

grove or on current historians, but rather will focus on that aspect of private experience which codifies who and what we are—or think we are—today.

Since our private memories are so dysfunctional—and so focused on the secular world—it is going to be increasingly hard to construct a meaningful narrative which can grasp our diverse experiences. It will be more and more difficult to provide a unifying story. It is vital however, that we try.

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TIM RATHBONE

*Brigham Young's Masonic Connection and Nauvoo Plural Marriages*

Brigham Young's enciphered diary entry [for January 6, 1842] eluded decryption by historians from Thomas Bullock to the present decade, in spite of the fact that it strongly resembles the well-known Royal Arch Masonic cipher. Although there are several variations of the Royal Arch cipher, Brigham's version is unique. But as the key to the cipher is only officially taught in Royal Arch Chapters one wonders how, if not through ritual exposes, Brigham could have learned about it.

The cipher was finally solved on May 21, 1991 by Art deHoyos (himself a Mason), who decoded it as follows: "I was taken into the lodge. J. Smith was Agnes."

The letters W and S are interchangeable, and deHoyos suggests that the word "was" which can also be read "saw" might be an acronym for "Wedded And Sealed," "Sealed And Wedded" "Washed, Anointed, Sealed" or something similar.

Indeed, D&C 132:41 refers to "the holy anointing" in reference to plural marriage. deHoyos's re-

search notes identify "Agness" as Agnes Smith, the Widow of Don Carlos Smith, whom, John C. Bennett stated was married to Joseph by Brigham.

I am inclined to accept not only the decryption and acronym, but suggest the whole might be expanded to read: "I, Brigham Young, was taken into the lodge room, where Joseph Smith was wedded and sealed to Agnes Coolbrith Smith."

Joseph Smith's history records the following on this day: "Truly this is a day of days . . . in which the God of heaven has begun to restore the ancient order of His kingdom." . . . This sealing to Agnes is the conceivable explanation for this otherwise cryptic entry.

This is the first contemporary record of a sealing for time and the first proxy sealing of this dispensation. This is Joseph's sixth marriage, the first of many to take place in the Lodge Room with Brigham Young officiating as the sealer. This sealing takes place six months after the death of Don Carlos Smith.

On his deathbed Don Carlos asked Joseph to marry Agnes. Agnes was the first widow Joseph married. Since Agnes was the widow of Joseph's brother, this would be a strict Old Testament, Levirate marriage in harmony with the scripture found in Matthew 22:24. If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Brigham Young sealed Agnes to Joseph Smith for time; after which Joseph Smith stood as proxy for his dead brother Don Carlos Smith when Brigham Young sealed Agnes to Don Carlos for eternity.

The sealing was a foreshadowing of what would occur five months later in the same room. When Joseph Smith would introduce the endowment.

This entry sets the pattern for (1) the sealings of husband and wives; and (2) the concealing of sealings and

plural marriages in a cipher or code. William Clayton, Willard Richards, Erastus Snow, Wilford Woodruff and others occasionally encrypted their entries in some form of Taylor shorthand.

## BOOK NOTICES

DOUG CAHOON

*Building Zion: The Latter-day Saints in Europe.* Bruce A. Van Orden. Deseret Book, 1996. 345 pp., \$19.95.

*California Saints: A 150-Year Legacy In The Golden State.* Richard O. Cowan and William E. Homer. Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1996. 452 pp., \$15.95.

*Images of the Prophet Joseph Smith.* Davis Bitton. Aspen Books, 1996. 198 pp., \$11.95.

*Jacob Hamblin: His Life in His Own Words.* Forward by Richard Lloyd Dewey. Paramount Books with Stratford Press, 1995. 127 pp. \$10.95.

*Lost Legacy: The Mormon Office of Presiding Patriarch.* Irene M. Bates and E. Gary Smith. University of Illinois Press, 1996. 258 pp., \$32.50.

*Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America.* Colleen McDannell. Yale University Press, 1996. 312 pp., \$35.00.

*The Mormon Trail: Yesterday and Today.* William E. Hill. Utah State University Press, 1996. 216 pp., \$19.95.

*Prophetic Destiny: The Saints in the Rocky Mountains.* Paul Thomas Smith. Covenant Communications, Inc., 1996. 90 pp., \$12.95.

*Quest For the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Archaeological Search for the Book of Mormon.* Stan Larson. Freethinker Press with Smith Research Associates, 1996. 305 pp., \$24.95.

*Utah's "Dixie" Birthplace: Washington City, Utah.* Compiled by Harold P. & Priscilla J. Cahoon. Washington City Historical Society / CFP Books, 1996. 282 pp.

*View of the Hebrews: 1825 2nd Edition.* Ethan Smith text, edited with introduction by Charles D. Tate, Jr. Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1996. 230 pp., \$19.95.