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The outermost court : gentiles in Mormon Zion, 1831-1869

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ABSTRACT

THE OUTERMOST COURT: GENTILES IN MORMON ZION, 1831-1869

Christopher Anderson, M.A.
Department of History
Northern Illinois University, 2016
James Schmidt, Director

This thesis explores the lives of the non-Mormon minority that lived within early Mormon communities. Understanding the nature of community formation and the role of passive religious dissent on the frontier of antebellum America problematizes monolithic narratives of religious conflict. A more localized exploration of Mormon/non-Mormon interaction provides insight into how these communities changed over time and how economic issues were central to their viability. Other studies of these relationships have focused on the conflict that arose between Mormon communities and their neighbors. By framing this investigation in terms of the opportunities for collaboration, I argue that these communities were more stable when they were economically integrated. This conclusion is evidenced by drawing from letters, journals, and newspaper reports from non-Mormon residents as well as the public statements and sermons of Mormon leaders.

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THE OUTERMOST COURT: GENTILES IN MORMON ZION, 1831-1869

BY

CHRISTOPHER W. ANDERSON
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DEDICATION

For Laurel, who loves Mormons

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INTRODUCTION

On a clear April morning in 1840, a correspondent for the *Alexandria Gazette* paid a visit to Joseph Smith and the Mormon enclave on the Mississippi. The Latter-day Saints had fled Missouri after a series of violent encounters with the state militia. The sleepy, swampy, settlement of Commerce, Illinois, provided a port in the storm and the faithful were laboring diligently to establish the Kingdom of God on the banks of the Mississippi. The reporter described his first impression of the Mormon Prophet and the group of Saints that had gathered around him. “His bearing towards them was like one who had authority; and the deference which they paid him convinced us that his dominion was deeply seated in the empire of their consciences. To our minds, profound knowledge of human nature had evidently taught him that, of all principles, the most omnipotent is the religious principle; and to govern men of certain classes, it is necessary to control their religious sentiments.”¹

For the Latter-day Saints, religious sentiments certainly seemed to be central to their behavior. It influenced their economic organization, their social behaviors, and their political activities. However, the story of Mormonism in America is more than just the story of an indigenous religious community and its internal development. The complexity of the Mormon experience is located at the intersection of community development, identity formation, and the construction of empire. The Mormons never lived in isolation and they had a knack for founding

¹ *Alexandria Gazette* (Washington, DC), reprinted in the *Quincy Whig* (Quincy, Illinois), 17 October 1840, William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 114-115.

the City of God and their settlements in Missouri, Illinois, and Utah at the crossroads of the continent. Independence was an international trade destination, Nauvoo was on the Great River, and Salt Lake City was in the inter-mountain region between the wild plains and the gold fields of California. Due to these central locations, there were always non-Mormons within Mormon communities. Who were these men and women who chose to live with the “peculiar people” (as Mormon President Joseph Young styled them in 1855)? How did they fare? If the newspaper reporter was correct and Smith had tapped into religion as the most omnipotent principle, what happened to the members of his community that did not acknowledge his religious authority?²

Between 1831 and 1869, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) established three separate communities with the expressed purpose of gathering in the Saints and preparing for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The social experiments in and around Independence, Missouri; Nauvoo, Illinois; and Salt Lake City, Utah, were tried by persecutions, violent confrontations, and even evictions. While the Saints tried to build paradise on Earth, the rapidly expanding American Republic also sought to extend its influence into the frontier. Competing visions of empire and community played out in these locations, and by investigating this process, we can appreciate the nature of the antebellum United States more fully. Economic opportunity, more than any other factor, dictated the terms of Mormon/non-Mormon interaction.

Historians have wrestled with the causes of Mormon/non-Mormon conflict for generations. Initially, these histories were highly partisan exercises in accusation and justification. Even into the 1950s and 60s, the LDS maintained a reputation for inaccessibility and their expansive archives were closely guarded. Since the development of the New Mormon History, both Mormon and non-Mormon historians have followed professional standards more

² Joseph Young, “Remarks on Behalf of the Indians,” [13 July, 1855], *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9: 230, online, jod.mrm.org/9.

closely, avoided overtly polemical scholarship, and actively pursued judgment-neutral explanations for controversial events.³

Several recent monographs have addressed the issue of Mormon/non-Mormon conflict and present compelling arguments for the root causes. J. Spencer Fluhman's 2012 monograph, *"A Peculiar People": Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America*, is a socio-intellectual history that analyzes the development of anti-Mormon rhetoric and argues that nineteenth-century Mormonism forced the United States to engage in a process of self-determination and assess how tolerant a nominally disestablished society was compelled to be. In deciding that Mormonism was outside the bounds of acceptable American religiosity, the United States established where those boundaries lay. Fluhman's work is essential for understanding the religious context of nineteenth-century Mormonism. It reminds the reader of the diversity of religious expression and the wave of enthusiasm that accompanied the Second Great Awakening between the 1790s and 1850s. The consequences of anti-Mormon behavior and its importance for defining American religious life answer important questions about the development of American religiosity and the relationship between church and state. Fluhman's research focuses on popular pamphlets and the national discourse. This methodological approach provides interesting insight into the broad American reaction and the role of policy makers in elite eastern cities. By giving center stage to the vocal anti-Mormons, Fluhman accurately describes the challenges they raised and the influence they had. It may, however, obscure the experiences of local non-Mormons who lived with the Mormons and practiced these tensions

³ Michael Quinn, *The New Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), viii.

every day. The prejudices of these vocal critiques are interesting and important, but they only present one side of the story.⁴

Another recent text that explores the issue of Mormon/non-Mormon interaction is W. Paul Reeve's 2015 work, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness*. Reeve argues that non-Mormon Americans saw the Mormons as a degraded form of whiteness based on their perceived relationship to Native Americans, abolitionist tendencies, overwhelming and ethnically diverse migration from overseas, and the development of polygamous practices. Reeve explores a long trajectory of Mormon history but centers his narrative on popular perceptions and prejudices around the time of the Reed Smoot hearings (1904-1907) when the U.S. Congress was deciding whether or not to accept a Mormon candidate to the Senate. This approach provides fascinating insight into questions about American racial attitudes and the imposition of identity. However, it also tends to universalize certain attitudes and make assumptions about the sensibilities of those frontiersmen who actually engaged in direct anti-Mormon behavior. Race certainly played a role in how those communities interacted, especially in Missouri. However, any Mormon struggle for whiteness was secondary to the factors that made them "other" in the first place. Reeve's work is helpful for understanding some of the consequences of the story that this work tells.⁵

A final recent work that addresses the nature of Mormon/non-Mormon conflict is Sarah Barringer Gordon's 2002 monograph, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America*. Gordon explores the period between 1852 and 1890

⁴ J. Spencer Fluhman, *"A Peculiar People": Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁵ W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

when a national debate raged over Mormon polygamy. She examines the controversy and argues that the debate popularized the notion that the U.S. Constitution could function as a moral document in addition to a legalistic one. Polygamists were committed to a strict interpretation of religious liberty, whereas anti-polygamists insisted that the Constitution could not be used to protect abhorrent immorality. Gordon's work demonstrates the centrality of polygamy in the national debate over Mormonism in the nineteenth century. It remains the enduring stereotype of Mormonism 125 years after it was rescinded.⁶

As valid and useful as these texts are for understanding the general animosity towards Mormons in the nineteenth century, they can be supplemented by more contextualized analysis to help us understand the nature of Mormon/non-Mormon relations in the spaces in which they developed. Admittedly, Mormonism was a national and even international phenomenon from its very beginning. Missionary efforts began in Canada and Great Britain very early. However, Mormonism has also been a spatially determined phenomenon. Tremendous efforts were put into the development of specific sites, and even the erection of specific edifices was communicated through divine revelations. By emphasizing the experiences of the non-Mormon members of Mormon communities, historians can appreciate the evolving dynamic of Mormon/non-Mormon contact from the moment of inception. Similarly, by avoiding the New York newspapers and Washington politicians as much as possible and searching out the frontier merchants and river doctors, we can understand the nature of Mormon community and trace how it evolved from a radical religious sect to a valid element of American settlement in the West. Even more than the rabid "neighbors" in the vicinity who violently rose up against a menace they might not have fully understood, this thesis reconstructs the lives of the residents who lived, worked, and played

⁶ Sally Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

alongside Mormons in Independence, Nauvoo, and Salt Lake City. By starting with the immediate context and examining these three communities, we can see that the way Mormons treated their non-Mormon minority changed over time. Furthermore, the letters, journals, and autobiographies of these non-Mormon residents and their Mormon hosts reveal that the success of a given community was largely dependent on the degree of economic integration between the two subcultures.

Where Mormons and non-Mormons cooperated and formed mutually profitable relationships with strong economic integration, they were more likely to maintain a peaceful cohabitation. When they tended otherwise, things quickly became contentious. Emile Durkheim observed this phenomenon when he wrote, “Interests never unite men but for a few moments, contracts are mere truces in a continuing antagonism. Nothing is less constant than interest. Today it unites me to you; tomorrow, it will make me your enemy.” Durkheim was writing about individual self-interest, but the same holds true for communities in contest. The Mormons and their non-Mormon cohabitants established mutually beneficial relations based on economic self-interest, but only for as long as those arrangements remained equitable. Other aspects of social exchange were determined by the security or insecurity of commerce. The story of early Mormonism and American western expansion is the precarious negotiation of economic stability and the derivative religious, social, and political communities.⁷

The Mormons ultimately established a vast network of cities across the American West. The three explored here were chosen specifically for their centrality to the Mormon narrative. Independence, Missouri, was identified as the location of Zion and the “central stake” upon

⁷ Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society* (New York, 1964; translation of *De la division du travail social: etudes sur l'organisation des societees superieures* [Paris, 1893]), 203f, 114, 211, quoted in David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 40.

which the Kingdom of God would be built. While there was an earlier attempt at community development in Kirtland, Ohio, starting this analysis with Independence allows us to examine the role of “Gentiles” (non-Mormons) within intentional Mormon communities. The mission at Kirtland grew up around the congregation of Campbellite minister and early Mormon convert Sidney Rigdon. Independence, on the other hand, was conceived as a community project in a divinely inspired location. After the Mormons were expelled from Missouri, they relocated to Nauvoo, Illinois. This community was also subject to divine revelation and directions included such mundane civic affairs as the construction of a hospitality center and a temple. Finally, the relocation to Salt Lake City and the continuing residence of the Latter-day Saints completes the trilogy of early Mormon community projects. By looking at the role of the non-Mormon minority in these three communities, historians can appreciate how the Mormon community changed over time and see how central economic issues were to their viability.⁸

Chapter One examines Independence, Missouri, between 1831-1833 and illustrates that the Mormons’ millennial expectations prevented them from integrating with the non-Mormon community. Independence had been formed four years earlier as a trade destination on the American end of the Santa Fe Trail. Its inhabitants had established a tenuous and diverse society based on economic investment and mutual accountability. The Mormons, who expected that Jesus would return to Earth in those “latter-days,” were not supposed to be interested in material goods. They tended to focus on agricultural pursuits and community development activities like a cooperative store and a newspaper. Their disinterest in civic and economic development left them isolated from their neighbors and triggered mischief and misunderstandings. The period between 1833 and 1838 was defined by increased isolation and conflict. The Mormons were

⁸ Eugene P. Moehring, *Urbanism and Empire in the Far West, 1840-1890* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004).

relocated to Caldwell County in northwest Missouri in a reservation-style attempt to contain their expansion. This ultimately failed, resulting in the Missouri-Mormon War. Once they had been expelled from Independence and Jackson County, their relationships with Missourians were largely hopeless. Conflict bred conflict, military self-defense trumped economic self-interest, and eventually the Saints were ejected from the entire state.

Chapter Two explores Nauvoo, Illinois, between 1838-1844. The Mormons crossed into Illinois and found a refuge along the Mississippi. They quickly built up a city that would rival Chicago in population during its heyday. Nauvoo had the highest degree of economic integration between the Mormons and the non-Mormon minority of these three primary settlements. This might beg the question, if economic integration provides a stable community despite religious dissention, why were they also forced from Illinois? The conflict began within the Mormon community in Nauvoo in 1844 when Joseph Smith shut down the press of rivals within the LDS who were contesting the emerging practice of polygamy. Joseph Smith was then called out of the city and killed in Carthage, Illinois, by county men who did not live within the Mormon community. The non-Mormons left in Nauvoo lamented the treatment of the Mormons, many converted, and one specifically noted the economic losses that their removal inflicted on him. Even the most stable communities are not immune to the prejudices and paranoia of a powerful external enemy. After an angry mob shot Joseph Smith in 1844, Brigham Young attained power and negotiated for two years of peace to arrange the Exodus.

Chapter Three examines the settlement of Salt Lake City, Utah, between 1847 and 1869. When the Mormons chose Utah and set out for their new home, it was still part of the tenuously held northern territories of Mexico. The Mexican Cession at the end of Mexican-American War thwarted their attempted out-migration and their settlement required them to continue to

negotiate their place within the American Republic. In Utah, they developed a blended approach of co-dependant economic integration. They unintentionally ceded the retail and manufacturing sectors to non-Mormon merchants who established profitable emporiums in downtown Salt Lake City. They came to depend on one another for supplies and for customers. As the Mormons made additional concessions in their social and political lives (including the termination of polygamy), they became more and more conventionally American, but the early relationships provided the groundwork for their mutual establishment and stability.

The influence of economic opportunity on American religious life has significant implications for the way we understand the extension of empire. Even the Latter-day Saints, whose tumultuous history and contributions to the development of the American West have been recounted within the rhetoric of religion, had profound economic triggers for the trials they experienced. Mormon/non-Mormon conflict has been explained as religiously, racially, and politically motivated. However, the faith and its unorthodoxies have always occupied the center stage. There are some good reasons for that. In many ways, the faith of the adherents inspired their behaviors. Those behaviors were not enacted in isolation and the non-Mormon minority was also inspired to form some relationship to Mormonism. Regardless of the degree to which one subscribed to Mormonism, or the disdain one might have felt towards the Mormons, all American frontiersmen wanted to get paid. They might have made holy sacrifices to the church in order to receive certain endowments or inheritances, or they might have sought to exploit a community they thought was naïve, but the story of Mormonism during the nineteenth-century is a lesson in the consequences of economic isolation or inclusivity. They tried both models over time and when they were more economically inclusive, their communities were more stable. This

stability, or lack thereof, can be evidenced through the complex religious, social, political, and economic relationships that they formed with their non-Mormon neighbors.

CHAPTER ONE

MERCHANTS AND MILLENNIALS: BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION IN FRONTIER INDEPENDENCE, 1831-1833

On Wednesday, July 20th, 1831, the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith stood in the midst of some two dozen church leaders who had eagerly followed him to the very edge of the American frontier and declared a revelation from God: “Behold the place which is now called Independence is the centre place.” Independence, Missouri, was the hub of the “land of promise,” the “everlasting inheritance,” for the establishment of Zion and the gathering of the Latter-day Saints. The revelation also contained specific directions about who should lead the settlement project and three separate exhortations about the importance and method of acquiring land. The dedication of the temple square occurred two weeks later on August 3rd when Joseph Smith laid the cornerstone in the northeast corner of a plot “not far from the court-house” in the center of the city. Meanwhile, the daily chaos of commerce swirled around the Saints in a dusty, golden cyclone. Mexican, American, and Indian traders conducted their affairs in the bustling eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail overland route. Whether or not they initially took notice of the diminutive congregation, their cohabitation would transform them all.¹

The Mormon experience in Missouri has been a fiercely debated issue for generations. For millions of the Mormon faithful, it was the beginning of their great Exodus narrative, the site

¹ Joseph Smith, *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Vol. 2: July 1831- January 1833*, Dean C. Jessee et al., eds. (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2013), 8 & 11; Joseph Smith, *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Vol. 2: Assigned Histories 1831-1847*, Dean C. Jessee et al., eds. (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2012), 45.

of deadly and depraved persecutions, and a sacred place of millennial yearning (the expectation of Jesus Christ's return and the establishment of paradise on Earth). For Missourians, it has been at various times a story of democracy and survival, the struggle of free Americans against an authoritarian regime that threatened their livelihoods. Lately, it has also been an embarrassing memory of the consequences of prejudice, intolerance, and violence. Between 1833 and 1838 the conflict boiled over in different areas of western Missouri. The Mormons were expelled from Independence in 1833, Joseph Smith led the failed Zion's Camp rescue mission in 1834, and there were a few years of uneasy peace while the Saints gathered in the area around Far West, Missouri, before the calamitous Mormon War of 1838 which precipitated Gov. Boggs's infamous Extermination Order. This conflict has dominated the historical narrative of the Mormon experience in the nineteenth century.²

The importance of the narrative is crystal clear, as evidenced by the meaning and significance ascribed to it by both parties. However, when one begins with a mind to explain a tragedy, one necessarily finds tragic roots. Instead, it is curious to imagine what those first two years were like without assuming the inevitability of conflict. Who were the men and women who lived in Independence between 1831 and 1833? What was the tenor of their lives and what were the initial conditions of social order that permitted two years of peace? Why did these two communities fail to integrate so spectacularly? Admittedly, two years is a brief window, but through this window we can see the process of community formation more clearly. By appreciating the religious, social, political, and economic interactions of Mormons and non-

² Brandon G. Kinney, *The Mormon War: Zion and the Missouri Extermination Order of 1838* (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2011); Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1987); Roger D. Launius, *Zion's Camp: Expedition to Missouri, 1834* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1984); for the traditional Mormon narrative, see B.H. Roberts, *The Missouri Persecutions* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1900); for a typical Missourian narrative, see W.L. Webb, *The Centennial History of Independence, MO* (W.L. Webb, 1927).

Mormons (occasionally called “Gentiles” by Mormon sources and scholars), it becomes clear that the Mormon millennial ideal of self-sufficiency established an essential barrier to cooperation. In their effort to establish an autonomous and theocratic Zion, they excluded their neighbors, who reciprocated, and jeopardized everyone’s security. Millennialism affected every aspect of Mormon community organization, including their religious, social, political, and economic priorities. In short, this cultural comparison of pre-conflict Independence argues that Mormons were not especially well integrated with the non-Mormon community in any of these categories because of the pervasive nature of Mormon millennialism.

