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A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN OHIO AND MISSOURI, 1831-1839

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Church History and Doctrine

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Orlen Curtis Peterson

August 1972

This thesis, by Orlen Curtis Peterson, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Church History and Doctrine in the College of Religious Instruction of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Milton V. Backman, Committee Chairman

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July 14, 1972
Date

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer would like to acknowledge with gratitude the suggestions pertaining to research techniques and the helpful assistance in the preparation of this manuscript given by Dr. Milton V. Backman, Jr., the committee chairman representing the major department. Likewise, the encouragement and approval rendered by Dr. Howard H. Barron, representing the minor department.

Gratitude is expressed to the staffs of both the Church Historian's Library and the Special Collections Library at Brigham Young University for their willing assistance which made the completion of this thesis possible.

The author expresses love and appreciation to his wife, Teri, who has given constant encouragement and sacrificed much time and companionship during the many hours spent in the completing of this thesis.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary objective of this study is to consider the history of the schools and educational opportunities offered by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints between the years of 1830 and 1840. The history will be limited because most information was obtained from diaries and personal histories which were scarce during this period of time. During the early era of the Church's history many exciting events also occurred which seemed to overshadow some of the more domestic affairs. For example, to terminate the persecution of the Saints in Missouri was, at that time, a more important activity than that of conducting schools. Therefore, no formal education of any type was offered during the winter of 1833-1834.

Excepting the School of the Prophets, formal names were not given to the respective schools. Therefore, the writer will give each a title which he feels best describes the course or type of school offered. The Latter-day Saints in Kirtland used different names when referring to the same institution of learning. Therefore, much information was classified by the author into the school according to the date and the curriculum of the school.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to make any extensive comparisons between the Church schools and those institutions offered

by the state or local communities. However, when information is available regarding contemporary schools which helps to give a better understanding of the LDS Church schools, it will be used. Some comparisons will also be made to illustrate the efficiency and quality of the Church's educational system.

As much as possible, the history of each school will appear in chronological order according to the date it first commenced. The Kirtland era will be presented first followed by the Missouri period.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as organized by Joseph Smith, Jr. at Fayette, New York, on April 6, 1830, may be referred to in this thesis as the LDS Church, or merely as the Church. The founder of the above named institution will be identified by his name, Joseph Smith, Jr., the Prophet Joseph, or simply as the Prophet.

Members of the Church may be designated as Latter-day Saints, Saints, or Mormons due to their belief in The Book of Mormon, which they accept as scripture. The term Gentile shall refer to someone who is not a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FORCES INFLUENCING DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH SCHOOLS

Almost immediately after Joseph Smith reported receiving a visitation from God and Jesus Christ, he found himself more and more in the midst of the so-called learned men of the world. He, no doubt, came to a quick realization of the importance of a good education so that he could combat the verbal attacks made upon him. Joseph's scant education was the result of belong to a family consisting of nine

children trying to eke out a living in a new land. This hardship naturally deprived the children of the benefit of a good education. Joseph Smith's schooling amounted to instruction in reading, writing and the ground rules of arithmetic.[1] He most likely received some instruction at home. Joseph's father had taught school for a few years at about the time of the Prophet's birth, and it was common in those days to obtain one's education mainly in the home.[2]

Joseph Smith's lack of formal education was by no means unique. Brigham Young had gone to school only eleven days before joining the Church, and many other leaders of this new organization found themselves in a similar situation.[3] On the other hand, some leaders in early history of the Church were educators. Oliver Cowdery, Orson Hyde, Sidney Rigdon, and William E. McLellin, to name a few, had all taught school prior to 1830.[4] Their influence, combined with the fact that most of the earlier converts came from the New England states where great pride was taken in their educational systems, provided considerable incentive toward the establishment of schools in the Church.

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[1]Joseph Smith, Jr. letter Books, p. 1, located in the Church Historian's Office, 47 East South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter cited as Church Historian's Office.

[2]Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1958), p. 46.

[3]Brigham Young, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, May 29, 1870, Journal of Discourses, reporter David W. Evans, XIII, (Los Angeles: Gartner Printing and Litho Co., Inc., 1956), p. 176.

[4]History of Orson Hyde (MSS located in Special Collections at Brigham Young University Library), pp. 3-4; Latter-Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate [Kirtland, Ohio], February, 1835.

Perhaps the belief that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was established, founded, and indeed maintained by the principle of revelation was the superior motivating force leading to the establishing of a school system in the Church. In June, 1831, a revelation was received instructing William W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery to select and write books for the "schools in this church."[5] The Lord did not want just instruction, but "schools" for the teaching of both the young and old. Concerning the young, God stated, "I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth."[6] But what is truth? "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come."[7] The Lord instructed Joseph and others to "study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people."[8] Two months after this revelation came the commandment to "obtain a knowledge of history, and of countries, and of kingdoms, of laws of God and man."[9] These revelations help to explain why the Church did its best to offer instruction in all subjects available to man, not excluding the revealed word of God whether it be ancient or recent.

"The glory of God is intelligence" was a principle revealed in 1833 which has since become a vital theme of the Church and illustrates

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[5]The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960), 55:4, hereafter cited as D&C.

[6]Ibid., 93:40.

[7]Ibid., 93:24.

[8]Ibid., 90:15.

[9]Ibid., 93:53.

the importance of both spiritual and secular education for its members.[10] Sidney Rigdon expressed it well in a 4th of July address given at Far West when he said the Church places education "next to the worship of our God."[11] He summarized the idea by saying, "Intelligence is religion, and religion is intelligence, if it is any thing."[12] To the early Saints salvation itself depended upon education.

Missionaries sent forth by the Church leaders were constantly coming in contact with new ideas which were being discussed. Many of these missionaries lacked the fundamentals of education, and consequently, were not prepared to discuss many of these ideas intelligently. In fact, many of them were no match for the ministers who had been trained in theological seminaries which were, at the time, some of the better centers of learning. Meanwhile, the Lord instructed; "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men."[13] Missionaries going to foreign countries were instructed to learn customs, laws, geography, habits, and languages of foreign nations so that they could spread the new gospel more effectively.[14]

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[10]Ibid., 93:36.

[11]Sidney Rigdon, Oration Delivered by Mr. S. Rigdon on the 4th of July, 1838 (Far West, Missouri, 1838), p. 8.

[12]Ibid., p. 9.

[13]D&C 11:21.

[14]Brigham Young, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, April 8, 1860, Journal of Discourses, reporter G. D. Watt, VIII (Los Angeles: Gartner Printing and Litho Co., Inc., 1956), p. 40.

Education in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was designed as a defense against wickedness. An article appeared in the Church's publication, Evening and Morning Star, referred to the wickedness in the world and how many young people were being allowed to do whatever they pleased. In Zion this was not to be the case. The Saints were to instruct their children while young "that they will be strangers to the thousand vices which now shock the meek and honest in heart."[15] Education was a weapon against wickedness not only in the young, but also against wickedness in government and church. The Church was in wholehearted agreement with the Ordinance of 1787 which stated: "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government, and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."[16] Virtues taught during childhood would make men good citizens, good members of the Church, and candidates for salvation in God's kingdom. These reasons were good motives for effective education.

Whatever higher education was offered above the most elementary training given in the home or private schools was largely controlled by religious sects in Ohio during the first years of its history.[17] Most denominations entered into aggressive campaigns for secondary education, either to strengthen their churches or to keep their

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[15]Evening and Morning Star [Independence, Missouri], May, 1883.

[16]C. Hartley Gratten, In Quest of Knowledge (New York: Association Press, 1955), p. 145.

[17]Robert E. Chaddock, Ohio Before 1850 (New York, 1908), p. 140.

memberships high.[18] Also, until after 1837, there was no standard of education or state aid given for education. Therefore, each locality was left with the responsibility of providing schools for its citizens.[19] Thus, if the Saints were to receive any formal education, it would have to be offered by the Church.

DESIRED RESULTS

The country in 1830 had not yet awakened to the need for providing education for all who desired it. New England and New York had accepted the idea of offering educational opportunities for those who could not afford it, but it was not accepted elsewhere except in a few isolated places.[20] The desired object of the Church's educational system was to provide schools for members of the Church of all classes, for rich and poor, for male and female.[21] In fact, one of the principle objectives of the Saints gathering into a compact society was to give better support to schools of all kinds for the betterment of its members.[22]

The goal of the Prophet Joseph and other leading figures of the Church was to form an educational system that would "be inferior

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[18]W. W. Boyd, "Secondary Education in Ohio Previous to the Year 1840," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications (Columbus, Ohio, 1916), p. 119.

[19]Chaddock, pp. 144-146.

[20]Carl Russell Fish, The Rise of the Common Man (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1929), p. 217.

[21]Rigdon, p. 10.

[22]Elders' Journal [Far West, Missouri], August, 1838.

to no society in our country in point of intelligence, learning and science."[23] Learning was not to be limited to a few subjects, but would cover all subjects, including revelation or knowledge of the future existence of men, "of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come."[24] The Prophet wanted schools which would teach its pupils how to apply the knowledge gained, and to judge their education not by the money it cost, but by the goodness it bestowed. The Prophet felt some people took too much pride in the amount of learning they had acquired, and then actively misused it. This wasted knowledge Joseph referred to as "learned ignorance."[25] Above all else, the Church wanted an educational program which would achieve its needs, that is, the establishing and sustaining of the kingdom of God on earth.

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[23]Oliver Cowdery Letters (MSS in Church Historian's Office), letter dated December 15, 1835.

[24]Rigdon, p. 9; D&C 93:24.

[25]Joseph Smith, History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (2d ed. rev.; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1959-60), II, 464, hereafter cited as DHC.

Chapter 2

EARLY EDUCATION IN KIRTLAND

FIRST SCHOOLS IN KIRTLAND

In the spring of 1814, the first school house, a small log cabin, was built in Kirtland; and during the first year, twelve students were taught by Miss Estella Crary. The teacher was paid by the day receiving twenty-five cents per day for her services.[1] This school was used until at least 1819, when the first frame schoolhouse was erected.[2] Levi Hancock recorded visiting a little log school on the hill in Kirtland built of logs and filled with "slab benches."[3] In all probability, it was the same building which was apparently still being used for some functions as late as 1831. Benjamin F. Johnson reported building his first home in Kirtland near the schoolhouse in what was referred to as "Kirtland Flat" which possibly was the schoolhouse built in 1819.[4]

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[1]History of Geauga and Lake Counties, Ohio (Philadelphia, 1878), p. 246.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Levi Hancock's Journal, 1831, pp. 47-48, located in Church Historian's Office.

[4]Benjamin F. Johnson, My Life's Review (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), p. 15.

