

A Brief History of the Church in the Mount Pleasant Area, Ontario, before 1850

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The Prophet Joseph Smith personally took the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ beyond the borders of the United States. Freeman Nickerson, a recent convert, invited and encouraged the Prophet to travel with him to Canada to teach and testify of the Restoration to his sons, Eleazer Freeman and Moses, and their families. Consequently, in October 1833, the Prophet Joseph Smith took his journey with Sidney Rigdon and Freeman Nickerson to Mount Pleasant in Upper Canada, a small village five miles south of Brantford, Ontario. During this visit Nickerson's sons and several other individuals accepted the gospel and were baptized, forming the nucleus of a small branch of the Church. In the years that followed, other missionaries built upon the foundation laid by the Prophet. Eventually, many of these faithful members took their exodus from Mount Pleasant to join with the Saints in the United States. Others—especially women who joined the Church while their husbands or other family members remained aloof from the Restoration—remained behind with their families. This treatise of the background, the initial missionary successes, and the individuals who joined the Church provides a brief history of this early branch in Upper Canada.

Upper Canada Prior to the 1830s

Before the Revolutionary War, the land in present-day Canada between Lakes Erie, Huron, and Ontario was primarily inhabited

by Iroquois hunters and French fur traders. Europeans first visited this region in 1640 when the Jesuit priest Jean de Brebeuf visited the “Head of the Lake” (west end of Lake Ontario) and found this area populated with several Iroquois villages. The settled area north of the New England colonies was identified as Lower Canada, and the area north of modern-day New York and Ohio was referred to as Upper Canada. The Revolutionary War created a challenge for those colonists who remained loyal to the king and Great Britain. Unwelcome by the citizens of the newly formed United States, these individuals were without a home. Some returned to live in England. Others who wanted to remain in North America were popularly called “United Empire Loyalists.”¹

After the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the British Crown offered land grants in Upper Canada to people who showed loyalty to England during the Revolutionary War. In addition, Iroquois tribes that were displaced from New York State because they fought on the side of the Crown also received “six miles of land on either side of the Grand River from its mouth [Lake Erie] to its source (675,000 acres).”² By 1800 the Iroquois villages had disappeared because wildlife was less abundant and settlements of United Empire Loyalists began to encroach upon the land, essentially forcing the earlier Iroquois from this area. The region was still only sparsely settled by Europeans, and Native American trails were used as highways and transportation routes.

By 1830 the corridors from Niagara to Hamilton to Toronto and from Hamilton to Brantford to London were populated with many small towns, good roads, and stagecoach service. Mount Pleasant lies five miles south of Brantford on what was once Grand River Indian land and later leased or sold to the United Empire Loyalists by Captain Joseph Brant, a Mohawk chief accepted by the British government to manage Indian affairs.³ Although primarily a farming community, Mount Pleasant also included a few merchants who traded grain from local mills for goods moving along the Grand River to the Great Lakes. Moses and his brother, Eleazer Freeman Nickerson, were among the village merchants managing a thriving business.

Religious Climate in Upper Canada

The idea of establishing the Church of England as the state Church for British North America was proposed in the 1790s. However, the spirit of religious freedom was too strong to allow that to happen. Earlier in Canada's history, various areas were settled with the idea of creating religious unity among the citizens. For example, Roman Catholics settled next to the border of Lower Canada, and Roman Catholicism became the predominant faith in Quebec. Scottish Presbyterians were given the land farther west, and German Lutherans the land beyond that.⁴

The new settlers from America were from many faiths and generally shared the view that religion was a voluntary principle in a person's life.⁵ Within this liberal view of religious persuasion, some churches, like the Methodist Church, actively proselyted for new members by sponsoring camp meetings and by employing a force of itinerant preachers. Such an approach of taking religion to the people created many areas where Methodism was a strong force in the community.

The Visit of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to Mount Pleasant

The parents of the Nickerson brothers, Freeman Nickerson Sr. and his wife, Huldah, had moved to old Perrysburg (present-day South Dayton), Cataraugus County, New York, in the 1820s. In April 1833 Zerubbabel Snow baptized Freeman, Huldah, and other family members. Their eldest son, Moses, who lived and worked in the Hamilton/Brantford area of Upper Canada, visited his parents in June. He recorded that "while on a visit to my parents' home heard for the first time what was then known as Mormonism; was favorably inclined towards the doctrine preached, and requested my parents to have some of the elders visit us in Canada if they could make it convenient. . . . In the month of September of this year 1833, my father and mother visited Kirtland, Ohio, the headquarters of these people, and induced Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to accompany them to Canada."⁶

Freeman Nickerson Sr. offered to transport the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon to his sons' home in Mount Pleasant. Joseph Smith left for Canada on October 5, 1833, traveling by way of the Nickerson home in Perrysburg, New York. While in Perrysburg, the Prophet inquired of the Lord regarding his young family, whom he sorely missed and for whose welfare he was deeply concerned. In response, the Lord assured Joseph and Sidney, "Your families are well; they are in mine hands, and I will do with them as seemeth me good; for in me there is all power" (D&C 100:1). "Behold, and lo," the Lord continued, "I have much people in this place, in the regions round about; and an effectual door shall be opened in the regions round about in this eastern land" (D&C 100:3). Clearly, the Lord knows the hearts of all people. As difficult as it may have been for the Prophet Joseph Smith to leave his family at that time, it was necessary that he and Sidney proclaim the gospel and open the doors for missionaries in this area of New York and in Canada. Milton V. Backman recounted that "on Sunday, October 13, Joseph and Sidney preached to a 'large congregation' in western New York. The next day they continued their journey, arriving three days later at Mount Pleasant, upper Canada, at the home of Eleazer Nickerson, the second son of Freeman Nickerson. During the remainder of the week, with the land covered with a fresh mantle of snow, the two missionaries sought to spread the warmth of the gospel, teaching and preaching in Mount Pleasant, Brantford, Colburn, and Weathersford."⁷

The group of missionaries, accompanied by Huldah Nickerson, arrived at the Mount Pleasant home of her son Eleazer Freeman Nickerson on October 18, 1833.⁸ The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded: "Journeyed till . . . Friday [October 18, 1833]. Arrived at Freeman Nickerson's in upper Canada having, after we came into Canada, passed through a very fine country and well cultivated and had many peculiar feelings in relation to both the country and people. We were kindly received at Freeman Nickerson's."⁹ It is assumed that since no acceptable roads existed along the north shore of Lake Erie, the group likely traveled from Perrysburg to Buffalo, New York; then crossed into Canada; followed the stage coach trail from Niagara Falls to Hamilton; continued to Ancaster, then inland to Brantford; and finally arrived in Mount Pleasant.

For the next ten days, the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon held meetings in Brantford, Mount Pleasant, and Colborne (modern-day Simcoe). On Sunday, October 27, 1833, Joseph recorded: "Held a meeting in Mount Pleasant to a large congregation. Twelve came forward and were baptized and many more were impressed." He continued: "Appointed a meeting for this day [Monday, October 28, 1833] at the request of some who desire . . . to be baptized at candle lighting. Held a meeting for confirmation. We broke bread [and] laid on hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Had a good meeting; the Spirit was given in great . . . power to some and the rest had great peace."¹⁰ During the meeting, "one of the sisters received the gift of tongues, which made the Saints rejoice exceedingly."¹¹ This sister was Lydia Bailey, who later married Newel Knight. Of that occasion, her biography relates:

"I would be so glad if so[m]e one who has been baptized could receive the gift of tongues as the ancient Saints did and speak to us," said Moses Nickerson.