This division eventually spurred the conflict of 1833-1838, and that much is not in dispute. However, historians have been drawn too quickly into the drama of confrontation, and the failure of community is assumed as given rather than analyzed and explained. Several theories have been offered, such as religious fanaticism, culture clashes, a dispute over slavery, and a perception of arrogance. However, these explanations are treated as preface to the hostilities. After hostilities commenced, hostility itself was a compelling cause and both groups eventually cried “self-defense.”³

In the case of Missouri, one of the most compelling arguments for the Mormon attitude towards settlement is described in Marvin S. Hill’s 1989 monograph, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism*. Hill argues that the Mormons sought to establish a religiously homogeneous society in the style of their Puritan ancestors. While they were not necessarily outwardly aggressive, they insisted on internal cohesion and self-reliance. The Mormons’ millennial fervor, like the Puritans’, inspired them to speak and write rather confidently about the pending dispossession of the communities they engaged. This core

³ Parley Pratt, *History of the Late Persecutions* (Detroit: Dawson & Bates, 1839); Lilliburn Boggs, “Missouri Executive Order 44,” [27 Oct 1838], online, www.sos.mo.gov.

religious ideology and social goal motivated the economic and political insularity that directly challenged the non-Mormon citizens of Independence. Hill's point is well taken, but he does not explain the shifting and evolving policies of inclusion that emerged in Illinois and Utah. After their experience in Missouri, the Mormons tempered their expectations and permitted a surprising degree of religious pluralism. The foundational lesson they learned seemed to be to favor the assurance of security rather than the promise of revelation.⁴

William Patrick O'Brien recently produced an essential monograph about the economic priorities and cultural concerns of non-Mormon Independence. *Merchants of Independence* examines the commerce of the frontier town in the context of international trade. As the major American entrepôt of the Santa Fe Trail, Independence was a polyglot and mercantile community. As it predated Kansas City by some 25 years, Independence was the major trade center on the western frontier and funneled the wealth and resources of Spanish Mexico and Indian country into the young republic. O'Brien argues that Independence flourished as a trade destination in spite of the religious, racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of its residents because they were all committed to the development of the trade. It was only after the Mexican-American War tipped the balance of power in the region that there was no longer a need for cooperation and the American traders truly dominated frontier commerce. His scholarship provides key insight into the breakdown between Mormon and non-Mormon Independence because this materialistic goal did not motivate the Mormons. Their aspirations were religious, or theocratic,

⁴ Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

and not especially economic. They were concerned with preparing for the millennial return of Jesus Christ and their labor was directed toward that end.⁵

When these texts are read together, they offer the most persuasive explanation of the Mormon experience in Missouri. By analyzing the journals of missionaries and merchants, letters to concerned parties in the East, and newspaper reports from around the region, it becomes clear that divergent economic priorities prevented the Mormons from integrating with Independence's pre-existent citizens. This failure manifested itself in various religious, social, political, and economic inconsistencies and the perceived threat to the established status quo triggered the prolonged consequences that have been so thoroughly covered elsewhere. However, this study proposes to explore the possibilities that existed in the first couple years of Mormon settlement in Independence and the limitations that confounded those ambitions.

Religion

The religious composition of frontier Independence is a matter of some confusion. Mormon scholars have depicted the non-Mormon residents as amoral and uncultured heathens, which fits into characterizations of the Missourians as an unruly mob. Early Mormon historian B.H. Roberts wrote that although the society was diverse, it shared a common instability, lawlessness, and profanity. Roberts's prejudices notwithstanding, there does seem to have been some fluidity in religious identity. William O'Brien reports that given the high degree of religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity found among Independence's merchants, the one feature that they shared was their willingness to adopt the identity that enabled them to maintain their industry and maximize their profits. At one point, the government of Mexico required American businessmen to become Catholics in order to trade in Mexico. The nominally Protestant

⁵ William Patrick O'Brien, *Merchants of Independence: International Trade on the Santa Fe Trail 1827-1860* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2014).

Americans apparently had few qualms about the requirement and converted without appeal. To the Mormons, who were by all accounts enthusiastic, this fluidity would have appeared wanton. However, when it is viewed in the context of a mercantile-oriented society, it is a necessary accommodation for a prosperous community.⁶

There is some evidence concerning the religious composition of the community during the period of Mormon settlement that indicates that it was certainly diverse. Alexander Majors, a merchant in the American West and friend of Bill Cody, recorded his experience during the Mormon crisis in Missouri in his memoirs. The publication of church literature in Independence was “very distasteful to the members and leaders of other religious denominations, the community being composed of Methodists, Baptists of two different orders, Presbyterians of two different orders, and Catholics, and a denomination calling themselves Christians.” These ministers found the Mormon claims of divine revelation and angelic visitations blasphemous. “Of course the Mormon elders denounced the elders and preachers of the other denominations above mentioned, and said they were the blind leading the blind, and that they would all go into the ditch together.” The specifics of this exchange are unavailable, though the attitude seems to fit other contemporary reports of Mormon exchanges with Gentiles. “They say they are commanded by God to preach to this generation, and say to them that all who do not embrace their faith and mode of worship...will be destroyed by the sword, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, &c.” Although these sentiments were not sanctioned by the Mormon leadership, to which we will return, the rank-and-file were not always on the same page with the Prophet.⁷

⁶ Roberts, *The Missouri Persecutions*, 50; O’Brien, *Merchants of Independence*, 116-117.

⁷ Alexander Majors, *Seventy Years on the Frontier* (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1965), 44; *Independent Messenger* (Boston), [7 June 1832], *Among the Mormons*, William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 72; Joseph Smith, *Joseph Smith Papers: Documents*, Vol. 2, 266.

However, the most concerning religious issue for both Mormons and Missourians concerned the use of the term “inheritance.” The Mormons were gathering to Missouri in order to participate in the establishment of Zion and build up the Kingdom of God. However, this left the Missourians with the impression that they were to be dispossessed and removed from their homes and businesses. In a divine revelation made to Joseph Smith in 1831, God provided guidelines for the economic establishment of the community and instructed the Mormons to “put [money] into the hands of the Bishop to purchase lands for an inheritance for the children of God... the Lord willeth that the deciples [sic] & the children of men should open their hearts even to purchase this whole region of the country as soon as time will permit.” The faithful interpreted this statement to mean that the land was theirs by divine right and it was only a matter of time until they possessed it all. Later, a Mormon bishop from Utah explained that this was a misunderstanding. God had given the land to the Gentiles through Columbus, the Pilgrims, and the Founding Fathers. Gentiles were, however, welcome to assist the Latter-day Saints in the establishment of Zion. Until then, “the Saints were under sacred obligations to show good will to the people around them, to deal fairly with all men, and honestly purchase every inch of ground necessary for the rearing of the New Jerusalem.” Even after the Mormons experienced the tragic consequences of the “misunderstanding,” Bishop Whitney explicitly reasserted that they were under sacred obligations to purchase all of Independence and the area around it. While the merchant class of Independence may have been concerned about the Mormons seizing it by force or settlement, their concern was ultimately the ambition of total domination in itself. After building their life on property and profit, a religious commandment from a sect that the merchants did not fully understand threatened to take that all away from them. Compound that with an economic organization that could direct the resources of thousands of migrants against a

partnership or small firm and the merchants realized that unless they banded together in some way, their enterprises would fall one by one.⁸

Furthermore, that disintegration was already beginning to happen. In 1833, Joseph Smith published a plat of Zion that laid out the plans for the proposed city. This proposal occupied the same space that had already been developed over the past six years and no explanation was given about how the current town or its inhabitants were going to be integrated into the new one. From the first, and by divine command, Mormon business purchased lots in the city center. They obtained spaces for the general store, the printing press, the temple, homes, and a gun and blacksmith shop. In addition to the land in town, the Mormons continued to purchase property in the countryside that fed the town. In just the first two years of Mormon settlement, somewhere between 1,200 and 1,500 Saints had acquired land in the vicinity of Independence. The relationship between this religious issue of divinely mandated land acquisition and the townsfolk's economic concerns is apparent. As the Mormons fulfilled their religious obligations, they encroached further and further on the non-Mormon residents' faith in commercial prosperity.⁹

The religious leadership of frontier Independence also felt threatened by the Mormon migrants. One Baptist clergyman, B. Pixley, wrote a critical letter to a Universalist newspaper in the East that disparaged the Mormons for their way of life, religious beliefs, biblical critiques, and economic system. He accused them of torturing the Bible and manipulating it to their ends. He also criticized their sacramental system. He asserts that the Mormons believed that western

⁸ Joseph Smith, *Joseph Smith Papers: Documents*, Vol. 2, 19-20; Orson F. Whitney, "The 'Mormons' in Jackson County," in W.Z. Hickman, *History of Jackson County, Missouri* (Topeka, KS: Historical Publishing Company, 1920), 191.

⁹ O'Brien, 94, 96-97.

Missouri was the home of the biblical Mount Zion. “This alone, it should seem, would be a sufficient index to the *head* or the *heart* of the preacher, and the belief of it a sufficient index to the *reading* and *understanding* of the hearers.” Pixley was writing for a religious audience about a religious subject and his argument essentially rested on a general agreement that the Mormons were ludicrous. Their beliefs could be dismissed out of hand because they were anathema to mainstream Christianity. Pixley’s intolerance was widely reprinted from Missouri to New York.¹⁰

Religion presented a clear barrier to integration. Although there were concerns with Mormon theology and revelation, as exhibited by Pixley’s rant, the primary disconnect was seated in the economic consequences of their divergent religious priorities. The merchants were not concerned about the Second Coming, at least not concerned enough to prevent them from adopting a relatively casual relationship with their religious affiliation. The merchants subsumed religion to commerce and in so doing made profit a sacred obligation. The Mormons, on the other hand, believed the Rapture was imminent and felt that it was their sacred obligation to build up the Kingdom of God in Independence. This incongruity prohibited religious integration and there are no significant reports of conversion among the residents of Jackson County. The Mormon community in Missouri grew by migration, not by persuasion. The continuous growth of the Mormon community triggered the second barrier to integration, a blossoming population with a radically different social structure than the pre-existent city.

Society

There were several impenetrable barriers to social integration between the Saints and the Gentiles in Independence. Despite Independence’s multiethnic community, this was no

¹⁰ B. Pixley, “New Jerusalem: Letter from Independence,” in *Among the Mormons*, Mulder and Mortensen, eds., 72-75.

egalitarian utopia. The entire system of mutually accountable economics was predicated on mistrust and the tense nature of race in North American society. The Anglo-Americans who settled Independence in the middle 1820s saw themselves as the outpost of civilization. The centennial history of Independence remembered them as “the Jacksonian type, hardy, brave, undaunted. With the ax in one hand and a rifle in the other, they were at once prepared to hew or slay – they did a great deal of both, slaying wild Indians and wild animals.” Although the economic development of the trails required the tolerance of Mexican and Native American traders, as well as French and Dutch trappers and pioneers, the uneasy multiethnic peace was a relationship of necessity, and the Anglo-Americans asserted authority in tentative and careful ways. Racial interaction beyond economics was unnecessary and dangerous to the fragile established order.¹¹

The initial condition that drove the Mormons to the edge of the frontier was its proximity to Indian Country. According to the Mormon mythos, the *Book of Mormon* is the recovered text of an ancient Native American race whose forbearers had travelled to North America from the Levant in biblical times. It is an anthropological origin story with associated morality and didactics. Therefore, the conversion and “redemption” of modern Native Americans was a central component of Mormon missionary objectives. According to B.H. Roberts, “Their present fallen state arises from their departure from the ways of the Lord, and the instructions and doctrines of their ancient prophets; the very blackness of their skin is the result of God’s curse upon them for their unrighteousness; yet are they promised that they shall know their origin – the favored race from which they are descended.” Missionaries were sent to Independence to spread the story of ancient Lamanites to their descendants. Missionary and church leader Parley Pratt

¹¹ Webb, *The Centennial History of Independence, MO*, 14; O’Brien, 118.

recorded an encounter with the chief of the Delaware tribe in his autobiography. He related the story of the *Book of Mormon* and it was well received. The Delaware were very interested but were too busy with preparations for the winter and promised to hold a large council in the spring to receive the missionaries and hear about the will of God. Then a celebration commenced and the Delaware hastened to spread the good news among the nations. Unfortunately, it was not meant to be. “The excitement now reached the frontier settlements of Missouri, and stirred up the jealousy and envy of the Indian agents and sectarian missionaries to the degree that [the Mormons] were soon ordered out of Indian country as disturbers of the peace; and even threatened with the military in case of non-compliance.” Pratt’s story about their impending success is contested by other accounts. Webb wrote that the Indians, in general, were uninterested and remained unconvinced and Kinney wrote that Oliver Crowder’s mission, specifically, was a failure. Nevertheless, the fact that they were removed from Indian Territory and threatened with military force foreshadowed the violence that would come later.¹²

Twentieth-century historian Joseph Geddes observed that although the interruption of the Lamanite Mission and the challenge of “tampering with the Indians” were unfortunate, the bigger setback was the poor first impression it made on their Gentile neighbors. There were other missionaries to the Indians, but their sects were well known and trusted not to stir up dissent. Frontiersmen knew from American military history about the dangerous possibility of Indian warfare and one anti-Mormon historian made the link between Mormon millennial expectations and the noble mythos of the ancient Lamanites in order to suggest that the mission to the Indians was part of a Mormon plot to seize the city and western Missouri. Back in Ohio, word of these accusations reached Joseph Smith. After establishing the Mormon community at Independence,

¹² Roberts, 24; Parley Pratt, *Autobiography* (Chicago: Law, King & Law, 1888), 56-61; Webb, 74; Kinney, *The Mormon War*, 36.

Smith had returned to lead the congregation at Kirtland. In 1832, he wrote to the Mormon newspaper editor in Independence, W.W. Phelps, rebuking him and instructing him to quell the community's fixation with the Indians: "[Y]our ignorant & unstable Sisters, & weak members... prophe[s]y falsly which excites many to believe that you are putting up the Indians to slay the Gentiles which exposes the lives of the Saints evry where." From the very beginning, the Mormons' evangelical ambitions among the Native Americans erected a social barrier based on race relations that would ultimately strike at the "coal hopper" of American politics, slavery.¹³

The Anglo-Americans who established Independence were predominantly from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Although slaves made up a relatively small part of the population in Independence, slavery and slave-holding society were the order of the day and the de facto plan for social growth. By 1830, almost three thousand people lived in Jackson County. Some sixty-two slaveholders owned almost 200 slaves. Slaveholders only made up a little over two percent of the population and the largest slave holder owned twenty-five. Most Jackson County residents who owned slaves held only two or three. Although the numbers were small at the outset, one need only remember the Border Ruffians and the violent Bleeding Kansas conflict over slavery that took place a few years later to appreciate how central slavery was to many Missourians' social ambitions.¹⁴

The Mormons, who were predominantly New England Yankees and converts from Ohio and the Upper Midwest, inadvertently stumbled into the hornet's nest of antebellum abolitionism. W.W. Phelps wrote and published an article in July of 1833 in the LDS newspaper,

¹³ Whitney, "The 'Mormons' in Jackson County," in Hickman, *History of Jackson County, Missouri*, 192; Joseph A. Geddes, *The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase): An Unfinished Experiment in Economic Organization* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1924), 104; *History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties* (St. Louis: National Historic Company, 1886), 107; Joseph Smith, *Joseph Smith Papers: Documents*, Vol. 2, 266.

¹⁴ O'Brien, 118.

The Evening and the Morning Star. “Free People of Color” was written as a warning to free black Mormons in other areas to make them aware of Missouri’s laws that prevented the settlement of free blacks in the state. As Mormons continued to migrate to Zion-at-Independence, Phelps thought it prudent to educate them on the risks. The article reports Missouri law verbatim and follows it up with Missouri’s “good” and “just” laws on religious toleration. There is no discernable editorializing on slavery in general, but the backlash was immediate and a committee was formed among the non-Mormons to respond to the issue. They drafted the “Secret Constitution” or “Mob Manifesto” which specifically referenced, though mischaracterized, the Phelps article. “In a late number of the *Star*, published in Independence by the leaders of the sect, there is an article inviting free negroes and mulattoes from other states to become Mormons, and remove and settle among us.” The resolution goes on to suggest that such an invitation would inevitably provoke the slave population to rebellion and violence. On July 16th, Phelps hastened to print an extra broadsheet retracting the article, which was promptly ignored, and Jackson County residents voted to expel the Mormons from the county at a meeting on the 20th, the declaration of which also specifically mentioned *The Morning and the Evening Star* and called for its immediate closure.¹⁵

The sensitive issue of race made enemies out of strangers. The Mormons, with their millennial motivations and Yankee dispositions, may have been inclusive towards Native Americans and perhaps abolitionist in their inclinations. There was only one black Mormon in the Kirtland, Ohio, congregation and a later estimate by Mormon leader Parley Pratt suggests

¹⁵ W.W. Phelps, “Free People of Color,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, Vol. 2, No. 14, (July 1833), Mormon Publications, 18th and 19th Century, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, online; W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 116-117; Kinney, *The Mormon War*, 37; The Secret Constitution, reprinted in Geddes, *The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)*, 121-122; “Minutes of the Jackson Citizens’ Proceedings,” reprinted in Geddes, *The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)*, 122-125.

that there were less than a dozen total. Phelps's target audience was probably inspired by the waves of migrants that were expected to descend on Zion in the celestial millennium. Saints had been steadily gathering in western Missouri, and the expectation was that the society would continue to blossom as promised and revealed through Joseph Smith. The millennial expectations of the early Mormons in Missouri triggered barriers to integration that prevented cooperation between Mormons and non-Mormon denizens. Mormon attitudes toward Native Americans and enslaved Africans were perceived as threatening to the established economic order and since that order was foundational for the city's elite merchants, it would eventually pit these two groups against one another. The anticipation of the coming of Christ and the establishment of a heavenly city on a hill are older than the nation itself, but the social isolation of the Mormon community permitted non-Mormon Independence to continue to view their religious beliefs as foreign and dangerous.¹⁶

Politics

Mormons and other Missourians functioned with radically different political ideologies and under radically different systems. Although Mormons clearly saw themselves as citizens of the United States and appealed to governors, presidents, and the courts to seek redress for grievances, that identity was secondary to their religious identity and the authority of their God. In *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, D. Michael Quinn described Mormon civil theology and the implications that it had for the development of Mormon political organization. Quinn observed that Mormonism emerged in western Missouri during Andrew Jackson's first term as president of the United States. The dominant national political discourse, especially in that region, was characterized by populism and democracy. Contrary to that impulse, Joseph

¹⁶ Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 117.

