

Martin Harris's 1828 Visit to Luther Bradish, Charles Anthon, and Samuel Mitchill

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Few episodes in early Mormon history are as fascinating—and problematic—as the February 1828 visit of Martin Harris to Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia College in New York City. Scholars from both within and without the Church—those seeking corroboration for the translation of the Book of Mormon as well as those trying to debunk the authenticity of the whole story—continue to grapple with the details of this event and its implications. The purpose of this article is to shed light on this old story, to proffer new dimensions and interpretations on the trip's origin, to take a fresh look at Anthon's credentials and what he said to Harris, and to show whom Harris consulted with and what confirmation they provided. While there are details we do not fully know, it is clear that Harris returned from the East confirmed in his desire to assist in the translation and printing of the Book of Mormon, although perhaps for additional reasons than long supposed.¹

The outlines of this story are well known in Mormon history. Working with the gold plates, Joseph Smith began the work of early translating in late

1827 from the “Reformed Egyptian” language found on Mormon’s abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. Early on, he transcribed some of the characters from the plates as a sort of alphabet or reference guide.² His primary scribe was Martin Harris, a respected Palmyra farmer, an early and keen supporter of Smith’s work who later became one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. For a variety of reasons, Harris begged leave to take a transcription of the characters Smith had come across in his translation attempts to New York City, as historian B. H. Roberts writes, “to submit them to men of learning for their inspection.”³ Roberts says Harris submitted “two papers containing different transcripts, to Professors Anthon and Mitch[i]ll, of New York, one that was translated and one not translated.”⁴ According to Anthon’s own accounts, Harris sought out Mitchill first, who then wrote a letter referring him to Anthon.⁵ Harris later recounted that Anthon “stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian,” and after viewing the characters “said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic, and he said that they were true characters and that the translation of such of them that had been translated was correct.” He even wrote a note “certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters.” However, upon hearing Harris say in answer to his question that an angel of God had revealed such things and that part of the plates were sealed, Anthon promptly tore up his certificate. Denying the possibility of angels and of all such heavenly manifestations, he asked Harris to bring him the plates for him to translate. When Harris replied he could not do so and that parts of the plates were sealed, the man from Columbia brusquely responded, “I cannot read a sealed book.” Harris then returned to Mitchill, “who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation” (Joseph Smith—History 1:65).

Unfortunately, Harris did not indicate how Mitchill would have been able to corroborate Anthon’s response. Sometime later, perhaps after reporting back to Joseph Smith, this entire episode came to be interpreted as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, that of “the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed” (Isaiah 29:11).⁶ Thus, “in spite of the limited ability of Anthon and Mitchell to pronounce judgment on the [Book of Mormon] transcription, and despite the ridicule from Anthon

regarding the story of angels and the destruction of Anthon's certificate, Harris was sufficiently convinced to go into debt and devote his full time to the support of the young prophet."⁷ Whatever Harris gleaned from these leading scholars, if he left Palmyra wondering and inquiring, he returned home supporting and defending the translation of the Book of Mormon.⁸ Just who this Professor Mitchill was and what he actually said to Harris is no longer unknown, nor is it a mere footnote to this episode, and will constitute a major focus of this paper.

Many have presumed Harris went east primarily because he wanted scholarly validation or independent corroboration of the translation efforts of young Joseph Smith, who had very little formal education. Such a reason makes sense, particularly if he would be asked to help finance the publication of the final product. However, there may have been other reasons for Harris to seek insights from scholars. According to Joseph Smith's earliest 1832 history, Martin Harris had received his own independent, corroborative inspiration even before making the trip, as a result of his giving Joseph fifty dollars to move from Manchester, New York, to Harmony, Pennsylvania. "And because of his faith and this righteous deed, the Lord appeared unto him in a vision and showed unto him his marvelous work which he was about to do. And [he] immediately came to Susquehanna and said the Lord had shown him that he must go to New York City [with] some of the characters, so we proceeded to copy some of them and he took his journey to the eastern cities."⁹ Perhaps, then, there was as much compliance as there was corroboration involved in Harris making the trip.

