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Five Who Handled the Plates

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Abstract: A review of five of the Eight Witnesses who handled the golden plates—the four Whitmer brothers and Hiram Page. The testimony of the five witnesses never failed. “In fellowship or alienation, youth or age, persecution, poverty or affluence, four Whitmer brothers and Hiram Page never altered their plain testimony that they handled the original metal record of the Book of Mormon.”



Five Who Handled the Plates

By Dr. Richard Lloyd Anderson

*“We have seen and hefted—”
“We did handle with our hands—”
“We also saw the engravings—”
“And we lie not. . . .”¹*

With these simple claims, eight farmers and artisans publicly reported that Joseph Smith had shown them ancient plates of the Book of Mormon. A practical group who worked with their hands, they were better able to evaluate the “appearance of gold” and the “curious workmanship” than eight picked at random from a modern city.

The Prophet dated the vision of the three witnesses in June 1829, commenting that the “additional testimony” of the eight took place “soon after.” Lucy Mack Smith was nearby when both events took place, and she recalled that “in a few days” after the vision of the three, the believers from Seneca County, New York, visited the Smiths in Manchester, near Palmyra:

“Soon after they came, all the male part of the company, with my husband, Samuel, and Hyrum, retired to a place where the family were in the habit of offering up

their secret devotions to God. They went to this place, because it had been revealed to Joseph that the plates would be carried thither by one of the ancient Nephites. Here it was, that those eight witnesses, whose names are recorded in the Book of Mormon, looked upon them and handled them.”²

The eight men were Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr., John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith, Sr., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith.

The Smiths are better known than the four Whitmer brothers and their brother-in-law, Hiram Page,

the house of Mr. Whitmer." Although this young minister seems to have been confused in some details by what many people told him, he remembered "two or three" of the Whitmer sons among "eight, who said they were witnesses. . . ." They had seen "certain plates of metal, having the appearance of gold. . . . These eight, we understood, were in company with Smith and three others."³

The Whitmer family had lived near Waterloo, New York, for just two decades when they extended their hospitality to Joseph Smith and believed in his divine call. In the early part of this period a standard guidebook characterized their township: "The inhabitants [are] principally of German extract, who came hither from Pennsylvania."⁴ The Whitmers were of this class. In several later interviews, David located the date of the New York move, which took place when he was four years old (1809), and the inclusion of Peter Whitmer on the 1810 census at Fayette confirms the family tradition.⁵ The proximity of the Whitmers to other pioneer settlers in the region (the Jolleys and the Schotts) through three censuses tends to show a single residence, confirmation of David's statement that the family remained in the same place until their move west with the Mormons in 1831. The deeds to Peter Whitmer came in four transactions between 1819 and 1827, but almost all settlers of this region contracted for their land and farmed it for several years before gaining formal ownership.⁶

Peter Whitmer and his sons were respected citizens of their township. The father was elected overseer of highways in his district in 1826 and 1827 and was also a local school trustee. Diedrich Willers, Jr., onetime Secretary of State of New York, prepared a careful history of Fayette late in the nine-

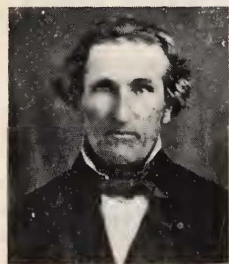
teenth century and then said of Peter Whitmer, Sr.: "He is spoken of by old Fayette residents as a worthy and industrious citizen."⁷ Diedrich Willers, Sr., the respected German Reformed pastor of the Whitmers, viewed Mormon converts as superstitious, which colored his comments on the elder Peter Whitmer, but he described him as "a quiet, unpretending, and apparently honest, candid, and simple-minded man."⁸ Local sources indicate that the Whitmers worshiped regularly at the early log structure of Zion's Church, a German-speaking congregation whose site is about a mile south of the Whitmer farm.⁹