Smith and early Mormon writers employed a predominantly monarchical rhetoric that praised the ideal of the enlightened prophet-kings and God above all. A theocratic monarchy was radically different and appeared incompatible with populist democracy. With this polarization, the Mormons appeared well outside of what was viewed as traditionally “American.” After all, opposition to tyranny and monarchy dominated the national historical narrative and although the Mormons saw a difference between tyranny and monarchy, other frontier Americans seldom made that same distinction.¹⁷

Furthermore, Joseph Smith received a revelation that explicitly established the pre-eminence of ecclesiastical edicts over secular politics. On August 6, 1833, Smith shared that God had instructed him that the people of God were subject to the commands of God and that when the law of the land conformed to those commands, they should be upheld, but when they did not conform, they should be neglected. This argument for the supremacy of the church over the state set the Mormons apart from other religious groups in the United States. Although many would argue that their denomination had some authority in ecclesiastical or private affairs, they stopped short of asserting any right to nullify American laws. Although this revelation was made only weeks after the Mormons were expelled from Jackson County, its roots lay in the scriptural appeals to God’s authority and a long Christian tradition that stretched back to the papal states. Furthermore, the establishment of a legal argument that allowed Mormons to reject county decrees that the church deemed unjust was a convenient morale booster during a crisis.¹⁸

The non-Mormon citizens of Independence, on the other hand, were stereotypically American in their political dispositions. The name of the town itself might have been a

¹⁷ D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1994), 79.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 81; Joseph Smith, *Joseph Smith Papers: Documents*, Vol. 3, 224.

celebration of the Declaration of Independence. Otherwise, it was a celebration of Andrew Jackson's famously independent character. Independence is still the county seat of Jackson County, although this is now largely ceremonial and most county business is conducted in Kansas City. Regardless, according to local historians, both the town and the county were named in honor of the independent spirit of all Americans and the man who embodied those ideals, President Jackson. The political climate of non-Mormon Independence was not compatible with Mormon ecclesiastical structure or civil theology.¹⁹

Another political issue that inhibited the integration of the Mormon and Missourian communities was the threat perceived on the part of the Missourians from the Mormons' steadily increasing numbers. On August 2, 1833, the *Western Monitor* followed its report of the Mormons expulsion from Jackson County with an explanation from the "old settlers": "It requires no gift of prophesy to tell, the day is not far distant, when the civil government of the county will be in [Mormon] hands. When the Sheriff, the Justices, and the county Judges will be Mormons... What would be the fate of our lives and property in the hands of jurors and witnesses who [are Mormon] may be better imagined than described." Clearly the merchants of Independence had noticed the growing population of Mormons in Jackson County and assumed that number would soon reach the capacity for seizing control of local politics.²⁰

The final grievance listed in the Secret Constitution referred to the potential loss of political power as a justification for removing the Mormons. "They declare openly that God has given them this county of land, and that sooner or later they must and will have possession of our

¹⁹ David W. Eaton, *How Missouri Counties, Towns, and Streams Were Named* (Columbia, MO: The State Historical Society of Missouri, 1916), 177; Webb, 13.

²⁰ LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri*, 17; *Western Monitor*, 2 August 1833, quoted in Kinney, *The Mormon War*, 35-36.

lands for an inheritance... we believe it a duty we owe to ourselves, our wives, and children to the cause of public morals, to remove them from among us, as we are not prepared to give up our pleasant places and goodly possessions to them.” O’Brien observed that in 1830, the American population of the entire Jackson County was 2,822 and that by 1833 between 1,200 and 1,500 Mormons had moved into the area. At that rate, another couple years might have been sufficient to seize the reins of government from the original settlers who had established the government. Joseph Geddes noted that as transplanted southerners, the residents of Independence would have been familiar with the struggle for political control, having fought hard to dominate the federal government. They were aware of the advantages and unwilling to accept the changing tide that these new migrants brought.²¹

Separate political ideologies and systems of governance, as well as a deep-seated suspicion about the consequences of shifting demographics, constituted a political barrier to integration. Political integration would have necessitated a negotiation of these issues and neither side was capable of engaging the other without grasping for control. The Mormons assumed control would come through divine intervention and the End of Days, whereas the Missourians feared that they would lose control through a democratic *coupe-d’état*. Both found their greatest hopes and darkest fears within the system that they employed and could not see any common ground for political cooperation.

Economics

From its inception, Independence was designed to capitalize on its geographic endowments and access to transportation networks. The town was established in 1827, only four

²¹ “The Secret Constitution,” reprinted in Geddes, *The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)*, 111, 122; O’Brien, *Merchants of Independence*, 97 and 118; T. Edgar Lyon, “Independence, Missouri, and the Mormons, 1827-1833,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Autumn 1972), 17.

years before the Mormons began to arrive. Situated at the confluence of the Little Blue, Big Blue, and Missouri Rivers, it provided traders a useful inland port to transfer goods brought overland from Mexico to the waterways that flowed to St. Louis, New Orleans, and the harbors of the Atlantic. To borrow a phrase from a later century, the business of frontier Independence was business, and the merchants who bought, sold, and financed as well as the tradesmen who laded and transported their vessels were dedicated to the preservation of that business. Furthermore, the town benefitted from its location by outfitting Great Plains and Rocky Mountain fur traders. The access to clean drinking water and transportation as well as its location on the far edge of the frontier made Independence the natural site for shipping and outfitting. These factor endowments contributed to the investment of political authority in the town and its selection as county seat, which brought the business of government and its attendant bureaucrats and lawyers.²²

The most famous account of the economic life of Independence and the Santa Fe Trail trade was captured in Josiah Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*. Gregg grew up on the Missouri frontier as the son of a farmer. Although opportunities were limited, he had a predilection for learning and rapaciously absorbed what he encountered. When 18 years old, Gregg contracted tuberculosis and his doctor prescribed a trip to the drier, warmer climate of Santa Fe. This experience set the course of his life and he became heavily invested in the Santa Fe trade. He set out from Independence in May of 1831. Over the next nine years, he led four wagon trains across the prairie. Although he was out of town during the period of initial Mormon settlement and returned just after their expulsion in 1833, his partners and friends, as well as his home and wealth remained tied up in that place. Therefore, his account is crucial for understanding the

²² O'Brien, 37-38.

economic conditions of Gentile Independence and the concerns that they had with their Mormon neighbors.²³

Independence earned the nickname “Queen City of the Trails” during this period. Its access to the Missouri River allowed traders to bypass over 100 miles of treacherous and often impassible roads that lay between it and the previous entrepôt of Franklin, Missouri. Traders bound for Santa Fe, trappers set for the Rockies, and settlers headed for Oregon all treated Independence as their final site of “outfit and departure,” where they built health or wealth and found “amusement” before crossing the Great Plains. Indian Country loomed only twelve miles to the west.²⁴

The trails were open seasonally and subject to the climate and conditions. In early May, as the caravans and pioneers began to gather, the town stirred to life in a flurry of commerce and the coffers of the merchants, outfitters, and teamsters who maintained the city year-round began to fill. Gregg’s own caravan in 1831 constituted roughly \$200,000 of invested capital (\$5.65 million dollars in 2014). This cost included the overhead costs of food, timber, beasts of burden, wagons, firearms, drivers, escorts and guides as well as the cargo which was dominated by manufactured cloth but included other goods like mirrors, buttons, jewelry, clothes, and luxury items.²⁵

The influence of this booming trade and the diverse characters that it attracted was a steady and tense peace. The world was a rapidly shifting marketplace of ideologies and governments that was repeatedly being interrupted by revolutions and reforms. Therefore, the

²³ Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, Vol 1, (J.B. Lippincott Company, 1962), vii-viii.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12 and 18; O’Brien, 61; Measuring Worth, measuringworth.com.

founders of Independence needed to create a culture of transparency that allowed merchants and laborers to deal with one another openly and cultivate trust. “Trade alliances, credit reporting systems, and court structures provided merchants and traders with the means to observe, assess, and to some extent, control each other’s business affairs through matrimony, reports, suits, and petitions.” In the absence of reliable international trade laws, the shrewd businessmen of Independence maintained an economic system of trust through mutual dependency to protect these heavy investments.²⁶

According to Josiah Gregg, this system was rather efficient. As the preparations were concluded and the travelers began to embark upon their journeys, Gregg reported a universal feeling of contentment and prosperity: “The miseries of preparation are over - the thousand anxieties occasioned by wearisome consultations and delays are felt no more.” The prairie resounded with the songs and jokes of the sojourners, and before they knew it, the “lovely village of Independence, with its multitude of associations, is already lost to the eye.” Although the system of multitudinous associations may have been wearisome, it certainly was effective in facilitating trade on the frontier. Traders embarked from Independence confident that they were treated professionally and fairly, with high spirits for the journey ahead. However, there soon came a group of settlers who were disinterested in conforming to these associations and that simple subversion was sufficient to prevent adequate integration.²⁷

In February of 1831, Joseph Smith still resided among the LDS community in Kirtland, Ohio, but he was already receiving revelations about the plans for the New Jerusalem that they would establish in the West. On February 5th and 9th, Smith received a series of commandments

²⁶ O’Brien, 79-81.

²⁷ Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 1:14.

that were eventually codified into the “Laws of the Church of Christ” and which included the “Laws of Consecration and Stewardship,” the blueprints for the United Order of communal economic living that the Saints tried to establish in Zion.

Behold thou shalt consecrate [sic] all thy properties that which thou hast unto me with a covenant and Deed which cannot be broken & they Shall be laid before the Bishop of my church & two of the Elders such as he shall appoint & set apart for that purpose & it shall come to pass that the Bishop of my church after that he has received the properties of my church that it cannot be taken from you he shall appoint every man a Steward over his own property or that which he hath received in as much as shall be sufficient for him self and family & the residue shall be kept to administer to him that hath not that every man may receive according as he stands in need & the residue shall be kept in my store house to administer to the poor and needy as shall be appointed by the Elders of the church & the Bishop & for the purpose of purchasing [sic] Land & building up of the New Jerusalem which is here after to be revealed.²⁸

A full two decades before Louis Blanc and almost 45 years before Karl Marx, Joseph Smith (or God) proposed to redistribute wealth from each according to his capacity to each according to his need, with a little kept over for the church’s expenses. Although this law only applied to the Saints, it centralized and internalized their economic activities. They could labor, and they were expected to, but the surplus and profit that drove most other Americans was to be directed towards the relief of the poor and the establishment of the New Jerusalem, which left little room for investment and commerce.

The implication that this was the plan for Zion-at-Independence became explicit in a revelation Smith received in Missouri on August 1st: “Now I give unto you further directions concerning this Land it is wisdom in me that my servant Martin [Harris] should be an example unto the church in laying his money before the bishop of the Church & also this is a law unto every man that cometh unto the Land to receive an inheritance and he shall do with his moneys

²⁸ Joseph Smith, *Joseph Smith Papers: Documents*, Vol. 1, 251-252.

according as the law directs.” The same revelation also reminded the Saints to purchase land in and around Independence and to establish a general store and printing press. All of the Mormons who were moving into Independence and other settlements in Jackson County were required to participate in the internal economy of the church rather than the complex and transparent system that had already been established by the merchant class of Independence.²⁹

Joseph A. Geddes’s 1924 book on the Mormon economic plan, the United Order, in Missouri provides a useful discussion of the operation, controls, and priorities of the United Order. Although the ambition of the order was “democratic” in that it sought to provide an adequate standard of living for all the Saints, it operated theocratically and was administered by the bishop (Edward Partridge at the time) anointed by God through revelation to Joseph Smith. This idiosyncrasy was untenable to the merchants of Independence, not so much because it presented a direct threat to their established wealth, but because it suggested that some members of the community could function apart from the rest of the town’s transparent and interdependent commercial life. In fact, when Josiah Gregg first mentions the Mormons, it is their economic activities that seem to frustrate him the most. “Prior to 1833, the Mormons... had made considerable purchases of lots and tracts of land both in the town of Independence and in the adjacent country. A general depot, profanely styled the ‘Lord’s Store,’ was established, from which the faithful were supplied with merchandise at moderate prices; while those who possessed any surplus of property were expected to deposit it in the same, for the benefit of the mass.” Mormon economic life in Missouri was a barrier to integration with the Gentile community. They operated their own exclusive store at discounted prices and undermined the marketplace outside their community, which was the lifeblood of frontier Independence. They

²⁹ Joseph Smith, *Joseph Smith Papers: Documents*, Vol. 2, 17.

also were rapaciously purchasing land, which impeded the growth of non-Mormon commerce. Although the Mormon system was established specifically to avoid competition and promote cooperation, their millennial expectations led them to exclude the Gentiles because they expected them to convert sooner than later. As we have observed, this exclusion in economic life reverberated in other aspects of the communities' cohabitation and the failure to integrate led to general disorder.³⁰

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There was a fundamental failure of community in Independence, Missouri, during the early 1830s. The town of Independence was divided between Mormons and non-Mormons and there was no discernable integration. Within the Mormon subset, they became a highly organized community, and likewise the non-Mormons coalesced around an anti-Mormon agenda. This led to years of conflict and violence, but it would also lead to some important changes in Mormon policies and behaviors during their period in Illinois.

There were four major barriers to integration. The apocalyptic expectations and unique doctrines of the Mormons confused and confounded the pragmatic and material faith of the Missourians. The wide-reaching proto-egalitarian evangelism of the Mormons starkly opposed the racial hierarchy of the antebellum South. The demographic growth of the Mormon population threatened to eclipse the established non-Mormon community and seize political power for a group with radically different ideologies. Ultimately though, it was the capitalist, profit-driven economy of the non-Mormons that clashed with the insulated, communistic economy of the Mormons. All of these issues relate back to the economic consequences of Mormon

³⁰ Geddes, 31-34 and 150-157; Gregg, 1:168-169.

millennialism. Since the end was nigh, there was no real impetus to integration. They seemed content to build up Zion and the Kingdom of God apart from the Missouriians. They were generally peaceable until provoked, but the provocation occurred because the Gentiles did not share that millennial expectation or the associated vision of economic organization. Since there were no feasible avenues for conversation, they could not prevent Mormon ascendancy without resorting to expulsion. Even in this polyglot town, Saints and Gentiles did not speak the same language.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GENTILE BRETHERN IN MORMON NAUVOO, 1839-1844

On the eastern bank of the Mississippi, halfway between Dubuque, Iowa, and St. Louis, Missouri, a small peninsular town juts out into the river. On the low, flat bottom, the empty shells of brick homes and overgrown streets remind the observer of the city that once rivaled Chicago. On the bluff overlooking the bend the reconstructed Mormon temple maintains a quiet sentinel for the civilization that once sprang from these banks. Nauvoo, Illinois, thrived and died on this pestilential peninsula for seven years from 1839-1846 when thousands of Mormon converts gathered in hopes of establishing a heavenly kingdom on Earth. Some were refugees from persecutions in Missouri, but most were converts from New York, Ohio, Canada, and Great Britain. Together, they reorganized after their violent expulsion from Missouri; they built the second largest city in the state; they mourned the assassination of their prophet, Joseph Smith, in 1844; and they prepared for the mass migration they undertook after their expulsion from Illinois. All told, some 12,642 Mormons called Nauvoo home during this crucial transitional period.¹

Communities are dynamic and complex organisms and the stereotypical description of the homogeneous, monolithic, and insulated Mormon society obscures the interrelation of Mormons and their non-Mormon neighbors. In order to assume that the composition of Nauvoo

¹ Susan Easton Black, "How Large Was the Population of Nauvoo?" in *BYU Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (1995), 91-94.

was strictly and exclusively Mormon, one would have to presume a degree of control over immigration that eludes even powerful modern nations, let alone a band of nineteenth-century refugees. Who were the non-Mormons who lived among the Saints in Nauvoo? Where did they come from and why? How did they contribute to the city and did these efforts support or undermine the vision of Joseph Smith and the Mormon leadership?

The importance of these questions extends beyond the peculiar case of Mormon Nauvoo. As a unique religious sect with specific American origins, the process of Mormon community formation reveals something significant about the nature of American religiosity and social life. The balance between conflict and collaboration illuminates the inherent tension of a pluralistic religious populace. Competition for souls was another venue for the struggle between the Jacksonian ethic of individuality and the pragmatic necessities of communal cooperation. When the Mormon theocracy challenged American religious disestablishment in the nineteenth century, the non-Mormons within their community were at the front lines of that process.

The utopian ambition of the Mormon Kingdom also reveals the optimism of American social construction and the story of non-Mormon contributors highlights the role of pluralism in utopian models. Most utopian experiments are, almost by definition, exclusionary. However, the inclusion of non-Mormons in Nauvoo's economic and social life without condition of conversion suggests a model of utopian construction that the Mormons continued to adapt throughout their experiences in Missouri, Illinois, and Utah. The economic integration of the non-Mormon minority provided the communal stability that allowed the city to blossom for the time that it did.

LDS historian George Givens estimates that between 1,500 and 2,000 people made up this "influential minority." By analyzing tax records, church records, letters written by non-Mormon leaders, and newspaper reports of life in Nauvoo from periodicals inside Nauvoo and

from the nearby towns of Warsaw, Carthage, and Quincy, some contours of this minority of Gentiles, or non-Mormons, becomes available. Many of the Gentiles who lived in Nauvoo were inhabitants of the pre-Mormon town of Commerce who stayed there while it developed. Others were opportunists who were either curious about the boomtown being constructed by the religious sect or optimistic about the available economic prospects. Furthermore, the high degree of religious conversion to Mormonism indicates that the society was inclusive enough to allow intellectual and spiritual exchange but restricted enough to generate a real or imagined benefit to joining the dominant group. Ultimately, non-Mormon residents of Nauvoo participated in a highly inclusive society with regards to religious life and social affairs. They also enjoyed some political opportunities as well. All of that communal stability was predicated on the intentional economic integration permitted by the Latter-day Saints.²

When historians reflect on this period of Mormon history, they tend to address two distinct types of questions. The first focuses on internal developments such as doctrinal innovation, civic management, and ecclesiastical leadership. This study will contribute to those questions by eliciting some key players from the Gentile minority who contributed to the economic and social life of Nauvoo. Historians have ignored individuals like John Weld, Daniel Wells, and John Finch and attributed their contributions to the dramatic leaders of the Mormon Church like Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor. The second set of questions that historians frequently investigate refers to the conflict that arose between Mormons and the non-Mormons of the surrounding county. The animosity between Mormon Nauvoo and Gentile Hancock County explains the short lifespan of the experiment and the abrupt departure for Utah

² Robert B. Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 211; George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo: Everyday Life in the City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Co., 1990), 143.

in 1846 and 1847. This conflict is clearly important and there is wonderful scholarship on the religious, social, political and economic contention that occurred as Nauvoo struggled to negotiate its place in the county. However, with all the attention paid to Mormon-Gentile relations, there is almost no space given to the situation within the city of Nauvoo itself. Again, this approach reinforces an “us” and “them” perspective based on assumptions of homogeneity and insularity.³

Scholars have long known that non-Mormons lived within Nauvoo, and this study will identify who they were and probe how they reacted to and lived with their role as dissenting denizens of a Mormon metropolis. Some of the best sources on the lives of Gentiles in Nauvoo are the letters of Charlotte Haven. Haven was a young socialite from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, who lived in Nauvoo for a year while visiting her brother, Harrison. Harrison lived and worked in Nauvoo as a pharmacist and although Charlotte’s stay was relatively brief, it was long enough to afford her the opportunity to make some colorful observations about the Mormon city, its leaders, and its society. As the daughter of a New England lawyer and sister of a frontier pharmacist, she enjoyed access to the bourgeois invitations that probably represented the highest degree of hybridized social activity both within the non-Mormon minority and the Mormon majority. Although her letters are entertaining, abounding with sarcasms and criticisms, she wrote them to her Protestant New England parents and are more useful for the descriptions they provide than the conclusions that they reach. Regardless, because a non-Mormon inside the city of Nauvoo wrote these letters in 1843, they are an excellent source of information on this

³ For internal issues, see John Allaman, “Policing in Mormon Nauvoo,” in *Illinois Historical Journal*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (Summer 1996), 85-98; Kenneth Godfrey, “Crime and Punishment in Mormon Nauvoo, 1839-1846,” in *BYU Studies*, Vol 32, No.1-2 (Winter/Spring 1992), 195-227; Melinda Jeffress, “Mapping Historic Nauvoo,” in *BYU Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 1991), 269-275. For Mormon-Gentile conflict, see Richard Bennett, *The Nauvoo Legion in Illinois: A History of the Mormon Militia, 1841-1846* (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark Co. of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2010); Kenneth Godfrey, “Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois, 1839-1846” (PhD Diss., Brigham Young University, 1967).

subculture. Haven and the non-Mormons with whom she associated frequently referred to themselves as a band or club of brethren. This informal social unit provides a useful window into the lives of non-Mormons in the Mormon settlement at Nauvoo. As the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to grow in size and influence in the 21st century, the lessons provided by Mormon/non-Mormon cohabitation offer a significant challenge to prevailing trends that focus on internal affairs or conflict-oriented narratives.⁴

Religion

Naturally, the major barrier between Mormons and non-Mormons in Nauvoo was religion. This barrier functioned in two markedly different ways. Depending on the individual, Mormonism was either the unassailable chasm between reason and heresy or it was a beckoning bridge to eternal life. That is to say that there were some non-Mormons who consistently rebuffed Mormon attempts at conversion but there were also many who embraced Mormonism and invested themselves fully into its enterprises. The availability of both responses and the flexibility of the host community suggest that religion was a stable category of interaction between the Mormon and non-Mormon communities.

