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BECOMING MORMON MEN: MALE RITES OF PASSAGE AND THE RISE OF MORMONISM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

by

Bruce R. Lott

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Bruce R. Lott in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

BECOMING MORMON MEN: MALE RITES OF PASSAGE

AND THE RISE OF MORMONISM IN

NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

Bruce R. Lott

Department of History

Master of Arts

The evidence presented in this thesis supports a view of the first Mormon men as coming from the agrarian majority of early nineteenth-century American farmers and artisans who embraced a set of manly ideals that differed significantly, in many ways, from those embraced by their middle-class contemporaries. These men's life writings attest to boyhood experiences of working alongside their fathers as soon as they were physically able, and subsequently of acting as substitute farmers and breadwinners as well as being put out to work outside the direct supervision of their fathers. Such experiences enabled them to frequently follow in the occupational footsteps of their fathers and almost always to marry at ages significantly lower that those of their more upwardly-mobile urban counterparts. Thus, they were able to follow a path to manly independence that was difficult yet direct and relatively rapid.

Early Mormonism attracted an unparalleled percentage of men, who, in turn, embraced and supported the development of a the more self-confident and self-assertive theology of man in early Mormon doctrine. Compared to the other denominations of the day, a disproportionate number of early Mormon converts were, or were led to Mormonism by, men. Although these men had received prior religious instruction in their earliest years, typically from their mothers, the content of that instruction was not of the feminized variety stressed by many historians, and a significant portion of these men had been unable to achieve evangelical conversion experiences. Since many of them had previously turned to more liberal religious beliefs regarding the nature of man and his relationship to God, these men undoubtedly supported Mormonism's development of similar doctrines. Their rejection of revivalist rites of passage, which stressed submission and self-abnegation, is also consistent with their enthusiastic participation in more traditional, physically assertive, unrestrained and combative passages to manhood and rites of male bonding. Such beliefs and behaviors were in marked contrast to the manly self-restraint increasingly enjoined by the Northeastern middle class which has provided the model for most previous studies of nineteenth-century American manhood.

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In working on this thesis I have become indebted to several members of the academic community. I particularly want to thank the members of my committee, David J. Whittaker, Susan Sessions Rugh, and, especially, my committee chair, Mary Stovall Richards, whose generous contributions of time, advice, and encouragement have helped to make what follows a much better work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is the contention of this study that historians of early Mormonism have yet to completely investigate the significance of the gender constructs and socio-economic conditions of its first adherents. The evidence presented in the chapters which follow support the view that the economic passages to manhood of the first Mormon men were difficult yet direct and relatively rapid; that men joined the Mormon Church in proportions unparalleled in other denominations of the time; that the large proportion of male members corresponded to a more self-confident and self-assertive theology of man in early Mormonism; and that the above phenomena also reflected and reinforced martial elements in early Mormon male culture including emphasis on the defense of manly honor even by physical combat. The present chapter reviews the historiography on the rise of Mormonism in early nineteenth-century America as it bears on the above topics.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter LDS or Mormon Church) was officially organized by Joseph Smith, Jr., and five other young men[1] at Fayette, New York, on April 6th, 1830. The "Mormon" Church thus had its official

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[1]The oldest was Joseph's brother Hyrum Smith, then aged 31. The Church was originally called simply "The Church of Christ," and its members soon became known as "Mormons."

beginning within an area and an era which historians have affirmed was experiencing rapid, fundamental, and often disconcerting social change. A number of studies have suggested that concerns about family and gender roles, which such change seemed to threaten or call into question, led many early converts into Mormonism.[2] Yet as recently as 1994, a review of the historiography of Mormonism decried its inadequate treatment of gender issues. While acknowledging the significant strides made in the area of Mormon women's history,[3] Roger Launius stressed the need to address the parallel question of how male ideals and experiences were "translated into Mormonism" as an essential prerequisite

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[2]For example, see Marvin S. Hill, "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District: Another View," *New York History* 61 (Oct 1980): 411-430; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Community Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 128-146; Melodie Moench Charles, "The Need for a New Mormon Heaven," *Dialogue* 21 (Fall 1988): 73-87; Rex E. Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990); Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 217- 225; Dorice Williams Elliott, "Women, the Mormon Family, and Class Mobility: Nineteenth-Century Victorian Ideology in a Twentieth-Century Church," *Sunstone* 15 (Dec 1991): 19-26; Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Mathias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7-10.

[3]The exhaustive *Studies in Mormon History, 1830-1997: An Indexed Bibliography* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2000) by James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, devotes twenty pages of its 586-page index to works on Mormon women's history, with no comparable section on Mormon gender history or on histories of Mormon men as men. This is not an oversight of the bibliography but of the field. Of the substantial body of works on Mormon women's history, a few examine the majority of female members prior to the migration of the main body of Mormons to the Great Basin in the late 1840s. The best of these include Valeen Tippets Avery and Linda King Newell, "Sweet Counsel and Seas of Tribulation: The Religious Life of the Women in Kirtland," *Brigham Young University Studies* 20, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 151-162; Martha Sonntag Bradley, "'Seizing Sacred Space:' Women's Engagement in Early Mormonism," *Dialogue* 27, no. 2 (Summer, 1994): 57-70; Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1994).

to an integrated "gender history" of Mormonism.[4] In the few years since Launius' article, relatively little has been done to adequately address this question.[5]

It is the purpose of the present study to help to fill this gap A closer examination of the passages to manhood of the first Mormon men holds the potential for refining our understanding of the early growth and development of Mormonism and also of the evolution of gender constructs in early nineteenth-century American. A basic assumption underlying the first part of this assertion, as adumbrated by Laurence Yorgason nearly three decades ago, is that the doctrines and customs of early Mormonism were "significantly influenced" by early Mormon converts, who in turn were shaped by "the times and conditions" in which they lived.[6] Most studies of the beginnings of Mormonism have, implicitly if not explicitly, emphasized the charisma of its founding Prophet, Joseph Smith, while generally ignoring Max Weber's crucial insight that charisma does not simply

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[4]Roger D. Launius, "The 'New Social History' and the 'New Mormon History': Reflections on Recent Trends," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27, no.4 (Winter 1994): 122-126.

[5]Launius, "Reflections on Recent Trends," 123. D. Michael Quinn has recently made a major contribution to a better understanding of some essential private aspects of Mormon manhood in nineteenth-century America. (See *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996].) But much work remains to be done regarding public rites of passage to manhood for Mormons during the same period. William G. Hartley has contributed greatly toward a history of Mormon rites of passage by tracing the history priesthood offices and ordinations from an institutional perspective. (See Bibliography). But he has also noted the continuing need to examine such rites using the insights of gender studies as well. (Hartley, "From Men to Boys: LDS Aaronic Priesthood Offices, 1829-1996," *Journal of Mormon History* 22 [Spring 1996]: 103).

[6]Laurence M. Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects of One Hundred Early Mormon Converts" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974), 3.

emanate from prophets to dominate their followers, but is largely bestowed upon the former by the latter.[7] Insofar as Yorgason was correct in concluding that the typical American-born male convert to Mormonism was "a farmer [with] a side occupation or two, who was living in rural conditions, and who could not be termed even relatively wealthy,"[8] the socio-economic conditions of these men resembled those of the majority of their American contemporaries.[9] Although Yorgason's study provides what is still the most thorough examination of these men's socio-economic backgrounds, its scope apparently did not allow for a close examination of their influence on the growth and development of early Mormonism. Moreover, it is essentially blind to gender, as are most subsequent studies of the subject.

The reasons for the lack of progress toward a gender-sensitive history of early

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[7]For Weber's comments on this key facet of charisma, see Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 241-242. Neglect of this insight may be seen in works which otherwise demonstrate considerable knowledge of the seminal works on charisma (e.g., see some of the essays in *The Prophet Puzzle: Interpretive Essays on Joseph Smith*, ed. Bryan Waterman [Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1999]), and even works which give lip service to this insight of Weber (see, e.g., the treatment of Joseph Smith in Len *Oakes, Prophetic Charisma: The Psychology of Revolutionary Religious Personalities* [Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997], 27, but cf. 67, 149, 169, 180, 200.) It is certainly important to continue to examine what it was about Joseph Smith that led so many followers to invest him with charismatic authority. But it must also be stressed that without such followers, as he himself often noted, his message would have died with him.

[8]Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects," 27.

[9]Nine out of ten Americans lived on the land in 1790 and nearly eight out of ten still did in 1860. On the eve of the Civil War, most Americans lived in the countryside, and pursued a way of life now referred to by historians as household economy or household production. (Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* [New York: Hill and Wang, 1989], 16.)

Mormonism may parallel those affecting a similar lag in the transition from women's to gender studies in U.S. history in general. As Michael Kimmel has observed, the pioneering work of feminist scholars in the past two and a half decades has rightly increased our awareness of the importance of gender in shaping, and restricting, the lives of women throughout history. Since gender is defined as the set of meanings and prescriptions that a given culture attaches to a biological sex,[10] such cultural meanings and prescriptions would logically shape and limit the lives of *each* sex.[11] Yet, Kimmel and others have noted the "invisibility of gender" to research involving men, and the related belief that men's history has already been written.[12] The key assumption behind these notions seems to be that gender norms, like historical studies, have until recently been the product of, or at least represented the interests of, the entire male sex (rather than a relatively few men with particular socio-economic backgrounds, ideals and interests). Thus, while women's historians have greatly enriched our understanding by recovering the varied experiences of female factory workers, laundresses, prostitutes, homesteaders, and housewives as well as women worthies, the portrayal of men's historical experience is still

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[10]Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 2-3.

[11]Since such gender constructs "affect all persons, men as well as women," observes one historian, "it seems appropriate," at this point to "focus not just on women" any longer in applying the principles and perspectives pioneered by feminist historians. (John Mack Faragher, "History from the Inside-Out: Writing the History of Women in Rural America," *American Quarterly* 33 [1981]: 545.)

[12]Faragher, "History from the Inside-Out," 3. For an attempt to apply this insight to research involving contemporary Mormon men, see David Knowlton, "On Mormon Masculinity," *Sunstone* 16:2 (August 1992): 19-32.

relatively monolithic.

To be sure, there is little evidence of protest by nineteenth-century American men regarding contemporary gender expectations (which traditionally placed them legally, economically, and ecclesiastically above their female contemporaries).[13] A more accurate explanation of their lack of protest, however, should surely examine the extent to which the majority of white men were accommodated to their social and economic inferiority--to a traditional gentry and then to a rising new middle class[14]--via sexist notions of their superiority over their wives and sisters. (Similarly, the socio-economic inferiority of the non-slaveholding majority of white men in the South was assuaged via racist notions of their superiority over blacks.[15]) Moreover, a better explanation should at least address the

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[13]Faragher, for example, notes that "the legal code that men wrote, perpetuated, and defended granted husbands extra-ordinary powers over the lives and affairs of their wives. Wives were *femme covert*, as the law said, without civil, political, or property rights apart from those of their husbands." Yet he might more accurately have written "that *elite* men wrote," for, as he goes on to state, the "ancient theory of domestic politics which made the father head of the household . . . reflected [and, we might add, *sustained*] the hierarchical organization of the society . . ." (Faragher, "History from the Inside-Out," 550.)

[14] For an outstanding illustration of the persistence of a nearly insurmountable boundary between the genteel and rural working majority in the era of the early republic, see Allan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Random House, 1995). For studies which attack the myth of a widespread or easy ascent into the new middle-class during the "Jacksonian" era, see Edward Pessen, *Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics,* revised edition (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 77-100; and Sellers, *The Market Revolution, passim.*

[15]Works which examine the use of racism as a palliative for (and by) working men in antebellum America include Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press , 1970) and David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991). As these works show, the

extent to which such gender ideals were "invisible" or, in other words, were viewed as common sense and thus hardly debatable. The realization that gender is socially constructed is relatively recent. There is good reason to believe that in the past the majority of members of both sexes generally saw gender as naturally or divinely determined, insofar as they considered it at all.[16]

Yet, Launius' specific suggestions for bringing male concerns into a Mormon gender history assume a monolithic motive: maintenance of male power. He stresses

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existence of black slavery enabled working-class whites in the North as well to view themselves as "free labor" even as the traditional bases of their claim to economic independence were eroding. Similarly, the continuing claims of "independence" by working men in all sections of the country were surely bolstered by the dependent status (legally, economically, and traditionally) of their wives and children. Thus *full* manhood, which depended so heavily on "manly independence," could be defined in contrast to womanhood and boyhood as well as in terms of whiteness. (For a similar argument, see Susan Juster, "The Spirit and the Flesh: Gender, Language, and Sexuality in American Protestantism," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, ed. Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], 349.)

[16]Such insights are not new and, in fact, appear in one of the earliest attempts to reconstruct the history of "womanhood" in America. While the author defines her topic as that "cage" or "mold in which history has persistently shaped" and "trapped" the female sex, she also observes that "woman confronts a web of constrictions upon individual autonomy more formidable than, *but not fundamentally different from*, man's predicament. Woman is merely placed at a greater disadvantage . . . . Neither can a single human hand, simply personified by the male sex, be found" behind the "making of womanhood." (Mary P. Ryan, *Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present* [New York: New Viewpoints, 1975], 3, 10, emphasis added.) The problem is that, until very recently, such insights have rarely been systematically pursued in relation to the history of manhood in America. (For a few notable exceptions, see note 25 below.) "Men's history at first seemed a silly concept," admitted one historian recently, "wasn't most history about men?" (Lisa Wilson, *Ye Heart of A Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999], ix.) Only later, Wilson says, did she realize "that the historical study of men as a gendered group had barely begun." Previous, one-sided studies, although gender-sensitive, portrayed men "as one-dimensional power brokers rather than flesh and blood people" who also had to "play . . . the roles assigned them." (Wilson, *Ye Heart of A Man*, 2, 4.)

"status anxiety" and resulting efforts to "re-secure patriarchal authority" as the most likely concerns of nineteenth-century male converts to Mormonism.[17] In fact, this is less an original suggestion than an assumption with a fairly long history as a key element in previous treatments of Mormonism.[18] Recently, Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz have asserted that as a result of the "market revolution," men "whose fathers and grandfathers had assumed unquestioned control of their households" began to "give themselves over to a gentle, loving Jesus" as they "delegated day-to-day authority over child-rearing and other household affairs to their wives." In the introduction to their recreation of the "Kingdom of Mathias," Johnson and Wilentz suggest that their subject was but an extreme example from among a number of religious reactionaries who sought to restore the father

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[17]Launius, "Recent Trends," 123-24.

[18] For example, Mario De Pillis, "The Social Sources of Mormonism," *Church History* 37 (March 1968): 74-79; Hill, "The Rise of Mormonism," 427-430. Although these articles may be viewed as part of an older "social history," their arguments hinge on basic assumptions regarding the gender ideals and experiences of early Mormon men that are also relevant to the newer "gender history." I believe that Launius is essentially correct in linking the older "status anxiety" with the more current "decline of patriarchy" arguments in that both rest on similar *assumptions* about the experiences and concerns of the historical subjects who were allegedly reacting to them. Historians who followed the interpretation of the Progressive Era proposed by "status anxiety" inventor Richard Hofstadter (*The Age of Reform*, New York: Vintage Books, 1955) learned that they had built on a foundation of sand when it was found that Hofstadter offered no direct evidence that his subjects had actually *felt* "status anxiety" but only suggested that they must have under the circumstances in which they found themselves. The most thorough subsequent study of the Progressives' motivations, which examines their own public and private writings--admittedly problematic, but still far better evidence than historians' retroactive projections of their motives based on economic statistics alone --has since suggested real religious concerns as the root source of Progressivism. (See Robert Crunden, *Ministers of Reform* [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982]. For a similar argument regarding antebellum social reformers, see Robert Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1994]).

as religious head of the family, a number in which they prominently include Joseph Smith.[19] In a similar vein, Charles Sellers has asserted that thousands of frustrated young single men, husbands, and fathers led their families to Smith's patriarchal religion, while tens of thousands followed women into evangelical denominations.[20] However, none of these scholars offer much evidence that these were in fact the driving concerns and motives of the majority of early Mormon converts.[21] Nor do they explain the many elements of "feminized religion" found in Mormonism by Barbara Welter in the article in which she coined that term.[22]

A few historians of Mormonism have expressed reluctance to assume too much about the place of early Mormon men in American society without more concrete and objective evidence. For example, Lawrence Yorgason concluded his study of the demographic aspects of early Mormons by acknowledging the insufficiency of the information available to support many "final assertions" despite his thorough efforts, and he found it "marvelous" that certain previous publications would make such "strong

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[19]Johnson and Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Mathias*, 7, 10.

[20]Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 225.

[21]In support of these assertions, Johnson and Wilentz offer only the case of Joseph Smith's own family, while Sellers includes also the case of Martin and Lucy Harris. None add any solid quantitative support to this minimal anecdotal evidence.

[22]Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860," in *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976), 99-100. Among the feminized doctrines Welter finds in early Mormonism are the rejection of infant damnation and the belief in a Mother in Heaven. For additional discussion of this topic see chapter 3 below.

claims" despite "the paucity of their information."[23] A similar discomfort regarding the "undocumented 'guesstimates'" regarding early membership of the Mormon Church led Susan Easton Black to undertake the ten-year, fifty-volume compilation of basic member information which provides much of the data base of the present study.[24] As that compilation neared completion, Black dedicated it to those who would undertake the task of writing a more well-founded and well-rounded history of average, rather than elite, early Mormons.[25]

Recent exemplary integration of his subjects' own perceptions of the meaning and attainment of manhood is found in Anthony Rotundo's work on nineteenth-century American northeastern middle-class and upper-middle-class males. In analyzing their experience, Rotundo takes advantage of the insights of nearly three decades of feminist historiography. Rotundo argues that due to nineteenth-century urbanization and separation of adult middle-class men's and women's spheres of activity, sons were increasingly separated from their fathers, who were thus unavailable as role models for the

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[23]Lawrence Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects," 83.

[24]Susan Easton Black, "All But Forgotten: The Early Latter-day Saints" (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1987), 3. On the other hand, some otherwise exemplary scholars seem perfectly content to make assertions about the socio-economic motivations of early Mormon men on the basis of a knowledge, however expert, of the general milieu, supplemented only by a few anecdotes.

[25]Similarly, in his pioneering study of colonial Plymouth, John Demos lauded the work of earlier historians of Puritan New England but lamented the "elite" bias inherent in their sources and expressed the hope that a demographic approach might "introduce a greater degree of precision into a field which heretofore has been widely influenced by popular myth, and indeed . . . guesswork." (John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1970], xi.

new roles their sons would have to fulfil, and that such boys were further inhibited from preparing for key aspects of those male roles by their mothers' efforts to refine them.[26]

Scholars have praised Rotundo for providing "an overarching interpretive model with which future scholars must contend," but they have also raised questions about the comprehensiveness of this model.[27] How could boys who knew little about the new role they would soon have to assume create a cultural system that would so neatly prepare them for its demands? How would Rotundo's model, admittedly based mainly on northeastern middle-class subjects, apply to other groups, particularly in frontier areas? Were religious values or training, which seem to have had little impact on Rotundo's males, really so unimportant?

In light of such questions, Elliot West has stressed the need for additional studies of growing up in other regions and socio-economic groups. He has found that, while rural

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[26]E. Anthony Rotundo, "Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America,* ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). Also, Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Present Era* [New York: Basic Books, 1993], 31-55); Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

[27]See review articles in *Reviews in American History* 22, no 1 (March 1994): 14-17; *American Historical Review* (June 1994): 960; *Journal of Social History* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 425-27. By the same token, Launius suggests the use of Carnes' work as way of explicating the reactionary nature of early Mormon priesthood ordinations and temple ordinances without noting Carnes' stress on his subjects' concern with genuine religious issues rather than mere social control. Carnes rejects a purely "sociogenic" interpretation by applying Victor Turner's conception of rituals as *subconscious* instruments of psychological mediation, as well as *liminal* in asserting the primacy of emotions and experience over calculating reason, and *multivocalic* in expressing, indirectly, conflicts within society and between social norms and personal drives. (Carnes, *Victorian Ritual*, especially, 2-3, 13, 63, 157.)

and frontier families did "seek to embrace" refined ideals like those of Rotundo's subjects, their efforts to do so were "continually colliding with the necessities of life." West argues that such necessities made the active role of children in American history far greater than historians have previously recognized. He concludes,

> Generalizing about the history of [growing up], based mainly on the experiences of the boys and girls of one social class in one part of the country, tells us as much (or as little) as looking at the history of the United States entirely through the eyes of adults. . . . Only when [their] diversity is recognized can we begin to bring childhood fully into the story.[28]

The few studies thus far which have dealt with coming of age among early Mormons do not make use of the important insights suggested by either Rotundo or West M. Guy Bishop has published pioneering articles on early (i.e., pre-Utah) Mormon prescriptions regarding children and child-rearing, but has not documented the impact of such views on actual early Mormon child culture (or vice versa).[29] Davis Bitton's article on "Zion's Rowdies" in the early Utah period would seem to suggest that such prescriptions, if used, were not always successful, at least from the point of view of non-

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[28]Elliot West, "Children on the Plains Frontier," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950*, ed. Elliot West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 39-40. See also Elliot West, *Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

[29]M. Guy Bishop, "Preparing to 'Take the Kingdom': Childrearing Directives in Early Mormonism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 7 (Fall 1987): 275-90; "Sex Roles, Marriage and Child-rearing at Mormon Nauvoo," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 11 (Fall 1988): 30-45.

Mormons [30] Bishop and Bitton both present adults' eye-views of youth culture, and neither examines gender differences. There is a need for additional study of early Mormonism incorporating the insights of gender studies as does Rotundo, while keeping in mind the important rural/frontier factors suggested by West.

The study of early Mormon gender history holds the potential for refining our understanding not only of the beginnings of Mormonism, but also of the evolution of gender constructs among a significant portion of nineteenth-century Americans Most American-born early Mormon men, like the majority of their American contemporaries,[31] were pre-industrial rural working men. As Marvin Hill, an eminent historian of early Mormonism, has observed,

> There is a good deal of evidence that many, if not most, early Mormons were men and women of modest means and little formal education. Such notables as Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor, Lorenzo Snow, Parley P. Pratt, and Lyman Wight were poor farmers or artisans barely finding the funds to meet their needs in 1830. . . . These findings compare favorably with Orson Spencer's assertion in 1842 that "our people are mostly [of] the working class."[32]

This is not to say that these men were primarily wage-earning members of an industrial "working class" in the Marxist sense. While concurring with Orson Spencer's assessment

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[30]Davis Bitton, "Zion's Rowdies Growing Up on the Mormon Frontier," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 50 [1982]: 192-195

[31]Laurie, *Artisans into Workers*, 16, 25.

[32]Letter of Orson Spencer from Nauvoo, November 7, 1842, in Orson Spencer, *Letters Exhibiting the Most Prominent Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1889) 38; Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 16-17.

of the majority of his early co-religionists, Hill finds "no evidence . . . that the industrial revolution affected them directly."[33] If we define "working people" as including those who "had to work for a living without the benefit of a college education or plentiful resources,"[34] we can replace the narrow definition of the term (as a disinherited urban industrial proletariat) with a broader definition which includes most early nineteenth-century American farmers and rural artisans. Coming from this rural working population, most early Mormons were generally better off than their urban working-class contemporaries, yet "lower" than both the traditional American upper-class and the rising middle-class.[35] In this respect most early Mormons were like the majority of their

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[33]Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 17. Moreover, Hill was looking mainly at early Mormon leaders. For a similar approach and conclusion, see Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.): 121-122. In their published studies Hill and Hatch limit their examination of the socio-economic backgrounds of early Mormons to a handful of notables. Yet theirs are among a mere handful of studies to go even that far, and their conclusions that early American Mormons came mainly from the laboring classes are confirmed by more in-depth monograph studies including this one.

[34]Karen Hansen, *A Very Social Time: Crafting Community in Antebellum New England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 30-32.

[35]Some scholars, from the up-and-coming to the well-established, have recently argued that converts to early Mormonism came primarily from the middle class if not higher. Graduate student Stephen Harper has recently attacked what he calls the "gullible bumpkin thesis" in previous Mormon historiography. While I certainly agree with the main thrust of Harper's thesis, his strenuous, yet counter-factual argument that "Joseph Knight [a wealthy early convert] typified more Mormons than Joseph Smith," leads one to wonder if he has not accepted his adversaries' association of poverty with stupidity. (Steven C. Harper, "'By No Means Men of Weak Minds:' The Gullible Bumpkin Thesis and the First Mormons," *Nauvoo Journal* 9 (1997): 40.) Sociologist Rodney Stark has also dismissed previous scholars' conclusions that most early Mormons came from the lower classes as founded on anti-Mormon rhetoric and has pointed to the early Mormons' establishment of a municipal university in Nauvoo as proof that they were actually from the middle if not the upper class. (Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* [San Francisco,

American contemporaries for whom such changes as were wrought by the industrial revolution "were only faintly perceptible before the 1830s."[36]

A recent study by Karen Hansen has suggested that the heretofore largely silent majority of working people in early nineteenth-century America constituted "an analytically distinct group . . . that gets lost in the broad formulation of the 'middling classes' or the narrow definitions of the working class."[37] While rejecting a rigidly Marxist approach, Hansen advocates the careful application of certain essential Marxian insights: that the material conditions of this large yet distinct group led its members to create a distinguishably unique cultural practice, and that what made this group distinct was mainly the fact that its members made a living through physical labor rather than

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CA: Harper Collins, 1996], 39-40.) In fact, early Mormons frequently described themselves and each other as being from the poor or laboring classes of society. Their attempts to form and support a University of Nauvoo did not make the Mormons there a community of "intellectuals" (Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 39) any more than the Kirtland Banking Society made its founders a group of financiers. Both ventures say more about their founders' aspirations than their attainments. Contrary to the assertions of Harper and Stark, the findings of this and other more broad-based studies support Mario S. De Pillis's assertion that most "early Mormons came from the lower but not the lowest classes." (Mario S. DePillis,"The Social Sources of Mormonism," *Church History*, 37 (March 1968), 77.) While the more fortunate families in rural America joined the rising new middle-class early on (see Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* [Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1981]), many remained part of the rural laboring majority throughout most of the nineteenth century. As recent work on early Mormon history suggests (e.g., Richard L. Bushman, "Was Joseph Smith a Gentleman: The Standard for Refinement in Utah," in *Nearly Everything Imaginable: The Everyday Life of Utah's Mormon Pioneers*, eds., Ronald Walker and Doris Dant [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1999], 27-36), and as this study affirms, most Mormons remained part of this agrarian majority throughout at least the first half of the nineteenth century.

[36]Laurie, *Artisans into Workers*, 20-21.

[37]Hansen, *A Very Social Time*, 32-35.

through speculation, interest, rents, etc. She makes a persuasive case for viewing her subjects this way by showing, among other things, that this is how they viewed themselves.[38]

It is also evident that many early Mormon men viewed themselves in these terms, and not only themselves but their fathers before them. Far from the powerful patriarchs suggested by Johnson, *et al*, with the time and means to micro-manage their households while others did all the work, these men affirmed that their fathers had spent their lifetimes toiling for and alongside their rural working families. "My father," wrote Solomon Chamberlain, "was an honest, hard-working man, a farmer by trade, and earned his bread *by the sweat of his brow*." "[M]y father," Joseph Noble wrote, "having a large family, and not much to help himself with, *depended upon the labor of his own hands* for the support of so large a family." "My father," declared George Laub "was *classed with the laboring men* to till the earth and earn his bread *by the sweat of his brow* as God gave command to our first parents."[39]

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[38]In this they evidently preserved notions inherited from their English ancestry, the majority of whom were seen, and saw themselves, as "a different order" from their "betters" primarily on the basis of their dependence on their own manual labor to support themselves. (Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age*, 2nd edition [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971], 27, 30, 41-45.) On the basis of their lack of class-consciousness, Laslett argues that being of a "different order" did not make them part of a different class. Yet, he shows that their experiences were certainly different as, arguably, were a significant portion of their views and values. (See, for example, Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, 55-83, 159-179.)

[39]Solomon Chamberlain, "A Short Sketch of the Life of Solomon Chamberlain," J. Willard Marriot Library, Special Collections, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah [hereafter Marriot Library], 1; Joseph Noble Autobiography, Harold B. Lee Library, Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah [hereafter HBLL), 1; George Laub, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; emphasis added in each case.

Although these accounts are "anecdotal" reminiscences, they might be multiplied many times from the unparalleled number of life writings of their contemporaries available in Utah repositories alone. Primary sources for what follows include the life writings of over one hundred native-born white American men who came of age, and became Mormons, during the first half of the nineteenth century. Although this is a small fraction of the many men who fit this category, it does include, as nearly as I can determine, all of their available surviving writings. One historian of Mormonism to recognize the potential of these sources is Malcolm R. Thorp, who has observed that the "extensive number of diaries, journals, and reminiscences that exist in various repositories interested in the LDS religious experience" provide insights "into childhood experience hitherto neglected by historians." Although nearly all these accounts are retrospective, "typically written somewhere between ten to fifty years" after the events which they relate, continues Thorp, yet they provide "revealing glimpses . . . not otherwise readily obtainable" of what some of those at the lower levels of the social order "thought to be significant about their" early years.[40]

As Thorp has used such accounts to explicate the passages to adulthood of early British working-class converts, this study seeks to do so for their rural American contemporaries using their surviving records. The details of the passage to manhood recounted in these records corroborate the characterization of these men and their fathers as members of the agrarian majority of farmers and artisans who supported themselves

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[40]Malcolm R. Thorp, "Childhood in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain Reflected in Some LDS Sources," in *Mormon Identities in Transition,* ed. Douglas J. Davies (London: Cassell, 1996), 93.

mainly with the work of their own hands rather than through rents, investments, or trade These life writings can be supplemented by demographic information for a much larger number of men[41] as well as contemporary descriptive and prescriptive writings including newspapers, letters, and sermons.

Such sources allow a fairly close study of the passages to manhood of American men who became Mormons during the first half of the nineteenth-century. In his study of American manhood, Anthony Rotundo found that while the passage to manhood for nineteenth-century northern eastern middle-class males was increasingly lengthy and problematic,[42] the boundary between boys' and men's worlds was quite distinct.[43] It was only in the last decades of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries that Rotundo's men increasingly embraced a definition of manhood which involved a good deal of glorifying, and even imitating, "boyish" spontaneity and physicality. In contrast to Rotundo's subjects, the experience of early Mormon men and boys during the same

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[41]The main source for this information in the following pages, including occupations, baptismal dates, is Susan Easton Black's fifty volume *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 1830-1848*, referred to above. This compilation contains basic information (including birth, baptism, and marriage dates and places, and occupational information) for over 6,000 American born males who became members (were baptized or born to already baptized parents) of the Mormon church before 1850.

[42]In this Rotundo builds on the findings of Joseph Kett's pioneering work, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); see, especially, chapters five and eight.

[43]The conclusion of Michael Kimmel regarding the nineteenth-century American view of manhood is quite similar to that of Rotundo, and perhaps more succinct: "Being a man meant . . . not being a boy. A man was independent, self-controlled, responsible; a boy was dependent, irresponsible, and lacked control." (Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 6, 7.)

period involved a much more fluid and flexible passage from boyhood to manhood, and one that involved many "manly" aspects and activities at the earliest possible age, while postponing others almost indefinitely.

