

# *THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE*

by Robert L. & Rosemary Brown

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE RIGDON CAPER



**YOU'VE SEEN ONE —  
YOU'VE SEEN 'EM ALL!**

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## OBJECTIVES

- To prove that D.P. Hurlburt was excommunicated **twice** from the LDS Church on **morals charges**. He then became a very bitter opponent of Joseph Smith and began a crusade to destroy the LDS Church.
  - To prove that Sidney Rigdon never saw the Book of Mormon until Parley P. Pratt presented it to him in about 1831.
  - To prove that testimonies attempting to connect Sidney Rigdon with Spaulding's manuscript are conflicting and contain false information.
  - To prove that Walter Martin and Howard Davis are involved in a very recent attempt to add spice to the Spaulding theory by creating a **false** story about a second Spaulding manuscript being found in New York which is similar to the Book of Mormon. To this charge we say, **PRODUCE IT!!!**
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## CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE RIGDON CAPER

### PART A — HURLBURT'S STORMY MEMBERSHIP IN THE LDS CHURCH

It was D.P. Hurlburt that collected the "affidavits" from the "eight witnesses at Conneaut" to discredit the LDS Church. Let's look at some reasons why Hurlburt would have wanted to discredit the Church.

#### HURLBURT JOINS THE LDS CHURCH

Hurlburt joined the LDS Church and soon after, on March 18, 1833, was ordained an elder.

"Doctor" Hurlburt was ordained an Elder; after which Elder Rigdon expressed a desire that himself and Brother Frederick G. Williams should be ordained to the offices to which they had been called, viz., those of Presidents of the High Priesthood, and to be equal in holding the keys of the kingdom with Brother Joseph Smith, Jun., according to the revelation given on the 8th of March, 1833. Accordingly I laid my hands on Brothers Sidney and Frederick, and ordained them to take part with me in holding the keys of this last kingdom, and to assist in the Presidency of the High Priesthood, as my Counselors; after which I exhorted the brethren to faithfulness and diligence in keeping the commandments of God.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, VOL. 1, PG. 334, MARCH 18, 1833

#### HURLBURT EXCOMMUNICATED FOR IMMORALITY

On June 3, 1833 (77 days later), Hurlburt was excommunicated for immoral conduct while on a mission for the LDS Church.

*June 3.*—A conference of High Priests convened in the translating room in Kirtland. The first case presented was that of "Doctor" Philastus Hurlburt, who was accused of un-Christian conduct with women, while on a mission to the east. On investigation it was decided that his commission be taken from him, and that he be no longer a member of the Church of Christ.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, VOL. 1, PG. 352, JUNE 3, 1833

## HURLBURT CONFESSES GUILT, REPENTS, AND IS REINSTATED INTO LDS CHURCH

When an excommunication takes place, notice is always given as to when the trial will be held and what the charges are. If a person chooses not to attend, he will still be represented by one-half of the court to insure, as far as possible, that the proceedings are held in a fair and just manner.

Hurlburt was absent at his trial. He later was not happy with the excommunication and requested an appeal. Because of his "liberal confession" of guilt, his remorse and repentance were assumed sufficient to restore him to membership.

*June 21.*—"Doctor" Hurlburt being dissatisfied with the decision of the council on his case presented the following appeal:

Hurlburt's  
Appeal.

1. Doctor Philastus Hurlburt, having been tried before the Bishop's council of High Priests on a charge of unChristian-like conduct with the female sex, and myself being absent at the time, and considering that strict justice was not done me, I do, by these presents, most solemnly enter my appeal unto the President's council of high priests for a re-hearing, according to the privilege guaranteed to me in the laws of the Church, which council is now assembled in the school room, in Kirtland, this 21st day of June, 1833.

It was voted by the council present, when this was received, that Brother Hurlburt be granted a re-hearing; and after prayer (which was customary at the opening of all councils of the Church), the council proceeded to ordain two High Priests, to make out the number, (twelve) that the council, or Church court, might be organized. By the choice of the council Brothers John and William Smith were ordained under the hands of Elder Rigdon.

Brother Hurlburt's case was then laid before the court, and the testimony against him given by Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith, and duly investigated. The decision of the court was, that Brother Hurlburt should be forgiven, because of the liberal confession which he made. This court also decided that the Bishop's council decided correctly on the case, and that Brother Hurlburt's crime was sufficient to cut him off from the Church; but on his confession he was restored.

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, VOL. 1, PG. 354, JUNE 21, 1833

## HURLBURT GETS EXCOMMUNICATED A SECOND TIME

Just two days later, Hurlburt was in trouble again. Apparently Hurlburt was laughing to himself all the way through his confession, and thought his reinstatement into the Church was a big joke. He bragged that he put one over on them. This apparent lack of true repentance, plus further testimony against him (morals again), brought another trial and he was excommunicated the **second time**. It is this author's opinion that it would be only on very unusual circumstances that anybody would be allowed back into the Church after being excommunicated twice — it is about as final as death and taxes. **As usual, under the circumstances, Hurlburt became a bitter enemy of the church.**

*June 23.*—“Doctor” Philastus Hurlburt was again called in question, by a general council; and Brother Gee, of Thompson, testified that Brother Hurlburt said that he deceived Joseph Smith’s God, or the spirit by which he is actuated. There was also corroborating testimony brought against him by Brother Hodges. The council cut him off from the Church.\*

Excommuni-  
cation of  
“Doctor”  
Hurlburt.

\*Owing to the subsequent prominence of this man, “Doctor” Philastus Hurlburt, as a bitter anti-“Mormon,” more should be said of him than is given in the Prophet’s narrative. He was not a physician, as the title “Doctor” would seem to indicate; but being the seventh son in his father’s family, according to the old folklore superstition that the seventh son would possess supernatural qualities that would make him a physician, he was called “Doc.” or “Doctor.” “This said ‘Doctor,’” wrote Sidney Rigdon in 1839, to the *Boston Journal*, “was never a physician at any time, nor anything else but a base ruffian. He was the seventh son and his parents called him ‘Doctor;’ it was his name, and not the title of his profession. He once belonged to the Methodist church, and was excluded for immoralities. He afterwards imposed himself on the Church of Latter-day Saints, and was excluded for using obscene language to a young lady, a member of the said Church, who resented his insult with indignation which became both her character and profession.” Joseph E. Johnson, in a communication to the *Deseret Evening News*, under date of December 28, 1880, says of “Doctor” Hurlburt: “In the year A. D. 1833, then living in Kirtland, Ohio, I became acquainted with a man subsequently known as Dr. Hurlburt, who came to investigate the truth of ‘Mormonism.’ Claiming to be satisfied, he was baptized and became a member in full fellowship. He was a man of fine physique, very pompous, good looking, and very ambitious, with some energy, though of poor education. Soon after his arrival he came to my mother’s house to board, where he remained for nearly a year, while he made an effort to get into a good practice of medicine, sought position in the Church and was ever striving to make marital connection with any of the first families. Finally \* \* \* he was charged with illicit intercourse with the sex, was tried and cut off from the Church. He denied, expostulated, threatened, but to no use, the facts were too apparent, and he at once avowed himself the enemy of the Church.”

**HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, VOL. 1, PG. 355, JUNE 23, 1833**

## HURLBURT THREATENS THE LIFE OF JOSEPH SMITH AND IS PUT UNDER PEACE BOND BY A COURT OF LAW

Hurlburt, now filled with bitterness and revenge, threatened Joseph Smith's life and he was taken to court. The court not only fined him \$200, he had to pay court costs of \$300, and was put under peace bond for six months "to keep the peace and be of good behavior."

Wednesday, April the 2nd, and Thursday, the 3rd, attended the court. Hurlburt was on trial for threatening my life. Friday morning I returned home, and in the evening attended Council, of which the following are the minutes:

**HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, VOL. 2, PG. 46, 47, APRIL 2-3, 1833**

*April 9.*—After an impartial trial, the court decided that Dr. Philastus Hurlburt be bound over, under two hundred dollar bonds, to keep the peace for six months, and pay the cost, which amounted to nearly three hundred dollars, all of which was in answer to our prayers, for which I thank my Heavenly Father.\*

Judgment  
Against  
Hurlburt.

\* The closing paragraph of the order of the court in the Hurlburt case is as follows: "Wherefore it is ordered and adjudged by the court that the said Doctor P. Hurlburt enter into a new recognizance, with good and sufficient security, in the sum of two hundred dollars, hereafter to keep the peace and be of good behavior to the citizens of the state of Ohio generally, and to the said Joseph Smith, Junior, in particular, for the period of six months; and it is further ordered, that the said Doctor P. Hurlburt pay the costs of this prosecution, taxed at the sum of one hundred and twelve dollars and fifty-nine cents. And thereupon came the said Doctor P. Hurlburt, with Charles A. Holmes and Elijah Smith as his sureties, in open court, entered into a recognizance in the penal sum of two hundred dollars each, conditioned that the said Doctor P. Hurlburt shall, for the period of six months from and after this day, keep the peace and be of good behavior to all the citizens of the state of Ohio generally, and to the said Joseph Smith, Jun., in particular.