Not only the father, but also the sons Christian, Jacob, and John Whitmer are found in Willers' church records as early as 1822. In 1825, Christian and Jacob, the two oldest sons, married sisters of the prominent Schott family. That year the 27-year-old Christian Whitmer was appointed ensign, one of three commissioned officers in the company of Seneca Grenadiers of the 102nd New York Regiment of militia.¹⁰ It is clear that this oldest Whitmer son was highly responsible and a recognized leader. He was also elected as one of six constables of Fayette township in 1828 and 1829, the year he became a witness of the Book of Mormon.¹¹

The newly organized Church assigned the youngest of the Whitmer brothers, Peter Whitmer, Jr., to travel west on a mission to the Missouri frontier. The sincere preaching of the young tradesman was remembered by several. Lyman Wight recalled his testimony "that he had seen the plates. . . ."¹² His own terse diary recalled on occasion: "[W]e declared the Book of Mormon. . . ."¹³ Following the pattern of the apostle Paul, these missionaries supported themselves



John Whitmer



Jacob Whitmer

and this article will survey the lives and testimonies of this latter group, with occasional reference to the remaining Whitmer brother, David, one of the three witnesses. This group resided in the same neighborhood in Fayette township, and the Church was organized at the home of the family head, Peter Whitmer, Sr. Just one week before this event (which took place less than a year after their experience with the plates), a young Baptist minister visited this household. David Marks recorded his impression of "attending a meeting in Fayette" on March 29, 1830, "at

we have and private ncy Adams emason, and confess that is favor for survive to be We cannot ng it might Mason at ilitary pow- nous period, to his coun- been—espe- man, of the etowns dis- son. What n could de- for the Pre- n the high- and conse- libations of and taken ns, extracts reader will the Livonia shed in the When we se- ths in the rother is so- brother and ne!" how -masons and so contrary hen that se- stitution of , but must f placing a Chief in the e so pecul- ant events, the danger-

uel Clark, John Burton, Benjamin Malt- by.

Collector.—Halsey Winans.
Constables.—Halsey Winans, George W. St. John, Edmund F. Hall, John L. Rogers, James Stevenson, Jr. Willard Metcalf.

The following gentlemen were yesterday elected town Officers for the town of Fayette.

Supervisor.—Enoch Chamberlin.
Town Clerk.—Benjamin Woodruff.
Assessors.—Daniel Holman, John Rorison, William A. Marshall.
Commissioners of High Ways.—Samuel Cook, George Thomas, Tobias Perrine.

Commissioners of Common Schools.—Charles L. Hoskins, Sebastian Chatham, Lewis Oakley.

Inspectors of Common Schools.—Isaac Pinkney, Archibald Fowler, Samuel B. Chidsey.

Overseers of the Poor.—Wm. Sweet, John Yost.

Collector.—John Burtless.

Constables.—John Burtless, William Sickels, Israel Rogers, Christian Whitmer, Jabez G. Cone, Jacob Hendricks.

State Road.—The bill providing for the construction of a road, through the southern tier of counties, leaving the route to be designated by commissioners, was rejected in the senate, on the 15 inst. by a vote of 16 to 9. The passage of some bill on this subject is much to be desired. The inhabitants of that section have certainly strong claims for it. We understand that it is the intention to present the bill in a different shape, providing for the construction of a road from Bath or Ithaca westward to the Lake; aid for that part of the route being at present most required.

W. M. THOMPSON, Secy

MARRI-

In this town on Tues- Burton, Esq. PHILIP M Miss ELSEY BRADY.

OBITUAR

In the death of Mrs. FRIDGE, consort of Co. of Galen, Wayne count the last Seneca Farmer. connexions sustain that ment, which can only b humble submission, and hope, that their loss is Mrs. Selfridge was an pious professor of the Saviour. She expired hope of everlasting feli grave, cheerfully and e. the will of Providence endearing connexions, an affectionate husband dren, the youngest five feel, to mourn, the ber- tender and paternal car The deceased was in tl her age, when her spiri transitory world, and i welcomed into the hap the spirits of the just—" ed cease from troubling are at rest."

