

# Epilogue

This project has been an interesting experience for all concerned, and it has served to preserve a bit of history—the thoughts and feelings of real people in their own words. Future generations will not have to wonder what those who were interviewed thought and felt.

Granted, the students were not professional interviewers. However, they facilitated the gathering of firsthand information and in the process learned some valuable lessons about the importance of oral history.

It is clear from these interviews that a perception coming down through the generations since 1845-46 is that a major reason the Mormons were driven from Nauvoo was because they were stealing from their neighbors. One has to wonder how the fifty or so decidedly and unapologetically "anti-Mormon" articles by Foster Walker that ran from March 1902 to March 1903 in the *Review*, a Dallas city newspaper, might have influenced the collective memory of the citizens of the area. The descendants of those who were driven from Nauvoo have quite a different perception. Perceptions acquired through generations of oral tradition are difficult to change.

Perhaps it is time to focus on the present and the future rather than the past. Regardless of which side of an issue we find ourselves on, we cannot change what has happened in the past. We can, however, decide how we will relate to one another now and in the future. Hatchets, if there are any, need burying, and people of goodwill need to treat one another with respect, openness, and friendliness. Hopefully, this project will promote such an approach.