



Type: Book Chapter

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## The Recovery of the Book of Mormon

Author(s): Richard Lyman Bushman

Source: *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*

Editor(s): Noel B. Reynolds

Published: Provo, UT; Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies,  
1997

Page(s): 21–38

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## CHAPTER 2

# THE RECOVERY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

*Richard Lyman Bushman*

All the events connected with the recovery, translation, and publication of the Book of Mormon took place in a six-and-a-half-year period from September 1823 to March 1830. The time of most intense activity was even shorter. During the four years from September 1823 to September 1827, the only significant happenings were the annual visits to the site where Joseph Smith first saw the plates. The bulk of the important occurrences—the removal of the gold plates from their hiding place, the struggle to preserve them from thieves and the curious, the consultation with scholars in New York City, the translation with the aid of various secretaries, the loss of the first batch of copy, the application for copyright, the search for a printer, and seeing the manuscript through the press—all happened in two and a half years, from September 1827 to March 1830. At the end of that time, Joseph

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Smith offered to the public a volume of 590 pages that has since been a subject of study, controversy, and devotion.

Unlike some events in LDS Church history—such as the First Vision and the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood—the chronology and main outlines of the recovery story are not much in question. We are not likely to be blindsided by a clever researcher who shows a lack of evidence for a major occurrence. The sources on events before 1827 are limited; we are largely dependent on the accounts of Joseph Smith himself and his mother, Lucy Smith.<sup>1</sup> But after the plates were removed from the stone box in the hill and neighbors learned about them, plenty of people, hostile and sympathetic, gave their versions of events.

Chronologically, the first published account appeared in a newspaper, the *Wayne Sentinel*, a Palmyra weekly, on 26 June 1829, and others followed on 31 August 1829 and 5 September 1829 in two Rochester papers, the *Advertiser and Telegraph* and the *Gem*. The main points of the story, as Francis W. Kirkham demonstrated many years ago, can even be found in the hostile affidavits that Philastus Hurlbut collected for E. D. Howe and published in *Mormonism Unveiled* in 1834.<sup>2</sup> The editor of the *Wayne Sentinel*, Pomeroy Tucker, recorded everything he could remember in a volume on Mormonism published in 1867.<sup>3</sup> Of course, Joseph Smith himself is the primary source, complemented by Lucy Smith, and their narrations are elaborated in firsthand accounts by Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Knight, Emma Smith, Martin Harris, and David Whitmer. If there remain uncertainties about details and contradictions on some points, the basic chronology of happenings is well-grounded in friendly and unfriendly sources.

How these sources are used to retell the story of recovery varies greatly according to the inclinations of the teller. Mormon historians, for example, emphasize the rapidity of

the translation. John Welch and Tim Rathbone estimate that there were sixty-three translating days available from Oliver Cowdery's start as secretary on 7 April 1829 to the end of June when the title page was published in the *Wayne Sentinel*. That comes to eight pages of printed text a day<sup>4</sup>—a marvelous production rate for any writer and a stupendous one for an uneducated twenty-three-year-old who, according to his wife, could scarcely write a coherent letter.<sup>5</sup> During the translation period, Joseph was hard-pressed to put food on the table. To avoid interruptions from hostile neighbors, he moved his entire household from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York. Yet, through it all, he dictated the Book of Mormon text without hesitation day after day.

Unbelieving writers pass over this achievement, usually by simply acknowledging Joseph Smith's genius; one author has attributed the book to a freakish capacity for automatic writing.<sup>6</sup> Secular historians pay less attention to the circumstances of translation, such as the production rate, and instead look for the sources of the book's content. They play down the miraculous and play up the conventional material from Joseph's own culture that they think shows up in the Book of Mormon. Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* (Poultney, Vermont, 1823), for example, is credited with supplying the main idea of Israelites migrating to the Western Hemisphere. Masonry and anti-Masonry, the Bible, local theological controversies, and Joseph Smith's own family dynamics are all said to have played a part.<sup>7</sup> Secular accounts thus attempt a cultural biography of Joseph Smith, scouring the intellectual landscape for possible sources of Book of Mormon ideas and speculating on how those sources might have made their way into Joseph Smith's mind. Day-to-day happenings are neglected to make room for this wide-ranging search.