There were some mainstream Christian services provided by itinerant preachers. A non-Mormon sojourner, Charlotte Haven, wrote that the Reverend Mr. Todd, from Cambridge, spent several days with the “Gentile band” and probably would accept Hyrum Smith’s invitation to preach in the Nauvoo Grove. Josiah Quincy and Charles Francis Adams of Boston recorded that on their visit a Methodist minister was in Nauvoo and challenged Joseph Smith’s preaching on

⁴ William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 116; Jeannette Mitchell to John E. Hallwas, August 24, 1989, Cultures in Conflict Collection [papers/manuscripts] (accession A08-12), AMS 2008-4, University Archives, Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL, Box 2, folder 74, accessed 11 March 2015.

the soundness of its theology. The Methodist preacher repeatedly interrupted Smith's sermon with questions. Smith graciously engaged these challenges and entered into a dialogue with the preacher. Although Smith seemed "dogmatic" and "unable to reason" to laypeople like Charlotte Haven, he nevertheless tolerated the presence and inquiries of mainstream Christian ministers.⁵

Haven also described a second itinerant minister who served the Gentile minority. "Mr. Blogert, a Unitarian minister... has been with us the past week, and has been invited to take part in the services in the grove this afternoon. He is quite an intelligent young man, but does not enjoy good health. We anticipate pleasure in hearing him, for a sermon is such a rarity to us that we can appreciate one. He appears more pleased with the Saints than strangers generally are." Although her testimony reveals that religious services were offered infrequently, it is clear that they were offered occasionally. Furthermore, the positive opinion of an educated mainstream minister reveals the diversity of opinion that developed regarding Mormonism during this period. This pluralism ultimately contributed to the impulse towards conversion that emerged among some of the Gentiles.⁶

The practice of inviting itinerant ministers to preach in public is an especially interesting element of life in Nauvoo and the non-Mormon minority who lived there. This is a manifestation of a general ethic of religious tolerance that the town leaders explicitly codified in their civic ordinances:

Sec. 1. Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, that the Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Latter-Day Saints, Quakers, Episcopalians, Universalists, Unitarians, Mohommedans, and all other religious

⁵ Charlotte Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [25 June 1843], *The Overland Monthly* 16, no. 96 (December 1890), 634; Josiah Quincy and Charles Francis Adams, "Two Boston Brahmins Call on the Prophet," in William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 139; Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [4 June 1843], 631.

⁶ Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [8 September 1843], 635.

sects and denominations whatever, shall have free toleration and equal privileges in the City, and should any person be guilty of ridiculing, abusing, or otherwise depreciating another in consequence of his religion or of disturbing, or interrupting any religious meeting within the limits of this City, he shall on conviction thereof, before the Mayor or Municipal Court be considered a disturber of the public peace, and fined in any sum not exceeding five hundred dollars, or imprisoned not exceeding six months, or both at the discretion of said Mayor or Court.⁷

This ordinance reflects an ideal vision of religious harmony that challenges some of the prevailing mythology about Mormon evangelical activities. Although Charlotte Haven's letters record several attempts at proselytization that suggest an expectation of eventual conversion, until a non-Mormon is prepared to accept Mormonism one was explicitly protected in one's rights to religious expression. Even more than that, non-Mormons were encouraged to take a center place in the grove and preach in front of Mormon and non-Mormon crowds. This signals a high degree of tolerance as well as a high degree of self-assuredness on the part of the Mormons. Gentile religion clearly posed no threat to them, even inside the Kingdom itself.⁸

Furthermore, Mormon religious leaders provided services to the non-Mormon community in the absence of mainstream denominational clergy. When Charlotte Haven returned from an excursion up the Mississippi, she found that a young Gentile girl had passed away. "The Goodwins are Presbyterians, but as there is no church here except the Mormon, the funeral services were conducted by the Elders, Taylor and Young. The house was well filled by kind neighbors and others, who did the singing. Each of the Elders made a lengthy prayer, in which they fervently pleaded for the conversion of this afflicted family to the Church of the Latter Day

⁷ Joseph Smith, "An Ordinance in Relation to Religious Societies," in John S. Dinger, ed., *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011), 17. Certain antiquarian forms of punctuation and capitalization have been corrected to facilitate reading.

⁸ Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [12 June 1843], 633; Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [5 March 1843], 625; Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [2 April 1843], 629.

Saints of Jesus Christ.” Haven concluded that their homilies and Brigham Young’s recount of his latest mission were unhelpful and inappropriate. She wrote, “I hope, for my friends’ sake, I shall not die in Nauvoo.” This event reveals two interesting aspects of non-Mormon religious life in Nauvoo. Mormons were clearly influential members of the religious life of the society. Brigham Young became the church’s second president and John Taylor its third. The family recognized the need for a religious service for their child and rather than send for one of the itinerant ministers from the surrounding county they allowed Taylor and Young to perform the ceremony. Haven’s judgment was negative, and that is not entirely unexpected. Regardless, it demonstrates the exchange that existed between the Mormons and non-Mormons with regards to religious life.⁹

Clearly, non-Mormons were not isolated from the religion of their Mormon neighbors or exclusively the target of intentional evangelistic outreach, though that was often a feature of their interactions. They were also frequently welcome to attend activities at the Temple and hear sermons preached by prominent Mormon leaders. Charlotte Haven described her experience attending a Sabbath sermon preached by Joseph Smith in January of 1843 after he had returned from a trip to Springfield: “I, who had expected to be overwhelmed by his eloquence, was never more disappointed than when he commenced his discourse by relating all the incidents of his journey... His object seemed to be to amuse and excite laughter in his audience. He is evidently a great egoist and boaster... I could not but with wonder and pity look upon that motley and eager crowd that surrounded me.” Haven’s experience illustrates a key complexity of non-Mormon life in Mormon Nauvoo: the religious barrier. Although she was a physical presence and active participant in the Sabbath gathering, her own religious sensibilities prohibited her

⁹ Haven, “A Girl’s Letters from Nauvoo, II,” [13 August 1843], *The Overland Monthly* 17, no. 98 (February 1891), 150.

from engaging the message that Smith conveyed and led her to cast judgment on her neighbors who had gathered with her. In this moment, Charlotte Haven was simultaneously a physical insider and a spiritual outsider. Mormon religious practices were open to non-Mormon community members and curiosity was a natural response. In this case, however, curiosity resulted in criticism and condescension.¹⁰

Charlotte Haven also witnessed a Mormon baptism ritual in May 1843. Although she happened upon the ceremony and was not explicitly invited, the public practice of such an important ritual indicates that non-Mormons were frequently exposed to Mormon religiosity simply by nature of proximity. She remarks on the doctrine of Baptism for the Dead and notes that the Mormons would be immersed in the frigid Mississippi (which still had ice floes in May that year) multiple times. She even says that George Washington was baptized by proxy and although this could be a joke written for her mother's benefit, it is clear that she found the practice interesting and exasperating. Exposure to Mormon behaviors and doctrines evoked varied responses from the non-Mormon residents. Charlotte Haven represents the sort of sarcastic derision that is typically associated with Mormon-Gentile interaction during this period. Regardless, her presence at Mormon religious events reflects the high degree of openness and inclusivity of Mormon Nauvoo. Furthermore, it reveals that non-Mormons (even the critical ones) accepted those invitations and participated in the religious life of the Mormon city.¹¹

Another important element of Mormon-Gentile religious interaction is the matter of conversion. Although some non-Mormons engaged Mormonism and retained their religious identities, others were convinced by their experience and became lifelong and influential

¹⁰ Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [22 January 1843], 621.

¹¹ Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [2 May 1843], 630.

Mormons. Two of these cases are particularly revealing: Daniel H. Wells and Hiram Kimball. Prolonged social, political, and economic exposure to Mormonism created a venue wherein conversion became an appealing proposition. The most idealistic explanation would be that these individuals experienced a spiritual awakening and were drawn to a newly perceived “truth.” Alternatively, they may have had such a profoundly positive experience with their Mormon neighbors that they began to identify with that community and found their individual socio-economic interests to be highly invested in the corporate church.

Daniel H. Wells moved to Commerce, Illinois (which became Nauvoo), with his mother in 1834 and got married in 1837. When Mormons arrived in 1839, Wells was 24 years old and only 100 people lived in that pestilential swamp. He quickly became friends with Joseph Smith. Due to this friendship and his role in the community prior to the arrival of the Mormons, he was asked to serve as a Nauvoo justice of the peace and a regent of the University of Nauvoo without converting to Mormonism. Daniel Wells was well propertied, including a centrally located parcel in the center of the bluff that would become the affluent Temple District after 1840. The historian Glen Leonard speculates that it was due to Wells’s wife’s skepticism that he refused to join the church during the Nauvoo era. After Joseph Smith was murdered in 1844, Wells joined the Latter-day Saints and migrated to Utah in 1848. Non-Mormon resident and judge Sylvester Emmons remembered Wells in his 1875 newspaper column, “Highly Interesting Reminiscence of Mormonism in Hancock County.” He wrote, “Daniel [H.] Wells, who afterwards joined the Mormon Church, left his wife, removed to Salt Lake, and has been mayor of that city and the commander-in-chief of the Mormon military forces of Utah.”¹²

¹² Dinger, ed., *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, lxxviii; Glen Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 60, 147, 161; Sylvester Emmons,

During this period Wells faced two important questions. The first was whether or not to stay in Nauvoo after the Mormons moved in and the second was what to do when they were moving out. By contrasting his decisions with Dr. John Weld, who was also an old resident who lived through the Mormon period and stayed behind afterwards, Wells's religious actions become somewhat clearer. Wells was a landholder in Commerce and his investment provided him with a resource to negotiate a place of influence in the burgeoning city. He had money to loan in a cash-strapped economy and the rapidly appreciating value of his land likely persuaded him to remain close at hand and influence its development. As conflict mounted with non-Mormons in the surrounding county, Wells began to see his financial and social investment in the Mormon community threatened. He certainly would have been aware of the dispossession of Mormon individuals in Missouri and may have parlayed a conversion experience into an opportunity to retain economic and social respectability. He converted in 1846, after Smith's murder and while the community was preparing for the Exodus to Utah. As Emmons noted, Wells's conversion allowed him to continue his rise from backwoods frontiersman to the mayor of the central Mormon metropolis at Salt Lake City. Although Weld would suffer his own economic losses, he was not as heavily invested in the Mormon project and could afford to stay behind. In this case, it seems that economic conditions influenced some non-Mormons' religious behaviors.

Like Wells, it's possible that Hiram Kimball's conversion could have resulted from a genuine spiritual conversion. However, he also experienced intense social pressure to join the Latter-day Saints. Like Daniel Wells and John Weld, Hiram Kimball lived in Commerce, Illinois, before the Mormons arrived, where he owned and operated a mercantile shop. Hiram's

"Nauvoo in 1843-4. Highly Interesting Reminiscence of Mormonism in Hancock County," *The Macomb Eagle*, 9 May 1875.

wife, Sarah, became a member of the church and Hiram did not. When their first child was born, Sarah asked Hiram how much money he thought the child was worth. Although he was initially taken aback, she pressed the issue and he admitted that the child was worth at least \$1,000. Sarah informed her husband that she would be donating her half of the child's value to the church as tithing for the construction of the temple. When Hiram Kimball told Joseph Smith about the joke, the Prophet was pleased and said, "I accept all such donations, and from this day the boy shall stand recorded, *church property*." Smith told Kimball that he could either receive \$500 and give up total possession or pay \$500 and retain possession. Hiram suggested donating city property to the church in lieu of cash and after Smith agreed he donated an entire city block. Mormons preserve this anecdote to demonstrate the agency and faith of Mormon women during this period. Sarah Kimball's commitment to the church inspired her to outfox her husband and convince him to donate a substantial sum to the church to which he did not belong.¹³

However, it certainly underscores the tension of living in a religiously blended home. Such questions about tithing, volunteer responsibilities, ritual practices, ethical and dogmatic beliefs, and the instruction of the children would all have required delicate, and probably tense, negotiations. Charlotte Haven also encountered the Kimball family: "A few other acquaintances we have made, Hiram Kimball's family, who lived here when it was Commerce,- Mrs. K's mother has become a Mormon and Mrs. K is leaning that way." Hiram Kimball converted to Mormonism in 1843, after four years living as a non-Mormon minority. He defended the city from external vigilantes in 1846, participated in the Mormon Exodus, and oversaw the settlement of Las Vegas in 1856. He was killed in a boiler explosion while on mission for the church in the Sandwich Islands. Kimball is a second example of a non-Mormon resident of Commerce who

¹³ Dinger, lix; Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 20-21.

converted to Mormonism and experienced significant political opportunities after the migration west. Although his motivations were probably a combination of factors, he certainly experienced unusual familial pressure by nature of their dual affiliations. Converting to Mormonism simultaneously expanded his political opportunities and simplified his home life -- and probably soothed his soul in some important way.¹⁴

The religious inclusivity of life in Mormon Nauvoo provided the non-Mormon minority with opportunities for discrete dissent and full conversion. There were itinerant preachers who occasionally visited Nauvoo and stayed among the Gentile community. These preachers were invited to preach in public and even debated theology with the Mormon leadership. When these preachers were not available, the Gentiles participated (to some extent) in the religious activities of the host society, including at intensely private and emotionally demanding occasions such as the death of a child. This prolonged contact, combined with evangelical attempts and the perceived political benefits of full conversion, led to a distinguishable pattern of conversion and dedication. Some of the non-Mormons in Nauvoo would become important Mormon contributors to the establishment of their western communities.

Society

The non-Mormon residents of Nauvoo recognized their unique position as a minority within a minority and to a certain extent they preferred to associate with other non-Mormons. Informally, they tended to dine and recreate with one another. However, when it came to the formal organizations of Nauvoo society they usually mingled with Mormons and were openly welcomed in all facets of community life. Non-Mormons viewed themselves as a separate

¹⁴ Dinger, lix; Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [5 March 1843], 625.

subculture and maintained that identity in key ways while simultaneously enjoying the popular social activities of civic life.

The non-Mormons in Nauvoo were deeply conscious of their minority status and preferred to associate with one another through informal social interaction. Charlotte Haven and Sylvester Emmons variously refer to the group as “Gentile brethren,” “our little society,” “our little Gentile band,” and “a little club of Gentiles.” Furthermore, Haven and Emmons record numerous dinners, carriage rides, and social calls with members of this “society,” such as Samuel Marr, O.C. Skinner, Dr. Charles Higbee, Dr. John Weld, and others. This intimacy and social isolation is poorly explained in the letters. They were certainly included in the formal occasions of life in Mormon Nauvoo, which will be seen shortly. However, they also saw themselves as a distinct social unit and behaved as such. The most obvious explanation for this behavior is the minority status of the Mormon majority. Although the Mormons were powerful in Nauvoo and wielded increasing influence in Hancock County, they were still a peculiar religious sect, which had already experienced traumatic persecutions at the hand of the dominant American state. These Gentiles were unwilling to subvert their status as non-Mormon Anglo-Americans by participating too intimately with their Mormon hosts. The non-Mormons’ initial reticence and prejudice must be appreciated in order to fully comprehend the complex economic, social, and political negotiations that occurred in other contexts. Haven believed the Gentiles knew in their hearts that they were different, outsiders, and preferred to keep it that way.¹⁵

The one formal social enterprise where non-Mormons opted to exercise voluntary segregation was education. Charlotte Haven taught two Gentile children whose mother decided they would be better served outside of the Mormon school. “I have two nice little scholars in

¹⁵ Haven, “A Girl’s Letters from Nauvoo,” [22 January 1843], 621; Emmons, “Nauvoo in 1843-4,” *The Macomb Eagle*, 9 May 1875.

Ellen and Sarah Goodwin, seven and five years of age. Mrs. Goodwin has been in great tribulation ever since she has been here about a school for her children, as there is but one in the neighborhood, and that is overflowing with Mormon children of all sizes, many of them not over clean and neat. So I volunteered to instruct them..." Goodwin's decision to employ Charlotte Haven reveals that when a Gentile alternative arose, it was "gladly accepted." The precise motivations for this desire are unclear. Haven suggests that it was the overcrowded classroom and the hygiene of Mormon children. In actuality, the City Council established a system of common schools in Nauvoo and employed twenty-seven certified teachers by 1843. This amount still allowed for overcrowded rooms, but there was certainly a formal educational system with structured oversight. For whatever reason, this non-Mormon family opted to exercise an alternative educational model and insulate its children from contact with Mormon children and institutions.¹⁶

One of the central components of Nauvoo social life was the Nauvoo Legion. The Legion was a military unit under the direction of the city government that had been authorized by the city's unique charter. The Legion was well armed and well trained, which led to great apprehension from the non-Mormons in the surrounding area. Although the Legion performed some important police duties and assumed ad hoc control of the city during the disorder that followed Joseph Smith's murder, its daily function was largely ceremonial. They paraded for church events, semi-annual general parades and Independence Day celebrations with banners, speeches, and drills. The activities of the Legion were also some of the principal cultural activities. Charlotte Haven described the impact of the Nauvoo Legion on her social calendar: "These [drills] are preparatory to the grand annual parade on the 6th of this month... It is

¹⁶ Charlotte Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo, II," [13 July 1843], 146; Leonard, 195-196.

expected that all the elite of the city will be present on this grand gala day. We understand there is to be a cavalcade of ladies with nodding plumes. Miss Ell (she is very, very tall) will lead the van and present a banner. Dr. [Higbee] has invited me to view this imposing scene, and if nothing better offers I shall go, and expect much amusement.” The officers wore extravagant uniforms and Joseph Smith apparently reveled in his title as Lieutenant General, a title that was not held by any other officer between Washington and Grant. By the time Joseph Smith died in 1844, the Nauvoo Legion contained nearly 5,000 men divided into companies of one hundred. “Officers in the Nauvoo legion were elected and usually approved without dissent. Qualified officers were voted upon by the troops. John Fuller Weld was one of these officers who served as Surgeon to the legion.” Both Charlotte Haven and Sylvester Emmons identify Dr. Weld as a prominent member of their “little club.” Other non-Mormon residents, such as Captain John T. Barnett and Sergeant Benjamin Warrington, also served in the Legion.

