

The Philadelphia Pennsylvania Branch: Its Early History and Records

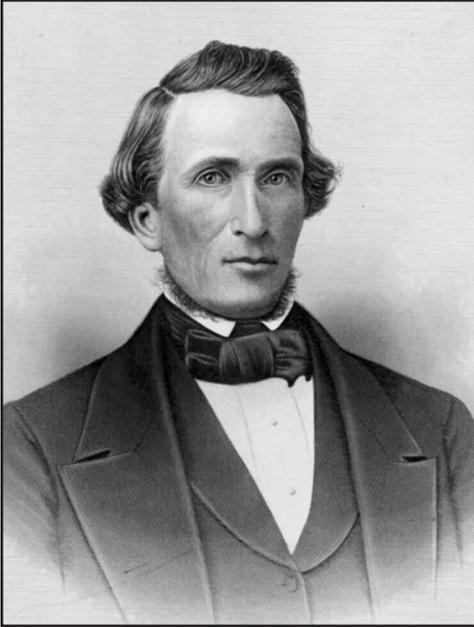
David J. Whittaker

Early Mormon missionary work found its focus in the villages and hamlets of the Old Northwest, usually among the family and neighbors of the earliest converts. This focus led members to seek out their immediate family members with whom they could share the news of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, accounts of which centered on the claims of Joseph Smith's visions, restored authority, an organized church, and new scripture. Most of these early missions were short term, they were often directed in general geographical terms, and they were centered in New England and New York, the areas of origin of most early members.¹

Gradually, their proselyting ventures moved north into upper Canada and south into Pennsylvania. By 1836, missionaries were beginning to enter larger cities such as Toronto, Canada, and New York City, in which locations the first Mormon missionary tracts appeared. As the Church grew, a system of licensing representatives of the Church developed, as did a more formal system of keeping track of members of the emerging "churches"—that is, branches. Early Mormon newspapers regularly printed the letters of these early messengers of the Restoration, and both the correspondence and the records of conferences have allowed historians to trace the gradual geographical expansion of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1830s.

As the Church grew in numbers, a more formal leadership structure emerged: a First Presidency was organized in 1832 and a Quorum of the

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Jedediah M. Grant.
Courtesy Church Archives.

Twelve Apostles was called in 1835, followed by the first Quorum of the Seventy. Most of the earliest assignments given to these quorums had to do with missionary work, and by the end of the 1830s, this outcome was reflected in more formal missionary calls.

The administrative growth and maturation of the Apostles who served in the British Isles from 1839–41 were particularly important in the growth and stabilization of Church administration once the Apostles returned home. The Apostles' growth and maturation were particularly important for the history of the Church in Philadelphia, as reflected in

the growing authority of the Apostles in Church leadership after 1841 and their control of missions and missionary work, Church publishing, and Church government.² The history of the Philadelphia Branch clearly reflects this growing reality.

History of the Philadelphia Branch

Mormon missionaries entered the state of Pennsylvania early in the 1830s.³ Joseph Smith's wife Emma had lived in the Harmony area of northeastern Pennsylvania, and Joseph had visited the area in the 1820s to work for the Knight family who lived up the Susquehanna River at Colesville, New York. Joseph met, courted, and married Emma by 1827 and acquired property in Harmony from her father where the young couple lived and Joseph worked on translating the Book of Mormon. The priesthood was restored near Harmony, and from this early time, the area had special meaning to early converts. Close friends of the Smith family were early supporters from these areas.⁴

Following the formal organization of the Church in April 1830, missionaries traveled east through New York and even south into

