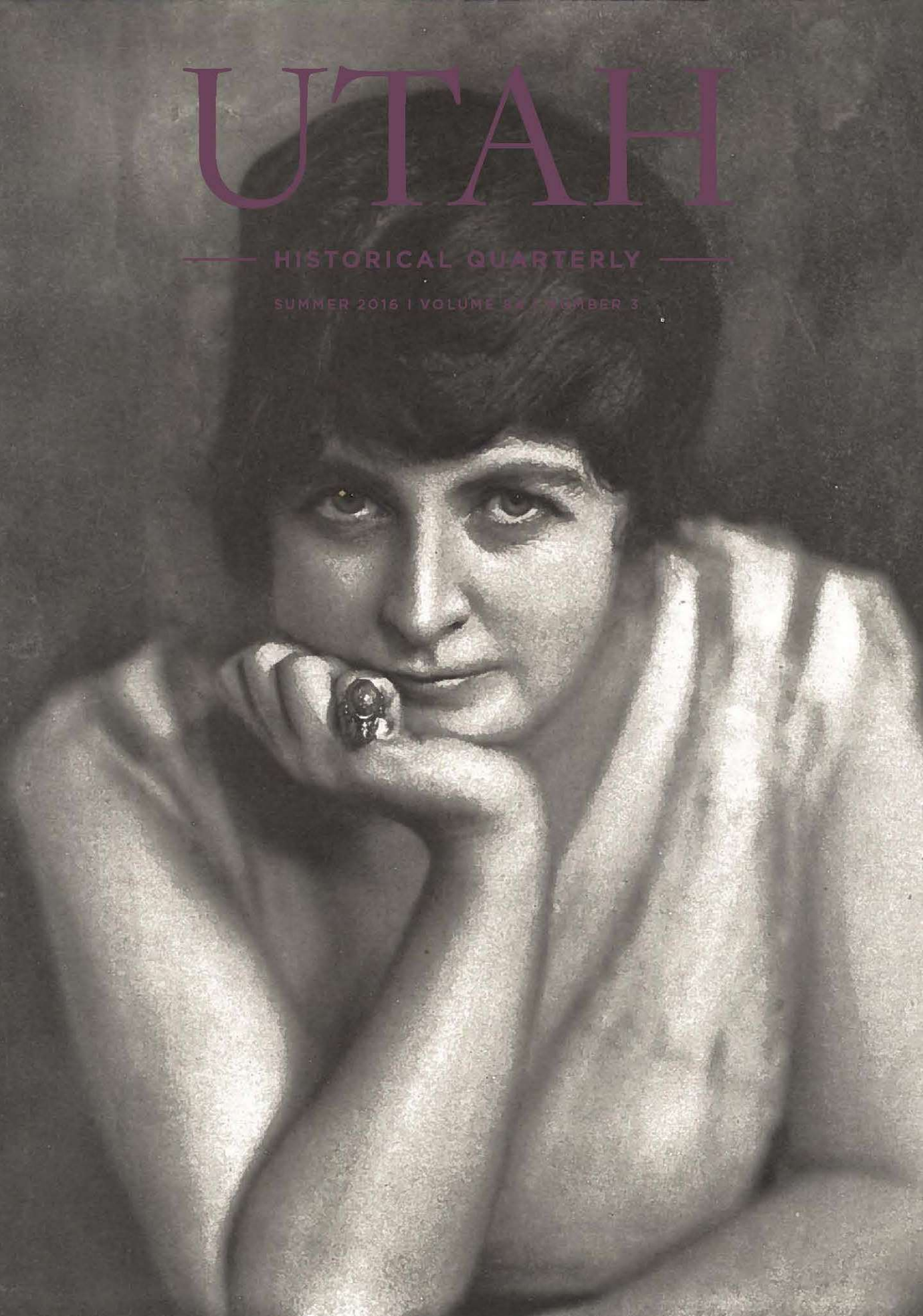


UTAH

HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2016 | VOLUME 54 | NUMBER 3





The Rio Grande Depot, home of the Utah State Historical Society.

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STANFORD KEKAUOHA

UTAH HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

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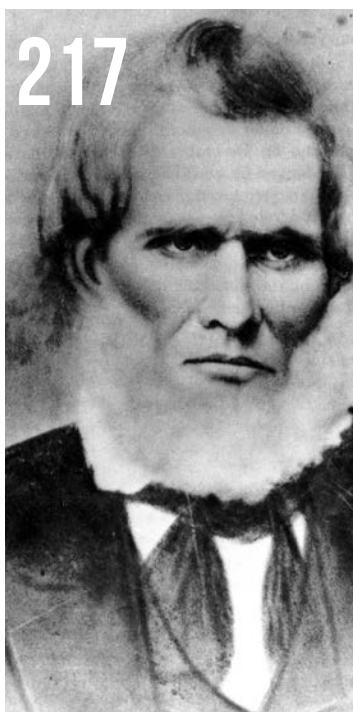
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POSTMASTER: Send address change to *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 300 S. Rio Grande, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101. Periodicals postage is paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

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Rod Miller

IN THIS ISSUE

People make sense of the world by representation. Words, maps, pictures, and symbols, of course, do not always capture the complexity and depth of the things they represent. Because they are incomplete, and also because they may be somewhat or wildly inaccurate, representations can distort our understanding. Consider, for instance, *The Birth of a Nation*, featured in this issue's "Utah in Focus." The white majority hailed this groundbreaking film, which was also blatantly racist and historically inaccurate, as a superb history lesson.

We tend to believe the representations that support what we already believe.

Our first article focuses on a certain type of representation, a Broadway play. *Polygamy*, coauthored by the talented Harvey O'Higgins and produced in 1914, treated its topic in a way that used and mirrored decades of representations. The play focused on the dark side of Mormon polygamy, but at its core it dramatized a larger theme: the perceived economic, political, and personal power of church leaders. "Mormons on Broadway, 1914 Style" tells the story of the play, how it came to be, how it represented the Mormon church and its members, what the critics thought, and how it touched the nerves of contemporaries.

Several decades earlier, attitudes toward Mormons had not yet solidified so firmly. The second article, "News from Salt Lake," unfolds the multifaceted newspaper coverage of the Salt Lake Valley in the first years of Mormon settlement. News, rumor, and speculation all filtered back to the eastern states through various reports and retellings that Americans around the country absorbed about the Brigham Young-led Mormons who had left the United States for Upper California. Perhaps strikingly, the coverage reported more on the landscape of the Great Basin than on the peculiarity of a religious people that would come to define representations of the Mormons in the decades that followed.

Journalists have their own way of representing reality; scientists try for more accurate representations through data. During the 1920s through the 1940s, George Clyde innovated and developed systems to predict water availability for farmers. Clyde would become governor of Utah in 1957, but he started his career as an irrigation engineer. Working for the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, he established a protocol for snow surveys that could help predict runoff each year; farmers could then plan for the planting season with valuable information. Our third article tells how Clyde and others started to scientifically understand Utah's snowpack and runoff.

That snow-survey technology served a very down-to-earth purpose, but Utahns have long had their eyes fixed on more sophisticated technology to diversify the economy. In 1970, NASA began looking for a new "spaceport" for the space shuttle program. Utah jumped into the competition to win the facility. Our fourth article details the efforts of boosters to sell northern Utah as the right place to land the shuttle.

Finally, from yet another corner of the state and at an emotional intersection between present and past, we offer the remarks made at the dedication of a memorial to the innocent Paiute victims of the Circleville Massacre of 1866. On April 22, 2016, 150 years later, Paiutes and other Utah tribal Indians, Circleville citizens, LDS and state officials, and others came together to honor the lives of those who suffered death at the hands of their Mormon neighbors when hysteria and distrust overcame humanity and reason. In the decades since 1866, the incident has been represented in different ways. But for the most part, it has been forgotten.

By writing about it, talking about it, and erecting a monument, historians and citizens today are trying to represent the past in a way that will continue to unearth the complexity and depth of this tragic event. That is what good history does.

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THE MAGAZINE FOR PLAYGOERS

APRIL, 1915
VOL. XXI NO. 170



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Barney
N. Y.

MISS CRYSTAL HERNE

The Theatre Magazine Co.
8-10-12-14 West 34th St. N. Y.

Chrystal Herne, one of the most fashionable stage actresses of her day, played Zina Whitman in Polygamy. This portrait appeared on the cover of Theatre in April 1915, during the run of the play.

MORMONS ON BROADWAY, 1914 STYLE

Harvey O'Higgins's Polygamy

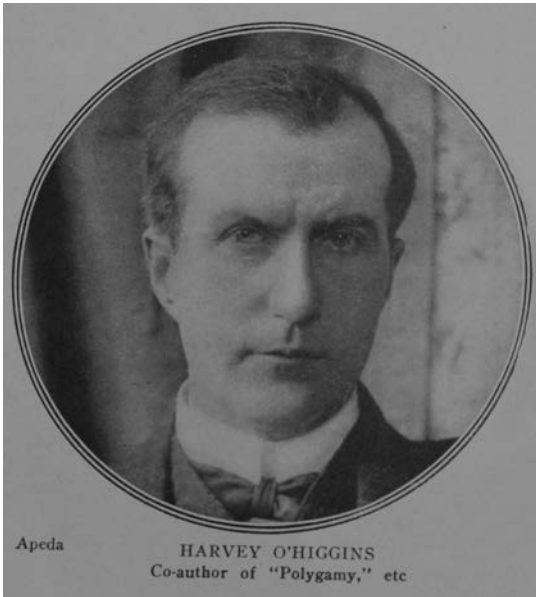
BY KENNETH L. CANNON II

The runaway success of Trey Parker and Matt Stone's *The Book of Mormon* on Broadway has brought new, widespread attention to the Mormon church and its culture.¹ Although the play is extremely popular, it has created controversy because it conveys an essentially sweet view of Mormons and at the same time includes scenes and song lyrics that many playgoers find offensive. *The Book of Mormon* is not the first Broadway play to depict Mormons and their unusual culture in a sensationalized way, nor is it likely the last. In 1914 and 1915, another play, *Polygamy, A Play in Four Acts* had a successful six-month run on Broadway and helped arouse (or contribute to) anti-Mormon sentiment among activists, actors, feminists, evangelical leaders, and many others.²

One of the authors of the play, Harvey O'Higgins, was a prominent New York writer who had co-written books about the Mormons. *Polygamy* is set in Salt Lake City and reflects a certain slice of Mormon life in Utah while depicting the LDS church's alleged secret continuation of

1 "The Book of Mormon' Scoops Tony Awards," Reuters.com, accessed April 2014; Devin Friedman, "Polygamy: The Musical!" *GQ Magazine*, March 2011, 162–63.

2 Harvey O'Higgins and Harriet Ford, "Polygamy, a Play in Four Acts," unpublished manuscript, microfilm copy in Dramatic Copyright Deposits, copyright no. D39916, reel 580, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; "Polygamy," Internet Broadway Database, accessed December 2014. At least two other plays about Mormons appeared on Broadway near the time *Polygamy* was staged, *The Girl from Utah* and *His Little Widows*, both musical comedies with popular show tunes. *The Girl from Utah* included the first hit song written by the soon-to-be legendary Broadway composer Jerome Kern.



*Harvey O'Higgins, co-author of *Polygamy* and a prominent journalist, muckraker, detective story writer, playwright, screenwriter, historian, and chief propagandist for the United States government during World War I. O'Higgins wrote three works involving Mormons: *Under the Prophet in Utah: The National Menace of a Political Priestcraft*, which he coauthored with Frank J. Cannon; *The Other House*, which he coauthored with an unhappy plural wife; and *Polygamy*.*

the practice of plural marriage. Its plot centers around a prominent young Mormon man being ordered by "the Prophet" to enter polygamy and the reactions and challenges he, his wife, and others face as a result.³

At the time *Polygamy* was staged, plural marriage, once sponsored and supported by the LDS church, was in sharp decline. Men who had married plural wives in prior years were generally expected to continue to live with and support their wives and families, but the church did not sanction new marriages, and many of those who had entered "the Principle" before the Manifesto of 1890 or the "Second Manifesto" of 1904 were aging. It is difficult to believe that O'Higgins, who had co-written two books about the Mormon church, did not understand that the practice had been officially abandoned and had dramatically declined. It is certain that Frank J. Cannon, O'Higgins's co-author and

friend, who acted as a consultant on the play, knew this. Cannon was the son of the prominent Mormon leader George Q. Cannon. His father and several of his brothers were polygamists. By 1914, however, Frank Cannon had become the most influential anti-Mormon agitator in the world.

What O'Higgins and Cannon did believe, however, was that LDS church leaders sought to exercise control over Latter-day Saints, businesses, and politics where they could, and that some senior officials were intent upon the church exercising secular power over the Intermountain West and other parts of the nation. Polygamy, long a controversial and well-known tenet and practice of the church, still outraged Progressive Americans, and O'Higgins used the practice as a dramatic device to make allegations of domination and control by church leaders. *Polygamy* also had a broader, American theme, and it sought to convey a powerful feminist message: that controlling, abusive men needed to be checked.

Like *The Book of Mormon* almost one hundred years later, *Polygamy* was a genuine Broadway production, complete with elaborate sets, costuming, and well-known actors. It was reviewed, usually favorably, by all the New York City newspapers and theater magazines as well as by many other publications around the country. It reinforced commonly held negative perceptions of the Mormon church's hierarchy and polygamy, but it also exhibited a favorable view of lay church members, particularly those who were troubled by their church's dominance in the affairs of its adherents. The play brought to the stage a portrait of Mormons and their church that mirrored contemporary muckraking articles and lectures. Moreover, the play owed at least some of its appeal to its focus on Mormon women seeking to free themselves from male domination and control and, in that respect, it channeled the great popularity of contemporary "white slave" dramas.⁴

4 On the Progressive Era's fascination with white slave drama, see Katie N. Johnson, *Sisters in Sin, Brothel Drama in America, 1900–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 109–61. Mormon polygamy was often cast as a form of white slavery by nineteenth-century critics. W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 140–70.

3 O'Higgins and Ford, *Polygamy*, acts 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Like *Polygamy*, many of these white slave dramas had political themes, and most exhibited a nascent feminist attitude fostered by their authors.

O'Higgins was an unusually broad-gauged, talented, and prolific writer.⁵ One of his books on Mormonism, co-authored with Frank J. Cannon, was *Under the Prophet in Utah: The National Menace of a Political Priestcraft*.⁶ *Under the Prophet in Utah* was very popular in its day and remains easily accessible today in a variety of formats.

As O'Higgins related to a number of drama organizations in New York while he was promoting *Polygamy*, he had met Cannon in the spring of 1910 in Denver. At the time, O'Higgins had gone west to work with Judge Ben Lindsey on his exposé of Colorado politics. There, O'Higgins convinced Cannon to tell his intriguing life story of growing up in a prominent Mormon household, his extensive political activities, and his fall from grace as his relationship with Joseph F. Smith, who became the LDS church president in 1901, deteriorated. The two had been longtime antagonists but became mortal enemies after Cannon's father died in early 1901.⁷

O'Higgins told reporters that Cannon had an "absolutely tragic face," apparently showing the ravages of first having saved, through "his eloquence and energy . . . the Mormon community at one of the most desperate crises in its history." According to O'Higgins, Cannon had negotiated the end of polygamy, the admission of Utah as a state, and the recovery of "the church's escheated property back from the government." After all that, he was rejected by the Mormons because of his differences with



Frank J. Cannon, second son of the high-ranking Mormon leader George Q. Cannon. Cannon became the first U.S. senator from Utah and, later, an effective anti-Mormon crusader

Smith, the "Prophet" in Utah from the title of Cannon's book.⁸

The anti-polygamy movement in the United States had begun to die down after the U.S. Senate's decision, after a four-year investigation, to permit Reed Smoot, elected as a senator from Utah in 1903, to retain his seat. Cannon, who had behind the scenes led the fight to unseat the senator, moved to Denver after failing in his fight against Smoot. Cannon had become the managing editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* in Denver by the time he met O'Higgins. After Cannon told O'Higgins the story of his fall from a "brilliant political career" to becoming a pariah in Mormon Utah, O'Higgins convinced Cannon to collaborate with him on

5 "Harvey J. O'Higgins, Author, Is Dead," *New York Times*, March 1, 1929, 18. See also Kenneth L. Cannon II, "The Modern Mormon Kingdom: Frank J. Cannon's National Campaign against Mormonism, 1910-1918," *Journal of Mormon History* 37 (Fall 2012): 62n4.

6 Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah, the National Menace of a Political Priestcraft* (Boston: C. M. Clark Co., 1911).

7 "A Human Document, Harvey O'Higgins Tells How He Found Material for 'Polygamy,'" *New York Tribune*, December 13, 1914, section 3, 4; Cannon, "The Modern Mormon Kingdom," 62-64, 69, 105-107; Kenneth L. Cannon II, "Frank Cannon, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, and the Alta Club," presentation to the Alta Club Library Forum, April 2016.

8 "A Human Document"; Harvey J. O'Higgins, "Address to the Drama Society of New York on 'Polygamy' (Inside Story of the Play)," [1915], L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.



Harriet Ford, the co-writer of *Polygamy*. Apparently, O'Higgins provided the storyline and Ford took the lead in writing the script.

an autobiography exposing the “inside history of the Mormon kingdom” and denouncing “the whole system of church dictation in politics.”⁹ The two worked for a year on the exposé, which first appeared serially in *Everybody's Magazine* and then as a book.¹⁰ The work was successful both in its magazine serial run and in its book form and paved the way for Cannon to embark on a remunerative and influential eight-year run as a powerful and persuasive national lecturer on Mormons and polygamy.¹¹

9 “A Human Document.”

10 “Under the Prophet in Utah” appeared in nine installments of *Everybody's*, from December 1910 through August 1911. It was always intended to be published in book form and was released as a book in December 1911.

11 “Under the Prophet in Utah” helped increase the *Everybody's* circulation from about 500,000 to more than 600,000 during the period of its run. Frank Luther Mott, *Sketches of 21 Magazines, 1905–1930*, vol. 5 of *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 81–83; Kenneth L. Cannon II, “And Now It Is the Mormons’: The Magazine Crusade

As one prominent lecture organizer recalled, Cannon’s “speech, lashing out at polygamy, which he made sound like a threat to every American hearthside, was sensational. . . . [S] hocked crowds who flocked to the tents to hear him drank it in.”¹²

After publication of the book, O'Higgins continued to be fascinated by Cannon and the Mormons and decided to write a play using the “human document” of Cannon’s life as a guide. He talked to his regular collaborator, Harriet Ford, a playwright widely known for “whipping into shape” other authors’ works for the stage, and they wrote the script together, initially calling it *A Celestial Marriage*.¹³ They took the script to a variety of producers, some of whom “declared it was the most gripping drama they had come across, but they would not dare to put it on,” because “they said the Mormon Church would ruin them financially if they put such an exposure on the stage.” As O'Higgins told the Drama Society of New York shortly after the play opened on Broadway, the managers (and he) believed that “the Mormon Church to-day is as powerful in New York City as any single financial interest in the United States, and can call upon the assistance of many equally powerful financial interests to aid it,” suggesting that influential Mormons and their allies would shut the play down—a gross overstatement.¹⁴ Critics recognized that the play had been inspired by the writings and lectures of “that valiant anti-Mormon former Senator Frank Cannon.”¹⁵

against the Mormon Church, 1910–1911,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 46 (Spring 2013): 1–63.

12 Harry P. Harrison and Karl Detzer, *Culture under Canvas: The Story of Tent Chautauqua* (New York: Hastings House, 1958), 132; Cannon, “The Modern Mormon Kingdom,” 62, 100.

13 In his (not so favorable) review, George Jean Nathan noted that “it is patent that Mr. O'Higgins is headwork of the collaborative couple and Miss Ford the handwork,” that is, that the story ideas came from O'Higgins and the adaptation of the story to the stage came from Ford. George Jean Nathan, “The Unimportance of Being Earnest,” *Smart Set Magazine* 45 (February 1915): 145. Ford collaborated with many co-authors. “Harriet Ford, 86, Dies, Widow of Dr. Forde Morgan Collaborated on Many Works Presented on Broadway,” *New York Times*, December 14, 1949, 31.

14 “The Girl Who Picks Winners for the Stage,” *New York Sun*, January 31, 1915, 11; O'Higgins, “Address to the Drama Society of New York on ‘Polygamy,’” 5–6.

15 Burns Mantle, “‘Polygamy’ and Other New Plays in the City of New York,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 13, 1914,

To make the play more attractive to producers, O'Higgins and Ford revised the play to make it a bit edgier by changing the name to *Polygamy* and by engaging the Broadway legend Mary Shaw to play the part of Bathsheba Tanner, an older polygamous wife, married to a counselor in the First Presidency, who controls younger sister wives much as a brothel's madam might the women in her establishment. Shaw was famous for having been personally chosen in 1905 by George Bernard Shaw to play Mrs. Warren, the proprietor of an upscale brothel in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, the quintessential "brothel drama" from the Progressive Era, and she was well-known as an outspoken feminist.¹⁶ Eventually, O'Higgins and Ford found funding for the production of the play by the Modern Play Company. Ownership of the company was initially anonymous, reportedly so "owners' assets could not be uncovered and destroyed" by the Mormon church.¹⁷

The producer and playwrights decided to stage a month-long pre-Broadway run at the Columbia Theatre in Washington, D.C. As they hoped, the play attracted significant attention in the capital city, which had only a few years earlier watched the real-life drama of the Smoot investigation. Members of Woodrow Wilson's cabinet attended one of the first performances of *Polygamy*, and Julia Gregory, the wife of the U.S. Attorney General, gave a tea for the authors "at which all the Cabinet folk were present." Janet Richards, a well-known lecturer and feminist, also encouraged all to learn about the horrors of Mormonism through the play.¹⁸

After its pre-production run in Washington, *Polygamy* formally opened on Broadway on December 1, 1914, shortly after four major na-

tional Progressive magazines published negative, multi-part articles about the LDS church and as Cannon crisscrossed the nation giving fearsome lectures against the church.¹⁹ These articles and lectures alarmed many American audiences with allegations of the Mormons' continuing active practice of polygamy, their importation of young women converts from Europe to become polygamous wives, and church leaders' assertion of political and financial control in western states. *Polygamy* brought these allegations to the stage, and journalists everywhere correctly assumed that O'Higgins had relied on Cannon to aid "the authors in the psychology of the Mormon people."²⁰ The *New York Times* reported that the play "embodied" Cannon's "tragic story."²¹

Unlike other plays and movies of its time, *Polygamy* is nuanced and contains many details about the LDS church and culture that were entirely lost on eastern reviewers, even though it is sprinkled with dialogue meant to help theatergoers understand Mormon culture. The play centers on four Mormons in their thirties, all from leading Salt Lake City families—Brigham Kemble, Annis Tanner Grey, Zina Kemble Whitman, and Daniel Whitman—over a critical twenty-four hour period. The young protagonists are portrayed as cultivated, engaging people. Brigham "Brig" Kemble, "obviously an idealized [Frank] Cannon himself," is the apostate son of Nephi Kemble, the "First Counselor" to the Mormon prophet.²² The elder Kemble is a

section 8, 7.

16 Louis V. DeFoe, "Propaganda and Drama: An Analysis of the New O'Higgins-Ford Play of Mormonism, 'Polygamy,'" *Green Book* 13 (March 1915): 482; John D. Irving, *Mary Shaw, Actress, Suffragist, Activist (1854-1929)* (New York: Arno Press 1982), 156; Johnson, *Sisters in Sin*, 91-108; "Shaw Interposes for a Namesake," *New York Times*, February 27, 1907, 9; Susan A. Glenn, *Female Spectacle: The Theatrical Roots of Modern Feminism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 138.

17 O'Higgins, "Address before the Drama Society," 5-6; "The Girl Who Picks Winners for the Stage," *New York Sun*, January 31, 1915, 11.

18 "Many Volunteer Boosters Working for Polygamy," *New York Sun*, April 11, 1915, sec. 3.

19 McClure's, *Everybody's*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Pearson's* magazines had run serial articles about the Mormon church from the fall of 1910 through the end of summer 1911. Cannon, "And Now It Is the Mormons," 1-63; Cannon, "The Modern Mormon Kingdom," 65-74. Frank Cannon began his lectures for the Redpath Chautauqua bureau in 1911 and for the National Reform Association in 1914.

20 "The Girl Who Picks Winners for the Stage," *New York Sun*, January 31, 1915, sec. 3, 4.

21 "Takes Park Theatre Lease, Modern Play Co., Inc., Will Move There Its Play 'Polygamy,'" *New York Times*, December 13, 1914, 14.

22 Louis Sherwin, "The New Play, 'Polygamy' at Playhouse Is an Anti-Mormon Melodrama," (*New York*) *Globe and Commercial Advertiser*, December 2, 1914, 14. Sherwin, who had been the drama critic for the *Rocky Mountain News* in Denver while Cannon was managing editor there, recognized the character of Brig Kemble as Cannon, though much "idealized." For biographical information on Sherwin, see Dixie Hines and Harry Prescott Hanaford, eds., "Louis Sherwin," in *Who's*

thinly disguised George Q. Cannon. Brig's love interest is Annis Tanner Grey, the daughter of Moroni Tanner, the harsh "Second Counselor" to "the Prophet," as the senior, unnamed leader of the church is called throughout the play. Ten years earlier, the Prophet had directed eighteen-year-old Annis to become the sixth wife of Apostle Grey, a church leader old enough to be her grandfather, as punishment for Brig Kemble's refusal to support polygamy or go on a mission. Grey has recently died, giving Annis and Brig hope that they might renew their interrupted romance. Brig's lovely sister, Zina Kemble Whitman, is married to Daniel "Dan" Whitman, a prosperous young businessman for whom church leaders have ambitious plans.

As the play unfolds, we learn that Moroni Tanner and one of his older wives, Bathsheba, have manipulated the Prophet to direct Dan to marry Annis as a polygamous wife. Dan reluctantly complies, and Zina is devastated. The rest of the play addresses the four protagonists' reactions to the polygamous marriage and the church leaders who have ordered it. *Polygamy* ends with what critics agreed was an unfortunate, conventionally happy conclusion that did not fit the rest of the play.

The play opens in the drawing room of Dan and Zina Whitman. As the New York-based Mormon journalist, Isaac Russell, described the scene, we see "a rarely beautiful wife teaching lessons to a rarely beautiful group of children. . . . The children are two in number ONLY. . . . [Presently] a husband enters who is the smartest type of the young up-to-date business man." The Whitmans enjoy "perfect happiness."²³ Zina attended an elite college in the East, and her brother Brig also has had wide experience outside Utah but is a "backslider from the faith" and the bane of his father's life. Brig is sufficiently good-hearted that Zina's children

and all the young polygamous wives love him.²⁴ In this first act, Zina's children tell their Uncle Brig that everyone calls him an "apostate" and they want to know what that means. He replies that "in this end of the country," apostasy "feels a good deal like leprosy."²⁵ Brig was played to generally excellent reviews by William Mack, a distinguished actor on Broadway whose wife grew up in Salt Lake City.²⁶

Annis Tanner Grey loves Brig more than anyone else. Annis's marriage to Apostle Grey devastated Brig. He took to drinking, trying to drown his sorrows in alcohol. Here the play touched on the real-life experiences of Frank Cannon, whose binge drinking was widely known and apparently related to times of boredom or high stress in his life. Cannon's drinking had been most pronounced as he became increasingly estranged from Joseph F. Smith and the Mormon church in the first few years of the twentieth century; perhaps O'Higgins found it convenient to blame Brig Kemble/Frank Cannon's drinking on abusive church leaders.²⁷

In the characters of Moroni Tanner and the Prophet, Cannon's dislike of Smith is evident. Tanner is reminiscent of Smith when he was a counselor in the LDS church's First Presidency, at least as Cannon perceived him. Tanner is harsh, devoted to the church above all else, shameless about his polygamous wives (most of whom are very pretty) and families, and unforgiving of those he views as having crossed the church or him. *Polygamy's* Prophet is also reminiscent of Cannon's version of Smith in that the Prophet actively oversees a vast empire of financial wealth and political power. A composite of Tanner and the Prophet resembles the

24 Act 1, at 2–4, 7, 12–13, 16–17, 24–25; act 2, at 5, 11

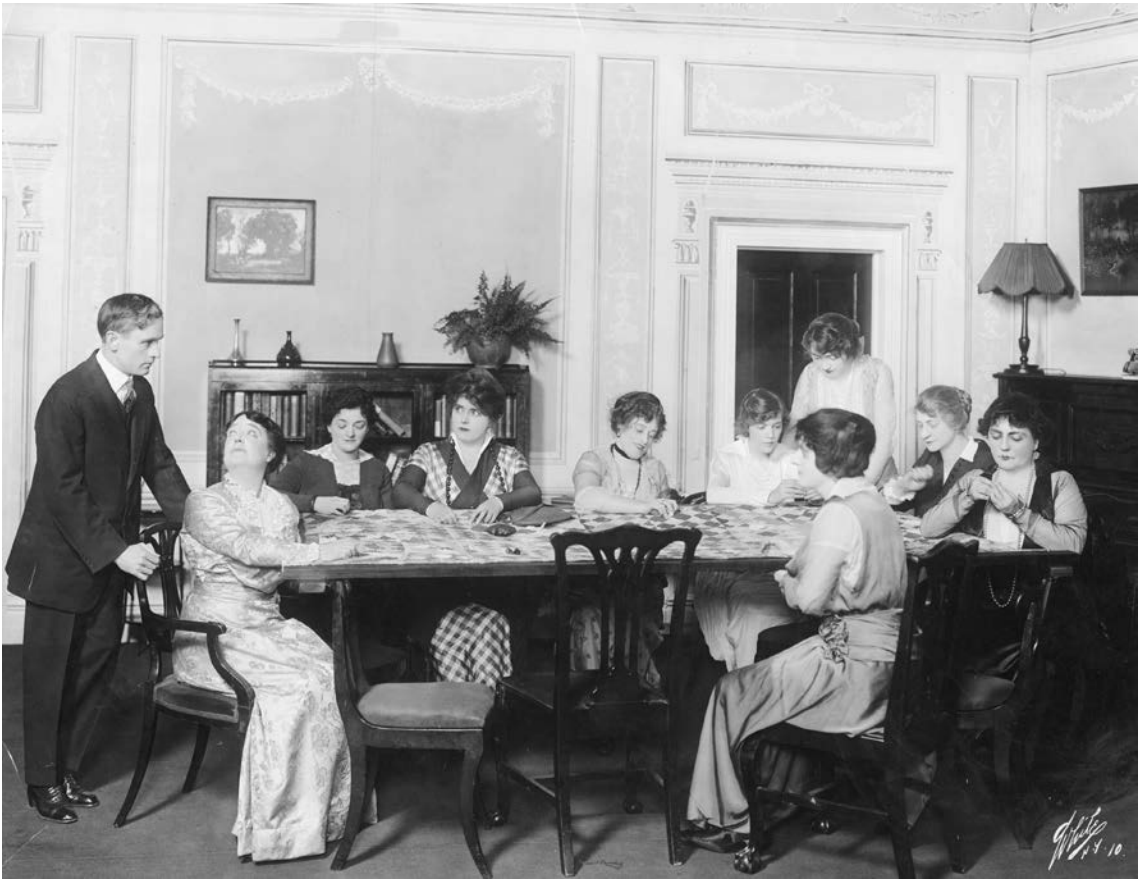
25 Act 1, at 3.

26 Channing Pollock, *Harvest of My Years, an Autobiography* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943), 39–40; "O'Malley's Roast, Took the Dramatic Editor of the News to Task," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 5, 1894, 2; "In the Playhouses of Salt Lake," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 4, 1910, 12.

27 Act 1, at 25, act 2, at 11. Kenneth L. Cannon II, "Wives and Other Women: Love, Sex, and Marriage in the Lives of John Q. Cannon, Frank J. Cannon, and Abraham H. Cannon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 43 (Winter 2010), 83–91. O'Higgins knew that Frank had largely stopped drinking during the 1910s while he was busy writing and lecturing about the evils of Mormonism.

Who in Music and Drama: An Encyclopedia of Biography of Notable Men and Women in Music and the Drama, 1914 (New York: H. P. Hanaford, 1914), 280.

23 Russell, unpublished essay on "Polygamy," [February 1915], 5, Isaac Russell Papers, 1898–1927, M0444, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California (hereafter Russell Papers) "As a criticism of Mormon life," Russell found, "the play has a fresh coloring to it. The Mormon who goes to the play finds none of the stock views of polygamy, with which the Mormon ear has been assailed for going on to sixty years." *Ibid.*, 1.



Quilting group from act one. Various polygamous wives surround the quilt. Four of these, including a beautiful new wife from Boston, are married to the harsh Moroni Tanner. Brig Kemble is standing at the left

portrait drawn of Smith in *Under the Prophet* in Utah.

The character of Nephi Kemble, on the other hand, is much as Frank Cannon viewed his father, George Q. Cannon—more sophisticated and tolerant. The elder Kemble sent his children east to college and loves his wayward son but believes devoutly in the church and is absolutely loyal to the Prophet. He married all of his wives before the Manifesto, and, in a relatively obvious manipulation by the playwrights, only his first wife, Esther, the mother of Brig and Zina, is ever seen in the play. As presented in the play, Frank Cannon's views of both Smith and George Q. Cannon seem to have been one-dimensional and flawed.²⁸

²⁸ Act 1, at 23. The distinction between the two counselors was lost on most of the reviewers, who viewed them jointly as "fanatics" who "grimly" sought to control

As act 1 progresses, we join a quilting circle made up of mostly plural wives. Zina enters. She was played by Chrystal Herne, one of the most elegant actresses in New York at the time, who came onstage dressed in "gowns by Ellsworth, New York."²⁹ Herne, the daughter of a prominent playwright, had a long career as a leading lady on Broadway and was known for her feminist views and activities.³⁰ The

their children's lives. "Polygamy," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 7.

²⁹ Channing Pollock, "Polygamy," in "Channing Pollock's Review," *Green Book* 13 (February 1915): 298; "Polygamy," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 7.