Neither of these schools gained any special distinction, and it is highly probable they had ceased functioning before 1840. The Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications issued a list by counties of the schools in Ohio prior to 1840, and neither school is listed. The only Kirtland school classified was the Western Reserve Teachers' Seminary which was established in 1838 after the saints left Kirtland.[5] Consequently, during part of the Mormon occupation of Kirtland, probably the only schools in operation were those sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

CURRICULUM

When a person in Ohio had the good fortune of obtaining an education in 1830, it was usually not much higher than an elementary level. Orson Hyde had been blessed with the opportunity of attending Burton Academy about this time and mentioned that grammar, geography, arithmetic, and rhetoric were offered.[6] These subjects would, a few years later, be considered the basic courses. Yet, this curriculum was offered by Burton Academy and it had been in existence since 1804.[7] Libraries were almost non-existent. If a community was fortunate enough to have a public library, it was usually very small and retained in private homes.[8]

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[5]W. W. Boyd, "Secondary Education in Ohio Previous to the Year 1840," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications (Columbus, Ohio, 1916), p. 123.

[6]Orson Hyde, "History of Orson Hyde" (MSS located in Special Collections Library at Brigham Young University), pp. 3-4.

[7]Boyd, p. 122.

[8]Hyde, p. 4.

Textbooks were difficult to acquire. Therefore, young children had to study from the same books used by the adults.[9] It was not easy for a child to study from such impractical manuals. In 1831 a revelation was given assigning Oliver Cowdery and William W. Phelps to select and write books for the schools and the young children. The task was considered important enough that the Lord instructed them to be "ordained" to that purpose.[10]

PRIVATE AND FAMILY SCHOOLS

In a June, 1832, issue of the Evening and Morning Star, parents were advised not to wait for the Church to dispose of its duty to organize schools before they began teaching their children.[11] Schools and the preparing of textbooks were considered "as soon as more weighty matters are finished."[12] "Weighty matters" continued to arise and formal school was not offered for the young until the Kirtland High School was organized in December, 1834.[13] Thus, formal education, until the fall of 1834, occurred primarily in private or family schools.

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[9]Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo," Woman's Exponent, X, 162.

[10]D&C 55:4.

[11]Evening and Morning Star [Independence, Missouri], June, 1832.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate [Kirtland, Ohio], February, 1835.

It is not known how many private and family schools were held in Kirtland. The Prophet Joseph Smith set forth a good example by holding family school in his home. Eliza R. Snow lived with the Smith family and taught the Prophet's family school.[14] No information is given regarding who attended the school, but Joseph makes numerous references to teaching grammar in the evenings to his family even after formal schools were constituted in Kirtland.[15]

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[14]Eliza R. Snow Smith, Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1884), p. 5.

[15]DHC, II, 301-302, 307.

Chapter 3

SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

A UNIQUE SCHOOL

Joseph Smith reported receiving a revelation on December 27, 1832, commanding him to "prepare all things necessary" to organize a school to be officially known as the School of the Prophets.[1] Joseph was told who should attend, how the school was to operate, what was to be taught, and the blessings that could be received within the school. In every sense of the word, the School of the Prophets was to be a private school only for a very select few. The school was not only the first official educational institution of the Church but also the most unique. Comparatively little is known about the operations which took place within the school; however, ample information is available to classify it as one of the most distinctive institutions of learning ever created until that time.

The importance of this school to the LDS Church would be difficult to determine. In a letter to all branches of the Church, Joseph stated that "it is as important as our salvation" to prepare the school so that members of it could receive the instruction the Lord designed they should receive.[2] William W. Phelps further illustrated

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[1]D&C 88:70-80, 117-141.

[2]Joseph Smith Jr. Letter Books, 1833, p. 37, located in Church Historian's Office.

its importance by writing, "(the Lord) has promised us great things; yea, even a visit from the heavens to honor us with His own presence" if they would only obey the instructions published in the revelation.[3]

COMMENCEMENT

The leaders of the Church lost little time in making preparations for the school. After the revelation regarding the School of the Prophets was given to the Prophet on December 27, 1832, William Smith left Kirtland on a short mission in December of 1832, to preach the gospel "and call the Elders to Kirtland to attend a school of the Prophets."[4] William apparently left within a few days of the revelation and returned within a month's time for he was among the group present when the school was organized.

The Prophet and a few other leaders met in a conference early in the month of January, 1833, and agreed to form a subscription and circulate it throughout the various branches of the Church. The subscription requested temporal assistance from the members, asking for help to build a house to the Lord and to aid the elders in attending the School of the Prophets.[5] No mention is made, however, concerning the type of aid which would be beneficial in helping the elders attend school.

Not just anyone had the authority to organize this special school. The administrator had to hold special priesthood "keys" in

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[3]DHC, I, 316.

[4]The Latter Day Saints' Millennial Star, XXVII (1865), p. 7.

[5]Joseph Smith Jr. Letter Books, p. 37.

order to formulate the organization. These keys were held by the Prophet Joseph Smith.[6] On March 8, 1833, another revelation was given directing the Prophet to take Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams and ordain them as members of the First Presidency of the LDS Church, and were "accounted as equal" with Joseph Smith "in holding the keys of this last kingdom; As also through your (Joseph Smith's) administration the keys of the school of the prophets."[7] Ten days following the preceding revelation, the ordination took place during a session of the school.[8]

The members of the School of the Prophets were few. Only those male members of the Church who were considered as "the first laborers in this last kingdom" were invited to attend.[9] This select group of missionaries were instructed to return to Kirtland and let the people to whom they were preaching "ponder the warnings in their hearts . . . for a little season."[10] Missionaries who were "not the first elders" were to "continue in the vineyard until the mouth of the Lord shall call them, for their time is not yet come; their garments are not clean from the blood of this generation."[11] Each member of the school was to be received into this special house of learning by the ordinance of the washing of feet as recorded in the

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[6] D&C 90:6-7.

[7] Ibid.

[8] DHC, I, 334.

[9] D&C 88:70, 74.

[10] D&C 88:71.

[11] D&C 88:85.

13th chapter of John and declared "clean from the blood of this generation."[12] No one was to be admitted into the School of the Prophets without first receiving this sacred ordinance.[13]

All of the members of this exclusive institution of learning are not known at the present time. Joseph Smith gave the names of the fourteen members present the day the School of the Prophets was organized. They were: Joseph Smith, Jr., Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Newel K. Whitney, Hyrum Smith, Zebedee Coltrin, Joseph Smith, Sr., Samuel H. Smith, John Murdock, Lyman E. Johnson, Orson Hyde, Ezra Thayer, Levi Hancock, and William Smith. All of the above were high priests excepting the last two who were elders.[14] Orson Pratt was admitted to the School of the Prophets a few weeks after the school's commencement.[15] Zebedee Coltrin gave an account of the first School of the Prophets fifty years later to the members of the School of the Prophets which was conducted in Salt Lake City under the direction of President John Taylor.[16] He was certain that there were twenty-one members at the time the Word of Wisdom was read to the school, but could only recall the names of seventeen.[17] Zebedee gave

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[12]D&C 88:138.

[13]Ibid.

[14]DHC, I, 322.

[15]Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 18, 1833, located in the Church Historian's Office, hereafter this collection will be referred to as Journal History.

[16]Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets (MSS in Church Historian's Office), minutes dated October 3, and October 11, 1883.

[17]Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883.

the same fourteen names Joseph Smith recorded, and also the names of Sylvester Smith, Martin Harris, and Reynolds Cahoon.[18] The above seventeen names plus Orson Pratt leaves only three members unaccounted for, and one could only guess as to who they were. There is always the possibility that other priesthood holders were admitted after the revelation pertaining to the Word of Wisdom was given.

During the winter of 1832-1833, Joseph Smith and his family lived in a small house connected to Newel K. Whitney's mercantile store.[19] A small room situated over the Prophet Joseph's kitchen was used as the meeting place where the scholars assembled to receive their instruction.[20] This little room was probably no larger than eleven by fourteen feet.[21] No doubt some alterations had to be made in converting it into an acceptable classroom. This task was apparently assigned to Levi Hancock, for he recorded in his journal that he finished his carpenter work on the schoolroom sometime before March of 1833.[22]

Part of the revelation regarding the School of the Prophets referred to "a commandment that you assemble yourselves together, and

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[18]Ibid.

[19]Brigham Young, Address delivered at Provo, Utah, February 8, 1868, Journal of Discourses, reporter G. D. Watt, (Los Angeles: Gartner Printing and Litho Co., Inc., 1956), XII, 158.

[20]Ibid.; Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883; Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), p. 224.

[21]Brigham Young, p. 158.

[22]Levi Hancock Journal, 1833, p. 74, located in Church Historian's Office.

organize yourselves, and prepare yourselves, and sanctify yourselves."[23] The elders obeyed the commandment by assembling together on January 22, 1833, most likely to receive instructions on how the school was to be conducted and the preparations each member would need to make before attending each session.[24] The Lord poured out His Spirit in great abundance that day, presumably to show His acceptance of their obedience. The Prophet spoke to the assembled "brethren" in another tongue. He was likewise followed by Zebedee Coltrin and William Smith "after which the Lord poured out His Spirit in a miraculous manner, until all the Elders spake in tongues."[25] Speaking, praying, and singing praises to God, all in tongues, occupied the rest of the day until quite late at night.[26]

On the 23rd of January, the same elders met again and officially opened the School of the Prophets.[27] Joseph Smith was sustained as the president of the school, and he in turn appointed Orson Hyde as the teacher.[28] After experiencing the same spiritual gifts that they had enjoyed the previous evening, each elder washed his own feet. Joseph then girded himself with a towel and proceeded in the ordinance of the washing of feet. When the Prophet was about to

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[23]D&C 88:74.

[24]DHC, I, 323.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.; Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883.

[28]Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 11, 1883.

wash the feet of his father, he requested a father's blessing which his father gave him by laying his hands on the Prophet's head, and in the name of Jesus Christ, declared that Joseph "should continue in the Priest's office until Christ comes."[29] At the close of the ordinance, Frederick G. Williams "being moved upon by the Holy Ghost" washed Joseph Smith's feet in token of his "fixed determination" to be with Joseph "in suffering, or in journeying, in life or in death."[30] After the ordinance of washing of feet had been completed, Joseph pronounced "them all clean from the blood of this generation; but if any of them should sin willfully after they were thus cleansed, and sealed up unto eternal life, they should be given over unto the buffeting of Satan until the day of redemption."[31] The meeting continue the whole day with each person fasting, praying, and receiving ordinances.[32] The first day of school then closed by each one partaking of the "Lord's supper."[33]

PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL

The School of the Prophets was established to fulfill many needs the Church had while still in infancy. The foremost reason for

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[29] DHC, I, 323.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., pp. 323-324.

[32] Ibid., p. 324.

[33] Ibid.

its existence was to correctly prepare the elders so they could better "magnify the calling . . . and the mission which I (God) have commissioned you."[34] Because most of the elders had not received much, if any, schooling, they had a great need to be instructed in many areas. Perhaps this need was the reason for the Lord to reveal the following:

> And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.
>
> Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;
>
> Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms--[35]

In other words, no subject was to be left out of the curriculum. For them to obey the above commandment would be an almost insurmountable task considering their other assignments and responsibilities. However, the Lord effectively expounded an important point, and the Church attempted to obey it. At the same time, the Lord taught another cardinal principle; that is, learning may be acquired "by study and also by faith."[36]

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[34] D&C 88:80.

