

# “The Commencement of Great Things”: The Origins, Scope, and Achievement of the Journal History of the Church

Gary James Bergera

“Behold, there shall be a record kept among you. . . .”  
(D&C 21:1, 6 April 1830)

Among the attempts of historians to keep a record of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Journal History of the Church stands preeminent, chronicling nearly every day of the Church’s history beginning with Joseph Smith’s birth in 1805. It is both annotated chronology and documentary archive and currently encompasses some six hundred thousand pages gathered into more than twelve hundred scrapbooks. In terms of size alone, it is virtually unparalleled among similar institutional histories. (The *Congressional Record* comes to mind as possibly being more voluminous.)

The Journal History traces its formal origins to the second half of 1906 when Assistant Church Historian Andrew Jenson began assembling the thousands of documents he and others had collected during the previous twenty-five years. “Up to that time,” he explained, “attempts had been made to incorporate every important event connected with early Church history under the title of the History of Joseph Smith, but the work of the Lord, even in the days of the Prophet Joseph himself, grew to such dimensions and had so many minor organizations, both in America and Europe, that it was impossible to properly incorporate every event connected with the Church in the Prophet’s personal narrative, even if a profusion of foot notes was introduced.”<sup>1</sup>

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Thus, the actual compiling of an official daily history of the Church—and precursor to the *Journal History*—began nearly seventy years earlier, in 1838–39, as “The History of Joseph Smith.”<sup>2</sup> Motivated both by a desire to obey God’s command to keep a history and by a need to counter rumor, innuendo, and falsehood, Joseph’s History reflected the state of history-writing in the early to mid-nineteenth century generally—self-important, partisan, selective. After several interrupted starts, Church Historian Willard Richards had written, by the time of Joseph’s death in 1844, more than 650 manuscript pages.<sup>3</sup>

As a historian, writes Davis Bitton and Leonard Arrington, Richards was “simple and direct, without embellishment, and tells simply and pointedly what took place. There is no speculation, no lamenting, no internalizing or sermonizing. . . . Richards was capable of literary flourishes, but the style of the ‘History of Joseph Smith’ and the other church chronicles he composed was plain and straightforward.”<sup>4</sup> When work on Joseph’s History resumed in 1845, Richards’ assistant, Thomas Bullock, recorded an additional 675 pages prior to the Saints’ departure from Illinois early the next year.

Following Richards’ death in 1854, George A. Smith, age thirty-six, was appointed Church historian, and he supervised completion of Joseph’s History. According to Howard Searle, the project became “almost an obsession with George A.”<sup>5</sup> Smith’s approach, explains his biographer, was essentially collaborative: “The staff, including George A., would assimilate all the reliable source material they could locate on the period under consideration. After a thorough study of this material, a rough-draft of the period would be written or dictated. . . . The rough draft would be reworked and revised and then read to President Young. There are penciled notes appearing frequently in the margins of the original draft indicating what date the manuscript was read to Brigham Young. After receiving the President’s approval a final copy would be written.”<sup>6</sup> At history’s end in early 1857, eleven scribes had written more than twenty-three hundred manuscript pages.<sup>7</sup>

Following completion of Joseph’s History, Church historians began its successor, the “History of Brigham Young.”<sup>8</sup> Rather than continue where Joseph’s History ended, Assistant Church Historian Wilford Woodruff turned to Brigham’s autobiography from birth to 1844. Woodruff and assistants also encouraged and/or prepared biographies of other members of the Twelve called to service by the time Young assumed leadership of the Church in 1844.

“Like the Joseph Smith history,” Bitton and Arrington note, Brigham’s History “commenced as a first-person account, based on the diaries of Brigham Young—those he had kept himself and those that had been kept for

him by his clerks. Matter was also incorporated from the diaries of Willard Richards, Wilford Woodruff, and other associates and clerks, from articles in church magazines and newspapers, and from other available documents. All of these were altered to make the history appear as a first-person account for a few years, and then they were left in the third person.”<sup>9</sup>

According to Bitton and Arrington, George A. Smith’s approach to history was “unquestionably biased.”<sup>10</sup> His “emotional attachment to the Church,” his biographer explains, “his memory of persecutions, injustices, and the martyrdom—made the Mormon past too much a part of his subjective experience to allow him to be very ‘objective’ in his historical approach.”<sup>11</sup> Once, after reading first-person accounts of some of the Saints’ tribulations, Smith confessed: “It makes me feel like swearing and all that restrains me is that I am not philologist enough to command words as fervent as I could wish to do justice to my feelings.”<sup>12</sup> Still, he was not oblivious to the challenges facing the conscientious historian. He struggled to make sense of contradictory testimony and to carefully navigate the emotional memories of eyewitnesses.<sup>13</sup>

