One of the great strengths of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is its institutional vitality. Expanding from six members in 1830 to fourteen million in 2010, its capacity to govern and manage an ever-enlarging membership with a bureaucracy flexible enough to provide for communication and growth but tight enough to ensure control and stability is an important but little-known story.

The essential functions of the Church were doctrinally mandated from its earliest years, and the commands to keep records have assured that accounts of its activities have been maintained. Such historical records created the essential informational basis necessary to run the institution. These records range from membership to financial to the institutional records of the various units of the Church, from the First Presidency to branches in the mission field.

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A Firm Foundation

The study of Latter-day Saint ecclesiology has been a challenge until recently. As yet, the best studies remain in scholarly monographs, often unknown or unavailable. It is the purpose of this essay to highlight this emerging literature by complementing the essays assembled in this volume.

OUTLINE

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    - The Succession Crisis
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Contemporary Publications

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Specific Priesthood Offices and Quorums
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**Women and Administrative History**
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**The Church and Its Mission: A Theology of Church Government**

**HISTORICAL STUDIES**

*General histories.* To date, this volume is the most comprehensive one-volume history of Church administration. A corrective to earlier notions that the real administrative genius of Mormonism was Brigham Young is the careful study of Joseph Smith’s organizational abilities in Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), especially 109–26, 251–69. D. Michael Quinn has produced two volumes on the major presiding quorums: *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books with Smith Research Associates, 1994) and *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books with Smith Research Associates, 1997). Quinn’s studies have been influenced by Michel Foucault’s work and tend to overemphasize raw administrative power (such as
its use of violence and extended marriage relationships) to maintain and expand its control. His scholarship, while important, tends to move the Mormon story to peripheral areas such as criminal behavior, gender issues, and the folk beliefs of the membership. Quinn’s earlier studies foreshadowing these include “Organizational Development and Social Origins of the Mormon Hierarchy, 1832–1932” (master’s thesis, University of Utah, 1973); “The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832–1932: An American Elite” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1976); “From Sacred Grove to Sacral Power Structure,” Dialogue 17 (Summer 1984): 9–34; and other articles to be noted in specific sections of this essay.


Other studies which are useful for understanding the foundational structures are Neil K. Coleman, “A Study of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as an Administrative System, Its Structure and Maintenance” (PhD diss., New York University, 1967); Edward Allen Warner, “Mormon Theodemocratic Elements in Early Latter-day Saint Ideology, 1827–1846” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1973); and Mario
DePillis, “Mormon Communitarianism, 1826–1846” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1961).


Mormon Administrative and Organizational History: A Source Essay


Mormon Administrative and Organizational History: A Source Essay

Mormons gathered converts throughout the nineteenth century into these centers to be near their prophet and to apply the teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ in their lives: the goal of these Mormon communities was to provide sacred space for the making of Saints. While the ward replaced the village ideal in the twentieth century, the goals have remained the same.


The succession crisis. The crisis in the Church at the time of Joseph Smith’s sudden death in June 1844 can be explained in large measure by the evolutionary nature of Church government prior to 1844. Joseph Smith had apparently thought of at least eight different ways or modes of succession as reflected in the changing nature of Church administration. While recent study shows that the most immediately viable leadership mode was
by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, their position at the time was not publicly obvious to everyone. This public administrative uncertainty helps explain other leadership claims after 1844.

D. Michael Quinn surveys eight different modes of succession in “The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844,” BYU Studies 16, no. 2 (Winter 1976): 187–233. Essays specifically addressing the special blessing motif are D. Michael Quinn, “Joseph Smith III’s 1844 Blessing and the Mormons of Utah,” John Whitmer Historical Association Journal 1 (1981): 12–27, reprinted in Dialogue 15 (Summer 1982): 69–90; and Roger Launius, “Joseph Smith III and the Mormon Succession Crises, 1844–1846,” Western Illinois Regional Studies 6 (Spring 1983): 5–22. Both essays were written with the assumption that a recently found account of the blessing was authentic, but the item turned out to be a Mark Hofmann forgery. These are included here because there were special blessings or rumors of such when Joseph Smith was alive, and these, no doubt, will be the topic of future research.

The semisecret Council of Fifty, organized by Joseph Smith in 1844 and for years thought to be the real administrative and political power behind the scenes, has been the subject of a number of studies. The first were James R. Clark, “The Kingdom of God, the Council of Fifty, and the State of Deseret,” Utah Historical Quarterly 26 (April 1958): 131–48; and Hyrum L. Andrus, Joseph Smith and World Government (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1958). In 1967 the most scholarly study appeared: Klaus J. Hansen, Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967). All these presented a monolithic model of a religio-political machine actively seeking for world domination. But the availability of new documents has forced a major revision in the understanding of this organization, beginning with D. Michael Quinn, “The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945,” BYU Studies 20, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 163–97; and Andrew F. Ehat, “It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God,” BYU Studies 20 (Spring 1980): 253–79. See also Marvin S. Hill, “Quest for Refuge: An Hypothesis as to
the Social Origins and Nature of the Mormon Political Kingdom,” *Journal of Mormon History* 2 (1975): 3–20, and Peter Crawley, “The Constitution of the State of Deseret,” *Friends of the Harold B. Lee Library Newsletter* 19 (1982), reprinted in *BYU Studies* 29, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 7–22. Current thinking suggests that this council was more symbolic than actual; perhaps a kind of contingent millennial organization in Mormon thinking given their expectations of the possible ending of the governments of the world. All of this must remain speculative until the original minute book of the Council of Fifty, owned by the Church, is made available for research.

Another group, known as the Quorum of the Anointed, was also semi-secret in Nauvoo before Joseph Smith’s death. Andrew F. Ehat suggests how central the temple and its sacred ordinances were for those claiming succession in “Joseph Smith’s Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1982). For more information on those Joseph Smith invited into this initial select group, see Devery S. Anderson, “The Anointed Quorum in Nauvoo, 1842–45,” *Journal of Mormon History* 29 (Fall 2003): 137–57; and *Joseph Smith’s Quorum of the Anointed, 1842–1845: A Documentary History*, ed. Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005).

More recent scholarship has shown that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were the key leaders of both the Council of Fifty and the Quorum of the Anointed. Ronald K. Esplin looks at the development of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in “The Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve to Mormon Leadership, 1830–1841” (PhD diss., BYU, 1981). Esplin brings the story past 1841 in “Joseph, Brigham and the Twelve: A Succession of Continuity,” *BYU Studies* 21 (Summer 1981): 304–41; and in “‘A Place Prepared’: Joseph, Brigham and the Quest for Promised Refuge in the West,” *Journal of Mormon History* 9 (1982): 85–111. The full story of the first apostolic missions to the British Isles and their impact on the preparation and emergence of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to Church leadership is presented in great detail in James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission: The Quorum of the Twelve*

follow the Church west with Brigham Young is Steven L. Shields, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration*, 3rd ed. (Bountiful, UT: Restoration, 1982); and *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism*, ed. Newell G. Bringhamurst and John C. Hamer (Independence, MO: John Whitmer Books, 2007). Most of the dissenters were unable to sustain a viable organization, and thus few of the new churches survived the death of their founders. The complex history of modern fundamentalism, dating from the era when the practice of plural marriage was abandoned by the Church, is detailed in Brian C. Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations after the Manifesto* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006).

1847–77. No complete study exists that deals with Brigham Young as an administrator. The early attempt in Utah in the 1850s under Brigham Young’s direction to establish the law of consecration, its general failure, and the subsequent Mormon Reformation to recommit members to their covenant obligations in 1856 are important to understanding both the deep religiosity of President Young and the zeal and rhetoric that were a part of the sermonizing of the time. These matters are discussed in Paul H. Peterson, “The Mormon Reformation” (PhD diss., BYU, 1981); Peterson, “The Mormon Reformation of 1856–57: The Rhetoric and the Reality,” *Journal of Mormon History* 15 (1989): 59–87; Peterson, “Brigham Young and the Mormon Reformation,” in *The Lion of the Lord, Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 244–61. The first appearance of catechisms for teaching the children of Mormon families first appeared during this time. They were published by John Jaques, *Catechism for Children*. . . (Liverpool: Franklin D. Richards, 1854). They were printed in large editions into the 1870s. See also Davis Bitton, “Mormon Catechisms,” in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith, Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, ed. Donald W. Perry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2002), 407–32; and the essay by Ken Alford in this volume. For a useful introduction of administrative structures in England, see William G. Hartley, “LDS Pastors and Pastorates,


Aaronic Priesthood callings, held mostly by adult males during this period, are detailed in William G. Hartley, “Ordained and Acting Teachers in the Lesser Priesthood, 1851–1883,” BYU Studies 16, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 375–98; Douglas Gene Pace, “The LDS Presiding Bishopric, 1851–1888: An Administrative Study” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1978); Douglas Gene Pace, “Community Leadership on the Mormon Frontier: Mormon Bishops and the Political, Economic, and Social Development of Utah Before Statehood” (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1983); and Douglas Gene Pace, “Changing Patterns of Mormon Financial Administration: Traveling Bishops, Regional Bishops and Bishop’s Agents, 1857–88,” BYU Studies 23, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 183–95. Also valuable are the essays on Bishop Edward Hunter by William Hartley and on Elijah Sheets, the longest-serving bishop in Mormon history (forty-eight years!) by Gene Pace in Donald Q. Cannon and David J. Whittaker, eds., Supporting Saints: Life Stories of Nineteenth-Century Mormons (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1985). Until the end of the 1850s, Mormon wards had two leaders: a bishop with Aaronic Priesthood functions and a presiding high priest with Melchizedek Priesthood functions. Having two leaders did not always work out well, and Brigham Young finally combined the two functions under one office, a pattern that has continued down to the present.