[35] D&C 88:77-79.

[36] D&C 88:118.

The school was also to sanctify the elders and prepare them for the endowment, heavenly visions, and spiritual blessings.[37] Orson Pratt once explained it this way, "We are the school of the Prophets . . . and are here for the purpose of being taught and instructed in the operations of the Spirit upon the mind of man."[38] John Taylor reported that Joseph Smith counseled the elders to feel free to express their ideas and thoughts for "it was very common for the Holy Spirit to reveal some things to obscure individuals, that are not made known to others, hence an exchange of ideas and reflections are profitable to all."[39] At least some of the aforementioned purposes of the school were apparently reached, for Joseph Smith recorded in his journal, "Great joy and satisfaction continually beamed in the countenances of the School of the Prophets, . . . on account of the things revealed, and our progress in the knowledge of God."[40]

Zebedee Coltrin made reference to times when the school would be called together to attend to certain business.[41] No mention is made as to what type of business was conducted in the school. He may have had reference to priesthood affairs such as Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams being ordained as presidents in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or

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[37] DHC, I, 334; Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, n.d.; D&C 88:139; DHC, II, 387.

[38] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, November 12, 1870.

[39] Ibid., June 3, 1871.

[40] DHC, I, 334.

[41] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883.

perhaps he was referring to important matters of which we have no record.[42] Joseph makes very few direct statements regarding the School of the Prophets, but at various times during the course of the school, he would make inferences like, "The High Priests assembled in the schoolroom of the Prophets, . . ."[43] He could very well have been referring to proceedings taking place during school. On the 26th of March, Joseph records, "A council of High Priests, twenty-one in number, convened for the general welfare of the Church, in what was then called Zion, in Jackson county, Missouri."[44] Possibly, he was referring to business handled in the School of the Prophets.

Zebedee Coltrin stated the school was not only for revelations and doctrine but also for the learning of English grammar.[45] Although Orson Hyde was the designated instructor, Sidney Rigdon occasionally lectured on grammar.[46]

RULES AND REGULATIONS

It is not certain how often the School of the Prophets was held. The school could have been in operation daily, once or twice a week, or just whenever the president would call it into session. The School of the Prophets which was established in the Utah Territory

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[42] DHC, I, 334.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid., p. 335.

[45] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 11, 1883.

[46] Ibid.

was held once a week. How much this school was patterned after the first school is questionable.[47]

Each time the school was in session, it would begin about sunrise and remain in session until about four o'clock in the afternoon.[48] Each student was to take a bath and put on "clean linen" and go to school fasting.[49] Certain regulations or rules were put forth by the Lord which each member was to do his best to abide. Each student was to obey the following rules:

1. "Cease from all your light speeches and from all laughter."

2. Cease "from all lustful desires, from all your pride and lightmindedness, and from all your wicked doings."

3. "Let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings. . .that all may be edified. . .and that every man may have an equal privilege."

4. "Love one another."

5. "Cease to be covetous."

6. "Learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires."

7. "Cease to be idle."

8. "Cease to be unclean."

9. "Cease to find fault one with another."

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[47]Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, 1870-1874.

[48]Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883, and October 11, 1883.

[49]Ibid.

10. "Cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated."

11. "Clothe yourselves with the bond of charity."

12. "Pray always, that ye may not faint."[50]

13. Keep and observe the Word of Wisdom.[51]

14. Not to wilfully divulge that which was discussed in the school.[52]

Although the above rules were outlined for the members of the School of the Prophets, most of the laws were gospel principles which every Latter-day Saint was to live.

The rule concerning the Word of Wisdom did not go into effect until the revelation on the Word of Wisdom was read to the members about four weeks after the school began. Zebedee Coltrin said, "Those who gave up using Tobacco, eased off on licquarice root, but there was no easing off on Tea or Coffee; these they had to give up or their fellowship was jeopardized."[53]

The last rule was not mentioned in any revelation, but the author feels strongly that it was included because of a statement made by Joseph Smith and because it was listed in the constitution of all

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[50] D&C 88:121-126.

[51] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 11, 1883.

[52] Ibid., November 19, 1870; DHC, II, 309.

[53] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 11, 1883.

the School of the Prophets held in Utah.[54] After he issued instructions concerning the ordinance of washing of feet, Joseph said, "Let us be faithful and silent, brethren, and if God gives you a manifestation, keep it to yourselves."[55] This rule could also be the leading reason why very little is recorded or known about the proceedings of the School of the Prophets. If Zebedee Coltrin had not given an account of the first School of the Prophets to the members of the school in Utah, the only information available would be that which is recorded in The Doctrine and Covenants and a few references in Joseph Smith's journal.

The Lord gave precise instructions on how each school day was to begin.[56] The president or the teacher was to be the first person in the schoolroom, and it would seem, was to bow alone in prayer. When the prayer was finished, the members of the school were admitted. After each person had taken their place, the president or the teacher saluted the brethren with uplifted hands in the following words:

> Art thou a brother or brethren? I salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in token or remembrance of the everlasting Covenant, in which Covenant I receive you to fellowship, in a determination that is fixed, immovable, and unchangeable, to be your friend and brother through the grace of God in the bonds of love, to walk in all the commandments of God blameless, in thanksgiving, forever and ever. Amen.[57]

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[54]George A. Smith made reference to the rule and then made a forceful statement in the School of the Prophets held on November 19, 1870; "Any member of this school who wilfully divulges what takes place or spoken here lays the foundation for his own ruin, though the School is not injured by it."

[55]DHC, II, 309.

[56]D&C 88:128-136.

[57]D&C 88:133.

The members of the school who were found worthy would then return the salutation with uplifted hands by repeating the same prayer and covenant, or by simply saying "Amen" in token of the same.[58] School would then proceed.

SACRAMENT

Each time the elders would meet in school, they would partake of the sacrament.[59] The sacrament would be administered by the president according to the ancient order which is patterned after the Lord's Supper as recorded in the 13th chapter of John. That is, warm bread was taken and broken into pieces "as large as my fist." Each member was also given a glass of wine. They then would sit and eat the bread and drink the wine.[60] Joseph said, "That was the way that Jesus and his disciples partook of the bread and wine, and this was the order of the Church anciently," and continued in this manner "until the Church went into darkness."[61]

WASHING OF FEET

Probably, each member of the School of the Prophets received the ordinance of washing of feet only once at the time of acceptance into the school. Many years after the Saints had arrived in Utah, a meeting of General Authorities of The Church of Jesus

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[58] D&C 88:135.

[59] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

Christ of Latter-day Saints was held to determine whether the ordinance of washing of feet as performed in the School of the Prophets was the same ordinance as performed in the Kirtland Temple.[62] President Wilford Woodruff made a statement which seems to indicate that the ordinances as performed in both places were the same. While referring to the ordinance of washing of feet as done in the School of the Prophets and the Kirtland Temple, he said, "Furthermore, there were things revealed very frequently--not in their fulness, but still strictly in accordance with the word and will and law of God, which were only temporarily entered into, and they were unable to perfect those things because of the weakness and the covetousness and the wickedness of the people."[63] Also, since in both cases the recipient is pronounced "clean from the blood of this generation," it would indicate that the ordinance of washing of feet as initiated in the School of the Prophets was the beginning of an endowment. However, it should be remembered that the ordinance was only a partial endowment, and that the full endowment was not given until the saints had established themselves in Nauvoo.[64] "Thus the knowledge relative to the washing of feet has been revealed step by step in this day until a full knowledge is now incorporated in the revealed ordinances of the Lord's house."[65]

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[62]MSS included with the Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, no date given.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine (2d ed.; Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 831.

[65]Ibid.

WORD OF WISDOM

Brigham Young was not present when the revelation on the Word of Wisdom was given, but stated he was as familiar with the events preceding its coming forth as anyone else, and then gave the following account:

> When they assembled together in this room after breakfast, the first thing they did was to light their pipes, and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom, and spit all over the room, and as soon as the pipe was out of mouths a large chew of tobacco would then be taken. Often when the Prophet entered the room . . . he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke. This, and the complaints of his wife at having to clean so filthy a floor, made the Prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the Elders in using tobacco, and the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom was the result of his inquiry.[66]

The Prophet then returned to the schoolroom and read the revelation to the members of the school. Zebedee Coltrin, who was present on the occasion, stated that twenty of the twenty-one members of the school used tobacco, and they "all immediately threw their Tobacco and pipes into the fire."[67] He did not, however, state who the one person was who abstained from the habit. Any member using tea, coffee, alcohol, or tobacco from that day on found his membership in jeopardy.[68]

BLESSINGS AND HEAVENLY MANIFESTATIONS

Even before the School of the Prophets commenced, the members of the school were told that if they would obey the commandment as

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[66]Brigham Young, p. 158.

[67]Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883.

[68]Ibid., October 11, 1883.

recorded in the eighty-eighth section of The Doctrine and Covenants, they would receive great spiritual blessings, even a visit from the Savior.[69] They also received the gift of tongues in a "miraculous manner" the first two days the elders were assembled.[70]

Once Joseph gave notice to the school for all to wash themselves, put on clean clothing, and to be at the schoolroom before sunrise, as it would be a "day of revelation and vision." Prayer was offered and then Joseph gave instructions on how to prepare their minds.[71] The Prophet promised "that the pure in heart should see a heavenly vision."[72] After remaining a short time in secret prayer, the promise was verified. Joseph records, "Many of the brethren saw a heavenly vision of the Savior, and concourses of angels, and many other things, of which each one has a record of what he saw."[73] Zebedee Coltrin recalled fifty years later his experience of that day, and gave an account of it to the members of the School of the Prophets in Utah. He reported that Joseph Smith and the members of the School knelt in silent prayer and Joseph's promise was verified. Many of the brethren saw a heavenly vision of the Savior and other heavenly personages.[74] He said the heavenly personages were "surrounded as

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[69] DHC, I, 316.

[70] Ibid., p. 323.

[71] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 11, 1883.

[72] DHC, I, 334.

[73] Ibid., pp. 334-335.

[74] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 3, 1883.

with a flame of fire" and that he experienced a "sensation that it might destroy the tabernacle as it was of consuming fire of great brightness."[75] Apparently, the experience was considered by the members of the school to be of such a sacred nature that Zebedee felt a session of the School of the Prophets in Utah was the only appropriate place to give an account of this sacred event. Also, the last rule of the school stated that the members of the school were not to divulge or discuss that which took place within the school. Perhaps, similar experiences as related above occurred in the School of the Prophets on other occasions but were not recorded because they were considered sacred. Zebedee Coltrin in this same report also recalled other spiritual and sacred experiences which occurred outside of the school to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and to himself.

