
EDITORIAL METHOD



THERE ARE THREE MAJOR TYPES OF NOTES OR AIDS that documentary editors can provide their readers: provenance, textual, and contextual notes.¹ To make this rich assemblage of missionary letters and reminiscences more comprehensible, we have employed all three categories of annotation to illuminate the people, places, and things the eight representative Latter-day Saint elders referenced in their letters. We have generally followed the same style used in Reid L. Neilson and Nathan N. Waite, eds., *Settling the Valley, Proclaiming the Gospel: The General Epistles of the Mormon First Presidency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), a companion volume to the present book.

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1. Stevens and Burg, *Editing Historical Documents*, 158–70; see also Kline and Perdue, *Guide to Documentary Editing*.

Provenance Notes

Our goal is to make these letters more accessible to our twenty-first-century audience. We want our readers to be aware of where they can find the original documents, better understand their genre, and come away with a greater appreciation of their publication history. To this aim we offer the following notes on the documents' provenance or history.

Repository information. Original printings of all the missionaries' letters contained herein can be found in the archival collections of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, as detailed in the source notes at the beginning of each chapter.

Publication history. Nineteenth-century missionaries often wrote letters to church leaders, and their accounts were published in various Latter-day Saint periodicals. We have included letters from a variety of sources. Dan Jones and Jesse Haven wrote to Presidents Franklin D.² and Samuel W. Richards³ of the European Mission, and their correspondence was published in the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, which long served as an official publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England.⁴ Orson Spencer's letter to Brigham Young was published as a

2. Franklin D. Richards (1821–99) was baptized in his home state of Massachusetts in 1838. He served several missions in the midwestern United States before laboring in the British Isles from 1846 to 1848, again from 1849 to 1852 (part of that time as mission president), and again from 1854 to 1856 (again as mission president). He became an Apostle in 1849. Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:115–21; Early Mormon Missionaries database, s.v. “Franklin Dewey Richards.”
3. Samuel W. Richards (1824–1909), the brother of Franklin D., was baptized in 1838. Like his brother, he served three missions to the British Isles (1846–48, 1852–54, and 1857–58), twice as mission president. He served several other missions to the United States throughout his life. Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:718–19; Early Mormon Missionaries database, s.v. “Samuel Whitney Richards.”
4. The *Millennial Star* was a church periodical published in England beginning in 1840. Like other church periodicals of the day, it printed extracts from the Doctrine and Covenants and other scriptures, reported on significant events in the church, and provided other items of interest to Latter-day Saints. Usually the president of the British Mission was the editor. The *Millennial Star* was published until

stand-alone pamphlet by Samuel W. Richards in 1853. Thirty years after his mission, Edward Stevenson wrote a reminiscent account to Apostle George Q. Cannon,⁵ editor of the *Juvenile Instructor*, a magazine for young Latter-day Saints. Benjamin Johnson wrote a handwritten memoir several decades after his own missionary service; his is the only holograph item featured as a chapter in this book. James Lewis and Chauncey West both had their letters printed in the *Deseret News*, the church-operated frontier newspaper in Salt Lake City.⁶ Augustus Farnham had letters published in the *Millennial Star*, the *Deseret News*, and the *Western Standard*, a Latter-day Saint newspaper published by George Q. Cannon in San Francisco.⁷

1970. Alan K. Parrish, “*Millennial Star, The*,” in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, 752; Parrish, “Beginnings of the *Millennial Star*,” 133–49.

5. George Q. Cannon (1827–1901) was born in Liverpool, England, and was baptized there in 1840. He traveled to Utah in 1847 and worked in the California gold fields before serving a mission to Hawaii from 1850 to 1854. He became an Apostle in 1860 and edited several Latter-day Saint periodicals throughout his life, including the *Western Standard*, *Juvenile Instructor*, and *Deseret News*. Cannon became a Utah territorial delegate to US Congress and served as counselor to church presidents Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow. Journal of George Q. Cannon, Chronology.
6. The *Deseret News* functioned as both a conventional newspaper, reporting on the news of the day, and a religious newspaper, with articles from a Latter-day Saint viewpoint. The Saints had published a newspaper since 1832 in Independence, Missouri. In 1847, Brigham Young asked William W. Phelps to buy a printing press to take to the Salt Lake Valley. The press arrived in Utah in 1849, but it was not until June 15, 1850, that the first issue of the *Deseret News* was published. Willard Richards was the first editor of the paper. Paper shortages were a constant problem during the paper’s first decade. The *Deseret News* is still in publication. Dennis L. Lythgoe, “The *Deseret News*,” in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, 140; Hunter, “Starting a Pioneer Newspaper,” 8–17.
7. The *Western Standard* was published in San Francisco by George Q. Cannon between February 1856 and November 1857. It joined the ranks of other Latter-day Saint periodicals, such as the *Mormon* and the *Seer*, intended to defend the church and its people from the criticisms of other local presses. Cannon, “George Q. Cannon and the *Western Standard*,” 22–25.

Textual Notes

Transcription method. Scholars engaged in documentary editing employ a variety of transcription methods. Editors make choices on the kinds of editorial apparatus they will use based on the types of documents they are featuring and their anticipated readership. Most of the letters in this book were written to church leaders and then published in periodicals.