The participation of non-Mormon residents in such a celebrated unit indicates that Gentiles participated in the important civic ceremonies of the town. When the City Council or First Presidency would occasionally activate the Legion for defensive or law enforcement purposes, these Gentiles apparently answered the call. The U.S. Treasurer paid Weld \$30 in 1846 for services performed to the Legion. Furthermore, historian Hamilton Gardner observed that the composition of the Legion was quite bifurcated, where the elite church officials were designated as generals and the rank and file Mormons were mostly privates. The fact that these prominent non-Mormons were lower officers indicates that they were included and respected and yet they were not afforded equal opportunity within the organization. The defensive and law enforcement

functions probably explain the reticence on the part of the Mormon elites to elevate non-Mormons too highly, whereas the social function of the unit necessitated their inclusion.¹⁷

Another important association in Nauvoo was Freemasonry. Historian Glen Leonard suggested that Joseph Smith's desire to elevate the city's profile in Illinois and strengthen ties with non-Mormon leaders in the surrounding community drove his zeal for developing Freemasonry in Nauvoo. Freemasonry became very popular and by October 1842 there were more Masons in Nauvoo than in all the other Illinois lodges combined. This led to the fractionalization of the Nauvoo Masons into three separate lodges. Robert Flanders described the consequences of this fractionalization: "The fraternity did not, however, prevent the persistence of antagonism between Mormon and gentile Masons. A Master Mason named Nye whom Smith described as an adulterer and a 'hypocritical Presbyterian preacher' who tried to 'pull me by the nose and trample on me' established a rival lodge up on the 'hill' in April, 1843." Flanders explains that Smith did not elaborate on the issues that underlay the tension but suggests that Nye's lodge appealed more to Gentiles. A significant enclave of non-Mormons lived on the bluffs above the town where the Mormon Temple was also under construction. Flanders's suggestion that Nye's lodge was constructed to appeal to non-Mormons explains some of Smith's dissatisfaction. If Leonard is correct that one of Smith's driving interests in Masonry was to strengthen ties between Mormons and Gentiles, the establishment of an alternative, "Gentile," lodge within Nauvoo would have totally undermined his attempts to bridge the gap.¹⁸

¹⁷ Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [2 May 1843], 629; Flanders, 110, 111 and 325; Rosemary Pollock, *A Friend to All: The Life and Contributions of Dr. John Fuller Weld (1802-1892)* (USA: Mira Digital Publishing, 2012), 35-36; Dinger, ed., xlvii, lxxviii. A concise description of the Nauvoo Legion is available in Hamilton Gardner, "The Nauvoo Legion, 1840-45: A Unique Military Organization," in Launius and Hallwas, eds., *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited*, 48-61.

¹⁸ Leonard, 314-316, 318; Flanders, 248-249; Givens, 142.

There is evidence from Dr. Weld and Charlotte Haven that non-Mormons participated in the Masonic life of Nauvoo. Although membership rolls are unavailable, Dr. Weld's family members were Masons, he donated money to Masonic lodges and he had the Masonic symbol inscribed on his tombstone. This seems fairly conclusive evidence that he was engaged in Masonic activities in Nauvoo since he lived there the entire time. Haven described the commemoration of the Nauvoo lodge. She was escorted to the ceremony by Sylvester Emmons and remarked that "most of the chief men here are Masons." There was a solemn service with well-dressed "female women folk" and Masons in "full regalia." The address was delivered by Sidney Rigdon, whom Haven regarded as the most dignified and articulate Mormon leader. There was a hymn, a processional, and a feast. Masonry, in addition to being a powerful male social organization, was also a context for the emerging Nauvoo high society. It is important to acknowledge that non-Mormons were included in both activities.¹⁹

The non-Mormon population was included in the social functions of Nauvoo high society as evidenced by Charlotte Haven's reports of Legion parades and Masonic ceremonies. However, there were also informal parties and social gatherings. She described four such events: a party she attended at Sidney Rigdon's home on February 20, 1843; an occasion where Joseph and Emma Smith called on her at home; the housewarming party at Joseph Smith's new Mansion House; and a carriage ride she took with Joseph Smith. Her brother Henderson and his wife Elizabeth accompanied her to most of these events. She was usually escorted by Judge Sylvester Emmons or Mr. O.C. Skinner. Haven's description of these occasions is steeped in many of the nineteenth century social pretenses such as chivalrous umbrella holding, parlor games, knitting circles, and thinly veiled criticisms about the Mormons in general. However, there are also

¹⁹ Pollock, *A Friend to All*, 32-33; Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [2 May 1843], 626.

interesting insights into the access that well-propertied non-Mormons could enjoy in the highest circles of Mormon leadership.

Haven's observations reveal some of the exchanges that these groups had and the opinions that those exchanges inspired. She was very impressed with Sidney Rigdon but she did not care for Joseph Smith. When the conversation turned to religion, as it usually did, the Mormons would invite the Gentiles to learn more and to convert to Mormonism. However, these overtures do not seem particularly aggressive. The church leadership included this band of Gentile elites in all of the social affairs of the Nauvoo bourgeoisie. Occasionally they elected to establish independent practices. These instances help illustrate some of the tension that this "little band of Gentiles" experienced as a minority within a minority. While the ecclesiastical and civil leaders labored to build a town and enhance their enterprise with all the fine social affairs of enlightened and progressive cities, their non-Mormon neighbors actively participated in this social construction. Parades, parties, and lounges were the crucible of Nauvoo's social alchemy and non-Mormons were apparently an active ingredient.²⁰

Politics

Prominent marginalization is the best description for the political situation of the non-Mormon population. Non-Mormons were afforded certain roles in the government and bureaucracy, yet the municipality was conflated with the operations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its leadership. Conversion and contribution were two of the optional responses to their minority status. There was also a resistance movement from within the church itself that triggered the events that led to Joseph Smith's arrest and lynching. Non-Mormons

²⁰ Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [5 March 1843], 625; *Ibid.*, [4 June 1843], 631; *Ibid.*, [15 October 1843], 636; Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo, II," [4 July 1843], 146.

participated in that movement as well. Gentile residents who became politically active either filled those prominent marginal roles or they partnered with Mormon dissenters to challenge church authority. Either way, they were included in Mormon political activities. Outsiders often accused the Mormons of being politically simplistic and characterized Joseph Smith as a despot who manipulated his followers for political power. Many argue that these political issues are actually the very core of the Mormon/non-Mormon conflicts that arose time and time again. As the Mormons gathered in substantial numbers, the suspicion of solidary bloc-voting behavior overwhelmed and threatened their more “independent” non-Mormon neighbors. This is a fascinating and convincing explanation for external conflict. However, the issue at hand is to evaluate the responses of non-Mormon residents *inside* the Mormon city.²¹

The first election in the newly chartered city of Nauvoo took place on February 1, 1841. Of the twenty-seven men who stood for election, only three were not Mormon. Daniel H. Wells was elected as an alderman, John T. Barnett was elected as city councilor, and Hiram Kimball was nominated, but not elected, as a city councilor. The city’s population was roughly 5,000 people at this time and overwhelmingly Mormon. The inclusion of three Gentiles could be construed as a liberal allowance and that’s precisely how *Times and Seasons* characterized it for their audience:²²

It is supposed by many abroad that all of our officers are Mormons--this, however, is not the case. A large number of the officers of the Nauvoo Legion; several members of the City Council, both Aldermen and Councilors; and a large portion of the Regents of the University; are not members of any church-- many of them are old citizens who resided here long before we were driven from

²¹ Godfrey, “Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois, 1839-1846,”; Klaus J. Hansen, “The Political Kingdom of God as a Cause of Mormon-Gentile Conflict,” in Launius and Hallwas, eds., *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited*, 62-71.

²² Leonard, 108-109.

Missouri. This will show to the world that although, numerically, we far exceed the remaining portion of the community in this vicinity, we are not disposed to exercise that power to the exclusion of men of sterling worth and integrity, simply because they do not believe in our religion. All we ever asked was that we might have the privileges of other men-- the supremacy of the Constitution and the Laws should be paramount to every other consideration.²³

The Mormon paper's response to the criticism of insularity is telling. They clearly saw themselves as a diverse and egalitarian community and they valued the inclusion of non-Mormons in the political process as one of the best evidences of their democratic and American heritage. Unfortunately, the degree to which these few Gentile politicians actually contributed to the political process is not clear.

Glen Leonard's narrative of the evolution of politics in Nauvoo challenges the *Times and Seasons* view and suggests that the actual situation may have been more like prominent marginalization. Between the establishment of the city and the death of Joseph Smith, there were always two or three prominent Gentiles on the city council. However, LDS leaders gradually assumed more dominant roles. Among the nine members of the council, there were always five to seven seats filled by members of the Quorum of Twelve, an elite group of Mormon leaders. Joseph Smith himself became a legislatively active mayor after 1842. Flanders also described the entangled relationship between the civil government and the ecclesiastical government and argued that the city became essentially an extension of the church polity that reinforced the church through the subdivision of wards. One of the most important elements to remember with regards to Mormon civic administration is that there was little distinction in the Mormon collective will between church and state. The view of the Kingdom of God as a political, earthly reality is one of the defining features of the early Mormon experience in general. The fact that Gentiles were allowed to participate in building up the kingdom politically is probably not vastly

²³ "Officers," *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, [1 January 1842], 638 and 646.

different from Smith's invitation to Gentile economic agents. Anyone who could contribute was indeed welcome, *on Mormon terms*. Furthermore, two out of nine seats is actually a statistically higher degree of representation than a 1,500-resident minority in a city of 12,000 would enjoy in a direct democracy. The concept of Zion was a theological and ethical reality that catalyzed the socio-political experiment in Missouri, again at Nauvoo, and would reach its fullest expression in the Utah. Gentile partners were always a part of that process, and nowhere more explicitly than in Nauvoo.²⁴

Not all Gentiles were content to contribute to the Mormon vision. Whereas some enjoyed privileged titles and important tasks about town, others started to feel that their interests were too often subordinated to the goals of the Latter-day Saints. Two men, in particular, provide valuable insight into the political dissent in which non-Mormons engaged. It is important to note that this dissent initially developed from within Mormonism itself. Therefore, it is actually further evidence of the inclusion that non-Mormons experienced in all facets of Nauvoo political life. When non-Mormons were unable or unwilling to work within the Mormon system, they collaborated with dissenting Mormons to challenge the hierarchy from without.

Traditional explanations argue that dissent started to form around the controversial teachings on polygamy. A core group of influential Mormons started to challenge Smith on the doctrine as well as his practice of taking plural wives. These men included Robert D. Foster, William and Wilson Law, and Francis Higbee. This group founded the *Nauvoo Expositor*, an opposition newspaper. Joseph Smith and the City Council declared the newspaper a public nuisance and had it terminated. This action led to the dissenters charging Smith with rioting and,

²⁴ Leonard, 109-110; Flanders, 99; Hansen, "The Political Kingdom of God as a Cause of Mormon-Gentile Conflict," in Launius and Hallwas, eds., *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited*, 62-71.

after the Legion was activated, with treason. It was during Smith's appearance in Carthage to answer those charges that a mob formed outside the jail to kill him and his brother Hyrum. This series of events was the result of an internal dispute within the church. However, certain non-Mormon community members contributed to these efforts and shaped the course of Mormon events through their involvement.²⁵

Sylvester Emmons recollection of 1875 focused primarily on the story of his involvement in the downfall of Joseph Smith and Mormon Nauvoo. He begins by identifying several of the key people in the "little club of Gentiles," but he concludes that "the fact was soon discovered by all that tyranny and oppression of the Mormon prophet was such as to preclude the possibility of [economic] success." In Emmons's version, it is not polygamy that drove a wedge between the dissenters and the Prophet but rather it was the fact that they "became tired of the oppressive acts of Jo. Smith." He continues, "The Gentile club, smarting under grievances unendurable, sympathized with the seceders and lent their assistance to the [*Expositor*]. It was a hazardous enterprise." Emmons then claims that he acted as the original editor of the *Expositor* until he was called away on business. Emmons's version of the story, though it was written thirty years after the events it describes, suggests the politically subversive activities of the Gentile minority. Many of the people whom Emmons names as being so egregiously put-upon (Wells, Finch, the Marr brothers, Skinner, Goodwin, and Weld) are the same people that Charlotte Haven describes

²⁵ Terence A. Tanner, "The Mormon Press in Nauvoo, 1839-46," in Launius and Hallwas, eds., *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited*: 94-118, here 108. Tanner also names Charles Higbee among his "prominent Mormons." However, according to "Charles Dr Higbee *FILE*-20056," [21 November 2000], Nauvoo Land and Records Office, Nauvoo, IL, accessed 12 March 2015, there is no record of Dr. Higbee's joining the LDS. Furthermore, Charlotte Haven frequently mentions Dr. Higbee as part of the "Gentile society," and in Elaine Layton, "The Residents of the City of Nauvoo Property According to Tax Records 1839-1846," Charles is the only Higbee designated as a doctor. Therefore, while I will not dispute that Dr. Higbee may have contributed to the dissenting group, it does not seem that he was one of the original Mormon dissenters. It is more likely that Tanner meant Chauncey Higbee, Francis's brother and a disaffected Mormon; Leonard, "Chapter 13: Foes Within: The Church of the Seceders" and "Chapter 14: Joseph and Hyrum are Dead," in *A Place of Peace, A People of Promise*, 341-417.

dancing and playing with the Mormons in her letters from 1843. Certainly, it is possible for both to be accurate. Perhaps they were dissatisfied but they affected a cordial air. It is also feasible that Miss Haven would not have been exposed to their more spirited protests. However, when one considers the economic lamentations of Dr. Weld and the socialist principles of Mr. Finch (which we will address shortly) or the religious conversion of Mr. Wells, it seems unlikely that Emmons's economic dissatisfaction was representative of the entire "club" like he claimed. What is clear, however, is that some Gentiles contributed to the *Nauvoo Expositor* and its mission. They supported the dissenting Mormons and added to the conditions that led to the death of Joseph Smith and the further destabilization of Mormon Nauvoo.²⁶

Augustine Spencer was another subversive Gentile in Mormon Nauvoo. Spencer's family converted to Mormonism and immigrated to Nauvoo in 1841. Augustine's brothers Daniel, Hiram, and Orson would become prominent members of the Mormon community. Later, Daniel and Orson each became mayor after Joseph Smith's murder. Augustine, however, remained apart from the church. When Augustine's father died in 1843, he attempted to execute the estate without input from his brothers or his mother. This triggered a family dispute that led to assault. The brothers were well connected with the Mormon elite and Augustine did not feel that his case was adjudicated appropriately. He fell in with the dissenting crowd and contributed to the publishing of the *Nauvoo Expositor*. The paper only ever published one issue and one of the articles in that issue recorded Augustine's version of the family dispute and criticized the Mormon establishment for their treatment of the case. Augustine Spencer's disdain for the Mormon leaders, and Joseph Smith in particular, compelled him to swear the affidavit that accused Joseph Smith of treason. Augustine Spencer's actions reveal the influence that one

²⁶ Emmons, "Nauvoo in 1843-4," *The Macomb Eagle*, 9 May 1875.

dissenting voice can have when it is part of a broader and volatile situation. The Mormon dissenters were already organizing. The surrounding county was looking for an excuse to strike at the Mormons, and the Gentile Augustine Spencer's perceived legal exclusion triggered a vendetta that ultimately contributed a significant piece to the downfall of Joseph Smith.²⁷

The non-Mormons who chose not to (or felt they were not allowed to) participate in the Mormon political establishment found alternative venues to engage the Mormon political world. If they were not able to work within the system then they took advantage of the Mormon schism to get involved with the opposition. The political agency of non-Mormon individuals was often influenced by the receptivity of the individual with regards to Mormon religious beliefs. Among those who started as non-Mormon residents, the ones who were most heavily involved in the religious establishment like Kimball or Wells ended up with the best political opportunities. Although non-Mormon residents experienced significant religious, social and political opportunities, they all were derived from the stability afforded by a highly integrated economic system.

Economy

The Gentile community experienced considerable economic opportunities within Mormon Nauvoo. Some non-Mormons engaged well-respected occupations and they were even employed in prestigious public works projects. Overall, they thrived despite occasional constraints from the Mormon leadership. Economic opportunity is a compelling explanation for their motivation for living in Nauvoo in the first place. Nauvoo was a boomtown. When the Mormons arrived in 1839, only about 100 people lived on the peninsula. At its zenith in 1844, there were 12,000 residents. The dominant Mormon community welcomed non-Mormons into

²⁷ Richard W. Sadler and Claudia S. Sadler, "Augustine Spencer: Nauvoo Gentile, Joseph Smith Antagonist," in *Mormon Historical Studies*, Vol. 12, Issue 2 (Fall 2011), 27-46.

the economic and social life of Nauvoo. Joseph Smith explicitly invited Gentile settlers and asserted that anyone who would labor to build up the Kingdom were welcome. This rapid growth appealed to entrepreneurs of all religious backgrounds and those who were well propertied or predated the Mormon inhabitation could make a handsome living. Judge Emmons began his column with a list of non-Mormon residents and concluded, “There were other citizens living there who were not Mormons, but those I have mentioned, with two exceptions (Wells and Weld), were sojourners who located there to do business.” However, the primary industry in Nauvoo was construction and that enterprise was largely funded on credit. Despite these limitations, non-Mormons in Nauvoo experienced significant economic opportunities that inspired the other expressions of integration described above.²⁸

Robert Flanders’s assertion that “the peculiarities and exclusiveness of the Mormon kingdom were unattractive to gentile capital” demands a more nuanced explanation. Of the two dozen Gentile individuals explored here, most were landed farmers, lawyers, doctors, landlords, and merchants. These professions fell into two broad categories. Either they were fixed and well established prior to Mormon inhabitation or they were highly mobile professions that allowed the immigrants to move into the boomtown and profit from the rapid growth of the city. Those who had property before the Mormons moved in sold their parcels to the Mormon pilgrims or to the church itself. A man like Sylvester Emmons contributed to the housing bubble of the Nauvoo boom and functioned as a central realtor and landlord for the Mormon migrants. Of course, there are exceptions, such as John Weld, who was a doctor who had lived there previously. Merchants like Samuel Marr and John Finch or a pharmacist like Henderson Haven seemed to be economic opportunists who were drawn to the town in order to profit from the booming industry and

²⁸ Black, “How Large Was the Population of Nauvoo?” 93; Flanders, 48, 51 and 164; Emmons, “Nauvoo in 1843-4,” *The Macomb Eagle*, 9 May 1875.

population. Whereas external investment from Gentile sources may have been hard to come by, there were entrepreneurs who were willing to invest their resources and their labor in order to participate in the economic life of the new city.²⁹

However, economic opportunism was not restricted to these types of capitalistic enterprises. One non-Mormon, John Finch, moved to Nauvoo from Rock Island, Illinois, in 1840 in order to open a store. Originally from Liverpool, he occasionally lectured on socialism and prompted a response from Joseph Smith wherein the Prophet clarified the church's economic ideology. After a series of lectures from Finch in September 1843, the Prophet restated his commitment to individual ownership and decried the failure of the church's experiments in communal property from the Kirtland, Ohio, era. Smith concluded that economic socialism was not possible for ordinary people. Finch tried to take advantage of the booming utopian religious sect in order to promote his goals of economic socialism. Not only was Nauvoo the site of personal economic opportunity, as seen from the capitalist ventures described above, but it was also the site of economic evangelism in the form of John Finch, the radical Gentile. Despite the statement from the Prophet, however, there is no evidence of a repression of Finch's ideas. Nauvoo was open to the exchange of ideas on economic principles. Obviously, that is not to say that Finch's ideas could gain any traction in the face of such prominent renunciation. Rather, it is sufficient to acknowledge that a non-Mormon inhabitant initiated a discussion and a statement from the Prophet that informed Mormon economic ideology in general.³⁰

²⁹ The most informative source for this segment has been the manuscript of Elaine Layton's work in progress. Elaine Layton, "The Residents of the City of Nauvoo Property According to Tax Records 1839-1846," [8 March 2015], Nauvoo Land and Records Office, accessed 23 March 2015, unpublished data; Flanders, 178.

