

Licensing Ministers of the Gospel in Kirtland, Ohio

Richard D. McClellan and Maurine Carr Ward

The Latter-day Saint movement grew quickly in Kirtland, brought about in no small part because of the fevered pace of its missionary efforts, first regionally and then abroad. This growth required the institution of many administrative functions and mechanisms most importantly to develop, disseminate, and control doctrine but also to create order and synergies in the frontier community, where government played only a fraction of the role apportioned to it today.

It was during the Kirtland years that the fledgling Church first took aim at developing the range of policies and procedures necessary to govern a large group of people—both secular and spiritual. Although the more secular interests gained prominence in Nauvoo and peaked in nineteenth-century Utah before phasing out during the twentieth century, the spiritual practices—or remnants thereof—developed in Kirtland proved foundational for the LDS faith and are still embedded in Church governance today.

One administrative practice that became formalized during the Kirtland years concerned the regulation of Church doctrine through its emissaries—the establishment of a standard ordination and licensing system for autho-

RICHARD D. MCCLELLAN was raised in Kirtland, Ohio, by parents whose pastime is still consumed by church and local history. As an undergraduate student at BYU, he worked with the Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History, FARMS, the Religious Education Student Symposium, and his Honors thesis—a biography of the Frenchman Louis Bertrand. Richard obtained an MBA in supply chain and marketing from Case Western Reserve University. He is on the board of Mormon Historical Studies. Professionally, Rich works in the Financial Advice department at American Express Financial Advisors. His wife, Heather, is an artist specializing in LDS history. She designs the covers for Mormon Historical Studies.

MAURINE CARR WARD is the editor of Mormon Historical Studies.

izing and communicating the right for individuals to preach the gospel. This procedure served a religious interest because it helped mitigate the spread of erroneous teachings by granting permission to preach only to “approved” messengers. But it also served a social good by providing the public with credentials demonstrating that these individuals represented a specific cause, having been duly appointed as “Ministers of the Gospel.” Published below are lists of those so designated between June of 1836 and June of 1837—but first, some context.

By early 1836, just as the work on the temple was coming to a close, Church leaders recognized that a standard format was needed for regulating the appointment of missionaries. Introducing the resolutions that were soon passed, the *History of the Church* provides some context: “Whereas, the records of the several conferences held by the Elders of the Church, and the ordination of many of the official members of the same, in many cases, have been imperfectly kept since its organization, to avoid ever after any inconvenience, difficulty or injury, in consequence of such neglect, your committee recommend [these resolutions].”¹

Accordingly, on Friday, 12 February, a “Council convened in the House of the Lord for the purpose of taking into consideration the subject of ordaining men to the office of Elder and other offices.”² Joseph Smith presented several priesthood quorums with the pressing need: “Many are desiring to be ordained to the ministry, who are not called, consequently the Lord is displeased. Secondly, many already have been ordained, who ought not to hold official stations in the Church, because they dishonor themselves and the Church, and bring persecution swiftly upon us, in consequence of their zeal without knowledge. I requested the quorums to take some measures to regulate the same.”³

During the course of the discussion that followed, a first draft of resolutions was created and rejected, after which Joseph was asked to draft the next proposal. His draft contained two proposals—the first that no person in the Kirtland stake be appointed to any office without unanimous consent of several presiding priesthood quorums and the second that appointments elsewhere in the Church be recommended by the various branches and ordained by general conferences. It is important to note that these resolutions, while building order into the process for electing and ordaining individuals to office, did not address the problem of recording and certifying the rights of these individuals once ordained.

Joseph’s resolutions went through a rigorous review process with the quorums. On Saturday, the Twelve amended language to the second resolution, clarifying the manner and right by which this was to be done. The following Wednesday, the Kirtland high council voted to accept the original

resolutions and to reject the Twelve's amendment. The high council of Zion met on Thursday and came to a similar conclusion. The First Presidency met on Monday, 22 February, and likewise agreed that the original resolutions be adopted without amendments.⁴

Two days later, Wednesday, 24 February, the quorums again gathered in the school room of the temple, this time to review a number of individuals proposed for ordination (seven were accepted and nineteen rejected). The subject of licensing came up, perhaps as a practical matter in connection with the discussion on ordinations. The group, therefore, appointed individuals to draft rules and regulations specifically for licensing: "O. Cowdery, Orson Hyde & Sylvester Smith were nominated and seconded to write rules and regulations concerning licenses. Vote called and unanimously passed. Thomas Burdick was nominated and seconded to officiate as clerk to record licenses. Vote called & unanimously passed."⁵ Joseph Smith informs us that this was a paid position.⁶

