

Chapter One

A Seeker's Guide to the Historical Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision

STEVEN C. HARPER

Joseph Smith's First Vision may be the best-documented theophany, or vision of God, in history. The known historical record includes five different accounts in eight statements (three of the statements are nearly identical) of the vision in Joseph's papers, and a few other hearsay accounts in the papers of people who heard him tell of it.¹ Critics contend that the multiple accounts of Joseph Smith's vision are inconsistent with each other or with historical facts and find in them an evolving story that becomes more elaborate over time. The very same evidence sustains a more faithful view that finds Joseph's vision well and richly documented. The multiple accounts do not compel one to disbelieve Joseph Smith. For some the richly documented First Vision is a good reason to believe him.

It is vital to recognize that only Joseph Smith knew whether he experienced a vision of God and Christ in the woods in 1820. He was the only witness to what happened. His own statements are the only direct evidence. All other statements are hearsay. With so much at stake, Joseph's accounts have been examined and questioned. Are they credible? To answer that question satisfactorily, seekers need to know all the evidence and examine it for themselves, independent of anyone else. For several decades now the Church and various scholars have repeatedly published and publicized the

known accounts of Joseph's First Vision, and images of the documents containing his own direct statements are available in *The Joseph Smith Papers* (josephsmithpapers.org) and on the Church's website (churchofjesuschrist.org).² Despite efforts to publish and publicize the historical record of the vision, relatively few people have learned of these vital historical documents and their contents. Critics, especially with the pervasive use of the internet, prey upon that ignorance to try to undermine faith in the vision. The antidote to that is to study the accounts Joseph left us.

Each of the accounts has its own history. Each was created in circumstances that shaped what it says, how it was recorded, and thus how it was transmitted to us. Each account has gaps and omissions. Each adds detail and richness. For example, Joseph described a highly personalized experience in his earliest account (1832). Using the language of the revivals, he says he became "convicted of my sins," but he could find no place for forgiveness since "there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament and I felt to mourn for my own sins." This account describes how the Lord appeared and filled Joseph "with the spirit of God" and "spake unto me saying Joseph my son thy sins are forgiven thee." It emphasizes the Atonement of Christ and the personal redemption it offered Joseph. He wrote in his own hand that as a result of the vision "my soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great joy and the Lord was with me."³

Three years later, in 1835, an eccentric visitor from the East inquired of Joseph, whose scribe captured some of Joseph's response in his journal. In this account Joseph cast the vision as the first in a series of events that led to the translation of the Book of Mormon. He emphasized the opposition he felt in the grove, how he made "a fruitless attempt to pray" but couldn't speak until he knelt and was enabled. This account tells that one divine personage appeared in a pillar of fire, followed shortly by another. "I saw many angels in this vision," Joseph added as an afterthought, noting, "I was about 14 years old when I received this first communication."⁴ A week later Joseph told another inquirer of the vision, though his scribe recorded only that Joseph gave the fellow an account of his "first visitation of Angels," rather than describing the vision itself.⁵ Both of these 1835 accounts were also incorporated into a draft of Joseph's history.

Joseph published two accounts of the vision during his lifetime. The first of these to be written and the best known is in Joseph's manuscript history, written in 1838 or 1839 before being published in the Church's newspaper in 1842 and now excerpted in the Pearl of Great Price. The

first to be published is Joseph's response to *Chicago Democrat* editor John Wentworth's request for a "sketch of the rise, progress, persecution and faith of the Latter-day Saints" as source material for a friend, George Barstow, who was writing a history of New Hampshire.⁶ The original manuscript of this account is missing. Many of Wentworth's papers are thought to have been destroyed in the 1871 Chicago fire, and there is no known evidence that Barstow used Joseph's account, but Joseph had it printed in March 1842 in the Church's *Times and Seasons* newspaper, making it the first account of the First Vision published in the United States.