³⁰ "Chrystal Herne, Stage Star, Dies," *New York Times*, September 20, 1950, 31; "Women's Protest with Tax Checks, Suffragists Are Sending Objections to Paying Without Having Representation," *New York Times*, June 16, 1915, 11; "Shaw Interposes for a Namesake," *New York Times*, February 27, 1907, 9; Johnson, *Sisters in Sin*, 76–77; "At The Theater," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 6, 1914, 13.

dominant woman in the quilting group is Bathsheba Tanner, the longest-married surviving wife of Moroni Tanner, who makes sure that others have to deal with the same burdens that she has endured as a Mormon and polygamous wife.³¹ The critics agreed that Mary Shaw stole the show with her portrayal of Bathsheba.³²

As the women quilt, *Polygamy* drifts into Mormon stereotypes. With Bathsheba are three of Moroni Tanner's other wives: Charlotte, a worried, aging beauty; Clara, a lovely young convert from Boston; and Matilda, a fecund Scandinavian. Other characters also represent certain stereotypical polygamous wives. Most of the women are catty with each other, representing how difficult polygamous households with aging first wives and younger, pretty wives must have been. Further, Isaac Russell noted in his unpublished essay on the play that Frank Cannon had circulated a rumor "that 'girls for Mormon white slavery were being imported from Europe by way of Boston.'" Isaac Russell related that "all knew in Utah" that this was "silly," but it made for a scandalous story. The inclusion of Clara, Moroni's young new polygamous wife from Boston, no doubt tied into this rumor.³³

The final scenes of act 1 provide dialogue crucial to the play's message. First, Nephi Kemble and Moroni Tanner stop by the Whitmans' drawing room, and Brig Kemble begins arguing with his nemesis, Apostle Tanner. Tanner accuses Brig of breaking all his covenants, and Brig asserts that, under the leadership of people like Tanner, the LDS church has broken its covenant with the U.S. government to cease polygamy. Brig then notes that, unlike his father, Tanner has continued to marry women polygamously, who therefore "can't claim their [husband who give birth to] children who can't bear their father's name before the world." As Clara, Tanner's new wife, becomes increasingly agitated by the discussion, the second counselor

tells her "this apostate attacks me because he wanted to marry into my family and I refused him." Tanner would "rather see my daughter dead and in her coffin than married to [Brig]," to which Brig replies "I'll bet there's a mother in Boston [i.e., Clara's mother] who would rather have her daughter dead and in her coffin than married into your household—you old Turk." Anti-Mormon literature had long associated Mormons with "Mohammedans" and "Turks," so with this comment the playwrights intentionally invoked images of the supposedly barbaric practice of polygamy in Islam.³⁴

The two counselors leave for the temple and a critical second argument begins, this time between Brig Kemble and Bathsheba Tanner. Bathsheba realizes that Clara is genuinely "agitated" by the statements made by her new husband and Brig, and Bathsheba counsels her sister wife that "when your faith's attacked, that's the time to stand firm. Everyone here knows that polygamy is the only road to salvation." Bathsheba tells Brig that the reason plural marriage works is that "all men are naturally polygamists." Brig takes issue with this, asserting that "the Gentiles put a man in jail for the same thing you put him in Heaven for." Bathsheba notes that she has "been out in the world as much as you have" and that men who "can afford it, and some who can't, keep separate establishments" for their wives and mistresses. Brig pokes fun of this "pious lie" of Mormon priests. Bathsheba rejoins that "it's no lie, Brig and it doesn't come from our priests. It comes from the Lord himself. He saw that the race was being ruined by the practices of the world and He revealed polygamy to save women from degradation." Brig tells Bathsheba that "for the life of me I can't see how it saves a woman from degradation to say that God ordered the degradation."³⁵ As the *New York Tribune's* reviewer rightly recognized, the playwrights were using

31 Act 1, at 26.

32 "Polygamy," *New York Times*, December 2, 1914, 13; "Polygamy," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 6–7; DeFoe, "Propaganda and Drama," 490; Frances Hackett, "Within Our Gates," *New Republic*, December 12, 1915, 24; Hector Turnbull, "'Polygamy' at the Playhouse," *New York Tribune*, December 2, 1914, 9.

33 Act 1, at 13–25; Russell, unpublished essay on "Polygamy," 22.

34 Act 1, at 22–26. Frank Cannon sometimes referred to the "Mohammedan monarchy" of the LDS church, and the *Christian Statesman*, the National Reform Association's magazine, often referred to the "Mohammedan Mormon Kingdom." Address given by Frank J. Cannon at the Baptist Church in Independence, Missouri, February 25, 1915, typescript, 18, Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; "The Mohammedan Mormon Kingdom," *Christian Statesman* 48 (February 1914): 86; Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 226–35.

35 Act 1, at 26.

the young apostate “for their mouthpiece.”³⁶ Zina defends her brother’s opposition to plural marriage and makes an off-handed remark that she believes that Mormon polygamy is a thing of the past. Bathsheba takes note and decides to make sure that Zina will “live her religion.”³⁷

As act 1 finishes, Dan comes home and everyone remaining—Zina, Annis, and Brig—tries to convince him that Bathsheba Tanner is going to find a way to make him a polygamous husband. He does not believe it, because the Prophet just “as good as told me he’d selected me for Congress. They can’t send another polygamist to Washington.” Brig explains to his brother-in-law that he has known the power of the Mormon church only “in its gentleness” while Brig has “been up against it in its cruelty” all his life. “If you stand up against the one devilish doctrine this fanatic [the Prophet] insists upon, in one hour he can turn every hand in this community against you.”³⁸ This was an overt reference to Frank Cannon’s fall from grace in Mormon society.

Act 2 is set later the same day in the beautiful inner sanctum of the Salt Lake Temple.³⁹ At one end of the room are three well-upholstered chairs on an elevated dais, with the Prophet’s chair in the middle. Portraits of Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and Joseph F. Smith hang on the wall, and busts of other church leaders line the wall.⁴⁰ The scenes that occur in

this setting clearly portray the fictional Prophet (and therefore the real men whose images appear on stage) as an autocrat who orchestrates an array of financial, political, and personal matters. The Prophet is dressed in white, looking, in the words of one reviewer, “like Uncle Sam in the clothes of Mark Twain.”⁴¹ Howard Kyle, who got his theatrical start with the Grand Theatre troupe in Salt Lake City in 1894, played the Prophet.⁴² Surrounded by his “votaries,” the Prophet “receives the reports of his secret agents and issues orders and instructions with the authority of a powerful temporal potentate.” He has at his disposal “the vast resources of the Mormon Church” with which he “is able to bend the financial world” to his will and ruin the lives of those who oppose him.⁴³ After dealing with high-level financial and political issues, the Prophet and his counselors turn to more personal matters. He tells those assembled that the Lord is grieved “to see dissension and apostacy creeping into the leading families of the Church,” and the “most dangerous offender in the Church” is Brig Kemble.⁴⁴

A temple guard escorts Brig into the chambers, where the Prophet meekly tells him that God “has relented to you and is willing to forgive you for your sins. He feels you have been sufficiently punished.” Mimicking Frank Cannon’s sardonic wit, Brig responds, “Well, if you and the Lord have had enough, I have.” In spite of Kemble’s retort, the Prophet expresses hope to save this wayward son of his first counselor: “You interrupted the most promising career in this Church when you refused to obey counsel

36 Turnbull, “‘Polygamy’ at the Playhouse,” *New York Tribune*, December 2, 1914, 9.

37 Act 1, at 26–27. See also DeFoe, “Propaganda and Drama,” 484.

38 Act 1, at 31–33.

39 “Polygamy,” *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 6. In another review, the same “Council Chamber” of the temple is described as a “veritable ‘Tosca’-like chamber of horrors, if full credence be given to the play.” DeFoe, “Propaganda and Drama,” 487. Salt Lake native (but non-Mormon) Channing Pollock noted that the room in the temple was “as accurately represented as may be, in view of the fact that no Gentile ever has set foot in that Holy of Holies.” Pollock, “Polygamy,” 298. Frank Cannon, who acted as a consultant on the play, had been endowed in 1873 and sealed to his first wife, Mattie, in 1878, in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City and likely attended meetings and other marriage sealings, even polygamous ones, there and in the temple. Franklin J. Cannon and Martha Anderson Brown, Family Group Sheet, accessed 2008, familysearch.org; Franklin J. Cannon, Ordinance Record, accessed 2009, familysearch.org.

40 Photo of the Council Room from act 2 published in

“Polygamy,” *Current Opinion* 58 (February 1915): 94.

41 Pollock, “Polygamy,” 297.

42 “Present Day Stage Celebrities Got Their Start at Grand Theatre Here,” *Salt Lake Telegram*, February 1, 1913, 11; “Howard Kyle Dies, Veteran of Stage,” *New York Times*, December 12, 1950, 13.

43 DeFoe, “Propaganda and Drama,” 488. The LDS church was often accused, likely accurately, of being an important participant in the “sugar trust.” Frank Cannon told shocked audiences that Joseph F. Smith controlled a trust worth over \$400 million. See Cannon, “The Modern Mormon Kingdom,” 97. However, in May 1914, Reed Smoot noted in his diary how Presiding Bishop Charles W. Nibley was attempting to borrow \$250,000 on behalf of the church to pay for 25 percent of the stock of American Sugar. Harvard S. Heath, ed., *In the World, The Diaries of Reed Smoot* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1997), 224, entry for May 13/14, 1914.

44 Act 2, at 5.

ten years ago. You lost your right to the blessings of the Lord's house. You lost your claim upon one of the daughters of Zion by your disobedience. The Lord is not unwilling to restore all the rights that you deserted ten years ago, if you are ready to do your part."⁴⁵ Most of the Prophet's statement to Brig Kemble reflected contemporary Mormons' views of Frank J. Cannon, except that few thought he might be given a second chance.⁴⁶

Brig asks the Prophet if he will be required to "stand in the Tabernacle . . . and say I repent of my rebellion against you" and to support the Prophet's "secret polygamy" in order to marry Annis, to which the Prophet sharply rejoins, "It is not ours—it is God's!" Then, in a speech straight out of Cannon's lectures and writings, Brig refuses to "support you in your broken promises to this Government that you made to gain citizenship," and informs the Prophet that Mormon leaders are "arousing the hostility of this whole nation." The Prophet orders Brig from the temple and concludes that "it's all in the hands of the Lord now. . . . He knows how to take care of our failures."⁴⁷

Next ordered into the temple chamber is Zina Kemble Whitman, through whom the central problem of the play—that her husband, Daniel, will be required to enter polygamy—is introduced. The Prophet informs Zina that the leaders have "important missions" for Daniel: "We expect him to represent us in the high places

of the nation, among the statesmen and great financiers." Yet the Prophet has heard reports that Zina might be "opposed to the principles of the gospel," and "it would never do to send Daniel as an ambassador from this Kingdom if that is true." Zina understands this as a reference to polygamy and argues that plural marriage has ceased in the church. Her father advises her that if she supports Dan, she will be exalted with him, but if she opposes his marriage to a second wife, he and their children will go "into the eternities without you." The harsh Moroni Tanner reinforces this by telling the Prophet, "If she consents, she's saved. If she refuses she's damned."⁴⁸ This is one of only two scenes in which Nephi Kemble, based in substantial part on George Q. Cannon, shows his faith and his loyalty to the Prophet over the happiness of his family members. Zina blurts out wildly "I can't—he wouldn't" and, in one reviewer's words, "emotes at length." The Prophet notes that "every woman now in Heaven has been saved against her own will," reinforcing *Polygamy's* message that the LDS church held women down—a message that only continues in the next exchanges.⁴⁹

The Prophet next summons Annis Tanner Grey, who was played by Stanford-educated Katherine Emmet, an ardent feminist with a reputation of being as elegant as Chrystal Herne.⁵⁰ The Prophet tells Annis that he has prayed about her and learned that it is "Jehovah's will" for her to be "sealed to some faithful soul." It seems that her late husband, Grey, has "urged . . . in the Council of the Gods" that she "bear children to him in this mortality in order to magnify his eternal kingdom." Annis is taken aback and responds that "surely—surely, I have done enough." The Prophet responds that it is Apostle Grey's "right to command you still."⁵¹

Annis replies that it is her father who has put the Prophet up to this because of his hatred of Brigham Kemble. She goes on, "it wasn't for

45 Act 2, at 5.

46 Moroni Tanner states that he would not permit "this drunken apostate in his family," but the Prophet quiets him by telling him he is acting like an apostate. Act 2, at 5–6; "Polygamy," *Current Opinion* 58 (February 1915): 92. This part of Brig Kemble's life bears no similarity to Frank Cannon's own marital experience. As a young man, Cannon married Mattie Brown, who was as beautiful and charming as the character of Annis Grey in the play, but who served on the LDS church's Relief Society general board for many years, even after Frank was excommunicated from the church. Frank went through periods of infidelity, usually while drinking. Like Brig's experience, however, Frank Cannon was excommunicated in March 1905, approximately ten years before *Polygamy* was produced on Broadway. "Smith's Hatred!," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 15, 1905, 1. The *New York Times* announced Frank's excommunication in a short article on its front page. "Cannon Excommunicated," *New York Times*, March 15, 1905, 1.

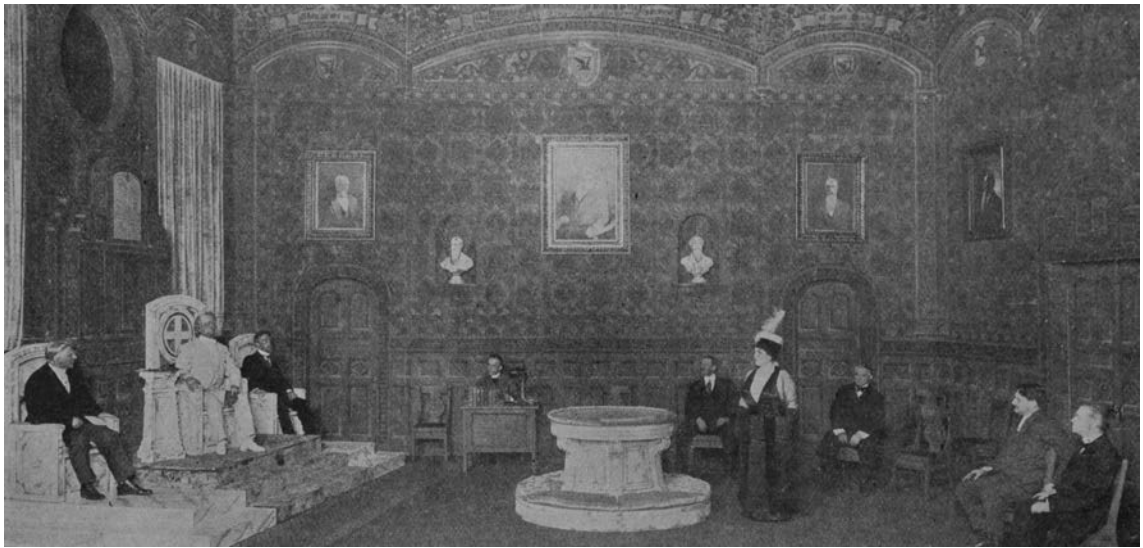
47 Act 2, at 6–7. See also "Polygamy," *Current Opinion* 58 (February 1915): 92.

48 Act 2, 7–9; Pollock, "Polygamy," 298.

49 Act 2, at 9.

50 Josephine Turck Baker, "The Realization of a Dream," *Correct English, Your Speech and How to Improve It* 23 (November 1922): 302; "Polygamy" and the Clubwomen's Night," in "The Stage," *Munsey's Magazine* 54 (April 1915): 547; Internet Broadway Database, accessed July 2015, ibdb.com.

51 Act 2, at 10–11.



In a scene set in the Salt Lake Temple, Bathsheba Tanner argues with the Prophet, demonstrating her strong personality. Howard Kyle, who played the Prophet, got his theatrical start with a troupe in Salt Lake City in the 1890s. Mary Shaw, who played Bathsheba, was an outspoken and celebrated Broadway actress closely associated with feminist causes. Playwrights O'Higgins and Ford knew that Shaw was the one actress they wanted to play the indomitable Bathsheba.

the glory of Apostle Grey that I was sacrificed, nor to save my own soul, it was to put me out of Brigham Kemble's reach." She pleads to Nephi Kemble, noting that her father and the Prophet have "ruined Brig's life," but the first counselor responds that "God's Prophet has spoken." The stage notes state that "she falls on the platform at the Prophet's feet" and emotionally tells the Prophet, "You saved my soul once. For Christ's sake let me save my body in my own way." The Prophet asks Annis if she has any choice of husband "among the holy priesthood," to which she responds, "no—no—no." As Annis is taken out, the Prophet privately acknowledges that the "revelation" to have Annis marry again in polygamy came from Moroni Tanner to keep her away from Brig.⁵²

With this scene, the playwrights suggested that Mormon women had no control over their own bodies or destinies. In the following scene, *Polygamy* continues with its feminist tone. In it, Bathsheba Tanner consults with the Prophet, and the feisty side of Moroni's senior wife emerges. She asks the Prophet what she should

say to the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) about the church's position on prohibition. He tells Bathsheba that he will order the legislature to pass a bill banning alcohol, to which she responds that the WCTU will assume he will then just "get the Governor to vetoe [*sic*] it." The Prophet muses on the proper place of women—the home—and the difficulty of female involvement in politics, telling Bathsheba to make whatever promises she pleases. She fires back that, if promises "have to be broken," a man had better do it.⁵³

As the critic Channing Pollock recognized, the authors were using Bathsheba in this scene to "utter sundry battle-cries of woman suffrage" and feminism.⁵⁴ Ironically, it is Bathsheba, the "fanatical" polygamous wife, who challenges the Prophet on these difficult issues. The authors continued to show women held captive under the chains of polygamy—even those who were committed to supporting the Mormon church—and objecting to the men who were attempting to control them. Theater audiences knew that Mary Shaw, who played Bathsheba, was outspoken politically and would challenge

⁵² Act 2, at 10–12; see also "Scenes in 'Polygamy' Now Being Presented at the Park Theatre," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 15.

⁵³ Act 2, at 13.

⁵⁴ Pollock, "Polygamy," 298.

the directions of men. Moreover, O'Higgins was portraying the Prophet as a hypocrite who condemned Brig Kemble for his drinking and outwardly supported prohibition but also ensured that the church's business interests and political officeholders were not harmed by actual passage of prohibition laws.⁵⁵

According to *Polygamy*, the LDS hierarchy could control matters at both the highest and most personal levels, something the final temple scene suggested. In it, the Prophet orders Dan Whitman to become a polygamist, and then dramatically announces that "the Council is ended for the day." Zina and Dan seek the advice of Nephi Kemble, who counsels them to follow the Prophet because they will never be happy if they disobey. Dan's bright future will be taken, and their friends will abandon them. Although Dan tells his father-in-law that he would "go through Hell" for Zina, she relents. Zina sinks to her knees on the altar, telling her husband, "We're wrong, Dan. They must be right. It's God's will. I give up—I give up."⁵⁶

As act 3 opens, Dan and Annis have been told that they are to be sealed in "celestial marriage," thereby solving the problem of Brig Kemble's interest in Annis and at the same time requiring unquestioning obedience from the Whitmans. Zina knows and is devastated. She has refused to attend the temple marriage, which Harvey O'Higgins understood from Frank Cannon to be a serious violation of protocol in Mormon plural marriage practice. Cannon told shocked audiences in his numerous lectures that the first wife was required to give the hand of the plural wife to her husband and then to kiss the new wife over the altar in a temple marriage ceremony.⁵⁷ The polygamous union of Daniel

and Annis takes place (though not seen in the play), causing one less-than-enchanted reviewer to conclude that Dan has taken "advantage of [Zina's] consent with most suspicious promptitude."⁵⁸

Meanwhile, Zina is at home seeking solace with her children.⁵⁹ Her brother, Brig, has heard a rumor that Dan has been ordered to marry a second wife. He realizes as soon as he sees his sister that it is true. After commiserating with each other and blaming their parents, Zina tells him that "the other victim" is Annis. Brigham has a sudden bout of extreme nausea, and Zina laments, "It was God—they said God commanded it." Brig disagrees, insisting that "it was Tanner" who called for the marriage to make sure Annis could never marry him. Zina realizes that Brig will try to destroy the church over this.⁶⁰

Dan and Annis arrive following the "sealing" of their plural marriage. Unknown to everyone else, they have vowed never to consummate the union. Zina "stonily" points Annis and Dan to the master bedroom, then storms out as she tells them, "I have my children." Dan reminds Annis that Zina "gave her consent," and Annis retorts, "oh, you cowards—men. We women—He's a man's God, not ours."⁶¹ In the next scene, the sorrow and anger of Brig, Dan, Annis, and Zina erupt as the four young people attempt to deal with their conflicting emotions and loyalties. The scene ends with a moment that, for the era, was nothing short of risqué, as Zina goes to the door of her bedroom and, finding it locked, assumes that Annis and Daniel are consummating their marriage. Zina falls into a swoon, and the curtain falls on act 3.⁶²

As *Polygamy* continued into its fourth act, O'Higgins reinforced his message that the

55 This was reminiscent of the stances of Joseph F. Smith and Reed Smoot toward prohibition during the 1914 senate race. Kenneth L. Cannon II, "Separation of Prophet and State? The 1914 Reelection of Reed Smoot," unpublished paper presented at Utah State Historical Society conference, October 2015.

56 Act 2, at 14–18.

57 Frank J. Cannon, Address in Independence, Missouri, 31. It is less than clear, however, that Frank accurately described such a ceremony. It is also evident that, in practice, many first wives did not attend their husbands' subsequent marriage ceremonies or give permission for their husbands to "take" new wives, though that was the stated procedure. See Eugene E. Campbell and Bruce L. Campbell, "Divorce among Mormon Polygamists: Extent and Explanations," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46

(Winter 1978): 21–22.

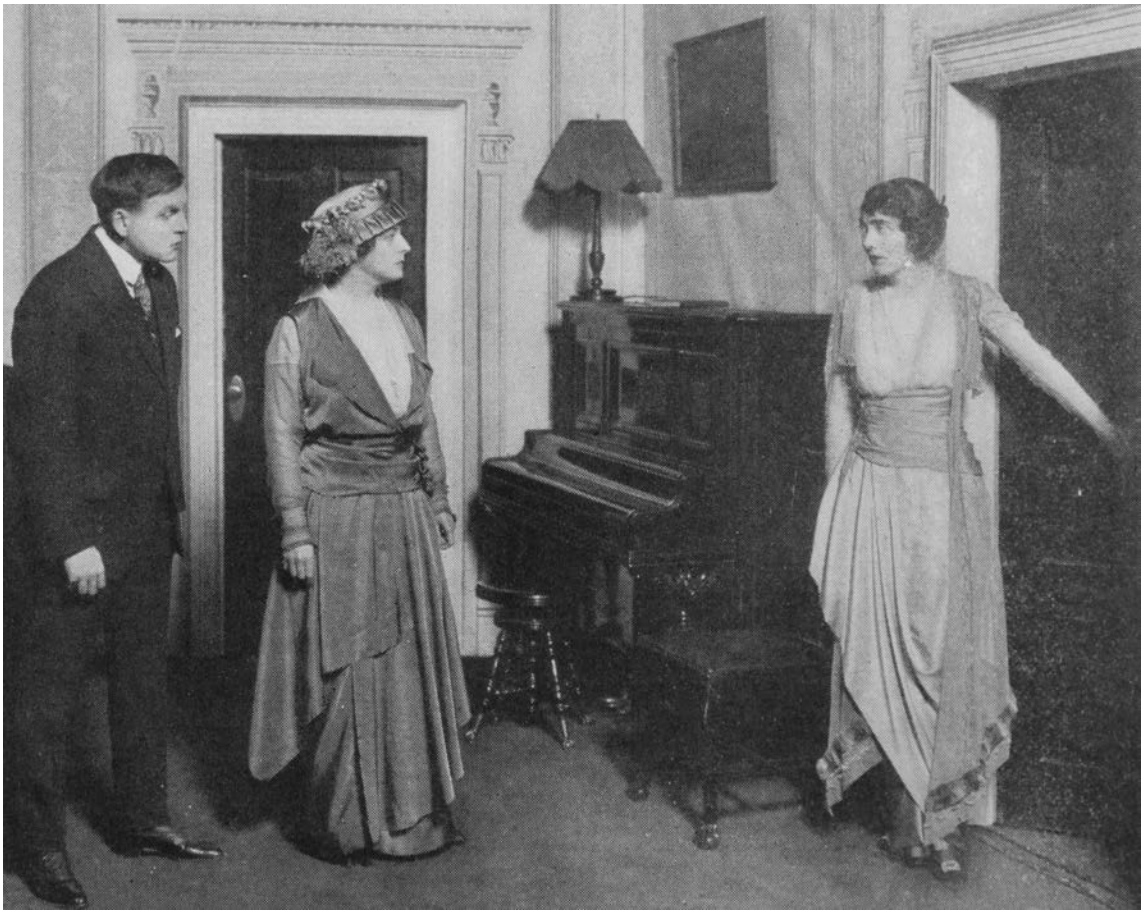
58 Pollock, "Polygamy," 298.

59 Act 3, at 1. See also, "Polygamy," *Current Opinion* 58 (February 1915): 93, 94; "Scenes in 'Polygamy' Recently Presented at the Playhouse," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 15.

60 Act 3, at 2–5.

61 Act 3, at 8–9.

62 Act 3, at 2–3, 9–13; "Polygamy," *Current Opinion* 48 (February 1915): 92–95; DeFoe, "Propaganda and Drama," 481–90; Pollock, "Polygamy," 297–99; "Polygamy," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 6, 15.



Zina Whitman directs her husband and his new polygamous wife into the master bedroom of the Whitman's home after Dan and Annis return from being married in the temple.

Mormon hierarchy meddled in both the business world and private affairs. Dan attempts to get out of his polygamous marriage to Annis, while Moroni Tanner—her father—insists that his daughter will “live polygamy, not merely be sealed to it.” Tanner’s plan is to require Dan, Zina, and Annis to live together for a few months. He believes that when the young people all realize that only by following church leaders can Dan “keep [his] fortune,” they will follow counsel.⁶³ The First Presidency’s close, almost prurient, oversight of the Whitman home continues as Tanner and Nephi Kemble visit to see how the first night of plural marriage has been for the doubting Whitmans. Kemble tells Dan that, as the fathers of his two wives, he and Moroni have come to dedicate their home to “the

celestial order of marriage, to pray with you, to bless your wives that they may be fruitful and bear you many children for your eternal glory.” Indeed, the counselors worry that Dan might be tempted not to take his new husbandly duties with Annis seriously. Dan tells the counselors that he will no longer agree to hold prominent political or business positions because he had “denied polygamy a thousand times in my talks with people in the East. I couldn’t look them in the face.” Tanner tells him that “every dollar you have in the world belongs to the Prophet of God.” Dan will receive his wealth as he does his “duty in the celestial order of marriage,” as shown by the first child born to Annis.⁶⁴

Just then, Brig Kemble reenters the room and the four men end up in a physical struggle. Brig

⁶³ Act 4, at 2–3.

⁶⁴ Act 4, at 6.



In act four, Bathsheba Tanner softens and offers money to the young people to help them escape from "Zion." Critics pointed out that this happy resolution to the play was both artificial and unbelievable.

orders his father and Tanner out of the house, but he and Dan realize that they are both in a serious predicament. Dan will lose his fortune and never go to Washington. Brig will face the wrath of the Mormon church, even more than he already has. Dan expresses concern when Brig tells him he is going to take Annis away but also asks him why he did not elope with Annis the prior evening, before all this happened. "She wouldn't come. This religion holds her. Revelations—revelations from God! If what has happened in this house hasn't been a revelation to you all that polygamy is wrong, you'll have to be struck by lightning." Dan acknowledges that he has been so busy "preaching this religion that I haven't had the time to ask myself whether it was true or not." Here was still another moment when *Polygamy* borrowed from Frank Cannon's own life: like Annis, Cannon's first wife, Mattie Brown Cannon, remained devout until she died in 1908.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Act 4, at 8. See also Cannon, "The Modern Mormon Kingdom," 65. Mattie Brown Cannon is not to be confused with Martha Hughes Cannon, also known as Mattie, who was a physician and Utah state senator married to Angus M. Cannon (b. 1857, d. 1932).

Annis's dilemma takes center stage as she and Bathsheba enter and the other characters learn that Annis stayed her wedding night with the rigid Bathsheba Tanner. Bathsheba will not let her stay, however, and she instructs Dan that Annis is now his wife and he needs to shelter her. Zina cannot contain herself and asks, "Oh, Bathsheba, why did you bring all this trouble on us?" The hardened Bathsheba responds with lines that play up her image as a kind of madam, impressing economic realities on young women:

Trouble—trouble—you seem to think of nothing but your own happiness. . . . There was a time in my life when I thought I couldn't go through with it, but I had to for the same reason that you have to. What are you going to do? Where are you going to live? Have you any money? . . . Well—I'm hard. If I'd been soft, how do you suppose I'd ever lived. This sort of life makes you hard.⁶⁶

Here, the playwrights suggested, was the dis-

⁶⁶ Act 4, at 10–11.

tortion of womanhood by Mormonism: beautiful young women pushed into an immoral situation by a callous older woman acting at the behest of abusive men. The brothel comparison continues as Brig tells Bathsheba that the younger girls are not as strong as she is. She rejoins, "You talk like a fool. The stronger you are the worse you suffer—and the longer it takes." Yet Bathsheba finally relents and takes out a large roll of money that she has been saving for twenty years "I thought—sometime—and then—when I could get away it was too late . . . there's money enough to get you out of it. . . . And if God wants to hold me responsible, I guess I can stand it. If I'm hard, I'm hard enough for that!!"⁶⁷

After giving the four her money, Bathsheba leaves. Clara, Moroni Tanner's young wife, arrives and tells them that Tanner has told police that Brig tried to kill him. Pushed to plan quickly, Brig, Dan, Annis, and Zina plot their escape from Mormonism. Brig will leave first, with some of Bathsheba's money. Dan and his two wives will stay in Salt Lake for now and "pretend to knuckle down to them." Brig is going to "start a newspaper exposure that will smash this fraud."⁶⁸ Clara begs Brig to take her with him.

The play ends with Brig Kemble and Clara Tanner successfully escaping from Zion and Dan, Zina, and Annis staying behind temporarily. They will appear to conform for a time and wind up business affairs honorably, then they will join Brig. The four will prevail, foiling the evil designs of Moroni Tanner and the Prophet.

When *Polygamy* opened in New York on December 1, 1914, the influential Drama Society of New York "lost no time in giving its enthusiastic support" to the production.⁶⁹ A good part of New York society turned out to see the play during its early performances. A playbill distributed at later performances quoted a large number of representative prominent playgoers, including Social Gospeler (and long-time Mor-

mon critic) Josiah Strong, Martha M. Allen of the WCTU, a variety of women's rights advocates, actors, journalists, evangelical Protestant leaders, and conservative rabbis, all of whom joined in extolling the virtues and strengths of the play. Social reformer Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst noted that "If one wants to understand the diabolical genius of polygamy let him witness the play 'Polygamy.'" Haryot Holt Dey, president of the New York Women's Press Club, enthused, "The cleverest and best balanced play of the season, not second to any, even Bernard Shaw's, and a feminist play indeed." The legendary actress Lillian Russell called it "one of the most powerful plays ever presented in New York and with a wonderful message for women. It is the strongest play I ever saw."⁷⁰

The play was reviewed by all the major newspapers and magazines. Most of the reviews were favorable. Critics characterized the play as "one of considerable dramatic force," "profoundly moving," and one that "is interesting all the way through." Most reviewers noted the high quality of the acting.⁷¹ Specially singled out for fine performances were William B. Mack, "splendid as the bitter young iconoclast," Brig; Chrystal Herne for "her exceedingly intelligent and emotionally effective performance of Zina"; Katherine Emmet, who brought "finesse, authority, and conspicuous emotional power to the part of the unhappy Annis"; Ramsey Wallace as Dan Whitman; and Howard Kyle as the Prophet.⁷² All agreed that veteran Broadway actress Mary Shaw stole the show by her "brilliant" portrayal of the vacillating Bathsheba Tanner. She brought "marvelous feeling and ironic despair."⁷³ The most

70 Playbill of *Polygamy*, copy in Russell Papers. Isaac Russell's copy of the playbill has a typewritten invitation to "clergy of New York" of a special presentation of the play sponsored by the Clerical Conference, New York Federation of Churches, on February 21, 1915.

71 "Second Thoughts on First Nights," *New York Times*, December 13, 1914, 8; "'Polygamy' Given with a Fine Cast," *New York Times*, December 2, 1914, 13; "Polygamy," in "Plays and Players," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 6; Frances Hackett, "Within Our Gates," *New Republic*, December 12, 1915, 24; Playbill of "Polygamy," at the Park Theatre, (quoting Louis DeFoe's review in *The World*), copy in Russell Papers.

72 "'Polygamy,'" *New York Times*, December 2, 1914, 13; "Polygamy," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 5; DeFoe, "Propaganda and Drama," 490; Hackett, "Within Our Gates," *New Republic*, 24.

73 "'Polygamy,'" *New York Times*, December 2, 1914, 13.

67 Act 4, at 11–12.

68 Act 4, at 12–13. See also "'Polygamy,'" *Current Opinion* 58 (February 1915): 94–95; "Polygamy" – A Play which Goes Behind the Scenes of Mormonism," *Current Opinion* 48 (February 1915): 94–95.

69 DeFoe, "Propaganda and Drama," 482; O'Higgins, "Address before the Drama Society," 1, 6.

POLYGAMY

Park Theatre
(59th St. and Columbus Circle)



A New
American Drama
By
Harvey O'Higgins
and
Harriet Ford

Authors of
"The Dummy," etc.

"The Most Talked-About Play in New York"

Playbill from the Park Theatre of "The Most Talked-About Play in New York."

prominent magazine covering Broadway at the time, *The Theatre*, printed several stills of scenes from *Polygamy* in its January issue. An arty color portrait of Chrystal Herne graced the cover of the magazine's April 1915 issue, and the same issue included a full-page illustration of Katherine Emmet, verifying the high profile of the play.⁷⁴

Reviewers also found that the structure of the play was "powerfully effective in phasing the emotions of the various persons concerned in this hideous entanglement. . . . [and] the dialogue is skillfully written, straightforward, expeditious, and incisive."⁷⁵ "It is, in addition, an intense domestic drama which deals with universal traits of human nature from a viewpoint that is fresh and new in the theater."⁷⁶ Finally, the authors had "quickened [the play] with a deal of skill in the writing."⁷⁷

Several reviewers were initially skeptical of the

74 *Theatre* 21 (April 1915): cover; "Annis Grey," *Theatre* 21 (April 1915): 189.

75 "Polygamy," *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 6.

76 DeFoe, "Propaganda and Drama," 483.

77 "Polygamy," *New York Times*, December 2, 1914, 13.

conditions portrayed in *Polygamy*, but were won over by the play. By his own account, literary critic Francis Hackett

was reluctant to assent for one moment to Mr. O'Higgins's interpretation of celestial marriage and his evident disgust with our Mormon brothers. But gradually, insensibly, I began to be convinced that I had to elect between Mr. O'Higgins and the vileness so plausibly portrayed. Here was no prudery about polygamy but a cumulative resentment against a sinister machine. Proceeding by inference alone, I accepted Mr. O'Higgins' premises, and ended with an ardent response to his theme.⁷⁸

Hackett understood better than other reviewers that alleged continued Mormon polygamy was just the outward manifestation of what O'Higgins found most troubling about the LDS church: heavy-handed ecclesiastical, political, and temporal domination by the church's leaders, for which O'Higgins relied on Frank J. Cannon's accounts.⁷⁹

Even the most positive reviews faulted the play in two respects: reviewers found some scenes to be unintentionally funny and, a more serious flaw, the ending to be unrealistically happy. Most critics found some of the scenes to be inadvertently comical.⁸⁰ Reviewer Louis Sherwin provided the best explanation for the laughter—"polygamy is, after all, for theatrical purposes an essentially comic theme."⁸¹ Such a subject addressed in a play, or a man receiving revelations from God, is often "provocative chiefly of mirth among the majority of people," whether or not the playwright is discussing the subject "very much in earnest." "Consequently, in 'Polygamy' every allusion to plural wives and unlawful cohabitation was greeted by shrieks of laughter by the audience." The notion that

78 Hackett, "Within Our Gates," *New Republic*, December, 24.

79 Ibid. Many of the observations of Mormon life and practices in the play come from *Under the Prophet in Utah* and Cannon's lectures on the "Modern Mormon Kingdom."