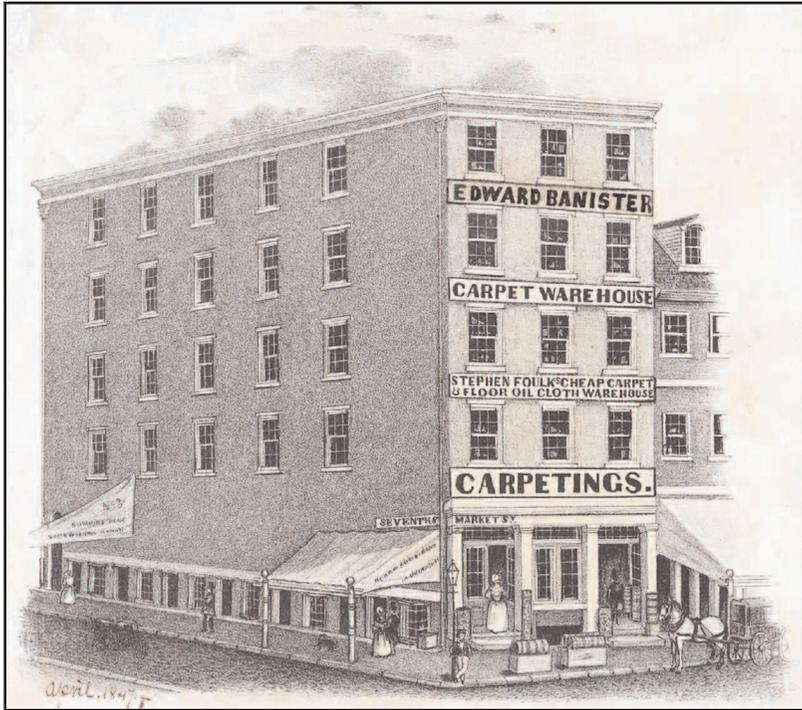
Pennsylvania. But it was not until 1839 when a formal call came to Benjamin Winchester that missionary work began in Philadelphia. Missionaries had been successful in New Jersey,⁵ and it was the Toms River Branch that assigned Winchester in June 1839 to do missionary work in the Philadelphia area.⁶ For much of the early 1840s, Winchester played a significant role in the work of the Church there.⁷

My purpose here is not to trace this story in detail; a short summary will have to suffice.⁸ The Philadelphia Branch was officially organized on Joseph Smith's thirty-fourth birthday, 23 December 1839, with Joseph himself presiding over the meeting.⁹ The Church in Philadelphia was always connected and associated with the various other branches in both New Jersey and those to the west of Philadelphia. Meetings and conferences held in Philadelphia regularly had representatives from such areas as New Jersey (Cream Ridge and Toms River) and Pennsylvania (Chester, Lancaster, and Armstrong counties). Immigration, missionary work, internal quarreling, and apostasy after Joseph Smith's death were reflected in the membership list that has come down to us. The Philadelphia Branch reported 250 members in October 1840; in April 1841, the branch reported 214 members; and by September 1844, 334 members (the highest number reported) were claimed.¹⁰

The Philadelphia Branch gives us an important window into the growth and change that early Mormonism experienced. Centered as it was in one of the largest cities in America (the 1840 census reported a population of 258,922), it was a dynamic port city that existed only on the periphery of the Church, whose real center was in Nauvoo during the early 1840s. But the comings and goings of Church leaders, its location close to the nation's capitol, and the strong personalities of its local leaders continue to invite us to look more closely at its history, clearly the largest Mormon congregation on the East Coast in the 1840s.¹¹

Following the death of Joseph Smith, some members of the Philadelphia Branch supported the claims of Sidney Rigdon,¹² but more became followers of James J. Strang, who came to Philadelphia himself to preach in the summer of 1846¹³ and then again came to Pennsylvania in 1849, and a number of former members of the Church in this area followed Strang.¹⁴ The emergence of Jedediah M. Grant to Mormon leadership (including counselor to Brigham Young) can be traced to his active role in Philadelphia¹⁵ in keeping many members loyal to the leadership of Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹⁶ After 1854, Philadelphia was used primarily as a port of entry for Latter-day Saints emigrating from Europe.¹⁷ But the full story of the Church in Philadelphia must include the key friendship of Thomas L. Kane, who

first met the Mormons in 1846 and then devoted his life to defending and advising Church leaders, even though Kane never joined the Church.¹⁸



Edward Banister's carpet warehouse and Stephen Foulk's cheap carpet and floor oil cloth warehouse, corner of Seventh and Market Streets, Philadelphia, April 1847. Nicholas B. Wainwright collection of Lithographic prints, courtesy The Library Company of Philadelphia.