Joseph and scribe Frederick Williams wrote the earliest account a decade before those two accounts were published, and the Church's historians brought this document across the plains to Utah, but it became unknown to Latter-day Saints until Paul Cheesman published it in his master's thesis in 1965.⁷ Similarly, the two accounts Joseph's scribe Warren Parrish penned into Joseph's journal in November 1835, which were later copied into a draft of Joseph's history, were generally unknown to Latter-day Saints until Latter-day Saint historians published them in the late 1960s.⁸

There is also a handful of contemporary hearsay accounts, meaning that they were written by people who heard Joseph describe his vision. Orson Pratt wrote one of these and published it in Scotland in 1840 as *A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions*. It echoes passages from Joseph's earlier accounts and prefigures passages in later ones. Orson Pratt must have had access to Joseph's tellings, either in person or through the documents of the pre-1840 accounts (or both), and possibly to an unknown document that prefigured the 1842 Wentworth letter. Alternatively, Orson's own rendering of the vision may have shaped the account in the Wentworth letter. The two accounts clearly share phrasing.

Pratt's account of the vision is the most thorough of the third-person accounts. Other hearsay accounts include the first translated publication of a First Vision account, Orson Hyde's 1842 German publication of an account very much like Orson Pratt's. Levi Richards wrote in his journal of hearing Joseph relate the vision in June 1843. David Nye White, editor of the *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, similarly wrote in his paper of his August 1843 interview with Joseph, including an account of the vision. Alexander Neibaur, a German convert to Mormonism, wrote in his journal of hearing Joseph relate the vision in May 1844, just a month before Joseph's death. All of Joseph's accounts and the hearsay accounts have been published, together with scholarly analysis, in *The Joseph Smith Papers* and in the first

two chapters of the book *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*.

Joseph's several accounts tell a consistent story of teenage angst followed by a comforting heavenly vision, a theophany. It is a fact, however, that the accounts vary in emphasis and disagree on some points. In 1832 Joseph declared that "the Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord," perhaps referring to two separate heavenly beings each as the Lord, but not explicitly describing two personages as his later accounts declare. His 1835 account says he saw one personage, then another, as well as "many angels." In one account Joseph called the experience his "first visitation of Angels," as noted earlier; in another he "saw two glorious personages."⁹ Joseph's 1835 and 1838 accounts emphasize opposition from an unseen power. The other accounts do not mention that part of the experience. In the 1832 account, Joseph's scribe Frederick Williams inserted a clause saying that Joseph was sixteen when the vision came, whereas his 1835 and 1842 accounts and the 1843 hearsay account all say "about 14," and his 1838 account says "in my fifteenth year," or at age fourteen.

Those are the objective facts; interpretations of their meaning vary among subjective interpreters. Suspicious interpreters decide that Joseph is unreliable, perhaps even scheming. Trusting interpreters decide that the variability in the accounts makes sense in terms of the particular ways Joseph remembered and related the experience and the diverse settings and circumstances in which his accounts were communicated, recorded, and transmitted.

Two writers, Fawn Brodie and Wesley Walters, have largely shaped the skeptical interpretations of Joseph's First Vision. They first articulated the criticisms that others have since adopted and published and that circulate widely today. Critical interpretations of Joseph's vision share a common hermeneutic, or explanatory method. They *assume* how a person in Joseph's position must have acted if his story were true and then show that his accounts vary from the assumed scenario. Sometimes they postulate an alternative to Joseph's own explanation. In the first edition of her biography of Joseph, Fawn Brodie cited his 1838 history, the one excerpted in the Pearl of Great Price. She did not draw on Joseph's 1835 journal or the undiscovered 1832 account and therefore concluded that no one had spoken of the vision between 1820 and about 1840. For Brodie, that meant that Joseph concocted the vision "when the need arose for a magnificent tradition."¹⁰

Fawn Brodie did not change her assumptions when she revised her biography of Joseph after the 1832 and 1835 accounts were discovered and

published. She did not reconsider her interpretation in the light of evidence that showed that Joseph had written and spoken openly of the vision on more than one occasion earlier than 1838. Rather, she simply substituted “1830” for “1834” in this sentence about the vision: “It may have been sheer invention, created some time after 1830 when the need arose for a magnificent tradition.”¹¹ She also noted the differences in details between the accounts, suggesting that their inconsistencies evidenced Joseph’s invention and embellishment of the story.