An explanation for this contrast may be found in a closer examination of key economic, religious, and cultural experiences and concerns of early Mormon men. The second chapter of this study examines demographic evidence (including types, and inter-generational persistence, of occupations, and average age at first marriage) as well as literary sources (especially life writings) to argue that pre-Mormon males experienced a strenuous yet relatively swift and direct passage to "manly independence" like that of their fathers and in contrast to that suggested by Johnson and others. The third chapter draws on prescriptive and descriptive writings, in addition to LDS church membership records, to demonstrate that Mormonism attracted men in proportions unparalleled in other denominations in nineteenth-century America, that helped support the development of its more optimistic and anti-Calvinist beliefs regarding man and his relation to God. Chapter four focuses on important martial aspects of early Mormon men's rhetoric and actions (e.g., regarding firearms, combat, and physicality in general) to illustrate how early Mormon male culture (attitudes, manners and behaviors) reflected the gender and socio-economic conditions of the majority of its leading adherents in following a "rough" over a refined ideal of manly performance. The evidence presented in these chapters supports a view of early Mormon men as embracing a set of manly ideals that differed significantly, in many ways, from those embraced by their middle-class contemporaries.

CHAPTER 2

"THEREFORE SHALL A MAN LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER . . ."[1].

ECONOMIC PASSAGES TO "MANLY INDEPENDENCE"

The single characteristic that early nineteenth-century American men believed above all distinguished them from every "other" in contrast to whom they defined their manhood was their "manly independence."[2] In the half-century following the American War for Independence, the myth of personal manly independence became the preeminent mark of manhood. This notion was particularly important to the self-image of both urban and rural working men. Drawing on elements of that republicanism which had provided the ideology for American independence, these men contrasted their personal independence with the dependence of "vassals and slaves."[3] They bravely maintained their belief in their manly independence despite their increasing dependence on landlords,

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[1]Genesis 2: 24.

[2]Mark E. Kann, *The Gendering of American Politics: Founding Mothers, Founding Fathers, and Political Patriarchy* (Westport, CT. Praeger, 1999), 72. See also, M. E. Kann, *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 30-31.

[3]Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 92.

lenders and employers,[4] but also despite their continuing dependence on one another and particularly on the women and children who were their wives, daughters, and sons.[5] (The difference between their sons and all these other unmanly "others" was that these men were the main guides and gatekeepers on their sons' path to becoming men like themselves.)

Manly independence required not only political independence but also economic independence, since, as republicanism made clear, one was not possible without the other. Thus, pre-industrial American fathers guided and controlled their sons' progress to manhood through the formers' monolopy on economic skills and resources. However, our understanding of the nature of this progress has been distorted by the fact that historical characterizations of the American family have focused mainly on idealized pictures of the traditional farm family based on elite examples presided over by prosperous patriarchs or on rising middle-class families organized around the interests of self-made

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[4]Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Random House, 1995), 175, 187.

[5]In his extensive study of the social construction of masculinity, anthropologist David Gilmore has shown that in cultures around the world, manhood is defined in opposition to a male-based discourse about "womanness." (David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 13-14.) In the American case, at least, others besides the female have been used in the role of "other" in the construction of manhood. In a recent study of manhood in America, sociologist Michael Kimmel observes that while femininity has been "a negative pole" against which American manhood has historically been defined, so has the *other* as defined by race or class. In addition, Kimmel asserts, in America prior to the twentieth century "[b]eing a man meant . . . not being a boy." (Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* [New York: The Free Press, 1996], 6-7, 18.)

men.[6] Hence, historical glimpses at the passage to manhood in the United States have portrayed early American sons as held on the farm by their fathers' hold on their landed inheritances, and nineteenth-century sons as held at home and in school by the need for increasingly lengthy preparation in order to become "independent" breadwinners The historical transition between these two models of boyhood has generally been linked to the emergence of new strategies necessitated or facilitated by what has been called "the market revolution." Sons are seen as responding to the development and spread of the market economy by fleeing the country in search of wage or salaried work either as an alternative to remaining at home until their fathers left them land or because there was insufficient land remaining for their fathers to leave to them.[7] Parents are portrayed as responding to new economic conditions by acting to reduce the number of their children and mobilizing their resources to support their sons while the latter pursued longer and more specialized education in hopes of perpetuating their families' recently won position

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[6]Only more recently have studies, such as that of Susan Gray, begun to focus more closely on the progress of young men who gained a greater degree of independence with the opening up of land in the West. Yet even Gray gravitates toward the more prosperous of these, arguing that fathers' lack of land was partially mitigated by their stores of another commodity of rising importance, cash. (Susan E. Gray, *The Yankee West: Community Life on the Michigan Frontier* [Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996], 100-102.) The current chapter will seek, among other things, to provide additional insights about some of their less prosperous contemporaries.

[7]For a discussion of these alternatives, see Nancy Folbre, "Patriarchy in Colonial New England," *The Review of Radical Political Economics* 12, no.2 (Summer 1980): 4-13; and "The Wealth of Patriarchs: Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1760-1840," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 16, no.2 (Autumn 1985): 199-220. Still, Joyce Appleby concludes that in the early republic "new careers" engaged "10 percent of white adult men" at most. (Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000], 121.)

in a new middle-class.[8] Historians have seen the former type of son as frustrated by his lack of choices and the latter type as bewildered by the abundance of his choices.[9]

As the previous chapter suggested, early Mormon men have been quite consistently portrayed as involved in such transitions even though little actual evidence and analysis of their economic circumstances and experiences has been offered in support of such portrayals. The present chapter will present evidence regarding the economic rites of passage to "manly independence" experienced by men who would join the Mormon Church (now formally The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) during its first decades. Statistical evidence of relatively early average age-at-first-marriage and of a high degree of inter-generational persistence of occupations among these men, combined with evidence from life writings of a pattern of rapidly increasing work experience and responsibility from the youngest age, suggest a path to manhood that was strenuous yet swift and relatively straightforward. Thus, these men's youths were in many ways more reminiscent of those of their colonial American counterparts than of their urban middle-class contemporaries.

In his classic study of family life in Plymouth colony, John Demos described

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[8]See, for example, Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 55-58, 145-185; John Demos, *Past, Present, and Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 13, 34, 104-108.

[9]See Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 57; Folbre, "Wealth of Patriarchs," 203-210; Demos, *Past, Present, and Personal*, 106.

coming of age in that formative American settlement as "fluid."[10] In such an agrarian community the role of children as a source of farm labor encouraged parents to have relatively large numbers of them and to emphasize their physical abilities over age or generational differences in the work assigned to them. As a result, coming of age "appeared not as a cliff to be mounted in a series of sudden and precarious leaps, but as a gradual ascent, the stages of which were quite literally embodied in the many siblings variously situated along the way."[11] As young boys learned the skills and roles of manhood from their fathers and older brothers, they evidently experienced a smoother transition to manhood than their modern counterparts. As Demos explained, after a boy began to assume an "adult role and style" around the age of six or seven, progress toward full maturity could be accomplished in a "gradual, piecemeal, and largely automatic fashion." Boys' own fathers provided relatively clear models for the formation of their own identities. There was no "awkward age," but rather "the steady lengthening of a young person's shadow," a "process through which one generation yielded imperceptibly to its successor."[12] Demos found that the boys in his study who began this process at six or seven had attained the marks of manhood-- relative economic independence and marriage-- by their early- to mid- twenties and without passing through the period of

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[10]John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 149.

[11]Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 69.

[12]Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 150.

"storm and stress" more recently associated with adolescence [13]

In sharp contrast, Joseph Kett and others have shown how the nineteenth century saw the prolongation and transformation of "youth" into an indefinite liminal stage in which the norms of neither the prior (childhood) nor the succeeding (adult) stage fully applied.[14] The years preceding manhood became fraught with ambiguities and anxieties Several factors apparently contributed to this transformation. Parents had fewer children, probably at least in part because economic changes such as commercialization, industrialization, and urbanization made children less economically valuable or useful By mid-century, the inter-generational continuum described by Demos was breaking down as more and more boys grew up without older brothers or even fathers in whose vocational footsteps they could easily or confidently follow. Instead, as Kett has shown, working-class boys were faced with the prospect of dead-end jobs, while their middle-class and upper-class counterparts faced the prolonged process of choosing and preparing for careers. For the latter group in particular, as Anthony Rotundo has shown, boyhood and manhood became increasingly separate and disconnected during the nineteenth century, with attainment of the economic independence and marriage which marked the latter

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[13]Demos, *A Little Commonwealth,* 145. As Joyce Appleby has found, key aspects of Demos' description obtained for the majority of young Americans into the early nineteenth century. "Since adolescence had yet to be conceived of as a special stage of life, girls and boys typically went from being a child to an adult with little fanfare. Physical maturity signaled adult status." (Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 121.) See also Joseph Kett, "Growing Up in Rural New England, 1800-1840," in *Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth-Century Social History*, ed. Tamara K. Hareven [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971], 1-16.)

[14]Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), especially 144-71.

status often delayed even into their thirties.[15]

Historians like John Demos have turned to various types of demographic data as key evidence in the history of the family. Such data hold the promise of being more objective and more inclusive, potentially providing glimpses at the behavior, and perhaps suggesting the values, of the silent majority who lacked the time or ability to leave behind more self-conscious evidence of their lives. Occupational statistics and age at first marriage averages, among other data, have been employed in attempts to shed light on the history of the family in general and the father-son relationship in particular. Put very simply, the movement of sons away from agricultural occupations and the drop in their average age-at-first-marriage[16] have both been viewed as corresponding to sons' gradual escape from patriarchal domination and toward greater individual autonomy. In short, for a study of male coming of age, such statistics might be viewed as indices of the accessibility of full manhood.[17] This chapter will examine such empirical evidence and then relevant passages from literary sources in pursuit of a more nuanced understanding of the

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[15]Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Present Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 115-16.

[16]Although this is not the only nuptial statistic historians have studied as an index of paternal power (see, e.g., Daniel Scott Smith, "Parental Power and Marriage Patterns: An Analysis of Historical Trends," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 35, no. 3 (August 1973): 419-428), it is the one on which they have most persistently focused.

[17]Lisa Wilson's recent findings regarding colonial New England through the eighteenth century– that "[m]arriage and parenthood were the only alternatives for adult men" as well as for women, that "a man first found work and then a wife," in that order but in fairly rapid succession, and that these constituted the marks of manly independence– are strikingly similar to my findings regarding their early nineteenth-century counterparts examined in the present study. (See Wilson, *Ye Heart of A Man,* 4, 7, 36.)

rites of passage to manhood that these men passed though.

While most studies of age-at-first-marriage have focused on the ages of the woman (because of the clear correlation of that statistic with fertility and population growth), male age-at-first-marriage can be an important index for historians interested in the history of male life stages and of the father-son relationship It makes sense to begin this study by reviewing the relevant information that may be gleaned from such previous studies.

Historians have estimated that in rural areas in Western Europe throughout much of the four centuries preceding the twentieth, the mean age for men at first marriage was roughly 27.5.[18] In contrast, the early decades of settlement in colonial New England were characterized by a significantly "lower-than-European" age-at-first-marriage for women (apparently due to their initial relative scarcity in colonial communities); yet, "a high or essentially European marriage age" still obtained for men.[19] As the subsequent convergence of the gender ratio gradually raised the average age-at-first-marriage for women, the age-at-first-marriage for men continued at "a European level" due, most historians agree, to patriarchal control over the disposition of the family lands and of craft skills.[20] Since early Euro-Americans continued the northwestern European pattern of

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[18]Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914* (Edinburgh: The Economic History Society, 1980), 20.

[19]Daniel Scott Smith, "The Demographic History of Colonial New England," *Journal of Economic History* 32, no.1 (1972): 176-77.

[20]Philip Greven was apparently the first to advance this explanation based on his study of colonial Andover. (See *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970], Tables 6, 15, and 21.)

"neo-local household formation" (with children separating from the households of parents upon marriage[21]), their children depended on such patriarchal endowments for the economic independence necessary to establish new families. Hence, at least until the late eighteenth century, fathers were apparently able to delay their sons' marriages and retain control over their labor until the sons' middle to late twenties.[22]

While much research has been done on the traditional European and colonial American age-at-first-marriage rates, little related research on nineteenth-century America has been available until quite recently.[23] In 1996, a report on long-term marriage trends in

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While John Demos' statistics for colonial Plymouth showed a similar gradual approach *toward* the Western European norms (John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, Table 4), Demos initially questioned the identification of patriarchal control of lands as the primary factor in influencing the age of sons at first marriage (ibid., 164-170). Subsequently, the explanation apparently pioneered by Greven has become the consensus view among historians of the American family. (See, for example, John M. Murrin, "Review Essay," *History and Theory* 11 (1972): 228-32; Daniel Scott Smith, "Parental Power and Marriage Patterns," 419-428; Stephen Mintz and Susan Kellog, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* [New York: The Free Press, 1988], 8-9, 16.)

[21]Daniel Scott Smith, "American Family and Demographic Patterns and the Northwest European Model," *Continuity and Change* 8, no.3 (1993): 399.

[22]The emergence of new sources of income, along with westward migration toward expanding frontier, and the growing number of parents who allowed sons to temporarily hire out their labor and thus achieve a measure of financial independence while still in their teens or early twenties did enable some to marry earlier (Mintz and Kellog, *Domestic Revolutions*, 20-21.) In New England the male SMAM (singulate mean age at marriage) dropped from 27.4 to 26.4 between 1690 and 1800. (Daniel Scott Smith, "The Demographic History of Colonial New England," 176-77.) During the same period, the male SMAM for the British American colonies as a whole dropped from 26.1 to 25.6, or 92 percent of the English level, while the female SMAM rose from 83 percent to 90 percent of the English level. (Michael R. Haines, "Long Term Marriage Patterns in the United States from Colonial Times to the Present" [*National Bureau of Economic Research Historical Paper*, Vol. 80, March 1996], Table 1, also p. 8.)

[23]Haines, "Long Term Marriage Patterns," 2-5.

America (from colonial times until the present) lamented the dearth of studies for the early and middle nineteenth century. The report's author, Michael Haines, hypothesized that (1) the opening of successive western areas permitted the singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) in frontier regions to fall in the early 1800s and (2) the gradual filling up of such areas led to a subsequent increase in the SMAM as the century matured. In fact, Haines apparently missed at least one prior study which seems to support these hypotheses. In 1989, Donna Breckenridge completed a Ph.D. dissertation at Brigham Young University in which she analyzed 17,549 marriages of *native-born* Americans contracted between 1800 and 1950.[24] The relevant data for this study are condensed and presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Average Age-at-First-Marriage for Nineteenth-Century Native-Born American Males, by Place of Marriage

	U.S.	N.E.[a]	M.A.[b]	S.A.[c]	N.C.[d]	S.C.[e]
1810s	25.0	24.2	25.5	23.9	23.1	25.4
1820s	25.9	26.3	27.0	26.4	25.5	24.3
1830s	25.1	25.1	28.1	24.6	24.2	23.8
1840s	26.0	29.2	26.8	25.1	24.5	24.8

Source: Breckenridge, "Trends in Age Heterogamy Among Native-Born Americans, 1800-1950" (Ph. d. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1989).

[a] New England: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT. [b] Mid-Atlantic: NJ, NY, PA. [c] South Atlantic: DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV. [d] North Central: IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI. [e] South Central: AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX.

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[24]Donna Baker-Greenway Breckenridge, "Trends in Age Heterogamy Among Native-Born Americans, 1800-1850" (Ph. d. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1989). Her sample was taken from twenty-three extensive histories of families who originally immigrated to the U.S. between 1688 and 1724. (*Ibid.*, 29-30.)

The information in Table 1 indicates a drop in mean age-at-first-marriage for men in the northern central and southern central regions of the country during the second quarter of the century when those areas were least densely populated and closest to the frontier. Such statistics are thus consistent with Haines' prediction and with the consensus of previous historians regarding a likely correlation between male age-at-first-marriage and the increased availability of land or some other means of livelihood. The above information also gives a basis for comparison with average ages at first marriage for early nineteenth-century Mormon males.

The lack of studies of average age-at-first-marriage for early (pre-1850) nineteenth-century Mormons rivals or exceeds the dearth mentioned above for nineteenth-century Americans in general. As far as I have been able to ascertain, a single study completed at the University of Utah in the 1970s by Skolnick *et al* contains a substantial compilation of data relating to ages at first marriage of early Mormon males.[25] The study was undertaken for the purpose of analyzing fertility rates and is very comprehensive in that regard. Although incorporating 10,881 nineteenth-century marriages, the sample for the two periods prior to 1846 totals only 259 marriages. Hence, the study by Skolnick *et al* provides a good starting point, and counterpoint, for the findings to be presented

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[25]M. Skolnick, L. Bean, D. May, V. Argon, K. De Nevers and P. Cartwright, "Mormon Demographic History I: Nuptiality and Fertility of Once-Married Couples," *Population Studies* 32 (1978): 5-19.

below.[26] Extrapolation of the data they present regarding SMAM and homogamy (difference in age of husband and wife) rates for Mormon women married during the nineteenth century produces the information for husbands in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Average Age-at-First Marriage for Once-Married Nineteenth-Century Mormon Males

Period	1820-34	1835-45
SMAM	24.12	23.89

Source: Skolnick et al, "Mormon Demographic History I," p.14, Table 3.

In Table 2, the mean age-at-first-marriage for Mormon males is less than that calculated by Breckenridge for the U.S. as a whole and for each of its major regions with

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[26]Skolnick *et al* acknowledge a possible bias to the data arising from the fact that it is derived from genealogical records (family group sheets) compiled by the LDS (Mormon) Church: "A criterion for entry into the LDS file is that a descendant has become a Mormon, which [means] that a member of each family connecting an ancestor to his descendant survived to marry and to reproduce." Hence, "the more children a person had, the greater the probability that he would produce a descendant who would be able to complete the family record and enter it into the genealogical file." (Skolnick *et al*, "Mormon Demographic History I, " 5.) On the one hand, such a bias is far less than it would be if Skolnick *et al* had included polygamous or complex families. The study contributes to redressing the imbalance in other histories of the nineteenth-century Mormon family, which have focused almost entirely on polygamous families. Still, the study incorporates relatively few (78) marriages for the two periods prior to 1835 and does not specify how many of these marriages took place prior to the couples' conversion to Mormonism. Collecting data from all available records of pre-Mormon and Mormon first marriages prior to 1846, including first marriages of those who subsequently married again after the death of a spouse or in order to practice polygamy, will include an even more representative sample for that period. Of course, it will also increase the bias described by Skolnick *et al*. A comparison of their averages with those presented below, with the above considerations kept in mind, will hopefully provide the best understanding of this issue.

the exception of the South-central region. To the extent that the sample for 1820-1834 consisted mainly of couples married before joining the Mormon Church (which was organized 6 April 1830), and that the sample for 1835-1845 consisted mainly of couples married after joining with that church, the slight decrease in mean age might possibly represent, at least in part, a response to the doctrines of early Mormonism. Scholars of contemporary Mormon family patterns have shown that in the late twentieth century Mormon males were not only more likely to marry, but also married over a year earlier, on average, than other American males. They linked this to the fact that "LDS teachings explicitly encourage marriage."[27]

It is therefore necessary to consider whether there is statistical evidence that the "re-sacralization"[28] of marriage by Mormonism's prophet founder, Joseph Smith (1805-1844), might have been a factor in motivating early Mormon men to marry younger. An evaluation of the possible correlation of such notions with the younger ages at first marriage presented in Table 2 above requires, at the least, a more precise sampling of such marriages. At a minimum, it must be determined how many were in fact Mormons before they were married, whether they were living in the current center of the Mormon

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[27]Tim B. Heaton, Kristen L. Goodman, and Thomas B. Holman, "In Search of a Peculiar People: Are Mormon Families Really Different?" in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives,* ed. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 89, 94. According to Heaton *et al* the mean age at marriage for Mormon males was 22.3 as opposed to 23.8 for other American males who married. (*Ibid.*, 95.)

[28]Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Community Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 136.

gathering,[29] and from which areas of the country they hailed, so as to ascertain any possible regional impact on age-at-first-marriage.

The largest list of marriage dates for pre-1850 Mormons taken from contemporary sources is *Civil Marriages in Nauvoo and Some Outlying Areas, 1839-1845*, compiled by Lyndon Cook from marriage announcements published in early Mormon newspapers as well as from the Nauvoo Civil Marriage Register. Cook's list includes 404 marriages in or near this last gathering place of the Mormons before their trek to the Great Basin Checking each marriage listed in Cook against Black's *Membership* compilation produced a total of 144 first marriages of Mormon males who had previously been baptized and for whom a birth date and place were also available. Averaging the ages of all the grooms in this sample resulted in a mean age-at-first-marriage of 23.03 for those (105) born in America and 24.42 for those (39) born in the British Isles. The American-born group thus married at least one year earlier on average than other Americans in the same period and region, and nearly two years younger than the country as a whole for the same period, according to Breckenridge's findings (see Table 1 above).

A search of Black's *Membership* for all first marriages of Mormons gathered in

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[29]As an exemplary survey of Mormon history explains, "Almost from the beginning . . . the concept of the 'gathering' tended to dominate the restored church. The righteous from all nations, sought out by proselyting elders, were to congregate in a place of refuge that would provide protection against wars, plagues, and other destructive forces of the last days." (James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, revised and enlarged edition [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 69.) Places of gathering for Mormons prior to their trek to the Great Basin included Kirtland in Ohio, Jackson and Clay Counties in Missouri, and Nauvoo in Illinois. For an explanation of the early Mormon doctrine of "gathering," in a work aimed at educated non-specialists, see Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 127-9, 140.

Kirtland, Ohio, and in the several Mormon gathering places in Missouri during the 1830s netted smaller totals of 28 and 24 Mormon first marriages in Kirtland and Missouri (respectively) for which the grooms' birth dates and places were also available. The SMAM for each of these groups of marriage was again substantially lower than that of the total population of the corresponding period and region as sampled by Breckenridge. As seen in Table 3 below, they were also substantially lower than the SMAM for American-born males married at Nauvoo.

Table 3. Average Age-at-First-Marriage for Males Married 1832-1845 After Mormon Baptism, by Region of Birth

	B.I.[a]	N.E.[b]	M.A.[b]	SO.[c]	N.C.[d]	Average	U.S.
Kirtland (1832-38)	23.90	22.00			21.50	22.91	25.10
Missouri (1832-38)			22.00	21.10	19.50	21.33	25.10
Nauvoo (1840-45)	24.42	23.90	23.31	22.57	22.11	23.03	26.00

[a] British Isles: England, Ireland, Scotland. [b] as in Table 1. [c] Southern States: MD, WV, VA, NC, SC, KY, TN, AL, MS, MO. [d] as in Table 1, except that Missouri has been removed from this region and added to the Southern region.

There are at least two possible explanations for the higher average ages in the Nauvoo sample related to the source of that sample. Coming as it does from contemporary newspaper announcements rather than from subsequently assembled family group sheets, the Nauvoo sample may not suffer as much from the bias toward early

marriages (and consequent higher fertility) in the latter sources [30] On the other hand, the Nauvoo sample may suffer from a bias in the other direction due to the higher economic level of those who could afford to place invitations in the newspapers and to entertain all those who might respond to such invitations and come to help the family celebrate the wedding.[31] Cook's list of 404 announcements from those sources is surely less than all of the marriages in a population for Nauvoo and surrounding Mormon settlements that must have topped 10,000 by 1845 according to conservative estimates.[32] That the additional marriages which took place included a significant number in which the groom was younger is suggested by a city ordinance announced in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* for 3 January 1844.

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[30]See note #19 above.

[31]According to George Givens, it was "the custom of the socially correct" in Illinois towns, including Nauvoo, to publish "bids (announcements or invitations)" sometime prior to the wedding, which "was usually solemnized at the home of the bride" and was "always followed" by a feast. "The next day feasting and partying were repeated at the groom's house." Moreover, according to Givens, "To be assured of having their wedding mentioned in the paper, the couple either invited the editors to the wedding or sent refreshments to the newspaper office for all hands." Givens even cites an example of an item in *Times and Seasons* on 15 January 1841 gently chiding a couple for failing to announce their wedding in the paper and invite the staff. (George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo: Everyday Life in the City of Joseph* [Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1990], 212-213.) One should not wonder at their failure with all of the funds they would have had to spend for the feasting. Givens does not attempt to speculate as to the proportion of "the socially correct" in Nauvoo or offer an explanation, considering the probable population of Nauvoo by this time, for the relative paucity of such announcements.

[32]Unfortunately, there is no way to determine with much precision the total number of male Mormons in Nauvoo, let alone throughout the United States, during this period. The most comprehensive effort to date to gather information on as many of these members as possible is Susan Easton Black's *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 1830-1848*, 50 vols (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1987), which identifies some 11,000 males who became members (were baptized, or born to already baptized parents) of the Mormon church by 1850, most of whom passed through Nauvoo.

According to the announcement, the ordinance prohibited any further marriages of males under seventeen or females under fourteen without their parents' or guardians' consent.[33]

Considering the findings in Table 4 below, we may reasonably posit a mean age-at-first-marriage for baptized males in early Mormon centers of gathering, and hence closest to the sources of doctrinal and prescriptive teachings, of under twenty-three years If so, the conclusion that there was some correlation between those teachings and younger ages at first marriage would still depend on an examination of statistical means for socio-economically similar sub-groups from the same regions. In fact, such an examination largely undermines the posited correlation. An analysis of 247 marriages of couples who had not yet but would subsequently join the Mormon Church reveals means which are, again, lower than the norms for the corresponding periods and regions.

Table 4. Average Age-at-First Marriage for Males Married 1820-1840 Before Mormon Baptism, by Region of Birth

B.I	CAN	N.E.	M.A.	SO	S.C	Average	U.S
23.25	23 35	23.00	22 77	21.60	21.20	22.29	25.5

In light of the similarity in age-at-first marriage for the Mormon and pre-Mormon samples, any correlation between early Mormonism and mean age-at-first-marriage probably had more to do with whom that faith attracted than what it taught about marriage in particular, at least during this early period. The range and the relative youth at

[33]Givens, *Old Nauvoo*, 208.

first marriage among these men is congruent with the view that, in this important respect, the door to manhood was open to Mormon boys relatively early on and the passage relatively unencumbered, with their fathers' encouraging, or at least allowing, rather than blocking the entrance.

As previously noted, the means by which fathers had apparently blocked the matrimonial passage to manhood in the past was through their controlled distribution of land and craft skills. If Mormon religious teachings cannot be satisfactorily correlated to the younger ages of marriage documented above, surely the next logical suspect is the relative ease with which these men were able to obtain the means to leave their parents' homes and establish and sustain families of their own. A crucial clue to the early achievement of economic independence, which marriage marked, may be suggested through an examination of inter-generational occupational persistence. To the extent that these men were able to learn their future occupations through working alongside their fathers, they could have avoided the confusing and the prolonged searching or schooling that attended seeking out new careers of their own.

In her intensive study of 100 mid-nineteenth-century working Americans, Karen Hansen found most of them to be engaged in a combination of farming and supplementary trades essential in rural communities. The most common employment of men was farming: 59 percent of the men engaged in farming, although most also performed day labor and other jobs to bring cash into the household. Not surprisingly, almost half the men held jobs as skilled artisans– shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths– and also found

seasonal jobs as teachers, factory workers, and clerks or peddlers.[34]

If such occupations were still economically viable for Hansen's New England subjects, they may well have been even more viable for the continually westward-moving early nineteenth-century Mormons In the previous century, Eastern farmers, tradesmen, and artisans had profited from the demands created by the building and settlement of new towns.[35] Similarly, the repeated relocation and settlement of the main body of early nineteenth-century Mormons sustained demand for the same occupational groups within the gathering Mormon community and so maintained inter-generational occupational links sundered by urbanization and industrialization in more settled areas of the United States. Early Mormon efforts to "gather out" from, and to become economically self-sufficient and independent of, "the world" also resulted in their "out-running" the general westward advance of commercialization, industrialization, and urbanization across America at least until the last few decades of the nineteenth century.

Susan Easton Black's *Membership* contains occupational information for over 3,000 of the men for whom there is also information on date and place of birth. The sources of this occupational information include journals, autobiographies, Mormon church records, genealogical family group sheets, and early federal census records.[36] This

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[34]Karen V. Hansen, *A Very Social Time: Crafting Community in Antebellum New England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 31.

[35]Stephan Bielinski, "A Middling Sort: Artisans and Tradesmen in Colonial Albany," *New York History* 73, no.3 (July 1992): 276.

[36]For the subjects of this study, this will involve only the 1850 census, first to include occupational information. Although this paper is primarily concerned with occupations the subjects engaged in prior to that year, it seems safe to assume that they did not arrive in Utah

information is generally given in the form of occupational titles quoted from these men's own self-descriptions. Pairing of all the fathers and sons in *Membership* for whom occupational information was included produced a total of 132 father-son sets in which both fathers and sons were born in the United States and the sons were born prior to 1825. The vast majority of these supported themselves as farmers or in occupations with a high demand in agricultural communities (as discussed above).

Table 5. American-born Pre-Mormon Male Inter-generational Occupational Persistence

	Father and Son Having the Same Occupation			Father and Son Having Different Yet Related Occupational Histories					NR[a]
Father	Farmer[b]	Farmer+[c]	Trade[d]	Farmer	Farmer	Farmer	Farmer+	Trade	
Son	Farmer	Farmer+	Trade	Farmer+	Trade	Labor[f]	Farmer	Farmer	
	24.2%	12.5%	6.3%	18.0%	17.7%	0.0%	6.2%	13 4%	1.7 %

[a] No apparent relationship between the occupations of father and son. [b] Only farming was listed as an occupation by both father and son. [c] Related trades were listed in addition to farming by both father and son [d] Related trades, but not farming, were listed by both father and son.

Among these men nearly 60 percent of the sons followed their fathers into farming, while another 6.5 percent followed their apparently non-farming fathers' trades. Of the remaining third of this group, nearly 18 percent of sons apparently departed from their fathers' farming livelihoods to practice various trades, while another 13.5 percent left their fathers' trades for farming. These figures assume, of course, that all of those who practiced farming are listed as farmers at some point in *Membership*. Even given this

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and suddenly begin to engage in an entirely new and different occupation. Available evidence from the life writings of these individuals consistently supports this assumption.

assumption, an examination of the trades into which, or from which, sons moved shows that most could have been learned in conjunction with farming. The most common trades of those sons who apparently departed from the farming livelihoods of their fathers were masonry, carpentry, and tanning (in that order) with others working as millers, butchers, or teachers (a common seasonal occupation of farmers during this period). The trades of those apparently non-farming fathers whose sons went into farming were carpentry, masonry, tanning, blacksmithing, and milling.