³⁰ Dinger, ed., 267; Leonard, 142-143.

The economic system of Nauvoo was deeply associated with ecclesiastical ambitions and objectives. Flanders notes that the numerous construction projects and bureaucracy established a patronage system and “favored and deserving Churchmen” enjoyed the best opportunities. This is not exclusively true but as a general observation, it is quite telling. Certainly, the members of the upper crust of the church were also the leaders of numerous associations in the city government, the Nauvoo Legion, the Masonic Lodges, the Nauvoo House Committee, and the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing Association, among others. This consolidation of power and economic opportunity illuminates an important aspect of the Gentile community. There were attractive internal opportunities for Gentile entrepreneurs to profit within the Mormon community, as evidenced by George Givens’s observation that they tended to live in isolated enclaves. Otherwise, access to the Mormon elites allowed them to take advantage of the broader economic activities of the whole city.³¹

The fact that many of the Gentiles were lawyers and doctors also presented a problem for the Mormon community. An editorial in Nauvoo’s newspaper, *Times and Seasons*, argued that Mormons should not hire lawyers or doctors but rather work their disputes out privately or through the church and trust their healing to the priests and to God. Fortunately for the Gentile professionals, enough of the Saints were pragmatists that they did a steady business. Dr. John Weld was busy enough during the Mormon period to estimate afterwards that if the Mormons had not been expelled he would have made about \$10,000 by 1851. Weld’s practice, like the town in general, was bustling but cash-poor. Dr. Charles Higbee, on the other hand, apparently had some difficulty finding Mormon patients and Charlotte Haven ascribed that shortcoming to

³¹ Flanders, 181; Givens, 142.

Mormon healing practices. Regardless, the professionals who were established there did a steady-enough trade.³²

Though critics within the church leadership and the cash shortage did discourage additional professionals from moving to Nauvoo. Givens explained that whereas New York City had one doctor for every five hundred people in 1840, Nauvoo had only five or six doctors in 1845, a ratio of about one doctor for every three thousand people. The religious issues involved in patronizing doctors and lawyers were not a major concern. Joseph Smith himself was aware of Mormon citizens patronizing doctors like John Weld. Smith recorded the amputation of the Mormon William Yokum's leg in 1841. Mormons were clearly not chauvinistic in their economic choices and Dr. Weld maintained a thriving business until the Mormons left. The flexibility of Mormon consumers and the attraction of Gentile professionals suggest that both groups coexisted economically and mutually contributed to the development of the city's professional establishment.³³

Non-Mormons in Nauvoo were able to pursue a variety of occupational strategies. The booming population and their own capitalist instincts drew some to Nauvoo. At least one came in order to promote an alternative economic model and attempted to experiment with socialism. Non-Mormons were involved in the very highest orders of Nauvoo's economic planning and they were also engaged in its lowest wage labors. Although there were some religious issues at play that might have affected certain professions, these were clearly not important enough to prohibit cohabitation and both groups benefitted from the skills of the other. Flanders's

³² Flanders, 159; "The Saints Make Nauvoo," *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 6, [1 April 1845], 856; Pollock, 40-41; Charlotte Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," [19 February 1843], 622.

³³ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Independence, MO: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1922), 4:389; Givens, 120.

observation that some of the best jobs were reserved for the Mormon elites may very well have been true and the associational cross-pollination is apparent. However, this establishment was neither exclusive nor prohibitive. This healthy economic integration inspired mutual investment and an interest in maintaining the stability of the community. That stability then found expression in the religious, social, and political relationships that these two groups formed.

* * *

The Mormon Kingdom on the Mississippi was a short-lived but transformative experiment with tremendous implications for the Mormons, the state of Illinois, and the ongoing saga of religion in America. Nauvoo, Illinois, was the location of Mormonism's interlude between the persecutions of Missouri and the perils of the Westward Exodus. Although it was not without its own challenges, it provided the church an opportunity to reorganize and flourish. In only eight short years, the Mormons crystallized their understanding of the relationship between the church and the state, the practice of plural marriage, and the organization of clerical succession and hierarchy, among other things. One aspect of the Mormon experience that is frequently examined is the conflict that arose between them and their non-Mormon neighbors in Hancock County. However, these inquiries have been one-dimensional explanations of the root causes of conflict. By analyzing the patterns of Gentile-Mormon relationships *within* Nauvoo itself, a more complex and informative narrative has developed. The constant contact of religious ideas spurred varied conclusions and a myriad of responses; the two most popular of which were criticism or conversion.

Non-Mormon residents frequently engaged Mormons in the town's social scenes, including the Nauvoo Legion parade ground, the Masonic Hall, and the parlors of prominent families from both "religious" communities. The non-Mormons' religious identity did not prevent them from getting a few prominent posts in municipal government. They worked together to build up the city through entrepreneurial experiments, professional services, and public works projects. The significant economic integration of the non-Mormon community provided the stability for other types of communal exchange. The common aspect of all these factors points again to the base reality: these two groups, Mormon and Gentile, lived side-by-side in Nauvoo, Illinois, and contributed to the improvement of their circumstances. Men like John Weld and Daniel Wells benefitted from the Mormon period in Nauvoo regardless of whether they became Mormon or not and both experienced the economic losses inflicted by intolerance.

CHAPER THREE

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD CANNOT RISE INDEPENDENT OF THE GENTILE NATIONS”: NON-MORMONS IN SALT LAKE CITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MORMON KINGDOM, 1847-1869

Brigham Young rendezvoused with the rest of the Vanguard Brigade in the Salt Lake Valley on July 24th, 1847. By the time he arrived, teams had already constructed farming equipment, dammed up the creek, ploughed the earth, and planted five acres of potatoes and corn. The work of settlement continued for three days before the company met to formally approve the location. One-hundred and forty-three men, three women, and two children were called to a general council around 8 pm. It was a soft summer night and a full moon shone over the Wasatch Mountains and cast a radiant glow upon the valley. “Cheerfulness and general hilarity prevailed” as the pioneers swapped stories from the days past and dreams about the ones to come. Young set to business and put a singular question to the group: “Shall we look further or make a location upon this spot & lay out & build our city?” Never mind that the decision had already been made and three days of labor had been poured into developing this spot; the motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously. On this momentous occasion, almost exactly 16 years after Joseph Smith had revealed the location of the first Mormon Zion at Independence, after the failure of Ohio, the violence of Missouri and Illinois, and the arduous journey into the wilderness, it fell to Brigham Young to say a few words about the new City of God. Naturally,

the role of non-Mormons was among the issues that needed to be clear from the very beginning and it was the first item addressed after the physical dimensions of city.¹

A man may live here with us & worship what God he pleases or none at all, but he must not blaspheme the God of Israel nor dam old Joe Smith <or his religion> for we will Salt him down in the Lake! We do not intend to have anny trade or commerce with the Gentile world, for so long as we buy of them we are in <a> degree dependant upon them. the Kingdom of God <cannot> rise independent of the Gentile nations until we produce, Manufacture & make every article of use, convenience, or necessity among our own People. we shall have Elders ab<r>oad among all nations & until we can obtain & collect the raw material for our Manufactures it will be their business to gather in such things as are <or> may be needed. So we shall need no commerc with the nations. I <am> determined to cut every thread of this Kind & live free & independent, untrammeled by any of their detestable customs & practices. you don't know how I detest & despise them. we have suffered by persecution at their hands which makes me so sanguine with regard to Law & its execution upon this Land.²

Young's dream of independence was not to be. Shortly after the foundation of Great Salt Lake City, following the acquisition of vast southwestern territories from Mexico and the discovery of gold in California, the Mormons found themselves in the midst of U.S. expansionist ambitions. The experiences of non-Mormons in the development of the Salt Lake City community reveal the gradual temperance of Brigham Young's ambitions and the establishment of American sovereignty over the Mormon Kingdom of God.

Young was so confident about his community's growth and development that when he entered the Salt Lake Basin he remarked that if he had ten years of peace, neither the devil nor Uncle Sam could remove them again. Although the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) remains headquartered in Salt Lake City to this day, they have made radical alterations to

¹ Norton Jacob, *The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847: Norton Jacob's Record*, Ronald O. Barney, ed. (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2005), 219-220 and 226-228; David L. Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847-1896* (Spokane, WA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1998), 22.

² Jacob, *The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847*, 229.

their social, political, and economic lives in order to conform to prevailing American ideals. In so doing, they compromised some of their religious ecclesiology and eschatology. Although the Mormons were finally able to establish a permanent homeland and incorporate a significant non-Mormon community, they made permanent concessions in their way of life in order to achieve that stability.³

This chapter analyzes the initial period of Mormon settlement in Salt Lake City from June 24th, 1847, to May 10th, 1869, when the completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory, Utah, capped a process of regional conquest that had been going on over the previous twenty-two years. Although the Mormons would not formally renounce their major policy stumbling block, polygamy, until 1890, the die was already cast by the time the railroad was completed. The completion of the railroad also radically changed the nature of Mormon migration to Utah. The celebrated handcart pioneers were replaced by less dramatic journeys by rail. Several important events occurred during these first two decades that determined the course of Mormon community development and ultimately led to their full inclusion in the American Republic. There was a gradual inclusion of Gentile businesses and eventually a reactionary, church-sponsored boycott; the development of non-Mormon religious communities; and repeated stand-offs with the U.S. federal government. By analyzing these events from the perspective of the non-Mormons within Salt Lake City, and against the arch of Mormon/non-Mormon relations since 1831, historians can appreciate the role of non-Mormons within the Mormon West and the internal pressure that led to the sacrifices that were made in order to achieve security.⁴

³ Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place*, (Salt Lake City: Gibbs-Smith Publisher, 1995), 100.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.

Thomas Alexander and James Allen's succinctly titled monograph from 1984, *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City*, is an informative narrative history on this subject and the first three chapters are especially useful. Alexander and Allen construct an urban history to argue that there were initially three major cultural groups operative in Salt Lake City: Mormons, nominal Mormons, and non-Mormons. Although subcultural group formation was not a viable option for Mormons, the other two groups developed secular voluntary organizations which the Mormons would eventually participate in, and by the 1880s, the differences between these subcommunities was greatly diminished. Furthermore, Alexander and Allen reject the utility of the "island community" paradigm for the case of Salt Lake City due to the high number of foreign migrants from diverse backgrounds and the constant parade of sojourners that passed through to points south and west. Both elements dramatically influenced social construction in Salt Lake City.⁵

The most useful text for understanding the political development of Salt Lake City and the Utah Territory is Chapter Three of Eugene Moehring's 2004 study, *Urbanism and Empire in the Far West, 1840-1890*. Moehring employs theories of imperial construction from Edward Said and Felix Guattari to argue that the Latter-day Saints and the United States briefly constituted two competing empires with radically divergent visions and ambitions. He states that Mormons used cities and towns as specific vehicles for a religious idealism that permeated all aspects of community life. As the Gentile population rose and asserted its vision, these networks challenged one another, and ultimately, radical concessions were made for the sake of stability and security.⁶

⁵ Thomas Alexander and James Allen, *Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1984), 8-9 and 14.

⁶ Eugene P. Moehring, *Urbanism and Empire in the Far West, 1840-1890* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004), 82-84.

Starting from the point of Brigham Young's initial vision of economic independence allows one to track the gradual erosion of that ideal throughout the first two decades of Mormon settlement in Utah. The religious, social, and political life of the Mormon capital were all dictated by the degree of economic inclusivity extended to non-Mormons. This holistic approach to community analysis reveals that although the geographic isolation of the Salt Lake Valley afforded the Mormons the opportunity to establish a permanent and prosperous settlement, that stability was only achieved at the expense of significant ecclesiastical concessions regarding economic organization and political autonomy.

Religion

Brigham Young's 1847 proclamation on religious tolerance was formally codified in the Constitution of the State of Deseret, which the Mormons drafted in 1850 to support their application to the United States. The drafters followed the U.S. Constitution and wrote:

All men shall have a natural and inalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and the General Assembly shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or of prohibiting the free exercise thereof... and no subordination or preference of any one sect or denomination to another shall ever be established by law, nor shall any religious test be ever required for any office of trust under this State.⁷

Congress did not approve the formation of Deseret and instead formed the Utah Territory, but the document reveals a great deal about the intentions of the Mormon community and the society that they sought to establish. They clearly valued their autonomy enough to assure the United States about their religious tolerance. This was a period before the Civil War when individual states had a higher degree of autonomy than they would afterwards. The Saints had learned this lesson firsthand from the federal government's refusal to mediate settlements in Missouri and Illinois. They intended to secure some political independence by conforming to American

⁷ "Constitution of the State of Deseret," Article VIII, Sec. 3 (Washington, DC: Wm M. Belt, 1850), 7.

expectations of religious pluralism, which they had been willing to do since Missouri. Therefore, the Mormons established a society that enjoyed a surprising degree of religious tolerance.

One aspect of religious pluralism that was relatively new in the Utahan context was the presence of an influential Jewish minority. The first Jewish settlers in Salt Lake City were Julius Gerson Brooks and his wife Fanny who owned and operated a millinery and bakery in 1854. However, the period of steady growth began in 1864. Historian Louis Zucker asserted that the Jewish pioneers in Salt Lake City were escaping the persecutions of ancestral Germany and the barriers to social advancement in eastern cities by moving to the frontier. The burgeoning mining industry and military installations provided economic opportunities for merchants, which attracted Jewish businessmen like the Auerbachs. The Jewish community had a fully operational social auxiliary in 1866 and Brigham Young himself donated the lots that became B'nai Israel Cemetery in 1868. The LDS also permitted the Jewish community to celebrate their High Holy Day festivals on the Mormon Temple grounds. This "brotherly regard" was, in part, a theological relationship. The Mormon Saints considered themselves the descendants of the House of Joseph and the "Lost Tribes" of Israel. Jews have traditionally identified themselves as the people of the House of Judah. According to Zucker, this consideration has only been suspended once and that was after the period of initial settlement.⁸

In addition to the help that Mormon elites provided in establishing the community, there was also a high degree of religious interaction among the general population. *The Israelite*, a Jewish newspaper from Cincinnati, ran an article on the Salt Lake City community in 1866 and shared that "several young Israelites have married Mormon ladies, one of whom has embraced

⁸ Louis C. Zucker, "The Jews of Salt Lake City: Our Background," Jewish Archives, MS0224, Bx 26, Fd 30, Louis C. Zucker, "The Jews of Salt Lake City," Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Judaism, and the others are soon expected to follow.” The interaction of religious groups, to the degree of intermarriage, indicates that the Jewish community was well established and occasionally well received by the Mormon host community. The paper’s report of conversion is especially intriguing. Mormonism enjoyed a high rate of retention and out-conversion was rare. The theological similarities and allusions to a shared heritage might offer one explanation, but this was only one occasion so it also might be anomalous. Regardless, the Jewish community enjoyed a high degree of tolerance in Salt Lake City, as observed by external contemporaries and later reflections.⁹

Religious tolerance was also extended to mainstream Christians in Salt Lake City, although their relationship with Mormons was more contentious. The first Roman Catholic mass was held at Camp Floyd in 1859 and the first Protestant service was held in 1862 at Camp Douglas. These were temporary measures to serve the military community and a small band of Gentile merchants. The Presbyterian and Congregationalist minister, Norman McLeod, launched the first permanent Protestant mission in 1865. McLeod established a brick-and-mortar edifice named Independence Hall in downtown Salt Lake City and operated two Sunday schools. The dearth of quality educational institutions apparently motivated many Mormon families to send their children to McLeod’s schools as well. In addition to educational ministries, McLeod also participated with the Mormons in a joint memorial service for Abraham Lincoln. The Mormon elites were suspicious of the Presbyterian educational system and tried, in vain, to establish an effective and attractive alternative. Brigham Young’s opposition to public schools and insistence on the use of the Deseret alphabet undermined those efforts. In 1866, Dr. John King Robinson, the superintendent of McLeod’s Sunday school program, was murdered outside the church. This

⁹ “Domestic Record,” *The Israelite* (Cincinnati), [3 August 1866], Jewish Archives, MS0224, Bx 26, Fd 35, Articles, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

murder was probably economically motivated, as Robinson had recently jumped a claim to the municipal hot springs in order to establish a surgical hospital for Salt Lake City. However, the murder was never solved and it occurred as McLeod was testifying to the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., asking for continued occupation of Camp Floyd and alleging corruption, manipulation, and civil rights abuse of Gentiles by Mormons in Salt Lake City. The municipal police force did not pursue the investigation vigorously, despite public outcry from both Mormon and non-Mormon circles. There was some breakdown in the relationship between Robinson, McLeod, and their Mormon neighbors. However, the schools continued to operate under the direction of Revs. George Foote and T.W. Haskins.¹⁰

When Episcopal Bishop Daniel Tuttle went to Salt Lake City in 1867, he maintained and expanded McLeod's educational ministries. He also visited with Brigham Young and decided to maintain a professional, but distant, relationship with him. His encyclopedia entry on Mormonism for Shaff's *Religious Encyclopedia* demonstrated a deep familiarity with Mormon history, sociology, and theology. He also conveyed the major issues in Mormon society such as fanaticism, polygamy, and their relationship to the federal government with a surprising degree of insight. He took the Mormons seriously enough and had sufficient contact with them to develop a more empathetic opinion than most non-Mormon Americans in the nineteenth century. This article and its ecclesiastical authorship and audience suggest that there was sufficient religious tolerance to permit some exchange of ideas.¹¹

Furthermore, Gentiles living within Salt Lake City acknowledged Brigham Young's tolerance of other religions. Warren Hussey, a Salt Lake City Gentile, wrote a letter to Daniel

¹⁰ Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 248-252 and 271-273; Alexander, *Utah*, 153.

