

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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the history of Relief Society, *A Centenary of Relief Society* (1942), and also the RELIEF SOCIETY MAGAZINE from 1937 until her call as general president in 1945.

Named as general president of the Relief Society near the end of World War II, Spafford felt an urgent need to aid the members of the Church in Europe who had suffered from the conflict. Within weeks, Relief Society members had gathered and shipped thousands of items of food, clothing, and bedding to the members abroad. In addition to providing for physical needs, President Spafford placed special emphasis in the *Relief Society Magazine*, as well as in the lesson manuals, on social and spiritual issues of love and tolerance, in an attempt to lessen some of the anger and bitterness that existed as a result of the war. The leadership of the Relief Society organization was restructured to meet local needs worldwide. With increased emphasis on training, members of the Relief Society General Board visited every stake to develop leadership skills in local officers and to establish or re-establish local units.

Amid all the aid and effort aimed at repairing war damage, the Relief Society gained permission and raised money to construct a new Relief Society Building in Salt Lake City. Having their own headquarters building, dedicated on October 3, 1956, gave the Relief Society new cohesion and support. The early 1960s brought new emphasis on music and choirs at the local level and almost every stake in the Church formed a women's chorus called "The Singing Mothers." These groups appeared both nationally and internationally over the next twenty years.

In an effort to solidify the family, the FIRST PRESIDENCY and the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES assigned the Relief Society the responsibility of reemphasizing the Family Home Hour. These efforts grew into the regular Monday night FAMILY HOME EVENING program in 1964.

In the 1960s, the Relief Society also placed special emphasis on strengthening the community by encouraging women to do volunteer service at the Red Cross, Traveler's Aid, March of Dimes, child-care clinics, and hospitals. A health missionary program was instituted in 1971, using specially trained nurses and others to teach health principles and welfare concepts to the disadvantaged. Under President Spafford's direction the Social Service and Child Welfare departments provided specialized services, including programs for

abused children, unwed mothers, and youth guidance, and established licensed agencies for adoption, foster care, and Indian student placements in Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and Idaho. For her pioneering efforts in social work, the Utah State Conference of Social Work awarded her an honorary life membership, and the University of Utah established the Belle S. Spafford Endowed Chair in Social Work.

President Spafford traveled the world widely and was affiliated with a number of national and international organizations. She served two terms as president of the National Council of Women (1968–1970). Recognized as one of the leading women in the world, she was presented with the National Council of Women's highest honor (1978). She died on February 2, 1982.

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SPAULDING MANUSCRIPT

The Spaulding Manuscript is a fictional story about a group of Romans who, while sailing to England early in the fourth century A.D., were blown off course and landed in eastern North America. One of them kept a record of their experiences among eastern and midwestern American Indian tribes. The 175-page manuscript was first published as a 115-page monograph in 1885, some seventy years after the death of its author, Solomon Spaulding (sometimes spelled Spalding). The only known manuscript was lost from 1839 until its discovery in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1884. It was promptly published by both the Latter-day Saints and Reorganized Latter Day Saint churches to refute the theory of some critics that it had served as an original source document for the Book of Mormon, supposedly supplied to Joseph Smith by Sidney Rigdon.

Spaulding was born in Ashford, Connecticut, on February 21, 1761. He served in the American Revolution, later graduated from Dartmouth College, and became a clergyman. He subsequently lost his faith in the Bible, left the ministry, and worked unsuccessfully at a variety of occupations

in New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania until his death near Pittsburgh in 1816. About 1812 he wrote *Manuscript Found*, which he attempted to publish to relieve pressing debts.

There are similarities in the explanation for the origins of both *Manuscript Found* and the Book of Mormon. The introduction to the Spaulding work claims that its author was walking near Conneaut, Ohio (about 150 miles west of the place in New York where Joseph Smith obtained the gold plates), when he discovered an inscribed, flat stone. This he raised with a lever, uncovering a cave in which lay a stone box containing twenty-eight rolls of parchment. The writing was in Latin. The story is primarily a secular one, having virtually no religious content. A character in the novel possessed a seerstone, similar to objects used by Joseph Smith. However, none of the many names found in either volume matches any of those in the other, nor is there the remotest similarity in literary styles.

The first to assert that a direct connection existed between the Book of Mormon and *Manuscript Found* was Doctor Philastus Hurlbut, who was excommunicated from the Church in June 1833. Desiring to discredit his former coreligionists, Hurlbut set out in the ensuing months to refute Joseph Smith's claims for the origins of the Book of Mormon. He interviewed members of Spaulding's family, who swore that there were precise similarities between Spaulding's work and the Book of Mormon. He also located the neglected manuscript, but must have been disappointed to discover that it had no demonstrable connection with the Book of Mormon.

In 1834, Hurlbut was involved with Eber D. Howe in preparing a significant anti-Mormon publication, *Mormonism Unveiled*. Its final chapter dealt with the Spaulding theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon. Howe admitted in the book that the only document known to have been authored by Spaulding had been found, but he asserted that this was not *Manuscript Found*. The title penciled on the brown paper cover was *Manuscript Story—Conneaut Creek*. Howe speculated that Spaulding must have composed another manuscript that served as the source of the Book of Mormon, but no additional writings of Spaulding have ever surfaced. By the 1840s, the so-called Spaulding theory had become the main anti-Mormon explanation for the Book of Mormon.

Spaulding's manuscript, lost for forty-five

years, was among items shipped from the office of the Ohio *Painesville Telegraph*, owned by Eber D. Howe, when that office was purchased in 1839 by L. L. Rice, who subsequently moved to Honolulu. Rice discovered the manuscript in 1884 while searching his collection for abolitionist materials for his friend James H. Fairchild, president of Oberlin College. Believers in the Book of Mormon felt vindicated by this discovery, and they published Spaulding's work to show the world it was not the source for the Book of Mormon.

Since 1946, no serious student of Mormonism has given the Spaulding Manuscript theory much credibility. In that year, Fawn Brodie published *No Man Knows My History*. This biography of Joseph Smith, hostile to his prophetic claims, dismissed the idea of any connection between Spaulding and Smith or their writings. Rigdon first met Joseph Smith in December 1830 after the Book of Mormon was published.

Nevertheless, some have continued to promote the Spaulding theory (e.g., see Holley). In 1977, graphologists claimed to have detected similarities between the handwriting of Spaulding and of one of the scribes who transcribed some of the Book of Mormon from Joseph Smith's dictation. After considerable media attention and further scrutiny, anti-Mormon spokespersons acknowledged that they had been too hasty. The handwriting evidence did not support a connection between Solomon Spaulding and Joseph Smith.

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SPIRIT

The existence of both good and evil spirit beings is a prominent doctrine in LDS theology. Spirits are intelligent, self-existent, organized matter and are