DIED.—In this village PHILIP CHASE, aged —

POEM

THE death of LAL with other POEM: and for sale by Waterloo, April 2, 18

S. B. GAY,

HAS Just established Village of Seneca

Old newspaper report shows Christian Whitmer as a constable.

during their stay in frontier Missouri. Peter Whitmer, Jr., was an accomplished tailor and at this time was engaged by General Alexander Doniphan to make him a suit.¹⁴ But something higher than an occupation was uppermost in the mind of Peter Whitmer, Jr. The brief notes of a conference speech capture his testimony and its basis after returning from this early mission:

"My beloved brethren, ever since I have been acquainted with the writing of God, I have viewed eternity with perfect confidence."¹⁵

As the program developed for

settling Jackson County, the Whitmer family and others located in a special settlement in the present Kansas City area. Among them was the Book of Mormon witness Hiram Page, a native of Vermont, who had earlier moved into western New York, married Catherine Whitmer in 1825, and then resided near his wife's family in Fayette. Some of the severest Missouri persecutions came to witnesses of the Book of Mormon. Late in 1833 John Corroll reported of Christian Whitmer: "They also took him and pointed their guns at him, threatening to kill him if he did not tell them where

the brethren were."¹⁶ Another correspondent wrote in the midst of this terror: "[T]he enemy . . . had thrown down 10 or 12 houses, and nearly whipped some to death, among whom was H. Page."¹⁷ Earlier that year, John Whitmer had joined other Mormon leaders in offering themselves as hostages to stop the abuse of their people.

In poverty but great faith the Latter-day Saints regrouped in Clay County after their Jackson County expulsion. All of the Whitmer witnesses were prominent enough in this early Missouri period to sit on the high council. But death removed the oldest brother, Christian, in 1835 and the youngest, Peter, in 1836, both weakened by chronic infections. Stalwart in their defense of the faith, both were paid a touching tribute from the personal knowledge of their brother-in-law Oliver Cowdery:

"By many in this church, our brothers were personally known: they were the first to embrace the new covenant, on hearing it, and during a constant scene of persecution and perplexity, to their last moments, maintained its truth—they were both included in the list of the eight witnesses in the Book of Mormon, and though they have departed, it is with great satisfaction that we reflect, that they proclaimed to their last moments, the certainty of their former testimony. . . . May all who read remember the fact, that the Lord has given men a witness of himself in the last days, and that they have faithfully declared it till called away."¹⁸

The next casualties among the Whitmer group were spiritual. John had been a trusted missionary, and in 1838 he was Church Historian and counselor to his brother David in the Missouri presidency. Because he and W. W. Phelps, the other counselor, had taken personal title



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Interest paid by Bank.....	554.15
Amount paid Missionary.....	\$2,979.11

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Neither Hiram Page nor the Whitmer brothers ever altered their testimonies

to the gathering site of Far West, the resentment of the Missouri members resulted in criticism and then formal suspension of that presidency from office. Declining to be called to account economically or to personally appear at high council trials, John Whitmer was excommunicated March 10, 1838, followed by his brother David one month later. Hiram Page and Jacob Whitmer were not formally dealt with, but they took sides with their relatives and from that time were alienated from the Church. Because the Whitmer faction had sacrificed so much, it is understandable in retrospect that each of these men was angered and permanently hurt at often inconsiderate treatment from former friends. This is not to justify their very real rebellion against priesthood authority, but to admit the need to exercise such power carefully and to observe that their steadfastness in testimony is remarkable in the face of their resentment against former associates.

Hiram Page and the Whitmers remained in upper central Missouri after the Mormon expulsion. Two main changes took place in their lives. First, these men were religiously unsettled. John Whitmer recorded his deepest feelings in his manuscript history during the month of his excommunication. Referring to difficulties in "some temporal movements," he alluded to his own "expulsion," closing with his prayer for forgiveness "of my faults" and a hope of salvation "in the Kingdom of God, notwithstand-

ing my present situation, which I hope will soon be bettered and I find favor in the eyes of God and all men his saints."¹⁹ Such a private comment shows that the testimony of the witnesses was no facade but the expression of a profound personal experience. Subsequently, when William E. McLellin sought to enlist them in his reorganized church in 1847, they agreed to become leaders in emotion-charged circumstances. But not long after McLellin left, Hiram Page began a series of letters to Kirtland confessing that the Missouri witnesses failed to discern the true power of God in these actions. Speaking specifically for the surviving Whitmers and himself, Page admitted, "we have been lying dormant," and yet he envisioned no practical involvement, since "the way is not opened for us to organize as we would. . . ."²⁰ Although inactive, a decade after their apostasy the remaining eight witnesses still devoutly believed that God had established a latter-day work.