"If one of you will rise up and open your mouth it shall be filled, and you shall speak in tongues," replied the Prophet.

Every one then turned as by a common instinct to Lydia, and said with one voice, "Sister Lydia rise up."

And then the great glory of God was manifested to this weak but trusting girl. She was enveloped as with a flame, and, unable longer to retain her seat, she arose and her mouth was filled with the praises of God and His glory. The spirit of tongues was upon her, and she was clothed in a shining light, so bright that all present saw it with great distinctness above the light of the fire and the candles.¹²

"After meeting," continued the Prophet Joseph Smith, "two came forward and were baptized; confirmed them at the water's edge; held meeting last evening [and] ordained brother E[leazar] F[reeman] Nickerson to the office of Elder."¹³

After the Prophet returned to Kirtland, Ohio, Frederick G. Williams listed the names of those Joseph baptized in the Prophet's record. In his list are fourteen names; the males are first, then the females, followed by the two names of the baptisms which occurred on the Monday. These individuals as entered in this record were:

Moses Chapman Nickerson
 Eleser [Eleazer] Freeman Nickerson
 Prechard [Richard] Ramon Strowbridge
 Andrew Rose
 Harvey John Cooper
 Samuel McAlester [McAllister]
 Eliza [McAllister] Nickerson
 Mary Gates
 Mary Birch [Burtch]
 Lidia Baeley [Lydia Goldthwait Bailey Knight]
 Elisabeth Gibbs
 Phebe [Andrews] Cook
 Margrett [Margaret] Birch [Burtch]
 Esthe[r] Birch [Burtch]¹⁴

Their preaching stirred the hearts of many in the region, some rising to oppose them and others to receive their message and baptism at their hands. Referring to their labors during this time, the Prophet Joseph Smith related, “We were publicly opposed by a Wesleyan Methodist. He was very tumultuous but destitute of reason or knowledge. He would not give us an opportunity to reply.”¹⁵

Apparently, the man to whom the Prophet referred was a preacher named Samuel Rose. In a letter dated November 21, 1833, Samuel Rose wrote to his brother John:

When I reached Mount Pleasant, I found a couple of preachers had been there the day before, who are of the Sect of the Mormonites. This Sect have lately sprung up in the United States: they profess to have found a part of the Scriptures. This, they say, was found, by a man by the name of Smyth [*sic*], on gold leef [*sic*]: and by him translated into English. He says that no man can read it but those to whom it is reveled [*sic*], and that it was revealed to him, and that he was commanded to translate it. Their converts profess to speak in unknown touns [*sic*]. But what to you may appear most strange is that 14 persons at this place goined [joined] them. 3 of them were Methodist[.] They Baptise their converts by immersion. When I came to this place and found that those miserable imposters were at work here, and that they were taking away some of our members, I tuld the people plainly that I believed them to be as great a set of imposters, as ever was up on earth. They have now left this part and have now gone down toward Kingston.¹⁶

After a week of meetings and establishing a branch in Mount Pleasant with Eleazer Freeman Nickerson as branch president, and preparing the way for future missionary activity, the Prophet Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Freeman Nickerson Sr. left Upper Canada for their homes in the United States. This missionary experience left Joseph Smith with a special love for the Saints in Mount Pleasant. Soon after returning home he wrote to them, "I remember brother Freeman and Wife, Ranson also, and sister Lydia, and little Charles, with all the brethren and sisters. I intreat [*sic*] for an interest in all your prayers before the throne of mercy in the name of Jesus. I hope that the Lord will grant that I may see you all again, and above all that we may overcome, and set [*sic*] down together in the kingdom of our Father."¹⁷

Resolving Confusion in Historical Publications

Some accounts of the Prophet Joseph Smith's visit to Mount Pleasant written by later historians have resulted in confusion. Specifically, the total number of people baptized varies, the spelling of some names is incorrect, and the given name of the "Nickerson" that Joseph ordained as the presiding elder is incorrectly stated. For example, mistakes regarding whom "Nickerson" refers to in Mount Pleasant occur in *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, by B. H. Roberts, and in the *Journal History*.¹⁸ Both of these sources refer to an individual by the name of Freeman A. Nickerson. Additionally, in *History of the Church*, also edited by B. H. Roberts, it states that the Prophet Joseph Smith ordained an individual known as F. A. Nickerson as an elder.¹⁹ In reality, there was no such person as Freeman A. Nickerson in the early history of the Church. The confusion may have risen over the need to distinguish between Nickerson Sr. and his son. In fact, the individuals involved are Eleazer Freeman Nickerson of Mount Pleasant, Ontario, Canada (also known as E. F. Nickerson or Freeman Nickerson), and his father, Freeman Nickerson of Perrysburg, New York. The diary account of Joseph Smith is correct, while some other accounts are not. Joseph Smith's diary account always refers to the Mount Pleasant Nickerson as Freeman Nickerson. The McAlister genealogy (wife of E. F. Nickerson) notes that he was always called

Freeman and never Eleazer, although that was his first Christian name. His Mount Pleasant property deed, however, bears the signature E. F. Nickerson. As mentioned, Joseph Smith referred to him as Freeman Nickerson except on the occasion of his previously mentioned ordination, in which he had recorded in the official Church history, "Ordained br E. F. Nickerson to the office of Elder."²⁰ Thus, future researchers and readers of Church history ought to create the necessary notes and corrections to clarify the confusion in the records.

Growth of the Mount Pleasant Branch in the 1830s

The Church in the Mount Pleasant area continued to prosper after the initial visit of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his companions. Thereafter, missionaries visited the area about every six months. We can gain some insight into the growth of the branch and the zeal of the members from a letter sent by Moses Nickerson to the Brethren in Kirtland, Ohio, dated December 20, 1833:

Your labors while in Canada have been the beginning of a good work: there are 34 members attached to the church at Mount Pleasant, all of whom appear to live up to their profession, five of whom have spoken in tongues, and three sing in tongues: and we live at the top of the mountain! . . .

Your friends in Canada often speak of you and brother Joseph. Mr. and Mrs. Beamer are seriously enquiring after the truth: they often speak of brother Sidney and Joseph: and all the people with whom I am acquainted, or have talked with upon the subject of religion, appear to be much engaged: Some for, and the remainder against; but I find those blessed promises to be verified, that God's grace shall be sufficient for our day and time of need. I find that those places where I thought the cross was agoing to be the hardest, is often the lightest, and then I often obtain the greatest blessings.

If you can send a couple of preachers out here, as soon as you receive this, you would do us a kindness; for brother Freeman is often called from home, and it is necessary that some one should be there: Send those that you have confidence in or none: the work requires competent workmen; for the harvest is truly great.²¹

Thus, the branch grew from fourteen members to thirty-four members in approximately two months. To the original list of

members can be added the families of William and Marinda Stevens, Roswell and Dolly Stevens, Benjamin Skinner, Andrew and Elisabeth Rose, John and Mary Flanners, Luther Cooley, and Mr. and Mrs. Beamer.