80 "Second Thoughts on First Nights," *New York Times*, December 13, 1914, 8; "His Little Widows," *New York Times*, May 1, 1917, 11; Pollock, "Polygamy," 299.

81 Louis Sherwin, "Broadway Echoes," *New York Globe*, December 5, 1914, 5.

the Prophet “was in direct and personal communication with God was [also] greeted with uproarious mirth.”⁸²

O’Higgins responded to these allegations of the play accidentally arousing laughter. “In the inquisition scene in the Mormon Temple during the second act, we purposely gave the Mormon Prophet lines with which we expected to provoke a horrified laughter, because, as far as he was concerned, we wished the audience to take that attitude toward him, and believed that with no other attitude could we keep him true to life.”⁸³ Most of the critics were not referring to such moments of laughter, however.

While reviewers found the inadvertently laughable scenes to be problematic, they were far more critical of the play’s conclusion. The *Theatre’s* review characterized the final act as “a somewhat lame and impotent conclusion; as logic and circumstance both point to a tragic catastrophe.”⁸⁴ Louis DeFoe thought that the drama of the play “would have been much more persuasive if its authors had not yielded to the inevitable temptation to sentimentalize it and dismiss its audiences in the comfortable glow of a conventional and illogical happy ending.”⁸⁵ Hector Turnbull, writing for the *New York Tribune*, though almost gushing in his praise of the play generally, summed up the unsatisfying conclusion of *Polygamy* as one that weakened “the effect of the entire play, and all the shrewd and clever observations made by the authors throughout the course of their arraignment of the Mormons.”⁸⁶ Louis Sherwin believed that *Polygamy* would have been improved if the play’s central dilemma had been resolved at the end of the third act, making the entire fourth

act unnecessary.⁸⁷ It appears, however, that Harvey O’Higgins could not permit the play to end other than to have Brig, Annis, Zina, Dan, and Clara escape the clutches of the Mormons, whether or not “logic and circumstance” dictated a different finale.

A few critics were not kind to the play. In his review in *Vanity Fair*, soon-to-be-world-famous humorist, P. G. Wodehouse, may have identified one of the reasons American men liked brothel drama in the Progressive Era. Wodehouse stated that a play could seem “salacious” and make “the Tired Business Man get his thrill and smack his lips” at the thought of Dan sleeping (separately) with his two beautiful wives, but “the beauty of the Mormon play, from one point of view, is that you can be corkingly improper and nobody can say a word because you are exposing a GRAVE EVIL.” Thus, New York City decency director Anthony Comstock could not send “locust-sticked” policemen in to shut the play down.⁸⁸ Wodehouse also found the play to be dreary but believed a way for it to remain in production for a long time would be by “the writing of a couple of good comic songs for the Prophet . . . and a dancing chorus added to Act II.”⁸⁹

Several reviews (correctly) questioned whether conditions in Utah were really as portrayed in the play.⁹⁰ Sherwin, who had been the drama critic of the *Rocky Mountain News* in Denver, which he characterized as an “anti-Mormon

82 Sherwin, “The New Play, ‘Polygamy’ at Playhouse Is an Anti-Mormon Melodrama,” *New York Globe*, December 2, 1914, 14.

83 Harvey O’Higgins, “Mr. O’Higgins Is After Many Kinds of Laughter,” *New York Times*, December 27, 1914, section 8, 3.

84 “‘Polygamy,’” *Theatre* 21 (January 1915): 6.

85 DeFoe, “Propaganda and Drama,” 486. DeFoe developed this theme later in his essay: “as drama it vitiates the strength of its grim story and violates the logic of human nature for the sake of a sugar-coated ending. The characters being victims of circumstances such as are represented, should have had in store for them a tragic life.” *Ibid.*, 490.

86 Turnbull, “‘Polygamy’ at the Playhouse,” *New York Tribune*, December 2, 1914, 9.

87 Sherwin, “The New Play, ‘Polygamy’ at Playhouse Is an Anti-Mormon Melodrama,” December 2, 1914, 14.

88 P. G. Wodehouse, “Boy! Page Mr. Comstock! Somebody Wants to See Him About Some Plays Now Running in New York,” *Vanity Fair* 4 (March 1915): 27. It appears that a scene such as the one in act 3 when Zina swoons outside her bedroom door after she directs Annis in to consummate her polygamous marriage to Dan would have been quite shocking to Progressive sensibilities. Wodehouse noted that such a scene would be far more “salacious” than scenes in plays that police were closing with “locust [night] sticks.”

89 *Ibid.* Of course, *Polygamy* was not intended to be very funny. Wodehouse noted that *Polygamy* compared unfavorably to *The Girl From Utah*, a musical which appeared on Broadway earlier in 1914. Jerome Kern wrote some of the music for *The Girl From Utah* and Wodehouse soon began writing lyrics for Kern’s Broadway compositions.

90 DeFoe, “Propaganda and Drama,” 483, 486; Pollock, “Polygamy,” 297–99; Nathan, “The Unimportance of Being Earnest,” 146.

paper,” when Frank Cannon had been managing editor, noted that he believed that “it would be hopeless to expect anybody but professional anti-Mormons to take [*Polygamy*] seriously.” To him, “the piece is a deliberate and lurid attack upon Mormonism.” Though he acknowledged that the authors “believe solemnly that the Mormon Church is a menace to the liberties of American citizens, and also to the cant and expediency popularly known as morality,” his experience led him to state, “I happen to know only too well that this entire agitation is simply a political squabble between the Mormons . . . and the Gentiles.”⁹¹

The prominent reviewer and playwright Channing Pollock, who was effectively a Salt Lake City native, found the play entirely unbelievable, poorly acted, and boorish.⁹² Pollock wrote that, while Americans might “have been credible enough” in the nineteenth century to accept such a portrayal of Mormons, the story was not “convincing in juxtaposition with modern furniture and a motor car.” The Prophet, “a gentleman looking like Uncle Sam in the clothes of Mark Twain, ordering the lives of his votaries, ceases to be impressive when the arrival of those votaries is announced by telephone.” To Pollock, modern times were not as welcoming to outlandish criticisms of Mormons. Herne as Zina, “with her broad o’s” and fashionable gowns “effectively gives the lie to Mr. O’Higgins and Miss Ford.” Pollock found Brig Kemble a drunken boor whose outbursts were generally in poor taste. Though Mary Shaw did “fine work” as Bathsheba Tanner, her character was alternatively a “fanatical Latter Day Saint,” “saucy to *the Prophet*,” and “a maudlin first aid to the injured.” Ultimately, “this absolutely false and foolish play is not helped by a quantity of very artificial acting by Miss Herne. William B. Mack, . . . and Ramsey Wallace play ‘*Brig*’ and ‘*Dan*’ with inexplicable sincerity, while Katherine Emmet almost succeeds in making *Annis* a sympathetic character.” In sum, Pollock opined that “‘*Polygamy*’ is unconscious farce. Evidently intended as another ‘*Clansman*,’ it proves to be quite the funniest thing that has happened

on our stage” in some time.⁹³

By his reference to *Clansman*, Pollock recognized the playwrights’ attempt to appeal to the current popularity of the theme of women under the domination of evil men. *Clansman* was a play produced on Broadway in 1906 based on a popular novel. In 1915 this story was brought to the screen by director D. W. Griffith as *The Birth of a Nation*, often touted as one of the most influential and visually stunning early motion pictures.⁹⁴ The play was sympathetic to the Ku Klux Klan and openly racist, with heroic white men attempting to control brutal black men intent upon dominating and raping white women.

Pollock captured, but did not quite fully recognize, the authors’ attempt to take commercial advantage of Progressive America’s fascination with white slave drama.⁹⁵ The white slavery drama was, in turn, a form of brothel drama in which fallen women would somehow raise themselves from the lives they had fallen into. The more likely characters in such a drama may have been prostitutes but O’Higgins recognized that he could portray “sister wives” in ways analogous to “sisters in sin.” Bathsheba Tanner took the role of the madam, while beautiful young polygamous wives such as Augusta Strong and Clara Tanner (and ultimately, Zina Whitman and Annis Grey) were the “sisters in sin.” Almost all of these women sought to escape their fates as polygamous wives and to assert their independence. As such, they conveyed an important feminist message and overtly “appeal[ed] to feminine sympathy.”⁹⁶ It was not coincidental that Herne, Emmet, and Shaw were all well-known feminists with extensive political activities. The play’s producer, Helen Taylor, actively encouraged women’s attendance at the play by encouraging prominent feminists to attend and also by having a “club-women’s” night every Tuesday when speak-

91 Sherwin, “The New Play, ‘Polygamy’ at Playhouse Is an Anti-Mormon Melodrama,” 14; Sherwin did like that the play, unlike most of the productions that season, was “about something.” Ibid.

92 Pollock, “Polygamy,” 297, 298.

93 Ibid., 297–99.

94 “AFT’s 100 Greatest American Movies of All Time,” *aficom*, accessed February 2015; “The Birth of a Nation,” *Theatre* 21 (April 1915): 222.

95 Mormon polygamy was often cast as a form of white slavery by nineteenth-century critics. Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 140–70.

96 DeFoe, “Propaganda and Drama,” 482–83; Mantle, “Polygamy” and Other New Plays in the City of New York,” sec. 8, 7.

ers would discuss “some phase of the feminist question” during the intermission between acts 2 and 3.⁹⁷

While pursuing their feminist message, the authors also sought to attract theatergoers as other white slave dramas of the day had, by casting beautiful, white young women in many of the lead roles. Besides having solid feminist backgrounds, the actresses who played these roles—Herne, Emmett, Mona Ryan, and Marie Pinchard (who played Augusta Strong and Clara Tanner)—were also white, intelligent, and beautiful. Wodehouse, at least, found the sexual tensions sometimes portrayed in the play salacious by contemporary norms.

Critic Louis DeFoe found the drama to be largely successful “propaganda”: “The peculiarity in the case of ‘Polygamy’ . . . is that the play has compelled the interest of a large percentage of the audiences that have witnessed its performances.” DeFoe stated that O’Higgins’s allegation that the Mormons’ “hateful matrimonial practices” were sufficiently “alive, or dangerous enough now to warrant propagandism . . . in the theater is, of course, open to doubt.”⁹⁸

Some critics and audiences admired the sincerity of the play, but the legendary Broadway critic George Jean Nathan, in an essay entitled “The Unimportance of Being Earnest,” found the play to be far too earnest. Nathan believed that the play might “conceivably have been a highly interesting piece of dramatic writing,” but O’Higgins, “instead of presenting the case for or against polygamy from a new plane, has permitted himself to present that case as nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand would present it. And the presentation, being consequently a mere parroting of what the man in the street sincerely thinks of polygamy, resolves itself into a tedious business.”⁹⁹

Nathan continued by lauding Mormons for their happy, clean-living, healthy, law-abiding lives, concluding with an ironic question, “If marrying one woman is moral, why isn’t marrying two women twice as moral?”¹⁰⁰

Nathan romanticized nineteenth-century Mormons for effect, but he did express what has often been a deep admiration for perceived positive character traits of Mormons. A reviewer for the *New York Post* found the play to be thoroughly unbelievable and as evidence pointed to the Prophet’s supposed exercise of “an illimitable despotism over the families of all the saints and the apostles themselves, but [who], like some imperial chancellor, receives the reports of his diplomatic agents from all parts of the United States and the civilized world, and issues mandates which statesmen and financiers, at home and abroad, must obey if they would avoid defeat or ruin.”¹⁰¹

After the show opened, the usually reticent O’Higgins “suddenly found himself in demand” as a speaker “on the facts beneath his ‘purpose play.’”¹⁰² He usually spoke of the “national Frankenstein” that was Mormonism in connection with his discussion of his new play.¹⁰³ O’Higgins and Ford wrote the play to keep the Mormon issue before the public. “We felt we had found in modern Mormon polygamy a theme for a play that might make some needed excitement for our audiences, the Mormons and ourselves. And we have not been disappointed. We are leaving it to the Mormons to speak for themselves—and they are keeping religiously silent.”¹⁰⁴ O’Higgins was using his

97 “‘Polygamy’ and the Clubwomen’s Night,” *Munsey’s Magazine* 54 (April 1915): 547.

98 DeFoe, “Propaganda and Drama,” 482–83. DeFoe’s ten-page review is the longest and most incisive. He recognizes the difficulties of *Polygamy*, and he is mistrustful of it as propaganda, but he also finds that the play is powerful drama and that it “grows in interest and significance” as it deals “with the possible effect of plural marriage upon domestic happiness.” *Ibid.*, 486.

99 Nathan, “The Unimportance of Being Earnest,” 145. See also George Jean Nathan, *Another Book on the Theatre* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1915), 64–67.

100 Nathan, “The Unimportance of Being Earnest,” 146; “Biography of George Jean Nathan,” accessed February 2015, english.arts.cornell.edu. Louis Sherwin, who had had many interactions with Mormons in the West and had worked with Frank Cannon, echoed Nathan’s views when he wrote that “the majority of [Mormons] are decent, thrifty, and honest citizens,” while Gentiles in Utah “play a sneaking game and whenever they are beaten howl for help by dragging in this moribund polygamy question.” Sherwin, “The New Play, ‘Polygamy’ at Playhouse Is an Anti-Mormon Melodrama,” 14.

101 *New York Post*, December 2, 1914, as quoted in Lael J. Woodbury, “Mormonism and the Commercial Theatre,” *BYU Studies* 12 (Winter 1972): 237.

102 “O’Higgins a Newspaperman Playwright,” *Fourth Estate*, February 13, 1915, 19.

103 O’Higgins, “Address before the Drama Society,” 4.

104 *Ibid.*, 6.



Isaac Russell, a Stanford-educated reporter for the New York Times, grew up Mormon in Utah and provided covert public relations services for the LDS church. Russell attacked the play and defended his church against the play's negative portrayal of it. He took Mormon leader B. H. Roberts to the play; Roberts found it to be harmless "melodrama."

insinuation that Mormons were keeping quiet about the play to reinforce his allegation that Mormon leaders would not respond because they could not truthfully do so.

In fact, *Polygamy* did create "excitement." For many evangelicals, feminists, rabbis, and others, the play simply brought to the stage the outrageous acts of the Mormons that they had been reading and hearing about in magazines, books, and Chautauqua and Lyceum lectures.¹⁰⁵ The source of much of this information was the authors' consultant on *Polygamy*, Frank Cannon.

Not surprisingly, the play also created some reaction in the Mormon community, though it was produced far away from where most Mormons lived. It is unclear how well known the play was in Utah. While local newspapers made

passing references to the actors, apparently neither the *Salt Lake Tribune* nor the *Salt Lake Herald* published reviews of the play.¹⁰⁶ Some Mormon leaders and commentators saw little to be concerned about in the play. B. H. Roberts attended the play with Isaac Russell, a Utah Mormon living in New York who worked as a *New York Times* reporter.¹⁰⁷ Roberts "emerged smiling without having felt hurt or offended at any word in it. 'Excellent melodrama' he commented, 'but so far away from any problem of ours that we won't need to bother with that.'"¹⁰⁸ In an essay he probably intended to publish for *Harper's Weekly* (but apparently did not), Russell wrote that, "as a criticism of Mormon life . . . the play has a fresh coloring to it." Unlike many of the New York critics, who found Zina's expensive gowns to be inauthentic and distracting, Russell found it refreshing to have women "carrying out the polygamous life in the latest Broadway gowns instead of in sunbonnets and shawls with dugouts and hovels for their homes." "It was surprising to one who had sat through years of the discussion of polygamy to find the whole thing charged up to something besides men's lust . . . and it was a bit of a surprise to encounter a home scene with a polygamous setting instead of something like a Turkish harem with its overlord and its bleak, unhappy women for his servants."¹⁰⁹

To Russell, the problem with the play was its "driving at the Mormon prophet." Frank Cannon had spent the previous ten years attacking Joseph F. Smith, the current prophet, "from about every angle he could direct a blow in his direction." Russell correctly believed that polygamy had been "practiced by a generation

106 See "Actress-Bride Postpones Honeymoon to Play Role in 'Polygamy,'" *Salt Lake Telegram*, January 13, 1915, 9; *Ogden Standard*, July 31, 1915, 8.

107 Kenneth L. Cannon II, "Isaac Russell, Mormon Muckraker and Secret Defender of the Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 39 (Fall 2013): 44–98.

108 Isaac Russell to Editor of the *New York Globe*, February 8, 1915, Russell Papers.

109 Isaac Russell, unpublished essay on "Polygamy," [February 1915], Russell Papers. It appears that Norman Hapgood, editor of *Harper's Weekly*, had approached Russell "to write an article about 'Polygamy' as a play in which I should state, as a Mormon, whether I saw any facts . . . that were true in Mormon history,—to discuss it from a Mormon standpoint." Isaac Russell to Reed Smoot, January 5, 1915, Russell Papers. It is likely that this unpublished manuscript was probably intended for this purpose.

105 Cannon, "And Now It Is the Mormons"; Cannon, "The Modern Mormon Kingdom."

now largely dead” and that church leaders had made a distinct effort to “cease further polygamous marriages.” Some had “slipped” past beyond the official end of polygamy in 1890, and, as Russell understood, some of those who had been involved in polygamous marriages after 1890 were senior church leaders. By 1915, however, “Mormons and non-Mormons alike who live in Utah” knew that polygamy was largely a thing of the past and were frustrated by people who did not understand the truth. As Russell pointed out, not only were Mormon polygamists a dying breed, but many of those who had fought hardest in Utah against polygamy, such as Orlando W. Powers, who had prosecuted polygamists, and William Nelson, who had led anti-polygamy efforts at the *Salt Lake Tribune*, had also passed away.¹¹⁰ The polygamy issue was essentially dead and so were most of those who had engaged in the attacks on and defenses of the practice.

To heighten the drama and, no doubt, to marshal support for his assertions of the control and power supposedly wielded by the Mormon church in the United States (and, not incidentally, to increase box office revenues), Harvey O’Higgins continued to tell audiences that the Mormons were trying to close the play. O’Higgins first made this allegation in his address to the Drama Society in December 1914, and he continued to make the same charge during the play’s five-month run.¹¹¹ He reportedly told people in private that Senator Reed Smoot had come to New York and talked to the bankers of William Brady, the owner of the Playhouse Theatre where *Polygamy* had opened. According to O’Higgins’ story, Smoot had “got this banker to withdraw all of his support from the BRADY productions till Brady should agree to DROP Polygamy.”¹¹² Those who promulgated this rumor pointed out that the play had had to move just weeks after opening because of unidentified “incredible difficulties and hostilities.” It then moved uptown to the Park Theatre, which was probably bigger but had a less fashionable address.¹¹³

Dr. Frank Crane, a columnist for the *New York Globe*, heard this story and wrote that “in ways too that you would not believe efforts have been made to stop this play. You would know why if you would see the play.”¹¹⁴ Isaac Russell tried to challenge Crane to provide support for his allegation. When Crane did not respond, Russell wrote a letter to the editor of the *Globe* in which he spoke glowingly of Crane’s writing and of the *Globe* generally but questioned Crane’s allegations that Mormons were trying to close the play.¹¹⁵ Either Crane had evidence of his assertions or he should stop making them. A month earlier, Russell had confirmed with Senator Reed Smoot that no one from the LDS church had tried either directly or indirectly to close Polygamy or interfered with the theatre’s finances.¹¹⁶

Influential Mormons believed that the play was failing financially. Russell wrote to President Joseph F. Smith in April 1915, near the end of the play’s run, that *Polygamy* was “proving to be a financial failure as well as a contemptible falsehood.”¹¹⁷ In fact, it is likely that Russell, who secretly and at church expense worked hard (and often successfully) to undermine anti-Mormon activities, had devised means of subtly attacking the play and its creators.¹¹⁸ Tellingly, Smith related how he wanted to assure Russell “that I greatly appreciate the good work you are doing in the East in combating the errors, falsehoods, and ‘lies that die hard,’ that are constantly appearing in the public press, the drama, moving picture shows, and from the pulpit of many so-called Christian churches.”¹¹⁹

Polygamy attracted attention and had a respectable run but ultimately did not enjoy long-term success. Louis DeFoe attempted to account for this, given the interest that the play generated

April 11, 1915, 9.

114 Frank Crane, “Polygamy,” *New York Globe*, January 14, 1915, 16. Crane also wrote that Mormon agents are “men who move as surely and as secretly as the agents of the Spanish Inquisition.”

115 Isaac Russell to Editor of the *New York Globe*, February 8, 1915, Russell Papers.

116 Isaac Russell to Reed Smoot, January 5, 1915, Russell Papers.

117 Joseph F. Smith to Isaac Russell, April 23, 1915, Russell Papers. Smith was responding to a letter to him from Russell and was quoting from Russell’s report.

118 Cannon, “Mormon Muckraker.”

119 Smith to Russell, April 23, 1915, Russell Papers.

110 Isaac Russell, unpublished essay on “Polygamy,” 8-9.

111 “O’Higgins a Newspaperman Playwright,” *Fourth Estate*, February 13, 1915, 19.

112 Isaac Russell to Reed Smoot, January 5, 1915, Russell Papers.

113 “A Woman Who Picks Successful Plays,” *Theatre* 21 (April 1915): 186. See also “Polygamy Creates Furore [sic] in New York; Creed? No the Play,” *Salt Lake Telegram*,

with those who attended it. To DeFoe, despite superb acting, a dramatic story, brisk dialogue, sets and costumes worthy of a major Broadway production, showings sponsored by prominent institutions, favorable reviews, and substantial publicity, *Polygamy* just never succeeded in attracting sufficient audiences. DeFoe believed there were two reasons for this: the play was too biased against the Mormons and amounted to unfair propaganda, and it betrayed its gritty message through an unlikely happy ending. As DeFoe wrote, in *Polygamy* “there is [an] irritating tendency of the play to fall between two stools—the stools of propaganda and drama. Both stools are shaky.”¹²⁰

How accurate was *Polygamy* in portraying conditions in Mormon Utah? Did O’Higgins even care about that? For one thing, Utah Mormons, even prosperous ones, did not generally dress in the latest fashions or speak with eastern accents. More important, it is clear that by 1914, when the play opened, senior church leaders were not generally encouraging or directing members to enter plural marriage. Francis M. Lyman, president of the church’s Quorum of Twelve Apostles, had led a committee that worked hard to find and discipline leaders and members of the church who continued to encourage or officiate in new polygamous marriages after 1904. Frank Cannon made money through lectures and writings accusing the church of continued support for polygamy, but it is very likely that he did not believe his own allegations. Polygamy was just a well-known practice of the church that outraged Progressive America, and O’Higgins used this as the dramatic device to make allegations of secular domination and control by church leaders while at the same time hoping to have a successful Broadway run. The playwrights might have known that their portrayal of the Prophet’s forcing Daniel Whitman and Annis Grey into plural marriage was not accurate but believed that the domination over the lives of Mormons portrayed in these actions by church leaders was every bit as heavy-handed and complete as that would have been. At least one critic, *New Republic* editor Francis Hackett, understood the play’s dramatic use of polygamy as a threat to men and women alike as a symbol of the church’s power and control.

In April 1915, in order to keep the play running, producer Helen Taylor began offering a money-back guarantee to patrons who were not satisfied with it.¹²¹ Her offer did not work. By the end of April, it was announced that “‘Polygamy’ has gone into retirement for the Summer season.”¹²² It never came out of retirement. Over its run, the play had tried hard to capture the attention of eastern society, to channel feminist outrage over what its authors viewed as Mormondom’s version of white slavery, and to focus on allegedly improper behavior by Mormon leaders. The fact that *Polygamy* is largely forgotten belies its sophistication, nuance, and force. Unlike *The Book of Mormon*, it just was not much fun. Perhaps *Polygamy* might have had a longer run if Ford and O’Higgins had engaged P. G. Wodehouse and Jerome Kern to write some snappy show tunes for it.

121 “Guaranteeing a Play, Novel Plan Being Tried with ‘Polygamy’ at the Park,” *New York Times*, April 4, 1915, section 8, 4.

122 Ibid.

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Kenneth L. Cannon II is an attorney in private practice and an independent historian who resides in Salt Lake City. His current long-term project is a group biography of George Q. Cannon’s three oldest sons, John Q., Frank J., and Abraham H.

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120 DeFoe, “Propaganda and Drama,” 490.



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This image reflects one way Americans imagined the Mormon settlers—in this case, after reading reports about the cricket plague. The original caption reads “Grasshoppers descent upon Salt Lake Valley.” Source unknown.

NEWS FROM SALT LAKE, 1847–1849

BY ANDREW H. HEDGES

On July 8, 1849, while on his way to the California gold fields, John B. Hazlip wrote a letter from the valley of the Great Salt Lake to a friend in Missouri. After receiving the letter, Hazlip's friend turned it over to the editor of the *Missouri Whig*, whose decision to publish it in the October 4, 1849, issue of the paper provided his readers with a contemporary first-hand description of the valley and its Mormon inhabitants. Hazlip found the Mormon's city to be "laid off in very handsome style," and the five thousand residents to be "very accommodating" and hospitable, though almost desperate for such basics as "sugar, coffee, tea and flour." Hazlip also noted the region's natural resources—springs, salt, and saleratus, for example—as well as the fort the Mormons had built and the fifty thousand acres of wheat they had under cultivation.¹ Hazlip's letter was one of many written from the valley that year, some of which were published and some of which were not. Similar letters from the Salt Lake area followed in subsequent years, many like Hazlip's eventually finding their way into print. Beginning in 1850, readers in the United States and England could also learn about the Mormons in Salt Lake in longer published accounts by travelers, government employees, and military men, and by the end of the decade a significant body of information on the topic—as well as about the physical features, mineral resources, climate, Indians, and natural history of the region—had been generated by non-Mormons for public consumption.² During the same period of time,

1 Dale L. Morgan, ed., "Letters by Forty-Niners Written from Great Salt Lake City in 1849," *Western Humanities Review* 3 (April 1949): 99–101.

2 For examples, see James Abbey, *California: A Trip across the Plains in the Spring of 1850* (Albany, IN: Kent and Norman and J. R. Nunemacher, 1850); William Kelly, *An Excursion*

dozens of visitors to the area had included detailed descriptions of the region and its residents in their personal diaries and journals.

These published and unpublished records of travelers through the Salt Lake valley have served as the basis for numerous studies on the early history of the area. Many of these studies have focused on non-Mormon descriptions and impressions of the Mormons in their western home, while others have been concerned with the region's geography and physical features as much as they have been with the area's human inhabitants.³ Whatever the focus, these studies have generally taken the year 1849 as their starting point, as that was the first year in which outsiders—in most cases, forty-niners on their way to California—generated large numbers of reports on life and conditions in the Great Basin. This tendency gives the impression that 1849 was the beginning of the public's awareness of the Mormons' situation in the Salt Lake valley. In fact, a fair amount of information on the topic was available in American newspapers in the two years previous to 1849 as well as in the early months of that year, before letters from forty-niners were published in eastern presses.

This article is an effort to bring to light what, exactly, that early information was, and to de-

lineate as much as possible the route by which it was conveyed from the valleys of the Great Basin to eastern newspapers.⁴ It also attempts to provide a rough idea of how broadly this early information was disseminated across the country, which was generally done through the relatively new electromagnetic telegraph system or by editors simply reprinting articles of interest they had read in other papers.⁵ I will also examine the origin and perpetuation of some of the misconceptions about conditions in the valley, especially the persistent rumors that the Mormons had found significant deposits of gold in the region.

The first news regarding the Mormons and the Salt Lake region in 1847 evidently reached eastern readers via an article published in a May 1847 issue of the *St. Louis Republican*, an established western paper whose location and circulation served to make it a prime channel for disseminating information from the West. Claiming to have received its intelligence "from sources having favorable opportunities of acquiring information," the *Republican* (according to a reprint in the *Cleveland Herald*) reported that in April a "pioneer corps" of church leaders and some three hundred men had "started for the Pacific" from their encampment on the west bank of the Missouri River. "Their intention," the paper's editor wrote, "is to proceed as far as possible up to the period of necessary planting time, when they will stop and commence a crop." If all went according to plan, this would be the "Bear River Valley," a region "to[o] sterile for cultivation," the editor opined, "with the exception of a small valley within about twenty miles of the mouth of Bear river, where it empties into the Salt Lake,

to California (London: Chapman and Hall, 1851); Nelson Slater, *Fruits of Mormonism* (Coloma, CA: Harmon and Springer, 1851); John W. Gunnison, *The Mormons, or, Latter-day Saints, in the Valley of The Great Salt Lake* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1852); Howard Stansbury, *Exploration and Survey of the Valley of the Great Salt Lake of Utah* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1852); Benjamin G. Ferris, *Utah and the Mormons* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1854); Cornelia Ferris, *The Mormons at Home* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856); S. N. Carvalho, *Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1857); and William Chandless, *A Visit to Salt Lake* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857).

- 3 For examples, see Brigham D. Madsen, *Gold Rush Sojourners in Great Salt Lake City, 1849 and 1850* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983); Edwina J. Snow, "British Travelers View the Saints," *BYU Studies* 31 (Spring 1991): 63–81; Martin Mitchell, "Gentile Impressions of Salt Lake City, Utah, 1849–1870," *Geographical Review* 87 (July 1997): 334–52; Craig S. Smith, "The Curious Meet the Mormons: Images from Travel Narratives, 1850s and 1860s," *Journal of Mormon History* 24 (Fall 1998): 155–81; Fred E. Woods, "'Surely This City is Bound to Shine': Descriptions of Salt Lake City by Western-Bound Emigrants, 1849–1868," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 74 (Fall 2006): 334–48.

- 4 Regular postal service between the Salt Lake valley and the Missouri River did not begin until the early 1850s.

- 5 First operational in 1844, Samuel Morse's electromagnetic telegraph was serving as a means of disseminating information about the Salt Lake Mormons between eastern newspaper editors by June 1848. See Richard A. Schwarzlose, *The Nation's Newsbrokers* 2 vols. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 1:38; "Correspondence of the Baltimore Patriot—By Telegraph," *Fayetteville (NC) Observer*, June 6, 1848; and "The Late Disastrous Western News," *North American and United States Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), June 7, 1848. Also facilitating the spread of newsprint was the Post Office Act of 1792, which allowed newspaper printers to "send one paper to every other printer of newspapers within the United States, free of postage." Schwarzlose, *Nation's Newsbrokers*, 1:4–6.



A romanticized image of emigrants passing through the Rocky Mountains. People in the eastern United States had to rely on reports of varying accuracy and artists' images for information about the West. From an engraving by F. F. Palmer, 1866.

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known by trappers as *Cache valley*.⁶ Pausing only briefly at this point, the leaders would then “proceed over into California,” where they would join forces with discharged members of the Mormon Battalion and “some hundreds who have reached there by sea.”⁷ Together, this

rapidly growing band would then “select a locality as a focus for immigration” somewhere on the shores of the Pacific, with the settlement in the Salt Lake region designed to serve as little more than a resting place for those coming after.⁸

6 “The Mormons,” *Cleveland Herald*, May 25, 1847. In this and other places where I have been unable to locate a copy of the original publication (in this case, the original *St. Louis Republican*), I have simply quoted from a reprint of the article appearing in another newspaper. Many such reprints identify the newspaper in which the article first appeared, the date on which it was published, and sometimes other pertinent information, allowing historians to reconstruct with at least a fair degree of confidence the early publication history of the article even when the original has not been available.

7 Ibid. The Mormon Battalion, initially consisting of some five hundred Latter-day Saint soldiers accompanied by thirty-three women and fifty-one children, had marched from Council Bluffs, Iowa Territory, to San Diego and Los Angeles to fight in the Mexican War. While many members of the Battalion had returned east following their discharge in July 1847, many others remained in California. The “hundreds” of Mormons who had reached California by sea was a reference to some 230 Latter-day Saints who had arrived at San Francisco on

News that the Mormons had modified their plans somewhat reached St. Louis three months later, on August 4, 1847, when a “Mr. Shaw” and a “Mr. Bolder,” traveling “direct from Oregon,” landed in the city on the Missouri River steamer *Tributary*. Shaw and Bolder had met Brigham Young’s pioneer company at Fort Bridger, at which point “it was understood that the Mormons would not proceed, this season, further than the neighborhood of the Salt Lake.”⁹ Quick

the ship *Brooklyn* in July 1846 under the leadership of Samuel Brannan. At this time, Brannan and his company were still in that area, waiting to hear where Brigham Young and the church intended to make a permanent settlement.

8 “The Mormons,” *Cleveland Herald*, May 25, 1847.

9 “Very Late from Oregon and California,” *Milwaukee*

corroboration for their report came from Captain T. G. Drake and John G. Campbell, who had left the Oregon settlements the day after Shaw and Bolder had and reported that Young's "advanced party were hastening on by forced marches, to select a place for a winter encampment somewhere in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake."¹⁰ That the church would continue on toward the Pacific the following year seems implicit in both reports, although Drake and Campbell reported learning that "the Californians, and most of the emigrants from the United States, were very decidedly opposed to the settling of the Mormons there," and would even "resort to force to resist their settlement" in that region.¹¹ The report by Shaw and Bolder, which first appeared in the August 5, 1847, issue of the *St. Louis Republican*, had been reprinted in Milwaukee, Cleveland, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. by the middle of the month, and in Vermont, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi by August 20.¹² Far fewer papers carried the *Republican's* later story on the Drake and Campbell report, perhaps because of its similarity to the earlier news brought by Shaw and Bolder.¹³

Newspapers continued to report well into September 1847 that the Mormons were ultimately bound for the Pacific Coast region. In its September 15, 1847, issue, for example, Philadelphia's *North American and United States Gazette* reprinted a report by one N. N. Osborne, who had met 750 Mormon wagons "on their way to California" as he returned from Ore-

Daily Sentinel and Gazette, August 11, 1847.

10 "From Oregon and California," *Washington D.C. Daily National Intelligencer*, August 31, 1847.

