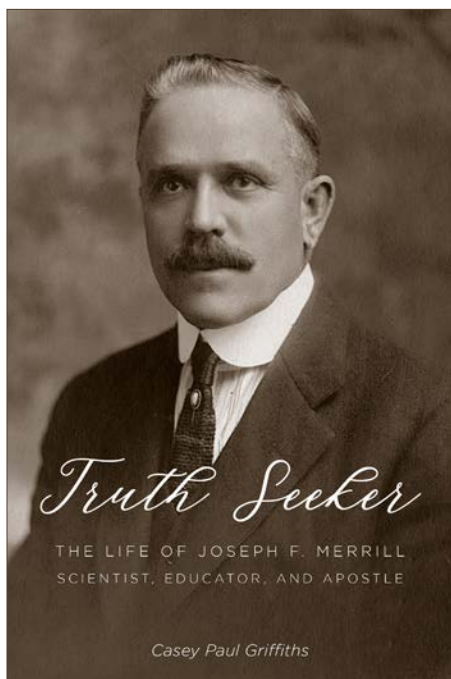


NEW FROM THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER

Truth Seeker

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH F. MERRILL
SCIENTIST, EDUCATOR, AND APOSTLE



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CASEY PAUL GRIFFITHS is an assistant teaching professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University. He was born and raised in Delta, Utah. He served as a missionary in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, before returning home to complete a BA degree in history at Brigham Young University (2002). He later earned an MA in religious education and a PhD in educational leadership and foundations at BYU (2007, 2012). His studies focused on the development of religious education programs among the Latter-day Saints. Before joining the faculty in Religious Education at BYU, Griffiths served in Seminaries and Institutes for eleven years as a teacher and a curriculum writer. His research focuses on the history of religious education among Latter-day Saints, the history of the Church in the Pacific, and diverse movements associated with the Restoration. He is married to Elizabeth Ottley Griffiths, and they live in Saratoga Springs with their four adorable children.

PROVO, UTAH, AND SALT LAKE CITY—This book tells the story of a truth seeker who sought to reconcile science and religion and to unite Latter-day Saints and people of other faiths. Raised in the insular world of the Church-dominated Cache Valley, when Joseph F. Merrill arrived at the University of Utah he became acutely aware of the divide between church and state in Salt Lake City. Embracing the world of secular learning but retaining the beliefs of his youth, he found himself, as he put it, “between the devil and the deep blue sea.” He wanted the Saints to believe a person could move freely in the world of reason and still have faith. He wanted the world outside the kingdom to believe a person could believe in the distinctive worldview of his faith and still be a person of intellect.

Merrill founded a mining school at the University of Utah, and the Merrill School of Engineering bears his name. But perhaps his most far-reaching innovation is found in the seminary program. Conceived and executed on a shoestring budget, seminary provided a solution to the educational difficulties vexing Church leaders of the time.

Religion classes sponsored by the Church started the practice of supplementary education, but Merrill, with his connections in the larger educa-

tional community of Utah, managed to negotiate an arrangement essentially turning every public high school into a Church school, with the Saints paying only for the theological department across the street.

The institutes of religion program was largely an extension of the seminaries on the collegiate level. Merrill arrived at the office of Church commissioner of education in time to provide guidance in creating the fundamental mission of the institutes—to provide students with the tools to connect religion and reason throughout their lives.

Truth Seeker: The Life of Joseph F. Merrill: Scientist, Educator, and Apostle was written by Casey Paul Griffiths and copublished July 26 by the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University and Deseret Book. Visit <https://rsc.byu.edu/book/truth-seeker> for more information.

DETAILS

Purchase at Deseret Book or online at deseretbook.com
Hardcover \$28.99
Pages: 368
Size: 6" x 9"
ISBN: 978-1-9503-0405-9
Published: RSC and Deseret Book, 2021

CONNECT WITH US rsc.byu.edu



MEDIA CONTACT

For more information, please contact

Project Editor: Devan Jensen

Marketing: Brent Nordgren

Social Media: Devan Jensen

801-422-9304, devan_jensen@byu.edu

801-422-3293, brent_nordgren@byu.edu

801-422-9304, devan_jensen@byu.edu



B Y U