

Joseph Smith
THE PROPHET & SEER



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Edited by

RICHARD NEITZEL HOLZAPFEL
AND KENT P. JACKSON



RELIGIOUS STUDIES CENTER
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

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RICHARD NEITZEL HOLZAPFEL
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Introduction

British author Charles Mackay published a small work in 1851, claiming that it was the first public history of “this new religion” founded in America by Joseph Smith, “one of the most remarkable persons who has appeared on the stage of the world in modern times.”¹ Although Mackay was not the first to write a history of the Latter-day Saints, he was right in asserting that Joseph Smith was a most remarkable person. Since the beginning of the Restoration, many individuals have collected the Prophet’s teachings and attempted to tell his story. Yet the task of reconstructing the life of Joseph Smith is fraught with difficulties, as it is with telling the story of anyone who lived in the past.

First, it is impossible to identify everything Joseph Smith said or did. Although much of what a person says or does is irrelevant to understanding who he or she is and would, if recorded, provide a rather tedious narrative, it is critical to have sufficient data in order to provide a

reasonable portrait of that person. Second, there are significant gaps at critical periods in Joseph Smith's life for which there are few primary documents from which a reasonable portrait can be created.² For example, the contemporary sources for the years 1805–30 are sparse. As a result, some important questions from this period remain unanswered. And finally, how do historians and other observers evaluate the life of one who claimed he was a prophet? How do we interpret his motives or understand him the same way he understood himself? Even for those years where good documentation exists, how do we read the evidence?

Who Was Joseph Smith?

Joseph Smith was acutely aware of the challenge of providing a reliable account of his life and work. At the Church's April 1844 conference in Nauvoo, he said, "You never knew my heart. No man knows my hist[ory]—I can not [tell] it. I shall never undertake [it]. If I had not experienced what I have, I should not have known it myself. . . . When I am called at the trump & weighed in the balance, you will know me then."³

Elder Heber C. Kimball, one of the Prophet's closest associates in Nauvoo, remembered a similar statement: "Would to God, brethren, I could tell you who I am! Would to God I could tell you what I know! But you would call it blasphemy, and there are men upon this stand who would want to take my life."⁴ Mary Elizabeth Lightner, one of Joseph Smith's plural wives, also recalled the Prophet making the same point in another situation: "People little know who I am when they talk to me, and they never will know until they see me weighed in the balance in the Kingdom of God. Then they will know who I am, and see me as I am. I dare not tell them and they do not know me."⁵

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What Joseph Smith meant or intended is subject to debate. Because it is impossible to interview him or any of his associates who may have had privileged information on the subject, we cannot be certain what he intended. Nevertheless, there are two reasonable possibilities, and maybe both are correct.

First, the Prophet may have been referring to his status or activities in the premortal world; the Heber C. Kimball recollection may suggest this. Through the Prophet, a flood of information about the pre-earth life was revealed, including the premortal identity of several prophets, such as Adam, who was identified as Michael, and Noah, who was identified as Gabriel.⁶ It would therefore not be surprising if Joseph Smith had learned something about his own role or premortal status. One of his own statements seems to suggest as much: “Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of Heaven before this world was. I suppose that I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council.”⁷

Second, Joseph Smith’s statements also seem to refer to his mortal ministry. His April 1844 conference statement highlights this point. As he said, “If I had not experienced what I have, I should not have known it myself.” He must have been surprised, again and again, as his mission was unfolded to him over time—“line upon line” instead of in one singular moment. For example, young Joseph Smith did not know in 1820 that his life would end on a hot, muggy Thursday afternoon in Carthage Jail in June 1844.

After his First Vision in 1820, the Prophet quickly learned that people reacted negatively to his claim that he had seen a vision. However, opposition then was local, and the initial reaction was not the kind of physical abuse he later experienced. He was forewarned of the heavy cost of discipleship when

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Moroni told him in 1823 that his name would be had for “good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues” (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). His small influence would dramatically enlarge to include the entire planet, but still there was no hint of the tarring and feathering, the destroyed property or physical threats, or the abuse to himself, his family, and followers that were just beyond the horizon. Apparently the only thing he learned on that occasion was that his name “should be both good and evil spoken of among all people” (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). How puzzling it must have been to an “obscure boy,” as he called himself (Joseph Smith—History 1:23), to think that he would one day be known all over the world!