As discussed above, this licensing issue was merely a practical expansion of the former discussion on ordination (first, what's the approval process; then, how do we track it). It is likely that much of the effort for the licensing resolutions—the design, purpose, and structure—was agreed upon to some extent by the quorums during this meeting (24 February). Several points suggest this. First, the ordination discussion had already been percolating for a few weeks, during which time proper record keeping likely surfaced. Second, the writers for these resolutions completed their work in only three days. And third, the council made only one change to these writers' proposal before receiving unanimous sanction. All these points suggest that the draft writers were given specific direction on what needed to be written.

Regardless, the writers completed their task by Saturday, 27 February, and presented the licensing resolutions to the quorums the following Thursday, 3 March:

The committee appointed on the 24th of February to draft resolutions for the better regulation of licensing the official members of said Church, made their report, which was read three times by the chairman of said committee. After which an addition was made to the 6th article, extending the power of the chairman & clerk. The following is a copy of the report of a committee appointed by the authorities of the Church [of] Latter Day Saints, assembled in the House of the Lord in Kirtland, Feb. 24th, 1836, for the purpose of drafting resolutions to regulate the manner of licenses to the official members of said church which were to be presented to said authorities for their consideration.

1st That all licenses hereafter granted by these authorities assembled as a quorum or by general conference held for the purpose of transacting the business of the Church, be recorded at full length, by a clerk appointed for that purpose in a book to be kept in this branch of the Church, until it shall be though advisable by the heads of the Church to order other books and appoint other clerks to record licenses as above.

And that said recording clerk be required to endorse a certificate under his own hand and signature on the back of said licenses, specifying the time, when & place where such license was recorded, and also a reference to the letter and page of the book containing the same.

2d That this quorum appoint two persons to sign licenses given as afore said, one as chairman and the other as clerk of conference, and that it shall be the duty of said person appointed to sign licenses as clerk of conference, immediately thereafter, to deliver the same into the hands of the recording clerk.

3d That all general conferences abroad give each individual whom they ordained, a certificate signed by the chairman & clerk of said conference and stating the time and place of such conference and the office to which the individual has been ordained, and that when such certificate has been forwarded to the person hereafter authorized to sign licenses as clerk of conference, such person shall, together with the chairman of conference, immediately sign a license, and said clerk of conference shall, after the same has been recorded, forward it to the proper person.

4th That all official members in good standing & fellowship in the various branches of this Church are requested to forward their present licenses accompanied by ~~their~~ a certificate of their virtues & faithful walk before the Lord, signed by the chairman and clerk of a general conference, or by the clerk of the branch of the Church in which such official member resides, by the advice & direction of such Church, to the clerk of conference whose duty it shall be to fill a new license as directed in the 3d article. And that all licenses signed, recorded and endorsed, as specified in the first article, shall be considered good and valid to all intents & purposes in the business and spiritual affairs of this church as a religious society, or before any court of record of this or any ~~court of~~ other country wherein preachers of the Gospel are entitled to special privileges, answering in all respects as an original record without the necessity of referring to any other document.

5th That the recording clerk be required to publish quarterly in a paper published by some member or members of this Church, a list of the names of the several persons for whom he has recorded licenses within the last quarter.

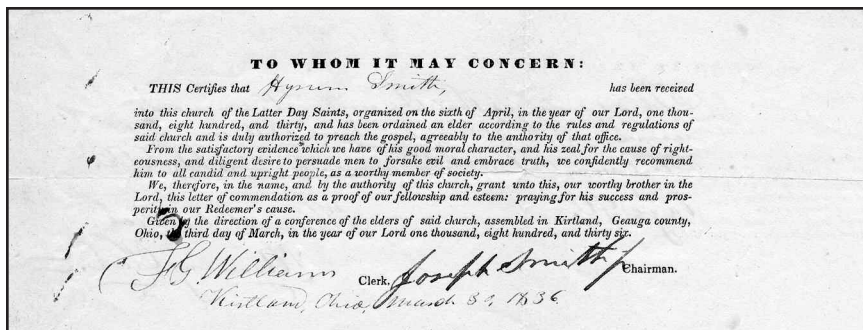
6th That this quorum appoint two persons to sign as chairman and clerk of conference, Pro Tempore licenses for the standing chairman and clerk who shall be appointed as names in the 2d article and also to act in their absence in signing other licenses as specified in the foregoing article.