¹¹ Daniel S. Tuttle, "Mormons," in *A Religious Encyclopedia: or Dictionary of Biblical, Historical, Doctrinal, and Practical Theology*, Vol. 2, Philip Schaff, ed. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), 1575-1581.

Tuttle in 1867 to describe the Mormons' liberal policies: "I am quite intimate with Prest. Young and have very frequently heard him express himself concerning other churches coming in here; and am very sure they will meet a hearty welcome from him, *under certain circumstances*. He is not at all prejudiced against other religions, but is most in favor of his own of course. Have frequently heard him say that the Mormons were not the only people to be saved." Tuttle worked in Salt Lake City for the majority of his career and helped develop that community. When he left for Missouri, he received a tribute in the *Deseret News*. Although the Mormons were concerned about subversion and clearly had parameters in which non-Mormons were expected to operate, they did not interfere with respectful and peaceful ministries within Salt Lake City.¹²

Daniel Tuttle calculated that including the population of Camp Floyd, non-Mormons made up seven percent of the population of Salt Lake City in 1867. Not counting Camp Floyd, it was closer to four percent. This community also included the nonreligious and Mormon apostates. Religious dissent does not seem to have been a significant point of conflict in early Salt Lake City. Most of the conflict that arose between Mormons and non-Mormons was justified on social, political, and especially on economic grounds. Religion was the initial category of distinction, but it was auxiliary behaviors that triggered contention. The Mormon experience of religious persecution inspired them to tolerate a degree of religious diversity in their midst, as evidenced by their legal assurances. However, it also inspired a measure of justification in maintaining their own interests. After having been forcibly removed from Missouri and Illinois, they were committed to maintaining authority in their new home. They

¹² Warren Hussey to Daniel Tuttle, [13 March 1867], in *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers*, William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 370.

permitted religious pluralism, within established limits. This is consistent with Brigham Young's original vision of religious tolerance that he articulated at the pioneer campground.¹³

Society

Migration, marriage, and militarism were pillars of Salt Lake City society. The influence of the handcart pioneers was alluded to briefly before but will be explored in more detail here. Although the immigration of Mormon faithful was significant, non-Mormon entrepreneurs also benefitted from Salt Lake City's intermountain location and the transportation industry that developed around it. Polygamy was firmly established and openly practiced in Utah during this period and led to contention between federal officials and the Mormon leadership. Finally, one of the major industries for non-Mormon residents besides the Main Street merchants was the U.S. Army, which established camps in the territory as early as 1858 and near Salt Lake by 1862.

Between 1847 and 1860, more than 40,000 Mormon migrants made the overland journey from the East to Salt Lake City and its environs. Refugees from Illinois and converts from other areas of the United States, Canada, and Europe flooded into the region in pursuit of a peaceful and secure location to practice their unorthodox faith. Most settlers before 1856 came on wagons pulled by ox teams and funded by the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, a ministry of the church that was chartered by the territorial government. Oxen and wagons continued to be the dominant mode of transportation. However, the more dramatic method became the handcart. Some 3,000 Mormons pushed or pulled wheelbarrow-style carts over the 1,400-mile trip between 1856 and 1860. The perseverance of these early pilgrims became etched into the collective identity of Utah and Mormonism. The constant influx of Mormon pioneers firmly established the territory as a Mormon enclave in the nineteenth century. As the dominant majority, society took on a distinctly

¹³ Paul A. Wright, "The Growth and Distribution of the Mormon and Non-Mormon Populations in Salt Lake City" (M.A. Diss., The University of Chicago, 1970), 11.

Mormon flavor. However, this group was ethnically diverse. Most were Americans from Illinois, the Midwest, and New England, but there were also thousands of immigrants from Canada, the British Isles, Scandinavia, and northern Europe. The ethnic diversity of Salt Lake City, as the major political and economic hub, reinforced the tolerance that non-Mormon residents experienced. The realities of receiving so many migrants also reinforced the need for non-Mormon merchants to supply their need for extraneous items that were illogical to carry over the long distance.¹⁴

Gentiles also supported the immigration industry through their labor in the transportation sector. In 1867, Daniel Tuttle estimated that 200 of the 1,050 non-Mormons living in Salt Lake City worked on stagecoaches. During this period, non-Mormons continued to develop the railroad industry in Utah. Mormons viewed the railroad as a mixed blessing. It simultaneously provided access to exogenous market goods and incoming pilgrims, yet it dramatically undermined the security benefits of their remote and difficult-to-access location. For a brief period the Gentiles of Utah almost cornered the transportation market and dominated the wagons, boats, and trains. A predominantly Gentile town called Corinne grew up on the north end of Salt Lake. By the time that the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, Corinne was the second largest city in Utah and handled almost all of the shipping on the lake. Corinne and the Mormon city of Ogden (backed by Salt Lake City) briefly struggled over railroad freighting in the region. However, Brigham Young funded a trunk line from Salt Lake City to Ogden and settled the issue by cutting out the Gentiles in Corinne. The timing coincided with a boycott on non-Mormon merchants and reflects the importance of shipping and freighting in

¹⁴ Alexander, 101-102; William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957).

Utah during this period. The conditions of a highly immigration-oriented society and a burgeoning transportation sector reinforced the mutuality of Mormon and non-Mormon economic and social roles. These two communities became more codependent up until the railroad was completed and their separate spheres were integrated by the availability of cheaper and more reliable goods and services.¹⁵

Another aspect of Salt Lake City social life concerned Mormon marriage practices. Polygamy was practiced in select circles of the Mormon elite even during the Nauvoo period but was more common in the Great Salt Basin during the latter half of the nineteenth century. There have been several scholarly studies of the nature of Mormon polygamy and its consequences within the faith as well as the animosity that it engendered with the nation's policymakers in Washington. It continues to be the defining negative stereotype of Mormonism even more than a century after LDS President John Taylor disavowed the practice. Conflict over polygamy began within the Salt Lake City community shortly after the town's foundation.

When Utah became a territory in 1850, U.S. President Millard Fillmore appointed Broughton D. Harris of Vermont as territorial secretary and Perry E. Brocchus of Alabama as an associate justice. Initially, these two federal officials, along with the rest of the president's appointees, were hosted about town at a series of balls and banquets designed to welcome them to the territory and introduce them to the high society of their new home. However, Harris's wife, Mrs. Sarah H. Harris, was unimpressed. She found the Mormon capital quite backwards and the practice of polygamy especially scandalous. Harris began to undermine LDS President and Utah Governor Brigham Young's authority and refused to pay for public services such as a census or elections. During a speech before the LDS church conference in 1851, Perry Brocchus

¹⁵ Wright, "The Growth and Distribution of the Mormon and Non-Mormon Populations in Salt Lake City," 11; Wallace Stegner, *Mormon Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1942), 252.

rebuked the Mormons for their open criticism of President Fillmore and other federal leaders. Then he attacked polygamy, compared Mormon women to prostitutes, and called on the church to terminate the policy. The incensed congregation prepared to lynch the federal judge until Young intervened. The offending officials abandoned the territory and railed against the Mormons in the eastern press. Although the federal government would ultimately accept Brigham Young's explanation, this affair was just the first of a series of similar incidents. When disaffected federal officials lambasted Mormon society in Salt Lake City, they made accusations of treason, mistreatment of Gentiles, collusion with the Native Americans, and sexual immorality.¹⁶

Daniel Tuttle, due to his expertise on Mormons from his experience living among them, wrote the entry on Mormonism for Schaff's *Religious Encyclopedia* in 1883. Surprisingly, the episcopal bishop listed polygamy among the strengths of Mormonism, along with religious zeal and organizational clarity. Although he maintained that polygamy was unnatural and "arrays woman's nature in rebellion to the system," he also observed that it "contributes unity and strength to Mormonism" because it ostracizes the community from the rest of "civilized mankind." Furthermore, the families that were engaged in polygamy were fiercely loyal to the system because to do otherwise would be to acknowledge their own illegitimacy. Even the vast majority who did not practice polygamy were linked to the institution through kinship networks and religious affiliation. It was an integral part of their society and identity that differentiated them from their Gentile neighbors. The experience of living among the Mormons in Salt Lake City convinced Daniel Tuttle of the utility of polygamy as a social reinforcement mechanism.

¹⁶ W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Alexander, 119-121.

This Gentile leader was especially well located to appreciate the efficiency of the practice in forming group solidarity.¹⁷

Militarism and tension was another significant aspect of society and the relationship between Mormons and non-Mormons in early Salt Lake City. There was a significant military presence in Salt Lake City after the establishment of Camp Douglas three miles east of town in 1862. Paul Wright described this residency as the first large penetration of Gentiles into the Mormon city, though we have seen that merchants comprised an influential, if numerically small, subgroup. Tuttle's count suggests there were 300 soldiers at Camp Douglas in 1867. These military men participated in certain aspects of Salt Lake City's urban society, including the Social Hall, which opened in 1853. The Social Hall hosted an array of community affairs where Saints and Gentiles comingled.¹⁸

However, not all occasions were so cordial. An 1856 letter from Surveyor General David Burr described the case of one Mr. Pugh, a man who was harassed and ostracized for providing information to federal agents. Pugh was accused of being a “[damned] Gentile spy” and the Bishop of Fillmore was allegedly making plans against Pugh's life. After Pugh caught wind of these plans, he squirreled his family away with his brother-in-law and rode to Salt Lake City to petition Governor Young for protection. Brigham Young, however, would neither see Pugh nor answer his letters. To David Burr, this sort of interaction was more typical of the relationships between Mormons and non-Mormons than the pleasant parties. Burr himself was not immune to conflict with the Mormons, though his experience was less dramatic. In the spring following his letter, his public report to the Secretary of the Interior was roundly criticized in the *Deseret News*. The Mormon periodical accused Burr's agents of camping, stampeding, and derailing

¹⁷ Tuttle, “Mormons,” in *A Religious Encyclopedia*, Schaff, ed., 1580-1581.

¹⁸ Wright, 11; Alexander, 107.

fences without cause or explanation, only the assertion that they were U.S. officers. The affairs of government revealed the contentious nature of the everyday lives of farmers and residents. The presence of federal officers within Mormon society highlighted the tension between Mormons and non-Mormons since many of the federal appointees were political patrons with connections in Washington and not Mormon leaders themselves. This tension occasionally bubbled into violent confrontation such as in the case of Pugh or the infamous Mountain Meadows debacle. More commonly, it fermented at the top strata of social life as in the case of Burr or Brocchus.¹⁹

Politics

The political life of Salt Lake City is indicative of the shifting balance of power over time. As the Gentile population became larger and more influential, it was able to influence the theocratic polity and insist on more democratic institutions. The most important event in the history of this struggle during the early years was the Utah Mormon War of 1857-1858. Although the military expedition had mixed results, it securely established the authority of the federal government in Utah Territory. There would continue to be conflict after the war when Gentiles in Salt Lake City attempted to form their own political party to contend with the overwhelming organizing power of the church.

The causes of the Mormon War were sordid and petty. Sexual immorality and misdirected machismo on the part of Camp Floyd soldiers, inappropriate political appointments to federal offices in the territory, and mob action against federal properties contributed to an escalating series of violence and an endless stream of rhetoric to Washington. The Mormons

¹⁹ David H. Burr to Thomas A. Hendricks, [31 December 1856], MSS A 1839, Manuscripts, Research Center of Utah State Archives and Utah State History, Salt Lake City, Utah; "A Singular Report," *The Deseret News*, [27 May 1857], Utah Digital Newspapers, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, online.

accused the Gentiles of misconduct and incompetence, and the non-Mormons accused the Saints of sedition and treason. The Mormons were concerned about the repetition of government abuses and negligence that they had experienced in Missouri and Illinois, whereas the federal government was concerned about subversion and secession. The Mormons had been accused of being un-American since their earliest activities. J. Spencer Fluhman argues persuasively that in the process of rejecting Mormon religion and society, Americans determined exactly what American religion could be. The nineteenth century was a period of incredible religious diversity with many radical groups. However, it was the Mormons who engendered such fierce opposition and the Mormon War of 1857-58 was the culmination of America's decision that Mormons were outside the bounds of acceptable American religion. This decision would be tempered through the negotiations that ended the conflict, but American President James Buchanan's conviction that the Mormons were in a state of rebellion was essentially a rejection of their right to self-determination at a time when popular sovereignty was the order of the day.²⁰

On May 28, 1857, Buchanan ordered a deployment of 2,500 troops from Kansas to Utah to force the abdication of Brigham Young and the installation of Alfred Cumming as the new governor of Utah Territory. Young would learn about the approaching army ten years to the day after his statement that ten years of peace would be enough time to establish the Mormons against another forced removal. The Mormons prepared for war by abandoning satellite communities and fortifying Salt Lake City. Young, who had never been notified of his replacement through any official channel, treated the army as an external enemy and asserted his right as territorial governor to protect the territory from invasion. Mormon leader and Nauvoo convert Daniel Wells asserted the Mormons' right to self-defense as a natural right.

²⁰ J. Spencer Fluhman, *"A Peculiar People": Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Alexander, 122-125.

Comparatively, the federal force was terribly mismanaged with a false start, change of leadership, and contradictory signals from the White House, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of War. These setbacks led the federal troops to stall with the onset of winter and gave the Mormons additional time to fortify and strategize. It was during this uncertain time that the tragic Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred, where trigger-happy Mormon militiamen slaughtered between 90 and 115 Arkansas migrants bound for California. These civilians were the only casualties of the Mormon War of 1857-1858. The quasi-war was resolved without further bloodshed after the spring thaw of 1858. The Mormons evacuated Salt Lake City and points north to take refuge in Provo. Thomas L. Kane, an aristocrat who had spent time with the Mormons, written a sympathetic treatise on their expulsion from Nauvoo, and also happened to be a friend to James Buchanan, mediated a peace agreement. The Mormons recognized Cumming's appointment and the authority of the federal government; Buchanan delivered an amnesty proclamation for their earlier intransigence and appointed a commission to negotiate further terms.²¹

Part of the reason that Cumming was convinced to offer peaceful terms to the Mormons was the discovery that the Mormon majority was not abusing Gentiles in Salt Lake City. Some merchants complained about boycotts (earlier and less organized than the 1866 boycott described below), but Cumming saw that as a private matter. The Mormon War led to significant changes in the political layout of Salt Lake City. There were more military personnel stationed in the area, which increased the Gentile population and probably had a coercive effect on the Mormon leadership. Furthermore, the Gentile businessmen who had lived in Salt Lake City through the crisis were soundly criticized for their failure to reject the government's initiative. One Mormon

²¹ Alexander, 125-136.

sermon was especially critical of the Gentile residents: “There are those who have been among us several years, but they have never proven themselves our friends; like blood-suckers, all they want is our money; they have never written a letter to the States to rebut a single falsehood or misrepresentation.” The Mormon majority interpreted their silence as tacit approval of the government’s deployment and the Gentiles were treated with suspicion for the next forty years.²²

Brigham Young himself articulated this suspicion and accused the Gentiles of “selling my blood and the blood of my brethren for gold... We have been kind to them and I have been their friend, and our people have paid them promptly, and they should have been our friends and told the truth about us.” During the crisis, the Gentiles missed an opportunity to strengthen their position within the Mormon community. By demonstrating some civic solidarity and supporting the Mormon position, they might have avoided the economic restrictions that came afterwards. Instead, they remained aloof, offended the host society, and were suspect thereafter.²³

Another major consequence of the Mormon War was the enrichment of the Mormon community. Camp Floyd (eventually renamed Camp Crittenden) was occupied from 1858 until 1861, when military personnel were redeployed in the East. When the camp was evacuated, \$4 million dollars’ worth of public property was sold at auction for only \$100,000. Mormon leader William Clayton wrote to George Cannon that “thus end the great Buchanan expedition, costing the Government millions, and accomplishing nothing, except making the Saints comparatively rich, and improving the circumstances of the People of Utah.” The secularist “merchants and

²² Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 173; Daniel Garn, “Sermon of Daniel Garn,” [5 July 1857] in *Journal History of the Church: 1850-1859, 1857 May-July*, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. CR100 137/v0044, Vol. 44, Image 241, online.

²³ Brigham Young, Statement of 26 October 1857, *Journal History of the Church: 1850-1859, 1857 October-December*, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. CR100 137/v0046, Vol. 46, Image 98, online.

speculators look blue and gloomy enough, and the true Saints feel well in proportion; while some, who think more of money and riches than they do of eternal life, feel nearly as bad as Gentiles.” The army had been supplied by goods shipped in from outside the territory which were then acquired by Mormon merchants, so the entire stock was a windfall and the basis of the establishment of the Mormon retail sector in the 1860s.²⁴

Although the Mormon War was not as inconsequential as Clayton suggested and the Mormons had acquiesced to federal political authority, the entire affair was bungled and resulted in the economic enrichment of the Mormon community. Although they had accepted the interference of the federal government, the organizational and economic power of the Mormon Church still allowed them to exercise significant political power in Utah. The establishment of a Mormon retail sector further undermined the role of non-Mormon merchants in Salt Lake City.

In response to their diminished position, having been neglected by Cumming during the negotiations and after the economic boon of the Camp Crittenden closure, the Gentiles of Salt Lake City attempted to form a political party in 1865. Rob Walker, of the Walker Brothers mercantile family, described that effort in a reminiscence he wrote later in life. Leading Gentiles organized a meeting to be held in Walker Brothers’ old location on Main Street. They printed posters and distributed them in “conspicuous places, the head-lines of which read, ‘Come one, come all,’ meaning of course their Gentile friends.” The Mormons took the vague headline as an invitation and arrived in great numbers with the intention of disrupting the meeting. The Mormons arrived early and occupied the front rows of the meeting. They nominated and elected one of their own, Jessie C. Little, as chairman. Many of the Gentiles arrived late and those who

²⁴ William Clayton to George Q. Cannon, [16 July 1861], *Millennial Star*, Vol. 23, No. 35 (31 August 1861), 566, Mormon Publications: 19th and 20th Centuries, Brigham Young University, Harold B. Lee Library, online; Dale L. Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1947), 272; Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 196-199.

were present were vastly overwhelmed by the Mormon crowd. Those Gentiles abandoned the effort and left the store. “At this juncture pandemonium reigned, and the Gentile meeting for the purpose of forming a Gentile party did not materialize on that particular evening.” The Mormons tried to play off the disruption as a joke, but the Gentiles were incensed, seeing it as indicative of the very problems they were organizing to address. “By this act, the Mormons engendered much bitterness against themselves, which only served to unite more firmly in the bonds of political union, their Gentile brethern [sic].” Numerical superiority was the major impediment to Gentile political efficiency. The Mormons drastically outnumbered non-Mormons during this period and appeals to democratic principles made the non-Mormon minority less influential than they were comfortable with. However, experiences like the one Walker recorded helped convince the Gentiles of the need to organize a united community to advocate for their interests. It was not until after the completion of the railroad and the influx of Gentile miners and railroad workers that accompanied it that the demographics of Salt Lake City would begin to shift.²⁵

The political life of Salt Lake City drew sharp distinctions between Mormon and non-Mormon interests. This was partly a consequence of the economic divisions in the city, as evidenced by Walker Brothers’ leadership in both instances. The relationship with the federal government underscored and exacerbated those issues, which ultimately led to separate political parties. However, unlike the political organizations in Missouri and Nauvoo, in early Utah the Mormons maintained their numerical superiority and were able to employ democratic institutions as an allegedly liberal vessel for Mormon ambitions. This method, while effective for maintaining Mormon agency, was a barrier to political integration. Since these parties identified

²⁵ Robert Walker, “‘Come One, Come All’, by Uncle Rob. Saturday December 18,” Walker family papers, 1838-1883, MS0463, Bx 1, Fd 2: Reminiscence by Uncle Rob Walker, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

along religious/cultural identities, they came to reflect the political ideology of the camps they represented. Mormon civil government continued to be intertwined with ecclesiastical affairs and non-Mormon secularity was postponed for at least a decade.