The continuing changes to the priesthood structures (especially in the emergence of the Aaronic Priesthood as a useful avenue for the training of the young men as missionaries and for leadership responsibilities)

1919–2000. No comprehensive study exists on the creation of the Corporation of the President in 1921 or Zion’s Security Corporation in 1922, or for that matter any of the corporate structures that dominate the administrative structure of the contemporary Church. Some of the basic information is presented in Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985). This work includes information on Church education, the building programs, welfare programs, missionary work, correlation, and much information on Church statistics. Another useful volume of information is Richard O. Cowan and Wilson K. Anderson, *The Unfolding Programs and Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints During the Twentieth Century* (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 1974).

The Church has selectively borrowed and adapted from other organizations programs that seem to offer assistance for its goals. For example, the Methodist Sunday School program was brought into the Church by British converts and remains an important program today. Another study of the impact


Students of the welfare program of the Church must begin with the programs of Joseph Smith. The best place to begin to study the developments from the 1930s on is with Arrington, Fox, and May, Building the City of God, 337–58. The Church Securities Program of 1936, which launched the modern Mormon welfare program, can be understood as more of a Utah complement to the New Deal programs of Franklin D. Roosevelt rather than as alternative to them. See also Albert L. Fisher, “Mormon Welfare Programs: Past and Present,” Social Science Journal 15 (April 1978): 75–99; Jessie L. Embry, “Relief Society Grain Storage Program, 1876–1940” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1974); David R. Hall, “Amy Brown Lyman and Social Service Work in the Relief Society” (master’s thesis, BYU,
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to maintain its identity by drawing closer to Protestant fundamentalism, and in effect, coming dangerously close to losing its historic identity. For Thomas O’Dea’s ideas, see *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); and “Sources of Strain in Mormon History Reconsidered,” in *Mormonism and American Culture*, ed. Marvin S. Hill and James B. Allen (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 147–68. The issues are too complex to discuss here, but the bibliography in Mauss’s work will lead the researcher to the larger literature.


Reflections on the recent developments to simplify Church programs are James B. Allen, “‘Course Corrections’: Some Personal Reflections,” *Sunstone* 14 (October 1990): 34–40, as well as the essays by J. Lynn England and Marie Cornwall in the same issue. See also John P. Livingstone, “Establishing the Church Simply,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 127–63. While there are important reasons for the simplifying of Church meetings and activities to a three-hour block on Sunday, Armand Mauss has argued that the reduction in Church meetings, which in the past could require almost daily Church meetings and activities has significantly challenged and thereby weakened the Mormon historic sense of community.

CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS


Joseph Smith’s administrative leadership can be seen in the various minute books of early Church and quorum meetings and conferences and in his correspondence, but he also addressed a number of priesthood and administrative matters in his sermons. Many can be found in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1980), under the following dates: August 8, 1839; October 5, 1840 (the only known address Joseph specifically prepared a text for); January 5, 1841; January 29, 1843; August 27, 1843; March 10, 1844; April 7, 1844; May 12, 1844; and June 16, 1844. There are also his more private addresses to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, many of which are contained in the journals and notebooks of Willard Richards and Wilford Woodruff, manuscripts in the Church History Library.

Some of the Prophet’s addresses and editorials appeared in early Mormon publications such as *The Evening and the Morning Star*, the *Latter-day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, the *Elders’ Journal*, and the *Times and Seasons*; some were reprinted in the *Millennial Star* in England.
Several of Joseph Smith’s early followers also published on these topics. One of the earliest and perhaps the most influential was Parley P. Pratt, who issued his _Voice of Warning_ in New York City in 1837. Chapter 3, “The Kingdom of God,” influenced a number of writers and pamphleteers in early Mormonism, including his brother Orson as well as Benjamin Winchester, a Church leader in Philadelphia, whose _A History of the Priesthood from the Beginning of the World to the Present Time_ (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking, and Guilbert, 1843) was the first book-length study of the subject. Orson Pratt’s pamphlet series on _Divine Authority, or the Question, Was Joseph Smith Sent of God?_ (Liverpool: R. James, 1848) and _The Kingdom of God_ (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1848–49) were probably the main channels through which Joseph Smith’s and Parley Pratt’s ideas reached the majority of Latter-day Saint converts in the nineteenth century.

Brigham Young also left a mountain of documentary records which detail his administrative and organizational leadership. For his sermons, see _The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young_, ed. Richard S. Van Wagoner, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2010). Administrative record books, financial records, and extensive correspondence will provide some future historian all the material needed to tell the full story.

John Taylor, the third President of the Church, was the author of three works on this topic: _The Government of God_ (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1852), _Items on Priesthood Presented to the Latter-day Saints_ (Salt Lake City, 1881), and _Succession in the Priesthood_, a discourse of October 7, 1881 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902).

Many of these publications came as a result of a growing need within the Church for more information and internal coordination on various aspects of Church administration as it grew in size and complexity. Writers and editors of Church publications had tried at various times to address various questions relating to Church governance. While no survey of their work has been done, the following are representative of these attempts: Erastus Snow, “On Priesthood,” _Gospel Reflector_ (Philadelphia), April 15, 1841, 204–12; Thomas Ward, “On the Correction of Errors in Priesthood,”
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More lengthy works which addressed administrative questions included John Jaques, *Catechism for Children. Exhibiting the Prominent Doctrines for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Liverpool, 1854); Joseph Young, *History of the Organization of the Seventy* (Salt Lake City, 1878); John Jaques, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Its Priesthood Organization, Doctrines, Ordinance, and History* (Salt Lake City, 1882); and B. H. Roberts, *Succession in the Presidency* (Salt Lake City, 1894).

A rich source of contemporary addresses of Church leaders is the *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: R. James, 1854–1886). Most of the official statements of the Presidents of the Church to 1951, many of which deal with administrative and organizational matters, are gathered in James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75). Addresses of Church leaders after about 1880 were printed as Conference Reports, at first irregularly, but generally twice a year after 1900 to the present. In more recent years, the May and November issues of the *Ensign* are devoted to the April and October conferences respectively. Reports were also published for the Area Conferences held throughout the world in the 1970s. The importance of Church conferences for administrative history cannot be overemphasized, for in these public settings new programs were announced and counsel for success in the older ones were given. Important studies include Jay R. Lowe, “A Study of the General Conferences of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (PhD diss.,

One of the key factors in the vitality of the Church is the notion of living prophets, leaders that hold the keys of authority and revelation. Catholic and Protestant views of a closed canon have given rise to suspicion of the Mormon view of living prophets and an open canon, but these beliefs are critical to understanding Mormon administrative history and much more. General conference has been one of the major channels of the institutional glue for the Mormon community, a biannual meeting of all members where counsel, direction, new programs, and spiritual food are offered to the membership. A reporter from Harper’s Weekly caught the meaning of these conferences early when it reported that these meetings were “the post-office, newspaper, legislature, Bible, almanac, temporal, spiritual, and social director of the people” (Harper’s Weekly, December 4, 1858, 781, in Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 31). For a historical perspective of these matters, see James B. Allen, “Line upon Line: Church History Reveals How the Lord Has Continually Added to His People’s Knowledge and Understanding,” Ensign, July 1979, 32–39. For an overview of the physical locations of Church headquarters, see Keith W. Perkins, “From New York to Utah: Seven Church Headquarters,” Ensign, August 2001, 52–58. See also D. Michael Quinn, “LDS ‘Headquarters Culture’ and the Rest of Mormonism: Past and Present,” Dialogue 34 (Fall–Winter 2001): 135–64.

Members regularly sustain their leaders by voting in Church meetings and conferences. The idea of “common consent” is not fully democratic, as members are in reality sustaining the decisions already made by their
for the Aaronic Priesthood by the Church. Keeler’s work was an important influence on the appearance and content of John A. Widtsoe, comp., Priesthood and Church Government (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1939). Keeler’s contributions are discussed in Whittaker, “Joseph B. Keeler.”

Priesthood quorums of the Church at first selected their own course of study. The first seventy’s quorum study guide was B. H. Roberts, The Seventy’s Course in Theology (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1907). Appendix 3 in Widtsoe’s Priesthood and Church Government (1965 printing), 370–73, gives the study courses for the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums from 1908 to 1963. Since the 1960s, the Church has issued manuals for study in the priesthood quorums. Most recently, they have focused on the teachings of the presidents of the Church.