Kirtland, Feb. 27, 1836
Orson Hyde
Sylvester Smith⁷

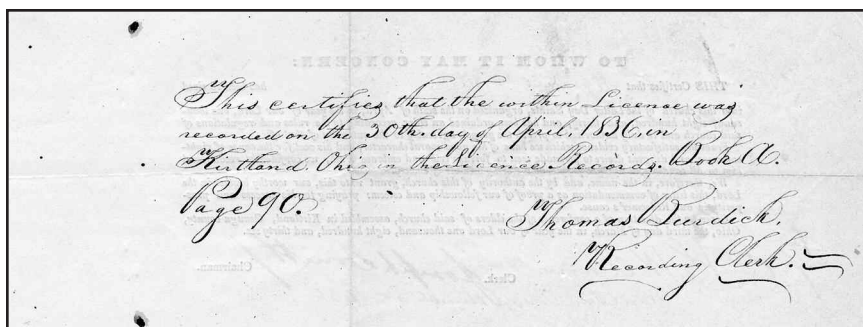
Oliver Cowdery
Committee

In short, these resolutions provided that:

1. Licenses be recorded by a recording clerk (Thomas Burdick)
2. Two witnesses sign each license—a chairman, and a clerk of conference
3. Licenses created in other locations be sent to the recording clerk
4. Existing licenses be exchanged for the new, compliant licenses
5. New license issues be published to the church quarterly
6. A temporary chairman and clerk of conference be appointed



Front of the minister's license belonging to Hyrum Smith, dated 30 Mar 1836 in Kirtland, Ohio. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.



Back of the minister's license belonging to Hyrum Smith shows that the license was recorded on 30 April 1836 in the License Records Book A. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.

These resolutions became known in the *History of the Church* as the “Resolutions on Ordinations and Licenses.” Joseph explains that he required the resolutions to be approved by each quorum in a hierarchical order: deacons, teachers, priests, bishop of Kirtland, bishop of Zion, high council of Kirtland, the Twelve, and, finally, the First Presidency. Unlike the review of the former resolutions on ordinations, this process was completed during the course of that meeting with unanimous sanctions.

Following this work, the two resolutions drafted by Joseph Smith were re-presented to the group, and the Twelve voted (nine to three) to withdraw their recommended amendment. The quorums of the Church now found themselves with both an approval process for granting men the priesthood (Joseph's resolutions) and a system for recording these ordinations and providing proper credentials (“Resolutions on Ordinations and Licenses”).

The lists published below were first presented in the *Latter Day Saints'*

Messenger and Advocate. They constitute Thomas Burdick's obedience to the fifth resolution. They were published in the June, September, and December 1836 and March and June 1837 issues. It appears that after 1837, Church leaders no longer continued the practice of publishing licensing lists in the Church serials published at Far West (*Elders' Journal*) or at Nauvoo (*Times and Seasons*).



LIST NO. 1^s

Kirtland, Ohio, June 3, 1836

The following is a List containing the names of Ministers of the Gospel, belonging to the church of the Latter Day Saints, whose Licenses were recorded, the preceeding [sic] Quarter, in the License Records, in Kirtland, Ohio.

THOMAS BURDICK
Recording Clerk

FIRST, NAMES OF THE ELDERS

Milo Andrus
Elijah Able
Hazen Aldrick
Arvin A. Avery
Sampson Avard
Martin C. Allred
Stephen Burnet
Elias Benner
Henry Benner
Hiram Blackman
Joseph B. Bosworth
George W. Brooks
Alva Beman
Reuben Barton
James Braden
Benjamin Brown
George Boosinger
James Burnham
Seymour Brunson
Lorenzo Barnes
Harrison Burgess
Almon Babbit
Loren Babbit
William Bosley
Nathan B. Baldwin
Francis G. Bishop
Israel Barlow
Albert Brown
Peter Buchanan
Josiah Butterfield

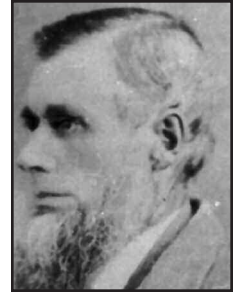


*Zera Pulsipher.
Courtesy
LDS Church Archives.*

Thomas Burdick
George Burket
John F. Boynton
Lorenzo Booth
John P. Barnard
Michael Barkdull
Peletiah Brown
Alden Burdick
Oliver Cowdery
Simeon Carter
Jacob K. Chapman
William Carpenter
John Corrill
Lebbeus T. Coons
Elijah Cheney
Zebedee Coltrin
Warren A. Cowdery
Jared Carter
William O. Clark
Lyman Curtis
Alpheus Cutler
Anthony Cooper
David Clough
Reynolds Cahoon
William F. Cahoon
Osmyn M. Deuel
Moses Daily
Peter Dustin
James Daily
Chapman Duncan
Solomon W. Denton

