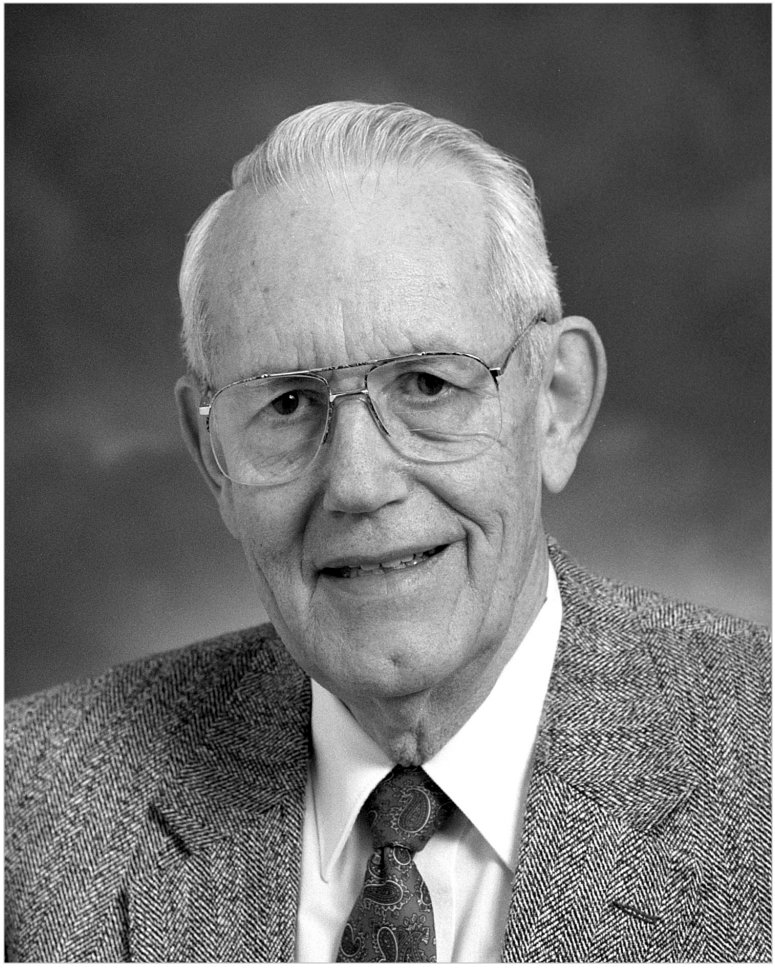

James B. Allen

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INTERVIEW BY ALEX D. SMITH

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ALEX D. SMITH, research historian with the Joseph Smith Papers Project in the LDS Church History Department, is a

specialist in Nauvoo-era Mormon history. He has worked with early Mormon manuscripts for many years, first as a document editor and research historian with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and more recently at the Church History Library. He was coeditor of the recently released *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Vol. 2*, with Andrew H. Hedges and Richard Lloyd Anderson.

THE INTERVIEW

SMITH: Let me start off with some basic questions. Please describe briefly events in your childhood, or growing up. Tell us about your early years.

ALLEN: Well, I don't know how brief I can be.

SMITH: Then don't be brief!

ALLEN: My mother and father met each other when they were both on missions in the Eastern States Mission. They were married in 1925, a few years after they got back. My father lived in Coalville, Utah, and that's where they were living when I was born—although my mother went to Ogden to have her baby. So I was born in Ogden but as a tiny child came back to Coalville, where my grandparents lived. My grandfather came from Ireland and settled in Coalville in 1869, and he raised his families there (after his first wife died, his second wife, my grandmother, finished raising the first wife's family and also raised one of her own).

When I was very young, my parents moved to Salt Lake City, and we lived in Salt Lake City for a while. Then, after the Great Depression became really deep, my parents moved with me and my younger brother, who had just recently been born, to Fairview, Wyoming, where my mother had grown up. Her parents were gone, but her four brothers were there. My father was able to work for a while with one of her brothers who owned a store in Fairview. So I spent a lot of my early years in Fairview and then a year or two in

Afton, not very far from Fairview. These towns were in Star Valley. Some of my best memories, really, are of growing up and going fishing, going camping—doing all the kinds of things that young boys love to do as they grow up in a very rural area such as that. We had no electricity, no indoor plumbing. We were living in what to some people would seem pretty primitive conditions, but they weren't primitive to us. Of course, the electricity finally came to Fairview as a result of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Rural Electrification Administration, but that was after I left.

I have a lot of good memories of playing with my friends out in the alfalfa fields, where we'd play hide-and-seek and that kind of thing. I don't want to go into too much of this, but these are just some of my most fond memories—growing up as a child in this very rural area. I still love to go back there from time to time and still have cousins there.

When I was about ten and a half, we moved to Logan, Utah, where I grew up, basically. My mother had four children by then—four boys. She wanted to go to Logan very badly because she wanted to give her boys a chance to go to college. She was a schoolteacher, but my father had never gone to college. He had a variety of professions. He was a traveling salesman most of his life and then got into mining and that kind of thing a little later. But my mother wanted her boys to have a college education. She drilled into us the importance of schooling and the importance of education in general. And, of course, we all got our college education. One of my brothers didn't stay in Logan; he went to Columbia University, but the rest of us eventually graduated from Utah State University. (At that time it was called Utah State Agricultural College.)

World War II was raging all the time I was in high school, and I remember wondering if I would ever have to go into the service. Meanwhile, I participated in drama, was a member of the ROTC, and, outside of school, took flying lessons. When I graduated from Logan High School in 1945 the war was still going, and I immediately

joined the US Navy, where I remained for nearly three years. I was never sent to sea, but I became a navy photographer and spent most of my time in Washington, DC. I was very active in the Church there, and as I was about to be discharged from the navy I was called on my mission from the Washington Ward. I was in the California Mission from 1848 to 1950, under President Oscar W. McConkie. During that time I spent twenty-two months traveling without purse or scrip. That was a remarkable experience.

SMITH: Let's talk about what it was that first interested you in studying Mormon history.

ALLEN: My beginning to get interested in Church history is related to my beginning to get interested in history at all. When I finished my mission, I knew I wanted to go to college. I started school at Utah State, unsure what I was going to major in. I had wild dreams about majoring in some kind of cultural thing where I could learn all about everything everywhere and then become a world traveler and write books about traveling the world. That never happened, of course.