Mormon writers are more inclined to put the reports from

people close to Joseph Smith into the story. Because the recovery of the Book of Mormon is a sacred story, every detail is relished. Mormons are interested in the futile efforts of Lucy Harris, Martin's tempestuous wife, to see the plates, or in Emma's father's refusal to allow an object in his house that he was forbidden to look at. We love Emma Smith's comment that she never saw the plates but "moved them from place to place on the table as it was necessary on doing my housework."<sup>8</sup> The way the divine work played on the lives of the various actors—perplexing, frustrating, thrilling, and enraging them—captures the Mormon imagination. These everyday details are beside the point for secular historians who want to run down the elusive sources of Book of Mormon ideas and not to make the protection of the plates, the gathering of converts, and the laborious work of translation seem too real. Most of the detailed sources were written by believers, and to follow them too closely infuses a narrative with their faith. Secular historians are, therefore, more inclined than Mormons to suppress source material from Joseph's closest associates.

Joseph Smith did not give all the details about recovering the Book of Mormon in his first attempt at autobiography in 1832. He had not yet found his full voice as a writer and historian. At that point he seemed more concerned with promoting the idea of a divine work breaking forth. The exact appearance of Moroni, the contents of his instructions, and the circumstances of the vision were played down; he told the whole story in one breathless sentence!

When I was seventeen years of age I called again upon the Lord and he shewed unto me a heavenly vision for behold an angel of the Lord came and stood before me and it was by night and he called me by name and he said the Lord had forgiven me my sins and he revealed unto me that in the Town of Manchester Ontario County N.Y.

there was plates of gold upon which there was engravings which was engraven by Maroni & his fathers the servants of the living God in ancient days and deposited by the commandments of God and kept by the power thereof and that I should go and get them and he revealed unto me many things concerning the inhabitants of the earth which since have been revealed in commandments & revelations and it was on the 22d day of Sept. AD 1822 and thus he appeared unto me three times in one night and once on the next day and then I immediately went to the place and found where the plates was deposited as the angel of the Lord had commanded me and straightway made three attempts to get them and then being exceedingly frightened I supposed it had been a dream of Vision but when I considered I knew that it was not therefore I cried unto the Lord in the agony of my soul why can I not obtain them behold the angel appeared unto me again and said unto me you have not kept the commandments of the Lord which I gave unto you therefore you cannot now obtain them for the time is not yet fulfilled therefore thou wast left unto temptation that thou mightest be made acquainted with the power of the adversary therefore repent and call on the Lord thou shalt be forgiven and in his own due time thou shalt obtain them for now I had been tempted of the adversary and sought the Plates to obtain riches and kept not the commandment that I should have an eye single to the glory of God.<sup>9</sup>

This abbreviated narration goes a long way to win over a reader to Joseph's sincere struggle to discover his mission. The passage has an endearing candor to it. Joseph admits his teenage transgressions and his hope for forgiveness. He comes across as a learner trying to understand what he is to do. He is baffled when he cannot get the plates and wonders for an instant if he had just dreamed the vision. He is terrified that he has done something wrong. The angel at times

frightens him. When he is rebuked, Joseph recognizes that he had been thinking of gold and riches, not of the glory of God. He is relieved to record the assurance that by repentance he could be forgiven and get the plates eventually. Like every other text, this one could be read for signs of extraneous cultural influences, such as a magical belief in visions in threes, and probably turned to other interpretive purposes. But however cleverly managed, the passage captivates a reader, making it hard to doubt Joseph's sincerity. Inserting too much of language like this into a secular account would diffuse the search for Book of Mormon sources and turn attention to Joseph's desire to comply with the will of heaven. Mormons, on the other hand, love every word of it. In this sense, believing historians are more inclined to be true to the basic sources than unbelieving ones.

In the 1832 account, Joseph leapt in a single phrase from age seventeen to age twenty-one, when he recovered the plates. The only interim event that figured in the story was his marriage to Emma Hale, daughter of Isaac Hale, on 18 January 1827. Actually, the Smith family suffered considerable adversity during the four years from 1823 to 1827. They lost their eldest son and major breadwinner, Alvin, in 1824. In a futile attempt to raise money, Joseph Smith Sr. involved Joseph Jr. in an abortive search for Spanish treasure that was to employ Joseph's powers as a seer. (Joseph had found a seer stone while digging a well for Willard Chase in 1822 and became adept at finding lost objects.) The Smiths failed to make the last payment on their farm and lost it, with all improvements, in 1825. Joseph was brought to trial in 1826 in South Bainbridge on charges of disorderly conduct, presumably because he used his seer stone in a treasure search. All of this, however, was tangential to the narrative of the Book of Mormon recovery, and Joseph left it out.<sup>10</sup>