By 1870, with Smith’s release as Church historian, Brigham’s History had reached the year 1855. Thereafter, according to Searle, “the history soon became a hodgepodge of clippings from periodicals, reports of sermons, copies of correspondence, and excerpts from minute books and journals—especially that of Wilford Woodruff. Very little of this heter[o]geneous material was connected and integrated by means of a connecting narrative, and there was little commentary or interpretive material, except for that in the sources themselves.”<sup>14</sup>

Work on the history remained at a standstill until 1874 when Orson Pratt was appointed Church historian.<sup>15</sup> By 1879, compilers had completed the year 1870, although most of this material consisted of “scattered entries not put into narrative form.”<sup>16</sup> When eventually finished in late 1881, Brigham’s History covered nearly forty-three thousand pages in forty-six volumes.<sup>17</sup> Known for a time as the “Documentary History of the Church,” the chronology is now titled the “Manuscript History of Brigham Young.” With the conclusion of Brigham’s narrative, the History of the Church became little more than a scrapbook of newspaper articles until it ceased altogether in 1880. A clerk in the Church Historian’s Office continued to “work on notations,” but “the majority of the work of compiling was completed.”<sup>18</sup>

Upon assuming the presidency of the Church in 1880, John Taylor appointed a committee of Apostles to “examine into the labor work and Business of the Historian office.”<sup>19</sup> “No person,” Elders Joseph F. Smith, Francis M. Lyman, and John Henry Smith reported, “seems to have an adequate idea of what the office contains. . . . There are no catalogues and no

proper registry kept of books borrowed, loaned and returned. . . . There is no safe or vault of any kind . . . the present building being . . . entirely insecure against burglary, incendiary or other casualty. There is no guard kept in the building and no other means of protection provided. . . . The floors are strewn with boxes, books and papers for which there seems to be no other place. The Historian, clerks, tables, cupboards and library are all in one compartment and everything is cluttered and inconvenient.”<sup>20</sup>

The committee also observed that the Church historian had not been able to acquire duplicate copies of printed materials relating to the Church. Among the committee’s recommendations was that the historian maintain a documentary history, both favorable and hostile, and that every effort be made to record the activities of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles.<sup>21</sup>

Taylor was committed to the idea of an ongoing historical record and, following Woodruff’s appointment as Church historian in 1883, sought the advice of members of the Twelve. One Apostle remembered the history Joseph Smith had begun in Nauvoo, entitled “The Book of the Law of the Lord.” Franklin D. Richards wrote:

the President of the Twelve for a number of years. The revelations given through you to the Church should be recorded therein; the deaths of the Apostles, perhaps of the Presiding Bishop and the First Presidents of the Seventies, or any distinguished persons as should be thought proper; then, also, the calling and ordinations of their successors; the organization of the present First Presidency and the filling of vacancies occasioned thereby in the Council of the Twelve Apostles; the laying of the cornerstones of the temples; the dedication of the temples, giving dates, dimensions, cost, when commenced and finished; the revelation and Counsel determining the reorganization of the Seventies, when and how accomplished, which may prove of great importance in future years; the organization of each new Stake of Zion with date, names of presiding officers, general location and boundaries; a statistical report of the Church, when you entered upon its presidency, and after, as you might think best; number of souls emigrated each year; total of tithing paid each year, if thought best. Perhaps you would like to note some of the leading points of your general instructions, such as the cultivation of confidence and good faith in all the relations of life; the doctrine of the atonement as enunciated in your book; Instructions to the Twelve concerning the Lamanites, and appointments and locations in their favor; appointment of Elder Moses Thatcher to the Mexican Mission and the translation of the Book of Mormon into the Spanish language; the fresh impetus given to Temple building, free will offerings and tithing.

Here let me say it might be proper and profitable for the leading authorities to record, first[?] individually, of their paying or having paid their tithings as valuable testimonies in future and in favor of their generations. I would like the privilege of doing this.

You would probably wish to notice some vicissitudes of the Church, such as the suit by the five heirs against the Trustee in Trust and the Executors of the Estate of the late President Young; with the terms of settlement and decrees of the District and Probate Courts therein; Hon. George Q. Cannon’s expulsion from Congress and

the election of Hon. John T. Caine as his successor; the passage of the Edmunds law, action of the Commissioners under its provisions; perhaps the mandamus case; the retention of the late Jeremiah S. Black—his services and death, and possibly that of Senator Vest to attend to cases in the U.S. Supreme Court.

In submitting the foregoing suggestions I have only intended to outline my ideas of what such a work might be; of course only such matter should be inserted as you shall please to direct. I think it should not be intended as a documentary or argumentative history, but a simple statement of such current events as shall be deemed of sufficient importance to record in as laconic and comprehensive language as is consistent with absolute truth, which could be secured by reading in manuscript to the Council before insertion in the book.

