

# Mormon Manuscript Materials in Utah State University's Special Collections and Archives<sup>1</sup>

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The Division of Special Collections and Archives located in the Merrill Library at Utah State University, Logan, Utah, is composed of six different sections (Manuscripts, Photographs, University Archives, Rare Books, Preservation, and Art and Book Arts). Although each of these sections focuses on collecting different types of materials, one major focus for Special Collections as a whole is Mormon history. Although the division itself has existed only since 1965, Utah State University's collection of Mormon materials dates back to 1916 when the university spent its entire book budget to purchase the Eli H. Peirce library. This collection contained almost seven hundred books focusing on Mormon and Utah history.<sup>2</sup> Since then, USU's collection of Mormon materials has steadily grown, and now it is one of the top ten in the country and one of the largest held by a public institution. What follows is a brief list of some of the major Mormon manuscript collections at USU.

## Processed Collections

**Alunite, Utah, Branch LDS Records** (Mss 207)—Minutes of sacrament meetings and membership rosters covering the period 1917–20. Alunite was a mining town during World War I but subsequently was abandoned after the war.

**Edgar B. Brossard** (Mss 4 and 220)—Personal and professional papers of a thirty-five-year member (1925–60) of the United States Tariff Commission, who also served in numerous LDS Church positions through-

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out his life, including president of the French Mission.

**Horace Cummings Family Papers** (Mss 226)—Correspondence received by Cummings during the 1880s. Documents the LDS Church's efforts in Mexico during this time period as well as internal family debates over the issue of polygamy.

**Fife Mormon Collection** (Mss 211)—Materials collected (1930s–1950s) by Austin and Alta Fife, nationally renowned folklorists who helped establish the folklore program at Utah State University. Collection contains a wide variety of Mormon folklore stories, such as those associated with the Three Nephites.

**Virginia Hansen** (Mss 217)—Diaries of a former county librarian and lifelong devout Mormon. These volumes cover the years between 1933 and 1978. In addition to Hansen's diaries, Special Collections has a number of other journals recording the daily life of Mormons living in Cache Valley, Utah. Many of these journals and diaries have been transcribed.

**Lorenzo Hatch** (Mss 70)—Correspondence from the 1880s and 1890s documenting the LDS Church's missionary activities in Arizona.

**Rodolfo Hunter** (Mss 28)—Late twentieth-century author specializing in Mormon women's literature. This collection contains the book manuscripts for *House of Many Rooms*, *Daughter of Zion*, and *Wyoming Wife*. Special Collections has several other collections of papers from Mormon authors.

**Logan Temple Time Books** (Mss 223)—Three time books recording work carried out during the construction of the Logan Temple (1879–84).

**Betsey Jane Tenney Loose** (Mss 177)—Papers, correspondence, and diary of a Mormon living in Illinois during the 1840s. Later, Loose moved to Utah and lived for a brief time in Nevada.

**Ernest Mahan** (Mss 142)—Photocopies of research materials collected in the 1930s by Mahan for an uncompleted biography of Joseph Smith.

**Martin Harris Pageant Records** (Mss 243)—Papers documenting the creation in 1982 of a musical pageant about Martin Harris, which is held annually in Clarkston, Utah. Harris, who was one of the Three Witnesses to the gold plates of the Book of Mormon, died in Clarkston in 1875.

**Peter Maughan** (Mss 37)—Papers of Maughan, who was the Presiding Bishop and President in Cache Valley, Utah, during the 1860s. Maughan was born in England and joined the LDS Church there in 1838. He then immigrated to America and lived in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois, before following the Church to Utah. Collection contains personal papers as well as correspondence with early Mormon leaders.

**Mormon Affidavits** (Caine Mss 19)—Materials pertaining to the 1831–39 persecutions of Church members in Missouri and their attempts to

obtain redress. Contains copies of the original affidavits.

**Mormon Diaries** (Mss 18)—Materials compiled and transcribed by the W.P.A. during the Great Depression. The bulk of the collection consists of interviews conducted by W.P.A. employees but also includes typescripts of diaries. One of several collections at USU containing typescripts of diaries.