(Signed) "M. RICHARD, P. J."

**HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, VOL. 2, PG. 49, APRIL 9, 1834**

## WINCHESTER DESCRIBES LIFE OF HURLBURT AS HE KNEW HIM (WINCHESTER'S SPELLING IS "HULBURT")

In 1840, B. Winchester wrote a booklet entitled *THE ORIGIN OF THE SPAULDING STORY, CONCERNING THE MANUSCRIPT FOUND*. The booklet is in the Appendix on P. 429. The pages written about Hurlburt by

Winchester have been summarized below. This summary gives added information concerning the life and character of Hurlburt. The text within quotation marks are taken directly from the pamphlet.

Before Hurlburt joined the LDS Church, he resided at Jamestown, New York. He was a member of the Methodist-Episcopal Church, and was a class leader. He later became a local preacher, but was expelled for "unvirtuous conduct" with a lady.

Hurlburt joined the LDS Church and went to Kirtland, Ohio, to be with the rest of the Church. On his way to Kirtland, he passed through Winchester's place of residence and they became acquainted. He went to Kirtland and was ordained an Elder. Hurlburt then came back to Crawford County, Pa., and made several converts. It was here that Hurlburt often stayed overnight at the home of Winchester's father. This gave Winchester the opportunity "of forming a correct estimate of the man."

Hurlburt is reported to give the aire of a proud man — frequently seeming to appear in the spirit of "big I and little u." His subsequent behavior seems to bear out that he certainly lacks any semblance of humility.

Winchester reports that Hurlburt got into moral difficulty and was excommunicated from the Church. He appeared "impenitent and obdurate" about it, but later he professed sorrow and humility and requested an appeal. His case was subsequently heard and due to his confession and acknowledgement of guilt, he was restored to membership. After Kirtland, on his way back to Pennsylvania, he stopped at Thompson, Geauga County, Ohio, and tried to seduce a young girl. This attempted seduction demonstrated to the brethren of the Church that his confession and repentance was apparently not sincere, and he was excommunicated again. Hurlburt became bitter and he sought to obtain revenge.

Hurlburt subsequently "repaired to Springfield, Pa.," which is apparently where he chose to live. Winchester observed that while Hurlburt was LDS, "preachers and priests of the different denominations heaped their calamity upon the Society for fellowshipping him; and made a stumbling block of him, and said there was no mark of a Christian about him. But no sooner had he made his appearance as the champion of sectarianism, and the assailant of Mormonism, than churches, chapels, and meeting houses were crowded to hear him." Winchester relates, "I attended the first lecture that was delivered in the neighbourhood, and there I beheld priest and people listening with breathless anxiety, to see and hear Mormonism forever demolished, and utterly overthrown, with as much interest, apparently, as the Pharisees waited the decision of Pilate, on the death of Jesus Christ."

Winchester's experience at Hurlburt's first lecture is not uncommon; there are many modern-day counterparts:



## Letters to the Editor

Editor,

I commend your newspaper for inviting public comment through letters to the editor.

My curiosity was quickened by an ad in the Rim Country News inviting the public to attend a seminar at the First Southern Baptist, to learn about the Mormons.

The meeting was conducted by Mr. Jim Robertson, an excommunicated Mormon.

I was appalled as I sat there for three hours and listened to so-called Christian people, competing with each other, to see who could make the ugliest and most sarcastic remarks about their Mormon neighbors. These remarks always brought laughter from the audience, as if each remark was a victory for those in attendance.

As a career army man, I have traveled around the world, where I seek worship with the Presbyterian faith whenever possible. Life has taught me to have a great deal of respect for all religious faiths.

I especially respect the Mormon officers with whom I have been associated. I have watched them remain on base and write letters to their wives and families and study the Bible, rather than frequent the bars, the nude attractions, and the sinful enticements of a far off land.

One year ago, I attended a meeting at the West Minister College in Salt Lake City, Utah. This college is owned by the Presbyterian Church, however on this occasion a group of Mormons were invited to attend. The business at hand was to create a better feeling between the two faiths, through mutual understanding and trust. Also to discuss the financial distress the college was suffering at that time. The Mormons volunteered the services of N. Eldon Tanner, a member of the Mormon hierarchy to head the finance committee. About sixty days later, word reached Phoenix that the Mormons had contributed

some \$50,000 to save our Presbyterian College.

Here was an excommunicated Mormon, mixing half truths with sacred scripture, to deceive the younger generation. He was challenged by a young Mormon dentist who suggested that he was misquoting the scripture and only telling half the story. Mr. Heap asked for a few moments to make corrections. Mr. Robertson refused the request and said in an audible whisper, "This is Baptist night."

Yes, I enjoy my summer cabin near Payson, and have wonderful, gracious neighbors. But this display of foul play in the name of Christianity was nauseating to me.

As I witnessed this slaughter of Christian principles, certain thoughts kept running through my mind: "Love thy neighbor as thyself. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Col. Joseph P. O'Reilly

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR IN THE PAYSON, ARIZONA "ROUND-UP" NEWSPAPER, JULY 23, 1980

The following is a newspaper clipping advertising another anti-Mormon lecture by Jim Robertson. You might be interested in knowing a little about Jim Robertson. He is head of the Concerned Christians, Inc., movement in Mesa, Arizona. Robertson goes around the country giving anti-Mormon lectures and claims his authority and knowledge about Mormonism from his being a **former Mormon Bishop**. This newspaper clipping was sent to us from Green River, Wyoming in 1981.

Jim Robertson fits in nicely with Hurlburt, Nelson, Martin, Davis, Cowdrey, and Scales — HE NEVER WAS A MORMON BISHOP!!! He was an assistant to the Branch President in a small branch of the Church in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Being an assistant (counselor) is not nearly as impressive as being a Bishop, so he often presents himself as being a "former Mormon Bishop." On occasion (see Vol. 1), he has passed himself off as a "former Branch President."

**ONE OF HURLBURT'S MODERN-DAY COUNTERPARTS****IS MORMONISM CHRISTIAN?****Jim Robertson was a former Mormon Bishop**

Is there more than one God?  
Does God change?  
Was God once a man?  
Did God create man after his own image?  
Does the Blood of Christ cleanse us from sin?  
Can man see God and live?  
Was Joseph Smith a prophet of God?  
Does grace come from personal righteousness?

Jim will be speaking on these issues and how the Mormon Doctrine, Mormon Scripture and Bible contradict each other

Jim Robertson was a Mormon Bishop and his wife was a youth leader. In 1973 after a number of years, they opened their Bibles for some indepth study. The result was that they, both at different times, discovered Mormonism and the Bible did not add up. Jim and his wife will share many of the truths that they have discovered. This is not an attack on Mormon people, but a sharing of knowledge and truth from God's word, the BIBLE.

Watch your local paper for more information.

**SPEAKERS:**

**Jim & Judy Robertson**  
from Mesa, Ariz.

**LOCATION:**

**Monroe Avenue Baptist Church**

**DATE: August 6 & 7**

**TIME: 7 p.m.**

Sponsored by concerned Christians and supported by 19 local churches.

*Source:*

*Green River, Wyoming 1981*

## HURLBURT DEVELOPS THE SPAULDING THEORY

According to Winchester, Hurlburt was not as successful as he had hoped in his anti-Mormon campaign. "The now Rev. Mr. Hulburt was petted and patronized by priest and people, and every accommodation afforded him. After spending two or three months in that region of the country, lecturing, it was quite manifest to him that his plan had completely failed to secure his purposes. **He resolved, therefore, to try a new experiment, and that was to forge a lie, and make it look as plausible as possible — thus is born the Spaulding theory.**

During the six or eight months that Hulburt was preaching in the state of Pennsylvania (part of the time in the Church and part of the time out of the Church), he was in a small village called the Jackson settlement. He became familiar with a family by the name of Jackson, and others, who were personally acquainted with the now celebrated Solomon Spaulding. He learned that Mr. Spaulding wrote a work called the Manuscript Found. Not that any of these persons had the most distant idea that this novel had ever been converted into the Book of Mormon, or that there was any connection between them. Indeed, Mr. Jackson, who had read both the Book of Mormon and Spaulding's manuscript, told Mr. H. when he came to get his signature to a writing, testifying to the probability that Mr. S.'s manuscript had been converted into the Book of Mormon that there was no agreement between them; for, said he, Mr. S.'s manuscript was a very small work, in the form of a novel, saying not one word about the children of Israel, but professed to give an account of a race of people who originated from the Romans, which Mr. S. said he had translated from a Latin parchment that he had found. The Book of Mormon, he added, purports to be written by a branch of the house of Israel, is written in a different style, and altogether different, for this reason Mr. Jackson **refused to lend his name to the lie**, and expressed his indignation and contempt at the base and wicked project to deceive the public."

