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## Discord in the City of Brotherly Love: The Story of Early Mormonism in Philadelphia

*Stephen J. Fleming*

Although a handful of visits to Philadelphia were made throughout the 1830s, Mormon proselyting began there in earnest in 1839. This endeavor was part of a larger proselyting effort that had begun a year earlier throughout the counties surrounding Philadelphia. Lorenzo Barnes and Elisha Davis had met with great success in nearby Chester County, Pennsylvania, and Benjamin Winchester had also made numerous converts in central New Jersey.<sup>1</sup> The next summer, Winchester began proselytizing in Philadelphia. At first, he “was ridiculed on almost ev[e]ry occasion when I enquired for a house” to preach in, yet he persevered. Winchester finally found a hall and “a crowded congregation attended the meeting.” After Winchester preached there about a dozen times, he debated with a Presbyterian minister, “which was the means of doing much good. By this time there was quite an excitement, and the former prejudices of the people seemed in part removed.” Winchester baptized several in Philadelphia, “and I feel myself authorized to say that the work of the Lord is gaining ground, in this city: and I trust that it will still roll on.”<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Smith’s visit to the area on his way to Washington, D.C., in the winter of 1839–40 spurred further growth of Mormonism in the area. A local newspaper reported that the Prophet “visited New Egypt, Hornerstown, and Toms River [New Jersey] and sealed a large number to the church.”<sup>3</sup> Joseph also established branches in Philadelphia and Chester County,

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*Church on 412 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
where Joseph Smith preached the last week of 1839.  
Photograph by and courtesy of Sidney Weitzman.*

Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup> The successes were often more than the missionaries could handle. In October 1839, Benjamin Winchester solicited help from Mormon headquarters “on the strongest terms.”<sup>5</sup> In January 1840, Lorenzo Barnes claimed, “I have calls in every direction, on the right hand and on the left.— A dozen elders might well be employed in Chester Co. Pa. . . . I can fill but a small part of the calls I have for preaching.”<sup>6</sup> Further, Erastus Snow reported in October 1840 that “the greatest obstruction is the scarcity of laborers. . . . All eastern Pennsylvania is literally crying out ‘come and help us,’ ‘send us preachers,’ &c. and on the other side of the Delaware it is the same.”<sup>7</sup> Outside Nauvoo, Philadelphia quickly became one of the largest branches, with over three hundred members.<sup>8</sup>

The story of Mormonism in Philadelphia sheds light on the extent and nature of Mormonism during the Nauvoo period. The *Times and Seasons* lists multitudes of branches throughout the United States during the 1840s; unfortunately, little has been written about these branches. The story of Mormonism in Philadelphia demonstrates just how vibrant and intriguing Mormonism was in such outlying areas.<sup>9</sup>

### **Difficulties of Outlying Branches**

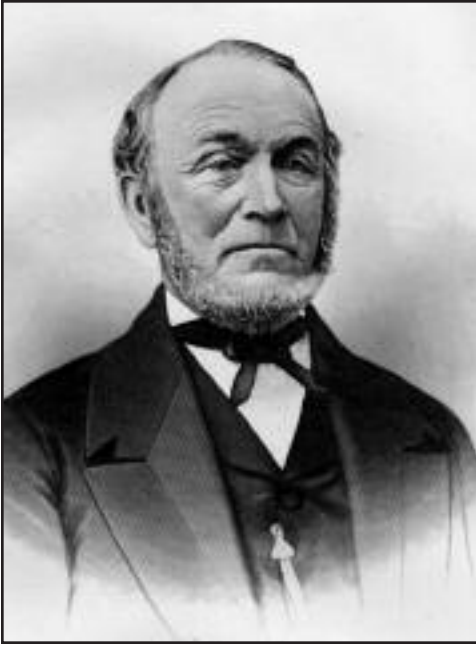
Despite the success, Mormonism’s tenure in Philadelphia was a conflicted one. The Mormons were frequently attacked in the press, and the local