Nearly six years later, in 1829, Joseph Smith’s sense of what lay ahead expanded again when the Lord commanded him to remain faithful, adding, “If you do this, behold I grant unto you eternal life, *even if you should be slain*” (Doctrine and Covenants 5:22; emphasis added). The key word in this revelation was “if,” not “when.” Nevertheless, the possibility of martyrdom had surfaced for the first time, and it most likely caught his attention, especially in light of the recent years’ increasing threats, both verbal and physical. Following the establishment of the Church in 1830, the Prophet experienced imprisonment, death threats, violence, and loss of property multiple times for the gospel cause, but he always made his way back safely to family and friends (for example, see Doctrine and Covenants 121:9).⁸ By 1842 that situation changed. As he prayed in one of the early Relief Society meetings, he apparently learned for the first time that his mission would end with his martyrdom.⁹ From 1842 until his death in June 1844, he repeated the prophecy more than one hundred times.¹⁰

The life Joseph Smith may have expected or even dreamed of when he was growing up in New Hampshire, Vermont, and

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New York was not the one he ultimately lived. He recognized that he did not always know where his life was heading. Satan opposed his work even before he himself knew what it was: “It seems as though *the adversary was aware, at a very early period of my life, that I was destined to prove a disturber and an annoyer of his kingdom*; else why should the powers of darkness combine against me? Why the opposition and persecution that arose against me, almost in my infancy?” He reflected on his lowly stature: “I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and *though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world*, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me” (Joseph Smith—History 1:20, 22; emphasis added). In this revealing recollection, the Prophet acknowledged that he was completely and utterly surprised by the attention he received, given his humble circumstances and his own expectations about his future life, which he assumed would be “of no consequence in the world.”

Joseph Smith continued to learn more about his prophetic mission as he translated the Book of Mormon. One can only imagine what he felt as he came to the section that contained the prophecies of Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob: “And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation” (2 Nephi 3:15).

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Between the revelations and the heavenly visitations, Joseph Smith was left to himself and possibly felt very much alone. There was no other human who could relate to him. Elder Dallin H. Oaks astutely observed, “In spiritual matters, Joseph Smith had no [mortal] role models from whom he could learn how to be a prophet and a leader.”¹¹ Although his father had revealing dreams and his mother was a devout Christian, he still had no adequate mortal mentor. The Prophet’s April 1844 statements, given at the end of his life, suggest that he sometimes felt isolated—alone. Even family, such as his brother William, and close friends did not always understand him. Some of his trusted colleagues, such as Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, David Whitmer, and William Law, abandoned him.

People living in this transitional moment in history—when the premodern world was being replaced by a world thoroughly and irreversibly influenced by the Enlightenment—may have struggled to understand Joseph Smith, given their modern expectations. There was no room in that modern scientific age for prophets, revelations, visions, and new scripture—nothing that would allow them to place his life in context. James Hannay, writing in Charles Dickens’s magazine *Household Words* in 1851, criticized the Mormon message as “the absurdity of seeing visions in the age of railways.”¹²

By their “modern” standards, many people living in western societies believed Joseph Smith was strange, odd, and out of place. There is no question that he was uncommon. Yet he was more than an uncommon man with a common name. Few individuals’ lives and labors have been foreknown and foretold like those of this great and long-hoped-for seer. Joseph Smith’s life and ministry were seen by ancient prophets “since the world began” as part of the “restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21). From the days of Adam, prophets like Enoch, Joseph,

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Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Malachi, and the Apostle Peter looked forward to his ministry and the establishment of the kingdom of God through his labors. President Brigham Young noted, “It was decreed in the councils of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people and receive the fullness of the keys and power of the priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eye upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father’s father. . . . He was foreordained in eternity to preside over this last dispensation.”¹³