In addition to Church Correlation–produced manuals, more recent publications on this topic include Harold Glen Clark, Millions of Meetings (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955); Oscar W. McConkie Jr., The Kingdom of God (Salt Lake City: The Presiding Bishopric, 1962); Oscar W. McConkie Jr., God and Man (Salt Lake City: The Presiding Bishopric, 1963); Bruce R. McConkie, Common Consent (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973); Lee A. Palmer, Aaronic Priesthood through the Centuries (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964); Sterling W. Sill, Leadership, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958–1978); Harold Glen Clark, The Art of Governing Zion (Provo, UT: BYU, 1966); Bruce R. McConkie, Let Every Man Learn His Duty: The Ten Commandments of Priesthood Correlation and the Home Teaching Constitution (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976); Priesthood (essays by the General Authorities of the Church) (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981); Rulon G. Craven, Called to the Work: Guidelines for Effective Leadership in the Church (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985); and M. Russell Ballard, Counseling with Our Councils: Learning to Minister Together in the Church and in the Family (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997). Hugh Nibley’s classic essay still serves as a useful reminder of the challenges of leading versus managing and of the key importance of the


The various manuals for the priesthood quorums for the Church, especially those since the mid-1960s that have been especially written by Church writing committees, can be found in the Church History Library or the Harold B. Lee Library. Also valuable are the addresses by General Authorities at special seminars for regional representatives of the Twelve and for mission presidents, most of which are available in the Church History Library.
The early issues of the *Improvement Era* regularly published a series “Priesthood Quorum Table,” which kept leaders and members informed regarding administrative matters. Finally, the in-house communication bulletins, including those issued by the Presiding Bishop’s office, *Progress of the Church* (monthly, 1938–43), and *The Messenger* (monthly, 1957–64), and following the introduction of priesthood correlation in the 1960s, the *Priesthood Bulletin* (1965–74, issued six times per year) and *Bulletin* (1980–present) are important sources for more recent developments. A detailed index to the ten volumes of the *Priesthood Bulletin* prepared by Thomas G. Alexander is available in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library. Also important are the various editions of the *General Handbook of Instructions* (1976–2006), and various handbooks issued in recent years for each organization and priesthood leadership unit in the Church. In November 2010, two new Church Handbooks of Instruction were issued by the Church (see *Ensign*, November 2010, 74–75). Manuals remain important guidelines for leaders throughout the Church, but they are never to take the place of the scriptures or the critical role of continuing revelation in the Church. As President Packer explains, “There is a spiritual element beyond the procedures in the handbook. . . . There are principles of the gospel underlying every phase of Church administration. These are not explained in the handbooks [italics in original].” See Boyd K. Packer, “Principles,” *Ensign*, March 1985, 6-8.

**ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES**

*General Authorities.* In addition to the thesis and dissertation by D. Michael Quinn cited above, see his “From Sacred Grove to Sacral Power Structure,” *Dialogue* 17 (Summer 1984): 9–34, for a group portrait of the General Authorities to the 1930s. Most of the biographies of Church leaders have been “gestas,” or life histories that subordinated the organizational history itself. Thus most of the biographies written of General Authorities have lacked detailed information on administrative history. The exceptions are worth noting: D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years* (Provo,
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Missiology. Mormon history is mission history. From the Church’s earliest days, converts were commissioned to preach the gospel, and they gradually spread into the villages and hamlets of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri, and Upper Canada. By 1837, Mormon missionaries were moving into the larger cities and in 1837 undertook the first mission to England. The success of their missionary efforts forced leaders to address a variety of institutional and organizational matters. It was in a missionary context than many of the Church’s programs were first tried. Thus organization, emigration, publication, and finances were natural outgrowths of missionary work. There are many studies devoted to Mormon missiology. The first scholarly study was S. George Ellsworth, “A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830–1860” (PhD diss., University of California–Berkeley, 1951); a more recent study with much information on the makeup of the early missionary force is Rex Thomas Price Jr., “The Mormon Missionary of the Nineteenth Century” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1991). Gordon Irving, “Numerical Strength and Geographical Distribution of the LDS Missionary Force, 1830–1974,” Task Papers in LDS History, no. 1 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), is a very useful compilation of missionary statistics. An extensive guide is David J. Whittaker, “Mormon Missiology: An Introduction and Guide to the Sources,” in The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor
of Richard Lloyd Anderson, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 459–538. The growing trend among scholars to use economic models to understand the growth and development of religious movements has only recently been applied to the Church. To see prophets as religious entrepreneurs and investigators as potential consumers for whom the gospel must be “packaged” to obtain their market share can be seen as offensive or at least an incomplete way of understanding the process to most Latter-day Saints. This is especially so when they believe in the key role of the Holy Spirit in the conversion experience. A useful introduction to all these matters is Larry Witham, Marketplace of the Gods: How Economics Explains Religion (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Much of the more recent scholarship on the growth of the Church has taken a closer look at the diversity of both members and those called to lead them. In the 1970s, a time when the first large-scale surveys were beginning to be done, one study compared the beliefs and attitudes of a ward in the Oakland, California, with a ward on the Wasatch Front in Utah. Among other things, the survey found more liberal political and social attitudes (for example, on birth control, labor unions, and war) among members of the Bay Area ward than among the Utah ward. The survey also found a growing tendency of the Church to call white-collar workers rather than blue-collar laborers to leadership positions. Here, time constraints and educational backgrounds seem to have been a factor in their callings. This survey was based on a small sampling, but these matters are important for those who study Mormon organizational and administrative matters. For an overview, see the appendix “Survey Methods and Measurements” in Mauss, The Beehive and the Angel, 215–28. For the early studies, see Armand L. Mauss, “Moderation in All Things: Political and Social Outlooks of Modern Urban Mormons,” Dialogue 7 (Spring 1972): 57–69; Mauss, “Saints, Cities, and Secularism: Religious Attitudes and Behavior of Modern Urban Mormons,” Dialogue 7 (Summer 1972): 8–27; and J. Kenneth Davies, “The Accommodation of Mormonism and Political-Economic Reality,” Dialogue 3 (Spring


Communications and public relations remain important topics for administrative history. How the Church presents itself to the world, how it responds to criticism, and especially how it has used the most current forms of mass communication since its founding are important subjects of study, even though they are just beginning to go on the agendas of scholars. Several publications by Sherry Pack Baker will lead researchers to this literature: “Mormon Media History Timeline: 1827–2007,” BYU Studies 47, no. 4 (2008): 117–23; and “Mormons and the Media, 1898–2003: A Selected, Annotated and Indexed Bibliography,” BYU Studies 42, nos. 3 and 4 (2003): 125–89 (with Daniel Stout). Especially useful is James B. Allen, “Technology and the Church: A Steady Revolution,” in Deseret Morning News 2007
Grass roots. Following similar trends in the study of social history, Mormon scholars have been turning to new methods and sources to recover the lives and experiences of common members of the Church. Much of this has centered on the local community where Saints were gathered and shaped through much of Mormon history. Here the values of Mormonism were taught and fostered in the village of the nineteenth century and in the wards of more recent times. Mormon group solidarity and loyalty in the nineteenth century came from extended family connections, temple sealings, and a sense of being part of a covenant community. Its focus on the small community meant that there was less need for either an extensive bureaucracy or coordinated programs. This changed as membership grew and gradually came to be settled in more urban and modern locales, making the ward less autonomous and more connected to the larger centralized structure. One of the consequences of the correlation movement in the 1960s was the gradual loss of local autonomy and the standardizing of lesson materials prepared by centralized Church writing committees.

One of the main ways that members and their leaders, both local and general, have kept in touch with each other is the home teaching program. As a program for teachers (mostly adults in the nineteenth century) “watching over the Church” (D&C 20:53, 84:111), it has gone by various names: block teaching, home missionaries, ward teaching, and home teaching. Mostly informal in the earliest years, the concern of Church leaders in the 1850s to more systematically visit and teach members during the Mormon Reformation saw the program more firmly established. Concern with the laxness of members entering into the consecration program as well as a concern with some members wishing to leave the fold, pairs of priesthood holders would visit various homes to maintain contact with and to watch
over those families assigned to them. These home missionaries worked to get members recommitted to their covenants and to help them reevaluate their spiritual worthiness. Using printed catechisms, these teachers would, by asking questions, encourage personal repentance and renewed dedication. Most members were rebaptized during this period as part of this effort at reformation. As a program for caring, teaching and communication, it remains a major channel for Church leaders to feel the pulse of the membership; locally, it provides the bishops with regular contact with ward members, and if done right, can lift some of the burdens of leadership and administering from the bishop’s shoulders. Useful sources on this program include Gary L. Phelps, “Home Teaching: Attempts by the Latter-day Saints to Establish an Effective Program during the Nineteenth Century,” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1975); Rex A. Anderson, “A Documentary History of the Lord’s Way of Watching over the Church by the Priesthood through the Ages” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1974); Vernon L. Israelsen, “Changes in the Numbers and the Priesthood Affiliation of the Men used as Ward Teachers in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1920 to 1935” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1937). For the Mormon Reformation, see Paul H. Peterson, “The Mormon Reformation of 1856–1857: The Rhetoric and the Reality,” *Journal of Mormon History* 15 (1989): 59–87. The Church has issued guidelines for home teaching throughout the twentieth century, and the importance of the program has been regularly addressed in general, stake and ward conferences. At its heart was always the strengthening of the family in matters relating to the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A sampling of the home teaching literature includes David O. McKay, *Suggestions on Ward Teaching* (Salt Lake City: Presiding Bishop’s Office, General Committee on Priesthood Outlines, 1912); Bryant S. Hinckley, *Ward Teachers Handbook, 1946* (Salt Lake City: Presiding Bishop’s Office, 1946); *Suggestions for Home Teachers, 1965* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1964); *Priesthood Home Teaching Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: Priesthood Home Teaching Committee, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972); *Guidelines for Priesthood Home Teaching* (Salt Lake City: The
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Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980); The Home Teaching Visit: A Guide for Home Teachers (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1983); Bruce R. McConkie, Let Every Man Learn His Duty: The Ten Commandments of Priesthood Correlation and the Home Teaching Constitution (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976); Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Home Teachers of the Church” Ensign, May 1987, 48-51; Thomas S. Monson, “Home Teaching—A Divine Service,” Ensign, November 1997, 46–48; and Richard J. Marshall, Home Teaching with Purpose and Power (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990). A similar program, coordinated by the ward Female Relief Society, is visiting teaching, wherein women in pairs are assigned to visit their sisters in the ward each month. Monthly messages from Church leaders for both programs are contained in the Ensign.

