, during the Reformation in Utah, a general rebaptism had taken place. The revelation on celestial marriage had been publicized in 1852, and all persons so rebaptized were baptized into a new and iniquitous distortion of primitive Mormonism. "The iniquity that destroyed the organization of the church perfecting its rejection, had now done its work." The church had failed to complete the temple, failed to maintain the quorums according to law, and failed to heed divine moral law.
Appealing to the principle of civil law, "that whenever a church is founded, its principles of faith formulated, its traditions fulminated from the forum and pulpit, those declarations become the constitution of its corporate and legal existence." When changes are introduced, the portion of the membership remaining true to the original creed is the true church. So in the case of the Latter Day Saints, those who did not lapse in polygamic iniquity were the true church. Penrose, argued Joseph Smith III, was correct that the priesthood had been conferred in the last days, never to be removed. But it remained with the righteous, not the wicked. If the Presidency were destroyed, the Twelve had the right and duty to carry on the work. If the Twelve were destroyed or fell into iniquity, the Seventy had the same right and duty. If the Seventy died or failed, the priesthood generally was charged to carry on the work. Hence the Reorganization had been justified in its course, because the three leading quorums had been destroyed or fallen into iniquity. When the temple was not finished, the church's quorums had lost their authority to act, but righteous elders individually retained their authority and had the right to reorganize the church on a righteous basis.48

Littlefield's third letter. Lyman O. Littlefield's reply to Joseph Smith III was dated July 17, 1883. He complained that the prophet's son raised few new points in his lengthy rejoinder and proposed to consider only some of them.

In reply to Joseph Smith III's scriptural arguments, he began by observing that although there was no mention, in the sacred books, of Adam, Noah, or Lehi having plural wives, many other godly men did. He cited Abraham and Moses, in particular. He also pointed out regulations concerning polygamy in the Pentateuch, and asked rhetorically whether God would prescribe regulations for sin. "Polygamy was the rule, not the exception, in ancient Israel," he concluded.
To explain the denunciations of polygamy in the Book of Mormon, he invoked several arguments. First, he argued that revelation is progressive. God promulgated laws adapted to the circumstances of his people. When the circumstances changed, the laws changed. When the people were able to receive strong drink, they no longer were given milk. On this basis, the Sermon on the Mount criticized various practices in the old dispensation. Second, the passage in the Book of Jacob condemning Nephite polygamy also contained the implication that the Lord would alter this prohibition in the future: "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things." Third, the Nephites were practicing unsanctioned polygamy, not divinely sanctioned celestial marriage. Celestial marriage extended into eternity and was performed by heaven's authority. Human polygamy was time-bound and of human origin. The condemnation applied to the human, not the divine practice. All denunciations of polygamy in scripture or by church leaders were condemnations of common polygamy and had no reference to celestial marriage.

The section in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants on marriage appeared in the appendix. It was a statement by the church, not a revelation from God.

Turning from these defensive arguments, he took the offensive by producing evidence of Joseph Smith's involvement in polygamy. The prophet's son erred in claiming that revelations must be submitted to the various quorums of the priesthood for acceptance, because the prophet had many revelations which were never made public. But the revelation on celestial marriage was submitted to the Twelve and accepted by them. It was submitted to the Nauvoo High Council and accepted by them, with William Marks, Austin Cowles and Leonard Soby dissenting. As proof he printed David Fullmer's affidavit, dated June 15,
1869, which stated that Hyrum Smith read the revelation to the High Council. And there were plural wives of the prophet living in Utah. It was hopeless to argue against their testimonies. "All your arguments are as lost as that of the blind man who endeavored to persuade his neighbors blessed with good eyesight that the sun did not shine. They knew better, and so do we." Joseph Smith III was obstinately refusing to accept the facts. Many affidavits had been published, and more could be published. Joseph Smith III's proclamation that even if his father did practice polygamy, he would not change his opinion of it, showed a settled purpose "not to be a true and faithful follower" of his father.  

Joseph Smith III's third reply. Joseph Smith III's third reply to Littlefield was dated July 30, 1883. Littlefield had claimed that God made mankind polygamic, and that three-quarters of the race practiced polygamy. Joseph Smith III violently rejected this contention. God made a single human couple in the beginning. Noah's family repopulated the world monogamously, as Lehi's family populated America. God's original pattern had been corrupted by the three-quarters Littlefield cited. The same three-quarters rejected Christianity. But did numbers prove anything? As for Littlefield's contention that monogamous societies inevitably turned to prostitution, this was a contemptible argument; a violation of moral law was no argument against the law itself.

He then elaborated upon his scriptural arguments against polygamy. Some ingenious proofs were presented to show that Abraham, Jacob, and Moses were monogamists. In the cases of Abraham and Jacob, the "proof" consisted of legalistic arguments that their relationships with Hagar and Leah, respectively, had not been legal marriages. In the case of Moses, he demonstrated to his own satisfaction that Zipporah had been his only wife, since she was one and the same person with the Ethiopian woman Moses was said to have married. He was on
much stronger ground when he pointed out that the patriarch Isaac had been a monogamist, and that the Bible made no mention of divine approval for David and Solomon's polygamous marriages.

Relying to Littlefield's sallies against him for not being a true disciple of his father, he insisted that his salvation was independent of the character of Joseph Smith: "... whatever Joseph Smith may have been personally, good or bad, is not to be the test when you and I are to be tried... the issue is not whether Joseph Smith was a polygamist; but is the doctrine of God." 50

Littlefield's fourth letter. Joseph Smith III had quoted the anti-polygamous passage from the Book of Jacob in his third letter. Littlefield now complained that the prophet's son had no right to do so, because he had never answered his (Littlefield's) pro-polygamous explanation of it. He repeated his explanation that the practice condemned in the Book of Mormon had nothing to do with celestial marriage. There were two types of plural marriage:

One is pure, holy, heavenly; it came from God, is controlled by his laws and ordinances and is designed to elevate, purify, refine and perfect the human race. The other is low, degrading, and corrupt; it had its origin in man's wickedness, and is calculated to debase, pollute, and destroy mankind.

David and Solomon began with the former and ended up with the latter. The latter, only, was forbidden in the Book of Mormon. The dispensation of the fullness of times was not bound by the inferior marital laws of an earlier dispensation. And the prophet Jacob had foretold this change.

As for Joseph Smith III's scriptural arguments, it might be true that Adam, Noah, and Lehi were monogamists (although the records could be incomplete), but this proved nothing, because other godly men of antiquity were polygamists. He criticized Joseph Smith III's attempts to prove Abraham, Jacob, and Moses monogamists. But he offered no rebuttal to Joseph's exegesis of the passages
concerning David and Solomon.

He denied the contention that the prophet ever sinned against his wife Emma by taking plural wives. He pointed to Lovina Walker's affidavit, dated June 16, 1869, that Emma Smith had told her of witnessing Joseph Smith's marriages to four women. Such marriages were hardly "secret sins" against Emma.

As for criticisms that some of the prophet's marriages antedated the revelation on celestial marriage, Littlefield replied that the principle had been revealed to the prophet long before the formal revelation was dictated for the church.51

Joseph Smith III's fourth reply. In September Joseph Smith III mailed his fourth reply to Littlefield to the Utah Journal. The Journal declined to print it, claiming continued controversy would "surfeit" its subscribers. In announcing the Journal's decision, Joseph commented that perhaps its readers had "dainty and disordered mental and moral stomachs" which could not digest his arguments. He printed his reply in the Saints' Herald and the Saints' Advocate, and made arrangements for it to be widely distributed in Utah, Idaho, and Montana.52

At considerable length, he responded to Littlefield's analysis of the antipolygamic passage in the Book of Jacob. The whole thrust of the passage was against the practice, he reasoned, and it was inconsistent to make one verse teach contrary to its context. "For if I will . . . raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things," was no prophecy. "Otherwise" meant "in different respects." The verse meant that God had brought the Nephites to America for the purpose of raising up righteous seed, and commanded them to cease following the unrighteous ways of their fathers. He commanded his people to hearken "otherwise" to these things, i.e., to obey him
and cease practicing polygamy. "If" had no future reference; it was causal in its meaning.

He observed that Littlefield's analysis of David and Solomon's marriages was unique. When, he wondered, did they cease practicing righteous polygamy and begin practicing unrighteous polygamy? He continued to insist that the biblical patriarchs were monogamists. All previous dispensations, according to Mormon belief, were gospel dispensations, and the purported revelation on plural marriage contradicted all former revelations on the subject.

He criticized the testimonies of David Fullmer, Lovina Walker, and Emily D. P. Young on narrow, legal grounds. E.g., Hyrum Smith presented the revelation to the High Council, not Joseph Smith.

He introduced a new line of argument when he reasoned that polygamy was contrary to natural law. It was a "departure from the established form . . . a monstrosity, a deformity, a lapsus naturae." God created one human pair; this was his order.

Joseph Smith III introduced fourteen reasons for disbelieving that Joseph Smith was a polygamist. The first eleven basically advanced the thesis that all gospel dispensations were monogamistic, Joseph Smith was the appointed prophet to inaugurate the last gospel dispensation, and therefore he could not have introduced polygamy. All of the church books and published teachings up until 1844 confirmed this conclusion. The son of the prophet then concluded with three of his favorite arguments:

12. Joseph Smith was a man in the full use of manhood's physical powers, capable of begetting children at the time of his death, and had children by his wife Emma, one of which was born to him after his death.
13. No children were born to Joseph Smith by any of those women whom you assert were wives to him with all that the name implies.
14. There are good reasons for believing that had Joseph Smith been married to those whom you assert were his plural wives, issue must have resulted; and the fact that no children were born to him in polygamy is
strong proof that he had no such wives; especially as said women subsequently bore children to other men, no better physically than he.

"In the face of what is above written," he wrote, "how can you expect a man whose legal training you admit gives him the power to analyze evidence and give it true weight, to receive as conclusive what is so unsatisfactory and damaging to your own cause[?]." But whatever the truth about his father's conduct, the gospel remained unchanged and polygamy wrong.53

RLDS Missionary Efforts in Utah

While Joseph Smith III led the RLDS Church into greater and greater participation in the national crusade against polygamy, RLDS missionary work in Utah languished in the doldrums. RLDS proselytizing had reached its high-water mark with the visit of Alexander H. Smith and David H. Smith in 1869. Through the year 1871, RLDS missionaries had garnered approximately three hundred converts per year in Utah. During the rest of the 1870s they had failed to sustain this pace.54

A series of failures marked the Reorganization's work in Utah in the 1870s. The mission of David Hyrum Smith, Josiah Ells, and Judge Boren had proven abortive in 1872. Then, in 1874, it was thought to revive the work by sending Jason W. Briggs, president of the Twelve, to supervise the Utah mission. Briggs stayed in Utah until 1877, and his tenure was marked by dissension. His missionary newspaper, The Messenger of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, began carrying heterodox articles. Finally the RLDS Board of Publication refused to print the Messenger any longer, Briggs was replaced as head of the mission, and the Semi-Annual Conference of 1877 refused to sustain him as an apostle.55 Briggs' replacement as head of the Utah mission was Apostle Z. H. Gurley, Jr. Gurley soon fell into a hot dispute with Joseph Smith III
and resigned his apostleship.56

The Reorganite missionary effort suffered from additional handicaps in Utah. Changing demographics worked against the RLDS Church. A smaller and smaller percentage of the Mormons in Utah was composed of old Saints who were familiar with Joseph Smith, Jr.’s blessing of his eldest son and with the succession crisis of 1844. Those who had been converted in Europe or who had been born in Utah felt less vestigial loyalty to the son of the prophet than did the old Saints. Utah was a difficult field for RLDS elders. At the Annual Conference of 1880 and thereafter, several prominent RLDS elders refused to return to Utah. W. W. Blair was of the opinion that this refusal led to a permanent decline in RLDS fortunes in the Great Basin.57 The RLDS treasury was strapped for funds continually, and this limited the number of missionaries sent to all fields, including Utah.58 To compound matters, what ought to have been the largest and strongest branch in Utah, the Salt Lake City Branch, was racked with internal problems.59

True, there were some small RLDS successes in Utah. Total RLDS membership in Utah increased, because converts no longer felt compelled to emigrate from Utah. A number of permanent branch organizations were formed. After years of struggling to raise funds, an RLDS chapel was dedicated in Salt Lake City in 1881. Jason W. Briggs' unorthodox Messenger was replaced as the church’s missionary publication by The Saints' Advocate (1878-1886). And some stability was restored to the work in Utah when W. W. Blair assumed its leadership in 1879.60

To a certain extent the RLDS strategy concerning Utah had undergone a subtle shift. With the growing realization that there would be no mass movement of Utahns into the Reorganization, correspondingly greater emphasis was placed on suppressing polygamy and less on converting Mormons. Greater emphasis was
placed on distancing the Reorganization from the Utah Church in the eyes of the world, and less on persuading Utahns of the correctness of RLDS apologetics. As the Reorganization played a more and more prominent role in the crusade against polygamy, the Mormon Church identified Joseph Smith III and his colleagues as "persecutors of the Saints." Here was a dilemma indeed. The more successful the campaign to eradicate polygamy, the greater the chance that the RLDS Church would be tarred with the brush of persecution. As RLDS elder R. J. Anthony lamented, in 1882, the work moved slowly in Utah, and the Reorganization was viewed with great bitterness by some:

Just at this time the chief men and in fact a large majority of the church are feeling very bitter towards the Reorganised Church our brethren at Washington has set them on fire they look upon us as the worst enemies they have they publicly declare that we are urging Congress to destroy them and that we would cut their throats if we had power to do so Should Congress pass stringet measures for the suppression of Polygamy then the worst has not come the Reorganised Church must come in for a double portion of their anathames .... I am positive in my own mind that we of the Reorganised church can do but little until Government does its part in suppressing Polygamy with its evils in Utah they must according to the Revelations be chastened and humiliated similar to the arrogant Slave holder of the South ....61

Particularly the presence of RLDS representatives in Washington and the Chicago Tribune's account of Joseph Smith III's remarks at Farwell Hall were employed by the Deseret News to raise a cry of persecution against the RLDS Church.62

Joseph Smith III's Second Trip to Utah

For some time Joseph Smith III had been considering a second trip to Utah. He knew that his first visit to the Mormon heartland had failed. The Mormons had not flocked to his banner. Brigham Young's power had not been broken. Polygamy had not ceased. Personally, he had been wounded by the innuendos employed against himself and his mother in Utah: that he was a liar, a lawyer, a spiritualist, maternally dominated, and an apostate who opposed his father's life-
work. He viewed himself as the victim of a policy of slander, one which had continued after the death of Brigham Young with the misrepresentations of his remarks at Farwell Hall.

A combination of circumstances led to his decision to make a second attempt at missionary work in Utah. By far the most important was his determination to see polygamy extirpated. The national campaign against the "twin relic of barbarism" was in full swing. Joseph Smith III felt compelled to lend assistance in the fight to eradicate "a principle foreign to the law of God and distinctly contrary to the instructions and intentions of the laws of the United States." A second factor was the need to reinvigorate the RLDS work in Utah. A third factor was the continued question, from many in Utah, "Why don't Joseph come? If he has a work to do here, why don't he come now?" A fourth consideration was his newly found freedom in the spring of 1885. His routine had settled back to normality following several years of hectic activity incidental to the move to Lamoni. Joseph Smith III finally had persuaded the Annual Conference of 1885 to accept his resignation from the Board of Publication, and W. W. Blair had become Associate Editor of the Herald beginning with the April 25, 1885 issue. He now felt free to attempt the trip to Utah.

Preparations. Perhaps the most disconcerting thing about missionary work in Utah was the possibility that he might be confronted by a woman who would testify that she had been his father's plural wife. The "Last Testimony of Sister Emma" had been intended to counterbalance the affidavits collected by George A. Smith and Joseph F. Smith, containing the testimony of such women. But Joseph Smith III was still uneasy. He had few persons to whom he could turn in the RLDS Church for help. Both William Marks and Emma Smith Bidamon were dead. William Smith was willing to testify against polygamy, but Joseph knew
only too well that his uncle's testimony was compromised. He therefore turned to James Whitehead for assistance. More than anyone else in the church, Whitehead was acquainted with the inner workings of Mormonism in Nauvoo. He had served as one of the prophet's secretaries in the Red Brick Store. He had heard many conversations in the office and had handled important documents.

Joseph Smith III therefore thought it best to inquire of James Whitehead concerning plural marriage in Nauvoo, before he headed west. On September 8, 1884 he wrote to Whitehead asking him to recount candidly anything he knew about the doctrine of sealing, spiritual wifery, or the revelation on plural marriage. Whitehead's reply is not extant, but must have proven encouraging, because on April 20, 1885 Joseph travelled to Alton, Illinois to visit the elderly gentleman. In his journal he recorded:

Visited James Whitehead had a long and interesting chat with him. He says that he saw the Rev. about 1 page foolscap paper in father’s handwriting. Clayton copied it was this copy that mother burned. The doctrine of sealing was taught but did not mean marital relations in time on earth but simply for companionship in eternity.

Whitehead's recollections of polygamy underwent modification between the 1870s and the 1890s. In 1874 he told W. W. Blair that the prophet taught and practiced polygamy and that Emma Smith knew it. By 1884 the anti-polygamous arguments of the RLDS Church more and more had come to reflect Joseph Smith III's belief that his father had not been the author of Utah polygamy, and Whitehead's testimony began to change. He told Joseph at the interview in 1884 that there was a revelation, but that it involved sealing wives to husbands for eternity only. By 1893, when he testified in the Temple Lot case, he denied that there had ever been a revelation on polygamy. Whitehead's intermediate position proved very useful to Joseph. Whenever he confronted direct evidence that his father had been sealed to a woman, he could rationalize it as a sealing
rite applying only to the hereafter.

Arrival in Utah. On June 16, 1885 Joseph Smith III left Omaha for Salt Lake City. With him were Apostles Alexander H. Smith and Joseph Luff. On the evening of June 17th they detrained in the "City of the Saints." Joseph's stay would be a lengthy one: six months. During that time he engaged in a variety of activities, including preaching, visiting, writing, and sight-seeing. 70

Preaching. Joseph spent his first week in the capital of Mormondom visiting. He immediately made the acquaintance of Territorial Governor Eli H. Murray, one of the leaders in the federal government's war against polygamy. There was no need to look over his shoulder when waking the streets, as had RLDS missionaries in earlier decades. Federal marshalls were about, seeking to arrest those in violation of the Morrill and Edmunds Acts. Mormon President John Taylor and many other General Authorities were in hiding.

On Sunday, June 21st, he spoke for the first time. He preached to the RLDS flock at their small chapel at 1:00 P.M. Then at 3:00 P.M. he addressed a standing-room-only audience of sixteen hundred at the Opera House. Notices in the papers and an editorial blast in the Deseret News had created tremendous interest. Crowds milled outside, unable to secure a seat. He chose for his text the commandment from the Doctrine and Covenants, "Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land . . . ." He reasoned from the Latter Day Saint belief that God superintended the creation of the American nation and its laws, to the conclusion that the church had no right to introduce teachings or practices in contravention of those laws.

The Opera House cost the RLDS Church twenty-five dollars per meeting. After several more efforts there by Joseph and Alexander (who then went on to
California), the meetings switched to the RLDS Chapel. The Gentile organ, the Salt Lake Tribune, championed the Josephite cause. The Deseret News continued to deliver editorial body blows. The News particularly took umbrage at an editorial written earlier in the year by Joseph Smith III, suggesting how John Taylor might deliver a revelation ordering the Saints to cease practicing plural marriage. For good measure, the News again resurrected the Chicago Tribune's account of his speech at Farwell Hall.71

The initial sensation subsided after a time. Joseph Smith III traveled to many settlements outside Salt Lake City. In some of the outlying settlements he drew large audiences. He preached on familiar themes such as monogamy, the first principles of the gospel, and obedience to government. He was pleased that in some places Mormon meeting houses were open to him. As in 1876, there was no rush of converts to the Josephite banner, although some members were added to the church. On August 6th he began a trip to Idaho and Montana, from which he did not return until October 3rd.72 Southern Idaho and western Montana were RLDS mission fields throughout the nineteenth century. Apostate Mormons and schismatics such as the Morristes often sought refuge in these places.73 While in Soda Springs, Idaho, Joseph met John Codman. Codman was an eastern writer who loved to vacation in the west. A liberal spirit (he had spent part of his youth at Brook Farm), he did not sympathize with the animus displayed in the current crusade against polygamy, but he did not countenance plural marriage either. Codman's pet idea was to reform Mormonism via the instrumentality of the Josephites. Once purged of polygamy, Mormonism would be perfectly innocuous, he reasoned. An internal reformation was much preferable to harsh governmental measures. Apparently Codman and Joseph Smith III got along famously. Codman continued to produce writings for the eastern press, championing the Josephites as
the "solution" to the Mormon problem.74

The flag at half-mast on the Fourth of July. July 4, 1885 was an eventful
day in the history of Salt Lake City. The flag in front of the city hall was
discovered flying at half-mast on Independence Day! It was flown half-mast in
front of some other public buildings under Mormon control. Joseph Smith III
accidentally found himself among the crowd which gathered outside the city hall.
Excitement ran high. A U.S. army officer, with some Gentile supporters,
demanded that the flag be raised or lowered. A Mormon policeman, backed by
some brethren, refused. The Mormon people, he shouted, had nothing to cause
them to celebrate the "Glorious Fourth." A fight was avoided when Governor
Murray inte-vened. The flag was taken down and later raised properly. That
evening a patriotic meeting was held. Troops had been called out from Camp
Douglas to prevent any disturbances. Governor Murray, other U.S. officials, and
some Protestant clergymen occupied the platform. Governor Murray—to the
disgust of one clergyman—invited Joseph Smith III to sit on the platform and to
speak. The crowd was treated to patriotic perorations, culminating in a loudly
applauded rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner. Joseph Smith III deeply felt the
contrast between his position and that of the Mormons:

As a citizen of the United States . . . and as a free man, at liberty to
come and go in that city and Territory where priestly domination
prevailed, I could not help a thrill of joy passing through me, as I realized
that that company of uniformed and steadily marching men represented
the power and authority of a still higher government—the Republic. . . . I
rejoiced that in my heart there was no shadow of fear of the righteous
authority there represented, and that I was conscious of no cowardice,
nor sense of guilt for wrong-doing. There was no writ in the marshal's
hands for my arrest, nor was I hiding from day to day, or from night to
night, under darkness or disguise, to avoid arrest or being called to
account for my conduct through the indignant charges of an outraged
authority.75

While his preaching and writing were the activities most in the public eye, his
private conversations were one of the most important aspects of his stay in Utah.
Unlike 1876, people no longer thought it imprudent to talk to the son of the prophet. He mingled freely with his relatives, Mormons, Gentiles, and members of the RLDS Church. The information gleaned in these conversations forever confirmed him in his anti-polygamous course of action.

**Interviews.** Joseph Smith III met a number of Mormons in 1885 who proposed to "tell him what they knew" about polygamy in Nauvoo. One of the first was Mrs. John McAllister on June 30th. But Joseph was not impressed, because questioning revealed that she was eight years his junior and therefore could not have any first-hand information about the subject. Mrs. McAllister was a plural wife, and Joseph felt that he detected a sense of self-consciousness and shame in her demeanor, despite her defense of polygamy.76

A second interview with an old Nauvooan was with Howard Coray, Joseph Smith III's former school teacher, on July 10th. This was Coray's second attempt to enlighten one of the prophet's sons about polygamy in Nauvoo. In 1866 Alexander H. Smith and Howard Coray had crossed swords at one of Alexander's meetings in Provo. Coray had attempted to bear his testimony to Joseph Smith's involvement in polygamy, and Alexander had attacked his statements.77

Learning that Joseph was in Provo, Howard Coray decided to bear his testimony to him. He related how Hyrum Smith had taught him the principle of celestial marriage personally, and how he and Martha Jane Coray had been sealed for eternity by Hyrum Smith on July 22, 1843.78 When the older gentleman had finished his account, Joseph began his cross-examination. He secured a series of damaging concessions from Coray: that he had never seen the revelation on celestial marriage in written form or heard it read in Nauvoo; that polygamy was not taught publicly in Nauvoo; that Joseph Smith never taught him the principle; that he never saw any woman publicly recognized as Joseph Smith's wife except
Emma Smith; and that he never observed the prophet being married to or cohabiting with a plural wife. His knowledge of Joseph Smith's marriages to plural wives was based solely on the reports of others, although some of these reports came from the wives themselves. As for his own sealing to Martha Jane Coray, Howard told his former pupil that the ceremony was designed for persons already married who desired to continue their marital association eternally in the world to come. The most damaging concession came in reply to what would become one of Joseph's favorite questions: why did his father have no polygamous offspring?

Coray replied that he had often been perplexed by that very question. The best answer he had been able to obtain was from one of the prophet's plural wives. She had told one of her children: "My son, the prophet was very considerate in his associations with women, and did not wish to subject them to the disgrace of having children without being married."

Joseph Smith III pounced with glee upon this statement. "Disgrace, Brother Coray, disgrace?" "Perhaps she should have said 'supposed disgrace,'" replied Howard Coray, his face turning red. He realized that he had revealed that many Mormons felt a lingering sense of shame about polygamy, despite their rhetoric about its being a holy principle.

This led to the conclusion of the conversation. Elder Coray beat a hasty retreat. A fellow Mormon elder named Dusenberry was embarrassed and most anxious to end the interview. Another Mormon bystander who had witnessed the whole affair felt the force of the concessions Joseph had extracted from Coray. He had anticipated that Howard Coray would demolish the son of the prophet's position, and was bewildered at the outcome.79

On October 20, 1885 Joseph Smith III was in Lehi, Utah. There he called
upon Melissa Lott Willis. As young people, in Nauvoo, they had been friends. Her father, Cornelius P. Lott, had worked the Smith family farm, east of Nauvoo, for a time, and Joseph had been well acquainted with Melissa and her sisters. He had been told that he would not dare to interview Melissa Lott Willis, because of the intimate details concerning polygamy she could relate. Joseph informed her that he wished her to tell him the truth, whatever it was.

Unlike most of Joseph Smith III's interviews in Utah, there is a record of Melissa Lott Willis' recollections of their conversation. There are several significant discrepancies between her recollections and those of Joseph Smith III, and also discrepancies between what she told him and her testimony in the Temple Lot case.

The following account is based on the fuller account in Joseph Smith III's memoirs. Discrepancies and problem-areas will be noted in footnotes. According to Joseph Smith III's account, Melissa Lott Willis told him that plural marriage had been taught privately in Nauvoo. Joseph recorded that he asked whether she had any knowledge of women other than Emma Smith living with Joseph Smith as his wife, and that she answered negatively. This reflects Joseph's method of "cross-examining" the "witnesses" for plural marriage. He asked whether she had ever witnessed a plural marriage or observed his father cohabiting with a plural wife and secured negative answers.

What of Emma Smith? Did his mother know of any plural marriages entered into by his father? Melissa answered rather tremulously, "If there was anything of that kind going on you may be sure that your mother knew nothing about it." Questioned as to Emma's reputation for veracity, Melissa replied that she was as good and truthful a woman as ever lived. "Then you think I would be justified in believing what my mother told me?, queried Joseph. "Yes," she
answered, "for she would not lie to you." Joseph triumphantly told Melissa that Emma had denied any knowledge of plural marriage, to which she replied that he could be confidant in believing that his mother had told him the truth. Since Melissa Lott Willis had been married to Joseph Smith in secret, she assumed that Emma Smith had been as ignorant of the prophet's other plural marriages as she was of Melissa's.82

But then Joseph asked the fateful question: "... what was your relation to my father, if any?" In reply, she brought out the family Bible and showed him the entry recording her marriage to the prophet. After examining the entry, Joseph proceeded with his cross-examination:

"Who were present when this marriage took place—if marriage it may be called?"
"No one but your father and myself."83
"Was my mother there?"
"No, sir."
"Was there no witness there?"
"No, sir."
"Where did it occur?"
"At the house on the farm."
"And my mother knew nothing about it, before or after?"
"No, sir."
"Did you ever live with my father as his wife, in the Mansion House in Nauvoo, as has been claimed?"84
"No, sir."
"Did you ever live with him as his wife anywhere?"...
At this point she began to cry, and said, "No, I never did; but you have no business asking me such questions. I had a great regard and respect for both your father and your mother. I do not like to talk about these things."85

"Well, Melissa, I have repeatedly been told that you have stated that you were married to my father and lived with him as his wife and that my mother knew of it. Now you tell me you never did live with him as his wife although claiming to have been married to him. You tell me there was no one present at that purported marriage except the three of you and that my mother knew nothing about such an alliance. Frankly, I am at a loss to know just what you would have me believe about you."

At this point the questioning was interrupted by the arrival of Melissa's sisters, Alzina and Mary. After some general conversation, Joseph inquired:

"Melissa, do you know where I can find a brother or a sister, child or
children of my father, born to him by some woman other than my mother—in Illinois, Utah, or anywhere else?"

Melissa answered that she did not, and Mary added: "No, Brother Joseph, for there isn't any!" She added that for twelve years she had been investigating all rumors of such children that came to her ears, had travelled many miles in her quest, and had found no truth in any of the rumors. Alzina then seconded her sister's conclusions, exclaiming that there were no such children, and, furthermore, she believed there never was any chance for any. Joseph, Alzina, and Mary laughed, but Melissa remained silent. Pressed for her reaction to her sisters' statements, she began to cry. At last she drew a deep breath and answered with trembling lips:

"Yes; you can believe that they are telling you the truth. There was no chance for any children."

After some additional conversation, Joseph left the widow Willis' home. He felt deeply satisfied. In his own mind he believed that he had successfully cross-examined another of Joseph F. Smith's witnesses who had signed affidavits concerning Joseph Smith's involvement in polygamy.

But what of the marriage ceremony between Joseph Smith and Melissa Lott? Joseph reasoned on two different levels. First, they had never been married in the real sense of the word, "provided the word married be construed as conveying the right of living together as man and wife." Second, he reasoned that his father may have been "married" or "sealed" to other women, but not in the conventional sense. There might have been, he speculated, ordinances performed which were intended to apply to the world to come but which had no reference to marital rights in the flesh, in the present.

Having negotiated this gauntlet successfully, Joseph resolved to continue
conversing with all purported plural wives of his father, to "subject them to as severe a cross examination as was within [his] power, to get as near as possible to the actual truth of the circumstances and the reports." Apparently he sensed no incongruity between his modus operandi and his quest for truth.

Another interview with an old Nauvooan took place in Salt Lake City. Solon Foster had served as Joseph Smith's coachman. Hearing that Joseph Smith III was in Utah, he travelled over one hundred miles to "tell him what he knew." Joseph remembered this former inmate of the Smith household with fondness. After some pleasant reminiscences, they turned to the point of Foster's visit.86

"Joseph," said Foster, "when you meet your father, don't you think he will give you a good spanking?"

"Why should he spank me?," Joseph asked.

"Because you are doing all in your power to break down that which he gave his life to establish."

"I suppose you refer to plural marriage?"

"Yes."

"I don't know that my father gave his life to establish plural marriage," Joseph insisted.

"Joseph, the night your mother turned Eliza R. Snow outdoors in her night clothes, and you and all the children stood out in the street crying, I led you back into the house and took you into bed with me, and you said 'I wish mother wouldn't be so cruel to Aunt Eliza.' You called her aunt, because you knew she was your father's wife."87

This incident was insufficient evidence to convince Joseph. Foster told him everything he knew about Joseph Smith's family affairs. But the son of the prophet was not impressed. Upon questioning, he learned that Foster had left
Nauvoo before 1844, and he concluded that Foster's information concerning the end of the prophet's life was hearsay. He brought forth the concession that Foster had never witnessed one of the prophet's plural marriages.

Then came a severe exchange. Joseph Smith III asked Solon Foster if he had ever observed the prophet behave promiscuously with someone other than Emma Smith. Foster's face flushed. "Brother Joseph, you have no business to ask me such pointed questions," he replied. Joseph replied that he had every right to ask such questions. It was, he argued, his business to find out the truth, even at the expense of losing confidence in his father's righteousness. He had been baptized into the church without any knowledge that its faith included plural marriage. If Foster's claims were true, it would compel him to revise completely his estimation of his father's character, so he had the right to investigate. However, he continued, Foster's information was second-hand gossip and hearsay. He chastized him vigorously:

... you know nothing at all, personally, that would so convict and condemn him, for you say he never taught you the doctrine; you say you never saw him married to any woman other than my mother; you say you never saw him act toward any other woman as though she were his wife, in any form; and that you were never introduced to any other woman who posed or was recognized either in his house or at the house of anyone else, as his wife.

He concluded by admonishing Foster that he had no right to repeat or testify to things outside the purvue of his own observation. The vigor of this cross-examination took Solon Foster by surprise, and Joseph Smith III was not sure that his old acquaintance ever forgave him for it.

Also during his stay in Salt Lake City, Joseph Smith III called upon Sarah Pratt, the widow of Orson Pratt (d. 1881). Sarah Pratt was a determined opponent of polygamy. Although she had continued to live with her husband after he took polygamous wives, she reared her children to hate plural marriage. After her
husband's death, she freely expressed her pent-up skepticism about Mormonism and her unflattering personal recollections of polygamy in Nauvoo.89

Having heard reports that Sarah Pratt had first-hand knowledge of his father's practice of polygamy, Joseph Smith III decided to seek confirmation. Obtaining an introduction through a retired physician named Benedict, he called upon Mrs. Pratt, whom he remembered from his childhood days. They chatted pleasantly about the copy of the Inspired Version which Joseph Smith III had sent as a gift to Orson Pratt, and the repercussions which ensued when Orson had endorsed the work publicly. After some time, Joseph broached the subject which had brought him calling. Apologizing for the indelicacy of the question, he asked whether the rumors were true that his father had made sexual advances to her. She denied that he had. After the interview was over, Joseph Smith III and Dr. Benedict walked down the street together.

"My God! What damned liars these people are!," exclaimed the doctor. "Here for years I have been told that your father had Mrs. Pratt for one of his spiritual wives and was guilty of improper relations with her. Now I hear from her own lips, in unmistakable language, that it was not true. What liars! What liars!"

Since Sarah Pratt died in 1888, Joseph Smith III was glad to have collected another "testimony" clearing his father's name in 1885.90

These were the most knowledgable persons Joseph Smith III interviewed in 1885 concerning polygamy in Nauvoo. Twice he unsuccessfully sought to interview Eliza Partridge Lyman. He spoke with his cousin Martha Ann Smith Harris and Edward Partridge, son of Bishop Edward Partridge. Both supported plural marriage, but neither had been old enough in Nauvoo to be familiar with polygamy's inner workings there.91 He spoke with William Huntington and Oliver B. Huntington at Springville, Utah, but learned nothing about the inner workings
of polygamy from them. The actor Thomas A. Lyne, told him of Hyrum Smith's
denunciation of polygamy in 1844.

Other conversations reinforced Joseph Smith III's convictions about
polygamy. He found many second generation Mormons were disgusted with it.
Occasionally he found a Mormon who defended plural marriage in principle while
belying such a conviction in practice. His cousin Martha Harris was one of these.
She stoutly upheld the principle in conversation with Joseph, but she refused to let
her husband William take a second wife. Mrs. John McAllister likewise
attempted a defense of the principle, but her self-conscious manner revealed that
her moral sensibilities were not reconciled to it. He became convinced that the
tales he heard of easy divorce and loose sexual ethics among young people were
natural outgrowths of polygamy.

His convictions about other areas of Mormon practice also were reinforced
by his conversations. He heard tales of how the tithing system was enforced
oppressively. First-hand accounts of Brigham Young's doings convinced him
that the Lion of the Lord had behaved arbitrarily, imperiously, and unwisely.
His interview with W. G. Hickman--son of the notorious "Danite"--persuaded him
that Bill Hickman had been a good man led into wrong-doing by the authorities of
the church. Annie Robinson, an RLDS convert, told him tales of oppression
and surveillance in Utah. He concluded that the standard works--particularly
the Doctrine and Covenants--were not commonly employed in Mormon preaching,
and that "Gospel discourses" were rare. John Carter told him that he had
heard the prophet announce that Young Joseph would succeed him.

Relatives. As in 1876, Mormon Patriarch John Smith greeted his cousin
Joseph cordially. Joseph was a frequent and welcome visitor at John's home, and
John frequently took his cousin visiting or sightseeing in his buggy.
Cousin Samuel H. B. Smith likewise offered Joseph a warm welcome. Joseph enjoyed visiting at Samuel's home, where he lived with his first wife. They were careful to steer clear of the touchy subject of polygamy, however, which was then uppermost in the minds of all due to the anti-polygamic activities of the U.S. marshals. On June 27th Joseph visited Samuel and found him in a rage against Bishop W. B. Preston. Samuel owned a dairy farm and sold his milk to the Tithing Office. A heated argument had ensued when Bishop Preston informed Samuel that he was going to lower the price he gave for his milk. "Cousin Joseph, I don't care a damn if you put this whole Mormon Church into your pocket and carry it off with you," he declared.105

On July 29th Apostle John Henry Smith called on Joseph Smith III. Joseph had a long friendship with Samuel H. B. Smith and John Smith, but it was in 1885 that he developed a lasting friendship with John Henry, the son of George A. Smith. On the 29th they spent the whole afternoon in conversation. John Henry was a pluralist. Together they canvassed their religious differences in a calm and courteous fashion. John Henry admitted that Joseph made a strong argument for his position, particularly "so far as the books are concerned," but he concluded that he always expected to remain a pluralist. He assured Joseph, however, that he was his friend and would welcome him always into his home. Both relatives respected one another. They remained lifelong correspondents.106

Joseph also had some pleasant visits with Judge Elias Smith, who, however, studiously avoided the question of polygamy. When dining at the judge's home, the introductions of the women of the household were conducted in such a manner that Joseph never was able to ascertain the relationships existing between them. Elias' granddaughter Lucy E. Woodruff presented Joseph with a transcript of the Smith family genealogy.107
One relative whom Joseph Smith III did not visit was Joseph F. Smith. Joseph F. was in the Sandwich Islands, keeping out of the way of the U.S. marshalls. He would remain in hiding—in Hawaii and elsewhere—until September 1891. Because Joseph F. had been in charge of the Endowment House for some years, and could testify about numerous illegal plural marriages performed there, President John Taylor was most anxious that he not fall into the hands of the law. In the vernacular of the time, he—along with many other members of the Mormon hierarchy—was on the "Underground Railroad." As Alexander H. Smith explained in a letter, John Taylor, Joseph F. Smith, George Q. Cannon, and Wilford Woodruff were all traveling on the underground railroad "for their health." Nobody, he explained, "except the very faithful know where they are. Angus Cannon Pres of this stake is serving his time in the Pen. Many of the small fry have been hooped and have gone up. The U.S. Deputies are preparing an attack all along the line, and a grand haul may be looked for in the near future." Joseph Smith III himself viewed the absence of his cousin and the other leaders-in-hiding with irony. "I am at the citadel—the chief shepherds are gone—where—dont know. I am the only prophet, seer and revelator in the city now of Mormonic reputation."

It was probably just as well that Joseph III was not able to converse with Joseph F. in 1885. Cousin Joseph F. was in high dudgeon, furious at the federal attempts to suppress polygamy. He regarded the federal government's war on polygamy as pure persecution. Joseph F.'s families were scattered, under surveillance, and often raided. Thousands of miles away, he was indignant, concerned for their welfare, and yet powerless to help them. His letters from Hawaii present a remarkable psychological portrait of a man alternately resigned to martyrdom, weary of exile, defiant, cautious, vengeful, and indignant. The
federal officials he regarded as "damned villains" deserving to having their miserable carcasses "consumed to ashes." "I sometimes feel like cursing the whole United States," he wrote, "for their unfairness, partizan rulings and inhuman laws." If Joseph III and Joseph F. Smith had been able to converse, it is likely that their talk would have been far more strained than it had been in 1876.

Joseph Smith III was able to meet his cousin Levira, however. The divorced first wife of Joseph F. Smith was reticent about her past. Joseph surmised that she might not wish to speak freely in front of Patriarch John Smith. Joseph Smith III viewed her as a victim of polygamy and felt deep sympathy for her.

When he departed Salt Lake City on December 21, 1885, relatives were there to see him off. John Smith, his wife Helen, and John Henry Smith bade him farewell at the Denver and Rio Grande station.

He could look with some satisfaction at his six-month mission in Utah. Although occasionally depressed by his environment, his facial neuralgia had not proved a significant hindrance. He had not gained large numbers of converts to the RLDS Church, but he had obtained valuable publicity. Newspaper readers across the nation were exposed to the differences between the two churches as a result of his mission. While he had been subjected to personal attack in the Mormon press, he had not responded in kind. In fact he found an increased willingness to debate compared with the past, and more open meeting houses. He was well received by federal officials and found that they gave his ideas about Utah serious consideration. He was convinced that polygamy was on the defensive and would be defeated in time. "Time will aid us. The processes are at work," he concluded. Most importantly, he had run the gauntlet in his mission to clear his father's name. He felt that his cross-examination of Mormon
testimonies had proven them unreliable in each case. Henceforth his writings and sermons would become ever more insistent that Joseph Smith, Jr. was not the originator of Mormon polygamy.

Dissension in the Ranks

At the conference of 1886, Apostle Jason W. Briggs, Apostle Zenas H. Gurley, Jr., and several members of the Gurley family withdrew from membership in the RLDS Church. One might have expected that these departures—that of the co-founder of the Reorganization and that of the son and namesake of the other co-founder—would have occasioned a major schism. Just the opposite occurred. Only a handful of members followed the dissident apostles out of the church.

The rest of the church breathed a collective sigh of relief at their departure. Controversy had surrounded them for approximately a decade. Their cry for a debate over their increasingly heterodox views had proven vexing. A measure of calm and unity pervaded the church after their withdrawal.

J. W. Briggs. Technically Jason W. Briggs withdrew because his articles were refused publication in the Herald. The root of the controversy, however, lay in his dynamic view of inspiration, revelation, and truth. Influenced by modern trends in Biblical and biological studies, Briggs had developed liberal positions about matters ranging from Adam's rib to Joseph Smith's revelations. Joseph Smith III was willing to tolerate a variety of opinions in the church, but eventually Briggs' speculative views and critical conclusions distanced him too greatly from the general membership for him to remain the president of the Twelve. His withdrawal in 1886 simply avoided formal measures against him by the conference.

Z. H. Gurley. It is the withdrawal of Z. H. Gurley, Jr. which bears some interest to this study, since it touched upon the question of polygamy. Both
Briggs and Gurley wished the church to repudiate certain of Joseph Smith's revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. But Gurley additionally complained that Joseph Smith III wrongly whitewashed his father's involvement in polygamy. Gurley felt strongly about this, based on conversations with his father-in-law, Ebenezer Robinson. Robinson told his son-in-law that Hyrum Smith taught him the doctrine of plural marriage. Gurley took Joseph Smith III to task:

... you absolutely refuse to believe the evidence which would convict him [Joseph Smith, Jr.], and said evidence by witnesses too who would readily be accepted by any court of the land and who stand unimpeached by the Church... Your constructions or rather your conclusions are rejected by me and mine by you, the Church is also divided upon this point--now I ask is it right for you to state your side of the question and aver its truthfulness through the Herald and deny the opposite side the same liberty?

Gurley insisted that he would continue to "flatly reject what I believe to be the 'human element' so frequently found in inspiration..." Joseph Smith's revelations were filled with this human element. "The hand," he charged, was "put forth to steady the Ark of God" early in the prophet's career. Z. H. Gurley, Sr. had witnessed much in Missouri and Illinois, but his love for the prophet "prevented his telling all he knew about the matter--at least I so think--but I confess that I am made of sterner stuff."118 Feeling that he could not accept all the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, he proposed that individual conscience and formally ratified doctrinal statements of the church be the only rule of faith and practice.

This went too far for Joseph Smith III to accept. It undermined the power of his prophetic office by removing from it the final seat of dogmatic authority.119 It threatened his campaign against Mormon polygamy, which was based upon an appeal to church law as contained in the Doctrine and Covenants and the other standard works. It also ran counter to his campaign to rehabilitate his father's reputation. Finally, it called into question the very basis of his
religious career. If Joseph Smith, Jr.'s revelations were questionable, what of his own blessing and calling? Joseph Smith III had no choice but to oppose Z. H. Gurley, Jr. and to let him go his own way. By experience, temperament, policy, and conviction, he believed in liberality, but this platform was more than he could accept.

Minor reverberations from Gurley's withdrawal continued for a few years. Wounded by the controversy, Gurley published a pamphlet entitled History of the Reorganization, arguing from incidents in Gurley family history that it was futile to place one's confidence in latter day revelations. Such "revelations," he argued, simply answered to the prior desire of the heart. When subjected to empirical testing, they failed. The revelations upon which the Reorganization was founded were subject to all these criticisms. He concluded that his father's work of reforming Mormonism had not gone far enough. All the revelations of Joseph Smith should have been rejected, because no one had a right "to add a codicil to the last will and testament of Christ."120

To confirm his father-in-law's allegations about Hyrum Smith teaching polygamy, Gurley had secured an affidavit from Leonard Soby. This he placed in the hands of Lyman O. Littlefield, who used it in a renewed attack upon Joseph Smith III.121

He also provided an autobiographical sketch for a history of Decatur County, Iowa. In this account he gave a detailed description of his quarrel with the Reorganized Church—arguing that latter day revelations had proven "the curse and bane of the Mormon church"—but he also cited the revelation on plural marriage as an example of this baneful influence. He submitted for publication two affidavits of his father-in-law Ebenezer Robinson. These certified that Hyrum Smith taught him polygamy in 1843, gave him special instructions how to
avoid public detection, and told how his brother Joseph had overcome his initial opposition to the revelation. Joseph Smith III was wounded by the publication of this affidavit, but concluded that the spirit of animus underlying its publication would be apparent to most readers of the history. In fact, it seems to have done little damage to the Reorganized Church in Decatur County.

Ebenezer Robinson. Two years after his son-in-law withdrew from the RLDS Church, Ebenezer Robinson (1816-1891) did the same. Robinson was an old Saint. He had been a eye-witness to many events in Kirtland, Far West, and Nauvoo. His services as a printer proved valuable both to Joseph Smith, Jr. and to Joseph Smith III. He followed Sidney Rigdon in 1844, but left him after a time and returned to the West. He affiliated with the Reorganization in 1863, but never accepted all the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants as binding. He believed that Joseph Smith had made many mistakes in his career, delivered false revelations, and had fallen into iniquity when he introduced polygamy. Both in conversation and in writing, Robinson had told Joseph Smith III that Hyrum Smith taught him the doctrine of plural marriage. In 1873, when the Herald carried an article stating that neither Joseph nor Hyrum ever built up polygamy, Ebenezer Robinson fired off a letter denouncing such statements as unfactual. It was at this time that he and his wife Angeline made out the above-mentioned affidavit, to record their testimony for posterity.123

In 1887 the Saints' Herald began publishing attacks on David Whitmer's Address to All Believers in Christ.124 Basically Whitmer maintained that Joseph Smith was chosen by God to bring forth the Book of Mormon, but later became a fallen prophet. Robinson agreed with many of Whitmer's criticisms of Joseph Smith's revelations, and the articles in the Herald impelled him to leave the RLDS Church and be baptized into the Whitmerite Church of Christ.125
In January 1889, he began publishing The Return in the interests of the Whitmerite Church. Robinson continued publishing The Return at Davis City, Iowa until his death in 1891. The twenty-six numbers of The Return fired hot-shot into the hull of the Reorganization. Repeatedly Robinson denounced departures from primitive Mormonism. His long-running series, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," excoriated Joseph Smith’s later career. At the very time that Joseph Smith III was making headway in rehabilitating his father’s name in the eyes of outsiders, Robinson diligently set about unearthing embarrassing incidents in the Mormon past. Over and over he sought to demonstrate that the Saints’ Herald portrayed a sanitized image of the prophet. Unfortunately for historians—perhaps to the relief of Joseph Smith III—Ebenezer Robinson died before he could complete his recounting of events in Nauvoo.\textsuperscript{126}

John K. Sheen. John K. Sheen was the son of Isaac Sheen. A pugnacious man, he had been embittered toward the RLDS Church for years.\textsuperscript{127} In the late 1880s he joined the critics who claimed that the Saints’ Herald was not being candid about polygamy. Drawing upon Sheen family history, he published evidence showing that the early Reorganization took a different view of polygamy than that put forward in the Herald in the 1880s. In 1889 he began publishing the short-lived Relic Library, in which he intended to republish historical evidence inimical to Latter Day Saint hagiography. When the Herald warned readers against patronizing the publication, Sheen fumed that the "Herod of Lamoni" had issued an edict against him in order to suppress the truth.\textsuperscript{128}

Sheen's most telling blow was the publication, late in 1889, of Polygamy, or the Veil Lifted.\textsuperscript{129} This twenty-two page pamphlet traced the history of Mormon polygamy back into the early days of Joseph Smith’s career. The published denials during the lifetime of Joseph Smith were identical to those issued afterwards by
men such as Brigham Young and William Smith. These denials, upon which Joseph Smith III rested so much of his case, actually showed that plural marriage existed prior to June 27, 1844, John K. Sheen reasoned. William Smith and Isaac Sheen had submitted a Memorial to Congress, in 1850, opposing the admission of Deseret into the Union, partially on the grounds that the Mormons practiced polygamy. But later that year William Smith was discovered to be practicing polygamy, which gave rise to the Reorganization. The first number of the True Latter Day Saints' Herald had told the truth about polygamy.

In his pamphlet, Sheen hammered away at the inconsistencies in Joseph Smith III's reading of Latter Day Saint history. What his heavy-handed prose lacked in tact and subtlety, it supplied in biting irony. John K. Sheen mocked Joseph Smith III's appeals to "rules of evidence" to exclude embarrassing historical data:

FRAUD, FRAUD, fraud! cries Joseph the younger. M. G. Eaton, stand up. Did you ever hear anything about Sealing and Spiritual Wives? Yes, I was one of Joseph's most "important witnesses," and swore to what Chauncy Higbee said on March 15, 1844. What was that? Joseph the younger: I object. This is hearsay. Objection overruled... Will Gov. Ford come in? Yes, sir. Do you know anything[?] Think I do... I object, says Joseph the younger, this man has no personal knowledge.

Court: We are governed by the rules of the Municipal court of Nauvoo. Gov. Ford, proceed.130

After more analysis of inconsistencies in Joseph Smith III's position, Sheen played his trump card. He related how his father had trapped William Smith into an admission of polygamy in 1850. Then he proceeded to publish William Smith's "Elders' Pocket Companion."131 This revealing little manuscript fell into the elder Sheen's keeping in 1850. It was subtitled "A Series of Brief Treatises on Baptism for the Dead. Spiritual Wife Doctrine Applies to the Millennium, and Plurality Wife Doctrine as Practised by the Ancient Prophets and Patriarchs."
Sheen concluded triumphantly that the RLDS Church was wasting its time trying to convict Brigham Young of originating polygamy, because the Mormon president's announcement on August 29, 1852 came eight years after William Smith composed the "Elders' Pocket Companion."

Whereas Sheen's earlier barrages were met with counterfire from the Herald, this salvo met deafening silence. The Herald loved to complain that Mormon elders generally refused to debate with RLDS elders, and that Mormon newspapers ignored RLDS claims and activities. To be consistent, Joseph Smith III constantly urged that RLDS chapels be open to speakers from other churches. RLDS elders frequently debated Adventists and Campbellites. Reports on such exchanges often found their way into the Herald. But in Sheen's case, silence was the best response. Public comment would only draw attention to parts of its own history which the Reorganization was trying to forget.

The defection of Jason Briggs and the Gurleys and the historical criticisms of David Whitmer, Ebenezer Robinson, and John K. Sheen were of great concern to Joseph Smith III at the time. But in the long run, their criticisms confirmed him in his policy. Virtually no one in the RLDS Church was persuaded by them. In a way which was unthinkable in 1860, the Reorganized Church was now truly a "Josephite" body, one which reflected the thinking of Joseph Smith III. The old Saints who remembered Nauvoo were nearly all gone. Few of their children or new converts to the church wished to dispute Joseph Smith III's revisionist interpretation of the Latter Day Saints' past. The defection of the dissidents established more firmly the RLDS Church's self-identity as the "true church," one completely loyal to a sanitized legacy depicting Joseph Smith, Jr. as a foe of polygamy.
Impending Crisis in Utah

While Joseph Smith III was leading the Reorganized Church into a position of public respectability by dissociating the church from polygamy past or present, the Utah Church increasingly found itself under seige.

Exile and death of John Taylor. On February 1, 1885, Mormon President John Taylor made what turned out to be his last public appearance. Before a congregation in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, he preached a lengthy sermon. In it he reviewed the history of the Mormons and their search for a haven in which they might practice their religion unmolested. With reference to the federal pressures against polygamy, he declared himself a die-hard. Human statutes could not annul divine commandments, he insisted. He declared emphatically that he would never surrender to such pressures: "... shall I be recreant to all these noble principles that ought to guide and govern men? No. Never! No. Never! NO. NEVER!" That night John Taylor disappeared from public view. He spent the rest of his life "on the underground."\(^1\)\(^3\)\(^2\)

On July 25, 1887 President Taylor died in hiding at Kaysville, Utah. He had eluded the federal cordon for more than two years. His counselors George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith published a eulogy in the Deseret News. In it they called him a double martyr, one wounded at Carthage Jail and later hounded to death by the U.S. government.\(^1\)\(^3\)\(^3\)

Wilford Woodruff was president of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles by virtue of seniority. The quorum, with Woodruff at its head, assumed direction of the Mormon Church. Eighteen months later, Woodruff formally assumed the office of president. He named George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as his counselors. Woodruff's assumption of the Mormon presidency marked an epochal turning point in that church's history. Under increasing federal pressure and after
agonizing soul-searching, he was to issue the edict abandoning the practice of plural marriage.

The Edmunds-Tucker Act. By 1887 hundreds of Mormon elders had been imprisoned under the Edmunds Act. It had been necessary to enlarge the federal penitentiary in Utah to accommodate all of them. Most of the Mormon hierarchy was on the underground. But public sentiment was not satisfied that enough had been done to extirpate the "twin relic of barbarism." On March 3, 1887 the Edmunds-Tucker Bill became law, without President Grover T. Cleveland's signature.

The Edmunds-Tucker Act marshalled the resources of the federal government for an all-out assault on polygamy. Various provisions made it easier to secure convictions for polygamy. Voters, jurors, and office holders were required to subscribe to a test oath pledging obedience to and support for all anti-polygamy laws. The act aimed to force compliance not only by assessing penalties against individual polygamists, but by attacking the political and economic power of the Mormon Church in Utah. Two of the most severe measures aimed at the church's power were the dissolution of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company and the disincorporation of the LDS Church. All property held by the Mormon Church in excess of $50,000 was to be escheated to the U.S. government.134

While the bill was under debate, the Herald kept up its drum-beat of criticism of Mormon resistance to federal law. Mormons had no business hiding behind claims that anti-polygamy laws were unconstitutional, argued the Herald. According to holy writ from Joseph Smith's pen, the U.S. Constitution was divinely inspired. The Constitution established the Supreme Court as the arbiter of constitutionality. Since the court had declared the anti-polygamy laws constitutional, these laws ought to be obeyed by all good Saints. If individuals
were left to choose which laws were constitutional, it would spell the end of civil government.135

Interestingly, Joseph Smith III opposed the two most severe provisions of
the Edmunds-Tucker Act prior to its enactment. He editorialized and wrote
friendly Members of Congress, urging that the provisions for the take-over of the
Perpetual Emigrating Fund and the escheating of the Mormon Church’s resources
be deleted from the bill. His reasons were twofold. First, he felt the measures
went too far and might be construed in Utah as “spiteful and oppressive.” They
might prove counterproductive by stiffening Mormon resistance, rather than
gaining compliance with the law. Second, he predicted that the Mormon
authorities would find ways to evade the law by transferring assets out of the
P.E.F. and the church corporation. The law would end up looking ridiculous.
Better to enact nothing than to pass an unworkable provision, he reasoned.136 He
assured his correspondents in Washington, D.C. that he wished to see polygamy
suppressed, plural wives’ rights provided for, U.S. law supreme, but without
making martyrs of Mormon polygamists.137

Once the Edmunds-Tucker Bill became law, Joseph Smith III editorialized
that members of the RLDS Church could take the test oath, but questioned
whether monogamous members of the LDS Church could do so.138 The Herald in
1887 was filled with articles proclaiming that Reorganites were loyal to the
government. A long-running series—aimed at countering Utah claims of
persecution and martyrdom—was entitled, “Persecution and Its Causes.” This
sought to show that both persecution of the early Saints and their response
had been different from the situation in Utah. In particular, the early Saints had
not suffered as a result of disobedience to the law and had sought redress for their
grievances via legal means.
When the Mormon Church's assets were seized on December 7, 1887, the Herald's reaction was subdued. The action, it said, was severe and harsh, "but it is the legal outgrowth of the measures enacted by the Government to compel people living in the United States territory to conform to the spirit of American institutions."^{139}

Joseph Smith III's Third Trip to Utah and the West

With polygamy on the defensive, most of the Mormon hierarchy on the underground, and the Mormon Church's economic and political power under siege, Joseph Smith III decided to make his third trip to Utah and the West. On December 27, 1887 he boarded a west-bound train at Lamoni. He had several reasons for this journey, but the crusade against polygamy was not chief among them. By far the most important reason was his need for a rest. The facial neuralgia which first beset him in 1876 had become progressively worse. He hoped that a stay in California, away from the heavy burdens of the office and Iowa's wintry chills, might bring him relief. Secondary reasons were the need to arbitrate long-standing disputes in the Oakland branch and a desire to answer numerous requests that he return to Utah.^{140}

After Joseph's departure, W. W. Blair editorialized:

Joseph has not sought in any way to obtrude or force himself or his work on the Utah people. He has neither despised, abused, ridiculed nor in any way contempted them. Nor has he flattered or in any wise endeavored to entice or beguile them. But from the first he has sought to reach their judgment and their affections and win them away from polygamy, priestly dictation in domestic, financial and political matters, and have them return to the doctrine of Christ and his laws and usages of the church contained in the sacred books publicly used and sanctioned by the Church in the days of Joseph the Seer.