My impressions are that such a record should be kept as would prove invaluable to the Church in future years, would do credit to your head and heart, and in the course of Providence may prove the greatest and best possible vindication of your course, and be accounted worthy the appellation “The Book of the Law of the Lord.”<sup>22</sup>

Taylor was impressed, and three weeks later Church authorities “universally voted” to appoint Richards as assistant Church historian.<sup>23</sup> Richards—in concert with Woodruff—began cautiously, preparing new materials for the Book of the Law of the Lord, inviting Taylor to narrate his account of events surrounding his calling as president, and asking George Q. Cannon how much of the activities of the Council of Fifty to include in the Church’s history.<sup>24</sup> Formal attempts to resume a daily chronicle of the Church began late the next year.

Woodruff, having served as Church historian from 1883 to 1889 when he was appointed Church president, appreciated the challenges confronting the Historian’s Office. For the past decade, the Church had contended with federal authorities over plural marriage and, beginning in 1887, had been forced to rent back its own confiscated buildings, including the Historian’s Office, from government officials. With the issuance of the Woodruff Manifesto in 1890 and return of Church property, the Historian’s Office returned slowly to normalcy, and the First Presidency again took up the possibility of a daily historical record. Richards, appointed Church historian in 1889, vowed to “secure the strictest accuracy possible” as well as “the most careful scrutiny that may be available.”<sup>25</sup>

In December 1895, the First Presidency invited Charles W. Penrose, editor of the *Salt Lake Herald*, to join the staff of the Historian’s Office and “start compiling the Church Hist[o]ry.”<sup>26</sup> According to Penrose: “Received appointment and instructions from Presidents Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith to work for the Church in compiling and writing Church history commencing at once, as they said ‘without any interregnum.’ . . . The Presidency said they wanted a complete organization of help in the Historian’s office and history[,] written and compiled ‘scrap work’ not

being sufficient[.] They said they wanted all my services and to fix compensation so that I would not need to 'piece out' by engaging in other occupations for a livelihood."<sup>27</sup>

Penrose quickly settled into his new office, and by mid-January 1896, he wrote that the presidency had "decided we should keep a daily journal of current events and that Bro[ther] G[eorge]. F. Gibbs [secretary to the First Presidency] should furnish duplicates of his type-written minutes to be incorporated in historical journal. Bro[ther] [Franklin D.] Richards arranged that for the present I should keep this journal and see how we could get things into shape for history."<sup>28</sup> This "Journal of daily events," Gibbs noted, "should be commenced from January 1st. 1896, as the basis for current Church history; access to be had to the President's Office Journal and correspondence. It was understood that past Church history was to be taken up as opportunity made possible."<sup>29</sup> Progress stalled temporarily when Gibbs could not decide how much of the First Presidency's Office Journal and weekly minutes of the Twelve Apostles to make available to Penrose.<sup>30</sup> The impasse was resolved when Gibbs was instructed to use his own discretion in determining which material to share.<sup>31</sup> By the end of the month, the Historian's Office staff had "concluded to go to work to attend more specially to historical matters, C[harles]. W. P[enrose]. to note down from papers and documents obtainable current historical items, A. M[ilton]. M[usser]. to mark papers for scrapping [that is, clipping], and more papers to be obtained as far as could be, of those published in or near the territory."<sup>32</sup> One week later, Penrose was called as assistant Church historian under Richards and was blessed with the "spirit of revelation and prophecy, with discrimination and judgment, power to avoid bias and to select and write to the acceptance of God and the Church authorities."<sup>33</sup>

For the rest of the decade, Penrose and colleagues worked to assemble a comprehensive, if not definitive, daily chronology, despite a steady tightening of finances and loss of personnel.<sup>34</sup> When Penrose left the Historian's Office to edit the *Deseret News* in 1899, he was replaced by Orson F. Whitney.<sup>35</sup> Scrapping continued, but not until 1906, during the Reed Smoot Hearings, was the decision finally made to bring the full resources of the Historian's Office to bear on a truly exhaustive daily documentary history of the Church from its beginnings to the present.<sup>36</sup> (Church historians had also during the early 1900s been revising Joseph Smith's History for republication, double checking as many original sources as they could locate.) Danish-born Andrew Jenson, age fifty-five, was assigned the nineteenth century; Joseph Fielding Smith, thirty-year-old son of Church President Joseph F. Smith, and Jenson's assistant, the twentieth.<sup>37</sup> "I went to the H[istorian's]. O[ffice].," Church Historian Anthon H. Lund recorded in mid-



*Church historian's office staff, February 1917.*

*Left to right: John Powell (custodian), A. William Lund, Laurinda Pratt Weihe, A. H. Lund (church historian), Harold Jenson, Andrew Jenson, and Alvin Olsen.*  
*Courtesy Church Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*

August of that year, in what may mark the beginning of the Journal History, “and had a long talk with Andrew Jenson about the work to be done in the Historian’s Office. I told him I wanted him to have all his notes transcribed.”<sup>38</sup>