Like their biblical models and their Puritan forebears, Mormons stressed the covenant in their relationships with each other and with their God. An understanding of this is central to studying Mormon history. An overview of the concept in the Church is presented in David J. Whittaker, “A Covenant People,” in The Seventh Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium: The Doctrine and Covenants (Provo, UT: Religious Instruction, BYU; Salt Lake City: Church Educational System, 1979), 196–216; and in shorter form in Ensign, August 1980, 36–40. See also Rex Eugene Cooper, Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990).

The early attempts of Mormons to establish their own communities are studied in Warren A. Jennings, “Zion Is Fled: the Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri” (PhD diss., University of Florida, 1962); Backman, The Heavens Resound, 63–81, 125–74, 262–83; David E. Miller and Della S. Miller, Nauvoo: The City of Joseph (Santa Barbara, CA; Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1974); Robert B. Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965); and Glen M. Leonard, Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2002).


In the twentieth century, the form of the Mormon community shifted from the village to the ecclesiastical ward. An interesting perspective is provided in Douglas D. Alder, “The Mormon Ward: Congregation or
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Colonization and settlement. Until recently both Mormon and non-Mormon historians have seen Latter-day Saint western colonization as a monolithic process directed by Brigham Young from Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. According to this scenario, Young established a firm base along the Wasatch Front and gradually expanded the Mormon settlements north and south, eventually penetrating the interior valleys. As an administrator and empire builder, Young wished to further control the main points of entry into the Great Basin, so he established further colonies at Las Vegas and San Bernardino to the southwest, in Carson Valley to the west, and in southern Idaho to the north. In all, Brigham Young is said to have established or planned about 360 settlements by his death in 1877. The traditional story is told most fully in Milton R. Hunter’s works, and especially in *Brigham Young the Colonizer*, 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1973).

One of the first scholars to challenge the traditional view was Eugene E. Campbell, “Brigham Young’s Outer Cordon—A Reappraisal,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 41 (Summer 1973): 220–53. Campbell pointed out that most of the outer settlements were not initially established under Brigham Young’s direction nor as part of a concerted effort at empire building. Some were established by disaffected members acting on their own, and others were established to control threats from Indians. Richard Sherlock, “Mormon Migration and Settlement after 1875,” *Journal of Mormon History* 2 (1975): 53–68, shows that later colonization was often undertaken by the
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initiative of various local leaders who felt the need to acquire new locations for their own rising generations.

Other studies have modified or changed traditional views such as the “trackless wilderness” as they have shown that the Mormons did not blaze any new trails in their westward immigration, nor did they find the Salt Lake Valley to be a treeless desert in 1847. See, for example, Lewis Clark Christian, “A Study of Mormon Knowledge of the Far West Prior to the Exodus (1830–February, 1846)” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1972); and Richard H. Jackson, “Myth and Reality: Environmental Perception of the Mormons, 1840–1865: An Historical Geosophy” (PhD diss., Clark University, 1970).

All of this is not to discredit Brigham Young’s administrative genius. As a colonizer he has no peers in American history, and a student of organizational history must not ignore this major dimension of early LDS history, for here few details were left to chance. From immigration and exploration to initial colonizing missions, Young did preside over the rapidly increasing settlement process. To say that not all colonies were under his direction is not to diminish his large accomplishments. Little wonder that almost all of his life was spent in administering the multitude of details of the Mormon settlement of the West. The variety of problems he confronted were intimately related to the evolving structure of the institution itself. Brigham Young’s extensive correspondence files in the Church History Library provide the details.

Meetinghouses and temples. The first structures built for worship were temples, and they and the sacred ordinances performed therein remain at the core of Mormon theology. The first structures for regular worship were not constructed until the Utah era. These meetinghouses varied in size and structure, being first built of wood, then brick, and then stone. The first large structures were tabernacles, temporary structures at first, then more solid buildings in Utah. The best place for a history and visual presentation of these important facilities for both worship and recreation is Richard W. Jackson, *Places of Worship: 150 Years of Latter-day Saint Architecture* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 2003). For a valuable guide to both ecclesiastical and vernacular structures of the Latter-day Saints, see Brad

*The Mormon Sabbath.* Before about 1852, Mormon Sunday meetings were less structured, and because there were no meetinghouses, meetings were usually held in the largest homes of members (much like the house churches of the New Testament). Larger meetings, where members could be instructed by their leaders, occurred in the Kirtland Temple, in barns of members, or in open areas, such as the “Grove” adjacent to the Nauvoo Temple. In 1852, Mormon meetings were standardized and were held on a community-wide basis in the tabernacle at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The nineteen
bishops in Salt Lake City took turns administering the sacrament during the afternoon meeting. One Thursday of each month, the ward met separately for fast and testimony meeting. This was the only time the members took the sacrament as a ward. Unlike today, the sacrament was prepared and passed to the congregation while the speaker gave his remarks to those assembled. In Edward Hunter’s ward, the speaker spoke while the bread was passed, and if he finished, the congregation sang a hymn while the water was being passed. After the sacrament came the closing prayer and the dismissal of the congregation. This summary is taken from Leonard J. Arrington, *From Quaker to Latter-day Saint: Bishop Edwin D. Woolley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 326–29.

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SPECIFIC OFFICES AND QUORUMS

General pattern. Before April 1830, Joseph Smith, with help from Oliver Cowdery, had outlined key doctrines and Church organization in a document now known as Doctrine and Covenants section 20. They drew heavily from the Book of Mormon. Having been given the necessary priesthood authority from heavenly messengers, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery officially organized the Church according to laws of the state of New York on April 6, 1830.

For the first few months, government for the infant organization was informal. Joseph Smith was recognized as the prophet and leader; Oliver Cowdery was his assistant and spokesman. The first years of Mormon history are the story of the growth from this informal government to an “oligarchy of leading elders.” By 1835, the basic contours of the Church’s administrative structure, the presiding quorums, were in place.

The Church began with five priesthood offices in 1830: Apostle, elder, priest, teacher, and deacon. The offices of bishop and high priest were added in 1831. But all of these early positions were local, held by lay members with no presiding authority. By 1831, Joseph Smith’s ecclesiastical position had been more clearly defined, but it was not until January 1832 that he was formally sustained by a conference vote as “president of the high priesthood.” Two weeks later he officially chose and ordained Jesse Gause and Sidney Rigdon as counselors. The Mormon hierarchy officially began with these March 8, 1832, calls. Early revelations and instructions from Joseph Smith established this First Presidency as the supreme authority on all matters relating to the Church.

The next major development was the organization of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on February 14, 1835. While men had been earlier ordained as Apostles, this act established a special unit of Church government. Although their responsibilities as a “traveling high council” were limited during the next six years to areas outside organized stakes, in time this quorum stood next to the First Presidency, and its senior member has
become, upon the death of every president beginning with Joseph Smith, the new leader of the Church.

The third presiding quorum in the Mormon hierarchy, the Seventy, was organized in 1835, two weeks after the organization of the Apostles into a quorum, when Joseph Smith began ordaining men to the office of Seventy. Their task was missionary work. They were organized into quorums of seventy men, with the first quorum as the presiding quorum and its first seven members as presidents of all the seventies in the Church. From the beginning, they were to receive instructions and directions from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles but were to “form a quorum equal in authority” to them (D&C 107:26). During the nineteenth century, most of the Church’s proselyting missionaries were seventies, yet with the exception of the Patriarch, the office of the Seventy in Church history is least understood. In 1985, all local seventies quorums were discontinued, but the first and second quorums were expanded and filled with General Authorities who have been given greater responsibility in managing the affairs of the Church worldwide. This pattern has continued with eight quorums in the Church today.