The first missionary to visit Mount Pleasant after the Prophet Joseph Smith was Elder John P. Greene. In a letter to Oliver Cowdery, Greene reported:

May, the 7th, I left Kirtland for Upper Canada. . . . After a tedious journey I arrived at brother Nickerson's Mount Pleasant, U[pper] Canada, on the 19th of the same month [May 1834] where I was received with expressions of joy by all the brethren, who were truly desirous to be instructed more perfectly in the word of the Lord. I labored in this region about two months with a good degree of satisfaction—many believed the word and some turned unto the Lord; while others were prevented by unbelieving friends; and many were stumbling at the vile calumnies that satan and his children were heaping upon the innocent, to stop the work of the Lord. But his name be praised! his word is sown in Canada; it has taken root in good ground, and it will grow in spite of all the priests of satan. . . . I baptized two persons at Mount Pleasant, which increased the church in that place to 43.²²

Six months later the Kirtland newspaper recorded the missionary visit of Zerubbabel Snow: "Elder Z. Snow writes from Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada, Nov. 28th, and informs us that the church in that place are prospering in the way of the Lord. He informs us of no addition, but says that the door for preaching is opening in many places—more than he can fill. He has preached to many attentive congregations."²³

In October 1835, the Church newspaper the *Messenger and Advocate* informed its readers of the expansion of the work in Upper Canada by means of a letter from Peter Dustin, another missionary called to serve in the Mount Pleasant area. He wrote: "I left this place [Kirtland] the 11th of June, to fill a mission in the province of Upper Canada by way of Buffalo, from thence to Mount Pleasant, and from thence to Malahide,²⁴ U[pper] C[anada]. I have succeeded in establishing a church there, which is composed of 32 members. They are young and unacquainted with the devices of the adversary, whose aim and business is, if possible, to make them

miserable. Brethren, pray for them, that they may continue and not be moved in the hour of temptation.”²⁵

Elder Orson Pratt served as a missionary in the Mount Pleasant area with Freeman Nickerson Sr. as his companion during the spring of 1836. In a letter he related the opposition to the Restoration of the gospel that they had experienced:

On the 27th of April last elder F. Nickerson and myself went to the village of Brantford, U. C. and obtained the privilege from one of the trustees of the school house of leaving an appointment for the next evening, which was circulated through the town. The next evening I went down alone to Mount Pleasant to fill the appointment; went to the school house found it crowded with men but no females, I went into the pulpit and was about to open the meeting by reading a chapter in the bible when a man by the name of Lewis Burwell²⁶ a Methodist by profession arose and requested me to answer a few questions previous to preaching. He then proceeded as follows. To what church do you belong? Answer. To the church of Latter Day Saints slanderously called Mormons. Do you believe in the book of Mormon? Yes sir, with all my heart. He then said he had read the book and made some very harsh expressions, desiring to know of me if I could speak with tongues prophesy, &c. I replied that I had not come to boast of what I or the church to which I belonged could do, but to hold forth the gospel and the promises and blessings which it proposes to all the faithful and obedient, but he insisted on my answering him yes or no, I replied that I did not consider myself under the least obligation to answer any of his questions till after my discourse, in which I would set forth our sentiments as a society in plainness, after which he or any gentleman present should have the privilege of taking exceptions and exposing publicly every erroneous principle, but he insisted on knowing what our church believed before preaching. About this time the congregation began to stamp with their feet and hiss, they also began to be divided the more part were determined to hear, while the remainder said that I should not preach, and the whole house was in an uproar some crying one thing and some another, some crying liberty of conscience as loud as they could hallow; while others were yelling delusion, impostor &c. and they began to contend one with another very sharply, becoming angry they proceeded to blows, two or three were knocked down in the school house, the noise was such for one or two hours that it might have been heard some distance, but I stood in the pulpit very much composed lifting my heart in silent prayer that the Lord would deliver me out of their hands unhurt; some threatened to lay violent hands

upon me while others said I was a stranger and they would protect me, but one man laid hands upon me who reached over the pulpit and gave me a sudden pull against the side of the same; at length some gentlemen present kindly assisted me in escaping they opened one of the pulpit doors took me by the hand and we passed through their midst. The whole congregation however followed us through the main st. of the village and seeing myself surrounded by a multitude part friends and part foes I concluded the better way of escape would be to go into a tavern and pass out the back door, which I accordingly did, being accompanied with two men as guides. I travelled that night to Mount Pleasant on foot and alone pondering [u]pon the scene through which I had passed and the corruptions of this gener[a]tion, the next day the people in Brantford sent an express requesting me to come the next evening and preach with an assurance that I should be protected.— I accordingly went had a crowded house and good attention, after my discourse gave liberty 4 arose, one at a time and brought forth their objections till they run themselves out of arguments and some of the assembly began to hiss at them, the meeting was closed and the people departed without any disturbance.

Thus we can see the zeal of the religious denominations of our land in opposing what they call Mormonism.

Elder Pratt concluded, “I tarried in the province not far from two months held 34 meetings, baptized 12 and then took my journey to Jefferson co. N. Y. . . . The truth seems to be progressing in these parts.”²⁷

The Saints’ Exodus and Opposition to the Restoration in Upper Canada

Richard E. Bennett has estimated that from 1830 to 1850 between one thousand five hundred and two thousand individuals were baptized and confirmed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Upper Canada.²⁸ Many of these Saints resided near the area of Toronto. The area of Mount Pleasant might have had as many as fifty members.²⁹ However, the Canadian census of 1851 shows only two individuals listed as Latter-day Saint, or Mormon—Eleazer Nickerson of Norfolk County and Mary Gates of Mount Pleasant, Brant County, respectively. Thus, the presence of the Saints in the area of Mount Pleasant lasted only a few years.

The reason for the disappearance of Mormonism in Upper Canada during this time is most likely threefold. First, members were encouraged to gather with the main body of the Saints in the United States. Second, missionary efforts outside the United States began to focus on Great Britain after 1838. Either of these may explain the decline of membership in the area. However, a third possibility is that negative press influenced the Saints not to gather with the main body of the Church and also affected proselytizing efforts.

The Lord previously revealed insights regarding efforts to influence people to reject the message of the Restoration using the press: “They will publish this, and Satan will harden the hearts of the people to stir them up to anger against you, that they will not believe my words. Thus Satan thinketh to overpower your testimony in this generation, that the work may not come forth in this generation” (D&C 10:32–33). The following three examples of damaging news articles quoted by Richard Bennett in his master’s thesis on the Church in Upper Canada.

I begin with the leader “Joe” as he is and has been called for twenty years past. For ten years he has been a man of questionable character, of intemperate habits, and a noted money digger. . . . Joe pretended that he had at length found, by digging a wonderful curiosity which he kept closely concealed. After he had told different stories, . . . he at length called it, the Golden Plates of the Book of Mormon.³⁰

Mormonism! This deluded and fanatical sect having occasioned considerable excitement in Oakland and its vicinity, it was thought necessary by those who love the truth, that a challenge should be forwarded to the leaders of that party, to a thorough discussion of the Divine Authority of the Book of Mormon. . . .

The Rev. James Nall of Burford undertook to prove that the Book of Mormon was not divinely inspired, but on the contrary was a base forgery. . . .

It was understood at the time he commenced, that the Mormon preachers would have come forward to a discussion of each point separately, but was surprised to find, that after he had gone through with the first part, no defence would be put in by his opponents, until he had gone through with the whole of his objections to the book, after occupying the floor for four hours and a half in supporting the cause of truth, and satisfactorily proving the deception and base fabrication of Mormonism to an attentive and crowded house, a truly miserable

defence was attempted by one of the Mormon preachers. . . . Many got up and left the house.