The Mormons in Utah should receive the son of the prophet, said Blair, because he was his duly appointed successor, because he recalled them to the pristine teachings of the Mormon scriptures, and because the Reorganized Church—unlike
the Utah Church—had achieved rapid growth and respectability, and generally was vindicating the latter day work.141

Joseph Smith III stepped from the train in Salt Lake City on December 31st. New Year's Day was a Sunday, and he preached twice in the small RLDS Chapel. He preached frequently during the rest of his stay. His preaching was standard fare. The Salt Lake Tribune reported that his sermon on the marriage relation, on January 15th, was eloquent. He sought to show from Latter Day Saint scripture that monogamy was ordained of God. Why, he asked, had the Utah edition of the Doctrine and Covenants removed the old section on marriage and replaced it with the purported revelation on celestial marriage? The Tribune reported that he closed by "reciting how he had successfully preached Mormonism in the very court room where Joseph and Hyrum were arraigned, and had baptized even in Bear Creek." The remainder of his time was spent in visiting and correspondence. This was no major missionary effort. There were no mass meetings and nothing resembling the sensation which attended his arrival in 1885.

The RLDS president had opportunity to visit with Governor West and several prominent members of the territorial legislature. He also conversed with B. F. Cummings of the Deseret News, E. W. Tullidge, and several relatives. Patriarch John Smith and Helen again greeted him cordially, as did Samuel H. B. Smith. He did not meet with Joseph F. Smith, who was not in Utah. He enjoyed his deliberately quiet visit. "I made no effort to reach many outside our own circles on this winter visit to Salt Lake City," he wrote, "but enjoyed my stay there very much."142

The same could not be said of his stay in California. On January 20th he left Utah, and on January 22nd he arrived in San Francisco. He wearied himself trying to resolve long-festering quarrels in Oakland. On March 20th, when he
arrived in Southern California, he anticipated staying for six months. He could, he hoped, enjoy the state's natural beauties, rest, and avoid the strains of the Annual Conference. Instead, he was vexed by facial neuralgia and insistent calls urging him to return home and attend the conference. After only one week in Southern California, he reluctantly headed east, more weary in body and soul than when he left Lamoni.143

Redeeming the Waste Places of Zion

Joseph Smith III reached Independence, Missouri on March 29, 1888. There he stayed at the home of his eldest daughter, Emma, and her husband, Dr. Alexander McCallum. Shortly after his arrival, Dr. McCallum extracted some of his remaining teeth, hoping that this would relieve the throbbing pain which afflicted the RLDS president. After the conference he sought relief by having the rest of his teeth removed. This experiment proved a failure. Bad teeth had nothing to do with the neuralgic pain. The conference itself proved contentious. Joseph Smith III suffered physically and emotionally during its sessions.144

His distress was counter-balanced by one bright event. On the opening day of the conference, April 6th, the cornerstone of the new RLDS church building in Independence was laid. Located just across the street from the historic Temple Lot, the beginning of the Stone Church marked a new step in the gradual return of the Saints to Zion. For some years the number of Saints in Independence had been growing. Conferences had been held in that city sacred to all Latter Day Saints. The commencement of the Stone Church symbolized the determination of the Josephites to return to Zion. Joseph Smith III took the event as a mark of divine favor:

In peace, by the common consent of the entire community where the Saints are dwelling, with the active cooperation of many and the outspoken sympathy of many more, the people of the church once driven
from the State, in open day, with the watchful guardians of the public safety careful that they were not disturbed and the spirit of American liberty again outraged, set up the stone designed to show where the "sanctuary and the true tabernacle" had been "pitched."145

Like the acquisition and refurbishing of the Kirtland Temple, and like the widely publicized conferences in the Kirtland Temple,146 laying the cornerstone of the church at Independence was one more step in Joseph Smith III's long and patient strategy. Through good citizenship and good morals, the Saints could return to the places from which their forebears had been driven.

**Fourth Trip to the West**

On December 6, 1888, Joseph Smith III again left Lamoni for California. Officially he was travelling to San Bernardino to participate in the dedication of the RLDS church there. Unofficially he was still seeking the rest and recuperation which he had failed to obtain the previous winter.

_Southern California._ He reached San Bernardino on December 14th. Two days later he preached at the dedication of the RLDS Church there. He stayed in Southern California until the middle of May. This time he succeeded in obtaining the much needed rest which had eluded him on his previous visit. When weather and health permitted, he preached occasionally, visited, and explored much of Southern California. It was an extraordinarily wet winter, and he spent much of his time reading and writing beside the fireplace.147

During his stay in California he completed a tract entitled _One Wife, or Many._ This recapitulated many of his earlier arguments in his exchange with Littlefield. He polished and refined his scriptural arguments against plural marriage and added certain historical arguments about the origin of Mormon polygamy. He argued that the practice received sanction illegally under Brigham Young, because it ran counter to previous revelation and public repudiations of
polygamy under Joseph Smith, because the purported revelation was never adopted by the church's quorums in the prescribed fashion, and because the revelation was contrary to statutory laws which the Saints were commanded to obey.\textsuperscript{148}

Apostle Heman C. Smith was in charge of the RLDS work in California and had his base of operations in San Bernardino. Heman C. Smith was a grandson of Lyman Wight and had possession of Wight's journal. Heman apparently showed Joseph some extracts from the journal, in which Wight upheld the rights of the prophet's son to succeed him, which Joseph mailed to W. W. Blair in Lamoni. Blair appended this material to the tract \textit{One Wife, or Many}.\textsuperscript{149} This was the first time the RLDS Church employed direct quotations from Lyman Wight to support Joseph Smith III's claims to the presidency.

In San Bernardino Joseph had a lengthy conversation with David Seeley, formerly of Nauvoo. Seeley contended that Joseph Smith originated polygamy and that the Reorganization lacked authority from God. Joseph Smith III prepared a lengthy set of answers to Seeley's objections. While the questions posed by Seeley ran the gamut of disputed points between the LDS and RLDS Churches—polygamy, the Rocky Mountain prophecy, temple rites, persecution as an authenticating mark of the church—he pressed Joseph Smith III hardest on the question of authority. In his written answers, Joseph expanded considerably upon his arguments in a tract entitled \textit{The Rejection of the Church} (written in 1887).\textsuperscript{150} In reply to Seeley's questions about the source of RLDS authority, he stated:

The men who were chiefly instrumental in the organization of the Reorganized Church were members of the Church in my father's time, whose membership had not been forfeited by transgression, proper labor, trial and conviction before a church tribunal of any kind. Membership in the church could not then, and can not now, be severed by even competent authority, except for cause. . . . No claim is made that the men were apostles. . . . There is no precedent . . . in which the chain of apostleship was severed; except in the succession, or failure of it, after
the Twelve chosen by Jesus, both in the Jewish Bible and the Book of Mormon; and in this case it was revived, renewed, or recreated by command of God to Joseph Smith. In the case of the Twelve appointed in the lifetime of Joseph Smith, the right of office and of succession lapsed by departure from the law of God, in which case Joseph Smith said, "Amen to that man's priesthood." The principle of the perpetuation of the church in case of failure in the Quorum of apostles ... is given in Doctrine and Covenants .... The Lord there said that the oracles should "be given to another; yea, even unto the church." The principle and powers of reorganization remained with the members of the church who retained the original faith, wherever any one holding the Melchizedek Priesthood was found, whenever commanded by God to proceed to that work; and that without action of ordination on the part of the last apostle .... Joseph and Oliver ordained each other, by command of god, unto office which neither held before. ... The command of god is man's authority, and any one holding the Melchizedek priesthood may, at the command of god, ordain such officers as are needed to begin and perfect organization.151

While in Southern California, Joseph Smith III continued his epistolary exchanges with Joseph F. Smith. Joseph F., who still had to stay out of public view, was demanding that the RLDS Board of Publication turn over engraved plates of Joseph and Hyrum Smith which the Reorganized Church had obtained from E. W. Tullidge. Joseph III refused. He told his cousin to take up the quarrel with Tullidge, who was in Salt Lake City, if Tullidge had wrongly sold property in which Joseph F. had an interest. The correspondence was not friendly, and it turned into a discussion of theological differences as well as a proprietary dispute. Both cousins wrote at great length, and, in the mind of each, conclusively.152

Northern California. On May 24, 1889, Joseph Smith III arrived in San Francisco. He stayed in Northern California for slightly more than a month, visiting the Saints and doing a bit of church work. On June 11th he looked up his cousin Ina D. Coolbrith, who was then librarian of the Oakland Library. Ina--her given name was Josephine Donna Smith--was the daughter of Don Carlos Smith, born only months before her father's death in 1841. She was one of the most prominent literary figures in California and assiduously sought to avoid all mention of her Mormon ancestry. She received Joseph graciously. Both Joseph
Smith III and Joseph F. Smith corresponded with their cousin Ina, but neither ever succeeded in persuading her to affiliate with his respective church. 153

Fourth Mission to Utah

On Thursday, June 27, 1889, Joseph Smith III arrived in Salt Lake City to begin his fourth mission in the Great Basin. He visited friends and relatives and then began his ministerial labors on Sunday the 30th, speaking twice at the RLDS Chapel. 154

On Independence Day he attended festivities in Liberty Park. Himself an accomplished Fourth of July orator and one who always enjoyed patriotic displays, he endured a dry and dusty day in the hot summer's sun to "display his patriotism." Many Mormons felt that the federal government was persecuting them, and most of the hierarchy was in hiding, but this only served to sharpen Joseph's criticisms of Mormon patriotism. He reported to his daughter Audie:

I saw not one of the leading churchmen in the crowd. I saw one, once a prominent man, and as he passed me, he looked at me as if he would like to bite me. At least that was the look I fancied I saw on his face—I may have been dust blinded, just then. I felt sad to think "How are the Mighty Fallen?" I, as a free man, respected at home and abroad, was there, but those who have made the name of Mormonism a stench, where were they? 155

On Sunday, July 7th, he again preached twice at the Saints' Chapel. Then on the 9th he headed south for Lehi. The better part of his mission was spent outside Salt Lake City, ranging from Pleasant Grove in the south to Malad, Idaho in the north.

Preaching. By now Joseph Smith III was self-confident when facing a Mormon audience. Several times in 1889 old Saints attended his services who might have challenged him about events in Nauvoo. But such a confrontation never took place. Among those old Saints was Joseph C. Kingsbury, who attended one of Joseph's services on July 14th. 156 Milo G. Andrews, who had been an
elder in Nauvoo, reviewed one of Joseph Smith III's discourses, but confined his remarks to theological rather than historical arguments. Lyman O. Littlefield attended his services at Logan, but deliberately arrived late and departed early in order to avoid face-to-face discussion. Lucy Walker Kimball attended one service at Logan, but said nothing. Joseph decided to call on her the next morning, but discovered that she was at the Logan Temple, doing temple work.

At Malad he was challenged to explain the polygamous marriages of the Biblical patriarchs. His challenger considered that the son of the prophet would have great difficulty with the subject. But by now this was well worn ground for Joseph. On the appointed day he took up the saga of Abraham, aiming to show the patriarch's mistake in taking Hagar to wife and the unhappy consequences of his decision. His challenger, a Welshman named Thomas, felt that his pet defense of polygamy had been overturned. After the service Thomas stepped outside the church, deliberately filled his pipe, and puffed away in silence. After thinking for some time he straightened up and exclaimed forcefully: "Damn old Abraham, anyway!"

At Willard, Idaho, he advised his polygamous listeners to put away all but their first wives. If the first wife were dead, they should live with the second and put away the rest, he urged. After the service a happy wife led her husband to the front of the building. The polygamous elder had just lost his first wife, and the second was overjoyed at the RLDS president's advice:

"This man is now wholly mine, Brother Smith, for I am his only wife. I am going to obey your counsel and see to it that he shan't have another."

"That's right, sister! See that you maintain your rights and your integrity, and keep your home from invasion, for that is your privilege."

The son of the prophet felt that he made a considerable impression upon his listeners at Willard.
At Logan, where he feared he might be confronted with direct testimony of his father's involvement in polygamy, he laid down the following line of defense, which must have startled many Mormons:

... if my father were guilty as charged he had by that conduct proved himself recreant to the marriage vows exchanged with my mother ... . Further, if he were guilty of polygamy he had broken the laws of the State of Illinois of which commonwealth he was a citizen at the time of his death, and of the law of God as well.

Apostle Moses Thatcher was sitting on the stand. Thatcher interjected:

"You mean his own law."

"No, sir; I mean the law of God, given through my father to the church," he replied.

Again Moses Thatcher interrupted, and again Joseph Smith III replied, reiterating his point more forcefully.

Thatcher was disgusted and muttered something under his breath. One of his colleagues admonished him not to interrupt the meeting. At this Thatcher could contain his frustration no longer, and muttered that it was not easy to disturb "a shyster lawyer."

Joseph turned to administer a rebuke. Then he thought better of it. All eyes were upon him. Dramatically he turned back to his audience. Slowly and emphatically he drove home his original point while he had everyone's undivided attention.

Thatcher swallowed his anger and apologized after the service. Joseph Smith III came away convinced that his position could not be answered fairly, and that a sense of frustration had provoked Thatcher's interruptions. For his own part, he shrewdly avoided naming any other purported polygamist than his father, so that he could not be charged with abusing anyone.162

At Richmond, Utah, he was granted permission to speak in the Mormon
Tabernacle. Christian Hayer, a counselor to the local bishop, presided at the meeting. When Joseph mentioned that it was claimed his father taught and practiced polygamy, Hayer exclaimed, "Yes, sir; and we can prove it, too!" Many in the room smiled broadly. Taking the measure of his man, he replied as he had at Logan: Joseph Smith's involvement in polygamy could not sanctify a wicked practice. The whole room grew silent, and he finished his talk without another interruption.\(^{163}\)

At Ogden he was challenged from the audience to read the fourth chapter of Isaiah. He proceeded to read it, beginning with the first verse: "And on that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Many in the audience thought he was cornered. But after reading the chapter, he asked if he might read the entire context. He was told to read anything he pleased. Joseph asserted that if the "daughters of Zion" spoken of in the passage were actually the Mormon women of Utah, the preceding chapter also must apply to them. This chapter spoke of the "daughters of Zion" as wanton, worldy, and soon to be husbandless as the result of God's judgment. Surely, he concluded, his questioner did not intend to apply such an unflattering description to Utah's women. His questioner was crest-fallen. Joseph's retort was greeted with a loud round of applause.\(^{164}\)

Relatives. Soon after arriving Joseph visited his cousins John Smith, Samuel H. B. Smith, and Sarah Millikin Nichols, wife of the publisher of the Salt Lake Times. Throughout his mission in 1889 he enjoyed visiting with these relatives and their families. John and Helen Smith attended some of Joseph's preaching services at the RLDS Chapel. They also gave him small donations of money, as did John Henry and Samuel H. B. Smith, to help meet his expenses while
in the field.\textsuperscript{165}

One day at Ogden he was joined by Patriarch John Smith, who was visiting his daughter Lucy Smith Davis. Together, John and Joseph called on Apostle Franklin D. Richards. Elder Richards, who was assistant church historian, greeted them warmly. Despite being under the weather, Richards had a long conversation with the RLDS president. They freely discussed their differences in a genial spirit of give-and-take. Richards questioned Joseph closely about his claims to hold the priesthood and about his parents. At one point Mrs. Richards laid her hand on Joseph's arm and said, with tears in her eyes:

"Brother Joseph, it is not worth while to have anything in our religion that we are ashamed of or afraid to explain, is it?"

"No Sister Jane," he replied, "it is not. And so far I have discovered nothing whatever in the faith left by my father and Uncle Hyrum of which any honest man need be ashamed."

Her hand relaxed upon his arm. As John and Joseph departed, both F. D. and Jane Richards expressed their pleasure at the visit, especially Jane.

Returning homeward, John introduced Joseph to several people, each time referring to him as "my cousin, Joseph Smith, president of the Reorganized Church."

The next day, John Smith abruptly departed Ogden. When Joseph visited John's daughter, she asked him:

"Cousin Joseph, what did you and Father have to drink when you were out together yesterday?"

Joseph, the tea-totaller, answered that they had not imbibed. Lucy then commented that she had never seen her father so agitated except when he had been drinking. The Mormon patriarch had paced back and forth, told about the
previous days' visit, and declared:

"I tell you, my Cousin Joseph is not ashamed of his belief, nor afraid to state it to anybody! I heard him answer Richards' questions concerning his faith and their organization which showed quite a different position from that which our leaders have stated he held. I am not ashamed to introduce him as the President of the Reorganized Church. In fact, I am proud of him!"

Joseph frequently included news about their Utah relations when writing home to Lamoni. By 1889 he had established cordial relations with all of his Utah cousins except Joseph F. Smith.

Conversations. There is no record of Joseph Smith III cross-examining witnesses as he did in 1876 and 1885. His attempted interview with Lucy Walker Kimball on September 27th was thwarted by her absence from home. F. D. Richards was conversant with much historical material, but was not himself an eye-witness to events in Nauvoo. He did collect an affidavit from RLDS member John Taylor, in Harrisville, stating that three weeks before his death, Hyrum Smith denounced spiritual wifery in the Seventies Hall.

Those who had experienced marital woes under polygamy took the opportunity to unburden and tell their stories in conversations with Joseph Smith III. Such stories confirmed him in his opinion that polygamy was not only wicked but a breeding ground of unhappiness.

Twice he had long conversations with LDS elders who defended polygamy, but ended up admitting that Joseph advanced powerful arguments. In each case they concluded by retreating to the ground that the theory of polygamy was right but it had been put into practice wrongly.

At Ogden he was congratulated by two Scots, one an elder and the other a well-to-do woman. Both told him that they had not heard a good Gospel discourse such as his since leaving Scotland.

He was delighted to learn of the effects of his preaching in one household
in Ogden. The wife of the owner of one of the largest stores in town was incensed to discover that the 1876 Utah Doctrine and Covenants substituted the polygamous revelation on celestial marriage for the monogamous section on marriage which had appeared in the 1835 edition. She stomped into the store the day after hearing one of Joseph's sermons and demanded that the clerk show her a copy of the Doctrine and Covenants. The clerk obliged. She asked whether the original section on marriage was in the book they were selling in the store. The clerk assured her that it was, but he was discomfitted not to find it when he thumbed through the volume. Still he insisted that it was there. The owner's wife placed a ten dollar gold piece on the counter and told the clerk he could have it as soon as he showed her the desired section. Eventually the coin ended up in the woman's purse, her challenge unanswered and her confidence in the Utah Doctrine and Covenants destroyed.

Her husband also was impressed with Joseph Smith III's preaching. Asked afterwards what he thought of the son of the prophet's talks, he snorted:

"Why, he hasn't left us a damned leg to stand on!"171

Other interviews supplied corroborative evidence to support other conclusions which the son of the prophet had reached previously. Stories of Apostle Charles C. Rich's financial dealings in Idaho confirmed him in his view that concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the hierarchy was an invitation to abuse. Stories of Mormon subterfuges to evade the force of the Idaho Test Oath reinforced his view that polygamy must be eliminated before Utah could be admitted as a state.172

While visiting the offices of the Salt Lake Tribune, the editors asked him to prepare some articles for publication. He refused on the grounds that the Tribune only wished to use him as a tool to destroy all of Mormonism, while he sought
to reform it. Perhaps sensing that the crusade against polygamy was nearing a successful conclusion, he did not wish to appear as the enemy of the Mormon people by writing for the Tribune. He did, however, consent to write some articles for the Salt Lake Evening Times.173

Homeward. On December 16, 1889, Joseph Smith III left Salt Lake City for Lamoni. He had been gone from home nearly one year. The Annual Conference of 1889 was the only one he ever failed to attend. He had gotten his much needed vacation. He had tested his developed apologetic arguments in Utah to his own satisfaction. There had been no mass conversions to the RLDS Church in Utah, but he sensed that the campaign against polygamy was reaching fruition.

The Manifesto

The Mormon Church suffered a series of political reversals in 1890. In February the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Idaho's Test Oath, which excluded Mormons from voting. In July Idaho was granted statehood. With many Mormons excluded from voting, the People's (Mormon) Party lost control of the Salt Lake Municipal government on February 10, 1890. The victorious Liberals now began pushing for disfranchisement of all Mormons as the basis for achieving statehood for Utah, after Idaho's pattern. The Cullom-Strubbe bill was introduced in Congress to disfranchise all members of the Mormon Church. If it were enacted, political power in Utah might pass permanently to the Gentile minority. Then in May came another blow. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the provisions in the Edmunds-Tucker Act dissolving the church corporation and escheating its property. The Court held that the LDS Church was an organized rebellion against the government and distinguished by the practice of polygamy and ecclesiastical control of its members. Federal prosecutions for polygamy continued. But
Mormon emissaries in Washington reported receiving signals to the effect that if the Mormon Church would yield on the question of polygamy, total disfranchisement of the Mormon people could be averted.174

President Wilford Woodruff faced a cruel dilemma. All avenues of escape seemed closed. Finally he acted, as he put it, "for the temporal salvation of the Church." He called a council of the leading elders and informed them of his decision: plural marriages must cease. Reluctantly and painfully the hierarchy submitted to the decision as a "revelation from God made through the Prophet of the Church." Joseph F. Smith was one of the last to speak at the council:

With a face like wax, his hands outstretched, in an intensity of passion that seemed as if it must sweep the assembly, he declared that he had covenanted, at the altar of God's house, in the presence of his Father, to cherish the wives and children whom the Lord had given him. . . . He would rather choose to stand, with them, alone--persecuted--proscribed--outlawed--to wait until God in His anger should break the nation with His avenging stroke. But--

He dropped his arms. He seemed to shrink in his commanding stature like a man stricken with a paralysis of despair. . . .

"I have never disobeyed a revelation from God," he said. "I cannot--I dare not--now."

He announced--with his head up, though his body swayed--that he would accept and abide by the revelation.

It was an emotion-laden, historic moment. But the fateful bridge had been crossed. The elders accepted their prophet's leadership.175

On September 24, 1890, Wilford Woodruff issued the proclamation which has become known as "the Manifesto." In it he declared that all plural marriages had been ordered stopped, in response to the rulings of "the Court of the last resort." He stated that he would submit to the law of the land and declared his intention to use his influence with members of the church to have them do likewise. He concluded: "... I publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the laws of the land."176
RLDS Reaction to the Manifesto. The Saints' Herald of October 11, 1890 published the Manifesto in toto. An accompanying editorial observed that when Brigham Young published the revelation on plural marriage in 1852, he foretold that polygamy would become a popular doctrine and override all opposition. But this prediction failed of fulfillment. Polygamy led to a decline in the number of Mormon proselytes, and "the preaching of the gospel . . . was made noxious and difficult, and in places entirely out of the question." The Reorganized Church, by contrast, from the beginning protested against polygamy as a dogma that "poisoned the spring of inspiration, degraded the priesthood and stayed the onward sweep of the news of redemption," and as a practice which turned Saints into lawbreakers. Finally, noted the Herald, under extreme pressure the Mormon leaders had capitulated to force, after failing to heed the word of the Lord:

Mr. Woodruff and his brethren refused to hear the voice of the Lord's servants, the law of the Lord given to the church by the man Joseph Smith, whom they so boastingly declare that they revere; and now, at last, are obliged to listen to the harsh edicts of the law making power of the American government, and yielding to the logic of events are now placing themselves in the attitude of denying what they have so long and so confidently held as their redeeming tenet, the crowning glory of their latter-day philosophy.177

The following number of the Herald carried the news that the Mormon Semi-Annual Conference had endorsed the Manifesto. The Herald remarked:

We have never doubted that the Utah Mormons would officially repudiate and put away polygamy, for the reason that it can not endure criticism in the light of the sacred books of the Mormons up to 1876, nor the authentic history of the church over which Joseph Smith the Seer presided up to the time of his death.

Not only did polygamy violate Latter Day Saint scripture, the manner in which Brigham Young forced it upon his followers violated the established method of testing revelations by all the quorums of the church. The editorial concluded on a somewhat magnanimous note:

We rejoice that Pres. W. Woodruff and the late conference over
which he presided had the good sense to publicly and officially abandon polygamy, but we do not exult over their humiliation. On the contrary, we shall be glad to see them and the people they represent return fully to "the old paths, which is the good way, and find rest to their souls," in the manner ordained of God and clearly set forth in the standard books of the church officially approved by Joseph Smith the "choice Seer" and the church under his presidency.\textsuperscript{178}

In following weeks, the \textit{Herald} naturally displayed ongoing interest in the Manifesto. The \textit{Herald} recognized that the Manifesto left certain questions unanswered, but expressed a hopeful wait-and-see attitude.\textsuperscript{179} In reviewing Wilford Woodruff's and George Q. Cannon's explanations of the Manifesto—that it came to President Woodruff as an inspired answer to prayer—the \textit{Herald} remarked that, if their accounts were accurate, it was an instance of history repeating itself. In the Bible, the voice of the Lord to Abraham was: "Put the bondwoman away." In the Book of Mormon it was: "Thou shalt have one wife only." And when sincere appeal was made to God in prayer, Wilford Woodruff received a similar message.\textsuperscript{180}

Soon the \textit{Herald} raised the question of whether or not the Manifesto was a revelation. "If not, how can the statement of Mr. Woodruff, backed as it may be by a 'thus saith the people,' set aside the command which it is alleged came from God?" The Manifesto itself consisted of a series of factual statements, culminating in Wilford Woodruff's advice that Mormons "refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land." A conference accepted the Manifesto as "authoritative and binding." But whatever the procedural and philosophical problems in receiving the Manifesto as binding, the \textit{Herald} rejoiced in it as a practical sign that "the long night of depression is passing and the morn of redemption is approaching."\textsuperscript{181}

The \textit{Herald} also raised some practical questions. The Manifesto, declared the \textit{Herald}, was only a first step toward the solution of the "Utah problem."
There remained the question of whether Utah would be admitted to the Union, and whether such admission would be sooner or later. Relations between Mormons and Gentiles in Utah would continue to produce friction. Could the Mormon promise to obey the law and not perform plural marriages be relied upon? "Who penetrates the secluded halls and corridors of the temples at St. George and Manti in the south, and Logan in the north, to report whether in them the respect due to the laws . . . is paid?" What would be the fate of existing plural wives and their children? All these questions were still unresolved. 182

The Manifesto represented a tremendous triumph for Joseph Smith III. He had maintained for years that strict enforcement of federal laws would result in the abandonment of the practice of polygamy by the Mormon Church. Now his long advocated policy had born fruit. The "twin relic" lay prostrate at the feet of federal authority.

Although polygamy was officially abandoned, the odium attached to Mormonism lingered for decades. It was still necessary for the RLDS Church repeatedly to dissociate itself from the Utah Church.

Joseph Smith III could not realize that the LDS abandonment of plural marriage contained the seeds of a future identity-crisis for the RLDS Church. Future generations would have no personal recollections of Mormon polygamy. To them the existence of an anti-polygamous body of Latter Day Saints would seem anachronistic. The cessation of plural marriage removed—in the long run—the major raison d'ètre of the Reorganized Church. Joseph Smith III's greatest triumph redirected the LDS Church down the pathway of greater accommodation with American culture. This fundamental step toward greater acculturation laid the foundation for Mormonism's tremendous numerical growth in the late twentieth century—growth which has greatly outstripped that of the RLDS Church.
406

But for the moment, prospects for the RLDS Church seemed bright. Joseph Smith III was now at the height of his power. He stood out above all other leaders in the church. He exercised increasing influence in state and national life.183

The debate between the RLDS and LDS Churches underwent a subtle shift of emphasis during the 1890s. Other points of distinction between the two churches received more attention in the Herald. Now that polygamy had been abandoned, increasing emphasis was placed on the questions of authority, legitimacy, and succession. In the debate over which was the true church, another lawsuit played a critical role.

The Temple Lot Suit

A key element in Joseph Smith III’s grand strategy to prove the RLDS Church the true church in succession was the Temple Lot suit. This was a lengthy court case, begun in 1891, concerning ownership of the Temple Lot in Independence, Missouri. The putative target of the lawsuit was the Hedrickite Church of Christ. But the ultimate target was the Mormon Church.

The Temple Lot was a piece of ground sacred to all Latter Day Saints. Here, on August 3, 1831, Joseph Smith laid the corner-stone for a temple. Around this temple, the Saints believed the City of Zion was to be built and Christ was to reign for one thousand years.184

In 1832 Bishop Edward Partridge purchased the temple-site and surrounding property, a little over sixty-three acres in all. But in 1833 the Saints were driven from Jackson County before construction could begin on the temple. In 1848 Partridge’s heirs sold the property to James Poole. The land then passed through a series of owners and was subdivided into lots.185

Shortly after the Civil War, the followers of Granville Hedrick began
settling in Independence. The Hedrickites were a small faction of Latter Day Saints, chiefly from Illinois. They held theological beliefs similar to the Whitmerites. Essentially they held to the primitive organization of the Mormon Church, including the original name, "Church of Christ." They believed that Joseph Smith fell into sin during the 1830s and therefore refused to accept his revelations given after 1834. They rejected polygamy and the doctrinal innovations of the Nauvoo period.186

In 1869 Granville Hedrick, as trustee-in-trust for the Church of Christ, purchased three lots from Bishop Partridge's original tract. In 1877 he purchased five more lots. Together these parcels encompassed the site designated for the temple. Hence the Hedrickite property was (and is) known as the "Temple Lot."187

By the 1880s, members of the RLDS Church were gathering to Independence in significant numbers. They found it possible to purchase other parts of Bishop Partridge's sixty-three acres, but they were frustrated in their attempts to secure the Temple Lot. After merger negotiations and out-of-court attempts to gain possession of the Temple Lot failed, Joseph Smith III decided to file suit for the property.

**Joseph Smith III's Strategy.** Joseph Smith III was pursuing the same strategy which had borne fruit in the Kirtland Temple suit. Ever since his initial studies of Latter Day Saint theology and history, in the 1860s, he had been convinced that some day the RLDS Church "would be called to stand before the great American Jury in the civil Courts of the Republic definitely arrayed against the hierarchy known as the Mormon Church in Utah," there to examine their differences:

I was impressed that the facts, arguments, and evidences upon which the Reorganization based its position as a religious body must be
measured against their opponents of similar or other name, and the truth or error of that position be ascertained before the august tribunals recognized as the Courts of law and justice, established by the American people for the purpose of settling such disputes and justifying the proper claimants in their rights. The idea that this contest would inevitably come became so firmly fixed in my mind that I am quite willing to admit it assumed almost the proportions of a prophetic obsession, so sure was I that it would come to pass.188

When Joseph Smith III had the RLDS Church incorporated, he deliberately had the papers drawn up to include the RLDS claim to be the successor to the Church of Jesus Christ, organized on April 6, 1830. As the successor to the old church, the RLDS Church could lay claim to its property. This claim had been recognized in the Kirtland Temple suit.189

In 1887 the Reorganized Church purchased quit-claim deeds to the original Partridge purchase from Oliver Cowdery's heirs. Supposedly, in 1839, Bishop Partridge had deeded the land to Cowdery and his children, and via this deed Cowdery's heirs held title to the land. Either this 1839 deed to the Cowderys or the 1848 deed to Poole conveyed legal title. In the first case, the RLDS Church held the legal title to the Temple Lot. In the second case, the Church of Christ held the legal title.190

Immediately after purchasing the quit-claim deeds, Joseph Smith III began plotting his legal strategy. The first half of his strategy involved discussions with the Hedrickites to persuade them to merge with the RLDS Church or acknowledge the RLDS claims to the property in exchange for a monetary settlement.191 The second half of his strategy involved the court challenge of which he had dreamed for so many years.

Pursuant to this second strategic approach he wrote a series of letters to George Edmunds. In the event that the Hedrickites proved recalcitrant or held a legitimate deed, he asked, could the RLDS Church still gain possession as the true church in succession to the primitive Mormon Church?
Edmunds, in reply, pointed out several potential problems: Did Bishop Partridge hold title as an individual or as a trustee for the church? Could the RLDS Church prove itself the true successor to the original church, to the exclusion of other factions? And was the church too late in pressing its claims? Joseph considered that the first two points made by Edmunds were not insuperable. The third—lapse of time—he admitted might prove fatal:

As to the right to the succession as a Church, I have not a particle of doubt; but as to the result of the lapse of years, the mutations of changing claimants, the vicissitudes of destruction of records; and last but most fatal of all, the almost criminal ignorance and careless administration of the agents, or trustees of the original church, I am in grave doubt. And am prepared in mind for adverse judgments, on account of the last named conditions.

He reasoned that Governor L. W. Boggs' Exterminating Order might be used to counter arguments based on the statute of limitations. The Mormons were forcibly expelled from the state, and the order had never been rescinded. In theory it was liable to revival at any time. Until Boggs' order was rescinded and the Saints could return legally to Missouri, the statute of limitations ought not to begin running against the Saints' claims to property in Missouri:

One thing to be reached, morally, is to get this order and consequent sanction set aside, in order that successful right to settle in Mo., as Mormons may be urged. I am of the opinion that so long as this order remains unnoticed it is, or should be plea in bar to prevent the statute of limitations to run against claims of those expelled, and their heirs. I may be wrong.192

After out-of-court efforts to secure title to the Temple Lot failed, suit was filed on August 6, 1891 in the U.S. Circuit Court in Kansas City, Missouri. The case was not tried immediately. Attorneys for both sides gathered depositions for many months.

While the legal contest ostensibly pitted the RLDS Church against the Hedrickite Church of Christ, the battle was actually three-cornered. First there was the plaintiff, the RLDS Church, which aimed to show that its faith and
practice were identical to that promulgated by Joseph Smith. Second, there was the defendant, the Church of Christ, which sought to show that Joseph Smith departed from his own teachings at some point in the 1830s and became a fallen prophet, but that they adhered to his original, righteous teachings. Third, there was the ultimate target of the RLDS attack, the Utah Church.

The Hedrickite-Mormon Strategy. Mormon leaders recognized that an RLDS victory in the Temple Lot suit would be damaging on a number of counts. Such a victory would foreclose the possibility of them purchasing the Temple Lot at a later date. It would lend legitimacy to RLDS claims. The RLDS Church might build a temple on the sacred tract and claim that this proved their church to be the true one.

Therefore the Mormon Church provided both financial and legal advice to the Hedrickites during the trial. The Hedrickite lawyers, in consultation with their Mormon allies, decided to take aim at the RLDS succession-claims by showing that Joseph Smith both taught and practiced polygamy. This would support the apologetic position of both the Hedrickites (polygamous fallen prophet) and the Mormons (polygamous righteous prophet) but would undermine that of the RLDS Church (non-polygamous righteous prophet). The Hedrickite-Mormon alliance of convenience proved the old adage, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend."

Legal proceedings. The testimony in the case was collected by means of depositions taken in various parts of the country. Attorneys for both sides would be present while the witnesses' depositions were taken. If an attorney had an objection to a question or an answer, he would register it, the stenographer would record the objection, and the judge (who was not present) would decide later whether to admit the testimony in question.
On February 6, 1894 the case was opened in the United States Circuit Court at Kansas City, Missouri. Judge John F. Philips presided. Both sides filed their evidence with the court. The actual courtroom proceedings were confined to motions and pleading by the attorneys for both sides, not to hearing testimony. George Edmunds, assisted by L. Traber and P. P. Kelley, made the opening argument for the complainant, the RLDS Church. Then John N. Southern presented the argument for the respondent, the Church of Christ. The pleading continued on February 7th. Joseph Smith III was a highly interested observer at the proceedings. He reported to readers of the Herald that E. L. Kelley was the last to speak on behalf of the RLDS Church. Kelley, he wrote, "in a most comprehensive and masterly way, summed up, refuting with remarkable facility the deductions and objections presented by Colonel Southern . . ." Judge Philips then told both sides that he could not state when he would make his decision, because it was an important case, the amount of evidence was great, and he wished to devote considerable time to studying the matter.

Testimony for the complainant. The major thrust of the testimony gathered by the RLDS attorneys aimed to show that the RLDS Church was the true church in succession. James Whitehead was perhaps the most spectacular witness on behalf of the RLDS Church.

Whitehead testified, in his deposition, that he had been a high priest in the days of Joseph Smith and his "private secretary" from 1842 to 1844. He testified to three important points. First, he observed that the doctrine, teaching, and tenets of the old church and the Reorganized Church were identical. Second, he swore that he was an eyewitness to Joseph Smith having blessed, ordained, set apart, and anointed Joseph Smith III to be his successor. And third, he testified that polygamy was never taught by anyone having authority in the church during
the prophet's lifetime.\textsuperscript{197}

Joseph Smith III was also a witness. Although his testimony was hardly as spectacular as Whitehead's it laid important groundwork for the RLDS case.

He testified concerning the nature of the reorganization of the church, his baptism by his father, and his affiliation with the Reorganization in 1860. He aimed to show that the Reorganization held authority via members who had been in good standing in the old church.

Concerning his designation as his father's successor, his testimony was similar to that of James Whitehead, although he refused to call his selection an "ordination:"

About my selection by my father to be his successor in office, I remember of being called in his office, or into a room adjoining his office, and receiving the laying on of hands, and a prophetic blessing or setting apart, whatever it may be called. I remember that, and also remember that just before his departure for Carthage, with a number of others, I was called into a room in the Mansion House, and there again received the laying on of hands, and the blessing. I was also present at a meeting in the grove near the temple, and I remember my father laying his hands on my head, and saying to the people that this was his successor, or was to be his successor. I remember some of the parties that were on the stand, a few of them I remember, but I do not remember all of them. William Marks, George J. Adams, and I think Willard Richards were on the stand at the time.

A considerable portion of his testimony was devoted to a comparison of the faith and doctrines of the original church, "as they are laid down in the public records, and the books of the church," and as "preached when I was a boy, and was taught in the Sunday school," with that of the Reorganized Church. The burden of his testimony was that the two were identical.\textsuperscript{198}

William B. Smith proved a useful, if less than honest, witness for the RLDS Church. He testified that he was one of the original Mormon apostles, that he separated from Brigham Young and the majority of the Twelve following his brother's death due to their teaching polygamy, and that RLDS doctrine was
identical to that of the original church. He accused Brigham Young and the Twelve of having introduced doctrinal deviations, e.g., the Adam-God doctrine, blood atonement, and polygamy. He completely denied having taught or practiced polygamy at any time. He cleverly downplayed the demise of his own church, and urged that the doctrine of lineal succession was true to Latter Day Saint scripture.\textsuperscript{199}

W. W. Blair and E. C. Briggs proved persuasive witnesses. Both testified concerning the early history of the Reorganization, sought to show that a reorganization of the original church was necessary and proper, and argued that the RLDS Church represented a faithful continuation of the teachings of the original church.\textsuperscript{200}

A number of old Saints and longtime residents of Jackson County were examined by the RLDS attorneys. The gist of their testimony was that the Saints were driven forcibly from Jackson County (and could not return safely until the 1870s) and that it was commonly recognized that the Temple Lot was property held in trust for the church. Some also testified that no improvements were made on the Temple Lot property until 1883.\textsuperscript{201}

John H. Carter testified that he witnessed Joseph Smith, on the stand, designate his son as his successor. He recalled that Brigham Young also told the people that Young Joseph eventually would lead them. If Brigham Young had taught differently (soon after the prophet's death) many Saints would have deserted him.\textsuperscript{202}

John H. Thomas told of leaving Winter Quarters in disgust. He felt that the Twelve had turned their backs on the doctrine taught in the standard works. He also testified that at Winter Quarters it was commonly expected that Young Joseph would someday lead the church, but that Brigham Young tried to quiet
such talk by insinuating that it endangered the lad's life.\textsuperscript{203}

Church Secretary and Recorder Henry A. Stebbins testified concerning membership statistics. He estimated that three to five thousand members of the original church had united with the Reorganization. The objective of his testimony was to show continuity between the original church and the Reorganization.\textsuperscript{204}

Testimony for the Defense. Much of the Hedrickite testimony was taken by deposition in Utah. The bulk of this testimony aimed to show that Mormon polygamy originated under Joseph Smith.\textsuperscript{205}

The most important testimony concerning polygamy came from three women who swore that they had been plural wives of Joseph Smith. Emily Dow Partridge Young gave a detailed account of how the prophet taught her the doctrine. After some initial reluctance she accepted the principle and was married to Joseph Smith on March 4, 1843. The ceremony was repeated later that year, after Emma Smith was persuaded--for the moment--to accept the principle and designated Emily and her sister Eliza to be plural wives of the prophet. The night of the second ceremony, Emily slept with Joseph Smith at his house.\textsuperscript{206}

Lucy Walker Kimball testified that Joseph Smith personally taught her the doctrine of plural marriage. She was married to the prophet by William Clayton on May 1, 1843. She accepted plural marriage as a sacrificial duty, at the command of God, to aid in inaugurating a grand and glorious principle. She became indignant when questioned whether or not she slept with the prophet, exclaiming, "He was my husband sir."\textsuperscript{207}

Melissa Lott Willis stated that she was married to Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, Hyrum Smith performing the ceremony. She was asked if she was his wife "in all that the word implies," to which she responded affirmatively. Repeated questions
about the number of times she had intercourse with the prophet finally brought an
indignant refusal to discuss the matter any farther. She denied insinuations by the
RLDS attorneys that she was simply sealed for eternity to Joseph Smith.208

Others testified concerning other aspects of the prophet's involvement in
polygamy. Joseph B. Noble told of marrying Joseph Smith to his sister-in-law,
Louisa Beaman, in 1841, and of how the prophet slept with Louisa after the
ceremony.209 Mercy Rachel Thompson testified that Joseph Smith united her in
plural marriage to Hyrum Smith. Lorenzo Snow, Wilford Woodruff, Mary Ann
West, Joseph C. Kingsbury, and Cyrus H. Wheelock all testified that Joseph Smith
personally taught them the principle of plural marriage.210

Beyond having heard the prophet teach polygamy, four witnesses swore
that they had seen the manuscript of the revelation on polygamy or heard it read.
By far the most important of these was Joseph C. Kingsbury who told how he
copied the original revelation—which was in William Clayton's handwriting—at the
request of Bishop Whitney. Mercy Rachel Thompson said that Hyrum Smith
handed her the revelation and told her that the High Council had just voted to
accept it. Lucy Walker Kimball also claimed to have seen it. Cyrus H. Wheelock
testified to hearing the revelation read by one of the prophet's clerks. Joseph C.
Kingsbury told how he made a copy of the original revelation—which was in
William Clayton's handwriting—at the request of Bishop Whitney.211

Three witnesses were brought forward to impeach William Smith's
testimony that he never was involved in polygamy and that Brigham Young
introduced it after the death of Joseph Smith. Mary Ann West testified that she
entered into plural marriage with William at the suggestion of Joseph Smith.
Priscilla Morgridge Staines told of her plural marriage to William in 1845. Jason
W. Briggs related how polygamy led to his rupture with William Smith in 1851.212
The Hedrickite Church faced a dilemma in this case. Its first line of defense was to claim legal title through the 1848 deed to Poole. If that failed, it still could claim color of title through the deed to Poole and adverse possession for more than ten years. But if the court rejected both these lines of defense, the contending churches' claims to equitable title might come into consideration. In this event the Church of Christ faced severe problems. It had only a handful of members, and perhaps only a few of these would make persuasive witnesses. Once on the stand and faced with cross examination about claims to succession, the witnesses would be subjected to questioning about early Mormon doctrines which the Hedrickites now rejected. In fact this is exactly what happened when Hedrickite Bishop Richard Hill took the stand. He was subjected to such damaging cross examination that no other member of the Church of Christ subsequently took the stand to testify concerning Hedrickite beliefs.213 There was another way to attack this problem, however, and that was to demonstrate that the RLDS Church did not adhere to the primitive doctrines and practices of Mormonism. This is what the Hedrickite attorneys attempted.

In cross-examining the plaintiff's witnesses, the Hedrickite attorneys sought to show a variety of RLDS deviations from original Mormonism. For example, they repeatedly returned to the point that the first name of the church was the "Church of Christ." They sought to show that RLDS rules of representation at conferences were an innovation, that the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants contained revelations altered from their appearance in the original Book of Commandments, and that the RLDS ecclesiastical organization was not identical to that of the early church.

Calling Mormon witnesses to testify about polygamy was part of the Hedrickite strategy of demonstrating deviations from the teachings of Joseph
Smith. An ingenious attempt to undermine the RLDS case was the calling of Jason W. Briggs to the stand. The Hedrickites obviously hoped that the disaffected co-founder of the Reorganization would air his reasons for leaving the church and perhaps charge Joseph Smith III with leading the RLDS Church away from its original moorings. The interrogation of Briggs failed to yield the desired results. He maintained that the cause of his departure was censorship of his views. After Briggs' favorable testimony, Joseph Smith III editorialized:

> It must be both gratifying and encouraging to the members of the church to know that one talented and critical as Elder Briggs, and so fully informed in regard to the rise and work of the Reorganization has naught to say against its faith and doctrines, although disconnected with its interests.

Strangite L. D. Hickey was also called to testify by the Hedrickite lawyers. By presenting Strangite claims to be the true church in succession, it was hoped that the RLDS claims would be called into additional question. Hickey, however, was more an eccentric curiosity than a persuasive witness.

The RLDS attorneys subjected the defense witnesses to careful cross-examination. In Utah, the elderly witnesses about polygamy in Nauvoo were subjected to extensive and detailed grilling. The objective was twofold. First, the RLDS attorneys sought to elicit contradictions in testimony. Several of the witnesses became confused about dates and other details of events five decades earlier. Second, they sought to show that polygamy was never publicly accepted as a doctrine of the church.

After the defense had called its witnesses, several RLDS witnesses appeared in rebuttal. James Whitehead insisted that polygamy was not taught or practiced until after Joseph Smith's death. Joseph Smith III testified that as a youth he never saw any evidence of his father's sexual involvement with Lucy Walker, Melissa Lott, the Partridge or Lawrence sisters, or any other woman.
Decision of Judge Philips. On March 3, 1894 Judge Philips handed down his decision. It closely followed the closing arguments of the RLDS attorneys. His decision represented a complete victory for the RLDS Church.

Judge Philips first summarized the facts in the case. He found that Bishop Partridge purchased the Temple Lot with church funds for church purposes. He found that the 1839 deed to the Cowdery children was valid and took precedence over the 1848 deed to Poole. Through a chain of title going back to the 1838 deed, the RLDS Church had secured a quitclaim deed to the Temple Lot. He further found that the Temple Lot had remained vacant and unoccupied until 1882 when the Hedrickites assumed adverse possession (by fencing the property and beginning improvements.) The RLDS suit was brought within ten years of this date, invalidating a defense of laches.

Turning to the legal issues, Judge Philips began with a discussion of the rights of an out-of-state religious corporation to sue for property in Missouri. He then came to the question of the 1839 and 1848 deeds. He ruled that Bishop Partridge held legal title to the property as trustee for the church (which held equitable title). The deed to the Cowdery children stipulated that they were to hold the property in trust for the church. He cited various legal precedents for accepting the validity of the 1839 deed, despite the problems associated with it. He cited various legal objections to the 1848 deed to Poole. Even granting that the 1848 deed (and those deriving from it) constituted color of title, the judge nevertheless ruled that the Church of Christ did not hold the Temple Lot for the necessary ten consecutive years to establish adverse possession. The Temple Lot proper was never fenced nor occupied until 1882. The payment of taxes on the eight lots by itself did not amount to adverse possession. Nor did the platting and development of other portions of the Partridge purchase outside of the Temple
Lot constitute adverse possession of the Temple Lot itself. Even if the 1848 deed to Poole were admitted in evidence, he and all parties claiming under him had notice of the trust character of the Temple Lot, which was well known to the citizens of Independence. The developers of the Partridge purchase must have known they were trying to reduce to speculative interest a spot sacred to this church. They assumed, doubtless, that those people, violently expelled from the state, and under popular odium, would not have the temerity to claim their own ....

The Hedrickites themselves testified that they were aware of the trust character of the property.

Having found that equitable title rested with the church, Judge Philips stated: "It remains to be ascertained who are the true beneficiaries of this trust." He rejected as mere quibbling the Hedrickite claim that they were the true church by virtue of preserving the primitive name, "Church of Christ." He ruled that up until 1844, equitable title clearly lay with the Mormon Church. The authorized books of doctrine and law for the government of the church, until this time, were the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants. After the death of Joseph Smith the church split into factions. The largest faction was led by Brigham Young who assumed the presidency by "bold and bold usurpation," contrary to church law and Joseph Smith's designation of his son as his successor. Polygamy was proclaimed a doctrine of the church under Brigham Young, but the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants both testified against polygamy. Granville Hedrick also condemned the purported revelation on plural marriage. The judge listed further departures of the Utah Church from the principles and doctrines of the original church: the Adam-God doctrine, the introduction of secret oaths and covenants, alteration of church polity, and teaching "obedience to counsel." Therefore, the LDS Church did not hold equitable title due to departures from primitive Mormon faith and practice.
Judge Philips then turned to the question of whether the complainant church represented the beneficiaries of the property. He pointed out that civil courts had no interest in adjudicating theological controversies. The court was interested only in the question of title to property. In the case of disorganization and factional divisions of an ecclesiastical body, the settled rule was that title to property rested with that part of the church which abided with the original laws, usages, customs, and principles of the organization. In cases of disputes over property, equitable title rested with the faction (large or small) which maintained the original faith. Those who departed from the church's original tenets forfeited their claims to the property. It did not matter how many factions developed after the death of Joseph Smith; if one remained faithful to the original teachings of the church, it held equitable title to the Temple Lot. Judge Philips ruled that the RLDS Church represented such a faithful continuation of primitive Mormonism.

He rejected various arguments of the defense to show that the Reorganization differed from the church as it existed prior to 1844: (1) He rejected historical arguments that Joseph Smith secretly taught and practiced polygamy. Joseph Smith and other church leaders, reasoned the judge, publicly rejected polygamy. Furthermore, Joseph Smith fathered children by his wife Emma but not by anyone else. And secret sexual liaisons by Joseph Smith were insufficient to make plural marriage a doctrine of the church. (2) He rejected the Hedrickite contention that RLDS additions to the Articles of Faith and Doctrine and Covenants constituted a departure from the original faith. He pointed out that one of the original Articles of Faith declared belief in ongoing revelation. None of the RLDS additions contradicted the original faith.221 (3) He rejected the Hedrickite contention that the RLDS Church had a new Bible different from that of the original church. The Inspired Version, he ruled, was the work of
Joseph Smith and inculcated no new doctrine. (4) He rejected the Hedrickite argument about the RLDS failure to fill all of the quorums of the church, pointing out that vacancies could be filled at any time.

Judge Philips rejected the notion that the Hedrickites held equitable title to the property. He wrote:

Looking at their answer in this case, and their evidence, the idea occurs that in theory they are ecclesiastical nondescripts, and in practice "squatter sovereigns." They repudiate polygamy while looking to Salt Lake City for succor. They deny in their answer that this property was ever bought for the church, or impressed with a trust therefor, and yet, when their head men were on the witness stand, they swore they are a part and parcel of the original church . . . and that to-day they hold the property in question in trust for the church.

Their founder, Granville Hedrick, was once a member of the Reorganization. They rejected parts of the Doctrine and Covenants and doctrinal developments in the church after ca. 1834. They rejected the law of tithing and baptism for the dead, both taught by the original church. "They are but a small band, and their seizure of the temple lot, and attempt thus to divert the trust, invoke the interposition of a court of equity to establish the trust, and prevent its perversion."

Lastly, Judge Philips rejected the defense of laches. The Saints (the beneficiaries of the trust) were driven from the state by military force and not permitted to return. Hastie feeling was too great for them to return and press their claims for decades thereafter.

No improvements were made on, and no visible possession taken of, the temple lot, until 1882, within 10 years of the institution of this suit . . . . Up to this hostile action of respondents the complainants had a right to assume that the trust character of this property was intact . . . .

Therefore, Judge Philips ruled in favor of the RLDS Church, "establishing the trust in its favor against respondents, removing the cloud from the title, enjoining respondents from asserting title to the property, and awarding possession to the
complainant."

Reaction to the Favorable Decision. Joseph Smith III anticipated the favorable ruling of Judge Philips. As he was walking to work in Lamoni on March 3rd—the date set by the judge to deliver his decision—he suddenly heard a voice say: "The decision of the Court will be in favor of the Reorganized Church on every point!" Later that day he received a telegram confirming his prescience. The long-awaited vindication of the RLDS Church in court had come at last.223

Naturally Joseph Smith III was elated at the news and immediately put it to good use. Judge Philips' favorable decision was reprinted in pamphlet form. As the first advertisement for the pamphlet explained, it was a valuable apologetic tool, "as setting forth the legally recognized position of the Reorganized Church as the only true successor of the Original Church." Not only that, proceeds from sales of the pamphlet would help to defray the legal expenses in prosecuting the suit.224 The preface to the pamphlet crowded that the decision was far more than a victory over the Church of Christ:

The Defendants were directly aided and supported in the suit by the factional church in Utah . . . the President of that body, Wilford Woodruff, and the President of its Quorum of Twelve, Lorenzo Snow, and other leading men and women voluntarily becoming witnesses for the Defendants; and many other witnesses answering to the personal summons of Mr. Woodruff came from different parts of the Territory to testify in behalf of the Defendants.225

The RLDS Church also published its abstract of evidence. This was a rather hefty book, abstracting testimony of witnesses and evidence from documentary sources. All of this, as advertisements in the Herald pointed out, offered "support of the claims of the Reorganized Church to be the successor of the Original Church, showing it to be the authorized and identical continuation of said Original Church and entitled to its property, while all other factions have deviated from the Original Church in organization, in teaching, and in
Joseph Smith III was convinced that events were unfolding in his favor. He editorialized that the news of the decision was being carried throughout the country by the press. Although careful not to claim final victory, he expressed confidence that time was on the side of the RLDS Church:

Many years ago, when there were more divisions between so-called Latter Day Saints than there are now, we stated to the Saints that of all the contending parties seeking to be regarded as the true church, the Reorganization could best afford to wait the arbitrament of time and the culmination of events. Late occurrences corroborate this statement. We have watched; we have prayed; we have waited, and to us has come again the fulfillment of the word; "and ye shall find favor and grace in the eyes of the people." 227

When the Deseret News editorialized that the various newspapers were reporting incorrectly that the LDS Church was a party to the suit, but that in reality the Mormon Church had no more interest in it than would the Roman Catholic Church in a controversy between Lutherans and Calvinists, Joseph Smith III disagreed editorially. The LDS Church was involved, indirectly, he argued, because claims of succession were at issue. Furthermore, Hedrickite leader Charles A. Hall had attempted to undermine the RLDS claims of fidelity to Joseph Smith's teachings by introducing the question of polygamy. The RLDS Church had no choice but to respond to the questions raised by Hall. All classes of Latter Day Saints, argued Joseph Smith III, had an interest in the questions raised. "There are those who in good faith . . . are willing to stand or fall upon the proofs of the issue being made." 228 Privately, Joseph Smith III was well aware of the involvement of the LDS hierarchy in supporting the Hedrickites, although his public comments were restrained. He particularly took offense at the manner in which his cousin Joseph F. Smith interfered during the taking of depositions in Utah. 229

On June 4, 1894 the Church of Christ filed bond for an appeal. Joseph
Smith III commented on the prospects of an appeal:

As to the reversal of the decision of Judge Philips in the higher court we have nothing to say, further than that it is possible, though not probable. It is best for all concerned not to worry over the possible shadows that may overlie the pathways, accept the good and bear with the inevitable.230

Reversal on appeal. The Hedrickite appeal was heard by the U.S. Court of Appeals at St. Louis in January 1895. Joseph Smith III was a spectator in the courtroom during the attorneys' arguments. The pleading ended on January 26th, and everyone went home to await the court's decision.231 The RLDS president was well aware of the possibility that the court might rule against the Reorganization on the ground of laches.232

On September 30, 1895 the Court of Appeals handed down its ruling. Judge Thayer, speaking for the three-judge panel, reversed the lower court's decision.233 The Court of Appeals ruled that Judge Philips erred in allowing the RLDS suit to come to trial, and this for two reasons.

In the first place, the Court ruled that the RLDS Church had no grounds for a suit in chancery. The RLDS suit claimed that the Hedrickite Church of Christ held no title—legal or equitable—to the land, but occupied the position of mere trespassers. The RLDS suit would only have been proper if the complainant held equitable title (which was claimed) and sought recovery from an occupant holding legal title (which was not claimed). Suits in chancery can only be brought to recover from adverse occupation when seeking legal title or seeking to obtain alleged equitable title. The RLDS suit sought neither.

In the second place, the Court ruled that the RLDS Church was guilty of such laches as should bar it from relief in equity. The RLDS Church filed suit in 1891, alleging equitable title, but the widow and heirs of Bishop Partridge conveyed the land by a deed executed and duly recorded in 1848, under which
numerous persons had acquired titles and made improvements upon the original tract. If the problem-ridden deed of 1839 should be enforced at such a late date, it would affect numerous subsequent sales, improvements, subdivisions, lawsuits, payments of taxes, etc., and place the entire tract under cloud of title. The RLDS Church had been guilty of negligence in asserting its interests to the property, by waiting until 1891 to file suit.

Judge Thayer stated:

... we think that the plaintiff church and those whom it claims to represent have been guilty of such laches as should bar them from all relief in the forum of equity, even though it appeared that the premises in controversy were originally held in trust by Edward Partridge for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and even though it appeared that Reorganized is at this day the legitimate successor of the original beneficiary. It behooves all persons who claim an interest in real property which is situated within the limits of a large town or city, and is rapidly coming into demand and appreciating in value, to be active and vigilant in the assertion of their rights thereto. A person claiming an interest in such property cannot remain silent and inactive for a long period while third parties are buying, selling, improving, and otherwise dealing with the property as their own, in reliance on a record title that is perhaps defective, and then be permitted to assert his own claim thereto in a court of equity. Courts of equity will not take such action as will discredit a title that has been dealt in for years and recognized as valid, and on the validity of which the fortunes of many persons may depend, unless their aid is invoked by a suitor who shows a clear equitable right, nor unless he has been diligent in making his rights known and prompt in seeking relief when they were invaded.