The fourth presiding unit in the Church hierarchy is the Presiding Bishopric. Edward Partridge, called on February 4, 1831, was the first bishop in the Church. He was joined in 1831 by Newel K. Whitney. Only gradually did their responsibilities become known to them and to the Church. Very early they were assigned to “watch over the Church” and to take an interest in the poor, with the special assignment of administering the donations received for the needy. By 1835, Joseph Smith had revealed that the bishops should also be judges in the Church and were to be responsible to the First Presidency. They were to preside over the lesser priesthood offices of deacon, teacher, and priest, and were to be increasingly concerned with the “temporal” or economic affairs of the Church (see D&C 107:15–17, 68–76, 88; Joseph Smith later added vv. 76–93 to this section). By 1839, two more bishops were called, but each had geographical responsibility
(Missouri and Ohio) for a loose group of members. Presiding authority remained undefined.

It was during the Nauvoo period (1839–46) that, originally for voting and labor tithing purposes, wards were first organized. In time these subdivisions became useful ecclesiastical units over which a bishop took responsibility. The office of Presiding Bishop was first designated in 1840, but no Presiding Bishop functioned until 1847.


*Prophet, seer, revelator.* In a revelation to the Church on April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith Jr. was designated “a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ” (D&C 21:1). The Hebrew word for prophet is *nabi* and literally translates as “to bubble, or to boil,” and seems to be related to the Akkadian *nabu* “to call, or announce.” Hence the title is given to one who is called or one who announces, as in revealing the divine will. The Old Testament speaks of certain individuals who were called of God, those who spoke to and for God. In his perceptive study of the prophets of ancient Israel, Abraham Heschel spoke of the prophet as a witness, a messenger, and an assayer. His greatness “lies not only in the ideas he expressed, but also in the moments he experienced.” Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets: An Introduction* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 1:20–22.

The Old Testament suggests a development from ecstatic seers to prophets (1 Samuel 9:9). As Joseph Smith sought to understand his gifts, he surely looked to the Bible and Book of Mormon for models of religious leadership. It should not surprise us that his own sense of calling was worked out within the context of Biblical precedents as he received additional revelation and divine tutoring on specific matters. This helps explain the heavy emphasis on the Old Testament in the earliest years of Mormonism, for it was there that the clearest prophetic models were found. Also critical was the Book of Mormon, as John Welch’s essay herein clearly shows. Joseph only gradually moved the Church from a loose, rather
democratic movement to a more hierarchical, pyramidal structure, the outlines of which were in place by 1835.

Thus the Hirum Page episode in September 1830 (see D&C 28) is best seen as the first serious challenge to Joseph’s leadership, when a follower had his own seer stone through which he was receiving revelation. This was consistent in the early years, as everyone stood somewhat equal in these matters. But in section 28, Joseph’s revelations were to be given priority over everyone else’s for the Church as a whole. This was surely a necessary development, if for no other reason than to keep some order in the growing movement. But it also helped to push the early democratic elements back. Early associates of Joseph Smith came to interpret this growing authoritarianism as a serious breach of the origins of the movement. On Hirum Page, see Bruce G. Stewart, “Hiram Page: An Historical and Sociological Analysis of an Early Mormon Prototype” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1987); for the attitudes of the Whitmers, see David Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ (1888); John Whitmer, From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer, ed. Bruce N. Westergren (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995). For further analysis of this point see Whittaker, “The Book of Daniel in Early Mormon Thought.”

From an administrative perspective, these changes not only reveal Joseph Smith’s organizational genius but also surely enabled the movement to survive and grow during periods of strong criticism and forced moves throughout the nineteenth century and to adjust to the changing world of the twentieth century.

Councils and conferences. In the earliest months following the organization of the Church, Joseph Smith regularly gathered members into meetings that he identified as conferences (the term was also used for geographical divisions in the mission field). In these meetings, business was conducted, various matters were discussed and voted on, and individuals were given various Church assignments. On a smaller scale, these meetings were called councils (in the beginning, these terms were interchangeable), and a leader was appointed to preside over these meetings, as was a clerk to take minutes
of the proceedings. In 1831, twelve conferences were held in about three months in addition to a general conference in November. In these meetings men were trained in administrative matters and also brought to accountability for misconduct. In these meetings, members were to seek revelation for themselves as they made decisions regarding administrative matters. As Richard Bushman suggests, it was these councils that made the Church self-governing, as Joseph Smith did not need to be present for the councils to function.

As the Church membership grew and as Joseph identified two centers of gathering, it was necessary to expand the governing capacity of these councils. The first step was to form high councils (composed of twelve high priests, with a president and two counselors) to regulate Church affairs in two locations: the Kirtland high council was organized in February 1834, and a few months later a second high council was organized in Clay County, Missouri. The Kirtland high council seems to have been intended as a council for the whole Church, and it seems that both high councils were intended to function as city councils for the two centers of Mormon gathering. These two governing bodies were to provide leadership where the Church was established, but there still remained two problems for the Church organization to address: what group should have jurisdiction in the mission field, and just what was the relationship of these high councils to Joseph Smith? Developments after 1834 addressed many of these concerns. For more information on the early councils and conferences, see Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 251–69; Bushman, “The Theology of Councils,” 433–45; Kathleen Flake, “From Conferences to Councils: The Development of LDS Church Organization, 1830–1835,” in *Archive of Restoration Culture: Summer Fellows’ Papers, 1997–1999* (Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Latter-day Saint History, BYU, 2000), 1–8; David Holland, “Priest, Pastor, and Power: Joseph Smith and the Question of Priesthood,” in *Archive of Restoration Culture*, 91–96; Jason Lindquist, “‘Unlocking the Door of the Gospel’: The Concept of ‘Keys’ in Mormonism and Early American Culture,” in *Archive of Restoration Culture*, 29–42; J. Spencer Fluhman,
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The First Presidency. On January 25, 1832, Joseph Smith was officially sustained by a Church conference as president of the high priesthood. On March 8, 1832, he chose Jesse Gause and Sidney Rigdon as his counselors, and with these calls the Mormon hierarchy began. Together they comprised the First Presidency. The early revelations clearly established this quorum as the top administrative unit in the Church, with final say on all matters regarding the Church (see D&C 107:8, 22, 79–80).

Early direction to the office of counselor was given in a revelation dated March 15, 1832, to Jesse Gause (see D&C 81). Frederick G. Williams replaced Gause the next year, and Gause seems to have disappeared from history. Two studies that discuss the life of the first man called as a counselor in the First Presidency are Robert J. Woodford, “Jesse Gause—Counselor to the Prophet,” BYU Studies 15, no. 3 (Spring 1975): 362–64; D. Michael Quinn, “Jesse Gause: Joseph Smith’s Little-Known Counselor,” BYU Studies 23, no. 4 (Fall 1983): 487–93; and most completely, Erin B. Jennings, “The Consequential Counselor: Restoring the Root(s) of Jesse Gause,” Journal of Mormon History 34 (Spring 2008): 182–227. On Williams, see Frederick G. Williams, “Frederick Granger Williams of the First Presidency of the Church,” BYU Studies 12, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 243–61.

The first real challenge to Joseph Smith’s claims to hold the keys, or directing and presiding authority, of the priesthood came shortly after the organizing of the First Presidency. In early July, 1832, with Gause absent on a mission and Joseph Smith living in Hiram, Ohio, Rigdon called a meeting in Kirtland in which he claimed that the Church no longer had the keys of the priesthood. Hyrum rode south to get Joseph, who returned to Kirtland and spent the next few weeks doing damage control. Rigdon was released from the First Presidency, and Joseph spent part of the month thinking about these matters. Joseph’s first autobiographical statement was
prepared during this time, and it centers on his right for claiming the keys of the priesthood: “the Keeyes of the Kingdom conferred upon him” was a forceful if short summary of the visionary experiences that brought the heavenly keys to him (in it he outlines his revelatory experiences: a testimony from on high, the ministering of angels, the reception of the holy priesthood, and a confirmation and reception of the holy priesthood), and it provides the only account we have of his First Vision in his own hand. For the text of this history, see Personal Writings of Joseph Smith, comp. and ed. Dean C. Jessee, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2002), 9–20; on Rigdon’s release and reinstatement, see Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, July 31, 1832, in Personal Writings of Joseph Smith, 273 (“after repenting like Peter of old, has been restored to his high standing”), and Hyrum Smith, diary, July 29, 1832, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, BYU). The scribe for this early history was Frederick G. Williams, who would become Joseph Smith’s counselor the next year, replacing Gause.