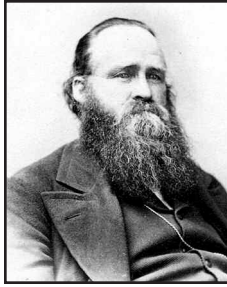
Hiram Dayton
 Perry Durfee
 Jabez Durfee
 Edmond Durfee
 Isaac Decker
 Israel Duty
 George W. Dunham
 William Draper, Sr
 James Emett
 Frazier Eaton
 David Evans
 David Elliot
 King Follet
 Noah M. Faunce
 Elijah Fordham
 Edmond Fisher
 Solon Foster
 Rufus Fisher
 Hezekiah Fisk
 James Foster
 William A. Fry
 Elisha H. Groves
 William Gould
 John Gould
 Michael Griffith
 Moses I. Gardner
 Salmon Gee
 Selah J. Griffin
 Thomas Grover
 Thomas Gorden
 Alpheus Gifford
 Jedediah M. Grant
 Sherman Gilbert
 Hervey Green
 John P. Greene
 John Galord
 Levi Gifford
 Oliver Granger
 Joshua S. Holman
 Elias Higbee
 Joel Haskins
 Nelson Higgins
 Elias Hutchings
 Jesse Huntsman
 Richard Howard
 George M. Hinkle
 Jonathan H. Holmes
 Levi W. Hancock
 Solomon Hancock
 Milton Holmes

Reuben Hadlock
 Orson Hyde
 John Herret
 William Harris
 Heman Hyde
 Samuel James
 Henry Jacobs
 Michael Jacobs
 John Johnson
 Truman Jackson
 Luke Johnson
 Daniel S. Jackson
 Joel H. Johnson
 Lyman Johnson
 Levi Jackman
 Vinson Knight
 Newel Knight
 Joseph A. Kelting
 Heber C. Kimball
 Joseph Keeler
 Joseph C. Kingsbury
 Ashbel A. Lathrop
 Benjamin Lewis
 Amasa Lyman
 Moses Lindsley
 Lyman Leonard
 Aaron C. Lyon
 Nelson Lyon
 Thomas B. Marsh
 Reuben McBride
 Isaac Morley
 John Murdock
 William E. McLellan
 Moses Martin
 Joel McWethy
 Artemus Millet
 George Morey
 John Mackley
 Samuel Miles
 Jeremiah Mackley
 William Marks
 Joseph B. Noble
 Levi S. Nickerson
 E. F. Nickerson
 Samuel Newcomb
 Roger Orton
 Gideon Ormsby
 Amos R. Orton
 W. W. Phelps
 Orson Pratt



*Israel Barlow.
 Courtesy
 Maurine Carr Ward.*

Warren Parrish
 Morris Phelps
 William Parkes
 Uriah B. Powell
 William Perry
 Edward Partridge
 Stephen Post
 John E. Page
 David W. Patten
 Parley P. Pratt
 Ambrose Palmer
 Dexter Palmer
 Noah Packard
 Sidney Rigdon
 Robert Rathbun
 George Rose
 Harlow Redfield
 Leonard Rich
 David H. Redfield
 Joseph Rose
 Lewis Robbins
 Shadrach Roundy
 Charles C. Rich
 Burr Riggs
 George Robinson
 Ebenezar Robinson
 Joseph Smith Sr
 Joseph Smith Jr
 A. Jackson Squiers
 Ezra Strong
 Almon W. Sherman
 Cyrus Smalling
 Zerubbable Snow
 Jaazaniah B. Smith
 Hyrum Smith
 Dexter Stillman
 Hiram Statton
 Lyman Stevens
 Sylvester Smith
 Jonathon Stevens
 Uzzial Stevens
 Henry G. Sherwood
 Erastus Snow
 Samuel H. Smith
 Stephen Starks
 Don C. Smith
 William Smith
 John Smith
 Milton Stow
 Peter Shirts
 William Tenny Jr