The RLDS Church urged three mitigating circumstances for the late filing of its suit. First, the Saints were driven from Missouri in the 1830s and found it dangerous to return. Second, the Hedrickites had not occupied the Temple Lot for a period of ten consecutive years. Third, the suit was to enforce the provisions of an express trust, in which case laches should not apply.

The court rejected these three arguments as insufficient to overcome a defense of laches. To rule in favor of the RLDS Church would affect too many third parties. The RLDS Church had ample opportunity, after the filing of the 1839 deed (in 1870), to bring suit. There had been no obstacle after 1870 to a
speedy assertion of the RLDS title and claim. Under these circumstances, laches constituted a good and sufficient defense, ruled the appellate court, and it therefore ordered the circuit court's decree reversed.235

The RLDS Church petitioned for a rehearing, contending that laches was not an applicable defense in a suit to enforce a charitable trust. On December 9, 1895 the Court of Appeals refused to rehear the case.236

In January 1896 the United States Supreme Court refused to hear the RLDS appeal of the case. This spelled an end to the legal contest.237

Joseph Smith III felt that the Court of Appeals' reversal of Judge Phillips' decision "was in reality but a continuation of unlawful act and injustice upon the part of the State authorities." He believed that if the church had been able to gain a hearing before the Supreme Court, "the State of Missouri would have been held to answer for what had resulted from its own unlawful actions in the past and the decision would not have resulted in our again being deprived of our just rights."238

Despite failing to gain possession of the Temple Lot, the RLDS president felt that his church had scored a decisive moral victory. Judge Phillips' decision for years has been cited by RLDS apologists. The Court of Appeals' decision, it was reasoned, rested upon technicalities which left Phillips' findings concerning succession undisturbed.239 But no matter how great a moral victory had been won, Joseph Smith III still felt a sense of injustice. Missouri's illegal actions against the Saints stood uncorrected. The Hedrickites held the Temple Lot, but they were too few and too divided to build a temple themselves. And all the while the RLDS Church was prevented from occupying the property.240

**Stance toward the Utah Church after the Manifesto**

In an address to the RLDS general conference of 1892, Joseph Smith III noted that the relationship between the RLDS and LDS Churches had undergone
an alteration since the issuance of the Manifesto:

... I am of the opinion that this change requires not only careful thought, but it requires a little difference in presentation. For instance: Until late when the question was asked, we have stated the chief difference between us and the Utah organization. It is now being forced upon the people of America that they have abandoned polygamy. Our ministry must be prepared for this change. Our ministry must exercise as much charity, forbearance, and courtesy as possible in urging our views upon the people.241

Joseph Smith III remained quick to point out to outsiders that the RLDS Church was strictly monogamous and always had been. But in the pages of the Herald he de-emphasized polygamy for some years after the Manifesto. The RLDS-LDS debate shifted in emphasis. Editorials in the Herald continued to give attention to church-state issues in Utah. The manner in which Joseph F. Smith received amnesty in 1891 came in for adverse commentary. Mormon unwillingness to debate RLDS elders continued to be criticized. Other points of distinction between the two churches (besides polygamy) received attention in editorials, e.g., baptism for the dead, the Mormon practice of "adoption," temples, temple rites, and the Rocky Mountain prophecy.242

Despite the Manifesto, the two churches remained different in certain fundamental respects. The differences were symbolized graphically by the dedications which occurred on April 6, 1893. On that date LDS President Wilford Woodruff led the ceremonies dedicating the magnificent Salt Lake Temple, which had been forty years in building. On the same day, RLDS President Joseph Smith III preached the dedicatory sermon at the new Brick Church in Lamoni, a commodious structure which had been under construction for ten years.243 The former structure was devoted to the sacred ordinances of the LDS Church and was accessible only to Mormons in good standing who came there on temple business. The latter resembled many Protestant churches of its day, was open to anyone, and was employed for conventional purposes. The differing architecture and functions
of the two structures reflected different theological tenets.

Joseph Smith III refused to oppose admission of Utah into the Union as a punitive measure directed against Mormons. He was pleased to observe the Mormon hierarchy moving away from theocratic pretensions in Utah, as evinced by the dissolution of the People's Party in 1891. The development of regular Democratic and Republican political organizations in Utah cleared the way for Utah's admission as a state. Editorials in the Herald supported such admission. If Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Washington were entitled to statehood, so was Utah. Anti-Mormon religious prejudice should not enter into the political question of statehood, editorialized the Herald, so long as the social and moral evil of polygamy were abandoned. On July 16, 1894 President Grover Cleveland signed the legislation enabling Utah to enter the Union. A constitutional convention was held in 1895 to draw up a state constitution for Utah. Joseph's cousin John Henry Smith presided over the convention. On January 4, 1896 President Cleveland issued the proclamation admitting Utah as the forty-fifth state in the Union. Joseph Smith III commented in the Herald:

We congratulate Pres. Woodruff on the issue of the effort for statehood, without reference to the political party complexion that the entrance of the new State may have taken on; believing as we do that American citizens are entitled to self government, whenever and wherever the national statutes governing in such cases are complied with. With the hope that the sisterhood of states may never have just occasion to be fearful of, or shamed by sentiment or deed of the new accession to their number; we hail the new star in the blue field of the American flag.

The question of succession in the presidency of the church occupied increasing prominence in the years following the Manifesto. The ablest exponent of the Mormon position was Seventy B. H. Roberts, who in 1894 published the first edition of Succession in the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. While Joseph Smith III admired Roberts' ability as an apologist, he was not particularly impressed with this work. Responsibility for replying to Roberts
largely was left to others. The chief burden of reply fell upon Apostle Heman C. Smith. Apostle Smith issued a series of replies to Roberts in the Herald which were then collected into a pamphlet. Joseph himself remained on the sidelines of the debate, although he did assist Heman C. Smith with advice and information. The fundamental reason for his lack of involvement was his besetting problem of neuralgia. As he explained to his counselor W. W. Blair, he knew that a book replying to Roberts was needed, but he could not undertake the work:

Ill health, such as I have had, the influence of which to incapacitate me for the labor incident to such a work few, yourself possibly included, have fully appreciated, or understood, has not only made me diffident to undertake but absolutely unqualified to do it. I do not want to undertake it and fail.246

Joseph Smith III spent a good deal of time and energy in 1896 dealing with fallout from an interview with Samuel G. Spencer. The episode began innocently enough. Joseph was in Independence, Missouri on March 17th and agreed to talk with Spencer, a visiting Mormon elder. The conversation took place at the home of RLDS Apostle Joseph Luff. Three other Utah elders were present during the interview, besides Spencer.247

Some months later, reports began reaching Lamoni that Spencer and others were utilizing a report of the interview as a controversial tool in discussions with members of the Reorganization.248 When Joseph Smith III saw a copy of the statements he purportedly had made, he was furious. The report of the interview quoted him so selectively as to misrepresent his actual views. He was occupied for months composing explanations to queries from anxious members of the RLDS Church who could not believe that their president had said the things he was quoted as saying.249 Joseph was so irritated at the misrepresentation that he wrote letters of complaint to Spencer and another of the Mormon elders who had attended the interview.250 When the Deseret News published Spencer's account
of the interview, he again sent off letters of complaint. Finally he published his own version of the interview in the Herald and in a tract.

**Bereavement and Remarriage**

Much of Joseph Smith III's attention and energy was directed away from warfare with the LDS Church during the mid-1890s. As the RLDS Church grew, he found himself increasingly in demand as a speaker at dedications, reunions, and other church functions. Much of his time was occupied in traveling to these functions. Another major effort was the founding of Graceland College, the RLDS liberal arts school at Lamoni, which was approved by the conference of 1894. His administrative burdens were increased by the death in 1896 of his dear friend and counselor W. W. Blair. Ill health at times left him with little energy or inclination for polemical warfare. A disposition to give the Utah Church the benefit of the doubt, after the Manifesto, also tempered his criticisms for a time.

The greatest factor diverting his attention away from warfare with the Utah Church was personal tragedy. On September 8th Bertha Madison Smith was thrown from her buggy. After two weeks of recuperation, she seemed well on the road to recovery and resumed her household routine. However, unknown to anyone, Bertha had suffered internal injuries. In mid-October she became ill, and Joseph hired a nurse to care for her. For several days she grew weaker, and then--quite suddenly--she passed away on October 19th.

Joseph was heartbroken. He and Bertha had spent twenty-seven years together. She was five years his junior and in robust health. He never anticipated that she would precede him in death. Stoically he set his face to the future. His daughter Audentia and her husband moved into Liberty Hall. Audentia managed the large household and assisted in caring for Joseph's younger children.

Joseph was not happy as a widower, and was not yet prepared to spend the
rest of his life unmarried. His domestic nature, his high regard for women, and his happiness heretofore in marriage combined to create a desire to remarry. He busied himself with official duties, but he found that he went about them on leaden feet in the months following his wife's death.253

As he traveled about on church business, he kept his eye open for a prospective wife. After having his proposal of marriage rejected by Adell Hawley, in September 1897, he was depressed. "I had hoped for a different answer," he wrote in his journal, "but must be content. I am old and not fitted for companionship I fear." He added: "This most likely ends my search in that direction. I pray for what is best for me to transpire."254

This was entirely too pessimistic an assessment. Only two weeks later he attended an RLDS conference in Canada where he renewed his acquaintance with the Alexander Clark family. The Clarks had several daughters, one of whom was a tall, unmarried nurse named Ada. Joseph soon formed an interest in Ada and again proposed marriage. Ada agreed on November 10, 1897. Joseph was sixty-five years old; Ada Rachel Clark was twenty-five.

There were outbursts of indignation in the Clarks' small hometown of Waldemar, Ontario. Some residents thought it outrageous that Ada was about to marry a "Mormon prophet." But Joseph and Ada serenely went about making their plans and were wed on January 12, 1898 in a quiet ceremony at the Clark residence.

Joseph and Ada took up residence at Liberty Hall. Joseph stated that he remarried "for the purpose of keeping my home intact and preserving that domestic environment which has ever been essential to my happiness." His motives were pragmatic, but he found happiness and an element of romance in his marriage to Ada. Three sons were born to them: Richard Clark (December 26,
1898), William Wallace (November 18, 1900), and Reginald Archer (January 8, 1903). W. Wallace Smith grew up to become president of the Reorganized Church (1958-1978).255

The Church History

Joseph Smith III long had desired to publish an authoritative history of the church. He was acutely aware of the apologetic value of history. Anti-Mormon accounts of Mormon origins, hostile biographies of Joseph Smith, endless retellings of the Spaulding Manuscript theory, accounts of polygamy in Nauvoo, and tales of Mormon misdeeds in Utah—all these and more demanded rebuttal, explanation, and criticism from an RLDS perspective. For decades Joseph Smith III busied himself writing letters to editors and publishers, criticizing them for printing historical material at variance from the RLDS perspective. Recognizing the importance of history, a committee was formed to prepare material "representing the faith and principles of the church" for inclusion in standard encyclopedias and school histories.256

Anti-Mormon historical accounts were not the only ones demanding rebuttal. LDS accounts also needed answering. A host of issues under debate between the two churches were rooted in past events. The LDS Church claimed the sanction of Joseph Smith's prophetic authority for many practices and beliefs rejected by the Reorganization: celestial marriage, temple rites, plurality of gods, etc. Additionally, the legitimacy of the Reorganization's claims to authority revolved, in part, around historical events in the 1840s and 1850s. Issues such as whether the Twelve led the church into apostasy, whether Joseph Smith designated his son his successor, whether the prophet delegated presiding authority to the Twelve, the completion of the Nauvoo Temple, the Rocky Mountain prophecy, and the like, all demanded historical discussion.
Jason W. Briggs had been church historian in earlier times, but he never published the desired church history. E. W. Tullidge's work had been intended as a stop-gap church history, but it had received a hostile reception. Finally, after numerous abortive starts and stops, the duty of writing the history fell upon two members of the Reorganization who had demonstrated ability and willingness to produce apologetic-historical material of high caliber: Apostle Heman C. Smith and President Joseph Smith III.

The first volume of the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* was published in 1896. Subsequent volumes appeared in 1897, 1900, and 1903. The four volumes carried the history of the church from the birth of Joseph Smith, Jr. to the year 1890.\textsuperscript{257}

The format was that of a "documentary history." There were extensive quotations from primary sources linked together by short amounts of explanatory material. Official church publications were relied upon heavily. Through the lifetime of Joseph Smith, Jr., printed sources such as the *Messenger and Advocate*, the *Times and Seasons*, and the Doctrine and Covenants were drawn upon copiously. Documentary sources in Utah were not accessible and probably not desired in any case. Reliance upon such official printed sources of necessity produced a "sanitized" version of church history—which is what Joseph Smith III desired.

The principle of selection which governed the choice of materials was undeviatingly simple: Joseph Smith was a prophet, a godly man, and a monogamist; and the Reorganization was the divinely authorized movement to rescue the Restoration from apostasy. One historian has called the *History* "the major statement of the true church-apostate model" of RLDS historiography:

Encyclopedic in its detail, the four-volume work nevertheless effectively carried the general theme of the continuity of the true
church from its early origins, through the troublesome 1840s to the 1850s, to the Reorganization's triumphal growth in the 1860s to the 1890s. It openly discusses many, not all, of the conflicts within the church, is generally not rancorous in tone, and is sure in its assumptions. The philosophy that God was in charge of history is strong in the work, but the decisions of the people are considered significant and integral to the history.258

The greater part of the composition of the History fell to Heman C. Smith.259 But the underlying assumptions, the methodology, and the guiding genius were those of Joseph Smith III. Through history he sought to validate the position of the Reorganization against the claims of both Mormon and Gentile critics.

**Renewed National Controversy over Utah**

The years immediately following Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto witnessed something of an era of good feeling in (and toward) Utah. "With few exceptions, non-Mormons seem to have been initially pleased with the Manifesto, believing that polygamy and unlawful cohabitation both would now suffer a happy, if gradual, demise."259 But growing evidence that plural marriages were still being performed, instances of the Mormon hierarchy's political involvement, and the debates surrounding the elections of B. H. Roberts and Reed Smoot to Congress brought this era of good feeling to an end. Joseph Smith III was an acutely interested observer and critic of all these developments.

The RLDS president was alert to all news concerning polygamy in Utah. He early began to question whether polygamy was suppressed in Utah and publicized accounts of the survival of the practice.260 Although denied at the time, the fact is that his doubts were more than justified. The highest levels of the Mormon hierarchy were involved in performing plural marriages and in taking new plural wives themselves after the Manifesto. There is evidence of at least ten polygamous marriages entered into by seven different LDS apostles after
1890. Many of those presiding in the First Presidency and Twelve "either took a very qualified view of the Manifesto or, as some believed, looked upon it as no more than a ruse." By the early 1900s a torrent of hostile publicity engulfed the Mormon Church, and the Saints' Herald was anything but a lonely voice crying in the wilderness about Mormon polygamy.

National controversy concerning Mormonism was also stirred by the political involvement of the LDS hierarchy. At the time of the Manifesto, the Republican Party had only a small following in Utah, due to its lengthy campaign against the "twin relic." But Mormon leaders realized that they needed Republican support in Washington to secure statehood and other desired legislation. They therefore set about to establish the two-party system in Utah and to strengthen the Republican Party in particular. The hierarchy decided "that men in high authority who believed in Republican principles would go out among the people, but that those in high authority who could not endorse the principles of Republicanism should remain silent." Apostles John Henry Smith and Joseph F. Smith vigorously promoted Republicanism within the Territory of Utah.

Apostle Moses Thatcher was an ardent Democrat. Seventy B. H. Roberts and Charles W. Penrose of the Salt Lake Stake presidency were also Democrats. They campaigned for the Democrats and helped the Democrats to carry the territory in 1892. For this they were soundly rebuked by the hierarchy.

The Republicans carried the elections in 1894. The Democrats hoped to rebound by nominating B. H. Roberts for Utah's first representative in the House, and by promising to elect Moses Thatcher to the U.S. Senate if they captured the State Legislature in 1895. Again, the candidacies of the two general authorities brought a severe rebuke from the First Presidency, particularly Joseph F. Smith. The issue of church-state union became prominent in the campaign. The
Republicans won, but by a reduced margin from 1894.

After the campaign a "Political Manifesto" was drawn up. General authorities were required to sign it before being sustained at the Annual Conference of 1896. Among other things, signatories pledged not to accept political office without first obtaining the approval of "those who preside over them." After intense soul-searching, B. H. Roberts signed the document. But Moses Thatcher refused. As a result, Thatcher was not sustained at the conference and was later dropped from the Quorum of Twelve.

When the Utah Legislature met in 1897, Thatcher narrowly missed being elected to the U.S. Senate. His defeat was directly related to opposition from the leadership of the church. To avoid excommunication from the church, that same year, he was required to recant, admit to sixteen errors, and acknowledge the supreme authority of the Presidency and Twelve.262

Joseph Smith III followed these developments with keen interest. He editorialized against ecclesiastical control in political affairs. When Thatcher was dropped as an apostle, he strongly endorsed Thatcher’s right to hold his own political views and not be dictated to by his colleagues. He commiserated with Thatcher’s ordeal while facing possible excommunication.263

After Thatcher was dropped from the LDS Quorum of Twelve, but before his trial, Joseph Smith III wrote to him to congratulate him for his stand, which he characterized as "temperate, manly and firm." He went on to say:

I have watched the course of the event as it has appeared to the public, and have been anxious to see the right vindicated; for, having all my lifelong been protesting against the undue exercise of official authority, in the Church, over the members, the citizens of the Kingdom, I can, I think, fully appreciate the fight you are making in the defence of the rights of the people. While I am in political preference a Republican, I am opposed, first, last, and all the time, to the interference of Church leaders in the private opinions and political acts of the members, the individual identities of the body. As these all answer to God for all their acts at the final determination of all things, the individual conscience
and the right to its exercise must remain unconstrained of priestly coercion; the member answering to his fellows in mutual allegiance to the rules of their fellowship, which bear alike upon all.

That you have the moral support of many, who believe in the Latter-day-work, not identified with the church in the valleys, I assure you. "May the right prevail," should be the prayer of every independent, honest minded man.264

The controversies surrounding the elections of B. H. Roberts to the House of Representatives (1898) and Reed Smoot to the Senate (1903) brought Utah and Mormonism even more prominently into the national spotlight.

In 1898 B. H. Roberts secured the necessary permission from the First Presidency to run for Congress. It was well known that Roberts was a polygamist. Roberts was elected by a sizeable margin, but after the election his right to sit in the House of Representatives was challenged.

Protestant ministers in Utah mounted a campaign against Roberts which grew into a national crusade. A monstrous petition containing seven million signatures was presented to the House, asking that Roberts be excluded from that body. His critics maintained that Roberts' election was in "violation of the covenant made between the Mormon leaders and the government when Utah was admitted to statehood." Roberts and the Mormon hierarchy maintained that there had been a tacit understanding that polygamists at the time of the Manifesto would not afterwards be punished so long as they entered into no new plural marriages. Roberts viewed himself as a law-abiding citizen duly elected by the people of Utah, who were well aware that he was a pluralist.

The House refused to permit Roberts to be sworn in and appointed a special committee to investigate the matter. Following the recommendation of the committee, the House voted 268 to 50 not to seat him.265

Joseph Smith III attempted to strike a balance in his editorials about Roberts. On the one hand, he felt that Roberts' religion had no bearing on the
question of his right to a seat in Congress. On the other hand, a violation of civil law was grounds for exclusion from Congress. On this basis, he thought, Roberts should be excluded: because he was an acknowledged law-breaker, not because he was a Mormon. The Saints' Herald carried suggestions on how to prepare resolutions opposing the seating of Roberts, and many RLDS branches and districts passed such resolutions.

In the wake of the controversy surrounding B. H. Roberts' election, the Utah legislature sought to avoid future embarrassment by weakening the anti-polygamy law so as to preclude the possibility of future convictions. Joseph Smith III vigorously editorialized against this legislation. There was sufficient outcry against it that Governor Heber M. Wells vetoed it. There was suspicion that Utah could not be relied upon to penalize polygamy, and a national campaign developed to pass an amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting it. Joseph Smith III and the RLDS Church were supporters of such an amendment.

An even greater controversy arose due to the election of Mormon Apostle Reed Smoot to the U.S. Senate in 1903. Smoot was a Republican and a monogamist. The charge leveled against B. H. Roberts—that he was in engaged in unlawful cohabitation—could not be brought against Smoot.

Nationwide opposition to seating Smoot erupted. The U.S. Senate voted to seat him, but the charges against him were referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. The committee began hearings in January 1904 and continued them for thirty months.

Objections to Senator Smoot took many forms. The extreme charge that he had plural wives and was therefore a lawbreaker was easily refuted. More serious was the accusation that he belonged to a self-perpetuating fifteen-member ruling body that controlled Utah's elections and economy. Church leaders, including Elder Smoot, were also charged with secretly continuing to preach and permit plural marriages. In addition, he was accused of taking a secret pledge of disloyalty to the American government.
The question was not finally resolved until February 1907. At that time the Senate voted that Smoot should retain his seat, despite the majority report of the committee which recommended expulsion. The controversy ranged far beyond the immediate issue of Reed Smoot's right to sit in the Senate. The Mormon Church, more than Reed Smoot, was on trial. Testimony in the hearings delved deeply into Mormon history, theology, and culture.272

Joseph Smith III from the beginning took the stance that Reed Smoot's religious beliefs and office in the LDS Church were not germane to the question of his right to a seat in the Senate. In the course of one of his editorials on the subject he stated:

We object seriously to the making of any man's religion a cause of war against him when no overt act of outrage against the laws and usages of the social institution of the country is alleged, or proved. It is a dangerous principle and is a menace to the rights of citizens of the United States affirmed by statutes everywhere.273

This was completely consistent with his earlier stand concerning B. H. Roberts. In fact, it resembled his response to the Anti-Mormons of Hancock County in 1860, when he demanded his own right to freedom of religion until such time as he should violate statutory or moral law.

Some of the testimony in the hearings was sensational. Much of it concerned the commercial and political power of the Mormon hierarchy, but it was polygamy which dominated the hearings. Joseph F. Smith (who had become president of the Mormon Church in 1901) was the first witness called when testimony began in March 1904. Other leading Mormons followed him as witnesses. National attention was focused on Mormonism.

Unfortunately, the testimonies of President Smith and most of the authorities willing to appear did little to help the Mormon cause. Not only did they plead an incredible ignorance concerning the polygamous activities and status of fellow apostles but admitted in their own cases, to having cohabited and fathered children with plural wives since the Manifesto. More than that, the church president said he was not able to
pursue charges against apostles or other church members with a view to bringing the practice of polygamy to an end. This, he said, was a matter left to the local wards and bishops' courts. It was shown that, unlike the revelation sanctioning plural marriages, the Manifesto suspending them had not yet been included in... the Doctrine and Covenants. As awkward as anything, many accused of either taking additional plural wives or performing the ceremony for others left the country, claimed illness, or otherwise refused to appear in Washington...

While confessing to continued cohabitation, President Smith repeatedly and categorically denied that he or either of his predecessors (Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow) had authorized new polygamous marriages since the Manifesto. Neither had any such contractions taken place with the "consent or knowledge or approval of the church." He was emphatic in denying that "secret" marriages of this kind had occurred anywhere in the world with official Mormon sanction. If some were shocked by the president's admissions concerning cohabitation, others must have been dumbfounded that he would endorse what many in the church knew, and increasing numbers outside the church believed, to be a fiction so far as the denial of new polygamous marriages was concerned. 274

The Herald naturally gave attention to such testimony. Joseph Smith III wished to emphasize that his cousin Joseph F. Smith was acting contrary to both the will of God and the law of the land. 275

Beyond the immediate issue of Reed Smoot's seat in the Senate, Joseph Smith III regarded the nationwide publicity as providentially beneficial to the RLDS Church. In his opening address to the General Conference of 1904, he observed that for decades he had felt that sooner or later "that which we have been so industriously opposing for over forty years would be forced into the open" to face the tribunal of public opinion. He believed that time had come, "directed by the supervising hand of God." The Reorganization had accused the Mormons of continuing to practice polygamy, he said, and they had denied it. But now his cousin Joseph F. Smith had been forced to admit publicly "that they have been and are now doing just precisely what we have charged them with doing." The Smoot hearings, he reasoned, afforded the RLDS Church an unprecedented opportunity to present its case to the public:

And I tell you frankly this morning, I am glad of it. I would rather fight
an enemy in view, than an enemy in the dark. . . . No warfare in this world is so annoying, none so barren of good results, as that which is conducted under cover. The Reorganization has been put into that position. As I stated a good many years ago, the only faction in so-called "Mormonism" . . . that could afford to wait the moving events of time was the Reorganization. I believe that yet.276

**Literary Efforts**

Immediately following Reed Smoot's announcement of his candidacy for the Senate, in May 1902, protests and debate erupted. Joseph Smith III seized the opportunity created by the controversy to reach a national audience.

In August 1902 The Arena published an article of his under the title, "Origin of American Polygamy." The arguments were familiar to all readers of the Saints' Herald, but doubtless were new to many of the magazine's readers. His fundamental thesis was that polygamy was no part of original Mormonism. He quoted the Doctrine and Covenants, Bible, Book of Mormon, non-Mormon writers, and several Mormon sources to this effect. Brigham Young officially promulgated the doctrine in 1852, and the documentary history of the revelation until that date was suspect, he argued. He made apologetic use of the Temple Lot case and the enmity of the prophet's family to polygamy:

It may be urged that women of Utah have stated to the public that they were the wives of the Prophet Joseph Smith; but the evidences of such relationship will not stand the test of examination. This has been amply proved by the fact that in a suit prosecuted by the Reorganized Church . . . in which suit the Utah Church took an active part, testimony was taken in Salt Lake City and submitted in said case . . . which testimony failed utterly to maintain the statements of said Utah women. Besides this, the Prophet's wife, Emma, and her immediate family, deny all knowledge of any such relationship existing; and it is also a fact that no children were born to the Prophet Joseph Smith except by his legal and only wife Emma . . .

Two sons of the Prophet have traveled in Utah . . . and have always been ready to present their views in opposition to plural marriage and have demanded their right as the sons of Joseph Smith to defend him against the allegation that he was the responsible agent in the introduction of plural marriage into the tenets of the church. These men are still ready and willing to maintain their contention, and to dispute the claims made by any that Joseph Smith, their father, either taught or
practised plural marriage.\textsuperscript{277}

In the number for November 1902, readers of The Arena were able to read a rebuttal from the pen of Mormon President Joseph F. Smith. Entitled, "Real Origin of American Polygamy," Joseph F. Smith's article also went over ground long familiar to members of the LDS and RLDS Churches. But it must have seemed ironic to non-Mormon readers to see two cousins--both bearing the name "Joseph Smith" and both presidents of Latter Day Saint bodies--arguing over the origin of Mormon polygamy. He argued that Joseph Smith III's position placed numerous Mormons of unimpeachable character in the position of liars. He went on to cite numerous affidavits of persons who were taught plural marriage by Joseph and Hyrum Smith, whose plural marriages were solemnized by them, or who became plural wives of one or the other of them. He conceded that the Mormon Church originally was monogamic, but insisted that the issue was whether the prophet \textit{later} promulgated polygamy. It was pointless to argue that polygamy was once prohibited, because progressive revelation could (and did) alter such prohibition. Furthermore, by rejecting the revelation on plural marriage, Joseph Smith III also rejected the doctrine of marriage for eternity, which was "an essential part of the same communication, and which is one of the most sublime and glorious principles ever made known to mortals."\textsuperscript{278}

The May 1903 number of The Arena contained a continuation of the discussion. Joseph F. Smith, Joseph Smith III, and a spokesman for the National Anti-Mormon Missionary Association submitted articles.\textsuperscript{279}

Joseph F. Smith began by observing that four-fifths of all Americans, if asked "What is Mormonism?," would answer, "It means polygamy." He tried to show that Mormonism was much more than polygamy, and that Mormon polygamy was a much misunderstood subject. He dismissed the attempts of those who tried
to dissociate Joseph Smith from Mormon polygamy. It would not do to appeal to
the public denials of polygamy by various Mormon leaders prior to 1852, because
these denials were designed to contradict reports of licentious behavior, not the
pure doctrine of celestial marriage. Joseph Smith III’s position was contradicted
by affidavits of his father’s most intimate associates and his plural wives. Joseph
F. Smith argued:

These, with hundreds of other persons acquainted with the facts,
form a cloud of witnesses that establish this point beyond fair dispute.
Against their attestations we have simply arguments, not unmixed with
patent sophistry, in the nature of a lawyer’s special plea, from the head
of the “Reorganized” church, who announces, in the face of all the proofs
advanced, that he “prefers to believe” his father did not preach or
practise polygamy or a plurality of wives!

But whatever the truth about polygamy in the past, declared the LDS president,
Mormons presently proposed to obey the laws of the land. Mormon elders were
forbidden to teach plural marriage. Only a minority of Mormons ever practiced it
in any case, and their numbers were dwindling rapidly.

Joseph F. Smith attempted to shift the focus of debate away from
polygamy. He pointed with pride to other aspects of Mormon teaching, such as
eternal marriage and the restored gospel. He also pointed to the fruits of
Mormonism: industry, thrift, education, progress, etc.

Joseph Smith III’s article was entitled “Plural Marriage in America.” He
renewed his argument that the Mormon Church was monogamous during the
lifetime of Joseph Smith, Jr. He took direct aim at Joseph F. Smith’s contention
that numerous unimpeachable witnesses established the contrary. He made use of
answers given by Mormon witnesses under cross-examination by RLDS lawyers in
the Temple Lot case, attempting to show that they contradicted Brigham Young’s
statements about the revelation on celestial marriage. He appealed to statements
by Emma Smith, William Marks, and others to show that Joseph Smith never
sanctioned polygamy. The entire argument resembled a defense lawyer's pleading on behalf of his client.

For the prophet to have taught polygamy, his son reasoned, would have contradicted the laws of God, given in the accepted books of the church: "... nothing could be given to the church that would conflict with the laws he had already given, or that would require the performance of any act by which those laws would be disregarded or broken." God's rule ever was monogamous. The RLDS president concluded:

Joseph Smith could not have either taught or practised contrary to this rule of marriage. To have done so he would have disregarded and disobeyed the commands of the Lord .... The evidence that he did this is lacking or altogether inadequate .... The chief contention of the Reorganized Church and the sons of the prophet Joseph Smith is not that he was not a polygamist, but that the dogma and practise are contrary to Scripture, ancient and modern, and wrong--being also contrary to the law of God and the institutions of the United States.

After the publication of "Plural Marriage in America" in The Arena, the article was reprinted by the RLDS Church as a tract. Joseph Smith III obviously considered it one of his strongest arguments against polygamy.

North American Review. As the controversy about the seating of Reed Smoot grew hotter, Joseph Smith III had another opportunity to publicize the differences between the two churches, this time in the prestigious North American Review. The March 1903 number carried his article, "Polygamy in the United States--Has It Political Significance?" 

First Joseph Smith III gave an overview of Latter Day Saint history. He argued that the rule of the church was monogamous during his father's lifetime, that the church was commanded to obey the laws of the land, and that the church always existed in states which prohibited polygamy through 1844. The Saints underwent many persecutions during Joseph Smith's lifetime, but polygamy was never a cause. Polygamy had been allowed to flourish in the Territory of Utah
due to the failure of the federal government to enforce laws against it. Political considerations were responsible for this failure. When Utah was admitted to the Union, a loophole in the state constitution made polygamy (which the constitution prohibited) to be simply the act of marrying more than one woman, not living with more than one at the same time as wives. This latter act, he pointed out, was punishable in Utah only as the relatively minor offense of "unlawful cohabitation." The penalty for that crime was a simple fine.

He concluded that polygamy had political significance for the present. It had been settled that a practicing polygamist (B. H. Roberts) ought not to be seated in Congress. Some urged that Reed Smoot ought not to be seated, but since Smoot was a monogamist, he ought not to be excluded. Beyond the case of Reed Smoot, there was the question of an anti-polygamic amendment to the constitution. Joseph Smith III advised proponents of the amendment to consider the history of past legislation against polygamy. He urged that the amendment not be framed "as to leave so transparent a loophole of escape from obedience to its requirements as was left in the Enabling Act by which Utah became a State, and which has been perpetuated in the Constitution under which she was admitted into the federation of States." He concluded with the hope that "politicians shall not again be fooled or outwitted into permitting such a political menace to continue."

Joseph Smith III also busied himself with some less important literary efforts. He left the Herald under the editorial supervision of his son and assistant editor, Frederick, and spent three months touring the British Isles during the summer of 1903.282

Frederick Madison Smith

While Joseph Smith III busied himself with continued polemical warfare
with the Utah Church, travels, speaking engagements, and raising a third set of children, he delegated increasing ecclesiastical responsibilities to his oldest surviving son Frederick. Given the prominence attached to the doctrine of lineal succession in the priesthood by the RLDS Church, Frederick's future career was virtually predetermined for him. As a youngster he constantly was reminded by older members of the church that someday he would be his father's successor. Despite his innate conviction that his talents lay more in the realms of teaching or science than in the area of religious leadership, he resigned himself to his seemingly inevitable rise to leadership in the church. In 1897 he was ordained an elder. He served in a variety of church-related positions and missions. In 1902 Joseph Smith III delivered a revelation designating Frederick one of his counselors in the First Presidency. Another revelation, given in 1906, officially designated Frederick Madison Smith as heir apparent to his father's office.283

The elevation of Fred M. Smith to the First Presidency served to cement in place RLDS adherence to the principle of lineal succession in the priesthood. The appointment of Alexander H. Smith as patriarch to the church (1897), Elbert A. Smith as counselor in the First Presidency (1909), and Frederick A. Smith as an apostle (1902) and later as patriarch (1909) added a certain dynastic flavor to Smith administration of the church. The sons of other leading elders were also advanced to prominent positions in the hierarchy.284

If Frederick Madison Smith's position as heir apparent served to emphasize the different stances of the RLDS and LDS Churches toward the question of succession in the presidency, Frederick's activities also served to demonstrate that the churches were traveling in divergent directions. In February 1904 he attended a Smith family reunion in Salt Lake City. While there he had the opportunity to become acquainted with his second cousin Joseph F. Smith, Jr. and
to give a brief talk before a Mormon congregation in the Tabernacle. In his talk he politely sought to stress points in common between the two churches. 285

Whatever good will may have been generated by this visit was dissipated during Frederick's next visit to Salt Lake City. From May 1905 to March 1906 he resided in the city and engaged in RLDS missionary work. He published two open letters in the Salt Lake Tribune which were highly critical of the Mormon Church. 286 Then on August 21, 1905 he sent a letter to President Joseph F. Smith asking that Mormon meeting houses be opened to him for the purpose of explaining the views of the Reorganization. The letter was blustering in tone and declared it to be the mission of the seed of Joseph to call the Mormon people to repentance. It concluded: "...beware how you reject the call coming through the seed of Joseph." Joseph F. Smith replied on August 24th. He professed himself willing to open Mormon meeting houses to various groups, but not to those whose avowed purpose was to attack the LDS Church. He rebuked Frederick for appealing to his ancestry while rejecting the teachings of his grandfather. This epistolary exchange was printed as a pamphlet by the LDS Church. 287 In December 1905 the Salt Lake Tribune carried another attack on the Mormon Church from the pen of Fred M. Smith, which criticized the Mormon teaching that the faithful must "obey counsel." 288

During the summer of 1905, while Frederick was attempting to revive the RLDS work in Utah, his father was traveling in the Pacific Northwest. Returning eastward, Joseph decided to make a stopover in Salt Lake City.

**Final Visit to Utah**

This was to be Joseph Smith III's final visit to Utah. 289 When he stepped off the train, at midnight, September 20th, he was accompanied by Ada and his three boys. After consulting with Fred M., Joseph decided to extend his stopover
in the City of the Saints. Ada and the boys remained until October 2nd. Joseph did not depart for Laamoni until November 9th.

**Public pronouncements.** September 24th was the first Sunday after the RLDS president's arrival. He occupied the pulpit in the RLDS chapel both morning and evening. There was a packed house for the evening service. The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that his forty-five minute extemporaneous sermon delivered "sledge-hammer blows in the battle for loyalty to the Government, for obedience to the laws of the land and of God, [and] for that freedom and independence which gives to the humblest individual in the church the courage to call even the highest of the church leaders to task for violation of the laws ...." He held preaching services during the week which were less well attended.

The next Sunday he again preached to a crowded audience and reiterated some of the same themes. He warned that the nation viewed the Mormon Church in light of Joseph F. Smith's testimony at the Smoot hearings that he would continue, as Joseph III characterized it, to "keep on living, in defiance of the laws of God and of the land." He warned that this stance was risky:

> Until the leaders and all the people return to obedience of the revelations of God and the laws of the land, you will suffer. . . . if this defiance of the law continues the strong arm of the Government will be stretched out to punish, and punish justly. The United States has been patient with the people of Utah, but the punishment of crime is sure to come. 290

An interview with Joseph Smith III appeared in the *Tribune* of September 24th. In it he warned that polygamy underlay a variety of Utah's continuing problems and that conflict with the federal government would result from continued defiance of the law. He also set forth the position of the Reorganized Church in several matters, including RLDS belief in liberty of conscience. 291

During the Mormon Semi-Annual Conference in October, the RLDS Church held evening services in Unity Hall, which was rented for the occasion.
Joseph Smith III was the featured speaker and again enjoyed some good crowds, including many leaders in the LDS Church. At one meeting, polygamous Apostle Francis M. Lyman was present. Joseph seized the opportunity to preach on the thirteenth chapter of Romans, contrasting the law-abiding and monogamous position of primitive Mormonism with that of the contemporary LDS Church. He deliberately "rubbed it in" and felt he gave his overconfident listeners something to think about. At the conclusion of the service Apostle Lyman avoided greeting him.\textsuperscript{292}

Joseph Smith III also made missionary journeys north and south of Salt Lake City. He spoke in Ogden, Plain City, Pleasant Grove, and Provo.\textsuperscript{293}

The \textit{Mormon Semi-Annual Conference}. On October 6th the Mormon Semi-Annual Conference opened at the Tabernacle. Joseph and Fred M. Smith were in attendance. Joseph was a careful observer and reported to his daughter, Audie, that he enjoyed the music but not President Joseph F. Smith's method of conducting business:

\ldots a more flagrant case of priestly hypnotism and one man domination prearranged I never saw. Every last man jack of the leading men voted for himself, except Reed Smoot, who very ingeniously S\textit{mo(o)thed} the opposition he had manifested against apostles Cowley and Taylor, of whom it is stated that they have married each a new wife since the manifesto. O, it was a sight to see. The Mormon paper stated that I seemed to be an attentive and interested listener, and so I was; why not?\textsuperscript{294}

He could not help contrasting the cut-and-dried manner of handling business at the LDS conference with the wide-open debates at RLDS conferences:

I think I never saw a more apparent instance of what we call packed conventions or jury than was presented October 6 in the tabernacle here. President Joseph F. Smith was in charge with his counselors and all the chief officers of the church, excepting five of the Twelve\ldots He started out with a rousing speech upon his own part, vaunting the great things they are doing, urging them to pay their tithing, keep their covenants \[sic\], get out of debt and keep out of debt, and denouncing bitterly the charges \[sic\] that have been made against them.\ldots [More general authorities spoke.] Thus having prepared the way, the people
being wrought up by the rousing discourses they had heard, fairly intoxicated with praise and adulation of themselves and their leading men, Joseph F. Smith with a written program in his hand, started out thus: "It is proposed to sustain Joseph F. Smith, prophet, seer, and revelator, and president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in all the world. Those approving, raise the hand;" at the same time raising his hand, thus voting for himself. All hands went up. There followed [sic] some fifteen or twenty propositions to sustain the several officers and auxiliaries in the church. In every instance in which the names of the presidents [or] any of the chief officers were named, they voted for themselves. The only exception was that when after Francis M. Lyman was sustained president of the Twelve, and the eleven remaining members were presented, including Senator Smoot, he kept his hand down. It is presumed because of some hesitancy upon his part to sustain Cowley and Taylor who are accused of having married plural wives since the Manifesto.295

Joseph III was particularly dubious of Joseph F. Smith's claims, in his opening address, that not one dollar of church funds had been misappropriated:

Apropos of this, it is well understood here among nearly all classes that prior to his being chosen as president he was an ordinarily poor man. He has a large family, which must have cost him a good sum for care and keep. He has now been presiding four years, and is estimated to be worth nearly two millions. He is living in splendor, no finer outfit of horses and carriages than his, and he has lately bought a large automobile for his family service.296

Given his own modest financial circumstances and the perpetually strapped condition of the RLDS treasury, Joseph III felt no little skepticism about his cousin's protestations.

Conversations. As in his previous visits to Utah, Joseph devoted a considerable amount of time to conversations. From these interviews he learned a good deal about conditions in Utah.297 However, by 1905, only a handful of old Nauvooans survived in Utah. He therefore had few opportunities to converse with old Saints. None of his interviews in this year were as dramatic as earlier talks with some of his father's plural wives. One interview, however, was was sufficiently important that it will be given extended consideration here.

Interview with Angus Munn Cannon. On October 12, 1905, Elder Angus M. Cannon called on Joseph Smith III. Cannon (1834-1915) was the former president
of the Salt Lake Stake and a member of one of the most prominent families in the LDS Church.\textsuperscript{298} After a preliminary exchange of pleasantries—including boyish memories of Nauvoo—the two white-haired gentlemen began a lengthy discussion of their religious differences.\textsuperscript{299}

Elder Cannon gave an extended account of his life, including his family’s conversion in England, their journey to America, his baptism in 1844, the exodus from Nauvoo, and his arrival in the Great Basin. Joseph Smith III questioned him closely about the general rebaptism which occurred after the Saints’ arrival in Utah. Cannon answered that it was necessary to perfect their defective records, and also that it was deemed wise to renew their covenants because “we had passed through so much affliction and trouble.”\textsuperscript{300}

Cannon explained his resistance to plural marriage, as a teenager, when an elder proposed to take his sister as a plural wife. Only after counsel from others and after hearing the revelation on plural marriage read, in 1852, was he finally persuaded that it was a divine commandment. Even after accepting it as his responsibility to enter plural marriage, he recognized the practical difficulties it entailed. He tried to mitigate the problems of favoritism, jealousy, and rivalry by taking two wives at once, when he finally married in 1858. Cannon claimed that his family relations had proven very pleasant and that he had been sincere in his belief and practice.\textsuperscript{301}

Apparently there was a good deal of give-and-take in the conversation. Joseph Smith III pressed him about his disobedience to the law of the land. A. M. Cannon replied that when he became a polygamist there was no law against it, and that under the Edmunds Act he had been imprisoned rather than abandon all but one of his wives. This he considered a sacrifice for the gospel. Joseph asked him whether he received a testimony of the truth of the gospel before he learned
anything of polygamy. Yes, replied Cannon, but the testimony he received of the truth of the revelation on plural marriage was of the same sort as he received earlier.302

While eating lunch, Joseph felt he detected a tone of self-justification in Cannon, a defensive air, a desire to deflect any suggestion that he had not lived harmoniously in polygamy. Cannon was openly critical of many of his brethren whom, he claimed, had not been so "conscientious." He complained that many of them had acted unwisely and even "hypocritically." Joseph queried whether he meant to say that Mormon men were generally insincere in their adherence to polygamy. Cannon paused, thought, laid down his knife, and replied, "Yes, Brother Smith, I am sorry to admit it, but it is true. The greater part of them are arrant hypocrites, and dishonest and deceitful in their actions." This confession brought a wide smile to the face of Frederick's wife Ruth, who had been listening to the exchange. As the conversation continued, Joseph became convinced that Cannon's dismissal as president of the Salt Lake stake had left him bitter. His free criticism of others stemmed from this bitterness and a desire to whitewash his own less-than-harmonious family life. Cannon's critical comments only reinforced the convictions of Joseph, Fred, and Ruth Smith that plural marriage was a mistake from the very beginning, and a formula for marital discord.303

One of the principal topics of conversation was the origin of polygamy. Cannon expressed amazement that Joseph Smith III could believe his father to have been a monogamist. He told a number of stories designed to smoke Joseph out into the open, but without success. For example, he told of meeting Mark H. Forscutt in Chicago, in 1871, and questioning him concerning this very point:

"Do you mean to tell me, Mark Forscutt, that Joseph Smith [III] . . . does not know that his father had more wives than one, when I know as much about it as I do, only being ten years of age at the time of his father's martyrdom, when he is two years my senior"? His answer was,
"Blair and I have talked over this matter and we are satisfied, Brother Cannon, that Joseph knows that his father had more wives than one at the time of his death." I then said, you are both satisfied of it then? He replied, "We are both satisfied of it." "Then you believe that the Prophet Joseph died a transgressor," when he said, "Yes we do".

Joseph Smith III listened to Cannon's story, and when he had finished, replied: "I knew that Blair cherished those opinions, but I did not know that Forscutt did." If Angus Cannon had thought to shock Joseph with the information that some of close associates believed his father had practiced polygamy, he was sadly mistaken. Neither could he secure the slightest hint that the prophet's son entertained such a belief.304

Cannon told of a childhood friend who claimed that Joseph once pointed out women in Nauvoo who were reported to be his father's wives. Joseph denied having any recollection of such a statement.305

Cannon also told of taking Eliza R. Snow for buggy rides, when she was an aged invalid. One day she expressed amazement at the "Last Testimony of Sister Emma." "Brother Angus," she said, "I can't comprehend how Sister Emma, who was one of the noblest women I ever knew, could, before her death, make the affidavit that she is said to have made, denying that her husband had more wives than one, for she took my hand and put it in the hand of her husband, Brother Joseph, and gave me to him to wife."306

Again, he told of discussions with the Whitmerites, who claimed that Emma Smith Bidamon never made the statements attributed to her in the "Last Testimony," and that Joseph Smith III put words in her mouth to clear reproach from his father's name. Cannon delicately asked whether this were so:

Joseph, this is the representation made to me on that occasion. You can answer regarding it. I have not met you nor sought to meet you in public, for the purpose of seeking your humiliation, reverencing your father as having lived and died a Prophet of God. I have felt in my heart a desire to meet you and talk these matters over, asking you for an explanation of your views, that you might tell me upon what principle
you justify yourself in fighting the doctrines regarding celestial marriage.

Joseph Smith III told Cannon that his mother's answers were reported accurately, and that they had been given in front of witnesses.307

This line of argument brought no concessions whatsoever from Joseph Smith III. He gave his familiar responses, that plural marriage was contrary to the standard works of the church, that officials such as Hyrum Smith and John Taylor repudiated it publicly, and that his mother contradicted stories of his father's involvement. He asked Cannon how he could account for his mother's statements. This was a difficult question, for it placed A. M. Cannon in the position of impeaching the testimony and character of the prophet's wife. He replied that she married a Gentile, lost the Spirit, and became darkened in mind. "She thought of the trials through which she had passed, and concluded to lead her children to walk in a path that would free them from the principles that had caused her much anxiety and produced great trouble."308 This estimation of Emma Smith was hardly calculated to persuade her son, but it was the best answer Cannon could give.

When Joseph was pressed about the reports of Melissa Lott, the Lawrence sisters, the Partridge sisters, Desdemona Fullmer, Lucy Walker, and Eliza R. Snow having married the prophet, he countered by asking why none of them had borne children to the prophet. Cannon knew that this was another telling point, but replied as best he could. He admitted that he did not have a fully satisfactory answer and could only repeat what Lucy Walker Kimball said, viz., that they were so nervous and lived in such constant fear that they could not conceive. Joseph laughed at this reply. Was it not true, he asked, that Eliza R. Snow died a virgin? No, replied Cannon, Eliza once denied such stories at a social gathering, saying, "I thought you knew Joseph Smith better than that."309
Angus M. Cannon also brought up Austin Cowles' affidavit stating that Hyrum Smith read the revelation before the High Council, and William Smith's polygamous activities. Joseph denied that his uncle ever admitted the existence of polygamy in the church prior to the death of the prophet. All this failed to move Joseph Smith III from his position.

The second great area of contention between the two men was priestly authority. Cannon sought to show that the Reorganization in general and Joseph Smith III and particular lacked authority. He argued that William Marks had held high office in Nauvoo, but had apostatized by following Rigdon, Strang, and others. How could Joseph Smith III have received divine authority via ordination under the hands of an apostate? And even if Marks had not apostatized, what right had he to ordain someone president of the church? Joseph's years of inactivity also were criticized:

I told Joseph it seemed strange to me that he should have slept for sixteen years from the martyrdom of his father to the time when these men assumed to ordain him to lead the Church, and then assumed to dictate the Church that had been lead [sic] by the ranking quorum of the Twelve, fulfilling the prophesies made by his father before his death, and giving evidences to the world that he lived and died a Prophet of the Living God. He remarked, calling some man by name, whose name I cannot remember, that he came to him and advised him to come to this people at an early day, he had earnestly prayed to the Lord for light, that he might know what to do. In the night he dreamed and where he stood there was a light descending from above upon him, and sprays of light came down and enveloped him, and a voice said, "Go not after them," indicating that the light proceeded from above accompanied him. He took this as an evidence that his duty was to maintain his position, and he had acted accordingly.

How, asked Cannon, could Joseph be a true prophet, when he had compromised himself in his address at Amboy in 1860? Cannon was puzzled at a prophet who promised not to reveal anything unacceptable to the people. Joseph Smith, Jr., he thought, taught that a prophet's duty was to proclaim the word of the Lord, and let the people bear the responsibility for accepting or rejecting it.
There was a further exchange concerning the rationale for the Reorganization. Cannon asserted that the priesthood was restored to earth never more to be removed. Joseph contended that the church was rejected organizationally, but that a righteous remnant retained the priesthood and the right to reorganize later at God's command.312

The two men finally concluded their lengthy conversation. Cannon left convinced that the prophet's son had been led astray by his mother, had repudiated his father's teachings, had sought the applause of the world, and had eschewed the kernel for the husk. Joseph Smith III concluded that Angus Cannon was one more hypocritical polygamist, embittered but unrepentant. Between their two positions there was a great gulf fixed.

**Political Conversations.** One of Joseph's motives for remaining in Salt Lake City was to observe the municipal elections in November. A third political party had been formed to counter the church's influence in both the established parties. Dubbed the "American Party," it was destined to dominate municipal politics in Salt Lake City from 1905 to 1911. One of the prime movers in the American Party was the recently excommunicated Frank J. Cannon. Cannon was the son of the late George Q. Cannon and had played a prominent role in negotiations with federal authorities prior to the issuance of the Manifesto. He bitterly resented having been maneuvered out of his U.S. Senate seat by the hierarchy, entertained a fond distaste for Joseph F. Smith, and was convinced that the promises made in 1890 had been betrayed.

Arrangements were made for Joseph Smith III to meet Frank J. Cannon. Joseph admired Cannon. He thought that Cannon was courageous in standing up for his convictions, much as he himself had done as a young man. Apparently the two men got along well. Cannon and his party were happy to make political allies
wherever they could. After an initial interview, Cannon arranged for Joseph Smith III to attend a luncheon at the mansion of ex-Senator Thomas J. Kearns on September 28th. Important civic, business, and religious leaders sat about the table. Joseph felt that he had been invited in order to assess his potential value as a political ally. Actually, he needed no encouragement. The day before the luncheon he wrote home:

There are or will be three party tickets in the field for municipal control. --Republican, Democratic, and American. Like the Irishman, we are in favor of the American because it is "Agin the government;" that is, against the hierarchy.\(^3\)

The friendliness displayed by Cannon, Kearns, and company gratified Joseph Smith III. He reflected upon the freedom with which he walked the streets of Salt Lake City and the good feeling manifested toward him by many. He could not help but contrast his situation with the years spent by his cousin, Joseph F. Smith, hiding from the law, in consequence of "his championship of a false doctrine." Virtue, he concluded, had its own rewards.\(^4\)

Relatives. Once again Joseph was welcomed into the home of his cousin, LDS Patriarch John Smith. Several generations of Smith cousins had a get-together at John's home on the evening of September 28th. Joseph was pleased to introduce Ada, his young sons, and Fred M.'s family to their Utah kinfolk. Joseph again had friendly visits with his long-time correspondent John Henry Smith. He also became quite fond of John Henry's son George Albert Smith during this stay in Utah.

Joseph was sorry to observe the distressed financial and mental condition into which his cousin Samuel H. B. Smith had fallen. Samuel harbored personal and financial grievances against the leading authorities of the Mormon Church. Joseph considered that Samuel showed signs of mental imbalance stemming from his reduced circumstances and long-standing resentments, coupled with his
unwillingness to break with the church. One evening Joseph III dined at the home of Samuel’s son Joseph B. Smith. Samuel H. B. Smith was also a guest, and seated next to him was his divorced first wife, Joseph B.’s mother. The evening placed Samuel under severe emotional strain, despite his ex-wife’s attempts to make him feel at ease. He spent much of dinner with tears trickling down his face and lips trembling. Walking home that night, Samuel unburdened his soul to Joseph. Joseph was convinced that his cousin would have lived his life differently, had he the chance to live it over again.315

The one cousin whom Joseph Smith III did not meet socially, while in Salt Lake City, was Mormon President Joseph F. Smith. He did watch Joseph F. from a distance, however, at the opening day of the LDS Semi-Annual Conference.

**Departure.** Joseph had promised Frederick Madison Smith that he would remain in Utah until after the municipal elections on November 7th. Both men were interested in seeing what success the American Party might achieve. Joseph made some parting visits to his relatives, attended a reception-cum-birthday party, and left Salt Lake City on November 8th. He spoke at Pleasant Grove and Provo the following two nights, but he found that his old nemesis, facial neuralgia, was so painful that he could not undertake any more sermonizing. Physically and emotionally he found himself growing weaker and weaker. Despite good audiences at Pleasant Grove and Provo, he decided that it was time to return home. He boarded a train and reached Lamoni on November 12, 1905.316

**Final Trip to Washington, D.C.**

The hearings concerning Reed Smoot’s right to sit in the U.S. Senate dragged on into 1906. From time to time members of the RLDS Church attempted to bring their views before the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections or urged that Joseph Smith III appear in rebuttal of Mormon claims. But
Joseph Smith III himself looked unfavorably upon such activities. He editorialized that the RLDS Church was not a party to the inquiry and that members should not interfere with the business of the committee by interjecting theological controversy into its proceedings.317

As the committee at last approached the conclusion of its hearings, in January 1907, Joseph Smith III finally was subpoenaed to appear as a witness. The chairman of the committee was Senator Julius C. Burrows of Michigan. Burrows' grandfather once had been a Mormon. Burrows himself had lived in Kirtland during his childhood, was friendly to the RLDS Church, and had some knowledge of Latter Day Saint history. He decided that the president of the RLDS Church might possess some knowledge of Mormon affairs which might prove damaging to Reed Smoot and accordingly had him subpoenaed.318

Joseph Smith III was ill when he received the summons at the end of January. His facial neuralgia left him confined to his home. Recognizing that he might need assistance in Washington, he recruited Bishop E. L. Kelley, Patriarch Alexander H. Smith, Church Historian Heman C. Smith, and veteran elder E. C. Briggs to accompany him. His wife Ada came along as a nurse. On February 2nd the party left Lamoni for the national capital.319

The party arrived in Washington on February 4, 1906. They were met at the train station by Apostle Francis M. Sheehy, who was in charge of the RLDS Eastern States Mission. Sheehy had spent some time in Washington opposing the seating of Reed Smoot and was on the best of terms with Senator Burrows. Burrows welcomed suggestions from Sheehy in his warfare against Reed Smoot, and always reserved a seat for him whenever he was present at the hearings. Sheehy was of great assistance to the visitors.3

On the 5th Senator Burrows came to the hotel for a discussion with Joseph
and Bishop Kelley. Joseph Smith III was pleased with the interview:

We were pleased as well as surprised at his clear, comprehensive knowledge of the history and facts concerning us, though he said nothing to commit himself in any way as to his opinions in the controversy. He told us we would be admitted to the committee rooms and given seats at the hearings, but that the calling of any of us to the witness stand would be left to the development of events.\(^{321}\)

On February 6th the RLDS party went to the hearings for the first time. They met a number of the principal persons connected with the hearings and were assigned seats of honor. Joseph was already acquainted with two members of the committee: Senator Albert J. Hopkins of Illinois (who came from Aurora, just fourteen miles from Plano), and Senator J. P. Dolliver of Iowa.

By February 9th it had been decided not to call any of the RLDS party to testify. Some of the senators were afraid that calling Joseph Smith III or any of his RLDS colleagues as witnesses would raise extraneous issues. The following day, Joseph wrote a brief explanation to his son Israel: "The committee finished with me yesterday by neglecting to call me to the stand. Why? Fear that my testimony would start anew the whole question between the churches, and thus prolong the controversy.\(^{322}\) Some members of the RLDS party were disgusted at this turn of events, but Joseph Smith III and E. L. Kelley were not, as Joseph reported to his daughter Audentia:

We were quite ready to answer, if called. But, much to Heman's disgust, and to Er Briggs dissatisfaction, the powers directing the inquiry decided to not put me on the stand. Reason assigned—It was feared that somewhere, either in the direct examination, or in the cross examination, something would be drawn out of me that would bring out the whole ecclesiastic quarrel between the two churches, and thus give Smoot the chance to prolong the fight till his term expired, and thus defeat the object of the inquiry. I could see that not to put me on was better than to put me on and then not allow the whole to come in. The Bishop saw this also. So, on the whole we were content to leave it... Our delegation made a fine impression.\(^{323}\)

After returning to Lamoni on February 21, Joseph Smith III editorialized about the reasons he was not called to testify. His editorial remarks were
somewhat less forthright than his private written comments from Washington. Publicly he took the stance that it was the committee's business to determine which witnesses were called, that he went to Washington only because he had been subpoenaed, and that he had no desire to force himself upon the committee. He pronounced himself neither surprised nor disappointed in not having been called to testify.\textsuperscript{324}

He had no desire to see Reed Smoot excluded from the Senate, he felt that the hearings had done a great deal to vindicate the RLDS stance toward Utah, and he was in poor health. For all these reasons, he felt no sorrow at not being called to testify.