There may be other ancient clues about what was known about Joseph Smith in the distant past. Only recently have scholars begun to unravel the complicated history of messianic expectations that existed in ancient Israel. Although today Orthodox Jews still believe in the coming of a Messiah, their progenitors, at different times, anticipated the coming of several specially anointed servants of the Lord: (1) the Messiah ben Judah (sometimes also identified as the Messiah ben David), (2) the Messiah ben Levi (sometimes identified as the Messiah ben Aaron or Messiah the Priest), and (3) the Messiah ben Joseph (sometimes identified as the Messiah ben Ephraim). It may well be that Joseph Smith should be identified as the third anointed servant of the Lord in these traditions. Although the ancient sources are confused and in many cases even contradict one another, there are some interesting threads that weave through the sources about the Messiah ben Joseph: he would appear before the coming of the final messiah, *the* Messiah (Jesus Christ), he would restore priesthood and temple worship, he would suffer a violent death at the hands of his enemies, and he would be resurrected by the Messiah who would come at the end of time.¹⁴

It was not just Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles who prophesied of his ministry. Asael Smith, Joseph Smith's own grandfather, spoke prophetically before Joseph was born: "It has been borne in upon my soul that one of my descendants will promulgate a work to revolutionize the world of religious faith."¹⁵ Later, Asael affirmed that his grandson was the "very Prophet that he had long known would come in his family."¹⁶

Reconstructing the Prophet's Life

Some past efforts to tell Joseph Smith's life history have relied heavily on reminiscences recorded many years after the Prophet's death. President Joseph F. Smith recognized the limitation of such reminiscences:

We fear that many things that are reported as coming from the Prophet Joseph Smith, and other early leaders in the church, by not being carefully recorded or told with strict regard for accuracy, have lost something of their value as historical data, and unwarranted additions have sometimes been made to the original facts, until it is difficult to determine just how far some of the traditions which have come to us may be accepted as reliable representations of what was said or what was done. Let those who feel impressed to make a record of facts, as they become acquainted with them, do so; but let them exercise the greatest care in obtaining accuracy of statement and in giving the authority for the statements they record.¹⁷

As a consequence of concerns like these expressed by President Smith, serious historians today shy away from secondary and reminiscent accounts of things the Prophet

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is purported to have said and done and focus instead on contemporary primary sources.

Some writers have attempted, with good intention, to provide a rather sanitized version of the Prophet's life, believing that such an account would serve Joseph Smith best. Much like some of our efforts at writing a personal diary or autobiography, these authors focus exclusively on the remarkable and the sensational while eliminating the Prophet's challenges, disappointments, unfulfilled aspirations, and "human foibles," as he called them. These authors forget that the scriptures themselves provide rather frank portraits of the Lord's people, including his servants, the Apostles and prophets. The greatness of Peter and Paul is the more inspiring because the scriptures also revealed their human weaknesses as they grappled with the struggles and trials so common to others.

On the other hand, downplaying the inspiration, revelation, and greatness of the Prophet's ministry would provide an incomplete portrait, and biographies that have excluded these divine connections have failed. To emphasize only the human aspects of his life is to create an exaggerated caricature in the same way that a completely sanitized version does. Neither provides the kind of history that is necessary to create a reasonable portrait. The Joseph Smith of faith-promoting rumors and sanitized stories lacks the human characteristics that endeared him to the faithful when he was known simply as "Brother Joseph." What is forgotten in the process is that the Prophet himself never claimed to be anything more than a mortal disciple of Jesus Christ, attempting to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. We should recall that he said that a prophet was a prophet "only when he was acting as such."¹⁸ He meant it when he said that, and those who knew him did not think the less of him because of it.

Revelations given of the Lord did not hide Joseph Smith's all-too-human struggles. He is sometimes challenged to repent in the Doctrine and Covenants (see, for example, Doctrine and Covenants 3:1–9). Additionally, in those same revelations he was reminded that the Lord is merciful and forgiving (see Doctrine and Covenants 3:10–20), something that provides hope to all disciples.