The Records of the Philadelphia Branch

The most important record of this Church unit is held in the archives of the Community of Christ Church (formerly RLDS) in Independence, Missouri. The record book contains the minutes of the meetings of the Philadelphia Branch, with entries from 23 December 1839 to the last entry, dated 16 April 1854. But included in the record book are important lists that allow us to track the names of the members of the branch, with information occasionally recorded that details such data as residence at time of conversion, dates of marriages, deaths, and excommunications, and specific and sometimes general information

relating to the individual's or the family's departure from the area (often to "the West"—that is, Nauvoo). There are also short lists giving the names of children blessed and lists of members baptized for restoration of their health, a practice common in the nineteenth century. Taken together, this early Mormon record book provides invaluable information to students of Mormonism on the East Coast during the Nauvoo period as well as useful information that will enable more detailed demographic studies of an early Mormon congregation.¹⁹ Additionally, when its full history is told, it will also provide a valuable case study of the impact of the succession crisis that affected the Church following the death of Joseph Smith. The records suggest that over 40 percent of the branch members were excommunicated after August 1844.

The manuscript record itself is about 170 pages. Pages 1 to 101 contain the minutes of the meetings and conferences held in Philadelphia from 23 December 1839 to 16 April 1854, although the entries after 10 March 1847 are short, devoting only about ten pages to the years from 1847–54. Some of the information was copied and forwarded to Nauvoo, where the account or extracts were printed in the *Times and Seasons*. This record contains accounts of the growing dissent within the branch leadership over the conflicts between Winchester and William Smith and John E. Page, both members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles during a period of substantial growth in the power and influence of that quorum. In time, all three would be cut off from the Church, and these problems were no doubt reflected in the growing chaos within the branch itself.

Following the record of meetings, there are several blank pages, and then page 99 contains the "Record of names of Church members Baptized for their health," mostly in April and October of 1843. Pages 102 to 128 are blank, followed by four pages of "Record of Children Offered to be blessed" with the dates reported, although one page is written upside down in the volume.

Then, from the back of the volume, but with the book turned upside down, are recorded on thirty-nine pages the "Names of the Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Philadelphia." Each page is numbered, with the names of each person recorded. Adjacent to each individual name or family is given their address (sometimes very specific, sometimes very general) at the time of baptism, as well as comments as they relate to each person. These comments were added at various times to the record in what was an attempt to keep the membership information up to date. Some of the information is very specific, as if it were supplied by a specific individual or source; sometimes the informa-

tion is very general, as if the source were rumor or a later oral report.

Written inside the front cover of the record book is the provenance information: "This record was found among the Books and papers of the Late Elder Sam. M. Reeve of Mt. Holly, New Jersey. Presented to the Philadelphia Branch by Bro. Samuel A. Reeve March 1906 to be held in trust for and where it is practical loaned to the General Ch. Historian." This note is signed by Walter W. Smith, 1 April 1906. Smith, then the historian of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, later drew extensively upon the record for his series on the history of the Philadelphia Branch, published in the *Journal of History* from 1918–1920.²⁰

What follows is the membership list, taken from the manuscript and printed here with the permission of the archivist of the Community of Christ Church.

The list was compiled by Maurine Carr Ward using three versions of the record book:

1. Microfilm of the original record book. This microfilm is located in the Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

2. Transcription of the original record book produced in 1993 by Winnie Piepengerdes, Archives Temple Associate, Community of Christ. This transcription of the complete book, including the minutes, was a huge undertaking and will be very valuable to serious researchers of Philadelphia. Ms. Piepengerdes is now deceased, having lost a battle with cancer.

3. Transcription by David J. Whittaker in 1979 during his examination of the original manuscript in Independence, Missouri.