*Some early branches of the Latter-day Saint Church around Philadelphia.*

newspapers frequently refused to print the Mormons' responses. Edwin Woolley reported: "The adversary is busily engaged in these parts, all manner of lies are circulated, the public prints are at war with the kingdom. . . . And when we called upon the Editors to print for us, they refused to do so, leaving us but poor opportunity to correct the errors."<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the Mormons started their own periodical in Philadelphia, the *Gospel Reflector*, edited and written mostly by Benjamin Winchester. Despite the hostile treatment in the press, the missionaries there reported no violence or mob action of any kind. The Mormon experience throughout the Delaware Valley was one of general, if sometimes begrudged, tolerance.<sup>11</sup> Though John E. Page claimed at one point that Philadelphia had "many who are fully convinced of the truth of the faith who only stay back for the sake of popular name,"<sup>12</sup> Samuel James felt that "the persecution has had the tendency to elicit inquiry, rather than surpress [*sic*] the truth."<sup>13</sup>

Ultimately, the major problems the Mormons faced in the Philadelphia area came from internal problems, many of which were related to their peripheral status. With a rather complex and changing hierarchical struc-



*Edwin D. Woolley.*

*Photograph courtesy of Church Archives,  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*

ture, Mormon organization in the area was often confused, as most of the membership were very new to the whole procedure. Questions of authority were a constant concern. By 1840, the Prophet had established the authority of the Twelve, but questions often arose about the relationship between traveling elders and local presiding elders. In December 1839, Joseph Smith told the Philadelphia Branch “that travelling elders should be especially cautious of inroaching on the ground of stationed & presiding Elders and rather direct their efforts to breaking up and occupying new ground.”<sup>14</sup> Presiding elders are what are called branch presidents today, and in the

early days of the Church, they were usually chosen by the branch. Despite Joseph’s counsel, the continual problem of administrative overlap persisted. For instance, in August 1844, the presiding elder in Philadelphia noted that one of the Twelve had ordained a Brother Miller without the branch’s knowledge and that this Miller was “holding meetings near Germantown representing himself as a Legate sent out by this Branch greatly to the discredit of the same, and the cause generally, he being incompetent to set forth doctrine in any degree of clearness on account it is believed of Mental infirmity.” The branch therefore motioned “that Br Miller be requested to remain in this branch and assist in the meetings, receive counsel from the Elders &c until such time as they may consider him competent to teach doctrines of the church successfully.”<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, Mormonism’s gathering principle took a major toll on outlying branches. At a conference in Philadelphia in 1841, Hyrum Smith stressed “the saints gathering at Nauvoo, at present, instead of any other place.”<sup>16</sup> Joseph Smith made this point clear to the entire church in May of 1841 when he discontinued all stakes outside of Hancock County, Illinois, and Lee County, Iowa, instructing the Mormons “to settle in this county

[Hancock] as soon as circumstances will permit.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, many converts in the Philadelphia area began to move to Nauvoo in 1841 and often encouraged their friends to follow. Edson Whipple wrote to Peter Hess in Philadelphia, saying, “Let me exhort you to leave Phil and come to this place and help build up Zion” and ended his letter by “exhorting you all to be faithful to your calling and gather home to Zion as fast as your circumstances will admit.”<sup>18</sup>

The gathering principle was particularly hard on these peripheral branches because those most likely to gather early on were the particularly stalwart and those who could most easily afford the move. Therefore, many of the poor and ambivalent were left behind, causing difficulties for Mormon administration in the area.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, Mormon leaders wanted these stragglers (for lack of a better term) to function as a church while they were preparing to gather. Thus, Mormon branches on the periphery were communities in tension; they were not really supposed to be there but were nevertheless supposed to function at a high level.