The second force upon the estranged witnesses was a secularization of their lives. Their essential problem was to make a living, and artificial religious convictions would certainly tend to fade to irrelevance. For instance, Jacob Whitmer settled in Richmond, Missouri, and he faced life in 1838 with few assets and a family of seven. His struggle in this period was later outlined on the basis of information from his remarkably successful lawyer-son. From 1840 to 1843 Jacob was virtually an invalid and unable to work, at the end of which period "his limited means were well nigh exhausted."²¹ A shoemaker by trade, he worked from 1843 to 1845 to buy a small acreage and erect a shoe shop on it. In the next decade he evidently followed the pattern of many early tradesmen by farming during the summer and working

his shop during the winter. At his death in 1856, his industry had resulted in ownership of 113 acres.²² But alienated from his Mormon associates for 18 years and preoccupied with material survival, Jacob Whitmer had never waned in his conviction regarding the plates. In 1888 his second son told Andrew Jenson, "My father, Jacob Whitmer, was always faithful and true to his testimony to the Book of Mormon, and confirmed it on his death bed."²³

Hiram Page's experience paralleled that of Jacob Whitmer. Starting life again with a family of eight in 1838, he disclosed no real estate assets on the 1850 census, two years prior to his death. Although family and neighborhood tradition indicate that Page had been a doctor when young, he was evidently untrained in that field and was generally a farmer, so listing himself on the census just mentioned. Conflict with religious associates and the fight for economic survival breaks the idealism of many a man, but Hiram Page's enthusiasm for the Book of Mormon was strong in adverse circumstances. Replying directly to an inquiry about his testimony, he mentioned early spiritual experiences and reaffirmed his practical knowledge of the plates: "As to the Book of Mormon, it would be doing injustice to myself, and to the work of God of the last days, to say that I could know a thing to be true in 1830, and know the same thing to be false in 1847."²⁴ Hiram Page's letters are warm toward his former associates, sending special greetings to Martin Harris, a fellow witness. His second son was 20 at his father's death in 1852 and later told Andrew Jenson: "I knew my father to be true and faithful to his testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon until the very last. Whenever he had an opportunity to bear his

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order.—The following statement of a diabolical deed, is furnished us by a respectable gentleman, residing at the spot where the act was committed.

On the night of the 7th inst. a Mrs. [redacted] of Sumpter District, was in-ly murdered by the servant maid.

She had for several days and nights attending her grand mother who extremely ill; on the evening of the [redacted] she returned to her residence to [redacted] her domestic affairs and enjoy some [redacted]—At the proper hour she re-posed; having two infants with [redacted] having two children, who were in [redacted] with the servant. The serv-ant a short time left the kitchen, en-tering the mansion of her mistress, and perpetrated the deed by striking [redacted] two or three blows on the [redacted] and it is said cut her throat, which [redacted] her immediate death. Mr. [redacted] was at the grand-mother's of [redacted] ceased.

When the servant returned to the kitchen the children saw her throw an apron at the door, to which they paid no [redacted] ion, suspecting nothing. When she entered the house they heard one [redacted] infants strangling, they rushed into [redacted] room, called their mother, and bearing [redacted] reply, put their hands upon her to [redacted] her to relieve the child's hot lamens-ty to tell, they found the bed clothes [redacted] a fire was immediately kindled, and beheld their beloved mother and one [redacted] bathed in the blood of the de-ceased object of their affection and regard.

immediately alarmed the nearest [redacted] who repaired to the dreaded [redacted] and to their regret and astonishment [redacted] the reality of the doleful tale. An investigation of the matter, the [redacted] related the circumstance of the [redacted], which was immediately examined [redacted] and covered with blood. The serv-ant was apprehended, tried and convicted [redacted] was to be executed yesterday.

an Alexandria (D. C.) paper March 10.
Murder and Robbery.