11 *Ibid.*

12 "Very Late from Oregon and California," *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel and Gazette*, August 11, 1847; "Very Late from Oregon and California," *Cleveland Herald*, August 12, 1847; "Late from Oregon," *Boston Daily Atlas*, August 13, 1847; "Oregon and California," *North American and United States Gazette*, August 12, 1847; "Late from California," *Daily National Intelligencer*, August 13, 1847; "From California," *Montpelier Vermont Patriot*, August 19, 1847; "Late from California," *Fayetteville Observer*, August 17, 1847; "Later from Oregon," *Greenville (SC) Mountaineer*, August 20, 1847; "Oregon and California," *Tri-Weekly Flag and Advertiser*, August 17, 1847; "Very Late from Oregon and California," *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette*, August 17, 1847.

13 A search of newspaper databases resulted in only one reprint; see "From Oregon and California," *Daily National Intelligencer*, August 31, 1847.

gon.¹⁴ At the same time, news began reaching readers that the Mormons had reached the valley of the Great Salt Lake. "A friend has shown us letters of a late date from the pioneer camp of Mormon emigrants," reported the *Philadelphia Pennsylvanian* in an article reprinted in Arkansas on September 17. "They had at length reached the great salt lake, near which they had made a halt, and their wearied cattle were enjoying the sweet grass and fresh water with which that region is favored."¹⁵ By September 22, Sam Brannan was reporting to readers in California that as of August 7, "480 souls . . . for the most part males . . . an advance of an extensive emigration soon to follow" had reached the Salt Lake valley and had "laid off and commenced a town, [and] planted large crops, which are described as being forward and flourishing."¹⁶ Still, though, the idea that the Salt Lake valley was nothing more than a stopover persisted, with the same article also noting that the Mormons in the Salt Lake valley still planned to open "an entire new road through to this country" on which they would "move *en masse* to the valleys of California."¹⁷

Even as some papers continued to promulgate the idea that the Mormons intended ultimately to travel to the Pacific, others began reporting that the Salt Lake valley would serve as the Mormons' final destination. On August 22, the well-positioned *St. Louis Republican* reported that General Stephen W. Kearny and members of the Mormon Battalion, who were escorting Lt. Col. John C. Frémont to Washington D.C. for his court martial, had just arrived in St. Louis from California.¹⁸ Most of the article, predictably, dealt with the military situation in California when Kearny and Frémont had left, but one paragraph briefly mentioned the

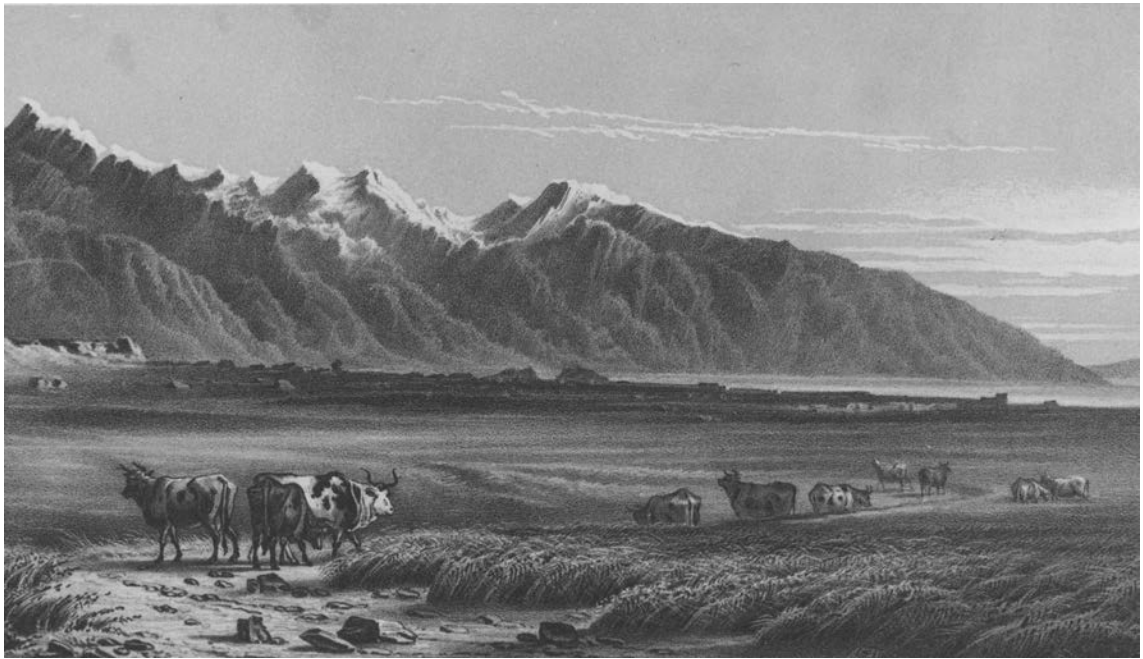
14 "From Oregon," *North American and United States Gazette*, September 15, 1847.

15 "The Mormons," *Little Rock Arkansas State Democrat*, September 17, 1847.

16 "Interesting from the Emigration," *Californian* (Monterey, CA), September 22, 1847. For background on Brannan, see note 7 above.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Kearny had arrested Frémont in California for mutiny and insubordination when Frémont had refused to submit to his orders following the American conquest of upper California in January 1847. See Allan Nevins, *Frémont: Pathmaker of the West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 305–42.



An early view of Salt Lake City from the north, taken from Howard Stansbury's Great Salt Lake of Utah (1852). The sketch shows plentiful grass in the wide valley and a small settlement.

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party's encounter on August 4 with 685 wagons of the Mormons one day east of Fort Laramie. "They expected to winter on the great salt lake," Kearny and the others reported, "and this, they assert, is to be the final resting place of their people."¹⁹ Within two weeks, the article was reprinted in papers across the country, due more to the national interest in the Mexican War at the time, probably, than to concern about the Mormons' intentions.²⁰

19 "Arrival of Gen. Kearney," *The Boston Daily Atlas*, September 4, 1847.

20 Kearny had established an American-based civil government in California in March 1847, two months after defeating Mexican forces in Los Angeles. Also in March, General Winfield Scott had landed some 12,000 American troops near Veracruz, Mexico, and began marching toward Mexico City. By the time this article began making its rounds in American papers, Scott's troops were poised for the attack on the Mexican capital that would end the war. For reprints of the article, see "From California," *Bellows Falls Vermont Chronicle*, September 8, 1847; "Very Late from California," *Daily Sentinel and Gazette*, September 1, 1847; "Arrival of Gen. Kearney," *Boston Daily Atlas*, September 4, 1847; "Late from California," *Tri-Weekly Flag and Advertiser*, September 9, 1847.

Details about the Mormons' permanent location followed over the course of the next two months, with editors generally judging the news to be interesting enough to print it under its own title. On October 27, for example, the *Missouri Republican* reported that it had just learned from "a person direct from Council Bluffs" that "the Mormons have located their grand gathering place about half way between the Utah and Salt Lake, in [Eastern Alta] California, on a stream which connects the two waters." The *Republican's* informant had obtained his news from a "runner . . . who was sent on in advance by the Mormon 'Twelve,' who were on the route back from the Salt Lake," and reported that "the distance between the two lakes is about sixty miles—a fertile valley extending the whole distance of several miles in breadth. There they have laid out a city and commenced making improvements." The article concluded by noting—erroneously, and perhaps too optimistically—that the Mormons were "in the midst of the Blackfeet, Utah, and Crow tribes of Indians, who are said to be peaceable, and favor this settlement." The article was reprinted in numerous papers over the course of November

and early December,²¹ with one of those papers, in a separate story, referencing the Latter-day Saints' "new settlement at Salt Lake" as though it was old news.²²

To be sure, the public knew very little about the Salt Lake valley prior to the Mormons' settlement of the region in 1847. The most reliable and broadly disseminated information on the area had been available for only two years in the form of an official report by John C. Frémont, who had explored the northeastern portion of the valley between the Bear River and Weber River deltas in early September 1843. Frémont had kept careful records of weather data, and had commented extensively on the geology, plant life, and animal life he and his party had encountered, but had been forced by the advancing season to leave the region after little more than a week, having never reached the area initially settled by Brigham Young and the Mormons. People who had read his report—including Brigham Young himself, who studied it carefully—had a general idea of the region's climate, topography, plant life, and abundant waterfowl, but only as they had manifested themselves during a few days in September 1843 in a small area fifty to seventy miles north of where the Mormons would settle.²³ Much remained to be learned, and it was the Mormons who would supply the country with that information.

On December 1, 1847, the *St. Louis Republican* published the most detailed report of the year regarding the Mormons' new situation in the Salt Lake valley. Citing as its source Jesse Little, a Mormon traveling east from the Great Basin to resume his duties as president of the LDS Eastern States Mission, the *Republican* report-

ed that "the country selected for the habitation of the Mormons is about twenty miles east of the Great Salt Lake," and included "a range [of mountains] some eighty miles in length, and perhaps ten to twenty miles in width."

A field of about one hundred acres of ground had been planted with corn, potatoes, turnips, and other edibles, but as the rain seldom fell there, they had to resort to the uncertain and laborious process of irrigation. They had engaged in the erection of a stockade, to protect the colony from the attacks of the Indians, covering some ten acres of ground, within which from a hundred and sixty to two hundred dwellings were to be erected. Some parts of the valley have a very fertile appearance, but others, again, are exceedingly poor, and cannot be made to produce anything. . . . In and around the Salt Lake Valley, very little game was to be found.

Relatively few papers appear to have reprinted this report and the gloomy prediction of the editor—who obviously was not impressed with the valley's resources and potentials—that "most distressing accounts" of the Mormons' situation would probably be received "by the first arrivals next spring."²⁴

By the end of 1847, then, most Americans were probably aware that the Salt Lake valley had become the Mormons' new central gathering place, and not the simple way-station *en route* to the Pacific coast they had read about earlier in the year. They also had a rough idea of the region's geography, Native peoples, and potential productivity, and the initial steps the Latter-day Saints had taken to produce a crop and provide for their safety. Most of the earlier information they had received came from men returning to the states from Oregon who had met various companies of church members on their way west. Later information came from army officers returning from California as well as church members already returning to the valley. Whatever the source, most of this news had first been printed in the *St. Louis Republi-*

21 For example, see "The New Mormon Location," *Arkansas State Democrat*, December 3, 1847; "The New Mormon Location," *Chillicothe (OH) Scioto Gazette*, November 10, 1847; "The Mormons," *North American and United States Gazette*, November 4, 1847; "A New Mormon Location," *Greenville Mountaineer*, November 19, 1847; "The New Mormon Location," *Daily National Intelligencer*, November 4, 1847.

22 "From the Pacific," *Daily National Intelligencer*, November 17, 1847.

23 John C. Frémont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains In the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843–'44* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1845), 149–59; Alexander L. Baugh, "John C. Frémont's 1843–44 Western Expedition and Its Influence on Mormon Settlement in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 83 (Fall 2015): 254–69.

24 "The Mormon Colony," *North American and United States Gazette*, December 15, 1847. See also "The Mormons," *Arkansas State Democrat*, December 17, 1847, and "The Mormon Colony," *Boston Liberator*, December 31, 1847.

can, whose articles on the subject were assiduously copied or summarized in papers located in virtually every region of the country.

News from Great Salt Lake City continued to work its way both west and east over the course of 1848. The first installment came as early as January 19, when the *St. Louis Republican*, continuing its role as disseminator of information about the West, published the “General Epistle from The Council of the Twelve Apostles, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, abroad, dispersed throughout the Earth.”²⁵ Dated December 23, 1847, the epistle included a detailed account of Mormon activities between the time church members had fled Nauvoo, Illinois, in February 1846 and Brigham Young’s return from the Great Basin to the Mormon settlements on the Missouri late in 1847. It also included a general call for Latter-day Saints throughout the world to gather to the Salt Lake valley as soon as possible, and instructions for parents, missionaries, and priesthood leaders regarding their duties—information, in short, that few non-Mormons would consider newsworthy. Three of the epistle’s thirty-seven paragraphs, however, detailed the “Saints” situation in their new home as of late August 1847, when Young left the area to return to Winter Quarters. The settlers had located in “a beautiful valley of some twenty by thirty miles in extent,” Young and his fellow apostles wrote, with a “continuation of the valley or opening on the north, extending along the eastern shore about sixty miles to the mouth of Bear River.” Reading at times like a pamphlet published by a booster club, the epistle enumerated the valley’s natural assets: Utah Lake to the south, good soil, the “warm, dry, and healthy” climate, the “many small streams” that could be used for irrigation, excellent mill sites, the availability of salt, the presence of “warm, hot, and cold springs,” the availability of timber in the mountains, and the “abundant” resources for making bricks and quarrying stone. As for the improvements

the Mormons had made, the epistle noted that a city had been surveyed “in blocks of ten acres, eight lots to a block; with streets eight rods wide, crossing at right angles.” One block had been set aside for a temple, while others had been reserved for public use. Efforts to grow food and provide protection had resulted in “near one hundred acres” having been planted “with a great variety of seeds” and the “the foundation of a row of houses” having been laid around one of the blocks.²⁶

Betraying the nation’s curiosity about the far West, papers that noted the epistle’s existence invariably focused on the content of these three paragraphs and either briefly summarized or ignored completely the rest of the letter.²⁷ Rather than quoting or summarizing the letter itself, many simply opted to reprint or paraphrase the *Republican’s* commentary on the letter, which also focused on these three paragraphs and the implications of the call for Mormons to gather to the valley. “If they succeed according to their expectations,” the editor wrote, evidently forgetting his pessimism of the previous month, “the[ir] central position between the Pacific and the Mississippi, their numbers and united prospects will give them an importance, that they have not been able to attain in the United States. . . . The present site of their church, in the midst of mountains on the margin of the great Salt Lake, . . . gives to their present position and enterprise a novelty which will attract hundreds to them.”²⁸ The story ran in papers throughout February and well into March, with at least two papers—one in Boston and one in Arkansas—publishing it as late as March 22 and 24, respectively.²⁹

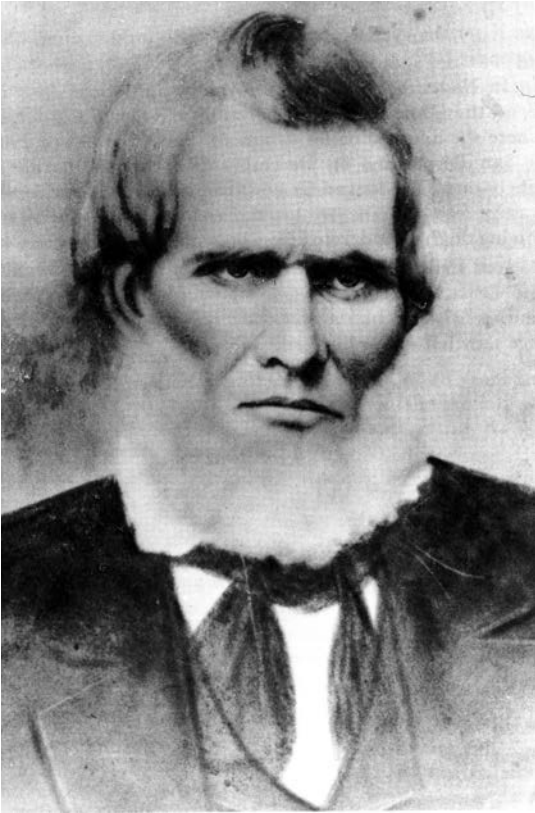
26 “General Epistle,” 82–83.

27 The *Cleveland Herald* summarized the contents of the three paragraphs, while the *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette* quoted them *verbatim*; see “The Mormons,” *Cleveland Herald*, January 31, 1848; “The Mormons,” *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette*, February 3, 1848.

28 “Mormonism,” *New York Emancipator*, February 16, 1848. See also “The Mormons in the Wilderness,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, February 3, 1848; “Mormonism,” *North American and United States Gazette*, February 3, 1848; “The Mormons,” *Vermont Chronicle*, March 1, 1848.

29 “The Mormons,” *Boston Investigator*, March 22, 1848; “Mormonism,” *Arkansas State Democrat*, March 24, 1848.

25 “The Mormons,” *Cleveland Herald*, January 31, 1848; “The Mormons,” *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette*, February 3, 1848; “General Epistle from The Council of the Twelve Apostles, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, abroad, dispersed throughout the Earth,” *Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star* 10 (March 15, 1848), 81–88. The epistle was issued from the Mormon settlement at Winter Quarters on the west bank of the Missouri River near Council Bluffs, Iowa.



Jefferson Hunt, who provided information on the Mormons to a newspaper in California. He had marched with the Mormon Battalion and would later guide parties between Utah and California, help establish a colony at San Bernardino, serve in the California State Assembly and the Utah Territorial Legislature, and found Huntsville, Utah.

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Rather than getting their midwinter update of the Mormon situation from the Quorum of the Twelve's epistle, readers in California obtained it from Jefferson Hunt, a discharged officer of the Mormon Battalion who arrived in Los Angeles from Salt Lake in early January 1848 "to purchase provisions, horses, cattle, seeds, &c. &c" for the settlers back in the valley. Hunt, who had left the new Mormon settlement on November 17, 1847, reported that there were "about 4,000 souls at the Lake, on the East side," and spoke highly enough of the region's fertility that a correspondent for the *Californian* wrote that "the land by their description must be better sowing land than any in California, well watered, and rich." The same writer learned from Hunt that the Mormons intended to settle permanently in the valley—information that had

reached St. Louis the previous August but evidently had not made it to the West Coast until now. Like the editor of the *St. Louis Republican*, the *Californian's* correspondent also noted the implications of a Mormon colony in the Great Basin, although with a decidedly Californian slant. "It will greatly facilitate the land travel from this to the United States if they succeed in permanently establishing themselves at the Lake," he wrote. "It is about half way."³⁰

Following the publication of the Twelve Apostles' epistle in the East and Hunt's report in the California coastal settlements, news from the Salt Lake valley ended for a time, probably as a result of the onset of winter and the limitations that snow imposed on travel in the Intermountain region and across the Great Basin. Not until May 10, 1848, did the *St. Louis Republican* have an update for its readers, which was based on letters that had just been received by unidentified residents of St. Louis "connected with the Mormon colony at the city of the Salt Lake." Dating to "the latter part of December [1847]," the letters contained information that was far from current but that was certainly more recent than the Apostles' epistle to the scattered saints or Hunt's verbal report to the Californians. "They represent their situation as a comfortable one," the *Republican's* editor wrote. "[The Mormons] had not been molested by the Indians, many of whom were in the habit of visiting the city." Notwithstanding the natives' friendliness, by the end of December the Mormons had enclosed an entire square with inward-facing adobe buildings, "intended for defence," and had completed two saw mills and a grist mill. The colony numbered some three thousand people (only two of whom had died by the time the letters were written); had sown three thousand acres of wheat in the fall; and was hoping to plant another six thousand in the spring. Other crops were contemplated as well, with seed potatoes going for ten dollars per bushel and peas for fifty cents per pound.³¹ Serving both as a tip of the cap to all that the Mormons had accomplished in 1847 and as an announcement of their hopes for the coming

30 "Correspondence of the Californian," *Californian*, January 26, 1848.

31 "From the City of the Salt Lake," *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 19, 1848; "The Mormons at Salt Lake," *Cleveland Herald*, May 20, 1848.

year, the *Republican's* article had been reprinted in papers across the country by May 23.³²

News of the Mormons' "comfortable" situation at the end of 1847 was quickly followed by news of supposed tragedy. In an article that appears to have first been published on May 23 in the *St. Joseph's* [Missouri] *Gazette*, a Mr. Schrader (or Shrader) reported being at Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory, when an "express" from the Mormons arrived "with the startling intelligence that the Indians . . . had murdered a number of men, women and children in the city of Salt Lake."³³ The news began reaching other papers in late May and early June, with several editors opting to print a colorful editorial summary of the *Gazette's* article rather than the article itself:

The Indians have commenced open hostilities against the Mormons. They attacked them in their towns and encampments, and have most cruelly and barbarous[ly] murdered a large number of men, women, and children.

An express has been sent by the Mormons to St. Louis asking for assistance and for armed forces to protect them from the fearful ravages threatened by their murderous and savage foes. No cause is assigned by the Indians for their conduct. They threaten vengeance, and declare their full determination to put it into execution.³⁴

The news from Salt Lake, combined with similar news from Oregon, convinced at least one editor that "the Indians have determined upon a regular war upon the colonies, though widely separated from each other," and called upon

the government to send "a military force of several thousand men . . . to protect our citizens in that quarter, . . . great as the cost may be."³⁵

Almost two months passed from when the story first broke in Missouri before eastern readers learned that the Indians had not, in fact, attacked the Mormons in the Salt Lake valley. "Dates from Salt Lake, California, to the 4th April, contradict the reports previously received, of the attack upon the Mormon Settlement there by the Indians, and the massacre of a number of its inhabitants," the corrective ran.³⁶ At least one paper, the *North American and United States Gazette*, discounted a similar report of Indians massacring Mormons on the Great Plains, explaining it as "probably an exaggeration of a recent affair of some of the sect with the Omahas" in which the Indians killed a young boy herding some cattle.³⁷ Most papers—including, eventually, the *Gazette* itself—combined the two stories into one but dropped in the process the report of an Indian massacre on the Plains. The result was the idea that the news of an Indian massacre in Salt Lake had its origin in the cattle-stealing episode on the trail.³⁸ No other explanation for the wildly inaccurate report was given.

Additional contradictory reports about the Mormons' situation in the West arrived later in the summer. In early August, ten men arrived in St. Louis from Oregon—which they had left on March 10—and reported that "the Mormon settlement at Salt Lake was in a flourishing condition."³⁹ Shortly afterward, however, another traveler arrived in St. Louis from the West—one who had fallen in with "a small party, consisting of four or five families of Mormons, in four wagons, direct from the settlement at the Great Salt Lake." According to the

32 For examples, see "From the City of the Salt Lake," *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 19, 1848; "The Mormons at Salt Lake," *Cleveland Herald*, May 20, 1848; "The Mormon Colony," *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette*, May 23, 1848; "From the City of the Salt Lake," *North American and United States Gazette*, May 20, 1848.

33 "The Late Disastrous Western News," *North American and United States Gazette*, June 7, 1848. See also "More Indian Murders at the City of the Salt Lake," *New York Herald*, June 6, 1848, and "More Indian Enormities," *Arkansas State Democrat*, June 16, 1848.

34 "From the New Mormon Settlement," *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 31, 1848; "Correspondence of the Baltimore Patriot—By Telegraph," *Fayetteville Observer*, June 6, 1848.

35 "Oregon Relief Bill," *North American and United States Gazette*, June 1, 1848.

36 "Dates from the Salt Lake," *Cleveland Herald*, July 26, 1848. See also "Dates from the Salt Lake," *Daily National Intelligencer*, August 1, 1848; "Items," *Hudson Ohio Observer*, August 2, 1848; "Gleanings from the Mails," *North American and United States Gazette*, August 2, 1848.

37 "From the Mormons in California," *North American and United States Gazette*, July 21, 1848.

38 See the articles listed in note 39 above.

39 "Latest from Oregon," *Floridian* (Tallahassee, FL), August 19, 1848.

St. Louis Organ, “they informed him that there was a great deal of suffering among the Mormons for want of provisions. They were obliged to kill their working cattle for food, and their stock of breadstuffs was nearly exhausted.” In what may have been the first report of the 1848 cricket plague to reach the East, the traveler also reported that the settlers’ wheat and barley “had been entirely destroyed by crickets, which appeared in astonishing numbers, and like the locusts, destroyed every kind of vegetation in their path.”⁴⁰ Of the two reports, the second was better substantiated than the first, as it was clear that it had originated with people who had been in the Salt Lake valley recently. While at least six papers carried the first story about the settlers’ “flourishing condition,” however, only two have been located that carried the better-supported news of the Mormons’ near-desperate situation at the time.⁴¹

Little news from the valley appears to have made its way east over the course of the next two months. In its absence, at least two papers took the opportunity in October to review the history of Mormonism and recap what was already generally known about conditions in the Salt Lake valley. In the first, the editor highlighted, predictably, the Mormons’ flight from Nauvoo; the “lake of salt water” at their new home; the necessity of irrigation in the region; the hot springs in the area; and the potential productivity of the valley, where “the strange Mormon may enjoy the fruit of his toil in peace, if he be peaceful himself.”⁴² The second focused more on Joseph Smith and the early history of the church, but closed with a few sentences on the valley. “The region selected for the new city is said to be very healthy, the climate salubrious and the soil fertile and easy of cultivation,” the

article read, probably drawing its information from the epistle of the Twelve Apostles published earlier in the year. Without disclosing its sources, the article also made the hyperbolic assertions that “nearly ten thousand” people were living in the valley at the time, and that an area had been “laid out” for a temple “six times as large as the unique affair at Nauvoo!”⁴³ The overall impression given in the two articles was that things were going very well for the “strange Mormon” in his new home in the West, and that whatever hardships he may have suffered earlier in the year had been overcome.

In their December 1847 epistle to the church, Brigham Young and his associates had indicated their intention, “as soon as circumstances will permit, to petition for a territorial government in the Great Basin.”⁴⁴ By November 1848, some observers began to speculate that such a petition was imminent. The idea appears to have originated in a letter from someone at Fort Kearny, published in the October 31 issue of the *St. Louis Republican*. “It is understood that so soon as a sufficient number of faithful reach Salt Lake,” the letter’s author wrote, “they intend to apply for a Territorial Government. The movement, I think, will be made next year.”⁴⁵ The letter was republished in at least one other

40 “From the Great Salt Lake,” *North American and United States Gazette*, August 25, 1848.

41 Those two papers are “From the Great Salt Lake,” *North American and United States Gazette*, August 25, 1848; “Late from Salt Lake,” *Cleveland Herald*, August 21, 1848. More positive representations are in “Latest from Oregon,” *Floridian*, August 19, 1848; “From Oregon,” *Boston Daily Atlas*, August 4, 1848; “Important from Oregon,” *Scioto Gazette*, August 9, 1848; “From Oregon,” *Ohio Observer*, August 9, 1848; “By Telegraph to Pittsburgh,” *Cleveland Herald*, August 4, 1848; “Late from Oregon,” *North American and United States Gazette*, August 4, 1848.

42 “Salt Lake of the Rocky Mountains,” *Arkansas State Democrat*, October 13, 1848.

43 “The Mormons,” *Boston Liberator*, October 20, 1848. Brigham Young estimated that “about five thousand” people were living in the valley by fall 1848. See “Epistle. First General Epistle of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, from the Great Salt Lake Valley, to the Saints scattered throughout the Earth,” *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, May 30, 1849.

44 “General Epistle,” 84. In December 1847 the Salt Lake valley was still a Mexican possession, as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war and transferred the region to the United States, was not signed until February 2, 1848, and not ratified until May 30, 1848. General Winfield Scott, however, had taken control of Mexico City in September 1847, with the result that most Americans were anticipating the transfer of Upper California (which included the Salt Lake valley) to the United States several months before it was formalized. Brigham Young and other church leaders had anticipated joining the Union as either a state or a territory even before the removal west; see B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century 1* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 3:414–17.

45 “From the Far West,” *Cleveland Herald*, November 16, 1848. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 provided for the election of a full legislature in a territorial possession of the United States when it could be demonstrated that 5,000 free males were living in the area.

paper in November, as was a separate editorial of unknown origin that made the same claim: "In the valley of the Great Salt Lake . . . [the Mormons] are flourishing and multiplying," the editorial read, "and the prospect is that the despised and persecuted Mormons will become the nucleus of a populous territory, so populous that by another year they will apply for a Territorial Government."⁴⁶ While the prediction proved to be correct, relatively few papers appear to have found it newsworthy.⁴⁷

In December, at least some readers in the East learned that the Mormons would soon be issuing their own paper from Salt Lake—news that, again, appears to have enjoyed little circulation.⁴⁸ The same cannot be said of what followed. As the nation buzzed with word of gold strikes east of Sutter's Fort in northern California, false rumors began circulating in the papers that "equally rich mines have been discovered" near Salt Lake and were being worked by the Mormons there.⁴⁹ At the same time, the Mormons were also reportedly planning to forcibly cash in on the strikes further west, either by "collecting near the Great Salt Lake, . . . proceeding in a body to California, driving off the gold diggers, and taking possession" of the region, or by laying claim "to a large portion of the gold territory, and demand[ing] thirty per cent. of the ore taken therefrom."⁵⁰ At least one editor, and presumably more, found the report of a planned Mormon takeover of the gold fields unconvincing. "We doubt very much the truth of these rumors," wrote the editor of the *Boston Daily Atlas*. "We fear that they originate in a deep seated hate to this persecuted and ill-treated, though, it may be, offending sect." The report that gold had been discovered near Salt Lake seemed more credible. "Gold, it

is said, has been found in that basin [the Great Basin], which is in the line and about the centre of the great mineral region stretching from Lake Superior south-westward to the Pacific Ocean. That basin, so singular in its formation, and so isolated, appears to have been made by the disintegration of vast mountains, and there, if any where, might we look for the richest mineral treasure." The editor closed by raising the specter of a gold rush to the Salt Lake valley that could result in the Mormons being driven yet again "from the homes they had reason to think so secure."⁵¹

Overall, most readers in the East probably ended the year 1848 with the general impression that the Mormons in the Salt Lake valley were doing quite well. The letter from church leaders that had opened the year had been overwhelmingly positive regarding the area's resources and potential productivity. News of Indian hostilities had proven false, and poorly circulated reports of low supplies and cricket infestations were overshadowed by other accounts of a growing and flourishing community. Much of the information could be traced back to various Latter-day Saints themselves, more so than had been the case in 1847. While most of the news had, again, come through the *St. Louis Republican*, other outlets in Missouri had broken stories on occasion. Word that gold had been discovered in the far West, and perhaps even in the Salt Lake valley itself, raised unsettling questions for some, but there seemed little reason to doubt that the Mormons were well on their way to becoming a significant part of the geographical and political landscape of the trans-Mississippi West.

Newspapers continued the theme of Mormon prosperity into 1849, although the true situation of the Saints, as will be seen below, was almost the exact opposite. By the middle of January, people in points as far east as Bangor, Maine, were reading a version of a report originally published in Missouri's *St. Joseph Gazette* detailing the situation of the settlers in the valley.⁵² "The Mormon colony are reported to be

46 "The Mormons," *Cleveland Herald*, November 17, 1848.

47 Only one paper carrying the letter published in the *St. Louis Republican* has been located (see note 45 above), and only two carrying the second article (see note 46 above and "The Mormons," *Ohio Observer*, November 29, 1848). Note that these were both Ohio papers.

48 "The Mormons," *Rochester (NY) North Star*, December 1, 1848.

49 "The Mormons in California," *Daily National Intelligencer*, December 16, 1848; "The Mormons," *Arkansas State Democrat*, December 29, 1848.

50 "Rumors have been afloat," *Boston Daily Atlas*, December 28, 1848; "The Mormons in California," *Daily National Intelligencer*, December 16, 1848.

51 "Rumors have been afloat," *Boston Daily Atlas*, December 28, 1848.

52 See "Intelligence from California—Direct," *Boston Daily Atlas*, January 10, 1849; "From the Salt Lake and California," *Cleveland Herald*, January 4, 1849; "From the Salt Lake and California," *Daily National*

in a prosperous condition, having a surplus of several thousand [thousand] bushels of grain and other necessities of life," the original story ran. "Money is plentiful, a large portion of which is obtained in, and brought from the gold regions of California, either in dust, or in Mexican gold coin, received in exchange for the dust in California." The *Gazette* got its information from George Smith, a merchant in St. Joseph, Missouri, who had been at Council Bluffs when an express mail arrived in town "fifty-six days from the Salt Lake"—meaning the news was about two months old. Included in the mail, though, and lending tangible support to the favorable report, were "orders for merchandize amounting to upward of \$5000, with the dust, among which was one package of ten pounds." The *Gazette's* editor quickly realized the significance of the orders, and what a market in Salt Lake might mean for the local economy in Missouri: "These are the first orders received from the quarter," he wrote, "and the opening of a new avenue of trade to St. Joseph, which must be extensive and profitable."⁵³

On February 2, 1849, an informative report corroborating the January news was published—not in a Missouri paper this time, but in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*.⁵⁴ The source was a Mr. E. Whipple, a Mormon who had arrived in Pittsburgh after leaving Salt Lake the previous October. Much of Whipple's news was old fare by this time—the dimensions of the valley (which he expanded to "about fifty miles long, and forty broad"), the Jordan River connecting Utah Lake with the Great Salt Lake, the lack of timber, the numerous streams issuing from the mountains, and the "perfectly healthy" climate of the area. According to Whipple, though, the "7000 persons of all ages and both sexes" who were in the valley when he left had little to complain of. "Last season they raised a fine crop of wheat, corn, and other productions, sufficient for their own consumption, and of those . . . who are yearly coming in. After next harvest they will have provisions to dispose of."

Intelligencer, January 8, 1849; "The Mormons as Salt Lake," *Bangor Daily Whig* (ME), January 13, 1849.

53 "From California and the Salt Lake," *Boston Courier*, January 11, 1849. The informant George Smith is not to be confused with Mormon apostle George A. Smith, who was then living in the Salt Lake valley.

54 "The Mormons—Salt Lake—The Discovery of Gold, andc.," *New York Weekly Herald*, February 10, 1849.

Two grist mills and four sawmills were in operation, and several villages, in addition to the city, had been laid out, where the saints were "building substantial houses, and surrounding themselves with many comforts."⁵⁵

Even more significant than the support he gave to earlier reports of Mormon prosperity, though, was Whipple's refutation of the wild rumors regarding Mormons and gold. "No gold has yet been found in the neighborhood of the Salt Lake, or any where east of the Sierra Nevada, as far as Mr. Whipple is informed," the article stated, offering an important corrective to reports of rich mines in the area that readers had seen in December. Similarly, Whipple explained the origins of the story "that the Mormons had claimed a pre-emption right to the diggings, and were demanding a per centage of the gold found."

The first discovery of gold was made by Mormons, (discharged soldiers,) in digging a mill race for Mr. Sutter. As the discovery was on his ground, he gave them the liberty of digging gold, on condition of paying him a certain per centage. This they agreed to do, but soon started off to explore for themselves, and having found some rich spots, they demanded a per centage from new comers for digging in their ground, to which they claimed a right of discovery. This practice is general in the mines, and the Mormons, Mr. Whipple says, no more claim the whole of the mines than they do the whole of California.⁵⁶

The *Gazette's* article was reprinted in several newspapers, all of which, as far as have been located, were published in the northeast and upper Midwest, not far from where the article had originated.⁵⁷

Without providing any new information, the *Cincinnati Atlas* kept the theme of Mormon prosperity alive in March 1849 when it noted the "flourishing circumstances" of the settlers

55 "Mormon Settlement in California," *Cleveland Herald*, February 12, 1849.

56 Ibid.

57 In addition to the *New York Weekly Herald* and the *Cleveland Herald*, cited above, see "The Mormons in California," *North American and United States Gazette*, February 7, 1849, and "Later from the Great Salt Lake—The Mormons," *Boston Daily Atlas*, February 7, 1849.



Vilate Kimball, the first wife of Heber C. Kimball, sent to her friends in the East a detailed, glowing report of the conditions in the Salt Lake Valley.