Marriage to Emma Hale, however, was relevant to the story; she became a copartner in the enterprise from that point on. Emma went with Joseph to the hill in the dark early hours of the morning of 22 September 1827 to get the plates. She was the one to rush to him with a report that thieves were hunting for the hiding place of the plates in a fallen tree where Joseph had left them that night. She arranged for a place to translate on her father's property in Harmony and was Joseph's first secretary. When Martin Harris lost 116 pages of manuscript, Joseph thought first of Emma: "Must I return to my wife with such a tale as this? I dare not do it, lest I should kill her at once."<sup>11</sup> After all her troubles with the doctrine of plural marriage and long after her break with Brigham Young, Emma held on to her belief in the Book of Mormon. With a wife's realistic assessment of her husband's abilities, she told her son that "it would have been improbable that a learned man could do this, and for one as unlearned as he was it was simply impossible."<sup>12</sup>

Among the enlarging circle of friends and enemies who were drawn into the story after the recovery of the plates was Joseph Knight of Colesville, New York, a farmer, miller, and carding machine operator who employed Joseph in 1826 during the months when Joseph was courting Emma. Probably by design, Knight made a point of visiting the Smiths on September 22 and wrote about what he observed. Although a believer from the start, Knight's "Recollection" has bothered some Mormon readers because of its rough-cut style and its unembarrassed reports of familiar relations with neighborhood money diggers. Knight recorded a warning Joseph sent to Samuel Lawrence, a conjurer, to stay away from the Hill Cumorah on September 22 or Joseph would "thrash the stumps with him." Knight talked to Joseph soon after the return from the hill on the morning of September 22 and reported the impression that Joseph



“seamed to think more of the glasses or the urim and thummim than he did of the Plates, for, says he, ‘I can see any thing; they are Marvelous.’” Knight also tells of pressure from the money-diggers to see the plates, resulting in Joseph’s and Emma’s retreat from Manchester in December 1827 to a quieter haven on Emma’s father’s place in Harmony.<sup>13</sup>

Knight’s “Recollection” is now more widely accepted in standard Mormon narrations of the recovery story. We are coming to appreciate the homely details and the skirmishes with the money diggers. Knight’s account seems all the more authentic because it is so candid. His close observation helps us understand how an increasing number of people were caught up in the drama of the gold plates. Joseph did not carry on his work alone.

Martin Harris entered the story when Joseph and Emma left Manchester for Harmony. Fascinated by the accounts of the gold plates circulating in Palmyra, Harris was both believing and doubtful. In spurts he was immensely helpful, and then again he was filled with misgivings. He told his story to the editors of *Tiffany’s Monthly*, a spiritualist publication that speculated that Joseph Smith was indeed inspired supernaturally but by low-grade spirits who foisted inferior doctrines on him. Mormon scholars have mistrusted the *Tiffany* report on Harris because of the magazine’s bias, but some parts are too good to resist and have made their way into Mormon narrations.<sup>14</sup>

Harris is famed for a number of interventions. He played a major role in the recovery story because he was a prosperous farmer who had money. He lent Joseph Smith fifty dollars to pay for the trip to Harmony in December 1827, and then during the winter, he came down himself. Joseph had been translating with the help of Emma and her brother Reuben Hale and had copied some of the characters on a

sheet of paper. Harris took the transcription to various learned men—most notably to Samuel Mitchill, then at Rutgers Medical School, and Charles Anthon of Columbia University. Joseph said that Harris himself received the inspiration to make the trip. It may be that in a doubting mood, he wanted confirmation that Joseph had the plates. I have speculated that Joseph wanted reassurance that he was doing the translation properly, considering the daunting difficulty of the task laid upon him. In the outcome, Harris was satisfied, even though Anthon himself later wrote that he tried to disillusion his visitor. Anthon could not translate the characters; he claimed to have said that they were a scrambled *mélange* of various languages. But Harris, who interpreted the encounter differently, came away reassured that they were authentic.

The incident made an impact on Joseph. He received no confirmation of his accuracy as a translator, but soon after he realized that Harris, Anthon, and he had fulfilled prophecy. As he retold the story in his 1832 account (and again in 1839), Harris's experiences with Anthon conformed with the verses in Isaiah 29 about the learned man being unable to read a sealed book and an unlearned person succeeding despite his ignorance. While we think it obvious that Joseph stood in the middle of the prophetic stream concerning the last days, we must remember that he was only twenty-two, truly unlearned, with no worldly standing, living in an obscure rural backwater, and with only a few visionary glimpses of what lay ahead. It was anything but obvious that he was to be a major figure in divine history, despite the extraordinary visions he had received. To find himself tied into the grand tradition of biblical prophecy must have thrilled Joseph and given him a larger understanding of his role.