Finally, after my second year of college, I had to declare a major. I had been taking history classes, particularly from a young professor who started teaching there the same year that I started going to school—George Ellsworth. For some reason George Ellsworth impressed me very deeply with the thoroughness of his scholarship. He had been writing some articles on Mormon history, but he taught Western American history and ancient history. He was a jack of all trades. I had both an ancient history and an American history class from George Ellsworth. He inspired me to want to learn more about history. I had a couple of other good teachers. One was Dr. J. Duncan Brite, who was not a member of the Church but just a very caring teacher. He used to say some interesting things to us: "You know, a lot of you students are doing your studies on Sunday, and you shouldn't do that. The first thing I learned in college was to get all my studies done on Friday night and Saturday so I had the rest of the weekend

to relax. That's how I got through college." I thought, "Dr. Brite, you're right on!" Ever since then I tried to do what this nonmember advised us to do.

I got into history partly because of George Ellsworth's influence on me. But at the same time, there was another young man who had just finished his PhD in Western American history, Eugene Campbell, who had just come to teach at the LDS Institute at Utah State. Even though he was a history major and had his degree in Western American history, the classes I took from him were classes in the Bible and Church doctrine, particularly the New Testament class. The kind of approach he suggested was that we don't know all the answers, but the spirit of the gospel is that you accept and believe wholeheartedly what you can; sometimes you can hold some things in abeyance. The important thing is how you put into practice what you believe, but there is nothing wrong with you if there are some mysteries you do not understand and some questions to which you do not have all the answers. That helps a lot because so many people are trying to find final answers to so many questions to which there are no final answers. He broadened my perspective on how to study the gospel in a very good way. I won't go into a lot more detail on that, but it was a very good thing for me to have that kind of influence from two young PhDs in history who became kind of my ideals. I finally decided that I wanted to follow in their footsteps if I could.

A third teacher to have an influence on me was another non-Mormon—the debate coach, Dr. Rex Robinson. I debated all four years that I was in college. He didn't like the Church. That is, he didn't like what the Church taught, but he liked all the missionaries because they were winning debate tournaments for him! He taught me how to think and analyze in a way that a lot of people didn't. I appreciated those three men, Professors Ellsworth, Campbell, and Robinson, very much.

By the time I finished college I had decided that I wanted to teach. I got a secondary teaching certificate, and Eugene Campbell suggested that I try to get into the seminary system. He introduced

me to the right people. Partly because of that, I was able to get interviewed and get a job in the seminary system. I didn't decide at that point that I wanted to spend my life writing Church history. But of course that moved my interest toward doing more in the area of the history of the Church, although the first article I ever published had practically nothing to do with Church history. When I was a senior I took a class from George Ellsworth that normally only graduate students took. I had finished all my undergraduate requirements, so I got permission to get into this class on how to write history. My first publication resulted from that experience.

Another member of that class was a young economics professor at Utah State who was just deciding he wanted to become a historian, too. He was just about ready to finish his PhD in economics at the University of North Carolina, but he wanted to write history. He had written a wonderful doctoral dissertation on the economic history of the Church in the Great Basin. It was finally published as *Great Basin Kingdom*. Of course, this man was Leonard J. Arrington. I got acquainted with Leonard in George Ellsworth's class. I was excited about the kinds of things he did. In this class I didn't write on Church history; I wrote on county boundaries in the Territory of Utah—the changing nature of county boundaries. I was able to give that paper at a Phi Alpha Theta (the history honor society) meeting in Salt Lake City. The editor of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, A. Russell Mortensen, happened to be there, and he wanted to publish it. During my first year teaching seminary, I spent time rewriting that article, and it was published in the *Utah Historical Quarterly* in 1955—as I say, the first article I ever published. I give George Ellsworth and this editor credit for getting me started in the publishing business. That article, though it was only tangentially related to LDS history, led me to feel that I might want to continue to work in the history of the Church.

I taught seminary in Kaysville for a year beginning in the fall of 1954. Then I was sent to Wyoming to establish the early-morning seminary program in northwestern Wyoming (the Big Horn Basin)

and southern Montana. So I was coordinator for early-morning seminaries in that area. I also taught seminary in Cowley and Byron, Wyoming. I stayed there for two years. During that time I worked on my master's degree at BYU, and then my wife and I decided it was time to go to another graduate school and obtain a PhD.

While I was teaching seminary in Kaysville and then in Wyoming, we spent our summers in Logan living with my wife's parents. I went to school at BYU the summers of 1954, 1955, and 1956, working on my master's degree. We spent part of one summer, five weeks, living in Provo. The other summers I would commute from Logan, returning on weekends. One of the summers, Eugene Campbell and Leonard Arrington were both teaching summer school at BYU. I would ride back and forth with them, so I became better acquainted with these two great historians at that particular point.

My master's thesis dealt with the development of county government in the Territory of Utah, so it was an extension of the paper I wrote for George Ellsworth. In the process I realized that there was really not much separation between church and state in the Territory of Utah. I began to realize that more fully, especially as I looked at county government, because the people who were the bishops and stake presidents were also the county probate judges. The judges were the executive authority in the county, as well as members of the county court, which was the legislature for the county. There just wasn't much separation of power—the probate judge held executive, legislative, and judicial authority in the county. Neither was there much separation between church and state, for as I said, the judges were often also bishops or stake presidents. We got into some interesting details about the relationship between the Church and the county government as we developed that thesis. I can't say that's what interested me in doing more about Church history, but at least it was one of the things that helped on the way. By the time I got to the University of Southern California in the fall of 1957, I had pretty well made up my mind that I wanted to write my PhD dissertation on a Mormon

topic because I wanted to go ahead and just write Mormon history. That was the transition where I felt like this was what I wanted to do.

I started school at USC, and the seminary and institute people were nice enough to help me out. I was made assistant coordinator of the early-morning seminaries in Southern California. I had time to go to school and also work.

SMITH: So you had applied to the program at USC before being offered a change in position with the seminary?

ALLEN: That's right. I applied at two or three schools, and I applied for scholarships. The University of Southern California gave me a full-tuition scholarship. I had to buy my own books, but I had the scholarship, and I was able to keep it for all the years I was taking coursework at the USC. I was very pleased with that.

Even with the scholarship I also needed to work. William E. Berrett, who was in charge of the seminaries and institutes, worked out the assistant coordinator job. After I had been there a year, Paul H. Dunn, the coordinator for all the institute programs in Southern California, invited me to join the institute faculty at USC, and that's how I went from the seminary program into the institute system of the Church.

When I finished my PhD degree (I'm jumping ahead right now), I was kind of interested in going to BYU, and the vice president of the university invited me to join the religion faculty. So I came to BYU in 1963 and taught religion for one year. At that time Eugene Campbell, my old mentor and friend from Logan, was chairman of the History Department. I had said to the religion people, "I would be glad to come but would you give me time to teach a history class?" They said yes they would, but they never did. When Eugene Campbell invited me to come to the History Department, I said I would like to come. "But will you give me time in my load to teach a religion class?" He said he would, and he kept his promise! So I was able to

teach religion for another three or so years, even after I had joined the History Department.

SMITH: What religion courses were you teaching?