After working upon the passions of the people nearly two hours, he came to a close, when a resolution condemnatory of the Book of Mormon, as a base fabrication and a libel on the Christian Religion was passed universally with four exceptions of which three were Mormon Preachers, and one a layman who appears to be thoroughly initiated into their system.³¹

Notwithstanding it presents every mark of an imposition, some thousands have been so strongly convinced that it came from heaven, that they have submitted to the loss of friends, the diminishing of property, and the danger and trouble of a pilgrimage to the distant land of Missouri. Some in Upper Canada having the same faith, have resolved on the same folly. But for a recent revelation requiring the preachers to send up to Zion only the "wise" (or wealthy) many would have forsaken their native or adopted country; and they reluctantly submit to spend another winter within the precincts of Babylon. Not far from this town, lies a dead child unburied, that its parents may have the pleasure of covering it with the earth of Zion! The object of their gathering in one part, is to escape the calamities soon to visit other parts of the world; as if God could not save his people apart as well as when together.³²

It is not presently possible to accurately assess the impact these three press excerpts or others had on newly converted members and potential converts. But it is likely that their influence should be considered when attempting to understand the Church in Upper Canada at this time.

As mentioned, the gathering of Latter-day Saints to Zion took its toll on the number of members in Upper Canada. New converts heeded the call to leave their homes and gather with the main body of Saints in the United States. The first convert from Mount Pleasant to leave was Lydia Goldthwait Bailey. She left the Nickerson home in the summer of 1834, returning to her home in New York State. Becoming restless there, she headed for Kirtland, Ohio, arriving in the spring of 1835. While in Kirtland she met and later married Newel Knight and moved with the Saints wherever they went.³³

In 1837, Eleazer Freeman Nickerson sold his store in Mount Pleasant to a fellow member of the Church Richard Strobridge and in 1838 left for the United States. E. F.'s sister, Huldah, and her



Photo 1. Mount Pleasant Main Street, 1912, west side looking south from the cemetery. The second building from the right was probably the Nickerson store (1821–1837). From postcard by E. J. Devlin, courtesy of Heritage Mount Pleasant.

husband, Emery Barrus, previously moved to Mount Pleasant and then decided to move to Missouri with E. F. and his family. E. F.'s brother, Moses Nickerson, also left Canada in 1837 after becoming politically involved with William Lyon Mackenzie and the ill-fated Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837. The Roswell Stevens family and the William and Marinda Stevens family sold their property in 1838 and eventually settled in Nauvoo, Illinois.³⁴

After 1840 several families left the Mount Pleasant area. For example, Andrew and Elizabeth Rose, who were Burford residents, emigrated to Nauvoo in 1842 along with their son and daughter-in-law, George Washington and Mary Rose, and their family. Another son, Wesley Rose, and his wife, Mariah Gates, of Brantford, also immigrated to Nauvoo in the 1840s. Mount Pleasant residents Hiram Gates and his wife, Sarah Sayles, left for Nauvoo in February of 1843 and arrived there on April 13, 1844.³⁵

In the late 1840s President Brigham Young sent a general epistle to the Saints throughout the world. This epistle called all Saints



Photo 2. Modern Main Street, Mount Pleasant, showing location of Nickerson property and cemetery.

to gather to the Salt Lake Valley. Because of this call, there was little missionary activity in Canada. Missionary work did not resume until George Goddard went to Canada in 1859. Elder Goddard recorded that he held meetings in St. Catharines, a village between Hamilton and Niagara Falls, with Saints that remained in the area. It became evident to him that faithful members had left long beforehand. Those left behind had returned to a former faith, had become disaffected because of polygamy, or had become converts to the Reorganized Church, the Strangites, and so on. The decade of the 1850s marked the beginning of a lengthy period in which Mormonism had no presence in Upper Canada. As Richard Bennett noted, "For the next half century and more, the Mormon influence in the province was negligible. The 1861 official Census indicated that there were only seventy-four Mormons (who identified themselves as such) in the entire province. It would not be until the end of World War I that the Church would create a separate and distinct Canadian Mission in Ontario, headquartered in Toronto."³⁶

The strength and faith of many of these early converts from the Mount Pleasant area is felt in the families of their descendants. Following the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Saints' exodus from Nauvoo, Illinois, several of these converts helped to settle the West under the direction of President Brigham Young. They contributed to the growth of the kingdom both in numbers and in testimony. Of particular note, Lydia Bailey Knight was the first subject of a series of biographies on faithful women in Mormonism: *Lydia Knight's History*, by Susa Young Gates.³⁷

Appendix A

A brief description of the known members of the Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada Branch in the 1830s.

Lydia Bailey

Born Lydia Goldthwait, June 9, 1812, in Sutton, Worcester County, Massachusetts. Her marriage to Calvin Bailey in 1828 was described as "unhappy." After one of her babies died at childbirth and Bailey deserted her, Lydia returned to her parents' home. In February 1833, a previous close acquaintance, E. F. Nickerson, visited in the area and brought Lydia back to Mount Pleasant to visit with him and his wife. Lydia was converted to the Church by the preaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and was baptized by Joseph Smith on October 27, 1833. She was one of the first members in Mount Pleasant.

When Lydia, in the summer of 1834, returned to her father's home in New York State, her relatives did all they could to persuade her to leave "Mormonism." At length she grew restless and unhappy on account of the constant raillery and derision showered upon her by her parents on account of her religion, and therefore decided to go to Kirtland, Ohio, which at that time was a gathering place of the Saints. Immediately on reaching Kirtland in the spring of 1835 she met Vincent Knight, who approached Sister Lydia, saying: "Sister, the Prophet is in bondage and has been brought into distress by the persecutions of the wicked, and if you have any means to give, it would be of benefit to him." She at once emptied her purse containing \$50, which was all she had. Brother Knight looked at it, counted it and fervently exclaimed,

“Thank God, this will release and set the Prophet free.” The young girl was now without means, not having enough to procure a meal or a night’s lodging. For six or eight months after that she lived a pleasant life in the home of Vincent Knight. In the fall of 1835 Hyrum Smith asked Lydia to come to his house and assist his wife. She complied with the request and while living there she became acquainted with Newel Knight, who boarded at the place while working on the Kirtland Temple. Newel Knight (who was not related to the Vincent Knight previously mentioned) is described by Sister Lydia as a tall man with light brown hair, a keen blue eye and a very energetic and determined manner; he was a widower, whose wife, a delicate woman, had died the previous fall, in consequence of the trials and persecutions she had suffered, and left an infant only two days old. Brother Knight, in course of time made Lydia an offer of marriage, which she after some hesitation accepted, and the two became man and wife November 23, 1835, Joseph Smith the Prophet performing the marriage ceremony. It was the first marriage ceremony the Prophet ever performed. The young married couple gladly accepted the offer of Hyrum Smith to spend the winter at his home. In the meantime Newel Knight continued his labours on the Temple and generally attended the school of the elders in the evenings. Together with his wife he also attended the dedication of the Temple and witnessed many marvellous manifestations of the power of God. After this Sister Lydia and her husband moved to Clay county, where a girl was born to them Dec. 1, 1836. In February, 1837, Newel Knight purchased 40 acres of land from the government near Far West, Caldwell county, Mo. A boy (named James Philander) was born to Lydia April 29, 1837. She passed through the persecutions of the Church in Caldwell county, Mo., and afterwards in Illinois, and she left Nauvoo with her family April 17, 1846, in the exodus of the Saints for the Rocky Mountains. While on the way, and while stopping temporarily together with many other Saints at a place known as Ponca, her husband died, Jan. 11, 1847. Thus she became a widow with seven helpless children and for several years after that she battled with all kinds of odds to support herself and family and to raise her little ones as best she could on the frontiers. Finally the way opened for her to come to the Valley; she crossed the plains in 1850 in Edward Hunter’s company, arriving in Salt Lake City Oct. 3, 1850. For several years she resided in the City and on a farm near the City. She subsequently located in Provo, where she taught school. Next she resided at Payson and Santa Clara, but when the St. George Temple was finished in 1877 she was called by President Brigham Young to labor in that sacred building as an ordinance worker. She responded cheerfully, made her permanent home in St. George and attended faithfully to her duties in the Temple

till the day of her death, which occurred in St. George April 3, 1884. Sister Lydia's life was full of events and her character full of integrity; she possessed a lovely disposition, gained the confidence and good will of all who knew her and died a most devoted and faithful Latter-day Saint.³⁸