SCHOOL CLOSES

Sometime between the 13th and 21st of April, 1833, the School of the Prophets closed with plans to commence again the following winter.[76] The latter part of March, a "council" was called to take into consideration purchasing the farms of Peter French, Elijah Smith, and a Mr. Morley. The council decided to purchase the farms, and Sidney Rigdon ordained Ezra Thayre and Joseph Coe as "general

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[75] Ibid.

[76] DHC, I, 340; Although further mention is made in Joseph Smith's journal of plans to again organize the School of the Prophets, this is the last reference in his journal of attending a class in the School of the Prophets.

agents of the Church for that purpose."[77] Zebedee Coltrin said this meeting was conducted as part of the School of the Prophets, and that the school closed so that the members could work and help obtain the necessary funds for purchasing the farms.[78] In a revelation the Lord, however, gives a different reason for its closing. He states, "Nevertheless, my servants sinned a very grievous sin; and contentions arose in the school of the prophets; which was very grievous unto me, saith your Lord; therefore I sent them forth to be chastened."[79]

PLANS FOR CONTINUING THE SCHOOL

During the spring and summer months of 1833, members of the School of the Prophets engaged in business, missionary work, and commenced the building of the Kirtland Temple. The top story of the temple was to be dedicated for the School of the Prophets.[80] The two main purposes of the Kirtland Temple were to have a house of worship and a classroom for the School of the Prophets.[81] However, these plans for the school were all based upon the completion of the temple.

In the middle of October, 1833, in a council of the Church, it was decided to discontinue work on the temple because of the lack of building materials. It was also decided that every effort would be made to build a house thirty by thirty-eight feet; the first story to

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[77] Ibid., p. 335.

[78] Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, October 11, 1833.

[79] D&C 95:10.

[80] D&C 95:17.

[81] DHC, I, 352.

be a classroom for the School of the Prophets that winter, and the upper story for the printing press.[82] However, their plans for the School of the Prophets to be held that winter never materialized. About this time, problems existing between the saints in Zion and some of the people of Missouri reached a climax, resulting in the Latter-day Saints being expelled from Jackson County. The winter was spent making preparations to send relief to the saints in Zion and in the organizing of Zion's Camp. These affairs were considered far more important than the schools, and thus, no schools were in session that winter.

The winter following the return of Zion's Camp, 1834-1835, Joseph organized the School of the Elders and spent most of his time organizing and teaching in that school. This school was held in the schoolroom below the printing shop which was at one time intended to be used for the School of the Prophets.[83] Under these circumstances the School of the Prophets was postponed for another year.

In a meeting of the Twelve Apostles held on October 5, 1835, a decision was reached to once again organize the School of the Prophets and "attend to the ordinance of the washing of feet."[84] However, one month later Oliver Cowdery returned from New York with a supply of Hebrew textbooks and efforts were made to immediately

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[82] Joseph Smith Jr. Letter Book, letter dated October 10, 1833; DHC, I, 418.

[83] DHC, II, 169-170.

[84] Ibid., p. 287; This is the last reference Joseph Smith makes in his journal to the School of the Prophets.

organize a Hebrew School, which was regularly attended by Joseph Smith and other leading brethren of the Church.[85] The Hebrew School ended the 29th day of March, 1836, two days after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.[86] Again, another winter passed and the School of the Prophets was not held as previously planned.

When the temple was completed, the sacred ordinances once performed in the School of the Prophets were carried out in that holy place.[87] All other purposes of the school were incorporated into the School of the Elders. Therefore, the School of the Prophets ceased to exist until the leading authorities of the Church once again organized it in Utah many years later. Consequently, the most unique and perhaps the most intriguing school organized in the Church's early history had a very short life--a span of about twelve weeks.

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[85] Ibid., p. 318.

[86] Ibid., p. 429.

[87] Ibid., pp. 430-431.

Chapter 4

SCHOOL OF THE ELDERS

PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL

The purpose of the School of the Elders was quite similar to that of the School of the Prophets except for the priesthood ordinances. The washing of feet, the sacrament, the rules and regulations, and the spiritual manifestations were all missing in the School of the Elders. The prime purpose of this school was to qualify the elders "as messengers of Jesus Christ, to be ready to do His will in carrying glad tidings to all that would open their eyes, ears and hearts."[1] The principle objective was to have each student become an effective missionary perfected in the understanding of their ministry, in theory, in principle, and in doctrine, in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth."[2] During the second session of the school in Kirtland, another purpose unfolded. That was to give instructions and prepare each elder for the endowment which the faithful would receive upon the completion of the temple.[3]

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[1]DHC, II, 176, 218, 430-433, 476; Erastus Snow, Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets, n.d.

[2]D&C 97:14.

[3]William Draper Journal, p. 2, located in Special Collections Library at Brigham Young University; DHC, II, 301.

How effective the school was would be difficult to determine. It seemed to be held on a daily basis and kept the elders quite busy, busy enough that when Dr. Sampson Avard requested the opportunity of bringing to Kirtland a series of philosophical lectures, the Church replied that it probably would not meet with much success "as the elders are busily engaged in other studies."[4]

The School of the Elders was one of the early American schools to offer classes for adults on the high school level. The elders studied history of ancient and modern nations, geography, literature, philosophy, politics, and English grammar.[5] The same subjects, except for bookkeeping, surveying, and astronomy, were taught in the high school at Providence which was regarded as one of the superior schools in the country during the 1830's.[6] Mr. Parmely's Select School and the Chardon Academy were private high schools in the neighboring community of Painesville. Both of these schools offered classes in philosophy, chemistry, rhetorick, history, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, reading and writing.[7] Some private schools offered evening classes for adults shortly after the Revelation, but these ventures were only at the elementary school level. The first public school on record to

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[4]Oliver Cowdery Letters (MSS in Church Historian's Office), letter dated December 15, 1835.

[5]H. S. Salisbury, "History of Education in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Journal of History, XV (1922), pp. 264-265.

[6]Carl Russell Fish, The Rise of the Common Man (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1929), p. 222.

[7]Painesville Telegraph [Painesville, Ohio], June 7, 1831, and December 13, 1833.

offer high school classes for adults was in Cincinnati in 1856.[8] However, there were probably private schools offering high school courses for adults before that time.

SCHOOL OF THE ELDERS IN ZION

The first school of the Elders opened in the latter part of the summer of 1833, in Jackson County, Missouri, or Zion. Parley P. Pratt was the instructor and his class consisted of about sixty elders.[9] School was held once a week in the open air, under some tall trees, in a "retired place in the wilderness."[10] The teacher traveled on foot, sometimes with bare feet, a distance of about six miles in order to conduct class. Parley P. Pratt recorded that they prayed, preached, prophesied, and exercised themselves in the gifts of the Holy Spirit so much so that "great and marvelous things were manifested and taught."[11]

The Lord seemed pleased with the school. In a revelation given to Joseph Smith, the Savior states:

> Behold, I say unto you, concerning the school in Zion, I, the Lord, am well pleased that there should be a school in Zion, and also with my servant Parley P. Pratt, for he abideth in me.

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[8]C. Hartley Grattan, In Quest of Knowledge (New York: Association Press, 1955), p. 218.

[9]Parley Parker Pratt, Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, ed. Parley P. Pratt (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), p. 93.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

> And inasmuch as he continueth to abide in me he shall continue to preside over the school in the land of Zion until I shall give unto him other commandments.
>
> And I will bless him with a multiplicity of blessings, in expounding all scriptures and mysteries to the edification of the school, and of the church in Zion.[12]

How long the school was in progress is not definite, but Parley said he taught the school the latter part of the summer and in the autumn.[13]

FIRST SESSION IN KIRTLAND

The School of the Elders opened in Kirtland a little over a year after the school of the Elders in Zion closed. The school began sometime between the 25th of November and the 1st of December, 1834.[14] It is not known how many elders attended school, but the number could not have been very large. School was held in the schoolroom below the printing shop which was only thirty by thirty-eight feet.[15] This room was also used as a place of worship on the Sabbath, and was so small that many had to be turned away or they would take turns in staying away.[16] Joseph Smith said the school was "well attended," and

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[12] D&C 97:3-5.

[13] Pratt, p. 93.

[14] DHC, II, 170, 175-176.

[15] Ibid., pp. 169-170; Joseph Smith Jr. Letter Book, p. 57, located in Church Historian's Office.

[16] Caroline B. Crosby's Journal, located at Church Historian's Office.

that is about the only indication given as to the size of the school.[17]

The first session of the School of the Elders closed the last week in March, 1835, to give the elders the opportunity to go forth and proclaim the gospel.[18] Thus, school was in operation for about eighteen weeks which was about average. The average length of the school session in 1836 in the United States was less than twenty weeks.[19]

SECOND SESSION IN KIRTLAND

Although the elders met together in school on November 2, 1835, the second session of the School of the Elders in Kirtland was not officially opened until Joseph dedicated it in "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" on November 3, 1835.[20] As in the first session, Joseph the Prophet presided and even did some lecturing on grammar.[21] However, Sidney Rigdon was the chief instructor, at least until the Hebrew School started, and there are indications that Frederick G. Williams and William E. McLellin assisted and conducted classes.[22]

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[17] DHC, II, 175-176.

[18] Ibid., p. 218.

[19] Robert E. Chaddock, Ohio Before 1850 (New York: Columbia University, 1908), p. 144.

[20] DHC, II, 299-301.

[21] H. S. Salisbury, "History of Education in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Journal of History, XV (1922), p. 265.

[22] Ibid.; Journal History, November 14, 1835; Benjamin F. Johnson, My Life's Review (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), pp. 21-22.

School was held in the schoolroom below the printing shop until the 18th of January, 1836. On that day it was moved into one of the five small rooms located on the third floor of the Kirtland Temple adjacent to the Hebrew School.[23] Even though this classroom had small windows and low ceiling, it was apparently better than the schoolroom below the printing shop, or that room may have been needed for one of the other schools. There were two grammar schools and a writing school being offered concurrently with the School of the Elders.[24]

School must have closed about April 1, 1836, for Joseph wrote, "The Elders began to spread abroad in all parts of the land, preaching the word."[25] This proved to be the last session of the elders' school because apostasy had infiltrated the Church and the leading officials were forced to flee Kirtland.

CURRICULUM

From a few textbooks used in the School of the Elders, a great amount of information can be obtained as to subject matter taught in the school. Two such textbooks are in the possession of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at Independence, Missouri. One is Richard Watson's Theological Institutes or a View of the Evidences, Doctrines, Morals, and Institutions of Christianity (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1834); the other is Rev. Royal Robbin's

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[23] DHC, II, 376.

[24] William W. Phelps, "Some Early Letters of William W. Phelps," The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, XXXI (January, 1940), p. 30.

[25] DHC, II, 436.

The World Developed in its History and Geography Embracing a History of the World (New York: W. W. Reed and Co., 1832). This last text is a book of 622 pages containing general views of the politics, religion, military and naval affairs, arts, literature, manners, customs, and society of both ancient and modern nations.[26]

Oliver Cowdery wrote that most of the elders were studying and reviewing "grammar, History, Writing, etc."[27] The elders also received a series of lectures on theology known as the Lectures on Faith.