After Hulburt learned about the Spaulding manuscript, he went to Kirtland, Ohio, to deliver a lecture on what he called Anti-Mormonism. He made a special request that all who were opposed to the Church of Latter-day Saints should attend. "Here Mr. H. had ample opportunity to display his talent for talking, to a people who listened with breathless attention, and were greedy in devouring his words, expecting to hear some great secret divulged. Mr. H. told them that he had been traveling in the State of Pennsylvania, lecturing against Mormonism; and that he had learned that one Mr. Spaulding had written a romance, and the probability was, that it had, by some means, fallen into the hands of Sidney Rigdon, and that he had converted it into the Book of Mormon. Mr. H. stated also, that he intended to write a book, called Mormonism Unveiled, which he said would divulge the whole secret." He received several hundred dollars in donations to help him accomplish his designs.

Hulburt went to New Salem (Conneaut), the place where Mr. Spaulding lived when he wrote the Manuscript Found. Just as in Kirtland, he called an anti-Mormon meeting. Hulburt told them that he had learned that Spaulding had written a novel while living in their town, and that Sidney Rigdon had by some means obtained it and converted it into the Book of Mormon. This sounded good enough to his listeners that they also provided him with some money to help him accomplish his designs. He was advised to visit Mr. Spaulding's widow, now Mrs. Davidson, who resided in Monson, Mass., to see if he could "learn the particulars to the problem."

### **HURLBURT FALSELY ACCUSES SIDNEY RIGDON**

Hulburt learned from Spaulding's widow, Mrs. Davidson, that Spaulding had moved from New Salem (Conneaut) to Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1812, and then shortly after to Amity, Washington County, Pa., where Spaulding died in 1816. Hulburt next wanted to go to Pittsburgh and see if Mr. S.'s manuscript had ever been left there. "It is a fact easily apprehended, that if a man or set of men, undertake to palm an abominable lie upon the public, they will endeavor to make it as plausible as possible. Therefore, knowing that S. Rigdon had resided in Pittsburgh for a certain length of time, he endeavoured to make the finding of the manuscript take place at Pittsburgh, and then infer, that S. Rigdon had copied it there."

After Hulburt returned from Pittsburgh, he went to Kirtland, Ohio, to try to gather more information and finish writing his book. Hulburt had not been in Kirtland long "before he threatened to murder Joseph Smith, Jun., for which he was bound over in the sum of five hundred dollars, to keep the peace. While there, his best friends began to lose confidence in him, his reputation waned rapidly, and the dark side of his character began to develop itself more fully, and he began to play his old pranks."

### **HURLBURT'S POOR REPUTATION GROWS HE SELLS HIS WRITINGS TO HOWE**

"Those who were anxious that Mr. Hulburt's work should come out, discovered it would not do to publish it in his name, his reputation was too rotten; they advised him therefore, to sell it to Mr. E.D. Howe, of Painesville, Ohio, for five hundred dollars. Mr. H. got the money and gave up his manuscript, thus Mormonism Unveiled, became the adopted offspring of Mr. Howe; indeed Hulburt's name was cancelled in many places. These are facts, and can be proven by hundreds of unimpeachable witnesses in that region of the country."

"Mr. Hulburt with his ill gotten gains went to Erie County, Pa., in the township of Girard, Miller Settlement, and bought a farm, and married a wife, soon became a confirmed drunkard, spent every cent of his inglorious gain, was reduced to beggary, took to stealing for a livelihood, was detected in stealing a log chain, fled the country to escape justice, and that is the last of him, so far as I

know. I have written this short biography of Dr. P. Hurlburt, that my readers may know the character of the man who first invented the Spaulding lie — Also that they may know the merit of him whom the priests of this day, to serve their purpose, have dubbed honourable, reverend, and etc.” (The footnote for “Dr.” states: Doctor is not the title of his profession, he being the seventh son, his mother saw proper to name him Doctor.)

### **HURLBURT IS NOT THE LAST TO UNSUCCESSFULLY ATTACK THE CHURCH**

Hurlburt fits the description of most anti-Mormons to a “T.” He uses deception to fight the LDS Church. Dee Jay Nelson set himself up as a world famous authority with two Ph.D.’s in Egyptology and over 150 scientific articles to his credit. He lectured all over the country against Mormonism as did Hurlburt. He received “love offerings” as did Hurlburt. True to course, Nelson was a high school drop out after two years, purchased his only degree from a now defunct diploma mill shut down by the Attorney General of the State of Washington. Hurlburt has the same reputation — anything but an honorable man. Wayne L. Cowdery had to help set the stage for his book by, among other things, falsely claiming to be a descendant of Oliver Cowdery, and joining the LDS Church for a few months only to impress his readers that he “had been a Mormon.” Walter Martin **falsely** claims to be a descendant of Brigham Young to help him spread fear and prejudice against the LDS Church. His **false** doctrine and **false** scare stories are now a matter of record. Jim Robertson advertises himself as a “former Mormon Bishop,” which he never was. The list could go on. **It should be taken as a compliment by every Latter-day Saint that it takes men such as these to fight our Church.**

### **PART B — SIDNEY RIGDON IN PERSPECTIVE**

Sidney Rigdon was a Campbellite preacher who converted Parley P. Pratt. Later, Parley P. Pratt discovered Mormonism, joined the church, and converted Sidney Rigdon. The following quotes are taken from *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, p. 119.

#### **PARLEY P. PRATT MARRIED THANKFUL HALSEY IN 1827**

“Parley P. Pratt was reared to hard work on a farm, and though his opportunities for acquiring an education were extremely limited, he was brought up in the strictest school of morals. Even in early youth he gave evidence of a profoundly religious nature, and while yet in his teens became identified with the Baptist church. In 1826 he left New York state and settled some thirty miles west of the town of Cleveland, in the state of Ohio, and laid the foundation of a wilderness home. The next year, 1827, he returned to Canaan, Columbia County,

New York — the county where much of his boyhood was spent, the home, too, of his parents — and there married Thankful Halsey, on the 9th of September, 1827. The same month the newly married couple returned to the wilderness home west of Cleveland.”

### **SIDNEY RIGDON CAME TO THE PRATT HOME AS A “CAMPBELLITE” PREACHER IN 1829**

“About eighteen months later Sidney Rigdon, who was connected with Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott and others in that aggressive reform movement among the Christian sects, which resulted in the founding of the sect of the “Disciples” or “Campbellites,” came into Mr. Pratt’s neighborhood preaching the doctrines of faith, repentance and baptism. As his doctrine more nearly conformed to the scriptures than any other Mr. Pratt had heard, he accepted Sidney Rigdon’s teachings, joined the “Disciples,” and became a minister in that church.”

### **PRATT WENT TO NEWARK, NEW YORK, WHERE HE FIRST HEARD OF AND SAW THE BOOK OF MORMON**

“He determined to take up the ministry as his life’s labor, sold his possessions and started first of all to call upon his relatives in New York. En route, however, he was moved upon by the spirit to stop off at Newark, in New York, while his wife continued her journey to her father’s home. At Newark, Mr. Pratt first heard of and saw the Book of Mormon and, without delay, hastened to Palmyra to investigate the story of its coming forth.”

### **PARLEY P. PRATT WAS BAPTIZED INTO THE LDS CHURCH ABOUT SEPTEMBER 1, 1830**

“At the home of the Smiths, near Manchester, he met with Hyrum, brother of the Prophet, and from him learned the particulars of the work. In company with Hyrum Smith he went to Fayette, where he met with Oliver Cowdery, and about the first of September he was baptized by him in Seneca Lake, and straightway was ordained an Elder of the Church. After these events he continued his journey to the home of his kindred in Columbia County, New York, where he baptized his brother Orson, then a youth of nineteen years. He returned to Fayette in time to attend the conference, where he met the Prophet Joseph . . .”

Spaulding is reported to have lived in Pittsburgh from about 1812 to 1814, and then he moved to Amity, Pennsylvania. It was during those few brief years that our three researchers are trying to build a case that Sidney Rigdon wrote or copied the Spaulding manuscript.

**What do the three researchers think Sidney Rigdon is doing with the manuscript**

all this time? Here it is about sixteen years later and Rigdon is a Campbellite preacher with no mention of any special manuscript or book. If he had the manuscript, as charged, one can't help but wonder what he was waiting for?