We have used a conservative “expanded transcription” method of displaying the printed text. This editorial approach “encompasses a wide spectrum of editing styles, all of which standardize accidentals, datelines, and signatures; mark paragraphs with indentations; and do not attempt to reproduce the excessive spacing and physical layout of the text of documents.”⁸ We have occasionally bracketed clarifications to the text and made any other corrections according to the seventeenth edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* and the eleventh edition of *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*.

Indecipherable characters or words. Occasionally a pioneer press error or the age of the printed page renders a letter or word indecipherable. When the missing text could be deduced from its context, we have filled the letter in without brackets.

Names of people. We chose to clarify the names of people, since some of our readers may be family historians searching for their ancestors. Aside from standard abbreviations such as “Wm.,” we have used brackets to expand abbreviated or partial names in the text and correct misspellings; thus, “elder Barnes” becomes “elder [Lorenzo] Barnes,” and so forth. We have included a biographical register of all the missionaries called in 1852. Other people have been identified in footnotes when possible; many, however, were impossible to find.

Spelling variants and misspelled words. Many of the original words in the missionaries’ correspondence do not conform to modern spelling conventions. Some of these words are nineteenth-century spelling variations (such as “procedure” instead of “procedure”), and we have retained them because they convey the historical nuances of the letters. We have, however, silently corrected words that were simply misspelled

8. Stevens and Burg, *Editing Historical Documents*, 76–77.

(such as “precisly”) or that were typographical errors (such as “pesiding” or “depreation”). At times, it has been difficult to discern whether a given spelling was a nineteenth-century variation or a simple misspelling, so we have had to use our best judgment. The *Oxford English Dictionary* has been an invaluable resource in historic spellings, as have the linguistic corpora of Mark Davies of Brigham Young University.⁹

One chapter is an exception to this convention. Chapter 5, Benjamin Johnson’s account of his mission to the Sandwich Islands, is a handwritten reminiscence that was not printed during his lifetime. We have kept misspellings in his chapter to preserve the character of his writing. When he inserted words above the main line of text, we have added them in <angle brackets>. When he underlined words, we have changed them to *italics*. Although he frequently superscripted abbreviations, we have not retained superscript text.

Punctuation. Punctuation has generally been retained from the original. It was often difficult to tell whether a particular mark was a period or a comma, or whether it was a colon or a semicolon; these unclear punctuation marks have been silently changed to whatever makes the most grammatical sense. Sometimes we have added punctuation marks in brackets when necessary to improve readability, but we have not used brackets for periods. Square brackets in the original are rendered as {braces}.

Formatting. When the letters were originally published, they used a variety of formatting methods in the greetings and signatures (including letters embedded within the longer letters), such as all caps, small caps, italics, bold, and line breaks. The introductory and closing materials have been standardized and set in roman in the published accounts. However, we have retained small caps and italics when they occur in the body of the text, since the missionaries used them for emphasis. Sometimes, ordinal numbers or abbreviations used superscripts, especially in Johnson’s reminiscence. We have decided not to use any superscript characters.

9. Davies, *Google Books Corpus*; Davies, *Corpus of LDS General Conference Talks*.

Contextual Notes

We also provide informational or contextual footnotes to help readers better understand the historical setting of the elders' correspondence. We want our audience to appreciate the individuals, scriptural passages, geographical features, and events mentioned in the letters. We also hope to clarify obscure references and correct any erroneous details featured in the texts that readers might find confusing.

Biographical references. To help readers know something of the lives and times of the men whose names were called at the August 1852 conference, we have provided biographical information about every missionary announced at that meeting. We have provided outlines of their lives in our biographical register. We have also provided footnotes for many of the individuals mentioned by the missionaries when we could identify them, whether they were Latter-day Saints or not. Patricia L. Spilsbury and her team of volunteers have done an astounding job of identifying the wives and families who were left behind in fledgling Utah Territory. The files used to compile each biography, as well as information about the wives and children of the eight featured missionaries, are available in the General Epistles biographical collection at the Church History Library in Salt Lake City.

Scriptural references. Like other Christians in antebellum America, the Latter-day Saints lived in a biblical culture, where the Bible greatly influenced written language and spoken rhetoric. But unlike their counterparts who only accepted the Old and New Testaments as the word of God, the Latter-day Saints also considered the Book of Mormon (1830), the Doctrine and Covenants (1835), and the Pearl of Great Price (published in 1851 but not canonized until 1880) as scripture. Canonical allusions and quoted Bible passages readily understood by nineteenth-century readers may be more obscure and hidden to modern readers. We have attempted to explicate these scriptural references in notes.

Geographic references. We have attempted to identify many of the locations mentioned in the elders' writings. Some of the geographical descriptions that were so evident to the writers and intended recipients of the missionaries' correspondence will likely be confusing without explanatory notes. Maps and endnotes are intended to assist the reader. However,

some places referenced in the letters have undergone name changes or have ceased to exist, so they have been difficult to locate.

We are hopeful that our provenance, textual, and contextual notes, together with the assembled images, map, and appendixes, make the past more accessible and friendly. Although the Latter-day Saints lived differently in pioneer Utah and the nineteenth-century world, why and how they did so should be made more understandable by our editorial apparatus.

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Katelyn Stevens (James Lewis), Kathleen Williams (Chauncey W. West), and Eileen S. Carlston (Augustus Farnham).

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