Throughout the previous quarter century, Jenson had gathered, arranged, edited, and published a variety of histories and biographies, including his *Church Chronology* (1886), all of which he used to create the Journal History. Beginning in 1888, the Church retained Jenson (though not as a member of the Historian’s Office) for a monthly allowance of \$50; he supplemented this income by selling subscriptions to his historical publications. Three years later, he was ordained a historian, and his retainer was raised to \$100. Finally, in April 1898, he was called to be assistant Church historian.<sup>39</sup> According to a later secretary to the First Presidency, such an “advancement” “elevated [one] to a level of official prominence that lifted him from the ranks of clerical anonymity, added weight to his words, and opened doors to research and writing opportunities that had previously been closed.”<sup>40</sup>

Given Jenson’s interest in chronology, as well as his familiarity with the



documentary sources, the organization and structure of the Journal History seem foreordained. Jenson looked first to past histories, clipping entries from the different published editions of Joseph Smith's History and pasting or typing them onto blank, legal-size pages, which he eventually inserted into expandable looseleaf binders. This approach permitted the incorporation of new information without jeopardizing the basic chronological format. "Each day's entry," noted Bitton and Arrington, "would include information on the weather, meetings, the comings and goings of principal church personalities, newspaper clippings and magazine commentaries, sermons, letters, excerpts from diaries, and other material of importance."<sup>41</sup> Other sources included most of Brigham Young's manuscript history (sometimes identified as the Documentary History); the Historian's Office Journal; minutes of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles (originally prepared for Penrose); minutes and other records of local wards, stakes, and missions, including the Far West Record, the Nauvoo High Council, and the Salt Lake High Council; a handful of individual diaries; letters to and from Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, George A. Smith, and others; unpublished affidavits; James Bleak's history of the southern Utah settlements; and more than a few first-person narratives,<sup>42</sup> including Jenson's own, written especially for the Journal History.<sup>43</sup> (The only documents for the years 1880 to 1896 are newspaper clippings.) Some entries covered as many as ten or more pages; others covered only a few lines. As he assembled the dates and documentary sources, Jenson also constructed a note-card index of people, places, and events.

By 1913, Jenson had covered the years 1830 to 1852. Five years later, aided by his son Harold, he reached 1876; and by 1922, they had arrived at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the time of Jenson's death in 1941, the Journal History covered the years 1830 to the end of 1930 and comprised about four hundred volumes.<sup>44</sup> "We do not expect any one of you to ever read all of these lengthy manuscripts histories," he explained in 1917, "but they are all very important as works of reference. These volumes and the many that hereafter will be added, may consistently be termed the 'fathers' of the new dispensation, and be classed with the so-called 'fathers' of the early Christian Church. We have recorded nearly everything that has happened since the organization of the Church in 1830, under proper date, and we are still recording events as they occur daily, just as regular as the sun rises and sets. . . . This compilation of historical events is what we call the Journal History of the Church."<sup>45</sup>

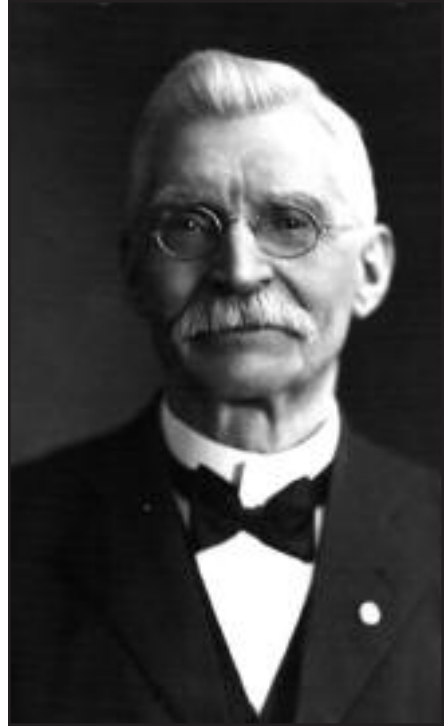
Five years later, he told the *Deseret News*:

The main work done at the historian's office during the past 35 years is the compiling and writing of what is now known under the title of "Journal History of the



Church” It is practically the annals of the Church arranged in chronological order, commencing with the 6th of April, 1830, and continuing to the present time. For the nineteenth century alone about 520 large typewritten manuscript volumes have already been compiled and arranged in their proper order.<sup>46</sup> These volumes will undoubtedly serve as the foundation or source of information for all future histories of the Church. In the journal history has been embodied everything written by the early Church historians, part of which has already been published; but as the Church has grown great it is but natural that the histories of the present day should attach more importance to details than the historians did in the early days of the Church, when the organizations were small. Many events which in the early days seemed to be insignificant, can now consistently be enlarged upon, as they in many cases, were the commencement of great things which followed.<sup>47</sup>