Wesley Walters was a Presbyterian minister. Beginning in the 1960s, he published articles claiming that there was no religious revival in Palmyra, New York, in the spring of 1820 and therefore Joseph’s claim to have been influenced by such religious fervor must be false.¹² Historians of the First Vision have credited Walters with awakening them to investigate the context of Joseph’s accounts, but they fault him for forcing his thesis.¹³ Joseph’s accounts do not claim that the revivalism centered in Palmyra itself, as Walters argues. Rather, Joseph located the “unusual excitement on the subject of religion” around Manchester, New York, and used a Methodist term to describe a wider geographical scope than Walters’s emphasis on the village of Palmyra. Joseph said that “the whole *district* of country seemed affected” by the revivalism (Joseph Smith—History 1:5; emphasis added). To nineteenth-century Methodists, a district was somewhat akin to a Latter-day Saint stake or a Catholic diocese.

It is not hard to empathize with Fawn Brodie or Wesley Walters. Brodie was raised as a Latter-day Saint but chose to leave the faith. For her and like-minded souls, that painful reorientation process requires a reinterpretation of Joseph Smith’s First Vision. Walters had just as much at stake. Joseph’s most definitive account of his vision relates how he told his mother, “I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true.” He also quoted the Savior saying that the Christian creeds “were an abomination” (Joseph Smith—History 1:19–20). Latter-day Saints who feel defensive about Walters’s efforts to undermine the vision should be able to empathize with his response to Joseph’s testimony. In one sense, his determined and enduring devotion to his cause is admirable. Even so, the critics and some believers lack the open-mindedness that seekers try to cultivate in their quest to learn the veracity of Joseph’s accounts.

The critics’ preconceived certainty that the vision never happened as Joseph said it did prevents them from exploring the variety of possibilities that the historical documents offer. All of the unbelieving accounts share what is sometimes called the hermeneutic of suspicion. It means, simply,

that you don't believe what you're being told. One historian (who doesn't believe Joseph Smith) said that he couldn't trust the accounts of the vision because they were subjective and that it was his job to figure out what really happened. By what power is this historian going to discover what actually happened when he is unwilling to trust the only eyewitness? Such historians give themselves godlike abilities to know. They don't seem to grasp the profound irony that they are replacing the subjectivity of historical witnesses with their own subjectivity. Their method is subjectivity squared. Like it or not, they are limited to the historical documents. But they dismiss the plainest readings of the documents in favor of skeptical interpretations. They severely limit possible interpretations by predetermining that Joseph's descriptions cannot be possible. When Joseph's 1832 account was discovered in the 1960s, opening new interpretive possibilities to Brodie, she did not respond with willingness to consider that Joseph might be telling the truth. She simply fit the new evidence into her previous conclusion.

Similarly, the discovery of considerable evidence of revivalism in and around Palmyra, and especially in the region Joseph described, did not alter the argument Wesley Walters continued to make. No matter what evidence came to light, he interpreted it according to his original conclusion. He chose not to see the possibilities available to those who approach Joseph's accounts on a quest to discover if he could possibly be telling the truth. Even today, though much evidence has been discovered, it is common for some skeptics to contentedly repeat the Walters thesis that Joseph's 1838 account is anachronistic, or out of historical order, because they have long since concluded that no unusual religious excitement occurred to catalyze the vision as Joseph's 1838 account suggested. There is evidence that an intense revival stirred Palmyra in 1816–17 when Joseph moved there with his family. It may have catalyzed Joseph's 1832 description of his mind becoming seriously concerned for the welfare of his soul "at about the age of twelve years."¹⁴ About 1818 Joseph's family purchased a farm in Manchester, a few miles south of Palmyra. A Methodist minister wrote in his diary of attending a camp meeting in Palmyra that June.¹⁵ The next summer, Methodists of the Genesee Conference assembled at Vienna (now Phelps), New York, within walking distance of the Smith farm. The Reverend George Lane and dozens of other exhorters were present. One participant remembered the result as a "religious cyclone which swept over the whole region."¹⁶ Joseph's contemporary and acquaintance Orsamus Turner remembered that Joseph caught a "spark of Methodist fire" at a meeting along the road to Vienna.¹⁷ A Palmyra newspaper documents a revival there in June 1820, which is perhaps not too