Harris went back to his Palmyra farm after reporting on the Anthon visit but returned in April with his wife, Lucy. Lucy was a nuisance, at least in Lucy Smith's telling. Lucy Harris would not rest until she saw the plates. She rummaged through everything, forcing Joseph to extreme measures to conceal their whereabouts. After she left in the late spring of 1828, Joseph and Martin got down to translating, the first protracted period of work on the plates since Joseph had received them the previous September. After 116 pages were written, Harris asked if he could show them to his wife. The gold plates were dividing his household, and he must have hoped that sight of the manuscript would reassure Lucy of their reality. Joseph inquired of the Lord and was told no. Martin importuned. On the third request, permission was granted under close restriction as to the persons who were to see the pages.

After Harris left, Joseph turned his attention to Emma, who, on 15 June, bore a son who died the same day. For two weeks Joseph tended her until she urged him to return to Manchester to check on the manuscript. To his dismay, the worst had happened. Martin had shown the manuscript to more than the agreed-on number, and finally, one day when he went to retrieve it, the pages were gone. Lucy Smith blamed the loss on Lucy Harris, suspecting her of stealing the manuscript with the intention of altering it. A re-translation, even if exactly the same, would make Joseph look like a fraud who was making up the text rather than translating it.

Lucy reported that when Joseph got the news, "the most bitter lamentations filled the house."<sup>15</sup> Joseph's own regrets were then underscored by a revelation that chastised him for giving way to Harris and threatened him with losing the gift of translation (see D&C 3). Joseph had to give up the interpreters and the plates. At the same time, he was prom-

ised forgiveness if he repented, and on 22 September 1828 the plates and interpreters were returned (see D&C 3).

Joseph still had to deal with the consequences of losing the manuscript. For the next year and a half, he lived in fear that an altered text would appear to discredit his translation. He was warned of the danger in a revelation, and in the preface to the published Book of Mormon, he cautioned readers about the possibility of a doctored manuscript turning up. He worried that “Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work.”<sup>16</sup>

The incident marked the end of Martin Harris’s term as secretary for the translation. For the next six months, little was accomplished until Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony on 5 April 1829. Cowdery was a twenty-two-year-old Vermonter who had kept store, blacksmithed, and taught school. He came from a family with a taste for the supernatural and apparently had tried water witching himself. In 1834 he attempted a history of Joseph’s visions and the rise of the Church in a series of eight letters to the Mormon newspaper, the *Messenger and Advocate*, in Independence, Missouri. Although close to Joseph Smith and a participant in many critical events, Cowdery is less than satisfactory as an historian. His wordy style and his proclivity to run off into meditations about the meaning of events keep getting in the way of the story. But he does tell us clearly that he arrived in Harmony on Sunday evening, April 5, helped Joseph with business matters on Monday, and began to write Book of Mormon dictation on Tuesday.<sup>17</sup>

They labored together for three months, from April through June 1829. During that time they had to scramble for food; at one point they were saved from going out to work by Joseph Knight, who arrived from Colesville with nine or ten bushels of grain, five or six bushels of potatoes, a pound of tea, and a barrel of mackerel. In mid-May a passage

in the Book of Mormon manuscript got them wondering about baptism. When they prayed, John the Baptist appeared and restored the Aaronic Priesthood.

Besides translating, Joseph received revelations for his brother Hyrum and the helpful Joseph Knight, and was instructed by the Lord to translate the small plates of Nephi rather than go back again to Lehi's longer record. But through all of the ambient events, the main project ground on, the words coming relentlessly from Joseph's mouth and going onto paper under Cowdery's pen.