Like his predecessors, Jenson was more compiler than historian, and his transcriptions were not always complete or accurate. However, his contributions to LDS historiography—especially to that of the history of rank-and-file Saints—cannot be overstated. “Of the twenty-five persons who have served as Church Historians and Assistant church Historians since 1830,” wrote Louis Reinwand in 1973, “none has made a greater contribution to the collection of primary materials, the organization of them for research purposes, the indexing and cataloguing of materials, and the preparation of volumes of narrative and documentary history.”<sup>48</sup> “More than any other person,” Bitton and Arrington agree, “more than any group of persons—he organized the materials of Mormon history, catalogued and indexed them, prepared reference helps, and wrote twenty-seven volumes of biography, chronicle, and narrative and documentary history based upon them. He also wrote more than two thousand historical newspaper articles. His was not great interpretive history, but it was factual, honest history. Without his carefully written



*Andrew Jenson.  
Courtesy Church Archives, Church of  
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*

chronicles, prodigious compilations, and time-saving indexes, modern historians could produce their monographs and interpretive histories of Mormonism only with much greater difficulty.”<sup>49</sup>

Joseph Fielding Smith’s contribution was more limited than Jenson’s. Called as an Apostle four years after his appointment as assistant historian in 1906, and then eleven years later as Church historian, Smith was unable to devote the same amount of energy to the mammoth project.<sup>50</sup> “His principal assignment,” note Bitton and Arrington, “seems to have been helping his father and other church authorities respond to the writings of anti-Mormons.”<sup>51</sup> In addition, he was named in rapid succession secretary of the Genealogical Society of Utah in 1907, librarian of the Society in 1908, and Society treasurer in 1909; he then served as vice president of the Society from 1925 to 1934 and as president from 1934 to 1961. He was also a popular speaker, and he helped to edit and wrote articles for the *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*.<sup>52</sup> Nor were the sources available to Smith as rich as they were for Jenson. Although he had access to some excerpts from the First Presidency’s Office Journal up to about 1905 (and occasionally beyond), as well as the weekly minutes (abridged) of the Presidency and Twelve Apostles up to 1915,<sup>53</sup> most of Smith’s sources were local daily newspapers, Church magazines and periodicals, and other published materials. Despite these limitations, stresses his biographer, Smith’s work on the Journal History “provided him with a more intimate knowledge of the Church during this period than any other person as he sifted through the voluminous materials to condense what he considered the most important information to be preserved in his basic record.”<sup>54</sup> Unlike past compilers, Smith would sometimes record his own response to a particular document, especially when he felt a correction was needed.<sup>55</sup>

Following Smith’s appointment as Church historian, a position he held for the next forty-nine years, the full burden of the Journal History shifted to Jenson and then, after his death, to other employees of the Historian’s Office, including A. William Lund, Fuschia Jones, Horace Cutler, LeRoi Snow, Junius F. Wells, Preston Nibley, Earl E. Olson, and Thomas G. Truitt, among others. The range of sources continued to narrow, although some unpublished letters and minutes occasionally found their way onto the blank pages.<sup>56</sup> In addition, from about the 1930s until the 1960s, weekly-to-monthly lists of ward, stake, and mission ordinations, settings apart, and other priesthood and Church appointments, as well as the creation, organization, reorganization, and dissolution of branches, wards, stakes, and missions, were regularly inserted into the history. (Until early 1953, these lists also included the actions of disciplinary councils.)

Shortly after his appointment as Church historian in 1972, Leonard J.

Arrington proposed that the recently reorganized Church Historical Department maintain a more comprehensive record, tentatively entitled "Chronicles of Church History,"<sup>57</sup> using, as Penrose had seventy years earlier, the minutes of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Initially, President Harold B. Lee was interested, suggesting that Joseph Anderson, eighty-four-year-old managing director of the department and a former secretary to the First Presidency, make extracts for the Church historian and his associates "on the basis of what they need."<sup>58</sup>

Logistically, the process proved to be more complicated than anticipated. Rather than review and summarize the Presidency's and Apostles' minutes himself, Anderson asked Francis M. Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency, to submit a sample abstract. According to Arrington's biographer, "It had taken [Gibbons] half a day—four hours—to summarize First Presidency minutes for two weeks. He thus calculated that it would take him twenty-four days to do a year 'and considering that we have to do the minutes of the First Presidency back to an early period, this represents a very sizeable investment in time. He didn't feel that he had the time to do it.'" In addition, when Arrington reviewed the summary, he decided that only about 10 percent was useful. Anderson then tried his own hand at condensing the minutes but soon abandoned those efforts as "impractical," having become "overwhelmed by the mass of material, the sheer length of the project, and the constant necessity of making decisions about potentially sensitive subjects."<sup>59</sup>