The case was not resolved for another year. The Senate received the majority and minority reports of the Committee on Privileges and Elections in June 1906. The majority report recommended exclusion of Smoot. The case was called up in the Senate in December. After much debate and political maneuvering the matter came to a vote in February 1907. Twenty-eight senators voted for exclusion, forty-two against exclusion, and twenty did not vote. Joseph Smith III's policy of non-involvement in the Smoot case seemed wise in retrospect. The church's interests were not at stake, and individual members held different views of the issues. But the hearings had publicized many things the Reorganization felt needed airing.\textsuperscript{325}

\textbf{Slowing Down}

The years following the Manifesto had been ones of painful adjustment for the Mormon Church. Step by step the church had been forced to retreat from polygamy. The Smoot hearings focused such attention on continued Mormon polygamy that Mormon President Joseph F. Smith issued the "Second Manifesto" in 1904. This official declaration marked a watershed. Outwardly it reaffirmed
Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto. Inwardly it signified a decision by the hierarchy to tolerate no more clandestine solemnizations of plural marriages. In 1905 Mormon Apostles John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley were forced to resign from the Quorum of Twelve, because they were not reconciled to this policy. A new generation of Mormons was gradually, if painfully, accommodating itself to American culture. Defiance of American mores was giving way to acculturation. Not only polygamy but other typical nineteenth century Mormon doctrines and practices had faded away or were undergoing metamorphosis: "the gathering; church-directed colonization; the law of adoption; the kingdom of God as a temporal, political entity; the united order; confinement of the idea of Zion to a particular geographical region; and the urgent expectation of an imminent return to Missouri and the Second Coming of Christ."326

Joseph Smith III's trip to Washington, D.C. formed a fitting climax to his years in Lamoni. This period in his life was characterized by a continuing crusade against polygamy. By 1906 he was ready to retire from active combat. A younger generation was coming to the fore in both the RLDS and LDS Churches. Polygamy, if fitfully and painfully, was being abandoned. Both the forces opposed to Reed Smoot and the ailing Joseph Smith III seemed to sense that no useful purpose would be served by calling the old warrior to the stand and reopening old controversies.

In the fall of 1905 Joseph had moved from Liberty Hall into a smaller home in Lamoni. The RLDS Church took over Liberty Hall as a home for elderly Saints. Broken in health, Joseph's crusading days were behind him. Organizationally and theologically he had placed his personal stamp upon the RLDS Church. Now, he sensed, it was time for him to enter a period of semi-retirement.
CHAPTER VIII

OLD AGE: 1906-1914

In 1906 the RLDS General Conference was held in Independence, Missouri. While there, Joseph Smith III discovered that there was considerable sentiment that he should relocate in "Zion." Before leaving for Lamoni, he looked about for a potential new home in Independence. Later, with financial assistance from friends in the church, he was able to purchase the modest two-story home he had selected, which lay within easy walking distance of the Temple Lot and the Stone Church. During the summer the legal transaction was consummated, the family's goods loaded onto a boxcar, and the move from Lamoni to Independence quickly accomplished. Joseph left the rigorous aspects of moving to younger hands. "The only help I gave was in opening boxes of books, or other light work, my principal object," he recalled, "being to keep out of the way."

He had been considering such a move for some time. He explained his reasons in a letter to his daughter Carrie:

I am past much physical labor. I can not do as I have for all my life "pitch in," no matter what is to be done; this demands a stop.

My neuralgic trouble has partially unfitted me for Herald work. I must get away from office work; I go to pieces too soon upon close application to Desk work, and can only work at intervals.

Besides all this, the center of gravitation in the gathering idea is here, and I have been charged with being "shaky" on the gathering because I did not "gather," and it ought to be a fact that sooner or later I should gather, or come here to live. I am soon 74; and, if I should come at all to be of any use, it should be soon. I want to emphasize my faith by works.

If any of the authorities of the Utah contingent come here to locate they will find me on the ground....

So now, Dear girl, remember that I have tried to follow the lead of
the Spirit. My duty is more to the work at large than to the Saints at Lamoni; that I am as much obligated to those here as to those there; and my final home and resting place are here.²

Joseph Smith III was conscious of his increasing years. During the remainder of 1906 his health prohibited extensive travel or preaching. He busied himself with such editorial work and correspondence as he felt capable of handling. Early in 1907 he set his temporal affairs in order, in the event of his death. He decided to busy himself with what work he could until his allotted time should expire.³

Travels

Joseph's neuralgic troubles abated sufficiently that he was able to return to work "in the field," in the next few years. His principal journeys were to Philadelphia and Hawaii (1907), and Canada and the East Coast (1908).

Visit to Hawaii. Joseph Smith III's second and last trans-oceanic missionary journey occurred in the fall of 1907, when he visited Hawaii to dedicate the first RLDS church building in the Islands. Joseph stayed in Hawaii from October 12th through November 6th. His visit assumed something of the character of a vacation as he toured about, observed Hawaii's natural wonders, feasted upon its cuisine, and visited with various dignitaries.

He also had occasion to do some preaching, both to the small RLDS flock and to curious outsiders. Mormon missionaries had served in Hawaii for decades, and LDS work was well established there. On several occasions, Joseph Smith III had opportunities to address LDS listeners. As usual, he avoided harsh or disrespectful language, while setting forth clearly the differences between the two churches. His presentations were persuasive enough that at least one local paper, the Pacific Commercial Advertiser, gave him extensive favorable coverage. For example, the Advertiser said the following about his sermon of
October 21st:

The purpose of President Smith's address was to demonstrate that polygamy was never a doctrine taught or tolerated by the Prophet, Joseph Smith, nor held in the church during his lifetime, nor ever held or taught by any authority recognized by the church, and is, in fact, a heresy, the acceptance of which has amounted to apostasy by the Utah branch of the church.4

During his travels on Oahu he observed some of the Mormon businesses. His opinions about them were less than flattering:

... we took a drive through the pineapple plantations, being much interested in all we observed. I may say that so far as the Mormon sugar industry at Laie was concerned, it appeared that everything about it was kept closely under the secret and dominant rule of the churchly hierarchy.5

Before his departure he was honored with a luau. On his seventy-fifth birthday he boarded a ship for San Francisco. A throng of well-wishers loaded him down with leis and other gifts. On the homeward voyage he was pleased by the captain's request that he lead the Sunday worship service aboard ship. He had achieved such a measure of respectability that a Protestant minister named Dodge was happy to assist him with the services.6

Visit to the North and East. During the summer of 1908 Joseph, Ada, and their youngest son made a trip to Ontario. After holding some meetings and visiting, it was decided to join the Saints in Massachusetts for their Eastern Reunion. While traversing the rapids on the St. Lawrence River, near Montreal, Joseph took a nasty shipboard fall. The resultant laceration to his shin did not heal properly for two years. At the reunion he found his step uncertain, due to his injury and failing eyesight. After some sightseeing they returned to Ontario by train and visited Ada's family. On the way home they visited some other RLDS branches. This was Joseph Smith III's last major journey. While in Canada he read a life of Napoleon, which proved to be the last book of any length he ever read. He was blind in one eye, and sight in the other was failing. Henceforth he
was to lead the life of a semi-invalid. 7

Retiring from the Healm

Joseph Smith III took a realistic view of aging. He realized that he was unable to work as he had in former years and gradually transferred his duties to younger men. In 1906, while incapacitated much of the time by illness, he delegated more and more of the First Presidency's routine work to his counselors. 8 Associate Editor Elbert A. Smith remained in Lamoni, where the Herald was published, and exercised general oversight of the church's official publication, still nominally edited by Joseph Smith III. Joseph, however, continued to submit editorial matter. 9 In the fields of history and apologetics, Apostle Heman C. Smith assumed the sorts of duties which Joseph had handled personally in former years. 10

The death of his brother Alexander (August 12, 1909) emphasized to Joseph that his own life was drawing to a close. Already at the General Conference of 1909 he had taken steps to prepare the church for his own departure by formally returning to the church the gavel which he long had used as the presiding officer at conferences. He recognized that his own failing eyesight and hearing made it increasingly difficult for him to preside over the conference's business. 11

At the General Conference of 1910, Frederick Madison Smith sat in the chair. This conference was designated as the "Golden Jubilee Conference," in honor of Joseph Smith III's fifty years as president. In speeches, ceremonies, prayers, music, poetry, and other exercises, the church's venerable president was showered with honors. 12 Church Historian Heman C. Smith, in a review of Joseph Smith III's career as president of the church, concluded:

Though President Smith has reached the advanced age of nearly seventy-eight years and his bodily powers are becoming impaired, he has lived to see one of his earliest predictions realized, viz., that he would
live to see the name of a Latter Day Saint honorable among men; and he has had the satisfaction of seeing the little band with whom he cast his lot fifty years ago become a mighty host, and the message they bore carried triumphant to almost every part of his native land, to many parts of Europe, to far-away Australia, and the islands of the sea.\textsuperscript{13}

Responding to one of the many honors bestowed upon him, Joseph Smith III summed up the philosophy which had governed his career:

I pledge myself, as I did fifty years ago, that the cause we represent shall not be brought into disrepute by act or teaching of mine contrary to the standard books of the church and the code of good morals. I renew that pledge at the beginning of this session of Conference. I do it from many considerations, chief perhaps being one that has been with me all my life, a resolution formed when I was but a boy, after my baptism by my father, and strengthened when, after the death of himself and my Uncle Hyrum, I faced the world and was recognized everywhere as the son of the Prophet--sometimes in language unfit for men to name, under the influence of which I was always a marked boy and a marked man. That resolution was this--I have uttered it in the hearing of many of you; I do so again: That if there was truth in the axiom, "Like father, like son," no man, speaking from my conduct, should call my father a bad man. After fifty years of coservice, you all know whether or not I have kept that pledge.

\ldots If there has been any portion of wisdom given me to exercise the rule of President, it has been from the Master and at his good will, and it shall be my prayer that to these younger men who take my place, there shall be given such portion of that wisdom coming from God that is first pure, gentle, and easy to be entreated; that those burdens may be borne, and the authority resting with them be exercised, as the Master would have his servants do, as honorable, Christian gentlemen, lovers of truth, fearless in its defense, and willing to make the sacrifice that God requires of human ambitions for human things of the love of power for power's sake, of the love of wealth for its surroundings; and that they shall always seek to discharge those duties imposed by Divine calling in such manner that when at last the shades of night shall gather over their weakened frames, as they are gathering over mine, they shall still be found men of truth, able and willing to trust in God.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Succession}

Not only did Joseph Smith III delegate more and more of his duties to others, but he attempted to make the succession of his son Frederick to the presidency as smooth as possible. The Reorganization was founded upon the principles of monogamy and lineal succession in the priesthood, but Joseph realized from past Latter Day Saint history that the absence of clearly spelled-
out procedures for succession to the presidency could create problems ranging from confusion to schism.

For some time Fred M. had been groomed to succeed his father. In 1902 Joseph delivered a revelation to the church elevating Frederick Madison Smith to the First Presidency. At that time he expressed his anticipation that his son eventually would succeed him in office:

I have been importuned to settle the question as to who should be my successor. We have advanced upon the hypothesis of lineal priesthood in this regard, and while I believe in it, I believe it is connected with fitness and propriety, and no son of mine will be entitled to follow me as my successor, unless at the time he is chosen he is found to be worthy in character. I should not expect it. I now state to you, brethren, under the influence of, to me, the Spirit of God, that should I be overtaken by death before some of the things which are anticipated shall be wrought, you have my successor in your midst. I do not say that he should be chosen; if at the time that this emergency should occur he is found to be worthy let him be chosen, if unworthy let him be rejected and another chosen from the body as the revelation provides. And should he be found unworthy and another of my sons found worthy, let the line descend, as I believe that it ought to; for a man should be called to the office to serve the church who has proved himself to be worthy of confidence and trust.  

According to Joseph Smith III’s understanding, several factors should coalesce in determining his successor: lineal succession, worthiness, and designation by revelation. This last factor came into play in 1906, when Joseph delivered a revelation which declared:

... in case of the removal of my servant now presiding over the church by death or transgression, my servant Frederick M. Smith, if he remain faithful and steadfast, should be chosen, in accordance with the revelations which have been hitherto given to the church concerning the priesthood. Should my servant Frederick M. Smith prove unstable and unfaithful, another may be chosen, according to the law already given.  

In 1909 Joseph Smith III received a revelation dropping R. C. Evans as second counselor in the First Presidency and replacing him with Elbert A. Smith, the son of David H. Smith. Removing the ambitious and egotistical Evans paved the way for the unimpeded succession of Frederick.
Despite Fred M. Smith's substantial involvement in ecclesiastical administration and his designation by revelation as heir-apparent, Joseph felt the need for further clarification of the succession. In 1912 he circulated a questionnaire to members of the RLDS hierarchy. It surveyed their ideas concerning the theology and mechanics of succession. After digesting the replies, Joseph prepared a lengthy "Letter of Instruction." He hoped that the "Letter of Instruction" would eliminate division, confusion, or uncertainty after his own death.

The "Letter of Instruction" spelled out in considerable detail the steps to be followed upon the death or removal of the president of the church. For example, it stipulated that so long as two members of the First Presidency remained, the presidency as a quorum was still intact. The first and second counselors were more than mere advisors; they were also presidents of the high priesthood. As such, they could continue to perform the routine duties of the presidency until a new president was chosen. Upon the death of the president, direction of the church would not devolve upon the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Only in the event that the Quorum of the First Presidency were dissolved (through the removal of two of its members) or no longer functioning properly (through the two remaining members quarrelling or attempting to seize arbitrary power) would the Twelve be authorized to intervene. Even in that case, the Twelve would have to act in conjunction with the Quorum of Seventy. All of this was in marked contrast to LDS practice and reflected years of RLDS criticism of the Quorum of Twelve's behavior after the death of Joseph Smith.

Detailed procedures were spelled out by which the General Conference subsequent to the president's death should select a successor. All of these procedures were designed to secure an orderly, well-considered vote.
Several paragraphs in the "Letter of Instruction" treated the doctrine of lineal succession in the priesthood. The Doctrine and Covenants contained the statement that priesthood descended from father to son, but Joseph Smith III explained that this referred to priesthood generally, not to any specific office in the priesthood. There was, he stated, no automatic succession of sons to their fathers' offices. A son, he emphasized, must first be worthy and qualified before he could be called to the priesthood or any office in it. If so qualified, a son might succeed to his father's office if called by revelation, chosen by the proper ecclesiastical authority, and ordained. All these conditions having been met, sons were eligible to succeed to their fathers' offices, precedence being given to the oldest living son.

Several paragraphs painted an historical retrospective of the succession-crisis which occurred following Joseph Smith's death in 1844. Three different patterns of succession were examined and criticized.

First, the assumption of supreme authority by the Quarum of Twelve was wrong. The usurpation of control by one of the three co-equal quorums was arbitrary and dictatorial. This ecclesiastical coup d'état denuded the church of its proper checks and balances and led to the "public proclamation of the plural marriage dogma with its concomitant corruptions of the doctrines of the church." The Doctrine and Covenants provided a safeguard against such efforts of "one or more ambitious men, more mindful of self-exaltation and aggrandizement than . . . the good of a spiritual people, to so far obtain control in authority that mischievous and pernicious theories and doctrines" would be introduced. This safeguard consisted of three quorums--Presidency, Twelve, and Seventy--"holding equal authority in matters of extreme decision, forming a three-fold cord in spiritual affairs . . . ." When the First Presidency was disorganized by the deaths
of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, in 1844, the Twelve and Seventy should have governed the church jointly—possibly with the High Council temporarily acting in the role of a third quorum—according to the principle of three-fold spiritual control, until the presidency could be reorganized according to law. The LDS practice of restricting the presidency to members of the Twelve was baseless.

Second, the precedents established by factional leaders such as James J. Strang, Lyman Wight, William Smith, and others were dismissed as being purely of negative value. They served "as warnings against deviating from the letter and the spirit of what had been given to the church . . . ."

Third, the procedure followed by the early Reorganization was said to provide an incomplete precedent for the future. The situation in the 1850s was unique. There had been a disorganization of the church and an interregnum. The principles of lineal succession and designation of the successor by revelation were sound, but a more orderly method of succession than that employed in the 1850s was needed.

Specifically turning to the question of his own successor, Joseph Smith III endorsed the principle of lineal succession, all the while taking care not to elevate it into an absolute dogma. God, he reasoned, had the right to designate whomever he desired. But, following the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, the "legendary teaching of the eldership," and the precedent established by the early Reorganization, Joseph Smith III concluded that the president's oldest son was "eligible" to succeed his father. This eligibility had to be confirmed by qualifications and revelation. Such father-to-son succession would be the normal pattern, he believed, "unless such action was contravened by revelation directing otherwise." In the event that a president died without specifically naming a successor, the existing revelations established the principle of lineal succession
with sufficient clarity that the church would be justified in choosing and ordaining his son to succeed him.

To avoid confusion or controversy, Joseph Smith III then specifically designated his eldest living son as his successor:

Assuming the right seemingly conferred in the revelations contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants and conforming to the safer principles enunciated in the legendary teaching of the eldership, I, Joseph Smith, the present incumbent of the office of president of the Reorganized Church, definitely designate my eldest living son, Frederick Madison Smith, as the proper person to be chosen by the church as my successor in office, believing as I do that the Spirit of revelation and wisdom has manifested to me that such choice should be made as directed by the Spirit of the great Master-builder.

Joseph Smith III's careful measures resulted in an orderly succession following his death in 1914. Frederick Madison Smith was ordained his successor without opposition. To the present day, the RLDS president has always been a male descendant of Joseph Smith III. Theology, history, tradition, and apologetics have combined to make this hereditary presidency one of the distinguishing characteristics of the RLDS Church.

Relatives

As he gradually retired from active life, Joseph Smith III's family became an increasing focus of interest to him. He was delighted, for example, at the birth of his first Smith grandson in 1912. Named Joseph Perrine Smith, the lad gave him hope that the RLDS line of Smiths would continue.21

With the passing of years, it became increasingly obvious that neither the Missouri nor the Utah branches of the Smith family were going to alter their religious views. This division of the family was a source of sorrow to all concerned. Nevertheless, Joseph Smith III continued to entertain a lively feeling of kinship for his cousins in Utah, a feeling which was reciprocated in most cases.

continued their longtime friendship in old age. After Joseph III moved to Independence, John Henry made a point of visiting him whenever he passed through Kansas City. During these visits, John Henry sadly observed Joseph's physical deterioration. He recorded in his journal that Joseph was worn with age, suffered from neuralgia, and was losing his sight and hearing. However, he found that Joseph had lost none of his mental acuteness. The cousins thoroughly enjoyed their conversations, as in former times.22

They also continued to correspond. When John Henry learned of the death of Alexander H. Smith, he sent a moving letter of condolence to Joseph. Awareness of their underlying religious differences was voiced even at such a time, however:

I recognize the fact that time is passing, and that you and John and Samuel and Joseph and Silas S. Smith, the old men of our race will soon meet their call. I trust that conditions may arise sometime or somewhere in the early future that shall lead us to a complete understanding with each other, that there shall be no dividing of interests when we stand in the presence of the quick and the dead.23

Joseph's reply to John Henry thanked him for his sympathy. Joseph went on to comment about the prospect of death and judgment:

Yes, Cousin John Henry, time is passing, and while I know that it can be but a little longer until I too must pass over to the great majority, I feel impressed that others now living will go before me. For what purpose this impression is fastened upon my mind, and why I have been so long left while others younger have been taken, I know not; but my faith in God, and the law of divine compensation has filled my soul with a peace and restfulness passing human comprehension, except with those who experience it, and gives me assurance that when I shall pass to the judgment of him who sees us all, I will be dealt with leniently for my faults and my failures, and that the good that I have wrought, if any, will receive commensurate consideration with those who have gone before me hitherto. To you, with whom I have conversed more freely than with others who have believed and practiced as you have done, and who has known of my life and public conduct for nearly a half century, I have no need to state that what I have done and said has been the result of conviction; and for my earnestness I make no apology to humanity.

He told John Henry that he shared his desire for a resolution of their religious
differences, but that such must be built upon divine law. He argued that God was not a changeable being, and that "when God laid the foundations of this Latter Day Work . . . he gave his laws to his people in harmony with his own unchanging and eternal design and purpose." He would receive all revelations in harmony with previous revelation, but could not accept anything contradictory to previously revealed divine law. "This is the testimony of more than my fifty years of advocacy and defence of the faith as delivered to Joseph Smith, my honored father." 24

Joseph was not above needling his Utah cousin. In 1911 he observed that some of the ongoing attacks on Mormonism in popular magazines were scurrilous. But, he asked, did not John Henry's own continued practice of polygamy invite such attacks?

But, say, Cousin John Henry, had you not better get a revision of Webster as to the definition of polygamy or plural marriage. Is not the example of Cousin Joseph F., yourself, Francis M. Lyman, and others, in living in polygamous wedlock, a direct personal denial of the position taken by President Joseph F. and others at the last conference[?] This is sub rosa between you and me, as you know you and I can give each other a sly slap without getting angry. The agitation against you people in England seems to be bringing the question of your sincerity to the trial of public opinion, abroad as well as at home. 25

John Henry Smith died on October 13, 1911. Shortly before John Henry's death, Joseph III had a premonition of his cousin's impending demise. Some visiting Utah elders had informed him that John Henry had been ill. Not long after learning this, Joseph dreamed that he saw John Henry and Joseph F. Smith together. John Henry appeared quite ill, and Joseph F.'s disheveled hair and beard seemed to express his anxiety for John Henry's health. Joseph Smith III had experienced many premonitions and dreams which later came to pass. Accordingly he was very worried about his cousin and wrote to him on September 14, 1911 expressing his concern. 26
John Henry replied to Joseph’s letter on September 18th, stating that he had not felt better in five years and expected to live for many years to come. This good-natured rebuke proved unfortunately mistaken. Not a month passed before Joseph III received a letter from Joseph F. informing him of John Henry’s sudden demise. Joseph III replied at once, offering his condolences to the Smiths in Utah. However, he harbored a certain unexpressed satisfaction at this "new evidence" that the "spirit of prophecy had not deserted the family."27

**John Smith.** The following month another of Joseph's Utah cousins passed away. John Smith—son of Hyrum Smith, half-brother of Joseph F. Smith, and Patriarch of the Mormon Church—died suddenly of pneumonia on November 6, 1911. LDS President Joseph F. Smith courteously notified his RLDS counterpart by telegram of John’s death. Both John and Joseph III were born in 1832. They had been great childhood friends in Nauvoo. Although John never kept up a voluminous correspondence with Joseph III, whenever Joseph was in Utah they had enjoyed each other’s company immensely. Joseph always found a ready welcome in John’s (monogamous) household and suspected that John secretly sympathized with his stand against polygamy. John Smith’s passing left Joseph Smith III the oldest living representative of the Smith family.28

**George Albert Smith.** George Albert Smith was the oldest surviving son of John Henry Smith. He had been elevated to the LDS Quorum of Twelve Apostles in 1903. Joseph Smith III had formed a friendship with George Albert in 1905, during his visit to Salt Lake City. A friendship had also developed between George Albert and Frederick Madison Smith during Fred M.’s stay in Salt Lake City. In later years, whenever George Albert made a trip to the East, he enjoyed visiting Joseph III and Frederick in Independence.29

As illnesses and deaths occurred in the Smith family, George Albert and
the Missouri Smiths exchanged letters of concern and condolence. After George Albert—who never enjoyed a robust constitution—suffered a nervous breakdown in 1909, Joseph Smith III sent a letter of sympathy to the family:

By your card to Fred M. my son, I learned that Cousin George A. was confined to his bed. I regret to hear this, though I was impressed last Fall when I last saw George A., that he was breaking down, and it was only a question of time. I was rather strongly impressed that he would not soon be rid of his sickness. I think the strength of his constitution has been sapped, though I hope earnestly for his recovery. We may differ in beliefs and sentiments, but I cherish no enmity, and am making no war on individuals. Principles are what will count in the day of judgment. If I have been wrong and am now wrong, I must lose; if George A. and his people have not been right, they must lose in the great arbitrament.30

When his father John Henry Smith passed away, George Albert wrote to Frederick Madison Smith to thank the Missouri Smiths for their words of consolation. He remarked: "Father has always been a real friend to your branch of the family and has appreciated the kindness manifested by your dear father and his family whenever he was with them."31

After one of George Albert's visits to Independence, in 1913, Joseph III sent him a letter expressing his pleasure at the visit and inviting him to call again. He recalled his kind reception in Salt Lake City in 1905 and the warm feelings between their branches of the family. He expressed his profound respect for the late John Henry Smith:

Your father . . . met me on one of my visits to Utah with such frankness and kindly exhibition of manly friendship, notwithstanding our differences of belief, in such courtliness of manner as won my confidence and esteem. He was always welcome and I was always pleased to exchange such courtesies as time would permit. And I cherish his memory as being one of the noble men among men.32

When Joseph Smith III passed away the following year, George Albert Smith sent condolences to Frederick M. Smith. Frederick and George Albert—one the second president of the Reorganized Church (1915-1946) and the latter to become the eighth president of the Mormon Church (1945-1951)—continued to maintain
their warm feelings of kinship for one another throughout the rest of their lives.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{Samuel H. B. Smith.} Joseph Smith III had enjoyed friendly relations with his cousin Samuel H. B. Smith. Joseph felt that financial distress, marital unhappiness, and ecclesiastical dissatisfaction had clouded Samuel's mental condition in later years. In May 1914, learning that Samuel was seriously ill, he sent his dying cousin some words of sympathy:

By letter from Mary B. Norman I learn of your extreme illness which seems to be the premising of your early departure from this life. I use the word early departure with the idea that it is nearer than the years you may have passed would seem to indicate. But you have lived a hard-working life and have used your wonderful strength much to your own personal injury, and in a sense may now be suffering the penalty of such overtaxing of powers.

It is needless for me to say that I sympathize with you; you already know this, but it gives me pleasure to assure you that notwithstanding we may have differed in regard to religion touching the faith and personal conduct, my love and regard for you as a member of my father's family has never wavered. I have always regarded you with affection and relationship love and you still hold that position in my affections and will under divine Providence whatever may be the issue.

I do not say, cousin Samuel, that I pray for your recovery, for I feel that you are in divine hands, but while I feel thus I seem to know for some reason that the Providence that has looked over us both so long will not permit a much longer continuance of life for either and that you will preceed me. My prayer is, therefore, that you may retain your faculties to the last and trustful in divine mercy you may pass into the beyond as it is written of some of the old time fathers.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Joseph F. Smith.} The chilly relations between Joseph Smith III and Joseph F. Smith continued in their old age. The two cousins stood as presidents of rival churches, each claiming to be the true church in succession from that founded by their namesake, Joseph Smith. Each had elevated a son into the hierarchy who showed intentions of continuing the polemical controversy between the two churches.

Joseph III and Joseph F. maintained an attitude of outward propriety and stiff civility toward one another. Upon the death of a member of the family, they would exchange the customary condolences. But unlike others of the Utah Smiths,
Joseph F. avoided social contact with Joseph III. Since the exodus from Nauvoo, they had spoken to each other only twice: once in 1860 and again in 1876. The meeting in 1876 had been strained in the extreme. During Joseph III's visits to Utah in the 1880s the two had not met, due to Joseph F.'s being in hiding from Federal authorities. In 1905 Joseph III had seen his cousin presiding at the LDS Semi-Annual Conference, but they had not spoken to one another.

In 1913, with Joseph III blind, nearly deaf, and obviously nearing the end of his life, a slight thaw occurred in their relationship. In late October Joseph F. and George Albert Smith journeyed to Chicago to dedicate two LDS chapels. They returned west via Missouri, stopping to see important Mormon historical sites. They visited Independence and on November 4th called on Joseph Smith III. One of Joseph F.'s polygamous wives was with him, but nevertheless they were received courteously by Joseph III and Ada. The visit was marked by propriety and was somewhat perfunctory. Items of religious controversy were studiously avoided. Afterwards the relatives exchanged thank-you notes.

Theological reconciliation was long since out of the question. Each man was deeply convinced that the other had turned his back on the truth and on his heritage. A sense of familial loyalty required them to observe social niceties, but each did so with a deep sense of sadness and regret at the other's course.

The two cousins never saw one another after November 4, 1913. Broken down with the debilities of old age, Joseph III died the following year. Joseph F. continued to preside over the LDS Church until 1918, when he died in the great influenza epidemic. Even on his deathbed Joseph Smith III could not put his Utah cousin from his mind, regretfully reviewing Joseph F.'s domestic situation and ruefully contemplating his cousin's fate at the Judgment. The seeds of controversy sown in Nauvoo, in the 1840s, continued to bear their bitter fruit.
Final Literary Efforts

Joseph Smith III continued to hold the title "Editor" of the Saints' Herald until his death. But by 1909 most of the editorial content was written by Elbert A. Smith. By then Joseph retained sight in only one eye, and he found that he could not bear the strain of sustained reading. By 1911 he was totally blind. Although he learned to dictate ecclesiastical, editorial, and personal correspondence to stenographers, he found himself capable of handling an ever decreasing amount of work. Besides waning strength, blindness, and poor hearing, his bouts with facial neuralgia proved the greatest obstacle to his continuing literary production. The neuralgic attacks often were severe enough to unfit him for simple dictation for weeks at a time.

Joseph—ever an active man—chafed at the idea of lying about in idleness. The day-to-day affairs of the First Presidency were handled by his counselors. Ada managed the household. The Herald was supervised ably by Elbert. And his physical condition confined him to the vicinity of home. He might preach occasionally, health permitting, but he desired to do more.

In view of his physical limitations, Joseph decided to devote his remaining time and strength to writing. He still submitted occasional articles to RLDS publications. Aside from these, he undertook three additional literary endeavors.

Everybody's Magazine. In 1911 a number of magazines featured articles critical of Mormonism. One of these was Everybody's Magazine, which ran a series by Frank J. Cannon entitled, "Under the Prophet in Utah." Cannon's articles—written from the perspective of a former insider—attacked the LDS hierarchy for insincerity in their repudiation of polygamy, ecclesiastical absolutism, economic aggrandizement, and political manipulation. Joseph Smith III felt that some of Cannon's criticisms were justified and was content to
watch developments as a spectator until the appearance of the April issue of Everybody's. The installment of Cannon's series in this number contained two pages of photographs bearing the description, "A Study in Mormon Leaders: Members of the Mormon Hierarchy—of a Religious Absolutism Which Enslaves Men and Women in Polygamy, and Holds the State of Utah under Political Domination." Featured prominently was a picture of Joseph Smith III, and to compound matters there was no picture of LDS President Joseph F. Smith. On the cover was a caricature of a white-maned Mormon despot, seated upon a throne and holding a Cupid-topped sceptre. This cover illustration bore a striking resemblance to Joseph Smith III. Someone at Everybody's apparently had confused Joseph III with his cousin Joseph F. Smith.

Joseph Smith III hastened to register his protest with the magazine's editors. To include his picture among those of the Utah hierarchy, he wrote, was "an inexcusable blunder, or a wilful and malicious mistake." He demanded a correction, in order, as he put it, to relieve him of the "opprobrium to which such publication" subjected him. The editors published his letter of protest in the next issue, together with an apology.

Cannon's series concluded in the August number of Everybody's. After the last installment, Joseph Smith III again wrote to the editors. His objective was to make sure that the magazine's readers understood the differences between the Reorganized Church and the Mormon Church. He argued that polygamy was no part of original Mormonism, that Brigham Young led only a small fraction of the original church to Utah, and that some of those who remained faithful to the original teachings of the church reorganized it along non-polygamous lines in the 1850s. He argued that the scriptures of the Latter Day Saints condemned polygamy, that none of Joseph Smith's immediate family accepted Brigham
Young's rule or the dogma of plural marriage, and that U.S. courts twice had ruled the RLDS Church to be the legal successor of the church organized by Joseph Smith in 1830. He concluded:

It is because of these things that the Reorganized Church, over which Joseph Smith, the son of the prophet, has presided for fifty-one years,—that this body, now some sixty-five thousand strong, protests against being classified as "Mormons," or being confounded in any way with the supporters of polygamy. The Reorganized Church is monogamous in its belief and practise, under the laws and institutions of the United States of America, and its members, as citizens, ask proper recognition at the hand of their fellow-men.40

This article was reprinted by the RLDS Church as a four-page tract.41

A Study of Moral Ethics. Sometime around 1910, Joseph Smith III conceived the idea of writing a book, to be titled A Study of Moral Ethics. The book was intended to be a critique of Mormon polygamy. In May 1911, however, feeling some urgency due to his advancing years, Joseph abandoned work on A Study of Moral Ethics and decided to devote himself fully to work on a volume of memoirs. He knew that this probably would be his last great undertaking in life.42

Memoirs. Joseph found that composing his memoirs was no small task. In the first place, he was dependent upon others to read to him and to do his research in written sources. Additional barriers were the great length and eventfulness of his career, the brevity of the memoranda he had entered in his journals, his poor memory for dates, and the pain which dictation entailed. Nevertheless, he made the effort. Despite the handicaps under which he labored, he possessed an aptitude for the work. Years of editorial experience, a logical mind, ready documentation for many of his activities (after 1860) in the pages of the Herald, and an excellent memory for people and events (if not for dates) proved valuable assets.

Joseph Smith III's memoirs occupied his attention during the last four years
of his life. The dedication was dictated May 22, 1911, and the final two paragraphs were dictated during his terminal illness in November 1914. Progress on the memoirs was sporadic until Israel A. Smith moved to Independence, in 1913, and took up duties as his father's secretary. Then the hitherto haphazard work on the memoirs assumed a new urgency; fully two-thirds of the work was dictated during Israel's year-and-a-half as amanuensis.43

Joseph Smith III left his memoirs in a state of semi-completion. He had carried the narrative of his life up through 1910, but had not had an opportunity to rework the first draft when he died. He left instructions that his children polish the notes into publishable form. This they did after the lapse of some years.44

Joseph's memoirs were primarily a personal rather than an ecclesiastical history. Recollections of acquaintances and journeys figured much more prominently than details of ecclesiastical administration. Through the end of the Civil War, Joseph's narrative was a rather loosely connected collection of topical reminiscences. Thereafter the organization became decidedly more chronological.

As published, the memoirs are an imperfect but nevertheless valuable historical resource.45 The considerable material treating Joseph Smith III's relations with the Mormons of Utah has been noticed at the appropriate places in this study, but it may be well to take note of several larger themes which permeate the work.

Joseph spent relatively little time speaking directly of his father. This is hardly remarkable given the fact that he was only eleven years old at the time of his father's death. Joseph Smith, Jr. was depicted as both a human father and a divine prophet. On the human side, Joseph portrayed his father as a robust man, one in love with life and family, but one capable of making mistakes (such as
installing a bar in his newly furbished hotel). Religiously, little attention was paid to the prophet's teachings. There was simply the pervasive assumption that Joseph Smith, Jr. was God's prophet, the divinely commissioned head of the church, an upright man who was hounded unto death by persecutors. Joseph's portrait of his father was marked by love, respect, not a small element of family pride, and a certain naivete.

Emma Smith was depicted as a decisive influence during Joseph's childhood. Joseph dedicated the work to her, stating:

I acknowledge with gratitude to my heavenly Father that to the precept and example of my father's humble wife I owe the love for right and the hatred for wrong which have characterized my life. She early impressed upon my mind the conviction that under Divine Providence only truth and right would live and that error and wrong must perish.
Upon those teachings I have tried to build the foundation and rear the structure of my services to God, ever bearing in mind the nobility of that character to which she pointed, by precept and example, as the best and the highest that through effort could be attained by man.

His mother was clearly the heroine of the early years: courageously facing persecution in Missouri, industriously managing a large household and hotel in Nauvoo, stoically withstanding the designs of wicked apostates after the prophet's death, making a new life for herself in the wake of the exodus, and raising her children to love good and hate evil.

There was a deliberate restraint displayed when speaking of Brigham Young and the Twelve, between 1844 and 1846. Joseph spoke frankly of the difficulties his family faced, but muted his criticism of the ecclesiastical leaders. A similar policy of not speaking "harsh words" generally was followed throughout the memoirs.

Polygamy was always at or very near the surface of the story. Polygamy—the ghost which ever haunted his steps, the demon which would not be exorcised, the legacy which would not die—polygamy was the Northstar which guided
Joseph's movements, the undercurrent which ever tugged at his soul. About many subjects Joseph was surprisingly candid—e.g., his step-father's indiscretions or his youthful dabbling in Spiritualism—but concerning polygamy he pursued the opposite course. Although he made a great show of gathering evidence and questioning witnesses, his soul could not bear the truth. In reality, his position was based upon moral, spiritual, and emotional considerations which had nothing to do with empirical evidence. As he himself confessed, when discussing his decision to join the Reorganization, the thought of his father's involvement in polygamy was

not only repulsive in itself to my feelings and strongly condemned by my judgment, but was contrary to my knowledge of, and belief in him, would serve to neutralize at once the intention I had formed to redeem his memory from false accusations and make honorable in the sight of men the religion for which he became a martyr, and would result in an utter failure on my part to accomplish that which I felt divinely urged to do. ... I am grateful as I reflect that in over fifty years of active service dedicated to the objects I had in view, there has never been presented to me any evidence worthy to be called proof by which I have been compelled to reverse the conviction of my judgment on these important matters, made at the time I took up my ministry. Nor have I been called to suffer shame before God and man by having to receive and admit a knowledge that my father was guilty of such gross immorality .... 47

His accounts of his conversations in Utah were truncated. Like lawyers' briefs, they told only the side of the story favorable to his own position. Contrary evidence was passed over in silence.

Another recurring theme was Joseph's quest for respectability. He was determined to vindicate the Smith name. Every slight from "sectarian" ministers wounded him, and every evidence of approval from the "Gentiles" was recorded with a sense of vindication. He sought to plead his case before the bar of American public opinion and felt that he had triumphed in large measure.

Legalism was another theme. Both in apologetics and court cases, Joseph sought to establish that the Reorganization was the lawful successor to the
original church. In theology, also, his approach was legalistic. Appeal was made
to the standard works of the church and to official ecclesiastical publications in
order to establish true doctrine. The Utah Church was constantly arraigned for
having gone beyond or against these published standards.

Patriotism was another recurring theme. Many of the Mormon Church's
controversies with the federal government were chronicled. The Reorganization,
by contrast, was depicted as law-abiding and loyal.

One final theme may be noted: spiritual manifestations. Throughout his
religious career, Joseph placed great confidence in spiritual manifestations--
revelations, spiritual impressions, tongues, interpretations of tongues, prophecy,
and the like—and felt that Providence had guided his pathways. There is no doubt
that he felt his religious career and lifelong opposition to Utah Mormonism to
have been guided, sustained, and approved by God, as evidenced by these
testimonies.

Joseph's memoirs were, in a real sense, his last testament. A contemporary
reader will find that they reveal the mind of the man and permit a detailed
analysis of the roots and consequences of his conflict with the LDS Church.

Passing of the Old Guard

The year 1914 was one of transition for both the world and the Reorganized
Church. Europe became engulfed in a conflagration which eventually destroyed
four empires. The old order was also passing within the RLDS Church, albeit in a
less dramatic fashion. The death of Joseph Smith III, late in the year, marked the
depture of that generation which had known Joseph Smith, Jr., and which had
been involved in the early Reorganization. Already the old interest in debates
with Mormons was waning. 48 Under Elbert A. Smith's editorship, less and
less space in the Herald was devoted to items dealing with Mormonism. The percentage of polygamists in the Utah Church was gradually dwindling, as new plural marriages ceased to be solemnized. In coming years it would no longer be sufficient for the RLDS Church to identify itself as a body of "non-polygamous Latter Day Saints." The very success of the campaign against polygamy contained the seeds of a future identity-crisis for the church. In any case, the RLDS Church itself was inexorably moving away from its "sectarian" origins toward "denominational" respectability. This movement was personified in the leadership of First Counselor Frederick Madison Smith, who undertook work on his Ph.D. in psychology at Clark University in 1914. When Joseph Smith III breathed his last, on December 10, 1914, an epoch in RLDS history had ended.

Final Illness

On November 26, 1914—Thanksgiving Day—Joseph Smith III was stricken with a heart attack. He had nearly completed the final chapter of his memoirs when the attack came. When told by his physician that he probably would not survive, he called Israel A. Smith to his bedside and dictated the final paragraphs of his memoirs. He told his family and friends that he now considered his life's work to be completed.

The family was called to his bedside. But Joseph lingered for two more weeks. Although in great physical distress, he was lucid much of the time. Family and friends would enter and leave his room, and converse with him and with one another. Much of the time one of the family would sit by the bedside with pencil in hand, transcribing the conversation.

On the evening of November 27th he dictated his last message to the church:

In the presence of these witnesses, as the last word to the church:
You of the priesthood all know how hard I have tried to give the church to understand that its life and work did not depend upon only one man; and I bequeath the church the mass of the eldership beginning with those associated with me, the Twelve and the Seventy, the responsible quorums of the church, together with all others. I counsel the church to choose wisely, according to the instructions given; the one who will succeed me as presiding elder of the priesthood.

I have not consciously wronged any man or woman. I have no fear to go beyond the vale. I know not what awaits me, but I have faith in Him who fashioned the world and who gave the laws to organize the church and permit the Spirit of truth to rest upon the entire body, not confined to one alone, but to all who have had the ability to become conscious of knowledge.

My peace I leave with those I have labored with. My blessings I leave with those I leave behind me.

I counsel my boys to be honest in word and in deed. Honor is that which men do by virtue of their integrity. My boys I can not leave wealth, but I can leave them an honorable name. This I do.

I ask the church to give consideration to my family in the time they shall need it; and leave my blessing with my companion who has so faithfully cared for me, and on my boys who have stood by me, and my girls who have shown such love and regard for me; and the friends that I have I leave with regret, but they will remember me.

The Spirit and the Bride say Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Have faith in God and worship him forever and ever. Amen.

Later he reiterated the conviction which had sustained him throughout his long career:

You men who hear me now must remember what I say: My father was not a bad man as the Brighamites have charged him, to my knowledge. I knew him to be an upright, virtuous, pure man with his family; and I have maintained the uprightness and integrity of his character in good faith. I know of no reason that has been presented that I should change my belief and now admit that he was a bad man. That was my living testimony; that is my dying declaration.

Sometime after being stricken, Joseph's old friend and confidant Dr. Joseph Luff intormed him that if he wished to make any last statement, he should do so at that time. He called Israel to his bedside to take dictation. Breathlessly the watchers about the dying man's couch listened as he gave his last testimony: "I know the testimony in the Book of Covenants is true, that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world." A few moments later he said: "I have no fear, and if a man can be happy in dying and leaving a home like mine, and friends like I have,
such a host of them, for the Master's cause, I can die happy. O blessed rest, blessed rest! I know that my Redeemer lives and ever prays for me."55

Frederick M. Smith was in Worcester, Massachusetts, pursuing his doctoral studies, when his father was stricken. Fred arrived at his father's bedside on Sunday, November 29th. Joseph informed his oldest son that he had lived in physical distress long enough and that he welcomed death. They discussed the future of the church. Joseph suggested that Israel A. Smith be ordained a high priest so that his business and legal ability might be put to good use in the councils of the church. The dying RLDS president told his heir that the revelations he had received and the "Letter of Instruction" should leave the question of succession clear.56

Joseph Smith III lingered for two weeks before dying. His daughter Audentia later recalled that those were "blessed weeks for those who were permitted to be near and to hear the words of precious wisdom and gentle counsel which would fall from his lips..." She reported:

... it was indicative of where the man's life work had lain, that my father's mind would constantly revert to the subject of polygamy and kindred evil doctrines of the apostate church. He would review, in memory, some of the battles and struggles he had experienced in his efforts to combat these evil teachings, and to clear his father's name and work, and expressed anew his indignation that even then, some of the leaders in Utah were living in the city of Salt Lake with numerous wives, and could do so without hindrance from the Government, or people who were supposed to love righteousness and chastity.57

At one point, he inquired:

"Do you think that those people out West will begin baptizing for me when I die?"

T. W. Chatburn replied:

"No, I don't think the leaders out there think enough of you."

"I hope they don't," Joseph replied. "But do you know, I believe that, deep
down in the bottom of his heart, Joseph F. Smith knows I’m right! Well, God knows—and I know!"

"And he’ll find it out!," added Chatburn.

"Yes, he’ll find it out—and in a terrible way!," Joseph concluded.58

On another occasion he again reflected upon his relationship with his cousin, Joseph F. Smith:

I don’t know that I have, yet I may have grown one enemy in that polygamous camp. I stated to Joseph F. Smith things that are true which he bitterly resents. Do you know that he was here and the wife that was with him was one of the three he introduced to me in 1876 in Utah, and he was here a year ago with a younger woman that was his wife, as she said to Ada . . . . I believe some of those fellows are polygamous, actually practising it right here in this state. Well, I won’t talk about it. It gets my blood up.59

On November 22nd the Mormon Church had dedicated a chapel valued at $25,000 in Independence. Two members of the LDS First Presidency, two apostles, and the Presiding Bishop took part in the dedication. One of the apostles was Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. The presence of so many prominent Mormons in Independence occasioned a Sunday evening sermon reviewing the differences between the two churches by Joseph Luff. Dr. Luff was a former RLDS apostle, former missionary to Utah, longtime friend of Joseph Smith III, and the dying president’s personal physician. Joseph Smith III congratulated his companion and friend:

You and I have been through some stormy scenes, Joseph. I'm so glad you took up the cudgel last Sunday night. They opened the scene for us. I'm glad Joseph F. Jr. was there. They make a great mistake when they say we are unwilling to meet them.

He asked another of his bedside visitors: "Did you think to ask those fellows how it was that neither Joseph nor Hyrum had any children by those polygamous marriages?"60

Joseph Smith III's strength gradually failed. Prayer and anointing with oil
failed to arrest his steady decline. He was in constant pain and longed for the release of death. As the end approached, he slipped in and out of delirium. Finally he expired on December 10, 1914.

Epilogue

As news of Joseph Smith III's death spread, many tributes were published in the secular press. Characteristically the tributes mentioned his abhorrence of polygamy and his exemplary character. His lifelong quest for respectability had been realized. Perhaps typical were the comments of the Concordia Daily

Kansan:

Joseph Smith . . . devoted his entire life . . . to a consistent, effective fight against the polygamous teachings of the Utah Mormons. It was around his strong personality and fine Christian character that the followers of the founder of the church gathered, because they repudiated the doctrines of polygamy promulgated by Brigham Young and formed an organization . . . fighting polygamy every jump of the road. The church of which Joseph Smith was the head, has done more than any other organization to eradicate the baneful influence of polygamy in its western stronghold.

A more lovable personality than Joseph Smith one can rarely meet. He was no ignorant fanatic—he was an educated gentleman, trained to the ways of the world as a practicing attorney. The sanctity of the home, love of wife—just one—love of children, and an upright, patriotic American citizenship, was the vision held out by Joseph Smith to all in the church of which he was the temporal head. No man ever lived a cleaner life than Joseph Smith. Aside from his religion, his home and his family were all the world to him.

We are not a follower of Joseph Smith, or his church, but we have known the man—the upright American citizen, the fine gentleman that he was—for many, many years, and it pains us to see his name reviled unjustly because of ignorance of the character of the man.61

While in Nauvoo, Young Joseph had formed two resolutions: to believe by his own good conduct the aspersions of those who reviled the name, Joseph Smith; and to lose no opportunity to make his father's religion honorable in the eyes of others. One measure of his success was the steady growth of membership in the RLDS Church: from less than one thousand in 1860 to sixty-eight thousand in 1914. A greater measure of his success was the widespread esteem in which he
was held by non-members of his church.
CONCLUSION

Joseph Smith III’s life was molded by a series of conflicts. His father blessed him to be his successor, but following his father’s death a struggle for power within the church left Young Joseph in a state of ecclesiastical limbo. His father declared plural marriage to be a divine principle, but his mother viewed polygamy with moral revulsion and raised her children to see it in the same light. Young Joseph revered his father as a martyred prophet, but he remained ignorant of many of his father’s secret teachings and practices until adulthood. Following his father’s death he was caught in the cross-currents of ongoing controversies between his mother and Brigham Young. Neither inducements nor intimidation could persuade his mother to join the Mormon hegira to the West. He grew up among Gentiles and learned to bear insults silently and to value liberality. Quietly he resolved to do what he could to redeem his father’s name from obloquy by his own good conduct.

His religious development was marked by a series of stops and starts. He was baptized by his father when about ten years old. At the time of his baptism he viewed his father as a good man and a prophet. He held tenaciously to this view throughout his life. He always maintained that if any baptism in the Latter Day dispensation were efficacious, it was the one he received at the hands of his prophet-father. When he began exploring his religious options, as a young man, he rejected affiliation with any organization which would require him to be rebaptized. Prior to his father’s death, he received general instruction in Mormon beliefs, but he was not privy to his father’s secret teachings. After his father’s
death, his mother reared him to believe in the Bible and in the efficacy of prayer. For a variety of reasons, however, she did not give Young Joseph further instruction as a Latter Day Saint. Her remarriage to L. C. Bidamon, a worldly man of skeptical bent, had some influence on her oldest son. As he approached maturity, Young Joseph went through a free-thinking phase and dabbled in Spiritualism for a few years. He attended the preaching services of various Protestant denominations, but he found that he could accept neither evangelical Protestantism's doctrine of hell nor Universalism. A nearly fatal illness when twenty years old set his mind to serious religious thinking. For years, however, he remained undecided about his religious course. A series of spiritual experiences convinced him to trust in divine guidance concerning his ultimate religious course of action. He therefore rejected appeals from various groups of Latter Day Saints that he join one or another group, because he felt that he could not act without having received definite instructions from God. In one of his religious experiences he was informed that the recently published Mormon doctrine of plural marriage was wrong and that he should not affiliate with the Utah Church. Finally he felt guided to affiliate with the small group of anti-polygamous Latter Day Saints which became known as the Reorganization.

He remained unsettled about his vocation throughout his youth and into early adulthood. He dreamed of blacksmithing as a youth. He helped around the family hotel and gardens. He tried shopkeeping and farming. He engaged in casual labor as it became available. He studied law and later became a justice of the peace. He was elected to the city council and school board. Finally his vocational and religious quests were resolved simultaneously when he became president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

The Latter Day Saints who formed the early Reorganization held to several
distinctive tenets. They rejected polygamy. They were convinced that the church in Nauvoo had fallen into iniquity and had been disorganized. They held that—according to scriptural teaching and prophetic utterance—the presidency of the church belonged to the seed of Joseph Smith. And they held that the Spirit had directed them to reorganize the church.

Following a period of consideration Joseph Smith III became convinced that the Reorganization's doctrinal views were compatible with his own. After receiving assurance through prayer and spiritual manifestations that God desired him to affiliate with the Reorganization, he became its president on April 6, 1860 at Amboy, Illinois.

This was the climactic step in his long spiritual and vocational quest. But it brought him no respite from conflict. Instead it ushered him into a lifelong conflict with the Mormon Church. It also brought him into unwelcome conflict with non-Mormons who tended to view all Latter Day Saints as polygamous, disloyal, and heretical.

Differentiating himself and his church from the Mormons of Utah was one of his chief objectives as president of the RLDS Church. He was determined to build a religious home for the scattered Latter Day Saints who rejected the rule of Brigham Young. In time he succeeded. The Reorganization became the logical haven for thousands of Saints who initially had followed other factional leaders, or who had grown disenchanted with Brigham Young's leadership, or who had stood aloof from all factions after Joseph Smith's death.

Joseph Smith III was determined to live among the Gentiles, as a non-Mormon Latter Day Saint. This he called a "triangular problem." For practical reasons, he spent more of his energy attacking the LDS Church than in warring with Protestantism or Roman Catholicism. There were a number of reasons for
this policy. Geography provides a partial explanation. The Reorganized Church had its greatest numbers in Illinois, Iowa, and (later) Missouri, whereas the LDS Church was situated in the relative isolation of the Rocky Mountains. Proximity and minority status made a certain degree of accommodation with Gentile culture both prudent and necessary. Practical considerations led Joseph Smith III to downplay such potentially friction-causing activities as gathering, economic communitarianism, bloc-voting, and monolithic hierarchical control of church finances and discipline.

A deeper reason for Joseph Smith III's continuing efforts at differentiating himself and his church from the Mormons of Utah was personal. He bore the name Joseph Smith. From his early childhood this name had marked him as someone unique. He frequently endured sneers and epithets from non-Mormons. If the Mormons of Utah brought the Smith name into disrepute through their conduct, he was resolved to redeem it through his own. He expressed himself candidly in a letter to his uncle William Smith:

You must know by this time how absolute has been my self control and reticence, in all years past, that I might ring out of Mormonism the good there was in it. My constant endeavor was to get recognition and standing room, among honorable and good men, for that despised name and faith, borne by your father and mine, as well as by yourself in those early days; well, both have been won, and upon principles, not men.1

He expressed himself along similar lines to his cousin Edson Don Carlos Smith in a letter urging him to live uprightly. The world, he reminded his cousin, counted their fathers fools, dupes, or worse. But they were good men. "Well," he concluded, "let us live, so far as we can so that the world shall respect our fathers, because they do us."2

Joseph Smith III's motives for differentiating himself and his church from Utah Mormonism were also ethical and religious. Reason, maternal training, scriptural study, spiritual manifestations, and personal convictions combined to
bring him to the conclusion that the LDS Church was wrong in many of its teachings and practices. Above all else, he was convinced that polygamy was wrong.

This lifelong quest for respectability was successful in large measure. Joseph Smith III became skilled at presenting his case in a variety of forums: courts, congressional hearings, contacts with high governmental officials, letters to editors, public speeches, interviews, articles in secular publications, sermons, and his voluminous work as editor and writer for church publications. He won the respect of many political leaders and editors. By the time of his death even Anti-Mormon writers frequently added a caveat to their writings, distinguishing between the polygamous Mormons of Utah and the monogamous Reorganized Saints.

During his lengthy presidency of the RLDS Church, the conflict with the LDS Church hardened into certain clearly defined lines. Many of these differences were secondary in nature, but they were nevertheless of importance to members of the two churches in the nineteenth century: different interpretations of the law of tithing; issues of ecclesiastical freedom (e.g., free debate at conferences, obedience to counsel, the degree of theological heterogeneity permitted in the church, freedom to criticize leaders); ordination of blacks to the priesthood; different attitudes toward federal authority; the gathering; Brigham Young's Adam-God doctrine; "blood atonement;" and various differences in ecclesiastical organization.

The two great differences between the LDS and RLDS Churches were polygamy and succession in the presidency of the church. The distinctive positions of both churches were established before Joseph Smith III became president of the RLDS Church. Under his leadership they became even more
clearly defined.

Joseph Smith III shared with all members of the Reorganization the conviction that polygamy was sinful. But his conviction that his father was unconnected with its introduction at Nauvoo was not shared by the majority of the fledgling Reorganization in 1860. Gradually his view of polygamy became generally accepted in the RLDS Church. The nucleus of older members who felt that Joseph Smith, Jr. was involved in polygamy gradually gave way to newer and younger members. These almost universally adopted Joseph Smith III's view of the matter—a view held by numerous members of the RLDS Church to this day. The prophet's son was determined to prove his father "innocent" of polygamy.

Apologetically this stance made it much easier to proselytize among Gentiles. It also made theological reconciliation with the LDS Church impossible. Even after the practice of plural marriage was abandoned by the LDS Church, the theology enshrined in Section 132 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants continued to lie at the heart of the LDS faith: celestial marriage and sealing rites as the sine qua non for exaltation to godhood. Rejection of plural marriage necessarily involved the RLDS Church in repudiation of concomitant doctrines: plurality of gods, eternal progression, eternal families and marriages, esoteric temple rites, and temple-building.

It is impossible to pinpoint an exact moment when Joseph Smith III definitely turned his back on these concomitant doctrines and practices—and upon the theological legacy of Nauvoo. The logic of his position gradually pushed him in that direction. By the time he moved to Lamoni his position was clear. In contradistinction to the Mormon Church, which based much of its position on oral teachings and secret practices privately introduced by Joseph Smith, Jr. in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith III took his stand on the publicly accepted works of Latter
Day Saint scripture canonized during his father's lifetime. Any doctrines or practices not found in these works he rejected. It was common during the lifetime of Brigham Young (and for some years afterwards) for RLDS elders to contend for "the Books" against their LDS counterparts who contended for "the living oracles."

Joseph Smith III's contention for the Books was multi-faceted. Part of it was principled and philosophical; part of it was practical and apologetic. On the one hand there was his fundamental assumption that God was unchanging. From this basic assumption, Joseph Smith III concluded that God's moral laws could not change nor could later revelation contradict earlier revelation. God, in his view, could reveal additional matter, but he could not contradict himself. If polygamy were condemned as an abomination in the Book of Mormon, no later revelation could sanctify it. On the other hand, there was an element of pragmatism in his contention for the Books. During his father's lifetime, additional material had been canonized from time to time. There was no logical reason why additional revelations left behind by Joseph Smith, Jr. at his death ought not to be canonized as had the earlier ones. Early RLDS publications freely quoted from the Civil War prophecy and the Book of Abraham, neither of which had been canonized during the prophet's lifetime. Eventually the LDS Church canonized both documents, but the RLDS Church gradually consigned them to scriptural oblivion. Not canonizing them was consistent with the idea that the canon of scripture given to Joseph Smith, Jr. somehow closed at his death. It safeguarded against the admission of the revelation on celestial marriage into Doctrine and Covenants. But Joseph Smith III gladly sanctioned publication of the Inspired Translation of the Bible, which was left by his father in manuscript. Since this occurred early in his career as president of the church, he may not have been alert to the possible
inconsistencies in such an action. Later he developed the position that additions could be made to the canon, but that such additions must be approved by the appropriate quorums of the church. Since the disputed revelations had never been submitted to the church for approval, they were not church law. Subsequent endorsement by an LDS conference was of no force, he reasoned, because that church lacked divine authority.