The major problems the Philadelphia Branch faced resulted from Mormonism’s internal difficulties. For instance, Mormon missionary Lorenzo D. Wasson reported the following when Mormon apostate John C. Bennett’s diatribes against the Saints hit Philadelphia: “When I arrived in Philadelphia the saints were in a tremendous flustration for the welfare of brother Joseph, and their friends in Nauvoo. The disclosures of J. C. Bennett and his satellites had just arrived, and the faith of some was failing—others doubting.”<sup>20</sup> Joseph Smith responded generally by sending out a considerable fleet of missionaries to the eastern cities to refute Bennett. In the end, historian George Ellsworth speculates that the Bennett affair actually helped the Mormons by the notoriety it created.<sup>21</sup>

Ultimately, the principal difficulties the Philadelphia Branch faced came from its own internal strife. Though the success of early Mormonism in Philadelphia was a high point in the story of early Mormonism, the infighting among the branch members and leaders caused continual difficulties for the branch and headaches for the leadership at Nauvoo.

### Early Disputes

When the Philadelphia Branch was organized by Joseph Smith in December 1839, the branch minutes recorded that “great union prevailed through[ou]t.”<sup>22</sup> However, by February 1840, Erastus Snow stated that he “preached and helped to settle some difficulties in the Church” in Philadelphia.<sup>23</sup> But the following year was generally one of harmony and progress for the Philadelphia Branch, except for some financial difficulty.

The branch decided to appoint a committee to look after the branch's finances, but Hyrum Smith, who was in the area, decided instead to call a branch bishop, a calling that would "supercede the necessity of a committee of finance." At a conference the next day, Hyrum informed the branch that they should call a "presid[ing] elder and two councellors . . . to preside over the spiritual affairs of the Church in this place, also, that a bishop and his councellors be ordained to take charge of the financial affairs of the Church and transact such business as the law directs." Hyrum then asked the branch to "make choice of men to fill these several stations." The branch chose Benjamin Winchester to be the presiding elder, with Edson Whipple and William Wharton and his counselors, and chose Jacob Syfritt to be the bishop, with Jesse Price and J. B. Nicholson as his counselors.<sup>24</sup>

That same year Winchester also began the publication of the periodical the *Gospel Reflector* in the city, and the branch began meeting regularly on the third story of the Marshall Institute on Third Street in an area of town called the Northern Liberties.<sup>25</sup> The branch also appointed the priests, teachers, and deacons of the branch to "visit each member of the Church to inquire into their faith and standing." At a conference in December of 1840, the Aaronic Priesthood reported that "all the Saints (with but few exceptions) are diligently striving to keep the commandments of God, and their faith in the work of the Lord in the Last Days, is unshaken."<sup>26</sup>

However, in March of 1841, the Philadelphia Branch called a special conference to "examine into the differences" between the presiding elder, Benjamin Winchester, and a traveling elder, Almon Babbitt, that "had their origin in the previous visit of the latter to this city." Further, according to the branch minutes, the differences "have been the cause of much sorrow to the saints." Winchester claimed that the tension was a result of "a combination of circumstances in themselves of small amount but which had been swelled by reports . . . [resulting in] hard feelings which each had rather encouraged." Winchester and Babbitt claimed that "they had forgiven each other from the heart," and they "insisted that those who had taken part on either side woul[d] now let the subject rest" and that "a curse [would be] pronounced upon any wanton hand who should dare to drag it forth again."<sup>27</sup> But this was only a foreshadowing of continual Philadelphia discord that was to develop into decided factions.

John E. Page's extended visit to the city in 1841 caused further difficulties for the branch. Page, then the junior member of the Quorum of the Twelve, began a sojourn in the East, during which time he was supposedly preparing to join Orson Hyde on his mission to Palestine. Frustrated with Page's foot dragging, Hyde had left for England without Page shortly after a heavenly rebuke in January of 1841. George A. Smith met with Page in June

of 1841 to try to encourage him to make his way quickly to England so that Page could accompany Hyde to Jerusalem as directed; however, "Elder Page rejected the proposition."<sup>28</sup>

Page spent much of his time in Philadelphia and exerted considerable influence over the branch. Page's influence became even stronger when Benjamin Winchester was called on a mission to Salem, Massachusetts, that summer.<sup>29</sup> On 1 September 1841, Page wrote a letter to the Church hierarchy in Nauvoo, explaining why he still had not left on his mission to Palestine. Page blamed Hyde for not leaving him enough money to make the trip and, "in justice" to himself, claimed that Hyde treated Page "as though I was not of as much importance as himself."<sup>30</sup> Page, nevertheless, reaffirmed his desire to fulfill his mission, but ultimately he never did.