Few good studies have been done on the men who have served as counselors to the President of the Church. Important exceptions are Jeffrey S. O’Driscoll, Hyrum Smith: A Life of Integrity (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003); Andrew F. Smith, The Saintly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Stanley B. Kimball, Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Kimball, “Brigham and Heber,” BYU Studies 18, no. 3 (Spring 1978): 396–409; Gene A. Sessions, Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Michael K. Winder, John R. Winder: Member of the First Presidency, Pioneer, Temple Builder, Dairyman (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publishers, 1999); D. Michael Quinn, Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002); Eugene E. Campbell and Richard D. Poll, Hugh B. Brown: His Life and Thought (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975); G. Homer Durham, N. Eldon Tanner: His Life and Service (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982). See also N. Eldon Tanner,

The office of Assistant or Associate President in the early Church also provided extra counselors for the President. Oliver Cowdery was appointed as Assistant President on December 5, 1834. The next day Joseph Smith Sr. and Hyrum Smith were called to the same position. Of the three, only Oliver’s calling was one of joint leadership with Joseph Smith with rights of succession. See Quinn, “Evolution of the Presiding Quorums,” 25. Also valuable is Robert Glen Mouritsen, “The Office of Associate President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1972).

*Scribes and clerks.* An important dimension in Mormon administrative history is the critical role that clerks and scribes and secretaries played in the creation and maintenance of Church records. Joseph Smith depended on personal scribes and secretaries during his presidency, as have his successors. One could almost suggest the existence of a scribal culture in Mormonism, from the important work of Oliver Cowdery in the earliest years to those who continue this nonpublic function in Mormon organizational/administrative history. Joseph Smith used such individuals as William W. Phelps to draft letters and documents for him, and the key role of Willard Richards in keeping the Prophet’s Nauvoo journals and in the shaping of his history is critical for understanding the records and history of his presidency. For information on the calling/assignment, the following works are suggestive: Robin S. Jensen, “‘Rely upon the Things Which Are Written’: Text, Context, and the Creation of Mormon Revelatory Records” (master’s thesis, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, 2009); Stanley R. Gunn, *Oliver Cowdery: Second Elder and Scribe* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962); *Days Never to Be Forgotten: Oliver Cowdery*, ed. Alexander Baugh (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 2009); Howard C. Searle, “Willard Richards as Historian,” *BYU Studies* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 41–62; Jerald F. Simon, “Thomas Bullock as an Early Mormon Historian,” *BYU Studies* 30 (Winter 1990): 71–88; James B. Allen, *Trials of Discipleship: The Story*

The presiding patriarch. Probably the least understood office in the Church, the first patriarch was designated by Joseph Smith in December 1833 or 1834. In a blessing on his own father’s head, Joseph said “he shall be called a prince over his posterity, holding the keys of the patriarchal Priesthood over the Kingdom of God on earth, even the Church of the Latter-day Saints.” “Patriarchal Blessing Book,” 1:9–10, manuscript, Church History Library. That same day, December 18, Joseph Smith Sr. was ordained “Patriarch and President of the High Priesthood.” There is some question as to the exact date of these events, whether it was December 1833 or December 1834, the earliest mention of Joseph Smith Sr. actually giving patriarchal blessings. It is unclear just whom he was to preside over; perhaps this is why he was also called as an Assistant President. See Irene M. Bates, “Patriarchal Blessings and the Routinization of Charisma,” Dialogue 26 (Fall 1993): 1–29.
The undefined nature of the presiding role of the Church Patriarch came into focus at Joseph Smith’s death and during the succession crisis that followed. William Smith’s claims that his position as Church Patriarch made him the new leader was denied by Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The potential tension remained in the Church until recently, when Eldred G. Smith was made patriarch emeritus in October 1979 and no replacement was called.


The office of stake patriarch has continued to function in the Church from its earliest days. Following the calling of the first Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1835 they were told in a revelation that “It is the duty of the Twelve in all the branches of the Church, to ordain evangelical ministers [defined by Joseph Smith as patriarchs] as they shall be designated unto them by revelation” (D&C 107:39). Their calling includes pronouncing special blessings, revealing or assigning lineages connected with the House of Israel, and giving inspired counsel to Church members. While worthy fathers are also patriarchs to their families and in that role can give blessings
to their family members, stake patriarchs also serve as fathers to those who lack either a living or an active earthly father. See Boyd K. Packer, “The Stake Patriarch,” *Ensign*, November 2002, 42-45.

*The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.* As early as 1830 the calling of Apostle was referred to in the revelations (see D&C 18:26–39; 20:2–3). In February 1835, following the New Testament pattern, twelve men were called to constitute a quorum of Church government. At first they were not given any presiding authority over already-organized stakes, but by 1842 Joseph brought the quorum into its position of key importance next to the First Presidency. After the initial years in the Great Basin, Brigham Young geographically decentralized the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles by assigning them to preside over various areas of Mormon settlement or on various missions. It was only in the 1890s that the quorum returned to its earlier unified structure. The full story of these early years is told in Quinn, “The Evolution of the Presiding Quorums,” 26–31; T. Edgar Lyon, “Nauvoo and the Council of the Twelve,” in *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, comp. F. Mark McKiernan, Alma Blair, and Paul M. Edwards (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1973), 167–205; Ronald K. Esplin, “The Emergence of Brigham Young and the Twelve to Mormon Leadership, 1830–1841” (PhD diss., BYU, 1981); Wilbur D. Talbot, “The Duties and Responsibilities of Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1835–1945” (PhD diss., BYU, 1977); and Talbot, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Salt Lake City: Randall Books, 1985).

The First Quorum(s) of Seventy. Shortly after the first Quorum of Twelve Apostles was called, Joseph Smith began calling men to be Seventies. On March 28, 1835, a revelation spelled out their duties: “The Seventy are also called to preach the gospel, and to be especial witness unto the Gentiles in all the world—thus differing from other offices in the church in the duties of their calling. And they form a quorum equal in authority to that of the Twelve special witnesses or Apostles just named” (D&C 107:25–26).

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The best-known members of the Seventy are the subjects of Truman G. Madsen, Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980); and J. Claude Richards, J. Golden Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966).

The Presiding Bishop. There was no functioning Presiding Bishop while Joseph Smith was alive. While Edward Partridge was appointed bishop on February 4, 1831, and Newel K. Whitney was called in December 1831, neither man was given authority over the other. Rather, they had regional responsibilities, one in Ohio, the other in Missouri. Only gradually did their duties become defined: they were to answer to the First Presidency; they were to preside over the lesser offices of deacon, teacher, and priest; and they were to concern themselves exclusively with the temporal affairs of the Church.

The first man to be designated as Presiding Bishop of the Church was Vinson Knight. This was in 1841, but his name was never presented to the Church for a vote, and it is clear he never functioned in this capacity before his death in July 1842. While there was some seniority ranking among the other bishops during the Nauvoo period, Newel K. Whitney was sustained
as the first functioning Presiding Bishop in April 1847. He was succeeded by Edward Hunter in April 1851.


Regional and area leaders. Reflective of the growth of the Church in the twentieth century was the creating of large geographical units to help facilitate the administration of the Church worldwide. Supervised and staffed by members of the Seventies quorums and responsible to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, these regional leaders have proved essential for the governing of an ever-enlarging Church.
An earlier attempt to provide General Authority leadership came in 1941, when Assistants to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were first called. Some thirty-eight men served in these callings before it was merged with the expansion of the Seventies quorums in 1976. A number of those who served as Assistants to the Twelve were later called into the Quorum of the Twelve. See John A. Widtsoe, “Assistants to the Twelve,” Improvement Era, May 1941, 288; and Spencer W. Kimball, “The Reconstitution of the First Quorum of the Seventy,” Ensign, November 1976, 9.


**Stake presidents.** The organization of stakes, with a president and two counselors and a high council of twelve members, dates from 1834. The first wards were created in 1839, through the gradual movement to their modern function took a little time. Both organizations were fluid geographically, and while these governing units began to coalesce during the Nauvoo period, it was not until the Saints settled in the Salt Lake Valley that they came to function like today. But there were still changes and modifications. For example, the Salt Lake Stakefunctioned as the center stake, with a higher status than other stakes, until 1876, when Brigham Young announced that all stakes were to be considered on equal footing. The rich history of stakes, still not fully told, can be seen in two essays by William G. Hartley: “Organization of Wards and Stakes: A Historical Approach,” in *Religious Educators Symposium on LDS Church History* (Salt Lake City: Church Educational System, 1977), 53–55; and “Nauvoo Stake, Priesthood Quorums, and the Church’s First Wards,” *BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1–2 (1992): 57–80. Donald Q. Cannon studies the powerful nineteenth-century president of the Salt Lake Stake in “Angus M. Cannon: Pioneer, President, Patriarch,” in *Supporting Saints*, 369–401.

**Bishops.** The most important grassroots leader in the Church is the bishop. In the modern Church his responsibilities center in five areas, (1) acting as the presiding high priest or father of the ward; (2) acting as head of the Aaronic Priesthood in his ward, (3) caring for the needy as he administers the welfare program on the local level, (4) overseeing ward finances, and (5) acting as a common judge in Israel. These are summarized in the March 22, 1974, oral history interview of J. Thomas Fyans, in the James Moyle
Oral History Program, Church History Library. These five areas were made the core of the Bishop’s Self-Help Training Course in the Church (ca. 1980).