LECTURES ON FAITH

Under the title of "Lectures on Faith" were seven lectures which contained "some of the best lesson material ever prepared on the Godhead; on the character, perfections, and attributes of God; on faith, miracles, and sacrifice."[28] After the lectures were given to the School of the Elders, they were prepared by the Prophet Joseph Smith and published in The Doctrine and Covenants.[29] The Lectures on Faith occupied the first 75 pages in all editions of The Doctrine and Covenants from 1835 to 1921. Yet they were not to be regarded as equal in authority to the revelations recorded in The Doctrine and Covenants, but were considered profitable for doctrine.[30]

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[26]Salisbury, pp. 264-265.

[27]Oliver Cowdery Letters, December 25, 1835.

[28]Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine (2d ed.; Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 439.

[29]DHC, II, 176.

[30]Ibid.; McConkie, p. 439.

It has been thought by some that the Lectures on Faith were given in the School of the Prophets, but this must be a mistake. The lectures were given in December of 1834, and the School of the Prophets was not in session that year.[31] Zebedee Coltrin stated that the Lectures on Faith as found in The Doctrine and Covenants were not given in the School of the Prophets, but "in a larger school on the hill afterwards, where Sidney presided."[32] It is possible, however, that doctrine similar to that found in the Lectures on Faith was taught in the School of the Prophets.

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[31]DHC, II, 176.

[32]Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets (MSS in Church Historian's Office), minutes dated October 11, 1883.

Chapter 5

KIRTLAND HIGH SCHOOL

ORGANIZATION

About twelve years after the first American high school was established in Boston, the leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized their first high school, later known as the Kirtland High School.[1] Although it is not known where the school was located, it was probably held in the schoolroom below the printing shop. Except for the small room above the Whitney Store, it was the only schoolroom available to the saints until the temple was finished. The school opened sometime in December, 1834, and continued until the following spring.[2] When the first school year ended is not certain. The Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate gave notice that the spring term would commence on the 20th of April, 1835.[3] No mention is made of the length of a term, but school must have continued at least into the middle of May. Thus, the first year of the Kirtland High School consisted of twenty to twenty-four weeks of instruction, which

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[1]James R. Harris, "A Comparison of the Educational Thought of Joseph Smith With That of Certain Contemporary Educators" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1965), p. 29.

[2]Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate [Kirtland, Ohio], February, 1835, hereafter cited as Messenger and Advocate.

[3]Ibid.

was more than the average length of a school year in Ohio during the 1830's.[4]

No reference could be found indicating that the Kirtland High School was held during the winter of 1835-1836. Both the School of the Elders and the Hebrew School were in operation that winter, and almost all of the adult male members were attending one or the other of these schools. Therefore, it is highly probable that the high school was not in session again until the fall of 1836.

The Kirtland High School opened again in November, 1836, in a new location.[5] Five small classrooms on the third floor of the Kirtland Temple were built to be used for the schools sponsored by the Church.[6] From the information available, it would seem that the Kirtland High School was the only daytime school in operation that winter. This session of school continued until sometime in May, and then the school was discontinued because of the exodus of the Saints from Kirtland to Missouri.[7]

The periods of instruction in Ohio schools during the Kirtland era were very short, books were scarce, and there was very little

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[4]Robert E. Chaddock, Ohio Before 1850 (New York: Columbia University, 1908), p. 144.

[5]DHC, II, 475.

[6]Clarence Fields, "History of the Kirtland Temple" (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963), pp. 28-29; DHC, II, 474.

[7]Erastus Snow, "Erastus Snow Sketch Book," p. 26, located in Special Collections Library, Brigham Young University.

system.[8] Yet, at that time the Church effectively organized a complete school system. It had a board of trustees composed of Joseph Smith, Jr., Frederick G. Williams, Sidney Rigdon, and Oliver Cowdery.[9] The high school, in its first year, was under the direction of William E. McLellin.[10] A Mr. H. M. Hawes was the "principal" the second year the school was in operation, and he had under his supervision two assistant instructors.[11] How much the teachers were paid for their services is not known, but the "ordinary school master" in other schools, during the 1830's, was paid nine dollars a month and twelve dollars if he was a "first class teacher."[12]

When school first commenced in December, 1834, 130 students attended classes, but after about three weeks the classes became so large and the "house" so crowded, it was decided to dismiss all the "small students."[13] The enrollment of the high school stayed at about one hundred for the rest of the winter.[14] Male and female, young and old, were encouraged to attend.[15] Apparently the high school was

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[8]Chaddock, p. 142.

[9]Messenger and Advocate, February, 1835.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., January, 1837.

[12]George A. Smith, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, July 7, 1872, Journal of Discourses, reporter David W. Evans, XV (Los Angeles: Gartner Printing and Litho Co., Inc., 1956), p. 98.

[13]Messenger and Advocate, February, 1835.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

fulfilling the need the Church had for educating their youth, for Dr. Sampson Avard's attempt to establish a female school in Kirtland was discouraged by the leaders of the Church.[16]

Between 135 and 140 students enrolled in the Kirtland High School the second year it opened for registration.[17] However, with three instructors and five classrooms it was not necessary to turn away any students as occurred two years before

TUITION AND EXPENSES

The cost of obtaining an education at the Kirtland High School seemed to be comparable with the tuition in the schools of the neighboring communities. In Kirtland the tuition for a term of English grammar was one dollar, while at Mr. Parmely's Select School in nearby Painesville, tuition was three dollars for a term of English grammar, geography and arithmetic.[18] Tuition for other subjects was two dollars for reading and writing, and between three and four dollars for philosophy, chemistry, rhetoric, and history.[19]

The Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate published a notice that "young gentlemen and ladies" living a distance from Kirtland could obtain board and room with "respectable families" for

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[16] Oliver Cowdery Letters (MSS located in Church Historian's Office), letter dated December 15, 1835.

[17] Messenger and Advocate, January, 1837; DHC, II, 474.

[18] Lorenzo Barnes' Journal, 1836, located in Church Historian's Office; Painesville Telegraph [Painesville, Ohio], June 7, 1831.

[19] Painesville Telegraph [Painesville, Ohio], June 7, 1831.

$1.00 to $1.25 per week.[20] This was the same price advertized in the Painesville Telegraph for board and room to attend the Chardon Academy.[21]

CURRICULUM

The Kirtland High School was divided into three departments with an instructor to supervise each. Languages were taught in the classical department. Mr. Hawes, the principal, was the supervisor of this department and taught Greek, Latin and English grammar.[23] In the English department the students studied mathematics, common arithmetic, geography, English grammar, reading, and writing.[24] The youngest scholars attended the juvenile department where they were instructed in the "first principles and rudiments of an education."[25] The trustees of this institution also had plans of introducing the "higher branches of English literature" into the curriculum.[26] In comparison, the high school in Providence, Rhode Island, which had the reputation of being one of the best during that period, offered only four subjects not listed in the Church's school system.

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[20] Messenger and Advocate, February, 1835.

[21] Painesville Telegraph, December 13, 1833.

[22] DHC, II, 474.

[23] Wilford Woodruff, Leaves From My Journal (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1909), p. 27; Messenger and Advocate, January, 1837.

[24] Messenger and Advocate, January, 1837.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., February, 1835.

Those subjects were bookkeeping, surveying, astronomy, and "evidences."[27]

William E. McLellin gave a report of the progress of the high school to the board of trustees in which he listed only four of the texts used in the school. He listed T. Burdick's arithmetic, S. Kirkham's grammar, J. Olney's geography, and N. Webster's dictionary.[28] These same texts were also used in Mr. Parmely's Select School in Painesville.[29]

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

It is interesting to note that a religious class, of any type, was not included in the curriculum of the Church's high school. About the only indication given to any type of religious instruction was William E. McLellin's report. He stated that the school paid "strict attention" to good morals as well as to the sciences.[30] However, during the 1830's, almost all the secondary schools offered regular courses in religion and morality.[31] The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints no doubt did the same. Also, most of the school reading books were of a religious nature or contained moral lessons

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[27]Carl Russell Fish, The Rise of the Common Man (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1929), p. 222.

[28]Messenger and Advocate, February, 1835.

[29]Painesville Telegraph, September 20, 1831.

[30]Messenger and Advocate, February, 1835.

[31]Bernard Mandel, "Religion and the Public Schools of Ohio," The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, LVIII (1949), p. 187.

based upon biblical themes.[32] The majority of citizens during this era preferred some religious teachings in the schools. Most Protestants agreed that the Bible should be read in class, but the Catholics strongly objected, especially to the King James Version. Thus, the decision was usually left up to the local citizens.[33]

It was a custom of the early schools in Ohio to conduct daily devotionals at the beginning of each school day.[34] These exercises usually consisted of Bible reading, prayer, and the singing of hymns.[35] It is within reason to suppose that the Church's high school would also observe this custom.

EVALUATION

With the small amount of information available concerning the Kirtland High School, it would be difficult to determine its effectiveness. William McLellin announced that he had been a teacher in five different states and had visited many other schools, but in none had he seen students make such rapid progress.[36] A public examination was given to the students in the presence of the trustees, parents, and guardians, and at its conclusion, Joseph found their

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[32]Ibid., p. 188.

[33]Fish, p. 218.

[34]Mandel, p. 187.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Messenger and Advocate, February, 1835.

progress "of the highest order."[37] The trustees issued a report stating, "Never did we witness greater progress in study in the same length of time and in so great a number of scholars."[38] It would seem that the Kirtland High School was at least on a par with similar institutions, and it is possible it was superior to many of the high schools in Ohio during that period of time.

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[37] DHC, II, 475.

[38] Messenger and Advocate, January, 1837.

Chapter 6

HEBREW SCHOOL

MOTIVATIONAL FORCES

The elders of the Church began arriving in Kirtland about the last week of October, 1835, for the second session for the School of the Elders. Classes which were to begin on the 2nd day of November had also been taught the winter before. A number of elders resided in neighboring communities; thus, at considerable cost and effort, arrangements were made for clothing, board, and room so that all who wished could attend. Although each elder could obtain board and room for about one dollar per week, many families had to make great sacrifices so that each one could obtain the education which the Lord had asked him to acquire.[1]

The primary purpose of the elders' school was to prepare the elders for missionary work and to develop their potential for rendering greater service in God's kingdom here on earth. Since Joseph Smith believed that an understanding of the Hebrew language would assist the elders to promulgate the gospel, a Hebrew class was included in the school's curriculum. Hebrew was being taught in many institutions of higher learning, and an elder understanding the language was likely to

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[1]Lorenzo Barnes' Journal, located in Church Historian's Office.

have more influence over the learned men of the world, or at least be able "to meet them on their own ground."[2] Joseph reasoned that if the saints read God's word as it was written in the "original language," then an increased knowledge of God and His teachings would be a natural result. It was his prayer that "God will speedily endow us with a knowledge of all languages and tongues, that his servants may go forth for the last time the better prepared to bind up the law, and seal up the testimony."[3]

Other factors undoubtedly provided incentive for including Hebrew as a course of study. Joseph recorded that he and others had been commanded to "study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people."[4] In July, 1835, Joseph acquired some papryi containing a record of Abraham and Joseph of Egypt and had spent the next few months arranging an alphabet and grammar for the Egyptian language. Noticing that some characters which appeared on the papyrus resembled ancient Hebrew characters, he apparently thought that an advanced knowledge of the Hebrew language would aid him in translating the ancient writings.[5] In addition, Joseph Smith's revision of the Bible most likely stimulated a great desire for additional learning of the language in which the book was originally written.