In the same letter, Page also offered advice on the governance of the Philadelphia Branch, proposing "that it would be well for some efficient Elder . . . to be sent to the branch such an one that would sustain the confidence of the branch to preside over the branch." Page claimed that "Elder Winchester has not been as wise in all things as he might have been," that "Winchester is very sanguine and unyielding in his course of economy," and that ultimately many potential converts told Page "that they will not go in while Mr. Winchester presides."<sup>31</sup>

In October, Winchester wrote a letter to Joseph Smith, claiming that Page actually did have sufficient funds to leave on his mission but that he did not want to go.<sup>32</sup> That same month Winchester took a trip to Nauvoo in which he met the Twelve and "complained he had been neglected and misrepresented by the Elders." Joseph Smith attended the meeting and felt Winchester "manifested a contentious spirit." Smith therefore gave Winchester a "severe reproof, telling him of his folly and vanity," and "counseled him to change his course, govern his disposition, and quit his tale-bearing and slandering his brethren."<sup>33</sup>

In January of 1842, "Benjamin Winchester was suspended by the Quorum of the Twelve until he made satisfaction for disobedience to the First Presidency."<sup>34</sup> That same month, John E. Page wrote to Church headquarters to report that "B. Winchester is my enemy."<sup>35</sup> The significant problems of the Philadelphia Branch looked to be exacerbated further as Winchester left Nauvoo for Philadelphia in that winter.

## Schism

The dispute between Winchester and Page carried over into the Philadelphia Branch. That winter, the *Philadelphia Gazette* reported the following in an article on the local Mormons:

Recently, a schism took place in the society, a part declaring themselves in favor of an Elder named Page, who found favor with them during the absence of Mr. Winchester, and the rest, by far the greater number, still adhering to the lat[t]er. That portion of the society adhering to the pastoral care of Mr. Winchester, have in consequence of the difficulty, leased a room in the Assembly buildings, corner of Tenth and Chestnut streets, and are fixing it up for public worship.<sup>36</sup>

The new meeting place on Chestnut Street was south of the original meeting place on Third Street, which gave the schism a geographical dimension. As the newspaper indicated, Winchester was at the center of the controversy, with the Chestnut Street members in the south in favor of his leadership while the Third Street members in the north were against him. The Third Street members chose William Wharton to be their leader, but the faction seems to have revolved around an Eliza Nicholson and her son James. Interestingly, James Nicholson was a counselor in the bishopric, and both he and the bishop, Jacob Syfritt, had conflicts with Winchester, the presiding elder.

In April of 1842, a special conference was called in an attempt to mend the schism between the parties. The conference proceeded by calling for “an investigation of those difficulties which have for a long time troubled us.” The investigation began with Winchester making charges against Jacob Syfritt and James Nicholson, who were, respectively, the bishop and his first counselor. Against Nicholson, the charges were, “First, for threatening to spill his (Winchesters) blood upon condition. Second, for saying that he (W) was a liar.” Against Syfritt, the charges were, “First for telling falsehoods. Second, for opposing the order of the Church.” The conference determined that the charges against Nicholson and Syfritt were true, and the two were rendered “satisfaction.”<sup>37</sup>

Then, the branch investigated Winchester. Winchester defended himself, claiming that the opposition against him was a result of the prior difficulties with Almon Babbitt. Winchester claimed Babbitt had endeavored “to excite the feelings of the saints—prejudice their minds against him, and consequently destroy his influence.” Next, Winchester attacked John E. Page. Winchester claimed that when Page arrived in Philadelphia and heard of the accusations against Winchester, Page “joined in a conspiracy—attempted with others carry their design into effect—to tramel [sic] him down, destroy his influence and remove him from the station.” Winchester further accused Page of being “familiar with one of the sisters, and of teaching doctrine contrary to the order of the church.”<sup>38</sup>