### **PRATT WAS FIRST TO PRESENT THE BOOK OF MORMON TO SIDNEY RIGDON**

“The sect was founded in the state of New York, while Mr. Rigdon resided in Ohio, several hundred miles distant. Mr. Rigdon embraced the doctrine through my instrumentality. I first presented the Book of Mormon to him. I stood upon the bank of the stream while he was baptized, and assisted to officiate in his ordination, and I myself was unacquainted with the system until some months after its organization, which was on the 6th of April 1830, and I embraced it in September following.” (“The Myth of the Manuscript Found,” *The Juvenile Instructor*, Pg. 31, by George Reynolds, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1883.) See p. 436.

### **SIDNEY RIGDON'S FIRST KNOWLEDGE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON**

The following quotes are taken from the HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, Vol. 1, pp. 122-125. Since Parley P. Pratt was instrumental in converting Sidney Rigdon, the conversion of Sidney Rigdon had to be **after 1830**.

### **THE BOOK OF MORMON IS PRESENTED TO SIDNEY RIGDON**

“The first house at which they (Oliver Cowdery and Parley P. Pratt) called in the vicinity of Kirtland, was Mr. Rigdon's and after the usual salutations, they presented him with the Book of Mormon stating that it was a revelation from God. **This being the first time he had ever heard of, or seen the Book of Mormon**, he felt very much surprised at the assertion, and replied that he had the Bible, which he believed was a revelation from God, and with which he pretended to have some acquaintance; but with respect of the book they had presented him, he must say that he had considerable doubt. Upon this, they expressed a desire to investigate the subject, and argue the matter. But he replied, “No, young gentlemen, you must not argue with me on the subject but I will read your book, and see what claims it has upon my faith, and will endeavor to ascertain whether it be a revelation from God or not.”

### **RIGDON ADMONISHES HIS CONGREGATION TO “PROVE ALL THINGS, AND HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD”**

“After some further conversation they expressed a desire to lay the

subject before the people, and requested the privilege of preaching in Mr. Rigdon's chapel, to which he readily consented. The appointment was accordingly published, and a large and respectable congregation assembled. Oliver Cowdery and Parley P. Pratt severally addressed the meeting. At the conclusion, Mr. Rigdon arose, and stated to the congregation that the information they had that evening received was of an extraordinary character, and certainly demanded their most serious consideration, and as the apostle advised his brethren to 'prove all things, and hold fast that which is good,' so he would exhort his brethren to do likewise, and give the matter a careful investigation, and not turn against it without being fully convinced of its being an imposition, lest they should, possibly, resist the truth."

"A few miles from Mr. Rigdon's home in Mentor, at the town of Kirtland, were a number of the members of his church, who lived together and had all things common — from which circumstances had arisen the idea that this was the case with the Church of Jesus Christ. To that place the elders immediately repaired, and proclaimed the gospel unto them, with considerable success; for their testimony was received by many of the people, and seventeen came forward in obedience to the gospel."

### **RIGDON EARNESTLY AND PRAYERFULLY READ THE BOOK OF MORMON**

"While thus engaged, they visited Mr. Rigdon occasionally, and found him very earnestly reading the Book of Mormon, praying to the Lord for direction, and meditating on the things he heard and read; and after a fortnight from the time the book was put into his hands, he was fully convinced of the truth of the work, by a revelation from Jesus Christ, which was made known to him in a remarkable manner, so that he could explain, 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto me, but my Father which is in heaven.' Accordingly he and his wife were both baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ; and, together with those who had been previously admitted to baptism, made a little branch of the Church, in this section of Ohio, of about twenty members."

### **SIDNEY RIGDON AND THE BOOK OF MORMON** **By John W. Rigdon (son, non-member)**

John W. Rigdon, son of Sidney Rigdon, tells of his father's conviction of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. This testament is recorded in a manuscript entitled, **Life of Sidney Rigdon**, pp. 188-195; also Joseph Smith,



HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, Vol. 1, pp. 122-3, and B.H. Roberts, COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, Vol. 1, pp. 234-235.

In his manuscript history of his father's life, filed in the Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, John W. Rigdon, near the close of that history, makes final reference to the coming of Cowdery, Pratt et al to his father's home in Mentor carrying the Book of Mormon with them. He relates how he himself visited the then territory of Utah in 1863, where he spent the winter among the Mormon people. He was not favorably impressed with their religious life, and came to the conclusion that the Book of Mormon itself was a fraud. He determined in his own heart that if he ever returned home and found his father, Sidney Rigdon, alive, he would try to find out what he knew of the origin of the Book of Mormon. "Although," he adds, "he had never told but one story about it, and that was that Parley P. Pratt and Oliver Cowdery presented him with a bound volume of that book in the year 1830, while he (Sidney Rigdon) was preaching Campbellism at Mentor, Ohio."

### **JOHN RIGDON HEARD ABOUT THE SPAULDING STORY AND ASKED FOR THE TRUTH FROM HIS FATHER**

What John W. Rigdon claims to have seen in Utah, however, together with the fact that Sidney Rigdon had been charged with writing the Book of Mormon, made him suspicious, "and," he remarks: "I concluded I would make an investigation for my own satisfaction and find out, if I could, if he had all these years been deceiving his family and the world, by telling that which was not true, and I was in earnest about it. If Sidney Rigdon, my father, had thrown his life away by telling a falsehood and bringing sorrow and disgrace upon his family, I wanted to know it and was determined to find out the facts, no matter what the consequences might be. I reached home in the fall of 1865, found my father in good health and (he) was very much pleased to see me. As he had not heard anything from me for some time, he was afraid that I had been killed by the Indians. Shortly after I had arrived home, I went to my father's room; he was there and alone, and now was the time for me to commence my inquiries in regard to the origin of the Book of Mormon, and as to the truth of the Mormon religion. I told him what I had seen at Salt Lake City, and I said to him that what I had seen at Salt Lake had not impressed me very favorably toward the Mormon church, and as to the origin of the Book of Mormon, I had some doubts. You have been charged with writing that book and giving it to Joseph Smith to introduce to the world. You have always told me one story; that you never saw the book until it was presented to you by Parley P. Pratt and Oliver Cowdery; and all you ever knew of the origin of that book

was what they told you and what Joseph Smith and the witnesses who claimed to have seen the plates had told you. Is this true? If so, all right; if it is not, you owe it to me and to your family to tell it. You are an old man, and you will soon pass away, and I wish to know if Joseph Smith, in your intimacy with him for fourteen years, has not said something to you that led you to believe he obtained that book in some other way than what he had told you. Give me all you know about it, that I may know the truth.”

### **SIDNEY RIGDON TELLS HIS SON HOW HE OBTAINED THE BOOK OF MORMON**

“My father, after I had finished saying what I have repeated above, looked at me a moment, raised his hand above his head and slowly said, with tears glistening in his eyes: ‘My son, I can swear before high heaven that what I have told you about the origin of that book is true. Your mother and sister, Mrs. Athalia Robinson, were present when that book was handed to me in Mentor, Ohio, and all I ever knew about the origin of that book was what Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, and Joseph Smith, and the witnesses who claimed they saw the plates have told me, and in all of my intimacy with Joseph Smith he never told me but one story, and that was that he found it engraved upon gold plates in a hill near Palmyra, New York, and that an angel had appeared to him and directed him where to find it, and I have never, to you or to anyone else, told but the one story, and that I now repeat to you. ‘I believed him, and now believe he told me the truth. He also said to me after that that Mormonism was true; that Joseph Smith was a Prophet and this world would find it out someday.’”

### **SIDNEY RIGDON’S WIDOW CONFIRMS HIS STORY**

“After my father’s death, my mother, who survived him several years was in the enjoyment of good health up to the time of her last sickness, she being eighty-six years old. A short time before her death I had a conversation with her about the origin of the Book of Mormon and wanted to know what she remembered about its being presented to my father. She said to me in that conversation that what my father had told me about the book being presented to him was true, for she was present at the time and knew that was the first time he ever saw it, and that the stories told about my father writing the Book of Mormon were not true. This she said to me in her old age and when the shadows of the grave were gathering around her; and I believed her.”

## AFFIDAVIT OF KATHERINE SALISBURY (SISTER OF JOSEPH SMITH)

### FIRST CONTACTS WITH SIDNEY RIGDON

We insert at this point the affidavit of the sister of Joseph Smith to further show that Sidney Rigdon had no communication with the Prophet or any other of the family until months after the Book of Mormon was published.

"STATE OF ILLINOIS, }  
Kendall county. } ss.

"I, Katherine Salisbury, being duly sworn, depose and say, that I am a resident of the state of Illinois, and have been for forty years last past; that I will be sixty-eight years of age, July 28th, 1881.

That I am a daughter of Joseph Smith, Senior, and sister to Joseph Smith, Jr., the translator of the Book of Mormon. That at the time the said book was published, I was seventeen years of age; that at the time of the publication of said book, my brother, Joseph Smith, Jr., lived in the family of my father, in the town of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, and that he had, all of his life to this time made his home with the family.