ALLEN: I taught a little Church history and some Book of Mormon classes. Now, back to Southern California. I started at USC in 1957 and began taking coursework in Western American history and also some other fields. My chairman was Donald Cutter, an expert in the Spanish Southwest, but also in general Western American history. When it came time to talk about a dissertation topic, I told Professor Cutter that I was interested in doing something on Mormon colonization, maybe comparing Mormon colonization methods with other kinds of methods or that type of thing. He thought for a while and said, in effect, "Look, why don't you write on a non-Mormon topic? You're going to be writing Mormon history all your life," I guess he was anticipating, "but you really need to make your name in some other field, too." At his suggestion I started doing a little study on company-owned towns in the American West. I did a couple of papers—one on a little town named Trona in California and another on another company town. I decided that this would be an interesting topic. I finally ended up doing a dissertation on the company-owned town in the American West. It was eventually published, after some revision, as a book: *The Company Town in the American West*—the only book ever published as a general overall study of company-owned towns. People who were in urban history cited that book for many years. What Cutter said was clearly the right thing to do. It helped out in a number of ways.

After that, most of my writing had to do with Mormon history. I taught at the University of Southern California Institute for a while. Also, those of us at the institute taught institute classes at various other campuses in the area. In fact, we spent a lot of our time on the road because we had classes at this or that college all over the place. During one year, I went out to San Bernardino once a week. Finally, in 1961,

my wife and I moved down to Garden Grove, California, because I was made director of the institute at Long Beach State College. The following year I was transferred to San Bernardino, where I was director of the institute at San Bernardino Valley College for a year. The following year I got my job at Brigham Young University.

SMITH: Since you have mentioned some of your earlier publications, what have been some of your favorite research topics, in terms of articles or books you have written? We'll get into the William Clayton biography later, but what else stands out as a fun thing to research?

ALLEN: That's an interesting question, but let me focus on a few articles first. I've had a specific purpose in writing most of the articles I've written. I guess we all have purposes in mind: we want to expound on or explain more fully one thing or another. Some of the articles I wrote grew out of some of my teaching experiences, and some of those have been especially important in my life. For example, I published an article on the League of Nations controversy in Utah, in which I dealt with differences of opinion among some of the Brethren on whether or not the United States ought to join the League of Nations. There were pretty fundamental differences, and these clearly became public. The background of that article came right out of my teaching, or at least out of my role as a professor at BYU. I felt that one of the things I was responsible for was to help young people who were having problems that dealt with issues that come up in Church history and that would sometimes challenge their faith. I spent lots of time just talking with students—and hopefully helping students—who would find things that they had never been taught about in Church classes they had taken, some things that happened that they couldn't quite understand. For example, in the 1960s, when our country's membership in the United Nations was controversial, Elder Ezra Taft Benson, a Republican, was one of those people who strongly and publically denounced the United Nations. At

the same time, President Hugh B. Brown, a Democrat and a member of the First Presidency, was a supporter of the United Nations. At one time Elder Benson came to BYU and spoke very pointedly on that issue, making it absolutely clear where he stood. It was only a week or two later that President Hugh B. Brown came down and took exactly the opposite position on the same issue. Right after that a girl came to me very confused, asking, "How can the Brethren disagree on this? I thought the Apostles were supposed to be united on everything." She felt that anything that came across the pulpit at BYU, or any place else, from a General Authority had to be the Church's position, even though President Benson usually made it clear, when he spoke politically, that he was giving his personal opinion. But some people never heard that. He was an Apostle, so what he said to them was the Church's position.

About that time I had been doing a little study on the League of Nations controversy in Utah. After those conflicting addresses, and after hearing from students such as that girl, I began to think that I ought to write an article, or at least be able to talk to my students, about something similar that had happened in the past. I wanted to relate an episode that involved actors who were now all deceased but where the Brethren disagreed with each other on political issues even though they were united on issues that mattered in terms of the doctrine and the faith of the Church. I found the League of Nations controversy perfect for what I wanted to do for my students. I gave talks on it, and I brought it up in class when it was appropriate. It seemed to help some students out very much. But then, to my surprise, one student came to me—I think he was a senior in history or something related—and said, "Brother Allen, this has been very interesting. I would like to write an article on that. Can I have all your notes?" Needless to say, I was shocked. I said to myself, "Hey, I'm not going to let him get away with that!" So I worked it up as a paper and gave it as a presidential address in April 1973 when I was president of the Mormon History Association. It was later published in *BYU Studies* as

"Personal Faith and Public Policy: Some Timely Observations on the League of Nations Controversy in Utah." That article grew out of a specific purpose, and it was one of my most satisfying experiences in terms of writing something that I thought might do my students, and others, some good.

I could tell stories about all of the things I have written, but another of the most interesting to me is the story of writing about Joseph Smith's First Vision. I have been very interested in the various different accounts of the First Vision. The first time I was made aware that there could be something there to write about was when Paul Cheesman wanted to do his master's thesis, and he asked me to be his chairman. He told me about the 1832 account of the First Vision, which he had discovered. I don't think he was the actual discoverer, but he was the first one to bring it to my attention and to the attention of historians generally. Most of us knew nothing about it. He wrote his master's thesis but didn't do any more with it. While he was working on it, I wanted to read that account. I hope people realize there is a spiritual dimension to the things I try to write—maybe not all things, but at least on things related to Church history—and this was one of the topics where that dimension was present.

I went to Salt Lake City and asked Earl Olson, who was in charge of the Church Archives, if I could see that manuscript. He said no, it was too delicate, but he would let me see the microfilm copy of it. I put my head in a microfilm machine and saw in Joseph Smith's handwriting that first, very powerful, account. There is practically no punctuation in it, the spelling is poor, and the grammar is not the best. But it's powerful! I've very seldom had such a powerful feeling come over me—that "This is true!" So I decided I had to write something on the First Vision. Eventually I posed several questions about it. When did we first begin to use the First Vision, or when did we first begin to publish it to members of the Church? When did Latter-day Saints first become aware of it? When did we first begin to use it in the way we use it now, to teach lessons and so forth? I

first published an article that dealt with some of these questions in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* titled "The Significance of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought," and later a kind of extension of that article in the *Journal of Mormon History* titled "Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Religious Thought."

Meanwhile, we were being made aware not only of that first account written by Joseph Smith but also of other accounts written during his lifetime. The editors of the *Improvement Era* recognized that the various accounts of the First Vision were now coming out and that the whole thing was becoming controversial. I don't fully understand why the fact that there were different accounts became all that controversial, except that perhaps the critics of the Church were grasping for something. But people who are critical of Joseph Smith and the Church will find anything they can, and if there is a little difference between some of the accounts they'll say, "Oh, then none of it is true." That's ridiculous. Nevertheless, they were there with their nay-saying, and the *Improvement Era* wanted an article on it. I think that mine was the first article to be published in a Church magazine dealing with the various different accounts of the First Vision. It was titled "Eight Contemporary Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision—What Do We Learn from Them?" and it appeared in the April 1970 *Improvement Era*. Of course, all this enhanced my own commitment to and testimony of the First Vision. I hope people understand that when they read the things I wrote about it. Those are a few of the articles I considered quite significant.