Several problems surfaced when these three sources were analyzed. Transcription of the film, and possibly the original, was difficult. Some of the miscellaneous information and the addresses were unreadable or difficult to decipher. It was difficult to determine which names had ditto marks under previous baptism dates and which ones did not. The order of events in the miscellaneous section did not make sense, and it was difficult to tell if a date belonged to a removal, a record coming into Philadelphia, or a cutoff date. At times, a cutoff date was written across the baptismal date. Strikeouts were not consistent. Some previous addresses and cutoff members were crossed out. Most of the time they were not. Usually, a female member who married had her maiden name crossed out and the married surname added in different handwriting. A few times, the writing on the right-hand page did not line up with the information on the left page. This discrepancy made it difficult to decide which address and information went with which name.

Surnames of family members were not always spelled the same. If a person was listed in more than one place, the name was often spelled differently. Because of the difficulty in reading the document, it was difficult to decipher some names, especially those using uppercase “L” and “S.” Some of the most noticeable names that could be (and were) interpreted more than one way were Trost-Tross-Frost, Vindures-Vinduzer-VanDusen, Diez-Dauss, Gale-Yale, and Grenich-Greenock. Other surnames that appeared to be the same family, but were not, were Stong-Strong, McKinney-McKinley, and Sleeper-Streeper.

Addresses of the members are shown in the last line in the “Miscellaneous and Address” column. The record shows different spellings on some street names. These were standardized. Where possible, correct spellings of early street names are shown in brackets. These spellings were found on early maps provided by David J. Whittaker. Some of the addresses were neighborhood, township, district, or borough names in use by 1850—not street names. For example, see Bush Hill, Camac’s Woods, Falls of Schuylkill, Manayunk Borough, Moyamensing Twp, Southwark District, Roxborough Twp, Frankford Borough, Germantown Twp, and West Kensington District.

The “Priesthood Ordination List” found below was not included as a list in the record book. These names and dates were extracted from the branch minutes. All of the persons shown in the death listing, except four infants, were adults who were found in the membership list. These death dates are included in the member information.

Two additional pieces of information have been added to the list in brackets. Several names indicated that the person removed to California. Most of these sailed with Samuel Brannan on the ship *Brooklyn* in February 1846. Two families do not show up as passengers, however, which indicates that the members either changed their minds or did not have the means to sail. Other names show that a person went west or removed to Nauvoo. These names were checked against Lyman D. Platt’s reference book, *Nauvoo: Early Mormon Records Series*, volume 1.²¹ Explanation of the four records he indexed is supplied in the endnotes. The first page number refers to Platt’s book; the second page number refers to the original source.

Because of the above considerations, the three transcriptions, including this one, do not always agree. There are possibilities for misinterpretation in this transcription. Any additions, corrections, or comments would be welcomed by Maurine Carr Ward, 433 East 300 South, Hyrum, UT 84319, maurineward@comcast.net.

Philadelphia shops and buildings, shown in period photographs



Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, south side, Numbers 46-54, 17 June 1843. Albumen print from a daguerreotype commissioned by John McAllister, who is shown in front of his optician shop at 48 Chestnut Street. Photo was taken by William G. Mason, a wood engraver and amateur daguerreotypist, whose shop is to the left of McAllister's.

Courtesy The Library Company of Philadelphia.

accompanying this introduction and the membership list, would have been familiar to many of the Latter-day Saints in Philadelphia.

Notes

1. The best history remains S. George Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830–1860," (PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1951).

2. The story is told in James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles, 1837–1841* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992). The minutes of the special conference in Nauvoo on 16 August 1841 noted that Joseph Smith said "that the time had come when the Twelve should be called upon to stand in their place next to the first presidency, and to attend to the settling of emigrants and the business of the church at the stakes, and to assist to bear off the kingdom." "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 20 (16 August 1841): 521–22.

3. See V. Alan Curtis, "Missionary Activities and Church Organization in Pennsylvania, 1830–1840," (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976); and Paul Zilch Rosenbaum, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Pennsylvania (1830–1854)," (Master's thesis, East Stroudsburg College [Pennsylvania], 1982). Also helping to fill in the details are studies by Cheryl Bean, "LDS Baptisms in Erie County, Pennsylvania, 1831–1833," *Nauvoo Journal* 5, no.2 (Fall 1993): 57–102; and Steven C. Harper, "The Restoration of Mormonism to Erie County, Pennsylvania," *Mormon Historical Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 3–19. An early compilation is Andrew Jenson, "Manuscript History of the Church in Pennsylvania," manuscript in the Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. A useful guide to the Mormon historical sites in Pennsylvania is by Larry C. Porter, *Sacred Places: New York and Pennsylvania*, Volume 2, ed. LaMar C. Berrett (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 258–314.