Joseph Smith III's arguments about succession and priesthood authority also contained both principled and and pragmatic elements. He had been blessed by his father to succeed to the office of president of the church. From personal observation of his mother's struggles, he felt that he had no reason to trust Brigham Young. He sincerely felt that the practice of polygamy—sanctioned by the leaders of the Utah Church—was wrong and therefore questioned the moral and spiritual authority of those leaders. Spiritual experiences—both his own and others'—persuaded him that God willed that he should assume the leadership of the Reorganization. His initial reluctance to speak of his having been blessed by his father—despite later Mormon claims to the contrary—was evidence of deep sincerity on his own part. He was unwilling to be his own witness, and relied on the testimony of others and the witness of the Spirit. All these elements stemmed from deep personal conviction.

On another level, the his arguments about succession and authority were a pragmatic necessity. The Latter Day Saint tradition spoke of one true church. If the Brighamite teaching of celestial marriage were wrong, then it was necessary to impeach the authority of those teaching such doctrine. Justification for the RLDS position was found in the theory that the church was disorganized in Nauvoo. Additional steps in the argument were the RLDS teaching that the Spirit guided the early RLDS elders to reorganize the church and to await the coming of
Young Joseph, and the RLDS doctrine of lineal succession.

One of the ironies of Joseph Smith III's struggle against the LDS Church involves lineal succession. The RLDS Church has enshrined the principle of lineal succession in the presidency of the church. The LDS Church has enshrined the principle of succession according to seniority in the Quorum of Twelve. Yet the LDS Church has preserved more of the theological justification for the practice of lineal succession (belief in pre-existence, coupled with belief in eternal families) than has the RLDS Church. One church retains the practice but not the theological rationale; the other retains the theology but not the practice.

The legacy of lineal succession in the presidency, stemming from the blessing of Joseph Smith III and continued to the present, poses an impending dilemma for the RLDS Church. The incumbent president, Wallace B. Smith, has three daughters and no sons. Upon his death or resignation, the church will face the question of whether or how to perpetuate the practice of lineal succession in the presidency.

A number of historiographical models have been proposed for the study of Joseph Smith III's career. According to the RLDS "faithful history" model, Joseph Smith III was God's anointed servant who battled to reclaim the Latter Day Saints from error and iniquity. This "true church" model undergirds the first four volumes of the RLDS History of the Church, Joseph Smith III's Memoirs, and Inez Smith Davis' popular The Story of the Church.

Until recently LDS histories have also reflected "true church" historiographical models. According to the LDS apologists, Joseph Smith III was the apostate son of an apostate mother. Even as sophisticated a work as B. H. Roberts' Comprehensive History of the Church is written with a keen eye toward refuting RLDS apologetic claims.
Alma Blair and others have argued that Joseph Smith III was a "moderate Mormon." This historiographical approach employs a developmental model. According to this approach, the early Reorganization and Joseph Smith III struggled for a number of years with problems of theological identity and administrative and historical perspective. By the mid-1880s these problems had been resolved. In some cases, this involved changes in positions. The doctrine of plurality of gods is a case in point. Whereas the "true church" model would be embarrassed by such episodes, a developmental model takes them as natural. Blair's particular developmental model finds the resolution of Joseph Smith III's quest for identity in reversion to the Kirtland period of Mormon theology (and rejection of Nauvoo developments).³

Closely related to this approach is the sect-church model. Here emphasis is placed on the sociological forces which cause religious institutions to change in a fairly predictable fashion over the course of time. Sectarian features gradually give way to churchly ones. Joseph Smith III's desire for accommodation with his Gentile neighbors and his distancing of himself from several doctrines and practices which gave offense prior to 1844 fit this model very well.⁴

Both of the two preceding models are complimentary and offer valuable insights into Joseph Smith III's career. Two additional models for understanding the man suggest themselves.

First, there is Joseph Smith III the legalist. Often the prophet's son faced the Mormon complaint that he was a lawyer. No compliment was intended. Quite apart from connotations of crooked practices and high fees, there was a certain amount of "legalism" in Joseph Smith III's character, theology, and apologetics. When approaching the question of polygamy, he reasoned that moral law was unchangeable. When confronted with evidence that his father had delivered a
revelation sanctioning plural marriage, he reasoned that such a doctrine could not have been introduced into the church legally. He felt strongly that obedience to civil law was a duty of every Latter Day Saint; practicing polygamy when civil law prohibited the same was clearly wrong in his view. He sought to establish the truth of the RLDS position through litigation in the courts. He repeatedly urged that the way to solve "the Utah problem" was through fair and uniform enforcement of federal laws against polygamy. He felt that his whole life would be evaluated by God at the Judgment, and he trusted that his ethical course would be rewarded, while that of Mormon polygamists would be condemned. He also conceived of himself as something of a defense attorney for his father. Mormons who testified that his father taught or practiced plural marriage were treated as hostile witnesses and were subjected to rigorous cross-examination. The objective was to discredit their testimony by demonstrating contradictions. For his own part, he adopted a public posture similar to a lawyer summarizing his client's case. No damaging evidence must ever be admitted. He advised one colleague, when debating, to admit nothing unless proven: "One erroneous admission is more difficult to dispose of than a dozen assertions unqualified." When his uncle William was planning to publish a book, he reminded William that he had expended much energy trying to remove the stigma of polygamy from the memory of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Therefore, he suggested, if his uncle were wise, he would "fail to remember anything contrary to the lofty standard of character at which we esteem those good men. You can do the cause great good; you can injure it by injudicious sayings." 5

Second, there is Joseph Smith III the tragic figure. His life was molded by forces outside his own control. He was the son of Joseph Smith, marked by his father for leadership in the church. Neither Saints nor Gentiles would let him
forget his ancestry. He was the son of Emma Smith, a resolute foe of plural marriage. Her conflict with Joseph Smith, Jr. over polygamy underlay her later conflict with Brigham Young and the Twelve. After her husband's death she resolutely sought to inoculate her children against polygamy. She succeeded. Latter Day Saints in various factions expected him to "take his place" as he approached adulthood. But he occupied a position fraught with tension. The conflict between his paternal and maternal legacies was inescapable. Finally he resolved the conflict as best he could: he would be a non-polygamous Latter Day Saint. But this solution yielded no respite from conflict, for now he was embarked on a lifelong crusade against the LDS Church, headed by many of his father's closest disciples. Finally he died, weary and full of years. He fulfilled his father's blessing that he would "live long upon the earth," be a comfort to his mother, and achieve honor and admiration in the eyes of others. Whether he realized the rest of the blessing—to possess wisdom and knowledge and understanding—let each reader decide.
Fig. 1. Map of Nauvoo, Illinois.

From Brigham Young University Studies 23 (Summer 1983):101.
1. John Taylor Farm
2. John Benbow's
3. John S. Fullmer's
4. Charles Kelly's
5. Adolphus Babcock's
6. The Big Field
7. Daniel H. Wells's

Fig. 2. Map of Hancock County, Illinois.
From Brigham Young University Studies 23 (Summer 1983):103.
Fig. 3. Family of Joseph Smith III
Fig. 4. Smiths in the RLDS Hierarchy
Fig. 5. Smiths in the LDS Hierarchy (after 1844)
Fig. 6. Smith Family Tree
ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT FORMS

The following abbreviations and short forms are used in the notes to identify publications and archival repositories:

**Bancroft Library**
Hubert Howe Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley

**Brigham Young University**
Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah

**CHC**

**D&C**
Doctrine and Covenants

**Huntington Library**
Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California

**Journal History**
*Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. A massive compilation, arranged chronologically, of extracts from personal journals, newspapers, correspondence, etc. Available to researchers at the LDS Archives.

**LB #1**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #1, RLDS Archives

**LB #1A**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #1A, RLDS Archives

**LB #2**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #2, RLDS Archives

**LB #3**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #3, RLDS Archives

**LB #3A**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #3A, RLDS Archives

**LB #4**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #4, RLDS Archives

**LB #5**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #5, RLDS Archives

**LB #6**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #6, RLDS Archives

**LB #7**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #7, RLDS Archives

**LB #8**
Joseph Smith III Letterbook #8, RLDS Archives

**LDS Archives**
Archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah


RLDS Archives Library-Archives, The Auditorium, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri

SH Saints' Herald (originally entitled the True Latter Day Saints' Herald)

Tullidge Tullidge, Edward W. Life of Joseph the Prophet. [RLDS ed.] Plano, Illinois: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1880. [Chapter 54, "Biography of Joseph Smith . . .", is an autobiographical essay written by Joseph Smith III.]

University of Utah Special Collections and Western Americana, Willard J. Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City

Utah State Historical Society Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah

Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
NOTES

Introduction


A classic explanation of the American voluntary system and revivalism was published in Scotland in 1843 by the American Presbyterian Robert Baird. (American editions appeared in 1844 and 1856.) Baird explained that the evangelical denominations were engaged in a common task of evangelizing the young nation. See Robert Baird, Religion in America; or, an Account of the Origin, Relation to the State, and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United States. With Notices of the Unevangelical Denominations (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1856).


6 The opening of the Erie Canal and the "Morgan Incident" both contributed to social flux in the 1820s. The breakdown of the older Calvinist theology and its replacement by modified Calvinism, Arminianism, or rationalistic theology contributed greatly to the intellectual ferment.

S. Gaustad (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), pp. 1-17, argues that the general American openness to religious innovation was combined with specific conditions in upstate New York to produce a sectarian hothouse. The general conditions were the absence of legal inhibitions, the lack of a unified ecclesiastical tradition, the sense that the present was pregnant with possibility, and space in which to experiment and institutionalize novelties. The specific conditions in the Burned-over District favorable to experimentation included intense revivals, a mixed population, a climate of perpetual excitement conducive to speculation and innovation, and the presence of individuals who were emotionally disturbed or unfulfilled by the revivals and therefore receptive to new prophets.

The term "sect" is employed in the specialized sense developed by Ernst Troeltsch. Troeltsch, H. Richard Niebuhr, and others have argued that religious groups evolve along a sociological continuum from "sectarian" beginnings to "churchly" maturity. Sects tend to be informal, emotional, and voluntaristic, while churches (or "denominations" in the American context) tend to be formal, doctrinal, and traditional. See Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, trans. Olive Wyon, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1931), especially 1:331-343; and H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929).


HC 1:1-80 gives Joseph Smith's account of his calling, the translation of the Book of Mormon, and the organization of the Mormon Church.

Alexander Campbell, in the Millennial Harbinger 2 (February 1831):85.


In 1834 the church became known as the "Church of the Latter Day Saints," to distinguish it from Campbellite and other churches employing the name "Church of Christ." In 1838 the two names were conflated into the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."


Chapter I

1The best source of information on Joseph Smith, Jr.'s descendants is Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, Ancestry and Posterity of Joseph Smith and Emma Hale: With Little Sketches of Their Immigrant Ancestors, All of Whom Came to America between the Years 1620 and 1685, and Settled in the States of Massachusetts and Connecticut (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1929).

2Details about Joseph Smith III's childhood, in this and succeeding paragraphs, are drawn from Memoirs, pp. 1-37, unless otherwise noted. Details concerning Latter Day Saint history are drawn from HC, HRC, CHC, and general histories such as James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976); Arrington and Bitton, The Mormon Experience; Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); and Donna Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1977).


4HC 3:175.

5Ibid., 3:190-191.

6Joseph Smith III, untitled Biographical Sketch of Emma Hale Smith, P13, f2302, RLDS Archives, p. 7. This sketch formed the basis for the biography of Emma Hale Smith in Recollections of the Pioneers of Lee County (Dixon, Illinois: Inez A. Kennedy, 1893), pp. 96-107. The published version is an abridgement and contains alterations from the original typescript. Throughout this dissertation, reference will be made to the original typescript, not to the published version.


9. D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," Brigham Young University Studies 16 (Winter 1976):188, 194, 199, 200. Quinn, pp. 212-213, also points out that in 1835 Joseph Smith had cited several ecclesiastical bodies as possessing authority "equal" to that of the First Presidency, but that he did not define how this might affect the question of succession in the presidency.


11. Late in life, John Wickliffe Rigdon recorded his reminiscences of this visit. By the time he wrote his reminiscences, the blessing at Liberty Jail was an item of hot dispute between the LDS and RLDS Churches, apologists for the former denying that it ever took place. John W. Rigdon, who had been rebaptized into the LDS Church in 1904, lent his voice to the polemical dispute. He had been present, he argued, and no such "ordination" occurred:

"... we were taken up to the Jail & there we remained for 3 days & that is the time & place where Joseph Smith claims that his father Joseph Smith ordained him to be the leader of the Church at his Father's death. Now I was there & was with Young Joseph all of the time while we remained at the Jail when the Jailer let me out to go around to see the town Joseph Smith went with me & when I went back he always went with me as he was a Little afraid to st[a]y out alone thinking they [sic] might be danger in doing so & I say that no such ordination ever took place while we were at Liberty Jail & if it had I should have certainly remembered it Young Joseph Smith the Prophet's son & I are the only ones who are a live that was in that Jail at that time & I know that the ordination which he claims never took place I was only to Liberty Jail once nor neither was Young Joseph Smith we went out in the same carriage & came back in the same carriage I understand that he now claims that his father blessed him but he cannot remember wheather he was ordained or not I say his father did not bless him either when we bid them good buye the turnkey stood at the Door with the Key in his hand to let us out his Father might have put his hand on his Sons head & said good buy my son God Bless you & do not say he did but he might have done so But as for his Father Gave him a blessing in Liberty Jail More than what [I] have said he did not[.]" Quotation from John W. Rigdon, "Lecture on the Early History of the Mormon Church," F 297, LDS Archives, pp. 62-65. A parallel account is found in his "Lecture by John W. Rigdon on the Early History of the Mormon Church," Washington State Historical Society, pp. 54-56 (photocopy at Utah State Historical Society).

A refutation is found in "John W. Rigdon's Affidavit," SH (August 30, 1905):826-827. It pointed out that Joseph Smith III visited Liberty Jail three times, and John W. Rigdon was present only one of these three times.


13. Lyman Wight to the Northern Islander, July 1855, Lyman Wight Letterbook, RLDS Archives, p. 24. (Spelling as in original.) Wight's expression, "came out of jail to lay hands... on him," raises some minor historical problems. Wight may have slipped with his pen, intending to say, "shortly after we came into jail." Or, more likely, he may refer to the basement of Liberty Jail, in which they were housed, as the "jail," in which case he meant to say that the blessing took place outside of their living quarters, upstairs on the ground floor (or even at the
doorway of the jail). Conceivably he could refer to another blessing after the prisoners gained their freedom in April 1839, but this seems unlikely. Lastly, he simply may have confused his chronology.


14In 1861 W. W. Blair was told by former members of Lyman Wight's colony that Wight always taught that Young Joseph someday would lead the church, and that he had been present with Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Liberty Jail, where "they put their hands on the lad's head (then but 6 years old) and the martyr then and there sealed prophetically that calling and blessing upon him." Soon afterwards Blair asked Joseph Smith III about this blessing. Joseph told him that he could remember visiting his father in prison but could not remember the blessing. However, he stated that he could remember a similar blessing in 1844. See "Mission of Bro. W. W. Blair. No. 1," SH 8 (October 1, 1865):101. Blair may have misunderstood Joseph's statement. The RLDS president may have told him that he could not remember the content of the blessing or the form of words employed, because in 1868 Joseph Smith III stated: "In Liberty jail the promise and blessing of a life of usefulness to the cause of truth was pronounced upon our head by lips tainted by dungeon damps, and by the spirit confirmed through attesting witnesses." See "Pleasant Chat," SH 14 (October 1, 1868):103.

In later years, Joseph Smith III definitely claimed to have been blessed by his father in Liberty Jail. See his letters to T. W. Davis, June 10, 1893, LB #4, p. 425; to A. V. Gibbons, June 1, 1893, LB #4, p. 391; and to H. C. Smith, November 1, 1894, LB #5, p. 433. In none of these letters does he claim to remember the content of the blessing, merely that it occurred. In Memoirs, p. 2, he specifically disclaimed memory of the content of the blessing. Cf. Heman C. Smith, "Succession in the Presidency," pp. 9-10.


16II Nephi 2:10-29 (RLDS); II Nephi 3:6-15 (LDS).


18Joseph Fielding Smith, The Life of Joseph F. Smith: Sixth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ([Salt Lake City]: Deseret News Press, 1938), pp. 34-36.

19Revelation of December 6, 1832 (RLDS D&C 84:3; LDS D&C 86:10).

larger context of Joseph Smith's theology.

21Lucy Mack Smith, Blessing of Joseph Smith III, dictated to Martha Coray, Summer of 1845, LDS Archives.

22Baby Dan Carlos Smith was born June 13, 1840. On December 26, 1842, another son of Joseph and Emma Smith died at birth.

23On the junior auxiliary of the Nauvoo Legion, see Joseph Smith III, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?" Journal of History 3 (April 1910):135-137; "Still Later from Nauvoo," New-York Messenger 2 (September 6, 1845):78; and "The Nauvoo Legion," Warsaw Signal, August 13, 1845. In later life Joseph Smith III regarded the martial spirit surrounding the Nauvoo Legion to have been a mistake, and he never mentioned his own participation. However, Schuyler Everett recalled that Young Joseph had been the first lieutenant and his cousin John Smith the second lieutenant in the junior auxiliary. See "Biography of Schuyler and Rachel Everett," W.P.A. Historical Records Survey Typescript, Film 920 #1, Brigham Young University.

24On Joseph Smith III's baptism see Memoirs, pp. 70, 101; Tullidge, p. 744; and "Pleasant Chat," SH 14 (October 1, 1868):104. The baptism may have occurred as early as the spring of 1842, because in the Nauvoo, Illinois, "Record of Members, 1841-1845," p. 55, Joseph Smith, Emma Smith, Julia Smith, and Joseph Smith, Junior are listed as members of the Fourth Ward, in a list compiled in the spring of 1842. In his later recollections, Joseph Smith III thought the baptism occurred in 1843.


29Several recent studies summarize the evidence concerning polygamy in Nauvoo. See Lawrence Foster, Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Brodie, No Man Knows My History; Hill, Joseph Smith; The First Mormon; and Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner's work Joseph Smith and Polygamy (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co., n.d.) collates a large amount of data, within an anti-Mormon perspective. Daniel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith," M.A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975, is an excellent study.


32 Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," p. 15.

33 LDS D&C Section 132.


35 Ibid., p. 16.

36 A good study of the doctrinal developments in Nauvoo is T. Edgar Lyon, "Doctrinal Developments of the Church during the Nauvoo Sojourn, 1839-1846," Brigham Young University Studies 15 (Summer 1975):435-446. On April 7, 1844, Joseph Smith preached the funeral sermon of elder King Follett, who had died accidentally. This sermon came to be called the "King Follett Discourse," and was noteworthy for its incorporation of many of the most revolutionary themes in Joseph Smith's theology. See HC 6:302-317. Three important recent studies are: Donald Q. Cannon, "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective," Brigham Young University Studies 15 (Winter 1978):179-192; Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," Brigham Young University Studies 18 (Winter 1978):193-208; and Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," Brigham Young University Studies 18 (Winter 1978):209-225. Hale, p. 213, summarizes the four most important concepts in the sermon: (1) Men can become gods; (2) Many gods exist; (3) The gods exist one above another innumerable; and (4) God was once as man now is. He also demonstrates that each of these concepts had antecedents in Joseph Smith's thought, prior to 1844.

37 D. Michael Quinn, "Joseph Smith III's 1844 Blessing and the Mormons of Utah," John Whitmer Historical Association Journal 1 (1981):15, points out that James Whitehead's later claim that this was a meeting of the Nauvoo High Council is unsubstantiated by the High Council's minutes. Whether this was a formal council of some sort or an informal meeting of elders is unknown at present.

38 More than one elder may have held the horn of oil during the ceremony. This and other details are derived from the recollections of James Whitehead in In the Circuit Court of the United States, Western District of Missouri, Western Division, at Kansas City. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Complainant vs. the Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri; Richard Hill, Trustee, Mrs. E. Hill, C. A. Hall, President; Mrs. C. A. Hall, George Frisbie, Mrs. E. Frisbie, Miss Nannie Frisbie, Daniel Beeder, and G. D. Cole, as Members of and Doing Business under the Name of the Church of Christ at Independence.

39 Joseph Smith, Jr., Blessing of Joseph Smith III, January 17, 1844, RLDS Archives. The existence of this document was unknown until 1981. It is written in the distinctive handwriting of Joseph Smith's scribe, Thomas Bullock. The document is photographically reproduced in a small pamphlet, For He Shall Be My Successor ([Independence, Missouri:] Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1981). It is transcribed in Dean C. Jessee, ed., The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984), pp. 565-566.

40 W. W. Blair, Journal, June 17, 1874, RLDS Archives.

41 Cf. Complainant's Abstract, p. 33. Whitehead's testimony was widely circulated within the RLDS Church in the 1890s. A typical statement is found in his "Testimony Given April 1895," RLDS Archives. Here he stated that Joseph and Hyrum Smith placed their hands upon Young Joseph's head to bless him and Newel K. Whitney poured the oil upon his head. Hyrum blessed the youth with a patriarchal blessing, according to Whitehead, and "then Joseph ordained him to be a prophet seer translator revelator and holding all the gifts and blessings of the first elder of the church and his successor in office. Also he said my son you must be patient and wait the appointed time of the Lord and he will direct you where to go." Whitehead added, to reinforce the proper RLDS conclusions: "I was an ear and eye witness to the above. I never heard Joseph preach polygamy. He did not believe it." As Quinn, "Joseph Smith Ill's 1844 Blessing and the Mormons of Utah," p. 15, has concluded, Whitehead's core recollections about the blessing are credible, because his earlier accounts were accompanied by admissions damaging to the RLDS apologetic position (i.e., that Joseph Smith, Jr. taught and practiced polygamy). His later embellishments are demonstrably inaccurate.

42 W. W. Blair, Journal, May 17, 1865, RLDS Archives. According to Blair's entry, this information was given to him at Nauvoo by Emma Smith Bidamon and Alexander Hale Smith.


44 Joseph Smith III to Joseph Flanders, January 5, 1895, LB #5, p. 481. Cf. Memoirs, p. 79; Joseph Smith III to A. V. Gibbons, June 1, 1893, LB #4, p. 391; and "Pleasant Chat," SH 14 (October 1, 1868):105. Unlike some of his colleagues, Joseph Smith III always called this a blessing rather than an ordination, holding that one could not be ordained to an office while another yet held it. Cf. Complainant's Abstract, p. 79.

45 Joseph Smith III, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?" p. 142.


49 Complainant's Abstract, p. 33.


51 "Pleasant Chat," SH 14 (October 1, 1868): 105. See also Complainant's Abstract, pp. 40-41.

52 Complainant's Abstract, pp. 179-181.

53 Affidavit of Sophia K. Cook, September 13, 1900; Affidavit of George Washington Bird, June 13, 1910; and Affidavit of Elizabeth E. Cowlishaw, June 13, 1910. All three affidavits are in the RLDS Archives.

54 Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, p. 387.

55 Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 307.

56 Ibid., pp. 306-308; Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, p. 387; and Brodie, No Man Knows My History, p. 367.

57 Bennett's charges were widely printed in the press and later collected into a book entitled The History of the Saints; or, an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism (Boston: Leland & Whiting; New York: Bradburn, Soden, & Co.; Cincinnati: E. S. Norris & Co., 1842). This expose included tales of sexual escapades, financial swindles, murderous Danites, and plans for a Mormon empire.

58 After Boggs recovered, he swore to an affidavit charging Joseph Smith with being an accessory before the fact to the attempted murder. Missouri's Governor Reynolds then demanded the prophet's extradition from Illinois. For some months, Joseph Smith led a harried existence trying to avoid arrest. Rockwell was investigated by the Jackson County Grand Jury, but the Grand Jury declined to indict him due to lack of evidence. HC 6:36.


60 Joseph Smith III, untitled Biographical Sketch of Emma Hale Smith, P13, f2302, RLDS Archives, pp. 10-11.

61 Ibid., p. 11.


64 Joseph Smith III, untitled Biographical Sketch of Emma Hale Smith, pp. 16-17.


An illuminating picture of Mormon dissent within Nauvoo is found in George F. Partridge, ed., "The Death of a Mormon Dictator: Letters of Massachusetts Mormons, 1843-1848," The New England Quarterly: An Historical Review of New England Life and Letters 9 (December 1936):583-617. Isaac and Sarah Scott, two of the letter-writers, still retained faith in the Mormon gospel they had first heard, but were shocked at the introduction of doctrines such as the plurality of gods, plural marriage, sealing up to eternal life; and practices such as lying to outsiders about polygamy and summary excommunication of dissidents. They viewed the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith as divine judgment for transgression. Such Mormons as these could not accept the leadership of Brigham Young and later found a natural home in the RLDS Church.

67HC 6:432-448.

68Ibid. 6:453-458 & 479-552. In HC 6:449-452 it is alleged that (an embittered) Emma Smith induced her husband to return and face the charges against him. This is challenged by Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, pp. 183-191. Cf. Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," p. 22, which states that investors who faced losses were the ones who prevailed upon the prophet to return.

69HC 6:554-558.

70Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, p. 403.

71Joseph Smith III to A. V. Gibbons, June 1, 1893, LB #4, pp. 391-392. Additional references by Joseph Smith to this blessing may be found in Tullidge, p. 744; Memoirs, p. 331; "Pleasant Chat," SH 14 (October 1, 1869):105; Joseph Smith III to T. W. Davis, June 10, 1893, LB #4, p. 425; Joseph Smith III to H. C. Smith, November 1, 1894, LB #5, p. 433; and Joseph Smith III to Fred Salisbury, June 3, 1897, RLDS Archives.

Late in life, in denying that she ever endorsed the claims of J. J. Strong, Katharine Salisbury (Joseph Smith's sister) claimed that to have done so would have been inconsistent, because she "was present at the council when the present Joseph Smith was Ordained and set apart to lead the Church by his Father the week before he was killed at Carthage." Josephine Salisbury to "Bro. George" (Lambert?), n.d., P21, f92, RLDS Archives. This claim must be viewed with a certain degree of skepticism, because in June 1844 the Salisbury family lived in Plymouth, Illinois. See Solomon J. Salisbury, "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian," Journal of History 15 (January 1922):18-20.

72Joseph Luff to Joseph Smith III, July 7, 1880, RLDS Archives. Luff continued: "I write this to ask you if there is any truth in it. It is new to me, and if true, ought to be known more generally.

"I take her statements at a large discount, as a rule; but this she avows is a
solemn truth. She is a great advocate of nearly all the absurdities out here; but says she knows they were and are wrong regarding the Successor."

HC 6:558-574.

For an account of the prophet's death, see Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, pp. 405-418; and HC 6:612-621.

Accounts differ concerning whether Joseph Smith died of shots received at the window or of final wounds administered after he landed on the ground.
Chapter 2

1 HC 6:621-622; CHC 2:289-290.

2 HC 6:624-625; CHC 2:291.


4 Ibid., pp. 336-337.

5 HC 6:627.

6 Smith, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?," p. 337. But cf. the reported reaction of Olive Frost, as reported in N. W. Green, Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition. Embracing the Narrative of Mrs. Mary Effie V. Smith, of Her Residence and Experience of Fifteen Years with the Mormons: Containing a Full and Authentic Account of Their Social Condition—Their Religious Doctrines, and Political Government (Hartford: Belknap & Bliss, 1870), p. 36, where this plural wife of Joseph Smith is reported to have gone "entirely mad" at news of the prophet's death.

7 HC 6:627-628; Smith, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?," p. 337. In the fall, at Emma Smith's request, the bodies were exhumed and buried near the Mansion. Rumors were afloat in later years about the true location of the prophet's grave, but Joseph Smith III never placed any credence in them, because he had been present upon one occasion when a hole was dug and a lock of hair clipped from the head of his father.

8 This last point is made by Thomas Ford, A History of Illinois from its Commencement As a State in 1818 to 1847. Containing a Full Account of the Black Hawk War, the Rise, Progress, and Fall of Mormonism, the Alton and Lovejoy Riots, and Other Important and Interesting Events (Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co.; New York: Ivison & Phinney, 1854), pp. 334 and 351.


11 HC 7:183, 184, 213, 228.

12 The lawyer's name is sometimes given as "Woods" and sometimes as "Wood." He signed his name James Wm. Woods in a receipt to Emma Smith, dated Nauvoo, June 13, 1846, acknowledging receipt of $85.00 for services and advice,
Wilford C. Wood Collection (microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms f 413, Reel 25). Cf. Times and Seasons 5 (July 1, 1844):564.


14Ibid., entries for July 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 1844; pp. 31-32; HC 7:183; Parley Parker Pratt, The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Embracing His Life, Ministry and Travels, with Extracts, in Prose and Verse, from His Miscellaneous Writings, ed. by Parley P. Pratt [Jr.] (New York: Published for the Editor and Proprietor by Russell Brothers, 1874), p. 373.


16Entry for July 6, 1844, Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 31.

17On Emma Smith's support for William Marks, see James M. Monroe, "Journal Kept During Private Tuition of the Prophet Joseph's Children and Also Bro Taylor's," April 24, 1845, Coe Collection, Yale University (microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms f 783). On William Marks' opposition, in the High Council, to the prophet's revelation on polygamy, see The Historical Record 6 (May 1887):226-228. On Emma Smith's resistance to the prophet's teaching and practice of polygamy, see The Historical Record 6 (May 1887):225-226.

18Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 32.

19The evidence shows that, on the contrary, she supported William Marks, and later toyed with the idea of supporting her brother-in-law, William Smith. Donna Hill's contention, Joseph Smith, p. 421, that Emma Smith advanced Joseph Smith III's claims to the presidency, in 1844, is without foundation.

20Entry for July 2, 1844, Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 31.

21Ibid., July 2, 1844, p. 31.

22On the death of Samuel H. Smith, see HC 7:213-222. For Willard Richards' warning that William should not return to Nauvoo, see his remarks in a letter to Brigham Young, June 30, 1844, in HC 7:148. Another reason William Smith stayed in the east was the serious illness of his wife Caroline.

23Relations between Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith had been deteriorating for some time. See Jedediah M. Grant, A Collection of Facts, Relative to the Course Taken by Elder Sidney Rigdon, in the States of Ohio, Missouri, Illinois and Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking & Gulbert, 1844), passim; Orson Hyde, Speech of Elder Orson Hyde Delivered before the High Priests Quorum in Nauvoo, April 27th, 1845, upon the Course and Conduct of Mr. Sidney Rigdon, and upon the Merits of His Claims to the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (City of Joseph: Printed by John Taylor, 1845), pp. 6-10; and McKiernan, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, pp.
Rigdon's removal from Nauvoo to Pittsburgh is usually attributed to his soured relationship with the prophet, but another possible reason for the move to Pennsylvania may have been related to Joseph Smith's presidential campaign, in which Rigdon was the vice presidential candidate. The move to Pittsburgh may have been done with an eye toward establishing a legal residence in a different state from that of Joseph Smith, due to the constitutional provision prohibiting members of the electoral college from casting ballots for both a president and a vice president residing in the same state as themselves (12th Amendment).


26"The Life Record of Anson Call," p. 29.

27Part of the deal called for Marks to assume the office of patriarch, in exchange for supporting Rigdon. See entry for August 7, 1844, Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 34.

28HC 7:229-230; Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 34.

29Later accounts of Brigham Young's speech spoke of him being "transfigured," taking on the very appearance, voice, and manner of the slain prophet. Traditional Mormon historiography argued that this was a divine testimony that Brigham was to inherit the prophet's mantle. See, e.g., Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe, The Life Story of Brigham Young (New York: Macmillan Company, 1930), p. 41. However, Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," p. 212, points out that the many accounts of the "transfiguration" are retrospective, none having been recorded at the time of its purported occurrence. Brigham Young probably encouraged comparisons between himself and Joseph Smith. Henry and Catharine Brooke, in November 1844, spoke of Brigham Young as favoring "Br Joseph, both in person, & manner of speaking, more than any person ever you saw, look like another." See Henry and Catharine Brooke to Leonard and Mary Pickel, November 15, 1844, Coe Collection, Yale University (microfilm at LDS Archives). Orson Hyde recognized the possibility that Brigham Young was utilizing his skills as a mimic to imitate the prophet's speech, but concluded that the transfiguration was more than mere mimicry. See Journal of Discourses 13:181.

30HC 7:233.

31Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," p. 211.

32McKiernan, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, pp. 130-131; HC 7:268-269. A lengthy account, the "Trial of Elder Rigdon," is found in Times and Seasons 5 (September 15, October 1, and October 15, 1844):647-655, 660-667, 685-687.
Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," pp. 191-193; McKiernan, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, pp. 133-145. There is some evidence that Sidney Rigdon (for a brief time in the fall of 1844) told his eastern followers that he was the guardian of the church until Young Joseph was old enough to assume the presidency. See Walter Wayne Smith, "Local Historians: Philadelphia Branch," Journal of History 13 (October 1920):514, and Heman C. Smith, "Succession in the Presidency," pp. 12-14.

HC 7:247.

Ibid., 7:247-265.

Entries for July 13, 14, and 15, 1844 in Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 33; and Journal History, July 17, 1844. The letters of administration, signed by David Greenleaf, Probate Justices of the Peace, are found in the Wilford C. Wood Collection (microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms F 413, Reel 25).

Entry for August 8, 1844, Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 35.

Entry for August 15, 1844, Clayton, Secret Writings, pp. 35-36.

Entry for August 18, 1844, Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 37. As the confrontation between Emma and the Twelve grew, the tangled nature of the prophet's affairs was to be used as a weapon by both sides. An early example of this occurred four days later. Daniel Spencer, the new mayor of Nauvoo, together with the municipal marshal and treasurer, sent Emma a letter informing her that John Robinson held a note from the city for $1,500, dated January 8, 1844, and that her husband had kept $1,000 of that amount for his personal use, and that she was, therefore, responsible for paying the $1,000. Daniel Spencer, John P. Greene, and William Clayton to Emma Smith, August 22, 1844, Huntington Library.

On the trip to Quincy, see Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 33. Ralston's advice is found in James H. Ralston to Emma Smith, August 20, 1844, Wilford C. Wood Collection (microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms f 413, Reel 25).

Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 37; cf. the entry for August 27, which speaks of Sidney Rigdon, William Marks, and Emma Smith trying to draw off an opposition party.

Dallin H. Oaks and Joseph L. Bentley, "Joseph Smith and Legal Process: In the Wake of the Steamboat Nauvoo," Brigham Young University Law Review, vol. 1976, p. 767. Originally, Emma Smith had posted bond for $2,000. On September 11th, she was directed to enter into a new bond of $6,000, within five days. Failing to do so, on September 18th, her letters of administration were revoked, and the following day, Joseph W. Coolidge replaced her as administrator, having entered into bond for $6,000. (See untitled typescript based on Hancock County court records, Wilford C. Wood Collection, Ms f 413, Reel 10, LDS Archives.) Emma's suspicion that someone was using political leverage to gain control of the estate does not seem farfetched.

Memoirs, p. 38.
In his autobiography, in Tullidge, p. 745, Joseph Smith III recalled that repeated demands for his father's private papers, journals, and correspondence brought an invariable denial, "and it was only with seeming reluctance that some title deeds and unimportant papers were accorded" to his mother. HC 7:260 records that on August 19, 1844, Apostle Willard Richards called on Emma Smith, requesting that she turn over the manuscript of the Inspired Translation of the Bible, but that she refused, stating that she "did not feel disposed to give it up at present."

Memoirs, p. 27.

Ibid.

In his diary, Oliver Boardman Huntington, recorded that at the time of David's birth, "It was intimated by old Mrs. Durphee and others that Joseph the prophet, had said that he (David Hyram which name Joseph gave him before his death) was to be the David the Bible speaks of to rule over Israel forever, which David spok[en] of most people took to be old Kin[g] David." See "Diary of Oliver Boardman Huntington," typescript, LDS Archives, p. 53.


Joseph Smith III, "Rules of Behavior for Youth," January, 1845, Brigham Young University. A notation in the manuscript-index reads: "Written by Joseph Smith Jr. Copied by William Huntington, dated January 1845. From his diary... These rules based on George Washington's Rule of Civility." ("Joseph Smith, Jr." was the name frequently given to Young Joseph after the death of his grandfather.)

Memoirs, pp. 8-17.

Ibid., p. 1.

For important events which Young Joseph did not attend, see Memoirs, pp. 27, 37. Cf. William Smith to James J. Strang, December 25, 1846, Quaife Collection, Yale University (typescript at University of Utah), in which William complains that Emma would not let Young Joseph have "any thing to do with Mormonism at present..."

"Lecture by Joseph Smith before the Men's League Sunday Afternoon, Feb. 28, 1909," RLDS Archives.

Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 218; Times and Seasons
57 George Miller, Correspondence of Bishop George Miller with the Northern Islander: From His First Acquaintance with Mormonism up to Near the Close of His Life. Written by Himself in the Year 1855 (Burlington, Wisconsin?: Wingfield Watson, 1916?), p. 23.

58 John D. Lee, Mormonism Unveiled; or the Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee (Written by Himself): Embracing a History of Mormonism from Its Inception down to the Present Time, with an Exposition of the Secret History, Signs, Symbols and Crimes of the Mormon Church. Also the True Story of the Horrible Butchery Known As the Mountain Meadows Massacre (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Company, New York: W. H. Stelle & Co., 1877), p. 155.

59 Ibid., p. 161-162. That this account is not simply a bitter invention of Lee, designed to wound Brigham Young (whom he considered had abandoned him to impending execution) is seen from an article entitled "Apostates' Last Hobby," New-York Messenger 2 (September 20, 1845):92. Here Parley P. Pratt condemned George J. Adams' advocacy of Joseph Smith III, as jeopardizing the life of an innocent lad to further Adams' own ambitions: "Little Joseph is not the secret spring that incites to action, but my own dear self wants the power, and I must make him my cat's paw to get it . . . ." Pratt cautioned the church to be silent about the matter and not to agitate the question. In due time, it was vaguely promised, Young Joseph might be raised to a position of leadership, "at a proper time when he who holds the keys to the Presidency shall be moved by the spirit of God to make the proposition." At that time, he would be accepted by the universal acclamation of the Saints, but until such a time, the Saints were counselled to "be silent upon this subject . . . . If any speak before that time upon these matters, and try to urge a premature action, he cannot be a saint."

60 Henry Brown, The History of Illinois, from Its First Discovery and Settlement, to the Present Time (New-York: J. Winchester, New World Press, 1844), p. 489, states, "The prophet, it is said, has left a will or revelation appointing a successor; and, among other things, it is stated that his son, a lad of twelve years, is named therein as his successor. Of this, however, there is no certainty." James Burgess, SH 5 (April 15, 1864):126, later recollected that when he returned to Nauvoo in 1845, he found that several aspirants to leadership had arisen, "but in the midst of this confusion and disorder there was an idea generally entertained by the saints, that Joseph's oldest son was the one appointed to succeed his father as President of the whole church, and in consequence of his youth they saw no alternative but to wait until the time appointed by infinite wisdom." Joseph Smith III, himself, later recalled that it was common knowledge in Nauvoo that he had been designated his father's successor, and that Brigham Young had quieted such talk by saying that it would lead to Young Joseph's murder. See Joseph Smith III to A. V. Gibbons, June 1, 1893, LB #4, p. 392.

61 Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, pp. 320-322.

63Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," p. 233. Quinn's suggestion, however, that the course pursued by the Twelve, in assuming control of the church's government, was likewise at the secret direction of Joseph Smith, wherein he conferred authority "upon a select group of individuals without previous public announcement or approval," is unconvincing. From the evidence he himself presents in his masterful article, Quinn would do better to conclude that Joseph Smith left a confused legacy concerning the succession, and that, in the midst of a crisis, the Twelve hit upon a solution whereby to continue the prophet's legacy. Whether Brigham Young's later policy toward the sons of the prophet can be construed as "loyalty to Joseph Smith and his prophetic office" is a moot question.

64This and the following paragraphs based upon Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, pp. 323-329; Ford, History of Illinois, pp. 403-412.

65One of the most graphic pictures of the mob's actions and the reaction of Backenstos' posse is found in "The Life Record of Anson Call," pp. 31-34.

66The most complete study, to date, is found in Thurmon Dean Moody, "Nauvoo's Whistling and Whittling Brigade," Brigham Young University Studies 15 (Summer 1975): 480-490. Hosea Stout was chief of police in Nauvoo, at this time. For a depiction, albeit a circumspect one, of the vigilance of the Nauvoo police, see Hosea Stout, On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout 1844-1861, ed. Juanita Brooks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press and Utah State Historical Society, 1964), 1:3-117.

67Tullidge, p. 749; Stout, Diary, p. 49.

68B. Huntington, "Diary," p. 54; Smith, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?" p. 338.

69Memoirs, p. 38; Tullidge, pp. 746-747; Smith, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?" pp. 338-339.

Joseph Smith III to Mrs. D. C. Chase, January 7, 1893, RLDS Archives, remarked:

"Mother was a keen student of human character; was distrustful of Pres. B. Young at quite an early period of their acquaintance. And after my father's death, was put under a most tralizing course of espionage by Pres Young during the summer, fall and winter of 1845, and spring of 1846, and was roundly denounced as an apostate, together with a number of others who realized the drift of affairs."

70Valen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, "The Lion and the Lady: Brigham Young and Emma Smith," Utah Historical Quarterly 48 (Winter 1980): 81-97. While the argument of Avery and Newell, that theological, ethical, and financial differences, rather than personal distaste for one another, led to the rupture between Brigham and Emma, is persuasive, it requires slight modification. Avery and Newell argued from silence that there was no evidence of longstanding personal enmity between the two, antedating the introduction of plural marriage. This assertion, however, is contradicted by Joseph Smith III's statement cited in n. 69.
71 Monroe, "Journal," April 24, 1845.

72 Lucy Meserve Smith, "Historical Record of Lucy M. Smith," LDS Archives, p. 18. Cf. her "Personal Letter," dated May 18, 1892, LDS Archives. Interestingly, Lucy Meserve Smith records that one day when Julia Murdock Smith was repeating some of her step-mother's hostile remarks about the Twelve, "Joseph spoke up and said there are two in this family who will be sorry for going on against the Twelve, as they do."

73 No credible documentary evidence exists that Brigham Young ever proposed marriage to Emma Smith, although speculation existed. The muckraking writer, Stanley P. Hirshon, The Lion of the Lords: A Biography of Brigham Young (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 225, n. 1, can only cite an article in the New York World, October 2, 1870, to support his contention that Emma Smith spurned Brigham's advances. That Brigham Young would have married Emma, if she had been receptive, seems likely. Whether a proposal was made before relations became embittered seems utterly improbable, given the fact that Emma was feuding with the Twelve before Brigham ever returned to Nauvoo, and that things went from bad to worse after his return.


75 Tullidge, pp. 748-749.


Entry for May 23, 1845, Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 63. Cf. HC 7:417. Adams is George J. Adams, who had been excommunicated April 10, 1845. There were two reasons for his being cut off. First, there was his too open practice of plural marriage in the east. Second, there was his advocacy of Joseph Smith III as the proper successor of his father, whom he had witnessed anointed and blessed by Joseph Smith, Jr., on January 17, 1844. Adams mentions this latter difference with the Twelve in a letter to A. R. Tewkesbury, June 14, 1846, LDS Archives: "I have suffered much persecution since I left Boston and much abuse because I cannot support the Twelve as the first presidency, I cannot do it when I know that it belongs to Joseph's son—Young Joseph who was ordained by his father before his death—Brigham Young is a usurper, a tyrant, and an apostate, but be patient and all things will go well." On William's marriage, see the Nauvoo Neighbor, July 2, 1845, and the sly remarks in the Warsaw Signal, July 2, 1845. The Signal mentioned that the bride's age was sixteen.

HC 7:418; George A. Smith, "History of George Albert Smith 1814-1847," entry for May 24, 1845, University of Utah (photocopy).


There was also conflict over an article appearing in the Times and Seasons. See George A. Smith, "History," June 30, 1845, and Times and Seasons 6 (June 1, 1845):920-922. In this number of the church paper, editor John Taylor repudiated statements made in the previous number (May 15, 1845, pp. 904-906), which were, he said, the over-hasty composition of junior editor W. W. Phelps. The controversial article, under the heading "Patriarchal," had called William Smith Patriarch over the church. Taylor asserted that William was only Patriarch to the church, and that the patriarchal office stood beneath the presidency. Furthermore, taking aim at William's claims based on lineal descent, Taylor argued that the office depended not so much on genealogy as on calling, order, and seniority. He pointedly observed that, after the crucifixion, Peter presided over the church, not one of Christ's brothers. (An abbreviated version of Phelps' offending article appeared in the Nauvoo Neighbor, June 11, 1845. Taylor's rebuttal also was printed in the Neighbor of June 25th.)


Ibid., entry for June 24, 1845, p. 65.

86 Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 66; George A. Smith, "History," June 28, 1845; Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," p. 203, n. 45. Lucy Mack Smith's three visions were copied into John Taylor's journal. See Taylor, "Nauvoo Journal," pp. 63-64 (entry for June 27, 1845). Until the recent publication of Taylor's journal, the visions were only available to general scholars in B. H. Roberts, Succession in the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Geo. Q. Cannon & Sons Publishing Company, 1900), pp. 22-24.

87 On William's position, see Clayton, Secret Writings, pp. 84ff, and Taylor, "Nauvoo Journal," pp. 65-68 (entry for June 30, 1845).


89 William Smith to "Bro Little," August 20, 1845, typescripts at Utah State Historical Society and University of Utah.

90 HC 7:434; also entry for August 2, 1845 in Clayton, Secret Writings, p. 68.


92 William Smith to "Bro Robbins," October 5, 1845, William Smith Papers, LDS Archives, as quoted in Donna Hill, Joseph Smith, p. 425. On William Smith's stay with George J. Adams, see George A. Smith, "History," September 26, 1845. William's sister Katharine later claimed that William's life had been threatened: "my folks and myself and husband did not believe in brigham taking joseph [sic] place and they sought to take the life of my brother william and also my husband and they had to leave the city to save their lives . . . ." Katharine Salisbury to "Dear friend," February 26, 1889, RLDS Archives. A similar account is found in Mary B. Smith Norman to Ina Coolbrith, March 27, 1908 and April 24, 1908, RLDS Archives.

93 HC 7:458-460, 470-472, 483; Times and Seasons 6 (November 1, 1845):1008-1009, 1013-1014.


96 HC 7:454-455.
97Hill, Joseph Smith, p. 435.

98Benjamin F. Johnson, "A Life Review," LDS Archives, p. 103, stated: "I was appointed with Bp. N. K. Whitney, to visit Sister Emma for the last time, and if possible persuade her to remain with the Church. Nearly all night we labored with her, and she would be the leading spirit. And so we left her. And she did lead all who would follow her so long as she lived."

Both RLDS and LDS sources indicate that substantial inducements were offered to her if she would go west with the Saints. Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, "Lucy Mack Smith and the Latter Day Saints, Journal of History 16 (January 1923):8, states concerning her grandmother, Emma Smith: "Flattery, promises of ease, luxury, wealth, when found to be unavailing, were followed by threats, persecutions, and humiliating espionage." Joseph Fielding Smith, Life of Joseph F. Smith, p. 130, states that his grandmother, Mary Fielding Smith received no such offers of assistance as were made to Emma Smith: "President Brigham Young had made every effort by promise of extended help to Emma Smith, widow of the Prophet, to aid her to make the journey west with the exiled Saints; but all such offers were haughtily refused. . . . Such extended help was not offered to the widow of Hyrum Smith."

The Twelve also wished to disinter her husband's remains and bury them in the "Tomb of Joseph," according to his wishes. Emma Smith refused. See Times and Seasons 6 (November 1, 1845):1014.

99Memoirs, pp. 28-29.

100Ibid., pp. 30-31.


103Tippets and Avery, "The Lion and the Lady," p. 95. Others shared the perception that Emma Smith was well-to-do. W. E. Matlock, recently arrived in the city, described her as a wealthy hotel owner. He also mentioned that the Mansion House enjoyed a "constant influx of strangers" which kept it perpetually filled. He also took notice of Emma's plans to rent the hotel, in May, and "retire to her private residence, on the banks of the river, and devote her time to the education of her children." See "Local Affairs," Hancock Eagle, April 10, 1846.

104"Local Affairs" column, Hancock Eagle, April 10 and 24, May 29, June 5, 1846.


106Ford, History of Illinois, pp. 414-415. Ford ascribed the vote for the Democrats as an act of gratitude to James K. Polk after the enlistment of the Mormon Battalion.
107Ibid., pp. 416-417.


111Joseph Smith III, Memoirs, p. 39, seems to imply that the rental occurred just prior to the departure from Nauvoo, but this is inaccurate. Notices in the Hancock Eagle (April 24 and May 1, 1846) prove that Van Tuyl had occupied the Mansion since May 1, 1846. Perhaps a formal lease was signed in September.

112Smith, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?," pp. 341-342; Memoirs, p. 39. Uncle Toby is spelled variously by Joseph Smith III in his writings. George B. Merrick, Old Times on the Upper Mississippi: The Recollections of a Steamboat Pilot from 1854 to 1863 (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company 1909), p. 291 gives the correct spelling, based on written records. This work also lists George B. Cole as captain of the vessel in 1846. Joseph Smith III recollected the captain's name as "Grimes."


115Ibid., pp. 426-436.
Chapter 3

1Memoirs, p. 39; Tullidge, p. 751; "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?" pp. 342-343. The date of arrival at Fulton City is given in the Journal of Abby B. Jenks Rice, as cited by Valeen Tippetts Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," p. 32.

Ironically, housekeeper Servilla Durfee secretly had been a plural wife of Joseph Smith, Jr.; see Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), pp. 302, 305, and 469. Another of those who stayed with Emma Smith that winter was Lovina Walker, eldest daughter of Hyrum Smith and wife of Lorin Walker. She later swore that her Aunt Emma "in Fulton City . . . in the year 1846, . . . told me that she, Emma Smith, was present and witnessed the marrying or sealing of Eliza Partridge, Emily Partridge, Maria Lawrence and Sarah Lawrence to her husband, Joseph Smith, and that she gave her consent thereto." See The Historical Record 7 (May 1887):223. Emma Smith's policy of denying that her husband practiced plural marriage therefore must have begun sometime after her return to Nauvoo, when living in an environment largely composed of Gentiles.


6Quaife, The Kingdom of Saint James, p. 27.

7James J. Strang to Emma Smith, February 22, 1846, Chicago Historical Society (microfilm at LDS Archives).

8Quaife, The Kingdom of Saint James, pp. 22-25.

9See the broadside entitled, Minutes of a Conference Held by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (N.p.: n.d.), published sometime after William Smith's conference held in Cincinnati, January 6, 1846. This broadside contains a portion of a letter from Lucy Mack Smith to William Smith, October
28, 1845, indicating that William already had prevailed upon his mother not to go west and that she supported him in his schismatic activities.

Concerning William's activities in Nauvoo, during March and April, see Warsaw Signal, March 11, March 18, and April 8, 1846. See also William Smith to James J. Strang, March 17, 1846, Yale University (typescript at University of Utah). Something of the nature of William's efforts to secure an "inheritance" for his mother and sisters, from the church, may be gathered from the broadside of Almon W. Babbitt, entitled, To the Public (Nauvoo: n.p., 1846?).

Voree Herald, July 1846. Thomas Sharp, who looked favorably upon all divisive movements within the Mormon camp, gleefully reprinted William's letter in the Warsaw Signal, August 18, 1846. The endorsement of Strang by these members of the Smith family also was carried on the back wrapper of T. Horton's A True History of the Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints—Of the Restoration of the Holy Priesthood. And of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records, Collected from the Most Authentick Sources Ever Published to the World. Which Unfolds the History of This Continent from the Earliest Ages after the Flood, to the Beginning of the Fifth Century of the Christian Era. With a Sketch of the Faith and Doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Also a Brief Outline of Their Persecution, and Martyrdom of Their Prophet Joseph Smith and the Appointment of His Successor James J. Strang (Geneva, New York: Gazette Print., n.d.). See Dale L. Morgan, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [Strangite]," Western Humanities Review 5 (Winter 1950):61.

William Smith to James J. Strang, December 7, 1846, Yale University (typescript at University of Utah).

Ibid. Cf. the recollections of Solomon J. Salisbury, "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian," Journal of History 15 (January 1922):20-22. Salisbury places their location at Alexandria, Missouri, and states that the family was forced to leave Nauvoo in March, 1846, because of their refusal to accept Brigham Young's leadership. He makes no mention of his father's support for William Smith. His mother, in her old age, denied that she had ever signed the endorsement of Strang. See "Testimony of Katharine Salisbury," SH 46 (April 26, 1899):261; Katharine Salisbury to George Lambert, February 10, 1899, RLDS Archives; and Josephine Salisbury to "Bro. George" (Lambert?), n.d., P21, f92, RLDS Archives.

Letters of William Smith to James J. Strang, December 2, 7, and 19, 1846, Yale University (typescript at University of Utah).

William Smith to James J. Strang, December 25, 1846, Yale University (typescript at University of Utah).

On November 6, 1846, Strang had a revelation stating that Joseph Smith III had been consecrated to God in infancy and that he should be ordained by Strang one of the first presidency. It also stated that William Marks should act as coadjutor to Young Joseph during his minority, and that Emma Smith should be a counselor to her son also. See Warren Post, "Chronicles of Voree," Ms f 350, LDS Archives.

The Strangite paper, Zion's Reveille, December 1846, carried the following under the heading, "The First Presidency:"
"YOUNG JOSEPH SMITH (eldest son of the martyred prophet), has been appointed one of the first presidents of the church, by revelation, in the place of his uncle Hyrum, and WILLIAM MARKS has been appointed his coadjutor, in like manner. The FIRST PRESIDENCY now consists of JAMES J. STRANG (in place of Joseph Smith, martyred), GEORGE J. ADAMS, (in place of Sidney Rigdon, apostatized), and JOSEPH SMITH, (in place of Hyrum Smith, martyred); WILLIAM SMITH, (the only surviving brother of Joseph and Hyrum), is the CHIEF PATRIARCH, and as the Patriarch of the whole church has always held a seat in the councils of the first presidency, as coadjutor, that high prerogative will be freely accorded to him, by virtue of his patriarchate."

These overtures to Young Joseph bear all the earmarks of George J. Adams' influence, and formed the basis for Strang's mission to Fulton City.

16 "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?," p. 343; Tullidge, p. 754.

The account in Roger D. Launius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again: The Life of Joseph Smith III, 1832-1914, Mormon Reformer," Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1982, pp. 103-104, which suggests that Young Joseph's illness was contrived, in order to avoid conversing with Strang, is speculative at best. However, Young Joseph did take an instinctive disliking to Strang. See Joseph Smith Ill to Wingfield Watson, March 28, 1881, LB #3, p. 343.

For a typical denial that Strang ordained him, see Joseph Smith Ill to Wingfield Watson, February 21, 1881, LB #3, pp. 301-302. In this letter, the date of Strang's visit is placed in December 1846 or January 1847, probably the latter month.

17 Furthermore, Van Tuyl, perhaps looking to his own self-interest, had publicly sided with the Anti-Mormons. The Nauvoo New Citizen of December 12, 1846 contained "An Address to the Public," reprinted from the rabidly anti-Mormon Warsaw Signal, containing an incredible tissue of lies to justify the conduct of the "regulators" against Nauvoo. Abram Van Tuyl was one of the signatories.

A letter from M. R. Owen to Mason Brayman, October 14, 1846, Bancroft Library, indicates that the so-called "neutral" party among the New Citizens were "the most officious persons in the county and have perhaps done as much towards keeping up excitement, and carrying on the disturbance as any set of men in the Country . . . ." Some of the neutral party were actually fifth-columnists, he related, who promised to join the Anti-Mormons as soon as they marched into the city. Their aim was to secure their own right to remain unmolested in the city. To accomplish this end they were willing to act as spies for the Anti-Mormons. Van Tuyl was evidently of this party.

18 Accounts of this episode are found in Tullidge, pp. 751-752, Memoirs, p. 39; and Smith, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?," pp. 343-344.

19 Tullidge, p. 752.


22Cf. Memoirs, p. 34. In 1843, Emma went to St. Louis to make purchases for the Nauvoo Mansion. On her return she found Joseph Smith had installed Orrin Porter Rockwell as a barkeeper in the hotel. She coolly delivered an ultimatum to her husband: either the bar must be removed or she and the children would move out.

23Memoirs, p. 40.

24Ibid., pp. 40-41.

25Major Bidamon served as a courier between the governor and the city, running the gauntlet of the hostile mob. See L. C. Bidamon to "Dear Brother," September 2, 1846, Wilford C. Wood Collection (microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms 413, Reel 25). Cf. John M. Ferris to Hiram G. Ferris, September 3, 1846, Bancroft Library (photograph of original in private possession). Earlier, he was prominent among those New Citizens who held meetings, signed petitions, and passed resolutions calling for law and order, and rejecting the mob's demands that the New Citizens drive out the Mormons; Hancock Eagle, June 26 and August 14, 1846. His brother J. C. Bidamon played a similar role, Hancock Eagle, Extra, August 20, 1846. For this they earned the enmity of Thomas Sharp, who later conducted a campaign to impugn the character of the brothers Bidamon; Warsaw Signal, March 6, March 20, March 27, and April 3, 1847.

26Sarah M. Kimball to Nancy Marinda Hyde, January 2, 1848, LDS Archives.