Another article I wrote at the request of a Church magazine was on change and the way change takes place in the Church. The story of how that article came into being is interesting. It began in 1974 while I was Assistant Church Historian. I received a letter from Doyle L. Green, editor of the *Ensign*, dated May 8. It began, "You have been cleared by the First Presidency to assist with a special project for the Church. The Brethren have directed that consideration be

given in the Church magazines concerning the important subject of revelation: how the principle of revelation operates, how and why changes have been made in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, and related subjects." The letter also said that the Brethren had discussed changes that had been made in some writings and felt that "it would be unwise and improper to attempt to suppress or ignore these matters as they are brought to light."

I was invited, along with several other people, to a special meeting on May 21. At this and subsequent meetings, a number of assignments were made with the idea that the *Ensign* would publish a series of articles dealing with these and other somewhat controversial issues. The editors didn't want to deal with them in such a way that it looked as if we were deliberately responding to the enemy, so to speak, but they wanted to still have the material there so that people could refer to it when they needed to. It would be a positive approach. Jay Todd, the managing editor, asked me specifically to write an article on change in the Church. I was enthusiastic about the project, but it was another five years before it was eventually published in the *Ensign* (July 1979) under the title "Line Upon Line." A lengthy subtitle written by the *Ensign* staff read, "Church history reveals how the Lord has continually added to his people's knowledge and understanding," but the article actually dealt with various changing practices, with a little emphasis on doctrine. I don't remember how many other articles grew out of that series of meetings.

I worked on my article for quite a while, and, despite the original encouragement, it became a bit controversial. It came back from the editor of the *Ensign*, Doyle Green, edited with green ink. I don't know whether he used green to represent his name or not, but he wanted a lot of changes made, including crossing out all references to *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (which had become a controversial journal by that time) and other things. I understood that, and it didn't bother me that much, but I was concerned about other changes he wanted. The article was not to his liking, and the editors were afraid

it wouldn't pass through Correlation. I didn't know quite what to do, but one of the young assistant editors of the *Ensign* (my memory is that it was Orson Scott Card—he doesn't remember this, so I may be mistaken; but I think I am right) said, "I think I can modify it in such a way that it will get through Correlation." He did, and it passed Correlation, but even though he did a good job under the circumstances, I was not satisfied with it. It didn't say exactly what I wanted it to say in the way I wanted to say it. But that version finally got to the desk of Dean L. Larsen, who was a member of the Seventy and also, by that time, editor of the *Ensign*. He called me up and said he had read the article but thought it could be improved.

We talked for a while. The things he said reflected some of the things that had been taken out of the original article. There was nothing in the original article that he or I considered really controversial. It was just something that somebody in Correlation felt might raise a question in the minds of some Church members. "Dean," I said (we were long-time friends), "you need to see the first article that I wrote, the original manuscript." So I sent it to him, and he liked it much better. He made a few very good suggestions and encouraged me to resubmit it. I did so, and, after reading it, the editors sent it to Elders Bruce R. McConkie and Boyd K. Packer. Brother McConkie thought it was fine, though he made a couple of little suggestions to which we responded. I asked either Elder Larsen or Jay Todd, "Well, how does Brother Packer feel?" He said, "He thought it was okay." I didn't know quite how to interpret that! But he didn't disapprove, and that was the important thing to me.

We published it, and it actually included every topic and most of the wording in the original article that the *Ensign* was afraid would not pass Correlation. The discussion of some of the topics was condensed, and the original, rather philosophical, introduction (which was really not essential to the article) was gone, but what I considered the essentials were there. These included discussion of the gradual development of our understanding of the Godhead and a discussion

of the "law of adoption," both of which someone along the way had urged be eliminated. Yet it got through the Brethren, and it received many nice comments from people who felt that it filled a little knowledge hole and was needed by some members of the Church.

That was a nice follow-through for me, at least, given that sometime earlier I had also been asked to write an article on change for the *New Era*. I wrote the article—which was a little different, for it was geared specifically toward the youth—and turned it in, but it was sent back because the Correlation committee did not think it appropriate. I still have the note somewhere, saying that they just did not think that young people were ready to hear about change. This blew my mind because I think that one of the most important things we can do as historians is to open people's minds to the fact that things *do* change, but some things are also constant. That's what we tried to emphasize in these Church articles—not only change but that change comes by way of revelation and that certain fundamentals also remain constant amid all that change. That's the idea we were trying to get across in those articles.

I think that answers your question about articles that have been particularly interesting and important to me.

SMITH: Thank you. Like you say, it's nice to feel vindicated by having the Brethren approve the second article.

ALLEN: I don't know whether "vindicated" is the right word. I'm just happy that somebody liked the *Ensign* article and was willing to publish it.

SMITH: Maybe we could talk for a minute about *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*. I'll begin with a question: Where do you begin when trying to undertake covering the history of the Church in a single volume, and how did that project come about?

ALLEN: I was appointed Assistant Church Historian in 1972. Davis Bitton and I were appointed at the same time to work with

Leonard Arrington. One of the first things Leonard wanted to do was expand the staff. He brought in a large group of people who had training in history and writing because the Historical Department was now going to embark on actually publishing history, which it hadn't done much of before. At that time there was a reorganization of the Historical Department into three divisions: the History Division, headed by Leonard J. Arrington; the Archives Division, headed by Earl E. Olson; and the Library Division, headed by Donald T. Schmidt. The History Division was the one responsible for writing history—not just *keeping* history but writing and publishing history.

Leonard had to get every project approved, and among them was a project for two single-volume histories of the Church. One of them would be a history that would be published by a non-Mormon press, basically for the non-Mormon audience. That was eventually written by Leonard and Davis Bitton together: *The Mormon Experience*, published by Knopf in New York in 1979. The other one was to be a volume written primarily for members of the Church, but hopefully also acceptable to scholars generally, because it would take into account all the new scholarship. The idea was that it would be faith-building to the members of the Church but also deal with issues sometimes glossed over in some traditional writings. We would deal with issues and ideas to the degree that they were important to understanding the Church and its history. We weren't going to simply dig up things that weren't important.