Furthermore, Lucy Mack Smith's account makes provision for precisely what kind of expertise Harris should seek after. "It was agreed that Martin Harris should follow him as soon as Joseph should have sufficient time to transcribe the Egyptian alphabet which Mr. Harris was to take to the east and through the country in every direction to all who were professed linguists to give them an opportunity of showing their talents."¹⁰

Much has been written about the so-called Anthon transcript which Harris took with him to New York, who authored it, what types of characters it represented, if it constituted an actual translation, and, if so, what it may have said.¹¹ Until recently, the prevailing notion was that this document (see fig. 1), now housed in the archives of the Community of Christ in

Independence, Missouri, was the actual piece of paper that Harris showed to Anthon and others in New York City in 1828.¹²

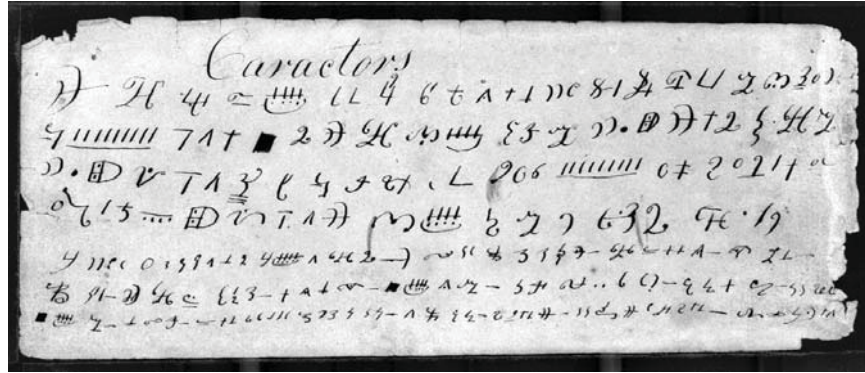


Figure 1. Anthon transcript. Photo courtesy of Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

B. H. Roberts has argued that at best the Community of Christ manuscript, containing only seven horizontal lines, was “a fragment” of what was submitted to Anthon and Mitchill and certainly not a translation manuscript in the true sense of the word.¹³ Other accounts speak of parallel columns and a second transcription bearing the translation. According to Charles Anthon, the document which he saw showed letters in “perpendicular columns” in the “Chinese mode of writing” which indicates vertical, not horizontal, columns. He also remembered that “the whole ended in a rude representation of the Mexican zodiac.”¹⁴ Such is lacking in the Community of Christ copy. If Anthon’s memory is correct, it is virtually impossible to argue with certainty that the Anthon transcript is the one he saw in 1828.¹⁵

Lucy Mack Smith says in her account that Harris was to seek out linguists “in every direction.” Three of his contemporaries make it clear that he first stopped off at Albany, the capital city of the Empire State, before proceeding down the Hudson River Valley to New York. William W. Phelps said that Harris “went to New York City by way of Utica and Albany.”¹⁶ Pomeroy Tucker, who had sold the *Wayne Sentinel* newspaper and his printing operation to E. B. Grandin in 1827, remembered that Harris “sought . . . the interpretation and bibliographical scrutiny of such scholars as Hon. Luther Bradish, Dr. Mitchell, Prof. Anthon and others.”¹⁷ John H. Gilbert, Jr., typesetter of the Book of Mormon in E. B. Grandin’s Palmyra print shop,

remembered many years later that Harris “stopped at Albany and called on Lt. Gov. Bradish—with what success I do not know. He proceeded to New York, and called on Prof. C. Anthon.”¹⁸

Why Harris chose to see Bradish is a topic of considerable interest.¹⁹ Suffice it to say that the Bradish and Harris families had been well-established citizens of Palmyra for many years, that the two men therefore knew each other, that Bradish had become a very successful Wall Street lawyer and New York State assemblyman by this time, and that he was a man of means and influence and in a position to possibly assist in the costs of printing the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, Bradish had lived in Egypt as a special agent for the American government not many years before during the “War of the Consuls” between the British and French expeditions of the Upper Nile. Consequently he knew more than a little about zodiacs, manuscripts, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the current state of research in Egypt. Any transcript purporting to show characters of reformed or ancient Egyptian would have been of interest to Harris’s fellow Palmyran.