29Later RLDS accounts list the date as December 27th, but this is inaccurate. The marriage certificate gives the date as December 23rd. See Avery and Newell, "Lewis C. Bidamon," p. 375, n. 3; also see J. Ronald Bogarth to the author, May 6, 1983.

30Memoirs, pp. 41-42; Avery and Newell, "Lewis C. Bidamon," pp. 375-380. In 1869 a visitor asked Emma why she married a man outside the church. She replied, "I had my own reasons for so doing to protect my children," and added that she had been warned that there would be an attempt to kidnap Young Joseph. See "Reminiscences of Sister N. J. Thorpe," Journal of History 11 (January 1918):120.

31Memoirs, p. 42.

32Ibid., p. 305.
In a sketch of his mother's life, Joseph Smith III once wrote that her second husband's habit of drinking to excess sometimes rendered their life unpleasant, and that "It is to the credit of Mrs. Bidamon's stability and excellent qualities of government and parental control, that she managed to keep her boys from contracting the same evil habit." See Joseph Smith III, untitled Biographical Sketch of Emma Hale Smith Bidamon, P13, f2302, RLDS Archives, p. 22. However, she did not succeed in keeping her oldest son from emulating his stepfather's use of tobacco. In later years he wrote Thomas Jacobs, "I send by this mail a small box containing a pipe and a bit of good tobacco for you. I once loved a pipe, and know what a solace to worry it sometimes is to sit down and enjoy a good pipe..." See Joseph Smith III to "Friend Jacobs," June 9, 1881, LB #1A, p. 224.


Journal History, January 26, 1848.


Ibid.

Journal History, January 31, 1848.

Oaks and Bentley, "Joseph Smith and Legal Process," p. 767. Coolidge may have absconded with some of the estate's assets; ibid., p. 768.

Ibid., p. 768. In his Memoirs, p. 39, Joseph Smith III incorrectly remembered the administrator's name as "John G. Ferris."

Oaks and Bentley, "Joseph Smith and Legal Process," pp. 768-769; Memoirs, pp. 38-39. Joseph Smith III adopted his mother's view of the later claims: "Later still two large claims, one of which I have reason to believe, was fraudulent; both of which I believer were paid previous to his death; (but as the B'tes had kept his papers we could not tell); were revived in chancery...;" Joseph Smith III to John H. Hansen, May 19, 1875, RLDS Archives. Cf. Tullidge, p. 770, where Phineas Kimball is named as the purportedly dishonest creditor.

Joseph Smith III presents hopelessly confused chronological data concerning this interview (or interviews). In his Memoirs, p. 38, he states that Babbitt was coming from Utah to Washington, which would make the date 1849, or later. In his autobiography, in Tullidge, p. 752, he places the interview in 1846 or 1847, thinking the latter date more likely. To add further complications, in "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?", p. 339, he states that more than one such visit occurred. (Part of the confusion may stem from conflation of details from more than one visit.) Babbitt left Nauvoo and met with Brigham Young and the Twelve at Winter Quarters, October 6, 1846. From there he went to the eastern states, to try to sell church property. He probably passed through Nauvoo on his way eastward, but Emma Smith was then in Fulton City. On March 20, 1847, he returned to Nauvoo from the east. An interview at this time fits the time-frame given in "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?" However, Babbitt was not coming from Utah, and not even from the west.
On January 31, 1848, Babbitt returned to Nauvoo from another meeting with the General Authorities in Winter Quarters. This date is a bit later than Joseph III’s recollection, but the discrepancy is only a month. It seems more likely than March 20, 1847, since Babbitt was returning from personal contact with Brigham Young and the Twelve, and could be delivering a message from them to Emma. The problem with this date is that Babbitt was not coming from Utah. Also, the description of his team prancing through the streets seems unlikely in January.

The date which best seems to fit the evidence is late 1849. Babbitt first emigrated to Utah in that year and was elected Deseret’s delegate to Congress, July 5, 1849. He reached Washington late in the year. In a letter, Emma Smith Bidamon to Lewis Crum Bidamon, January 7, 1850, RLDS Archives, there is mention of an interview with Babbitt in which he told her that she had no right to marry Major Bidamon. The letter also mentions the great difficulties she was encountering in her attempt to hold her property, which fits very well Joseph III’s account of the interview. This date is two years later than that given in "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?," but since Joseph III’s statements concerning the date of the interview are chronologically irreconcilable, that is not an overwhelming objection.

Babbitt probably passed through Nauvoo, on later trips to and from Washington, D. C., until his last such trip in 1856. However, these occasions do not seem more likely than 1849, particularly after most of the estate was sold in 1851.


43Memoirs, p. 38.

44Smith, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?," p. 340; Memoirs, p. 38; Tullidge, p. 753.

45Tullidge, pp. 753-754.

46Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, pp. 115-143, has shown that Nauvoo’s prosperity had been based largely upon land sales and building to accomodate the constant influx of new Mormon immigrants. Tippetts and Newell, "The Lion and the Lady," p. 96, rightly conclude that much of the widow Smith’s apparent wealth was illusory. With a declining population, the value of property declined as well. However, the conclusion of Tippetts and Newell that "the only explanation" that Emma "could find for the situation was that somehow Brigham Young must have swindled her out of what should rightfully have been hers," seems an attempt to put the best possible face upon their bitter controversy. The dispute was more than the result of a misconception. The adversaries really attempted to damage one another.


48Ibid., pp. 773-775.

49Ibid., pp. 775-778.

51 Memoirs, pp. 39, 62, 277.


53 Ibid., p. 777.

54 Ibid., pp. 778-781.

55 There were two later episodes concerning the estate. First, one of the creditors, Phineas Kimball, obtained a state-court judgment against the estate in March 1852 for about $5,000. To satisfy the debt, several properties held by Joseph Smith, Jr. in a personal capacity were ordered sold. L. C. and Emma Smith Bidamon were able to retain the Mansion House, the Nauvoo House, and other properties only by bidding for them at the auction, June 5, 1852. See Oaks and Bentley, "Joseph Smith and Legal Process," pp. 779-780, n. 188. Cf. Tullidge, p. 770. In a letter to his son, Israel A. Smith, March 28, 1910, RLDS Archives, Joseph Smith III recalled George Edmunds' role in rescuing the family: "I have the sincerest regard and respect for Judge Edmunds, for it was through his unflinching regard for the right, and a sincere respect for mother and her family, that we saved anything of much value out of father's estate, as a combination of which one Phineas Kimball was the center would have robbed us, if Judge Edmunds had not stood in the way."

Second, in 1856, twelve years after her husband's murder, Emma was able to secure part of the dower money which the federal government erroneously had neglected to pay her. This was accomplished by a special act of Congress, providing for payment of $197.35. See Secretary of the Treasury James Guthrie to Rep. William A. Richardson, January 30, 1854, Wilford C. Wood Collection (microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms f 413, Reel 25); U.S., Congress, House, Emma Smith Bidamon, H.R. Rept. 66 to Accompany H.R. 290, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1856; U.S. Congress, House, A Bill for the Relief of Emma Bidamon, H.R. 290, 34th Cong., 1st sess., 1856; Oaks and Bentley, "Joseph Smith and Legal Process," p. 779, n. 186.

56 Memoirs, p. 43; Tullidge, p. 755.

57 Memoirs, p. 43.

58 Ibid., pp. 43-44.

59 See "Account of L. C. and J. C. Bidamon's Outfit for California," ca. Spring 1849, Huntington Library. This minutely itemized list of supplies, some of which came from the remaining stock in the Red Brick Store, totalled $403.93 in cost. The account indicates that the Major's brother was his partner, but Joseph Smith III, Memoirs, p. 45, named his partner as Nathan King. Major Bidamon's bout of "gold fever" was anything but unique. On April 14, 1849, the Warsaw Signal reported that approximately twenty California-bound wagons and teams had crossed the flooded Mississippi in one day the previous week. On June 9, 1849, the same paper reported that an eastbound traveller had met 1,125 wagons bound for the west.

60 Memoirs, p. 60.
61bid.

62Emma Smith Bidamon to Lewis C. Bidamon, January 7, 1850, RLDS Archives. The "ingratitude" spoken of concerns Bidamon's activities in defense of Nauvoo.

63The date of L. C. Bidamon's return to Nauvoo is uncertain, but it seems that he had not returned at the time a former resident of Nauvoo wrote to Emma requesting that she look after his city taxes on a lot in Nauvoo. He says that from the lack of replies to his letter to Major Bidamon, he infers that the Major may be absent from the city. See A. Pelton to Emma Smith Bidamon, August 7, 1851, Huntington Library.

64Memoirs, p. 45.

65George A. Smith to Joseph Smith III, March 13, 1849, RLDS Archives.

66Almon W. Babbitt wrote to Brigham Young that Emma had joined the Methodist Church on trial, Journal History, January 31, 1848. But John M. Bernhisel later wrote Brigham Young that she had not joined the Methodist Church, Journal History, September 10, 1849. Possibly she had been taken into a class on trial but never took the next step of formally uniting with the church, or perhaps Babbitt had mistaken her attendance at services for a more formal commitment.

   It would not have been unusual for Emma to have been attending Methodist services, prayer meetings, or class meetings. She had been raised in a Methodist family. At this time, the Methodist Episcopal Church was the only religious organization actively at work in Nauvoo. Missionary G. G. Worthington had organized two classes of about fifty members during 1846. See his report, "History of Nauvoo Mission, 1846," Minutes of the Central Illinois Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Held at Moline, Illinois, Sept. 16 to Sept. 21, 1925, ed. by George Davies (Galesburg, Illinois: Wagoner Printing Co., 1925), pp. 286-289, reprinted from the Western Christian Advocate, January 29, 1847.


68Jonathan C. Wright to Brigham Young, February 11, 1848, Journal History.

69John M. Bernhisel to Brigham Young, September 10, 1849, Journal History.

70Hannah Tapfield King, Journal, May 20, 1853, LDS Archives.


74 This and the following two paragraphs based on Memoirs, p. 14; and Joseph Smith III to James T. Cobb, August 21, 1879, LB #2, p. 323.


77 Memoirs, pp. 14, 63-64, and 163; Tullidge, pp. 761-762. The date of this incident is not given in Joseph Smith III's Memoirs but can be established from data given there, p. 14. Here Joseph says that he wrote to Oliver B. Huntington at Watertown, New York, but that Oliver had left some months earlier for Utah. Eventually Joseph's letter caught up with Oliver on the way to Utah, and Oliver sent a reply from Fort Laramie, Wyoming, stating that he was alive and well. The Deseret News of September 5, 1852 lists O. B. Huntington and his family as reaching Utah that summer with the 20th Company of emigrants. A similar entry is found in Journal History, Supp. 1852, p. 128. This would place Joseph Smith III's final disillusionment with Spiritualism during the summer of 1852. It should be noted that Roger Launius, "Joseph Smith's Encounter with Spiritualism," Restoration Trail Forum 9 (November 1983): 3, 8, cannot be relied upon concerning this and several other points of historical detail.

78 Joseph Smith III to Emma Knight, December 4, 1855, RLDS Archives (photocopy of original).

In Journal History, entry for November 25, 1855, there is an account of LDS Elder Enoch B. Tripp's visit to Nauvoo, while returning from a mission. Tripp recorded that he found Emma very bitter against Brigham Young and that her children had partaken the same spirit. "Joseph, her oldest son, is a very strong spiritual medium and claims that he through writing (by placing his hands with a pencil on paper) can converse with his father. I informed him that God, angels and the servants of God never have, and never will, converse with the children of men in that way, but that that was the way the powers from beneath communicated with men." Tripp reportedly told Joseph Smith III to turn from such satanic deceit and to walk in the path laid out by his father.

For Tripp's account to be credible, one must ignore the fact that Joseph Smith III was in Canton at the time of the purported interview, ignore his anti-Spiritualistic advice to Emma Knight, and discount his disillusionment with Spiritualism after corresponding with Oliver B. Huntington in 1852. These three anachronistic features of Tripp's composition seem to mark it as a retrospective account of a later decade after Brigham Young denounced Joseph Smith III as a Spiritualist.


80 Memoirs, p. 50.

81 Th. Gregg, History of Hancock County, Illinois, together with an Outline History of the State, and a Digest of State Laws (Chicago: Chas. C. Chapman &
Co., 1880), pp. 982-985; Charles J. Scofield, ed., History of Hancock County
(Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company Publishers, 1921), p. 865; Robert M.
Cochran, et al., eds., History of Hancock County, Illinois, Illinois Sesquicentennial

Chapter 4

1 Salisbury, "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian," pp. 24-27. Joseph Smith III was not one to call attention to such ostracism, but hints of what he must have endured have survived. See SH 14 (October 1, 1868):105, where he refers to having been left a legacy of shame, of having to bear the world's approbrium, and of receiving the rude sneer of being the son of the "Mormon Prophet, Joe Smith." At the funeral of his step-father, in Nauvoo, he recalled how years before ladies would cross the opposite side of the street in order not to meet him, simply because he was the son of the prophet; SH 38 (March 14, 1891):164.


4 John Taylor's denial was printed in Three Nights' Public Discussion between the Revs. C. W. Cleeve, James Robertson, and Phillip Cater, and Elder John Taylor, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, at Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, Chairman, Rev. K. Groves, M.A., Assisted by Charles Townley, LL.D. (Liverpool: John Taylor, 1850), p. 8. B. H. Roberts, The Life of John Taylor, Third President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., Publishers, 1892), pp. 222-225, argues that the Protestant clergymen accused the Mormons of gross immorality, based upon works such as that of John C. Bennett, and that Taylor's denial was meant to cover a broad array of charges, including promiscuity, community of wives, keeping of seraglions, polygamy, illicit intercourse by permission of the prophet, and keeping of spiritual wives. Roberts casuistically argues that the denial applied only to the charges in general, not to every specific charge.

For a collection of Mormon denials of polygamy, beginning during Joseph Smith's lifetime and continuing up to 1852, see Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, Joseph Smith and Polygamy (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co., n.d.), pp. 7-17. There is no qualitative change in the denials after 1844. Joseph Smith III, in later years, tried to employ the denials issued during his father's lifetime to prove that plural marriage originated later. The same logic would prove that Brigham Young and John Taylor never practiced plural marriage.
5Journal of Discourses 6:282. The entire proceedings of the conference were printed in the Deseret News, Extra, September 15, 1852. The revelation on celestial marriage presently constitutes Section 132 in the Utah Doctrine and Covenants.


8Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," pp. 196-197, 209. Quinn's able analysis might be strengthened by the acknowledgment that Wight regarded the first three modes of succession as interim measures until Young Joseph (or another son of the prophet) should assume the presidency. Wight's views on the interim government of the church were variable and even inconsistent. His view concerning the final disposition of the succession was consistent. His conviction that Young Joseph should occupy his father's place displayed the same stubborn loyalty to what he understood to be the prophet's legacy as his mission to Texas. See n. 11.

9Wight's pamphlet was entitled, An Address: By Way of an Abridged Account and Journal of My Life from February 1844 up to April 1848; with an Appeal to the Latter Day Saints, Scattered abroad in the Earth, and to All Nations, Kindreds, Tongues and People, to Kings on Their Thrones, to Presidents on Their Seats, and to Peasants in Their Cabins—without Respect to Honor, or Distinction of Character, for One Common Fate Awaiteth All, Even the Resurrection from the Dead. For the Dead Shall Come Forth and Inherit Their Land, Even the Land Which the Lord Their God Gave unto Jacob, and Who Said, I Will Take the Children of Israel up out of Their Graves and Place Them in Their Own Lands, Even the Land That I Gave unto Their Father Jacob—Ezekiel 37: Chapt. (N.p.: n.d.). On p. 13, Wight adamantly claimed that no one had the authority to countermand his mission from or appointment by the prophet. He specifically denied that Brigham Young and the rest of the Twelve could remove him from the quorum:

"Therefore, I appeal to all those of a like ordination unto myself that they
have neither power nor authority given them, to move me from this station, nor to place any long eared Jack Ass to fill a place, which has never been vacated. Notwithstanding their long ears and slanderous tongue, they will find them too short and too feeble to compete with a man who has gained his right and inheritance by passing through the sufferings which I have passed through. And should they come up before the throne of God, when my name is called as one of the Twelve, and they should answer to the same, I shall be there: and they will then find that instead of dancing over the ashes of our beloved brethren Joseph and Hyram [sic], they will be dancing to the tune of Jack. And the only tune that he could play was Over the Hills and Far-away."

10"Ecclesiastical solipsism" is the marvelously apt expression coined by Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," p. 197, to describe Wight's policy. "Wight," says Quinn, "was able to acknowledge individually or collectively the prerogatives of the Quorum of the Twelve, of the Council of Fifty, of William Smith, and of Joseph Smith III, as long as those claimants did not presume to infringe upon his view of his own appointment and mission."

11Lyman Wight's letter to the editor of the Northern Islander, July 1855, Lyman Wight Letterbook, RLDS Archives, is cited frequently to this effect. There are numerous other instances, stretching over many years, in which he made the same point. Cf. his letter to Lucy Mack Smith, August 21, 1848, printed in the Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald, May 1849, p. 4: "... to young Joseph we say, it is your privilege to take your father's place, and to this we will all give head [sic] universally, but if you think it beneath your privilege some of your younger brethren must come in according to the decree of Almighty God. ... Tell young Joseph that if he did but know it his calling is as high as the heavens, and when Jackson County is redeemed he will be the sole proprietor in building the Temple of the Great God until his father is resurrected from the dead." Other examples are found in Wight's Appeal, p. 14; his letter to William Smith of July 16, 1849, printed in the Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald, September 1849, p. 3; and his letter to Sanford Porter, December 7, 1855 (p. 38 in the Letterbook; original at LDS Archives, Ms d 3474). Heman Hale Smith, "The Lyman Wight Colony in Texas," p. 22, quotes from William Leyland's Journal an account of a conference in August 1849, at which Wight's followers voted, "That we receive J. Smith Junior as president of the Church when he comes forward and claims that station." Joseph Lee Robinson, History of Joseph Lee Robinson (N.p.: n.d.), p. 24, records that in November 1849 another Wightite conference voted to receive William Smith as head of the church until Young Joseph "can come forward, command and claim his station." Additional data concerning Wight's views are found in Heman C. Smith, "Succession in the Presidency," pp. 4-8.

12Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald, September 1849, p. 2. Cf. Lyman Wight and Harriet Wight to Sanford Porter, December 7, 1855: "... the priesthood is not to be taken from one lineage and given to that of another this you might have known as the Lord was so strenuous that he would have the man that brought forth the book of Mormon to be of the tribe of Joseph that was sold into Egypt and that his father's name should be Joseph and you will find... that it has been a firm decree of the Lord from the foundation of [the] world, it was a decree of the Gods that the holy priesthood should remain to come forth by the same Lineage that each dispensation should be alike and that the last dispensation should gather all others into one dispensation and be ruled by the same power of
the others in their time and in their season.


14 Davis Bitton, "Mormons in Texas," p. 22, n. 31, correctly notes that Wight's testimony lends support to the claims of the Reorganized Church concerning succession in the presidency, but in several other respects, e.g., polygamy and temple ordinances, "his beliefs and practices seem to confirm the claims of the Mormon Church in Utah." Bitton concludes: "Wight's descendants are appropriately found in both churches."

15 See William Smith, Proceedings of Trial for Adultery 1847, University of Utah (typescript of original at Yale University).

Even before the conclusion of his trial, William Smith had set a course independent of Strang, as evidenced by a letter of Temperance Mack to "Dear Children," May 5, 1847, Utah State Historical Society (photocopy of original at University of Michigan). Temperance Mack was at Winter Quarters, writing to her family back in Michigan. She tells of getting a letter from Lucy Mack Smith, containing the news that William Smith "has got through with Strangism," and that he and John C. Bennett were "going a boute like roaring lions."

A broadside entitled William Smith, Patriarch & Prophet of the Most High God, Latter Day Saints, Beware of Imposition! [Ottawa, Illinois: 1847], publicized Strang's chicanery in his endowment ceremonies: "...Mr. Strang has knowingly and wilfully lied in the name of the Lord, in promising an endowment to the Saints, and then mixing oil with phosphorous and palpining it off upon them as that endowment."

On the excommunications at the fall conference, see Russell, "King James Strang," p. 241.

16 On William's overtures to the Twelve, addressed to Orson Hyde, see Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," p. 205. Not satisfied with Hyde's reply, William Smith reprinted an extract which he considered particularly disparaging to the Smith family, in William Smith, Patriarch & Prophet of the Most High God, Latter Day Saints, Beware of Imposition! Hyde had written: "William, cease your whining about your martyred brothers; cease your whining about your poor old mother; cease your preaching, and go to work at some business, and get money, and join the camp in the west. Go to the camp, if you have to go on foot without money."


The Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald periodically published letters of support from Lucy Mack Smith, which indicates that she vacillated between a latent regard for the Saints in Utah and loyalty to her son William. Emma Smith must have been informed of William's activities through Lucy's correspondence, but kept William at arm's length. Her nephew Harmon Wasson, who lived in Lee County, Illinois, informed her of William's doings there and conveyed the general consensus that the character of William's supporters was of low repute. See
Harmon Wasson to Emma Smith Bidamon, May 14, 1848, Wilford C. Wood Collection (microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms f 413, Reel 25).


19Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald, March 1849, p. 2. (The first number was entitled the Aaronic Herald.)

20Ibid., March 1849, pp. 1-2; May 1849, pp. 3-4.

21Ibid., October 1849, p. 3.

22For information on the merging of William Smith and Lyman Wight's movements, see the following: John Young to William Smith and Isaac Sheen, February 9, 1850, LDS Archives; Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald, June 1849, pp. 1 and 4; September 1849, pp. 1 and 4; and February 1850, p. 1.

Isaac Sheen's denunciation of William was printed in the Cincinnati Daily Commercial, May 22, 1850. His son, John K. Sheen, in 1889, recalled how his father broke with William Smith:

"In February, 1849, Isaac Sheen began the publication of a small paper devoted exclusively to 'lineal rights' of the 'Smith family.' In June of that year a conference was held in Covington, Ky., and it was there resolved that they recognized the right of 'young Joseph' to be the President of the church 'whenever he should so claim.' In the meantime, William Smith was to officiate. A combination with Lyman Wight was made and it was planned to go to Texas, but 'the best laid plans of mice and men, gang aft alee.' Through the visit an[d] death of Otis Hobart it was learned that the 'devil' was in Texas and that William was not above suspicion. Father laid a plan to entrap him, and succeeded in getting a polygamous letter from William, who was then in Illinois. He immediately exposed 'the Elijah of the last dispensation' withdrew his name from the petition against the 'State of Deseret' and pulled up the 'Stake of Zion' in Covington." See John K. Sheen, Polygamy, or the Veil Lifted, pp. 14-15.

23Jason W. Briggs, "History of the Reorganization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; Being a Brief Statement of the Principal Facts Connected with Its Rise and Early Progress, Together with the Principles Underlying It, or Which Distinguishes It from the Various Fractions Which Have Arisen among the Latter Day Saints," The Messenger of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 2 (November 1875):1.


An example of William Smith's strong denunciation of polygamy is found in his remonstrance against the admission of Deseret into the Union. See U.S., Congress, House, Deseret. Remonstrance of William Smith et al., of Covington, Kentucky, against the Admission of Deseret into the Union, H.R. Misc. Doc. No. 43, 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850, p. 2.

Briggs, "History of the Reorganization," p. 1

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.


"It may be valid to assume that with the public endorsement of polygamy by leaders of the largest single colony of Saints, and with the immediate negative public reaction thereto, the budding church had an identity crisis of far greater proportions than had previously been the case in its clash with James Strang and William Smith. Thus it was quite natural for the new organization of Briggs and Gurley, in the face of wide and intensifying public censure, to distance itself from the Salt Lake City Saints for their views on marriage, to spare no effort to inform the world that the Reorganization had little in common with the Mormons of Utah Territory. So it was that during the period under review here and far beyond that ... the RLDS Church sought to erect a wall between the two churches."


Joseph Smith III later recollected that this episode probably took place during the winter of 1855-1856. See Tullidge, p. 759, and Joseph Smith III to Lyman O. Littlefield, August 14, 1883, LB #4, pp. 15-16. But he stated that the interview occurred while Walker was on his way to the Cape Colony, which would place it in 1852, not 1855-1856. Walker arrived in Nauvoo on November 16, 1852, and spent a two-day visit with the Smith family. See "Diary of William Holmes Walker," typescript at LDS Archives, pp. 27-28.

It is remotely possible that the interview occurred in the fall of 1856, when Walker was returning from South Africa. However, against this are the following considerations: (1) Joseph Smith III plainly said Walker was travelling from Utah to South Africa. (2) Joseph Smith III's chronological recollections of the 1850s are notoriously imprecise. (3) It seems more likely that Joseph Smith III's first controversy over polygamy would have occurred shortly after August 29, 1852, not three years later.

There is a good deal of material on Lorin and William W. Walker in Joseph Smith III, Memoirs, pp. 12, 13, 18, 22, 25, 36, 39, 160. The brothers obviously had been on close terms with the Smith family.

Tullidge, p. 759.

Joseph Smith III to F. P. Scarcliff, October 4, 1893, LB #1A, p. 410.

In 1886, John Henry Smith wrote to Joseph Smith from Salt Lake City: "William Walker has just called in to see me, and I asked him if he knew anything in regard to the introduction of plural marriage... he says: tell Joseph that B. Young never taught me that doctrine but that Joseph Smith the prophet did, and he did ask me for my sister Lucy for a wife for himself." John Henry Smith to Joseph Smith III, April 21, 1886, RLDS Archives.

"Last Testimony of Sister Emma," SH 26 (October 1, 1879):289. Here Joseph Smith III said that he never discussed with his mother the possibility of his father's involvement in polygamy until 1879. His younger brother, David H. Smith also expressed reluctance to question her about the subject. See David H. Smith to "Brother Sherman," July 27, 1872, RLDS Archives. Writing from Salt Lake City, he expressed concern that his father might have been involved in polygamy, from testimony he had heard in Utah, but still "I do not wish to ask her in regard to polygamy..."

Tullidge, pp. 756-757. Here Joseph gave the time of this interview as the spring of 1853. In a letter to Lyman O. Littlefield, August 14, 1883, LB #4, p. 12, he stated that it took place during the summer of that year.

Additional verification of the dating of this interview is found in Frederick Piercy, Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley: Illustrated with Steel
Engravings and Wood Cuts from Sketches Made by Frederick Piercy, Including Views of Nauvoo and the Ruins of the Temple, with a Historical Account of the City; Views of Carthage Jail; and Portraits and Memoirs of Joseph and Hyrum Smith; Their Mother, Lucy Smith; Joseph and David Smith, Sons of the Prophet Joseph; President Brigham Young; Heber C. Kimball; Willard Richards; Jedediah M. Grant; John Taylor; the Late Chief Patriarch, John Smith, Son of Hyrum. Together with a Geographical and Historical Description of Utah, and a Map of the Overland Routes to That Territory from the Missouri River. Also an Authentic History of the Latter-day Saints' Emigration from Europe from the Commencement up to the Close of 1855, with Statistics, ed. by James Linfirth (Liverpool: Franklin D. Richards; Liverpool: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855), p. 58. Here Piercy commented that in 1853 the emigrants to Utah, "instead of going up the dangerous Missouri River in steam-boats would... start from Keokuk and cross the State of Iowa to Kanesville..." The year 1853 was the only one in which Keokuk was used as the main outfitting post for the westward trek.

46 Tullidge, p. 762. Joseph Smith III's conversations with Putnam Yates, as recorded in Tullidge, pp. 760-763, present some vexing chronological difficulties. On p. 762, he placed his main discussion with Yates in 1856. He also stated that an earlier conversation took place "a year or two before this," and that they frequently discussed the subject. His syntax is such that one cannot be absolutely certain at which time the conversation about Utah was followed by the vision of the luminous, funnel-shaped cloud. To further complicate matters, Joseph Smith III's chronology of events in the 1850s, in Tullidge, was based on memory and frequently is unreliable.

This writer concludes, subject to persuasion by better evidence, that there was one conversation with Putnam Yates around the time of Joseph Smith III's first great spiritual crisis, and that there was another in 1856 which was followed by the aforesaid vision.

47 This explains his drawn appearance in the portrait appearing in Piercy's Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley. It was drawn while Joseph was still recuperating from the illness. Piercy, p. 64, states that he drew it on Joseph Smith III's twenty-first birthday, November 6, 1853.

48 Tullidge, p. 757.

49 Joseph Smith III to Lyman O. Littlefield, August 14, 1883, LB #4, pp. 13-15. The precise number and chronology of the spiritual manifestations which Joseph Smith III experienced during the 1850s present serious historiographical problems. The ultimate conclusion which he drew from them is clear enough—that polygamy was wrong, that he was not to go to Utah, and—later—that he was to join the Reorganization, but the number and sequence is murky. In this letter to Littlefield he clearly stated that he had such manifestations while recovering from illness in 1853. In his autobiography in Tullidge, pp. 757-758, he mentioned only a vision which told him that he must choose between self-serving success and humble service (to God), in 1853. In Tullidge, pp. 762-763, he seemed to place the instructions concerning polygamy and Utah in 1856.

Joseph Smith III probably received several such manifestations concerning Utah and polygamy, rather than one. Angus Munn Cannon, Statement of an Interview with Joseph Smith III, (typescript), LDS Archives, records one such
manifestation, which differs from the vision recorded in Tulidge, pp. 762-763. "He remarked, calling some man by name, whose name I cannot remember, that he came to him and advised him to come to this people [the Utah Mormons] at an early day, he had earnestly prayed to the Lord for light, that he might know what to do. In the night he dreamed and where he stood there was a light descending from above upon him, and sprays of light came down and enveloped him, and a voice said, 'Go not after them,' indicating that the light proceeded from above accompanied him. He took this as an evidence that his duty was to maintain his position, and he had acted accordingly." The vision of 1856 took place during daylight and involved a luminous, funnel-shaped cloud. The messages were similar but not identical.

This writer concludes, subject to better evidence, that the vision recorded by Cannon probably took place in 1853. All of the circumstances match those mentioned in the letter to Littlefield of August 14, 1883.

Tulidge, pp. 757-758.

Ibid., p. 758.


According to his daughter, after his severe illness, Joseph Smith III was uncertain whether or not he would take up his father's work, feeling the necessity of calling prior to taking such a step. But whatever his personal course might be, he formed two great resolutions: "One was that he would live in such a manner that no one, from his actions, could say that his father had been a bad man—in the sense of 'like father, like son.' The other was that he would lose no opportunity to try to make the religion for which his father had lost his life, honorable in the sight of men." Anderson, "Lucy Mack Smith and the Latter Day Saints," pp. 9-10.


Piercy, Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley, pp. 64-66.


Jason W. Briggs to Joseph Smith III, November 20, 1853, LDS Archives. (This letter is a copy of the original.)

George A. Smith and John L. Smith to Joseph Smith III, RLDS Archives.

In "Sermon by Pres. Joseph Smith, of Lamon, Iowa, at the Saints' Chapel, Lamon, December 17th, 1882," SH 30 (February 10, 1883):90, he stated, with tongue-in-cheek, "I wanted to be a blacksmith, and I am sorry now I did not make one. I had the smith part, and it would not have taken long to have made the black." He then continued, "But my step-father and mother had more ambitious views. I must be per force a lawyer."

That Emma may have been less enthusiastic than the Major about Joseph's legal studies may be gathered from a letter she wrote when the idea of her youngest son's entry into law was contemplated. She stated that she believed it
useful to know a little law, but that she had "a horror of one of my children being entirely dependant upon being a lawyer for a living." Emma Smith Bidamon to Joseph Smith III, October 11, 1866, RLDS Archives. She probably shared the common conviction that law was a "shady" business. Certainly she had spent enough of her time and substance dealing with lawyers to have developed a distaste for a profession which made an opportunity of other people's necessity. (She once advised her nephew, Harman Wasson, not to enter the medical profession, because it made an opportunity of other people's necessity. Harman Wasson to Emma Smith Bidamon, May 14, 1848, Wilford C. Wood Collection; microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms f 413, Reel 25.)

In a letter to his daughter Audie, Joseph Smith III humorously recalled that he had enjoyed blacksmithing as a youth, opining that "the Major spoiled a good blacksmith, to make a poor lawyer; and if I had not turned out a preacher, I cont know what I should have been—possibly a loafer. Joseph Smith III to Mary Audentia Smith, April 12, 1889, RLDS Archives.

59 There were two men named William Kellogg practicing law in Fulton County in 1855. The first was William Kellogg of Canton, Illinois (1814-1872). The second was William Pitt Kellogg of Farmington, Illinois (1830-1918). Lamius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again," p. 125, wrongly identifies the "William Kellogg" under whom Joseph Smith III studied as the younger man, William Pitt Kellogg. In fact, it was the older William Kellogg, of Canton.

The correct identification is based on the following data:
1) In SH 21 (March 1, 1874):144, Joseph Smith III gave details of a visit to Canton. He mentioned that he read law there "in the office of Judge William Kellogg, now deceased." The older Kellogg died in 1872; the younger in 1918.
2) William Pitt Kellogg lived in Farmington, about ten miles north of Canton. See "Anti-Nebraska County Convention," Canton Register, September 2, 1856.
3) The older William Kellogg served as judge of the Circuit Court of Illinois, 1852-1855, and Joseph Smith III therefore called him "Judge Kellogg."
4) The younger Kellogg was admitted to the bar in 1853, while the older man was a lawyer of widespread reputation. Joseph Smith III would hardly undergo the expense of studying in Fulton County under a neophyte attorney.

Following is a sketch of William Kellogg's career. He was born in Ohio in 1814 and removed to Canton, Illinois in 1837. In Illinois he built up an extensive practice in the area of disputed land titles. He was a superb defense attorney, reputed to possess forensic power equal to any lawyer in the state and stood at the head of the Fulton County bar. He served in the Illinois legislature (1849-1850) and was judge of the Circuit Court of Illinois for three years. He became active in the fledgling Republican Party and was elected to Congress in 1856, 1858, and 1860. Lincoln appointed him U.S. Minister to Guatemala in 1864, but he declined the appointment. Andrew Johnson appointed him Chief Justice of Nebraska Territory, in which capacity he served until the territory became a state in 1867. He served briefly as a federal collector for Pecos district and made an abortive attempt at a political career in Mississippi as a Republican carpetbagger. In 1870 he returned to Pecos and practiced law with his son William. He died there in 1872.

60Tullidge, p. 759.

61Joseph Smith III, untitled Biographical Sketch of Emma Hale Smith Bidamon, P13, f2302, RLDS Archives, p. 25. Her action was, Joseph concluded, "the key to her character and the steadfast policy of her life."

62Joseph Smith III to Emma Smith Bidamon, June 15, 1855, RLDS Archives.

63Joseph Chitty (1776-1841) was an English legal writer whose legal manuals enjoyed a considerable reputation. His lawyer-sons Joseph, Thomas, and Edward also authored legal tomes. Joseph Smith III might have been reading the works of any of them.

64Joseph Smith III to Alexander H. Smith, September 27, 1855, RLDS Archives.

65Tullidge, p. 759.

66ibid.

67See Buddy Younggreen, "The Death Date of Lucy Mack Smith: 8 July 1775-14 May 1856," Brigham Young University Studies 12 (Spring 1972):318. Joseph Smith III to "Cousin Mary B.," December 7, 1877, LB #1A, pp. 59-61, states that when his grandmother died, he and a hired girl were "her only attendants, while my mother sought an hour's rest after a long siege of sleepless attendance upon her."


69Joseph Smith III to Emma Knight, May 24, 1855, RLDS Archives (photocopy). Copies of Joseph Smith III's correspondence with Emma Knight are also housed at the Utah State Historical Society, MAN A658, together with explanatory background material by Ralph Martin McGrath, a great-grandson of Wesley Knight, father of Emma Knight.


71Scofield, History of Hancock County, p. 896, explains the important social role attendance at religious services played in the lives of young people: "In an early day church services were largely attended. Entertainments in the modern sense were of infrequent occurrence, and so, while the older people 'went to church' to worship, the younger people went from mixed motives, among which was the opportunity for meeting one another and a little love-making on the 'aside,' cloaked with the profession of religious enthusiasm. The young men lined up at the church door at the conclusion of the services, and the young women
(with giggling willingness) had to run the gauntlet of an offered elbow and a 'may I see you home?' in their apparently strenuous efforts to reach the friendly covert of parental protection."

72Memoirs, p. 51. Joseph Smith III to E. L. Kelley, July 10, 1883, RLDS Archives, contains a lengthy retrospective account of the explanation given to Emaline Griswold when proposing marriage.

73Memoirs, p. 52.

74Joseph Smith III to Emma Knight, May 4, 1856, RLDS Archives (photocopy).

75Tullidge, pp. 760-761.

76In Tullidge, p. 764, Joseph Smith III recollected that the visit was a little more than a month after his marriage on October 22nd. Actually, it was only ten days after his marriage. See George A. Smith to Joseph F. Smith, July 17, 1872, Church Historian's Letterpress Book, LDS Archives.

77George A. Smith to Joseph F. Smith, July 17, 1872, Church Historian's Letterpress Book, LDS Archives, emphasized the purely unofficial nature of the visit. Joseph F. Smith had inquired whether a statement of Judge Boren were true, to the effect that Brigham Young had sent George A. Smith as an emissary to urge Joseph Smith III to come to Utah and assume the presidency of the church. George A. Smith replied that the rumor was unfounded, that Brigham Young was ignorant of the visit, and that no delegation was ever sent to offer Joseph Smith III any position in the church. George A. Smith explained that he was, at that time, a delegate to Congress, to seek Utah's admission into the Union, and that between sessions of Congress he did missionary work. Finding himself near Nauvoo, he paid a social visit to his old home, relatives, and friends.

78Tullidge, pp. 764-765.

79For George A. Smith's view see George A. Smith to Joseph F. Smith, July 17, 1872, Church Historian's Letterpress Book, LDS Archives: "Elder Snow was anxious to ascertain if Joseph believed in the Book of Mormon and the divine mission of his father, his evasive answer to Elder Snow's interrogatories led us to the conclusion that he did not." Cf. Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," pp. 39-41. For Joseph Smith III's view see Joseph Smith III to James T. Cobb, November 1, 1878, LB #1A, pp. 100-103: "Much that has been said for Mormonism I can not endorse; but in stating thus, I do not authorize you to carry the inference that I am in doubt as to the truth of it. I once said to George A. Smith and Erastus Snow, that I did not believe the Book of Mormon, as they taught it. He straightway reported that I was infidel as to that book."


81Ibid., pp. 449-451; Tullidge, p. 767.


84Tullidge, p. 769; cf. Memoirs, pp. 52-53 for some differences in detail. Some hints of the financial difficulties facing Joseph Smith III and the rest of the family may be gathered from three events: First, on February 19, 1856, Joseph Smith III sold some land holdings for $2,500. See contract between Joseph Smith III and H. R. Dickinson, February 19, 1856, Brigham Young University. Second, after the death of Lucy Mack Smith, her Egyptian papyri and mummies were sold almost immediately to raise cash. Cf. the bill of sale, dated May 26, 1856, and signed by L. C. Bidamon, Emma Bidamon, and Joseph Smith III, LDS Archives. Third, there are entries in Joseph Smith III's journal, during the spring of 1859, indicative of financial problems. The entry for April 25th indicates that Joseph, his brother Frederick, and "Bernard" [Rissie?] went to the farm, looked at stock, and made a mortgage of $472.80. On May 7th, there is an ambiguous entry: "Sale, saved Tatty coram & machine property all gone." This sounds as though some farm land had been sold to satisfy a debt. See Joseph Smith III, Journal, RLDS Archives. Joseph Smith III to "Cousin Mary B.," December 7, 1877, LB #1A, pp. 59-61, summarized his financial plight: ". . . ever since my Bro. Frederick's death, I have been constantly harassed by debts contracted by him and for him; we having been in partnership for two unfortunate and disastrous years, which left me involved about 2500 dollars . . . ."

85Joseph Smith III to John Smith, December 28, 1876, LB #1A, pp. 11-17.

86Two important essays which shed light on Joseph Smith's unpublished oral and/or secret teachings at Nauvoo are Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," Brigham Young University Studies 18 (Winter 1978):198-208; and Ronald K. Esplin, "Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve: A Succession of Continuity," Brigham Young University Studies 21 (Summer 1981):301-341. Esplin, p. 304, estimates that only 20% of Joseph Smith's known public sermons were recorded in reasonably accurate summaries.

87Joseph Smith III to John Smith, December 28, 1876, LB #1A, pp. 11-17.

88Memoirs, p. 70.

89Ibid.

90Ibid.

91Ibid., pp. 70-71. As a youth, after becoming aware that his father's name was held in disrepute by many, Joseph Smith III resolved "that I would so live that no man would say, from my example, that my father was a bad man." SH 39 (April 16, 1892):243. Redeeming his father's name became a lifelong goal of the prophet's son.

92Memoirs, p. 71.

93Ibid.

94Ibid.
95 Ibid.

96 Ibid., p. 54. Launius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again: The Life of Joseph Smith III," p. 169, wrongly dates this episode in 1857. The mention of "little ones" and "children" clearly places it in 1859, during Evalyn Rebecca's brief life. The "little ones" were Emma Josepha and Evalyn Rebecca.

97 Memoirs, p. 53. Cf. Joseph Smith III, Journal, September 2 through October 7, 1859, RLDS Archives. The entry for September 30 reads: "At home all day evening little Eva dying. Oh! how sorrowful. 9 o'clock Eva dead[.]

98 Memoirs, p. 53.

99 Ibid., p. 72.

100 Tullidge, p. 772.


102 Joseph Smith III to William Marks, March 5, 1860, RLDS Archives.

103 Tullidge, p. 773.

104 Tullidge, p. 774; W. W. Blair, Journal, March 19 through 22, 1860, RLDS Archives. W. W. Blair told E. C. Briggs that Joseph desired counsel from Marks, Rogers, and himself about the best means of redeeming the Utah Church from evil, expressing the opinion that many in Utah had been honestly deceived. Joseph Smith III therefore was inclined to adopt a mild course toward them. See E. C. Briggs, Journal, March 30, 1860, RLDS Archives.

105 Joseph Fielding Smith, Life of Joseph F. Smith, pp. 130-156.


108 Ibid.

109 John Smith to Joseph Smith III, April 3, 1860, RLDS Archives. John's fears concerning persons taking advantage of his cousin in speculative schemes were far from groundless, although the schemers were not leaders of the Reorganization. L. C. Bidamon entertained grandiose dreams of vast profits to be made selling lands to Saints "gathering" to a new stake of Zion. Others entertained similar ideas, as will be seen in the following chapter.
Chapter 5

1 Tuellidge, p. 774.

2 F. Scott and S. S. Scott to "Dear Brother and Sister," April 29, 1860, RLDS Archives. Additional details concerning Joseph Smith III at Amboy can be gleaned from: Memoirs, pp. 73-74; Tuellidge, pp. 774-775; Charles Blair, "Recollections of Amboy Conference," Autumn Leaves 40 (February 1927):91; "The Reception of Bro. Joseph Smith, Jr.," SH I (May 1860):122; and Elizabeth Johnson Blair, "Autobiographic Statement of Elizabeth Johnson Blair," Journal of History 10 (July 1917):354. This last article states that Joseph Smith III was in tears the better part of his address, that there was not a dry eye in the room when he finished, and that "his mother, Mother Bidamon, . . . just sobbed with joy."

3 For an account of Joseph Smith III’s address see SH I (May 1860):101-105 (reprinted from the Amboy Times). For explanatory comments, see Memoirs, p. 464.

4 Additional information concerning the conference is found in "Minutes of Conference," SH I (May 1860):105-108. Some accounts list only Gurley, Blair, and Marks as ordaining Joseph Smith III. W. W. Blair, Journal, April 6, 1860, RLDS Archives, states that Samuel Powers joined the others in ordaining Joseph Smith III as a high priest. Edmund C. Briggs, Journal, April 6, 1860, RLDS Archives, states that the four mentioned by Blair were joined by a fifth, George Morey, in ordaining Joseph Smith III president of the church.

The reaction of many Saints was summed up in William Marks when he said: "... It was the happiest day I think that I ever experienced in my life;" William Marks to Hiram Falk and Josiah Butterfield, October 1, 1865, RLDS Archives.


7 Ibid., and Samuel H. B. Smith to George A. Smith, July 11, 1860 (also printed in Youngreen's article, pp. 360-361). A second-hand account of this episode has survived in a letter of John R. Young to Vesta Pierce Crawford, April 1931, Ms 125, Box 3, Folder 13, University of Utah. Young recalled: "Soon after the return of Joseph F. Smith from his first mission to England, I heard him tell this story. As cousins Samuel H. B. Smith and I were going to England we visited Nauvoo & staid a few days with Aunt Emma. In the evening cousin Joseph said, "Joseph F. we are going to let you & Samuel sleep in our dream chamber, and in the morning we want you to tell us your dreams, for what ever one dreams the first night that they sleep in that room, will be true Pointers to their future
lives." It is interesting to speculate whether the "dream chamber" was the same room in which Joseph Smith, Jr.'s portrait hung.

8 Joseph F. Smith to Levira A. Smith, June 28, 1860.

9 Samuel H. B. Smith to George A. Smith, July 11, 1860.

10 Ibid.


12 During the summer of 1863, Joseph F. Smith and Samuel H. B. Smith returned from Europe and retraced their steps across America. They passed through Hancock County, but missed seeing their cousin Joseph. Joseph Smith III learned of their visit and sent word to his cousin John of their safe arrival. Joseph Smith III still entertained hopes that all the Smith cousins someday would stand "shoulder to shoulder in the war of truth with error as our Fathers in bygone days." He also stated that their religious differences were "not such as to create a sundering of natural ties." Joseph Smith III to John Smith, August 14, 1863, as cited in Youngreen, "Sons of the Martyrs' Reunion—1860," pp. 364-365. (The original of this letter is in private possession; a photocopy is located at Brigham Young University.)

Joseph's hopes for his Mormon kindred is reflected in a letter written some months later: "My cousins Joseph & Samuel have returned to the Valley and I apprehend that there will be a way for their emancipation from Utah thraldom." Joseph Smith III to Charles Derry, October 14, 1863, RLDS Archives.


17 Tullidge, pp. 773-774; Memoirs, p. 72.

18 Memoirs, pp. 72-73. Joseph Smith III also had observed at first hand the failure of the Icarian communitarian experiment in Nauvoo.


21Joseph Smith III to George Edmunds, Jr., July 1, 1860, RLDS Archives. Concerning Edmunds' promontory activities, see Cochran, et al., eds., The History of Hancock County, p. 97, n. 1. Edmunds' biography remains unwritten, but the researcher frequently runs across his name in conjunction with plans for civic improvements such as railroads, bridges, and canals. See, e.g., "Local Affairs," Hancock Eagle, July 10, 1846, and "Canal Meeting," Hancock Patriot, February 26, 1848.

22Tullidge, p. 777. Memoirs, p. 78, emphasizes Edmunds' belief that religious opposition to the Reorganization would soon fade away.

23"Meeting of the Citizens, May 10," Carthage Republican, May 24, 1860. In Memoirs, p. 66, Joseph Smith III recalled that R. W. McKinney chaired this meeting, but the published minutes state that J. Bauer was chairman.

24"New Phase in Mormonism," Carthage Republican, May 24, 1860. This piece was signed "Observer," but from subsequent discussion, McKinney was obviously the author.

Cf. Memoirs, pp. 65-66. Launius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again," p. 209, erroneously states that R. W. McKinney led the opposition to Joseph Smith III, "not because he feared a repetition of past Mormon troubles but because he and Smith were engaged in a tough race for the office of mayor. The election would not be held until November, but McKinney used the religious issue as a means of discrediting Smith so that he would be more likely to defeat him." This is inaccurate on several counts: (1) As noted in Joseph Smith III's journal, the election took place on April 18, 1860. (2) His opponent was John B. Icking. See Memoirs, p. 65. (3) McKinney was mayor of Nauvoo in 1854 and 1855. See Scofield, History of Hancock County, p. 1090. (4) The religious hostility of former Mayor McKinney's staunch Presbyterian wife was probably the underlying cause of his attacks; see Memoirs, pp. 65 and 67. Launius, p. 209, notes 46 and 47, cites the Carthage Republican for August 23, 1860, August 24, 1860, and July 10 through November 28, 1860. The Republican was a weekly, and there were no numbers for August 24, July 10, or November 28, 1860. Launius also wrongly places McKinney's articles between July 10 and November 28, 1860. In actuality, they appeared May 24 and June 14, 1860. Launius states that the articles were unsigned, whereas one was signed "Observer," and the other bore McKinney's name.


26Memoirs, p. 66. Joseph Smith III later informed Rissee, when things had returned to normal, that if the document had been signed, he would have sought an indictment at the next sitting of the grand jury on grounds of conspiracy. This may have been a bluff on his part, however, because he sought no such
indictments against the signatories of the Carthage resolutions. Indictments would have aroused feelings just at the time Joseph sought to calm them.


28 David Mack to Jarius G. Stark, August 21, 1860, Brigham Young University.

29 "Reported Re-location of the Mormons--Meeting of the Citizens of Carthage," Carthage Republican, August 23, 1860.

30 HRC 3:268-269.


32 The following three paragraphs are based upon a reading of Joseph Smith III's 1859-1861 Journal, RLDS Archives. The journal contains entries for January 1 through May 15, 1859; July 9 through December 31, 1859; and January 1 through February 13, 1861. Joseph Smith III's next journal begins May 30, 1866, which means that most of his Nauvoo presidency is not covered by journal entries. It is fortunate to have the entries for early 1861, because they show clearly that Joseph's daily routine underwent no radical change at the outset of his presidency.

33 On February 18, 1859, Joseph noted in his Journal: "Broke my pipe & quit smoking." However, later entries indicate that he continued to purchase tobacco occasionally.

34 The RLDS Church commenced publishing The True Latter Day Saints Herald in January, 1860. Isaac Sheen, formerly editor of William Smith's Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald, became the first editor. Between Sunday, January 6 and Sunday, February 10, 1861, Joseph Smith III left Nauvoo on a preaching expedition only once, February 3rd, when he preached across the river at Montrose, Iowa.

35 Memoirs, pp. 45-46. Launius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again," p. 206, n. 39, erroneously states that Julia "had married and moved to Texas during the 1850s and had no part in this story...." Actually her sojourn in Texas lasted until the death of her first husband, Elisha Dixon, after which she returned to Nauvoo for a time.

36 "An appeal to my Brother Frederick When on his sick bed," David H. Smith, Diary, February 17, 1862, RLDS Archives. The poem reads:

Remember Brother dost thou not
What mother used to say?
Or are her counsels all forgot,
Her teachings thrown away?
Remember O! how innocent,
Our early years were passed,
Shall we when Mothers life is spent,
Neglect our god at last?
Remember how she taught us five
In faithfulness to pray
That God would guard us through the night
And watch us through the day.
Oh did we think when ere we read
The bible! holy book?
In after years that in to it
We'd be ashamed to look?

O! shall we stand above her grave?
And in our conscience say?
That on life's road we have not walked
As Mother showed the way?
You know how righteous she has been
Through all her weary years.
Let's turn to her example then,
Lest we repent with tears.

37David Hyrum Smith, "A Word of Advice to Those That Look for Me To Be the Prophet," SH 3 (April 1863):199. Concerning Brigham Young and his expectation that David would come to lead the Mormon Church, see Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," pp. 154-158; Esplin, "Joseph, Brigham, and the Twelve: A Succession of Continuity," pp. 336-337; and Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints, p. 213.


42Joseph Smith III to Charles Derry, April 24, 1863, RLDS Archives.


44Tullidge, pp. 614-615.


46See Journal of Discourses 6:319-320 (discourse delivered April 7, 1852); 3:212 (February 17, 1856); 5:296 (October 6, 1857); and 18:70-71 (discourse delivered August 31, 1875).

"President Young remarked in his Discourse that Joseph Smith Jun. (little Joseph as he is called) will be a good Latter day Saint; in time it may want a revelation from the Lord; but blessings will rest upon the posterity of Joseph Smith the Prophet; and the spirit of the Lord will probably rest upon Joseph that he will be constrained to enquire of the Lord what he would have him to do."


George P. Stiles to Joseph Smith III, May 12, 1860, RLDS Archives.

Journal of Discourses 8:69 (discourse of Brigham Young, June 3, 1860).

Journal of Discourses 8:233-234 (discourse of Orson Hyde, October 7, 1860). (Brackets in original.) After Hyde had finished speaking, Brigham Young elaborated upon the events of February, 1848: "The houses in the neighborhood shook, or, if they did not, the people thought they did, for they ran together and inquired whether there had been an earthquake. We told them that the voice of God had reached the earth—that they need not be afraid; it was the power of God. This and other events have transpired to satisfy the people—you, and all who belong to the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth." Journal of Discourses 8:197 (discourse of Brigham Young, October 7, 1860).

Tullidge, pp. 615-630. Cf. Quinn, "Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932," pp. 64-65. Quinn, n. 60, cites Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, August 30, 1894 (typescript at Brigham Young University), in which Wilford Woodruff stated that he could not remember any particular manifestations at the time. Quinn suggests that the voice heard by Hyde "was apparently not audible to all of the apostles," but that Hyde told them of the divine instruction he had received, "which probably contributed to their unanimous vote to accept the motion." Quinn does not deal with Wilford Woodruff's reply to E. W. Tullidge's question about Hyde's story: "Edward," Woodruff answered, with a deep blush on his face, "it was not true!" See Tullidge, p. 620.

A similar story designed to bolster Brigham Young's right to leadership appeared in the "History of Brigham Young," Deseret News, February 10, 1858. Here Joseph Smith is said to have foretold that Brigham Young would lead the church someday. This account is interpolated in HC 1:295-297, although it does not appear in the original version of Joseph Smith's "History," as it appeared in the Times and Seasons 5 (October 15, 1844):673.

Quinn, Joseph Smith III's 1844 Blessing and the Mormons of Utah," p. 16.

Statement of Phebe Woodworth, Church Historian's Office Journal, September 1, 1861, LDS Archives, as cited by Quinn, "Joseph Smith III's 1844
Blessing and the Mormons of Utah," p. 16.

56W. W. Blair, Journal, RLDS Archives; "Diary of Oliver Boardman Huntington," p. 53; Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," pp. 51-52; and Quinn, "Joseph Smith III and the Mormons of Utah," p. 16. Quinn's remarks are most apropos. He emphasizes what many have glossed over, viz., that Joseph Smith, Jr. foresaw that David would be a prince, and this at the very moment that he was organizing the theocratic Council of Fifty. One may ask, did Joseph Smith, Jr. envisage his son Joseph III succeeding to the presidency of the church and his son David reigning over the world as God's viceregent?

57Fred. Ursenchbach wrote from Switzerland, in 1866, "I have always understood that David Smith is to succeed his father as a prophet and that when he will be called from God the priesthood will be reestablished with all its spiritual powers ...." Fred. and Sophia Ursenchbach to Joseph Smith III, July 31, 1866, RLDS Archives.

58Quinn, "Joseph Smith III's 1844 Blessing and the Mormons of Utah," p. 23.


60E. C. Briggs to Isaac Sheen, August 18, 1863, as printed in SH 4 (September 15, 1863):199.

61SH 2 (April 1861):46 contained the following notice:
"EMIGRATION FROM UTAH is to be commenced this spring (God willing)
on a large scale, by saints of the New Organization to Western Iowa. One of the
time has sent this information. Let the 'prayer of faith' ascend to God for their
protection and deliverance from their enemies."

R. H. Attwood wrote from Salt Lake City, November 23, 1864, that about
four hundred RLDS converts were preparing to leave early in the spring. "As soon
as we baptize any into the reorganization they are for leaving this country as soon
as possible." This rapid departure of members, said Attwood, was the greatest
hindrance to the RLDS work in Utah. See "News from Elders," SH 7 (January 15,

A graphic picture of the harassment undergone by Utah converts of the
RLDS Church during this period is found in Sr. L. J. Hartman, "Memories of
(December 1910):489-497; and (December 1910):555-560.

62On RLDS missionary activities see HRC 3:367-406, and Davis, The Story
of the Church, pp. 459-485 and 491-498.

63This last point is developed by Richard P. Howard, "The Reorganized

64Memoirs, p. 78

65Ibid., p. 77.
66[bid., p. 79.

67[bid.

68[It is easy to reason that Joseph Smith III possessed certain printed sources from which he schooled himself in Latter Day Saint doctrine and history, and that because these printed sources contained few hints of the later, private teachings of the prophet, he ended up with "Kirtland theology" rather than "Nauvoo theology." But did the methodology produce the theology? Perhaps moral, theological, and spiritual commitments and preconceptions determined his methodology. Or, perhaps the relationship between methodology and theology was dynamic, each feeding upon and buttressing the other.


72[Joseph Smith III to E. L. Kelley, July 10, 1883, RLDS Archives.

73[William McLellin to Joseph Smith III, January 10, 1861, RLDS Archives. McLellin amplified these statements in a later correspondence. See William McLellin to Joseph Smith III, July-September 8, 1872, RLDS Archives.

74[HRC 3:381.

75[For a publication which initially bore the motto on its masthead, "Hearken to the word of the Lord, for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife and concubines he shall have none."—BOOK OF MORMON," there are surprisingly few articles on polygamy in the Herald during the editorship of Isaac Sheen. After the initial issue, in which it was argued that the prophet had taught polygamy but later repented of it, there are only five articles dealing specifically with the subject, and all of these remained silent about the relationship of the prophet to the doctrine. The approach was to refute polygamy from scripture. See: "A Rejoinder to a Polygamous Sermon of Orson Pratt," SH 1 (June 1860):142-148 and (July 1860):149-164; Josiah Ellis, "Polygamy," SH 2 (February 1862):178-180 and 3 (September 1862):54-57; and W. W. Blair, "Who Are the Seed of the Lord?" SH 4 (July 1863):10-15. Other articles treat the subject as part of a larger condemnation of Brighamism.