Emery and Huldah Nickerson Barrus

Emery Barrus was born April 8, 1809, in Hanover, Chataugua County, New York, and Huldah Nickerson was born April 16, 1816, in Springville, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. They became acquainted while Emery was working as a farmhand for Huldah's father, Freeman Nickerson, of Perrysburgh, New York. They married on December 19, 1833. Earlier that year, Emery, Huldah, and others in the Nickerson family had joined the Church of Jesus Christ after hearing the preaching of Zerubbabel Snow and Amasa Lyman. Emery Barrus and his wife, Huldah, were either visiting or living in Mount Pleasant since their second child was born there in 1836. They left with E. F. Nickerson for Missouri but later settled in Nauvoo until they were forced to leave in 1846. They crossed the plains in Appleton Harmon's company and settled in Grantsville, Utah, in 1853. Huldah Barrus died on August 22, 1872, and Emery Barrus died on October 6, 1899; both were faithful Latter-day Saints.³⁹

Adelia Burtch

Adelia was the daughter of Mount Pleasant residents Stephen Burtch and Margaret Belingar Burtch. Orson Pratt's journal refers to baptizing a number of people in Scotland (Upper Canada) on May 15, 1836; Adelia was one of the converts. Adelia is listed as the widow Adelia McComley in an 1862 document addressed to her brother, David.⁴⁰

Esther Fillmore Burtch

Esther was born to Stephen Burtch and Margaret Belingar Burtch in 1813. She was converted and baptized by Joseph Smith on October 28, 1833. She was one of the first members in Mount Pleasant. In 1840, Esther is listed with Mount Pleasant's Upper

Canada Bible Society (a group typically Methodists but also Presbyterians and Anglicans), led by Reverend Bryning. Esther married and had one son she named Joseph. In 1859 she was listed as the widow Esther Fillmore. She died in Mount Pleasant on January 7, 1896, and was buried in the Mount Pleasant Pioneer Cemetery. Her memorial stone reads in part, "Creatures no more divide my choice. I bid them all depart. His name and love and gracious voice, have fixed my loving heart."⁴¹

Margaret Burtch

The identity of the Margaret Burtch baptized by the Prophet Joseph Smith on Monday October 28, 1833, is not certain. However, two individuals are candidates:

1. Margaret Slaught Burtch was the wife of Silas Burtch. She was born in 1812 and was twenty-one years old (the same age as Esther Burtch) when Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon visited Mount Pleasant. If Margaret was married at the time, she could be the woman referred to. Margaret died in Mount Pleasant in 1841 at age twenty-eight and is buried in the local cemetery.

2. Margaret Burtch was the wife of Stephen Burtch and the mother of nine children, including Esther and Mary Burtch. Stephen Burtch died in July 1833, and the widow Margaret Belingar Burtch would have been about sixty years old at the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith's visit to Mount Pleasant. She lived at least until 1849, but her place and date of death are not known.⁴²

Mary Burtch

Three women have the same name as the woman baptized by Joseph Smith on Sunday, October 27, 1833.

1. Stephen and Margaret Burtch had a daughter Mary. They have another daughter, Esther, who was baptized by Joseph Smith on October 28, and it is likely that both daughters might have been baptized that day.⁴³

2. Another possibility is she was Mary Burtch, wife of Charles Burtch Sr. She would have been about seventy years old at the time

of the Prophet's visit to Mount Pleasant. She remains a consideration because her daughter Mary Burtch Gates was baptized by the Prophet Joseph Smith on the same day as the Mary Burtch recorded in the Prophet's register.⁴⁴

3. A third possibility is that Mary Burtch and Mary Burtch Gates are the same person. However, this possibility presents the problem that the Prophet Joseph Smith did not differentiate between these two individuals. That would mean there was another unaccounted individual, bringing the total number of baptisms to fourteen.



Photo 3. Gravestone of Phebe Cook in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

Phebe Andrews Cook

Phebe was born in 1766 and married Daniel Cook in 1787.⁴⁵ Joseph Smith recorded the baptism of Phebe Cook on Sunday October 27, 1833. In 1840 she was listed with the Upper Canada Bible Society of Mount Pleasant. It is not clear if she could have remained faithful to the Restoration and still have associated with this

society. Her memorial stone in the Mount Pleasant Pioneer Cemetery, reads in part, "Phebe Cook died July 30th, 1850 in the 85th year." Her headstone lies beside Daniel Cook's, who died August 19, 1837, according to his headstone.⁴⁶

Harvey John Cooper

The only reference to John Harvey Cooper is from Joseph Smith's journal. John was one of the original twelve persons baptized on Sunday, October 27, 1833.⁴⁷

Hiram and Sarah Maria Sayles Gates

Hiram Gates was the son of Henry Gates and Mary Burtch Gates. Hiram was born in Oakland, Ontario, and married his second wife, Sarah Maria Sayles, in 1827. Sarah joined the Church in the 1830s, but Hiram was not baptized until later. Hiram and Sarah moved to Nauvoo in 1843. He wrote: "I always disbelieved in every doctrine taught by the sectarian world. I left Canada for Nauvoo, February, 1843 arrived there April 13, 1844. I have been acquainted with the Prophet and Patriarch, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, martyred in Carthage Jail, June 27, 1844. I was baptized on the 6th of October, 1844, by John Boice was ordained in the 2nd Quorum October 1844."⁴⁸ They traveled West with the Saints after their expulsion from Nauvoo and remained faithful. Sarah died August 18, 1849, and is buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery.⁴⁹

Mary Burtch Gates

There is some question about Mary Burtch Gates's date of birth from available records. Mary was born around 1781, the daughter of United Empire Loyalist Charles Burtch. She married Henry Gates, a Mount Pleasant resident. Mary was one of Joseph Smith's original converts of Sunday, October 27, 1833. The 1851 Canadian Census (taken in 1850) lists her as a Mormon. There is no evidence that her husband ever joined the Church. Mary did not go West with the Saints, possibly for this reason.⁵⁰ In later years, Henry and Mary lived with their daughter Polly and son-in-law Hiram Westbrook. Henry died April 19, 1850, at age seventy-three. According

to her tombstone, Mary Gates died on February 28, 1864, at age eighty-one. She is buried near her husband's grave in the Oakland Pioneer Cemetery, Oakland Township, Ontario, Canada.⁵¹

Elizabeth Gibbs

Joseph Smith's journal entry notes that Elizabeth Gibbs was baptized with a group of twelve on Sunday, October 27, 1833. Not much information about Elizabeth exists. But the Brant County Museum records that Cyrus Gibbs of Windham married Elizabeth Bennett of Charlotteville, April 19, 1832.⁵²

John and Mary Ann Harvey

"Br. John Harvey writes us from Canada, under date of May 30th [1836], stating that Eld. O. Pratt had been preaching in Brantford [*sic*], Mount Pleasant, and Mallahide [*sic*], Upper Canada, and that he had baptized six in the former place, and two in Mallahide."⁵³ Orson Pratt's journal has the six baptisms taking place in Scotland, Upper Canada, May 15, 1836, with Mary Ann Harvey as one of those baptized. This may be the same John Harvey Cooper mentioned by Joseph Smith in 1833. "Cooper" may refer to his profession rather than his surname.