*Amasa Lyman.
 Courtesy LDS Church
 Archives.*

Nathan Tanner
 Charles Thompson
 Ezra Thornton
 John Tanner
 Samuel Thompson
 James L. Thompson
 Julius Thompson
 Jonathan Taylor
 F. G. Williams
 Peter Whitmer
 Michael B. Welton
 Lorenzo Wells
 Harvey G. Whitlock
 John Whitmer
 David Whitmer
 Edward M. Webb
 Chancey G. Webb
 James Webb
 Goerge [sic] Willson
 Stephen Winchester
 Benjamin Winchester
 Henry Willcox
 Willford Woodruff
 Daniel Wood
 Levi Way
 William Wightman
 Alexander Whiteside
 Hiram Winter
 Brigham Young
 Lorenzo Young
 Joseph Young
 Phineas H. Young

SECONDLY, NAMES OF THE PRIESTS

Ira Ames
 William Cowdery
 Joseph Cooper
 John Daily
 William Draper Jr
 John Herrington
 Julian Moses
 Uriah Roundy
 John Robinson
 Samuel Rolfe
 Daniel Tyler

THIRDLY, NAMES OF THE TEACHERS

Hial Bronson
 Amos Taylor
 Ransom Vanleuven

FOURTHLY, NAMES OF THE DEACONS

William Burgess
Robert W. Bidwell

John Sagers
Andrews Tyler
Diderick Westfall

LIST NO. 2⁹

Kirtland, Ohio, Sept. 3, 1836

The following is a list of the names of Ministers of the Gospel belonging to the church of the Latter Day Saints, whose licenses [sic] were recorded, the last Quarter, in the License Records, in Kirtland Ohio:

by THOMAS BURDICK,
Recording Clerk.

ELDERS

James Blakelee [Blakeslee]
Samuel Phelps¹⁰
William H. Presley¹¹
Zera Pulsipher¹²
Phineas Brownson Jr
Isaac H. Bishop
Alexander Badlam
Harry Brown
Samuel S. Burkick
Edson Barney
Royal Barney Jr
Calvin B. Childs
Israel Calkins
Jacob Chamberlain
William P. Card
Stephen Chase
James Durfee
John Daily
Edmund Durfee Jr
Zenas Gibbs
Joshua Grant Jr
Truman Gillet Jr
Thomas Gates Jr
William Huntington Jr
James Houghton
Mahew Hillman
Nathan Haskins
Jonathan Hampton
Samuel Jaques
Hiram Kellogg
John Killian
John Knapp
Cornelius P. Lott
William Miller
Garland W. Meeks

John F. Olney
Oliver Olney
Samuel Phelps
Harpin Riggs
Darius Race
George A. Smith
Gardner Snow
Willard Snow
William Snow
Lyman Sherman
Erastus B. Wightman
Charles Wightman
Samuel Warner Jr
Elias F. Wells
Melvin Wilbur
Whitford G. Wilson
Henry H. Wilson
Franklin Youngs

PRIESTS

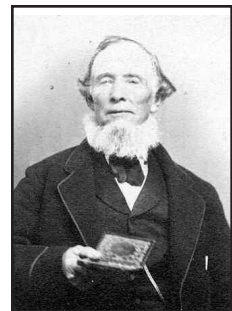
Charles Brown
Moses R. Norris
Jonas Putnam
Andrews Tyler
Abraham Palmer
William Tenney

TEACHERS

Russel Thompson
Bechias Dustin
Orson G. Beach

DEACONS

Moses Tracy
Isaiah Williams



*Morris Phelps.
Courtesy LDS Church
Archives.*

LIST NO. 3¹³

The following is a list of the names of Ministers of the Gospel, belonging to the church of the Latter Day Saints, whose Licences [sic] were recorded the last Quarter, in the Licence Records, in Kirtland, Ohio:

By THOMAS BURDICK
Recording Clerk.

Kirtland, Dec 1, 1836

ELDER'S NAMES

Truman O. Angel
Asa Anson
Solomon Angel
Ezeikel Barnes
Amos Babcock
Jeremy Bartlett
Benjamin F. Bird
Noah Bulkey
Samuel Brown
John Badger
Gideon H. Carter
Austin Cows
Samuel Conklin
Joseph W. Cole
Silas Davis
Jonathan Dunham
Amos B. Fuller
Thomas Hayes
Jonathan H. Hale
Nathaniel Holmes
Dana Jacobs
Daniel Kent
Ozias Kilbourn
John Kempton
John Lawson
Richard Mann