"That at the time, and for years prior thereto, I lived in and was a member of such family, and personally knowing to the things transacted in said family, and those who visited at my father's house, and the friends of the family, and the friends and acquaintances of my brother, Joseph Smith, Jr., who visited at or came to my father's house.

"That prior to the latter part of the year A. D. 1830, there was no person who visited with, or was an acquaintance of, or called upon the said family, or any member thereof to my knowledge, by the name of Sidney Rigdon; nor was such person known to the family, or any member thereof, to my knowledge, until the last part of the year A. D. 1830, or the first part of the year 1831, and some time after the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ, by Joseph Smith, Jr., and several months after the publication of the Book of Mormon.

"That I remember the time when Sidney Rigdon came to my father's place, and that it was after the removal of my father from Waterloo, N. Y., to Kirtland, Ohio. That this was in the year 1831, and some months after the publication of the Book of Mormon, and fully one year after the Church was organized, as before stated herein.

"That I make this statement, not on account of fear, favor, or hope of reward of any kind; but simply that the truth may be known with reference to said matter, and that the foregoing statements made by me are true, as I verily believe.

"KATHERINE SALISBURY.

"Sworn before me, and subscribed in my presence, by the said Katherine Salisbury, this 15th day of April, A. D. 1881.

"J. H. JENKS, Notary Public."

Source:

"The Myth of the Manuscript Found,"  
by Elder Geo. Reynolds  
Salt Lake City, Utah, 1883.

See Appendix, p. 437

## PART C — THE RIGDON CAPER YESTERDAY AND TODAY

There was only **one** manuscript in question written by Spaulding. For a complete chronology of that manuscript see Chapter 6, Journey of the Manuscript Found, to follow the manuscript from its creation to its rediscovery in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1885. However, the Rigdon Caper, which is trying to tie in Sidney Rigdon to stealing Spaulding's manuscript, came about after 1834 when Hurlburt and Howe realized that the Manuscript Found that Hurlburt retrieved from the old trunk at Spaulding's widow's brother's house did not match the questionable pre-1834 descriptions given by the "eight Conneaut witnesses." **At that moment, the second manuscript theory was born.** There must be another one somewhere, they reasoned. Davis, Cowdrey, and Scales attempt to develop this idea of a second manuscript stolen by Rigdon to later become the Book of Mormon. It is their contention that this "phantom script" is the Book of Mormon. After attempting to develop the plot, their grand finale was to present the evidence of the handwriting experts to prove that those twelve pages of the unidentified scribe in the Book of Mormon were actually written by Solomon Spaulding, thus proving the Rigdon Caper and that Spaulding was the real author of the Book of Mormon. This was the essence of their claim of "A Startling New Discovery" as advertised on the front cover of their book.

In our country you are innocent until proven guilty. It is obvious that Davis, Cowdrey, Scales, and Walter Martin have motives other than truth in their activities relating to the LDS Church. Nevertheless, they have put us in the position of proving that Sidney Rigdon **didn't** steal Spaulding's manuscript and rework it into the Book of Mormon. The ancestors of Rosemary Brown, a co-author of this book, came from around that area also. Can you imagine the work involved in proving that her relatives didn't steal Spaulding's manuscript either? To make the job harder, all throughout the book WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON there is conflicting testimony as to what they want to prove. There is testimony that Spaulding's manuscript was returned to him from the printer's office, there is testimony that it couldn't be found and Spaulding said that Rigdon had stolen it, and there is testimony that it was returned to Spaulding and then Rigdon stole it. Sidney Rigdon was raised on a farm in Liberty, Pennsylvania, and didn't move to Pittsburgh until about 1822. Because he was a close friend to Joseph Smith and a leader in the early Church, he was chosen as the target to have purloined Spaulding's manuscript. We have researched most all of the testimony included in WRWTBOM concerning the accusation against Sidney Rigdon. It would take another small book to show all the inconsistencies, and it's not all that exciting to read. To give you an example of their inconsistencies, we will present a few of the most obvious below.

**TESTIMONY OF JEFFRIES****(P. 104 — WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON?)**

As we previously stated, Rigdon left the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1844. At that time he spoke to James Jeffries while both he and Jeffries were in St. Louis. Jeffries relates the incident:

Forty years ago I was in business in St. Louis. The Mormons then had their temple in Nauvoo. I had business transactions with them. I knew Sidney Rigdon. He told me several times that there was in the printing office with which he was connected, in Ohio, a manuscript of the Rev. Spaulding, tracing the origin of the Indians from the lost tribes of Israel. This M.S. was in the office several years. He was familiar with it. Spaulding wanted it published, but had not the means to pay for the printing. He [Rigdon] and Joe Smith used to look over the M.S. and read it on Sundays. Rigdon said Smith took the MS. and said, "I'll print it," and went off to Palmyra, New York.<sup>19</sup>

Although Jeffries mislocated the printshop in Ohio (since both Rigdon and Spaulding had each previously lived in Ohio), his testimony agrees in substance with the previous statements. At the time of this statement (1884) Jeffries was living in Maryland and dictated his words to Rev. Calvin D. Wilson in the presence of his wife and Dr. J.M. Finney.

There are several things wrong with this letter. The Patterson Printing office was located in Pittsburgh, PA, and not in the state of Ohio. In the above incident, Jeffries claimed that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon read the Spaulding manuscript several times and then Joseph Smith took it to Palmyra for printing. As you have previously read, Sidney Rigdon, John Rigdon (Sidney Rigdon's son), the wife of Sidney Rigdon, and Katherine Salisbury (Joseph Smith's sister), all testified that the Book of Mormon was already printed **before** it was presented to Sidney Rigdon by the missionaries. Finally,

Sidney Rigdon never was "connected" with a printing office. **This is obviously a false testimony.** One thing you may notice in reading WRWTBOM is that an unusual number of testimonies have a "Reverend" either writing it or substantiating it. Men of the cloth are usually considered honest, truthful, etc. It is this author's opinion that they were written that way for effect, to lend an air of credibility.

## TESTIMONY OF HENDRIX

### (P. 135-140 — WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON?)

#### The Testimony of Hendrix

A quite detailed statement concerning the origin of *The Book of Mormon* and the relationship between Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith was provided by Daniel Hendrix, who as a young man lived in Palmyra and was very well acquainted with Smith and later Rigdon. He said:

I was a young man in a store in Palmyra, N.Y. from 1822 until 1830 . . . and among the daily visitors at the establishment was Joseph Smith, Jr. Every one knew him as Joe Smith. He had lived in Palmyra a few years previous to my going there from Rochester.

Joe was the most ragged, lazy fellow in the place, and that is saying a good deal. He was about 25 years old. I can see him now, in my mind's eye, with his torn and patched trousers held to his form by a pair of suspenders made out of sheeting, with his calico shirt as dirty and black as the earth, and his uncombed hair sticking through the holes in his old battered hat. In winter I used to pity him, for his shoes were so old and worn out that he must have suffered in the snow and slush; yet Joe had a jovial, easy, don't-care-way about him that made him a lot of warm friends. He was a good talker, and would have made a fine stump speaker if he had had the training. He was known among the young men I associated with as a romancer of the first water. I never knew so ignorant a man as Joe was to have such a fertile imagination. He never could tell a common occurrence in his daily life without embellishing the story with his imagination; yet I remember that he was grieved one day when old Parson Reed told Joe that he was going to hell for his lying habits.

. . . For over two years Joe Smith's chief oc-

cupation was digging for gold at night and sleeping in the daytime. He was close-mouthed on the subject of his gold-seeking operations around on the farms of Wayne County, where not a speck of gold was ever mined and when people joked him too severely concerning his progress in getting the precious metal he would turn his back upon the joker and bystanders and [retreat] as fast as possible. With some of us young men, however, who were always serious with him and affected an interest in his work, he was more confidential.

... Finally, in the fall—in September, I believe—of 1828, Joe went about the village of Palmyra telling people of the great bonanza he had at last found. I remember distinctly his sitting on some boxes in the store and telling a knot of men, who did not believe a word they heard, all about his vision and his find. But Joe went into such minute and careful details about the size, weight, and beauty of the carvings on the golden tablets, the strange characters and the ancient adornments, that I confess he made some of the smartest men in Palmyra rub their eyes in wonder. The women were not so skeptical as the men, and several of the leading ones in the place began to feel at once that Joe was a remarkable man after all.

Joe declared, with tears in his eyes and the most earnest expression you can imagine, that he had found the gold plates on a hill six miles south of Palmyra, on the main road between that place and Canandaigua. Joe had dug and dug there for gold for four years, and from that time the hill has been known as Gold Hill.