Caroline Hubbard

Caroline is the fourth child of Freeman and Huldah Nickerson and the sister of E. F. and Moses Nickerson. She married Marshall Hubbard in 1827. While living in Perrysburg, New York, she and Marshall were converted to Mormonism by Elders Zerubbabel Snow and Amasa Lyman in April 1833. Marshall Hubbard died in 1838. She probably followed her brothers and parents to Missouri and then to Nauvoo because she married Thomas Grover in Nauvoo in 1841. She and Thomas left Nauvoo in February 1846, traveling with her father's family and arriving in the Great Salt Lake Valley on October 2, 1847, with Charles C. Rich's company. Caroline later left Thomas Grover and married Andrew Stewart. She died a faithful Latter-day Saint in Grantsville, Utah, July 28, 1889.⁵⁴

John Mansfield

John Mansfield was as a convert of Orson Pratt on May 15, 1836, in Scotland, Upper Canada. The 1851 census of Windham, Norfolk County lists John Mansfield, seventy-six years old, and wife Catherine, sixty-nine years old, as Wesleyan Methodist.

Samuel McAlister

Samuel McAlister was born in 1757 in Ireland of Scottish parents. He and his father fled from Ireland to America due to religious persecution. Samuel was left in the care of another family while his father returned to Ireland “to get his wife. But he found she had been burned at the stake to make her tell the whereabouts of her husband and son. It was a time of torture and terror, and it was supposed that she died of the torture as had many others. He could not find any trace of her and he never came back to his son. It is quite probable that he was captured by persecutors.”⁵⁵ Samuel’s wife, Elizabeth Salmond, was born in Rhode Island in about 1771 and married Samuel in 1787. They moved to Burford near Mount Pleasant at the time of the War of 1812. He and his family were early settlers of Mount Pleasant and operated an inn across from the Pioneer Cemetery.⁵⁶ Samuel was one of the original twelve people converted and baptized by Joseph Smith. He was the father of Eliza McAlister Nickerson, who married E. F. Nickerson. Samuel died on February 21, 1846, at age eighty-eight and was buried beside his daughter in the Mount Pleasant Pioneer Cemetery.⁵⁷

Elizabeth McAlister Nickerson

Eliza McAlister was the daughter of Samuel McAlister and Elizabeth Salmond. She was born in Burford, September 12, 1812, and married Eleazer Freeman Nickerson on February 9, 1830, in Mount Pleasant. She was baptized by Joseph Smith on October 28, 1833, and was one of the first members in Mount Pleasant. She was known for her beautiful singing voice. She died at age twenty-three on August 16, 1835, less than two years after her baptism. Eliza was buried in the Mount Pleasant Pioneer Cemetery with this sentiment on her memorial stone: “Could love or admiration save, So



Photo 4. Gravestone of Elizabeth Nickerson in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

dear an object from the grave, This stone had not essayed to tell,
The loss of one beloved so well.”⁵⁸

Eleazer Freeman Nickerson

E. F. Nickerson was born in Vermont on April 2, 1806, the third child of Freeman Nickerson and Huldah Chapman. He opened a merchant business in Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada, in 1830 and was joined by his brother Moses a year later. He was one of the original members in Mount Pleasant, baptized by Joseph Smith. In addition, he was ordained an elder and set apart as the branch president. After the death of his wife, Eliza, in 1835, he married Harriet Fischer in 1837. He sold his business in 1837 to fellow Latter-day Saint R. R. Strobridge but did not leave for Missouri until the fall of 1838. Eleazer did not stay in Missouri or Nauvoo but returned to Colborne, Upper Canada (near Mount Pleasant). He attended a conference of the Church in Oakland in 1842. He and his family are listed as Latter-day Saints in the 1851 Canadian census. However, he never went west with the Saints and died in Colborne (Simcoe), Upper Canada, in 1862.⁵⁹

Moses Chapman Nickerson

Moses was born on March 9, 1804, in Vermont, the second child of Freeman Nickerson and Huldah Chapman. Moses was converted by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and was baptized by Joseph Smith on October 27, 1833. He was an original member of the Mount Pleasant Branch. He was single at the time but soon after his baptism married the widow Mary Boss Colton on February 10, 1834. About that same time, he moved into a house in the vicinity of Colborne and purchased property at the mouth of Patterson's Creek called Port Dover.

Moses took "a lively interest in favor of the reform cause,"⁶⁰ which led to the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion. The following posted proclamation was issued by the government: "High Treason—Moses Chapman Nickerson, late of the township of Woodhouse, in the District of Talbot, Yeoman." It also reported that Mount Pleasant's former merchant had "fled the county or remained concealed therein."⁶¹

Moses Nickerson's brief autobiography notes that he felt that his life was in danger if he remained in Upper Canada. He writes:

I went to my Father's in Cataraugus county, and in the fall of 1838 my wife joined me with our first child, three or four months old. We then decided upon going west to Missouri, and late in the fall went on a raft to go down the Ohio river,—my father and mother, brothers and sisters, with my own family. About thirty miles above Pittsburgh we were caught in the ice, and wintered over. My father and myself, after building good comfortable shanties for the families, went out preaching. A number gave their attention to it and became obedient, among whom was Thomas Hickenlooper and his brother.

In the spring we started on our way for Jackson Co., Missouri, but learned that the Mormons had been driven out. We arrived in St. Louis in May, and shipped on board of a steamboat for Jefferson City, where we finally arrived.

Here, after ten days sickness, we buried our only child, a very promising and interesting child of ten months. My sister buried one a little older, and a double stone at their head marks the place of their rest.

During the summer, my parents removed to Nauvoo; and in the fall I visited them. I found many sick and much suffering from having been robbed of all they possessed in Missouri, and driven from their homes in a very inclement season of the year.

I here found Joseph Smith living in a tent, having given up his *house as a hospital for the sick!* He was doing all he could to alleviate their sufferings.

I returned in the fall to my family—was taken very sick—suffered much, but finally by the kind attention of my wife, recovered.

In the spring I visited Nauvoo again, and found them much improved in health and surrounding circumstances.