late to qualify as early spring since it snowed heavily on May 28. The diaries of Methodist minister Benajah Williams show that Methodists and others were hard at work in Joseph's district all the while.¹⁸ They combed the countryside and convened camp meetings to help unchurched souls like Joseph get religion. Joseph's accounts are consistent with this evidence. He said that the unusual religious excitement in his district or region "commenced with the Methodists" and that he became "somewhat partial" to Methodism (Joseph Smith—History 1:5–8). The Walters thesis, though heartfelt and tenaciously defended by him and uncritically accepted and perpetuated by others, no longer seems tenable or defensible.¹⁹

Similarly, parts of Fawn Brodie's thesis are not as compelling as they once were. The evidence she analyzed in her second edition suggested to her that Joseph embellished each telling of the vision until it matured into the canonized 1838 account. But even later accounts do not continue to become longer, more detailed, or elaborate. Rather, these accounts return to sounding like Joseph's earlier, less-developed accounts. This evidence can be interpreted as Joseph's intention to make his 1838 account definitive and developed for publication, whereas some of the less-developed accounts, including ones later than 1838, were created for other purposes. Some were delivered on the spur of the moment and captured by someone remembering and writing later.

For those who choose to read Joseph's accounts with the hermeneutic of suspicion, the interpretation of choice is likely to remain that Joseph elaborated "some half-remembered dream" or concocted the vision as "sheer invention."²⁰ Those are not historical facts. They are skeptical interpretations of the fact that Joseph reported that he saw a vision. There are other ways to interpret that fact. Indeed, all of the scholars who have studied the accounts of the vision for decades and written the seminal articles and the earliest scholarly book on the vision share what one of them described as a hermeneutic of trust.²¹

One will arrive at the same conclusions as the skeptics if one shares their assumptions about what the facts mean. But if one is open-minded, other meanings for the same facts are possible. The danger of close-mindedness is as real for believers as for skeptics. Many believers seem just as likely to begin with preconceived notions rather than a willingness to go where Joseph's accounts lead them. They might assume, for instance, that Joseph told his family of the vision immediately or wrote it immediately, that he always understood all of its implications perfectly or consistently through the years, that he would always remember or tell exactly the same story, or

that it would always be recorded and transmitted the same. But none of those assumptions are supported by the evidence. Some believers become skeptics in short order when they learn of the accounts and find that their assumptions of what would happen if Joseph told the truth are not supported by the historical record.

There is an alternative approach to the evidence. It is humble, believing, and thoroughly informed. It does not assume that one already knows how Joseph would respond to and tell a heavenly vision. Instead it allows his accounts to shape that understanding. This is the historical method. It is the method of the believing scholars who study all of the accounts and the context in which Joseph lived and wrote or told them. Richard L. Bushman, one such scholar, wrote:

Behind the simplest event are complex motives and many factual threads conjoining that will receive varying emphasis in different retellings. In all accounts of his early religious experiences, for example, Joseph mentions the search for the true church and a desire for forgiveness. In some accounts he emphasizes one, in some the other. Similarly, in the earliest record of the first vision he attributes his question about the churches to personal study; in the familiar story written in 1838 or 1839 he credits the revival and the consequent disputes as raising the issue for him. The reasons for reshaping the story usually have to do with changes in the immediate circumstances. We know that Joseph suffered from attacks on his character around 1834. As he told Oliver Cowdery when the letters on Joseph's early experiences were about to be published, enemies had blown his honest confession of guilt into an admission of outrageous crimes. Small wonder that afterward he played down his prayer for forgiveness in accounts of the vision. Such changes do not evidence an uncertainty about the events, as Mr. Walters thinks, as if Joseph were manufacturing new parts year by year. It is folly to try to explain every change as the result of Joseph's calculated efforts to fabricate a convincing account. One would expect variations in the simplest and truest story.²²

Several scholars read Joseph's accounts with a hermeneutic of trust and find them consistent where it counts. These are not bumpkins. They include Ivy League-educated historians who have authored prizewinning books and have studied the documents and their context for decades.