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[2]Minutes Regarding School of the Prophets (MSS in Church Historian's Office), minutes dated January 14, 1871.

[3]DHC, II, 376-377.

[4]D&C 90:15.

[5]DHC, II, 348.

Before the elders began arriving in Kirtland to attend school, the leaders of the Church had been in communication with a man by the name of Lucius Parker about obtaining his services to teach a Hebrew class. Parker informed the Church leaders he would be willing but could only teach the rudiments of the Hebrew language. Oliver replied, "We have those who are able to teach the rudiments of the Hebrew, but we wished an accomplished scholar."[6] Oliver also requested names of any scholars with whom Parker was familiar who could fulfill the Church's request.

On November 2, 1835, the School of the Elders opened. However, classes were not held because most of the day was occupied with organizational matters. During the evening of this same day, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, Frederick G. Williams, Warren Parrish, and a few others traveled by team and wagon to Willoughby for the express purpose of listening to a lecture on the theory and practice of physics given by Professor Piexotto. It is possible the Church leaders had learned that Dr. Piexotto was an instructor of the Hebrew language, perhaps from Lucius Parker, and for this reason attended his lecture. Apparently, during that meeting arrangements were made for Dr. Piexotto to instruct the Hebrew class.[7] Since books were needed for the proposed class, the issue arose as to whether Oliver Cowdery or Frederick G. Williams should be sent to locate the texts. Revelation through Joseph Smith settled the

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[6]Oliver Cowdery letters (MSS located in Church Historian's Office), letter dated October 28, 1835.

[7]DHC, II, 299-300; Journal History, November 14, 1835.

question; Oliver was to go to New York and purchase Hebrew textbooks and a book bindery.[8] Also, Oliver had been "ordained" to do the work of "printing, and of selecting and writing books for the schools," and perhaps, this was another reason Oliver was to attend to this task rather than Frederick G. Williams.[9]

Oliver Cowdery returned Friday evening November 20, 1835, with a quantity of Hebrew books. He presented Joseph with a Hebrew Bible, lexicon, and grammar, plus Webster's English Dictionary, and also a Greek lexicon.[10] Joseph was thrilled. He spent the next six weeks, before the Hebrew class began, engaged in individual study of the language. With the Hebrew lexicon in hand, he began studying Hebrew and translating the Egyptian papyri. Following intense personal study, the Prophet made an interesting statement concerning the Egyptian scrolls:

> The record of Abraham and Joseph, found with the mummies, is beautifully written on papyrus, with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation. The characters are such as you find upon the coffins of mummies--hieroglyphics, etc.; with many characters of letters like the present (though probably not quite so square) form of the Hebrew without points.[11]

This discovery, no doubt, stimulated a desire on the part of many to gain a thorough knowledge of the language.

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[8] DHC, II, 300.

[9] D&C 55:4.

[10] A lexicon is a dictionary containing an alphabetical arrangement of the words in a certain language, with the definition of each.

[11] DHC, II, 348.

HEBREW SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

The Hebrew class met on January 4, 1836, and a decision was made to separate this body from the School of the Elders and establish another educational institution.[12] A committee was appointed to conduct all arrangements for the newly organized school. It was decided that the school would meet daily in the west room on the third floor of the Kirtland Temple. This room was sometimes referred to as the "translating room."[13] Although the room had small windows and a low ceiling, the leaders of the Church decided it was adequate for instructional purposes.[14] Prior to this decision, four stoves had been placed in the cellar of the temple which heated twelve cylinders. Four of these heating vents were used to warm the attic schoolrooms.[15] This aided greatly in providing a physical atmosphere conducive to learning.

Two months before the Hebrew School was organized, the class members reached the conclusion that Dr. Piexotto was not qualified to give them the knowledge they wished to acquire and wanted to be released from the agreement which they had with him.[16] When Doctor Piexotto notified the school the day before he was to deliver his introductory lecture that he would be detained for an additional week,

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[12]Ibid., pp. 355, 376.

[13]Ibid., p. 356.

[14]Clarence Fields, "History of the Kirtland Temple" (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963), pp. 28-29.

[15]Journal History, December 18, 1835.

[16]DHC, II, 318-319.

the saints utilized that reason to have Dr. Piexotto released. After a vote was taken, the saints decided that Sylvester Smith should write him a letter, informing him that his services were no longer needed.[17]

William E. McLellin and Orson Hyde were dispatched to the Hudson Seminary to hire a new teacher, and in all probability they knew beforehand which teacher they desired.[18] At this time Eliza R. Snow was living with the Prophet's family and had throughout the winter written often to her brother Lorenzo, who was a student at Oberlin College. During the fall months of 1835, Lorenzo had received private instruction in the Hebrew language at Oberlin from a Jewish professor, Joshua Seixas.[19] Most likely it was through this channel that Joseph learned of Professor Seixas and his reputation as an excellent teacher of the Hebrew tongue. Joseph probably also knew that Seixas was at that time an instructor at the Hudson Seminary. Elder McLellin returned from Hudson and reported to the school that he had hired Joshua Seixas to teach forty scholars for a term of seven weeks for a sum of $320.00.[20] Meanwhile, until the new teacher arrived, the school continued to meet under the guidance of the Prophet.

Under the tutorship of Joseph Smith the school experienced some difficulties. On the first day of class, Orson Pratt had a heated debate with Joseph over the correct pronunciation of a certain Hebrew

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[17] Ibid., p. 355.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Leroi C. Snow, "Who was Professor Joshua Seixas?" The Improvement Era, XXXIX (1936), 70.

[20] DHC, II, 356.

letter. The next day was spent settling the unpleasant feelings which Orson expressed. Finally, Orson confessed his fault, asked the forgiveness of the class, and was "cheerfully" forgiven by all.[21]

Two days of class time were devoted to discussing heavenly manifestations that had followed the ordinance of washing and anointing which took place in their classroom the night before. Some of the students testified that they had seen the heavens opened, others said they beheld visions, some said they had seen the face of the Savior, and still others declared that they were ministered unto by holy angels.[22] Since many students said they "did not feel like studying," they commenced conversing upon heavenly things. Joseph recorded that these days were spent "agreeably and profitably."[23] Although school was not held on a daily basis while Joseph was the teacher, good progress was made and some students were able to begin reading their Hebrew Bibles with much success.[24]

JOSHUA SEIXAS

Before Joshua Seixas arrived in Kirtland, he had established a notable reputation. He was a young man, being only a few years older than Joseph Smith.[25] Joshua was born either in Cuba or Virginia to

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., p. 382.

[23] Ibid., p. 384.

[24] Ibid., p. 376.

[25] Snow, p. 69.

Gershom Mendez and Hanah Manuel Seixas.[26] It is not certain where he received his education, but it is known that he had extensive experience as a teacher. He had taught Hebrew and other ancient languages at the theological seminary in New York; had studied and taught at Andover, Massachusetts; was an instructor in the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in New York City; and also had taught at both Oberlin College and Western Reserve College at Hudson, Ohio.[27] Joseph said he had a "knowledge of many languages which were spoken by the ancients, and he is an honorable man, so far as I can judge yet."[28] Christopher Crary, a non-member citizen of Kirtland, had heard Joshua Seixas speak at the local Congregational Church and said, "I think I never heard more eloquent and touching language used than in his lectures on Joseph and Moses in Egypt."[29] Following a few weeks' acquaintance, Joseph said, "I believe the Lord is striving with him, . . . and that he will eventually embrace the new and everlasting covenant, for he is a chosen vessel unto the Lord to do His people good."[30]

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[26]Ibid., pp. 67, 70.

[27]Ibid., p. 70.

[28]DHC, II, 388. Joseph made this statement after Seixas had examined the Abraham papyrus and had pronounced it to be original beyond all doubt.

[29]Christopher G. Crary, Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences (Marshalltown, Iowa: Marshall Printing Company, 1898), p. 33.

[30]DHC, II, 397.

INSTRUCTION BEGINS

Joshua Seixas, or "Sashshus" as some pronounced it, arrived on the 26th of January, and classes were held that day. He taught from 10 to 11 a.m., and from 2 to 3 p.m.[31] His students gathered to recite for fifteen minutes before class and then read to one another for a period of time following his lectures. No mention is made of homework, but Joseph makes numerous references to private study at home during the duration of the school.

TEXTBOOKS AND TUITION

The school began with one class of forty students, but within two weeks four classes had been organized, each containing thirty to forty students.[32] This expansion meant that over 120 students were taking the course during the same period of time. This unexpected increase in the number of students was more than the committee had originally planned. The number of texts available were few, so few, in fact, that the Hebrew Bibles were each divided into several parts so that each student could have a text to study.[33] In addition to the Hebrew Bible, there existed among some of the brethren books written by Moses Stuart entitled A Grammar of the Hebrew Language (Andover, Massachusetts, 1835) and A Hebrew Grammar (Andover, Massachusetts,

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[31]Ibid., pp. 385-386.

[32]Ibid., pp. 390-391.

[33]Ibid., p. 391.

1821), but these were few in number.[34] Perhaps the textbook most frequently used was a Supplement to J. Seixas' Manual Hebrew Grammar especially printed "for the Kirtland, Ohio, Theological Institution."[35] Seixas returned to Kirtland from a visit with his family bringing with him a few extra Hebrew Bibles and other books, but this still did not satisfy the demand for them. Each book cost from $1.30 to about $2.00, except for the Hebrew Bible which cost $4.16.[36] These were expensive textbooks for that time.

Lorenzo Barnes records that tuition for attending the Hebrew School was about $6.00.[37] This seems to be a fair price considering the students of the Hudson Seminary had to pay $7.50 for the same instruction.[38]

PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS

After three weeks of classes, Seixas stated that the elders "were the most forward of any class he ever instructed for the same length of time."[39] Some of the brethren had made such strides that

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[34] H. S. Salisbury, "History of Education in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Journal of History, XV (1922), 266; Moses Stuart, A Hebrew Grammar (Andover, Massachusetts, 1821).

[35] Joshua Seixas, Supplement to J. Seixas' Manual Hebrew Grammar (New York, n.d.). The preface of this text was written by Oliver Cowdery.

[36] Snow, p. 69.

[37] Barnes, February 9, 1836.

[38] Snow, p. 69.

[39] DHC, II, p. 396.

Professor Seixas selected a group to receive advanced instruction. These men were Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, William W. Phelps, Edward Partridge, William E. McLellin, Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, Sylvester Smith and Warren Parrish.[40] These scholars met one hour before other members of the class assembled for intensified study.

