

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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PALMYRA/MANCHESTER, NEW YORK

The Palmyra/Manchester area of New York is significant to the LDS Church because the Joseph SMITH, Sr., family settled there in 1816, and the hill CUMORAH, from which came the gold plates of the Book of Mormon, is nearby. Many events in early Church history occurred in the vicinity, including Joseph Smith's FIRST VISION, and also the visits of the ANGEL MORONI leading to the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon in Palmyra. A number of persons, including Martin HARRIS, Oliver COWDERY, and E. B. Grandin, prominent in the early scenes of the Church, also lived in the vicinity. Four revelations now published in the Doctrine and Covenants were received in the area (see D&C 2, 19, 22, 23).

The Joseph Smith, Sr., family arrived in the village of Palmyra, New York, in 1816 from their home in Norwich, Vermont. By the fall of 1817 they made a down payment on a 100-acre farm two miles south of the village in the adjoining township of Farmington (which became Manchester in 1822). During the winter of 1817–1818, they began the construction of a log house, which was completed by the fall of 1818 (Enders, p. 16). A 1982 archaeological dig revealed the exact location of the log cabin on the southern edge of Palmyra township (Berge, pp. 24–26).

In the early spring of 1820, Joseph Smith, Jr., sought the Lord in prayer and experienced the First Vision, in a grove of trees near the home, and three years later, on the evening of September 21–22, 1823, the angel Moroni visited him in the log cabin and gave him instructions about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The hill Cumorah where Joseph first viewed the gold plates and received annual visits from Moroni is about three miles to the southeast, on the Canandaigua Road.

From 1822 to 1826 the Smiths built a frame house in Manchester; and in January 1827 Joseph and his new bride, Emma Hale Smith, came to that home to work on the farm. Attempts to steal the gold plates required their being concealed both under the hearthstone of the house and in the cooper's shop.

The Book of Mormon was printed by Egbert B. Grandin in his Palmyra Bookstore, with Martin Harris's mortgaged farm guaranteeing that the printing costs would be met. With the organization

of the Church on April 6, 1830, at Fayette, the Manchester/Palmyra area was identified as one of three branches.

The Church still has interest in the area, maintaining VISITORS CENTERS in the Grandin printing shop and bookstore; at the Smith farm and SACRED GROVE; and also at the hill Cumorah, where an appropriate monument and building have been erected, and where an annual pageant is held. A portion of the Martin Harris farm is also owned by the Church. Members of the Smith family and others prominent in the early history of the Church are buried in the cemeteries of the area.

[See also *History of the Church*, c. 1820–1831; *New York: Early LDS Sites in.*]

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PAPYRI, JOSEPH SMITH

The term "Joseph Smith papyri" refers narrowly to twelve extant pieces of the Egyptian papyrus that the Prophet Joseph Smith acquired from Michael H. Chandler in July 1835. Located in the Church Archives, these fragments range in size from 7.5 in. x 12.5 in. to 6.5 in. x 4.5 in. Facsimile No. 1 in the BOOK OF ABRAHAM came from one of these fragments. Broadly, the term also refers to Facsimiles Nos. 2 and 3 in the same book and to papers and all the Egyptian materials of the KIRTLAND period of Church history containing small sections of copied papyrus text. The discovery and transmission of the mummies and papyri are discussed in BOOK OF ABRAHAM: ORIGIN.

The origin of the ancient writings is fascinating to trace. In 1798 Napoleon's Egyptian conquest reawakened Europe to Egypt's treasures. One Italian collector, Antonio Lebolo, excavated in Egypt between 1817 and 1821. In 1820 he worked at