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at Salt Lake in a rambling article on the unique geographical features of the church's current location.⁵⁸ Of far greater interest to papers that month throughout the country, however, was an article published in *Nile's Republican*. The article, based on an August 2, 1848, letter written from South Pass by the *Republican* editor's brother, who had not even been to Salt Lake, did more to perpetuate fantastic rumors than to provide solid information about the Mormons in the valley. The first such rumor dealt with the contemplated Salt Lake temple, a "splendid building" whose "highest point is to be 600 feet, and can be seen eighty miles either way."⁵⁹ Next came the Mormon fortifications: "They enclose a lot 17 miles long and 12 miles wide, with a mud wall 8 feet high and four feet thick," the *Republican* reported,⁶⁰ evidently merging

reports about the church's Big Field (located south of the city, and fenced on two sides with a seventeen-mile, eight-foot pole fence) with the eleven-mile pole-and-ditch fence that surrounded the city.⁶¹ The article then noted the alleged discovery of "a mountain of pure rock salt . . . near the Mormon settlement," and closed by resurrecting rumors of gold in the area with the report that "the Mormons have discovered a rich gold mine 150 miles southwest from the Salt Lake."⁶² Confused at best, and patently false for the most part, the *Republican's* article—or portions of it—nevertheless was being republished as late as May 21, and it ultimately appeared in papers from Wisconsin to Vermont to Arkansas and Mississippi.⁶³

At least two other articles on the Mormons in the Salt Lake valley were published in April, neither of which appears to have received much attention. One was actually a correction to the report of a gold discovery near Salt Lake—a report which, as we just saw, had taken on a life of its own by this time. "The mines discovered by the Mormons, near Salt Lake, in the Rocky Mountains, prove to be copper and lead, instead of gold," the notice ran.⁶⁴ The other was a letter from Vilate Kimball—wife of Heber C. Kimball, first counselor to Brigham Young in the church's First Presidency—to friends in New York. In her letter, dated October 10, 1848, Kimball noted that upon their arrival in the valley two weeks earlier, she and her family had been met "by hundreds of men, women, and children, whose dress and manners would have done honor to your eastern cities." Most were "in good health and spirits," Kimball reported, "and pleasantly located in comfortable houses,

61 Madsen, *Gold Rush Sojourners*, 39; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 47.

62 "The Mormon Temple," *Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette*, March 8, 1849.

63 Ibid.; "The Mormon Temple," *North American and United States Gazette*, March 10, 1849; "The Mormons," *Daily National Intelligencer*, March 22, 1849; "The New Mormon Temple," *Vermont Patriot*, March 29, 1849; "The Mormon Temple," *Mississippian*, April 13, 1849; "The Mormons," *Boston Investigator*, April 18, 1849; "The Mormon Temple," *Arkansas State Democrat*, April 27, 1849; "The South Pass—Alkaline Water—Rock Salt—New Gold Mine," *Cleveland Herald*, May 21, 1849.

64 "The mines discovered by the Mormons," *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, April 23, 1849.

58 "The Mormons," *Daily National Intelligencer*, March 22, 1849. See also "The Mormons," *Cleveland Herald*, March 17, 1849, and "The Mormons," *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette*, March 31, 1849.

59 "The Mormon Temple," *Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette*, March 8, 1849.

60 Ibid.

and their tables loaded with the productions of their fields and gardens.” Like others before her, Kimball also noted the snow-capped mountains, the Salt Lake, the lack of timber in the valley, the mills that had been constructed, and the various springs in the area, including one “of sufficient heat to cook an egg” and another for bathing “that far exceeds the Ballston and Saratoga waters” of upstate New York. “We also find clay equal to that of Liverpool,” Kimball told her friends, and “mechanics of every kind in our . . . city.” Where others had spoken of the soil’s potential productivity, Kimball could give actual results: “Wheat seems peculiarly adapted to this valley, and garden vegetables are large and excellent,” she wrote, illustrating her point by noting “a winter squash that weighs seventy-four pounds, and a round turnip which weighs eight pounds and nine ounces” that had been given to her family as a present. With the exception of “groceries and clothing, which cannot be procured here,” Kimball wrote, the settlers had all “the necessities and many of the comforts of life,” including molasses and “some excellent sugar” that had been extracted from corn stalks. Unwittingly feeding speculation that the area was rich in gold, Kimball also reported that the region had “every appearance of gold mines, which we fear to have opened, for adversity we have proven to be far better for the saints than prosperity.”⁶⁵

It soon became clear that Kimball’s and the others’ highly favorable reports of conditions in the valley were not entirely accurate. The corrective was supplied in another “General Epistle . . . to the Saints scattered throughout the Earth,” issued by church leaders in early 1849. Completed in the Salt Lake valley shortly after April 7, 1849, the epistle was first published in the church’s new paper in Iowa, the *Frontier Guardian*, on May 30, after which it (or summaries of it) began making the rounds in papers across the nation. The information it contained was the first news about conditions in the valley in 1849 to reach eastern readers that year, as earlier reports to reach the east in 1849—such as Kimball’s—were all generated in late 1848.⁶⁶

After briefly rehearsing church leaders’ activities and movements from the time they had issued their earlier epistle, the epistle suggested that significant growth in the valley’s population was not necessarily accompanied by prosperity. “On our arrival in this Valley” in the fall of 1848, the leaders wrote, “we found the brethren had erected four forts, composed mostly of houses, . . . and numbering about 5,000 souls.” Those who had been there in the spring had planted “an extensive variety of seeds” on the Big Farm, it was true, but only to see “most of their early crops . . . destroyed in the month of May by crickets, and frost, which continued occasionally until June; while the latter harvest was injured more or less by drouth, by frost . . . and by the outbreaking of cattle.” The result was a very poor harvest, which was followed by a severe, New England-like winter of deep snow, intense, sustained cold, and “violent and contrary winds.” Cattle weakened “through fasting and scanty fare” lacked the strength to draw wood from the snow-covered mountains and canyons, with the result that many of the settlers had “had to suffer, more or less, from the want thereof.” An inventory of available “bread-stuff” conducted in early February 1849 had revealed “little more than three-fourths of a pound per day, for each soul, until the 9th of July,” and that some of the settlers had resorted to less-than-saintly hoarding to protect their goods. While the situation was far from dire, it was clear that things would not be getting markedly better any time soon; grain and cattle were both in short supply, another batch of crickets was already making its appearance, and those hoping to emigrate to the valley that year were told to remain where they were “unless they have team and means sufficient to come through without any assistance from the valley,” and could bring enough food and supplies “sufficient to last them a few months after their arrival.” Assurances that those in the valley probably wouldn’t starve because of the “abundance of nutritious roots” in the area probably provided little comfort.

Not all of the news was bad. A public works

65 “The Mormons—Salt Lake Valley,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, April 3, 1849.

66 “Epistle. First General Epistle of the First Presidency

of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, from the Great Salt Lake Valley, to the Saints scattered throughout the Earth,” *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, May 30, 1849. The first issue of the *Frontier Guardian* appeared on February 7, 1849, with Orson Hyde as editor.



Early view of First South Street in a sketch taken from Howard Stansbury's Great Salt Lake of Utah (1852). At this time travelers through the city saw only scattered houses, but they would also have noticed the broad streets—wide enough for herding cattle—that would serve a future large city.

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program had built a two-story “council house,” several bridges, and a bath house at the now-famous warm springs; several thousand acres had been surveyed and plotted into five and ten acre lots for farming; a canal for irrigation had been dug along the base of the mountains; three grist mills and several saw mills were in operation; and plans to build a tannery and foundry were well-advanced. Church leaders also reported that the valley was “settled,” at least in some fashion, “for 20 miles south, and 40 miles north of the city,” and that the city itself had been divided into nineteen ecclesiastical wards, most of which consisted of nine city blocks. In spite of the difficult winter, the epistle reported, a “large number” of schools had also been functioning, and it claimed that a variety of languages—including Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, German, and even Tahitian—were being taught.⁶⁷

Three other topics rounded out the epistle’s coverage of the situation in the valley. First, it brought everyone up-to-date on who was cur-

rently serving in various leadership positions in the church. This included announcing the formal excommunication of apostle Lyman Wight, who had repudiated the leadership claims of Brigham Young and his associates and settled in Texas. Second, it reaffirmed the Mormons’ desire for territorial status and reported that they were already drafting a petition to Congress to that end. And third, it did its best to clarify the real situation behind the prevalent rumors that gold had been found in the valley. “On the return of a portion of the ‘Mormon Battalion,’ through the northern part of Western California, they discovered an extensive gold mine,” the epistle noted, clearly trying to emphasize that the strike was far to the west of the Salt Lake Valley. “By a few days’ delay,” the epistle explained, the returning soldiers had been able “to bring sufficient of the dust to make money plenty in this place for all ordinary purposes of public convenience,” and to enable church leaders to issue notes redeemable in gold. Other phrases and references to the “gold mines” in the epistle emphasized the point that those “whose God shines

⁶⁷ Ibid.

best in gold” had to leave the settlement area to find it.⁶⁸

The epistle was clear and comprehensive, but that didn’t necessarily mean that it was reproduced in papers that way. In the same May 30, 1849, issue of the *Frontier Guardian* in which the epistle first appeared, a separate report from Salt Lake was published—a verbal report, evidently, by the members of the “Express” that had carried the epistle east. The report touched on two items: first, that there was “no end to the gold in that country [California]—though none had been found in the Valley, still the regions two or three hundred miles [west] of it abound in the shining ore.” Second, it stated that the Mormons would soon be sending “Dr. Burnhyson [John M. Bernhisel]” to Congress with the petition for a territorial government.⁶⁹ Early on, a short hybrid report that included information from both the epistle and the Express’s verbal account was generated and circulated. In the process, word that gold had *not* been found in the Salt Lake valley—as both the epistle and the verbal report made clear—was replaced with news that it *had* been found. The error seems to have originated in a careless reading of the verbal report: “New and extraordinary discoveries of gold had been made in the mountains near Salt Lake,” one popular version of the hybrid account read. “There seems to be no limit to the deposits of the precious metal in our far west territory.”⁷⁰ Most, though not all, reproductions of this report also noted the Mormons’ desire for a territorial government, their intention to send “a Mr. Burnhyson” to Washington D.C. to bring that about, the prosperity of the saints in the valley, and the defection of Lyman Wight, erroneously identified in some papers as “the leader of the Mormons in the valley.”⁷¹ Within days, many of these same

papers reprinted, in whole or in part, the epistle of the leaders of the church, though none appear to have acknowledged either the obvious similarities or the glaring contradictions in the two reports.⁷² While some readers may have viewed the epistle as a correction to what they had read earlier about the presence of gold in valley and other issues, others who had read both reports within days of each other would have been understandably confused at the end of June 1849 as to the true situation prevailing in the Salt Lake valley.

The express that brought the epistle east had left the Salt Lake valley on April 15, so the news it carried was about two months old in the latter half of June, when people in the East were reading it.⁷³ On June 27, the *Frontier Guardian* published a brief update, courtesy of three men who had left the valley on May 3. “The health of the settlements was good—spring crops looked remarkably well,” the men reported, although the winter wheat “did not look quite so prosperous as could be desired.” A “fine rain” had fallen on May 1, and the crickets “were not one quarter so destructive as last year.” As for the Mormons and gold, the men simply reported that “many men would leave the Valley to go to dig gold in opposition to the counsel of the Church,” and that “quite a company” had al-

Discoveries of Gold in the Mountains near Salt Lake—The Mormons—Progress of the California Immigrants, andc.,” and “From the Great Salt Lake,” *New York Herald*, June 8 and 20, 1849; “News from the Far West—News Discoveries of Gold in the Mountains near Salt Lake—The Mormons—Progress of the California Immigrants, andc.,” *Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette*, June 18, 1849; “From the Salt Lake,” *Boston Daily Atlas*, June 11, 1849; “From the Far West—Discoveries of Gold in the Mountains near Salt Lake—The Mormons—Progress of the California Emigrants, andc.,” *North American and United States Gazette*, June 9, 1849; “From the far West—Gold—Numerous Emigrants,” *Cleveland Herald*, June 13, 1849; “The Mormon Settlement in the Great Salt Lake Valley,” *Weekly Herald*, June 23, 1849; “From the Western Plains,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, June 11, 1849.

68 Ibid.

69 “42 Days from Salt Lake City,” *Frontier Guardian*, May 30, 1849. See also “News from the Mormon City of the Salt Lake,” *Cleveland Herald*, June 18, 1849. Bernhisel left Salt Lake for Washington, D.C. in May 1849.

70 “News from the Far West—New Discoveries of Gold in the Mountains near Salt Lake—The Mormons—Progress of the California Immigrants, andc.,” *New York Herald*, June 8, 1849. At least one paper managed to confuse the issue even more by reporting “the discovery of an extraordinary mountain of gold on the banks of the great Salt Lake” itself; see “Third Dispatch,” *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette*, June 20, 1849.

71 For examples, see “News from the Far West—News

72 For examples, see “The Mormons.—Their Settlement at the Great Salt Lake,” *Boston Daily Atlas*, June 23, 1849; “The Mormons, and their Settlement in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake,” *New York Herald*, June 22, 1849; “News from the Mormon City of the Great Salt Lake,” *Arkansas State Democrat*, June 29, 1849; “Later from the Mormons,” *Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette*, June 28, 1849; “The Mormons and their New Settlement,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, June 28, 1849.

73 “News from the Mormon City of the Salt Lake,” *Cleveland Herald*, June 18, 1849.

ready gone.⁷⁴ On July 14, an unidentified St. Louis paper published a summary of the *Guardian's* article, which summary—rather than the *Guardian's* article itself—served as the template for most of the reprinting across the nation. The summary was relatively accurate, although no mention was made of the crickets, and the rain of May 1 was expanded to “fine rains,” “many fine rains,” and “a number of fine showers” as it made its way east.⁷⁵ The summary also failed to make the important point that those who wanted gold had to actually leave the valley. “Many of the Mormons had gone in the search of gold, against the counsel of the elders of the church,” one popular version read.⁷⁶ Even though a few papers—including at least two that had earlier published a version of the summary—eventually obtained and published the full article from the *Guardian*,⁷⁷ the wording of the well-circulated summary was poorly suited to correct any misconceptions that may have existed regarding the existence of gold in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake.

The following month (August) at least two papers published a letter ostensibly “from a Mormon at the Salt Lake to his friends in Ohio,” but so blatantly at odds with the evidence on some points that one wonders if it was a hoax that was taking advantage of prevailing rumors.⁷⁸ “There

is an extensive gold mine here, from which a great many of my neighbors are engaged in digging gold,” the author wrote. “Those who work the mines make from thirty to seven hundred and fifty dollars per day, each. If a man wants gold all he has to do is to go and dig it.” Similarly, the author’s report that “buffaloes, antelopes, deer, bear,” and other wild game was “very plenty” in the area flies in the face of an earlier report (see note 24 above), while his claim that “cattle can live here the whole year without either hay or corn, and be fat enough for beef at any time” is very much at odds with the latest epistle’s report, noted above, of cattle weakened “through fasting and scanty fare.” More accurate descriptions of the hot and warm springs, the availability of salt, the lack of timber, and irrigation did little to bolster the letter’s legitimacy, as those features of the valley had been well publicized by that time.⁷⁹ Whether readers in the East questioned the letter’s authenticity is impossible to say, and one suspects that for at least some, the letter served to verify all they had heard—including rumors of gold—about the happy situation of the Mormons in the Salt Lake valley.

At the end of August 1849, then, the themes of Mormon prosperity and Salt Lake gold circulated in the eastern press as they had at the end of 1848. Repeated, authoritative reports to the contrary had been invariably followed by fresh news of plentiful harvests, fat cattle, and mines of incredible wealth in the area. Part of the problem was that while much of the most accurate news from the western Mormons was first being printed in the *Frontier Guardian* in Iowa, many papers further east and south were getting it only after it had been summarized by another paper. Such summaries generally distorted the original report to one degree or another, with the result that reports that could have corrected various misconceptions about the situation in the Salt Lake valley were actually seen to support them. Thus, erroneous, even outlandish, reports went largely unchecked and eventually spread to papers throughout the country. Ironically, in spite of the nationwide interest in the Mormons’ situation in

74 “18 Days Later from Salt Lake,” *Frontier Guardian*, June 27, 1849.

75 “St. Louis, July 14,” *Arkansas State Democrat*, July 27, 1849; “Interesting from the Plains—The Cholera, andc.,” *North American and United States Gazette*, July 16, 1849; “July 14,” *Cleveland Herald*, July 16, 1849; “Intelligence from the Plains—Mormons going to the Mines—Troubles among the Emigrants, andc.,” *Weekly Herald*, July 21, 1849; *Vermont Chronicle*, July 25, 1849.

76 “Interesting from the Plains—Decrease of the Cholera, andc.,” *Boston Daily Atlas*, July 17, 1849; “Intelligence from the Plains—Mormons going to the Mines—Troubles among the Emigrants, andc.,” *Weekly Herald*, July 21, 1849; “Interesting from the Plains—The Cholera, andc.,” *North American and United States Gazette*, July 16, 1849; “St. Louis, July 14,” *Vermont Chronicle*, July 25, 1849.

77 “Eighteen Days Later from the Salt Lake,” *Boston Daily Atlas*, July 28, 1849; “Eighteen Days Later from Salt Lake—Accounts from the Emigrants, andc.,” *Arkansas State Democrat*, August 3, 1849. See also “From Salt Lake,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, July 25, 1849; “Eight Days Later from Salt Lake,” *North American and United States Gazette*, July 25, 1849.

78 “From the City of the Salt Lake,” *North American and United States Gazette*, August 10, 1849. See also “From the City of the Salt Lake,” *Milwaukee Sentinel and*

Gazette, August 20, 1849.

79 “From the City of the Salt Lake,” *North American and United States Gazette*, August 10, 1849. See also “From the City of the Salt Lake,” *Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette*, August 20, 1849.

their new home in the first half of 1849, and in spite of the significant number of newspaper articles that had addressed this topic up to that time, readers in the East probably knew less about the real conditions in the Salt Lake valley in the first half of 1849 than they had during most of the previous two years.

In September 1849, the Mormon delegate to Congress Almon W. Babbitt arrived at Council Bluffs from Great Salt Lake City and reported that 15,000 emigrants on their way to the California gold fields had passed through the valley by the end of July.⁸⁰ Babbitt's estimate was probably double the actual number of travelers who took the Salt Lake route that summer, but the phenomenon he noted would significantly alter the news that would come from the valley over the course of the next several years. Babbitt carried with him numerous letters from gold-seekers to friends and family in the East, many of which contained information on conditions in Salt Lake.⁸¹ These and additional letters that would be written later by other adventurers represented a tremendous increase in the volume of information coming out of the valley when compared to the information that had been available during of the previous two years. Over the next several years, travelers' detailed observations and commentaries on the valley's weather, agriculture, topography, prices, improvements, and all things Mormon contributed to the construction of a much fuller, more detailed, and more accurate picture of the Saints in their new home than had been possible earlier. These observations quickly cleared the air of lingering misconceptions about things like the presence of gold in the area. Newspapers would continue to print unfounded rumors about the Mormons for many decades to come, but erroneous reports on such basic issues as the Salt Lake valley's productivity, climate, economics, and natural resources had a much smaller chance of being perpetuated

ed after the summer of 1849 than before.

Still, people in the East had read a great deal about the Mormon settlement near the Great Salt Lake in the months and years preceding the gold rush. Most of what they read dealt with the Mormons' physical environment, and the various "improvements" the Mormons had made in their efforts to create a permanent home. Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, is the almost complete lack of comment on the Mormons themselves, including such things as their physical appearance and their religious and political beliefs—topics that would receive a significant amount of attention in later years. Even plural marriage, which the church wouldn't publicly acknowledge until 1852, but which was openly practiced in the valley from 1847 onward, appears to have gone largely unnoticed during this early period. Nor do these articles, even the earliest ones, discuss the possible international implications of the Mormons settling in Mexican Territory during the Mexican War. This curious omission might be explained by the fact that by the time the Mormons' intention to settle in the Salt Lake valley was clear, Stephen Kearny had already established (in March 1847) an American civil government in upper California, and Winfield Scott and 12,000 American troops were well on their way to Mexico City. With the war's ultimate outcome written on the wall, the Mormons' choice of location was evidently less of the international news item one might expect it to have been. Of far more interest to eastern editors and readers was the Mormons' plan to apply for a territorial government, although it, too, appears to have been less of an issue that one might expect.⁸²

Nevertheless, as this article has shown, the nation's interest in the church and its members had not lessened with the death of Joseph Smith in 1844 or with the Mormons' departure from Nauvoo in 1846.⁸³ News from Salt Lake was a

80 "Later from the Salt Lake—The Mormon Settlement—An Indian Battle," *Boston Daily Atlas*, September 19, 1849. Babbitt was on his way to Washington D.C. to pursue statehood on behalf of the Mormons living in the Great Basin.

81 "From the Salt Lake," *Milwaukee Sentinel and Gazette*, September 22, 1849; "From the Salt Lake," *North American and United States Gazette*, October 1, 1849. Madsen estimates that "one-third or more of the 25,000 emigrants of 1849" took the Salt Lake route. Madsen, *Gold Rush Sojourners*, 12.

82 For a good overview of the Mormons' efforts at self-government in the Salt Lake valley during the period covered in this article, including the creation of the State of Deseret during the spring and summer of 1849, see Dale Morgan, *The State of Deseret* (1940; Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), 5–41.

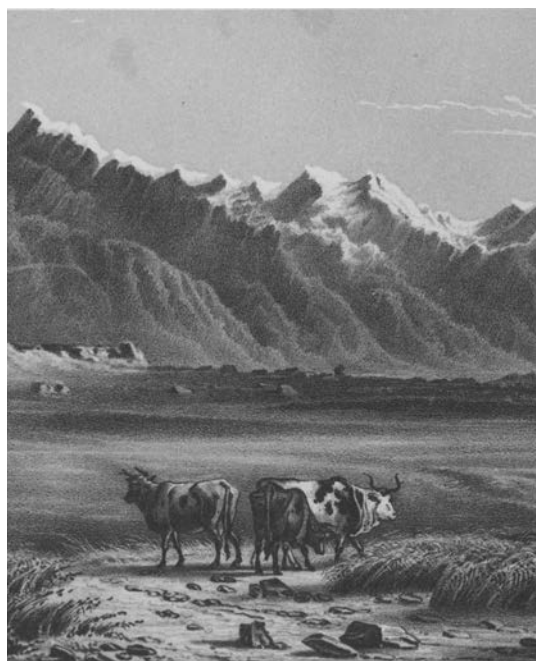
83 Jeremy J. Chatelain has located more than 10,000 newspaper articles on Mormonism published from 1829 to 1844, illustrating the nation's interest in the new faith's claims, doctrines, practices, and personalities.

regular feature in papers across the nation well before gold seekers began writing home from the valley in the middle of 1849—notwithstanding the convoluted paths it sometimes traveled before getting into print. If much of the information was inaccurate, so was much of what readers read on any topic covered in the papers during this period, as early American newsmen made little effort to ensure the reliability of what they published. This tendency, combined with the well-established practice of mountain men, travelers, army men, reporters, and others exaggerating conditions in the West, made it almost inevitable that wildly inaccurate reports of the Mormons' situation in the Salt Lake valley would be printed and circulated. Through it all, however, it is clear that American interest in the new church had not waned when its members left the boundaries of the United States in 1847, and that exile in the West had not removed them from the nation's view.

See Jeremy J. Chatelain, "The Early Reception of the Book of Mormon in Nineteenth-Century America," Dennis L. Largey, Andrew H. Hedges, John Hilton III, and Kerry Hull, ed., *The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (Salt Lake City and Provo, Utah: Deseret Book and the Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2015), 174.

Andrew H. Hedges is an associate professor of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University.

WEB EXTRA



We sat down with Dr. Hedges to discuss his research on the dissemination of information about the Mormons' first years in the Great Basin. Check out our conversation at history.utah.gov/uhqextras.



A farmer adjusts a head gate, c. 1945. Water for irrigation in Utah comes mainly from melted snow; the Utah snow survey program initiated by George Clyde helped farmers know how much water to expect each season and to plant accordingly.

GEORGE DEWEY CLYDE AND THE HARVEST OF SNOW

BY ROBERT E. PARSON

As a dry summer and mild fall continued after a near-snowless winter in 1934, George Dewey Clyde pondered the inevitable impact of drought. Since being hired as an irrigation engineer at the Utah Agricultural College in 1923, Clyde had been researching and collecting data on snow surveys.¹ The prospect of being able to accurately forecast stream flows from the mountain snowpack would be tremendously beneficial in determining for farmers the amount of water available during the irrigation season. Utah was predominantly an agricultural state, and water, as Clyde insistently emphasized, was its most important natural resource. Because most precipitation fell in the high elevations of Utah's mountains, the state's 24,000 small, irrigated farms were dependent on a harvest of winter snow.²

Clyde had taken his baccalaureate from the Agricultural College in 1921 and spent two years earning a master's degree from UC Berkeley before

1 Founded as the Agricultural College of Utah in 1888, the institution was generally referred to as the Utah Agricultural College until 1929, when its name was officially changed to Utah State Agricultural College (USAC). In 1957 it became Utah State University (USU).

2 Irrigated farms comprised more than a million acres in Utah. See Rondo A. Christensen and Stuart H. Richards, *Utah Agricultural Statistic, Revised 1924–1965, Utah Resources, Series 36* (Logan: Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, 1967), 6.



George Dewey Clyde seated at his desk in the Engineering Building, located near the southwest corner of the Utah State Agricultural College. The building has since been named for Ray B. West, the first dean of the Engineering School, whom Clyde succeeded in 1936.

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returning to Logan as an irrigation engineer with the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station. He remains one of the institution's most distinguished graduates. In 1936, the institution appointed Clyde dean of the School of Engineering. He served in this capacity until 1946, when he entered federal service as Chief of Irrigation Investigations for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. In 1953, he assumed the directorship of the Utah Water and Power Board, the agency empowered by the legislature to fully develop the state's water resources. Three years later, he challenged incumbent Governor J. Bracken Lee in the Republican Party primary, won the contest, and went on to win the general election. Clyde served two terms as Utah's governor, from 1957 to 1965.

Clyde's years as governor coincided with the

beginnings of the modern environmental movement, which ushered in a gradual but significant shift in public sentiment. As environmental consciousness grew, Clyde zealously spread the message that the state's economic vitality was inextricably linked to a bountiful supply of water. He championed the comprehensive development of the Colorado River, expressing his certainty that storage reservoirs—like those planned at Echo Canyon, Flaming Gorge, and Glen Canyon—were needed to conserve the harvest of winter snow. Furthermore, he often favored logging, grazing, and mining interests over the preservation initiatives of environmentalists. His opposition to the creation of Canyonlands National Park during the early 1960s is particularly significant.³

3 Samuel J. Schmieding, *From Controversy to Compromise*

Story lines adapt to changing times; historical actors, such as Clyde, often do not. In his long ride across the scientific and political western landscape, Clyde remained true to character. His intractable support for resource development has since colored the perception of some regarding Clyde's role in the theater of natural resources management.⁴ Clyde defined conservation according to the once celebrated wise-use model of Gifford Pinchot. While this utilitarian approach has not always proven as wise or as efficient as Pinchot intended, Clyde's system of snow surveys is an example of a past conservation measure worthy of praise. It ranks as one of Clyde's most notable achievements.

Not that he originated the idea of snow surveys—the measurement of snowfall and the amount of water it contained.⁵ He acknowledged his European progenitors from Russia and France, as well as the Vermonter Charles A. Mixer and the Michigan native R. E. Horton, who in 1905 “invented a sampling tube with scales for cutting and weighing cores to deter-

to Cooperation: *The Administrative History of Canyonlands National Park* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2008), 94–106.

4 See, e.g., Stephen C. Sturgeon, “Just Add Water: Reclamation Projects and Development Fantasies in the Upper Basin of the Colorado River,” in *The Bureau of Reclamation: History Essays from the Centennial Symposium*, 2 vols. (Denver: Bureau of Reclamation, 2008), 2:727–28; and Mark W. T. Harvey, *A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 37.

5 Undoubtedly, the former historian of the Soil Conservation Service (now the NRCS or Natural Resources Conservation Service) J. Douglas Helms has been the most thorough in documenting the history of western snow surveys. Beginning in 1981 until his retirement in 2011, Helms wrote widely on the history of conservation and natural resources. In 2008, the NRCS published his history of snow surveys, *The History of Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2008). In addition to chronicling the history of snow surveying, the bulletin also contained interviews with many of the pioneers who had participated in the beginnings of snow surveying. Although George Dewey Clyde figures prominently as a character in Helms's narrative history, he died in 1972 and his recollections were never recorded.

Likewise, the recollections of James E. Church, perhaps the most famous of the science's pioneers, were never recorded. His history is, however, expertly documented in Bernard Mergen's “Seeking Snow: James E. Church and the Beginnings of Snow Science,” *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 35 (Summer 1992): 75–104.

mine water content.”⁶ Particularly important in laying the foundation that Clyde would later build upon was James E. Church Jr.⁷ Church was first to use measurements to forecast runoff from the Sierra Nevada mountains, successfully predicting springtime levels at Lake Tahoe and forecasting the lake's outflow through the Truckee River. In 1905, Church constructed a weather observatory below the 10,778-foot summit of Mount Rose, the first high-elevation observatory established in the Great Basin. In cooperation with the U.S. Weather Bureau, Church equipped the Mount Rose Observatory with instruments to record temperature, barometric pressure, and precipitation. He also began experimenting with his own snow sampler tube and scales to measure water content. A tense rivalry soon developed between Church and inventors of similar devices, particularly R. E. Horton. As neither device was patentable—they were too similar to previous inventions used to measure grain—Church began to promote and publicize his apparatus in professional journals and the popular press, naming it the Mount Rose Snow Sampler. While others, including Charles Marvin of the U.S. Weather Bureau, vied to have their devices used, it would be Church's Mount Rose Sampler that found general acceptance among neophytes like George Dewey Clyde who were initiating new snow survey programs in the West.⁸

The Weather Bureau continued to play an important role as a cooperating agency. In fact, in 1911 meteorologist J. Cecil Alter had been the first to conduct a snow survey in Utah using Charles Marvin's apparatus on the Maple Creek watershed above Payson in Utah County.⁹ The

6 George D. Clyde, “Water Supply Forecasting Based on Snow Surveys—A Basic Factor in Water Conservation,” 5, box 13, fd. 3, George D. Clyde Research Materials, 1929–1971, USU_COLL MSS 279, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan (USUSCA).

7 “The methods used by Mr. J. E. Church, Jr.,” Clyde wrote, “seem to be the most satisfactory . . . of any yet devised.” Clyde went on to explain that Church had “extended to us an invitation to meet him in Reno . . . and go over the work done by him in detail.” George D. Clyde to William Peterson, October 12, 1923, box 11, fd. 7, Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, record group 18.1:56, USUSCA.

8 Mergen, “Seeking Snow: James E. Church and the Beginnings of Snow Science,” 75–104.

9 J. Cecil Alter, “The Mountain Snow: Its Genesis, Exodus

Weather Bureau had for years been measuring precipitation through gauging stations and had recently installed snow stakes at higher elevations. The latter had proven unsatisfactory, Clyde observed, as the “density of snow varies widely throughout the season and in different seasons.”¹⁰ The unreliability of snow stakes and the later snow bins installed by the Weather Bureau to capture and measure snowfall helped spur Church’s development of a more predictable method of forecasting streamflow in the Tahoe region of Nevada. Clyde followed suit in Utah, establishing snow courses on the Logan River drainage east of the Utah Agricultural College campus.

Writing at the outset of his research to Marvin, Clyde explained that “runoff from any watershed” could only be ascertained by having accurate records. “As a general rule such records are lacking at the higher elevations,” he wrote. Clyde proposed cooperating with the Weather Bureau and Forest Service to obtain better data, explaining that it would “necessitate a system of snow surveying.”¹¹ Marvin, who had recently been named chief of the Weather Bureau, responded by welcoming any suggestions that Clyde and the Utah Experiment Station might offer. He readily admitted that the Weather Bureau’s efforts had been “entirely inadequate.” Nevertheless, Marvin stressed, our effort “covers the present limit of our ability.” The Weather Bureau had diligently tried to “discover methods and obtain funds . . . but thus far . . . without success.” Even if funding could be secured, Marvin continued, “we would be confronted with a physical obstacle that has heretofore proved . . . insurmountable. How can observers be obtained at the higher elevations that are uninhabited? If observers . . . cannot be obtained,” he asked, “what other plan could be devised?”¹²

and Revelation,” *Transactions, American Geophysical Union, Reports and Papers, Snow-Survey Conference* (Seattle: 1940), 892–93; see also A. H. Thiessen, “Report of Snow Measurement in Maple Creek Watershed, Utah County, Utah, March 4 to March 14, 1912,” *Monthly Weather Review* (March 1912), 435.

10 Clyde, “Water Supply Forecasting Based on Snow Surveys—A Basic Factor in Water Conservation,” 5.

11 George D. Clyde to C. F. Marvin, October 3, 1923, box 11, fd. 4, Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

12 C. F. Marvin to George D. Clyde, October 11, 1923, box 11, fd. 4, Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

Much as Church had done in Nevada, Clyde proposed establishing snow courses at various high-elevation locations within drainages that could then be surveyed by measuring the snow for depth and water content.¹³ These measurements needed to occur at crucial intervals depending upon the temperature and snowmelt conditions, but always at the conclusion of the snowfall season, sometime between April 1 and April 15 on the Logan River drainage. Clyde recommended selecting sites “having uniform snow cover and . . . [protection] from drifting winds . . . free . . . from irregularities, steep slopes, boulders, fallen trees, meandering streams, logs, brush, and snow slides.” Furthermore, as surveying was “difficult and hazardous,” requiring travel “on snowshoes or skis, often under extremely trying circumstances,” Clyde suggested always considering “accessibility” when locating snow courses.¹⁴

Obviously, to select a site using his criteria required visiting an area during both winter and summer. As these high-elevation sites were all located at a minimum of 8,000 feet, travel to and from was physically challenging regardless of the season. Clyde established eight snow courses on the Logan River drainage during his first year, including Garden City Summit, Mount Logan, Franklin Basin, Tony Grove Lake, two at Spring Hollow, and one each at the Mud Flats and Tony Grove ranger stations. By 1927, he had expanded his research by laying out an additional eighteen courses on the drainages of the Ogden, Weber, Provo, and Sevier rivers in the Great Basin, as well as courses on the Price and Strawberry rivers in the Colorado River drainage.

In August 1927, as he prepared to make a reconnaissance of other Colorado River tributaries in Utah’s Uinta Basin, Clyde described his preliminary travel plans. “I am writing you to find out if you could assist us in securing horses,” he inquired of Ashley Forest ranger E. C. Shepherd. “We plan to leave Logan on Wednes-

13 A snow course is an area identified as providing the best cross section of a mountain snowpack. They are established permanently, usually about 1,000 feet long, and, as Clyde explained, carefully chosen with regards to certain criteria.