Most of these occupations could surely have been largely learned and practiced in conjunction with farming. In fact, a majority of both the fathers and sons who practiced farming also practiced just such trades, as well as shoemaking, cabinet making and wagon-making. In only one quarter of the group are both father and son listed only as farmers Another 42 percent list both as farmers but with additional occupations for either father, son, or both. Of those pairs of farmers with additional occupations listed for both father and son, only one quarter list the same trade for both. Yet here again, most, if not all, additional occupations listed could surely have been learned and practiced along with farming. It may be significant that more than twice as many sons as fathers among the farmers listed additional occupations, possibly a reflection of the increasing need for additional sources of cash in the face of increasing commercialization of the economy. Nevertheless, at least two-thirds, and very possibly over 90 percent of the sons could have learned viable occupational skills from their fathers.[37]

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[37]Moreover, the present study does not include an analysis of the rate of congruence of sons' occupations with those of their fathers-in-law nor of their brothers, which may well augment the incidence of inter-generational occupational

The data on occupations and average first marriage ages discussed above seem compatible with a view of coming of age for early Mormons similar to that described by Demos in its smoothness and early assumption of increasing manly breadwinning responsibilities, culminating in marriages at even earlier ages than the norms in either colonial times or the early republic The latter phenomenon may also reflect a loosening of paternal control and a greater unwillingness, or inability, of fathers to hinder their sons from becoming fellow men.

Thus far, the data on inter-generational persistence of occupations and early ages at first marriage support a view of early Mormon coming of age which has more in common with that attributed by Demos to colonial youths than that described by Kett and Rotundo as predominating among sons of middle-class or urban working-class families only a bit later in the nineteenth century. It is possible from the data considered above that the majority of young Mormon males were able to learn from their fathers valuable occupation knowledge and skills, which enabled them to achieve a degree of economic independence sufficient to marry at a relatively early age. In short, the data is compatible with a view of early Mormon male progress to manhood that was relatively unencumbered and of the boys who would become the first Mormon men as receiving from their fathers relatively clear models for the formation of their own identities. Surviving accounts left by these individuals themselves in letters, journals, and reminiscences, although anecdotal, support the picture suggested above.

Records left by men who became Mormons in the 1830s and 1840s affirm that

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persistence.

their boyhood years, from the earliest practical age, were occupied mainly with working to help sustain their families. Most had grown up as members of what historians have called a household economy This meant that they joined the other members of their family as soon and as much as they were physically able in performing essential labor for the family's sustenance Their life writings suggest that they were often aware of their essential contributions and derived a sense of greater self-worth from that awareness As they performed increasingly more mature tasks within the family economy, they gradually gained the knowledge and skills deemed requisite to begin marriages and families of their own Helping to sustain their families was clearly difficult and often precarious, and there is no doubt that all desired to gain a sufficiency and a competency While there is evidence in their writings of concern about obtaining enough and to spare to sustain themselves and their families, there are few examples of anxiety over either a frustrating lack or a confusing plethora of choices regarding their future roles or occupations.

According to the most comprehensive study of the socio-economic backgrounds of early Mormon converts, the typical male convert was "a farmer [with] a side occupation or two, who was living in rural conditions, and who could not be termed even relatively wealthy."[38] The evidence examined in the present study suggest that this generalization could be applied as well to these men's fathers. "My father was a farmer and brought me up to labor on the farm," recalled Isaac Haight, born in Windham, Green County, New York, in 1813. "[M]y trade was farming, my father's was the same," wrote Andrew Allen,

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[38]Lawrence Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects of One Hundred Early Mormon Converts, 1830-1837" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974), 27.

born five years later in Pulaski County, Kentucky Lorenzo Hatch, born another eight years later in Lincoln, Vermont, recalled, "My father was a farmer and reared me at that occupation."[39] As seen in Table 5 above, a majority of those who became the first Mormon men could evidently have echoed these affirmations. Two fundamental aspects of such an upbringing, as Lorenzo Hatch tersely noted, were that he "labored very hard" and that his parents " had confidence" in him.[40]

Indeed, being reared as a farmer in the early nineteenth century meant engaging in hard and responsible work from the earliest age. Before the 1850s, very few American farmers had the means to hire farm hands from outside their families.[41] At the same time, many parents "conceived of their children as their own flesh, blood, and labor supply."[42] As soon as they were physically able, their children began to perform essential labor for their families. "I was only seven years old ," recalled Levi Hancock of Springfield, Massachusetts, when "as was the custom, I was put to be out in the spring, to help out all I could." The earliest outside assignments involved work around or near their homes. George Washington Bean of Mendon, Illinois, recalled, "My early life was spent in keeping the buckets filled with fresh water from the spring for 'Ma', seeing the cows and

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[39] Isaac Haight, Autobiography, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah [Hereafter HBLL]), 1; Andrew Allen, Autobiography, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah [hereafter LDS-A], 1; Lorenzo Hill Hatch, Journal, HBLL, 1.

[40] L. Hatch, Journal, HBLL, 1.

[41] John Mack Faragher, "History from the Inside-Out: Writing the History of Women in Rural America," *American Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 546.

[42] Ryan, *Cradle*, 26.

horses had hay in the mangers, and keeping the cedar wood in the kitchen box and pine logs for the fireplace." David Cazier's earliest memories included chopping and gathering wood near his parents' home in Oldham County, Kentucky, before the age of seven. Even at this early age, Cazier attested, he was honing skills that would serve him throughout his life. "[I]t was this early beginning," Cazier explained, "that made me an expert with the axe so that I could strike four or five times exactly in the same place."[43]

As these boys got a bit bigger, tasks such as hunting for edibles and herding livestock took them farther away from hearth and mother. David Cazier's earliest memories also included venturing from the house together with his mother to help her pick greens and hunt wild fruits and nuts in the woods. Likewise, Benjamin Johnson's "earliest recollections" were of "gathering forest nuts [and] wild fruits" as a child with his mother. In Cazier's account, by the age of seven he was hunting edible fauna as well as flora, taking leave of his mother's company in the process. By the same age, other boys were pursuing domesticated animal sources of sustenance. At seven, Benjamin Ashby was "driving cows to pasture" near Salem, Massachusetts, while in Pennsylvania, age-mate George Patten was first "sent to the pasture for the cows." William Kartcher was taken by his mother to his parents' employer "to be his cowboy" when William was barely six years old.[44]

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[43]Levi Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 4; George Washington Bean, *Autobiography of George Washington Bean*, ed., by Flora Bean Horne (Salt Lake City, UT: Utah Printing Company, 1945), 14; David Cazier, Autobiography, HBLL, 1.

[44]David Cazier, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Benjamin Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1947), 7; George Patten, Autobiography, LDS-A, 1; Benjamin Ashby, Autobiography, Family History and Lands and

As soon as they were physically able, boys joined their fathers in the fields to help plow, plant, and harvest. David Cazier recalled spending most of his waking hours between the ages of seven and eleven on the family's new farm in Moltry County, Illinois, "hoeing corn and doing chores." By age eleven, Lorenzo Brown was helping on his father's farm by "driving team, haying, harvesting, etc., etc." At the age of seven, precocious William Pace tried to help drive a team of oxen in breaking up the rolling prairie near Shelby, Illinois. At about the same time and age, Taylor Butler was deemed not " big enough [vs. old enough] to drive a team."[45] Like their colonial counterparts, as soon as they were big enough these boys followed their fathers out into the fields.[46] Benjamin Franklin Johnson wrote,

> With the deepest sympathies for our father's hard labors all his boys early learned to be helpful, and even at six years of age I was accustomed to follow him in the summertime to the forests and fields, to pile and burn the brush, or in planting time, to drop the seeds, or in haying, open the swaths for drying the hay, and no one then old enough to become in any way a help was left to be idle.[47]

Records Office, LDS Visitors Center, Nauvoo, Illinois (hereafter NVC); William Decatur Kartchner, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage* (hereafter *OPH*) 6 (1964): 330.

[45]Cazier, 1; Lorenzo Brown, Journal, LDS-A, 3; William Bryan Pace, Journal, HBLL, 1; John Butler, Autobiography, HBLL, 18.

[46]Demos, *Past, Present and Personal*, 10. Working alongside one's father was customary even in those rare cases when he was well enough off to have hired men working for him as well. George W. Bean "endured the jibes of 'Pa's Shadow'" from his father's hired men, yet continued to follow him about, so great was his curiosity "to glean information on the business of farming and cattle raising." (Bean, *Autobiography*, 15.)

[47]Benjamin Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 8-9. Johnson's "no one *then* old enough" suggests the contrast he may have seen between his own childhood and that of his grandchildren for whom the time previously spent working in the household economy was now devoted more fully to formal education or purely recreational activities. The extent to

One intermediate step or informal rite of passage on the road to manly independence for many of these farm boys occurred when they were required to act, for a period of time, as what might be called "substitute farmers." Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has shown how rural wives in many instances could become "deputy husbands," operating the family farm or business in the event of their spouses' absence or illness.[48] That role of women must not be slighted, and it is not my intention to do so herein. Much of the so-called "independence" of men was actually dependent on the intense work and subordination of their wives and children of both genders. Their common categorization as "dependents" is ironic in light of the extent to which their husbands and fathers depended on them to sustain a household economy.[49] In the context of this study,

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which his sympathies were mainly for his father (either precociously or retrospectively) or for himself (either as a boy who had to help his father so strenuously or as a father who had to do without such help) is impossible to know for certain. Although we may suspect the latter case, we have no direct evidence other than his word. As to the main point, that he and many of his contemporaries did in fact labor thus from an early age, there are plenty of supporting accounts.

[48]Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Random House, 1980), 35-50.

[49]Many Mormon accounts confirm Christopher Clark's observation that "the boundaries between 'men's' and 'women's' work, while never rigid, appear to have been more permeable in permitting women to enter the men's sphere than the other way round. Women found themselves called to do barn, garden, or field chores usually done by men if circumstances required. Instances of men doing household tasks, on the other hand, were rarely recorded." (Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 25-26. See also Faragher, "History from the Inside-Out,"540-541.) Such accounts also affirm the economic realities behind the wife's role as "female provider," which was "taken for granted" by Mormon church leaders during this early period and even "authoritatively encouraged" in the latter nineteenth century, only to "became a weak if not negative element" in the discourse of Church leaders during the following century. (Vella Neil Evans, "The Mormon Women: Defined in Authoritative Church Discourse 1830-1980," *Religious Studies and Theology* 7,

however, it is important to especially note the experience of many of their sons, whose journeys toward "manly independence" often included a period as substitute farmers, working the family farm while their fathers sought other employment to earn cash for additional capital investment or simply to make ends meet.

Their stints as substitute farmers in the absence of their fathers evinced the parental "confidence" which Lorenzo Hatch and others affirmed that their hard work with their fathers had earned them. Having worked "with [his] father" on the family farm from the age of ten, at age sixteen, two of his younger brothers being "large enough" to assist him, Henry Boyle of Virginia was given "the management of the farming," while his father left to "work abroad" for the next two years. From the time Silas Richards of Ohio was "about 15 years old" he was "principal to carry on a farm," with the help of his twelve-year-old brother Milton, while his father practiced medicine. Silas and Milton continued

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no. 1 [January 1987]: 36.)

Elliot West's observation that frontier life blurred the gendered division of labor for children (*Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier* [Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1989], 138-139) also finds much support in accounts of "pre-Mormon" childhoods. In his family's efforts to clear new land for a farm in Ohio, James McBride declared that "bone and sinew were put to chopping and grubbing—and the younger hands to gathering brush—*whether boys or girls, it mattered not, the clearing must be done*."(James McBride, Autobiography, HBLL, 7, emphasis added.) Sally Randall affirmed, "I was not only taught to work in the house, but [also] to help my father plant and hoe corn, potatoes, plant and pick cotton . . . . And I have gone down into the blacksmith's shop to help my father blow and strike, when he had no" healthy sons at home to "help him . . . and that is why *us girls had to help father at times*, so that he could carry on his work."(Sally Randall to "Parents and Brothers and Sisters," Nauvoo, 15 January 1845, in *Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900*, eds., Kenneth Godfrey, Audrey Godfrey, and Jill Derr, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1982 [Hereafter *WV*]), 143, emphasis added.) These accounts also suggest, however, that these children had internalized the belief that such transgressions of the gendered division of labor were just that: transgressions.

to "carry on" the farm together until Silas got married at age 21. After their older brother Ruel married and started a farm of his own in Ohio, seventeen- year-old Wales Shurtliff of Massachusetts took over operation of the family farm with the assistance of his ten-year-old brother Luman, who declared, "I could get the cows and drive the oxen, ride the horses and do many things "[50] The fall before Luman was sixteen years old, he got his own turn to act as substitute farmer while Wales sought outside work for a season His responsibilities at fifteen were impressive. As Luman recorded,

> I was left to take care of the crops, stock, and farm, and we were building a large farm house. This added to my care. I had 12 acres of corn to gather, one of potatoes to dig and bury, six acres of wheat to fence (most of the rails were split but had to be drawn and laid up), thrashing to be done with a flail, wood to get and chop, hogs to fatten and kill. In thrashing the wheat, I hired a hand to help me. My work kept me busy almost night and day. . . . Wales returned about the first of June . . and I was much pleased to have him home and take charge . . . and liberate me [51]

Some boys even younger got the opportunity to be substitute farmers After working the farm with his father and older brother until he was thirteen, Peter Conover of Kentucky was left to work the farm himself for a year while they went to work in Illinois.[52] A few fathers evidently gave sons even younger the opportunity for some guided practice at substitute farming. The summer after he turned ten, Levi Hancock's father gave Levi and his older brothers, thirteen-year-old Joseph and sixteen-year-old Alvah, "a small piece of land each, to see which could raise the most and take the best care of it." "We all raised a

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[50]Henry Boyle, Autobiography, HBLL, 3; Silas Richards, Autobiography, *OPH* 15 (1973): 110; Luman Shurtliff, Autobiography, LDS-A, 6

[51]Luman Shurtliff, Autobiography, LDS-A, 9-10.

[52]Peter Conover, Autobiography, NVC, 1.

good crop and secured it well," attested Levi.[53]

While some boys were reared as farmers by their farmer fathers and older brothers, others learned the trades of their artisan fathers and brothers. When fourteen years of age, Heber C. Kimball's father took Heber into his shop and taught him blacksmithing. His brother subsequently taught him the potter's trade. Charles Sperry, whose father, "worked at carpentering and in a mill," reported that he "worked with him and learned the business." Henry Sanderson of Hampden County, Massachusetts, was taken by his father at the age of ten and "instructed in the manner of closing shoes or sewing up the uppers which was all done by hand at the time." Shortly thereafter, Henry "obtained work" from a shoe shop. Some future Mormon men were apprenticed by their fathers to others to learn a trade. At thirteen, Wandle Mace became one of the youngest apprentices of a wheelwright whose shop in New York City included a number of other apprentices ranging from Wandle's age to twenty-one years old. Wandle's father was a farmer and a blacksmith, and Wandle was "first put to work in the blacksmith shop and kept in that shop until [he] had learned that branch of the business thoroughly." "I then learned to make wheels," Wandle recalled. "When I had learned these branches of the business I was put to work at other parts or branches, until I had thoroughly learned to do every kind of work that was done in the shops which was all kinds of coach and carriage buildings." Thus, Wandle was able to expand upon what he had learned from his father to qualify

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[53]Levi Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 7.

himself for a more technical and valuable trade.[54]

Of course, being "reared as a farmer" and learning other skills were rarely mutually exclusive experiences. "I was reared at the farming and stock business, also at getting out saw timber and wood for cooperware," recalled James Stephens Brown, who grew up in Brown County, Illinois, in the 1830s As "the country was then wild and with very few inhabitants," Brown affirmed, "so it was with great effort that father and mother succeeded in making a home and gathering about them the comforts of life." Generally speaking, the farther west they were, the more versatile these men and boys had to be. Working with their father, Brown and his brothers "trained horses and cattle to work, stocked our own plows, made our own harrows, rakes and forks, braided our own whips from the pelts of wild beasts which we ourselves dressed, raised our own honey, and made our own sugar, with some to sell."[55] Samuel Rogers learned both farming and shoemaking from his father, who "followed agricultural pursuits in summer and worked as a shoemaker in winter "[56] At fourteen and a half, Levi Hancock decided to work at his trade in the winter while continuing to work the piece of land his father had let him farm. According to his account he was quite productive at both pursuits Wrote Levi,

> I fixed up the shop and fixed up my lathe and went to work making

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[54]Heber C. Kimball, "Synopsis of the History of Heber Chase Kimball," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* [hereafter *MS*] 26 (1864), 471; Charles Sperry, Autobiography, in *OPH* 9 (1966): 441; Henry Weeks Sanderson, Autobiography, HBLL, 11, 12, 22; Wandle Mace, Autobiography, HBLL, 1-2.

[55]James Stephens Brown, *Life of a Pioneer* (Salt Lake City, UT: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1900), 11.

[56]Samuel Rogers, Journal, HBLL, 1.

> furniture. I also helped on the farm. In the spring I helped make sugar. Father let me have a piece of land and told me I could have all I raised on it [after clearing it]. I chopped the logs off and put some of the smaller ones against the larger ones and burned what I could. I [then] raised twelve bushel of wheat and some potatoes.[57]

Although he was trained as a blacksmith and a potter, Heber Kimball also learned enough in his youth about farming that after leaving home he was able to a purchase land on which he planted fruit trees and built "a wood house, barn, and other outhouses," all the while continuing in the pottery business. Nor was working as a farmer and as a small merchant mutually exclusive. In Otsego County, New York, in the late 1820s, Leonard Harrington's father "engaged in the tavern keeping business and also in a small degree in farming and lumbering," so that young Leonard's "business was a mixture of assisting about the tavern, farming, lumbering, et cetera."[58] These accounts illustrate the opportunities for work experience and increasing responsibility afforded to these boys. They also belie the notion that rural fathers micro-managed the work of their families in the home before they were removed from their homes by the separation of spheres.

Such accounts say as much about the economic responsibilities of fathers as about their efforts to rear and prepare their sons for manhood. The father-son separations necessitated by such responsibilities included periods not only of leaving sons in charge at home but also of requiring sons to leave home in the interests of the family economy. The practice of "putting out" of children to live and work in other household economies in an

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[57]Levi Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 11.

[58]Kimball, "History," *MS* 26 (1864): 471; Leonard E. Harrington, "Journal of Leonard E. Harrington," as published in *Utah Historical Quarterly* [hereafter *UHQ*] 8 (Jan 1940): 4.

earlier era of American history has been analyzed by John Demos in his study of colonial Plymouth referred to above. While somewhat less formal, the practice was apparently almost as common among early nineteenth-century American rural families as it had been among their seventeenth-century Plymouth predecessors. The greatest difference may have been in the motives of parents in following the practice in the two eras. Citing cases in which they sent their children to live with others even when this was economically irrational, Demos, following Edmund Morgan, suggests that Plymouth parents' main motive may have often been to avoid spoiling their children through over-abundant parental affection.[59] By contrast, in most cases the decision of "pre-Mormon" parents to "put out" their children was apparently motivated primarily by economic considerations.[60]

Boys whose labor evidently could not be economically managed by a supervising parent were hired out to others who could afford to provide room, board, and sometimes schooling for the boy in exchange for his work. Since his father had "a large family and not much to help himself with," at the age of fourteen Joseph Noble went to work "for six months at $5.00 per month." The money Joseph earned clothed him and "bought a cow" for his father, and "from this time on" he was "from home most of the time." Similarly, at

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[59]Demos, *Little Commonwealth*, 73-74; Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York: Harper and Row, 1944), 77.

[60]Although most subjects of this study continued to refer to this experience as being "put out," their parents' motives often had less in common with those described by Demos in putting their children out than with those which led nineteenth-century farm families to "hire out" their sons, as described, for example, in David E. Schob, *Hired Hands and Plowboys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815-1860* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 4, 173-175.

the age of fifteen Parley Pratt was first "separated from [his] father's house, and placed as an assistant on a farm." Harrison Burgess lived with his parents until the age of fourteen and then off and on until seventeen when he left home and commenced supporting himself.[61]

In cases where the family suffered major reverses, such as the death or prolonged illness of a parent, children might be put out at even younger ages. After his mother died, six-year-old George Patten was briefly cared for by his grandmother and then put out to live with one of his father's cousins who "had no children." Henry Buckwalter recalled, "My father, being in poor health for sometime past, and our family in rather destitute circumstances, I was at the age of seven years put out by my parents to live with a family" of non-relatives After Joseph Holbrook's father died, his mother rented out the farm and sent seven-year-old Joseph to live with his paternal grandfather to help work his farm and, when possible, to "be accommodated with schooling." "Being about eight years of age my father was taken with the bloody flux and died," wrote George Laub. "Shortly [there]after my mother broke up housekeeping and I was lucky enough to fall into the hands of a good man who . . . having no children adopted me into his family . . . . My mother agreed with him that I should live with him till I was of age."[62] Indeed, the most commonly mentioned reason in these accounts for putting out a young son was the death

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[61]Joseph Noble, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Harrison Burgess, Autobiography, in Kenneth Glyn Hales, editor and compiler, *Windows: A Mormon Family* (Tucson, AZ: Skyline Printing, 1985), 100.

[62]George Patten, Autobiography, LDS-A, 1; Henry Schuler Buckwalter, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Joseph Holbrook, Autobiography, HBLL, 5-6; George Laub, Autobiography, Marriot Library, 1.

or prolonged illness of a parent.

As the above examples illustrate, the putting out of these boys, as of Demos' subjects, frequently "followed the lines of family connection."[63] Thus, when he was ten, Peter Conover went to live with his sister and brother-in-law, where he worked for the next three years farming and driving stock. After living for a year with an unrelated family, Parley Pratt boarded with one of his aunts in order to attend a nearby school whenever she did not require his work around her place.[64] Some of these boys expressed a preference for being "put out" to relatives. While his mother suffered a prolonged illness, eight-year-old Levi Hancock of Springfield, Massachusetts, "was put out to a man . . . and his wife" who, as Levi recalled,

> . . . would not let me lay down when I was sick, so I grieved and wished I was back home with my father. . . I had to do all the chores . and chopped all his firewood through the winter all but the large logs. Sometimes I would be sent on errands near my fathers place and I would have to stop and see him. It would seem like the sun would go down [faster than] any other time. The man would need me and give me the beech rod, but the next time I was sent close to home I would stop and see Father but I would not stop long as I knew I should get a whipping.

Much to his relief, the following spring Levi was sent instead to live with his older married brother, "where [he] was received kindly."[65] Those who were treated kindly by non-relatives to whom they had been put out were quick to remember and remark upon the fact. George Laub "was lucky enough to fall into the hands of a good man," and Parley

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[63]Demos, *Little Commonwealth,* 120-121.

[64]Peter Conover, Autobiography, NVC, 1; Parley Pratt, *Autobiography*, 21.

[65]Levi Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 5.

Pratt wrote of the first family with whom he was placed that "better, kinder, or more agreeable people are seldom met with in this wicked world," and that they treated him like "an only son, instead of a hired servant."[66] Kind or harsh, the adults with whom they stayed gave these boys an experience of living and working under the supervision of adults other than their parents, another step on the path to manhood.

Besides their economic concerns, some parents put their sons out to live with other families so that they would be close enough to be able to attend school. This purpose for being put out was more common among these children because so many were raised in frontier areas far from established schools.[67] Whether sent to live with others, or continuing with their own families, those who were able to attend school thereby had another chance to spend time away from home and under the supervision of authority figures other than their parents. Although a closer study of the educational levels of the first Mormons is definitely called for,[68] it is important to stress several relevant points in

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[66]Laub, Autobiography, Marriot Library, 1; Pratt, *Autobiography*, 21.

[67]For example, Joseph Holbrook, Autobiography, HBLL, 7, George Patten Autobiography, LDS-A, 1; Levi Hancock, Autobiography, 5, 7.

[68]Some earlier studies have overestimated the educational attainments of early nineteenth-century Mormons both before and after conversion. Yorgason's assertion that most early Mormon converts received five to six months of schooling a year (Yorgason, "Demographic Aspects," 14) is unsubstantiated and greatly exaggerated. Paul Smith presents an even rosier idealization of schooling in Nauvoo. (Paul Smith, "A Historical Study of the Nauvoo, Illinois, Public School System, 1841-1845" [Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969].) Stephen Harper's assertion that most early Mormons were fairly well-educated members of the middle-class (Stephen Harper, "'By No Means Men of Weak Minds:' The Gullible Bumpkin Thesis and the First Mormons." *Nauvoo Journal* 9 [1997]: 41) is problematic for several reasons. Historians generally agree that in the early republic basic literacy in America rose to "nearly universal" levels for males throughout nearly all socio-economic groups and geographical regions (other than the South). Although the most

the context of the present study.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to establish with any precision the average prior education of early Mormon converts. Even minimally complete information such as ages and duration of school attendance and level of attainment is not extant for the vast majority of these men. Of course, even such data would not tell the whole story (Heber

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intensive study, by William J. Gilmore, relies primarily on signature rates, Jennifer Monoghan has argued that, since "reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic" were usually taught in that order, signature counts may actually underestimate reading ability for some groups. (William J Gilmore, *Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780-1835* [Knoxville, TN: Univerity of Tennessee Press, 1989], 5-6, 119; E. Jennifer Monoghan, "Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England," in *Reading in America: Literature and Social History*, ed. Cathy N. Davidson [Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1989], 53-80. See also Carl F. Kaestle, *Literacy in the United States* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991], 22-24, and Leonard I. Sweet, *Communication and Change in American Religious History* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 1993], 8-9, but cf. Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1991], 365-366.) More importantly, Harper bases his assertion solely on Yorgasen's finding that most early Mormons were at least minimally literate, which is based in turn on the accounts of those who were able to report that they were (i.e., proving essentially that literate Mormons were literate.) In light of the above, the most that can be suggested is that literacy among early Mormon men was probably comparable to that of their rural American contemporaries. Moreover, Gilmore identifies several other modes of cultural communication such men could engage in, including oral communication, singing, music, arts and crafts. Nathan Hatch as show how common Americans could use such modes to engage in discussions and critiques of the burning religious questions of the day. (Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989].) R. Lawrence Moore has recently argued that it was discussing just such religious questions in their youths that, more than anything else, taught even the most refined nineteenth-century American minds how to think critically and argue logically. (R. Laurence Moore, "What Children Did Not Learn in School: The Intellectual Quickening of Young Americans in the Nineteenth Century." *Church History* 61, no. 1 [March 1999]: 42-61.) As Moore suggests and the following chapter of the present study illustrates, such discussions and critiques were not the monopoly of the upper classes. An appreciation of such factors undermines any "gullible bumpkin thesis" as well as any simple equation of literacy and intelligence, both of which existed widely in nineteenth-century American among those below the middle class.

Kimball's schooling spanned as many years of age as Wilford Woodruff's, but Heber was a poor student, attended "off-and-on," and never completed a common school education while Wilford attended faithfully, proved extremely bright, and made it through not only common school but also a local academy, during the same span of years Heber was by far the more nearly typical of the two.) Furthermore, the available sources certainly over-represent the better educated since they would have been more able to produce detailed life writings. Nevertheless, the Mormon emphasis on record keeping, and on the continuing pursuit of knowledge, have produced a unique percentage of life writings by those ill-situated to pursue education in their earlier years. As an extreme example, Amasa Potter prefaced his autobiography with the apology: "[T]he writing is poor and spelling bad, but you must make allowance for this as I never went to school a year in my life, and had to learn without a teacher while on a foreign mission, prompted by the Spirit of the Lord."[69]

Of those who wrote in any detail of their educations, less than a handful wrote only of having been taught by their mothers or parents.[70] On the other hand, less than a handful were able to attend the academies that were colleges of the new middle class;[71] only one or two attended the universities that could escort one into the ranks of the educated elite of

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[69]Amasa Potter, Journal, LDS-A, 1.

[70]William W. Sterrett, Autobiography, in *OPH* 19 (1976): 399; Ezra T. Benson Autobiography, *Instructor* 80 (1945): 54; William Pace, Diary, HBLL: 3.

[71]"Academies were truly 'colleges of the middling classes,' but 'middling' here means not the dead center of the income spectrum in antebellum American but the children of substantial farmers, [and] professional men." (Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 20.)

American society. Most who wrote about their schooling in any detail reported at least some attendance at local common schools.[72]

Although the common schools were often open both winter and summer, each season of classes generally lasted only a few of months at most.[73] While families who could spare their children's labor long enough sent them to school both summer and winter, most of the subjects in this study were able to attend only in the winters and then only when the household economy allowed David Osborn of Virginia wrote, "My mother was not neglectful in sending us to school when opportunity offered, which was generally in the winter season, and then in the summer we were employed on the farm." This did not necessarily provide a balanced approach, according to David, who concluded, " we would forget during the summer nearly all we could learn in the winter."[74]

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[72]Careful previous studies have reported similar findings Of seventy-one converts to Mormonism whose educational levels were analyzed by Yorgason, he found 46 (nearly 65 percent) to have received common school educations, while 15 (21 percent) received less or little education. (Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects," 14-20.) Mark Grandstaff's analysis of the educational backgrounds of sixty-six Mormons who gathered to Kirtland, Ohio, prior to 1839 found 48 (nearly 73 percent) had received common school educations while 15 (nearly 23 percent) had less or little education and 3 (4.5 percent) had more. (Mark R. Grandstaff, "The Impact of the Mormon Migration on the Community of Kirtland, Ohio, 1830-1839" [Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1984], 105. Yorgason's finding of 14 percent at the higher level is suspect as he states, for example, that Heber C. Kimball's education was "exceptional" on the basis of the years it spanned. (Cf. page 56 above.)

[73]"If I had two month's schooling a year," recalled George Patten, "I did well for those times."(George Patten Autobiography, LDS-A, 1.) At best, these men's pre-Mormon schooling matched Joyce Appleby's recent summation that "farmer's children" during this era went to school "for a few months for four or five years to learn the fundamentals of reading, writing and 'summing.'" (Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution,* 104; see also Kett, *Rites of Passage*, 21.)

[74]David Osborn, Autobiography, HBLL, 2; see also, e.g., Isaac Haight, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Joseph Noble, Autobiography, HBLL, 1-2.

The recurring lament of those who did receive some schooling was that it was "small," "a little," "but little," "very little," "limited," "very limited." Many explained that the limitation was due to the frontier areas in which they grew up, which meant little or no school far more often than being put out to be able to attend school.[75] By far the most commonly identified factor that limited their schooling was the higher priority of laboring for their families. Harrison Burgess explained that he was "kept constantly at work and had but little opportunity of acquiring an education." Parley P. Pratt wrote that his opportunity for education, even in the nearby common school, was "far more limited than most," because of his "time being mostly required in physical exertion to assist in sustaining the family of [his] father." "My means of education were limited owing to the circumstances of my parents," explained Samuel Rogers, as "my labor was required to assist in the support of the family." In a statement with which most of his followers could surely identify, Brigham Young recalled from the pulpit: "In my youth . . . instead of going to school, I had to chop logs, to sow and plant, [and] plow."[76]

It is also important to note that a significant percentage of those who reported

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[75]For example, Anson Call, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Benjamin Brown, *Testimonies For The Truth*, in George Q. Cannon, ed., *Gems for the Young Folks* (Salt Lake City, UT: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1881), 117; George W. Averett, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Goudy E. Hogan, Autobiography, HBLL, 4; Martin Luther Ensign, Autobiography, LDS-A,1; Brigham Young, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1801-44*, ed., Eldon Watson (Salt Lake City, UT: Smith Secretarial Service, 1969), 1-2.