Having received pressing invitations from my friends in Canada to return, I concluded to do so; and in October started with a span of horses and light wagon for Canada.⁶²

Thus, as other members of the Nickerson family settled in Nauvoo, Moses and his wife returned to Port Dover, Upper Canada. He attended the Church's Oakland conference in 1842. Mary died on December 14, 1862. Moses recorded, "I visited Utah Territory in the month of April 1869; spent the summer traveling through the Territory.—Saw much to admire and some things to condemn, among which is the institution of polygamy."⁶³ Although Moses does not specifically indicate in his autobiography that he was at this time associated with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, it appears that this was the case.⁶⁴ Moses died on March 4, 1871, in Jackson County, Missouri.⁶⁵

Andrew and Elizabeth Daniels Rose

Andrew was born February 17, 1782, and Elizabeth was born July 9, 1790. They moved to Canada and settled in the Ancaster area in about 1815. Andrew's baptismal date is listed as October 26, 1833, but it is not certain whether he is the Andrew mentioned by Joseph Smith. The Rose family lived in Burford and Mount Pleasant and left for Nauvoo in 1842. Andrew and Elizabeth were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple on February 3, 1846. Andrew died on August 14, 1850, while crossing the plains.⁶⁶

Benjamin Skinner

There is a single reference to a Benjamin Skinner in the Mount Pleasant history. He owned a farm in Mount Pleasant and was a Mormon convert.⁶⁷

Roswell Sr. and Sybil Spencer Stevens

Little is known of the conversion of Roswell Stevens Sr., born February 17, 1772, at either Plainfield⁶⁸ or Litchfield,⁶⁹ Connecticut, and of the conversions of his wife, Sybil, born April 4, 1778, at Washington, Massachusetts. He owned a large tract of land in Mount Pleasant.⁷⁰ They remained faithful to the end of their lives along with their sons Roswell Jr. and William, their daughters Sarah and Harriet, and their families. Roswell Sr. and Sybil were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple on December 24, 1845. Roswell Sr. and Harriet died July 3, 1847, at Council Bluffs, Iowa. Sybil came West and died November 18, 1862, and was buried in Fillmore, Utah. Sarah, born in 1816, lived to be ninety-eight years old and died in Spanish Fork, Utah.⁷¹

Roswell Jr. and Maria Doyle Stevens

Roswell Stevens Jr. was born November 17, 1808, in Grand River (Mount Pleasant), Upper Canada, the son of Roswell Stevens and Sibbell (Sybel) Spencer. He married Maria Doyle in 1827.⁷² When twenty-four years old, he was converted by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in 1833 but was not baptized until the spring of 1834, when John P. Greene came through on a missionary assignment. Roswell, his wife, and five of their children later located in Nauvoo. Roswell and Maria were endowed in the Nauvoo Temple on December 20, 1845.⁷³ He initially served as a member of the Mormon Battalion but was appointed to return to Winter Quarters, where he was selected as one of the pioneer company. He arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley in July 1847. He married Mary Ann Peterson in 1854. Roswell Stevens died at Bluff City, Utah, May 14, 1880, as a faithful Latter-day Saint.⁷⁴

William and Marinda Stevens

William was born October 1, 1799, to Roswell Stevens and Sybil Spencer in Herkimer, New York. Marinda was born June 29, 1809, in Mount Pleasant, New Jersey. They were married September 2, 1828, in the Mohawk chapel, Ontario, Canada.⁷⁵ William and

Marinda were Mount Pleasant residents. The Mount Pleasant history notes that they sold their farm in 1838 at a “price much lower than it was resold for a short time later, suggesting a sacrifice sale, for William and Marinda Stevens are known to have joined an exodus of the Mormons to the United States about this time.”⁷⁶ Andrew Jenson’s entry in the *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* on Walter Stevens, William and Marinda’s son, indicates that the family left Mount Pleasant in 1838 with the intention of going to Missouri but wintered in Illinois and joined the Saints at Nauvoo.⁷⁷ William and Marinda went West with the Saints. Marinda died June 27, 1848, in Kanesville, Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County, Iowa. William later settled at Holden, Utah, in the 1850s, where he lived the rest of his life. He died February 5, 1888, as a faithful Latter-day Saint.⁷⁸

Richard Ramon Strobridge

R. R. Strobridge was a merchant and a Mount Pleasant resident who was an original member of the Mount Pleasant Branch. Joseph Smith baptized him on October 27, 1833. He purchased the Nickerson store when E. F. Nickerson left for Missouri. He sold his store in 1841 and opened a larger store in Brantford. Little is known of Strobridge. He, his wife, and their children are listed as Methodists on the 1851 Canadian census.⁷⁹

NOTES

¹The Library and Archives Canada Web site (<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/confederation/023001-2001-e.html>) provides a brief discussion of Upper Canada:

Upper Canada, the precursor of modern-day Ontario, was created by the *Constitutional Act* of 1791, which divided the former Province of Quebec into two parts: Upper Canada and Lower Canada. These two provinces were joined once again to form the Province of Canada in 1840 and were then referred to as Canada West (Upper Canada, or Ontario) and Canada East (Lower Canada, or Quebec). The terms “Upper Canada” and “Lower Canada,” in the Canadian historical context, therefore refer to the period between 1791 and 1841. Much

of the heritage of the Ontario we know today can be traced to this Upper Canada period.

The *Constitutional Act* of 1791 was London's answer to the American Revolution with regard to the administration of its North American colonies. A lieutenant-governor, assisted by an executive council, a legislative council and a house of assembly, was appointed in every province. Until 1848, when London agreed to grant responsible government to the Province of Canada, the Executive Council was answerable to London rather than to the House of Assembly.

In 1791, Upper Canada had a population of about 10,000 people. Most inhabitants were United Empire Loyalists who profited substantially from London's generosity. During the War of Independence (1776–1783), subjects who wished to remain loyal to England left what would later become the United States to settle in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Province of Quebec (modern-day Quebec and Ontario). At that time, Upper Canada also had significant Francophone and Aboriginal populations.

²Mary Byers and Margaret McBurney, *The Governor's Road: Early Buildings and Families from Mississauga to London* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 6.

³Sharon Jaeger, "The Work of Our Hands": *Mount Pleasant, Ontario, 1799–1899: A History, Written for Heritage Mount Pleasant*, ed. Delia O'Byrne (Canada: Thompson Printing and Lithographing, 2004), 21–28. Heritage Mount Pleasant and Dr. Jaeger indicate that much of the research in this book was compiled by a local historian named Margaret Smyth for a project called "Mount Pleasant Tweedsmuir History," taken on in the 1950s by the Mount Pleasant Women's Institute. Smyth's manuscript was never published.

⁴William Smith, *Political Leaders of Upper Canada* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1968; reprint of 1931 ed.), x, xiv.

⁵Smith, *Political Leaders*, ix–xxvii, states: "According to the denominational census taken by the government in 1840, the membership of the leading denominations was as follows: Anglicans, 96,014 [29 percent]; Presbyterians, 88, 463 [27 percent]; Methodists, 73,933 [23 percent]; Baptists, 19,021 [6 percent]; Roman Catholics, 49,601 [15 percent]" (xxv). See also Stewart Crysdale and Les Wheatcroft, eds., *Religion in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), 114–24.

⁶Moses Nickerson, "Moses Nickerson Autobiography," *Saints' Herald*, July 15, 1870, 425.

⁷Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 117.

⁸The manuscript entries of October 18, 20, and 21 "were inadvertently written one day earlier than the actual calendar date" (Joseph Smith, *The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volume 2: Journal, 1832–1842*, ed. Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 7n2). In addition, it is possible that the three missionaries mentioned and Freeman Nickerson's wife, Huldah, were also accompanied by

their nineteen-year-old son, Levi (see Susa Young Gates, *Lydia Knight's History*, vol. 1 of Noble Women's Lives Series [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883], 15).

⁹Smith, *Papers*, 7; spelling and punctuation standardized.

¹⁰Smith, *Papers*, 9–10; spelling, grammar, and punctuation standardized.

¹¹Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 1:422.

¹²Gates, *Lydia Knight's History*, 21–22.

¹³Smith, *Papers*, 10; spelling, grammar, and punctuation standardized.

¹⁴Smith, *Papers*, 13–14.