For the first month or two at least Joe Smith did not say himself that the plates were any new revelation or that they had any religious significance, but simply said that he had found a valuable treasure in the shape of a record of some ancient people which had been inscribed on imperishable gold for preservation. The pretended gold plates were never allowed to be seen, though I have heard Joe's mother say that she had lifted them when covered with a cloth, and they were heavy—so heavy, in fact, that she could scarcely raise them, though she was a robust woman. What Joe at that time expected to accomplish seems difficult to understand, but he soon began to exhibit what he claimed to be copies of the characters engraved on the plates, though the irreverent were disposed to think that he was more indebted to the characters found on China tea chests and in histories of the Egyptians and Babylonians than to any plates he had dug up near Palmyra. Before long, however, a new party appeared

on the scene in the person of one Sidney Rigdon, and thenceforward a new aspect was put upon the whole matter.

I remember Rigdon as a man of about 40 years, smooth, sleek, and with some means. He had a wonderful quantity of assurance, and in these days would be a good broker or speculator. He was a man of energy, of contrivance, and would have made a good living anywhere and in any business. He was distrusted by a large part of the people in Palmyra and Canandaigua but had some sincere friends. He and Joe Smith fell in with each other and were cronies for several months. It was after Rigdon and Smith were so intimate that the divine part of the finding of the golden plates began to be spread abroad. It was given out that the plates were a new revelation and were part of the original Bible, while Joe Smith was a true prophet of the Lord, to whom it was given to publish among men.

Rigdon, who from his first appearance, was regarded as the 'brains' of the movement, seemed satisfied to be the power behind the throne. Not only were pretended copies of the engraved plates exhibited, but whole chapters of what were called translations were shown; meetings were held at the Smith house, and in the barns on the adjoining farms which were addressed by Smith and Rigdon, and an active canvass for converts was inaugurated. Strange as it may appear from the absurdity of the claims set forth and the well-known character of Joe Smith, these efforts were to quite a degree successful, particularly among the unsophisticated farmers of the vicinity, and a number of them, who were regarded as equal in intelligence to the average rural population, became enthusiastic proselytes of the new faith.

... For three or four years Smith, Rigdon, and Harris worked for converts in the new faith. They all became from constant practice and study good speakers, and Smith was at that time as diligent and earnest as he had previously been lazy and careless. The three men traveled all over New York State, particularly up and down the Erie Canal. Smith would always tell with some effect how the angel had appeared to him, how he felt an irresistible desire to dig where he did, and how he heard celestial music and the chanting of a heavenly host as he drew the golden plates from the earth and bore them to his home.



... Of the printing of the 'Book of Mormon' I have a particularly keen recollection. Smith and Rigdon had hard work to get funds together for the new Bible. Smith told me himself that the world was so wicked and perverse that it was hard to win converts: that he had a vision to print the Bible, and that as soon as that was done the work would be prospered wonderfully. . . . The printing office was an upper floor, near the store where I worked, and I was one of the few persons who was allowed about the office while the publishing was going on.

The copy for the Book of Mormon was prepared in a cave that Smith and others dug near the scene of the finding of the golden plates on Gold Hill. I went out there frequently for a Sunday walk during the process of the translation of the plates and the printing of the book. Some one of the converts was constantly about the entrance to the cave, and no one but Smith and Alvin [Oliver] Cowdry, a school teacher there, who had proselytized that season, was allowed to go through the door of the cave. Rigdon had some hopes of converting me, and I was permitted to go near the door, but not so much as to inside.

... The publication of the book of 538 pages was pushed with spirit, but until it was completed not a copy was allowed to leave the office. Every volume was packed in the upper room, and the pile they made struck me at the time, and has since been vividly in my mind, as comparing in size and shape with a cord of wood, and I called it a cord of Mormon Bibles. This work was finished in the spring of 1830. Not long after the publication was completed Smith and his followers began their preparations for a removal, and ere long the parties with their converts, packed up all their belongings and left for Kirtland, O.

This removal was not 'on compulsion' from any complaints of their neighbors like those they were subsequently compelled to make from Kirtland and Nauvoo, but all seemed to enter into it readily and with the utmost cheerfulness, though many abandoned homes of great comfort and comparative wealth. In the exodus there were farmers who were customers of the firm where I was employed that sold their farms to the amount of \$15,000 all of which was committed to the care and tender mercy of Joe Smith, and the votaries committed themselves to his care and guidance.

Hendrix's testimony was obtained from the Chicago Historical Society and further supports the thesis that Smith and Rigdon were close associates long before Mormonism first reached Kirtland. Hendrix was evidently very well acquainted with both Rigdon and Smith *before* 1831, since Hendrix said he left Palmyra after 1830.

In researching the Hendrix testimony, we obtained the original from the Chicago Historical Society. In comparing the two testimonies, we noticed that the beginning paragraphs were left out by Davis, Cowdrey, and Scales. Good scholarship would have included ellipses ( . . . ) indicating that words were left out. We wondered why these paragraphs would have been left out without a trace. Since there must be a reason, we thought we would check out the information given. The omitted paragraphs in the testimony state that Daniel Hendrix "is often visited by descendants of Joseph Smith and of Sidney Rigdon . . ." That is impressive. It continues with "Edgar Smith, a grandson of Joseph Smith, told the writer less than a year ago that he found Daniel Hendrix, the last man living who had the closest personal acquaintance with his grandparent at the time of the finding of the golden Bible." You will soon see why the three researchers omitted this and the other sections.

## HOW MORMONISM BEGAN.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ONE WHO KNEW  
JOE SMITH AT PALMYRA, N. Y.

Daniel Hendrix Describes the Humble Beginnings of Smith, Who Was the Vagabond of the Village—Much Given to Gold Hunting by Supernatural Processes—Finding of the Golden Plates—How the Inscriptions Were Translated.

SAN JACINTO Cal., April 21.—Daniel Hendrix, one of the two persons now living who were associated with the members of the earliest Mormon Church at Palmyra, N. Y., lives at the home of his son in this vicinity. . . He is 87 years of age, and retains his full mental faculties. Although a disbeliever in any part of the Mormon faith he is often visited by descendants of Joseph Smith and of Sidney Rigdon, the founders of Mormonism, for reminiscences of the early days of the 'Latter Day Saints' in Wayne County, N. Y. Edgar Smith, a grandson of Joseph Smith, told the writer less than a year ago that he found Daniel Hendrix, the last man living who had the closest personal acquaintance with his grandparent at the time of the finding of the golden Bible.

Mr. Hendrix's mind is wonderfully retentive of events of sixty-five years ago. He has a few proof sheets of the original Mormon Bible, as printed by Maj. John Gilbert at Palmyra in 1834, and at one time had a copy of the first complete Bible. He sold it twenty years ago for \$200 to a gentleman who acted as an agent for Lord Beaconsfield. He has since learned that two Mormon Bibles of the first edition have been bought in Europe for about \$700 each. The present Joseph Smith has tried hard to procure a copy of that edition for Mr. Gladstone, who sent word to San Francisco that he would be willing to pay a handsome price for the book.

**OMITTED!**

Samples of omitted sections of Hendrix letter



Source:  
Original in "Mormon Papers" Collection —  
Folder 6. Chicago Historical Society Manuscript Collection.

Of the printing of the 'Book of Mormon' I particularly keen recollection. Smith and had hard work to get funds together for the le. Smith told me himself that the world was d and perverse that it was hard to win con- at he had a vision to print the Bible, and that s that was done the work would be prospered

wonderfully. . . .

A new convert named Andrews, a plain old farmer in Auburn, N. Y., mortgaged his property for \$3,000 to start the printing. The Wayne Sentinel, published at Palmyra, did the work on a contract for 5,000 copies for \$5,000.

The printing office was an upper floor, near the store where I worked, and I was one of the few persons who was allowed about the office while the publishing was going on.

First of all, **Joseph Smith didn't have a grandson by the name of Edgar Smith.** The genealogy of Joseph and Emma Smith is given in the Appendix beginning on P. 390. As you can see, there is no Edgar Smith. Remember, the daughters are not necessary to prove this point because the last name must be "Smith." Since there isn't any grandson by the name of Edgar Smith, perhaps the name of Daniel Hendrix should be checked out.

Davis, Cowdrey, and Scales state that Hendrix said he left Palmyra **after 1830.** He should be in the 1830 census for Palmyra. According to the U.S. census for the town of Palmyra in 1830, there is no one listed by the name of Daniel Hendrix. Further checking revealed that there was no Daniel Hendrix living in all of Wayne County, New York. Checking even further, there was no Daniel Hendrix in the whole state of New York in 1830. Yes, we checked the whole state of New York!

### **ERRORS IN OMITTED SECTIONS OF HENDRIX LETTER .**

(See p. 302 for omitted sections)

In checking the original letter rather closely with the letter printed by Davis, Cowdrey, and Scales, we found several errors in the sections omitted by our three researchers.