Economics

Brigham Young's original vision of economic exclusion was never really successful and Gentile merchants contributed to the development of the Great Salt Lake City almost from its foundation. One of the initial barriers to success was a restriction on land ownership. The LDS contended that the land belonged to God and the priesthood asserted the right to distribute lots for the purpose of development. Once a Mormon had been granted land, however, the Church struggled to enforce this restriction. There were clearly several significant examples of non-Mormon mercantile establishments as early as 1849.²⁶

Gentile economic opportunists generated this community by outfitting prospectors on their way to the goldfields of California. The Pomeroy brothers sold thirty tons of merchandise valued at fifty thousand dollars in Salt Lake City in 1849 despite being suspected of participating in the Missouri-Mormon War. Jim Bridger's partner, Louis Vasquez, established a permanent location in Salt Lake City by November of 1849. The Gentile firm owned by James Livingston and John Kinkead sold twenty thousand dollars' worth of goods in two weeks and employed eight to ten clerks to handle the crowds. The availability of cheap goods from the surplus of the Mexican-American War and the incredible demand in such an isolated location allowed the merchants to set their prices at incredible profits. Word reached the East that Salt Lake City afforded the best respite in the intermountain region and the trail to California shifted to include the Mormon metropolis. This led to increased encounters between Mormons and Gentile

²⁶ Wright, 11; Alexander, 110.

travelers and the continued development of non-Mormon mercantile firms. By the early 1850s, a small community of prosperous Gentile merchants had developed on Main Street. Mormons, who had acquired the land as an inheritance for a petty filing fee, were hard pressed by the demand for land and soon anybody with enough capital could persuade the landowner to sell at enormous profit. This initial incursion into Mormon economic life was fortuitous for the non-Mormon population. Only two years after the establishment of the city, Mormon development was primarily residential and agricultural. This left a vacuum that the Gentiles filled and the only Mormon merchants, John and Enoch Reese, were soundly routed in open competition.²⁷

Initially, Brigham Young begrudgingly accommodated the Gentile merchants. The Mormons desperately needed manufactured goods but had no manufacturing industry to supply those needs. Even as late as 1864, as economic tensions were beginning to rise, Brigham Young himself aided the Jewish Auerbach brothers in the selection of a site for their Salt Lake City store and negotiated the removal and employment of the site's previous tenant. The Mormon president exercised some authority with regards to economic development as well as a degree of accommodation for non-Mormon businesses.²⁸

Brigham Young's original plan of importing goods through the Elders abroad had been abandoned within two years. The church operated a small commissary for ecclesiastical use but intentionally refused to compete with the Gentile merchants. Young hoped that this course would inspire the development of home industries in the Salt Lake Valley and dependence on imported goods would be overcome quickly. Furthermore, he pointed to the church's commercial failures

²⁷ Brigham D. Madsen, *Gold Rush Sojourners in Great Salt Lake City, 1849 and 1850* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 62-63; Alexander, 110.

²⁸ Morgan, *The Great Salt Lake*, 288; "Seventy-Five Years Auerbach Company: Diamond Anniversary, 1864-1939" (Hailey, ID: Mrs. Luscha J. Friedman, 1939), Jewish Archives, MS0224, Bx 26, Fd 33, Auerbach Company Anniversary Books, 1939, 1944, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.

in Ohio and Illinois in order to justify surrender of the industry. Mormons were less willing to pay cash for goods purchased from the church than they were from the Gentiles. The Gentiles were expected to be greedy and the church was expected to extend benevolent and untenable amounts of credit. Young stated that he would not jeopardize a Mormon's relationship to the church by acting as a creditor. What's more, a Mormon debtor labored diligently to repay credit extended by a Gentile merchant and neglected their obligations to the church because of the church's assumed other-worldliness. "You trade with the Almighty worse than you do with the devil," Young concluded. Although Young was clearly not pleased with the presence of the Gentile merchants on Main Street or with Mormon dependency on their goods, he was also more pragmatic than Joseph Smith was and refused to make the same mistake again. The weak Mormon retail sector allowed the non-Mormons to establish a niche in the city and integrate themselves into the life of the greater community.²⁹

Mormon economics also benefitted from the Gold Rush travelers and the demand that they placed on agricultural goods. As the 49ers rested near Salt Lake City and prepared to make the final push over the Sierra Nevada mountains, they sold the manufactured goods that they no longer needed and refreshed their stores of food. This provided both a cheap alternative to the pricey downtown merchants and a market for Mormon vegetables, grains, and livestock. Brigham Young had ordered Mormons to leave the goldfields to the Gentiles and till their own gardens. When a few Mormons defected for riches, Young vilified them and succeeded in convincing most Mormons to stay and build up the Kingdom. This relationship reinforced the

²⁹ Arrington, 83; Brigham Young, "Management of the Kanyons – Paying Debts – Keeping Stores – Material for the Temple," [9 October 1852], *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. I (Liverpool, UK: F.D. and S.W. Richards, 1854), 214-216; Brigham Young, Sermon of 8 October 1855, *Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, [8 October 1855, Page 3], CR100 137/v0039, Vol. 39 (1857 October-December), Image 37, Church History Library, online.

Mormons' commitment to an agricultural economy and stunted the development of industrial production and retail. Furthermore, the cheap goods offered by the 49ers in their haste to lighten their loads exacerbated the frustration with the established merchants. In comparison, the prices asked by the downtown stores began to be viewed as exorbitant.³⁰

The appeal of a profitable economic alternative to the Mormon agricultural ideal also drew out some of the nominal Mormons. The Walker brothers migrated to Salt Lake City with their convert mother in 1852. Initially, they paid their tithes and maintained their membership. After the closure of Camp Crittenden, the brothers purchased the surplus goods at a discount and opened their own stores. They were headquartered on Main Street in Salt Lake City and had locations in Camp Crittenden and Fairfield. Samuel Sharp Walker described the origins of the tithing conflict in an autobiography he composed in 1884. The Salt Lake store did a "successful jobbing business till 1868 ~~refused to pay tithing 1866,~~" when the "government made it obligatory [for] assessors to procure monthly sales of wholesale merchants. by [sic] these means Brigham Young found amount of sales of Walker Bros. had refused to pay tithing before but were willing to donate such amounts as we saw fit to the poor. We refused to recognize the rights of the church to collect tithings from anybody." Although they were attracted to Utah by the religious solidarity of their mother's new religion, the Walker brothers found the economic opportunities more compelling. It appears that the wedge that drove the brothers away from the church was not the nature of their economic enterprise but rather a dispute over the church's authority in Mormon economic life. The brothers were British, so this is not strictly Americanism but rather

³⁰ Stegner, *Mormon Country*, 247-248; Morgan, 288.

the incipency of Western liberal economic values in the Mormon collective. Walker claims they were willing to make donations for the relief of the poor, but on their own terms.³¹

One of the most significant consequences of Gentile mercantile operations in Salt Lake City was the dramatic undermining of Mormon monetary independence. In 1858, the LDS attempted to establish the Deseret Currency Association which was tasked with the development of a monetary standard for use in Utah Territory. However, the Gentile merchants refused to accept this currency at face value, purchased it from Mormons at a discount, and used it to acquire the livestock on which it was standardized, thereby depleting the church's resources. Eventually, the Mormon establishment terminated the experiment when the territorial marshal confiscated and destroyed the plates so the church was no longer able to print new notes.³²

The presence of Gentile merchants was a mixed blessing for the Mormon city. They provided a necessary economic service by erecting a retail sector that supplied the material goods that were required for home industry and agricultural production. However, they also drained the economy of the limited resources that were available. They sold their goods at a profit and transferred wealth from Mormon to Gentile hands. They also rejected the authority of the church to interfere in economic issues or collect tithes. These initial conditions retarded the growth of Mormon industry and led to the economic conflict of the late 1860s.

Brigham Young had already established the precedent of anti-Gentile economic policies through his preaching. In sermons from 1851 and 1852, Young described the patronage of non-Mormon merchants as hypocritical and devilish and urged a cessation. He was willing to tolerate

³¹ Morgan, 288; Alexander, 138; Samuel S. Walker, "Biography – Matthew & Mercy Walker & Family," Walker Brothers Papers, MS0080, Bx 2, Fd 1, pg 2, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. Strikethrough is original to the manuscript and has been retained to emphasize Walker's understanding of the relationship between the refusal to pay tithes and additional regulations.

³² Arrington, 190-192.

their presence by necessity, but the community would be better served by supporting its own merchants and the development of home industry. This tactic failed to inspire development and the Gentiles became increasingly entrenched in Salt Lake City economics.³³

In 1866, the same year the Walker brothers refused to acknowledge Young's economic authority, the Mormon president ordered a general boycott of non-Mormon firms. Police were stationed outside non-Mormon and apostate firms in order to intimidate Mormons who might neglect the boycott. Furthermore, those who continued to patronize Gentiles were threatened with excommunication. Walker Brothers' sales plummeted from \$60,000 per month to \$5,000. Many Gentile businesses were defeated by the boycott. The larger operations like Walker Brothers survived due to their size and the capacity to continue offering acceptable prices to the Gentile community. Others, like Auerbach, limped along with sales to nearby Gentile mining communities. However, they were all hard pressed to see a sustainable long-term solution. Twenty-three of the city's leading merchants, including ex-Mormons, Jews, Protestants, and Catholics, petitioned Brigham Young for relief. They offered to leave the territory peacefully if the church would buy out their stores at a twenty-five percent discount. Young mocked the merchants and told them they were free to stay or leave, it was of no consequence to him. He believed that the stock was too great an investment for the church and, given the boycott, it was not worth as much as the merchants were claiming. Ironically, this intransigence ultimately saved the Gentile community in Salt Lake City. Since the merchants were unable to afford to leave, they suffered through three lean years until they were relieved by the arrival of the

³³ Brigham Young, Sermon of 25 May 1851, *Journal History of the Church: 1850-1859, 1851*, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. CR100 137/v0029, Vol. 29, Image 262, online; Brigham Young, Statement of 9 October 1852, *Journal History of the Church: 1850-1859, 1852 July-December*, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. CR100, 135.v0031, Vol. 31, Image 243, online.

railroad. Union Pacific provided a significant economic rival to LDS power. It bolstered Gentile businesses despite the codification of the protectionist measures in the October General Conference of 1868.³⁴

The church used the occasion to finally engage the retail sector and started down the road towards the Second United Order with the formation of the Zions Cooperative Mercantile Institution. ZCMI became the largest merchandising and manufacturing outfit in the territory with an extended network of stores in almost every Mormon settlement. The Salt Lake City location was the centerpiece and distribution hub. Although the venture was imagined as a cooperative, the wealthy Mormon elite consolidated its ownership. It drove Mormon small businesses out of operation along with the Gentiles. However, even this ecclesiastical venture was not monolithic. Nicholas S. Ransohoff, a Jewish merchant in Salt Lake City, provided 17% of the initial stock formation.³⁵

The economic development of Salt Lake City in the first twenty years reveals the initial conditions for Gentile-Mormon cooperation in Utah. The Gentiles were a necessary evil who performed an essential function for the foundation of the city. Only after twenty years, as Gentile power and influence continued to rise and led to the apostasy of prominent Mormon merchants, Brigham Young and the church took steps to curb Gentile opportunities. By the time the church engaged the retail economy, the Gentile community had grown large enough to sustain its own businesses. Furthermore, their success in Utah made it an attractive market for miners in the 1850s and railroaders in the 1860s. This appeal led to the incorporation of Salt Lake City into the

³⁴ Alexander, 153-154; Samuel S. Walker, "Biography – Matthew & Mercy Walker & Family," Walker Brothers Papers, MS0080, Bx 2, Fd 1, pg 3, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah; Arrington, 248-249; Morgan, 290.

³⁵ Arrington, 301-302.

broader American economy and undermined any efforts for economic independence. Economic codependence within Salt Lake City established the patterns of interaction that were felt through their religious, social, and political encounters.

* * *

Between the founding of the city in 1847 and the census in 1910, the proportion of Mormons to non-Mormons declined from one hundred percent to less than forty-five percent, with the greatest change occurring between 1885 and 1891. Brigham Young's prophesy that ten years of peace would allow them to establish themselves beyond extraction had proved truthful. However, the accommodations they made had turned the Mormon metropolis into an attractive destination for non-Mormons as the American Republic asserted its influence in the West. Mormons conceded the retail sector early on and allowed Gentiles to establish a seedling community during the Gold Rush that would prove to be resilient and endured even against Mormon communitarian experiments. Salt Lake City society was deeply influenced by migration and family structure. These elements simultaneously supported the development of an ethnically diverse urbanity and reinforced the divisions between Mormon and non-Mormon. The edicts of religious toleration that were articulated in ecclesiastical and territorial legislation were widely respected and functioned to nurture a mutually supportive religious environment. The Jewish community was especially well positioned to form partnerships with Mormon neighbors, and mainline Protestantism established a begrudging forbearance toward others. Religion, as a category of human activity, was not a significant barrier to cooperation in early Salt Lake City. Rather, it was the ancillary consequences of religion such as social formation or political

organization that provided points of contention and all of these interactions were predicated on changes in the economic landscape.³⁶

The stability and security of Mormon Utah came as the result of significant Mormon concessions with regards to their dependence on non-Mormon material goods, the eventual disavowal of polygamy, and the acceptance of American federal authority during the Mormon War. The Saints had finally found the peace of Zion, or at least they were not expelled from the Garden a third time. However, in the process they had to radically change their expectations for what Zion looked like. The railroad was the final nail in the coffin of Mormon utopian ambitions and the waves of Gentile fortune hunters that it brought would even undermine Mormon numerical superiority.

³⁶ Wright, 9.

CONCLUSION

Early Mormon experiences were strongly influenced by the degree of inclusivity or exclusivity with which they incorporated their non-Mormon minority. The larger American population had its concerns about the fledgling religion, but the sparks of conflict arose from specific and local circumstances. By focusing on the conditions that existed within the Mormon communities of Independence, Nauvoo, and Salt Lake City, it is clear that Mormon-Gentile relations changed over time, and when they tended towards economic inclusion, the community as a whole was typically more stable.

The merchants of frontier Independence, the professionals of Nauvoo, and the retailers of Salt Lake City all developed different types of relationships with the Latter-day Saints with whom they lived and worked. These relationships entailed religious, social, political, and economic components but they all underwrote failure or prosperity of the establishment. The Saints' millennial expectations undermined any attempt at community development with the merchants who depended on Independence for their livelihoods. Their rapid development and edict of religious tolerance enticed some ambitious professionals and inspired the conversion of several prominent Gentiles in Nauvoo. There, the Mormons established a highly inclusive economic system that nevertheless succumbed to external pressures and prejudices. In Salt Lake City, different development priorities allowed for the establishment of separate but

complementary economic sectors. Gentiles prospered by controlling retail while the Saints focused on agricultural and residential pursuits.

Over the period from 1831 to 1869, the Mormons learned that they needed to include non-Mormons in the development of their community. The statements regarding religious tolerance and the experiences of Gentile residents in Nauvoo and Salt Lake City testify to this maturity. That is not to say they were explicitly intolerant in Missouri; rather, their millennialism inspired a belief that inclusivity was not especially relevant. When the millennial expectations were high, it was not important to include non-Mormons because Christ would complete the community eventually anyway. After the trials of Missouri, they seem to have adopted a more pragmatic approach and explicitly invited non-Mormons to contribute to their communities.

It also does not seem that race, politics, or religion are enough, in themselves, to explain the development of conflict between Mormons and non-Mormons. These factors were certainly important as rhetorical devices, but Americans in the nineteenth century tolerated a wide variety of religious denominations and utopian experiments. These factors are very helpful for describing the motives of national, regional, and external anti-Mormonism, but those generalizations need to be complemented with a deeper appreciation of the local contingencies and the endogenous developments of Mormon-Gentile relationships.

The Mormon experience on the American frontier is relevant because it was central to the cultural development of the United States as an imperial power. Although industrial and military power did not catch up to American ambitions until after the Civil War, the North American West was a dress rehearsal for expansion and subjugation. The Mormons were yet another society brought into the sphere of U.S. economic and political authority, now in its third generation. As other scholars have pointed out, the Mormons established an extensive network of

closely linked communities that started crafting the West in an Anglo-American image. Simultaneously, they continued to see themselves as a distinct people with radically different religious, social, and political values. The process of negotiating their relationship with the dominant culture of the United States is the narrative that this study has reconstructed and interpreted. This author would never doubt the sincerity of the Mormons' spiritual convictions, but not everyone in these settlements shared the same religion and the common denominator of American interests was profit. Mormons and their non-Mormon neighbors lived together by appealing to their economic integration, and the degree to which those appeals were valued and nurtured dictated the stability and success of those cities. However, as Durkheim observed at the outset, "Interests never unite men but for a few moments, contracts are mere truces in a continuing antagonism. Nothing is less constant than interest. Today it unites me to you; tomorrow, it will make me your enemy." These communities were plagued by conflict as the shifting sands of commerce changed the landscape. Over time, the Mormons made certain key concessions that gradually conformed to American social expectations and thus they were fully incorporated into the Union. The story of non-Mormons in Mormon cities tells the tale of empire formation from the front-lines and allows historians to watch the imperial phagocytosis from a new angle.

Mormons were important to the settlement of the American West and authors have struggled with how they were integrated into the Republic. It appears that the more interesting question might be how they integrated the Republic into their worldview. Over the course of the nineteenth century, they gradually came to recognize the roles that a non-Mormon minority might play in the development of the Kingdom. This was not always a pleasant relationship and this exploration should not obfuscate the harsh realities of violent oppression and forced removal

that the early Mormons underwent. Instead, it offers a simple reminder that despite the religious, social, and political differences between these two subcultures, prosperity can be attained for a price. Although certain concessions had to be made to achieve them, tolerance and cooperation provided a stable environment that would eventually pay dividends in the desert.

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