I was assigned to that project, but Leonard was also able to get Glen Leonard, who at that time was working for the Utah Historical Society, to join the staff of the Historical Department of the Church. Glen and I were asked to work on that project together. I must add, there could seldom be a cooperative writing experience any more satisfying than my working with Glen Leonard on the project. It was just amazing to me how close we were in our ideas on what ought to be done, and even our writing style. When we finished the book, the final typescript went through my typewriter, but there was very little,

if any, change in the material Glen wrote. You can't tell by reading it who originally wrote which chapter because we were so close together in our cooperation and our writing. I was very pleased with that kind of association.

Glen and I started out by working together prayerfully and outlining what it was that we wanted to accomplish, deciding where the chapter divisions would be and that kind of thing. We decided to divide the book into five different sections and have a general introduction to each section. One of the most challenging things we wanted to do was to include a comprehensive bibliography. About a fourth of *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* is this massive bibliography, where we indicate chapter by chapter all the best published sources, whether we used them or not, that apply to things in that chapter. We received many good comments on that bibliography. Some people didn't like it because it included a lot of references to things published outside the Church, but we thought they were important for understanding. We worked on the book for over three years; it was finally published by Deseret Book Company in 1976.

We were not required to submit our books to the Correlation Executive Committee, for everyone understood that these were not to be considered "official" Church publications. But we did submit the manuscript to Elder Joseph Anderson, managing director of the Historical Department. He approved it before we sent it to Deseret Book. Yet even though the book was well accepted and highly praised by Church members generally, as well as by non-LDS scholars, there was some criticism of the book by certain people who were not comfortable with some aspects of it. I don't want to go into the details of the criticism, but it is true that somebody from the Correlation Committee had it reviewed by someone who was predisposed not to like the kind of thing the newer Mormon scholars were doing. As a result, it was criticized in a way we thought quite unfair. Elder Benson picked up on that and in a public address, while not naming the book, he criticized some of the things which some critics had said were in

the book. Unfortunately, what was reported to him about what was said in the book was not quite what we had written. It was a somewhat distorted view. Still, apparently having only the critique to rely upon, he repeated some of the criticisms in his address. So it caused some problems, and it caused Deseret Book to take the book off the shelves for a while. It was rather gratifying to me that later on we heard that President Kimball had read the book and enjoyed it. He said, "I don't see any problem with it." He couldn't understand the criticism. He told Elder Marvin J. Ashton, president of the board of Deseret Book, that it was a great work and that he could not comprehend why anyone would think otherwise. The behind-the-scenes story is in Leonard Arrington's *Reflections of a Church Historian*. In addition, I was honored when Elder Howard W. Hunter, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, talked with me at length about how good he thought the book was and how sorry he was about the criticism it had received.

As I said, we had gotten it approved first by Elder Joseph Anderson, managing director of the Historical Department, so we thought everything was fine. We were rather shocked and a little bit dismayed—well, more than a little bit dismayed—when all that criticism came. But the book received good reviews. Interestingly, some people outside the Church who reviewed it said it was a very nice start in the direction of better history. A few people inside the Church, like my good friend George Ellsworth, said, "This is a start but it's not good enough yet!" You get all kinds of reviews, and if you can't take some criticism then you had better not write history. That was one of the first lessons I learned as a historian—if you can't take criticism don't write. Period.

We wondered what to do about the negative comments. Leonard Arrington's point of view was don't do anything, just let it go. I felt, too, that the more you talk about it, the more it aggravates the situation. So we just let it go. We tried not to criticize anybody, just understand why people have different points of view. Again, it was gratifying when we understood that many of the Brethren liked it and

couldn't understand the criticism. As I understand it, only three or four were critical. It was very nice, some years later, when I saw a copy of a talk entitled "Reading Church History" that had been given at a CES symposium by Elder Dallin H. Oaks. In one section of the talk he used four different examples of how you can tell by what someone writes whether they believe, do not believe, or seem ambivalent. His example of someone who clearly believed in the First Vision by the way they wrote about it was *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*.

As I said, Deseret Book took it off the shelves for a while but then put it back on. When the first printing was sold out, the publishers decided to reprint it. We said, "Do you want us to make any changes?" "No, no. We want to reprint the first edition as is." So the criticism didn't affect the publication of the book. Later on the editors asked us for a revised edition. "How do you want it revised?" we asked. They said, "Whatever you want to do." There was no hint of any criticism. But in preparing the second edition, we did pay attention to some of the criticism; we made a few minor changes or added explanations that might help. For example, one of the criticisms was that we put the Word of Wisdom in the context of the temperance movement of the time and thus promoted a "naturalistic" explanation, rather than the idea that it was a revelation. The Word of Wisdom *was* given in the context of the temperance movement of the time, but the critics implied that we had left the impression that it was *only* in response to that and that it was not a revelation. That was grossly misleading, for we actually used the word "revelation" in the discussion. We said that it came during the height of the temperance movement, and it was pretty obvious that we were trying to say that Joseph Smith knew what was going on around him. There were temperance societies all around him, including in Kirtland, and that movement naturally raised questions in his mind about how the Saints should respond. Our clear implication was that it was in this context that the Prophet asked his own questions and received the revelation. To quote directly from the book: "At first written 'not by commandment or constraint,

but by revelation and the word of wisdom,' this revelation eventually became a standard of health as well as a symbol of obedience among the Latter-day Saints." And of course it was only after asking questions that Joseph Smith received many, if not most, of his revelations.

The critics also complained that this was not the way Brigham Young told the story. This was true, but we wrestled with the fact that Brigham Young was not even there when the revelation was given and that he did not tell the story so often quoted until over thirty years later. We were not even sure of his source for the story. But in the second edition we made it even more clear so that the point could not be missed: the Word of Wisdom was a revelation, given under the circumstances described. We also added the story that Brigham Young told. We took out nothing; we just added the idea that in addition to the questions raised in the larger context it appears that "an immediate situation close to home played a key role in calling forth the inspired code of health." Then we wrote that many years later Brigham Young reported on what happened in the School of the Prophets, which was the immediate impetus for the revelation. We quoted the story as he gave it in an 1868 sermon. We hoped all that would satisfy any latent concerns.

SMITH: Not to focus on the criticism of the first edition, but did the feedback result in discussions in the Historical Department about the way you would approach writing history? Did it raise concerns of which you might not otherwise be aware?

ALLEN: I don't remember the specifics of the discussion, but yes, it did raise some questions. Again, Leonard Arrington, who had the final say, so to speak, said we must continue to do what we were doing. It was not the kind of thing that was going to hurt anybody's testimony. In fact, in connection with *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, we received story after story of people whose faith was enhanced by it. I remember one returned missionary, having returned from England, who stopped me on campus at Brigham Young University. He said, "I

gave a copy of that book to a girl who was investigating the Church." It had converted her to the Church. "And now I'm married to her!" We received stories like that! That's what we were trying to do—write things in a way that would not ignore context and not ignore difficulties that may have occurred but put them in a context that was understandable to members of the Church. That's how Leonard felt we ought to be writing our history. I remember him saying time after time, "I have never found anything in all the documents I've been through that give me reason not to have faith in Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon." We all felt the same way.