**“Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith”** (Mss 85)—Uncut manuscript of a 1984 book by Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery. Special Collections has a number of book manuscripts and dissertations on Mormon topics.

**Mutual Improvement Association Journal Manuscripts** (Mss 67)—Hand-copied newsletters from the Hyrum, Utah, Young Men’s and Young Ladies’ M.I.A. These issues cover the period 1884 to 1893.

**Mary E. Perkes** (Caine Mss 1, Box 2 and File Mss 435)—Journal of an early Cache Valley settler. Records her experiences while courting and during the early period of her marriage (1867–75).

**Joel E. Ricks Transcripts** (Mss 46)—Large collection of transcripts of journals, town histories, and other documents pertaining to the settlement of Cache Valley (1874–1955).

**Samuel Roskelley** (Mss 65)—An early settler in Smithfield, Utah, Roskelley was also an active temple worker for the LDS Church. Collection contains personal and business papers as well as extensive materials on Church leaders and activities during the 1880s. Much of the material focuses on activities at the St. George and Logan temples.

**Salt Lake Opera Company** (Caine Mss 30)—Records of the touring Mormon musical company (1897–1912) founded by Horace G. Whitney, the son of Newel K. Whitney.

**Heber Snell** (Mss 32)—Former LDS Institute teacher. Collection contains materials for his book, *Ancient Israel: Its Story and Meaning* (1948), as well as an account of the 1970–73 LDS Church court trial of John Fitzgerald (Mss 102) who criticized the Church’s former opposition to full membership for African-Americans.

**Conway Sonne** (LJAHA 8)—A Mormon historian who specialized in the nineteenth-century maritime migration of Mormons to the United States. Collection contains the research materials he used for several books (1949–88). There is also a separate photographic collection containing pictures of the ships Sonne researched. This collection is part of the Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives focusing on Mormon history.

**Moses Thatcher** (Mss 22)—Apostle of the Church (1879–96) and an active leader in LDS efforts to establish colonies in Mexico. Later, Thatcher was forced out of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The collection contains his diaries (1866–68, 1878–81) and letter books (1888–90, 1902–3).

**Thatcher Family Papers** (Mss 47 and 93)—Papers from Moses's brother, George, and his son, Moses Jr., and their families. The papers reflect the activities of one of the leading families in Cache Valley, Utah, during the early years. The Thatcher family ran a number of local businesses. Collections cover the period 1868–1960.

**Orson F. Whitney** (Mss 167 and 188)—Papers and diaries of Church Apostle. Whitney worked as reporter and editor for the *Deseret News* in the 1880s and was active in Salt Lake City politics. He also served several missions for the Church, both in America and Europe. Whitney was the author of the four-volume *History of Utah* (1904).

**Helen Mar Kimball Whitney Family Papers** (Mss 179)—Correspondence and diaries of Orson F. Whitney's mother. Spans the period from the 1840s to the 1890s. Also contains papers from other family members.

**John A. Widtsoe** (University Archives 3.1/5-2)—A former president of Utah State University (1907–16) and Apostle of the LDS Church, Widtsoe was a prolific author of both theological and scientific books.

**Brigham Young Financial Records** (Mss 42)—Thirty volumes reflecting the financial status of the LDS Church between 1859 and 1877. One ledger is recorded in the Deseret alphabet.

**John W. Young** (Caine Mss 26)—Collection contains papers and correspondence pertaining to the business activities of Brigham Young's son, including various railroad construction projects in the West.

### Bound Manuscripts

**Deseret Currency Association** (1858–69)—Records of the Association and private LDS money transactions in Salt Lake City.

**Franklin, Idaho, Tithing Office** (1864–66)—General tithing accounts for families and summary of returns from General Tithing Office in Salt Lake City.

**Mount Fort, Utah, Ward** (1882–1908)—Seven ledger books recording the financial transactions of the ward. Includes information on fast offerings, tithing deposits, temple donations, election funds, and janitorial expenses.

**River Heights, Utah, Ward** (1931–33, 1941–47)—Two volumes. The first one is a record of the ward's Young Ladies' M.I.A. in the early 1930s. The second volume is a record of the ward's financial affairs during the 1940s.

### Other Collections

Although the majority of Mormon materials in Special Collections pertains to the LDS Church, the division also has several collections associat-

ed with other related LDS groups.