Such scholars are open to historical possibilities. For instance, Joseph may have purposely or unconsciously conflated events. Such compression or blurring is common when people remember and tell their histories. Joseph

may have had a hard time remembering exactly when the vision occurred and, thus, how old he was at the time. Some of his accounts use the word *about* to describe his age or when his father moved to Palmyra or later the Manchester farm or other details of the story. As we all do, Joseph may have mixed information from his explicit episodic memory (the kind that consciously recalls events from the past) with semantic memory (the kind that knows what it knows without remembering how it knows, as in remembering one's name or phone number).

It was Joseph's vision and thus the accounts are undeniably subjective. All remembered things are. "Memories," wrote a foremost scholar of memory, "are records of how we have experienced events, not replicas of the events themselves." If two people had witnessed the vision together, their memories of it would be independent and different. Each would remember it a bit differently from the other and a bit differently each time they remembered it. Their memories would be mixtures of past and present. That is, whatever they were thinking about in the present to catalyze their memory of the vision would influence the nature of the memory.²³

One scholar of memory wrote that "just as visual perception of the three dimensional world depends on combining information from the two eyes, perception in time—remembering—depends on combining information from the present and the past."²⁴ Another scholar used the same analogy. He explained that "merely to remember something is meaningless unless the remembered image is combined with a moment in the present affording a view of the same object or objects. Like our eyes, our memories must see double; these two images then converge in our minds into a single heightened reality."²⁵ Another memory scholar calls this heightened reality "insight" and acknowledges that it "may sound a bit magical."²⁶ Historian Richard Bushman described the process of finding insight in memory. "When we have a strange experience," he said, "something that is new, we have to understand it in terms of what is old. Events and experiences do not carry their meaning on the surface. We have to look around in the inventory of ideas that we have in order to make sense of what has occurred to us. And so [Joseph had] to enlarge his inventories . . . in order to make sense of an experience that he had before."²⁷

Some assume that anyone who had such a heavenly experience could not possibly forget the date or his or her age, but who is qualified to make such an assumption? How does one know how a person responds to or remembers a heavenly vision? Those who choose the hermeneutic of trust do not prejudice the issue but rather listen to Joseph carefully with an open

mind and make an informed decision about the veracity of his accounts. One who did that was the literary scholar Arthur Henry King. He wrote:

When I was first brought to read Joseph Smith's story, I was deeply impressed. I wasn't inclined to be impressed. As a stylistician, I have spent my life being disinclined to be impressed. So when I read his story, I thought to myself, this is an extraordinary thing. This is an astonishingly matter-of-fact and cool account. This man is not trying to persuade me of anything. He doesn't feel the need to. He is stating what happened to him, and he is stating it, not enthusiastically, but in quite a matter-of-fact way. He is not trying to make me cry or feel ecstatic. That struck me, and that began to build my testimony, for I could see that this man was telling the truth.²⁸

Many people who hear or read one or more of Joseph's accounts arrive at the same conclusion. Others, of course, do not. It is not therefore the historical facts or the accounts of the vision that compel the conclusion one makes about it. Believing or not in one of the best-documented theophanies in history is ultimately a conscious, individual decision. One must decide whether to trust or be suspicious of the historical record created by Joseph Smith. That decision reveals much more about the subjective judgments of its maker than it does about the veracity of the claims Joseph made in historical documents.

Steven C. Harper is a professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.

Steven C. Harper, "A Seeker's Guide to the Historical Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Religious Educator* 12, no. 1 (2011): 165–76.