Not all went well in the school, however. William Smith lost his temper one day over a statement made by Seixas which William thought was damaging to the Church.[41] Joseph spent the afternoon settling the misunderstanding between the two, and apparently thought he had settled the matter.[42] However, William stated many years later that his feelings restricted his ability to attain any great proficiency in his knowledge of the Hebrew language.[43] Another problem occurred over the sale of Bibles which belonged to Seixas. A meeting of the school committee had to be called to assure Joshua that payment would be made for his Bibles, and soon they were able to soothe his injured feelings.[44]

The Saints felt that Seixas' instruction had proved so beneficial that the school committee approached him with an offer to remain for another quarter. For some reason this proposal was not

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[40]Ibid., p. 397.

[41]William Smith, William Smith on Mormonism (Lamoni, Iowa, 1883), p. 23.

[42]DHC, II, p. 400.

[43]Smith, p. 23.

[44]DHC, II, 402.

accepted; however, he did agree to teach for an extra three weeks.[45] This extended period of instruction allowed the last class organized to complete a full seven week course. Arrangements were also made to have the family of Mr. Seixas brought to Kirtland.

RESULTS OF THE HEBREW SCHOOL

The Hebrew School was in existence for only ten short weeks. It is interesting that little was said concerning the last day of school. Joseph merely stated, "Attended school, which was the last day of our course of lectures in Hebrew, by Professor Seixas."[46] Then no more was said concerning the school, Joshua Seixas, or further study of the language. Orson Pratt wrote that he obtained a certificate from Professor Seixas certifying to his capability of teaching the Hebrew language.[47] It would seem likely that the other members of the advanced class would have also obtained similar certificates.

The benefits resulting from the Hebrew class may never be determined. Joseph set a new goal for himself. "My soul delights in reading the word of the Lord in the original, and I am determined to pursue the study of the languages, until I shall become master of them, if I am permitted to live long enough."[48] Using the Hebrew

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[45]Ibid., p. 405.

[46]Ibid., p. 429.

[47]Orson Pratt's Journal, 1836, located in Church Historian's Office.

[48]DHC, II, 396.

Bible as his source, William W. Phelps occasionally wrote letters to Brigham Young giving his translation of chapters which had particular significance for the saints.[49] Caroline Crosby wrote that her husband would return home after school and tutor her in the Hebrew language until she had learned to read it, but was not able to translate.[50]

In later years, Orson Pratt tells of seeing a stone taken from the great mounds near Newark, Ohio. On the stone was a carved figure of a man clothed in a priestly robe and over the head of this man were the Hebrew characters for "Moshe," the ancient name of Moses. On each side of the figure were the Ten Commandments written in ancient Hebrew characters.[51] Concerning these Hebrew characters, Orson said, "I had sufficient knowledge of them to understand and know how to translate the inscription." He further explained the differences between the modern and ancient Hebrew languages.[52] He had apparently been instructed in both.

President Brigham Young gave the following instructions to all Latter-day Saint parents:

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[49]Papers of William W. Phelps (MSS in Church Historian's Office), n.d.

[50]Caroline B. Crosby's Journal, located in Church Historian's Office.

[51]Orson Pratt, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, April 10, 1870, Journal of Discourses, reporter David W. Evans (Los Angeles: Gartner Printing and Litho Co., Inc., 1956), XIII, 130.

[52]Orson Pratt, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, November 27, 1870, Journal of Discourses, reporter David W. Evans (Los Angeles: Gartner Printing and Litho Co., Inc., 1956), XIV, 297.

> See that your children are properly educated in the rudiments of their mother tongue, . . . When they have become well acquainted with their language, let them study other languages, and make themselves fully acquainted with the manners, customs, laws, governments, and literature of other nations, peoples, and tongues.[53]

Perhaps, then, the most important accomplishment of the Hebrew School was that it instilled in the hearts of early Church leaders the desirability of learning other languages.

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[53]Brigham Young, Address delivered at Salt Lake City, March 4 1860, Journal of Discourses, reporter G. D. Watt (Los Angeles: Gartner Printing and Litho Co., Inc., 1956), VIII, 9.

Chapter 7

OTHER SCHOOLS IN KIRTLAND

GRAMMAR SCHOOLS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized its first grammar school on December 22, 1834.[1] It was designed especially for the benefit of the young elders who lacked the necessary education to be effective representatives of the Church.[2] Although the school was organized primarily for the elders, some women of the Church also attended.[3] This grammar school was apparently well attended, for it required the services of two instructors. Sidney Rigdon and William E. McLellin taught the classes which were in existence for about six weeks.[4] It is possible that another six week term commenced following the first six weeks of instruction. Evan M. Greene, who was in attendance during the first term, recorded that he attended grammar school until the 13th day of March, 1835.[5] Concerning the grammar school, Evan Greene wrote, "This day our school was dismissed for the

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[1]Journal History, December 22, 1834.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., December 22, 1834; and March 13, 1835.

last time; it was truly an effecting scene and all hearts seemed melted unto tenderness."[6] A few weeks later, on April 1, 1835, Evan Greene began teaching school and continued for twelve weeks.[7] This was probably a grammar school also.

The next December two grammar schools were in existence. Both of these schools were held in the evenings.[8] On the evening of December 2, 1835, Orson Pratt delivered a lecture upon grammar and then made a proposal to teach a grammar school from one to four evenings per week.[9] Apparently the offer was accepted, because his school opened the next night. However, after fifteen days of classes, Orson Pratt closed his school "in consequence of other business of more importance."[10] Another grammar school, under the direction of Sidney Rigdon and Vinson Knight, was in operation at the same time as Orson Pratt's school. This school commenced in the early part of December, 1835, and it is not known how long it was in existence before it terminated.[11] Even Greene reported he was not able to attend the School of the Elders or the Hebrew School because he was teaching

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[6]Ibid., March 13, 1835.

[7]Evan Molbourne Greene's Journal, April 1, 1835, located in Church Historian's Office.

[8]William W. Phelps, "Some Early Letters of William W. Phelps," The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, XXXI (1940), 30.

[9]Orson Pratt's Journal, December 2, 1835, located in Church Historian's Office.

[10]Ibid., December 3, 1835.

[11]Lorenzo Barnes' Journal, December 9, 1835, located in Church Historian's Office.

school from January until the 12th day of March, 1836.[12] This school could have been a continuation of the grammar school taught by Sidney Rigdon, because he began attending the Hebrew School during the first part of January.

DEBATE SCHOOL

Debating societies for both young and old made an early appearance in Ohio and were used to supplement or even take the place of formal instruction.[13] The purpose of these associations was to allow free expression, strengthen self-control, learn to give due respect to the opinion of others, and develop the ability for independent thought and the power to form correct opinions. Also public debates on matters of religion and politics were common.[14] The above reasons were probably the motivation factors leading to the organization of a debating school.

As early as November, 1835, Joseph Smith recorded that he had visited his father and found some young elders debating the question, "Was it or was it not, the design of Christ to establish His Gospel by miracles?"[15] Apparently the debate was well organized because the society had a president who would render a final decision.[16] By

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[12]Greene, March 12, 1836.

[13]Robert E. Chaddock, Ohio Before 1850 (New York: Columbia University, 1908), p. 147.

[14]Ibid.

[15]DHC, II, 317.

[16]Ibid.

December of the same year, Joseph made reference to a debating school.[17]

On the evening of December 16, 1835, the Prophet and others met in the home of William Smith to continue a debate which they had begun the previous Saturday. After a decision had been made upon the question under debate, the question arose as to the propriety of continuing the debate school. They feared it would result in more harm than good.[18] Joseph recorded that he had discovered in the debates "too much zeal for mastery, too much of that enthusiasm that characterizes a lawyer at the bar, who is determined to defend his cause, right or wrong."[19] Joseph and others were in favor of its discontinuance, but William was opposed. He insisted on proposing another question for the school, and when he met with some resistance to his proposal, he became very angry. At length, William physically attacked Joseph, Jared Carter and a few others. William's actions disappointed Joseph very much for he wrote, "I am grieved beyond measure, and can only pray God to forgive him."[20] This event no doubt brought a quick end to the debate school for there is no further mention of it.

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[17]Ibid., pp. 334, 340.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., pp. 317-318.

[20]Ibid., p. 335.

SINGING SCHOOL

On the same day the Hebrew School began, a meeting was held in the evening at the Kirtland Temple and arrangements were made for a singing school.[21] This type of school was by no means unique during this period of time. Vocal music was offered in many of the schools in the New England states in the 1830's and was also a course included in many of the early secondary schools of Ohio.[22]

On Monday January 4, 1836, a committee of six was chosen to make the necessary arrangements to organize the singing school. A Mr. M. C. Davis was appointed the instructor for the first year.[23] The school was held two evenings each week, and "all ages took part, from the young adults to the gray heads."[24] The statement, "the choir was large," was the only indication given as to the size of the school.[25]

The Prophet and a few others occasionally visited the temple to listen to the choir of singers. He said, "They performed admirably

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[21] DHC, II, 356.

[22] Carl Russell Fish, The Rise of the Common Man (New York: The MacMillian Company, 1929), p. 222; W. W. Boyd, "Secondary Education in Ohio Previous to the year 1840," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications (Columbus: Fred J. Heer, 1916), p. 133; Jonathan Crosby's Journal, p. 4, located in Church Historian's Office.

[23] Caroline B. Crosby's Journal, 1836, located in Church Historian's Office.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

considering the opportunities they have had."[26] Joseph was apparently very pleased for he had the school organized again the next year and assigned Luman Carter and Jonathan Crosby to give instruction in the principles of vocal music.[27]

OTHER SCHOOLS

Many of the schools in Kirtland were held for only six to twelve weeks, and it is possible that schools were held of which no record is now available. For example, Benjamin F. Johnson wrote that he attended an evening class in geography, and William W. Phelps wrote to his wife about a writing school.[28] William E. McLellin was called before a council of the Church for expressing dissatisfaction with President Sidney Rigdon's school and stating he was glad his wife could not attend the school which was held during the summer of 1835.[29] It would seem that some schools were held in the summer for the members of the Church who could not attend school during the winters when the schools were mostly attended by the men of the priesthood. There may have been a few other such schools of which there are no records.

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[26] DHC, II, 407, 409.

[27] Ibid., p. 474.

[28] Benjamin F. Johnson, My Life's Review (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), p. 22; Phelps, p. 30.

[29] DHC, II, 240, 283.

Chapter 8

LDS SCHOOLS IN MISSOURI

EARLY EDUCATION IN MISSOURI

When Joseph Smith made his first visit to Independence, Missouri, or what the saints called Zion, he observed that "The disadvantages here, as in all new countries, are self-evident--lack of mills and schools."[1] Ezra Booth, when describing Independence in 1831, said the town consisted of a court house, two or three merchant stores and about twenty homes built mostly of logs, but he made no mention of any schools.[2] However, there must have been at least one school in Independence. When Oliver Cowdery sent a report to the Church in Kirtland of his mission to the Lamanites, he reported that he was then teaching school in Independence as a means of supporting the missionary labors.[3]

During the period of 1820 to 1833 there were few schools in Missouri. What few schools existed were almost all private ventures. This no doubt was because most of the citizens in early history of Missouri were from the South. This Southern influence brought with it

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[1]DHC, I, 198.