4. See Larry C. Porter, "The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 10, no. 3 (Spring 1970): 365–85.

5. See Stephen J. Fleming, "An Examination of the Success of Early Mormonism in the Delaware Valley" (Master's thesis, California State University, Stanislaus, 2003), and Fleming, "'Sweeping Everything before It': Early Mormonism in the Pine Barrens of New Jersey," *Brigham Young University Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 72–104.

6. Winchester describes this assignment in his letter of 18 June 1839, *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 1 (November 1839): 9–11. He describes his early work in Philadelphia in a report of 21 October 1839 published in *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 2 (December 1839): 26.

7. For the larger story, see David J. Whittaker, "Benjamin Winchester: Early Mormon Pamphleteer," in "Early Mormon Pamphleteering" (PhD dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1982), 139–235, which presents many details on Philadelphia branch history; and Whittaker, "East of Nauvoo: Benjamin Winchester and the Early Mormon Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 21 (Fall 1995): 30–83. Winchester published in Philadelphia a number of works defending Mormonism, including the periodical *The Gospel Reflector* (semimonthly from 1 January to 15 June 1841) as well as *The Origin of the Spaulding Story* (1840); *Synopsis of the Holy Scriptures* (1842); and *A History of the Priesthood* (1843).

8. For a useful summary, see Stephen J. Fleming, "Discord in the City of Brotherly Love: The Story of Early Mormonism in Philadelphia," *Mormon Historical Studies* 5, no. 1. (Spring 2004): 3–27.

9. See Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 23 December 1839, manuscript, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

10. Membership figures were reported within the Philadelphia Branch Minutes and also in various reports published in the following issues of the *Times and Seasons*: May 1840—400 members "within sixty miles of this place [Philadelphia]," Lorenzo Barnes to Don Carlos Smith and Ebenezer Robinson, 5 May 1840, *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 8 (June 1840): 117; October 1840—200 members, Lorenzo Barnes to Don Carlos Smith and Ebenezer Robinson, 8 July 1840, *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 12 (October 1840): 182; October 1840—250 members, "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 2 (15 November 1840): 215–16; October 1840—230 members, Erastus Snow to Don Carlos Smith and Ebenezer Robinson, 31 October 1840, *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 2 (15 November 1840): 221; April 1841—213 members, "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 14 (15 May 1841): 412–13; and September 1844—334 members, "Minutes of a Conference in Philadelphia," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 20 (1 November 1844): 701. Regular movements of converts to Nauvoo probably account for the fluctuations in the numbers reported. Significantly, Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve's 29 May 1843 letter, "To the Church in Philadelphia," instructed and counseled members there to move "without delay" to Nauvoo. The instruction clearly had a lasting impact on the branch's ability to sustain local membership growth. See "Special Message," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 15 (15 June 1843): 232.

11. For the history of Philadelphia, see Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), and Nicholas B. Wainwright, "The Age of Nicholas Biddle, 1826–1841," and Elizabeth M. Geffen, "Industrial Development and Social Crisis, 1841–1854," in *Philadelphia, A 300 Year History*, ed. Russell F. Weigley, et al. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 258–306, 307–62.

12. For Rigdon's Pennsylvania years, see Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 367–412.

13. Strang's periodical, the *Voree Herald* [Wisconsin] claimed in September 1846 that their congregation in Philadelphia was flourishing. He also claimed members in New York and Boston, and convert George J. Adams arranged the elaborate coronation ceremony for Strang. Adams also performed Strang's first plural marriage to Elvera Field in July 1849, a young woman who accompanied him (traveling as a male private secretary under the name of "Charles J. Douglas") during his second missionary trip to the East Coast in 1849–50. When Strang publicly admitted to the practice of plural marriage in July 1850, many of the former East Coast converts left his organization.