Sometimes members of the Historical Department would deal with points people didn't feel comfortable with. For example, Davis Bitton and Gary Bunker of BYU published a book dealing with cartoons about Mormons that had been published in *Harper's Magazine* and other publications in the nineteenth century. It was a delightful book, and they didn't criticize the Church. They just said that here was the public image of the Church as expressed in those publications. Some people didn't like that book. It wasn't an official project of the Historical Department, just something the authors did on the side because it interested them, and it was important to understanding some aspects of our history. As a department we felt strongly that we still needed to publish history that was honest, not feeling required to make every paragraph somehow prove the faith, yet not be destructive of the faith. Our personal belief should be clear through the tone of our writing. Some things nevertheless became controversial.

Finally, the Brethren, particularly after G. Homer Durham became the managing director of the Historical Department, felt it was better not to have professional history come out under the direct auspices of the Historical Department of the Church because it would look too official. In hindsight I think that was probably not a bad decision for the time. When something comes out that looks official, any criticism comes right back on the Church. Most members of the History Division were then transferred to BYU to become the

basis for the newly created Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History. I had resigned a little earlier because I could see the "handwriting on the wall" and was encouraged by the dean of our college to come back to BYU full-time. So in 1979 I came back to BYU. I didn't resign under any pressure or anything like that. It just looked like it was time to move, so I moved back to full-time in the BYU Department of History.

I might add that, as I have so often noted, part of the story of the Church is that things change. It may seem ironic to some people that in 2005 the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute at BYU was closed, and people who had been transferred there twenty-one years earlier were transferred back to the Church History Department and are now deeply involved, officially, in producing scholarly history.

SMITH: Our discussion could go on eternally about your time with the Historical Department. But before we move on, do you wish to make any general remarks or impressions about your time there, either favorite stories, impressions, or working relationships—things like that?

ALLEN: Memories dim a little, and I need to go back and read my diary, but it was an exhilarating time—because we were writing worthwhile things. The biography of William Clayton was one of the most fun books I've ever written, a totally enjoyable project. I did that while I was there. Earlier I published a book titled *Manchester Mormons: The Journals of William Clayton, 1840 to 1842* (coedited with Thomas G. Alexander, 1974). I published a number of articles that were, I think, fairly important in one way or another. But we also started or helped enhance the career of many young people. Leonard Arrington brought in people who were working on various kinds of projects and was able to get grants for them. A number of people who later became prominent in various ways did some of their early work through the Historical Department. Some people who were already prominent, like Richard Bushman and Eugene England, got fellowships and began working on

some of their projects that were eventually published. David Whittaker worked on some of his projects through a fellowship at the Historical Department of the Church. The work of Ron Esplin and Bill Hartley, who were full-time employees—and I could name others—did the wonderful things they did with full encouragement. Some of us still had to teach classes, so we couldn't put in all the time we wanted to. Some of these other people were full-time, which was important. Another thing that came out of that era was a nice early beginning of greater emphasis on women's history. Jill Mulvay Derr came into the department early; Maureen Ursenbach Beecher was an early member who came in to help us with our writing, but she also pioneered a lot of women's history, and to see that kind of work begun in the Historical Department of the Church was exciting. We can see the legacy of that period of time in so many things that are happening today. Even the Joseph Smith Papers Project, if you will, had a kind of beginning there. One of the spearheaders of the current Joseph Smith Papers Project was Ron Esplin, who began working on various documents, including the papers of Brigham Young, while he was there and became committed to the publication of documents. Later on, as director of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute, he got the Joseph Smith project going; then it was finally transferred to Salt Lake City, where it is now. The whole legacy of the Historical Department experience is very important, I think, and very interesting to me. I was just happy to be a part of that particular legacy, and while I was there I published a few worthwhile things.

SMITH: Thank you. Speaking of things you published that are worthwhile, what interested you in working on a biography of William Clayton? Let me add a quick little note here. For those of us who work in Church history, William Clayton's record, particularly of the Nauvoo years, is immensely helpful and important. But for many people, you are dealing with the fact that they know William Clayton only as the author of "Come, Come, Ye Saints." So in trying to educate members of the Church about his significance, or just for yourself, how did you become interested?

ALLEN: The thing that interested me first happened when I was at BYU, just before I went to the Historical Department. A descendant of William Clayton who owned the Manchester diary of Clayton—it was at BYU, but his family still owned the diary—came to the chair of the Department of History, who at that time was DeLamar Jensen, and said they would like to have the diary published. As my memory serves me, he said the family would be willing to officially donate the diary if they could find someone who would publish it. DeLamar called me in and asked me if I was interested. I thought about it for a while, then decided, "Sure, why not? I'd like to do that kind of thing." I found the diary fascinating and thought it really did need to be published. I started to work on it and then, after I was appointed Assistant Church Historian, invited Tom Alexander to work with me. I still spent a great deal of time on the project, and it was published by Gibbs Smith, the editor of Peregrine Smith Press, at the behest of Davis Bitton. They planned to start a Mormon diaries publication series, and Davis was going to be the general editor. However, this was the only one they ever published. It was titled *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton, 1840 to 1842*, and it came out in 1974. The diary takes him all the way to Nauvoo.

But I was so fascinated with William Clayton that I thought I'd like to do a little bit more on his life. So I started working on anything I could find on him and wrote a manuscript. But there was a big hole in the manuscript; it didn't say very much about William Clayton in Nauvoo. I knew of the existence of his Nauvoo diaries, and I'll be eternally grateful to G. Homer Durham for helping me to obtain access to them. I went to him and said I had been invited to give a talk on William Clayton at Graceland College, the Reorganized Church's college in Lamoni, Iowa. I said I would love to see those diaries because I wanted to talk about Clayton in Nauvoo, and the diaries were the only place where I could get the information I needed; and I was writing this biography anyway. Thank goodness he was able to get permission for me to read those diaries. That changed my whole

approach to William Clayton because I saw so much about his association with Joseph Smith and the richness of life in Nauvoo, as well as some of the problems, too. It was that little start of publishing that original diary that got me interested, and we went from there.

SMITH: I believe that Jan Shipps made a statement that the chapter "One Man's Families" from the Clayton biography was, at the time, the best thing she had read about plural marriage, even saying it was worth the price of the book. Can you tell me how approaching that chapter worked, when you had all the information—particularly from his Nauvoo diaries—about his plural marriage relationships? Was there any trepidation in writing a chapter like that for a largely Mormon audience?