Saturday night, William Shup- [redacted] a Southern trader, was murder- [redacted] near Centerville, Fairfax county,

Newspaper clipping shows David and Christian Whitmer active in Seneca Grenadiers.

Seneca Grenadiers.

Commissions for a company of Grenadiers in the 102d regiment, have lately been received at the clerk's office in Waterloo, for the following named persons, viz:

DANIEL SCHOTT, Captain,
MICHAEL HENDRICKS, Lieut.
CHRISTIAN WITMER, Ensign.

At a meeting of said company held at the house of the widow Hendricks, on the 12th instant, pursuant to notice given for the purpose of adopting a uniform, and electing non-commissioned officers, the following persons were elected, viz: Sebastian Chatham, 1st. John Bachman, 2d. David Witmer, 3d. and Samuel Hendricks, 4th Sergeants.

The following is a description of the uniform as agreed upon, viz:—Caps to be of leather, nine or ten inches in height, considerably bell-crowned; the American standard painted in front, with the motto of "Seneca Grenadiers" in curve form round the standard; a white plume with a red top to be worn in front. Stocks to be black leather or silk. Coats, indigo blue, single breasted, standing collar, bullet buttons, four on each side of the collar, worked on silver lace from button to button, three rows of buttons in front, with nine in each, worked with silver lace from one button to the other, in diagonal form; three rows of buttons with three in each, on each sleeve, to represent herring bone, worked with lace; three rows with three in each in like form on each skirt, worked with lace likewise; four buttons at each flap, worked with lace lengthwise; four buttons on the skirts of each of the back piece, with lace. Length of coats, to be about half way between the long and short coat. White vests. Citizen pantaloons, indigo blue, and short [redacted]

Seneca Farmer the communications Woolley, are requested to publish

Melancholy Accident.—Ting, (March 10) about 7 Mr. Thomas Arnold, ship- in ascending a ladder (at the frigate now building at Yard, for the purpose of ing his daily vocation; he and he fell to the ground, of nearly forty feet. He up and carried home, who gered a few hours and exp has left a widow and sever to mourn his sudden exi delphia paper,

Among the executive business the Senate of the United States on was the confirmation of the promt lieutenants to be masters comma nary. We understand the prom follows: Captains Henley, Cass Brown, Thompson, Wadsworth, I and Seward, to be post captains. Kearney, Parker, McCall, Turner, Tagher and Stevens, to be ma nants.—21b. Gas.

The first Congress of the Mexico the new Constitution was assembled of January. The two branches— House of Representatives, were with regularity and harmony. On the victory of Ayacucho, in Peru, the Mexican Sea, 2d February, of

"This most glorious victory pro effect for our independence as the toga produced for that of the U The nations of Europe will now that Spain has no longer any res object of subduing us. Through tent of America, the flag of Spain wall of Callao and Juan de Ulua will soon disappear entirely."

The Mexican "Eagle," [redacted] history of the late war between the and Great Britain, offered as "a iam" to the Mexicans.

A subscription has been opened the relief of the Spanish combatan land.—1b.

A verdict of \$5,500 has been gi in Maine, for a breach of marital The parties were Miss Mary Pe Boston.—1a.

Nine negro convicts have end Penitentiary at Trenton, N. J.—1

these plates, and know of a surety that Joseph Smith, Jr., has translated the Book of Mormon by the gift and power of God. . . ."²⁶

From this peak of conviction, the same man descended to the depths of doubt within three years. Skeptical of Joseph Smith personally because of the failure of the Kirtland Bank, and rejected by his companions in gospel service, John Whitmer made common cause with other non-Mormons in ridiculing the faith of Theodore Turley, the business agent of the Church who remained to wind up financial affairs at Far West after the Mormons were driven out. But Turley openly accused Whitmer of inconsistency; answering in the presence of his anti-Mormon friends, the Book of Mormon witness made two revealing statements. First, he admitted, "I now say, I handled those plates; there were fine engravings on both sides. I handled them." When Turley next asked bluntly why Whitmer now doubted the work, the witness indicated his inability to translate the characters on the plates: "I cannot read it, and I do not know whether it is true or not." From the strict point of view of evidence, this report is most impressive. With social pressure to deny and personal motivation to explain away his experience, John Whitmer insisted that he had in fact handled the plates.