In early June the two of them left Harmony for Fayette, New York, and the Peter Whitmer household. Joseph saw signs of an impending mobbing, and Cowdery had asked his friend David Whitmer, son of Peter, if the family could make room while the translation was finished up. Many of the Whitmers—but David particularly—were interested in the gold plates. David took time away from the spring farm work to go down to Harmony to pick up the pair. Like Cowdery, Whitmer gave his own account of events in these years, but only long after he had soured on the Church and had lived in religious isolation for many years. Whitmer was most happy with Joseph during his time at the family farm and just after the Church was organized. In Whitmer's view these were the times of recurrent miracles involving him and his family, a time when Joseph was in touch with God through his seer stone, and when priesthood and organization played a lesser role.<sup>18</sup>

Joseph and Oliver got back to work the day after they arrived in Fayette. They translated in a room at the top of the house in the heat of early summer. David Whitmer said, "It was a laborious work for the weather was very warm, and the days were long and they worked from morning till night."<sup>19</sup> Occasionally Emma and one or two of the Whitmers spelled Oliver, but Joseph labored on day after day. Some-

time before 11 June, they applied for a copyright. By then they had finished the plates of Mormon and translated Mormon's title page. The small plates of Nephi and Ether kept them busy probably until near the end of June.

Around 20 June, possibly prompted by passages in Ether 5:2–4 and 2 Nephi 27:12 about others who would see the plates, the three men closest to Joseph—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—asked if the privilege might be theirs. The testimonies of the three, along with a similar statement by eight others who saw and touched the golden plates, appeared in the first edition of the Book of Mormon. It was the only attempt at providing proof for the plates and the divine inspiration behind the translation. In answer to Martin Harris's earlier request for a witness, the revelation had said that "they would not believe you, my servant Joseph, if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you" (D&C 5:7). In June, however, the three were told they would see the plates, the breastplate, Laban's sword, and the Urim and Thummim (see D&C 17:1). Then after they had "seen them with [their] eyes, [they should] testify of them, by the power of God" (D&C 17:3). The witnesses' statements were an effective demonstration of authenticity for a skeptical age, including modern doubters who have found no plausible cause for the elaborate vision. Fawn Brodie could only hypothesize Joseph's "positive talent at hypnosis"; in a more recent study, John Brooke makes no attempt at explanation.<sup>20</sup> Secular historians have never come to grips with the fact that none of the eleven who saw the plates (in addition to Joseph Smith) ever recanted.

With the completion of the book by the end of June, Joseph was at last relieved of his arduous labor. He turned now to the search for a publisher. The printer in Palmyra, Egbert Grandin, refused the job, apparently feeling religious

compunctions in keeping with many in the village. In July Joseph and Martin went to Rochester in search of a printer and were turned down by Thurlow Weed, owner of a Rochester newspaper, before winning the cooperation of another Rochester printer, Elihu Marshall. Before signing with him, however, they went back to Grandin and persuaded him to take the contract since the book was to appear anyway. Grandin required a \$3000 security in case the books did not sell, and Martin Harris mortgaged his farm to raise the money. Cowdery meanwhile began recopying the manuscript for the printer's use, and typesetting commenced in August.

Joseph left Harris, Cowdery, and Hyrum Smith to see the manuscript through the press while he returned to his little farm in Harmony. He had to return to Palmyra in January 1830 when the publisher of a new Palmyra weekly, the *Reflector*, began printing pirated excerpts from the Book of Mormon. The publisher was Abner Cole, a former justice of the peace, who, under the pseudonym Obediah Dogberry, began the paper the previous September. He set the type in Grandin's office on Sundays and apparently in that way got Book of Mormon passages in advance of publication, hoping to take advantage of the local notoriety to sell papers. Hyrum's warnings to Cole had no effect, and the family decided Joseph Sr. should go to Harmony for Joseph. Joseph caught Cole on Sunday afternoon hard at work and reminded him of the consequences of stealing copyrighted material. Cole heated up and challenged Joseph to a fight—a dangerous proposition against an adept wrestler like Joseph Smith. Joseph waved him off and eventually Cole agreed to stop after his 22 January issue, closing the case.

As the book neared completion and news of its actual contents began to leak out, opposition mounted. Lucy Smith said that people from the county called a meeting to mobi-

lize resistance. They passed a resolve not to purchase the book and went directly to Grandin, the printer. Hoping he would stop work, they told him the printing expenses would never be paid. Martin and Joseph calmed Grandin down and the work went on. The incident may have occurred around 16 January when Joseph Smith Sr. signed an agreement that Harris would have an equal chance to sell copies of the book along with Joseph Sr. and his friends.<sup>21</sup> The pressure from the villagers may have worried Harris as much as it did Grandin. When the book came off the press in late March, Harris was still panicky. Bringing Joseph up from Harmony in that month, Joseph Knight came across Harris on the road with a pile of books in his arms. He told the two of them, "The Books will not sell for no Body wants them." Refusing to be reassured, Harris told Joseph, "I want a Commandment," meaning another revelation. Joseph told him to obey the commandments he had, but Harris insisted.<sup>22</sup> The next day Joseph received the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 19 in which Harris was sorely rebuked and admonished to "not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the Book of Mormon, which contains the truth and the word of God" (D&C 19:26).