**Morrisites** (Mss 157 and Caine Mss 10)—Utah State University has the largest single collection pertaining to the Church of the Firstborn, which broke away from the LDS Church in 1858.

**Ed Decker** (Mss 210)—A prominent LDS critic, Decker founded the Saints Alive in Jesus organization (1978) to actively encourage people to leave the Church. He also produced the film *The Godmakers* (1980).

**John Fitzgerald** (Mss 102)—A former member of the LDS Church, Fitzgerald was excommunicated (1973) for his active criticism of the Church's exclusion of African-Americans from the priesthood.

**Mormons for ERA** (Mss 225)—Group that lobbied for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. The most well-known member of this organization was Sonia Johnson, who served as head of the group and was excommunicated by the LDS Church (1979). This collection contains the papers of Johnson's three colleagues: Alice Allred Pottmyer, Hazel Davis Rigby, and Maida Rust Withers.

### Collections in Process

Although an abundance of Mormon-related materials is already available at Utah State University, Special Collections has in recent years acquired a number of new collections that promise to greatly strengthen and expand the division's Mormon holdings. (These collections are currently being processed and are not available for research at this time.)

**Leonard J. Arrington**—He is perhaps the most prominent historian in the field of Mormon history. This collection contains Arrington's diaries, correspondence, manuscripts, books, and voluminous research materials. This collection is the centerpiece of the Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives, which focuses on Mormon historical materials and also houses the papers of other Mormon historians.

**S. George and Maria Ellsworth**—Another prominent Mormon historian was S. George Ellsworth who spent his career researching the early missionary era of the LDS Church, especially its efforts in the South Pacific. The collection contains the research materials that Dr. Ellsworth used for his books on Addison Pratt and Louisa Barnes Pratt as well as for his textbook, *Utah's Heritage*. His wife Maria, a historian in her own right, focused her research on her ancestors who were early Mormon settlers in Arizona. In addition to the Ellsworths' own papers, this collection contains the papers of various family members such as Addison Pratt, Louisa Barnes Pratt, Pauline Udall, Ida Hunt Udall, and Caroline Crosby.

**Charles W. Nibley**—He was a prominent figure in Logan, Utah, and in the LDS Church. His descendants have donated family correspondence and

photographs and have participated in an oral history project (which is a joint venture with USU's History Department). Collection spans the period from the 1850s to the 1930s.

**F. Ross Peterson**—Papers and correspondence from his years (1983–91) as editor of the independent Mormon journal *Dialogue*.

**William B. Preston**—An early settler in Logan, Preston was a brother-in-law of Moses Thatcher. Preston's diaries and correspondence recount his years spent in Great Britain as a missionary during the 1860s. He subsequently had an active political, theological, and entrepreneurial career when he returned to Utah, where he played an active role in arranging national tours for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

### More Information

The items listed above should provide researchers with a sense of the types of Mormon manuscript materials to be found in USU's Special Collections, but this is by no means a comprehensive list. Many other collections and materials providing both direct and indirect insights into Mormon history can be found at Utah State University, including a large number of local history collections.

One way to find out more about the materials housed in Special Collections is to consult the various Mormon manuscript reference books that are available in most research libraries. Two examples are Mary Washington's *An Annotated Bibliography of Western Manuscripts . . .* (1971) and Davis Bitton's *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* (1977).

Special Collections and Archives is located on the first floor of the Merrill Library at Utah State University in Logan. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 until 5 and Saturdays from 1 until 5. (It is closed on holidays, holiday weekends, and all Saturdays in August). The telephone number is (435) 797-2663. The web address is [www.usu.edu/~specol](http://www.usu.edu/~specol). (This web site is currently being revised. A new one should be posted by the second half of 2000.)

### Notes

1. This article is a revised and updated version of an earlier article by Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Mormon Americana in the Utah State University Special Collections Library," in *Mormon Americana: A Guide to Sources and Collections in the United States*, ed. David J. Whittaker (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1995), 217–24.

2. For more information about the Peirce collection and the controversy surrounding its purchase, see Ann Butters, "The Peirce Collection at Utah State University," in *Mormon Americana*, 225–31.