Arrington then suggested that the Journal History be "discontinued in favor of a 'News Clippings Journal,'" since "the present Journal History has become largely a newspaper source book drawing mainly from local papers and materials."<sup>60</sup> He proposed indexing rather than clipping most articles, convinced that this process would save resources and would also facilitate greater use of the history, especially if it were available electronically. Although his proposal was not adopted, the Journal History was temporarily, from January to June 1973, rechristened "News Clippings Journal" to reflect its reliance on published sources. In July 1973, Arrington was officially placed in charge of the Journal History; and, for the first time, the collection, beginning on the title page of volume 977, carried the notation "compiled under the direction of Leonard J. Arrington, Director, Historical Division, Church Historical Department." For the next five years, Arrington devoted at least one hour each day to the history,<sup>61</sup> aided by secretaries Christine Croft Waters, Nedra Yeates Pace, and Kathy Gailey Stephens, who did most of the clipping, pasting, and indexing.<sup>62</sup> Under Arrington, the Journal History also began incorporating articles from a wider variety of non-English-language publications.

Arrington later explained that while most of his sources were newspapers, magazines, and other publications, he also inserted unpublished materials,<sup>63</sup> including, “administrative documents, as I have become aware of them. I have not included what might be called confidential items that ought not to be made available to the general public. I have placed those in my office diary. . . . Aware of the problems confronted by the Church and its leaders each day, week, and month, I have also included articles, letters to the editor, etc., which were not necessarily favorable to the Church and its leaders. So this is not exclusively a collection of articles released by the Church, but also of articles in the press which deal with the Church, whether in a friendly or unfriendly manner.”

“In selecting clippings,” he continued, “I have sought to keep in mind what a historian ten, twenty, or thirty years from now would want to see, as a day-to-day record of the Church. Of course, he would prefer to have the minutes of meetings of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, but despite repeated requests these have never been made available to us.”<sup>64</sup>

In November 1979 (volume 995), responsibility for the Journal History shifted to Ronald O. Barney. For the next nine years, Barney, joined by Karen Sanborn in 1983, examined a range of contemporary publications for inclusion. He also incorporated more unpublished documents—letters, reports, interdepartmental memoranda—than any time previously since the early 1900s.<sup>65</sup> Beginning in 1985, the Church History Library began subscribing to major out-of-state newspapers, which compilers also reviewed for inclusion. In 1994, compilers began including materials—national and international news wire service articles, transcriptions of radio and television broadcasts—from the LexisNexis Group electronic information provider data base. They not only consulted this source daily but also searched retroactively to 1990. “The nine plus years experience,” Barney wrote at the end of his tenure, “has been most pleasurable and enlightening. A number of significant events have occurred during this time which will have a pronounced impact on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in future generations. In some small way I hope that my contribution to its maintenance will be of benefit to those who use the Journal History in the future.”<sup>66</sup>

Following Barney, James L. Kimball Jr. and Karen Sanborn worked on the history beginning in early 1989 (volume 1032). Kimball continued for almost a year, Sanborn until mid-1998. Today, the Journal History is maintained by Carol Johnson and a small team of employees of the Church History Library, who also have custody of its most recent volumes. Toward the close of 2002, the entire Journal History through 1923 (except for two complete entries and one partial entry, as well as the index) was published

as volume 2 of *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Brigham Young University Press).

The Journal History is an extraordinary archive of primary and secondary historical documents. Of course, it is not without its drawbacks. One wishes, for example, that its compilers had more carefully verified their transcriptions of unpublished items; perhaps adopted a more clearly specified uniform set of criteria for determining what to include; provided in every instance the complete document and not simply excerpts; maintained a more thorough and heavily annotated index (particularly for the years before 1870); and, especially, included a greater range of primary materials. One should also bear in mind that the history is essentially defensive in both presentation and tone and reflects to a large degree the interests and prejudices of its compilers. Still, its size, scope, and breadth defy easy comprehension—it is both a repository and descriptive catalog of much, but by no means all, of the Church's own rich, multifarious manuscript holdings. Historians ignore the Journal History at their own risk.

### Notes

1. Andrew Jenson, Title Page, "Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Compiled by Andrew Jenson, Assistant Historian, under the direction of Anthon H. Lund, Church Historian," Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church Archives), partial photocopy at LDS Church Historical Library. Microfilm copies are available at LDS Church Historical and Family History libraries, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City; and Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. In addition, a copy of the index is available on microfilm at the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. Compare Andrew Jenson, *The Autobiography of Andrew Jenson* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1938), 445–46.

2. See Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (summer 1971): 439–73. See also Howard C. Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography: Writing the History of the Mormons, 1830–1858" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1979), 200–336. Portions of Searle's analysis may be found in "Authorship of the History of Joseph Smith: A Review Essay," *BYU Studies* 21, no. 1 (winter 1981): 101–22. For earlier, less successful, attempts at a Church history, see Bruce N. Westergren, ed., *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995). Whitmer's history was unavailable to Church historians and did not figure in their efforts.

3. For more on Richards as historian, see Davis Bitton and Leonard J. Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 3–14.

4. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 11. Richards also had a sense of humor. In commenting on the need for more livestock, he once wrote: "I think it wisdom for you to come on as soon as you can with a dozen pigs, if you can find a choice breed; none of your long-nosed runts, that can cut nothing but the wind, but such as can feed on weeds and grass till corn grows." As cited in Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and*

*Their Historians*, 14.

5. Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography," 268.

6. C. Kent Dunford, "The Contributions of George A. Smith to the Establishment of the Mormon Society in the Territory of Utah" ( Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1970), 137.

7. See Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography," 292, 294. From 1845 to 1856, scribes had also transcribed, primarily as a safeguard, a 1,627-page duplicate (or "fair") copy of Joseph's History up to 18 July 1843.

8. See Howard C. Searle, "Authorship of the History of Brigham Young: A Review Essay," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (summer 1982): 367–74; and Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography," 337–57.

9. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 23.

10. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 24.

11. Dunford, "The Contributions of George A. Smith to the Establishment of the Mormon Society in the Territory of Utah," 141.

12. As cited in Dunford, "The Contributions of George A. Smith to the Establishment of the Mormon Society in the Territory of Utah," 141.

13. "From many conversations I have had with Bro[ther]. [Stephen] Markham," he once wrote, "in relation to the subject [that is, Joseph Smith's death] I have formed the opinion that his memory is so treacherous that he would unwittingly mix other circumstances with those attending Joseph's assassination. His statements would therefore require criticism." George A. Smith to Wilford Woodruff, 14 September 1856, as cited in Dunford, "The Contributions of George A. Smith to the Establishment of the Mormon Society in the Territory of Utah," 144.

14. Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography," 355.

15. From 1870 to 1874, Albert Carrington has served as Church historian.

16. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 23.

17. See the register to CR 100/102 in Church Archives. According to Woodruff, during Pratt's tenure as Church historian, "He has got up a history documentary for 22 years, Making 34 volumes of 41,259 Pages, averaging 1,213 1/2 pages each vol, at a cost of \$12,377.70. There was 54 pages of indexing for Each vol as title page, making \$400 per volum including Binding, paper, ruling pens and ink and indexing. total \$13,600. But none of this work has been Compared with its Copy." Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–1984), 8:52.

18. Register to CR 100/102, 1, Church Archives.

19. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:51.

20. Joseph F. Smith, Francis M. Lyman, and John Henry Smith to the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles, 17 September 1881, as cited in Charles P. Adams and Gustive O. Larson, "A Study of the LDS Church Historian's Office, 1830–1900," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (fall 1972): 382.

21. Adams and Larson, "A Study of the LDS Church Historian's Office, 382.

22. Franklin D. Richards to John Taylor, 26 December 1883, photocopy in L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. A portion of the "Book of the Law of the Lord" was published as "Illinois Journal, 1841–1842," in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volume 2: Journal 1832–1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 334–506. Richards subsequently wrote a lengthy history of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. See, for example, Heber J. Grant, Diary, 3 October 1891 and 1 April 1892, Church Archives.

23. Franklin D. Richards, Diary, 16 January 1884, Church Archives; Woodruff,

*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:223. Richards' first day as assistant historian was 23 January 1884. See *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:224.

24. See Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 8:225; and Richards, Diary, 25 January and 20 March 1884.

25. Franklin D. Richards to Andrew Jenson, 16 April 1891, in Jenson, *Autobiography*, 193–94.

26. Richards, Diary, 12, 13, and 17 December 1895.

27. Charles W. Penrose, Diary, 16 December 1895, Church Archives.

28. Penrose, Diary, 10 January 1896. See also Richards, Diary, 10 January 1896.

29. As cited in *Journal History*, 10 January 1896.

30. Penrose, Diary, 11 January 1896.

31. Penrose, Diary, 13 and 15 January 1896

32. Historian's Office Journal, 28 January 1896, Church Archives.

33. Penrose, Diary, 4 February 1896.

34. In April 1898, the First Presidency, responding reluctantly to the national depression of the 1890s, decided to reduce most salaries and to limit working hours to 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. More drastically, two employees were to be discharged. See Historian's Office Journal, 1 April 1898, Church Archives. One of the affected employees was allowed to remain for an extra month "as there were to[o] many missionaries to be set apart, and he took their genealogies. . . . He felt very sad about his discharge, as he is lame and has a large family of young children, and his wife has poor health." Historian's Office Journal, 30 April 1898, Church Archives. Before the end of the next six months, however, this employee, at least, returned to the Historian's Office since "the Church had to support him somehow." Historian's Office Journal, 5 October 1898.

35. See Penrose, Diary, 3 January 1899. Penrose was called as an Apostle in 1904 and entered the First Presidency in 1911. He died in 1925. Whitney joined the Quorum of the Twelve in 1906. He died in 1931.