Furthermore, Bradish knew the printing business and an encouraging word from him could open doors in many places. For instance, we now know that Bradish not only knew the Grandin family well back in Palmyra;²⁰ but he was also a literary agent for James Fenimore Cooper, author of *Pioneer, Leather Stocking*, and other wilderness novels then coming into such rich popularity.²¹ He also knew Washington Irving very well. Consequently Bradish knew Isaac Carey and Isaac Lea, well-known Philadelphia book publishers, and was in the ideal position to help Harris with the publication of any fine American manuscript, particularly one that might speak of Native American Indians. If Harris was looking for someone who could open doors for him in New York and Philadelphia, one who might help him either with financing the printing of the book or finding publishers for it, Bradish was the perfect man to see.

The two men likely met in Albany that February since the legislature was then in session. It is reasonable to conclude that they talked about Palmyra, Grandin, Joseph Smith and his work of translation, Egypt, and other topics. Very likely Harris showed him the characters which Joseph Smith had transcribed. The precise nature of their conversation awaits discovery, but there is no indication Bradish pledged any kind of financial support. An astute lawyer, politician, and businessman, Bradish had many friends in Palmyra

and supporting Harris in a financially uncertain, highly debatable publishing enterprise might lose him credibility and support, especially when others in Palmyra were then also asking for his financial support.²² Instead, Bradish likely recommended, since he knew the city well, that once in New York City Harris visit with the leading naturalist in the country: Professor Samuel L. Mitchill.

A Quaker from birth who was “rather short and inclining to corpulency,” full-faced with a large double chin and “a pleasant open countenance,” Mitchill in 1828 at age sixty-four was regarded by presidents and paupers, farmers and fishermen as one of America’s greatest minds and scholars. A man of the many and a friend of every class, he possessed a voracious curiosity and “a taste for . . . new discoveries.”²³ His door was always open for he delighted to learn from everyone, no matter what their station in life.

Mitchill also was well known for his “Mitchillian cabinet” of specimens of plants, seeds, and animals from all over the world.²⁴ His scientific interests knew no bounds. John Randolph called him “a chaos of knowledge,” and Felix Pascali described him as “an umpire of all merits, inventions, discoveries, projects, arts [and] sciences.”²⁵ He was known among his colleagues as the “nestor of American science,” a “stalking library,” and “the Delphic Oracle of New York.” Even President Thomas Jefferson referred to him as “the Congressional Dictionary,” greatly admiring him for his knowledge of the natural sciences.²⁶

However, before offering his learned opinion on the written characters which Harris brought with him, Mitchill kindly referred him to his colleague, the young and upcoming scholar of linguistics, the thirty-one-year-old Professor Charles Anthon (1797–1867), AB, LL.D. Born in New York City, Anthon began his study of Greek and Latin at Columbia when only fourteen years of age. At age twenty-three, he took up a position of professor of languages at Columbia. His famous edition of Lempriere’s *Classical Dictionary*, first published in 1825, had already marked Anthon as a rising classical scholar. However, in 1828 he was but an adjunct professor of Greek and Latin, more an accomplished grammarian than a prestigious scholar. His first love was the classics, especially the works of Homer and Herodotus. While he knew Greek, Latin, German, and French superbly well, there is little indication he knew much about Egyptian, Hebrew, or any other Middle Eastern language. Because of his love of languages, he was probably aware

of emerging research interests in Egyptian hieroglyphics and of the recent decodings of the ancient Egyptian writings on the Rosetta Stone by the magnificent French linguist Jean-François Champollion.²⁷ And, while it is reasonable to conclude that he may have been interested in ancient Near Eastern languages, Anthon was by no means a scholar of such. By force of his own brusque personality, he claimed to know more in this area than he really did.