Written revelations of the Church specified that the bishop was divinely authorized to administer the temporal and financial resources of the Church, in addition to certain other duties. The precise jurisdiction of the office of bishop was not specified, and the Presidents of the Church often distinguished various types of bishops. The student should be aware of the following titles used in Church history: (1) ward bishop—a lay leader whose jurisdiction was limited to a local ecclesiastical unit called a ward. This type of bishop has been recognized in Latter-day Saint terminology and practice from 1839 to the present; (2) regional presiding bishop—a leader who served as bishop over a region, generally a county or a stake. The regional presiding bishop was responsible for the regional storehouse, in which the voluntary donations of Church members were received and disbursed. This designation was used from the early 1850s to 1877; (3) bishop’s agent—an agent of the Presiding Bishop who was directly responsible to the Presiding Bishop for the condition of the resources and records in the stake to which the agent was assigned. The title and function date back to 1831, when one of the general bishops had an agent as authorized in a written revelation, but the number of such officers was largest after 1851. An organized system of bishop’s agents was used extensively in Utah during the period 1877–1888; (4) Presiding Bishop—a bishop who was responsible for the administration of temporal affairs of the entire Church and who presided under the First Presidency over the entire Church. He and his two counselors comprised the Presiding Bishopric. As stated earlier, there was no functioning Presiding Bishop while Joseph Smith was alive. Newel K. Whitney was sustained as the first functioning Presiding Bishop in April 1847. He was succeeded by Edward Hunter in April 1851; (5) Assistant Presiding Bishop—bishop who served as an assistant to the Presiding Bishop of the Church. When sustained by the vote of the general membership of the Church, these assistants were also General Authorities. This title was first designated in 1851, lasted from one to two years, and became firmly established in 1856 as permanent counselors to the Presiding Bishopric; (6)
traveling bishop—a bishop whose jurisdiction was not limited to a ward or stake. The traveling bishop was to be as “a father to the people” and to supervise temporal matters in the settlements he visited. This position was authorized in a written revelation of 1830, and men periodically served in this role for the next several decades; (7) traveling agent for the General Tithing Office—a traveling auditor who gave instruction on bookkeeping to the ward bishops, compiled financial summaries, and helped with the supervision of temporal affairs in the areas he visited. Traveling agents for the General Tithing Office were used from 1860 to 1876. This summary of bishops’ roles is taken from D. Gene Pace, “Changing Patterns of Mormon Financial Administration: Traveling Bishops, Regional Bishops, and Bishop’s Agents, 1851–1888,” *BYU Studies* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 183–95.

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Four of the seven interviews of William Woolf taken in 1973–74 by William G. Hartley for the oral history program of the Church Historical Department detail Woolf’s experiences as the bishop of the Manhattan Ward in New York in the 1940s. They are frank and contain good insights into the role of a more contemporary urban bishop. Valuable insights are in Pilar Rich (pseud.), The Saints of Snowville: Story of a Mormon Bishop (New York: Exposition Press, 1970). The rural ward discussed here was in Star Valley, Wyoming. A guide to nineteenth-century bishops is Ronald G. Watt and Rachel Whitmore, comps., “LDS Bishop’s Directory, 1848–1890” (unpublished manuscript, Church History Library, 1979). A contemporary look at the history of one ward in Delaware for one year is Susan Buhler Taber, Mormon Lives: A Year in the Elkton Ward (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993). See also Jessie L. Embry, Mormons Wards as Community (Binghamton, NY: Global Publications, Binghamton University, 2001). Lorin K. Hanson and Lila J. Bringhurst’s history of the Fremont, California, stakes provides an overview of the growth of one area outside the Wasatch Front to branches and districts and then to stakes and wards: Let This Be Zion:
Mormon Pioneers and Modern Saints in Southern Alameda California: From a Colony of Refugees in Gold Rush California to “Stakes of Zion” in a World-wide Church (Newark, CA: Fremont California and Fremont California South Stakes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996).

The key role of the bishop as a common judge in counseling members, hearing confessions of members, and assisting members of his congregation with the repentance process is discussed in great detail in Lester E. Bush Jr., “Excommunication and Church Courts: A Note from the General Handbook of Instruction,” Dialogue 14 (Summer 1981): 74–98; Edward L. Kimball, “Confession in LDS Doctrine and Practice,” BYU Studies 36, no. 2 (1996–97): 7–73; and Kimball, “The History of LDS Temple Admission Standards,” Journal of Mormon History 24 (Spring 1998): 135–79. See also R. Collin Mangrum, “Furthering the Cause of Zion: An Overview of the Mormon Ecclesiastical Court System in Early Utah,” Journal of Mormon History 10 (1983): 79–90. While ward bishops have counseled their ward members since the earliest days of the Church, due to its private and generally confidential nature, very little study has been done on this aspect of their job. Recent studies, of uneven quality, include Peter Wendel Johnson, “Counseling Attitudes of Bishops and Seminary Instructors of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” (EdD diss., Boston University, 1973); Franklin Kelso Meadows, “A Study of the Status, as Counselors, of One Hundred Bishops in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (master’s thesis, BYU, 1958); Philip Dayton Thorpe, “The Brigham Young University Ward Bishops and Professional Counselors as Helping Persons” (PhD diss., BYU, 1967); and Jerry Allen Wilson, “A Fault Free Approach to Analysis of Counselor Training for Bishops in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (EdD diss., BYU, 1976). The Church has commissioned a variety of studies on wards and on bishops, but almost none of them have been made public. The growing interests and concerns of professional counselors, many of whom are used by bishops in referral situations, can be seen in the publications and meetings of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP). See also Scott Ashby Speakman, “A
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WOMEN AND ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

From Mormon institutional beginnings, women have been encouraged to participate in Church government. They were to vote in conferences on matters of policy and doctrine, and Mormon scripture never suggested that revelation or inspiration was a function of one’s gender. From the earliest days, women have played a major role in virtually all aspects of Latter-day Saint history, but their lives and contributions have only begun to catch the attention of scholars. This judgment is true whether the topic is a single biography, women organized, or in the more sociological areas of the role and function of sisterhood in the Mormon experience.

Mormon Administrative and Organizational History: A Source Essay


Other studies which reveal the richness of the organizational experiences of the Relief Society are Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “The Leading Sisters: A Female Hierarchy in Nineteenth Century Mormon Society,”


**AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

*Young Women’s and Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Associations.* The Young Women’s organization began in November 1869 as the Cooperative Retrenchment Association, when Brigham Young organized his own daughters into the group. Initially concerned with matters of dress and deportment, it was supervised by Eliza R. Snow. By 1870, each ward in Salt Lake City had a women’s organization, and in 1871 it was renamed the Young Ladies’ Retrenchment Association. In 1875, a similar organization for the young men was organized. A useful summary is Elaine Anderson Cannon, “Young Women,” in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1616–19. Susa Young Gates wrote the first history of the YWMIA: *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association, November 1869 to June 1910* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911). In 1955, Marba C. Josephson brought the history up to date in her *History of the Y. W.*

*Primary Association.* Under the direction of President John Taylor, the Primary Association began in 1878, and by the 1880s this organization for young children was functioning in most Mormon wards. Until recently, the only history of the Primary was the personal history of the founder, Aurelia Spencer Rogers, *Life Sketches of Orson Spencer and Others, and History of Primary Work* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1898). While this work is valuable, the serious student will want to read Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Staker Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Primary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), and Janet Peterson, *Children’s Friends: Primary Presidents and Their Lives of Service* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996). See also Jill Mulvay Derr, “Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Mormon Primaries,” *Task Papers in LDS History*, no. 20 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978); Susan Staker Oman, “Nurturing LDS Primaries: Louie Felt and May Anderson, 1880–1940,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 49 (Summer 1981): 262–75; Susan Oman and Carol Cornwall Madsen, “One Hundred
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**Sunday Schools.** There is no adequate one-volume history of the Church’s Sunday School programs. Borrowed from British-Canadian examples in the 1830s and first established in the Salt Lake Valley in 1849, the Sunday Schools were formally centralized in 1867 when Brigham Young established the “Parent Sunday School Union Society.” Thereafter the organization was modified and its name was changed to the Deseret Sunday School Union. In 1971 its name was changed to its current form, the Sunday School of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Sunday Schools have remained important channels for weekly socialization and gospel instruction for all ages in the Church beyond Primary. Two publications have served as official organs of the organization: the *Juvenile Instructor* (1866–1930) and the *Instructor* (1931–70). For many years the lessons and guidelines for the classrooms and organizations were printed in these magazines. Since 1944 separate manuals have been issued for the various classes.

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CHURCH ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

Introduction. As the Church increased in size and complexity, various administrative units were either created or given additional responsibilities. At the beginning of the twentieth century, as American society was modernizing and bureaucratizing, the Church moved in the same direction by creating specialized departments to handle various chores of the kingdom. Today many of the day-to-day functions of the Church are carried out by these departments. Hence no student of administrative history can ignore these bureaucracies that seek to implement the directives from Church leaders.

