

## *Acknowledgments*

Fifteen years ago, I had no idea who Joseph F. Merrill was. I was a master's student at Brigham Young University and was planning on writing my thesis on Latter-day Saint apocalypticism in the Civil War. At a lunch with Scott Esplin, he informed me that no one had ever written anything about Joseph F. Merrill and that his papers were kept at BYU, completely open and available to the public. An hour later I was in Special Collections looking through Elder Merrill's papers. It was the beginning of a long journey, and Scott was the person who first pointed me down this path. From the very inception of this project as a master's thesis to this publication, Scott has been a great support and a wise friend. Soon after, Mary Jane Woodger joined in as a member of my committee and has been a great support and help to me ever since. Finally, Alan K. Parrish chaired my committee, and no graduate student has had a more kind and encouraging mentor. Richard D. Draper and Clyde Williams also provided great leadership to our master's program. Additionally, Richard E. Bennett and Richard O. Cowan taught a wonderful class in Church history that encouraged me to move forward in this effort.

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As the project progressed, I began spending a lot of time at the Church History Library, where a number of people provided invaluable assistance to my research. Among the wonderful staff there, no one was more helpful than Brittany Chapman Nash. William W. Slaughter also opened doors for me in a way no one else could, and I cannot say enough good about the rest of the staff at that institution. I am also deeply indebted to the people who provided assistance and a number of different repositories, including the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at Brigham Young University, the Marriott Library Special Collections at the University of Utah, the Merrill-Cazier Library at Utah State University, and the Utah State Historical Society.

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Finally, though he passed several decades before my birth, I must acknowledge the mentorship of Joseph F. Merrill himself. This project has been a consistent thread through all of my graduate education and my academic career. In a world with so much hypocrisy and cynicism, it was an honor to read the public and private thoughts of a person of real character. He was not perfect by any means, and I have tried to portray him as a real person with struggles and difficulties. But he was also a true man, a man who lived his principles, and held fast to his beliefs. Finding someone with such integrity is a rare and wonderful blessing.