*Nathan Cheney.
Courtesy
Maurine Carr Ward.*

Orin Perry
Gustavus A. Perry
Philip Packard
Carvil Rigdon
Abram Rose
Stephen Shumway
James C. Snow
Charles Smith¹⁴
C. W. Stilwell
Otis Shumway
Sylvester B. Stoddard
William W. Spencer
Alvah L. Tippits
Alvah Tippits
William Willsey
Levi B. Wilder
Benj. S. Wilber
Ira J. Willes

PRIESTS

Jacob K. Butterfield
H. N. Byington
Elijah B. Gaylord
Samuel Parker
Jeremiah Wilby

TEACHER

Joseph Fielding

LIST NO. 4¹⁵

Kirtland, March 3, 1837

The following is a list of the names of Ministers of the Gospel, belonging to the church of Latter Day Saints, whose Licences [sic] were recorded the last quarter in the Licence Records, in Kirtland, Ohio, by

THOMAS BURDICK
Recording Clerk.

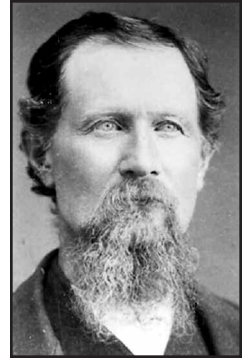
ELDERS

Matthew Allen
 Wm Aldrich
 Dennis M. Barmore
 Richard Brazier
 Ephraim Badger
 Asaph Blanchard
 Nathan Cheney
 Robert Culbertson
 Anthony Combs
 David Dort
 David Fullmer
 David Gamet
 Levi Graybill
 James Huntsman
 John Kelso
 John Lyons
 Wm E. M'Lellin
 Benjamin Mitchell
 Jacob Myers
 Isaac Perry
 Alex. Richardson
 Stephen Reed
 Luman A. Shirliff
 Abram O. Smoot
 Wm Stevens
 Elias Smith*
 Masten Tindal

C. G. Vanburen
 John Williams
 Wm Wirick
 Charles Wood
 Jacob Zundel

PRIESTS

Daniel Allen
 Austin Butler
 Daniel Carter
 David K. Dustin
 Anthony Fisher
 Wm Felshaw
 Elisha Hoops Jr



*Hiram N. Byington.
 Courtesy
 Jay Burrup.*

TEACHERS

Chauncy I. Calkins
 Thomas Carrico
 Martin H. Peck

DEACONS

Josiah Miller
 John Pulsipher

*Published Charles, in December paper, through mistake.

LIST NO. 5¹⁶

Kirtland, Ohio, Jun 3 1837

A list of the names of Ministers of the Gospel, belonging to the Church of the Latter Day Saints, whose Licenses were recorded, the last quarter in the License Records, in Kirtland, Ohio, by

THOMAS BURDICK
Recording Clerk.

ELDERS

Briggs Alden
 James M. Adams
 Walter M. Blanchard
 Leister Brooks
 Caleb Baldwin
 John B. Carpenter
 Samuel Crawford

Dominicus Carter
 Daniel M. Crandal
 Alexander Cheney
 Hiram Clark
 Giles Cook
 John Goodson
 John P. Green
 Emer Harris

Henry Herriman
 Heman T. Hyde
 Chester S. Judd
 James Locke
 William Law
 Samuel M'Clanathan
 Laban Morrill
 Russell Potter
 George Rose
 Isaac Russell
 John Stiles
 Lorenzo Snow
 Benjamin Sweat
 Archibald M. Wilsey
 Bradley B. Wilson
 George C. Wilson
 Lewis D. Wilson

Bushrod W. Wilson
 Willard Woodstock
 John Wilson

PRIESTS
 Lewis Eager
 Jesse Turpin
 John McVay

TEACHERS
 Cyrus P. Dunton
 George Pack

DEACONS
 Abram Cheney
 Ebenezer Scott



Erastus Snow.
 Courtesy
 LDS Church Archives.

Notes

1. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B.H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 2:403 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*)
2. Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell, eds., *Kirtland Council Minute Book* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co., 1996), 161.
3. *History of the Church*, 2:394.
4. *History of the Church*, 2:398.
5. *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 165.
6. *History of the Church*, 2:400.
7. *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 165–67.
8. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 9 (June 1836): 335–36.
9. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 12 (September 1836): 383.
10. Phelps's name is not listed in alphabetical order.
11. Presley's name is not listed in alphabetical order.
12. Pulsipher's name is not listed in alphabetical order.
13. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 32, no. 3 (December 1836): 432.
14. This name was changed to Elias Smith in the March 1837 issue
15. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 6 (March 1837): 472.
16. *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 9 (June 1837): 528.