Corporate structure. Today the corporate structure of the Church is controlled by the Corporation of the President, which was created in 1921. Under this lead corporation are three major corporations: (1) the Cooperative Security Program, which runs the vast welfare program of the Church, including Deseret Industries, Deseret Mines and Elevators, Deseret Transportation, and about 650 separate corporate welfare related corporations; (2) Deseret Trust, which administers all the nontaxable ecclesiastical Church properties, including chapels, temples, mission homes, and other nontaxable properties; and (3) Deseret Management Corporation, which is responsible for a variety of income-producing properties. The three major subsidiaries of Deseret Management Corporation are (1) Zion's Securities Corporation created in 1922, which was responsible for such entities as ZCMI, Beneficial Development Company, Utah Home and Fire, U & I Sugar, Utah Hotel Corporation, Beneficial Life, and other properties and securities; (2) Bonneville International, the major communications arm of the Church, which includes BEI Productions, Bonneville Productions, twenty-eight affiliate radio and TV stations and two shortwave stations; and (3) Deseret News, which includes Deseret Press, Deseret Book Company, and Deseret Enterprises LTD. A diagram of this corporate structure at the time of the Church’s sesquicentennial is in Dialogue 15 (Winter 1982): 16. Deseret Trust and Deseret Management Corp. were mistakenly reversed on the printed chart. Very little scholarly attention has been devoted to these corporate structures, which have continued to grow and change, including the 2009
formation of two new operating divisions of Deseret Management Corporation: KSL Broadcasting (split off from Bonneville International and focusing only on KSL-TV and KSL News Radio), and Deseret Digital Media (which will manage the websites and business operations of Deseret News, Deseret Book, and new KSL Broadcasting subsidiaries). Thus Deseret Management has begun to function as an active operating company rather than as a holding company, as it had in the past. See Deseret News, September 10, 2009, for the announcement. With the creation of these new divisions, Deseret Management Corporation now comprises nine for-profit divisions: Bonneville International, Deseret Book, Deseret Digital Media, Deseret News, KSL Broadcasting, Beneficial Financial Group, Temple Square Hospitality, Hawaii Reserves Inc., and Zion’s Securities. A useful overview in 1979 is in Arrington and Bitton, “The Temporal Foundation” in The Mormon Experience, 262–83. The key role of N. Eldon Tanner in Mormon administrative and financial history is suggested in G. Homer Durham, N. Eldon Tanner, His Life and Service (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982).


With the stability of Mormon settlement in the Great Basin, more formal administrative structures were established. Because economic prosperity was vital, the organizational devices for managing economic programs were often incorporated into the ecclesiastical structure. In “The Six Pillars of Utah’s Pioneer Economy,” *Encyclopædia* 54, no. 1 (1977): 9–24, Arrington identified six organizational devices: the office of trustee-in-trust; the department of public works; the tithing office (later the Presiding Bishop’s Office); the Perpetual Emigration Fund; the Relief Society; and the office
of Brigham Young, who, as both President of the Church and as a private entrepreneur, sought to apply correct spiritual principles to all areas of life. Each of these institutions needs further study.


Corporate responses to the economic challenges of the twentieth Century are the subjects of a variety of studies: Albert L. Fisher, “Mormon Welfare Programs: Past and Present,” *Social Science Journal* 15 (April 1978): 75–99; Jessie L. Embry, “Relief Society Grain Storage Program, 1876–1940” (master’s

From 1982 to 1984, the whole system of welfare farms was reevaluated by Church leaders and in November 1984 it was announced that about 70 percent of these farms were to be sold or leased to avoid competition with private farmers. The shift of the Church membership to the south of the United States border in recent years has also witnessed changes in the administration of welfare programs. See Bradley Walker, “Spreading Zion Southward: Improving Efficiency and Equity in the Allocation of Church Welfare Resources,”
Major Departments. Today, the administrative structure of the Church is directed by Church leaders through a number of professionally staffed departments. These departments include Audiovisual, Church Auditing, Church Educational System (includes BYU, BYU–Idaho, BYU–Hawaii, and LDS Business College, in addition to the extensive Seminaries and Institutes of Religion programs), Church Security, City Creek Reserve Inc., Correlation, Curriculum, Temporal Affairs, Family and Church History Department (including the Church Museum), Finance and Records, Human Resources, Information and Communication Systems, Investment Properties, Investment Securities, LDS Family Services, LDS Philanthropies, Materials Management, Missionary, Perpetual Education Fund, Physical Facilities, Priesthood (which oversees military relations, Music and Cultural Arts, Primary, Relief Society, Sunday School, Young Men, and Young Women), Public Affairs, Tabernacle Choir, Temple Department, Translation, and Welfare Services. In addition, there is an office of General Counsel. This organizational reality reflects the size and breadth of the Church, but it also suggests that the initial organization under Joseph Smith was flexible enough to permit growth and adjustment to new challenges. It all remains under the leadership of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, just as it did under Joseph Smith by 1844.

Here we can only look at two departments; we focus on them because of their critical role in record keeping.

Historical Department. On the day the Church was organized, Joseph Smith revealed to his followers a commandment that a record should be kept of the movement (D&C 21:1). While personal records have been maintained, large quantities of institutional records have been kept on just about every aspect of the Church. Most of these records are now housed in the Church History Library in Salt Lake City.
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Various individuals have received assignments to be the Church historian and recorder since Joseph Smith’s day. The Office of Church Historian has been given the major responsibility of record keeping, the writing of histories, and the care and preservation of these records. The existence of a large quantity of records today testifies to their dedication and hard work.

No one study covers the entire history of this department. An overview of its activities in the nineteenth century is in Charles D. Adams and Gustive O. Larson, “A Study of the LDS Church Historians Office, 1830–1900,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 40 (Fall 1972): 370–89. A list of Church historians and general Church recorders was compiled by Leonard J. Arrington in *Dialogue* 3 (Summer 1968): 66. An overview, with detailed bibliography, of the history of Mormon historical writing which considers both institutional and private Mormon histories and historians within the larger context of American historical work is found in Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormons and Their Historians* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988); and Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, *Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).


As assistant Church historian, Andrew Jenson was responsible for a variety of projects that are important for students of administrative history.

Central to its divine mission are three goals that have been enunciated in recent years: to preach the gospel, to perfect the Saints, and to redeem the dead. See Spencer W. Kimball, “A Report of My Stewardship,” *Ensign*, May 1981, 5. A fourth goal, always implied but more recently stated, is to care for the poor. Everything else the Church as an organization does is subsumed by and subordinated to these four central areas. All were preached during Joseph Smith’s presidency, and while the programs used to achieve them have been changed and modified in the years since, they remain the core vocation and errand of its leaders and members. These goals, founded on the rock of revelation and restored priesthood authority, remain the firm foundation of the Church. As President Gordon B. Hinckley noted in 2005: “The remarkable organization of the Church was framed by him as he was directed by revelation, and no modification or adoption of that organization is ever considered without searching the revelations set forth by the Prophet” (*Ensign*, December 2005, 2).

From its earliest years, Joseph Smith’s approach to Church government was to combine divine direction with a deep love for the membership. “I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves,” Joseph Smith is reported to have taught, according to John Taylor (“The Organization of the Church,” *Millennial Star*, November 15, 1851, 339). He further said, “Sectarian priests cry out concerning me, and ask, ‘Why is it that babbler gains so many followers, and retains them?’ I answer, it is because I possess the principle of love” (Discourse, July 9, 1843, in Joseph Smith diary, kept by Willard Richards, Church History Library). He also said, “A man of God should be endowed with wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, in order to teach and lead the people of God” (June 11, 1843, in Wilford Woodruff, journal, Church History Library). Faithful Latter-day Saints strongly believe that their leaders are the men of God Joseph spoke of.

At the heart of all these concerns about organization was Joseph Smith’s teaching that it was the purpose of the priesthood “to direct man to godliness”
(Joseph Smith discourse, May 12, 1844, report of Thomas Bullock, cited in The Words of Joseph Smith, 366), to have the divine authority to administer the saving ordinances and correct teachings for mankind to be exalted. An early revelation (June 1830) informed Joseph Smith that it was God’s purpose “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” (Moses 1:39)

Wilson K. Anderson, who taught a course on priesthood and Church government at BYU for years, suggested that the priesthood could be studied under five definitions: (1) priesthood is authority, the exclusive right, recognized and commissioned by God, to act in his name; (2) priesthood is an organization, a brotherhood, a government, organized by quorums and conducted by councils; (3) priesthood is the divine channel of communication; (4) priesthood is a divine physical and spiritual power delegated to intelligences; and (5) priesthood is the foundation of the rights, powers, and privileges of the family, both in time and in the eternities. Each of these aspects could be the subject of a book, as each lay at the heart of Mormon administrative history. With Brigham Young, we could say:

There is no other people on this earth under such deep obligation to their Creator, as are the Latter-day Saints. The Gospel has brought to us the holy Priesthood, which is again restored to the children of men. The keys of the Priesthood are here; we have them in our possession; we can unlock, and we can shut up. We can obtain salvation, and we can administer it. We have the power within our own hands, and this has been my deepest mortification, one that I have frequently spoke of, to think that a people, having in their possession all the principles, keys and powers of eternal life, should neglect so great salvation. We have these blessings, they are with us. (in Journal of Discourses, 4:299, discourse of March 29, 1857)

NOTE

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