Grandin announced in the 26 March edition of the *Wayne Sentinel* that the Book of Mormon was now for sale, wholesale and retail, at the Palmyra bookstore. After all the effort that went into the translation over the past two and a half years, it should have been a high moment for Joseph Smith and the small circle of believers. But none is recorded. Neither Lucy nor Joseph nor anyone close to them expressed exhilaration at the accomplishment. The book was launched, and the Prophet went on to other matters. Within two weeks the Church was organized.

Nothing in the newspaper reviews gave the translator any cause for celebration. The Book of Mormon was noticed



to be sure. Within a year James Gordon Bennett could write in the *New York Morning Courier and Enquirer*: “You have heard of Mormonism—who has not?” But the press response was universally scornful. Within a week after the 26 March publication date, the *Rochester Daily Advertiser* described the book under the headline “BLASPHEMY”: “The Book of Mormon has been placed in our hands. A viler imposition was never practiced. It is an evidence of fraud, blasphemy, and credulity shocking both to Christians and moralists.”<sup>23</sup> Those words were picked up in Boston and Vermont within weeks. Thus was the Book of Mormon greeted when it came into the world.

Joseph seems to have given the reviews no notice, never mentioning the bad press. He had not translated the book to win acclaim in the newspapers, and he saw no need to answer the attacks. The revelation to Martin Harris, when the Book of Mormon was published, said he was to carry it to Jew and Gentile “with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers” (D&C 19:30). Rather than reply to the revilers, Joseph contented himself with writing an account of events as he had experienced them, to which were added reports from many friends and family members. Together they constitute the bulk of the historical record, the original source material for the story of the Book of Mormon’s recovery. Narrations that balk before the miraculous events and try to tell another story must suppress these sources and disregard the consistent and detailed accounts from the people who knew Joseph Smith best.

## Notes

1. The two major versions of his own history by Joseph Smith are Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:1–10, in the LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City, and *History of the Church*, also in the LDS

Church Archives. Both are superbly edited by Dean C. Jessee in *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, vol. 1, *Autobiographical and Historical Writings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989). The best readily available edition of Lucy Mack Smith's account is *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Orem, Utah: Grandin, 1995). Her preliminary manuscript, housed in the Church Archives, contains material omitted from the published version.

2. Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon*, vol. 1, *Contemporary Historical Data concerning Its "Coming Forth" and Publication* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing, 1942), 129–37, 146–52. After all these years, Kirkham's work is still useful and for most readers provides the easiest access to a large body of source material such as complete reprints of these key newspaper articles.

3. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton, 1867).

4. John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Preliminary Report on the Basic Historical Information," (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1986), 38–9.

5. See Joseph Smith III, "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Herald* (4–10 February 1879; 1 October 1879): 290.

6. Scott C. Dunn, "Spirit Writing: Another Look at the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 10 (June 1985): 17–26.

7. For two recent comments on the sources of the Book of Mormon, see John L. Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 149–83; and Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1994), 462–7.

8. Joseph Smith III, "Last Testimony," 290.

9. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:7–8.

10. A basic narrative of events in the recovery years is available in Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 79–114. A useful chronology that adds and modifies details is Welch and Rathbone, "Translation of the Book of Mormon," 3–32.

11. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 121–2.
12. Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony,” 290.
13. Dean Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection of Early Mormon History,” *BYU Studies* 17/1 (1976): 33.
14. Martin Harris, interview in *Tiffany’s Monthly* 5 (1859): 163–70, conveniently reprinted in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, *Attempts to Prove the Book of Mormon Man-Made* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing, 1959), 376–83.
15. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 121.
16. Book of Mormon, 1830 ed., v, vi.
17. Oliver Cowdery’s historical letters are included in Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:27–96. He describes his arrival in Harmony on page 29.
18. The longest of David Whitmer’s accounts is *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Mo.: David Whitmer, 1887), but interviews with him were published or recorded and placed in archives.
19. Cited in Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 103–4.
20. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage, 1995), 77; Brooke, *Refiner’s Fire*, 180.
21. The text of the agreement, from an original in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, is produced in Welch and Rathbone, “Translation of the Book of Mormon,” 31.
22. Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 37.
23. Kirkham, *New Witness*, 2:40.