¹⁵Smith, *Papers*, 8; spelling and punctuation standardized.

¹⁶Samuel Rose to his brother Mr. John Rose, November 21, 1833, Rose Papers 1831, Miscellaneous Collection #8, 1831, Ontario Archives, Toronto, Canada.

¹⁷Joseph Smith, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, comp. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 304.

¹⁸B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 1:394; Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, LDS Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, October 24, 1833. B. H. Roberts also records that "about sixteen were baptized," rather than the fourteen recorded by Joseph Smith. It may be that he did not consider that the two who were baptized the following day were already included in the total number given by the Prophet.

¹⁹Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:422.

²⁰Jessee, *Papers*, 10; spelling, grammar, and punctuation standardized.

²¹*Evening and Morning Star*, February 1834, 269; letter by M. C. Nickerson dated December 20, 1833, Wendham (Canada).

²²*Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, October 1834, 7–8.

²³*Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, December 1834, 45.

²⁴Malahide lies to the southwest of Mount Pleasant, about a day's ride in 1835.

²⁵*Messenger and Advocate*, October 1835, 207; letter dated October 21, 1835, Kirtland.

²⁶Lewis Burwell was the Crown surveyor of Mount Pleasant, 1830–38.

²⁷*Messenger and Advocate*, October 1836, 396–97; letter dated September 5, 1836, Burville, Jefferson County, New York.

²⁸Richard E. Bennett, "A Study of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Upper Canada, 1830–1850" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1975), 75.

²⁹Bennett, "Study of the Church," 75.

³⁰*Toronto Christian Guardian*, December 3, 1834, quoted in Bennett, "Study of the Church," 80.

³¹*Brantford Sentinel*; reprinted in *Christian Guardian*, July 27, 1837, quoted in Bennett, "Study of the Church," 84.

³²*Christian Guardian*, November 29, 1837, quoted in Bennett, "Study of the Church," 83.

³³See appendix for a short biographic sketch on Lydia Bailey.

³⁴Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:715–16; 4:719.

³⁵"Autobiography of Hyrum [Hiram] Gates," Seventies Record, 2nd Quorum, Biographies (LDS Church Archives, CD-ROM), 232.

³⁶Bennett, "Study of the Church," 87.

³⁷William G. Hartley, *Stand by My Servant Joseph: The Story of the Joseph Knight Family and the Restoration* (Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for LDS History; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 522nn20–21.

³⁸Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company/Andrew Jenson Memorial Association, 1901–36), 2:775–76.

³⁹Barrus Family Genealogical Papers, correspondence from Esther Louisa Barrus Warner, Grantsville, Utah, and Nickerson Genealogical Papers.

⁴⁰Second Book [Journal] of Orson Pratt, Special Collections, Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah, May 15, 1836; correspondence to William Goddard from John Davis [Burtch family researcher, descendant of Stephen and Margaret Burtch through their daughter Lucy Burtch Eadie], February 27, 1981, London, Ontario.

⁴¹Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14; *The History of the County of Brant, Ontario* (Toronto: Warner, Beers, & Co., 1883), 556; Margaret Smyth, *Mount Pleasant: Tweedsmuir History* (n.p., n.d.), 201–2; and Davis correspondence; memorial stone in Mount Pleasant Pioneer Cemetery.

⁴²*History of the County of Brant*, 556; Davis correspondence; memorial stone in Mount Pleasant Pioneer Cemetery.

⁴³Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14; *History of the County of Brant*, 556.

⁴⁴Davis correspondence.

⁴⁵Jessee, *Papers*, 2:536; *History of the County of Brant*, 560.

⁴⁶Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14.

⁴⁷See comments on Harvey in Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14.

⁴⁸Carole Gates Sorensen correspondence; "Autobiography of Hyrum [Hiram] Gates," 232; grammar has been standardized.

⁴⁹Sorensen correspondence.

⁵⁰Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14; Sorensen correspondence.

⁵¹Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14, 547; Davis correspondence; see also the entry for Oakland Pioneer Cemetery (Village of Oakland, Oakland Township, Brant County, Ontario) in the online Cemetery Transcription Library at <http://www.interment.net/data/canada/ontario/brant/oakland/oakland/index.htm>.

⁵²Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14.

⁵³Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14; *Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 9 (Kirtland, Ohio, June 1836): 330.

⁵⁴Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:137, 689; Nickerson Genealogical Papers.

⁵⁵McAlister Genealogical Papers.

⁵⁶Smyth, *Mount Pleasant*, 154; Jaeger, "Work of Our Hands," 112–13.

⁵⁷Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14; McAlister Genealogical Papers.

⁵⁸Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14; Smyth, *Mount Pleasant*, 166; Nickerson Genealogical Papers; Eliza B. Nickerson memorial stone, Mount Pleasant Pioneer Cemetery.

⁵⁹Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14, 575; Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:690; Nickerson, "Autobiography;" Smyth, *Mount Pleasant*, 159, 194; Nickerson Genealogical Papers.

⁶⁰Nickerson, "Autobiography," 426.

⁶¹Smyth, *Mount Pleasant*, 197.

⁶²Nickerson, "Autobiography," 426; emphasis in the original.

⁶³Nickerson, "Autobiography," 427.

⁶⁴During the summer of 1869, the Prophet Joseph Smith's sons, Alexander and David, accompanied by others, made a missionary visit to the Utah Territory. The primary topic of contention was polygamy (see Valeen Tippetts Avery, *From Mission to Madness: Last Son of the Mormon Prophet* [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998], 87–113). In addition, Moses Nickerson's autobiography (cited in this paper) was published in 1870 by the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald*, a publication of the Reorganized Church, currently the Community of Christ.

⁶⁵Smyth, *Mount Pleasant*, 136, 159, 164, 166, 193, 197; Nickerson Genealogical Papers.

⁶⁶Family History Records; Nauvoo Temple Endowment Records.

⁶⁷Smyth, *Mount Pleasant*, 175.

⁶⁸For more information, visit <http://www.dreambreeze.com/GED/d0003/g0000058.html#I2125>.

⁶⁹<http://www.cannonfam.org/steve-anc/p5.htm#P335>.

⁷⁰Jaeger, *Work of Our Hands*, 246.

⁷¹<http://www.cannonfam.org/steve-anc/p5.htm#P335>; <http://www.cannonfam.org/steve-anc/f286.htm>; <http://www.dreambreeze.com/GED/d0000/g0000059.html#I2126>.

⁷²<http://www.dreambreeze.com/GED/d0003/g0000058.html#I2123>; <http://www.xmission.com/~research/family/familys.htm>; <http://www.cannonfam.org/steve-anc/f286.htm>; Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:719, lists Roswell Stevens' date of birth as October 17, 1809.

⁷³Nauvoo Temple Endowment Name Index.

⁷⁴Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4:719; <http://www.dreambreeze.com/GED/d0003/g0000058.html#I2123>.

⁷⁵Marriage Record of William Stevens and Marinda Thomas from Mohawk Chapel, Ontario, Canada, cited in <http://www.cannonfam.org/steve-anc/p5.htm#P335>.

⁷⁶Smyth, *Mount Pleasant*, 175.

⁷⁷Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2:715.

⁷⁸Susan Easton Black, "Early LDS Membership Data," *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 1830–1848* (Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University); Obituary of William Stevens, *Deseret News*, February 21, 1877, 39; cited in <http://www.cannonfam.org/steve-anc/p5.htm> #P335.

⁷⁹Jessee, *Papers*, 2:14, 597–98; Smyth, *Mount Pleasant*, 194, 201, 290.