John Whitmer stayed in Missouri and farmed land on the site of the former city of Far West and its temple lot. His material success is measured by his estate inventory at death, listing ownership of 625 acres, much livestock and farm equipment, to which must be added the fine two-story house that still stands. The evaluation of his community on his 40 years of residence in Caldwell County is shown by the local obituary that alluded to the Mormon expulsion: "Mr. Whitmer

remained at Far West and has since been a highly respected and law abiding citizen."²⁸

Although rural Caldwell County was relatively inaccessible, John Whitmer told his story of seeing the plates to a wide variety of visitors. In 1861, Jacob Gates talked with him over four hours and wrote in his journal, "[H]e still testified that the Book of Mormon is true and that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of the Lord. He also said that he believed that . . . Brigham Young was carrying out the doctrine and system which Joseph Smith taught but he (Whitmer) did not believe in a man's having more than one wife. . . ."²⁹

Like other Book of Mormon witnesses whose lives are well-known, John Whitmer's reiteration of his testimony was a moving experience to him. Pained that he was out of the Church, this witness wept openly when William Lewis pressed the inconsistency of his inactivity: "At last he did say, wiping the tears off, that the day would come when we would all see eye to eye."³⁰ The bitterness of the days after his excommunication were gone, and what remained in John Whitmer's mature years was the vivid memory of participation in the translation of a record of scripture:

"[O]ld Father John Whitmer told me last winter, with tears in his eyes, that he knew as well as he knew he had an existence that Joseph translated the ancient writing which was upon the plates, which he 'saw and handled,' and which, as one of the scribes, he helped to copy, as the words fell from Joseph's lips, by supernatural or almighty power."³¹

What motivated John Whitmer to reaffirm his testimony constantly to the end of his life? Financially successful and respected by his neighbors, this quiet personality shunned notoriety. Yet the affirmative men-

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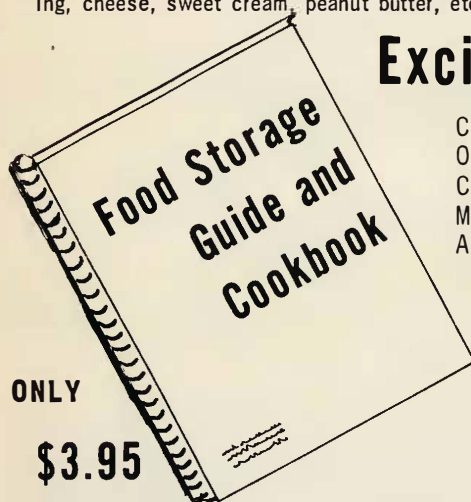
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tion of Mormonism in the location of the worst Mormon persecutions was certain to cause prejudice against him. His actual handling of the plates is the only plausible explanation for the seriousness with which this conservative farmer shared his testimony with Mormon visitors and non-Mormon associates. One may surely rely on his ability to report whether or not he lifted and handled a metal object of substantial weight. Six months before his death, he delivered his convictions publicly at a rural Sunday morning service, reported in the local newspaper as follows:

"Mr. Whitmer is considered a truthful, honest and law abiding citizen by this community, and consequently, his appointment drew out a large audience. Mr. Whitmer stated that he had often handled the identical *golden plates* which Mr. Smith received from the hand of the angel. He said it was of pure gold; part of the book was sealed up solid, the other part was open, and it was this part which was translated. . . . Before closing he asked the audience if they would take the Book of Mormon and the Bible and compare them, and to take Paul's rule, 'To prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. . . .'²

In fellowship or alienation, youth or age, persecution, poverty or affluence, four Whitmer brothers and Hiram Page never altered their plain testimony that they handled the original metal record of the Book of Mormon. ○

FOOTNOTES

¹These phrases from "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses" are identical in the 1830 or present edition of the Book of Mormon. Capitals are added to the first three clauses.

²Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith* (Liverpool, 1853), p. 140.

³David Marks, *The Life of David Marks* (Limerick, Maine, 1831), p. 340. His language is undoubtedly inexact in implying the appearance of the angel to all witnesses.