Preserving and Writing the Prophet's History

Joseph Smith realized that it would be important for the Church to have a record not only of his life but also of the communications he received from God. During his lifetime, three collections of the revelations were prepared, each one larger as new revelations came.¹⁹ In his efforts to preserve his history, in 1838 he began an account of his life. He and his clerks compiled the record from available sources, including his memory, his journals, and the records of others. It starts with autobiographical material that the Prophet dictated to scribes and then shifts to the format of an ongoing diary, with his journals providing the framework. Although he kept intermittent journals during the 1830s, the information for that decade is not as complete as it is for the 1840s, when his clerks kept a record of his activities. Where there were gaps in the Prophet's own journals, passages from the journals of other Church members were added to supply the needed information, so none of the significant documented acts or words of Joseph Smith would be excluded. Staff members added letters, transcriptions of sermons, and other documents in their proper sequence to make the record as complete as possible.

The publication of the Prophet's history began in 1842, with installments appearing periodically in the Church's Nauvoo newspaper, the *Times and Seasons*.²⁰ At the time of his death,

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the history had been compiled to 1838 but was published only to 1831. But the work continued, both in Nauvoo and in Utah, where installments were published in the *Deseret News* until their completion in 1858.²¹ Decades later, Elder B. H. Roberts compiled and edited the history into a six-volume book, called *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, by Joseph Smith.²² It is still in print today, and it remains an important historical record.

Drawing material from the *History of the Church*, other important works have been compiled. For example, in 1938 Elder Joseph Fielding Smith of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles published *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, a collection of the Prophet's writings and sermons, mostly extracted from the *History of the Church*.²³ This remained the standard collection of Joseph Smith's teachings for many decades. In 2008–9, Relief Society and priesthood-meeting lessons focused on *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*.²⁴ Drawn mostly from the *History of the Church*, this important collection of excerpts from the Prophet's sermons and writings also includes lesser-known and previously unpublished materials. In the late twentieth century, scholars increased their efforts to locate and compile Joseph Smith's recorded words and experiences from the earliest possible primary sources.²⁵ The indispensable collections from those years include *The Words of Joseph Smith* (1980), *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (1984, rev. ed. 2002),²⁶ and *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (1989, 1992).²⁷

Using available documentary sources, scholars continue to study and write about the Prophet's life. The most ambitious and comprehensive recent biographical effort is *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (2005).²⁸

In recent decades, major efforts have also been undertaken to research important scripture-based manuscripts. One such

effort is the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, under the direction of Brigham Young University professor Royal Skousen.²⁹ That project identified all known parts of the Original and Printer's Manuscripts of the Book of Mormon and provided a facsimile transcription of both manuscripts. Researchers Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews prepared and published a facsimile transcription of the original Joseph Smith Translation manuscripts in 2004.³⁰ These monumental documentary projects allow us, as never before, to learn of Joseph Smith's revelatory experiences with a close-up view, and they are essential building blocks for current and future attempts to advance our understanding of his mission.

Added to these scholarly activities is the Joseph Smith Papers Project. It is the most ambitious effort to date to publish all known primary documents created by or commissioned by the Prophet. This extremely important effort, projected to take a number of years to complete, will include all of Joseph Smith's known diaries, letters, revelations, contemporary reports of his discourses, and samples of other public documents authored by him. Through this project, historians have already gained important insights to the Prophet's life and ministry and will continue to do so. This is one of the most exciting efforts to date, and it promises to provide the important sources necessary for fresh, thoughtful, careful interpretative studies on the life and ministry of Joseph Smith.

Joseph Smith Papers Project

We may never know Joseph in the same way as those who were acquainted with him personally during his life; however, we are becoming acquainted with his personal writings in a way in which many people, even his friends, could not do during his

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lifetime.³¹ In addition to having a better understanding of the times in which the Prophet lived, scholars today are gaining access to numerous documents that shed light on Joseph's life and experiences that were not available to historians a generation ago. In 2008 and 2009, the first two volumes of *The Joseph Smith Papers* were published.³² Additionally, scholars have supplementary contemporary sources, such as Wilford Woodruff's diaries, which add a wealth of primary material about the Prophet.³³ All of these sources provide an intimate view of the Prophet through the eyes of those who knew him personally.