14. Strang himself visited and preached in Philadelphia in 1846, and he counted among his followers a number of people who had formerly been part of the Philadelphia Branch, including several key leaders. The James J. Strang Papers in the Beinecke Library at Yale University contain letters of members of the Philadelphia Branch, and these letters provide evidence that Strang and his followers were able to take advantage of the discontentment manifested in the branch. See, for example, the letters of Peter Hess, Andrew G. Jackson, and Amos Lowen. See also Robin S. Jensen, "Gleaning the Harvest: Strangite Missionary Work, 1846-1850," (master's thesis, BYU, 2005).

15. For Jedediah M. Grant's key role in Philadelphia, see Gene A. Sessions, *Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 73–110.

16. D. Michael Quinn has argued that about 40 percent of the Philadelphia Branch refused to follow apostolic leadership after the death of Joseph Smith. See Quinn, "The Succession Crisis of 1844," *BYU Studies* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1976): 232–33n137.

17. Because of the serious problems with sickness in the Mississippi River Valley during this time, Brigham Young counseled British Mission leader, Franklin D. Richards, to route Mormon converts through Philadelphia, Boston, or New York, but President Young gave Philadelphia top billing. See the letter of Brigham Young to Franklin D. Richards, 2 August 1854, in *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 16, no. 43 (October 1854): 684.

18. Kane's early meetings with Church representative Jesse Little in Philadelphia, his assistance in trying to raise money in Philadelphia for the exiled Latter-day Saints, his eventual friendship with Brigham Young, and his life of service to the Latter-day Saint cause can be glimpsed in an early biographical study by Albert Zobell Jr., *Sentinel in the East* (Salt Lake City: Nicholas G. Morgan Sr., 1965), and more fully in the extensive Kane Collection recently opened in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, as described in Whittaker, "New Light on Old Friends: The Thomas L. Kane and Elizabeth W. Kane Collection," *Journal of Mormon History* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 67–94. The Kane papers make it clear that the Kane home was often visited by Mormon leaders passing through the city, and Kane's extensive correspondence with Brigham Young refers to these visits.

19. Although the records of the first decades of the Church are fitful and incomplete, their very existence is a testimony to the record-keeping initiatives of Joseph Smith. See Dean C. Jessee, "Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormon Record Keeping," in *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith*, Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black, eds. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 138–60.

20. Walter W. Smith, "The History of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Branch," *Journal of History* (Lamoni, Iowa: published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) 11 (July 1918): 358–73; 12 (July 1919): 111–18; 13 (October 1920): 509–37. Richard P. Howard, a later RLDS Church Historian, reflected on the importance of the Philadelphia Branch records in "Value in Old Minute Books," *Saints Herald* 123, no. 12 (December 1976): 48.

21. Lyman D. Platt, *Nauvoo: Early Mormon Records Series*, 1 vol. (Highland, Utah: n.p., 1980). Records that Platt indexes in this book are the following:

1. COR: "Record of Members 1841–1845." This record contains the names of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who handed in certificates to the Church clerk at Nauvoo. The date the certificate was made out, the place of issue, and the name of the presiding authority who signed it are given in the original records.

2. LDS: 1842 census of Nauvoo, "A Record of the Names of the Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as taken by the lesser priesthood in the Spring of the year 1842 and continue to be added [to] as the Members arrive at the City of Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois. Also the Deaths of Members, & their Children, & Names of Children under 8 years of Age."

3. NLM: "Members who came into the City since 1841 and those Baptized in the City."

4. DLP: "A Daily Log of persons entering the city as recorded by Willard Richards, beginning July 31st 1843 and ending January 22, 1846."

Phila April 22^d 1842

To Mrs Joseph Smith President of the Church of Latter Day-Saints.