36. For example, Anthon H. Lund's diary reads, "William [Lund] commenced to work in the H[istorian's]. O[ffice]. scrapping to close the gap between 1880 and 1881 of Church History." Anthon H. Lund, Diary, 18 June 1903, Church Archives.

37. See the October 1917 general conference address of President Anthon H. Lund in *Eighty-eighth Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: *Deseret News*, 1917), 12. The best sources on Jenson are Keith W. Perkins, "A Study of the Contributions of Andrew Jenson to the Writing and Preservation of LDS Church History" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, May 1971); Louis Reinwand, "Andrew Jenson: Latter-day Saint Historian," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 1 (autumn 1973): 29–46; Keith W. Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, April 1974); and Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 41–53.

38. Lund, Diary, 13 August 1906. See also the entry for 5 December 1906. Jenson's diary (in Church Archives) is generally silent regarding these events.

39. Jenson was an indefatigable champion of Church history, but his personality was sometimes off-putting, especially, for example, when soliciting subscriptions among stake and ward leaders. Even some of his coworkers occasionally complained of his being "obnoxious" and "egotistical." See Perkins, "Andrew Jenson," 109–10; also Lund, Diary, 25 July and 12 October 1900. Such problems reached a head shortly after the death of Church Historian Franklin D. Richards in late 1899 and not only prevented Jenson's appointment as Richards' successor but also, beginning the following October, resulted in his not being presented in general conference as an assistant Church historian. See Perkins, "Andrew Jenson," 109–10; Lund, Diary, 8 October 1900. Fortunately, the new



Church historian, Anthon H. Lund (also a Danish convert), helped to resolve many of these problems, and in April 1902 Jenson was again sustained as an assistant historian. Still, the omission of his name during this period was crushing, and for a time Jenson entertained the possibility of leaving Church employment for private enterprise. Only an especially powerful response to prayer convinced him not to quit the Historian's Office. See Perkins, "Andrew Jenson," 110–13.

40. Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph Fielding Smith: Gospel Scholar, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 223.

41. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 49.

42. See, for example, the entry dated 26 November 1871 but actually recorded May 1930.

43. See, for example, the entry dated 14 August 1935.

44. This is according to Jenson's secretary, Mary F. Kelly Pye. See "A Tribute," in Jenson, *Autobiography*, 673. Jenson's history may have subsequently been divided into more binders.

45. Andrew Jenson, Address, in *Eighty-eighth Semi-annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 85–87.

46. This included the stake and mission histories Jenson also compiled during these years.

47. *Deseret News*, 25 November 1922, 3.

48. Reinwand, "Andrew Jenson: Latter-day Saint Historian," 45.

49. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 55.

50. According to Bitton and Arrington, Smith's appointment as Church historian was another "bitter pill" Jenson had to swallow. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 53–54. "I am driving no stakes," he later wrote, "laying no plans, and having no expectations, so I look for no disappointments." As cited in Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 54.

51. Bitton and Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians*, 53.

52. See James B. Allen, Jessie L. Embry, and Kahlile B. Mehr, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1894–1994* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, Brigham Young University, 1995), 71–76. Appreciation to John W. Welch for pointing out this source.

53. Access to these materials seems to have been affected by, first, the Smoot Hearings and, second, the so-called anti-Mormon magazine crusade of the mid-1910s. The attacks on the Church these events provoked may have persuaded Church officials not to be as disclosing as they had been.

54. Gibbons, *Joseph Fielding Smith*, 223.

55. See, for example, the entries for October 1912 and 12 April 1913.

56. See, for example, the entries for 15 December, 24 December 1949, and 10 April 1950.

57. Arrington's papers in the Merrill Library at Utah State University in Logan include his own version of the Journal History, beginning 21 April 1979, which he labeled "Chronicles of Church History." This collection of newspaper clippings continues through 29 November 1997.

58. As cited in Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Doves and Serpents: The Activities of Leonard Arrington as Church Historian, 1972–1982," 44, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, and Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

59. Anderson, "Doves and Serpents," 44.

60. See the entry dated 1 January 1975, titled "Proposals of 'Journal History—News

Clipping' Committee." The Journal History underwent a name change during the first six months of 1973, not 1975.

61. Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 64–65.

62. See the entry dated 31 October 1979.

63. See, for example, the diary excerpt under the entry dated 7 April 1974.

64. See the entry dated 31 October 1979.

65. See, for example, the memorandum dated and filed under 14 December 1983, which reported that in 1982, the Church destroyed 898 feet of accumulated departmental records and archived the remaining 213 feet (or 19 percent) and that in 1983, the Church destroyed 1,540 feet, and archived 243 feet, of such records. These figures, the memo pointed out, do not "reflect the records that are destroyed in [each department's] office. When those records are included we probably received less than 10% of all the records generated in the [Church] office building. . . . Most archives are saving from 10% to 14% of all records which their parent generates. That would mean that the Church Archives is within the national norm."

66. See the entry dated 9 January 1989.