Joseph Smith III preferred not to discuss the question, particularly within the RLDS Church. At this time there were too many old Saints who disagreed with him about his father's role, and such discussions created divisions within the body. At the Annual Conference of 1863, he secured passage of the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the members and ministry avoid alluding to, or discussing the subject of polygamy when it is not imperatively necessary. . . ."

"Pres. J. Smith said, whenever it is necessary that we should meet it the resolution permits us to do so, but the object is to prevent bringing it up in our prayer meetings, and in all our meetings as the tendency of its discussion is to
drive the Spirit of the Lord from us." "Minutes of the Annual Conference," SH 3 (April 1863):195. It also was concluded to change the motto of the Herald:

76 Council of Twelve Minutes, Book A, p. 11, RLDS Archives (microfilm).


78 Council of Twelve Minutes, Book A, p. 34.


83 "News from Utah," SH 2 (June 1861):92-93.


85 Concerning Joseph Smith III's diffidence about being a witness on his own behalf, see "Pleasant Chat," SH 14 (October 1, 1868):105. He once told W. W. Riplin, in relation to his blessing by his father, "that the reason why he had not made this matter known before was, that he did not wish to be first and alone in bearing witness to his own appointment, and that he had hoped that those in Utah and elsewhere, who knew concerning this matter, would have come forward and borne record of the fact." See "Mission of Bro. W. W. Blair. No. 1," SH 8 (October 1, 1865):101.

In 1891 Blair observed that Joseph Smith III sought to avoid flaunting his

Concerning his self-consciousness as a young preacher see Memoirs, pp. 104-106.

86Memoirs, pp. 77-78. Cf. Solomon Tripp to Warren L. Van Dine, July 31, 1940, RLDS Archives. In this biographical sketch, Tripp tells of his father—a former Strangite on his way to Utah—visiting Nauvoo in 1861. Joseph Smith III told him: "Brother Tripp, this is my advice. You make it a matter of prayer and ask God what to do and if God tells you to go to Utah, you go, but if God tells you to stay, then stay."

87Memoirs, pp. 84-88. The Republican platform contained the following plank:

"Resolved: The Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign powers over the Territories of the United States for their government, and that in the exercise of this power, it is both the right and the imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism—Polygamy and Slavery." Cited in Larson, The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood, p. 60, n.60.

Memoirs, p. 89. Too close an association with the Union's cause was not necessarily calculated to win popularity in Hancock County, however. In December 1862, Charles Derry visited Nauvoo and found that RLDS Apostle John Shippy had created problems for himself by too ardently urging young men to enlist in the army.

Derry concluded that Shippy "borrows a great deal of trouble; and I fear is not so wise as he should be for the position he occupies. I am sorry to learn that there is considerable influence against him here, even among the Saints. His forwardness in trying to gain favor for Zion by persuading young men to enlist in the war, has closed up the hearts of mothers and sisters against him, and they feel that they owe their bereavements to him .... I believe that if any man thinks the Saints ought to enlist in this war, he should himself set the example."


91Memoirs, pp. 90-91.

92Ibid., p. 90.

93Ibid., p. 91.


97"The Declaration of Loyalty to the Government of the United States, by the Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-Day-Saints," SH 3 (May 1863):201-202. W. W. Blair, Journal, October 31, 1863, RLDS Archives, recorded that some in Hamburg, Iowa, objected to Latter Day Saint preaching, on the grounds that the Saints were disloyal and dishonest. It was this sort of prejudice that the "Declaration of Loyalty" sought to remove.

98Joseph Smith III to Charles Derry, April 24, 1863, RLDS Archives.

99Bringhamurst, Saints, Slaves, and Blacks, pp. 3-105.

100Ibid. Bringhamurst argues that the policy of denying priesthood to blacks originated under Brigham Young. This has been challenged by Ronald K. Esplin, "Brigham Young and Priesthood Denial to Blacks: An Alternative View," Brigham Young University Studies 19 (Spring 1979):394-402.

101Bringhamurst, Saints, Slaves, and Blacks, pp. 84-108 and 123-143.


William D. Russell, "A Priestly Role for a Prophetic Church: the RLDS Church and Black Americans," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 12 (Summer 1979):37-49, suggests that Joseph Smith III's racial views followed the "respectable" views of white society. While it is true that he suggested the necessity of accommodation to prevailing social mores, later in life, and had a positive distaste for racial intermarriage, Russell fails to take into account the amount of racist sentiment within the RLDS Church which Joseph Smith III consistently opposed. Joseph Smith III included a good deal of material in the Herald about race relations; only a fraction of this material is cited by Russell in his article.

103W. W. Blair, Journal, April 1, 1865, RLDS Archives.

104Ibid., April 2, 1865.

105Council of Twelve Minutes, May 3, 1865, Book A, p. 13, RLDS Archives (microfilm). This resolution may have been adopted on May 2nd; the sequence of events, May 1-5, 1865, in the minutes is confused.


John Atlas, "Utah Herdboys," SH 2 (June 1861):91. This is a fictional dialogue between three herdboys. Its theme is the greediness of Brigham Young. The "teats that Brigham Young suckls from, it alleges, are the Perpetual Emigration Fund, the Temple tax, the Law of Consecration, and the law of tithing. Brigham Young and the "big bugs" take what they please from the poor, and are generally guilty of greed, adultery, oppression, and tyranny, trampling virtue under foot, is the dialogue's conclusion. In "Letter from Utah," SH 5 (May 1, 1864):139, R. H. Attwood claimed that church and state were united in Utah, and that "one man governs the religious, political, civil as well as the social and domestic circle," thereby rendering men of talent "miserable, abject, and cowardly and cringing slaves."

Dennis Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: An American Elite," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976, pp. 81-157, has argued that wealth tended to be a function of status within the Utah hierarchy, and that Brigham Young in particular succeeded in using his position to accumulate a fortune. Quinn also has shown that Young's personal finances were so incestuously connected with those of the church that other members of the hierarchy grew critical of him but feared to voice their feelings; pp. 126-127.


E.g., "News from Elders," SH 4 (September 1, 1863):79; "Letter from Utah," SH 4 (September 15, 1863):90. This complaint seems strange to contemporary ears, but the practice of sharing meeting houses was common at that time.


Something of Joseph Smith III's unwillingness to mix secular politics with ecclesiastical affairs can be seen in his lifelong association with W. W. Blair, a Democrat, or in his willingness to vote for Z. H. Gurley, Jr., in an election in Decatur County, Iowa, after the latter had left the RLDS Church.

Revelation of July 8, 1838 (RLDS D&C 106; LDS D&C 119).

See notes 110 and 111.

Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 133-145. Mormons in Utah interpreted one-tenth of their "increase" to include the production of their land, the production and time of their livestock, their own time, and their own wages. "In general, it could be said that many faithful church members paid one-tenth of their gross income rather than one-tenth of their net."

"The First General Epistle of the Twelve, under the Presidency of Joseph Smith, Son of Joseph, the Martyr," SH 2 (January 1862):155-157; and Joseph Smith III, "Appendix to the Epistle of the Twelve," SH 2 (January 1862):162. The "Appendix" was added to the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants in 1880 (Section 114).

Memoirs, p. 942.


"Two Lineal Priesthoods," SH 1 (May 1860):118-122, cited the Book of Abraham. SH 3 (July 1862):1-10, reprinted the Book of Abraham from the Times and Seasons of March 1 and 15, 1842. SH 5 (April 1, 1864):1112 announced that the number of the Herald containing the Book of Abraham had been reprinted and was on sale for ten cents.

Council of Twelve Minutes, Book A, p. 2, RLDS Archives (microfilm).

Ibid., p. 12.

Memoirs, p. 98

Brigham Young's most well known statement of the Adam-God doctrine is found in Journal of Discourses 1:50-51 (discourse delivered April 9, 1852). The Adam-God doctrine has received considerable attention in Anti-Mormon writings. The Twentieth Century LDS response, until recently, has oscillated between denial that Brigham Young ever taught the doctrine and embarrassed silence. A scholarly lacuna has been filled recently by David John Buerger's able treatment, "The Adam-God Doctrine," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 15 (Spring 1982):44-58. Buerger concludes that Brigham Young "clearly believed that Adam was the father of the spirits of mankind in addition to being the first procreator of mankind's physical bodies; that Adam came to this earth as a resurrected and exalted being; that he 'fell' to a mortal state of existence in order to procreate mortal bodies; and that Adam was the physical and spiritual father of Jesus Christ."

Apostle Orson Pratt opposed Brigham Young's Adam-God doctrine. See Gary James Bergera, "The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies: Conflict within the Quorums, 1853 to 1868," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 13 (Summer 1980):7-49. Bergera argues that the underlying difference between the two lay in differing views of revelation. Brigham Young held a dynamic view
which allowed for past revelation being superseded. Orson Pratt’s view was static, insisting that new revelation could not contradict anything in the existing canon of scripture.


128 Some of the texts speaking of temples, ceremonies, and/or endowments are: Revelation of July, 1831 (RLDS D&C 57:1d; LDS D&C 57:3); Revelation of August 1, 1831 (RLDS D&C 58:13a; LDS D&C 58:57); Revelation of September 22-23, 1832 (RLDS D&C 83:1-2b & 6a; LDS D&C 84:1-5 and 31); Revelation of June 22, 1834 (RLDS D&C 102:10a; LDS D&C 105:33); Revelation of January 19, 1841 (RLDS D&C 107:10-17; LDS D&C 124:25-55); Revelation of September 1, 1842 (RLDS D&C 109:5-7; LDS D&C 127:5-10); and Revelation of September 6, 1842 (RLDS D&C 110:24; LDS D&C 128:24).


130 Revelation of January 19, 1841 (RLDS D&C 107:10-12; LDS D&C 124:25-39); Revelation of September 1, 1842 (RLDS D&C 109:5-7; LDS D&C 127:5-10); and Revelation of September 6, 1842 (RLDS D&C 110; LDS D&C 128).

131 Nauvoo Temple Records, Baptisms for the Dead, photocopy in Wilford C. Wood Collection, 4-N-b-13 (microfilm at LDS Archives, Ms f 413, Reel 8).


133 Memoirs, pp. 79-80; Tullidge, p. 782.


135 Memoirs, pp. 53-55.


137 Tullidge, p. 783. Cf. "Autobiography of Charles Derry," Journal of History 2 (April 1909): 166. In some places Joseph Smith III stated that he was elected Justice of the Peace in 1858 and 1862, elsewhere that the elections were in 1857 and 1861.
138 Memoirs, p. 80.
139 Ibid., p. 114.
Chapter 6

1Memoirs, p. 114.

2Ibid., p. 55. SH 9 (April 1, 1866):112 gives the date of Joseph Arthur's death as March 16, 1866. It is given as March 12th in the Memoirs.

3SH 9 (April 1, 1866):110. Isaac Sheen noted:
   "BRIG. GEN. CONNOR, from Camp Douglas, Utah, was in our office on the 22d ult. He came to talk with Pres. Joseph Smith, in reference to Utah affairs. He is laboring zealously for the emancipation of the oppressed people of Utah, and is confident of success, and of the success of the Reorganized Church in Utah. Bro. Joseph Smith had not returned from Nauvoo, where he had gone to attend the funeral of his youngest child."


6P. Edward Connor to R. C. Drum, October 26, 1863, as printed in Orton, Records of the California Men in the War of the Rebellion, p. 514.

7Memoirs, p. 236. Connor was willing to employ Protestant missionaries in his crusade, as well. See P. Edward Connor to Jonathan Blanchard, October 25, 1864, as printed in Roger Laurinari, "The American Home Missionary Society Collection and Mormonism," Brigham Young University Studies 23 (Spring 1983):207-208. In this letter Connor encouraged the A.H.M.S. to send missionaries to Utah Territory.

8Joseph F. Smith to Samuel H. B. Smith, February 28, 1866, LDS Archives.

9P. Edward Connor to Joseph Smith III, April 10, 1866, RLDS Archives.

J. M. Ashley to Joseph Smith III, May 10, 1866, RLDS Archives.


Ibid., pp. 123-124.

Joseph Smith III's testimony is contained in U.S., Congress, House, The Condition of Utah, H.R. Rept. No. 96, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1866, pp. 5-10. A manuscript copy of this testimony, in Joseph Smith III's hand, is found in P15, f24, RLDS Archives. The manuscript copy is missing one page of questions. Quotations in the following paragraphs are taken from the printed version.

The Condition of Utah, p. 10.

Ibid., p. 2.

Ibid., p. 1.

Cf. his reminiscence, in 1880, about his trip to Washington. He stated: "... we did not advise new and oppressive legislative enactments, but did recommend that crime in Utah should be treated as crime in any other section of the country was and ought to be treated; holding that it was not the severity, but the severity of prosecution and punishment that deterred men from the commission of crimes against the law. It was our opinion then, it is our opinion now, that so long as those transgressors escaped punishment from the venality, or weakness of executors of the law, just so long would polygamy survive. We are not now, we never have been in favor of official and legal oppression, or mob violence; but ... we are in favor of the arrest and just legal punishment of those who willfully and persistently continue to violate law." SH 27 (December 15, 1880):380-381.

Memoirs, p. 124.

Cited in SH 10 (August 15, 1866):59.


Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible has been referred to by a number of names. Robert J. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation", p. xxiii, suggests utilizing "New Translation" to refer to the manuscript left by Joseph Smith, in contrast to "Inspired Version," which refers to printed editions of the work. The RLDS Church first published the work under the title, The Holy Scriptures. The expression, "Inspired Translation" was frequently employed in the 19th Century. Today, in Mormon writings, "Joseph Smith Translation" (or, JST) is often used.

Matthews, "A Plainer Translation", p. 100; Memoirs, p. 38. Cf. Emma Smith Bidamon to Joseph Smith III, January 20, 1867, RLDS Archives; and Emma
Smith Bidamon to Joseph Smith III, February 2, 1867, RLDS Archives.

23″Annual Conference," SH 9 (April 15, 1866):123, 125.

24Concerning some of the technical difficulties encountered by the committee, see Howard, Restoration Scriptures, pp. 127-136, and Matthews, "A Plainest Translation", pp. 141-165. Much of the preliminary work was done by Marietta Hodges Faulconer and Mark H. Forscutt.


29SH 12 (December 1, 1867):176. Such rumors persisted in later years; cf. SH 28 (August 1, 1881):238.

30W. W. Blair to Joseph Smith III, February 8, 1868; SH 13 (March 1, 1868):76-77.

31Thomas Job to Joseph Smith III, January 22, 1868; SH 13 (March 15, 1868):93.

32Thomas Job to Joseph Smith III, August 24, 1868; SH 14 (September 14, 1868):92.


34Concerning some tentative LDS overtures to compare the printed version of the Inspired Version with the manuscript, see Joseph Smith III to John Taylor, February 22, 1878, LB #1, p. 315; John Taylor to Joseph Smith III, April 1, 1878, LDS Archives (unprocessed typescript copy at RLDS Archives); and Joseph Smith III to James T. Cobb, October 16, 1878, LB #1, pp. 482-485.

Despite Brigham Young's having placed the Inspired Version under the ban, Orson Pratt privately continued to hold it in high regard. Brigham Young died in 1877. In 1878, Orson Pratt, who was then Church Historian, prepared a new edition of the Pearl of Great Price, including revisions of the Book of Moses and Joseph Smith's translation of Matthew 24. No indication of Pratt's source for the revisions was indicated, but in actuality he employed the RLDS Church's published version of the Inspired Translation. See Matthews, "A Plainest Translation", pp. 219-232.

Alexander Hale Smith to Joseph Smith III, August 29, 1866; SH 10 (October 1, 1866):107-108.

Besides the accounts in n. 35, see James W. Gillen to Joseph Smith III, November 12, 1866; SH 10 (December 15, 1866):177.

Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints, p. 629, called the debate between Alexander and Joseph F. Smith "a curious spectacle." "Here were the sons of Joseph and Hyrum Smith quarrelling over Brigham Young and Polygamy...and each 'knew' that his position was true 'by revelation,' and 'by the Holy Ghost!' To make the wrangling still more interesting, Joseph F. made a malignant attack upon Mrs. Emma Smith, and called her a vile name before a public audience. Alexander H. was more a Christian than is admired by people generally, but he sprang up and warmly cautioned Joseph F. that, though they were cousins, he must not apply such an epithet to his mother again."


E. C. Briggs, Journal, August 11, and October 7, 1863, RLDS Archives. Briggs recorded that Brigham Young said that Joseph Smith III told his cousins Joseph F. and Samuel H. B. Smith that "he would not let them have his name to use until he got his fees as any Lawyer would and he got foure hundred dollers as a salery." Briggs later questioned Joseph F. Smith about this. In an undated entry in his journal (between October 8 and 24, 1863) he recorded that Joseph F. Smith denied having made such a report to Brigham Young. Joseph F. said that he believed his cousin was sincere but deceived, and that he held out hope he would retrace his steps. Joseph F. Smith did not believe, however, that his cousin Joseph ever would be president of the LDS Church.


Martha Jane Coray to Brigham Young, June 13, 1865, LDS Archives, explained the inaccuracies in Lucy Smith's book as resulting from her poor health, the influence of William Smith, reliance on a faulty memory, and lack of reference to source materials. This letter was evidently solicited by Brigham Young as part of his campaign against the book. The letter is reprinted in Jeffrey O. Johnson, "Martha Jane Knowlton Coray: 'Masculine in Her Strength of Character,'" unpublished paper, photocopy in Library, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

Another source of irritation to Brigham Young in the book may have lain in its record of the patriarchal blessings given by Joseph Smith, Sr. prior to his death in 1840. He foretold long life and faithfulness for his children William, Sophronia,
Lucy, Catherine, and his son-in-law Arthur Millikin. Since all of these had repudiated Brigham Young's leadership of the church, Brigham's resentment would be understandable. See Lucy Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations (Liverpool: Published for Orson Pratt by W. Richards, 1853), pp. 266-270.

41 Thomas Job To Joseph Smith III, August 24, 1868; SH 14 (September 15, 1868): 92.

42 James W. Gillen to Joseph Smith III, November 12, 1866; SH 10 (December 15, 1866): 177-178. Cf. the letter of T. E. Jenkins, from Wales, in SH 10 (August 1, 1866): 46, reporting that Joseph Smith III and his mother were slandered there.

43 James W. Gillen to Joseph Smith III, November 12, 1866; SH 10 (December 15, 1866): 177-178. That Gillen accurately reported Brigham Young's remarks to Joseph Smith III is shown by the typed transcription, "Remarks by President Brigham Young at the Semi-Annual Conference, G. S. L. City, October 7, 1866, Library, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.


45 Sophia Jewks to Joseph Smith III, January 20, 1869; SH 15 (March 1, 1869): 150. Joseph Smith III's editorial reply is found in the same issue, p. 146.

In 1868, Mormon elder John Hawley visited Plano. He first met Joseph Smith III milking his cow in the pasture. Hawley remarked, after being introduced, "Well, Brother Joseph, this does not look much like you were getting the salary it is reported that you get from the founders of the Reorganized Church." Joseph replied that he got no salary at all. They also discussed the rumors about him being a lawyer and a Spiritualist. John Hawley, "Experiences of Elder John Hawley," Journal of History 4 (April 1911): 229-230.

See also "Semi-Annual Conference," SH 18 (October 15, 1871): 632. W. W. Blair reported that it was rumored in Utah that the President of the Reorganized Church received a salary in the amount of $3,000 to $30,000, depending on which rumor one listened to. At this, the minutes noted, "The audience looked amused."

46 Memoirs, pp. 55-56.


The suggestion of Launius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again," pp. 176 and 206, that the couple experienced serious matrimonial problems, flies in the face of the evidence.

48 Bertha Madison Smith was born July 16, 1843, in La Salle County, Illinois. Concerning her life and character see Mary Audentia Smith Anderson,

49 Ibid., pp. 56-57.

50 "Salutatory," *SH* 7 (May 1, 1865):129.

51 *HRC* 3:239.


54 Ibid., pp. 117, 136-137; *SH* 19 (December 1, 1872):720. In the *Herald* article, Joseph Smith III names the elder "Abel Butterfield." In his memoirs he names him "Miller," which is probably a case of mistaken memory.

55 *Memoirs*, p. 149.

56 *SH* 15 (May 1, 1869):280.

57 Emma Smith Bidamon to Joseph Smith III, August 1, [1869], RLDS Archives.


60 Alexander Hale Smith to Joseph Smith III, July 18, 1869; *SH* 16 (August 1, 1869):85-86; "Extracts from Elder David H. Smith's Journal," *SH* 16 (September 1, 1869):129-131; and the sources cited in n. 59.


62 The correspondent for the *San Francisco Bulletin* reported that Joseph F. Smith, at one of his meetings, explained that his father's denials of polygamy were not lies: "It is said that I have proved my father a liar. I will show that he has not lied. There is a difference between telling a lie and not telling the truth (!!!) Webster says: 'Polygamy, a man having several wives, or a woman having several husbands.' The latter part my father meant to deny, and not the former; therefore he did not lie." Cited in Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints*, p. 634.

64Ibid., pp. 510-512.

65Joseph F. Smith to Sarah E. Richards Smith, September 13, 1869, University of Utah (photocopy).


69Ibid., pp. 112, 114-115.

70Ibid., p. 116.


72"Semi-Annual Conference," *SH* 18 (October 15, 1871):631. At the Annual Conference, April 1871, the two brothers had been appointed to labor "under the president's direction." *SH* 18 (May 15, 1871):313. One reason they remained close to home may have been concern for David's health. Another reason was the need to provide for their families.

Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," pp. 117-125, presents evidence that David Hyrum Smith made two brief trips to Utah in November 1870 and the Summer of 1871. This writer believes that the purported trip in November 1870 may not have occurred. The only evidence for this trip is a letter from David to Joseph Smith III dated November 12, 1870 (P13, f199, RLDS Archives). Internal evidence, particularly the reference to Josiah Ells, places the date of the letter's composition in 1872, not 1870.


74David H. Smith to Joseph Smith III, November 19, 1871, RLDS Archives.

75David H. Smith to Joseph Smith III, March 14, 1872, RLDS Archives.


77Ibid.


80David H. Smith to Joseph Smith III, July 23, 1872, RLDS Archives.
81Ibid. A partial copy or a rough draft of a letter from Joseph F. Smith to David H. Smith is found in the Joseph F. Smith Family Papers, Ms 288, Box 3, Folder 13, University of Utah. In this letter Joseph F. Smith denies Judge Boren's allegation and states that similar statements were made by Alexander H. Smith during his stay in Salt Lake City. Joseph F. Smith's letter makes it clear that the purported invitation was said to have occurred in 1856, during the visit of George A. Smith and Erastus Snow to Nauvoo.


84An excellent study is Ronald Warren Walker, "The Godbeite Protest in the Making of Modern Utah," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1977. Walker places the Spiritualism of the Godbeites within the framework of a broader liberalizing tendency which rejected the Mormon emphasis upon unity, cooperation, obedience, homogeneity, separateness, and hierarchical control. Walker discusses in some detail the Liberal Institute, pp. 148-169. The Institute was constructed as a meeting hall by the Godbeites. Other religious groups, such as the RLDS Church, were permitted to use it.

85Brodie, No Man Knows My History, pp. 474-475.

86Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," pp. 163-166.

87Ibid., pp. 171-173.


89Memoirs, p. 173.

90Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," pp. 185-193. Quotation from p. 188.

91David H. Smith to Joseph Smith III, March 15, 1873, RLDS Archives.


93Affidavit of Judge D. H. Morris (quoting Lucy Walker Kimball), June 12, 1930, LDS Archives, as cited in Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," p. 193. That this second-hand account reflects an actual conversation between David Smith and Emma Smith Bidamon strains credibility. The story may well reflect the doubts which troubled David's mind, however.


RLDS D&C 121:1.


RLDS D&C 124:2.

Memoirs, p. 174; Avery, "Insanity and the Sweet Singer," p. 245.

Photocopies of the death certificate and other papers relating to David H. Smith's hospitalization are in Ms d 2510, LDS Archives. F. Mark McKiernan has developed the hypothesis that David H. Smith suffered from hypoglycemia, not a tension-induced mental breakdown. See F. Mark McKiernan, "The Tragedy of David H. Smith," Joseph Smith, Jr., Family Reunion Ora1 Presentations August 18 & 19, 1972 at Nauvoo, Illinois (N.p.: n.d.), pp. 32-36.

Memoirs, p. 141.

ibid., p. 143.

On Joseph Smith III's eastern trip, see Memoirs, pp. 141-148.

On Joseph Smith III's trip to California, see Memoirs, pp. 149-157, and notices in virtually every issue of the True Latter Day Saints' Herald, September 1 through December 15, 1876.


Joseph Smith III, Journal, November 18, 1876, RLDS Archives. For information on Joseph Smith III's activities in Nevada, see Memoirs, pp. 157-160 and "Notes of Travel," SH 23 (December 15, 1876):752-753 and 24 (January 1, 1877):9.

The doctrine of blood atonement held that certain sins--particularly murder and apostasy--could be atoned for only by the shedding of one's own blood. The most notorious exponent of the doctrine was Brigham Young's one-time counselor, Jedediah M. Grant. To date, the closest approach to a scholarly study of the subject is found in Sessions, Mormon Thunder. Unfortunately, Sessions' analysis is flawed by his insistence that Grant was engaging in nothing more than blood-curdling hyperbole. He characterizes Grant's rhetoric, p. 130, as "just a natural part of bumptious Brother J eddy," who "just wanted the Saints to be the best people in the world," and whose language "rattled windows and doors, but . . . killed no one."

Gentiles in the Nineteenth Century were likely to form their opinion of blood atonement from sensational press accounts and exposés such as those of John D. Dee or Bill Hickman.

Reorganized leaders took the doctrine seriously. A typical expression of their views is found in Z. H. Gurley, Jr. to Joseph Smith III, August 25, 1878,


Memoirs, p. 163.

Joseph Smith III had been serving not only as Editor of the Herald but as Business Manager of the Herald Office and President of the Board of Publication. At the Annual Conference of 1876, he announced his resignation from the Board, effectively divesting himself of all his duties save that of Editor; SH 23 (May 1, 1876). Henry A. Stebbins was appointed Business Manager in his place, and Israel L. Rogers was chosen the new President of the Board. In SH 23 (May 15, 1876):271, Joseph Smith III expressed relief at being released from the burdens associated with the Board of Publication. His new-found freedom permitted him to travel more extensively than in the past.

See Minutes of the Board of Publication meeting held April 12, 1876, SH 23 (June 1, 1876):349. The April 15th issue of the Herald was the first to list H. A. Stebbins as Assistant Editor.

Joseph Smith III to Henry A. Stebbins, November 24, 1876, printed in SH 23 (December 15, 1876):758; Memoirs, pp. 159-160; Joseph Smith III, Journal, November 17 and 21, 1876, RLDS Archives.

Concerning Joseph Smith III's activities in Utah, see Memoirs, pp. 162-173; and SH 24 (January 1, 1877):9, 10, 12; (January 15, 1877):24-25; (February 1, 1877):34-35. There is also an account in Joseph Smith III to Heman C. Smith, September 19, 1878, LB #1, pp. 456-457.

Memoirs, pp. 162-163. Cf. Joseph Smith III's remarks to Z. H. Gurley, Jr., August 20, 1878, LB #1, p. 434. In this letter he commiserated with Gurley's statement that some features of missionary work in Utah were "almost enough to make a man hate his race." Joseph replied: "I did hate the race; at times, while I was in Salt Lake, myself included. If I could have had the whole of those ratty old sinners together at once, and have had the privilege of telling them what I thought of the course they had pursued, I should have felt relieved; but to carry a volcano in ones breast to which the crater was lost, was horrible."

On November 28, 1876, Joseph Smith III ate dinner at Samuel H. B. Smith's house. A number of polygamous wives (of various men) were there, including Augusta Cobb, a wife of Brigham Young. Joseph later wrote to her son, James, "Kind regards to your mother. She little knew what a turbulent storm was raging
in my heart the day she saw me at Samuel's my cousin."  


117*Memoirs*, p. 163.

118Ibid., pp. 163-164.


121Ibid., p. 167.

122Ibid. Of all his Utah relatives, Samuel H. B. Smith displayed the greatest willingness to discuss their theological differences. Previously they had exchanged views by mail. See Samuel H. B. Smith to Joseph Smith III, January 9, 1867, RLDS Archives; Joseph Smith III to Samuel H. B. Smith, January 28, 1867 and October 26, 1867, photocopies of both letters at Brigham Young University. The two cousins were on familiar terms as a result of Samuel's having stayed with Joseph for a winter in the 1850s. See *Memoirs*, p. 223.

George A. Smith, who died in 1875, had also displayed a willingness to discuss the origin of plural marriage with Joseph Smith III. George A. considered Joseph III to have been raised in ignorance concerning the subject. See copies of their correspondence in Church Historian's Letterpress Book, vol. 2, pp. 872-875 and 891-900, LDS Archives. This correspondence took place in 1869. George A. ordered copies of the RLDS anti-polygamous tract *Address to the Saints*, which he proceeded to distribute to some of Joseph Smith's plural wives. Under George A.'s direction, Joseph F. Smith went about collecting affidavits from these women and others with first-hand knowledge of the prophet's teaching and practice of plural marriage. In a letter dated October 9, 1869, George A. gave Joseph III a sample of the information which had been collected (cf. n. 134).

Had George A. Smith been alive in 1876, his conversations with Joseph III would have been interesting. Unlike Joseph III's younger Utah cousins, George A. could have given him a personal account of the prophet's polygamous teachings.


124The following accounts are drawn from *Memoirs*, pp. 165, 170-171.


126Cf. William Clayton to Madison M. Scott, November 11, 1871, LDS Archives. In this letter Clayton stated that Joseph Smith III errs in "denying bitter;y that his father ever had a revelation on the subject" of polygamy, and also stated that he believed the prophet's son knew better. He expressed reluctance to criticize Joseph Smith III, out of respect for his father, but testified unequivocally that he wrote the revelation on celestial marriage as dictated by the prophet, July 12, 1843.

In the 1870s most members of the Salisbury and Millikin families were received into the RLDS Church. Joseph Smith's oldest sister, Sophronia McCleary, also was received into membership at the Annual Conference of 1873. HRC 4:4. She died July 22, 1876, leaving one surviving daughter, Maria Barnett.

Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," p. 205, shows that William Smith made approaches toward reconciliation with Brigham Young in 1847, 1854, 1855, and probably in 1860. But Brigham Young was unwilling to restore William to his former standing, and after each rebuff William renewed his denunciations of Utah Mormonism.

A graphic picture of the negotiations between Joseph and William is found in Joseph Smith III to William B. Smith, January 12 [?], 1878, LB #1, pp. 275-279.

After securing William's affiliation with the Reorganization, Joseph held out to him the hope that he might be recognized as patriarch, "at a propitious time." See Joseph Smith III to William B. Smith, February 20, 1879, LB #2, pp. 115-116.

Memoirs, p. 184. In 1856, E. C. Briggs and S. H. Gurley delivered sensitive documents into Joseph's hands concerning the breakup of William Smith's organization in northern Illinois. When William discovered that Joseph had the documents he demanded them, but Joseph refused to relinquish the documents. In 1875, Jason W. Briggs had published an account of William's involvement in polygamy in "History of the Reorganization," p. 1. Joseph Smith III still had possession of the documents given him by Briggs and Gurley, in 1889. He wrote to David Seeley that William Smith's organizational failures in Kentucky and Illinois were due partially to "things of a similar nature to those for which your people now suffer; and of which I do not care to inform you, though I hold the evidences to prove them." "Questions Asked by Elder David Seeley, of the Utah Church, and Answered by Pres. Joseph Smith in San Bernardino, Cal.," P19, f47, RLDS Archives.

The Reorganization held that the church, after the death of Joseph Smith, became disorganized. This was a divine judgment for the church's disobedience and iniquity. However, within each faction into which the church divided, there might be righteous men who continued to hold legitimate priesthood. Therefore, the Reorganization admitted into membership persons who had received baptism after June 27, 1844, from elders who were not in transgression and concerning whom the Spirit "bore witness" that they should be accepted. Ordinations were judged in a similar fashion. See Joseph Smith III to W. E. Winkworth, February 1, 1911, RLDS Archives, for a detailed explanation.

William Smith's pride would not admit the necessity of rebaptism, but Joseph privately felt that "it would have been better if Uncle had been washed in baptism." Joseph Smith III to T. W. Smith, December 10, 1876, LB #2, p. 42.

Joseph Smith III to William B. Smith, October 26, 1883, and William Smith to Joseph Smith III, October 19, 1883 (including Affidavit of William Smith, dated October 22, 1883), RLDS Archives.
In 1883 the RLDS Church published William Smith's memoirs of early Mormonism, under the title, William Smith on Mormonism. This Book Contains a True Account of the Origin of the Book of Mormon. A Sketch of the History, Experience, and Ministry of Elder William Smith. The Story of the Golden Plates from which the Book of Mormon Was Translated. An Account of a Most Extraordinary Miracle, Wrought by the Laying on of the Hands of the Elders of the Church, and a Statement of the Principles and Doctrines, as Believed and Taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with Other Matters of Great Interest to All Believers in Christianity (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Steam Book and Job Office, 1883). The previous year, when William wrote Joseph that he was contemplating writing his memoirs, Joseph strictly warned him to employ discretion:

"I have long been engaged in removing from Father's memory and from the early church, the stigma and blame thrown upon them because of Polygamy; and have at last lived to see the cloud rapidly lifting. And I would not consent to see further blame attached, by a blunder now. Therefore Uncle, bear in mind our standing to-day before the world, as defenders of Mormonism free from Polygamy, and go ahead with your personal recollections . . . . if you are the wise man I take you to be, you will fail to remember anything contrary to the lofty standard of character at which we esteem these good men. You can do the cause great good; you can injure it by injudicious sayings." Joseph Smith III to William Smith, March 11, 1882, LB #3, pp. 435-436. (A somewhat similar warning is found in Joseph Smith III to William Smith, July 12, 1879, LB #2, pp. 257-258.)

In 1869, George A. Smith wrote Joseph Smith III a detailed account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s involvement in polygamy, naming numerous events and dates. He told how the prophet personally taught him the doctrine of plural marriage. He also listed some of the prophet's plural wives, giving the dates and circumstances of their marriages. As for Emma Smith, he wrote: "The inauguration of these principles were a severe trial to your mother. At times she received and resolved to act upon the same. She gave your father four wives with her own hands; this intelligence I had from your father's mouth." George A. Smith to Joseph Smith III, October 9, 1869, RLDS Archives.

In 1872, William McLellin wrote Joseph Smith III a letter accusing Joseph Smith, Jr. of adulterous affairs in the 1830s. He also stated that Emma Smith had confirmed these stories to him in 1847. Emma purportedly told him that the prophet foresaw that polygamy would ruin the church and himself burned the revelation (but copies had been made previously). McLellin challenged Joseph: "Can you dispute your dear mother? She related this to me, and will if you ask her tell you the same thing." William McLellin to Joseph Smith III, July-September 8, 1872, RLDS Archives.

In 1874, Zenas H. Gurley, Jr. wrote a letter to Joseph Smith III objecting to his editorial stance, that Joseph and Hyrum Smith never taught polygamy. Zenas H. Gurley, Jr. to Joseph Smith III, January 1, 1874, RLDS Archives. (This letter was not typical of those members of the RLDS Church who thought that the prophet had been involved in polygamy. Most were content to denounce polygamy as wrong and to say nothing about the prophet's practice.)


"Last Testimony of Sister Emma," SH 26 (October 1, 1879):289.
Some of the impetus for this interview was provided by James T. Cobb, a Salt Lake City liberal with whom Joseph Smith III was in correspondence. Cobb questioned many details of the traditional account of Mormon origins, theorizing that Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith had been co-conspirators in a religious fraud. Joseph's questions to his mother about Rigdon and early Mormon history were aimed at Cobb and others of like mind. Shortly after interviewing his mother, Joseph wrote to Cobb triumphantly announcing that her testimony demolished his pet theories about Rigdon and the Book of Mormon. See Joseph Smith III to James T. Cobb, February 14, 1879, LB #2, pp. 85-88.

The use of the first person plural in the "Last Testimony" is Joseph Smith III's typical use of the editorial "we." Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, pp. 300-302, mistakenly conclude from its use that Alexander Hale Smith was present at the interview with Joseph.


Ibid.

SH 26 (April 1, 1879):104.


See Joseph Smith III's editorial lament about the pile of correspondence awaiting answers from him; SH 26 (May 15, 1879):153. He stated: "... we just ache for a thinking machine into which we could toss the entire pile, turn the crank and then get the solutions, decisions and answers, all nicely written out and neatly labelled ready for use."

Foster, Religion and Sexuality, p. 307, n. 86.

The untitled notes are found in P19, f40, RLDS Archives.

The original notes consist of two pages of questions and eight pages of answers. Most of the questions are in ink, and apparently were prepared before the interview. Two additional questions, in pencil, were added at the end, apparently having come up in the course of conversation. The answers, all in pencil, bear typical marks of having been written while another spoke. There are crossed-out words, interlineations, abbreviations, and other signs of having been written in haste, to keep pace with the spoken word.

Memoirs, p. 277.


Clayton, Secret Writings, pp. 20, 24 (entries for July 12, 1843 and August 16, 1843).
150 See notes of testimonies given at the Stone Church, Independence, Missouri, May 1, 1921, P18-8, f1, RLDS Archives. Various elderly Saints who had known Emma Smith Bidamon testified that they had heard her say that Joseph Smith had always been true to her, that he had no other wife but herself, and that he had nothing to do with the revelation on plural marriage. Those giving such testimony included her granddaughter, Emma Smith McCallum; her daughter-in-law, Clara Hartshorn Smith; and E. L. Kelley. Cf. Buddy Youngreen, Reflections of Emma: Joseph Smith's Wife (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1982), pp. 41, 67; Jason W. Briggs, "The Basis of Polygamy. No. 5," The Messenger of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 1 (April 1875):23; Briggs, "A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856," pp. 461-462; "Reminiscence of Sister N. J. Harpe," Journal of History 11 (January 1918):120; and Henry A. Stetbins, "In the Dark and Cloudy Day," Autumn Leaves 30 (October 1917):497.


Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "The 'Leading Sisters': A Female Hierarchy in Nineteenth Century Mormon Society," Journal of Mormon History 9 (1982):33, has pointed out that in the spring of 1844, Emma Smith, president of the Relief Society in Nauvoo, conducted a series of meetings with the Mormon women in which she delivered a "double-talk indictment of plural marriage, a coded but unmistakable opposition to the practice which her husband was ever more widely promulgating. Her design was to oppose polygamy, not openly, but through the use of veiled language." Similar semantic sleight of hand may be involved in the answers she gave her son in the "Last Testimony."


155 Memoirs, pp. 185, 193. In the interests of economy, the material in the book treating events up until the death of the prophet had undergone relatively little revision.

156 Typical of those opposed to the book was W. H. Kelley, who called the spirit and drift of Tullidge's work "radically opposed to the Spirit and Genius of the Reorganization." W. H. Kelley to Joseph Smith III, February 28, 1881, RLDS Archives.

157 Memoirs, p. 185.

158 Joseph Smith III to A. H. Cannon, September 14, 1888, LB #4, pp. 323-

159 Memoirs, pp. 189-190.

160 Ibid., pp. 190-191.

161 Carthage Republican, January 21, 1880; as cited in HRC 4:299-300.

162 Carthage Gazette, January 21, 1880; as cited in HRC 4:300.

163 Joseph Smith III's tremendous sense of vindication, after preaching at the Carthage County Courthouse, is evident in his letter to James T. Cobb, January 22, 1880, LB #2, pp. 462-465. He wrote that he had just preached in the same room where Joseph and Hyrum Smith were arraigned, "and now let the dwellers in Zion howl, because I did not get killed by a mob while there . . . I have tried to make the name of Joseph Smith honorable among men, and to sift the wheat of Mormonism from its chaff, to find the gold among its debris, and in the pursuit of this object I have waited and worked. It was this that took me to Carthage; and because I went there and unmolested preached Mormonism, in the Court room there, I shall get the renewed ire of our Utah Saints, unless I have judged them amiss. It will be taken as another evidence that I am 'hail fellow, well met,' with the murderers of Joseph and Hyrum. . . . while harassed by the torture of the warfare that I have been engaged in, the cup of bitterness has been turned into nectar on my lips, and the murky cloud of the past has hovered over my pathway so long has been turned into the glowing splendor of a halo of glory, by this religion of Christ, and his peace is mine. Never did I realize this more than when, last Sunday night I stood in the Judge's desk, in that distant court room, and while I told the hundreds assembled there to hear me, the story of the Cross as the books left by Joseph Smith warranted me in telling it."

164 In order to establish order in the sometimes tumultuous RLDS conferences, Joseph Smith III adapted the rules of order used in the U.S. Congress for use in the conferences. These were published in a pamphlet: Joseph Smith III and Thomas W. Smith, comps., A Manual of Practice and Rules of Order and Debate for Deliberative Assemblies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Plano, Illinois: Herald Office, 1876). He also persuaded the church to establish rules of representation.

165 Joseph Smith III to George Edmunds, August 8, 1867, LDS Archives.

166 HRC 3:709-711.

167 Ibid., 3:712.

168 SH 20 (March 1, 1873):144.

169 George E. Paine to Henry A. Stebbins, December 23, 1878, RLDS

George E. Paine to Henry A. Stebbins, December 23, 1878, RLDS Archives.

Memoirs, p. 191.

"Notice," printed in the Painesville (Ohio) Telegraph, August 21, 1879. Clipping in P24, f36, RLDS Archives. Joseph Smith III, Mark H. Forscutt, Sarah F. Videon, John Taylor, and the Utah Mormon Church were named as defendants. Apparently a fraction of the original temple property had been sold to Sarah F. Videon.

Joseph Smith III recognized the possibility that the Utah Church might put in an appearance. In 1879, he wrote: "The only contestant to this successorship, likely to put in an appearance in dispute, is the Brighamite Utah church, and the chances of their doing it are remote. But should they, we shall make a stubborn fight of it; and we think we can make a successful showing to the claim we make to the rightful succession." Joseph Smith III to George E. Paine, January 31, 1879, RLDS Archives.

E. L. Kelley to Joseph Smith III, February 19, 1880; printed in SH 27 (March 15, 1880):84-85.

A verbatim transcription of the decision is printed in Israel A. Smith, "The Kirtland Temple Litigation," SH 90 (January 9, 1943):40. The original is located in Book T, Common Pleas Record, Lake County, Ohio, p. 488, located in Lake County Courthouse, Painesville, Ohio, as cited in Paul E. Reimann, The Reorganized Church and the Civil Courts (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, 1961), p. 84.

RLDS publications, beginning with the first account in SH 27 (March 15, 1880):89, generally cite all of the court's decision except the last two sentences dismissing the suit. This has created the widespread misimpression that the court awarded legal title to the RLDS Church.

LDS polemict Reimann, The Reorganized Church and the Civil Courts, pp. 49-100, correctly points out that the court dismissed the RLDS suit. However, he himself is even more disingenuous. He quotes only the last two sentences and omits everything else.

Those interested in the legal issues in the Kirtland Temple suit must consult Reimann's book, cited above, and Israel Smith's article (SH 90:40-43, 50), also cited above. Both works are highly partisan. Reimann's work is particularly unfortunate. It gathers together much important material bearing on the case and then squanders it in contentious and sometimes misleading polemics. Reimann's book might have been of permanent scholarly value had the author been content to present the factual data (all of it), the pertinent legal data (all of it), and then to show that previous RLDS accounts of the case contained significant omissions. As it stands, the work suffers from the same selectivity and partisan bias of which it complains in others. A definitive study of the Kirtland Temple suit remains to be written.
The present writer, a non-lawyer, understands the legal issues as follows. The court found, as a matter of fact, that the RLDS Church was the lawful successor of the original Mormon Church. As such, the court ruled that the RLDS Church held equitable title to the Kirtland Temple. The court also ruled, as a matter of fact, that Joseph Smith, Jr. had held legal title to the Kirtland Temple as trustee for the church. The court found that legal title had passed to the heirs of Joseph Smith, holding the title in trust for the church.

The RLDS suit sought three things: equitable title, legal title, and possession of the property. (1) Judge Sherman ruled that the RLDS Church held equitable title. (2) But because Joseph Smith died intestate, Judge Sherman ruled that legal title automatically passed to his heirs as constructive trustees for the church. Therefore, as a matter of law, legal title could not be granted to the RLDS Church. (3) The question of possession is more difficult to understand. Since Judge Sherman held the probate sale invalid, all subsequent deeds deriving from that sale were held invalid. This left Joseph Smith III and the other defendants in the position of mere squatters. Why did not the court order them evicted? The most likely explanation seems to be that an ejectment proceeding should have been brought by the party holding legal title to the property, i.e., the heirs of Joseph Smith.


180Plano Mirror, June 22, 1876; as cited in HRC 4:138-139.

181HRC 4:206-209.

182Kendall County Record, as cited in HRC 4:373.

183SH 28 (September 15, 1881):286.
Chapter 7


3Samuel A. Burgess, "The Regions Round About Jackson County and Missouri," Journal of History 17 (July 1924):293-308.


5Memoirs, pp. 194-197.


7The first Utah edition of the Doctrine and Covenants did not appear until 1876. Larson, The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood, p. 78, n. 34, remarks that the 1876 edition—which included for the first time the revelation on celestial marriage (Section 132)—was aimed at bolstering LDS claims, in the Reynolds case, that plural marriage was a part of the Mormon religion. In 1879 another Utah edition—with verification by Orson Pratt—appeared. Since that time new printings and editions have appeared regularly in Utah.


8Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints, pp. 662-663, states that Brigham Young intended for Brigham Young, Jr. to succeed him as president of the church and that this objective underlay the secret ordination of Brigham, Jr. and two
other sons as apostles in 1864. Of the three, only Brigham Young, Jr. ever was admitted to the Quorum of Twelve.

Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," p. 221, n. 92, cites Stenhouse's statement that Brigham, Jr. was being groomed for the succession. "I have found no evidence to suggest that President Young intended his son to be his immediate successor to the presidency of the Church. On the other hand, he undoubtedly anticipated that eventually one of his sons would become the president by virtue of being the senior apostle in the Church. Ordaining John W. Young an apostle at the age of eleven may have been a step in that direction." But Quinn also notes, p. 220, that seniority in the Quorum of Twelve was not unanimously adhered to in the nineteenth century. After the deaths of both Brigham Young and John Taylor, some members of the quorum favored making Joseph F. Smith the new president.

John Codman, The Mormon Country A Summer with the "Latter-day Saints" (New York: United States Publishing Company, 1874), p. 16, stated that Brigham Young was said to favor the claims of Brigham Young, Jr. to succeed him.


Jason W. Briggs was in Utah during Brigham Young's last years and commented with biting irony upon his inconsistent attempt to establish a Young dynasty after repudiating lineage as the basis for succession in the 1840s. See "Assumption--Extraordinary," The Messenger of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 1 (June 1875):32; and "Brigham Young's Successor," The Messenger of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 2 (June 1876):30.

E. W. Tullidge, Life of Joseph the Prophet, p. 621, reported that in 1856 or 1857 he questioned Orson Pratt about the rumor that Brigham Young had ordained his three eldest sons as apostles, with the intention that Brigham, Jr. would succeed to the presidency. Pratt replied, "I guess the Twelve will choose their own president at the death of President Young." Tullidge then and there concluded that the Twelve had determined that there would be no Young dynasty.

Shortly before his death, Brigham Young stripped Orson Hyde of his seniority in the Quorum of Twelve and made John Taylor the new president of the Twelve. After Young's death, Taylor delayed forming a new First Presidency until after the death of Orson Hyde, November 28, 1878. The reason, as he told one of Orson Hyde's sons, was that he felt the presidency rightly belonged to Hyde. "No, I could not do otherwise, because I would have been taking your father's place. The presidency, rightfully, under the order of the Priesthood, would have been upon Orson Hyde." Joseph S. Hyde, "Orson Hyde," p. 89.

Reed C. Durham, Jr. and Steven H. Heath, Succession in the Church (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Inc, 1970), pp. 78-95.

Larson, The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood, pp. 77-80.

Ibid., pp. 92-93.

Ibid., pp. 93 & 96.
14Ibid., pp. 94-95.

15John Wentworth—former mayor of Chicago, six-term congressman, and editor of the Chicago Democrat—was prominent in organizing the meeting. At Wentworth's suggestion, E. F. Cragin, the chairman of the rally, invited Joseph Smith III to participate. See Joseph Smith III to John Wentworth, February 18, 1882, LB #3, p. 427.

16This summary of Joseph Smith III's remarks is based on the extensive account in the Chicago Daily Tribune, February 23, 1882, p. 6. Since the account in the Tribune is a summary, it should be compared with Joseph Smith III to E. F. Cragin, February 18, 1882, LB #3, pp. 417-426. The letter to Cragin, chairman of the meeting, was written as an outline of his views, at a time when Joseph Smith III feared he might not be able to attend the meeting.

17Joseph Smith III, et al., Memorial to Congress from a Committee of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, on the Claims and Faith of the Church (Plano, Illinois: True Latter Day Saints' Herald Steam Book Office, [1870]).

In 1875 the Semi-Annual Conference appointed H. J. Hudson, P. Cadwell, and J. W. Briggs to draft another memorial to Congress, urging "more decisive measures in the suppression of misrule and tyranny in Utah." The memorial urged stricter law enforcement, voting guarantees, jury reform, appointment of postmasters who would deliver anti-Mormon materials, and property guarantees for Gentiles. HRC 4:114-117.

18Joseph Smith III and Henry A. Stebbins to Rutherford B. Hayes, August 16, 1878, LB #1, pp. 424-426. Additional correspondence concerning Cadwell's proposed nomination is found in LB #1, pp. 427-428 & 440-448. In P15, f25 and P24, f44, RLDS Archives, are undated form letters in Joseph Smith III's hand, endorsing Cadwell for governor of Utah. These form letters were sent to various citizens of political influence with the request that they sign and forward them to President Hayes. Cf. Larson, The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood, p. 93, n. 5.


In 1888 E. L. Kelley recalled:

"Our church originated the Edmunds Law against [sic] polygamy in the Territories of the United States. I made the oral argument before the Sub Judiciary Committee in answer to the argument of George Q. Cannon. Written arguments were presented to every member of the Forty-Seventh Congress."
Excerpt from an interview in the *Cincinnati Telegram*, May 18, 1888, as reprinted in *SH* 35 (June 2, 1888): 349-350.


22 *SH* 29 (May 1, 1882): 138. Joseph Smith III privately relished his triumph. In 1885 he recalled: "When the Edmunds Bill was pending, I filed a bill in replication, and made the fight a three cornered one, sending two able men, one a good lawyer, to meet G. Q. Cannon before the Committee. . . . Congress at last assumed the ground I had occupied for years, that polygamy was not necessarily religion; the law was passed the way prepared and new fearless men are enforcing the law. Joseph Smith III to George Edmunds, May 5, 1885, RLDS Archives.

23 Joseph F. Smith to John Henry Smith, March 5, 1882, University of Utah.


25 *SH* 29 (June 1, 1882): 172-173.

26 Secretary of State William M. Evarts' Circular Letter No. 10 of August 9, 1879 is found in U.S., Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Policy of the United States, Transmitted to Congress, with the Annual Message of the President, December 1, 1879*, pp. 11-12.

27 *SH* 29 (October 15, 1882): 332. A manuscript copy of the document conveyed to Secretary Frelinghusen, dated February 13, 1883, is found in P19, f. 44, RLDS Archives.

28 *Memoirs*, pp. 201-202. The memorial—a rather lengthy document—explained that the RLDS Church was a non-polygamous Church of Latter Day Saints, numbering about 20,000 members. In particular it stated that confusion with the polygamous and disloyal Mormon Church worked to its disadvantage, especially since Evarts' circular letter. "The effect of this letter was such that in Germany, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Italy, Norway and the Society Islands, missionaries of the Reorganized Church were regarded with suspicion and were refused liberty to propagandize, as such liberty is given to missionaries of other American churches." The text of the memorial is found in *HRC* 4: 414-419.


30 *HRC* 4: 422.


32 Ibid.

33 RLDS Council of Twelve Minutes, Book A, p. 34 (microfilm at RLDS Archives).
34E. C. Briggs and R. W. Attwood, Address to the Saints in Utah and California. Polygamy Proven an Abomination by Holy Writ. Is Brigham Young President of the Church of Jesus Christ, or Is He Not?, rev. by Joseph Smith III and Wm. W. Blair (Plano, Illinois: Church of J. C. of L. D. S., 1869). This tract originally had been prepared for use as a missionary tool in Utah, and was revised by Joseph Smith III and W. W. Blair. Its basic argument was that polygamy violated both scripture and church law.

35Joseph Smith III, Reply to Orson Pratt (Plano, Illinois: True Latter Day Saints' Herald Office, [1870]).

36Joseph Smith III to E. L. Kelley, October 30, 1884, RLDS Archives.


38The debate with Littlefield is given extended treatment here, because it is typical of the arguments repeated so often in later years by Joseph Smith III. Later writings which add little to these basic arguments will not be treated at length.


40Joseph Smith III gingerly avoided discussion of whether such evidence had been presented to David H. Smith.

41Perhaps a reference to Servilla Durfee.

42The identity of this elder is not known.


47Actually Lyman Wight, although alienated much earlier, was not formally excommunicated until 1848, so theoretically seven of the twelve apostles at Joseph Smith's death were still members of the quorum.

In SH 30 (July 7, 1883):425-426, Joseph Smith III realized that he had failed to discuss the situation of Lyman Wight, but took the ground that Wight was no longer a member of the quorum in 1847.


Initially Briggs' writings in the Messenger were standard RLDS fare, but when he began to question not only the LDS but the RLDS understandings of scriptural inspiration, the gathering, and pre-existence, conservatives within the church began clamoring that he be silenced.


Gurley's complaint was that a conference resolution established the Doctrine and Covenants as dogmatic authority for the church. He was unwilling to affirm that every revelation contained in the book was divinely inspired. The refusal of Joseph Smith III to print his letters in the Herald added fuel to the fire and led to his temporary resignation as an apostle. Finally he withdrew from the church in 1886.


58° E.g., Joseph Smith III to John Codman, December 15, 1884, LB #4, pp. 132-135.


60° ibid., pp. 80, 91, 93-94.

61° R. J. Anthony to Joseph Smith III, February 16, 1882, RLDS Archives. (Spelling as in original.)


63° Memoirs, pp. 221-222. Joseph Smith III to George Edmunds, May 5, 1885, RLDS Archives, contains the following explanation of his reasons for going to Utah:

"The time is as you say opportune. My first intention, that of helping to
unshackle the innocent in Utah, is still good. My purpose has not wavered in the least. My labor has been long and hard to get a hearing; first of the outside world, then of the people in Utah. I could not get the second, until I had the first. I could not fight the world, (the U.S.); the flesh, (polygamy) and the Devil, (the lies told of Mormonism), as a combination; so had to take them in detail. .

"Now I am ready in mind to go to Utah . . . . My proposition is to make the fight upon the same grounds that I have occupied from the first—that polygamy is not Mormonism, has never been legally, according to the law of the church itself, and can not be. That if Joseph Smith practiced plural marriage, he was a transgressor of law, both secular, and divine. .

"I propose to admit nothing; except what is proved, and shall insist upon good evidence for that, respecting the introduction of polygamy and shall try to lead the better disposed to a better philosophy, as you suggest that they can be good saints and be good citizens; retaining faith, church relationship, citizenship, homes and prestige if they will."

65"Salt Lake District," SH 32 (April 25, 1885):272. R. J. Anthony reported that many were asking the question, as quoted.

66Joseph Smith III to James Whitfield, September 8, 1884, LB #1A, pp. 262-263.


68W. W. Blair, Journal, June 17, 1874, RLDS Archives.

69Complainant's Abstract, pp. 28-29, 32-33.

70SH 32 (June 27, 1885):414; (July 4, 1885):428. Joseph Smith III, Journal, June 17, TB85, RLDS Archives, states that he arrived on June 17th, while the notice in the Herald states that he arrived on the 18th.

An overview of his itinerary, sightseeing, and social visits can be found in his journal and in Audencia Anderson, "My Father's Letters," Vision 45 (January 1932):35-37; (February 1932):83-85; and (March 1932):121-123, 131.


A description of Joseph Smith III's reception in Utah is given in Ethan Barrows, "The Journal of Ethan Barrows," Journal of History 15 (July 1922):446-447. Barrows, an RLDS convert in Utah, ascribed the failure of the prophet's son to reap conversions to the spiritual deadness of the Mormon people and prejudicial
stories in the Deseret Evening News.

72Memoirs, pp. 237-242; and notices in SH 32 (August 29, 1885):555-556; (September 5, 1885):574; (September 12, 1885):592; (September 19, 1885):603-604; (September 26, 1885):619; (October 17, 1885):670-671; and (October 24, 1885):699.


75Memoirs, pp. 427-428, and "Fourth of July in Salt Lake City," SH 32 (July 25, 1885):475. Joseph Smith III editorialized that the Mormon leaders' approval of the insult to the American flag was a mistake. He concluded that their cry of persecution at the hands of unconstitutional measures was "a display of wilful ignorance." He called upon that 98% of Mormon men who were not polygamists to assert themselves and put a stop to "further exercise of the foolish wisdom being displayed." Following the account of Salt Lake's Fourth of July, the Herald ran an article entitled "July Fourth at Lamoni," to show the contrast between Mormon "disloyalty" and RLDS "loyalty." SH 32 (July 25, 1885):475-476.


77James W. Gillen to Joseph Smith III; printed in SH 10 (December 15, 1866):177. Gillen wrote that at the close of Alexander's address in Provo, "a man by the name of Corey [sic] ... endeavored to bolster up their tottering fabric by telling what your father did and said as an offset against positive law, but his folly was made manifest to every one that had sufficient manhood to think for themselves."

78See Howard Coray's untitled autobiographical reminiscences, Mss 1422, Brigham Young University. Here he left an account, pp. 25-26, of how Hyrum Smith taught him and his wife the revelation on celestial marriage. When both Howard and Martha Jane Coray proved receptive, Hyrum sealed them on the spot, in his buggy.