14 George D. Clyde, *Establishing Snow Courses and Making Snow Surveys*, Circular 91, December 1930 (Logan: Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, 1930), 4.



Clyde with the tools of the snow surveying trade: snow-shoes, skis, a snow sampling tube, and a scale used to measure the weight of the snow.

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day the 17 and should reach the Road Camp the same evening. From there it is planned to take a pack outfit and go into the Granddaddy lake region at the head of the Duchesne [River] and spend two or three days riding over the watershed." Afterward, Clyde's party intended to leave the Road Camp, travel to the town of Duchesne, and then go on to Vernal, "making side trips into the Uintah [sic] Mountains along the route."¹⁵

Snow courses had yet to be laid out anywhere in the Uinta Mountains. The Forest Service had been measuring snow stakes since 1918, but the "wide variations in stake readings from year to year" demanded that snow courses be established "before any accurate forecasting of

the stream flow [could] be made."¹⁶ Two weeks after making his reconnaissance, Clyde reported his observations to Ashley Forest supervisor A. G. Nord. He criticized the snow stakes for "not furnish[ing] an index to the probable amount of water which will run off during the season" and for being located at lower elevations, where the snow "is melted and gone before the spring runoff starts." Clyde suggested abandoning all but a few stations and relocating observations at the 9,000 to 10,000-foot elevation range. As the spring runoff from the Uintas usually occurred a month or more after that on the Wasatch, establishing snow courses at these locations would require measurements only once a year between May 15 and June 1. The observer could "make the trip into the area [on] horseback," Clyde advised, "without undue inconvenience."¹⁷

Utah officials remained keenly interested in how Clyde's research might apply to a more precise forecast on the Colorado River. In 1922, a year before Clyde began his research, Utah and the six other neighboring states had negotiated and signed the Colorado River Compact. The Compact divided the river's flow between the Upper Basin states of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and New Mexico, and Arizona, California, and Nevada in the Lower Basin. The flow of the river fluctuated greatly, from 240,000 cubic feet per second at flood stage to as little as 2,600 "in the driest portion of the driest year," according to state engineer R. E. Caldwell.¹⁸ Any means the state could use to better predict runoff could only help as Utah began laying plans to harness its share of this interstate stream. Other states were equally anxious to have more information. James Church congratulated Clyde on his future plans to survey the upper Colorado River drainage, noting how it "will ultimately be of prime importance in forecasting the run-off of the Colorado whose flow will be closely linked with Nevada's prosperity."¹⁹

16 Box 11, fd. 5, Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

17 George D. Clyde to A. G. Nord, August 27, 1927, box 122, fd. 10, Director's Files, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, 1914–1935.

18 *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the State Engineer, 1921–1922* (Salt Lake City: Arrow Press, 1922), 53.

19 J. E. Church Jr. to George D. Clyde, December 14, 1924, box 11, fd. 4, Progress Reports, Utah Agricultural

15 George D. Clyde to Forest Ranger, Morgan Park, August 10, 1927, box 122, fd. 10, Director's Files, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, 1914–1935, record group 18:17, USUSCA.

Furthermore, in 1921 the Utah legislature had created the Utah Water Storage Commission with broad power to make investigations, employ technical assistance, and enter “into co-operation for investigations.” The legislature intended for the commission to investigate and propose plans for the complete and “ultimate development and utilization of the State’s water resources.”²⁰ To this end, the commission, to which Caldwell was a member, entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to survey the Salt Lake Basin “north, east and south of the borders of Great Salt Lake” and determine the available water supply and number of irrigable acres that might be reclaimed.²¹

These early cooperative investigations between Utah and the federal government would pay dividends later as the state began exploring reservoir options on the Colorado and its tributaries. In 1938, as the Upper Basin states first met to discuss the division of their half of the Colorado River, Reclamation engineer E. B. Debler declared that because Reclamation had developed a cooperative relationship with the state, Utah “had more valuable information on the possibilities of development . . . in the Colorado River basin than . . . any other.”²²

Owing largely to the Caldwell’s interest, the state funded Clyde’s first year of research in 1923. Funding had become a perennial problem for snow surveyors, as the work was both time-consuming and expensive. “Are you planning to appeal to your legislature for funds?” James Church inquired. He advised Clyde in 1924 how the recent water shortage made this a “most desirable time to do so.” Ever the opportunist where funding was involved, Church solicited Clyde’s support for a campaign to increase funding in Nevada. Church told Clyde that nearly all of Nevada’s water districts had agreed to send letters to the governor “urging the continuance of the work as part of the State budget. However,” he continued, “I am won-

dering whether a letter from you to Governor Scrugham outlining your plans . . . would not be of material assistance, for the Utah plans will afford a much desired extension of the snow survey to the east.”²³

It is likely that Church’s well-honed political skills influenced Clyde to begin developing his own nascent ability. In 1925, Clyde’s snow survey project moved from the uncertainty of state funding to more reliable federal funding under the Purnell Act. In making his pitch, Clyde stressed the urgency of acquiring more “knowledge” on the factors influencing stream runoff, “particularly of snow cover.”²⁴ This would act as “a proper guide to the construction and operation of storage reservoirs, to flood control, to the development of hydroelectric power, and to the forecasting of early and late season discharges, all of which will make possible a more complete utilization of our water resources.” In a nutshell, snow surveying, just like the conservation and utilization of water resources, was purely an economic matter. Even “banks are governing their loans for maturing crops on the water available from the mountains for the coming year,” the Utah Experiment Station emphasized.²⁵ Funding depended on Clyde’s ability to demonstrate a tangible economic benefit. Doing so played well to federal pragmatists concerned with the declining farm economy during the 1920s, and it also played well in Utah. It became familiar territory for Clyde, who again and again throughout his career would plow this same ground, linking the economy with natural resource development.

In 1926, just three years into his research on the Logan River drainage, Clyde announced that a shortage of winter snowpack would likely curtail the irrigation water supply. Those who heeded his prediction and “reduced their late season crops matured what they planted.

Experiment Station.

20 *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the State Engineer, 1921–1922*, 87.

21 *Ibid.*, 91.

22 *Report and Proceedings of the Fact Finding Committee of the Upper Colorado River Basin*, 2 vols. (Green River, WY: The Committee, 1938), 2:38.

23 J. E. Church Jr. to George D. Clyde, December 14, 1924, box 11, fd. 4, Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

24 See Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, box 11, fd. 5. Passed by Congress in 1925, the Purnell Act incrementally increased federal funds to the state experiment stations annually until the total appropriation reached \$60,000. Clyde’s investigative work received \$2,100, a sizable chunk of Utah’s initial Purnell Act appropriation.

25 See box 11, fd. 4, Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.



Clyde (at right) and two assistants taking measurements in the Tony Grove area of Logan Canyon. Clearly, snow surveying could be rigorous work.

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Those who planted regularly did not," Clyde asserted. "Much of their labor and seed was wasted."²⁶ The economic impact of Clyde's research became even more pronounced in 1931 when the Utah and Idaho Sugar Company and the Amalgamated Sugar Company refused to contract with farmers growing sugar beets until the springtime snow surveys had been completed and forecasts made on the availability of irrigation water.²⁷

Drier years were yet to come. The winter of 1931 paled in comparison to 1934, and as Clyde pondered the prospects of what would become "the most severe [drought] in the history of the [W]est," he realized there was much he did not know.²⁸ Although precipitation had been pitifully absent during summer and fall,

Clyde's research had indicated "no correlation between Valley and mountain precipitation."²⁹ Furthermore, outside of the Logan River drainage, where Clyde had been most active, he had only a few years of data on other major watersheds in the state. "Every watershed seems to be a law unto itself," he wrote, "and the snow cover-runoff relationship must be worked out for each."³⁰ Still, as Clyde looked at his twelve years of accumulated data from snow surveys, he felt confident announcing a particularly gloomy outlook for irrigators that year.

Notwithstanding his dismal predictions, "many [primarily agricultural] water users . . . refused to recognize the seriousness of the situation," which prompted Clyde to conduct a special

26 "Water Supply Forecasting Based on Snow Surveys—A Basic Factor in Water Conservation," 12.

27 Ibid., 13.

28 Ibid.

29 Progress Reports, box 11, fd. 5. See also George D. Clyde, "Relationship between Precipitation in Valleys and on Adjoining Mountains in Northern Utah," box 16, fd. 5, Clyde Research Materials.

30 Clyde, "Water Supply Forecasting Based on Snow Surveys—A Basic Factor in Water Conservation," 5.

midwinter snow survey in February 1934.³¹ Clyde reported that the Provo River watershed showed a “marked deficiency of snow cover.” Furthermore, much of the snow cover had melted during the winter, revealing dry soil underneath. It was a dangerous combination, he declared. The situation did not improve: the regular April snow survey confirmed the February findings and “emphasized the pending water shortage”; the runoff, Clyde estimated, would “not exceed 35 percent [of] normal.”³²

While the pending drought would have devastating results for Utah’s economy, it also presented Clyde with a golden opportunity to promote and publicize the value of snow surveys. Following the April forecast, Clyde appealed to state officials, eventually gaining the ear of Governor Henry H. Blood. Blood, a New Deal Democrat elected in 1932, used the occasion to petition for emergency funding through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and “called the first drought conference in history to be held before the drought occurred.”³³ The governor by proclamation appointed Clyde as State Conservator and named him as his special representative to the conference.³⁴

On the strength of Clyde’s forecast the conference adopted a two-pronged approach. Conservation became the first priority, which required a concerted educational program to convince water users of the seriousness of the situation, to urge them to modify the number of planted acres to acquaint them with more efficient “methods of irrigation,” and to teach them to administer the water “to secure . . . maximum use.” Clyde enlisted the college’s county extension agents to help canvass the state, where educational meetings were held in each county

except Wayne and Daggett.³⁵

The governor appealed to Utahns’ sense of cooperation by prevailing upon owners of “prior-right water to divide with those owning secondary rights.”³⁶ Utah, however, had functioned under a system of “first in time, first in right” since practically the beginning of settlement, and those possessing first rights on an irrigation stream were under no obligation to share. The priority system had, in fact, been adopted to settle water disputes in times of shortage and to make water available to secondary appropriators only after primary rights had been satisfied. This system may not have seemed just under such dire circumstances, but it was reality. “Water-rights in Utah are based on priority of use,” Clyde allowed. Still, he reminded primary right holders that normal crop production was possible only because they could “use all the water on the river . . . in spite of the serious water shortage.” Moreover, Clyde admonished irrigators to be conscientious about how they distributed and applied water, to make certain that their fields were level and their ditches clean and to replace leaky head gates. He also encouraged farmers to plant only those acres that had sufficient irrigation water to mature a crop; to retire marginal land; and, above all, to save the orchards and trees. Importantly, Clyde added his voice to the governor’s hopefulness by imploring irrigators to cooperate. “Cooperate with your neighbor, transfer water to the most productive land, and develop a public opinion that will not tolerate waste.”³⁷

Concurrent with the conservation educational campaign, the state embarked on a plan to de-

31 George D. Clyde, “Forecasting Water Supply—The West’s Most Valuable Asset,” paper delivered at the Conference of Western Extension Workers, Fort Collins, Colorado, August 12, 1935, box 16, fd. 5, Clyde Research Materials.

32 George D. Clyde to T. H. Humphreys, Utah State Engineer, memorandum, n.d., box 16, fd. 5, Clyde Research Materials.

33 Ibid.

34 “Proclamation of Governor Henry H. Blood, April 27, 1934,” in George D. Clyde, *Report of Water Conservation Program and Drought Situation in Utah* (Logan: Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, 1934), box 16, fd. 6, Clyde Research Materials.

35 Clyde, “Water Supply Forecasting Based on Snow Surveys—A Basic Factor in Water Conservation,” 10–11. Clyde gives no specific reason as to why meetings were not held in Wayne and Daggett counties.

36 “Proclamation of Governor Henry H. Blood, April 27, 1934,” in Clyde, *Report of Water Conservation Program and Drought Situation in Utah*.

37 Clyde, *Report of Water Conservation Program and Drought Situation in Utah*, 11, 14–15. Although the earliest settlers tried to follow the ideal of communal, cooperative use of water, managed by ecclesiastical authorities, it quickly became clear that the distribution of water rights needed to be more systematic. For an example of one community’s transition from cooperative use to prior appropriation law, see John Bennion, “Water Law on the Eve of Statehood: Israel Bennion and a Conflict in Vernon, 1893–1896,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 82 (Fall 2014): 289.

velop a supplementary water supply, part two of the strategy adopted by the drought conference. Utah enjoyed an enviable relationship with New Deal Democrats. The state's previous governor, George Dern, had been selected to serve as FDR's Secretary of War, opening the way for Governor Blood's election in 1932. Furthermore, Utah's congressional delegation consisted of a full slate of Democrats. The state wasted no time in securing the appointment of Robert H. Hinckley as FERA administrator in Utah. The Ogden, Utah, businessman had served in several capacities during the administration of Governor Dern, including as a member of the Volunteer Relief Committee in 1931. Hinckley had persuaded Governor Blood to seek election in 1932, and after his election, Blood appointed Hinckley to travel the state enrolling young men in the New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps. Hinckley was well connected within Utah's Democratic Party and was a likely choice to head FERA operations in Utah. He was also an appropriate choice, being characterized later as one of the nation's "finest and most socially-minded state administrators."³⁸

Drawing on Clyde's report, Hinckley assembled a committee to evaluate potential projects and select those which they considered most beneficial.³⁹ Emphasizing the importance of irrigated agriculture to the state's economy at the time, \$550,000 of the initial \$600,000 made available by the federal government went for irrigation projects.⁴⁰ By the end of 1935, FERA

had expended nearly \$1.5 million on water projects for Utah.⁴¹

Clyde was learning the art of political procurement. More than just working tirelessly to perfect his fledgling snow survey program, he had turned the drought to his advantage by making his snow surveys an indispensable barometer for Utah's agricultural economy. Clyde credited snow surveys for having predicted the drought; Utah's "foresighted governor" for setting in motion the "machinery necessary to meet the situation"; and the state's hardy farmers, born of pioneering spirit, for meeting and weathering the storm (or lack thereof).⁴² Clyde estimated that conservation and the development of supplementary water in Utah had saved more than \$5 million in crops.⁴³ He also frequently reminded the public that the \$5 million in savings was enabled by an expenditure of only \$2,500 for the snow surveys.⁴⁴

Not only were snow surveys useful in gauging drought, but as Clyde would demonstrate, they could also forecast potential floods. In 1936, the state engineer T. H. Humphreys asked Clyde to prepare a report for the Scofield Dam on the Price River in Carbon County. The earth-filled structure had partially failed in 1928. Irrigators repaired the breach but failed to address the dam's inadequately sized spillway.⁴⁵ As a result, the state restricted storage in the dam to half its original 60,000-acre-foot capacity. Heavy

also decreased the level of Utah Lake to its lowest historic level, an environmental upheaval from which the lake never fully recovered.

38 Leonard J. Arrington, "Utah's Great Drought of 1934," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 54 (Summer 1986): 251.

39 Utah Emergency Relief Administration, Engineering Department, "Report of the Emergency Drouth Relief Administration," September 2, 1935, 2, Call No. 333.9 UT1R, General Book Collection, USUSCA. The committee was composed of State Engineer T. H. Humphreys; Extension Director William Peterson; and chairman of the Utah Water Storage Commission William Wallace.

40 Arrington, "Utah's Great Drought of 1934," 251. The largest and most costly project involved erecting a pumping plant at Pelican Point along the western shore of Utah Lake, enabling irrigators' access to the last remaining three feet of storage water. Through construction of an associated canal that connected to Jordan River below the lake's outlet, the project serviced 106,000 acres in Salt Lake County. See Utah Emergency Relief Administration, "Report of the Emergency Drouth Relief Administration," appendix. Reportedly, the project saved 60,000 acres. See Arrington, "Utah's Great Drought of 1934," 251. Significantly, the project

41 Utah Emergency Relief Administration, "Report of the Emergency Drouth Relief Administration," introduction.

42 Clyde, "Water Supply Forecasting Based on Snow Surveys—A Basic Factor in Water Conservation," 10.

43 Clyde to Humphreys, Clyde Research Materials.

44 Paul Willmore, "Engineers Enjoy Snow Trip," box 16, fd. 5, Clyde Research Materials. See also *Herald Journal*, February 2, 1937.

45 Flawed construction continued to worry those residents below the original Scofield Dam. Owing to the threat it presented to railroad and mining interests pertinent to national defense, the FDR administration authorized reconstruction of Scofield Dam during World War II. The new dam was moved downstream approximately eight miles and constructed by the firm of W. W. Clyde between 1942 and 1947. See U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, "Scofield Project," by Eric A. Stene (Denver, CO: Bureau of Reclamation, 1995), 2–12.

snows visited eastern Utah in 1936, making residents in the “half dozen communities” below the dam “extremely nervous.” Not only would these communities be impacted, but so would more than forty miles of railroad lines and four coal mines. “The damage resulting from a failure,” Clyde reported, “would be tremendous in loss of property and possible loss of lives.”⁴⁶

Clyde’s snow survey showed a potential runoff of between 65,000 and 75,000 acre-feet on the Price River. Because the density (water content) of the snow in the drainage “was unusually high, averaging approximately 45 per cent,” Clyde warned the irrigators that a slight rise in temperatures could trigger a sudden melting, producing a “potential runoff [of] at least 50,000 acre-feet.”⁴⁷ This would be far in excess of what the spillway tunnel could accommodate. Clyde recommended emptying the reservoir and keeping the spillway gates open until 20,000 acre-feet of runoff had passed.

Irrigators protested. They feared that the runoff would be insufficient to fill the reservoir and provide irrigation for the season. They even threatened “to forcibly close the gates.” Humphreys ordered the reservoir drained and kept the gates open until the recommended 20,000 acre-feet had passed. “The reservoir,” Clyde reported, was “filled a few days prior to the end of the runoff period and the irrigators . . . so violently opposed to release of the hold over storage . . . admitted the justification of the program which was carried out.” This endeavor or succeeded, he pointed out, largely because of the state’s “knowledge of the conditions of the watershed . . . furnished by surveys of the water in snow storage.”⁴⁸

Together with his success during the drought, Clyde’s ability to accurately forecast the Price River runoff and avert a potentially deadly flood demonstrated the significance of snow surveys. Clyde continually looked for ideas to promote his project and capture the public’s eye. During winter 1937, as newly installed dean of the School of Engineering, he prevailed on several Agricultural College faculty members to accompany him and fourteen engineering students to

take measurements on the Mount Logan snow course. Student Paul Willmore later chronicled the expedition for the *Herald Journal*:

While Logan was slumbering, wide awake surveyors started on what was to be the most glorious of all Mt. Logan snow surveys. A camera man from a popular studio, professors who have scaled the ladder of the intellectuals, and even meek students donned their snow traveling foot wear to make this trip on the ever protruding Wasatch Mountains.⁴⁹

Joining Clyde’s entourage was local photographer Max Brunson, who captured the excursion on motion picture film.⁵⁰ Despite the rigors of walking through deep snow up a very steep hill, Willmore later acknowledged that “as time went on” the mood lightened and the “actors in this history making news-reel” soon fell into character. They especially enjoyed Dean Clyde’s role as movie producer as he barked the typical stock-in-trade Hollywood language: “action,” “camera,” “cut!” The Agricultural College screened the footage for the student body during spring 1937 and evidently supplied copies to local movie theaters to be shown before feature films.⁵¹

Clyde’s efforts during the 1930s began attracting the attention of a much wider audience. As the historian J. Douglas Helms asserts, his work represented the “most dramatic demonstration of the value of snow surveys.”⁵² One of Clyde’s ardent admirers was W. W. McLaughlin of the USDA’s Bureau of Agricultural Engineering (BAE). As far as snow surveys were

49 Willmore, *Engineers Enjoy Snow Trip*,” Clyde Research Materials. See also *Herald Journal*, February 2, 1937.

50 Max Brunson was probably the first local photographer to experiment with moving pictures. After his relocation from Fillmore, Utah, to Logan, Utah, in 1936 he functioned as the college’s official photographer. For biographical information, see www.rootsweb.ancestry.com. The author has searched in vain for Brunson’s early footage. His private collection has remained with his family since his death in 2004.

51 See copy of press release and Willmore, “Engineers Enjoy Snow Trip,” both in box 16, fd. 5, Clyde Research Materials. See also *Herald Journal*, February 2, 1937.

52 J. Douglas Helms, “Bringing Federal Coordination to Snow Surveys,” in *The History of Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting*, edited by Douglas Helms, Steven E. Phillips, and Paul F. Reich (Washington, D.C.: USDA, 2008), pt. 3, 39.

46 Clyde to Humphreys, Clyde Research Materials.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

concerned, McLaughlin considered Clyde “the best informed man in the country.”⁵³ McLaughlin had been one of the Utah Agricultural College’s earliest engineering graduates, taking his baccalaureate in 1896. From 1901 to 1905 he taught engineering courses at his alma mater, until a legislative mandate prohibited the institution from offering such coursework.⁵⁴ Afterwards, McLaughlin gravitated to the USDA as an agricultural engineer. In 1925, after earning his long-awaited master’s degree, McLaughlin moved to head the Irrigation Division, first with the Bureau of Public Roads, and then with the BAE. Although Clyde and McLaughlin may have become acquainted at Berkeley, it was then that the two developed a professional relationship.⁵⁵

As early as 1930, Clyde had successfully formed a cooperative snow survey program in Utah among the Experiment Station, the Forest Service, the Weather Bureau, and the State Engineer’s Office.⁵⁶ Furthermore, his gubernatorial appointment as Utah’s drought czar during 1934 provided him entrée to local, state, and federal officials. Clyde, McLaughlin reported to his superiors, had “very pleasant contacts with other agencies.”⁵⁷

In 1935, McLaughlin traveled to Logan to confer with Clyde.⁵⁸ He explained his plan as defined by Congress in May 1935 to federalize western snow surveys and “coordinate, standardize, and broaden the scope . . . for forecasting irrigation water supplies.”⁵⁹ McLaughlin saw the program Clyde had established in Utah as a model that might be developed throughout the western states. Clyde eagerly agreed to collaborate with the BAE to bring McLaughlin’s federal plan to fruition.

In August 1935, in company with Ralph L. Parshall, Clyde visited Colorado establishing snow courses and explaining the federal program to “Forest Supervisors and Forest Rangers, Division Water Superintendents, and the office of the State Engineer.”⁶⁰ Parshall, a BAE engineer stationed at Fort Collins, would become one of four federal snow survey supervisors in 1939 following the program’s absorption by the Soil Conservation Service.⁶¹ Of those involved in making this initial foray across the West, the only state employees selected by McLaughlin to collaborate were Clyde and James Church in Nevada. From August 12 through 28, Clyde and Parshall laid out new snow courses at the headwaters of the North and South Platte, Arkansas, Rio Grande, and Colorado rivers.⁶²

The cooperative federal program developed somewhat organically, with arrangements among the BAE, Weather Bureau, Forest Ser-

53 W. W. McLaughlin to Samuel H. McCrory, May 6, 1935, File 3-234, General Correspondence, 1931-1939, Records of Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, Record Group 8, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Quoted in Helms, “Bringing Federal Coordination to Snow Surveys,” 29.

54 The state legislature’s curtailment of the curriculum in 1905 prohibited the teaching of engineering and pedagogy, among other subjects. The prohibition had a devastating effect on Utah Agricultural College, which understandably lost its engineering faculty, including W. W. McLaughlin. It would not begin to recover until 1912, when the legislature relaxed the prohibition and allowed instruction in irrigation and drainage engineering, but only as it applied to agriculture. See Herschel Bullen Jr., “The Utah Agricultural College, University of Utah Consolidation Controversy, 1904 to 1907 and 1927,” box 1, record group 1.2/2-1, USUSCA. See also Don E. McIlvenna and Darrold D. Wax, “W. J. Kerr, Land-Grant President in Utah and Oregon, 1900-1908,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 85 (Winter 1984).

55 “Hydrographic Studies on the Bear River in Cache Valley from June 15 through September 15, 1925,” box 1 fd. 5, George Dewey Clyde Papers, 1919-1954, COLL MSS 176, USUSCA.

56 Progress Reports, box 11, fd. 6, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

57 W. W. McLaughlin to Samuel H. McCrory, May 6, 1935, quoted in Helms, “Bringing Federal Coordination to Snow Surveys,” 29.

58 Ibid.

59 George D. Clyde, “Federal Cooperative Snow Surveys, Memorandum Covering the Location and Establishment of Snow Courses and Arrangements for Seasonal Snow Surveys on the Water-Sheds of the State of Colorado,” September 1, 1935, box 122, fd. 7, Director’s Files, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, 1914-1935. The act is contained in *Statutes at Large*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1936), 1:274.

60 Ibid.

61 Other supervisors included James C. Marr in Boise, Idaho; R. A. (Arch) Work in Medford, Oregon; and Lou T. Jessup at Yakima, Washington. See J. Douglas Helms, “Snow Surveying Comes of Age in the West,” in *The History of Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting* (Washington, D.C.: USDA, 2008), pt. 3, 35. Parshall may be best known for designing a device used to measure irrigation water. The flume, which bears his name, was widely adopted across the West.

62 Clyde, “Federal Cooperative Snow Surveys, Memorandum Covering the Location and Establishment of Snow Courses and Arrangements for Seasonal Snow Surveys on the Water-Sheds of the State of Colorado.”

vice, and state agencies operating informally for many years. The cooperative program Clyde initiated in Utah in 1930 also functioned informally, albeit Clyde, unburdened by bureaucratic jealousies, appeared to have better relations with the Weather Bureau than the BAE.⁶³ Snow surveyors in the BAE and later under the Soil Conservation Service found the Weather Bureau to be the most reluctant partner. The Weather Bureau had functioned as the national resource for forecasting weather since 1870. Owing to its legacy, the Weather Bureau perhaps believed it had an inherent right to administer the snow surveys and resented its elimination as the lead agency by Congress in 1935. The BAE, however, had waged a particularly effective campaign to convince Congress that stream forecasting in the western states should be a matter for engineers, not meteorologists.⁶⁴

63 Clyde began circulating drafts of a Memorandum of Agreement as early as 1932. See George D. Clyde to J. C. Alter, March 10, 1932, box 122, fd. 11, Director's Files, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, 1914–1935. A copy of the draft agreement is located in the same file. As mentioned previously, J. Cecil Alter, chief meteorologist for the Weather Bureau in Utah, had been the first to conduct a snow survey in 1911. He remained keenly interested in Clyde's research. Even so, in July 1944 when the agreement was finally formalized, the Weather Bureau was not a party to it. See box 37, fd. 25, Director's Files, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, 1914–1935. Evidently the Weather Bureau's opposition also extended to the local level. Alter, however, stayed engaged, recounting the history of snow surveying in Utah before the American Geophysical Union in 1940. See Alter, "The Mountain Snow: Its Genesis, Exodus and Revelation," *Transactions, American Geophysical Union, Reports and Papers, Snow-Survey Conference*, 892–93. Alter's interest may have persisted because of Utah. He was keenly interested in many things pertaining to the state, even refusing several opportunities for advancement in the Weather Bureau because it would have required his leaving. "Not content merely to study and record the weather," historian Gary Topping confirms, "he served his adopted state as chairman of the Utah State Parks Commission, as a member of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, and as author of travelogs and historical columns in two Salt Lake newspapers." Beginning in 1927 and extending for the next two decades, Alter would direct the Utah State Historical Society. He was founding editor of the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. See Gary Topping, "One Hundred Years at the Utah State Historical Society," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 65 (Summer 1997): 224.

64 J. Douglas Helms, "Recollections of R. A. (Arch) Work Concerning Snow Surveys in Western States," in *The History of Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting* (Washington, D.C.: USDA, 2008), pt. 3, 29.

In February 1936, at its first meeting following establishment of the federal cooperative program, delegates to the eleven-member Western Interstate Snow Survey Association elected Clyde to chair its executive committee. Clyde rarely missed a chance to trumpet the success of his program, but never did he do so by tooting his own horn. "As a result of the interest and activity of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station in the work," Clyde unassumingly stated, "Utah is now looked upon as the leader in this field of research."⁶⁵

During the next few years, Clyde continued spreading the gospel of stream forecasting, bringing ever more of the state's watersheds under the purview of snow surveys. By 1940, eighty-three snow courses, from the Logan River in the north to the Virgin River in the south, had been established. Most of these, according to the engineering graduate student Ross Eskelson, had been "located and laid out personally by Clyde."⁶⁶ This herculean effort had inestimable value, Clyde asserted. Clyde emphasized once again his utilitarian view on natural resources conservation and its economic benefit by noting water's special significance to "farmers who depend upon water for irrigation . . . , to the livestock men who use the water sheds for grazing . . . , to the power companies who generate power . . . , the municipalities . . . , and to business in general."⁶⁷ Additionally in 1938, Clyde began assembling recreational reports for broadcast over KSL radio.⁶⁸ This was in concert with snow surveyors working for the BAE, who were asked by the NBC Radio network to "cooperate in the winter production

65 *Herald Journal*, February 8, 1936.

66 Ross W. Eskelson, "A Comparison of Over-Snow Vehicles Produced at Utah State Agricultural College" (master's thesis, Industrial Science, Utah State Agricultural College, 1955), 3.

67 By 1940, runoff relationships had been established for Ashley Creek, Bear River, Beaver River, Blacksmith Fork River, Big Cottonwood Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Duchesne Creek, Huntington Creek, Logan River, Price River, Provo River, Salt Creek, Sevier River, Ogden River, Uinta River, Virgin River, Weber River and White Rocks Creek. Box 11, fd. 6, Progress Reports of the Utah State Agricultural College.

68 Clyde also invited community members to get up at six a.m., don snowshoes, and join him for a vigorous hike up Logan Canyon to make the snow survey. See Willmore, "Engineers Enjoy Snow Trip," box 16, fd. 5, Clyde Research Materials. See also *Herald Journal*, February 2, 1937.



An early prototype of the Utah snow machine, likely the one developed by USGS engineer Willis Barrett, who is seated at the wheel. Clyde stands at left and technician Roy France stands in the back.

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of a weekly announcement of snow, road, and weather conditions at the more popular western ski resorts,” R. A. (Arch) Work recounted. These so-called “Sno-casts” were gleaned from information “hot off the griddle first thing each Friday morning from forest rangers and other cooperators,” Work continued, “then shot . . . into Berkeley for collation and relay to NBC.” The popularity of the feature waned during WWII, as did winter recreation generally, Work concluded. “In 1941, we dropped this particular off-shoot activity.”⁶⁹

If interest in winter recreation slowed during the war, interest in snow surveys accelerated. Water supply for the production of food and fiber, industry, and hydroelectric power was vital to national defense, and a thorough knowledge of the amount of expected mountain runoff

was paramount to the war effort. Not only did Clyde refine and expand his system of snow surveys in Utah, but he also took charge of military and vocational instruction at the college as the campus rapidly transformed into a defense training facility. Under the Engineering Defense Training Program created by Congress, the college began training students in defense-related vocations in September 1941. By 1942, with the U.S. fully engaged in WWII, more than 400 students were enrolled in engineering and science courses that included soil mechanics, fluid mechanics, reinforced concrete design, aerial photography, radio fundamentals, cartography, and engineering drawing.⁷⁰ Beginning in 1943, military trainees began arriving on campus. During the next two

⁶⁹ Helms, “Recollections of R. A. (Arch) Work Concerning Snow Surveys in Western States,” 51–52.

⁷⁰ The Engineering Defense Training Program became the Engineering, Science, and Management War Training Program after December 1941. See box 1, fd. 19, Papers of the Dean of Engineering, 1938–1945, War Production Training, USU_14.4/1:17a, USUSCA.

years, more than 2,000 active military personnel would receive training through the Navy Radio School, the Aviation School, and the Army Specialized Training Program.⁷¹

In part to compensate for the “man power shortage” during the war, but also because the expanded program made it impractical to visit each snow course on snowshoes or skis, Clyde hastened the development of “power driven transportation . . . for movement over snow.”⁷² An inveterate tinkerer, Clyde enjoyed nothing more than joining his blue-collar colleagues in the college shops to modify and improve the tools of his trade. He had initially adopted the Mount Rose snow sampler but continued experimenting and modifying Church’s invention to make it more affordable, portable, and practical. “There is a demand,” Clyde insisted, “for a standardized method of collecting . . . data as a basis of stream flow forecasting.”⁷³ One of Clyde’s first modifications was to decrease the diameter of the cutter, the bottom opening of the sampling tube, from 1.5 inches to 1.485 inches, reasoning that a “cylinder of water 1.485 inches in diameter and 1 inch long weighs 1 ounce.” Standardizing the size of the cutter avoided the need to use the specially calibrated scales that accompanied the Mount Rose sampler, reducing the expense for irrigation companies and other water users.⁷⁴

Clyde had found most of the snow machines developed elsewhere in need of modification. In 1941, in an effort to develop a machine capable of operating under Utah’s unique conditions, Clyde turned to another inveterate tinkerer, self-styled engineer Walter Hansen of Ephraim, Utah. Hansen had built at least two snowmobiles at his Sanpete County shop to chauffeur skiers to the top of Horseshoe Mountain. Hansen had successfully circumvented the vexing problem of using regular Caterpillar-type tracking, which iced up and eventually failed in deep, heavy snow. Rather, Hansen de-

signed an open-center track system that floated on three sets of pneumatic truck tires. Simple yet elegant, Hansen’s design, for which he received a patent in 1943, would influence the construction of virtually all subsequent snow machines at the Agricultural College.⁷⁵

Recognizing the genius of practicality when he saw it, Clyde eventually prevailed on Hansen to join Roy France and others of his team of technicians in Logan. The team produced several prototypes of Hansen’s machine, experiencing both success and failure. Following the war, Clyde contracted with several agencies, including the Soil Conservation Service and the U.S. Geologic Survey, and employed a number of professional engineers to further modify and perfect a “Utah” machine.⁷⁶

Notwithstanding the expertise that was brought to bear on finding solutions to over-snow vehicle travel, the most remarkable breakthrough came not from professional engineers but once again from two seasoned automotive mechanics, Roy France and Emmett Devine. The two practitioners began constructing their own version of a snowmobile in 1947 using “only their personal resources . . . , with whatever parts were available for the least amount of money.” The Frandee SnoShu, as it would be known, solved the persistent problem of track slippage. France and Devine continued using Hansen’s open-centered track system with three rubber tires per side, but instead of having the track driven by only the rear axle, they procured axles off an old Willys automobile having both front and rear differentials. This essentially made the Frandee machine four-wheel drive and provided enough friction between the track and rubber tires to prevent the track from slipping. In recounting the story of snowmobile development at the college, Ross Eskelson asserted that this “proved to be the most important single feature in snowmobile design.” France and Devine would subsequently receive a patent for their engineering feat, the second major advancement in snowmobile design developed at Logan.⁷⁷

71 *Herald Journal*, November 27, 1943.