We the undersigned Petitioners, members of the Church of Latter Day Saints at Phila, respectfully represent, that inasmuch as there has been some difficulties in our Church, in this City for some few months past (as you doubtless are aware) and through those difficulties, since the Conference has closed, Elder Winchester and others have caused the place of worship in Third Street where we have been worshipping to be closed, ^{this} compelling those that wish to hear the Gospel preached to attend in Chestnut St much to our inconvenience and the inconvenience of others that are enquiring the way to Zion. Therefore your Petitioners would respectfully ask, that a Church may be organized in the North part of the City of Phila (in the part of the city where the most of us reside) separate and distinct from any other, in order that the Good work may still continue to prosper with us, and in order to have the word of God dispensed among us, we would present to your favourable notice Elder Mrs Wharton who has been serving us without pay, ever since Elder Winchester left us, to our entire satisfaction and the satisfaction of others who are enquiring the way of Life. If those favours are granted they shall be held in gratefull remembrance by the subscribers untill we can make it convenient to remove to the Land of rest prepared for the people of the Lord, for which we will ever pray &c

Signs. G B Nicholson. Chas Snyder

Sabina Emens	Mark Webb	Jacob G Baker
Elizabeth Pitterlin	Sarah Ann Hayes	Eliza Baker
Elizabeth Hayes	Thomas J. Jones	Laranna Webster
Ludice Snyder	John Proter	J Wilson
Eliza Nicholson	Mary Bates	J. J. Jones
Adelaide Nicholson	Jane Bates	J. J. Jones
Catharine Pitterlin	Thomas Allen	Charles Johnson
Elizabeth Clark	Margaret Allen	Charles Pitterlin
Janet & Owen	Mrs. Spout	Mary C. Cox

Pages of a petition written from Philadelphia Branch members to Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, 22 April 1842. Many of the signatures on this petition are those of members shown in the branch list, which follows. This petition is located in the Joseph Smith Collection, Supplemental Material, courtesy Church Archives.

We whose names are herunto attached have learned with surprise that the house in Third Street where the Latter Day Saints have held meetings and where we have been very well pleased, under the Preaching of Wm Wharton their Preacher, is closed by the order of Ben^g Winchester and others; would ask in conjunction with the members that the same or another may be opened under the Guidance of Wm Wharton, or some other person as competent as he & we will ever pray &c

Wm Wharton	John Moore	Emma Frost
Wm Conway	George Holmish	Mary Baker
Geo H. Hating	James Brewer	Catherine Windupel
George Hiles	Eliabeth Webb	Lurak Wustler
John G. Cable	Mary Ann Webb	Hannah Conrad
Benjamin H. Foster	John Wood	Stonanda Wimmiley
Wm H. Allcock		Ann Craig
		Catherine Wood
Richard Harrison	Eliza Broadnix	Margaretta Walker
Charles Waiters	Esther Key	Eliza Emlin
Reuben W. Thompson		Lidia M. Key
Joseph Hines		Sarah Ann Davis
Charles B. Allen		Harnet Smith
Sarah Stearns		Catherine Depray
William Wharton		
James Haines		

Assured by the 12. May 1844.

Ann Mary Hill	James M. Hinney
Margarett. Sumner	Jane Lyfrit
Wm of Bob	Hannah Sailor
Mrs. Cole	L. Hinney
Caroline. Gruen	Nells Walton
Mary Matilda Croft	Charles E. West
Joseph Landis	Susan H. Conrad
Esther Loring	Samuel Baker
Richard Lyffing.	Elizabeth Baker
Frederick Lyffing.	James Sanson
Isaac Linnick	Samuel P. Chapman
Ann Linnick	Caroline Linnick
George Applethorn	Sarah Burns
John Turner	William Middleton
Ann Corvial	Clary Wilhel
Michael Katz	Jacob Hopking
Catherine Katz	George Clarke
Esther Yager	Mary Ann Hopking
Eliza Yager	Rebecca Long
Richard Pender	Susanna Wilson
John Ewing	John Schaul
	Esther Schaul

A number more signed could be obtained if time would admit
 but as Mrs. Robins must leave we must close.
 An answer by the Bearer of this Petition will be gratefully
 received by your Petitioners who will ever pray for your
 prosperity & that of the Church until we all come in the unity
 of the faith &c &c even so Amen.