[76]Harrison Burgess, Autobiography, in *Windows* (1985), 100; Samuel Rogers, Journal, HBLL, 6; Parley Pratt, *Autobiography*, p.1-2) Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols., (Liverpool: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot) 14 (8 Aug 1869): 103; see also, for example, David Cazier, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Orange Wight, Autobiography, HBLL, 6.

receiving schooling also reported recurrent childhood illnesses "It was the rule in the country," explained Sidney Rigdon's brother John, "that when a boy was too feeble to work in a farm, they would send him to school and give him an education " Sidney's father was one of the few men discovered by this study who pursued the middle-class path of sending one of his sons for more than rudimentary education. Not wanting to be a farmer, Sidney rebelled when he was not the son chosen for higher education [77]

In this Sidney was similar to those few upwardly mobile young men cited by Ryan as showing a "discontent with the family economy,"[78] or at least with farming. Yet, he was yet unique among the subjects of the present study, most of whom expressed regret at their limited educations, but little desire to become anything but what they had been raised as, and what their fathers had been, artisans and farmers. In fact, several expressed just the opposite sentiments as those cited by Ryan. Edward Hunter of Pennsylvania recalled, "My father intended to make a scholar of me but for some cause, I cannot tell, I got a great dislike for going to school. I said I would rather work on the farm " Edward's father, who had the means to provide him with a "higher" education, declared that if Edward would not pursue one he must be apprenticed to a trade. Edward "agreed and was put to the trade of tanning and currying." He "made great proficiency," in this endeavor, soon "took the lead of older apprentices," and, by the age of twenty, "bossed

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[77]John M. Rigdon, "Lecture on the Early History of the Mormon Church," Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2.

[78]Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 57.

the shop."[79] Similarly, Benjamin Johnson confessed that his school education "was less than it would have been, had [he] loved school more," but reported no trouble in supporting himself as a farmer nor regrets at having followed that occupation [80]

Thus, the typical schooling experience of those in this study who did have and take that opportunity differed significantly from that of their more upwardly mobile contemporaries. The parents of young men in the "cradle of the middle-class" had the means to feed, clothe, and house some of their sons through an extended period of nonproductive study; many of their laboring contemporaries were not so blessed. Yet, perhaps there were hidden advantages in this for these laboring sons of rural America. Their common school experiences did not involve the age-graded segregation, which decreased the time later youths spent working with and learning from older boys. Nor was the schooling of any but a minute fraction so extensive as to postpone the attainment of manly independence. None of the writings examined in this study mention completion of schooling as a significant rite of passage to adulthood nor a prerequisite to economic independence. In fact, almost none mention it at all.

Thus far, the passage to manhood of these individuals resembles that of their colonial counterparts as described by Demos much more than the passage to "American Manhood" of their contemporaries as described by Rotundo. Yet, in a fundamentally important way, the subjects of Demos and Rotundo had more in common with one another than either did with the subjects of this study. The ages at which the subjects of

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[79]Edward Hunter, "Autobiography," in *Our Pioneer Heritage* 6 (1964): 319.

[80]Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 9,10.

this study married, and fully assumed the role of men, were significantly earlier than those described by either Demos or Rotundo While the marriages of Rotundo's subjects were postponed until their late twenties and beyond as they pursued specialized education for professional careers, Demos' rural youths postponed their marriages into the late twenties as they waited for their fathers to yield the inheritances of land on which they could become independent farmers. By the time of the early republic, if not sooner, this was a gift far fewer fathers had to withhold.[81]

A search of early Mormon men's writings yields precious few examples among these men, or their fathers, of the landed patriarchal rulers-of-all-they-surveyed who, to judge from most of the previous literature, were the fathers and grandfathers of nearly everyone born in the country in the early years of the nineteenth century. "None of our means was willed to us," attested Nathan Tanner, "but earned by hard work and economy." "I was born on a New Jersey farm," recalled John Horner. "There I continued to live until the end of my twenty-first year, when I was expected to shift for myself . . . without money" or any other inheritance. In a few instances, the inheritance had been lost by their fathers. "When nineteen," reported Heber Kimball, "my father, having lost his property and not taking the care for my welfare which he formerly did, I was left to seek a place of refuge or home of my own."[82] Far more often, these men's

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[81]Lisa Wilson has recently observed that "even by the middle of the eighteenth century," an inheritance of land large enough for a "viable farm" had become "a costly gift beyond the resources of many." (Lisa Wilson, *Ye Heart of A Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999], 34-36.)

[82]Nathan Tanner, Autobiography, LDS-A, 51; John M. Horner, Autobiography, in *OPH* 3 (1961): 548; H. Kimball, "History," 471.

fathers had begun without tangible inheritances just as their sons would. The case of Lorenzo Hatch's parents was typical:

> My father and mother were poor when first married, but my father bought a farm . . . having time to pay for it given him. The farm was not cleared and was heavily timbered except for a few acres where a house and barn stood. He worked hard, burnt ashes, and made payments for his land and store goods. Thus he cleared up his farm or some portion of it.[83]

Allen Stout likewise recalled, "My father, being a poor man, maintained his family . . . partly by farming and partly by days work."[84]

The straightened yet viable economic circumstances described by these men is congruent with the findings of historian Susan Gray that westward migration generally excluded both the wealthy and the very poor.[85] Yet Gray has stressed several examples of Midwestern fathers who were able to offset their lack of patrimonies in land with inheritances of cash for their sons.[86] Even if the latter funds were insufficient incentive to keep sons from heading farther west to more abundant land, fathers had another, legal recourse which enabled them to partake of the fruits of their sons' labor, at least until they came of age. Still, as Gray explains, this was a two-edged sword.

> According to Blackstone, the bond between parent and child had the force of law until the child turned twenty-one. . . . "[A father] may indeed have the benefits of his children's labour while they live with him and are maintained by him . . . . [Yet,] though he may receive the profits during the

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[83]L. Hatch, Autobiography, HBLL, 1.

[84]Allen Stout, Journal, HBLL, 1, 3-4.

[85]Gray, *The Yankee West*, 11.

[86]Gray, *The Yankee West*, 101-102.

child's minority . . . he must account for them when he comes of age."[87]

Although several of the fathers in Gray's study were able to "maintain" their sons profitably and "account for" their contributions generously when they left home, others evidently foresaw that they could do neither. The relative poverty of many fathers, along with the ability of many sons to become self-supporting before reaching the age of majority, often overrode the legal definition of when a boy became a man. As Gray explains, sons "were obliged to turn their earnings over to their fathers, but the obligation was negotiable. Depending on his relationship with his son," but surely also on his own economic sitution, "a father might demand the entirety or a portion of the [boy's] earnings, or he might give his son the 'balance of his time,' either as a gift or in return for a lump sum."[88]

While it is not possible to ascertain exactly how often this occurred among early Mormon men (even Gray was not able to provide precise statistics), several did similarly report having "'received their time," or "bought their labor" from their fathers before reaching twenty-one.[89] While some reported leaving home promptly at twenty-one,[90] others were given their remaining time, as Gray suggests, either as a gift or for a fee.

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[87]Gray, *The Yankee West*, 112-113.

[88]Gray, *The Yankee West*, 111. I have found Gray's to be by far the most thorough discussion in the secondary literature of this important aspect of rural men's progress toward manly independence.(See Gray, 111-117, but also Schob, *Hired Hands*, 173-174.)

[89]Cf. Gray, *The Yankee West*, 110-111.

[90]For example, Benjamin Brown, *Testimonies*, 51; John M. Horner, Autobiography, *OPH* 3: 548, Noah Packard, Autobiography, HBLL, 3. Even such accounts suggest these men's father's inability to keep them home longer with enticements of land or cash.

"Being twenty years of age," recorded William H. Walker, "my father gave me my time." Thereupon, William moved out of the house, "rented a large farm," and was soon married. "When I was nineteen years old I left home with the consent of my parents," stated Edward Bunker, explaining that since older brother Silas had been given the property, "I ought to have my time." Erastus Snow left his "father's house" the day before he turned seventeen, taking with him "the blessing of father and mother" and "fifteen dollars in money," which Erastus noted was "the only pecuniary legacy he was ever able to bestow upon me." About a month after his sixteenth birthday, Levi Hancock asked his father to give him "liberty" to go out to work, and after receiving his father's leave, "went and started without purse or scrip into the wide world." At the age of fifteen, Milo Andrus was able to buy the balance of his time "until [he] was twenty-one" from his father, for "one hundred and fifty dollars." Thus, based on their economic circumstances and abilities, such men left home at varying ages in search of manly independence.[91]

Nevertheless, they were not without an inheritance of sorts. "I had good health," concluded Horner, "and was industrious and ambitious." In addition, having been reared as a farmer, Horner had a marketable skill. He soon obtained work as a farm laborer and,

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[91]Walker, Journal, LDS-A, 8; Edward Bunker, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Erastus Snow, Autobiography, *OPH* 6: 300; Levi Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 15-16; Milo Andrus, Autobiography, HBLL, 2. Nor was this transition evidently a sudden shock to these men. Gray observes that by the early eighteenth century little ungranted land remained in the older Eastern settlements, and that by the end of that century "young men could aspire to becoming farmers without benefit of land from their fathers." By the 1830s, many young men were "buying their labor from their fathers" in order to leave home before they were of legal age, and by mid-century, there was legal precedent for sons' doing so even without their father's "express consent" by demonstrating economic independence. (Gray, *The Yankee West*, 13, 100, 102, 116-7.)

in a couple of years, was working a farm of his own [92] If most of these men received as "inheritances" only their strength and some skill in which to apply it, so, in most cases, had their fathers before them. Benjamin Cummings wrote,

> My father . moved into [a new] state . . when young (after marrying a wife to share with him in his toils). The country at that time was new, and as all the capital stock he had to commence business with was a healthy and a strong constitution, he was under the necessity of laboring hard in order to gain an inheritance.[93]

Like fathers, like sons. " What little property I received from my father's estate did me little or no good," wrote Solomon Chamberlain, "and I began the world like my father, earned my bread by the sweat of my face."[94] Thus, these men identified themselves, and their fathers before them, as working men who relied on their own muscles, skills, and experience to survive.

In summary, this chapter has sought to show that the passage to manhood of these men was indeed arduous yet also fairly straightforward and relatively swift. In the eyes of their fellow men they were qualified for the passages of leaving home and taking wives within a few years of reaching physical maturity.[95] By that time, they were deemed to

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[92]Horner, Autobiography, *OPH* 3:548.

[93]Benjamin Cummings, Autobiography, HBLL, 1.

[94]Solomon Chamberlain, Autobiography, Marriot Library, 1.

[95]In this, they resembled their counterparts during the colonial period and well into that of the early republic. Throughout that time, for the rural working majority, "work, marriage, and inevitably children [of their own] came in quick succession" (Wilson, *Ye Heart of A Man*, 15) and thus "physical maturity signaled adult status" (Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 121).

have the skills and experience to support themselves and to help support families of their own. The strenuous yet swift passage to manhood of these men doubtless affected their life choices, including the religion they would come to embrace.

CHAPTER 3

A MAN MUST BE BORN AGAIN[1]

RELIGIOUS PASSAGES TO EARLY MORMON MANHOOD

Early nineteenth-century Mormonism has been characterized by late twentieth-century historians as a "revival theology"[2] and as a "refuge" from revivalism,[3] as the era's prime example of "egregious patriarchalism,"[4] and as an example of the era's "feminization of American religion " [5] A more thorough, gender-sensitive reexamination of the composition and motivations of early converts to Mormonism can provide new insights for explaining these apparently contradictory characterizations This chapter draws on early Mormon church records and life writings to adduce statistical as well as

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[1]See John 3: 3-7.

[2]Martha Sonntag Bradley, "'Seizing Sacred Space:' Women's Engagement in Early Mormonism," *Dialogue* 27, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 59.

[3]Marvin Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 14. See also Lawrence Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects of One Hundred Early Mormon Converts, 1830-1837" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974), 4n1.

[4]Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 225.

[5]Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860," in Welter, *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 99-100.

more impressionistic evidence regarding the gender composition of early Mormon church membership as well as the religious backgrounds and concerns of male converts in particular.

This chapter is not intended to present a monocausal explanation, nor to negate earlier interpretations,[6] but to elucidate additional motivations which can help explain the relatively high numbers of male converts to early Mormonism and their possible impact on its growth and development. The current chapter will present evidence that, compared to the other denominations of the day, a disproportionate number of early Mormon converts were, or were led to Mormonism by, men. Moreover, although these men had received prior religious instruction in their earliest years, typically from their mothers, the content of that instruction was not of the feminized variety stressed by earlier historians, and a significant portion of these men had been unable to achieve evangelical conversion experiences. Many had evidently previously turned to more "feminized" religious beliefs such as those espoused by the Universalists, and it may well have been male converts who helped influence Mormonism's development of similar doctrines. Insofar as the subjects of this study were part of the rural working majority of early nineteenth-century

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[6]Several studies have examined the concerns and motives of early Mormon converts. The best include: Mario S. DePillis, "The Social Sources of Mormonism," *Church History* 37 (March 1968): 64-87; Marvin S. Hill, "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District: Another View," *New York History* 61 (Oct 1980), 24-41. Further, it is not the contention here that any apparent differences in the conversions of men and women reflected essential differences in their natures, but rather differences in their experiences as well as the culturally assigned roles which they had been taught and in which they sought to act.

Americans,[7] their experiences can also provide additional insights regarding the interaction of gender and religion in that place and time.

Some historians have pointed to changes in church attendance and doctrine in nineteenth-century America as evidence of a feminization of American religion. Barbara Welter and others have argued that, being excluded from the workplace (which was increasingly separated from the home), women went to church in greater numbers as part of a sphere in which they could work toward the preservation and promulgation of values necessary to the salvation of their families and country. The increasing percentage of female church members during a period when disestablishment and denominationalism meant ministers had to become popular to keep their jobs, allegedly led to more gentle, sentimentalized, "feminized" teachings. The view of a vengeful God by whom unbaptized children were roasted for eternity was thus replaced by doctrines of innocent infants and others saved by a kinder, gentler Jesus. Christ, like a true mother, was increasingly seen as "the embodiment of nurture, warmth, tenderness, mercy, and forgiveness," who sacrificed himself to become a mediator between a stern Father and his children.[8] Thus, observed British visitor Frances Trollope in 1832, it was "from the clergy" that American women received "that sort of attention which is so dearly valued by every female heart. I

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[7]See the previous chapters of the present study.

[8]Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion," 83-89; Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 17-165, William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 120. See also: Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," *American Quarterly* 18 (1966): 151-174; Nancy F. Cott, "Young Women in the Second Great Awakening in New England," *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 3 (Fall 1975): 15-29. But see also footnote 13 below.

never saw, or read, of any country where religion had so strong a hold upon the women, or a slighter hold upon the men."[9]

The estimates of her contemporaries, as well as more recent and empirical studies, seem to support Mrs. Trollope's suggestion regarding church attendence. The same year as her observations were published, the Reverend Ebenezer Porter estimated that during the past three decades the churches in New England had gained at least three female converts for every two males.[10] Recent studies have found that the proportion of female converts in one county of New York rose from 52 percent in an 1814 revival to 72 percent in an 1838 "Awakening," while 69 percent of the new converts to New England's Congregational churches between 1800 and 1835 were women.[11] The latter percentages would mean that, if anything, the Reverend Porter underestimated. Mary P. Ryan, who authored the study of Oneida County, New York, also observed of the male converts in her study that: (a) few were heads of households, (b) a significant number were related to women who had previously converted, and (c) more joined the denominations of their mothers than of their fathers. Hence, Ryan suggests, many women may have "led,"

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[9]Quoted in Welter, "Feminization," 88, and in full in Douglas, *Feminization*, 100-101.

[10]As cited in Cott, "Young Women," 15. Some of Porter's fellow clergymen lamented the increasing number of women in their congregations as signaling their own marginalization. (See Welter, "Feminization," 95; Douglas, *Feminization*, 19-22, 69.)

[11]Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 79; Richard D. Shiels, "The Feminization of American Congregationalism, 1730-1835," *American Quarterly* 33 (Spring 1981): 48.

"cajoled," or "manipulated," their menfolk into the evangelical churches.[12]

However, some studies suggest cracks in this seemingly seamless picture of the feminization of American religion. Richard Shiels has supplied statistical support for Cotton Mather's 1691 observation that there were "far more godly women" than men long before the nineteenth century by tracing a preponderance of women among the members of New England's Congregational churches as far back as the 1660s. Hence, as Shiels observes, "the audience was largely female long before the message was feminized." Shiels does stress that the percentage of female converts to New England churches further increased during the American Revolution and rose even more dramatically after 1800.[13] Yet, he also notes that the church to which these women were converted "retained much of the Calvinistic tradition," as well as reviving the requirement that each convert publicly recite her or his conversion experience before admission to the church.[14] Nancy Cott's earlier study of young women in the Second Great Awakening also affirmed that New

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[12]Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 80-81, 94.

[13]More recently, historians including Ann Braude and Susan Just attacked key aspects of the nineteenth-century religious feminization thesis. Braude has argued that the increase in female church membership after the Revolution was not all that dramatic and that the lag of over two centuries between the first documented female majorities and the liberalization of church doctrines greatly problematizes viewing the newer doctrines as the results of feminization. (Ann Braude, "Women's History Is American Religious History," in *Retelling U. S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997], 94-95.) Susan Juster has argued that such liberal doctrines would "hardly have been considered 'feminine'" by adherents of the time. (Susan Juster, "The Spirit and the Flesh: Gender, Language, and Sexuality in American Protestantism," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, ed. Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], 345.

[14]Shiels, "Congregationalism," 47-48, 60.

England ministers "consistently preached, and 'hopeful converts' accepted, what they acknowledged as 'soul-humbling doctrines' or 'hard sayings'" of Calvinism.[15] Barbara Epstein's subsequent study of men's and women's conversion narratives confirmed that both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conversions were Calvinistic, involving, indeed requiring, "a sharp awareness of sin, fears of hell, and a strong desire to be saved" and ultimately "a concern with original sin" as individuals were "encouraged to shift the focus of [their] concern from particular misdeeds to the state of their souls generally, to the original sin that they had inherited from Adam and Eve."[16] If increasing numbers of women in the congregations eventually encouraged the preaching of kinder, gentler doctrines, these were not the doctrines being preached when they were converted.[17]

Cott, Epstein and others have also asserted that women during this period were prepared to submit to the "soul-humbling" aspects of conversion by their upbringing, having been "taught to be passive and resigned" and "to remain deferential" to male authority figures, of whom God the Father was arguably the ultimate example. Yet, as Cott has suggested, conversion could "set up a direct relation to God's authority" that

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[15]Cott, "Young Women," 15.

[16]Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 14, 17.

[17]One scholar has argued persuasively that *feminization* might be better defined as an increasing "association of femininity and religiosity" by Americans which, although perhaps "prefigured" by developments in the early nineteenth century, "was primarily a mid-nineteenth century development (1840-1870) linked to the emergence of the Victorian family patterns" of the " middle class." (Ann Taves, "Mothers and Children and the Legacy of Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Christianity," *The Journal of Religion* 67, no. 2 [1987]: 203.)

might allow female converts to "bypass" men's authority. "The submission required of those who were to be saved was consistent with female socialization, but this submission was also an act of initiation and assertion of strength by female converts," according to Cott.[18]

"Women's greater religiosity during the nineteenth century must partly be imputed to cultural expectations," agrees Martha Blauvelt As women approached maturity and marriage, according to Blauvelt, they became particularly susceptible to the revival's evangelical message. "The renunciation of past sinfulness, recognition of one's powerlessness in matters of salvation, and acceptance of God's sovereignty that characterized the Calvinist conversion paralleled the renunciation of youthful frivolities, acceptance of a drastic loss in independence, and recognition of man's superior authority," which women experienced especially as a result of marriage. Still, Blauvelt concludes, religion could also imbue women with "a self-confidence and sense of righteousness that enabled them to stand up to human authority."[19]

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[18]Cott, "Young Women," 20; cf. Epstein, *Politics of Domesticity*, 63. On a somewhat different note, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has suggested that "the promise of spiritual *equality* at some level, or at least hereafter," was one of the "premier attractions" of institutional religion for women, and Susan Juster has stressed the "leveling of gender distinctions at work" especially in the evangelical conversion discourse. (Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: New Questions and Old Models in the Religious History of American Women," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no.3 [September 1985]: 468, emphasis added; Susan Juster, "'In a Different Voice': Male and Female Narratives of Religious Conversion in Post-Revolutionary America," *American Quarterly* 41, no. 1 [March 1989]: 36, 57.)

[19]Martha T. Blauvelt, "Women and Revivalism," in *Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century*, 3 vols, ed Rosemary Ruether and Rosemary Keller (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981, 1983, 1986), I: 3-5. In a few denominations, women might even attain positions of leadership (Louis Billington, "Female Laborers in

While much has been written to explain why women were attracted to religion and revivals during this period, less has been written on why men were not. Some, like Richard Shiels, have suggested that men might have felt "uncomfortable" in churches where the clergy "condemned the materialism" of the new market economy in which they felt compelled to compete. Similarly, Barbara Epstein proposed that men's resistance to conversion may have stemmed from their increasing involvement in trade and commerce.[20] As I have shown in the previous chapters, early Mormon men were generally less involved in such competition than were many of their more upwardly-mobile urban contemporaries. As the following evidence indicates, these men were also less likely to accept the requirements of revivalist religion.

A few historians have asserted that the Mormon church presents a singular exception to the preponderance of females among nineteenth-century American church members; yet none has offered adequate evidence in support of this assertion.[21]

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the Church": Women Preachers in the Northeastern United States, 1790-1840," *Journal of American Studies* 19, no. 3 [December 1985]: 369.) More often their leadership was of voluntary associations they had formed (See, esp., Ryan, *Cradle*), and by far the most frequent way that women of this period sought to lead was through the application of "influence" and moral suasion in the home. (See, e.g., Taves, "Mothers and Children," 203.)

[20]Shiels, "Congregationalism," 60; Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity*, 29, 50, 62-63.

[21]Marvin S. Hill, "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District," 411-430; Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 217- 225; Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Mathias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7-10; Karen V. Hansen, *A Very Social Time: Crafting Community in Antebellum New England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 231. In fact none but the first of these offer any evidence at all beyond an anecdote or two, and Hill's point that three-fifths of the Mormon diaries and

However, such evidence is not unavailable Susan Easton Black's exhaustive effort to compile all extant membership information on early Mormons has yielded information on 11,160 individuals born in the United States who joined the Mormons in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of these, 5113 (45.8 percent) were women and 6047 (54 2 percent) were men. While there is a lack of contemporary evidence for such a large imbalance in the sex-ratio of Mormons during this early period, other evidence also supports the assertion that men often led their families into Mormonism

Black's *Membership* also includes baptismal dates for both spouses for at least 92 American-born couples who joined the Mormons after marriage[22] and prior to the Saints' move to the Great Basin. Of these couples, in 25 (27 percent) of the cases, the wife accepted baptism anywhere from a few days to several years before her husband In 33 (36 percent) of the cases, the date of baptism for the husband and wife is the same. In 34 (37 percent) of the cases, the husband was baptised anywhere from a day to a few years

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autobiographies that survive from the nineteenth century were written by males may have as much to do with the patriarchal priorities of later Latter-day Saint leaders as with the demographics of their early rank-and-file forebears. On the other hand, in the same article Hill stressed the importance of combining statistical evidence with a close examination of early Mormons' life writings to elucidate their experiences and motivations. (Hill, "Rise of Mormonism," 427, 421, 430.)

[22]It is harder to determine how often single converts subsequently helped to lead their future spouses into Mormonism even from individual life writings. For example, after several lines describing the weeks of deliberation culminating in his baptism, Milo Andrus mentions almost offhandedly that, about six weeks previous to his baptism, he had married a young woman whose family were Mormons. On the other hand, young Mormon Joseph Noble married a young woman who "was willing to have her lot cast" with his and subsequently joined his church. (Milo Andrus, Autobiography," in *Our Pioneer Heritage* [hereafter *OPH*] 14: 233; Joseph Noble, Autobiography, 10. See also, e.g., Alonzo Hazelton Raleigh, "Life Sketch," in Andrew Jenson, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia* 1:672.)

before the wife. Although the web of family ties and influences was complex, and any attempt to generalize about who led whom into this or that church will inevitably be an oversimplification,[23] these figures add weight to the assertion that early Mormonism provides a counter-example to the norm of women leading their menfolk into churches.[24]

Surviving life writings suggest that at least in some cases different baptismal dates do in fact indicate who led whom into Mormonism. "My wife," wrote Norton Jacob, "was naturally skeptical but by means of the instruction she received by living with the Saints and hearing the prophet preach, was induced to be baptized" some two years after her husband. Benjamin Brown recalled that he was "not baptized directly" after becoming converted to Mormonism because he "hoped to have the pleasure of seeing [his] wife comply with the same ordinance, when we could enter the Church together." Benjamin's wife, "although at first favorable to 'Mormonism,' had become a determined enemy," according to Benjamin. He continued to study Mormonism while waiting for his wife for a "whole year and a half" and then was baptized, although his wife was still "bitterly opposed" and had even threatened to leave him if he joined the Mormons. According to Benjamin "one of the principal reasons" for his wife's bitter opposition to Mormonism "was that she considered it disgraced her to have her husband belong to a Church that was

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[23]For example, Henry Sanderson's parents were baptized on the same day after an uncle on Henry's mother's side convinced his father of the truth of Mormonism. (Henry Weeks Sanderson, Autobiography, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah [hereafter HBLL], 10-11)

[24]Although the greater percentages of women in other denominations are not nearly matched by the greater percentage of men in the early Mormon church, the latter percentage is significant, especially in contrast to the former.

'so poor, and everywhere spoken against '" Although Joseph Holbrook's wife's baptism followed his by only two days, he recalled that she had characterized Mormonism as "nonsense" and "a deception" in response to his initial interest.[25]

Of course, baptism dates alone do not always tell the whole story Being baptized on different days might not indicate disagreement. Church records indicate that Luman Shurtliff was baptized a day before his wife, but Luman's own record strongly suggests that the couple reached the decision to submit to that ordinance together [26] Nor did being baptized on the same day always mean that one spouse had not led the other to that point. Samuel Rogers' parents were evidently baptized together, but in becoming Mormons, as Samuel puts it, his mother, who already belonged to another denomination, "readily united with her husband," who did not. According to LDS church records Philo Dibble and his wife were baptized on the same day. Yet Philo recorded, "My wife thought I was too hasty, and said if I would wait awhile perhaps she would go along with me. She was [of another faith] by persuasion. I paid no heed to her, but went forthwith and was baptized."

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[25]Norton Jacob, Journal, Information Center and Library, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah [hereafter UHI], 7; Benjamin Brown, *Testimonies For The Truth*, 58, 62-62; Joseph Holbrook, Autobiography, HBLL, 19-20, 25. Not surprisingly, some of these men's life writings also support the assumption that baptism on the same date was a mutual decision. (See, e.g., Joseph Hovey, Autobiography, HBLL, 13.)

[26]Luman Shurtliff, Autobiography, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, [hereafter LDS-A], 22. As the Mormons practiced baptism by immersion, ill health may have also prevented one spouse from being baptized with the other. George Smith's mother was baptized four months before his father because of the latter's "feeble health," but women's greater health risks as well as other responsibilities during this period may well have reversed the order of baptism in a greater number of cases. (George A. Smith, "My Journal," *The Instructor* 81 (1946): 11-12.)

Similarly, after a fairly lengthy description of his wrestle with Mormonism and final decision to embrace it, Anson Call concluded, "I accordingly went immediately . . and was baptized . . . . My wife accompanied me." In quite a different tone David Osborn reported, "after much reading, reflection and prayer, I went forward in the midst of a large congregation and gave my hand as a candidate for baptism . . My wife hesitated a few days but afterwards consented and we both went forward and were baptized."[27]

Nor was it always the man who claimed credit for being the leader. Although Elizabeth Tanner and her husband John were baptized on the same day, her account of the events leading up to that day indicate that it was John who made the final decision. On the other hand, men did not always make that claim for themselves. John Butler and Ezra Benson each acknowledged that his wife had received a testimony of Mormonism sometime before he did, yet waited so that the two could be baptized together. Some women's accounts also indicate that, despite being baptized on the same day, they had lead their husbands to that point. "I believed with my whole soul," affirmed Nancy Tracy of her first reaction to hearing a sermon by Mormon missionaries. "I would talk with my husband and was very anxious that he should hear and investigate. So I waited." After he heard a sermon by Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt, Nancy's husband's "eyes began to be opened," and shortly thereafter they were both baptized together. Such accounts support historian Martha Bradley's assertion that "female converts [to Mormonism] were eager to

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[27]Samuel Rogers, Journal, HBLL, 6; Philo Dibble, Autobiography, in *Four Faith Promoting Classics* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), 76; Anson Call, Autobiography, HBLL, 2-3; David Osborn, Autobiography, HBLL,13.

bring their husbands, brothers, and fathers into their faith."[28] Yet, the available evidence taken together suggests that early Mormonism was unique in its ability to attract male converts.

Although there is sufficient evidence for Sellers' assertion that men more often led their families into Mormonism, his explanation of that phenomenon is wrong on several points Sellers is certainly incorrect in stating that women were not even eligible for conversion unless married or related to a Mormon man.[29] Joseph Smith did state on one occasion that Mormon missionaries should go to "the master of the house; and if he receive the Gospel, then he may extend his influence to his wife also." But he went on to say that "if a man receive not the Gospel, but gives his consent that his wife may receive it, and she believes, then let her receive it."[30] Such a rule no doubt reflected rural views of

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[28]Elizabeth Tanner, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; John Butler, Autobiography, HBLL, 8, Ezra Benson, Autobiography, in *The Juvenile Instructor* [hereafter *JI*] 80 (1945), 102; Nancy Tracy, Autobiography, HBLL, 4-5; Martha Sonntag Bradley, "'Seizing Sacred Space,'"60. As the preceding statistics suggest, women also led their families into Mormonism in a significant minority of cases, a fact that is also acknowledged in some of the life writings of their menfolk. (See, e.g., Silas Hillman, Autobiography, HBLL, 15.)

[29]Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 225.