When Anthon showed Harris the door, Mitchill welcomed him back and sanctioned what Harris showed him for at least two reasons. Like Anthon, Mitchill was a linguist having studied the Oriental languages, the classical languages of Greek and Latin, and was a student of many American Indian languages, hieroglyphs, and native dialects. He also knew of Champollion's great work.²⁸

But, unlike his junior colleague, Mitchill had been studying the origins of the American Indian people for several years and had painstakingly developed his own "two races" theory of ancient America.²⁹ His interest in the history of the ancient American Indians was therefore at a peak when Harris showed him the transcripts.³⁰

Professor Mitchill had, in fact, arrived at the conclusion that "three races of Malays, Tartars, and Scandinavians, contribute to make up the American population."³¹ He believed that the Tartars (as he called the originating stock) were primarily from northeastern Russia and China.³² He also had concluded that another great race of people had once coinhabited ancient America—a "more delicate race"—which he believed originated in the Polynesian Islands of the South Pacific. These people he called the Australasians or Malays. They were, however, eventually overtaken and exterminated by the more savage, warlike Tartars or Eastern Asiatics to the North—the ancestors of many of the North American Indians—and had long ago become extinct. Mitchill had come to the conclusion that they

have probably been overcome by the more warlike and ferocious hordes that entered our hemisphere from the northeast of Asia. These Tartars of the higher latitudes have issued from the great hive of nations, and desolated, in the course of their migrations, the southern tribes of America, as they have done to those of Asia and Europe. The greater part of the North American natives are of the Tartar stock, the descendants of

the hardy warriors who destroyed the weaker Malays that preceded them.³³

Mitchill maintained that the “Iroquois” Indians were of “Tartar descent, who expelled or destroyed the former possessors of the fertile tracts reaching from Lake Ontario south westwardly to the River Ohio.”³⁴ He went on to argue that the great last battles between these warring peoples had occurred in upstate New York, a few miles southeast of Rochester and not far from Palmyra, Harris’ home.

It was probably for these and perhaps other reasons that Mitchill showed deep interest in the transcript of the characters Harris showed him. Whether or not he wrote anything to substantiate the veracity of the characters is yet unknown; however, we now know what the two men said to each other. According to the 1831 journal of New York newspaper reporter, Gordon Bennett, arguably the earliest account of Harris’ visit to New York,

He [Harris] carried the engravings from the plates to New York—shewed them to Professor Anthon who said that he did not know what language they were—Told him to carry them to Dr. Mitchell. Doctor Mitchell examined them and compared them with other hieroglyphs—thought them very curious—said they were the characters of a nation now extinct which he named.³⁵

According to Bennett, the two men did not exchange any sort of a translation of the characters. If Harris had such in his possession, Mitchill never saw them. However, it is now clear that Harris showed the wise old sage of Columbia and “nestor of American science” the characters which he had brought with him from Palmyra. Mitchill, after carefully studying them and comparing them to the hieroglyphs in his possession, set them down as the language of an ancient American people.

Anthon’s statement on not being able to read a “sealed book” gained traction and circulation among Mormon missionaries in the very early days of the Church. Furthermore, Church leaders and scholars have referred to Anthon’s words many times since. Most notably, Le Grand Richards in his best-selling *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, a primer on the Restoration for millions of investigators to Mormonism, boldly declared that when Professor Anthon said “I cannot read a sealed book,” he did not realize that

he was literally fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah found in the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah.³⁶

In addition to the exchange with Anthon, those interested in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon should recognize that there was more to the story. It was likely Professor Mitchill, thanks to the recommendation of both Luther Bradish, Esq., and Charles Anthon himself, who gave the most scholarly corroboration Harris was looking for that winter of 1828. Returning home to Palmyra with the story of prophecy fulfilled on the one hand and, on the other, the sanctioning of all that Anthon may have said by America's foremost naturalist, Harris was ready to provide the financial means to publish the Book of Mormon.