"Mr. Hendrix's mind is **wonderfully retentive** of events of sixty-five years ago.

"He has a few proof sheets of the **original** Mormon Bible, as printed by Maj. John Gilbert at Palmyra in **1834 . . .**"

"Hendrix related, 'Of the printing of the Book of Mormon, I have a particularly keen recollection. Smith and Rigdon had hard work to get funds together for the new bible. . . **A new convert named Andrews**, a plain old farmer in Auburn, N.Y., mortgaged his property for \$3,000 to start the printing.' "

### **OTHER ERRORS AND INCONSISTENCIES IN THE HENDRIX LETTER** (See p. 300)

"The copy for the Book of Mormon was **prepared in a cave** that Smith and others dug. . . Some one of the converts was constantly about the entrance to the cave, **and no one but Smith and Alvin Cowdry, a school teacher there, who had proselytized that season, was allowed to go through the door of the cave.** Rigdon had some hopes of converting me, and I was permitted to go near the door, but not so much as to go inside. . . "

" . . . The publication of the book of 538 pages. . . **This work was finished in the spring of 1830.**" (See p. 300)

**There are a lot of inconsistencies in the above statements drawn from the testimony of the elusive "Hendrix." One might question his "wonderfully**

retentive mind” and “keen recollection.” “Hendrix” cited both 1834 and then 1830 as the date of publication of the Book of Mormon. The actual date is 1830. It wasn’t a man named “Andrews” that financed the first publication of the Book of Mormon. It was Martin Harris, a farmer, who mortgaged his farm for \$3,000 to pay for the printing. And I’ll bet Wayne Cowdrey choked when “Hendrix” referred to his “great-great-great-grandfather” as “Alvin Cowdry!” It was Oliver Cowdrey. Let’s at least get the names straight. “Hendrix” also stated that “Smith told me later that no one had ever seen the golden plates but himself . . .” He apparently doesn’t know enough about Mormonism to know that there were three witnesses and then there were eight witnesses who saw the plates. Finally, any reference to translating in a cave is totally false.

Since “Hendrix” doesn’t seem to exist, it would be interesting to know just who wrote this poorly composed testimony. We may never know. One thing is for certain though — it is a testimony firmly entrenched in anti-Mormon literature. Well, let them have it. They need all the straws they can grasp.

## **AN EXAMPLE OF TAKING YOUR PICK WAS THE MANUSCRIPT STOLEN OR RETURNED?**

**“SIDNEY RIGDON HAD STOLE IT.”  
(P. 100, WRWTBOM,  
BY REV. JOSEPH MILLER)**

### **More Witnesses**

Rev. Joseph Miller, who lived in Amity during Spalding’s time there, and who tended him during his last illness and made his coffin (see Chapter 4, pages 66-74), stated:

My recollection is that Spalding left a transcript of the manuscript with Patterson for publication. The publication was delayed until Spaulding could write a preface. In the meantime the manuscript was spirited away, and could not be found. Spaulding told me that Sidney Rigdon had taken it, or was suspected of taking it. I recollect distinctly that Rigdon’s name was mentioned in connection with it.<sup>10</sup>

When Miller was carefully questioned he emphatically confirmed that it was Spalding himself who mentioned Rigdon as the culprit, and that he was in no way influenced in his testimony by subsequent events surrounding the rise of Mormonism and Rigdon's prominent position in it.<sup>11</sup>

Miller repeated the essentials of his statement for the book *New Light on Mormonism*, in which he said, "Patterson said he, Patterson, would publish it, if he, Spalding, would write a title page. He told me he kept a little store in Pittsburgh. He then moved to Amity (1814) leaving a copy of the manuscript in Patterson's hands. After being at Amity some time, he went back to Pittsburg, took his title page; he called it the lost manuscript found. When he went to Pittsburg, the manuscript could not be found. He said there was, or had been, a man by the name of Sidney Rigdon had stole it."<sup>12</sup>

**"Mr. Spalding told me that he had submitted the work to Mr. Patterson for publication, but for some reason it was not printed, and afterwards returned to him."** (P. 101-102, WRWTBOM? BY REV. R. MCKEE)

Rev. R. McKee, who had boarded with the Spaldings in Amity (see Chapter 4, pages 75-85) adds to our testimony, although his statement seems to reflect that he was not very knowledgeable about this specific event, even though he was well-versed on other areas of Spalding's life, as shown in his other testimony. He declared:

Mr. Spaulding told me that he had submitted the work to Mr. Patterson for publication, but for some reason it was not printed, and afterwards returned to him. I also understood he was then occasionally re-writing, correcting, and he thought improving some passages descriptive of his supposed battles. In this connection he spoke of the man Rigdon as an employee in the printing or book-binding establishment of Patterson and Lambdin, in Pittsburgh; but about him I made no special inquiries.<sup>16</sup>

The Rev. Joseph Miller states that **Rigdon stole the manuscript**. The Rev. R. McKee states that the manuscript **was returned to Spaulding**. In addition, the good Rev. McKee tells that Spaulding "spoke of the man Rigdon as an employee in the printing or book-binding establishment of Patterson and Lambdin, in Pittsburgh." How interesting. Spaulding died in 1816 and the partnership of Patterson and Lambdin formed in 1818, how could the dead Spaulding tell the good Rev. McKee about Rigdon being an employee in the printshop of Patterson and Lambdin? Impossible! The following quote is taken from the book, **WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON?**, Philadelphia, PA, 1882, by Robert Patterson, which is quoted extensively by Dav,Cow,Sca.

15. Rev. Robert Patterson, to whom the Spaulding manuscript was taken in 1812 for publication, should certainly have been applied to for information among the first. Mr. Howe, in his book already mentioned, states that "Mr. Patterson said he had no recollection of any such manuscript being brought there for publication, neither would he have been likely to have seen it, as the business of printing was conducted wholly by Lambdin at that time." This statement seems irreconcilable with the testimony of the widow and daughter of Spaulding, and also in conflict with the fact that the partnership of R. Patterson and Lambdin was not formed until Jan. 1, 1818. In 1812, Lambdin was a lad of fourteen in the bookstore of Patterson & Hopkins, and afterwards was continued in the employ of R. & J. Patterson. Mr. Howe, on being applied to for his authority for the statement, answered, "I think Hurlbut was the person who talked with Patterson about the manuscript." But Hurlbut himself informed the present writer (Aug. 19, 1879) that he had never seen Mr. Patterson or had any communication with him. There is therefore no known authority for the statement in Mr. Howe's book. On being applied to in 1842 by

Dav,Cow,Sca quote most of a letter by Rev. R. McKee on P. 79-85 in their book. However, the whole first page in the original letter was omitted. Perhaps the authors didn't like the second paragraph which states:

"Besides, the bulk of said incidents would be more in the line of autobiography, than that of direct testimony **on the points which you wish me to prove. I shall therefore cite only a few incidents of my early life, unexpected removal from Pittsburgh, and acquaintance with Mr. Solomon Spaulding, of whom more anon.**"

**In that paragraph is the clue to why there are so many discrepancies in all the "evidence" collected by early anti-Mormons.** What points did the solicitor want him to prove? It is not honest scholarship to predetermine what points you want to prove, then ask someone to write a testimony proving those specific points.

And the music plays on and on and on and on, stuck on the same tune. Don't you think it is getting a little redundant? Oh, let's move on. Does it seem a little strange that so many people seem to be involved in an attempt to discredit the LDS Church? (There may not have been so many; Hurlburt is suspicioned of writing many testimonials.) Perhaps they had the same motives as our three researchers and Walter Martin. Now that you know about the **character** and **integrity** of Davis, Cowdrey, Scales, and Walter Martin, you are in a better position to judge what they will come up with in the future. And it looks as if they have big plans . . . .

### THE RIGDON CAPER TODAY

The following "new twist" was sent to us in the mail. It was originally printed by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. It was interesting to note that it states that "we could talk to Howard Davis and he could tell us all about the matter," and Mr. D. also stated that Walter Martin had been to his home in St. James, N.Y., to see the documents." You are sure to find this an interesting development by our three researchers and Walter Martin:

#### **LOST & FOUND?**

#### **Spalding's Manuscript and 116 Book of Mormon pages**

A few months ago a reporter from one of the largest newspapers in the United States asked us if it was true that the Mormon Church had bought the long-lost Solomon Spalding manuscript for \$6,000,000. We replied that we had no information to support such an accusation. It is known, of course, that Spalding prepared a manuscript on the inhabitants of ancient America, and we have published it in its entirety in our book, **Did Spalding Write the Book of Mormon?** Many people, however, feel that Spalding wrote another manuscript (now lost) which was the true source of the Book of Mormon. Although we have tried to keep an open mind on this matter,



we have never put much stock in this theory. In any case, it was this manuscript to which the reporter was referring. In other words, he was trying to find out if it was true that the Mormon Church had paid \$6,000,000 to suppress the fact that Spalding was the real author of the Book of Mormon.