[30]Joseph Smith to "The Elders of the Latter-day Saints," in *The Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 2 (November 1835), 193. In contrast to Mary Ryan's reports of rural husbands banning their wives from church attendance or membership (e.g., Ryan, *Cradle*, 77), nearly all those in this study with unchurched fathers also affirmed that their mothers had been allowed to attend the church of their choice. (See, e.g., Warren Foote, Autobiography, HBLL, 2; David Osborn, Autobiography, HBLL, 2; Noah Packard, "A Synopsis of the Life and Travels of Noah Packard," HBLL, 1.) The one exception I have found was the father of William Kartcher, who "was an infidel and would not allow his Family to attend sectarian meetings." To illustrate his fathers' opposition to the "sectarian" churches, William recalled an occasion in which his father and another man "once arranged a hogshead for a Methodist Minister to stand on to preach, and so fixed the hoops that a hard stomp would knock the head in and in the midst of his sermon he

propriety and of patriarchal primacy in the family

Without reference to early Mormon doctrines and practices, there were a number of pragmatic and even logistical factors which might help explain why this new religious organization reversed the trend of women's leading their menfolk into the churches. In the early years of promulgating Mormonism, the harvest may have been ripe, but the laborers were indeed few. Potential converts frequently had to travel considerable distances to first hear Mormon missionaries, who were too few to come to them. The culture and conditions of the time meant that in many cases men might do this far more readily than women. "Hearing of these [Mormon missionaries], curiosity prompted Mr. [Heber] Kimball to go and see them," reported his wife Vilate. Benjamin Cummings father also "went to hear a discourse," which eventually led his family into Mormonism. "Tho[ough] the Elders were holding meeting then eighty miles from his home," Charles Allen's father "went and listened to the gospel [of Mormonism] for the first time. Before returning home he was converted & baptized & received a testimony of its truthfulness." Benjamin Asby's father's "returned home" one day and told his mother, who had been "confined to her bed by the birth" of Benjamin's sister, that "he had been to hear a new religion preached by a Mormon in the Masonic Hall." Even when the meeting was not at such a male-only venue, and the woman wasn't confined to her home with child-bearing and -rearing responsibilities, it was often culturally discountenanced for a woman to be out

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commenced stomping and at once dropped into the empty hogshead, out of sight of the audience to the surprise of all but father and Mr. Lavern who were enjoying a hearty laugh at the expense of . . . the preacher." Still, William's mother in a sense had the last laugh. She "joined the old Baptist Church," reported William, "soon after" her husband's death. (William Decatur Kartchner, Autobiography, *OPH* 6: 331.)

and about on her own. Hence, at least one woman who would lead her husband into Mormonism had felt the need to get "two other women to go" with her before going "to the place appointed" to hear Mormon missionaries for the first time [31]

As a "new religion," Mormonism also presented unchurched men with a unique opportunity to become churched (thus deflecting the pressure from others to do so) while rejecting all previous churches (thus preserving some pride at not having joined, or remained in, any previously). Moreover, it would have been easier for unchurched men to become Mormons than for their churched wives, who had to sever ties and often lose friends in their previous congregations.

In addition, such factors might have had what economists call a multiplier effect. Seeing their fathers take an interest (often for the first time) in a organized religion might well have helped pave the way into Mormonism for many of their sons. "Up to this time he had never joined any religious denomination," recalled Charles Allen of his father, who he felt had been "waiting for something to come that would give him better satisfaction than the churches of that day could give." James McBride recalled, "My father, who previously had not felt to join any Christian denomination, now opened his house, and welcomed the Mormon elders to his home. The first sermons preached [in the area] by

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[31]Vilate Kimball, Autobiography, in *Women of Mormondom*, ed. Edward W. Tullidge (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1877), 105; Benjamin Cummings, Autobiography, HBLL, 2; Charles Allen, Autobiography, 4 See also Mary Hales, Autobiography, in *Windows: A Mormon Family*, ed. Kenneth Hales (Tucson, AZ: Skyline Printing, 1985) [hereafter *Windows*], 30; Benjamin Ashby, Autobiography, HBLL, 3-4; Nancy Tracy, Autobiography, HBLL, 4-5. This was also a factor in the conversion of a number of young single men to Mormonism (e.g., Benjamin Cummings, Autobiography, HBLL, 4; William D. Kartchner, Autobiograpy, *OPH* 6: 335-36).

elders of this church, were preached in my father's house in April 1831 " Although James, then "about thirteen years old," did not immediately follow his father in joining the Mormons, when he did, he was following his father's example [32]

On the other hand, some fathers' resistance to organized religion, or to this new religious organization, died hard. Erastus Snow's father supported his sons in their decision to join with the Mormons, although he did not do so himself. Other fathers were far less supportive. Benjamin Johnson "overstepped" his father's objections" to be baptized, Henry Boyle's father said he must "leave his house" if he were going to be a Mormon, and Jacob Norton's said "he had rather hear I was dead than that I was a Mormon."[33] It is the resistance of many of their fathers to organized religion in general that holds a clue to the "manly" content of Mormonism. To tease out this clue will require a fairly extensive re-examination of the religious backgrounds of American men who became Mormons in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Before doing so, it is important to note two points stressed by Jon Butler in his iconoclastic revisioning of American religious history which are crucial to an understanding of the context in which men became early Mormons. As Butler's subtitle suggests, the revivals of the nineteenth century were more a "Christianizing" process than one of "re-Christianizing" the nation as the revival ministers and their evangelical heirs would have it. Moreover, the majority of Americans remained unchurched before and

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[32]Charles H. Allen, Autobiography, LDS-A, 3; James McBride, Autobiography, HBLL, 9.

[33]Erastus Snow, Autobiography, *OPH* 6:299; Henry Boyle, Autobiography, HBLL, 5; Benjamin Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 19; Norton Jacob, Journal, UHI, 7.

after both the first and second "Great Awakenings." Still, as Butler's title implies, the fact that they were unchurched did not mean that they were irreligious. Following the definition of philosophers of religion, Butler defines religion as "belief in and resort to superhuman powers, sometimes beings, that determine the course of natural and human events." As Butler shows, besides being in the majority, unchurched American men were indeed "awash in a sea of faith."[34] Although they failed to "get religion," in the vernacular of the day, they were often "religious" according to Butler's more universal definition.

As the following examples illustrate, the religious backgrounds of early Mormon men fit into the model of ongoing feminization of religion in a number of ways. At the time they embraced Mormonism many, like their fathers before them, were not members of any church. Most of their mothers and wives, on the other hand were, or had been, members of other denominations. In these men's accounts, their mothers were also almost always the sources of their early religious instruction and often the primary sources of encouragement toward church membership. However, their reminiscences also highlight points not generally stressed by historians before Jon Butler.

While many early Mormons reported that their fathers had not been church members, they also consistently insisted that they were moral and often religious men. Although "not attached to any religious denomination," David Osborn reported, "my

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[34]Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 2-4, 191-194, 282-283. One study of church affiliation based on denominational membership statistics and the 1850 federal census estimates that in that year about 21 percent of Americans were members. (Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, "Turning Pews into People: Estimating Church Membership in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25, no. 2 [June 1986]: 185.)

father was honest and industrious and had the confidence and goodwill of his associates " Charles Allen also stated that his father "had never joined any religious denomination tho[ugh] he was always honest and upright in all his dealings " Harrison Burgess attested that his father "made no profession of religion but led a moral and virtuous life " Making "no profession of religion" did not mean being irreligious, but rather refusing to join any church. William Leany's father, "though a non-professor, was a believer in God and the Bible and strictly moral," according to William, "far more so than many of the professors of those times." Samuel Rogers affirmed that his father was "a moral, just and upright man and a believer in deity, in Jesus Christ and his apostles, and in the holy scriptures, though he made no profession of religion." "My father never joined any Church," acknowledged Noah Packard, yet "he prayed daily in his family " Joseph Holbrook also affirmed that his father "never made a profession of religion, but was strictly a very moral man and treated his family kindly." In Holbrook's case at least, his father's father was not "a professor of religion of any kind" either; yet he "often prayed in his family" and "did not allow any profanity on his farm or in his house," and was "much more particular" about such things than many churched persons Joseph knew Nor was it only men who testified to their unchurched fathers' basic morality. "I was taught to be somewhat religious," recalled Abigail Abbott, for "although my father did not belong to any religious denomination, yet he was a very moral man."[35]

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[35]David Osborn, Autobiography, HBLL, 2; Charles H. Allen, Autobiography, LDS-A, 3; Harrison Burgess, Autobiography, *Windows*, 100; William Leany, Autobiography, HBLL, 5; Noah Packard, "A Synopsis of the Life and Travels of Noah Packard," HBLL, 1; Joseph Holbrook, Autobiography, HBLL, 2, 10; Abigail Abbott, Autobiography, in *OPH* 6 (1964): 198.

Like Abigail Abbot, many of these men denied that their fathers' refusal to belong to any particular denomination meant that their children were not taught "to be somewhat religious." Even when neither of their parents belonged to any church, children were frequently taught to reverence God and the Bible "My parents were not members of any church and made no definite profession of religion," recalled Leonard Harrington. "I was therefore trained to no particular creed, but taught to believe the Bible, and the general principles of Christianity." Again, such accounts attest that religiosity was not restricted to church members. "My parents were religiously inclined and always reverenced the Deity," affirmed Ezra Benson, "yet never belonged to any religious society They were firm believers in the Bible, and taught their children" the same beliefs. Wandle Mace similarly recalled, "My parents were not connected with any church but were Bible readers and believers in that good book and taught their children to observe its teachings. More especially was this so with my mother who took great care to teach [us] the New Testament, the contents of which she seemed to know thoroughly."[36]

As the last passage illustrates and many other accounts confirm, whatever their parents' religious affiliations, the usual source of their early religious training was their mother. Such accounts seem on the surface to fit the feminization thesis fairly neatly. On closer examination, they reveal that the truism of an early nineteenth-century shift in responsibility for their children's religious training from fathers to mothers is only partly

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[36]Leonard E. Harrington, "Journal of Leonard E. Harrington," in *Utah Historical Quarterly* 8 (Jan 1940): 4; Ezra T. Benson, Autobiography, *JI* 80 (1945): 53; Wandle Mace Autobiography, HBLL, 1. These men also often insisted that their unchurched parents taught and practiced "principles of moral rectitude." (Benjamin Cummings, Autobiography, HBLL, 2. See also, e.g., Benson, Autobiography, *JI*, 53.)

true Although the literature on how and what to teach children would be increasingly addressed to mothers, for these rural working families it had been mainly mothers who carried out this training all along. While relatively untouched by industrialization and urbanization, the subjects of this study almost to a man reported receiving their early religious training from their mothers.

This training began at a very early age before they were big enough to join their fathers in shops and fields John Murdock's mother "was much given to reading and prayer, . . . was noted for piety, and was very ready to teach and instruct her children" those things, so that John learned to pray from her "when young." "My mother taught me to pray when very young," wrote Luman Shurtliff. Benjamin Johnson was taught to pray by his mother at "about 4 years of age." "At the age of four I began to call upon the Lord seriously," Levi Hancock similarly recalled. "My mother was a praying woman and trusted the Lord to hear and answer her prayers." "Of course, I had been taught the Lord's prayer and other children's prayers at my mother's side," affirmed Benjamin Ashby.[37]

As they grew a bit older, many future Mormon men learned from their mothers to revere and read the Bible. David Osborn affirmed, "My mother always taught me good principles and especially to have implicit faith in the Bible." Benjamin Johnson likewise affirmed that his mother was "in no degree" remiss in teaching her children from the Bible. Benjamin's oldest brother Joel received a small New Testament from his mother as soon

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[37]John Murdock, Journal, HBLL, 2; Luman Shurtliff, Autobiography, LDS-A, 6; Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 7; Levi Hancock, "Autobiography, HBLL, 1 - 2; Benjamin Ashby, Autobiography, HBLL, 2.

as he was able to read By "the age of seven years," Parley Pratt's mother had begun giving him "lessons to read in the Scriptures." In some cases, there was no adult besides mother to do so; in others, she supplemented the local Sunday School, which a number of these children attended whether or not their parents were church members. Jonathan Crosby explained that, since there were no Sunday Schools in the area, "the children in the district schools were called together once in three months, and catechized by questions and answers from the Bible . . . . Our mother used to learn us these things at home and when we were old enough to read, she would have us read some in the Bible every day." Erastus Snow "received religious training and encouragement to search the scriptures" from his mother and became "a student of the Bible" with her encouragement, "when nine years old."[38]

Several of these men thankfully recalled their mothers' efforts to teach them to pray and study the scriptures. "It has been like an anchor to my wandering soul," said Luman Shurtliff of his mother's religious instruction, "to keep me steady and religiously inclined." Parley Pratt was "inspired" by his mother's teachings "with love, and with the noblest sentiments." David Osborn "often since expressed" to his mother his "heartfelt gratitude" for her religious teachings, although, to his "great mortification" he could never "prevail on her" in later years to accept the gospel of Mormonism.[39] Others described

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[38]David Osborn Autobiography, HBLL, 2; B. Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 10; Joel Johnson, *Voice From the Mountains*, 3; Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography*, 22; Jonathan Crosby, Autobiography, UHI, 1-2; Erastus Snow, Autobiography, *OPH* 6: 299.

[39]Luman Shurtliff, Autobiography, HBLL, 6; Pratt, *Autobiography*, 22; David Osborn, Autobiography, HBLL, 2.

their mothers as "pious and godly," " very religious and good."[40]

However, many of these men were less than happy about what seemed to them to be a central theme of their mothers' religious teachings. Moreover, that theme which troubled them did not seem to fit the gentle, feminized religion some historians have described. "When I was very small child," recalled Joel Johnson, "my mother . . . would often converse with me and tell me about Heaven and Hell, God, Jesus Christ, the Devil, etc., and when but eight years of age I . . . would weep bitterly, considering myself a sinner in the sight of God." Henry Boyle's mother also told him "if I done wrong, I would have to be taken to a place of eternal punishment, where my punishment would have no end." As a result of these teachings, Henry "often thought [he] was a wicked boy." Levi Hancock, who expressed gratitude toward his mother for teaching him to pray, also remembered, "She often told me I must love God, or he would let the devil have me; this would frighten me so much I could not sleep nights." His mother's teaching about "the damned souls in Hell and how they had to be in a lake of fire and they could not die . . . wrought such a serious impression" upon Levi, that he wished he "had not been made."[41]

Some remembered learning this harrowing doctrine from their minister rather than their mother, although it was nearly always their mother who brought them into contact

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[40]Orson Hyde, Autobiography, in *Millennial Star* 26 (1864): 742; James Leech "Recollections," *JI* 27 (1892): 152.

[41]Joel Johnson, *Voice From the Mountains*, 3; Henry Boyle, Autobiography, HBLL, 3; Levi Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 1-2

with the minister.[42] At his mother's church William Adams was taught "the doctrine of everlasting punishment where sinners would be burning in hell for everlasting without end . . . . Wonder and horror and amazement would occupy my mind at the suffering of sinners " Benjamin Johnson reported that "while yet in childhood" his mother took him to Sunday School where he "learned" and began "to be afflicted with the idea of a future punishment, with literal fire and brimstone to those who did not 'get religion' or a 'change of heart '" Benjamin was "so greatly exercised with anxiety and fear upon this subject," that, beginning before he was ten, he "did not cease to attend all their religious meetings and revivals, hoping [to] obtain that forgiveness of sins that would release [him] from the fears of that awful burning pit so powerfully portrayed."[43]

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[42]Although a few sources of this study mentioned learning such concepts in connection with their attendance at Sunday Schools, which also imparted basic literacy skills to many children during that period, their failure to report any discussion of such doctrines in the common schools is congruent with Laurence Moore's finding that such troubling doctrines were carefully avoided in that setting. (R. Laurence Moore, "What Children Did Not Learn in School: The Intellectual Quickening of Young Americans in the Nineteenth Century," *Church History* 61, no 1 [March 1999]: 59-61.)

[43]William Adams, Autobiography, HBLL, 2 - 3; B. Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 9. Such accounts contrast sharply with the liberalization of religion and of child-rearing attributed by many historians to this period. Yet, they are quite in line with the content of evangelical child-rearing as identified in the most extensive (though controversial) study of prevailing American "temperament" of the day. This temperament, according to the study's author, stressed man's depravity and offered hope only to those who submitted utterly to an incomprehensible God. (Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Childrearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977]; see also his *Childrearing Concepts, 1628-1861: Historical Sources* [Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock Publishers, 1973].) Greven's tracing of these concerns well into the nineteenth century, though originally criticized, receives recent support from R. Laurence Moore's survey of the religious concerns which captivated young Americans through most of that century. Moore finds heart-felt concerns over Calvinistic religious doctrines learned in their youths pervading the reminiscences of nineteenth-century Americans, and concludes that such concerns colored

Some recalled overtly rebelling against such "soul-humbling" teachings, even in their earliest years. Young Levi Hancock subsequently "screeched" at a man he heard speaking of how God would eternally torment the damned "I told the man," recalled Levi, that "if God would do so he was worse than I and I could prove it. . I never would torment a snake that would bite me, but kill him" so that "he could do no more harm and that was enough for me.'" Zerah Pulsipher also recalled, "I could not be reconciled to souls left in Hell fire to all eternity as I had been taught." Nevertheless, when he was "about fourteen or fifteen years of age," Zerah concluded "that it was necessary that more preparation should be made" before he "should be willing to pass the Vale of Death." Motivated by a similar conclusion, Truman Angell "for some months made an earnest supplication before the Lord; and from then on, my mischievous life and shortcomings were laid aside."[44] The aptly named Angell, however, seems to have been an exception. Nearly every other account by a male convert to Mormonism that mentions prior participation in the revivals reports an inability to achieve or experience such a sudden change from sinful boyhood to righteous manhood, often despite considerable effort and

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American culture at every socio-economic level. (Moore, "What Children Did Not Learn in School," 43, 45-47, 49-51, 55-56.) While Moore's evidence supports his conclusion for those in the "higher" levels of society whose writings generally weren't published until the final decades of the nineteenth-century at the earliest), that of the current study (from life writings generally produced earlier) supports a similar conclusion regarding these concerns for their more common contemporaries. Virtually the same religious concerns which led some upper-class Americans of the era to agnosticism, evidently spurred a number of their lower-class contemporaries to embrace Mormonism.

[44]Levi Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 20; Zerah Pulsipher, Autobiography, HBLL, 3-4; Truman Angell, Autobiography, *OPH* 10:195-6.

frustration.[45]

If mother was nearly always cited as a primary source of explicit religious instruction, father seldom was. There are exceptions, however, and they are instructive. Parley P. Pratt was taught as a child by his father "to venerate our Father in Heaven, Jesus Christ, His prophets and Apostles, as well as the Scriptures written by them." Yet, Parley's father, who "belonged to no religious sect," was also "careful to preserve his children free from all prejudice in favor of or against any particular denomination." Thus, at least some of those fathers who refused to join any church counseled their sons to do likewise. Edward Hunter's father counseled him, "Do not belong to any religious sect but keep sacred that all men have a right to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience." What Parley's and Edward's fathers said delicately, others evidently put more bluntly. Jacob Hamblin's father "who despised priestcraft and superstition," cautioned Jacob against "connecting [him]self with any sect or party." Samuel Rogers' father "often spoke disapprovingly of what he termed the hypocritical profession and practice of the various so called Christian denominations of the day."[46] Even if fathers did not give such counsel explicitly, their examples probably often spoke louder than words to

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[45]Of the twenty-three accounts I have found of early Mormon men who wrote of prior experiences with revival religion, twenty-one refer to their experiences with a combination of frustration, fear and disdain, while only two (Truman Angell and David Osborn) recorded successful evangelical conversion experiences prior to being exposed to Mormonism. Cf. Marvin Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 13-14, which identifies eight of the former and none of the latter to similarly conclude, "Many had been adversely affected by Calvinism and revivalism."

[46]Pratt, *Autobiography*, 19; Edward Hunter, Autobiography, *OPH* 6: 319-20; Jacob Hamblin, Autobiography, HBLL, 1; Samuel Rogers, Journal, HBLL, 6-7.

their sons in this as in other areas.

Many early Mormon men attributed additional religious views to their unchurched fathers beyond a belief in God and the Bible. One of the most commonly cited beliefs of their fathers was in marked contrast to that associated by these men with their mothers. This belief was Universalism, country-cousin of Unitarianism, which Ann Douglas identified as among the most feminized of early nineteenth-century denominations. Like many others, Samuel Rogers' father was "strongly inclined in favor of the Universalists, yet he did not join them, nor any other persuasion."[47] Newel Knight's father "did not belong to any religious sect, but was a believer in the Universalian doctrine." In contrast to the distress often produced by their mother's "hard sayings," the Universalism attributed to a number of their fathers was found to be most congenial. "So honest and plain were all his statements" on the subject, concluded Newel, "that there was no room for any misgivings with me on the subject."[48] While Newel did not specify what he found so plain and convincing in Universalism, Benjamin Brown did:

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[47]Samuel Rogers, Journal, HBLL, 7. One possible explanation is that this was a retrospective attempt to prove their fathers' religiosity and excuse their failure to join any church. Yet they might as reasonably have boasted of the latter fact, since Mormonism taught that all other churches were apostate and that the Lord himself had told Joseph Smith to join none of them. On the contrary, having previously joined several denominations in succession before embracing Mormonism, Henry Boyle regretted having "ever embraced any [other] religious system or doctrine." He hated to be seen "to change so often," as it made it look "like there was no stability" in him. (Henry Boyle, "Autobiography", HBLL, 3-4.) Attributing Universalist tendencies to their fathers in retrospect seems even less likely if Universalism was as roundly repudiated by early Mormonism as some scholars have recently argued (e.g., Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993], 42-57).

[48]Newel Knight, Autobiography, in *Classic Experiences and Adventures* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 46-47.

The Universalist system appeared to me the most reasonable of the various denominations I came in contact with. The horrible hell and damnation theories of most of the other parties, in my idea, were inconsistent with the mercies and love of God . . . . I did not actually join the Universalists. But their doctrines, with respect to the eternity of punishment, etc., savored to me of a more generous and God-like nature, than the contracted notions held by the other denominations, concerning God's purposes towards the human family.[49]

Although Brown did not clarify the sources from which he first learned these apparently contradictory Calvinistic and Universalist notions of God, in light of his own preference as well as the parental sources often cited by others, it would seem problematic to explain the shift in American religion from the worship of a fearful Sovereign to a loving and merciful Heavenly Father simply in terms of feminization.

Despite such leanings, as the above examples illustrate, both fathers and sons attracted to Universalism usually did not join any church, including even the Universalists, prior to joining the Mormons.[50] There were, however, a few exceptions Isaac Haight,

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[49]Benjamin Brown, *Testimonies*, 52

[50]Of the twenty-one accounts I have found of pre-Mormon men who were sympathetic to Universalist teachings only two actually joined the Universalists, and only one came to espouse universalist beliefs after brief sojourns in other denominations. The other eighteen men with universalist tendencies joined no church prior to the Mormon church. Interestingly, some men were less ready to join even congregations with univeralist beliefs than were their wives. William Leany's father continued as "a non-professor," even though William's stepmother belonged to "what was called the dunkards or Hell Redemptionists because they believed Christ's blood sufficient to redeem all mankind when the uttermost farthing was paid." Benjamin Ashby reported, "My father was not a member of any denomination but attended the Universalist Church of which my mother was a member because as I have often heard her say they preached the love of God for his children in contrast to the doctrines of the Orthodox churches that held to the everlasting punishment of all who did not embrace their peculiar dogmas." By contrast, Sarah Allen's parents were united both in "never" joining with any church and in their "liberal . . . religious views as to the universal salvation of mankind." (William Leany, Autobiography, HBLL, 4-5; Benjamin Ashby, Autobiography, HBLL, 3; Sarah Beriah

for example, had brief sojourns in several denominations until he "found" his "mind changing from the rigid" doctrines of his evangelical experience "to the universalian principles" yet not settling on "any creed." "In this state of mind," Isaac "was found by a preacher of the [Mormon] gospel."[51]

Jonathan Crosby's description of the differences in the religion of his two parents is fairly typical of those in other accounts.[52] "My father was a Unitarian in principle but he never said much about religion, never prayed in his family except to ask the blessing on the food and return thanks when done eating. My mother was a very zealous Christian, and used to talk to her [two] boys when we were small and old enough to understand And, accordingly, we were traditionated to be religious when quite young." Even after being "traditionated," Crosby recalled that he and his brother were "compelled to go to meeting, often times when we did not want to, after [they] became much older." Despite both tradition and compulsion, however, when Crosby became free to choose, his approach to religion was closer to that of his father than that of his mother Although he "was

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Fiske Allen, Autobiography, Family History and Lands and Records Office, LDS Visitors Center, Nauvoo, Illinois (hereafter NVC),1.)

[51]Isaac Haight, Autobiography, HBLL, 1-2. Leonard Huntington "had the opportunity of hearing a Universalist preacher" several times and becoming acquainted "with several who believed and advocated that doctrine." As a result of their comments "together with [his] own feelings and temperament," Leonard "became a believer in universal salvation." He did not join their "Society," but attended its meetings "at every opportunity." As to the revivalists, Leonard stated, "I fully believe [that their] doctrine and protracted meetings, if they affected me at all, only aided" his belief in Universalism. (Harrington, "Journal of Leonard E. Harrington," *UHQ* 8: 4.)

[52]Another exception is Nancy Tracy, who recorded, "My parents were church-going people, my mother a Baptist, my Father . . . was a Universalist." (Nancy Tracy, Autobiography, HBLL, 1-2.)

frequently urged and exhorted to get religion," he reported that the "preaching had no affect [*sic*] on me. With all their hell-fire and brimstone, they could not frighten me "[53]

Whether as a result of precept or example, many of these men affirmed in words and deeds their fathers' faith in God but not in the existing churches [54] Following his father's teachings, Edward Hunter being "fully in the knowledge and power of a Superior Being," felt "a desire to do justly, walk humbly, and love mercy, but join no sect " But the precepts and precedents of their fathers were not the only reasons such men rejected revivalism. Despite the "desire" to "join no sect," which he said his father's example and teachings had instilled in him, Edward Hunter nevertheless attended several "different places of worship." However, he "*could not* connect with any sect."[55] Edward did not explain exactly why he "could not." Possibly, like other future Mormon men including Joseph Smith, he wanted to "feel and shout" like others did, but "could feel nothing "[56] Based on similar accounts, Marvin Hill concluded that many "future Mormons" were "casualties of revivalism and its powerful pressures" and so " participated in a general break with Calvinism." [57] Perhaps he ought to have said more precisely "future Mormon

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[53]Jonathan Crosby, Autobiography, UHI, 3

[54]Furthermore, in contrast to Ryan's subjects, of those pre-Mormons' who did join churches "the vast majority . . . adherred to . . . their father's religious affiliation." (Mark R Grandstaff, "The Impact of the Mormon Migration on the Community of Kirtland, Ohio, 1830-1839" [Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1984], 26.)

[55]Edward Hunter, "Autobiography," *OPH* 6· 320-321; emphasis added.

[56]Alexander Neibaur, Diary, 24 May 1844, LDS-A 15.

[57]Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 13-14.

men."

Martha S Bradley's pioneering study of early Mormon women's conversion narratives found that women's experiences of conversion to Mormonism (or at least their accounts thereof) were not unlike their evangelical contemporaries' experiences of "getting religion."[58] In fact, some future Mormon women were able to experience manifestations of saving grace long prior to their exposure to Mormonism. As a child, Sarah Leavitt "was seriously impressed and desired very much to be saved from that awful hell" that she had "heard so much about." She "prayed much" and her "prayers were sometimes answered immediately," from which she derived comfort but which did not, at that early age, give her "any pretensions to having any religion." As a young mother of nineteen, having already lost one child in infancy and now caring for another of six months, Sarah "had a vision of the damned spirits in hell," which filled her with more

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[58]Bradley, "'Seizing Sacred Space,'" 57-70. Based on a study of "more than 200 . . . conversion narratives" Bradley concluded that few early female converts to Mormonism emerged "from the ranks of the unchurched." Of the 89 male converts examined by Yorgason, fully one third had no previous religious affiliation and many of the rest had passed through and rejected church membership. (Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects," 43.) Of the twenty-three men in the present study who reported encounters with revivalism, only two reported successful evangelical conversion experiences. By contrast, Bradley suggests that such experiences were relatively common and accessible to pre-Mormon women. Yet, insofar as she equates such experiences with "already" having "a religious life," she adopts the same standard as church-goers from that time and since. In American historiography, as Jon Butler observes, such a bias has prevented adequate appreciation and examination of the "religious life" of the unchurched. Although as few as one fifth of Americans were church members in the early nineteenth century (Finke and Stark, "Turning Pews into People," 185), one historian has recently argued that concerns with fundamental religious doctrines were almost universal among early nineteenth-century Americans, even "if one looks at examples of Americans who as adults were not conventionally pious, who in fact developed a strong dislike for most forms of organized Christianity." (Moore, "What Children Did Not Learn in School," 48.)

horror than she "was able to bear." With her faith in prayer, Sarah "cried to the Lord day and night until [she] got an answer of peace and a promise that [she] should be saved in the Kingdom of God." "That promise," she later affirmed to her Mormon children and grandchildren, "has been with me through all the changing scenes of life ever since," even though Sarah was not exposed to Mormonism for another fifteen years. Future Mormon Abigail Abbott received similar assurance regarding her salvation. Having for "some time" felt "great anxiety pertaining to the salvation of [her] soul," at seventeen, Abigail prayed for reassurance. In Abigail's case, her prayers were answered with a dream in which she beheld "a large company of people arrayed entirely in white apparel" singing a song "that sounded more glorious" than any she had ever heard, so that she was "filled with rapture and anxiety to learn the song and be associated with them." She was able to learn part of the song and was thus reassured of God's love and approbation.[59] Insofar as membership in many of the churches of the day often required a recitation of such an experience, it seems likely, as Bradford suggests, that of the many "churched" women who would become Mormons, a considerable number had previously had such experiences.[60]

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[59]Sarah S. Leavitt, Autobiography, *OPH*, 7: 243; Abigail Abbott, *OPH* 6: 198.

[60]Of course, there were exceptions. Nancy Tracy reported, "I had a religious turn of mind and in my childhood I read the Bible and went and prayed with all the sincerity in the world, for I wanted to be a Christian and be happy like they were. But I never joined them. When I was about 13 years old, there was a great revival among them. . . . They held their meetings for several days and made many converts. Among the rest they had me on the anxious seat, as they called it, but I failed to get that change of heart as some of them did [who] shouted, 'glory hallelujah, I have got religion.' I wanted with all my heart to be good, but I could feel no different." (Nancy Tracy, Autobiography, HBLL 2-3.)

Mormon men, on the other hand, quite consistently insisted that they had felt little or nothing in their prior efforts to "get religion." Previous studies of early Mormonism have stressed the disorder and confusion that many of these individuals associated with the revivalist religion.[61] This was definitely a frequently expressed and evidently genuine concern of the authors of these accounts. Warren Foote went "often" to revival meetings, where he watched others "jump" and heard them "shout." Yet Warren "could not see any thing in such proceedings" similar to what he read in the Bible, where he found "that God was not the author of confusion, [and] that the house of God is the house of order." Other writers expressed other common concerns, and many were not as detached as Foote about their revival experiences. Allen Stout attended a camp meeting and "tried to get religion" like others but "couldn't make it go off" like they did and so he "gave up trying." Not all gave up after a single camp meeting. Thomas Marsh joined an evangelical denomination "and tried for two years" but "did not succeed any better in getting religion."[62]

Historian Susan Juster has found that social pressure from family and friends, as well as a competitive "fear of being left behind," often drove the evangelical conversion process for men.[63] Several accounts attest to the role of peer pressure in leading future

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[61]Mario S. DePillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (Spring 1966): 69-88; Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 13-15.

[62]Warren Foote, Autobiography, HBLL, 2; Allen Stout, Journal, HBLL, 5; Thomas B. Marsh, "History of Thomas Baldwin Marsh," in *Millennial Star* 26 (1864): 360.