⁴Horatio Gates Spafford, *Gazetteer of the State of New York* (Albany, 1813), p. 187.

⁵*Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 5, 1881. Family tradition and the birthplaces listed on the 1850 census indicate the birth of Catherine Whitmer April 22, 1807, in Pennsylvania and the birth of Peter Whitmer, Jr., September 27, 1809, in New York.

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⁶Seneca County Clerk's Office: Book M, p. 430; Book Q, p. 134; Book R, p. 124; Book S, p. 567.

⁷Diedrich Willers, *Centennial Historical Sketch of the Town of Fayette* (Geneva, New York, 1900), p. 49.

⁸Letter of Diedrich Willers to Ellen E. Dickinson, cit. Ellen E. Dickinson, *New Light on Mormonism* (New York, 1885), p. 249.

⁹*Ibid.* See also Courier Printing Company (ed.), *Manual of the Churches of Seneca County* (Seneca Falls, New York, 1896), p. 102.

¹⁰*Seneca Farmer* (Waterloo, New York), March 23, 1825.

¹¹Fayette Township Record, at Waterloo Library and Historical Society, Waterloo, New York. John Genung, president of the society, materially assisted in locating these references.

¹²Journal of Lyman Wight, cit. *Saints Herald*, Vol. 29 (1882), p. 192.

¹³Name file, Church Historian's Office.

¹⁴Interview with Alexander W. Doniphan, *Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 12, 1881.

¹⁵Far West Record, Typescript, Church Historian's Office, October 25, 1831.

¹⁶Letter of John Corrill to Oliver Cowdery, Liberty, Missouri, December 1833, cit. *The Evening and the Morning Star*, Vol. 2 (January 1834), p. 125.

¹⁷Letter of Nov. 6, 1833, cit. *ibid.* (December 1833), p. 119.

¹⁸*Latter Day Saint Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 3 (December 1836), p. 426.

¹⁹The Book of John Whitmer, cit. *Journal of History*, Vol. 1 (January 1908), p. 305. The manuscript shows that these first comments, intended to close his records, were crossed off as subsequent conflict occasioned further explanation.

²⁰Letter of Hiram Page to Alfred Bonny, et al., Richmond, Missouri, June 24, 1849, cit. *The Olive Branch*, Vol. 2 (August 1849), pp. 27-29.

²¹*History of Ray County, Missouri* (St. Louis, 1881), p. 530. This sketch is the basis of other information in this paragraph, confirmed by other sources.

²²Probate papers, Ray County, Missouri.

²³Letter of Andrew Jenson to *Deseret News*, September 13, 1888, Richmond, Missouri, cit. *Deseret News*, September 17, 1888.

²⁴Letter of Hiram Page to William E. McLellan, May 30, 1847, Ray County, Missouri, cit. *Ensign of Liberty*, Vol. 1 (January 1848), p. 63.

²⁵*The Historical Record*, Vol. 7 (October 1888), p. 614.

²⁶*Latter Day Saint Messenger and Advocate*, Vol. 2 (March 1836), pp. 236-37.

²⁷Memoranda of Theodore Turley, April 4, 1839, Church Historian's Office. As in all quotations of this article, editorial changes have been limited to punctuation, spelling, verb forms, and capitalization.

²⁸*Kingston Sentinel*, cit. *Richmond Conservator*, July 26, 1878.

²⁹Journal of Jacob Gates, March 18, 1861.

³⁰Letter of William Lewis to *Saints Herald*, November 29, 1877, Stewartville, Missouri, cit. *Saints Herald*, Vol. 24 (1877), p. 381.

³¹Letter of Myron Bond to *Saints Herald*, August 2, 1878, Cadillac, Michigan, cit. *Saints Herald*, Vol. 25 (1878), p. 253.

³²Article of early 1878 from the *Kingston Sentinel*, cit. *Saints Herald*, Vol. 25 (February 15, 1878), p. 57. The date and delivery of the speech on January 13, 1878, was verified in an independent letter, cit. *ibid.*, p. 58.

Completion

By Dorothy Cameron Smith

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