72 Box 11, fd. 6, Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station. There were a number of companies, agencies, and individuals, both before and after USU’s involvement, that built and marketed snowmobiles.

73 Box 11, fd. 4, Progress Reports of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.

74 Clyde, *Establishing Snow Courses and Making Snow Surveys*, 8.

75 Eskelson, “A Comparison of Over-Snow Vehicles Produced at Utah State Agricultural College,” 5.

76 Among those employed to perfect a machine for the USGS was Willis Barrett, a Soil Conservation Service engineer assigned specifically to USU. *Ibid.*, 20.

77 *Ibid.*, 36. The name Frandee SnoShu name was derived



Excavation and foundation work for the Utah Water Research Laboratory, located below First Dam on the Logan River along the old Logan Canyon road. Engineers considered the site to be one of the most optimal sites in the western United States for this research.

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One can certainly assume that Clyde enthusiastically approved of France's and Devine's initiative. Since the days he first started laying out snow courses in Logan Canyon, Clyde had always planned to develop a method of conducting snow surveys that was accurate, less expensive, and easily replicable by local irrigation companies and other interested groups having little or no engineering training. His focus corresponded well with the research mission of land grant institutions such as the Utah Agricultural College, which prided itself on finding practical solutions for the "industrial classes."⁷⁸

from the last names of France and Devine. Eskelson was part of the team that worked on France's and Devine's machine, and later the inventor of his own craft known as the Eskelson Motor Sled. See *ibid.*, 73.

⁷⁸ Enacted in 1862, the Morrill Land-Grant College Act sought to "promote the liberal and practical education

After twenty-three years of continuous funding to study snow surveys in Utah, Clyde concluded his research. It continued "under an operations program" in coordination with the federal/state Cooperative Snow Survey that Clyde had helped establish.⁷⁹ In 1946, Clyde stepped down as dean of Engineering to accept the position of Chief of Irrigation Investigations in the Soil Conservation Service, a position formerly occupied by his old friend W. W. McLaughlin and

of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life." Although Clyde began his work at the Agricultural College of Utah more than thirty years after its founding in 1888, Clyde and others associated with the college and Experiment Station recognized this as their prime purpose. See *Announcement of the Agricultural College of Utah* (Logan: The College, 1890), 7.

⁷⁹ Progress Reports, box 11, fd. 6, Utah Agricultural Experiment Station.



Designed by Kenneth W. Jones and built by Olsen and Davis Construction Company, the Utah Water Research Laboratory was dedicated on December 6 and 7, 1965. In August 1982, USU posthumously named the facility in honor of George Dewey Clyde.

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which administered the federal/state cooperative program.⁸⁰ Ever the booster for his campus and native state, as one of his first official acts, Clyde moved the division's headquarters from Berkeley, California, to Logan, Utah. Clearly, he intended to make Utah, and by extension the college, the epicenter for irrigation and water research in the western region. Clyde and others who both preceded and followed him were involved in the engineering, design, and research of hundreds of irrigation and drainage projects. In 1951 Clyde made this point to the USDA as he proposed establishing a "regional" irrigation research laboratory at Logan, to be

"staffed jointly by the [USDA] Agricultural Research Service and the Utah State Agricultural College."⁸¹ Others certainly vied to establish the regional research center in their states. The Utah college, however, had a near-perfect site. Located only a mile east of campus, the proposed site sat next to the Logan River, directly below the state reservoir and power plant that college engineers had designed in 1916.⁸² The site, Clyde emphasized, provided an abundant

⁸⁰ It is unknown, but probable, that McLaughlin, who had held the position since the 1920s while it was still part of the BAE, eagerly recommended Clyde for the job.

⁸¹ "Proposal for the Construction and Operation of a Regional Irrigation Research Laboratory at Logan, Utah," [n.d.], box 40, fd. 5, Utah Water Research Laboratory General Files, 1946–1983, USU_RG 179/2, USUSCA.

⁸² See box 1, Papers concerning the College Power Plant, USU_6.2:45, USUSCA.

water source, easily controlled and measured, with “a wide range of heads and discharges.”⁸³ Engineering faculty member Vaughan E. Hansen, who had been studying the site since 1948, furnished the photographs and drawings that accompanied Clyde’s proposal.⁸⁴

While Clyde’s initial proposal did not bear fruit, the seed was planted, and he never ceased cultivating the idea of a regional water research facility in Logan. Soon after becoming governor, in March 1957, he signed a proclamation that changed the Utah State Agricultural College to Utah State University (USU). The overture was more than just window-dressing. Only as a state-recognized research university could Utah’s land-grant institution hope to successfully compete for research dollars. Those funds would be crucial as the university continued pursuing Clyde’s regional water research center. In collaboration with the newly minted dean of engineering, Dean F. Peterson, Governor Clyde engaged with his legislative colleagues to obtain \$1.2 million in construction funds. Grants from the National Science Foundation and U.S. Department of Health solidified the beginnings of the Utah Water Research Laboratory in 1959. Dedicated in 1965, the Water Lab celebrated its fifty-year anniversary in 2015. Earlier in 1982, USU had posthumously named the facility in honor of George Dewey Clyde, who died from complications of a stroke on April 2, 1972.⁸⁵

Clyde’s training and research convinced him that natural resources ought not to be wasted, that they should be intelligently conserved and efficiently utilized. His experiences during the

1930s drought and depression certainly reinforced this conviction and colored his definition of conservation. Furthermore, although he served two terms as a Republican governor, the New Deal had nurtured his political instincts, confirming Clyde’s belief that government had a role to play in leveraging the state’s economy.

During the last fifty years, Clyde’s model of conservation has been increasingly challenged by segments of the public. Nevertheless, the debate over natural resources and their use or preservation still very much permeates Utah’s political landscape. Environmentalists largely eschew the economic yardstick that Clyde favored for measuring the value of natural resources. On the other side of the political division are those who argue that federal public lands policy and environmental regulation inhibit the economic growth and independence of rural western communities. In some ways, Clyde anticipated and personified this cultural and political divide—“the contrary world views and economic realities of urban and rural America,” according to the historian Samuel J. Schmieding.⁸⁶ As Clyde’s story confirms, however, the debate is seldom one-dimensional.

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Robert Parson is University Archivist at Utah State University and a member of UHQ’s board of editors.

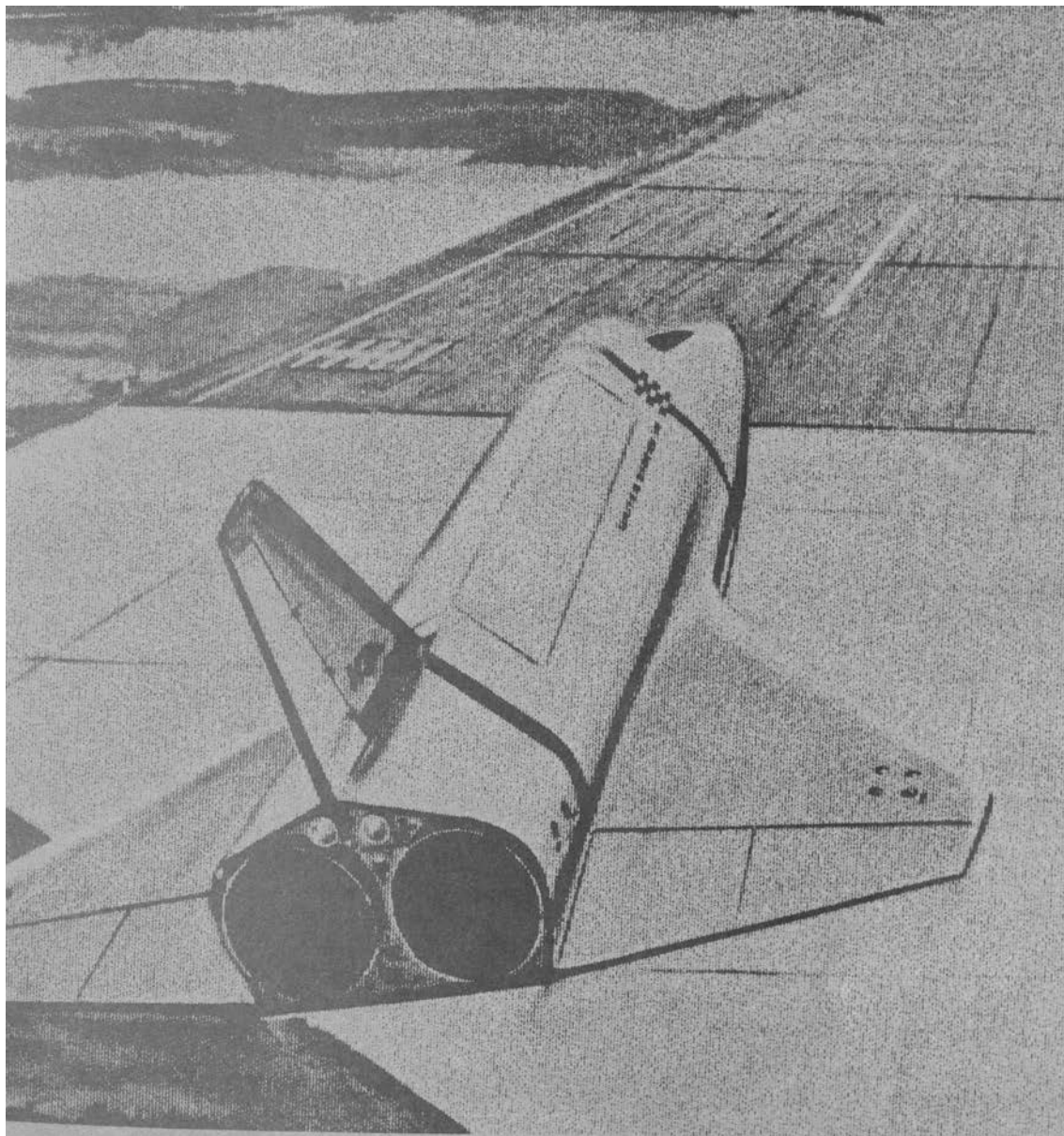
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83 “Proposal for the Construction and Operation of a Regional Irrigation Research Laboratory at Logan, Utah,” 17.

84 “Utah Water Research Laboratory Progress Report, 1964–1966” (Logan: College of Engineering, Utah State University, 1966), 5.

85 Clyde’s commitment to the Water Lab is demonstrated in the very pointed letter he sent to University President Daryl Chase in 1961 reproaching university officials and the Board of Trustees for trying to eliminate “the hydraulics laboratory from the building program. . . . I am quite disturbed,” Clyde declared, adding that it would strike “at the very foundation of agriculture and industry in this state to eliminate progress in the field of water utilization. I would appreciate very much your explaining this,” the governor insisted. See George D. Clyde to Daryl Chase, January 12, 1961, box 40, fd. 10, Utah Water Research Laboratory General Files.

86 Schmieding, *From Controversy to Compromise to Cooperation*, 101–2.



committee report – brief

In 1972, Utah made a bid for NASA to build its spaceport for the space shuttle within the state. This image of the space shuttle was from a report on the project.

UTAH'S SPACEPORT

A Failed Dream

BY ERIC G. SWEDIN

In 1971, as the Apollo program was still putting astronauts on the moon, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) envisioned space travel and exploration in the future. Though many space enthusiasts hoped for a large space station or moon base, a reusable spacecraft called the space shuttle was projected as the next obvious step, because putting people and cargo into orbit with single-use booster rockets was very expensive. When budget cutters in the Nixon Administration cancelled the final three planned Apollo moon flights, NASA decided to build a winged booster vehicle and winged orbiter that could each be able to fly back to the ground for reuse, dramatically lowering launch costs. NASA wanted a “space truck” that could carry into orbit astronauts, satellites, sections of a space station, or sections of vehicles to be assembled in space in order to later take astronauts to Mars.¹

NASA had regularly battled with the Air Force over space funding and programs, both in Congress and within the federal bureaucracy. For instance, the NASA space station Skylab eventually prevailed over the Air Force’s Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL) program. To build congressional support for the proposed space shuttle, NASA looked for allies and expanded the possible uses of the space shuttle by including Air Force requirements in the proposed system.

¹ The term “space truck” was widely used as a description of the space shuttle, as evidenced by the name of a 1987–1997 exhibit on the space shuttle at the Smithsonian. See Smithsonian, “America’s Space Truck: The Space Shuttle,” accessed May 23, 2016, si.edu/Exhibitions/Details/America's-Space-Truck-The-Space-Shuttle-3550.

The Air Force wanted to be able to launch the proposed space shuttle into polar orbits and then to land it after only a single orbit. Manned missions were normally launched into near-equatorial orbits that went around the earth in an eastward direction, taking about ninety minutes to complete a single orbit. This equatorial orbit meant that on each circuit of the earth the shuttle could pass over its launch point. A polar orbit also lasted ninety minutes, but the earth was rotating underneath the spacecraft, which meant that a shuttle launched into polar orbit could not arrive back over its launch point after a single orbit. Twenty-four hours of orbiting were required for the earth to rotate the launch site back to the original location. This meant that a shuttle launched into a polar orbit for a single orbit would need to re-enter the atmosphere and soar back about 1,500 miles to reach its launch point. Flying that far within the atmosphere required larger wings with more lift. Without the Air Force requirement to return from a single polar orbit, the shuttle could have been designed with short, stubby wings good only for gliding back to an airfield, not flying through the atmosphere.²

Numerous states saw an economic opportunity in the proposed space shuttle, which NASA officially called the Space Transportation System. NASA had launched all of its manned missions out of Cape Canaveral (then called Cape Kennedy) in Florida, but there was no conclusive reason that the new system had to continue to use that location.³ Cape Canaveral had been selected as the first American space port because Florida was closer than most of the rest of the United States to the equator, which meant that rockets launched towards the east were able to take advantage of the additional acceleration that came from the earth's daily rotation; launches toward the east would also be over open water, increasing launch safety. A disadvantage was that Florida lies mainly at sea level, and every launch must push through the full weight of the atmosphere to reach space.

The competition among the states for the shuttle launch site began in April 1970, when NASA formed the Space Shuttle Facilities Group to evaluate launch facility needs. Two outside firms were contracted to provide advice. California raised money and organized an effort to attract NASA to Edwards Air Force Base, which had already made aviation history when, in 1947, Chuck Yeager's Bell X-1 jet broke the sound barrier and when, during the 1960s, test flights of the X-15 rocket-powered experimental aircraft set world records for speed and altitude in a manned aircraft. Edwards also had a large dry lake bed with a surface hard enough to act as a very large landing field. California also proposed Vandenberg Air Force Base, located on the Pacific Coast, where the Air Force had tested ballistic missiles by shooting them out over the ocean. New Mexico offered the use of Holloman Air Force Base and the White Sands Proving Ground, site of the first atomic bomb test and also site of numerous rocket tests. Oklahoma proposed the Clinton-Sherman Air Force Base, which had been closed a few years earlier. Florida mounted its own effort to keep the space shuttle in the state and proposed that a new airfield, sufficiently large to accommodate returning shuttles, be built at Cape Canaveral. A total of twenty states proposed some one hundred sites.⁴

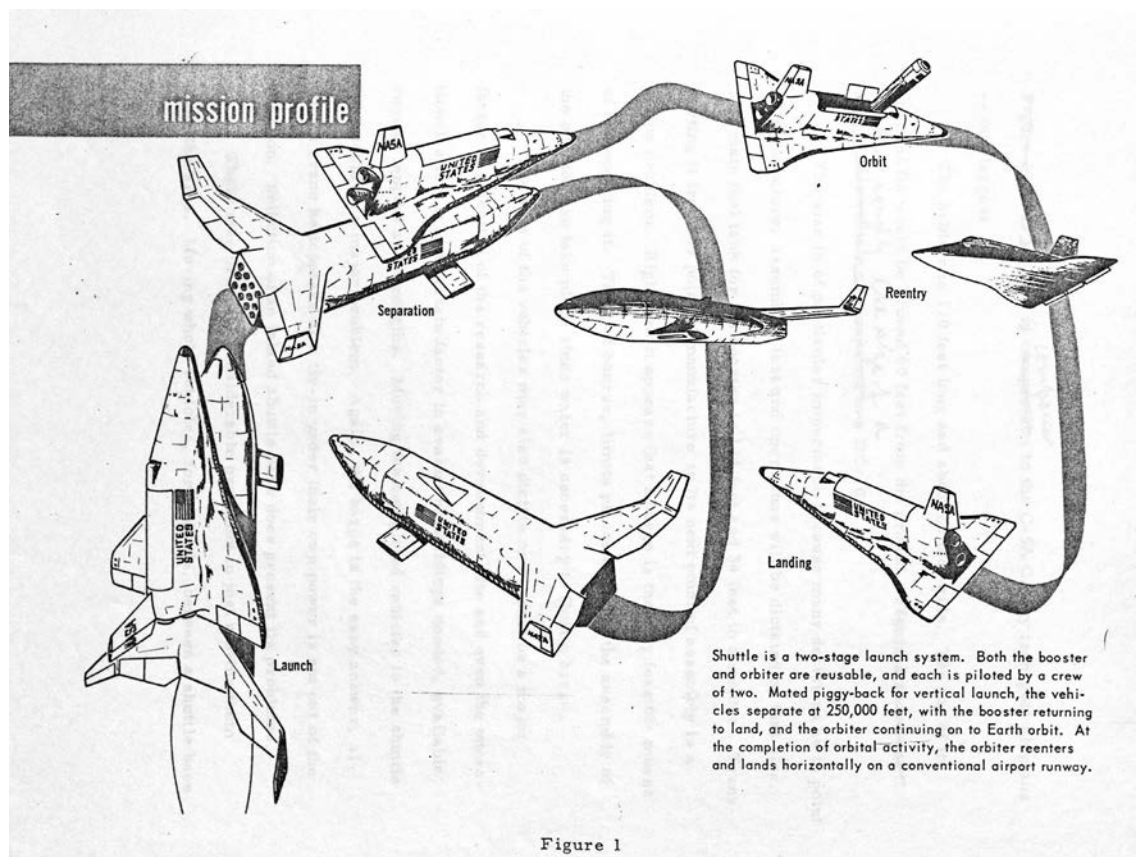
Utah already had a strong presence in the space industry because of its vast expanses of undeveloped land. Both Hercules and Thiokol had placed research, test, and manufacturing facilities for their solid-fuel engines in the state. Solid-fuel rockets were well-suited for military purposes, such as propelling nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), because their fuel lasted for decades, ready to use at a moment's notice. Liquid-fueled rockets, like the majestic Saturn V that propelled astronauts to the moon, had to have toxic fuels loaded into their tanks prior to launch.

As possible launch sites for the shuttle, Utah could offer two federal facilities in the western desert of the state. The Dugway Proving Ground was founded in World War II as a re-

2 David Hitt and Heather R. Smith, *Bold They Rise: The Space Shuttle Early Years, 1972–1986* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 24–26.

3 Cape Canaveral was renamed Cape Kennedy from 1963 to 1973, when it was changed back to Canaveral. In 1963, the Cape Canaveral Space Center had also been renamed the Kennedy Space Center, a name that has been retained.

4 Richard D. Lyons, "States Press Bids in New Space Race," *New York Times*, February 13, 1971, 1, 24; T. A. Heppenheimer, *SP-4221: The Space Shuttle Decision* (NASA, 1999), 425–26, accessed May 23, 2016, history.nasa.gov/SP-4221/ch9.htm.



The space shuttle program would usher in a new era of space flight. Utah's Spaceport Committee printed this explanation of how it was proposed to work. The shuttle would be carried into space by a booster piloted by a crew of two. The booster would then return to earth to land. The committee argued that because of Utah's sparse population outside of cities, a booster malfunction would kill fewer people here than elsewhere. In the end, NASA rejected a piloted aircraft solution in favor of solid-rocket boosters.

mote location for the army to test chemical and biological weapons and eventually increased to almost 800,000 acres in size. Michael Army Airfield was located within the proving ground. Also of interest was the Utah Test and Training Range, a massive area initially set aside during World War II as a training ground for bomber crews. The range contained the hardened salt flats west of the Great Salt Lake. Though inactive by then, the Wendover Air Force Auxiliary Field, located on the Nevada-Utah border, was another important asset if a space port were to be built in Utah's West Desert.⁵

Utah was slower than competing states to get its bid together. On February 11, 1971, supporters obtained the necessary legislation from the Utah Legislature, passing Senate Bill 121 to create a "Space Port Committee." Shortly thereafter, Utah promoter George S. Odiorne, dean of the University of Utah College of Business, gave a quote to the *New York Times* that was perhaps imprudent but honest: "Let's get that pork rolling!"⁶ The bill, which went into effect eight days after it passed, created a steering committee to be appointed by the governor. The legislature allocated no extra funds for the effort, however; each state department or institution provided its own funding. The Utah

5 Roger D. Launius, "Home on the Range: The U.S. Air Force Range in Utah, a Unique Military Resource," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 59 (Fall 1991): 332-60.

6 Richard D. Lyons, "States Press Bids In New Space Race," *New York Times*, February 13, 1971, 1, 24.



Michael Army Air Field, one of the proposed sites for a Utah Spaceport. MAAF was built in 1943, nine miles west of the main facilities at Dugway. Today it has a 13,125 foot runway and is used for aviation training, test and evaluation missions, and ground support for the Utah Test and Training Range. Lieutenant Francis J. Zalesak, who was stationed at Dugway during World War II, took this photograph.

COURTESY OF TOM ZALESAK

Spaceport Committee was assembled as a collection of local business leaders, political leaders, and state government officials.⁷ As chair, the committee selected Milton L. Weilenmann, director of the Utah Department of Development Services. Raymond L. Hixson, executive director of Economic and Community Development at the University of Utah, served as executive secretary of the committee and coordinated much of the work.⁸

7 The committee included Haven J. Barlow, Max I. Beers, C. Taylor Burton, John W. Gallivan, Curtis P. Harding, Gordon E. Harmston, Richard K. Hemingway, Raymond L. Hixson, Kenneth C. Olson, Milton L. Weilenmann, and Dilworth S. Woolley. For a list of the committee members, see the contents page in Utah Spaceport Committee, *Utah! Spaceport Committee Report: Report I, Economic and Operational Advantages, Dugway* (Salt Lake City: Center for Economic and Community Development, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Utah, 1971).

8 Raymond L. Hixson to Milton L. Weilenmann, "Report on Spaceport Committee Efforts February 1971 to December 1971," December 13, 1971, doc. 21, box 9, fd. 5,

The committee commissioned feasibility studies and produced brochures and pamphlets printed in full color on glossy paper. For instance, the governor's office produced a sixty-seven-page booklet, *The Great Salt Lake Desert . . . Space Shuttle Solution*.⁹ The feasibility studies, conducted by University of Utah professors in engineering, economics, and other disciplines, explained that launching the space shuttle from Utah's high elevation would lead to substantial cost savings over the lifetime of the system. More pounds could be put into orbit for less cost. A Utah study projected that individual flights from Cape Canaveral could carry only 43,200 pounds, while a flight from Dugway could carry 50,400 pounds. Over the

Vice President for University Relations Records, 1965–1975, ACC 240, University of Utah Archives, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

9 Calvin L. Rampton, Governor, *The Great Salt Lake Desert . . . Space Shuttle Solution* (Salt Lake City: Calvin L. Rampton, March 15, 1971).

projected ten-year lifetime of the shuttle, as then currently envisioned, a Utah base would allow NASA and the Air Force to put 4.5 million more pounds into orbit than the Cape Canaveral site could.¹⁰

This elevation argument was Utah's strongest draw, though the committee also argued that Utah offered substantial advantages because of the sparsely settled land in all directions, an advantage retained regardless of which direction the space shuttle was launched. The only exception to this low density was the concentration of population along the Wasatch Front. A committee report minimized the risk to Utahns, however:

The population of the state is concentrated in a narrow band along the Wasatch Mountains some 80 miles east of Dugway. This population band is generally not more than 10 miles wide. This means that overflight of Utah's most densely populated region would last only a few seconds. Should it become necessary to abort the launch, only minimal capability would be required to postpone or maneuver during abort to prevent any undue exposure of population to potential vehicle impact.¹¹

The brochures and pamphlets produced by the Utah Spaceport Committee had maps that showed different locations for the spaceport, either in the mountains north of Wendover or in the mountains inside the Dugway Proving Ground. A more detailed map showed two different pairs of launch sites, one pair about five miles north of Michael Airfield at White Rock and another pair about five miles south of Michael Airfield near Camels Back Ridge. Never explained is how the problem of moving the launch boosters and orbiters across uneven desert and mountainous terrain would be solved.¹² The Utah Spaceport Committee gath-



Milton Weilenmann, chair of the spaceport committee. Weilenmann previously had served as Utah economic development director, served as state Democratic Party chair, owned Salt Lake City restaurants, and ran for the U.S. Senate in 1968, losing to Wallace F. Bennett.

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USHS

ered letters of support from Utah's congressional delegation, other government officials, and even officials of surrounding states, who would see some economic advantages if their states were used as possible emergency landing sites for the winged booster and the space shuttle. The committee also hosted visits to Utah by members of Congress and NASA officials. Other states made similar efforts.¹³

The space shuttle program was divided into two phases, a research and development phase, and a subsequent operational phase. Whichever site won the research and development phase would have a substantial advantage in winning the operational phase. The Utah Spaceport Committee realized that Utah was

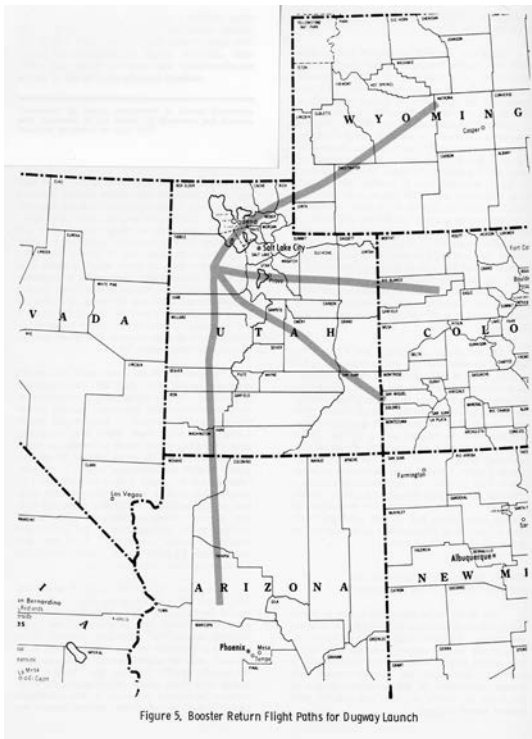
10 Utah Spaceport Committee, *Utah! Spaceport Site Selection Studies: Introduction Spaceport Brief* (Salt Lake City: Center for Economic and Community Development, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Utah, 1971), 4. The study expected the launch facility in Utah to be at 5,300 feet in elevation, so this was a best-case scenario for Utah.

11 Utah Spaceport Committee, *Utah! Spaceport Committee Report: Report 1, Economic and Operational Advantages, Dugway*, 41.

12 Map in box 10, fd. 2, Vice President for University

Relations Records, 1965–1975, University of Utah Archives.

13 Claude E. Barfield, "Space Report / NASA Feels Pressures in Deciding On Location For Its Space Shuttle Base," *National Journal*, April 24, 1971, 869–76.



This figure from the spaceport committee's 1971 report shows the anticipated return flight paths to the Dugway site for the piloted booster aircraft, depending on the direction of launch. The booster flight would generally pass over sparsely populated areas (though the paths pass over or near several towns, including Nephi, Provo, Castle Dale, Ogden, Moroni, Cedar City, and Springdale). Thus, the committee argued, the risk of fatalities from an accident or malfunction was quite low.

fourth in the running for the research and development phase, with Florida having strong advantages over New Mexico, California, and Utah. Florida already had "extensive facilities suitable for R&D" and existing "large staffs." The decision for the research and development site was planned for January 1972. The operational site would be picked in 1975.¹⁴

The Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral was selected as the location of research and development of the space shuttle, though its status as the operational site remained in competition. The other main competitors remained the two California sites and the sites in New Mexico and Utah. These three states offered both facilities

and land already owned by the federal government; only California's Vandenberg site lacked large amounts of desolate land for landing sites or places for errant rockets to crash. Utah officials felt that their state was in the best position to win the operational site due to its distance from foreign countries and matching other NASA and Air Force requirements. New Mexico offered serious competition to Utah because its proposed site was about 4,000 feet in elevation and had a considerable amount of sparsely vegetated desert in every direction. The only disadvantage of New Mexico was that the proximity of Mexico presented a possible security risk because the shuttle would be flying over foreign territory during launches whenever a southern trajectory was selected.

From January to early March 1972, NASA engineers analyzed the type of boosters the shuttle system should use. Engineers preferred a liquid-fueled, pressure-fed engine, but this system would be more difficult to develop and more expensive than a solid-fuel booster. Solid-fuel boosters delivered more thrust than liquid-fueled boosters and had been developed as ballistic missiles for military use. The Air Force had extensive experience with solid-fuel boosters, and several civilian companies, such as Hercules and Thiokol, had experience delivering such boosters to both the Air Force and Navy. However, solid-fuel boosters (SRBs) had never been used on a manned mission before because once they were started, they could not be turned off. NASA officials weighed all this information with an eye to reducing the anticipated development costs of the program and also reducing the technological risk inherent in developing any new technology. In the end, NASA chose the solid-fuel approach.¹⁵

Because the entire space transportation system was supposed to be as reusable as possible, NASA wanted the external cases of the solid rocket boosters to be reused. This led to a plan to return the SRBs to the earth with parachutes, slowing the descent. Even with parachutes, a landing on the ground would damage the booster cases, thus requiring a water landing. Some pundits could have responded that the Great Salt Lake looks awfully big on a map,

14 "Review of Utah's Competitive Position," box 10, fd. 5, Vice President for University Relations Records, 1965–1975, University of Utah Archives.

15 John M. Logsdon, *After Apollo? Richard Nixon and the American Space Program* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 272.

but the reality is that the lake is very shallow, with the deepest part only thirty feet below the surface—not deep enough to sustain a water landing.

The decision to use solid-fuel boosters on the space shuttle ended any opportunity for Utah to become home to the operational site. Ultimately, Cape Canaveral became the launch site of the space shuttle. Vandenberg Air Force Base in California also became an operational site, but although shuttle launch facilities were built there to satisfy the Air Force's requirement for polar orbits, ultimately all 135 flights of the space shuttle were launched from Cape Canaveral; none were ever launched from Vandenberg. The space shuttle never lived up to the original ambitious plans of at least one launch a month, never flying more missions in a single year than the nine missions launched in 1985. The loss of the shuttle *Challenger* in 1986 ended such aggressive efforts, and increased safety measures slowed the schedule for shuttle launches. Because of the slower shuttle launch rate, the Air Force returned to using expendable boosters to satisfy its requirements for launching satellites.

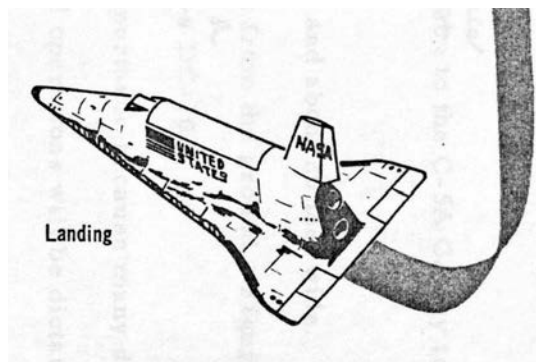
The decision to use solid-fuel boosters ended Utah's chance to host the launch facilities, but it had a silver lining for Utah. In November 1973, Thiokol Chemical Company received the contract to build the solid rocket boosters (SRBs).¹⁶ This led to substantial economic benefits for Utah—the initial expansion of the Thiokol facilities at Promontory and decades of the company manufacturing shuttle solid-fuel boosters. A Thiokol facility in Clearfield at the Freeport Center refurbished the used booster cases. While these economic benefits declined at the end of space shuttle program in 2011, the former Utah Thiokol operations, now part of Orbital ATK, have remained involved in designing and building solid-fuel boosters for NASA.

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Eric G. Swedin is a professor of history at Weber State University.

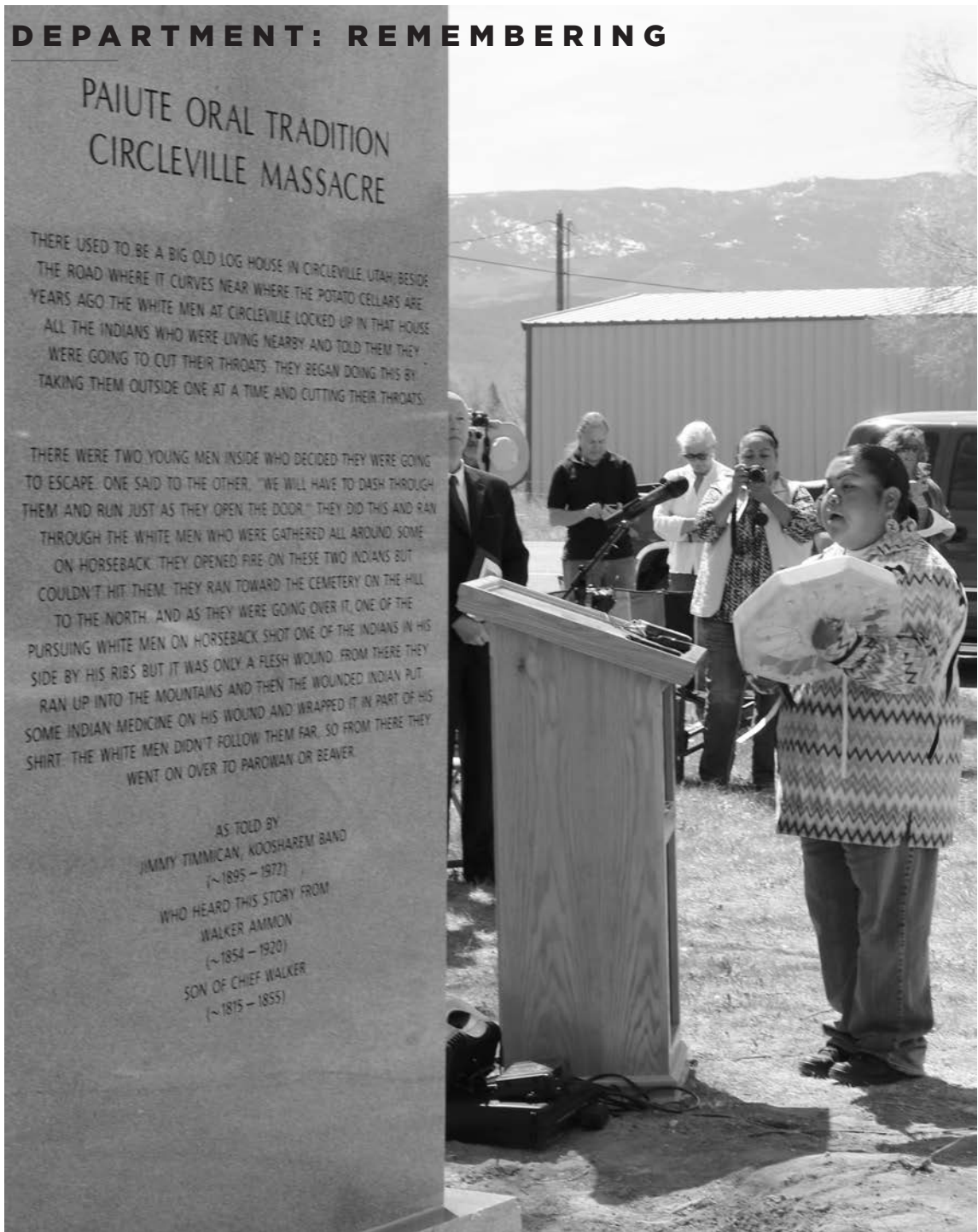
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WEB EXTRA



We reproduce a confidential report of the Utah Spaceport Committee dated March 22, 1971. The report contains data and illustrations designed to encourage NASA's selection of Utah for the spaceport. Go to history.utah.gov/uhqextras.