[63]Juster, "'In a Different Voice'," 36, 54-55.

Mormon men to attend revivals and attempt to get religion. "Being light and trifling like many of the youth, the subject of religion made but little impression" on Leonard Harrington until about the age of seventeen. At that time "protracted meetings became very frequent" in his vicinity and, "many of [his] associates becoming converted," he desired conversion as well. At the about the same age Henry Boyle attended "a great revival in religion" near his home after he found that "all or nearly all the young men and girls" of his acquaintance "had attached themselves" to the church which sponsored it At about eighteen, George Laub was persuaded by a fellow carpenter's apprentice to attend a revival, where for three nights he went to the anxious seat "very anxious to embrace religion" but without success. Determined that "if there was such a thing as religion" he would "seek after it and get it" if he could, twenty-one-year-old John Butler attended a camp meeting "which lasted three or four days," in company with several "comrades " Although most of his "companions and associates professed a remission of their sins," John could not feel to do so, and this made him "feel very mean." They tried to persuade him to go to the mourner's bench, but he was "too stubborn for that " After the meeting broke up and John thought about how his friends now had all "found out" that he was "seeking religion," this made him "feel meaner than ever."[64]

Thus, despite being led to attend revivals at least partly by public pressures, none of these men reported "getting religion" in such a public setting, although several joined

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[64]Leonard E. Harrington, "Journal Of Leonard E. Harrington," 4; Henry Boyle Autobiography, 3; George Laub, Autobiography, HBLL, 2-3; John Butler, Autobiography, 2-3.

congregations for a time to avoid "being any more pestered about it "[65] The proposal that women of the time were prepared by their socialization to participate in the self-abnegating aspects of public conversion may provide a clue to these men's inability to do so. Noting the preponderance of women in the Cooperstown Presbyterian Church during the early decades of the nineteenth century, Alan Taylor suggests that "men were trained by their competitions and contentions to shelter and fortify their most personal thoughts and experiences."[66] Taylor's suggestion that males needed, and were taught, to "shelter and fortify" their inner feelings rings true for a number of the men in this study, who prayed, meditated, and even received religious manifestations (dreams, visions, feelings, etc.) when they were alone, but had difficulty experiencing or recounting conversion

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[65]Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* [hereafter *JD*] 14 (3 June 1871). 197. Other such individuals included Thomas Marsh, "History," 360, George Laub, Autobiography, 3, John Butler, Autobiography, 3, and Henry Boyle, Autobiography, 3 Such camp or "general meetings" were mainly practiced by the Presbyterian, Baptist, and especially Methodist denominations in which some 45 to 60 percent of pre-Mormon men briefly sojourned. (For the most thorough recent analysis of the history of such meetings in America, see Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999], esp. 76-117. For the low and high percentages of pre-Mormon men who had tried membership in those denominations which Taves identifies as sponsoring camp meetings, see Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects," 43, and Grandstaff, "Impact of the Mormon Migration," 109, respectively.)

[66]Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Random House, 1995), 227. These men's reluctance to surrender to evangelical conversion may have also been influenced by the association of manhood with rationality, as reflected, for example, in one evangelical man's confession that he had "always doubted . . . that the power of divine love [could without injury] deprive a man of the exercise of his rational powers." (As quoted in Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions*, 108.) In this, as in other related examples, the word "man" is probably meant in the specific sense.

experiences in public [67] Yet, Taylor's reference to "competition" must be qualified in their cases

Among those who left other denominations, as well as those who never chose to join them, several complained of what they saw as the hypocrisy of their members After attempting unsuccessfully to "get religion" at a revival, Henry Sanderson reflected that "it seemed an easy matter for some of the really meanest boys of the place to get religion but I would perceive no change in their conduct and finally came to the conclusion that these boys acted the hypocrite."[68] John Murdock joined and then left two different denominations, both times on the grounds that he "became dissatisfied with their walk" as they "did not walk according to the scriptures."[69] One of Joseph Smith's earliest prophecies, reportedly given prior to the publication of the Book of Mormon or the organization of the Church, may provide a clue as to the behaviors which these men felt did not accompany the religious "professions" of many church goers:

> Now you look at deacon ---------- & you hear him talk very piously well you think he is a very good man but suppose that Mr (one of his poor neighbors <who had 8 children> owed him the value of one cow well this man has eight small children suppose the poor man should be taken sick &

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[67]For example, John Murdock, Journal, 3, 6-7; Truman Angell, Autobiography, 195-6; Anson Call Autobiography, HBLL, 2-3; Joseph Holbrook, Autobiography, HBLL, 19-20. Susan Juster has also argued that the traditional American conversion experience from Puritan times until "well into the nineteenth century" forced men to "suppress their masculine identity." At the heart of this phenomenon was the problem, to paraphrase Juster, that "to be utterly 'dependent' upon God . . . was the ultimate mark of sanctification" while "to be 'dependent' in the economic or political realm" marked one as unmanly (See Susan Juster, "The Spirit and the Flesh," 336-341.)

[68]Henry Weeks Sanderson, Autobiography, HBLL, 22-23

[69]John Murdock, Journal, HBLL, 4.

> die leaving his wife with one cow but destitute of every means of support for herself and family Now I tell you that deacon ---------- <religious> as he is would not hesitate to take the last cow from the widow and orphans rather than loose the debt although he has an abundance of every=thing[70]

Joseph's thinly veiled ("you hear him *talk* very pious") and then ironic ("*religious* as he is") denunciation of the outwardly religious deacon could strike a familiar chord with anyone familiar with the New Testament. Yet, this early "prophecy" also contained a critique, based on a traditional, cooperative "local" ethic, of a rising new "market" ethic. The local ethic, as Christopher Clark has explained, "valued longer-term reciprocity" among those involved in exchanges, based on knowledge of and sensitivity to each others' changing circumstances. The market ethic, on the other hand, "emphasized quick . . discharge of obligation" based on the assumption of a "formal equality" between individuals involved in exchanges.[71] As Joseph's example pointedly proved, the obvious fiction of the "market" ethic's assumption of "equality between individuals" notwithstanding, it could lead a man to "take the last cow from the widow and orphans rather than loose [*sic*] the debt although he has an abundance of everything."

Charles Sellers has proposed that the communal aspects of Mormonism probably appealed mainly to the women who joined that faith. As the comments of Smith and

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[70]"This seemed to us at that time impossible," recalled Joseph's mother Lucy Mack Smith. "[B]ut it was not one year from the time in which it was spoken when we saw the very act <thing> that was told transpire before our eyes." (Lucy Mack Smith, "Preliminary Manuscript," in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996], 307-308.)

[71]Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 196.

others suggest, men might have been equally, if not more, attracted by these aspects [72] When Benjamin Brown was persuaded by reports of their great success to attend a revival, he recalled, "I humbled myself, and determined to divest my mind of all prejudice, and put myself at least in a position to receive all the good that could be obtained." Unlike most of his future fellow Mormons, Benjamin felt inspired to stand and testify, but his testimony hardly conformed to the customary formula.

> While the minister was preaching, it was revealed to me to arise and declare to the congregation, that they, before coming together to pray for the conversion of others, ought first to be reconciled one to the other, so that their gifts of prayer might be accepted by the Lord. The Spirit also said that some in the congregation were guilty of oppressing the poor, taking unlawful usury, oppressing the hireling in his wages, and many other sins of a similar character.[73]

Like Benjamin, Noah Packard attended but would not join other churches since he felt that the members "would go to meeting and put on a long face on the Sabbath, and on the next day would go home and cheat their neighbors."[74] By contrast, Mormonism would seek to reestablish among its members the type of community ties which had inhibited this kind of behavior. Early male converts like Brigham Young saw in Mormon communalism a "beautiful order," where all worked "for the good of the whole more than for individual aggrandizement."[75] As one historian has observed, this ideal required an ethic which was "strikingly different from the larger American society," where the "Cult of True

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[72]Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 224.

[73]Benjamin Brown, *Testimonies*, 55, 57-58.

[74]Noah Packard, "A Synopsis of the Life and Travels of Noah Packard," HBLL, 2.

[75]*JD* 1 (9 April 1852):48; *JD* 12 (12 January 1868):153.

Womanhood" enjoined women, but not men, to be pious, pure, submissive, and altruistic "for the sake of an order that was nonexistent outside the family unit."[76] Thus, with Mormonism, "in some respects, the church and the family became indistinguishable."[77]

If others would be hypocrites, these men insisted that they would not George Smith attended "several protracted meetings" held by his parents' denomination "for the conversion of sinners," believing that he "needed conversion, after the manner" of the evangelicals before he could be "fit" for baptism. Therefore, George attested,

> I attended their meetings as a seeker after religion night and day, but could not be a hypocrite and profess to be frightened nearly out of my senses for fear of hell and damnation when I really felt no such fear, and I would not take my seat on the anxious benches without I felt as others said they did; . . . because I would not be a hypocrite, but remained in the gallery . . . while hundreds were moaning for their sins on the anxious benches.[78]

The hypocrisy George Smith and others said they rejected was in pretending to believe that he was a gross sinner deserving of God's punishment. While some, like Benjamin Johnson and Henry Sanderson, feared that they were "destined to welter an eternity of ages in hell" if they did not get religion, others like Jonathan Crosby and George Smith

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[76]Jill Mulvay Derr, "Woman's Place in Brigham Young's World," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18, no. 3 (Spring 1978): 382.

[77]O. Kendall White, "Ideology of the Family in Nineteenth Century Mormonism," *Sociological Spectrum* 6 (1986): 294. In fact, this may have been an aspect of Mormonism which both attracted and discouraged men. The covenant to obey the law of consecration, which became an additional rite of passage for many, promised cooperation in times of hardship but also entailed an implicit admission of their dependence on other men and women. By re-expanding the sphere of communal values, it essentially brought Mormon men back into a sphere which their contemporaries deemed domestic and womanly.

[78]George Smith, "My Journal," *JI* 81:11.

denied ever feeling such fears. In either case, many could have said, with Noah Packard, "I had followed their instructions without receiving the promise they made to me . . . so that the Mormon missionaries found me in a bad condition to receive their testimony."[79] Again, other studies of conversion narratives have found this to be a fairly typical male response.[80]

Noah Packard was not alone in finding the revivalists' instructions inadequate, if not nebulous. Parley Pratt attended evangelical congregations and revivals yet could "experience no great change." This and his scripture study led him to reflect that had he lived in the days of the Apostles and wished to become a disciple, they would no doubt have told him, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Instead, complained Parley

> we go to the religious minister [who] tells us we must experience a mysterious, indefinite and undefinable something called religion before we can repent and be baptized acceptably. But, if we inquire how, or by what means we are to come at this experience, he cannot tell us definitely; but will tell us that it is the work of God in the soul; which he will accomplish in his own due time, for his own elect; and that we can do nothing acceptably till this is done [as] even our prayers and repentance, and all our good works are sin; so long as this work of God is not done within us.[81]

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[79]Noah Packard, "A Synopsis of the Life and Travels of Noah Packard," HBLL, 2.

[80]"Young men especially," according Barbara Epstein, often rejected and opposed the revivals and "raised theological objections to Calvinism, especially to the doctrines of human depravity. . . . Such men were likely to be attracted by the liberal forms of Protestantism--Universalism and Unitarianism . . . because they described people as basically good rather than evil, and because they made hell seem less threatening and entrance to heaven more likely." (Epstein, *Politics of Domesticity*, 49; see also Juster, "'In a Different Voice,'" 45.)

[81]Pratt, *Autobiography*, 6.

In short, although he did not in fact believe he was a sinner, Parley felt he had no hope of salvation according to the precepts of modern ministers because he "lacked that 'experience of religion' which they always required "[82]

Parley's complaints, which were also voiced by other subjects of this study, again reflect concerns typical of males in other studies of nineteenth-century conversion narratives Susan Juster has observed that her male subjects' rejection of revivalistic religion was a rebellion "against the seemingly unjust and arbitrary nature of God's rule," in punishing his creatures although, as one put it, they "had never committed a crime deserving of eternal punishment." Early Mormon convert Harrison Burgess similarly protested, "My childhood was not marked with any crime although I paid but little or no attention to religion [i.e., to joining a church] until I was about 17 "[83] Nevertheless, after that time Harrison, like others, searched diligently for a means to ensure the safety of his soul. Like Parley, these men sought for specific rules or rites that they could follow to that end. And like Parley, others who looked to adult baptism as an alternative to evangelical conversion could not accept what the denominations which practiced it taught about those who did not receive it.[84] Many were well satisfied with the Mormon church's rejection of such "arbitrary" doctrines, and with the authority by which its ministers affirmed they baptized.

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[82]Pratt, *Autobiography*, 7; cf. Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 13, 194n68.

[83]Juster, "In a Different Voice," 44-45; Burgess, Autobiography, *Windows*, 100.

[84]Butler, Autobiography, HBLL, 3-5; Boyle, Autobiography, HBLL, 3; Murdock, Journal, HBLL, 4.

Sellers is surely correct in identifying the priesthood ordinations and offices, which eventually proliferated in the Mormon church, as a major attraction for male converts [85] Yet, early on, another aspect of the Mormon priesthood restoration may have also been important to many male converts After his baptism, Warren Foote was filled with gratitude

> . . to the Lord for the revelation of His gospel through His servant Joseph Smith, on whom he bestowed his Holy Priesthood through the laying on of hands of the ancient apostles . . . [and] thereby opening up the way whereby mankind can be saved . . through repentance and baptism . by those ordained into this Holy Priesthood. The gospel says repent and be baptized and you shall be saved, but sectarian preachers say 'Come to the anxious seat and we will pray for you and you will get religion.' What a contrast [86]

In Foote's contrast we can perhaps see the interrelationship of two key religious motivations of many early Mormon (male) converts as identified by previous scholars: rejection of revivalist religion and embrace of religious authority.[87] If these men could be assured by reason and the testimony of others that the Mormon baptismal rite of passage was performed by men with authority from God, they need not trouble themselves with displaying, expressing, or even experiencing the feelings of self-abnegation and loss of self-control that were part of the passage to acceptance in the evangelical denominations.

One of the few studies of Mormon women's conversion narratives has

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[85]Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 225.

[86]Warren Foote, Journal, HBLL, 53.

[87]See note 56 above.

characterized Mormonism as a "revival theology."[88] Focusing on Mormon men's conversion (or rather non-conversion) narratives has led this study to a quite different conclusion. Several scholars as early as the nineteenth century found the Book of Mormon to be replete with revivalistic accounts and doctrine.[89] For example, Grant Underwood has stressed evidence of "apocalyptic dualism," especially in the Book of Mormon, and argued that this was acceptable to most early Mormons because of their prior religious training and traditions. He concludes that Mormonism not only embraced, but "consistently moved ahead the traditional saved/damned reckoning of the final judgement . . . to a saved/destroyed outcome apparent at Christ's advent, which preceded it."[90] In contrast, others have pointed to early revelations included in the LDS *Doctrine and Covenants* to conclude that Mormonism "virtually embraced a doctrine of universal salvation."[91] Dan Vogel has stressed other evidence, especially from revelations published shortly after the Book of Mormon, to argue that early Mormonism soon approached a position of near Universalism which he identifies as restorationism. As Vogel observes, a revelation of March 1830, a month before the Church was even organized, assured

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[88]Bradley, "'Seizing Sacred Space,'" 59.

[89]Several nineteenth-century students of Mormonism recognized the revivalistic language in the Book of Mormon. These include: T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints: A Full and Complete History of the Mormons, from the First Vision of Joseph Smith to the Last Courtship of Brigham Young* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1873), 542-43; Clark Braden, *The Braden-Kelley Debate* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., [1884?]), 151; and B. H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brigham D. Madsen (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1992).

[90]Underwood, *Millenarian World*, 52-54.

[91]White, "Ideology of the Family," *Sociological Spectrum* 6 (1986): 291.

Universalist-leaning Martin Harris that "every man must repent or suffer" but also that "it is not written that there shall be no end to this torment."[92] As Vogel explains, this revelation taught "the hallmark tenet of restorationism, that the unrepentant must suffer for their own sins," but that in the end all would be redeemed. Less than two years later, in February 1832, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon received a vision in which they learned that all, save a few, would eventually be saved in one of three heavens.[93] This vision, as Vogel explains, "thus solved the major weakness in restorationism--that of regarding the commandments too lightly. [Smith] could now explain the mercy of God without neglecting God's justice."[94]

Early resistance by some to what came to be called "The Vision," as documented by Underwood and Vogel, surely is not entirely attributable to female converts to Mormonism, any more than the resistance to "apocalyptic dualism" documented in this study can be entirely attributed to early Mormon men. Yet, the differing concerns other scholars have identified in nineteenth-century male and female conversion accounts do appear to frequently parallel those found in the life writings of male and female converts to

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[92]This revelation was first published as chapter 16 in the LDS *Book of Commandments* in 1833.

[93]This revelation was first published July 1833 in the LDS newspaper *The Evening and the Morning Star* and was subsequently included as section 91 in the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

[94]Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1988), 172-173. Underwood does not make any direct response to Vogel, although he does acknowledge in an endnote an anti-Mormon tract published in England in 1840 which interprets The Vision as "a Universalist manifesto." (Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism*, 172n89.)

early Mormonism. While modern scholars' preference for systematic theology has perhaps led them to insist that the body of beliefs early Mormons embraced was a unified whole, their subjects may well have been motivated by differing concerns. To early converts, Mormonism may well have spoken with two voices, one of which was more congenial to many of its male auditors and the other more familiar to many of its female adherents.

Marvin Hill has suggested that early Mormonism sought a middle ground between Arminianism and Calvinism.[95] More recently, Mark Thomas has found and analyzed considerable revival language and evangelical conversion morphology in the Book of Mormon, yet concluded that the theology of that book as a whole represents "a mediation between liberal Arminianism (with its optimistic view of human nature) and Calvinism (with its pessimistic view of human nature)." While Calvinism, as we have seen, was at the heart of the revivals, "liberal Arminians believed that sin consists only in sinning and not in a prior state of being."[96]

Dan Vogel has suggested that if Hill and Thomas are correct, "then Joseph Smith may have adopted" this theology "in order to mediate between the Universalism of his father and the Presbyterianism of his mother.[97] In contrast, a basic assumption underlying

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[95]Marvin S. Hill, "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," *Brigham Young University Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 363-365; see also Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 5-10.

[96]Mark Thomas, "Revival Language in the Book of Mormon." *Sunstone* 8 (May/June 1983): 19-25; "The Devil and Daniel Vogel," *Sunstone* 13, no. 6 (Dec 89): 5; "The Ideal Apostasy and Restoration," *Sunstone* 13, no. 3 (Jun 89): 47.

[97]Dan Vogel, "Once More Into the Breach," *Sunstone* 14, no. 2 (Apr 1990): 2-3.

this study has been that the doctrines and customs which Mormonism would adopt were "not simply the work of Joseph Smith," but were "significantly influenced" by "the people who joined with him," who in turn were influenced by "the times and conditions" in which they lived.[98]

In any event, key differences between nineteenth-century men's and women's conversion experiences strikingly paralleled key differences between nineteenth-century Mormon and evangelical theologies. In her extensive comparison of men's and women's conversion narratives, Barbara Epstein found that men "tended to feel the sharpest guilt over particular sins, while women tended to emphasize a pervasive sense of the sinfulness of their beings." In her subsequent study of the same subject, Susan Juster found that, while women's stress on the ultimate total dependence of all human beings on God theoretically mitigated and eradicated all gender distinctions, men desired a system of heavenly laws by each individual could attain his "just" reward and level.[99]

In some ways, Mormon theology has become the ultimate realization of such "masculine" religious ideals. As if echoing the legalism and rejection of original sin of Juster's and Epstein's male subjects, nineteenth-century Mormons soon came to believe that the only sin of man is that of acting in violation of divine law. Philosopher of religion Sterling McMurrin concluded that Mormon theology was "essentially a rebellion against . . . the orthodox Protestant dogma of original sin," which held that "the condition of sinfulness attaches as a quality or property to every person simply by virtue of his

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[98]Laurence M. Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects," 3.

[99]Epstein, *Politics of Domesticity*, 51; Juster, "In a Different Voice," 47, 57-58.

humanness " By the time of Joseph Smith's death, he was teaching that God himself was bound by divine law, that in fact it was only by obedience to this law that He had become God, and moreover, that men could become gods by the same process [100] "The only sin" in Mormon theology, McMurrin concluded,"is the actual sin that a man commits" in violation of this law, "not in some mystical sense as a participant in Adam's sin " [101] As many men's rejection of revivalism resulted largely from their rebellion against the implications of "original sin" and "apocalyptic dualism," Mormonism's ultimate rejection of these doctrines may have resulted, to a significant degree, from Mormon men's aversion to them.

A close corollary to the early Mormon rejection of original sin was an affirmation of the goodness of the (male) body and its impulses.[102] "The great principle of happiness consists in having a body," taught Joseph Smith, and furthermore, "All beings who have

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[100]See *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1980), 340-382, *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*. ed. Scott H. Faulring (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1989), 465.

[101]Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1965), 66-67, 106.

[102]For Mormonism's affirmation of the goodness of the body, see, e.g , Truman G. Madsen, *Eternal Man* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1966), 43-51. For its affirmation of (male) bodily impulses, see, e.g., Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 104-109. At the same time as Mormonism was sacralizing the body and its "natural affections" as essential to eternal exaltation, these were increasingly seen by nineteenth-century evangelicals as "an impediment to spiritual communion" so that "only those who could suppress their carnal selves altogether" could hope for salvation. (Juster, "The Spirit and the Flesh," 346.)

bodies have power over those who have not "[103] Such teachings affirmed the experiences of his rural, manual-laboring followers about the importance and efficacy of their bodies If such experiences indeed had eternal implications, surely their bodies could and should be defended against physical as well as spiritual enemies Moreover, such teachings meant that to risk or sacrifice one's body in the defense of one's brothers was a great sacrifice indeed Thus early Mormon doctrine harmonized with the traditions familiar to many early Mormon men, which linked manly honor and physical combat, that will be examined in the following chapter

[103]Extracts from William Clayton's Private Book, 5 January 1841 (Tuesday), as published in Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 60

CHAPTER 4

"GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN . . ."[1]

"BOYISH STRIFE" AND "MARTIAL SPIRIT"

IN EARLY MORMON MALE CULTURE

In June 1844, the Mormon-published newspaper *Times and Seasons* included a poem by Eliza R. Snow in which she chided brawling members of Congress for engaging in "boyish strife."[2] Eliza was certainly not alone at the time in associating strife with boys. Anthony Rotundo has found that many nineteenth-century Americans referred to boys as "wild" and "careless," "Goths and Vandals," "primitive savages" full of "animal spirits," even a separate race: "the race of boys."[3]

Rotundo also found that such characterizations, while somewhat exaggerated, were not entirely unfounded. The northeastern middle-class boys he studied had apparently engaged in a "boy culture," which stressed values of courage and aggressiveness cultivated primarily through the "varieties of physical punishment" that boys often inflicted on each other. One of Rotundo's sources described this boys' world as

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[1]John 15:13.

[2]*Times and Seasons* 5 (1 June 1844): 559.

[3]E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Present Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 31-32.

a place "where the heroes make friends with one another by indulging in everlasting assault and battery, and continually arise 'refreshed with the blows.'" A favorite theme of improvised games was warfare, yet boys often "threw stones at their friends purely for sport or even as a form of greeting." Boys created clubs with secret words and codes "which isolated outsiders, even as they united those who belonged." Yet within a club, members engaged each other in a curious mixture of nurture and combat. Boys "created an endless round of competitions" and ranked each other on the basis of stoicism, loyalty, and physical prowess. This was demonstrated not only in contests of running, climbing, and various sports but also in willingness and ability to engage in fights. All of this led many adults to wonder, "Why is a gentle, polite boy such a rarity?"[4]

Rotundo asserts that a "gentle, polite boy" was mainly hard to find if one looked outside the house. Much like Mark Carnes' thesis that men sought a refuge from both domestic and commercial spheres by creating a mediating culture in the lodges,[5] Rotundo argues that boys created a "boy culture" outside their homes. This culture, with its abundant competition and strife, helped boys to prepare in many ways to fill the new role of self-made, competitive manhood in the marketplace which their fathers were not available to teach them. However, Carnes has questioned how Rotunto's boys, who knew little if anything about this new role they would soon have to assume, could create "a

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[4]Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 33-55.

[5]Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

cultural system that would so neatly accord with its demands?"[6] Moreover, Elliot West has stressed the need for additional case studies of children from other regions and socio-economic backgrounds [7]

An examination of the "boyish strife" and "martial spirit" stressed by Rotundo, from the alternative, traditional rural perspective of early Mormon boys, suggests that such aspects of male culture were not necessarily an invention of middle-class boys responding to a market revolution and separation of spheres. Moreover, Rotundo found that for his subjects the boundary between boys' and men's worlds was fairly clear. Only near the close of the century did Rotundo's subjects increasingly embrace an ideal of manhood that involved a good deal of glorifying, and even imitating, "boyish" physicality and "strife." By contrast, the early Mormon experience fostered a more rough and tough boy/manhood and sanctioned a degree of boyish strife and martial spirit that made few distinctions between boys and men other than those of physical ability.

Those boys who had the opportunity of attending schools before becoming Mormons recalled some of the same kind of boyish strife experienced by Rotundo's boys. Henry Sanderson recalled that while attending school at New Canaan, New York, between the ages of six and twelve he "passed through many of the vicissitudes familiar to school life." Henry affirmed that, although he always tried "to avoid strife or animosity,"

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[6]Mark C. Carnes, in *Journal of Social History* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 426-27.

[7]Elliot West, "Children on the Plains Frontier," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950*, ed. Elliot West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 39-40. See also E. West, *Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

he always fought "when imposed upon" and in such cases "always met with success " For Henry, at least, being "imposed upon" included physical but also certain types of verbal assaults which to him apparently constituted fighting words For example, he recalled a time when his father went to work in Texas, which was considered at that time to be "filling up with Criminal parties fleeing from Justice and consequently had a very bad name." When "the largest boy in school" subsequently called Henry "Texas," he recalls, "it was no sooner out of his mouth than he received a severe blow on the nose that set the blood to flowing freely." Although Henry had to stay after school as punishment for his action, he considered it a trifling price to pay in defense of his honor [8]

If a boy did not have the pugilistic prowess of a Henry Sanderson, he might make friends with someone who did. Benjamin Ashby recalled of his best friend, Richard, "He was my champion and many a time has he, by superior strength, saved me from a good thrashing and woe to the boy who troubled either of us." Of course, in such a relationship it could help to have something to offer in return. Benjamin explained that, with him and Richard, "if mental work was to be performed I was sure to lead and my counsel [was] listened to and thus we found ourselves necessary to one another."[9] However, in their case at least, the two boys' friendship went beyond mutual self-interest and was apparently deep and genuine. The studious Benjamin expressed no qualms about befriending someone so ready to fight in defense of himself or his friends.

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[8]Henry Weeks Sanderson, Autobiography, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah [hereafter HBLL], 21-22.

[9]Benjamin Ashby, Autobiography, LDS Visitor's Center, Nauvoo, Illinois [hereafter NVC], 2.

Evidently, these boys' fathers were equally without qualms about such activities In fact, their fathers often taught these boys by word and deed that they should fight for their rights or honor. Benjamin Ashby learned at an early age how a neighbor had once tried to claim a piece of land that his father had begun to enclose. Benjamin recalled with apparent pride, "As soon as my father commenced to dig his cellar, Mr. Pomroy came and forbid him and used force to throw back the dirt as fast as Father threw it out." The two men "threw at one another," until Benjamin's father put down his shovel and "fairly whipped Pomroy and drove him from the field." James S Brown's father made the same point to his sons more explicitly, telling them more than once, James recalled, to "stand up for our rights, and fight for our country and friends."[10]

Yet these boys usually "fought for their rights" only in response to physical attacks by other boys. As with the middle-class boys Rotundo studied, such attacks were often a kind of initiation, and the ensuing combat often led to mutual respect and even friendship. When his family moved to Pittsburgh, Henry Sanderson recalled, "I again had some fighting to do with the boys." Yet he insisted that this fighting was only "in self-defense." As a result, he not only "soon convinced them that it was best to let me alone" but also found that "it was not long before they strove for my companionship." As Henry explained, "Finding out that I was what they termed 'game', I became quite a favorite".[11] And as Rotundo's study suggests, a boy need not necessarily physically defeat his

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[10]Ashby, Autobiography, NVC, 1; James Stephens Brown, *The Life of a Pioneer* (Salt Lake City, UT: George Q. Cannon and Sons,1900), 2.

[11]Sanderson, HBLL, 25, 27.

assailants, but only physically engage them, to pass this apparent initiation.

While a boy could thus transform his status with his peers from outsider to insider through "boyish strife," after becoming Mormons many boys found that they were more "outsiders" than ever with their non-Mormon peers [12] Many first began to realize this as a result of the changes they perceived in the treatment of their parents and older siblings Such impressions were common: "In the spring of 1832, my father joined the Mormons" who were "represented as the lowest and most degraded people on the face of the earth in every point of view"; "I can not describe the peculiar grief and mortification which was thus drawn upon our father," who found himself "isolated and friendless, deserted by many that had been considered friends and subject[ed] frequently not only to contempt and scorn, but to insult mingled with abuse"; Father "and [M]other were baptized into the church and though they" had been pillars of their local church and "had borne excellent characters all their days," now "they were called crazy, and derided by relatives and friends"; "[p]revious to this we lived in peace with our neighbors, but soon after we were baptized our neighbors began to speak evil of and persecute us in various ways."[13]

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[12]The inability of early Mormons to find a peaceful place of refuge among their neighbors in Jacksonian American, and the resulting migration of the main body of members from New York to Ohio, Missouri, Illinois and finally to the Great Basin between 1830 and 1847 has been well-documented. (See, e.g., Marvin Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989]; Kenneth Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830–1846* [Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989].)

[13]William Holmes Walker, Journal, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah [hereafter LDS-A], 5; Lorenzo Brown, Autobiography, LDS-A, 3; Ashby, Autobiography, HBLL, 2; John W. Hess, Autobiography, HBLL, 47. James V. Williams first realized that such a change had come when, while en route with his family to Nauvoo in 1840, his fifteen-year-old brother

A number of boys also found themselves "persecuted in various ways," even if they had not yet made the decision to become Mormons. "I well remember the taunts and slurs cast at me by my school mates, after my parents joined the Mormons," wrote Charles Griffin of his schooldays in Vermont. James S Brown of North Carolina reported, "From the very day my parents entertained the Latter-day Saint Elders in their house my former playmates in the neighborhood commenced a crusade on me, calling me a Mormon, and many hard names, whenever they met me "[14] This "persecution" may well have been worse for some boys who had joined the church but had not yet "gathered" to the latest center-place. "Once they threw eggs at us just because we were Mormons," recorded John Pulsipher of an experience he and his brother Charles underwent while en route to Nauvoo. While living in Warsaw, Illinois, in 1844 Joseph Black was given a particularly hard time. "While I was walking in the streets," recalled Joseph, "boys and old men would hoot and yell at me and some of them threatened to kill me because I was a Mormon "[15]

Most Mormon boys who received such treatment apparently strove to bear it patiently Charles Griffin confessed that "when the news came of the death of the Prophet and Patriarch" his schoolmates became worse than ever in trying to aggravate him, "and they very often succeeded to the extent that I would often resent it with blows, and many

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Thomas died. He "was not permitted to be buried in any of the Christian burying grounds and was obliged to lay his remains in what was known as the Potter's Field, a place set apart for the burial of strangers and crazy people, only on account of our parents being Mormons." (James V. Williams, Journal, LDS-A, 3).