ALLEN: You've posed a number of questions. First, I decided I had to make this book a combination of chronological and topical approaches. Actually, I wasn't able to find enough in-depth material on the last years of Clayton's life to do the same kind of thing that I had done for the Manchester and Nauvoo years. So much of the book is topical in approach. One of the topics, because he had ten wives, was obviously going to be William Clayton and his families. When I got into it I realized that here was a wonderful example of the way plural marriage could have affected the lives of various kinds of people, because I found just about every kind of situation. I found the first wife very accepting of her sister as the second wife. I had to read between the lines on some of these things because we don't have the women's accounts, which I wish we had, but you can read what Clayton says about their reaction, and you can read between the lines that for the most part they got along very well. In his diary and some of the letters you can see that at least the first three wives got along quite well with each other. They even accepted the seventeen-year-old Diantha Farr when she became a plural wife. And there's the beautiful story of how he wrote "Come, Come, Ye Saints" as a result of this young plural wife back in Nauvoo having a baby. There are also

stories of divorce, which was not unusual in Utah, so when it happened to Clayton, I put it in. There is also the story of one woman he wanted to marry who not only rejected him but eventually rejected the Church; that's also in there. I won't say his story is typical of plural marriages, but it represents, at least to me, the various kinds of experiences that could have occurred, and sometimes did occur, under that system. That's the value of that chapter. Most of Clayton's marriages worked out well. One of his marriages was to the daughter of Amasa Lyman, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. She apparently got on well with Clayton until her father joined the Godbeites, and then she decided to follow her father instead of William Clayton, which was a great heartbreak to him. That story is also in there.

Trepidation? Yes. Just dealing with plural marriage was difficult, especially over thirty years ago when some people were still walking on eggs, so to speak—not wanting to deal with the real issues. Today, however, I don't think there are any problems dealing with them, so long as you deal with them honestly and include the faith and the commitment of the people who were involved, which I tried to do. That's really the story: how much of this represents the faith and the commitment of people like William Clayton as they embraced something entirely different. Does that answer your question?

SMITH: It certainly does. Largely you were able to approach at least the Nauvoo period of that book by having access to those manuscripts. They formed the basis of understanding his life during that time. Do you mind talking for a minute about access to documents—where you think the department has been and where we are now?

ALLEN: You asked about access to documents while we were in the Historical Department—that's what you were specifically referring to I think. One of the things that Leonard was able to accomplish was give full access to any documents housed in the Church's archives. That didn't mean that everybody outside our department had full access to them, but those of us who were there could go into

the stacks whenever we wanted. One of the things I've kicked myself for is that I didn't take full advantage of that. I would go in when I was looking for something specific, like William Clayton material. I would just go and look at all the papers that were there, but I didn't expand it to taking a lot of notes on other things I wasn't working on at the time but might be interested in later. Now I wish I had done so. But it was a very healthy time. We were helped out a lot by the Church archivist, Earl E. Olson, and the librarian, Donald T. Schmidt, who were very cooperative with us in what we were doing. It is also true that there was a little more opening of the archives even to people outside of the Church.

Unfortunately, some people, not from inside the Historical Department but from outside the department, were able somehow to get access to documents that were restricted and spirit copies out. That's one of the things that caused the Brethren deep concern about the whole question of access to the archives. There was a time, even before we were in the Historical Department, that you had to get permission—jump through the hoops—to get any kind of access to many documents. I remember one time when I was working on my master's thesis that one of the good brethren working there felt that his job was to examine every note that was taken out of the archives. We had to submit those notes to him and come back the next day, or the next time we were there, to retrieve them. Once in a while we would find a note missing. Unfortunately for him, he didn't realize that some people were making carbon copies of their notes! I very seldom had anything withheld by him, but I do remember one item. I had gotten the same information from some county records down in southern Utah, so I could cite them instead of the Historical Department of the Church. Those restrictions were not a very effective effort on their part. I'm sure the brother saved the Church from embarrassment in some ways, but it wasn't the best way.

Of course, I believe that any private archive has the right to place restrictions on the use of its documents, and if there are restrictions,

people should be informed of those restrictions; they should sign an agreement that recognizes those restrictions and then be trusted. If someone violates that trust, then that person can be restricted from further access. If the archives feel that they would like to approve the use of something from its collection before it's published, they ought to have a good relationship with whoever is doing the research, and the researcher ought to be willing to abide by the requests. If I go to an archive and documents are opened to me, it's still up to the archivists to say how they can be used, and the researcher should respect the policy. So as far as what was happening within the Historical Department after we got there, there was no restriction on us. We were cautioned on how we should deal with some of those issues. I myself became involved in a few very sensitive issues. It was the way you dealt with them that was more important rather than if you had access to the documents or not.

SMITH: Any brief observations on where the Church is now in terms of document access?

ALLEN: I don't know exactly what the rules are right now, but my impression is that after we left, things became tighter. One of the reasons was that many things were still being cataloged, like the papers of Brigham Young. Such things are more and more open to people now. One thing thrilled me when the first volume of *The Joseph Smith Papers* came out. I was able to say in my review of the volume that even though there had been stories earlier about the Church not being willing to let people see all the manuscripts, so far as Joseph Smith's history is concerned we have nothing to hide. The fact that we are being that open and publishing everything is a wonderful thing for the Church and for scholars. I believe it will do more than almost anything else to give confidence to people outside of the Church that we are going to be honest in our approach to Church history. It will also put to rest a lot of rumors because people think there is lots of damaging stuff hidden in Joseph Smith's papers,

and there is not. This is being shown simply by letting those papers be published.

SMITH: Let me follow up the question about document access. Richard L. Jensen mentioned to me—and I don't think he'll mind my using his name—that he has always been impressed by how you were able to deal with sensitive issues but approach them in a disarming way that would then allow for a conversation about those topics afterwards. Any comments about what kind of philosophical approach you take?

ALLEN: Well, that was very nice of Richard Jensen, and I'm complimented that people would suggest that, because I'm not sure how well I meet that ideal. But it is true that philosophically I have that ideal. This is partly because when I was teaching at BYU, as I mentioned before, I met so many students who were having problems related to Church history. They would get involved in new things in Church history they had never heard about. Sometimes they would read a book that disturbed them and then go to someone in Religion and ask a question. Then they would come to me and report the person from Religion as saying something like, "We have the answer, and you shouldn't be reading that book; we don't talk about this." That kind of thing. I'm sure this didn't happen all the time, but when they did get that kind of answer, where should they go? I remember spending many an hour with students on simply all kinds of questions. One girl came to me very upset because she wanted to publish something about a direct ancestor (her grandmother or great-grandmother) who was a plural wife. She thought the story of that woman ought to be told. People in other areas discouraged her from writing about it—"We should not talk about this." She said to me, in effect, "What can I do? I'm proud of my family, and it seems to me as if I've been made an illegitimate heir or something, and I don't feel illegitimate." I clearly remember the pain she felt at the fact that she was being discouraged from finding out about her ancestor. I could

see it in her face and feel it in her voice. I tried to encourage her, and as I remember it, she eventually did the research and wrote the paper.