NOTES

1. The First Vision accounts are available on the Joseph Smith Papers website at <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/accounts-of-the-first-vision>. They are reprinted and analyzed in John W. Welch, ed., *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 1–75.
2. See Dean C. Jessee, ed., "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 3 (1969): 275–94; *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2002); and *Papers of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92). See also Milton V. Backman Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake

- City: Bookcraft, 1980), especially the appendixes; Milton V. Backman Jr., "Joseph Smith's Recitals of the First Vision," *Ensign*, January 1985, 8–17; James B. Allen, "Eight Contemporary Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision—What Do We Learn from Them," *Improvement Era*, April 1970, 4–13; Richard L. Anderson, "Joseph Smith's Testimony of the First Vision," *Ensign*, April 1996, 10–21. More recently, see Dean C. Jessee, "The Earliest Documented Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," and James B. Allen and John W. Welch, "The Appearance of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith in 1820," in *Opening the Heavens*, 1–34 and 35–76, respectively. See also <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/accounts-of-the-first-vision>.
3. Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 4–7; also Joseph Smith, History, circa Summer 1832, pp. 2–3, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/>.
 4. Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 7–8; also Smith, History, 1834–1836, p. 121, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/>.
 5. Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 10–11; also Smith, History, 1834–1836, p. 129.
 6. Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 17; also Joseph Smith, History, 1838–1856, volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842], p. 1281, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/>.
 7. See Paul R. Cheesman, "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating to Joseph Smith's Early Visions" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1965), 126–32.
 8. See James B. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's 'First Vision' in Mormon Thought," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Autumn 1966): 40–41; and Jessee, "Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," 275–94.
 9. Smith, History, circa Summer 1832, p. 3; History, 1834–1836, p. 129; History, 1838–1856, volume E-1 [1 July 1843–30 April 1844], p. 1715, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/>; and Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 3–19.
 10. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 25.
 11. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1995), 25.
 12. See, for example, Wesley P. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins from the Palmyra Revival," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 60–67.
 13. Dean C. Jessee, James B. Allen (July 27, 2009), Richard L. Anderson (July 29, 2009), Larry Porter (July 30, 2009), Richard L. Bushman (July 31, 2009), Milton V. Backman Jr. (August 12, 2009), interviews by Samuel A. Dodge, video recording, transcriptions in possession of author.
 14. Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 4; also Smith, History, circa Summer 1832, p. 1.
 15. Aurora Seager wrote in his diary, "I attended a camp-meeting at Palmyra," in June 1818. He said that over the weekend about twenty people were baptized and forty became Methodists. See E. Latimer, *The Three Brothers: Sketches of the Lives of Rev. Aurora Seager, Rev. Micah Seager, Rev. Schuyler Seager, D.D.* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1880), 12, quoted in D. Michael Quinn, "Joseph Smith's Experience of a Methodist 'Camp Meeting' in 1820," *Dialogue* Paperless E-Paper 3, December 20, 2006, 2–3.
 16. Quoted in Milton V. Backman Jr., "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1969): 308.
 17. Orsamus Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement* (Rochester, NY: William Alling, 1852), 213. Richard L. Anderson evaluates Turner's credibility as a witness in "Circumstantial Confirmation of the First Vision through Reminiscences," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 3 (1969): 373–404.

18. Diaries of Benajah Williams, in possession of Michael Brown, Philadelphia.
19. See Backman, "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District," 309; and Richard L. Bushman, "The First Vision Story Revived," *Dialogue* 4, no. 1 (1969): 85.
20. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 2nd ed., 25.
21. Richard L. Bushman, interview by Samuel Dodge, July 31, 2009, Provo, Utah, transcription in author's possession.
22. Bushman, "First Vision Story Revived," 83.
23. Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic, 1996), 6.
24. Schacter, *Searching for Memory*, 28.
25. Roger Shattuck, *Proust's Binoculars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 46–47.
26. Edmund Blair Bolles, *Remembering and Forgetting: An Inquiry into the Nature of Memory* (New York: Walker, 1988), 65.
27. Bushman, interview.
28. Arthur Henry King, *Arm the Children: Faith's Response to a Violent World* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 1998), 288.