The Joseph Smith Papers Project is not an attempt to produce narrative histories—few people will open to page 1 and then read a volume all the way through, as they would read a biography. Instead, these documents will require careful examination, as one would do when working in an archive with the original source document in front of them. However, the Joseph Smith Papers Project will provide annotations by important historians to help the reader understand the document better than if they were on their own at the Church History Library in Salt Lake City. The Papers' primary benefit to the average Latter-day Saint and to others who want to understand the Prophet will probably come as a result of the future work of scholars who will utilize the Joseph Smith Papers as a primary source in their interpretative histories. Ronald K. Esplin, the managing editor of the project, explains that the volumes contain the raw material of history—in other words, the gold of history. Like a gold mine, these volumes will contain previously unprocessed precious metal; it will be left to scholars to extract the gold to create beautiful jewelry.³⁴

The Church decided that the Joseph Smith Papers Project should be directed to scholars. Obviously if the Papers were not written for scholars, with scholarly conventions, they would not

be taken seriously in the academic world. Preparing a faithful record that non-Latter-day Saint scholars will take seriously is the primary purpose for the multimillion-dollar investment and enormous effort that have been put into the project. Esplin adds, “While this scholarly emphasis is the emphasis of the project, there is a secondary purpose to make sure that Latter-day Saints are going to have access to these documents, that it is something that they can use.” The two circles—the scholarly audience and the LDS audience—overlap but not completely. Esplin notes:

This little tale about how and why we came to focus more clearly on the scholarly audience is background for the point I really want to make. When you have the opportunity, I hope you will underscore the point that our work is not designated to defend Joseph Smith so much as to understand him. Of course, we are all Latter-day Saints and the work we are doing is Latter-day Saint and Joseph Smith-centric. We are who we are. But our tone, language, approach, and intention is to understand and not defend. It is the faith and experience of everyone involved in the project that if we will do that, understand him, he will come off just fine. Since he is who he said he was his life and works can withstand scrutiny. There is no need to distort the historical record, but a great need both in order to really know Joseph and for other worthy reasons to understand it. To the degree that we do our work well, all of us will, in the future, have tools for that which we don’t have now and have never had before—the material that will allow us to know Brother Joseph again.³⁵

Getting to Know Brother Joseph

During the fall of 2008, we invited several scholars, including some of the editors of the Joseph Smith Papers

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Project, to participate in a Brigham Young University lecture series titled “Joseph Smith’s Prophetic Ministry.” The lectures were released on CD, and the chapters in this book were based on their lectures. These fine scholars use fresh eyes to look at Joseph Smith, mining both old evidence and new discoveries to give us a view of who the Prophet was, what he accomplished, and why his life matters. As a result of the efforts of these and other scholars, in some ways we may know more about the Prophet than did those who lived during his lifetime, given the intimate look we have into his personal diaries and letters. But naturally his family, friends, and close associates knew him in ways in which we cannot.

The Joseph Smith emerging from this current effort is a remarkable, complex, passionate, and truly likable person. Recent research has not diminished him in the least but shows him standing taller than ever. He was truly the prophet of the Restoration, the great seer who set in place the Lord’s kingdom for the latter days. He was a disciple of Jesus Christ, like those New Testament Apostles who left their nets, boats, tollbooths, and other ordinary labors to follow Jesus. One of his close associates, Wilford Woodruff, borrowing Joseph Smith’s own metaphor, noted the process that refined him: “He never professed to be a dressed smooth polished stone but was rough out of the mountain & has been rolling among the rocks & trees & has not hurt him at all. But he will be as smooth & polished in the end as any other stone.”³⁶

We who are involved in current research on Joseph Smith do not believe that our individual efforts represent the final interpretation of his life. Certainly, historians in the future will provide fresh insights and make corrections after the discovery of new information, which, in turn, will allow them to reexamine the primary sources now available. However, we cannot wait

until we know everything about Joseph Smith and the world in which he lived. We look forward to the Millennium, for only then will we “know fully” (New International Version, 1 Corinthians 13:9–12) all the things we wish we knew now. In the meantime, the current work of historians is expanding our understanding of Joseph Smith in ways that were impossible before. This effort will continue to benefit us all.

Notes

1. Charles Mackay, *The Mormons: Or Latter-day Saints* (London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1851), vi.