Notes

1. Richard E. Bennett, "‘Read This I Pray Thee’: Martin Harris and the Three Wise Men of the East," *Journal of Mormon History* 36, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 178–216. See also Bennett "Martin Harris and Three Wise Men," in *Brigham Young University 2010–2011 Speeches* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2011): 77–92. An excellent earlier study on this topic is Stanley B. Kimball, "The Anthon Transcript: People; Primary Sources and Problems," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10, no. 3 (Spring 1970): 325–52. Kimball was the first to show that the Mitchell referred to in this episode was indeed Professor Samuel L. Mitchill.
2. Michael Hubbard MacKay, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, and Robin Scott Jensen, "The ‘Caractors’ Document: New Light on an Early Transcription of the Book of Mormon Characters," *Mormon Historical Studies* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 131–52.
3. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1964; repr., Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 1:99.
4. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1:100. Where Roberts derived his information is subject to discussion. Sources other than the anti-Mormon 1834 publication *Mormonism Unveiled* include Joseph Smith's 1832 own history, in which he said Martin Harris "came to Susquehanna and said the Lord had shown him that he [Harris] must go to New York City with some of the characters so we proceeded to copy some of them and he took his journey to the Eastern cities and to the Learned [saying] read this I pray thee." Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, 1–6, Church History Library, cited in *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Autobiographical and Historical Writings*, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 9. See also the account in the *Times and Seasons*, May 2, 1842, 772–73. Another possible source is Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the*

- Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853).
5. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, OH: published by the author, 1834) chapter 18, as quoted in Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 104–5. See also Samuel M. Smucker, *The Religious, Social, and Political History of the Mormons, or Latter-Day Saints [microform]: from Their Origin to the Present Time; Containing Full Statements of Their Doctrines, Government and Condition, and Memoirs of Their Founder, Joseph Smith* (New York: Miller, Orton and Co., 1857), 37–39.
 6. Joseph Knight, in his recollections of early Church History written “sometime” between 1833 and 1847, remembered the story this way: “[Joseph Smith] began to be anxious to git them translated. He therefore with his wife drew of[f] the Caricters exactley like the ancient and sent Martin Harris to see if he could git them Translated. He went to Albeny and to Philadelpha and to new york and he found men that Could Translate some of the Carictors in all those places. Mitchel [Samuel L. Mitchill] and Anthony [Charles Anthon] of New York were the most Larded [learned], But there were some Caricters they could not well understand. Therefore Anthony told him that he thot if he had the original he culd translate it. And he rote a very good piece to Joseph and said if he would send the original he would translate it. But at Last Martin Harris told him that he Could not have the original for it was Commanded not to be shone. And he was mad and said what Does this mean, and he tore the paper that he wrote all to pieces and stampid it under his feet and said Bring me the original or I will not translate it. Mr Harris, seeing he was in a passion, he said, “well, I will go home and see, and if they can be had I will wright to you immediately.” So he Came home and told how it was and they went to him no more. Then was fulfild the 29th chapter of Isiah.” Dean C. Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection of Early Mormon History,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 1 (Autumn 1976): 34–35; original spelling retained.
 7. Kimball, “The Anthon Transcript,” 337. See also Vogel, *Joseph Smith—The Making of a Prophet*, 116.
 8. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:20. See also *Times and Seasons*, May 2, 1842, 772–73.
 9. Joseph Smith, History, circa summer 1832, in Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844*, vol. 1 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2012), 15.
 10. *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 402.
 11. See Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 270–73, 352. See also John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* (Philadelphia: W. J. and J. K. Simon; New York: Robert Carter, 1842), 232–38. Some have tried strenuously to debunk it as a hoax while others have made a painstaking comparison of the characters written on the one