[14]Charles Emerson Griffin, Autobiography, LDS-A, 3; Brown, *Life of a Pioneer*, 16.

[15]John Pulsipher, Journal, HBLL, 3; Joseph Smith Black, Journal, HBLL, 8.

were the combats I had with them." At about this same time, however, Goudy Hogan recalled that he "was frequently called 'old Joe Smith' and when the boys would choose up for a game of ball they would leave me out frequently because I was a Mormon boy, but I had the feeling that I was hated for righteousness sake and I endured it patiently." Even Henry Sanderson, who had previously bloodied a larger boy's nose for calling him "Texas," refused to be goaded by those who tauntingly called him "Mormon" as his family traveled to Nauvoo.[16]

Still, early Mormon boys continued to feel they had a right to fight back if physically assaulted. Henry Sanderson told his would-be adversaries that he did not think it was right to fight "other than in self defense." Yet, if "they would threaten me and proceed to carry these threats into execution then there would be a row," and Henry refused to run unless badly outnumbered.[17] While Henry does not describe the nature of the threats or their execution, James S. Brown's journal indicates that he would endure a great deal before fighting back after his friends learned that his family had joined the Mormons.

> When we gathered at the mill pond, our usual place of bathing, they would baptize me, as they called it, in the name of Beelzebub; but I called it drowning, for it seemed to me that when three or four of them got me under the water they never knew when to let me up. Then when I got out of the water they would mockingly "lay hands" on me in the name of Beelzebub, going through a ceremony and at short intervals calling "Pluck," when they would pull my hair with a severe twitch, and would spit

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[16]Griffin, Autobiography, LDS-A, 3; Goudy E. Hogan, Journal, HBLL, 8; Sanderson, Autobiography, HBLL, 27.

[17]Sanderson, Autobiography, HBLL, 24.

on me and laugh.[18]

James apparently bore all this patiently. He even endured it stoically when the other boys threw his clothes into a patch of stinging nettles and, when he tried to pull them out with a stick, pushed him in after them. It was not until the other boys began to "punish" him harshly enough to threaten serious physical injury that James "became so provoked" that he struck back. The result of this combat with his fellow country boys paralleled the experiences of Henry Sanderson with the city boys. James found that the other boys not only "stopped their punishments," but also began to treat him as a friend, and even "a leading boy among them."[19]

As James' account suggests, after they had become Mormons, some Mormon boys continued to credit their fathers' pre-Mormon counsel to fight in self-defense. Others received the same lesson for the first time from their Mormon fathers. Mosiah Hancock's father taught his son that lesson by both word and deed after he saw him being trounced by a Missouri boy because Mosiah would not fight back.

> Up to that time my father had taught me to run when anybody wanted to fight me. This time however, seeing the condition of affairs, he said, "Mosiah, if you do not whip that boy, I will whip you." I knew my father meant what he said, therefore I waltzed right into my foe. . . . [T]he boy's father and another smarty started to make short work of my father. But, when I saw my father tripping off a horn-pipe on their bodies, I took courage. When my father had finished his business, he said to me, "Mosiah, I give you leave after this good education."[20]

For Mosiah, as for Henry Sanderson and James S. Brown, this lesson was reinforced by

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[18]J. S. Brown, *Life*, 16.

[19]J. S. Brown, *Life*, 16.

[20]Mosiah Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 8.

the outcome of the combat. Mosiah reported that "ever after, that boy had a high regard for me even though he was a year older than I." Yet, Mosiah affirmed that his parents also taught him to be "kind to those with whom [he] came in contact," and he insisted that he could not recall having ever "been guilty of striking a first blow."[21]

The conflict in Missouri[22] eventually went well beyond "boyish strife," although many Mormon boys were called upon to participate. Reddick Allred recalled serving in a company of "men & boys," who faced off with "Governor Boggs' army" at Far West in October 1838. By that time, John Pulsipher affirmed, "Every man and boy that could carry a gun went into the ranks to defend the women and children. We not only took our guns to our work, but slept with them at night so as to be ready to jump at any minute, when the enemy should come." At this time Reddick Allred was sixteen and John Pulsipher eleven, and Pulsipher appears to have been closer to the age at which many frontier parents evidently felt their boys "could carry a gun."[23] When the Mormons were

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[21]Mosiah Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 8.

[22]Mormons first began to settle as a group in Missouri in 1831. For various views of the Mormons' conflict with non-Mormon settlers in Missouri, which resulted in the Mormons' expulsion from several counties in that state beginning in 1833 and eventually from the state itself in 1838-9, see Stephen C. LeSuer, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1987); Clark V. Johnson, "The Missouri Redress Petitions: A Reappraisal of Mormon Persecutions in Missouri," *Brigham Young University Studies* 26 (Spring 1986): 31-44; David J. Whittaker, "The Book of Daniel in Early Mormon Thought," in *By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley*, ed. John Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1990): 155-201; Alexander Baugh, *A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri* (Provo, UT: the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute, 2000).

[23]Reddick Newton Allred, Autobiography, in *Treasures of Pioneer History* [hereafter *TPH*] 5 (1956): 303; J. Pulsipher, Journal, HBLL, 3. George Washington Bean recorded that he and his brothers were all taught to "shoot a gun for self protection"

subsequently ordered to surrender their weapons, John Pulsipher expressed special consternation at being required to yield that particular item of his "own individual property." Aroet Hale also seemed especially sad that his father had to give up "two nice rifles" in Missouri. "One was intended for me as soon as I was large enough to use it," explained Aroet, who was ten when he saw his hopes thus dashed.[24]

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prior to the time his family joined the church when he was eleven (*Autobiography of George Washington Bean*, ed. Flora Bean Horne [Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, 1945], 15). James Stephens Brown also reported learning to use a gun and other weapons prior to uniting with the Mormons at the age of twelve. "As the first settlers of new countries are more or less subject to dangers from outlaws, wild beasts, and savage men, we found it important to be well armed," James explained. "Thus we learned the use of firearms and the tomahawk. My father was an expert with the old Kentucky rifle, and some of his boys were not far behind him; he trained us always to shoot with a rising sight, to keep cool, and always to have our powder dry and plenty of it." (J. S. Brown, *Life*, 11-12.)

[24]J. Pulsipher, Journal, HBLL, 3; Aroet Lucius Hale, Journal, HBLL, 4. These boys may have mourned the loss of their guns as lost marks of manhood, but for many Mormons surrendering their guns meant losing a means of livelihood as well as defense. Orange Wight affirms that the group of exiles he was in surely would have starved to death if John Higbee had not somehow obtained an "old Flint Lock shotgun" and pounded some pieces of lead into round slugs, with which Higbee was able to kill eleven deer to feed them. Mosiah Hancock's father and brothers hid sixteen guns in a thicket rather than surrender them and thereby, Mosiah proudly reports, "the Hancock brothers, Levi, Joseph, and Solomon, with their guns guarded and fed 600 men, women, and children while camped in the woods after they had been driven from their homes." (Orange Lysander Wight, Autobiography, HBLL, 16; Mosiah Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 13.)

After being driven from their homes again in Illinois less than a decade later, Stephen Bunnell, then age twelve, earned the nickname of "Nimrod the mighty hunter" from a group of Latter-day Saints on the west side of the Mississippi for whom he was providing game with "a very nice little rifle" his father had bought him before the exodus from Nauvoo. When he began to run low on ammunition, a Brother Farmer, the acting bishop, gave him "from 6 to 8 loads a day," reported Stephen, "because they looked to me for something to eat." (Stephen Ithamar Bunnell, Autobiography, LDS-A, 1-2.)

Such accounts of gun use contrast with the main thrust of a recent work by Michael A. Bellesiles (*Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000]) in which he argues that America had no gun culture to speak of prior to the Civil War. While Bellesiles claims to have hunted diligently for guns

Boys too young to bear arms were not necessarily too young to serve in other ways, however. Being more likely to escape notice, they were often sent out to gather food and information. Samuel Miles lived about a mile south of Far West on the enemy army's direct line of march. When all the males under arms were called in to defend the city, Samuel (age twelve) was sent out to see and report on what they were doing He discovered that they were searching houses for arms, remained until the army had all passed, then returned and reported.[25] Other boys did similar duty John Lyman Smith explained, "Being of an age to see and hear unmolested a great deal that passed I may say I was not always idle."[26] Thus, smaller boys' size and stealth was used to advantage in

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in the historical records of antebellum America and been unable to find them, I had no particular desire, and made no special effort, to find guns in the records of early Mormon men yet found quite a few. While Bellesiles' argument is undoubtedly correct for the more settled areas of antebellum America, it is perhaps less so for less settled areas. Aside from those accounts cited in the present chapter, there is abundant evidence of possession and use of guns by substantial numbers on both sides in conflicts between Mormons and "Gentiles" such as those at Crooked River (25 October 1838), Haun's Mill (30 October 1838), and Far West (31 October 1838), in Missouri, and at Carthage Jail (27 June 1844) in Illinois, as well as in numerous other places and contexts (See, e.g., D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* [Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1994], 61-62, 84, 101-102, 112-113, 137, 141, 146, 470-471, 474, 476; Baugh, *A Call to Arms*, *passim*.) Upon closer examination, sources cited by Bellesiles of antebellum Americans eschewing gun-ownership and mocking activities involving guns (such as participation in militias or hunting) are often the products of northeastern middle-class authors (See, e.g., Bellesiles, *Arming America*, 297-303.) His assertion that "the knife was the weapon of choice" throughout the U. S. prior to 1850 (*Ibid.*, 308-9, 314, 354) was evidently true on the Mormon frontier only insofar as one was too young or poor to possess a gun. (See pages 128-134 below.)

[25]Samuel Miles, Journal, LDS-A, 6.

[26]John Lyman Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 3. See also Charles Pulsipher, Autobiography, in *Pulsipher Family History Book*, ed., Terry and Nora Lund (n.p., 1953) 65. Of course, Mormon boys also filled numerous essential non-martial roles during this period. The Missouri "Mormon War" in particular deprived many Mormon families of

fathers, whether permanently or temporarily, through death, disease, imprisonment, or other exigencies. Hence, for many boys, the early Mormon experience accelerated the early assumption of responsibility typical in frontier childhood (West, *Growing Up with the Country*, 73-99) Although they could and arguably deserve to fill at least a separate chapter, a few examples of early Mormon boys' non-martial contributions seem called for herein

While their father was in Platt County working for money to help them out of the state of Missouri, Charles and Pulsipher, aged eight and eleven, "stayed at home and got fire wood and took care of the folks the best that [they] could." (J. Pulsipher, Journal, HBLL, 5) After his father and others were taken prisoner, ten-year-old Aroet Hale was "about the largest boy in camp." As such, he "had to cut wood and burn it into coals outside the tent, take the coals into the tent in a bake kettle" to keep his mother and younger siblings from freezing, until the Grand River froze over and they were able to load their team across on the ice (A. L. Hale, Journal, HBLL, 5). Fifteen-year-old Orange Wight drove the family's remaining two cows from Diahman to Far West in Missouri and thence to Quincy, Illinois, keeping near to the brethren who were transporting his sick mother and younger siblings all the way so that his family could get milk (O. Wight, Autobiography, HBLL, 5).

In many cases, boys continued as their families' primary providers during much of the Saints' sojourn in Illinois. After arriving at Quincy, Orange Wight transported and sold fish caught by the Higbees and thus "made a good living for myself and family" until his father was released from jail (O Wight, Autobiography, HBLL, 5-6). At Zarahemla, John Lyman Smith (aged twelve) and his cousins Silas (ten) and Jesse (eight) supported their mothers and siblings and "did the principal part of the farming" while their fathers were gone for long periods on various church and personal business (J. L. Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 4-5) A few of those who lived in Nauvoo wrote of similar experiences: "The many years of labor and hardships that my father had passed through caused his health to fail, and as I was the only boy in the family, the greater part of the labor devolved on me" (Hess, Autobiography, HBLL, 47); "[d]uring this season I managed most of the family business as most of the folks were ill" (Bean, *Autobiography*, 23). Benjamin Ashby supported his family by making and selling shoes while his father was "on a mission to the eastern states" and thereafter when he returned and was "laid up most of the winter with rheumatism" (Ashby, Autobiography, HBLL, 11).

Mormon boys continued to provide for their families as the Saints prepared to leave Illinois. Joshua Hawkes' parents were so sick with "chills and fever" during the family's final weeks in Illinois that the family's sole support, besides some charity, was the income ten year old Joshua got from selling their cow's milk to the passing steamboats (Hawkes, Autobiography, HBLL, 3). Due to his father's illness, Abraham Zundel was at about the same time and age "obliged to assist in all the outdoor labors" despite the severe winter and a lack of warm clothing. Abraham recorded, "Many a time when going after wood it seemed that I could not endure the extreme cold but must perish. Thanks to my Heavenly Father he preserved me through all that I passed through. But many of the boys

such situations. By the time the main body of Saints was settled in Illinois, Mormon boys had demonstrated to their parents and to themselves their ability and willingness to perform such defensive duties

In and around Nauvoo, they further demonstrated their enthusiasm for the "martial spirit" and performed protective functions deemed necessary to the community. There is evidence that upon gathering to Nauvoo, Mormon boys continued to fill the roles of "look-outs" and "sentries" almost unabated and unasked. Here, they made Joseph Smith the focus of such activities, as they came to realize that the Prophet was in particular danger from their enemies. Some of those who sought to meet him for the first time in Nauvoo could not recognize or find him because he was often in disguise or hiding. After getting to know him, his friends were able to see through the disguises he used to avoid his pursuers.[27] Boys appreciated the humorous as well as the serious aspects of the Prophet's usually victorious hide-and-seek contests with his enemies, and they soon came to join in the subterfuge when it seemed necessary. At age nine James M. Fisher was out with some friends flying kites when the boys were approached by "a couple of sheriffs,"

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of my age have succumbed and been gathered home to their Fathers and while I write this it gives me a feeling of sadness when I think of the departed." (Zundel, Journal, LDS-A, 5.) Jesse N. Smith (age thirteen at that time) similarly recalled, "We at length set out, driving our two cows, which last was made my especial duty. My heart bounded within me, though a child, as I thus turned my back upon the intolerant world which had persecuted so many of my friends unto death." (J. N. Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 10.)

[27]Hatch, Journal, HBLL, 2; Ashby, Autobiography, HBLL, 9. Ward Pack recalled once seeing Joseph Smith in disguise as a fish monger. "I recognized him and father tried to make me think it was not he, fearing that I might make mention possibly of his disguise, but he could not get me to think that it was not the Prophet. Then he told me the reason of his being disguised; that he was visiting his friends and avoiding his enemies" (Ward Pack, Journal, LDS-A, 5).

who asked them if they knew where Joseph Smith was. One of James' young companions told them solemnly that Joseph Smith had "died and gone to heaven" and that they had "just sent his dinner up on that kite."[28]

Some boys concluded that in certain cases subterfuge was not enough to protect the Prophet. Mosiah Hancock explained that "now and then" an outsider would come into town with no apparent business other than to loiter about by a wood pile and whittle. "There was no law against that," observed Mosiah, "but from what we could learn, some of them were interested in taking the life of the Prophet. We kept a good watch, and were directed to keep an eye on the 'Black Ducks.'" Whether or not boys were ever "directed" to go beyond surveillance to intimidation, they sometimes deemed it necessary to do so. Still, Mosiah Hancock insisted that they never did so unless they observed that a person was "lurking around the Prophet's premises quite late" or engaging in other menacing behavior. In such cases, apparently taking a cue from some of the outsiders they had observed, the boys would approach the lurking stranger and start to whittle menacingly. "In extreme cases," when they "knew a man to be a mobber, who still sought the life of the Prophet" despite the initial treatment, Mosiah explained,

> we would use our rail. We generally had four boys to a rail --the rail would be flat on the bottom and was three cornered; on the top corner it was terribly sharp-- fixed to suit the aggravating circumstances. Four boys generally knew how to manage the rail. We all had our knives and our timbers to whittle and make rails.[29]

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[28]Thomas Billington Nelson, Autobiography, LDS-A, 1; James Madison Fisher, Autobiography, LDS-A, 4.

[29]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 26-27.

According to Samuel Woolley, similar scare tactics might also be applied to officers wielding vexatious warrants. "During a meeting held in Nauvoo in the spring of 1843," wrote Samuel,

> an officer came to arrest Joseph Smith, and in order to keep him from doing so, a number of the boys, including myself, began whittling sticks and whistling, and every time the officer came near the house we would stand in front of him and whistle and whittle The result was that he did not arrest Joseph Smith that day.[30]

While Mosiah Hancock points to outsiders as the initiators of the menacing whittling that the Mormon boys' subsequently engaged in, other accounts include interesting clues to the origins of the Mormon boys' whistling. William Pace stressed the effect of "an unearthly whistle," along with "incessant whittling," in striking "terror into the hearts" of "obnoxious elements." Other recollections suggest that the whistling might have also served as a system of signals. John Lyman Smith reported that as early as 1840 Joseph Smith would visit his house to elude "officers [who] were seeking to kidnap and take him to Missouri." According to John Lyman, Joseph Smith would "call and say, 'Johnnie, now watch and if any stranger come, you whistle to me so I can slip into the cornfield, and then when they are gone give me the signal and then I'll return to the house.'"[31] According to Mosiah Hancock, each boy in his band "knew what tunes to whistle," and William Pace also recalled that "generally everyone had his own favorite tune," which he would begin to whistle when he discovered a suspicious-looking stranger,

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[30]Samuel Amos Woolley, Autobiography, LDS-A, 2.

[31]J. L. Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 4.

and "soon a crowd of his pals gathered."[32]

Some scholars have downplayed accounts of "whistling and whittling" during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, arguing that the "whistling and whittling brigade" was not organized until the repeal of the Nauvoo Charter in early 1845 left Church leaders with no legal alternative for maintaining order [33] However, Mosiah Hancock's account of earlier whistling and whittling also makes the argument that there was no legal alternative (i.e., that there was no law against anti-Mormons loitering around apparently lying in wait for Joseph Smith). Hancock's account also includes an important possible clue as to why there are not additional accounts similar to his. "I was about to give some instances [of our activities], but forbear," wrote Mosiah. "I do not know if the boys from Nauvoo would like for me to betray those old-fashioned secrets."[34]

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[32]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 27; William Pace, Journal, HBLL, 7-8

[33]Thurmond Moody's article presents the most thorough argument for this perspective (Thurmon Dean Moody, "Nauvoo's Whistling and Whittling Brigade," *Brigham Young University Studies* 15 [1975]: 480-504). However, the assertion that the lack of contemporary accounts to corroborate the boyhood reminiscences proves that the "brigade" was first organized by adults seems somewhat circular. Since very few boys of this period and socio-economic circumstances kept diaries, the lack of contemporary accounts seems equally compatible with the explanation that such a band was "organized" by boys before it was noticed or acknowledged by adults. In light of the findings of Elliot West and Anthony Rotundo regarding the degree of independence of children's activities and cultures, I would argue that the latter explanation is at least equally plausible. Several non-Mormon sources, although also reminiscences, agree with those of the boys cited above in insisting that Mormon "whistling and whittling" went on during the lifetime of Joseph Smith. (See, e. g., Hawkins Taylor, Autobiography, and Eudocia Baldwin Marsh, Reminiscence, both excerpted in *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois*, eds. John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius [Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1995], 52-55 and 76-77 [respectively].)

[34]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 27.

If the whittling and whistling band began in part as a sort of secret club, as Mosiah seems to suggest, it was evidently not the only such organization in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith III also reported joining such a club as a young boy in Nauvoo While Joseph III looked back on the club as childish, he acknowledged that the club's activities provided "a good deal of fun, as fun was rated among us." Such activities included initiation ceremonies that could be fairly elaborate as well as rather rough, as when Jack Allred, the school bully, insisted that the members let him join the club. Jack's initiation turned out to be rougher than planned when, in pushing him blindfolded into a cellar in order to frighten him, one of his initiators accidentally pushed too hard and Jack struck a beam on the way down which "cut a deep gash in his scalp." Nevertheless, Jack ever after ceased bullying the smaller boys in the club and soon became the bosom companion of Joseph Smith III, one of his chief initiators.[35]

Mosiah Hancock's account of the early "whistling and whittling band" contains some interesting similarities to Joseph Smith III's account of the club he joined After apologizing for (almost) revealing some of the band's secrets, Mosiah continued, "but that was the way we initiated those who seemed to wish with all their hearts to become thoroughly acquainted with the secrets of the Prophet. If they appreciated the way of

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[35]Roger Launius writes that Joseph Smith III was one of the founding members of the organization and that in doing so he was "following the example of the prophet and other men in the community who had formed a chapter of the Masonic Lodge in 1842." (Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988], 16-17.) In the primary source cited by Launius, however, Joseph Smith III states that the secret club had been formed by "the older boys" prior to his own induction which, in turn, evidently took place prior to the formation of the Masonic Lodge in Nauvoo. (J. Smith III, "Memoirs," *Saints Herald* 80 [17 Nov 1934]: 1511.)

innocent childhood, they could repent of their sins and be ready for baptism "[36] Mosiah's account suggests similarities between this and other cases of "boyish strife " It suggests that early practitioners of this whittling intimidation were also open to the possibility that the confrontation might ultimately decrease, rather than increase, enmity, and might even make some of the outsiders into insiders. William Pace insisted that he did not join the brigade until after 1844. Yet, he also reported that the first time he entered Nauvoo in the spring of 1840 he experienced a very similar initiation at the hands of Mormon boys, who did not yet know whether he was friend or foe. William recalled that after setting up camp on the outskirts of the town,

> Father proposed going down into town . . . . I, boy-like, insisted upon going along too, . . . but we had not gone far when I heartily wished myself back again in camp for all of the boys of my size and larger in the neighborhood seemed to be following us I suppose I looked like a country Jake to them, and they wanted to pick a quarrel . . . so I kept close to my father and tried to not notice them, until their taunts were observed by my father.

Although the taunting boys in this case were Mormons, the response of William Pace's father was congruent with the pre-Mormon precepts of other fathers and strikingly similar to the response of Mosiah Hancock's father in Missouri, discussed above. William's father

> . . . stopped of a sudden and, picking out one of the largest boys among them . . . told me if I did not give that fellow a whipping he would give me one when we got back to camp. . . . I did not relish two whippings so there seemed no other alternative only to pitch in and do my best. By accident I managed to knock or push the fellow down. Then using my advantage jumped on him but he soon cried enough and I let him up.

Like many other boys before and since, William found that after standing up to his

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[36]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 27.

adversaries he "had no further trouble with them."[37]

Whatever their status under Joseph Smith, whistling and whittling boys were certainly approved of and utilized to a significant extent by his successor, Brigham Young.[38] Furthermore, as early as 1841 Nauvoo boys also had another outlet for their "martial spirit," which Joseph Smith clearly approved. This was the boys' corps that was attached to the Nauvoo Legion.

As with the whistling and whittling band, those historians who have noticed it at all

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[37]Pace, Journal, HBLL, 2.

[38]The anti-Mormon press insisted that the "whistling and whittling" boys were under the direct and close control of Brigham Young after 1844. Thurmond Moody presents abundant evidence that the boys' "whistling and whittling" were approved by the Church leadership during that time, yet some of his evidence also shows that the boys were willing and able to engage in these activities independently even after the brigade was "correlated" under the "Bishop's and Deacon's organization" in 1845. Nauvoo Police Chief Hosea Stout recorded in his diary for Monday, April 7, 1845: "In the forenoon Dr. Charles made complaint that he had been insulted by some boys and abruptly demanded to know if this people tolerated such things of which President Young satisfied him that they did not. In a short time he came back again making more bitter complaints than ever. President Young then called for me and requested me to protect him from further insults and ferret out the names of the boys who insulted him." For Sunday, 27 April 1845, Stout recorded that an apostate was at the general church services, and "a company of boys assembled to whistle him out of town but I prevented them. I came home in the evening, went to police, on my way was informed that the old man had been whistled out immediately after meeting." (Hosea Stout Diary, HBLL, 1: 44.)

A month later, Mormon leader Heber C. Kimball apparently sought to call an end to the boys' intimidating whittling if not their vigilance and whistling. "[W]hen we sleep let us sleep with one leg out of bed, and one eye open. Let us beware of those fellows, that do not like us very well. At this time a few of them do not like to dwell in our midst; they are afraid of the boys. Well, we will have no more whittling at present; let the boys go to school and attend to their own Business." (Reported June 1st 1845 in *Times and Seasons* 6: 987-88.) Whether this was the end of the brigade is hard to say. There were no more reports in the anti-Mormon papers. Yet according to David Moore, some whittling continuing through the summer. "Our weapons was a large hickory cane and a toothpick [large knife] to whittle Rascals out of town." (David Moore, Compiled Writings, HBLL, 29.)

have generally favored interpretations of the boys' corps that stress adult initiative and direction and portray the boys' input as passive or at best imitative [39] Launius also follows Donna Hill in asserting that the Prophet organized the activities of the boys' corps.[40] I found no evidence of the Prophet's direction of the boys' corps in the sources cited by Hill and Launius, nor in any of the other sources I have found. All of the accounts, including that of Joseph III, suggest instead that the boys' corps and its activities were initiated by the boys or by a "Captain Baily." In fact, like the "whistling and whittling brigade," the first "boys' company" may have also begun as a secret boys' club [41]

Even insofar as the boys' companies were imitative, their members may have been motivated by models other than the Nauvoo Legion, in which their fathers were required to serve. Under the Uniform Militia Act passed by Congress in 1792, and supported by local legislation in most states, including Missouri and Illinois during the periods when these states included gather places of the Mormons, militia service was required of white males between the ages of 18 and 45.[42] The military parades and general reviews of the Nauvoo Legion, the first of which occurred in April 1841, were clearly inspiring to many

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[39]Here again Launius suggests a top-down explanation with apparently no other evidence than *post hoc ergo propter hoc est:* "The adults had no sooner created the Nauvoo Legion than . . . ." (Launius, *Pragmatic Prophet*,12-13)

[40]Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 284.

[41]Mosiah Hancock begins his discussion of the boys' legion by noting, "We boys in Nauvoo formed a company called the 'Sons of Helaman.'"(Autobiography, HBLL, 25.)

[42]See Baugh, *A Call to Arms*, 25, 179; George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo: Everyday Life in the City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1990), 131.

of the Mormon boys who saw them Yet Jesse N. Smith and Joseph Smith III both begin their accounts of the boys' legion with references to visits by detachments of the Illinois State Militia, which "came frequently to Nauvoo "[43] While Jesse Smith saw these visits as attempts to intimidate the Mormons, Joseph III suggested that he and others were inspired, and perhaps a bit envious, at the sight of the "Quincy Blues":

> I remember seeing this very efficiently drilled unit come to Nauvoo and there present a most inspiring sight as it paraded through the streets, much to the great delight of us youngsters. Captain Prentice had a son who was an accomplished performer upon the snare drum. He seemed to be esteemed by all and to be the pride of the company, which fact made a great impression upon us.[44]

Whether elected by the boys, assigned by adult leaders, or self-appointed, the only adult leader of the boys' corps mentioned by any of the boys was a Brother Baily from Massachusetts. Baily apparently developed a close rapport with the boys yet also drilled them tirelessly. Mosiah Hancock recalled of Captain Baily that "he was proud of us and we were proud of him" and also that he made sure that they "drilled quite a lot." Jesse N. Smith also recalled how he had "drilled under Capt. Bailey," and "marched proudly" beneath a banner on which the boys had inscribed: "Our Fathers We Respect; Our Mothers We'll Protect." Diligent drilling could lead to advancement in ranks, which were also recalled with pride. Mosiah Hancock attained the rank of "second Lieutenant." William Pace, whose own father was "an expert drill master," was "soon initiated into all the mysteries of drill and command" to such a degree that he was "duly elected captain of

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[43]J. N. Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 8.

[44]J. Smith III, "Memoirs," *Saints Herald* 80 (1 Jan 1935): 15.

one of the companies of 'fifty'."[45] The results of all their drilling on boys as a unit was apparently also quite impressive. Joseph Smith III affirmed,

> On training days we were always very much in evidence and it is one sure thing that so far as keeping rank formation and preserving accuracy and unity in evolutions were concerned, Baily's boy troops numbering between four and six hundred, made a spectacle quite as well worth seeing as did the infantry composed of men of larger growth.[46]

The boys' attempts to compare favorably with their adult counterparts sometimes went beyond precision drilling. Joseph III described how the boys once launched a mock attack on the Nauvoo Legion as it paraded through the streets of Nauvoo. Armed with "tin pans, pails, sticks, and whatever other noisemakers they could muster," the boys moved across an open field and intercepted the marching men. When Joseph Smith, Jr., ordered a cavalry charge to disperse the boys, they shouted and "sent up a lively beating upon drums and pans and such a vigorous waving of branches and poles that the horses refused to charge them. Their riders became very much disconcerted. The Commanding General ordered another troop to try it, but they had no better success." Finally, the Prophet spurred his own horse toward the column of boys and was able to scatter them.[47] As the above account suggests, there was undoubtedly "a fanciful element" in the boys' legion "and more than a little fun."[48] Yet, given the Saints' recent memories of Missouri,

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[45]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 25; J. N. Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 8; Pace, Journal, HBLL, 2.

[46]J. Smith III, "Memoirs," *Saints Herald* 80 (1 Jan 1935): 16.

[47]Smith, "Memoirs," 15; Launius, *Pragmatic Prophet*, 13.

[48]D. Hill, *The First Mormon*, 284.

the boys'assertions that there was also a serious element was surely not just boyish braggadocio. "This was no 'paper hat boy play' but sober reality," insisted William Pace [49]

Beyond the pans, pails, sticks and poles listed by Joseph III, Pace and others affirmed that the boys were "armed with slings, haversacks and cobblestones" and also "invariably" with "wooden guns made so they would snap at the command, 'Fire.'"[50] While these wooden guns were almost certainly harmless, the purpose of drilling with them seemed clear to the boys. Pace understood the eventual purpose of the boys' companies as enabling them to "learn drill and discipline" and act as "reserves" to the Nauvoo Legion. He explained the companies' membership as comprising "all the boys from eight years up" who were "not capable of bearing arms."[51] This suggests an average upper age in the boys' companies of around thirteen since, as noted above, most boys were apparently deemed capable of bearing arms by that age [52] The fact that Mosiah

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[49]Pace, Journal, HBLL, 2. One has only to read accounts such as Mosiah Hancock's of anti-Mormon men gang-raping a15-year-old Mormon girl, and then, evidently, young Hancock himself, during the 1838 hostilities in Missouri to appreciate how "sober" the "reality" must have been for these young men (M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 14.)

[50]Pace, Journal, HBLL, 2; J. N. Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 8.