16 See Eric G. Swedin, "Thiokol in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 75 (Winter 2007): 64–78. See also *SP-4012 NASA Historical Data Book: Volume III: Programs and Projects 1969–1978* (Washington, D.C.: NASA History Office, 1988), 43, accessed May 23, 2016, history.nasa.gov/SP-4012/vol3/ch1.htm.



A scene from the April 22, 2016, dedication of the Circleville Massacre memorial dedication.

CIRCLEVILLE MASSACRE MEMORIAL DEDICATION

April 22, 2016

This year marks the sesquicentennial of a sad and tragic event: the massacre of nearly an entire band of Paiutes at the hands of Mormon settlers during the Black Hawk War. To mark the occasion, representatives of the Paiute Tribe of Utah, the town of Circleville, LDS Church Historical Department, and Utah Division of State History gathered with other attendees in Circleville, Utah, to remember the men, women, and children caught in the middle of a bloody struggle and victims of fear, deceit, and inhumanity. For the hundred and fifty people in attendance the occasion was somber yet welcome: an opportunity to commemorate and honor after years of forgetting and neglect. We reproduce below some of the remarks delivered at the memorial dedication.



Paiute Indians in Koosharem, Utah, February 1905. Jimmy Timmican, kneeling far right, heard the story of the massacre from his father, John Timmican, standing with his wife Rosey on the far back row. Jimmy's oral account is inscribed on the back side of the new memorial

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STATEMENT ON HISTORY

Jedediah Rogers, State Historian, Utah Division of State History

This month one hundred and fifty years ago, nearly an entire Paiute Koosharem band was massacred not far from where we now gather.

The massacre occurred in an atmosphere of fear and violence known as the Black Hawk War, a conflict staged primarily between Mormon settlers and Northern Ute who fought to resist displacement and removal from their homelands. This was, according to the historian John Alton Peterson, “an intense struggle between two intelligent, resourceful, but threatened peoples in the context of the political and demographic world in which they found themselves. What emerges is perhaps Utah’s most tragic story.”¹

Settlers newly arrived in Circle Valley found themselves in the heart of the conflict. Late in 1865, some Utes raided the town of Circleville—which was ill-prepared to defend itself—killing four citizens, including two thirteen-year-old boys, Orson Barney and Ole Heilersen.

Reports had swirled that Paiutes, or Piedes, as they were sometimes called, had aligned with the Ute. A Ute-Paiute alliance seems unlikely; the Ute had long abducted Paiute women and children as part of their slave trade. Nevertheless, in 1866 Parowan militia officers decided to “take in all straggling Indians in the vicinity”—Paiutes included—eventually requesting several to come to Fort Sanford, where they were questioned. The fort, located between Panquitch and Circleville, had been constructed

¹ John Alton Peterson, *Utah's Black Hawk War* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1998), 8.

earlier that year as additional protection on the road over the pass to Parowan. Unlike Marysville to the north, Circleville had no fort or stockade, and the houses were too scattered to provide effective protection.

In a day or two prior to the massacre, an express sent from Fort Sanford to Circleville stated that two Paiutes in the area had shot and wounded a member of the Utah militia. What the dispatch did not report was that one of the Paiutes had been injured, while the other had been shot and killed by a soldier's long-range rifle. In response to this skirmish, the fort's military commander advised Circleville and Panguitch residents to disarm the Paiutes encamped near those settlements.

In Circleville the townsfolk met to decide what course to pursue. As a result, a patrol of militiamen, accompanied by interpreters, approached the Paiute village and convinced most of the band members to come into town to hear a letter read by the local LDS bishop. Those who complied were directed into the church meeting house. The militia quietly surrounded the remaining Paiutes who had refused to come in and directed them to the meeting house. When the Paiute were told to surrender their weapons and they expressed reluctance, the settlers forcefully disarmed them. The men were bound under guard, while the women and children—perhaps some fifteen in number—were likely held in the cellar.

LDS church apostle Erastus Snow received a report from Circleville and returned instructions that the prisoners should be treated kindly and let go unless “hostile or affording aid to the enemy.” The dispatch arrived too late. What happened the night of the massacre is not entirely clear. One version is that some of the Paiute men had managed to unloose the ropes that bound them. After the changing of the guard they sprang upon their captors and in the struggle that followed each was shot. Another, probably more likely, version goes like this: two young Paiute men attempted an escape, breaking out of the building amid gunfire, in which one was wounded and recaptured. The militiamen then must have decided to take the remaining men—probably between twelve and fifteen—from the building, club them, and slit their throats.

They then proceeded to bring the women and children up from the cellar, one at a time, and to slit their throats.

Reportedly, the bodies were taken to the cellar of an unbuilt mill and buried in a mass grave. Three or four children of the Koosharem Band thought too young to bear witness were spared and adopted by local families.

The basic factual details, let alone the answer to the question “Why did this happen?” are surprisingly elusive. The precise date of the massacre is not clear, nor is the count of the dead. The accounts are confusing and hardly definitive. The answers to these and other questions may never be fully known—but they are hardly the most important.

The contested terrain of history goes well beyond what happened and why it happened to how it is remembered and what its meaning is. This is a painful story to the good residents of this community, it is certainly painful to members of the tribe and band, and it casts a long shadow of neglect and forgetfulness in our telling of Utah history.

To have us gather here this morning signifies that we will not forget what happened here. It is a reminder that the stories we tell about the past animate the present. The oral traditions of the Paiute people, and the work of the historians Linda King Newell, Albert Winkler, Leo Lyman, John Peterson, and Sue Jensen Weeks, have enabled each of us to learn not only what happened a century and a half ago but also to feel what happened. And this granite stone honoring the dead is also a testament to their work in telling the story.

REMARKS

Richard E. Turley Jr., Assistant Church Historian, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

I'm grateful and sobered to be here on this important occasion, for which many have worked long and hard.

Years ago when I was working on a book about the Mountain Meadows Massacre, I interviewed Paiute elders who said to me, in effect, "You are researching the Mountain Meadows Massacre. What about the Circleville Massacre?" Their words resonated within me. I knew the Circleville Massacre was a historical atrocity that needed addressing, and I resolved at that point to do something about it someday.

Over the intervening years, I have spoken with other like-minded people about the possibility of erecting a monument. Fortunately, others have had similar ideas, and eventually, a groundswell of interest led to the formation of a Circleville Massacre monument committee organized under the direction of the Utah Division of State History.

When our committee first met at the division's offices in the old Rio Grande Depot in Salt Lake City, there was palpable interest and excitement among those gathered, including many of those present here today. Before the meeting, I had begun reading Sue Jensen Weeks's book *How Desolate Our Home Bereft of Thee*, which describes the massacre, but I had not gotten much further than the early pages. During the meeting, however, Sue passed around a copy of the book, and when it came to me, I opened it and turned to pages I had not yet read.

As I was looking at them, I noticed an entry or two about one of my ancestors and letters he wrote about Circleville before the massacre. After the meeting, I mentioned to Sue that the man was a relative, and she said, "Yes, his account of the massacre is one of the best." Her words puzzled me. In the pages of her book that I read before and during the meeting, I had seen nothing from my ancestor about the massacre itself, and despite being an avid genealogist, I had never heard or read of anyone in our family mentioning it. Sue's statement left me won-

dering where my ancestor got his information, since so far as I knew from family sources, he had nothing whatsoever to do with the crime.

I am often reading several books at a time, picking them up and laying them down again according to how much time I have and what my interests are on a particular day. But I determined on that occasion to make finishing Sue's book a priority, and I took it with me when I went on vacation.

As my wife and I were flying over the Pacific Ocean toward what I hoped would be a restful time in Hawaii, I worked my way through the book and eventually came to a passage in which my ancestor's son, who was a small child in Circleville when the massacre took place, gave a detailed, if one-sided account, of the killing that began with the following paragraph:

The final act in the great drama occurred a week later. About 30 supposedly friendly Indians were bound and imprisoned in the "blockhouse" which was located in the center of the rectangle forming the Fort, with an armed guard of three men on duty, among whom was my father.²

He then described how the guards fought with Paiutes who were trying to escape from bondage.

"Their feet were still bound," he wrote of the Paiutes, when they were "knocked unconscious by the clubbing with guns by guards." Afterward, he explained, they were "executed . . . and their bodies buried in an old cellar near the entrance to the Fort."³

He wrote nothing about the subsequent killing of the women and the children, but what he did write by itself was still enough to stun me. My

2 Sue Jensen Weeks, *How Desolate Our Home Bereft of Thee: James Tillman Sanford Allred and the Circleville Massacre* (Melbourne, Australia: Clouds of Magellan, 2014), 147.

3 Ibid.



*Black Hawk War veterans at an encampment in Richfield, Utah. Second from right is Peter Gottfredson, author of *Indian Depredations in Utah*, a collection of firsthand accounts compiled by Gottfredson, which provides a valuable account of the massacre. Gottfredson served for a time in a local militia but was also known for his close association with the Timpanogos Utes.*

—
USHS

ancestor, I realized, knew about the massacre because he participated in it, and despite his son's efforts to cloak the deed in euphemistic terms, I could combine his account with other evidence to come to the awful truth.

Before that day, I had wanted a monument at Circleville to help right a wrong from the past. But now the matter became more personal, and my resolve to see the monument built took on even greater intensity.

I do not know all the reasons why my ancestor and other men did what they did a hundred and fifty years ago, but I am deeply sorry for it. I assume the climate of war and the emotion of fear somehow mixed lethally in their minds. At this point, only God truly knows their hearts, and someday He will call them to account before His judgment bar for taking the lives of men, women, and children, once seen as friends, who at the time of the killing were bewildered and completely defenseless.

Today, the monument we dedicate helps us remember “the innocent who were lost in this place so long ago,” and with all of you, I quietly try to ponder how these victims must have felt, though none of us can hope to comprehend their emotions fully. Still, on this day of memorial, we “honor their existence as human beings.”⁴

They were people—people going about their normal lives, working, loving, laughing, and playing, until those lives were wrongly and violently taken from them.

I know that for many, including me, these facts from the past are jarring. My hope is that by facing the past, difficult though it can sometimes be, and learning from it, we can build a better future and realize that amid our differences, whatever they may be, we share a common humanity, a humanity that allows us to strive together, if we will, in love and respect for the good of all.

⁴ Quoted from the Circleville Massacre memorial monument, Circleville, Utah.

REMARKS

Dorena Martineau, Cultural Resource Manager, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah

This memorial came about because of Susan Weeks, who came to the Paiute Tribal Council last year in November 2015. She asked the council for permission to have a monument erected in memory of the slaughtered Paiutes in Circleville, and they gave their permission to have this done.

Susan has done years of intense research on the massacre, as her great aunt had married one of the surviving children. This boy was later taken to Spring City, where he was traded to Peter Monson, a Swedish immigrant, for two and a half bushels of wheat. He was renamed David Monson. David witnessed and never forgot the slaying of his family and his little sister, of how she had been picked up by her heels by the whites and swung against a wagon wheel until dead.

Whenever we talked about the Circleville Massacre, Susan would always would get emotional about it, and it always touched my heart. She always cried; she could never say a word without tears. And so I knew that she cared deeply.

The others involved that made this a reality were the Utah Division of State History, the town of Circleville and Mayor Mike Haaland, the LDS Church Historical Department, the Utah Westerners, and other independent historians who wanted to help give recognition to those massacred in April 1866.

We heard from the historians that they wanted to help us. They helped make this possible. They asked us questions: "What do you think about this?"

It's sad; it's a shame that this has been so hush-hush. A lot of people don't know about it, and when you tell them, they say, "Well, I never heard about it! Why do you think this was so quiet?"

And I say, "Well, this is something that was really tragic; who would want to brag about it?"

Today, the Paiute Tribe of Utah has a total of 918 members. There are only five bands left, out of the many that there used to be, but we're still hanging in there!

We're still hanging by a thread, but you know, we're not even a thousand yet. And we're losing a lot of our language. The few elders we have teach the younger. We have to hang on to what little we have left.

Anyway, I want to thank everybody for coming, I really appreciate it, and I hope that the monument will bring peace. And it does mean a lot, this occasion, and you know, it's time for this. It's been a long time.

—

WEB EXTRA



Visit history.utah.gov/uhqextras for a bibliography with links to primary and secondary sources detailing the Circleville Massacre.

THE AWKWARD STATE OF UTAH:

Coming of Age in the Nation, 1896–1945

CHARLES S. PETERSON AND
BRIAN Q. CANNON

*Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2015. ix + 474 pp.
Paper, \$29.95*

Many historians have attempted to explain Utah's transition from a theocratic territory to a full member of the national commonwealth, none more successfully than Charles Peterson and Brian Cannon. Basing their analysis on Alan Trachtenberg's concept of "incorporation," they trace the evolution of industry, labor movements, agriculture, politics, and demography from statehood until the end of World War II, bringing Utah through an awkward "adolescence" to a mature American state.

This work is extremely well-researched, particularly in regard to Utah sources. Private papers, oral interviews, journal articles, government documents, newspapers and periodicals, and published primary and secondary works have all been consulted. The book is carefully footnoted and thoroughly indexed, and its bibliography offers a treasure trove of material for anyone wishing to conduct further research on the chosen Utah topics. Consequently, in regards to Utah, this book has tremendous depth, and it also references most of the basic secondary works illustrating concurrent national history.

The writing style is entertaining, informative, and highly accessible. The authors substantiate major points not only with statistics and general information, but also with comments from Utah residents of varying backgrounds. Their even-handed approach highlights myriad

examples, including women of all backgrounds, immigrant minorities, Native Americans, and Latter-day Saints, both famous and obscure.

Organizing such a vast amount of material always presents a challenge. The authors have met it by generally proceeding chronologically, beginning with political, then agricultural and industrial transformations from statehood through the Progressive Era. Labor next earns two chapters, followed by one on Native Americans, then two on the environment (one specifically on water), and chapters on the 1920s, the Great Depression, the New Deal, and World War II. Each chapter begins with a brief overview and ends with a thorough conclusion.

Organizationally, this structure works well in most cases. Including so much material on Native Americans is commendable, but some information could be better incorporated chronologically. The authors have left material on the Indian New Deal in the topical chapter rather than including it chronologically, but they do include the Navajo code talkers as part of Utah's World War II history.

One other weakness seems to derive from the choice of Alan Trachtenberg's work for the overall context. His emphasis on democratic, corporate transitions shortchanges other aspects of Utah history. Culture and recreation, including sports, get their due only in the 1920s, with another brief mention as relief from the gloom of the Great Depression. Thus, unlike the discussion of other topics, where transitions emerge clearly, this treatment ignores the evolution of Utah culture, certainly very important since Mormon pioneer days, as well as among Native Americans and ethnic minorities. Science and technology, such as the lasting impact of Utah inventor Philo T. Farnsworth, are completely neglected.

A few other improvements could strengthen this already fine work. Some references deserve more clarification, particularly the meaning of

LDS conferences (sometimes referred to as “General Conferences”) including for the non-Mormon reader a brief description of their duration and purpose. Other tiny problems crop up. For example, less important, but useful, would be the identification of the owner of the Pleasant Valley Coal Company as the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad rather than “the largest coal mine operator in the West” (109), which would explain why striking coal miners were “denied use of the railroad” (116) to spread their union organizing attempts. One also wonders whether the “Red Flag” and “Sabotage” bills were state or federal legislation (139). A legal citation here would clarify this matter. The notion that Gen. John L. DeWitt “encouraged” American Japanese to relocate “voluntarily” makes a travesty of his coercive commands and his threat of incarceration if they stayed, as well as of the intra-state relocation and property losses that had already occurred (345). But these are small matters indeed compared to the wealth of material included.

Overall, this book is a triumph well worth the twenty years it has taken to bring to maturity. In the scope and depth of Utah histories, it stands alone. It offers a synthesis of hundreds of other works, illuminating a vital half-century in the state’s development. Anyone interested in Utah’s history will find it informative and enjoyable, including students, researchers, and the public at large.

— NANCY J. TANIGUCHI

California State University, Stanislaus, Emerita

MAKING THE WHITE MAN’S WEST:

Whiteness and the Creation of the American West

BY JASON E. PIERCE

Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2016. xxv + 296 pp.
Cloth, \$45.00

Jason Pierce’s *Making the White Man’s West* is an ambitious work, seeking to trace the creation of the West as a region dominated by white Americans from the purchase of the Louisiana Territory to the outbreak of World War I. Pierce has divided his work into two parts. The first examines how white Americans’ perceptions of the West changed from seeing it as a hostile environment to a sort of racial paradise for whites. The second part looks at the physical spread of white settlers and their use of violence to ensure their political, legal, and social dominance over the multitude of non-white and off-white residents of the West.

Pierce places his discussion of the changing perceptions of the West into a larger context of evolving racial discourse. In particular, Pierce argues that the environmental determinism of the early 1800s, which suggested that warm environments were inimical to the health of the white race, posed a significant barrier to white settler interest in the West. Instead, some white commentators suggested that the West should be used as a sort of racial “dumping ground,” a policy that was manifested in the removal of Native peoples westward and in the suggestion that free blacks could form colonies in the West. But with increasing demand for land, the discovery of precious minerals, and the advent of polygenesis thought (which suggested that races had innate characteristics largely unaffected by the environment), white perceptions of the West began to change. As the nineteenth century wore on, the West was increasingly perceived as particularly healthy for white folks, superior to the Eastern cities with their grime, crime, and immigrant populations. By the *fin de siècle*, the West now existed in most Americans’ minds as a white region whose tiny non-white populations added exoticism but did

not pose the sort of threat to whites that African Americans and immigrants in the East did.

In the second part of his book, Pierce links the changing nature of the mythical West to changes that were happening on the ground. Pierce begins with the conflict over slavery, which, as he points out, included a conflict about whether black people would be allowed into the western territories, and he ties that discussion to attempts to exclude free blacks from certain areas of the West, most notably Oregon. He then shifts to a discussion of railroad recruiters who relied on notions of racial and ethnic suitability when they almost exclusively targeted northern Europeans to settle along their lines. Readers of this journal will be particularly interested in chapter seven, where Pierce explains how missionary efforts by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints resulted in a similar pattern of settlement. Pierce shows that while Mormon missionaries gained thousands of followers in northern Europe and among Pacific Islanders, they had virtually no success outside of those regions during this period. This meant, when combined with the prohibitive cost of immigrating from the Pacific to West, that Mormon settlers tended to be of the same background as those promoted by the government and railways. The final chapter reveals how violence was crucial to creating and enforcing the dominance of whites over non-whites in the West, up to and including genocidal acts meant to purge what was by then considered a “white man’s country.”

Overall, Pierce does an excellent job of weaving together broad cultural and political transformations with regional developments and fascinating anecdotes. Pierce’s work does suggest several avenues for further research. The intersections of class and gender with the racial ideas and practices he describes bear exploration. Pierce also notes that a number of groups such as the Mormons, southern Europeans, and some Hispanics found themselves on the periphery of whiteness, classified as off-white. A deeper understanding of these and other liminal peoples’ impacts on the real and imaginary West will need to wait for another work.

What is truly innovative about this book is that it succeeds in linking previously dispa-

rate studies of the construction of whiteness in the West into a unified narrative. In so doing, Pierce reveals the crucial role that racially coded ideas about the West played in its development. When combined with Pierce’s easy writing style, this book should be of interest to nonspecialists and useful in undergraduate and graduate courses on either the West or race in America.

— CHRISTOPHER HERBERT

Columbia Basin College

WHERE ROADS WILL NEVER REACH:

Wilderness and Its Visionaries in the Northern Rockies

BY FREDERICK H. SWANSON

Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2015. Maps + 367 pp. Paper, \$24.95

Frederick Swanson’s *Where Roads Will Never Reach* provides a concentrated and vivid history of pro-wilderness activism in Idaho and Montana from the 1950s to the 1980s. Swanson’s story is about the efforts of activist groups consisting of outfitters, hunters, fishermen, and concerned citizens, and their struggle to protect forested areas in the Northern Rockies. These activists worked tirelessly to maintain a sense of remoteness within wilderness areas throughout the Northern Rockies region of Montana and Idaho. They galvanized other recreationists, politicians, and local communities into action to protect these forests from reclamation and timber projects. Their actions directly challenged the authority of the Forest Service and its clients by winning public support for wilderness preservation. They sought to protect large roadless landscapes that they believed represented the ideal of untrammelled nature. Their continuous efforts helped establish popular sentiment for wilderness protection, culminating in the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964.

During the prosperous years after World War II, the United States Forest Service achieved a high level of popular support. Its success in cutting trails and preventing forest fires earned it not only the admiration of a growing country but also an unprecedented amount of autonomy. Armed with this authority and popularity and having what seemed to be the nation's best interests at heart, the Forest Service sought to carry out extensive new timber cutting projects in many forested areas of the Northern Rockies. Areas like the present-day Bob Marshall wilderness, the Selway-Bitterroot Range, the Lincoln backcountry and Scapegoat Mountain area, the Clearwater area, and many others were all up for logging and reclamation projects designed to supply the nation's growing timber needs. These projects, however, were unsustainable, and the new policy did not satisfy many hunters, anglers, and outfitters. These men and women regarded the Forest Service projects as a threat to the previously remote natural landscapes where they hiked, hunted, and fished. Swanson identifies these actors as the vanguard of a larger and more extensive movement that would eventually help to establish a lasting wilderness preservation policy. These activists based their message on the idea that people benefit from interacting with wild animals in their native habitat. After decades of struggle, they were able to achieve wilderness designation for millions of acres of national forest throughout Idaho and Montana, and they did it without the benefit of political experience. Although they were eventually able to win the support of some politicians, like Frank Church (D-ID) and Lee Metcalf (D-MT), and various conservation organizations, these early wilderness activists operated largely on their own steam and leadership.

Any person interested in Northern Rockies environmental history and wilderness activism in the American West would do well to read *Where Roads Will Never Reach*. Swanson's narrative is rich and detailed, and his footnotes are extensive. His considerable research skills are on display as he builds from numerous sources, including correspondence, interviews, newsletters, speeches, and government documents. He describes the wilderness areas beautifully. The result is a comprehensive, detailed, and personal account. To Swanson's credit, he concedes his bias toward the

preservationist perspective but also goes to great lengths to give logging and reclamation agents a fair hearing. He sympathetically documents the Forest Service's continual frustrations at trying and failing to carry out logging and reclamation projects that it planned with the best intentions.

In a book about wilderness, however, it would be helpful to know more about how these actors understood the concept of wilderness. Swanson argues that the activists were not concerned with restoring wilderness to a state of natural perfection. Instead, they saw value in experiencing wilderness by interacting with wildlife. Expansive forests filled with grizzly bears and elk herds and natural rivers stocked with salmon were essential to their ideal wilderness. This emphasis differs slightly from that of other studies of wilderness preservation, which focus more on wilderness advocates' concerns with road and dam construction than on the preservation of natural wildlife habitats. A little more analysis about the meaning of wilderness to activists, federal agencies, and even opponents of wilderness preservation would have added depth to this study. Additionally, since many of these activists were professional outfitters and guides who relied on wilderness tourism, a more in-depth examination of the economic contributions of wilderness recreation to local economies and the economic stakes of these local activists would have been interesting.

In *Where Roads Will Never Reach* Swanson has produced an enjoyable narrative worthy of the epic landscape it describes. It is an inspirational study of the preservation of one of the nation's most beautiful natural regions.

— JON ENGLAND

Arizona State University

WORKING ON EARTH:

Class and Environmental Justice

EDITED BY CHRISTINA ROBERTSON AND JENNIFER WESTERMAN

Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2015. 296 pp. Paperback, \$29.95

For decades, historians have debated which category of analysis is the most useful in illuminating relations of power and agency: race, class, or gender. In revealing and examining instances of environmental inequality and injustice, scholars have tended to favor race and, to a lesser degree, gender. *Working on Earth: Class and Environmental Justice* enriches this scholarship and points it in a productive new direction. This interdisciplinary collection of essays convincingly demonstrates the centrality of class in understanding environmental inequalities. *Working on Earth* explores how the places where people work and the kind of work they do shapes their ideological, cultural, and physical relationships to the “more-than-human environment” (3). Consciously activist, the essays engage the power of stories to call for a “working-class ecology” and reveal the dangers of environmental knowledge and narratives that pit jobs against the environment and divide nature, work, and home (3).

Untangling the structures of power, ecological knowledge, culture, and the physical world that intersect to create ecological injustice is inherently complex. By themselves, none of the traditional academic disciplines seem adequate to the task. *Working on Earth* embraces this reality. Drawing from the fields of political science, history, English, literary criticism, journalism, anthropology, cultural studies, the environmental humanities, and sustainable development, the anthology weaves together a complex exploration of the relationship between work and the environment, and the sum is greater than its parts. Intentionally narrative, the essays move at scale, delving into the particulars of, for example, living in Vietnam in the age of climate change, developing energy resources in the shadow of ex-urban McMansions near Park City, Utah, and working the night shift

under artificial light—all to illuminate regional, national, and global relations and structures of power. While the essays explore work experiences as varied as logging, fishing, and janitorial labor, they maintain a potent coherence. The reader is left with no certain judgments about the relationship between capitalism and the exploitation of workers and the land. Instead the reader finds an ambiguity that accurately reflects the complicated mix of economic necessity, culture, and class identity tied to place and the physicality of work that informs the lived experience of so many. The result is a nuanced, convincing assertion of the critical importance of class in understanding environmental inequality and a challenge for scholars to reexamine labor as a vital component of the human experience and of our relationship to the environment that surrounds us.

Working on Earth is essential reading for anyone interested in environmental justice, political ecology, sustainability studies, and labor studies, and its narrative essays would be perfect to use, collectively or individually, in undergraduate and graduate courses. Beyond their utility, the essays benefit from the close attention paid by each author and the editors to the book’s narrative form. The stories are at times heartbreaking. Elsewhere, they evoke a grin and even a laugh. Throughout, they are fully human and engage the reader’s empathy as well as reason. This quality enhances the collection’s combination of topics, voices, and research methods to make *Working on Earth* a valuable addition to environmental justice literature and likely a pivotal work in the field.

— CODY FERGUSON
Fort Lewis College

THE GREAT MEDICINE ROAD:

Narratives of the Oregon, California, and Mormon Trail. Part 2: 1849

EDITED BY MICHAEL L. TATE,
WITH WILL BAGLEY AND RICH-
ARD L. RIECK

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015. 326 pp. Cloth, \$39.95

This edited volume is the second in a projected four-book series of trail narratives written by people who traveled the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails from 1841 to 1869. The first volume is composed of fifteen firsthand accounts by men and women who went west between 1840 and 1848, including well-known figures such as Catholic priest and missionary Pierre-Jean de Smet, Nancy Kelsey of the Bidwell-Bartleson Party, and former Missouri governor and anti-Mormon Lilburn Boggs. This second volume, in contrast, focuses on the year 1849, and all of its seven selections are by men whose names are obscure today. Three of the featured writers have Utah connections.

The best of those three writers is Samuel Rutherford Dundass, who joined his friends on a jaunt from Ohio to California in 1849. Dundass was a sickly young man who had failed to find steady employment at home, but he was well-educated and kept an eloquent trail journal in flowery, nineteenth-century literary style. His accounts of the native people he met during the journey are patronizing and romanticized—"Simple hearted children of nature!—Sons of the forest!"—but not unkind (228). He describes the route from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake City, where his wagon party stopped for several days, and Dundass attended Mormon worship services. His party continued north along the Hensley Cutoff to rejoin the California Trail at City of Rocks. His near-death experience in crossing of Nevada's Fortymile Desert is similar to others reported that summer, but unlike most other 1849 chroniclers, Dundass recorded his activities for several months after

reaching California. Overall, his account is an informative and enjoyable read.

Another selection with a Utah connection, though weak, is that of Sidney Roberts, an eccentric Latter-day Saint who frequently acted out his own peculiar revelations from God (35). While residing among the Mormon community at Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1849, Roberts published a twelve-page tract to raise interest in his business venture, a wagon train to the California gold fields. The tract lists nine reasons why gold seekers should go west via the Mormon Trail, enjoying the "society and protection" of the Mormons along the way instead of risking their lives among "savages and cannibals" and other hazards of sea passage (41). Roberts's business venture evidently failed and he never led a wagon train west, but his tract offers an interesting peek at the commercial side of overland travel.

The third writer with a Utah connection is Sherman Hawley, a twenty-nine-year-old Forty-niner who headed west with a party of "Kalamazoo Boys" from Michigan. They followed the north bank of the Platte and North Platte rivers (the "Mormon Trail") to Fort Laramie, Wyoming, where Hawley posted a short, upbeat letter home in June. Notable encounters along the trail to that point included an Indian couple who spent a night as guests in the company camp, and a Calamity Jane-like "old maid from Massachusetts" who carried a revolver and rode astride her horse to hunt buffalo (185–86). Hawley's second surviving letter, mailed from Sacramento in October, mentions that he had written home earlier from Salt Lake City. Unfortunately, the Salt Lake letter is lost. The California missive is short and disappointed in tone, with Hawley lamenting, "I have not seen a man that crossed the plains, that is willing to go over the same again, for all there is in California" (187).

Another notable selection in the volume (though with no Utah connection) is Henry O. Ferguson's "Recollections," written nearly seventy years after he migrated to California with his parents and six siblings. Ferguson tells of Pawnees, cholera, buffalo, and wagon stampedes along the trail. Most interesting, though, is his memory of the stormy November

night when his party, nearing their destination, pitched their tents among “Bruff’s Camp” of Forty-niners in the Sierra Nevada. As they slept, a huge tree fell into camp, killing four men and injuring Ferguson’s sister. His father left eleven-year-old Henry and his thirteen-year-old brother to guard the family’s wagon while the others rushed the injured girl to the California settlements. Ferguson tells how he and his brother fended for themselves for two weeks in the Sierra winter until their father returned and led them to safety.

Also included in this volume are the diary of James Harvey Bandle, the letters and journal extracts of Benjamin Robert Biddle, and the memoir of John Evans Brown, along with trail maps from the works of Unruh and Mattes and artwork by William Henry Jackson and J. Goldsborough Bruff. Editor Tate, author of two other trail-related histories, provides interesting biographical sketches of each writer and abundant footnotes to help the reader understand the historical and geographical contexts of the writings.

— LEE KREUTZER
National Park Service

FROM THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN:

Essays on Mormon History, Theology, and Culture

EDITED BY REID L. NEILSON AND
MATTHEW L. GROW

New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. xxi + 414 pp.
Paper, \$35.00

This volume collects the Tanner Lectures given at the Mormon History Association’s annual conference between 2000 and 2014. In these lectures, scholars approach their topics as outsiders to Mormon studies and the Mormon church itself. Coming from their varied scholarly perspectives, they can ask interesting questions, such as what Nat Turner, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Joseph Smith have in common; why the LDS church isn’t particularly successful in Africa; what roles Mormonism has played in U.S. empire-building; and how Mormons

shaped their identity by appropriating and transforming House of Israel tropes. The result makes for some fresh scholarship that demonstrates and creates ways that Mormon history can connect to broader historical inquiry. The essays at times address Utah history topics directly—childhood memories, the cultural landscape, Mormons and the Civil War, and women, for instance—but since Mormonism is so much a part of Utah’s evolution, all of the essays inform and shed new light on the shape of Utah’s past, present, and future.

THE LOST FRONTIER:

Momentous Moments in the Old West You May Have Missed

BY ROD MILLER

Guilford, Conn.: TwoDot, 2015. vii + 245 pp. Paper, \$18.95

The Lost Frontier is a collection of twenty-nine stories organized by historian and writer Rod Miller that lay outside of the core historical canon of the Old West. That is not to say that these stories are unimportant or uninteresting; as Miller makes clear, these stories not only deserve attention due to their historical importance but also may be appreciated simply due to their intriguing and interesting content. For the Utah reader, the stories told within *The Lost Frontier* will vary from the familiar to the unknown—from the Circleville Massacre of 1866 and the proposed state of Deseret, to the only American “emperor” and an 1859 conflict sparked by a pig. Topics include the political, the religious, and occasionally, the humorous. With its short, intriguing accounts and easy-going writing style, *The Lost Frontier* is sure to appeal to both the scholarly and casual history enthusiast.



MARKETING “THE BIRTH OF A NATION”

Many Americans hailed *The Birth of a Nation* as a wonderful dramatization of history, though it was hardly history. It portrayed a postwar South dominated by blacks who were crude, murderous, and predatory. It portrayed the Ku Klux Klan as a purifying and noble “savior.”

In Ogden, about fifty African Americans petitioned the city to ban it, as the movie would have “no other effect than to engender race hatred.” In Salt Lake, both “white” and “colored” petitioners also asked their city to censor the film.

Despite the petition, the “Thrilling History Picture” came to Salt Lake City in 1916 and became as popular throughout Utah as elsewhere. This photo, taken on June 14, 1916, shows costumed actors advertising for it on its third run in the city, at the Salt Lake Theater.

A production like this did not entail simply turning on a projector. A whole company of people arrived with the film, including technicians and orchestra members. The company had been delayed for its June 9, 1916, performance by a train wreck on the line—and the house was sold out. When the company arrived, they creatively gave the audience something to do by letting them watch the crew put up the projector and screen, set up the paraphernalia for sound effects, and arrange the orchestra pit for the twenty-five musicians.

—
SHIPLER PHOTOGRAPH, JUNE 14, 1916



Outside the Denver and Rio Grande Depot, 1910. UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

UTAH DIVISION OF STATE HISTORY UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF UTAH HISTORY

BACK COVER

— Paiute Jim, c. 1867, as photographed by
C. W. Carter. USHS

FRONT COVER

— In 1915, Katherine Emmet, a Stanford-educated actress and feminist, played Annis Grey in the Broadway play *Polygamy*, a production that expressed and influenced current attitudes about Mormons.



IN THIS ISSUE

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