transcript that has survived. Writing over sixty years ago, Ariel L. Crowley wrote a three-part series of articles in the Church-owned *Improvement Era* in which he offered a surprisingly candid and somewhat convincing argument, based on a careful comparison of the “caractors,” that they showed strong parallels to the hieratic or demotic forms of a later Egyptian cursive language. See Ariel L. Crowley, “The Anthon Transcript: An Evidence for the Truth of the Prophet’s Account of the Origin of the Book of Mormon,” *Improvement Era*, January 1942, 14–15, 58–60; February 1942, 74–80, March 1942, 150–52, 182–83. Several Book of Mormon apologists since, in what critics have dismissed as “parallelomania,” have tried to show similarities of the writings to “Merotic” and other forms of “Reformed Egyptian.” Some have even compared them to Native American writings and have tried to translate them as part of the Jaredite exodus to the New World as recounted in the Book of Mormon. For a very careful, albeit sympathetic review of this topic, see David E. Sloan, *The Anthon Transcripts and the Translation of the Book of Mormon: Studying It Out in the Mind of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1996), 57–81. For a negatively critical study, see William L. Moore, “The 1823 Detroit Manuscript: A Book of Mormon Prequel.” See also Stan and Polly Johnson, *Translating the Anthon Transcript* (Parowan, UT: Ivory Books, 1999).

12. The Anthon transcript, a slip of paper 8 × 3¼ inches wide, passed into the hands of David Whitmer. After his death in 1888, the transcript remained in the custody of the Whitmer family, which eventually sold it to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in April 1902.
13. Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1:101.
14. Charles Anthon to Eber D. Howe, February 17, 1834, as cited in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 271–72. See also Charles Anthon to Rev. T. W. Coit, April 3, 1841, as cited in John Clark, *Gleanings by the Way*, 232–38.
15. Recent research stemming from the Joseph Smith Papers Project convincingly shows that, based on handwriting analysis, the Anthon transcript described above was not written by Joseph Smith in 1828 but by John Whitmer in 1829 and therefore could not have been the one Harris displayed in New York City. In all likelihood it was a copy of an earlier facsimile, “likely derived from one of the documents that Joseph Smith created in the winter of 1827 and 1828.” MacKay, Dirkmaat, and Jensen, “The ‘Caractors’ Document,” 137.
16. William W. Phelps to E. D. Howe, January 15, 1831. I am indebted to my colleagues Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter for bringing this source to my attention. See their forthcoming biography tentatively entitled *Martin Harris: A Witness of the Book of Mormon*.
17. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1867), 41–42. Who the “others” may have been is still unknown.
18. Memorandum, made by John H. Gilbert Esq., Sept. 8th, 1892, Palmyra, NY: Palmyra King’s Daughters Free Library, as cited in *Early Mormon Documents*, comp. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 2:546–47. Fayette Lapham is reported to have had an interview with Joseph Smith Sr. in 1829,

but did not record it until 1870. According to his account, it was Joseph Smith himself who met with Luther Bradish in Franklin County, New York. Bradish could not read “the strange characters” shown him and advised Smith “to return home and go into other business.” Fayette Lapham, “Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, Forty Years Ago. His Account of the Finding of the Sacred Plates.” *Historical Magazine* [2nd Series] 7 (May 1870): 305–9, as cited in *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:456–57. Considering the many inaccuracies of fact in this reminiscence, its lateness in writing and its spiteful, caustic tone, one must be careful about trusting this account implicitly. It was Harris, not Joseph Smith, who visited Bradish and it was in Albany, not Franklin County, where their meeting took place.