Philosophically, I think you can write history and tell the whole story, but you also have to be sure that you understand that you're writing about a real person, and you must make every effort to understand that person's point of view very well. You can talk about William Clayton and about all of his problems—for example, who he didn't like, his morose nature, and other things like this—but you wouldn't get the real William Clayton. While you don't ignore those things, you write about them in such a way that they're part of a larger story that includes what he really was—a man of undying faith in the Savior and undying faith in Joseph Smith. What has to come across when you finish is not the little details of this problem and that problem (even though you must deal with those things if they were an important part of his life), but the larger picture. It's possible to tell the truth and not tell the truth at the same time. If you're so focused on some new document that what this document says about something controversial becomes the overall message, then you have missed the whole truth because you have missed the larger context of the document.

I don't know whether that answers your question; my point is that it's a matter of making sure that what you write is responsibly balanced. And before you publish it, you have to let it gel for a while, then go back and read it again several times, even get some advice from other people. I submitted my articles to other people and took their advice as to "this didn't sound quite right" or whatever. This is a very important thing to do. So I guess that's two things a historian has to learn. One is to take criticism, and the other is to profit from the criticism.

SMITH: We've talked about some of the projects you have researched and on which you've written in the past. Would you talk for a moment about things you would like to see done—either your

work on twentieth-century Church history or things in Mormon history generally that you would like to see emphasized?

ALLEN: In a general sense, I would love to see more emphasis on women's history, although I do have a feeling that this can get overpowered. People can spend so much of their lives writing on one topic that they begin to lose perspective on other topics. I'm not accusing the women involved in women's history of doing that; I'm just saying that historians need to strike a good balance. For now, we need more studies of women and women's roles in the Church. We're getting more and more of that all the time. Maybe I'm outdated, but this is what I was saying ten and fifteen years ago, and I still think we need more of that.

Obviously we need more studies of the Church in foreign countries. I would love to see more and more not just on the foundation of the Church but on the kinds of things the Church has to do to get into countries and the degree to which it may be having to adapt programs in certain areas, or the way it may be challenged culturally by whatever may be happening in other cultures that may or may not conflict with the programs of the Church.

The whole story of technology and what that's done for the Church is a fascinating story. I published a little-read article on that four years ago in the *Deseret News Church Almanac*, and to me it's another of the most fun articles I've published. But it's way out of date now, in just four years. I can't even believe it was fully up to date then. Just keeping up with that kind of thing is important. Right now I'm still trying to find time to finish that work on the history of the Church in the last half of the twentieth century, which you worked on for me. I have all those notes upstairs.

I've been delayed on so many other things that I've just never been able to do more than put an outline on paper, but I hope I get to finish that one of these days because to me it is a very important project. Some wonderful things can be said about it. Oh, there are lots of things that should be done.

SMITH: Do you have any anecdotes you would like to share about your work in the Historical Department?

ALLEN: There are many, but let me mention just one. I was happily satisfied when we first were appointed and Davis Bitton came back from his interview and Leonard called Davis and me into his office. Dean Jessee was also there. I had wondered in my own mind, "Are we going to start this adventure with prayer?" and Leonard said, "We need to start with prayer." The group of us knelt down and had kind of an opening prayer for the whole experience in the Historical Department. Just being there and seeing Leonard in that kind of situation, which a lot of people would never see him in because they see him as the scholar and the controversial man, was a great experience. Having that kind of experience was a wonderful start to our whole experience in the Historical Department.

SMITH: You said something earlier about when and why you left the Church's Historical Department. Could you briefly say something about what happened in your career after that?

ALLEN: As I said earlier, I went back to the BYU Department of History on a full-time basis in 1979, after a little over seven years as Assistant Church Historian. I could see the "handwriting on the wall," so to speak, so when the dean of the college encouraged me to return, I gladly did so. In 1980 I was named chair of the department, a position I held for six years. Then in 1987, I felt deeply honored to be named Lemuel Hardison Redd Jr. Professor of Western American History. I held that academic chair for five years, until my retirement in 1992. The Department of History allowed me to maintain an office in the department for the next two years. Then in 1994 I was "adopted," in a manner of speaking, by the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History. I held the title of senior research associate until 2005, when the institute was disbanded and its staff transferred back to the Historical Department of the Church. During that time I took a leave of absence in order for my wife and

me to fulfill a mission for the Church. We served as CES missionaries at the Boston Institute of Religion, 1999–2000. I also taught for one semester at BYU–Hawaii (January–April 2002).

SMITH: What research projects did you complete during that time?

ALLEN: I completed a few small projects as well as three major projects. One was the biography of William Clayton, which had been well along the way before I left the Historical Department of the Church and which was finally published in 1987 by the University of Illinois Press: *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton, A Mormon*. In 1986, while still in manuscript form, it won the annual David Woolley Evans and Beatrice Cannon Evans Biography Award. In 2002 it was republished by BYU Press under the title *No Toil Nor Labor Fear: The Story of William Clayton*. In 1992, I published another book that got its start while I was in the Church Historical Department: *Men With a Mission: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles, 1837–1840*, published by Deseret Book. It was reprinted last year. Coauthors on that book were Ronald K. Esplin and David J. Whittaker.

But the project I spent the most time on during that period was a massive bibliography, published by the University of Illinois Press in 2000 as *Studies in Mormon History, 1830–1997: An Indexed Bibliography*. Ronald W. Walker and David J. Whittaker are listed a coauthors, but as they will both tell you, the overwhelming amount of work on that project was mine. The publication consisted of two parts. The first was a comprehensive listing of all the books, articles, theses, and dissertations relating to Mormon history from 1830 to 1997 (or at least all we could find). The second section, the heart of the project, was a comprehensive topical index to these historical writings. Also bound in the volume was a "Topical Guide to Published Social Science Literature on the Mormons," prepared by Armand L. Mauss and Dynette Ivie Reynolds. I worked on that project for about twenty years before it was published. I received several research grants from BYU to support it and employed numerous research assistants to

search for materials, summarize them, and help prepare indexes. The book won a special citation from the Mormon History Association in 2001. I continued to update the database for several years, working with Michael Hunter of the BYU library. Hunter continued to work on the database, including continuing updates. It's now searchable online at mormonhistory.byu.edu. Not enough people are aware of this project, but making such a database available to serious students of Mormon history was an important goal for me, and I am very gratified that it is still going on.

By the way, the collaboration between Ronald Walker, David Whittaker, and myself resulted in another book, *Mormon History*, published by the University of Illinois press in 2001. It was a comprehensive study of Mormon historiography—the history of Mormon historical writing.