Some time after this, we received a phone call which seems to explain the source of the rumor. The woman on the phone told us that if we would call a Mr. D\_\_\_\_\_ in St. James, New York, within half an hour, he could give us the details concerning the rediscovery of Spalding's manuscript. The number we were given was 516-862-6448. We believed that someone might be playing a joke on us, but since the area code (516) was for the state of New York, we decided to take a chance. At first Mr. D. seemed rather indignant about the intrusion and was reluctant to talk about the matter, but with some prompting, he finally told us that he had discovered Spalding's lost manuscript. In this and other phone conversations he revealed that he had found the 339-page manuscript in an old piano. He not only claimed that he found the manuscript, but he maintained that he also had a sixteen-page document written by Sidney Rigdon in which he confessed the part he played in the whole deception. This was not all, however; he also found an 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon which was marked to reveal the portions which were plagiarized from the Spalding manuscript.

We must admit that at first this all sounded very impressive, and we were certainly prepared to revise our views on the Spalding controversy if Mr. D. had the documents which he spoke of. Unfortunately, however, it soon became apparent that there were serious problems in this man's story—problems that make it almost impossible to believe. To begin with, the claims are so sensational that they tend to make a person suspicious. If Mr. D. had claimed to have either the Spalding manuscript or the Rigdon confession, this would have been exciting enough, but for him to have stated he had both seemed just too good to be true. It is now obvious that although Mr. D. makes fantastic claims, he does not seem to be willing to back them up with any evidence. When we asked if we could examine the documents, he replied no, but said we could talk to Howard

Davis and he could tell us all about the matter. We were surprised that we were referred to Mr. Davis. The reader will remember that in **Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?** Davis maintained that at least part of the Spalding manuscript was in the Mormon Church archives and that handwriting experts have verified this claim. To admit that Mr. D. had the original manuscript would seem to cast doubt on this idea. In any case, we have since learned that Mr. Davis has not actually seen the documents but is merely depending on this man's word. Mr. D. also stated that Walter Martin had been to his home in St. James, N. Y., to see the documents. When we called Martin's office, however, his staff told us that they knew absolutely nothing about the matter. In a telephone conversation with Wesley P. Walters, Mr. D. claimed that a newspaper reporter had been out to his house to see the material. When Walters called the reporter, however, he said that he had never been to the man's house, although he had talked to him on the phone. Mr. D. also told Wesley Walters that he had a report prepared at the F.B.I. laboratory which proved that the paper in the Spalding manuscript dated to the period between 1808 and 1811. He also said that he had sent information verifying the authenticity of the document to Dartmouth College. We felt that it was unlikely that an employee of the F.B.I. would use its laboratory to authenticate private papers which have no relationship to law enforcement, and when Mr. Walters called Dartmouth College, he was told that Mr. D. had not provided any documentation concerning the manuscript.

Mr. D. stated that he was thinking of using the manuscript to stir up the Spalding family to sue the Mormon Church, or else he might just lock it up and not let anyone see it for a hundred years. Taken as a whole, his story reminded us of some of the tales we have been told by con men who pass through the Rescue Mission. They always give tantalizing accounts of what they can provide in the future, but when they are pressed for evidence, they are unable to come up with anything tangible. Now, we certainly would not accuse Mr. D. of forgery. We have no evidence that he has forged any documents. As far as we can tell, the manuscripts either exist only in his own fertile imagination, or he is committing a deliberate hoax. One supporter of the Spalding theory has strongly urged

that nothing be printed about this matter and it has been suggested that Mr. D. is so eccentric that he might burn the manuscripts if we publish a critical article. We believe, however, that the whole matter sounds suspiciously like Joseph Smith's story of the gold plates, and we feel that Mr. D. should be pressured into either bringing forth his evidence or admitting that he has none.

Several statements concern us. It looks as if **our foursome is setting the stage for more deceit**. There is an old saying — to be forewarned is to be forearmed. There are several suggested threats to this “exciting” breakthrough. Mr. D. stated in the article that “he might just lock it up and not let anyone see it for a hundred years.” The article also makes the statement that “One supporter of the Spalding theory has strongly urged that nothing be printed about this matter and it has been suggested that Mr. D. is so eccentric that he might burn the manuscripts if we publish a critical article.”

Wouldn't it be clever to publish to the world that the real Spaulding manuscript to the Book of Mormon has been found, and then have it disappear or be destroyed (or if they get in a real pinch, have it “stolen by the Mormons”) before anything could be proven. Then Davis, Cowdrey, Scales, and Martin can say “Well, there was one. We can't prove it now but you can take our word for it.” They haven't seen this book yet and are going on the assumption that everyone who reads their books are convinced that the three handwriting experts have proven that Spaulding's handwriting was included in the Book of Mormon. Little do they know, but they will find out, that two of the three handwriting experts have little respect for them and have proven that the handwriting of the unidentified scribe is **not** the handwriting of Solomon Spaulding. We sincerely hope they try to pull this caper off because it will show to the world better than we can just how deceptive they really are. Probably the best deception in regard to this supposed new manuscript would be to blame the Mormons for its disappearance. Just remember, if they try to pull that, that we already know that Spaulding's handwriting is not in the Book of Mormon and finding more of Spaulding's handwriting isn't going to prove anything. It is this author's feeling that to make this deception work, some way or another they are going to have to somehow make this “new manuscript” inaccessible. Because the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true church of Jesus Christ, deception is the only tool its enemies have to work with.

**THE LAST WORD FROM THIS AUTHOR IS . . . BRING THE MANUSCRIPT FORWARD AND PROVE YOUR CHARGES!**

## IN SUMMARY

The Rigdon Caper was summarized very effectively by Reynolds 100 years ago, in *MYTH OF THE MANUSCRIPT FOUND*, 1883, pp. 35-36:

“Has it ever entered into the thoughts of our opponents that if Sidney Rigdon was the author or adapter of the Book of Mormon how vast and wide spread must have been the conspiracy that foisted it upon the world! Whole families must have been engaged in it. Men of all ages and various conditions in life, and living in widely separate portions of the country must have been connected with it. First we must include in the catalogue of conspirators the whole of the Smith family, then the Whitmers, Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdery; further, to carry out this absurd idea, Sidney Rigdon and Parley P. Pratt must have been their active fellow-conspirators in arranging, carrying out and consummating their iniquitous fraud. To do this they must have traveled thousands of miles and spent months, perhaps years, to accomplish what? That is the unsolved problem. Was it for the purpose of duping the world? They, at any rate the great majority of them, were all of men most unlikely to be engaged in such a folly. Their habits, surroundings, station in life, youth and inexperience all forbid such a thought. What could they gain, in any light that could be then presented to their minds, by palming such a deception upon the world? This is another unanswerable question. Then comes the staggering fact, if the Book be a falsity, that all these families, all these diverse characters, in all the trouble, perplexity, persecution and suffering through which they passed, never wavered in their testimony, never changed their statements, never “went back” on their original declarations, but continued unto death (and they have all passed away save a very few), proclaiming that the Book of Mormon was a divine revelation, and that its record was true. Was there ever such an exhibition in the history of the world of such continued, such unabating, such undeviating falsehood? If falsehood it was. We cannot find a place in the annals of their lives where they wavered, and what makes the matter more remarkable is that it can be said of most of them, as is elsewhere said of the three witnesses, they became offended with the Prophet Joseph, and a number of them openly rebelled against him; but they never retracted one word with regard to the genuineness of Mormon’s inspired record. Whether they were friends or foes to Joseph, whether they regarded him as God’s continued mouthpiece or as a fallen Prophet, they still persisted in their statements with regard to the book and the veracity of their earlier testimonies.”

There have been many varied claims made in **WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON?** by the three researchers. It has been claimed that Sidney Rigdon copied or stole Spaulding's manuscript which became the basis somehow for the Book of Mormon, etc., etc. Claims and baseless charges are easily made. We have only touched the surface on the deception we found in the book **WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON?** **If it takes us countless hours to try to ferret out all the conflicting stories and then spend more countless hours preparing research to refute them, what kind of job awaits the honest investigator trying to discover the truth? This is why we have emphasized prayer throughout this book as the means of finding truth. It is an impossible task to find the truth without the guidance of the Lord.**

Modern-day technology has yielded further proof against the Spaulding theory. **It can now be demonstrated by computer wordprints that Solomon Spaulding's writing style is not the same as that of the Book of Mormon.** Everyone uses words in a different and distinct way. Authors can now be identified through their wordprints, just as people can be identified through their fingerprints. See Chapter 9 written by Dr. Robert L. Hamson, an authority on computer wordprints, to read about this exciting development.

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