2. There are gaps in source materials used in writing Joseph Smith’s history just as there are significant gaps in sources used in reconstructing the Savior’s life (see F. E. D. Schleiermacher, “The Public Life of Christ to the Time of His Arrest,” in *The Historical Jesus: Critical Concepts in Religious Studies*, ed. Craig A. Evans [London: Routledge, 2004], 4:34).

3. *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1980), 355; capitalization and punctuation standardized.

4. Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), 322–23.

5. Mary Elizabeth Lightner, address to Brigham Young University, April 14, 1905, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

6. For Adam’s identity, see Doctrine and Covenants 27:11; 107:54; *Words of Joseph Smith*, 8. For Noah’s identity, see *Words of Joseph Smith*, 8.

7. *Words of Joseph Smith*, 367; capitalization, punctuation, and spelling standardized. Though this teaching is often applied to every man and woman, the original context focused on the calling of the

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dispensation heads; see Samuel A. Richard's account of the May 12, 1844, discourse: "At the general and grand council of heaven, all those to whom a dispensation was to be committed were set apart and ordained at that time, to that calling" (*Words of Joseph Smith*, 371).

8. See Ronald K. Esplin, "Joseph Smith's Mission and Timetable: 'God Will Protect Me until My Work Is Done,'" in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, ed. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 280–319.

9. *Words of Joseph Smith*, 116.

10. See Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Joseph Smith's Prophecies of Martyrdom," in *The Eighth Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium: A Sesquicentennial Look at Church History* (Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, January 26, 1980), 1–14.

11. Dallin H. Oaks, "Joseph Smith in a Personal World," in *The Worlds of Joseph Smith: A Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2006), 159.

12. James Hanney, in *Household Words: A Weekly Journal* 3 (1851): 385.

13. *Deseret News*, October 26, 1859, 266.

14. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "The 'Hidden' Messiah," in *A Witness of Jesus Christ: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 81.

15. Quoted in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), 1:4; see also Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 112.

16. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 2:443.

17. Joseph F. Smith, "Shall We Record Testimony?" *Improvement Era*, March 1898, 372.

18. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:265.

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19. 1833 Book of Commandments, 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants.

20. See “History of Joseph Smith,” *Times and Seasons*, March 15, 1842, 726–28.

21. See Jessee, “The Writing of Joseph Smith’s History,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 439–73.

22. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902–12). A seventh volume dealing with events after the death of Joseph Smith was published in 1932.

23. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938).

24. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007).

25. See Paul H. Peterson, “Understanding Joseph: A Review of Published Documentary Sources,” in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, the Man*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1993), 101–16.

26. *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002).

27. *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, vol. 1: *Autobiographical and Historical Writings*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989); vol. 2: *Journal, 1832–42*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992).

28. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005).

29. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2001); *The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies,

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Brigham Young University, 2001); M. Gerald Bradford and Alison V. P. Coutts, eds., *Uncovering the Original Text of the Book of Mormon: History and Findings of the Critical Text Project* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2002).

30. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004); Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005).

31. For a biographical treatment of Joseph Smith in this period, see Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 8–39.

32. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman are general editors of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. The first two volumes were *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2008); and *Revelations and Translations, Volume 1: Manuscript Revelation Books*, ed. Robin Scott Jensen, Stephen C. Harper, and Robert J. Woodford (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009).

33. See *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983).

34. Ronald K. Esplin, e-mail message to author, August 27, 2008.

35. Esplin, e-mail message to author, August 27, 2008.

36. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:297. It appears that the quote comes from a sermon by Heber C. Kimball. Richard Bushman, however, notes Brigham Young as the source of the quote (see *Rough Stone Rolling*, vii). Joseph Smith characterized himself as a “rough stone rolling down hill” (“Joseph Smith Journal,” May 21, 1843; as cited in *Words of Joseph Smith*, 205; see also diary entry for June 11, 1843, in *Words of Joseph Smith*, 209).



The Prophet Joseph Smith was born in Sharon, Vermont, on December 23, 1805. The home in which he was born straddled the Royalton-Sharon township line. This monument is situated adjacent to the site where the home once stood. The monument was dedicated by Joseph F. Smith, Church President and nephew of the Prophet Joseph Smith, on December 23, 1905. (George Edward Anderson, 1907; all rights reserved.)