19. Bennett, “‘Read This I Pray Thee’: Martin Harris and the Three Wise Men of the East,” *Journal of Mormon History* 36, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 178–216. See also his “A Very Particular Friend: Luther Bradish,” in the forthcoming *Approaching Antiquity: The Ancient World in Joseph Smith’s Mormonism*, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015).
20. P[hilip] Grandin to Luther Bradish, April 18, 1829, Luther Bradish Papers, New York Historical Society. Philip Grandin was a brother of E. B. Grandin.
21. Cooper was a then a rising voice in American historical romantic novels of frontier and Indian life in early America. He had published his first novel, *Precaution*, in 1820. His much better and commercially more successful work, *The Spy*, came out the following year. After writing *The Pilot* and *Lionel Lincoln*, he published arguably his greatest work, *The Last of the Mohicans*, with Isaac Carey and Isaac Lea Publishers of Philadelphia.
22. Rev. Joseph Colt to Luther Bradish, October 30, 1827, Luther Bradish Papers, New York Historical Society. The fact is many others from all around the state were asking him for money. See, for instance, Martin Wilkins to Luther Bradish, June 14, 1829, Luther Bradish Papers, New York Historical Society.
23. Samuel Griscom Diary, May 24, 1824, New York Historical Society.
24. For example, see New York State Board of Agriculture, *An Examination into the Expediency of Establishing a Board of Agriculture in the State of New York* (Brooklyn: E. Worthington, 1819), 47–50. For his discovery of ancient mastadons, see *American Monthly* 1, no. 3 (July 1817): 195–96 and 2, no. 1 (November 1817): 46–47, 56–57.
25. Felix Pascali, MD, *Essay on the Life and Character of the Honorable Samuel Latham Mitchill, M. D. . . . October 15, 1831* (New York: American Argus Press, 1831), 22.
26. John W. Francis, *Reminiscences of Samuel Latham Mitchill* (New York: J. F. Trow, 1859), 26. “Dr. Mitchill’s Letters from Washington: 1801–1813,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 58, no. 347 (April 1879): 740. Ronald E. Shaw, *Erie Water West: A History of the Erie Canal, 1792–1854* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), 94.
27. Among the better-known published works on Egyptian hieroglyphics available in 1828 were Jean-Pierre Rigord’s longstanding *Memoire de Trevoux*, first

- published in 1704, Georg Zoega's *Du Origine et Usu Obeliscorum* (1797), *Les Description d'Egypte*, (1809), Thomas Young's *Museum Criticum VI* (1815), and Jean-Francois Champollion's famous *Lettre a M. Dacier* (1822) and his follow-up work, *Precis du Systeme Hieroglyphique* (1824). The latter two works of Champollion not only gave facsimiles of hieroglyphs but code-breaking translations. How many of these works Anthon or Mitchill had in their possession or were aware of is impossible to determine. For a good study on this topic, see Maurice Pope, *The Story of Decipherment—From Egyptian Hieroglyphs to Maya Script*, rev. ed. (London: Thomas and Hudson, 1999), chapters 2 and 3.
28. Francis, "Reminiscences of Samuel Latham Mitchill," 16–18. At one time he gave a "profound exegetical disquisition upon Kennicott's Hebrew Bible in disproof of the interpretations of Gershom Seixas, the great Jewish rabbi of the age." Beverly Smith, *The Lantern*, College Papers.
 29. Mitchill, "Discourse on Thomas Jefferson," 15.
 30. Samuel L. Mitchill, *A Lecture on Some Parts of the Natural History of New Jersey. Delivered Before the Newark Mechanic Association . . . 3 June 1828* (New York: Elliott and Palmer, 1828).
 31. Letter of Samuel L. Mitchill of New York to Samuel M. Burnside, Esq., Corresponding Secretary of the American Antiquarian Society, January 13, 1817, as published in *Archaeologia Americana: Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* (1885; repr., Worcester, MA: Jonshon Reprint, 1971), 1:314–15.
 32. E. Howitt, *Selections from Letters Written During a Tour of the United States, in the Summer and Autumn of 1819 Illustrative of the Character of the Native Indians, and Their Descent from the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel* (Nottingham, England: J. Dunn, 1819).
 33. *Archaeologia Americana*, 324–25. Mitchill went on to write Clinton in 1816 that "the northern tribes were probably more hardy, ferocious, and warlike than those of the south" and that "the hordes dwelling in the higher latitudes have overpowered the more civilized, though feebler inhabitants of the countries situated towards the equator. . . . The surviving race in these terrible conflicts between the different nations of the ancient natives residents of North America, is evidently that of the Tartars." *Archaeologia Americana*, 326.
 34. Samuel L. Mitchill to John W. Francis, September 13, 1816, Samuel L. Mitchill Collection, Rare Books Dept., Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard University Library, Boston.
 35. From an original twenty-nine-page holograph journal of James Gordon Bennett, June 12–August 18, 1831. Bennett's holograph journal tells of his journey through upstate New York, part of the time in company with Martin Van Buren, Benjamin F. Butler, and Nathaniel S. Benton. Special Collections, New York Public Library, New York City.
 36. LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (1950; repr., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 49.