

Preface



This project—a history of the Latter-day Saints in Illinois from 1830 to 1839—began when Marlene C. Kettley sought information about her husband’s ancestors who came to Illinois during the early nineteenth century. While researching, she found numerous references to early Mormon missionaries and other members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints which caught her attention. In 1985, Robert E. Fisher, then president of the Naperville Illinois Stake, asked her to compile information on the history of the stake. She remembered those early references. As Marlene continued her research, she was surprised to learn that some of those early elders, who had been sent to Independence, Missouri, in 1831 in response to section 52 of the Doctrine and Covenants, had taught and baptized within what would become the boundaries of the Naperville Stake. She also discovered that the first Latter-day Saint branch in Illinois, established in 1831, was located near the present-day Naperville Illinois Stake Center. While she was researching old county histories and journals of the early Saints, it soon became obvious that the Church had established numerous branches throughout the state during the 1830s. Marlene discovered that as early as 1835 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was likely the fourth-largest religious body in Illinois. Local histories, newspapers, and private journals soon added detail and color to the statistics. Before long, Marlene’s research went far beyond the boundaries of the Naperville Stake and ultimately expanded throughout the entire state of Illinois.

In 2003, Arnold K. Garr and Craig K. Manscill, professors of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University, joined Marlene as coauthors. They soon realized that sources available at BYU could strengthen the work.

Not only does this book unveil many previously unknown events in Church history that took place in Illinois, but it also utilizes many county and community sources that provide a non-Latter-day Saint as well as a Latter-day Saint perspective. The authors have also placed many important Latter-day Saint developments within the context of Illinois state history.

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