[2]Journal History, August 3, 1831.

[3]Joseph Smith Jr. Letter Book, p. 11, April 8, 1831, located in Church Historian's Office.

the idea of private schools being supported by a few individuals who could afford to pay for them. It also brought the idea of employing private tutors for one or more wealthy families.[4] Once in a while a group of families would form into a voluntary association for the purpose of educating their children. They would hire a teacher and each parent would pay a portion of the cost. It was the teacher's duty to collect the fees, and he would board a week or longer in the home of each family who sent children to school. Many of these schools were found in Missouri until 1839.[5]

The first legislation passed concerning education in Missouri was known as the "Act of 1808."[6] It contained provisions that the poor and the Indian children were to be taught free and the French and the English languages were to be taught at all times. This act encouraged the study of subjects such as reading, writing, ciphering, and spelling, but forbid the study of theology.[7] Grammar and geography were studied by the more exceptional students. The "Act of 1835" stated that expenses for schools were to be paid out of the money obtained from the sale of school sections. It added the subjects of arithmetic and "such other branches as the funds might justify," but again theology was not to be included.[8] It was not until 1839, after the saints had been

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[4]Claude A. Phillips, A History of Education in Missouri (Jefferson City, Missouri: Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1911), pp. 1-2, 8.

[5]Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[6]Ibid., p. 5.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., p. 9.

expelled from Missouri, that any attempt was made by the Missouri legislature to organize some type of school system.[9]

COLESVILLE SCHOOL

In the summer of 1831, the Colesville branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, originally from Colesville, New York, arrived in Jackson County. On the 2nd day of August, 1831, Joseph Smith and eleven other men laid the first log for the first house in Zion. The log was carried and placed by twelve men, symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel.[10] This first house in Zion was to be a place of worship and a school.[11] It was located twelve miles west of Independence in Kaw Township. Today a monument erected by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands on the spot where the school was built in what is now known as Troost Park, Kansas City, Missouri. The inscription on the monument reads:

SCHOOL IN ZION

> On August 2, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith was assisted by the members of the Colesville Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and others in laying the log for the first house as a foundation of Zion in Kaw Township.
>
> This log was carried and placed by twelve men representing the twelve tribes of Israel.
>
> This house, a place of worship,was also used as a school and was the first school to be erected within the present boundaries of Kansas City, Missouri.[12]

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[9]Ibid., p. 2.

[10]DHC, I, 196.

[11]Alvin R. Dyer, The Refiner's Fire (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1969), pp. 115-116.

[12]Ibid.

Little else is known about the school, but it was apparently used until the saints were forced from Jackson County in the fall of 1833.

Another building used for a place of worship and as a school was built by Bishop Edward Partridge in Independence near what is presently known as Union and Lexington Streets. School was conducted here until the saints were expelled from the county.[13] However, the saints had plans for a great many more schools to be built eventually in Jackson County. Each "City of Zion" was to have "twenty-four buildings to supply them with houses of worship, schools, etc."[14] Each of these buildings was to be a temple.[15]

A conference was held in Jackson County on January 24, 1832. In this conference William W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery and John Correll were appointed to superintend all schools of the Church in Jackson County.[16] It seems that the LDS Church was just beginning to organize an effective school system in Zion when educational endeavors of the Church were stopped because of the activities of the Jackson County mob.

FAR WEST SCHOOL

One or two months after the first house was built in Far West during the summer of 1836, a "large and comfortable" schoolhouse was

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[13]H. S. Salisbury, "History of Education in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Journal of History, XV (1922), 259.

[14]DHC, I, 358.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Papers of William W. Phelps, (MSS located in Church Historian's Office).

built.[17] It was located in the southwest quarter of the city, and was to also be used as a church, town hall, county court house and a public gathering place.[18] This schoolhouse was apparently very large when compared to most schoolhouses of its time. Helen Whitney said it was large and commodious and "far superior to the ones built by the Gentiles in my native town."[19]

When Missouri was admitted into the Union, an act of congress set apart every sixteenth section of land throughout the state for school purposes.[20] On July 3, 1837, the saints put the Far West school section up for auction. When the bidding had finished, the land, "although entirely a prairie," had sold for prices ranging from $3.50 to $10.20 an acre. This made a total of $5,070 in the first school fund.[21] This was probably the wealthiest of all the Church's schools. Since the Church used funds from the sale of state land to finance their school, this meant it could not be a private institution. Because of the Act of 1808 and the Act of 1835, theology was not to be taught and the Church may have had to limit instruction in Church doctrine in the schools, something they had not had to do before.[22]

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[17] Bertha Ellie Booth, A Short History of Caldwell County Hamilton, Missouri: Hamilton Public Schools, 1936), chapter I.

[18] Ibid.; DHC, III, 30.

[19] Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo," Woman's Exponent, X, 162.

[20] Phillips, p. 7.

[21] Messenger and Advocate [Kirtland, Ohio], July, 1837.

[22] Phillips, pp. 5, 9.

Information regarding the extent of the educational programs of the Church in Far West is limited. Mary Lightner reported she had taught a few children in reading, spelling, writing and geography for about two years.[23] John Murdock taught spelling in an evening school at Far West, and gives the impression that other evening schools were also being held.[24] Z. H. Gurley and Erastus Snow were also instructors in schools at Far West.[25] However, there are no records available which would give any indication whatever that adults attended school during the saints' occupation of Far West. All available records refer only to the education of the youth.

One young boy who attended John Murdock's spelling school was called before the high council at Far West and was reprimanded for trying to hug a girl in class. The boy pleaded not guilty, and the resulting trial gave insight into the conduct of some students during the early periods of Church history.[26] The teacher, John Murdock, was against evening schools because of the young people had the tendency to be "light-minded and tended to draw away minds from their

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[23]Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner's Journal, p. 12, located in Special Collections Library, Brigham Young University.

[24]Far West Minutes and High Council Record, p. 106, located in Church Historian's Office, hereafter this record will be referred to as Far West Record.

[25]Zora Smith Jarvis, Ancestry, Biography and Family of George A. Smith (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1962), p. 62; Erastus Snow, "Erastus Snow Sketch Book," p. 47, located in Special Collections Library, Brigham Young University.

[26]Far West Record, pp. 106-108.

studies."[27] Also, he was against evening schools "because there was too much going home with the girls."[28] Some testified that a few of the young men did not give the teacher the respect which they thought he should have received. Some reported to the high council that a few boys would write verses "which served to tantalize the master," would shake their fists at the teacher when his back was turned, and would wink and smile at a special girl when she would go out to get a drink of water.[29] As mild as some of these actions may seem today, they were considered quite serious during that period of time.

OTHER SCHOOLS

No mention is made of schools being held in the other Mormon settlements of Adam-ondi-Ahman, Haun's Mill, or De Witt, but it is unlikely that the same people who put forth so much effort in providing schools in Kirtland and Zion would not put forth that same effort in these settlements. Joseph Holbrook recorded in his journal in 1837, "I also built a school house in the district where I lived, 22 feet square." Joseph Holbrook lived three miles west of Far West.[30] There is evidence that the Church held school in a log cabin on Long Creek in Kingston Township with Mary Ann Duty as the teacher.[31] The

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[27]Ibid., p. 106.

[28]Ibid., p. 107.

[29]Ibid., pp. 106, 108.

[30]Joseph Holbrook's Journal, p. 21, located in Church Historian's Office.

[31]Booth, chapter V.

Church also built a school in the center of Mirable Township, and had several school houses in Caldwell County "for the Mormons have ever been careful and diligent in the education of their youth."[32]

The saints also had plans for future schools which never materialized because of the persecution and expulsion of the saints from the state of Missouri. Sidney Rigdon gave a forceful address during the Far West Temple site dedication. He stated the temple was to have a double purpose. The first floor of the house would be for sacred worship and the two other floors were for educational purposes. The cost of the temple was calculated to be about $100,000.[33] This house of learning would be a place "where all the sciences, languages, etc., which are taught in our country, in schools of the highest order, shall be taught."[34]

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[32]Ibid.; Howard L. Conard, Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri, IV (New York: The Southern History Company, 1901), 484.

[33]Sidney Rigdon, Oration Delivered by Mr. S. Rigdon on the 4th of July, 1838 (Far West, Missouri: Journal Office, 1838), p. 8.

[34]Ibid., p. 10.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had realized, almost from the day of the Church's restoration, that it was only through intelligence, knowledge, and the acquisition of wisdom that the Church would ever succeed in her mission of establishing the kingdom of God on the earth. Revelation and the Church leaders' thirst for knowledge provided the motivational forces necessary to establish effective education institutions. The saints were to study thoroughly all truth--"of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgements which are on the land, and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms."[1] There appears to be no field of research which lies outside the sphere of this commandment.

The Church members took every available opportunity to obtain as much education as time, money, and circumstances would allow. The saints would attend school whenever possible whether it be fifteen days, six weeks, or six months. Education was a major part of their religion, and most Latter-day Saints strived to live their religion. Much of their time was spent doing missionary work, conducting Church

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[1]D&C 88:79.

business, and providing a living for their families, and these duties of necessity put a limit on the opportunities for gaining as much education as they desired. Mob persecution, especially in Missouri, also greatly limited the opportunities of attending school.[2]

The educational programs of the Church gradually developed until, in the late 1830's, the Church had a highly organized school system for that period of time. It is interesting to speculate what might have been the results had the saints been allowed to remain in Kirtland and Missouri. Their goals for education were in advance of most Americans living in the early republic, and it is possible they could have reached them, had the saints been left alone to pursue the type of life they desired. However, the Church did effectively provide an education for its members which they may not have received otherwise, and perhaps laid a foundation which provided a pattern for the Church school system of the future.

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[2]Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner's Journal, p. 12, located in Special Collections Library, Brigham Young University; Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes and Incidents in Nauvoo," Woman's Exponent, X, 162.

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A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN OHIO AND MISSOURI, 1831-1839

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ABSTRACT

This study is a history of the schools and educational programs organized and maintained by the LDS Church while the saints resided in Ohio and Missouri between the years of 1831 and 1839. The instructors, curriculum, organizational structure, and the purpose of each school is given when information in these areas was available. In Kirtland, the Church organized the School of the Prophets, School of the Elders, Kirtland High School, Hebrew School, a singing school, a writing school, and a few grammar schools. The Church leaders in Missouri organized the Colesville School, a school in Independence, Far West School, and a few others in Caldwell County. However, mob activities probably limited the educational pursuits by the members of the Church in Missouri.

Church members took available of many opportunities to enhance their formal education, and some of the schools established by Latter-day Saints were well organized in comparison to many other schools of the early Republic.

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