[51]Pace, Journal, HBLL, 2

[52]Pace recalled the names of a few of the boys who had "figured prominently in these companies." If the boys' companies were formally organized about the same time as the Nauvoo Legion (April 1841), and if the boys Pace named joined at about that time, their ages would have been congruent with the preceding estimations. In April 1841 the youngest of the boys Pace named, William A. Empey, would have been not quite eight, Joseph Smith III eight, William Pace, William Cluff, and Henry P. Richards each nine, Abram Hatch and Benjamin Cluff eleven, and oldest of the boys Pace names as "figuring

Hancock first mentions having his own rifle while recounting his first service in the men's legion (at age ten) seems to support Pace's suggestion that the ability to bear arms, rather than age, was the main criterion for graduating from the boys' legion [53]

Prior to this time, Mosiah had spent a good deal of his free time making "pop-guns" from "small branches off the elderberry trees "[54] Perhaps these were prototypes for the wooden rifles with which he and his fellow boy-legionnaires in Nauvoo would drill, which would pop at the command to "fire " Mosiah, for one, also apparently spent a good deal of time practicing with the other weapons with which the boy-legionnaires were armed. His mother later refused to allow him to take his real rifle with him to try to stop the (apparent) theft by some "dragoons" of a wagon and yoke of oxen belonging to a Brother Tillet. Undaunted, Mosiah (then twelve) and his young comrades intercepted the fleeing thieves and pinned them down with a barrage of stones from their slings until Nauvoo legionnaire Orrin Porter Rockwell arrived told the young boys he

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prominently," William Kimball, would have been about to turn fourteen. Jesse N. Smith and Mosiah Hancock, who were younger than any of the boys Pace names, may have joined a bit later.

[53]According to Mosiah Hancock, his first action as a legionnaire was in connection with the suppression of the *Nauvoo Expositor* in June 1844. Mosiah recalled, "I shouldered my rifle and marched along, and I saw the press and type go through the window. I picked up a hat full of type, shouldered a press log, and with my rifle returned home, arriving there about 4 o'clock in the morning." (M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 26) Later, Brigham Young examined Mosiah's rifle while the boy was on guard duty one day at the Temple. President Young "guessed it to be a 44 caliber," reported Mosiah, who was impressed with the accuracy of Young's guess. (M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 31-32.)

[54]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 5.

would "relieve" them.[55]

For some boys, an intermediate step between training in the boys' corps and bearing arms in the men's legion was induction into the latter organization as a drummer. William Pace recorded that "after about one year" he was taken out of the boys' company and sent to Edward P. Desette's drumming school, where he joined several other boys who were learning to drum.[56] After "a few weeks" of training, these boys were assigned to the Nauvoo martial band. Aroet Hale reported, "I frequently serenaded the Prophet Joseph and was on several parades." Pace explained that the drummer boys were also required to do a good deal of guard duty, including standing watch and "beating the alarm at night" if necessary. He also explained the particular qualifications of boys for performing such guard duty. "Being a boy with no particular family cares I came in for much of the latter," he recorded, so that "I was on duty almost the entire time."[57]

By the age of fourteen or fifteen a number of boys had joined the men's legion. "I volunteered when I was 15 years old," recorded John Pulsipher. "I attended every training and tried to learn the ways of war that I might help to defend ourselves and protect the helpless from the fury of our enemies."[58] Again, these boys' duties included standing

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[55]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 33.

[56]These included the precocious N. A. Empey and also Henry Phineas Richards (b. 30 Nov 1831), Jesse Earl (b.1831), and Aroet Hale (b. 18 May 1828), whose father apparently had not yet been able to afford to replace the rifle meant for Aroet that had been surrendered in Missouri. (See Pace, Journal, HBLL, 3).

[57]A. L. Hale, Journal, HBLL, 9; Pace, Journal, HBLL, 3.

[58]J. Pulsipher, Journal, HBLL, 6.

guard at all hours of the day and night, especially around the home of the prophet, albeit now with rifles.[59] While none of these individuals reported any shooting while on guard duty (at least not in extant accounts), some faced anti-Mormon fire outside the city before and after the Prophet was killed When their captain refused to carry out the Prophet's order (shortly before his death) to lead the Macedonia troop to Nauvoo, John Lyman Smith (then aged fifteen) and his fellow troops elected a new captain. According to John Lyman's account, on the way to Nauvoo they encountered a band of

> mounted men with red flags flying. They were twice our number and had gathered around a log house, some fifty yards to the left of the road They rode around the house several times and fired at us as they made the circle The bullets were whistling through the air and some of them plowing up the ground before reaching our lines. Captain Yeager placed our men in file at three paces space, directing each man to lead well, but hold fire until we could see them wink. Just as we were nearly opposite them they took fright and broke into a run across the prairie toward Carthage.[60]

In the fall of 1845, Abram Hatch (then aged fifteen) and George Washington Bean (then aged fourteen) were among the Legion members mustered by Colonel Stephen Markham to join Sheriff Jacob B. Backenstos' posse of "men," who made a tour of Hancock County for the purpose of arresting the suspected ringleaders of those who had been burning houses and crops and driving off stock belonging to Mormons living in

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[59]Job Smith, "My Recollections," LDS-A, 3; Pleasant Green Taylor, Journal, LDS-A, 5. Of course the Prophet's home was not the only place boys guarded. Charles Sperry recalled that, before the martyrdom, "I although a boy took my turn guarding the roads to keep the mob out of town." (Charles Sperry, Autobiography, in *Our Pioneer Heritage* [hereafter *OPH*] 9:441). After the prophet's death, the main focus of guard duty shifted to the temple, where George Bean, Mosiah Hancock and others took their turns standing guard (Bean, *Autobiography*, 22, 24; M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 31-32)

[60]J. L. Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 6.

outlying settlements.[61] Bean recalled that they rode almost night and day on horseback, "with arms and full equipment for service," until they had "scattered" the marauders.[62] Both Hatch and Bean concluded that their adversaries had scattered as a result of their show of strength.[63]

"My soldier service in the Nauvoo Legion . . . was an important chapter of my life," concluded George Bean, because "I gained much experience with some fine men."[64] Thus, while some aspects of the early Mormon experience separated fathers and sons for significant periods of time,[65] their participation in martial activities could bridge some of the distance between boys and men, and between boyhood and manhood. As a result of being inducted into the Legion, "my associates almost from this time became men and not boys," recalled William Pace. Mosiah Hancock expressed wonder at the fact that he was

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[61]Abram Hatch, Autobiography, LDS-A, 4.

[62]Bean, *Autobiography*, 21.

[63]Before the formation of this posse, Mormon boys and men outside Nauvoo sometimes had to fend for themselves. Harrison Sperry vividly recalled how, when he was twelve and living in La Harpe, a townsman rode up one day and warned his father that all the Mormons must leave the county. "I well remember how my Father looked," wrote Harris. After telling the messenger "that he had been one of the first settlers in that town and had tried to be a good citizen," Harrison's father said: "'I have four boys and myself. We all have got guns, and if you come we will make it warm for you.'" The outcome in this case was similar to that of the previous cases of "boyish strife" discussed above. Harrison observed simply, "[T]hey never came." (Harrison Sperry, Autobiography, LDS-A, 1.)

[64]Bean, *Autobiography*, 22, 24.

[65]See footnote #26 above.

often "in the rank of the grown men, and no one ever said, 'You're in the way '"[66]

Mormon boys and men also participated together in the types of physical contests that most middle-class northeasterners at that time associated primarily with boys [67] Joseph Smith III recalled, "It was the custom on Saturday afternoons for the men and boys of the community to gather together and indulge in athletic games, such as running, jumping, wrestling, throwing weights, or in other ways attesting strength and agility."[68] In Nauvoo, boys of all ages engaged in such activities with each other, thus striving like Rotundo's boys to strengthen their friendships with one another by indulging in these variations of boyish strife [69]

Of all the men with whom they were able to associate in such activities, the one who had the greatest impact on many of these early Mormon boys was Joseph Smith, Jr. Although we may justly be wary of the uniformly positive impressions of the Prophet these boys express, it may still be instructive to notice what it was these boys praised him for. They rarely refer to the power of his teaching in general, nor to any particular teaching which inspired them.[70] Nor do they describe him as solemn, pious, refined, distant, sage,

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[66]Pace, Journal, HBLL, 3; M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 25.

[67]Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 31-33.

[68]J. Smith III, "Memoirs," *Saints Herald* 80 (4 Dec 1934): 1512.

[69]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 22-23; J. L. Smith, Journal, LDS-A, 17; Sanderson, Autobiography, HBLL, 31; William Moore Allred, Journal, LDS-A, 471.

[70]An interesting exception is Mosiah Hancock's recollection of asking his father while on the road to Far West, "Who made the father of our God?" Joseph Smith, who was traveling with them answered, "[I]t is just as natural for God to have a father as it is for you or me to have one." (M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 2.)

spiritual or ethereal, although those were the qualities many had been taught to expect of a prophet. Rather, they apparently delighted in relating his evident lack of such "qualities." A typical recollection is that of Job Smith, who first encountered Joseph Smith when he stepped off a steamboat at Nauvoo at age fifteen.

> One of the newcomers thought to engage the Prophet's attention to answer a long string of inquiries . . . whereupon the Prophet referred him to President [of the Apostles, Brigham] Young, and turning on his heel, and in an almost acrobatic manner made quick time towards home, to the amazement of those who expected to see the solemnity supposed to be so necessary for a prophet.[71]

Joseph Smith's love of physical contests, especially wrestling, has been well documented.[72] After watching him accept one non-Mormon's challenge to a wrestling match and then throwing him into a mud-puddle, twelve-year-old Calvin Moore saw the Prophet take his opponent by the hand and say, "You must not mind this. When I am with the boys I make all the fun I can for them." Eleven-year-old Joseph III watched his father tackle a friend and fellow Mormon without warning and accidentally break the man's leg.[73] At age thirteen, Charles Allen first encountered Joseph Smith, Jr., when the Prophet and a workman were discussing the best way to mend a ditch. When the workman pointed out a

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[71]Job Smith, "My Recollections," LDS-A, 1.

[72]Most recently and thoroughly in Alexander L. Baugh, "Joseph Smith's Athletic Nature," in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1993), 137-150.

[73]Calvin Moore, "Recollections," *Juvenile Instructor* 27 (1892): 255; J. Smith III, "Memoirs," *Saints Herald* 80 (4 Dec 1934): 1512. Young Joseph III's recollection is confirmed by his father's unintended victim, Howard Coray (Journal, HBLL, 9), who nevertheless remained friends of both Josephs for the duration of their lives.

flaw, Charles heard Joseph respond, "Yes, yes, that will be better, but although you can outwit me, I can throw you down " Thomas Abbot, aged twelve, watched an encounter in Nauvoo between the Prophet and a big, burley man known as "Old Eagle " When the man "made a rush at him, saying 'Joe Smith, you son of a bitch,' Joseph struck him with his fist and knocked him to the floor, and as he got up and started at him the second time, he was knocked down again" after which "Old Eagle" relented.[74] As a young boy in Nauvoo, the Prophets nephew, Joseph F. Smith recalled, he was "one day playing marbles" in front of his uncle Joseph Smith's residence

> . . . when all of a sudden the door flew open and . . . there came a great, big man right off the end of Joseph Smith's foot, and he lit on the sidewalk just by the gate . . . I wondered what in the world was the matter [but later] learned that this man was . . insulting the Prophet, and abusing him in his own house, . . . so he opened his door and invited him out . . . and he gave him the assistance of his boot . . . and he had been less a man if he had not [done so].[75]

Such examples suggest that Joseph Smith, like the men and boys described above, fought for sport and also to defend his honor. Boys also saw that in his combats Joseph Smith usually gained the friendship, or at least the respect, of his adversary.

Joseph Smith, Jr., also gave his sons the same fatherly instruction received by other boys as described above. According to Joseph III, he and his brothers were taught by their father that they "were never to be the aggressors in any trouble" but were to "be

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[74]Charles Allen, Autobiography, LDS-A, 10; Thomas Abbott, Autobiography, HBLL, 2.

[75]Joseph F. Smith, 23 Dec 1894, in *Collected Discourses: Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*. ed. Brian Stuy. 5 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: B. H. S. Publications, 1987-1992), 5: 28.

thoughtful, considerate, and honorable in play, observing closely the rules of all games" and to "to impose upon no one, avoid quarreling or calling ugly names." "However," continued Joseph III, "we were told that if we ever got into trouble among our friends and playmates we should take care of ourselves." Young Joseph recalled that his mother, on the contrary, "express[ed] her wish that we should not engage in fighting." However, Joseph III subsequently fought to defend himself or his younger brothers on several occasions, refusing (on the authority of his father's counsel) to obey his teacher's order to apologize. He also usually ended up being better friends with his opponent after the tussle.[76]

Joseph III's mother, on the other hand, opposed the martial spirit promoted in the Nauvoo Legion and eventually persuaded her son to quit the boys' corps. Although he confessed to having enjoyed its activities at the time, in retrospect Joseph III expressed regret "that such a spirit crept in among [us], . . . and still greater that the leading minds of the church partook of it."[77] While Emma was certainly not alone in her sentiments at the time, Mosiah Hancock was probably correct in perceiving that many in Nauvoo felt as he had. "I loved to march and parade and have the martial spirit; and was happy under military discipline," admitted Mosiah unabashedly several decades later. "I loved to see a martial feeling cultivated." Joseph Smith probably sensed that many of his male followers, both young and old, felt similarly. Many of them believed that one of the

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[76]The single exception was apparently William Law's son Llewellyn, whose continuing animosity led their teacher to ask Joseph III to apologize ("Memoirs," *Saints Herald* 80 [17 Nov 1934]: 1513-14).

[77]J. Smith III, "Memoirs," *Saints Herald* 82 (1 Jan 1935): 16.

Prophet's main purposes in promoting physical contests and martial displays was to buoy up their spirits and increase their feelings of brotherhood. Many boys were also impressed with the Prophet's gallant appearance in full uniform at the head of the Nauvoo Legion, yet they did not interpret this as *prima facie* evidence that he was a war-monger.[78] A number of boys noted another aspect of gallantry in his words and deeds. When John C. Bennett challenged Joseph Smith to fight a sham battle during exercises of the Nauvoo Legion, several boys saw "General Smith" decline, thus "settling bitter enmity in that way." On the other hand, when the lives of others were in danger, as at Far West, boys saw him "mustering in the ranks, his rifle on his shoulder, encouraging the Saints by his example as well as by his cheering words."[79]

Perhaps the greatest number of early Mormon boys at one time saw and heard the Prophet when he gave his last addresses to the Nauvoo Legion on June 18th, 1844.[80] Many of these boys attended as members of the boys' corp, drummers, legionnaires, or perhaps past or future whistling-whittlers. As other boys had after Zion's camp,[81] these boys heard Smith say that their sacrifice in striving to defend their people had been

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[78]M. Hancock, Autobiography, HBLL, 25; Amasa Potter, Journal, LDS-A, 2-3; Job Smith, "My Recollections," LDS-A, 1; Fisher, Autobiography, LDS-A, 3.

[79]A. L. Hale, 9; M. Hancock, 26; Fisher, Autobiography, LDS-A, 3; Samuel Miles, Journal, LDS-A, 4.

[80]See, e.g., Job Smith, "My Recollections," LDS-A, 3, J. Pulsipher, Journal, HBLL, 7.

[81]Joseph Taylor, "Recollections," *JI* 27 (1892): 202; George W. Johnson, Autobiography, HBLL, 2; R. Allred, Autobiography, *TPH* 5 (1956): 303; 303; Sillas Hillman, Autobiography, HBLL,16. Cf. *History of the Church* 6: 498-500.

accepted of the Lord (even if it had not been accepted by their adversaries). They also heard their Prophet say that if in the future they were ever obliged to fight, they must never stain their hands with the blood of women and children and must always grant quarter whenever their enemies asked for it.[82] As many boys had earlier at Far West, those at Nauvoo heard Smith say again that they must give up their arms "without making resistance and all will be right," and they subsequently saw him "surrender himself."[83] In each case when a show of resolution or strength did not win the hoped for friendship or respect of their adversaries, Joseph Smith taught them in word and deed not to continue to fight unless their lives were at stake.

In concluding his final address, many boys of all ages heard the Prophet ask whether they were willing to lay down their lives for him and, after a resounding "Yes," declare that he was also willing to lay down his life for them. Some recalled another part of the Prophet's address immediately preceding this final question and answer. Wandle Mace (thirty-five at the time) reported that "seeing our sad faces [Joseph] said, 'Boys,' -- he always called us 'his boys'– 'Don't be sad, don't be cast down.'" Then, according to Mosiah Hancock (aged ten), "He asked the Legions if they were not all his boys, and they shouted 'Yes!'"[84]

Smith's choice of words, remarked upon even by his followers, evince both an awareness and a partial repudiation of the manhood constructs of their middle-class

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[82]Pace, Journal, HBLL, 4.

[83]J. Pulsipher, Journal, HBLL, 3; P. G. Taylor, Journal, LDS-A, 6.

[84]Wandle Mace, Autobiography, HBLL, 145; M. Hancock, 27; see also Pace, 4-6.

Northern contemporaries. Anthony Rotundo has proposed that middle-class boys embraced a martial spirit and engaged in boyish strife in order to prepare for their changing roles in an increasingly commercial-urban-industrial society The similar behavior of Mormon boys during the same period suggest that perhaps both groups of boys were, like the children studied by Elliott West, acting as "tradition's warmest friends, respecters, even venerators, of custom" rather than inventing new ways to cope with a changing economy.[85]

Citing strikingly similar male engagement in physical challenges and combat in the Old Northwest, historian Nicole Etcheson attributes such behavior to traditions of "aggressive masculinity" brought by "upland southerners" from their native region. Like Christopher Clark, Etcheson finds that reputation and good character among "the Yankee middle class" depended largely on their ability to pay debts promptly and maintain their "dependent" women and children in a state of "economic non-productivity "[86] For the "Southern yeoman," on the other hand, she argues that maintaining a good reputation often depended to a significant degree on his willingness to display physical courage and to protect and provide for his family in more muscular ways. Noting that the study of American manhood has largely focused on the Northern middle class, Etcheson points out the need to pursue additional sources of American manhood constructs, particularly those

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[85]West, *Growing Up With the Country,* 109.

[86]Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 196; Nicole Etcheson, "Manliness and the Political Culture of the Old Northwest, 1790-1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 61-3.

suggested by Bertam Wyatt-Brown in his study of Southern honor. Etcheson concludes,

> Southern ideas of manliness retained a traditional culture's emphasis on reputation, physical prowess, and moral courage. Imputations of deficiency in these qualities required instant, sometimes violent, defenses . . . In contrast, Yankee notions of manliness came during the same period to rely more heavily on the norms of a middle-class, professional society [87]

The accounts of Mormon men and boys presented above place them culturally far closer to Etcheson's upland southern yeomen[88] than to the middle-class men of the region from which these Mormon males mostly hailed.[89] Yet, in linking middle-class

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[87]Etcheson, "Manliness and the Political Culture," 62, 77; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[88]Wyatt-Brown shows that martial contests were practiced by men of all classes as a way of preserving honor in the South. The present study looks, as does Etcheson's, at the more rough-and-ready type of manly combat favored by rural working men, as opposed to the more formalized challenges and duels practiced by their social "betters" in the South, and increasingly eschewed (together with the lower-class brawling) as lacking manly self-control by the Northern middle class.

[89]An examination of the backgrounds of "some 280" individuals who converted to Mormonism between 1830 and 1845 led Lawrence Yorgason to conclude that "most were born in the east (New England, New York), with comparatively few either born or converted in the south." (Lawrence Yorgason, "Preview on A Study of the Social and Geographical Origins of Early Mormon Converts, 1830-1845," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10, no. 3 [Spring 1970]: 281.) In his subsequent thesis, Yorgason identified only 10 percent of his American-born subjects as coming from southern states (Virginia and Kentucky). In contrast, 62 percent hailed from New England, 25 percent from the Mid-Atlantic states of New York and Pennsylvania, and the remaining 2.5 percent from the Middle Western states of Ohio and Illinois. (Lawrence Yorgason, "Some Demographic Aspects of One Hundred Early Mormon Converts, 1830-1837" [Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974], 32.) Mark Grandstaff's analysis of the backgrounds of 602 adult converts to Mormonism who gathered to Kirtland, Ohio, before 1839 identified 50.7 percent as hailing from New England, with another 34.7 percent from the Mid-Atlantic states mentioned above. (Mark R. Grandstaff, "The Impact of the Mormon Migration on the Community of Kirtland, Ohio, 1830-1839" [Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1984], 27, 104. See also Mark R. Grandstaff and Milton V. Backman, Jr.; "The Social Origins of the Kirtland Mormons," *BYU Studies* 30, no. 2

Northerners' conception of manliness to their occupational context, Etcheson provides a better clue to her southern yeomen's contrasting concepts than their region of origin. It might be argued that early Mormon boys and men learned such martial values from their southerner neighbors and adversaries in Missouri after a few months or years of contact It seems far more likely, however, that they too retained a good deal of the same "traditional culture" of muscular masculinity, given their similar occupations as "farmers and mechanics." Despite its title, Wyatt-Brown's pioneering study notes early on that combat in defense of honor was "not merely a Southern phenomenon," but one that could be traced at least as far back as the "more conservative, rustic, and wilder areas and households of the British Isles."[90] He suggests that both North and South originally shared this aspect of an older traditional culture, which was subsequently supplanted in the North by the rise of a more internalized ethic of self-control promoted by Northern middle-class and evangelical interests

"Boyish battles" among those who continued this tradition, to paraphrase Wyatt-Brown, "led to long-standing male friendships of an intense, fraternal kind . . . and provided experience in physical defense . . . that even the adult [male] needed." Thus,

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[Spring 1990] 49, 52.) Both Yorgason and Grandstaff also note that the parents of those born in these Middle Atlantic states had very often themselves been born in New England. The current chapter, which includes a greater proportion of those who gathered to Missouri, nevertheless finds that of thirty Mormon males who reported engaging in some form of boyish strife or martial spirit, only five (<17 %) hailed from southern states, including one from Missouri itself.

[90]Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 17-18, 26-27.

they became an "effective . . . substitute . . for the religious revival experience"[91] not only for Southern men but for men throughout the country who resisted what they viewed as the self-denigrating implications of the rising northeastern evangelical and middle-class culture. As farmers and mechanics, such men viewed their muscular strength and skills as essential marks of their manhood. As the accounts of the subjects of this study affirm, the experiences of early Mormon men taught them that to submit without resistance to public humiliation was to mark oneself as a continuing target for such treatment. To prevent this, even physical combat was deemed not only permissible but mandatory.

Of course, the association of masculinity and martial values can be traced as far back as recorded history. This does not mean that the link is "innate" or biologically determined. As biologist and social critic Barbara Ehrenreich has observed, "inherited predispositions," even if they exist, do not irrevocably "condemn us to enact them." On the other hand, "the fact that some response or pattern of behavior may be entirely *culturally* determined hardly means that each generation is free to alter it at will." As long as that pattern of behavior is sufficiently functional, and is perceived and therefore (ironically) taught as natural, it will maintain a strong hold in human societies. Admittedly

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[91]*Southern Honor*, 23-24, 164-165; see 165 for quotation. Another recently published perspective on this phenomenon is presented by Timothy R. Mahoney in *Provincial Lives: Middle-class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Mahoney demonstrates how middle-class Westerners, in contrast to their Northeastern counterparts, did engage to some degree in such rough and tumble aspects of a "masculine subculture" which he finds thrived in "border societies" in mid-nineteenth-century America. Yet, Mahoney explains that such men did so primarily in order to coopt leading members of the lower-class in order to solidify loyalty to the community and to their leadership thereof. (Mahoney, *Provincial Lives*, 63, 72-80.) Thus, the implications of Mahoney's findings for the origins and essential functions of such activities are basically congruent with those of the present study.

speculative, Ehrenreich's hypothesis regarding the association of physical combat and manhood nevertheless seems to find resonances in the accounts of early Mormon males examined above. While her argument is impossible to summarize adequately in a single sentence, Ehrenreich suggests that male association with such "blood rites" grew out of an originally genuine need to risk their lives in the dual role of guardians and sacrifices, fighting against, and sometimes succumbing to, predatory threats to their families and communities.[92]

Mormon religious teachings that validated the (male) body and its impulses reflected and reinforced the early Mormon male's experience of his physical efficacy. In facing physical danger and meeting challenges to physical combat, he showed brothers and potential brothers his willingness to risk his body in defense of his body and, potentially, theirs as well. Joseph Smith frequently referred to the biblical passage which states that there is no greater love than that of one who lays down his life for his friends.[93] A number of his followers subsequently referred to Smith's own death on June 27th, 1844, in just those terms.[94] In submitting to the incarceration that led to his death, Joseph Smith said that he was "going like a lamb to the slaughter." Yet, in the final minutes of his life, like the original guardian/sacrifices posited by Ehrenreich, he did not lay it down without a

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[92]Barbara Ehrenreich, *Origins and History of the Passions of War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), 88-89 for quotations; see also, especially, 76-77, 92-95, 109, 125-139.

[93]Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church*, ed. Brigham H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City, The Deseret News Company, 1902-1912), 3: 175, 5: 516; 6: 73, 500.

[94]*Times and Seasons* 5, no. 16 (2 Sept 1844): 638; Wandle Mace, Autobiography, HBLL, 207.

fight [95]

[95]Danel Bachman cites several works which have argued that Smith was not a true religious martyr, as his followers have labeled him, because he "died with a gun in his hand," with which he "killed at least two men and wounded another" of his assailants before succumbing. (Danel W. Bachman, "Joseph Smith, a True Martyr," in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man,* eds. Susan E. Black and Charles D. Tate, Jr. [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1993. 317-320.] Bachman argues that Smith's death nevertheless met the minimum technical requirements of martyrdom as originally defined in the Christian tradition. If Ehrenreich is correct, in might also be argued that Smith died very much in the older tradition of the original proto-religious guardian/sacrifice, fighting to the last against threats to himself and his community.

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented in the preceding chapters supports a view of the first men who would become Mormons as part of the rural majority of early nineteenth-century American farmers and mechanics who embraced a set of manly ideals that differed significantly, in many ways, from those embraced by their middle-class contemporaries. Early Mormon men's life writings attest to boyhood experiences of working alongside their fathers as soon as they were physically able, and subsequently of acting as substitute farmers and breadwinners as well as being put out to work outside the direct supervision of their fathers. Such experiences enabled them to frequently follow in the occupational footsteps of their fathers and almost always to marry at ages significantly lower that those of their more upwardly-mobile urban counterparts. Thus, they were able to follow a path to manly independence that was difficult yet direct and relatively rapid.

Early Mormonism attracted men in unparalleled proportions, which doubtless reflected and reinforced the more self-confident and self-assertive theology of man in early Mormon doctrine. Compared to the other denominations of the day, a disproportionate number of early Mormon converts were, or were led to Mormonism by, men. Although these men had received prior religious instruction in their earliest years, typically from their mothers, the content of that instruction was not of the feminized variety stressed by

many historians, and a significant portion of these men had been unable to achieve evangelical conversion experiences. Since many of them had previously turned to more liberal religious beliefs regarding the nature of man and his relationship to God, these men undoubtedly supported Mormonism's development of similar doctrines. Their rejection of revivalist rites of passage, which stressed submission and self-abnegation, is also consistent with their enthusiastic participation in more traditional, physically assertive, unrestrained and combative passages to manhood and rites of male bonding, which were in marked contrast to the "manly self-restraint" increasingly enjoined by the Northeastern middle class.

As the nineteenth century progressed and Mormon men found that a rough and ready stance served to increase rather than decrease the enmity of outsiders, they began to encourage their sons to cultivate the qualities of a genteel manhood that increasingly resembled that of their middle-class contemporaries. Beginning in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the Mormon church would develop a series of increasingly regimented rites of passage through which Mormon boys could be carefully guided to manhood.[1] During the twentieth century, some scholars have argued, many Mormons

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[1]Ordinations to the Mormon Priesthood, once available to worthy males mainly on the basis of proven loyalty and bestowed mainly on adult men, came increasingly to be given like clockwork every two years to Mormon boys beginning with the office of deacon at the age of twelve and culminating with the office of elder at age eighteen or nineteen. (See William G. Hartley, "The Priesthood Reorganization of 1877: Brigham Young's Last Achievement," *Brigham Young University Studies* 20 [Fall 1979]: 3-36; "The Priesthood Reform Movement, 1908-1922," *BYU Studies* 13 [Winter 1973]: 137-56; "From Men to Boys: LDS Aaronic Priesthood Offices, 1829-1996," *Journal of Mormon History* 22 (Spring 1996): 85-127.) After becoming elders, young Mormon males are strongly encouraged to serve two-year missions, the penultimate Mormon rite of passage to manhood, and upon their return, equally strongly encouraged toward the ultimate rite of

would embrace a theology of Mormon "neo-orthodoxy" more reminiscent of the Calvinism rejected by their forefathers than the more optimistic doctrines of early Mormonism [2]

For those men who had originally embraced the earlier doctrines, extra-religious passages to manly independence were evidently sufficiently available and accessible that they would not brook sacrificing their belief in their manly independence to the requirements of the era's evangelical religion. Their perceived self-reliance was too great to admit the notion of a total, childlike dependence on an arbitrary Deity Economic passages such as leaving home, supporting themselves, and marrying came after hard work, yet came relatively early in their lives. Such passages taught them that they could indeed live "by the sweat of their brow" and thereby also provide for their wives and children. Manly rites such as engaging attackers in physical combat and obtaining and using firearms also came young, evincing the efficacy and importance of their bodies and their right and need to use and defend them. Such rites also proved to them and their fellows that they could protect as well as provide for themselves, their "dependents," and, when necessary, their new brothers in the faith. That an earthly Zion must be physically

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passage to manhood, temple marriage. As William Hartley points out, these rites of passage were originally far less ordered and age-graded. Their regularization and regimentation has surely contributed to the more "fully programmed" paths to adulthood of modern Mormon youth. (Davis Bitton, "Zion's Rowdies: Growing Up on the Mormon Frontier," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 50 [1982]: 195.)

[2]O. Kendall White, *Mormon Neoorthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1987); cf. Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5 (July-August 1980): 24-33.

"built" on the American continent led the Saints to the conclusion that the world had need of "willing men."[3]

[3]That "Zion will be built" is an article of faith originally attested by Joseph Smith in his 1 March 1842 letter to Joseph Wentworth, then editor of the *Chicago Democrat*. (See *History of the Church* 4:535-541.) That early Mormon's believed Zion would be built mainly by human hands has been amply demonstrated by historians of Mormonism (See particularly Leonard J., Dean May, and Feramorz Y. Fox, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, 2d ed. [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976].] That the "world has need of willing men" is attested by Latter-day Saints each time they sing the hymn, "Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," formerly entitled, "The World was Need of Willing Men." Although "not Latter-day Saint in origin . . . it achieved immediate popularity" among Mormons after it first appeared in a gospel-song hymnal in 1904, as a near perfect expression of core tenets of the faith of their fathers. (See Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-day Hymns: The Stories and the Messages* [Salt Lake Cit y, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1988], 252.)

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