80Melissa Lott was born on January 9, 1824. She married Joseph Smith on September 20, 1843. The marriage was recorded in the family Bible, which is now in the possession of the LDS Church. See Brodie, No Man Knows My History, pp. 482-483, and Joseph Fielding Smith, Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage, pp. 55, 72.
81. Joseph Smith III's account is found in Memoirs, pp. 244-246; Journal, October 20, 1885; and Complainant's Abstract, pp. 489-490. For Melissa Lott Willis' version, see Temple Lot Suit Transcript of Evidence, RLDS Archives, 2:93-108, particularly pp. 97-98 and 107-108. (This typescript of the testimony is henceforth cited as Temple Lot Transcript.)

82. This question placed Melissa Lott Willis in an extremely embarrassing position. Emma Smith Biddamon was highly respected among the women of Nauvoo and noted for her veracity. Presumably, Melissa thought that Emma was ignorant of Joseph's plural marriages. But, assuming the contrary, it would mean impeaching Emma's reputation before her son to contradict Emma's "Last Testimony." Furthermore, Melissa Lott Willis' testimony, Temple Lot Transcript, 2:101, 105-106, indicates that she cohabited with the prophet without Emma's knowledge in the Mansion House. No matter how she answered this question, she felt embarrassed and compromised.

83. In Temple Lot Transcript, 2:93, Melissa Lott Willis said that Hyrum Smith performed the wedding ceremony.

84. In Temple Lot Transcript, 2:93, 97, 105-107, she testified that she cohabited with Joseph Smith as his wife, both at the farm and at the Mansion House. She even named Room No. One as the location in the Mansion House.

85. During the Temple Lot case, under questioning which was extremely frank for that time and place, she more than once bristled when a question was too indelicate. She simply would not tell Joseph Smith III because to do so would be unladylike. On p. 97, of her testimony she noted that during the interview at Lehi she respected him as a gentleman and he respected her as a lady. Respect for the social conventions of the day prevented Melissa Lott Willis from speaking frankly to Joseph Smith III.

86. Joseph Smith III's account of this interview is found in Memoirs, p. 235.

87. This piece of dialogue was recounted by John R. Young to Vesta Pierce Crawford, April 1931, University of Utah. After returning from Salt Lake City to St. George, Foster gave his account of the interview in a testimony meeting. John R. Young was present at the meeting.

Concerning the episode between Eliza R. Snow and Emma Smith, see Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Linda King Newell, and Valeen Tippetts Avery, "Emma and Eliza and the Stairs," Brigham Young University Studies 22 (Winter 1982):87-96.


89. Sarah Pratt was one of the principal sources for W. Wyl's Joseph Smith the Prophet: His Family and Friends (Salt Lake City: Tribune Publishing Company, 1886). For additional background about Sarah Pratt's views on polygamy, see Elden J. Watson, comp., The Orson Pratt Journals (Salt Lake City: Elden Jay Watson, 1973), pp. 176ff, 515-516, 559-562, 590-593.

90. Memoirs, pp. 32-34. Sarah Pratt gave her version of this interview to W.
Wyl, who reproduced his notes of her story in Joseph Smith the Prophet: His Family and Friends, pp. 60-61, as follows:

"Joseph Smith, the son of the prophet, and president of the re-organized Mormon church, paid me a visit, and I had a long talk with him. I saw that he was not inclined to believe the truth about his father, so I said to him: 'You pretend to have revelations from the Lord. Why don't you ask the Lord to tell you what kind of a man your father really was?' He answered: 'If my father had so many connections with women, where is the progeny?' I said to him: 'Your father had mostly intercourse with married women, and as to single ones, Dr. Bennett was always on hand, when anything happened.'"

This source must be used with caution due to its bias and uncertain methods of transcription and documentation. Assuming that both Joseph Smith III's and Wyl's accounts record parts of the actual conversation, a reconciliation between them can be affected as follows: (1) Both Joseph Smith III and Sarah Pratt gave one-sided accounts, recalling those aspects of the conversation supporting their own biases. (2) Sarah Pratt denied that she ever became a plural wife of Joseph Smith, because in fact she stoutly resisted such advances. (3) Joseph Smith III dismissed as rumor, gossip, innuendo, or hearsay all of Sarah Pratt's stories which were not based on her personal observation. (4) Joseph Smith III's questions were framed carefully to elicit only those pieces of information which bolstered his "case." (5) For a variety of other reasons Sarah Pratt did not tell him everything she knew: a sense of futility in reasoning with a man whose mind was made up, modesty, or a desire not to dissuade him from his anti-polygamous warfare.

One aspect, however, of Joseph Smith III's account cannot be reconciled with other statements of Sarah Pratt, viz., "...your father never said an improper word to me in his life...was never guilty of an action or proposal of an improper nature...towards me, or in my presence, at any time or place." This statement in Joseph's memoirs probably represents a lapse of memory based upon Sarah Pratt's statement that she had never been a plural wife of Joseph Smith, Jr.

92 Ibid., pp. 247-248 & 257.
93 Ibid., pp. 224-225.
94 E.g., Lucy Young, James A. Browning, and a large number of men in Nephi. See Memoirs, pp. 227, 243, and 254.
95 Memoirs, p. 230.
96 Ibid., p. 226.
97 Ibid., pp. 247, 253, and 256.
98 Ibid., pp. 244, 252, and 255.
100 Ibid., pp. 256-257.
101 Ibid., p. 256.
102 Ibid., pp. 251-252, 257.
103 Ibid., p. 230.
104 Ibid., pp. 243, 259.
105 Ibid., p. 223; Joseph Smith III, Journal, June 27, 1885.

106 Memoirs, p. 230. See John Henry Smith to Francis M. Lyman, July 21, 1885, John Henry Smith Letterpress Book 1:419, University of Utah. Here John Henry Smith stated: "The reorganized Joseph . . . and me are warm friends." Further details concerning Joseph III's visits with John Henry are found in John Henry Smith to Joseph Smith III, John Henry Smith Letterpress Book 1:425. John Henry reported that they had met four times and soon would do so again. Joseph admitted to John Henry that "the spiritual wife doctrine" was taught in his father's day and that he believed "his father may have been in transgression," but--in John Henry's estimation--Joseph quibbled over the words "marry" and "seal." Here Joseph was employing James Whitehead's testimony about sealing for eternity as his second line of defense. His third line of defense was to argue that even if his father cohabited with women other than Emma Smith, this only proved he had transgressed God's law.

107 Memoirs, pp. 233 and 244.

108 Joseph Fielding Smith, Life of Joseph F. Smith, pp. 252-262. The Endowment House served as a surrogate temple in Salt Lake City. The Salt Lake Temple was begun in 1853 but was not dedicated until 1893.

109 Alexander H. Smith to W. H. Kelley, June 24, 1885, RLDS Archives.

110 Joseph Smith III to W. H. Kelley, June 22, 1885, RLDS Archives.


112 See Joseph F. Smith's Letters to Martha Ann Harris, January 26, 1885; Sarah E. Richards Smith, March 11, 1885; Sarah E. Richards Smith, April 8-10, 1885; Sarah E. Richards Smith, April 6, 1886. All of the foregoing are photocopies of originals, University of Utah.

113 Memoirs, p. 233; cf. p. 223. That Joseph Smith III viewed his cousin as a victim of polygamy is made clear in Joseph Smith III to Levira A. Smith, February 3, 1880, LB #2, pp. 486-487.

114 Memoirs, p. 260.

115 See Joseph Smith III to George Edmunds, October 13, 1885, RLDS Archives. In this letter he related his discussions concerning legislation and appointments.

116 Joseph Smith III to George Edmunds, January 7, 1886, RLDS Archives.

Zenas H. Gurley, Jr. to Joseph Smith III, April 6, 1869, RLDS Archives. Additional letters to Joseph Smith III amplifying these views were written on December 5, 1873, January 1, 1874, March 25, 1879, and August 7, 1879; all in RLDS Archives.

Joseph Smith III's general line of reply to Gurley is found in letters dated October 23, 1878 (LB #1, pp. 491-493), April 2, 1879 (LB #2, pp. 149-156), and July 24, 1879 (LB #2, pp. 275-277).


Littlefield used the affidavit from Soby and a statement from Mercy R. Thompson to renew the controversy with Joseph Smith III. Joseph Smith III tried to impeach their testimony by showing inconsistencies in it. He also secured a letter from Z. H. Gurley stating that he secured the affidavit from Soby on his own initiative, not Joseph Smith III's, contrary to Littlefield's allegation that Joseph Smith III first sought the affidavit and then suppressed it. See Joseph Smith III's letters to Lyman O. Littlefield, May 26, June 16, and June 24, 1886, LB #4, pp. 247-252, 253-257, and 261-262. Also see Joseph Smith III to Z. H. Gurley, Jr., March 5, 1886, LB #4, pp. 234-235. Littlefield's position can be found in The Historical Record 6:227-228.

Biographical and Historical Record of Ringgold and Decatur Counties, Iowa. Containing Portraits of All the Presidents of the United States from Washington to Cleveland, with Accompanying Biographies of Each; a Condensed History of the State of Iowa; Portraits and Biographies of the Governors of the Territory and State; Engravings of Prominent Citizens in Ringgold and Decatur Counties, with Personal Histories of Many of the Leading Families, and a Concise History of Ringgold and Decatur Counties and Their Cities and Villages (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1887), pp. 543-544.

"One Wife or Many," The Return (November 1889):174-175. Copies of the affidavit of Ebenezer and Angeline E. Robinson, dated December 29, 1873, are found in both the RLDS Archives and the LDS Archives. Robinson's views were well known to members of the RLDS hierarchy long before his break with the church. See Ebenezer Robinson to E. L. Kelley, November 24, 1879; and Ebenezer Robinson to Jason W. Briggs, January 28, 1880; LDS Archives.

Among other things, Whitmer stated, pp. 38-39, that he had as much evidence to believe that Joseph Smith received the revelation on polygamy as to believe that George Washington ever lived. "I never saw General Washington, but from reliable testimony I believe that he did live." He cited as evidence the first number of the True Latter Day Saints' Herald. He alleged that the present leadership of the Reorganization would like to forget the statements made in that number, by Isaac Sheen and William Marks, seeking to disconnect Joseph Smith from the origin of polygamy in order to avoid public odium. "Will God approve of a church being built up upon representations of the innocence of Joseph Smith regarding polygamy, if he is not innocent in the matter? Nay, verily! And I tell you that the efforts of the Reorganized Church in this regard have not been acceptable unto God! He does not want any truth covered up."

The Herald responded by reprinting the statements of Marks and Sheen, in "What Was Suppressed?" SH 34 (December 10, 1887):793-795, arguing that these statements proved nothing about Joseph Smith's involvement in polygamy. Throughout 1887, the Herald kept up a steady attack on David Whitmer.

125Explanations. Some Reasons Why We Withdrew from the Reorganized Church," The Return I (December 1889):184-185. Robinson was baptized into the Whitmerite Church on April 13, 1888. Joseph Smith III's recollections of Robinson's departure from the RLDS Church are found in Memoirs, pp. 216-217.

126Robinson died March 11, 1891. His basic platform was outlined in "Some Reasons," The Return I (January 1889):9-10. He enumerated seven reasons for believing that the Latter Day Saints had apostatized from their primitive faith, even before the death of Joseph Smith. These included: changing the name of the Church of Christ; the introduction of polygamy; Utah's Adam-God doctrine and blood atonement; tithing stipends paid to ministers; the doctrine of "avenging" in the Doctrine and Covenants; and the Order of Enoch, secret oaths, and fictitious names. In later issues, he laid the origin of Danites, temple rites, and polygamy at the feet of Joseph Smith. Robinson's last installment of "Items of Personal History of the Editor," The Return 2 (February 1891):28-30, carried his recollections through the latter part of 1843. Here he told of Hyrum Smith's teaching him polygamy and the opposition to the revelation in the High Council by William Marks, Austin Cowles, and Leonard Soby. He also replied, p. 28, to Joseph Smith III's attempts to undermine the credibility of his affidavits.

Robinson received frequent counterfire from W. W. Blair in the Herald, throughout 1889.

127John K. Sheen to Joseph Smith III, October 20, 1874, RLDS Archives. In the preface to the first number of The Relic Library No. 1 (April 15, 1889) he declared, "I am not a member of any church."


129John K. Sheen, Polygamy, or the Veil Lifted [Yank, Nebraska: 1889].
130Ibid., p. 10.
131Ibid., pp. 15-21.
133Ibid., pp. 175-179.
134Ibid., pp. 210-212.
137Joseph Smith III to W. P. Hepburn, February 9, 1886, LB #4, pp. 221-224; Joseph Smith III to G. F. Edmunds, March 4, 1886, LB #4, pp. 231-232.
139SH 34 (December 24, 2887):825.
140Memoirs, p. 267.
143Memoirs, pp. 267-270. Cf. remarks in SH 35 (April 21, 1888):252, and Joseph Smith III to J. C. Jensen, June 7, 1888, RLDS Archives: "... I was beset by neuralgia till my courage, endurance and patience were all gone; and I could enjoy nothing, not even being miserable."
146RLDS general conferences were held in the Kirtland Temple in 1883, 1887, 1891, 1896, and 1904. The gathering in 1883 particularly attracted the attention of the secular press. See SH 30 (May 5, 1883):273 and (June 2, 1883):346.
148Joseph Smith III, One Wife, or Many (Lamoni, Iowa: Printed by the
Reorganized Church, n.d.). The tract was first offered for sale in SH 36 (May 4, 1889):273.

In his memoirs, Joseph Smith III stated that he began One Wife, or Many under inspiration two years before but had been unable to finish the tract until the light returned to him in California. He said that he took up the work one morning and succeeded in finishing it within two days. But in his journal it appears that these were not two consecutive days. See Memoirs, p. 274; Journal, January 19 and March 13, 1889, P2, J119, RLDS Archives.

149 W. W. Blair, "The Ministry of Joseph's Sons:" in One Wife, or Many, pp. 14-16.

150 Joseph Smith III, The Rejection of the Church (Lamoni, Iowa: Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, n.d.). From a notice in SH 34 (September 10, 1887):588, it is possible to date the publication of this tract. The thesis of the tract was that God rejected the church in Nauvoo, because of the failure to finish the temple speedily, as commanded by God. The Twelve went back on their original theory of succession (1844) when they illegally reorganized the First Presidency (1847). Brigham Young and his followers fell into gross iniquity and lost their priesthood. When the "Reformation" of 1856-1857 required mass rebaptism—into a polygamous church—the LDS effectively were baptized into apostasy. But the Spirit called a righteous remnant to reorganize the church.

151 "Questions Asked by Elder David Seeley of the Utah Church, and Answered by Pres. Joseph Smith in San Bernardino, Cal.," P19, f47, RLDS Archives. See Memoirs, p. 280. The account in the memoirs seems garbled, stating that Seeley composed written answers to Joseph's questions.


154 Memoirs, p. 283.

155 Joseph Smith III to Mary Audentia Smith, July 3 [sic], 1889, RLDS Archives.

156 Kingsbury was certainly familiar with the inner workings of polygamy in

157Memoirs, pp. 292-293.

158Ibid., p. 295.

159Ibid., p. 296. Lucy Walker Kimball made no public challenge to Joseph Smith III during his address, but she was introduced to him after the service. She recalled that Joseph said, "I am very glad to see you, and I am not either afraid or ashamed to see you." She told him that she was very desirous of having a chat with him. In Lucy Walker Kimball's mind Joseph's remarks to her and his argument that the question was not whether his father had more wives than one, but whether it was right, implied he feared to argue the former question and knowingly adopted a false position. "Now did he not give himself away there?" she said in her Temple Lot testimony. See Temple Lot Transcript 2:473-474.

In 1904 Joseph Smith III denied a rumor that Lucy Walker Kimball publicly confronted him at Logan with the assertion that she had been a plural wife of Joseph Smith, Jr. See "Editorial Items," SH 51 (November 9, 1904):1043-1044.

160Memoirs, p. 290.


162Ibid., p. 295.

163Ibid., p. 296.

164Ibid., pp. 285-287.

165Ibid., p. 283.

166Ibid., p. 298-299.

167Affidavit of John Taylor, November 19, 1889, RLDS Archives. Thomas A. Lyne endorsed Taylor's recollections on December 12, 1889.


169Ibid., pp. 284 and 299.

170Ibid., p. 288.
171bid.

172ibid., p. 291.


176The Manifesto is printed as an "Official Declaration" in the LDS Doctrine and Covenants. There was some question whether or not it was a revelation in the same sense as others contained in the Doctrine and Covenants. It was added to that book in 1908.

The Manifesto has been seen, almost uniformly, as a strategic retreat in the face of federal pressure. An exception is the somewhat bizarre treatment of Gordon C. Thomason, "The Manifesto Was a Victory," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 6 (Spring 1971):37-45. Thomason argues that while the government appeared to win the battle, it lost the larger war. Thomason points out that the church preserved the secrecy of its sacred covenants and was not forced to break up existing plural marriages. But the federal government never sought to destroy Mormonism per se; it sought to terminate the specific practice of plural marriage. This it accomplished. Thomason's unrealistic assessment is counter-balanced by that of Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, pp. 356-379. Arrington shows that the Anti-Mormon crusade attacked both polygamy and Mormon economic-political collectivism. The Manifesto defused much of the crusade's impetus, and the admission of Utah into the Union carried the process farther. The price which the LDS Church paid was relinquishing a substantial portion of its temporal power—not just plural marriage. After statehood, Arrington concludes, p. 379, "The temporal Kingdom, for all practical purposes, was dead—slain by the dragon of Edmunds-Tucker."

177SH 37 (October 11, 1890):657. The editorial was unsigned, but Joseph Smith III almost certainly wrote it. The style is his, and Associate Editor W. W. Blair was away from Lamoni at the time.

In what follows, citations are drawn from unsigned editorials in the Herald to show Joseph Smith III's attitude toward the Manifesto. Unfortunately, his surviving correspondence makes little mention of the Manifesto, so these editorials are the best available source for Joseph Smith III's immediate reaction to it.

178"Mormons Will Obey," SH 37 (October 18, 1890):673.
179"Utah's Step Forward," SH 37 (October 25, 1890):690.
180"That Manifesto," SH 37 (November 1, 1890):705.
183HRC 5:46-47.
184HC 1:196-199.
185The rather complicated history of the property is outlined in Complainant's Abstract, pp. 12-20.
186On the Hedrickites see Shields, Divergent Paths of the Restoration, pp. 76-83.
187Complainant's Abstract, pp. 18-19.
188Memoirs, p. 310.
189In 1891, the RLDS Church was reincorporated at Lamoni, Iowa, partly to lay the groundwork for the Temple Lot suit. The Articles of Incorporation are printed in Complainant's Abstract, pp. 24-27. Particularly significant was Article 6, which reads: "All property now held or owned by said church, in the name of any person or persons, as trustees or otherwise, including the publication establishment of said church, shall vest in said corporation. And all persons holding such property in trust for said church are hereby directed and required to transfer and convey the same to said corporation, as the property of said church. And said corporation shall by operation of law succeed to all property now owned by said church or held for its use, and may sue for and recover the same in the name of said corporation" (emphasis added). Article 1, which declared the Reorganized Church to adhere to the doctrines and tenets of the original church organized in 1830, and to be a reorganization thereof. Taken together, these two articles laid the groundwork for a lawsuit to recover property held in trust for the original church.
   One reason for the reincorporation in Iowa may have been Iowa's liberal grant of power to a church corporation to sue. See 60 Fed. 937, 939-941.
190The purported deed from Edward Partridge to John Cowdery, Jane Cowdery, and Joseph Smith Cowdery, March 25, 1839, is printed in 60 Fed. 937, 938-939.
191An outline of the negotiations with the Hedrickites is found in Joseph Smith III to Stephen Maloney, July 12 [?], 1893, LB #1A, pp. 332-337.
192Joseph Smith III to George Edmunds, June 18, 1887; George Edmunds to Joseph Smith III, June 22, 1887; and Joseph Smith III to George Edmunds, June 29, 1887; all three letters in RLDS Archives. Quotations from the last letter. See also Joseph Smith III's letters to E. L. Kelley, June 14, 1887, and July 6, 1887,
RLDS Archives.

193See the thirteen items of correspondence between C. A. Hall, president of the Church of Christ, and LDS attorney John M. Cannon, September 4, 1892 through June 24, 1894, Ms 1363, Brigham Young University. These letters demonstrate that the Church of Christ received legal advice and sizeable financial assistance from the Mormon Church throughout the Temple Lot case. See also Emily Dow Partridge Young, Journal, entries for March 11, April 29, and May 6, 1892, University of Utah (photocopy of typescript). These entries show that the LDS First Presidency was working closely with the Hedrickites in the Temple Lot suit. Joseph F. Smith on April 29th boasted that the Josephites did not want the testimony taken concerning plural marriage and were "quite mad about it." Emily concluded that if the RLDS attorneys had initiated such testimony themselves, "they could not know what they were doing."

194"Temple Lot Suit," SH 41 (February 14, 1894):99 incorrectly gives the impression that the case was heard only on February 7th. Actually pleading began on February 6th and was concluded on the 7th.

195"The Temple Suit," SH 41 (February 21, 1894):113. Joseph Smith III's additional impressions of the attorneys in the case can be found in Memoirs, pp. 310-312.

196For a complete transcription of the testimony in the Temple Lot suit, one must consult Temple Lot Transcript. For the RLDS side of the evidence, the selections in Complainant's Abstract convey a fair impression of the testimony.

197Complainant's Abstract, pp. 27-37.


199Complainant's Abstract, pp. 91-105. See p. 98 for William's point-blank disavowal of polygamy: "I never, prior to the death of my brother, or subsequent to his death, taught or preached the doctrine of polygamy. I never did at any time or any place preach the doctrine of polygamy, and any history that states that I did teach the doctrine of polygamy, if any does state it, is false."

200Complainant's Abstract, pp. 107-165. To the standard litany of Brighamite deviations from primitive Mormon doctrine, Blair added the following (pp. 111-112): the Twelve's usurpation of the authority of the Presidency and Bishopric, dictation rather than free discussion at conferences, and the notion that the authority of the Utah priesthood was necessary for a true marriage.

201Long time residents of Jackson County and old Saints who testified included Robert Weston (Complainant's Abstract, pp. 171-173), Isaac N. Rogers (p. 173), William McCoy (pp. 173-175), Thomas Hailey (p. 175), Dr. Clarence St. Clair (p. 175), Hiram Rathburn, Sr. (pp. 215-231), John W. Brackenbury (pp. 231-232), Robert Weston (pp. 248-253), and John T. Crisp (pp. 274-278), Martha A. Hall (pp. 278-279), Jacob Gregg (pp. 287-289), and William Stewart (pp. 289-290).

202Complainant's Abstract, pp. 179-188.
203 ibid., pp. 253-258.

204 ibid., pp. 165-171.

205 Substantial parts of the testimony concerning polygamy have been expunged from the Complainant's Abstract. Since the purpose of the abstract of evidence was to present the evidence upon which the RLDS Church based its case, this can be considered neither surprising nor dishonest.

206 Temple Lot Transcript 2:350-351.

See Emily Dow Partridge Young, Journal, March 19-24, 1892, University of Utah (photocopy of typescript). The elderly woman recorded that RLDS attorney Kelley's cross-examination was "rigid" and sometimes made her feel as though the top of her head "might move off." She found some of the intimate questions insulting, but recorded that she had to pocket her pride and suffer the indignation. She considered it ironic that after so many years, "Joseph the Prophet is being tried in court for teaching and practicing plural marriage," and some of his wives were being called as witnesses. After testifying, she regretted that she had been unable to handle the cross-examination better and mulled over many responses she might have made but could not think of under the pressure of the moment.


208 ibid., 2:93.

209 ibid., 2:394-396. Noble told RLDS attorney E. L. Kelley that the prophet slept with Louisa Beaman. Kelley demanded to know whether Noble had seen them in bed together. Not exactly, Noble explained. He had given counsel to the prophet, telling him, " Blow out the lights and get into bed, and you will be safer there." The prophet later told him that he took his counsel; pp. 427-428.

210 ibid., 2:239-240; 109-110; 10; 495-496; 178; and 539.

211 ibid., 2:249-250; 539-540; 178-180; and 189. Under cross-examination, Kingsbury repeatedly stated that he was unsure how long it took him to copy the revelation or how many sheets of paper it filled. Finally, after incessant questioning, he stated that he estimated it took an hour to copy and filled an estimated two sheets of foolscap. In later years Joseph Smith III made much of these statements, arguing that the revelation was so lengthy that no one could have copied it on so little paper in so short a time.

212 ibid., 2:495-497; 528-529; and 584-585.

213 Complainant's Abstract, pp. 428-446.

214 ibid., pp. 393-407.

215 SH 39 (June 25, 1892):412. The writer of the untitled editorial presumably was Joseph Smith III. The following issue contained a letter from Alexander H. Smith, dated June 14, 1892, Salt Lake City, which gave details of Briggs' testimony, and calling him "a good witness for the True Church Reorganized." SH 39 (July 2, 1892):424.


See "Opinion of Judge Phillips [sic], in Temple Lot Case," SH 41 (March 14, 1894):161-162. The complete text of the decision is found in Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. Church of Christ et al., 60 Fed. 937 (1894).

See in the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western District of Missouri; Western Division at Kansas City, The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Complainant, vs. the Church of Christ, at Independence, Missouri, Richard Hill, et al., Defendants. Brief and Argument by G. Edmunds, on Behalf of Complainant, One of Its Solicitors (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bindery, 1893).

Reimann, The Reorganized Church and the Civil Courts, pp. 114-127, marshals overwhelming evidence to show that the 1839 deed was spurious. Israel A. Smith, "Temple Litigation," SH 90 (July 3, 1943):10, reprints the arguments of S. A. Burgess in support of the genuineness of the deed, but the arguments build upon too many conjectures and suppositions to be credible.

Launius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again," pp. 392-393, contains a misstatement concerning the 1839 deed. He correctly points out that the defense presented serious evidence impeaching the legitimacy of the deed. He says that the defense asked the judge to throw out the case, but the judge decided to continue the trial. According to Launius, after the "complete discrediting of the Reorganization's deed to the property," Joseph Smith III "told his lawyers to forget the deeds, and to claim the property solely on the ground that the Reorganization was the legal continuation of the original Mormon church and had been forcibly driven from the land it held in 1833." In actuality, Joseph Smith III never told the RLDS attorneys to "forget the deeds." George Edmunds appealed to the 1839 deed in his closing argument (In the Circuit Court, p. 7). The amended Bill of Complaint appealed to it (Complainant's Abstract, pp. 6-7). Judge Phillips based part of his decision upon acceptance of it. And the later reversal of Judge Phillips by the Court of Appeals was based, in part, upon the RLDS claim to legal title via the 1839 deed.

The Articles of Faith first appeared in a letter of Joseph Smith to John Wentworth in 1842. See HC 4:535-541, especially 540-541. The RLDS Church republished the articles under the title, "Epitome of Faith," with some slight modifications, including an article condemning polygamy. See Complainant's Abstract, pp. 41-44.

Laches means undue delay in asserting a legal right or privilege, resulting in the expiration of the statute of limitations.

Memoirs, p. 312.


In the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western Division of
the Western District of Missouri: Decision of John F. Philips, Judge in Temple Lot Case: The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints versus the Church of Christ, et al. (Lamoni, Iowa: Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, n.d.), p. 5.

226 "Abstract of Evidence Temple Lot Suit," SH 41 (July 4, 1894), advertisement appearing on rear cover.

227 SH 41 (March 21, 1894):177.


229 Memoirs, p. 312.


The RLDS case is set forth in Respondent's Abstract of Pleadings and Evidence, United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, December Term, 1894. No. 516. The Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri, et al., Appellants, vs. the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Appellee. Appeal from the Circuit Court at the United States for the Western District of Missouri (Kansas City, Missouri: Sidney F. Woody Printing Co., 1894).

232 See n. 192. See also Joseph Smith III to E. L. Kelley, June 14, 1887, RLDS Archives; and Joseph Smith III to P. P. Kelley, March 20, 1894, LB #5, p. 157.

233 Church of Christ at Independence, Mo., et al. v. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 70 Fed. 179 (1895).

234 Ibid., pp. 187-188.

235 "Temple Lot Suit Reversed," SH 42 (November 6, 1895):711 gave a brief notice of the reversal.


239 RLDS apologists have made considerable use of Judge Philips' decision as proof of being the true church in succession. The reversal of the decision, such
apologists have reasoned, was on technical grounds and did not affect the judge's factual findings concerning succession. See Koury, The Truth and the Evidence, pp. 108-109; Elbert A. Smith, The Church in Court, pp. 8-9. Reimann, The Reorganized Church and the Civil Courts, argues at great length that the reversal of Judge Phillips' decision overturned all the findings of fact and conclusions of law on which his decree was predicated (pp. 149-187). Reimann correctly shows that RLDS apologists err who claim that the suit was dismissed solely on grounds of laches, but he misleads his readers when he states that the suit also was overturned on grounds that the RLDS Church lacked sufficient title to maintain an action. The court of appeals ruled that the RLDS bill of complaint was drawn in such a way as to place the Hedrickites in the position of mere squatters, and, therefore, there was no basis for a suit in chancery. Someone reading only Reimann's book would never understand this, just as someone reading only one of the RLDS apologists would never understand that something more than laches was involved in the reversal.


246Quotation from Joseph Smith III to W. W. Blair, January 9, 1896, LB #6, p. 314.

The first edition of Roberts' Succession in Church Presidency was published in Salt Lake City by Deseret News Publishing Co., 1894. A second edition was published in 1900.

Joseph Smith III's opinion of Roberts' work is given in a letter to L. D. Hickey, April 30, 1894, LB #5, p. 216, in which he states that the book "is not a strong work, only in its assumptions." In a letter to Heman C. Smith, November 1, 1894, LB #5, pp. 433-434, he gave advice concerning how to answer Roberts.

Heman C. Smith's series of articles entitled "True Succession in Church Presidency" ran in the Herald in 1898. These articles were then gathered together into a book, True Succession in Church Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Being a Reply to Elder B. H. Roberts on "Succession in the Presidency of the Church" (Lamoni, Iowa: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1898). A second edition appeared in 1900.

A copy of Spencer's account, taken from a journal or pocket memorandum book, is in the LDS Archives. See "Interview with Jos. Smith," Ms d 6708, LDS Archives (photocopy).


Joseph Smith III, Journal, September 23, 1897, RLDS Archives.


Typical examples of Joseph Smith III's correspondence with editors are: Joseph Smith III to Editors of the Salt Lake Tribune, March 20, 1877, LB #1, p. 118; to "Messrs Editors," June 21, 1877, LB #1, pp. 170-172; to Editors of the Boston Daily Advertiser, March 10, 1879, LB #2, pp. 133-135; to Editors of Manford's Magazine, December 23, 1879, LB #2, pp. 419-422; to Publishers of the Western Rural, March 17, 1880, LB #3, pp. 45-46; to Publishers of Lippincott's Monthly, November 16, 1880, LB #3, p. 2:2.

Joseph Smith III and Heber C. Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 4 vols. (Lamoni, Iowa: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1897-1903).


268 "An Effort in Behalf of Polygamy," SH 48 (March 20, 1901):222-223. Technically the bill did not repeal the law. It simply emasculated it by changing the rules of evidence in such cases. The new law would have required the complaint to be from the wife or alleged plural wife of an accused polygamist.

269 The RLDS General Conferences of 1902 and 1903 passed the following resolution:
"WHEREAS, it is currently reported that polygamy is still practiced in Utah and adjacent States and Territories, in defiance of the laws of God and the laws of the land; and
"WHEREAS, the laws enacted by State legislation seem to be inadequate to prevent or prohibit the practice of polygamy without the intervention of Federal enactment; therefore be it
"RESOLVED, that we, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, in General Conference assembled, favor the enactment of an
amendment to the Constitution of the United States prohibiting the practice of polygamy in all the States and Territories under the jurisdiction of the Republic."

The RLDS First Presidency--Joseph Smith III, Frederick Madison Smith, and R. C. Evans--prepared a flier announcing the church's support of such an amendment. It was entitled "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and the Proposed Constitutional Amendment Prohibiting Polygamy (N.p.: n.p., 1903?). See also HRC 5:579; 6:53.

The hearings are reported in U.S., Congress, Senate, 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, 59th Cong., 1st sess., Doc. no. 486, 4 vols., 1906.


Joseph Smith III, Plural Marriage in America (N.p.: n.d.). This was a tract of eight pages which reprinted the article in The Arena of May 1903. A greatly expanded version of the article was published as a thirty-nine page tract in 1903 or 1904. Entitled Plural Marriage in America. A Critical Examination (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, n.d.), it was one of Joseph Smith III's most comprehensive briefs directed against the witnesses who testified to his father's involvement in plural marriage.


The concluding paragraphs of this article were reprinted in Public Opinion with minor editorial changes. See "Polygamy as a Political Issue," Public Opinion
34 (March 12, 1903):327.


284 RLDS D&C 124:2a, 129:5, 126:7b, 130:3a.


287 Frederick Madison Smith to Joseph F. Smith, August 21, 1905, and Joseph F. Smith to Frederick Madison Smith, August 24, 1905, as printed in [Frederick M. Smith and Joseph F. Smith,] Appeal of Frederick M. Smith One of the Presidency of the "Reorganized Church" to Pres. Joseph F. Smith for the Unlimited Use of the Meeting Houses of the Latter-day Saints and His Reply (N.p.: n.d.). This pamphlet bears no publication data. From the prefatory remarks it may be inferred that it was issued upon the authority of Joseph F. Smith.


289 Joseph Smith III made one other trip to Utah not elsewhere noted in this dissertation. On September 12, 1902, on his way home from California, he stopped briefly at Salt Lake City. Memoirs, p. 373.


291 "President of Reorganized Church Visits Salt Lake City," SH 52 (October 4, 1905):948–950.


293 Joseph Smith III, Journal, October 20 through October 31; November 8 and 9, 1905.

294 Joseph Smith III to Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, October 10, 1905, RLDS Archives.

295 Joseph Smith III to Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, October 17, 1905, RLDS Archives.
619

296 Joseph Smith III to Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, October 17, 1905.


298 The Cannons were one of the most powerful families in the Mormon Church and in Utah society. See the entries for George Q. Cannon, A. H. Cannon, and A. M. Cannon in Jenson's Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, 1:42, 167, 292.

299 There are three sources for this interview: Memoirs, p. 428; Angus Munn Cannon, Journal, October 12, 1905, F435, Reels 5 & 6, LDS Archives; and Angus Munn Cannon, Statement of an Interview with Joseph Smith III, LDS Archives. This interview is important for two reasons. First, it has intrinsic merit. Second, of all Joseph Smith III's interviews in Utah, this is the best documented from the other participant's side. Comparison of the two participants' accounts demonstrates that Joseph Smith III was highly selective in his recollections of what transpired in such interviews. Those points which were damaging or embarrassing to his apologetic position rarely found their way into his Memoirs. Similarly, Angus Cannon omitted from his account certain concessions which Joseph Smith III elicited from him.

300 Cannon, Statement, pp. 4-5.

301 Ibid., pp. 6-8.

302 Ibid., p. 9.

303 Memoirs, p. 428.

304 Cannon, Statement, p. 11.

305 Ibid.


307 Ibid., pp. 15-16. Cannon's memory failed him in some details here. He misnamed the Whitmerite "Smith," rather than "Schweick." And he reported Joseph Smith III claiming, "My mother did sign that affidavit." In fact, Joseph Smith III never claimed that his mother signed or swore to the "Last Testimony."


310 Ibid., pp. 17, 19-20.

311 Ibid., pp. 18-19.


313 Joseph Smith III to Israel A. Smith, September 27, 1905, RLDS Archives.


316 "Editor at Home." SH 52 (December 13, 1905):1187; Memoirs, p. 429.


A telegram from some RLDS elders to the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections alleged that Joseph Smith did not promulgate or practice plural marriage. This was the immediate occasion for a seditious pamphlet from Mormon elder A. Milton Musser, entitled "Race Suicide," Infanticide, Prolicide, Leprocide vs. Children, Letters to Messrs. Joseph Smith and Wm. H. Kelley, Aggressively Defensive (N.p.: n.d.). Musser was still smarting from an incorrect allegation in the Herald in 1901 that polygamy was still being practiced in the Musser family. Wm. H. Kelley's A Defense of Monogamic Marriage (N.p.: n.d.) is a reply to Musser. It contains additional information about Musser's umbrage at the article in the Herald.


321 Memoirs, p. 128.

322 Joseph Smith III to Israel A. Smith, February 10, 1906, RLDS Archives.

323 Joseph Smith III to Mary Audencia Smith Anderson, February 12, 1906, RLDS Archives.


325 HRC 6:163-165.

Chapter 8

1Memoirs, pp. 431-432.

2Joseph Smith III to Carrie L. Smith Weld, July 11, 1906, RLDS Archives.

3Memoirs, p. 432.


5Memoirs, p. 438.

6Details concerning the trip to Hawaii are found in Memoirs, pp. 435-442; Waller, "Local Historians: Sandwich Islands," pp. 42-55; and HRC 6:251-252.

7Memoirs, pp. 443-448.

8HRC 6:167-168, 186.

9Ibid. 6:199, 202. From 1908 to 1913, Elbert A. Smith was assisted in editorial duties by Israel A. Smith. HRC 6:291, 453, 504.

10HRC 6:135-136, 182-183. In 1909 Heman C. Smith was released as an apostle in order that he might devote more of his time to his work as church historian.

Early in 1907 the Herald Publishing House in Lamoni burned to the ground. This building served as something of a church headquarters. Numerous important historical documents were consumed in the flames, including much of Joseph Smith III's correspondence. Joseph Smith III desired to leave a record which would survive any such catastrophe in the future. Therefore he persuaded the church to begin publishing the Journal of History, for the purpose of putting important historical manuscripts in print, reprinting materials dating from the early days of the church, and publishing historical recollections and studies by living members of the church. Heman C. Smith was appointed editor of the Journal of History, which began appearing quarterly in 1908. Joseph Smith III himself contributed an important article, "What Do I Remember of Nauvoo?" in 1910.


13Memoirs, p. 454.

14Ibid., p. 460.
15RLDS D&C 126:4, 8; Memoirs, p. 376.

16HRC 6:558.

17RLDS D&C 127:8.


Replacing Evans with Joseph Smith III's nephew Elbert A. Smith, not only insured a smooth transition of power, it also fit in perfectly with Joseph's thinking about lineal succession. Elbert was filling the position in the presidency once held by his father, David H. Smith. See Memoirs, p. 449.

19HRC 6:559-560. The returned questionnaires are housed in the RLDS Archives (unprocessed).

20The text of the "Letter of Instruction" is found in HRC 6:560-575.

21Joseph Smith III to Israel A. Smith, September 12, 1912, RLDS Archives.

22John Henry Smith, Journal, November 22, 1906; November 23, 1909; January 14, 1910; and December 1, 1910; University of Utah (photocopies).

In 1910 Joseph F. Smith elevated John Henry Smith to the position of second counselor in the LDS First Presidency. During his presidency he also elevated two of his sons to the Quorum of Twelve. With a Smith as patriarch of the church, the hierarchy was taking on a definite family coloration. Interestingly, the same thing was happening in the RLDS Church.

The suggestion of Pusey, Builders of the Kingdom, p. 195, that John Henry cultivated a warm feeling of kinship for Joseph Smith III, "without much encouragement," runs contrary to all the surviving correspondence between the two men. In fact the cousins felt a deep affection for one another.


24Joseph Smith III to John Henry Smith, August 27, 1909, University of Utah.

25Joseph Smith III to John Henry Smith, April 27, 1911, University of Utah.

26Joseph Smith III to John Henry Smith, September 14, 1911, University of Utah.

27Memoirs, pp. 234 and 92. Joseph Smith III gave contradictory statements about the dates of his dream and correspondence, in these two citations. However, the correct chronology can be established from the letter cited in the previous note.

28Memoirs, p. 92; Joseph Smith III to Israel A. Smith, November 7, 1911,
RLDS Archives.

29Memoirs, p. 234; Pusey, Builders of the Kingdom, pp. 232, 244.

30Joseph Smith III to Mrs. George Albert Smith, January 10, 1910, University of Utah.

31George Albert Smith to Frederick Madison Smith, October 28, 1911, University of Utah (carbon copy).

32Joseph Smith III to George Albert Smith, November 8, 1913, University of Utah.

33George Albert Smith to Frederick Madison Smith, December 21, 1914, University of Utah (carbon copy); Pusey, Builders of the Kingdom, pp. 279-300.

34Joseph Smith III to Samuel H. B. Smith, May 30, 1914, Brigham Young University (photocopy).

35George Albert Smith to Joseph Smith III, November 21, 1913, University of Utah (carbon copy); Memoirs, pp. 234-235; Pusey, Builders of the Kingdom, p. 257.

36See note 54.

37Cannon's popular articles formed the basis for his book, Under the Prophet in Utah, published in 1911.


41Joseph Smith III, Mormons Who Are Not Polygamists (n.p.: n.d.).

42Memoirs, p. 452. W. R. Dexter was Joseph Smith III's principal stenographer in 1910 and 1911. Dexter's notes for A Study in Moral Ethics, written in Gregg shorthand, are currently housed in the RLDS Archives (unprocessed). A cursory examination of the notes, by this writer, shows that Mormon polygamy was the object of Joseph Smith III's attack in his unfinished opus.

Joseph had been working on his memoirs concurrently with A Study in Moral Ethics. When Israel A. Smith replaced Dexter as secretary, Joseph decided to devote all his remaining energy to the memoirs.

43Israel A. Smith first took dictation on the memoirs on May 23, 1913. The previous two years of work constitute pages 1 through 165 of the Memoirs (1979
The year and one-half of dictation to Israel constitute pages 166 through 471.

For information concerning the dictation, transcription, and editing of the memoirs, see Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, "Concerning My Father's Memoirs," SH 81 (November 6, 1934):1412, 1425-1426; Israel A. Smith, "My Father's Last Years (A Memory of President Joseph Smith)," SH 81 (November 6, 1934):1409-1410, 1426; and Frederick M. Smith, "Concerning Joseph Smith's Memoirs," SH 82 (August 6, 1935):995-996. These three articles are reprinted as Appendices A, B, and C of the 1979 edition of the Memoirs, pp. 472-476.

This writer has compared a portion of Israel A. Smith's notes (a mixture of longhand and Pitman shorthand) with the published memoirs. The principal differences between the notes and the printed version are organizational and syntactical. As to substance, the printed version faithfully represents the original at all points where comparison was made.

The memoirs were edited by Joseph Smith III's daughter Audentia and published serially in the Saints' Herald, between November 6, 1934 and July 31, 1937. (Financial constraints during the Great Depression prevented issuance in a book.) Audentia's daughter, Bertha Audentia Anderson Holmes, abridged the serialized memoirs. This abridgement was published by Herald Publishing House in 1955 under the title, Joseph Smith III and the Restoration. For years, scholars without ready access to the Saints' Herald have been dependent upon this abridgement, which omits much vital material. Finally, in 1979, a complete edition of the memoirs was brought out in the form of a book. RLDS Church Historian Richard P. Howard supervised this new edition of the memoirs, which photo-reprinted the pages from the Saints' Herald containing the serialized memoirs. The masthead, date, and pagination from the Herald were retained at the top of each page, for purposes of reference. Consecutive pagination was added at the bottom of each page. An introduction, notes, appendices, and index were added. The 1979 edition of Joseph Smith III's memoirs is the single most important source for the study of his life.

Launius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again," p. 442, harshly criticizes the memoirs as being "really quite bad as far as historical writing [is] concerned." He calls the narrative disjointed: "the ramblings of an old and feeble man," designed to cast the church and Joseph Smith in a favorable light. A more charitable—and more perceptive—assessment is found in Anderson, "Concerning My Father's Memoirs," in which awareness is displayed of the handicaps under which the memoirs were produced, and credit is given for the remarkable memory displayed therein. Audentia Anderson's article rightly points out that the incidents recalled in the "rambling" narrative are valuable pointers to the mind and heart of the author.


Ibid., p. 71.

HRC 64448.

Ibid. 64454, 551-552.

Maurice L. Draper, "Sect-Denomination-Church Transition and
Leadership Types in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ," M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1964, demonstrates that the RLDS Church in 1964 had traveled a good distance down the road from "sectarianism" to "denominationalism." A good historical treatment of this transition has yet to be written.

51Hunt, F. M. Smith, 170-104.

52HRC 6:577; Memoirs, pp. 470-471. Launius, "And There Came Prophets in the Land Again," p. 443, speculates that during the concluding months of his life Joseph Smith III suffered from "rapidly advancing senility." This assertion is not supported by the article to which Launius appeals in his accompanying footnote. Furthermore, it is totally contradicted by the following considerations: (1) Joseph Smith III dictated his memoirs up until the time of his final illness, and the product can hardly be considered the work of a senile mind. (2) His deathbed conversations give every evidence of an acute intellect, including characteristic repartee and self-deprecating humor, despite intense pain.

53HRC 6:577-578. This was also published in a small booklet, shortly after his demise: Joseph Smith III, His Last Message (Independence, Missouri: Ensign Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 1-3.

54Joseph Smith III, His Last Message, pp. 3-4.


A complete transcription of the notes taken during Joseph Smith III's last illness has never been published. They are presently housed, in unprocessed condition, in the RLDS Archives. There appear to have been three principal scribes: Israel A. Smith, Rogene Munsell Smith, and Audentia Smith Anderson. (Rebecca Weld Nolan later transcribed some of the dictation and may have served as one of the scribes.) The first two employed a combination of Pitman shorthand and longhand. Audentia Anderson employed only longhand. The Pitman shorthand employed is of a character which virtually defies transcription at points, due to its unconventional and/or sloppy symbols. Nevertheless, the author has managed to transcribe most of the shorthand notes which are currently housed in the RLDS Archives. Two further problems were encountered in working with the shorthand notes. First, it is extremely difficult to establish chronological sequence among the several notebooks and loose sheets of paper. Second, from the bits of Joseph Smith III's dialogue which were published after his death, it appears that not all of the notes have been preserved or found their way into the Archives.

These notes (and the author's transcriptions of them) are henceforth cited as "The Last Days of Joseph Smith III."

56Untitled transcription of remarks of Joseph Smith III, November 29, 1914, P15, f26, RLDS Archives. Part of this transcription was printed in "Statement of President Joseph Smith to His Son Frederick M. Smith, Sunday, November 29, 1914," Zion's Ensign, February 11, 1915.

58 "The Last Days of Joseph Smith III."

59 ibid.

60 ibid.

61 Quoted in HRC 6:583-584. See pp. 582-583 for additional tributes from the press.
Conclusion


4. Ibid., p. 23.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

1. Manuscript collections.


Independence, Missouri. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Library-Archives.
   Lewis Crum Bidamon Papers.
   E. C. Briggs Journals.
   Charles Derry Journals and Papers.
   Forscutt-Stebbins Letterbook.
   E. L. Kelley Papers.
   William H. Kelley Papers.
   Miscellaneous Letters and Papers.
   Alexander H. Smith Journals.
   David H. Smith Diary.
   Emma Hale Smith Papers.
   Joseph Smith III Papers, Letterbooks, and Journals.
   Temple Lot Suit. Transcript of Evidence.
   Unprocessed Papers.
   Lyman Wight Letterbook.


Provo, Utah. Brigham Young University. Harold B. Lee Library. Special Collections.

Salt Lake City, Utah. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Historical Department. Archives.
   Angus M. Cannon Papers.
   Journal History.
   Microfilm of Chicago Historical Society Mormon Collection.
   Microfilm of Mormon materials from Yale University.
   Microfilm of Wilford C. Wood Collection, Woods Cross, Utah.
   Stephen Post Collection.
   Joseph Smith III Correspondence.

Salt Lake City, Utah. University of Utah. Willard J. Marriott Library. Special Collections and Western Americana.
   Vesta Crawford Papers.
2. Scriptures.


Doctrine and Covenants. English. 1876. The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Containing the Revelations Given to Joseph Smith, Jun, the Prophet, for the Building up of the Kingdom of God in the Last Days. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Office, 1876. [First Utah edition.]

Doctrine and Covenants. English. 1880. Book of Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God, and Given in the Order of Their Dates. Lamoni, Iowa: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, 1880. [A reprint of the 1864 edition, with the addition of new revelations since the Reorganization. As additional revelations were received by Joseph Smith III, they were added to subsequent editions of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants:
- 1881 edition adds sections 118, 119, 120, and 121.
- 1894 edition adds sections 122 and 123.
- 1897 edition adds section 124.
- 1901 edition adds section 125.
- 1902 edition adds section 126.
- 1905 edition adds section 127.
- 1909 edition adds sections 128 and 129.
- 1913 edition adds section 130.
- 1917 edition adds section 131 (and 132).]

Pearl of Great Price. English. 1851. The Pearl of Great Price; Being a Choice Selection from the Revelations, Translations, and Narrations of Joseph Smith, First Prophet, Seer, and Revelator to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1851.


Ford, Thomas. A History of Illinois from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847. Containing a Full Account of the Black Hawk War, the Rise, Progress, and Fall of Mormonism, the Alton and Lovejoy Riots, and Other Important and Interesting Events. Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co.; New York: Ivison & Phinney, 1854.


Green, N. W. Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition. Embracing the Narrative of Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith, of Her Residence and Experience of Fifteen Years with the Mormons; Containing a Full and Authentic Account of Their Social Condition—Their Religious Doctrines, and Political Government. Hartford: Belknap & Bliss, 1870.


Hyde, Orson. Speech of Elder Orson Hyde Delivered before the High Priests Quorum in Nauvoo, April 27th, 1845, upon the Course and Conduct of Mr. Sidney Rigdon, and upon the Merits of His Claims to the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. City of Joseph: Printed by John Taylor, 1845.

In the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western District of Missouri:


In the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western District of Missouri:

Decision of John F. Philips, Judge in Temple Lot Case: The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
versus the Church of Christ, et al. Lamon, Iowa: Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, n.d.

In the Circuit Court of the United States, Western District of Missouri, Western Division, at Kansas City. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Complainant vs. the Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri; Richard Hill, Trustee, Mrs. E. Hill, C. A. Hall, President; Mrs. C. A. Hall, George Frisbie, Mrs. E. Frisbie, Miss Nannie Frisbie, Daniel Bauder, and G. D. Cole, as Members of and Doing Business under the Name of the Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri, Respondents. Complainant's Abstract of Pleading and Evidence. Lamon, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bindery, 1893.


Miller George. Correspondence of Bishop George Miller with the Northern Islander: From His First Acquaintance with Mormonism up to Near the Close of His Life. Written by Himself in the Year 1855. [Compiled by Wingfield Watson. Burlington, Wisconsin?: 1916?]


Piercy, Frederick. Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley: Illustrated with Steel Engravings and Wood Cuts from Sketches Made by Frederick Piercy, Including Views of Nauvoo and the Ruins of the Temple, with a Historical Account of the City; Views of Carthage Jail; and Portraits and Memoirs of Joseph and Hyrum Smith; Their Mother, Lucy Smith; Joseph and David Smith, Sons of the Prophet Joseph; President Brigham Young; Heber C. Kimball; Willard Richards; Jedediah M. Grant; John Taylor; the Late Chief Patriarch, John Smith, Son of Hyrum. Together with a
Geographical and Historical Description of Utah, and a Map of the Overland Routes to That Territory from the Missouri River. Also an Authentic History of the Latter-day Saints' Emigration from Europe from the Commencement up to the Close of 1855, with Statistics. Edited by James Linforth. Liverpool: Franklin D. Richards; London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855.

Pratt, Parley Parker. The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Embracing His Life, Ministry and Travels, with Extracts, in Prose and Verse, from His Miscellaneous Writings. Edited by Parley P. Pratt [Jr.]. New York: Published for the Editor and Proprietor by Russell Brothers, 1874.

Public Discussion of the Issues between the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Christ (Disciples), Held in Kirtland, Ohio, Beginning February 12th, and Closing March 8th, 1884, between E. L. Kelley, of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and Clark Braden, of the Church of Christ. St. Louis: Clark Braden Publishers, 1884.


Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. For He Shall Be My Successor. [Independence, Missouri]: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1981.


One Wife or Many. Lamoni, Iowa: Printed by the Reorganized Church, n.d.

Plural Marriage in America. N.p.: n.d.


The Rejection of the Church. Lamoni, Iowa: Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, n.d.


A Statement and a Correction of It. Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, n.d.


Smith, Lucy. Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations. Liverpool: Published for Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, 1853.

& Guilbert, Printers, 1844.

William Smith on Mormonism. This Book Contains a True Account of the Origin of the Book of Mormon. A Sketch of the History, Experience, and Ministry of Elder William Smith. The Story of the Golden Plates from Which the Book of Mormon Was Translated. An Account of a Most Extraordinary Miracle, wrought by the Laying on of the Hands of the Elders of the Church, and a Statement of the Principles and Doctrines, as Believed and Taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with Other Matters of Great Interest to All Believers in Christianity. Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Steam Book and Job Office, 1883.


The Voice of the Captives, Assembled at Zarahemla, in Annual Conference, April 6, A.D. 1854, to Their Brethren Scattered Abroad. N.p.: n.d.


Wight, Lyman. An Address: By Way of an Abridged Account and Journal of My Life from February 1844 up to April 1848, with an Appeal to the Latter Day Saints, Scattered abroad in the Earth, and to All Nations, Kindreds, Tongues and People, to Kings on Their Thrones, to Presidents on Their Seats, and to Peasants in Their Cabins—without Respect to Honor, or Distinction of Character, for One Common Fate Awaiteth All, Even the Resurrection from the Dead. For the Dead Shall Come forth and Inherit Their Land, Even the Land Which the Lord Their God Gave unto Jacob, and Who Said, I Will Take the Children of Israel up out of Their Graves and Place Them in Their Own Lands, Even the Land That I Gave unto Their Father Jacob—Ezekiel 37. Chapt. N.p.: n.d.

Office, 1892.


The Anti-Polygamy Standard (Salt Lake City), 1880-1882.

*Autumn Leaves* (RLDS Youth magazine), 1888-1928. (Renamed *Vision*, 1929-1932.)

*Canton Register*, 1855-1856.

*Carthage Republican*, 1860.

*Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1882.

*Deseret News*, 1850-1914.

*The Frontier Guardian* (Kanesville, Iowa), 1849-1852.

*Hancock Eagle* (Nauvoo, Illinois), 1846.

*Hancock Patriot* (Nauvoo, Illinois), 1846-1847.

*The Historical Record* (Salt Lake City), 1882-1890.

*Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool, etc.), 1855-1886.

*Journal of History*, 1908-1925.

*Latter Day Saints’ Millennial Star* (Liverpool), 1844-1914.

*Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald* (Covington, Kentucky), 1849-1850. (First issue named *Aaronic Herald*.)

*The Messenger of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Salt Lake City), 1874-1877.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 1843-1845.

*Nauvoo New Citizen*, 1847-1848.

*Nauvoo Expositor*, June 7, 1844.

*New-York Messenger*, 1845.

*Northern Islander* (St. James, Michigan), 1850-1856.

*The Prophet* (New York City), 1844-1845.
The Relic Library (York, Nebraska), 1889.
The Return (Davis City, Iowa), 1889-1891.
Saints' Advocate (Plano, Illinois), 1878-1886.
Saints' Herald (title varies), 1860--.
Times and Seasons (Nauvoo, Illinois), 1839-1846.
Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine (Salt Lake City), 1880-1885.
Voree Herald, 1846-1850. (Renamed Zion's Reveille, November 1846; renamed Gospel Herald, September 23, 1847.)
Warsaw Signal, 1845-1850.
Zion's Ensign (Independence, Missouri), 1891-1915.
Zion's Hope (RLDS children's magazine), 1869-1914.

5. Governmental Documents.

Church of Christ at Independence, Mo., et al. v. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 70 Fed. 179 (1895).

Church of Christ at Independence, Mo., et al. v. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 71 Fed. 250 (1895).

Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints v. Church of Christ et al., 60 Fed. 937 (1894).


U.S. Department of State. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Transmitted to Congress, with the Annual Message of the President, December 1, 1879.

6. Other.


Partridge, George F., ed. "The Death of a Mormon Dictator: Letters of


________. "In the Dark and Cloudy Day: A Personal Testimony by One Who Knew the Principal Characters in the Reorganization of the Church." Autumn Leaves 30 (October 1917):495-497.


Secondary Sources


Biographical and Historical Record of Ringgold and Decatur Counties, Iowa. Containing Portraits of All the Presidents of the United States from Washington to Cleveland, with Accompanying Biographies of Each; a Condensed History of the State of Iowa; Portraits and Biographies of the Governors of the Territory and State; Engravings of Prominent Citizens in Ringgold and Decatur Counties, with Personal Histories of Many of the Leading Families, and a Concise History of Ringgold and Decatur Counties and Their Cities and Villages. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1887.


Durham, Reed C., Jr., and Heath, Steven H. *Succession in the Church.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Inc, 1970.


History of Fulton County Illinois; together with Sketches of Its Cities, Villages and Townships, Educational, Religious, Civil, Military, and Political History; Portraits of Prominent Persons and Biographies of Representative Citizens (Pearla: Chas. C. Chapman & Co., 1879).


Jenson, Andrew. Latter-day Saint Biographical 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. and Andrew Jenson Memorial Association, 1901–1936.


Tullidge, Edward W. *The History of Salt Lake City.* Salt Lake City: Tullidge and Crandell, 1876.

______.*The Life of Brigham Young.* New York: Tullidge and Crandell, 1876.

______.*Life of Joseph the Prophet.* Plano, Illinois: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1880.


2. Articles.


Andrus, Hyrum L. "Joseph Smith and the West." Brigham Young University Studies 2 (Spring Summer 1960):129-147.


Burgess, Samuel A. "The Regions round about Jackson County." Journal of History 17 (July 1924): 293-308.


3. Theses and Dissertations.