The conference decided that “Winchester acted in the discharge of his duty in rebuking Elders Page, and Babbitt, for their conduct” and exonerated Winchester of any wrongdoing. Furthermore, “the motion was made, and



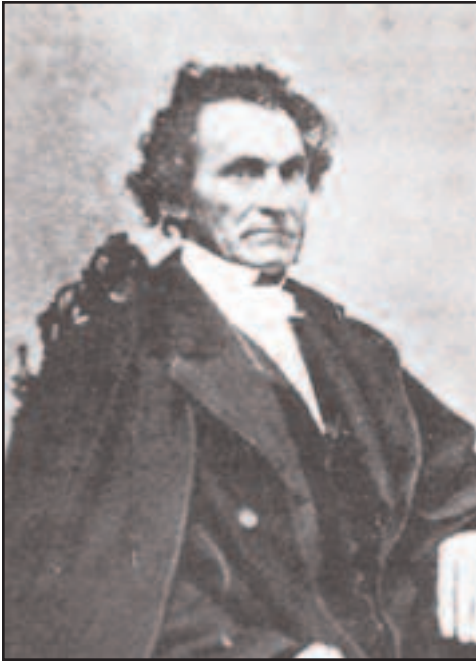
seconded that the head quarters of the Presiding authorities of this Church Shall be at the assembly building in Chestnut St., and that all other places for preaching in this City shall be under the directions and control of those authorities." Thus, Winchester's accusers were chastised, Winchester was exonerated, and the branch placed the entirety of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Philadelphia under Winchester's charge. Further, the branch decided to write to inform Hyrum Smith of the proceedings of the meeting "to remove the false impressions which he may have received from letters sent from this place" and also to print the conference minutes "for the special benefit of the saints."<sup>39</sup> From this point, the branch minutes make no more mention of the bishopric, which seems to have been dissolved.

The Philadelphia Branch minutes note that "many who it appears had imbibed a strong, but unfounded prejudice against Elder Winchester, appeard [sic] to express a full determination to overthrow the former proceeding; and sustain an accusation against him. But their efforts where [sic] completely overthrown." The Third Street members, nevertheless, struck back by gathering signatures for a petition to overturn the conference proceedings. On 22 April 1842, they sent the signatures to Joseph Smith with their requests. These members complained that the meeting place on Chestnut Street was "much to our inconvenience, and the inconvenience of others that are enquiring the way to Zion" and requested "that a church may be organized in the north part of the city of Philadelphia (in the part of the city where most of us reside) separate and distinct from any others." The letter further requested that William Wharton be made the presiding elder because he had been serving in that capacity since Winchester left.<sup>40</sup> The Prophet granted the request; and, in May 1842, the Twelve issued two edicts in the *Times and Seasons*. The first stated that they granted the petition and "disapproved" of the conference. The second silenced Benjamin Winchester "from preaching until he makes satisfaction for not obeying the instruction which he received from the Presidency, when at Nauvoo."<sup>41</sup> Thus, Winchester's victory was completely overturned, and the Philadelphia Branch continued to meet separately.

### **Attempts at Reconciliation**

It is unclear who was put in charge of the Chestnut Street branch following Winchester's silencing, though Winchester seems to have always been the de facto leader. At their next conference held in September of 1842, the Chestnut Street branch appointed Peter Hess Jr. as its new presiding elder, with Albert Lutz as his counselor. The next month Hyrum Smith

visited Philadelphia again and called a conference for “the whole church in Philad’a” as “he considered it but one branch.” Hyrum further “recommended that all former difficulties [sic] be forgotten and never more spoken of, and that all the former organizations be annulled, and that the Church reorganize and begin anew.” At that point, Peter Hess was nominated and sustained as the presiding elder “over the whole church in Philad’a.” The branch then decided “that we occupy the House in 3rd St until a more commodious one can be obtained in a more central situation.” Thus, the branch met in a northern location until it found a new meetinghouse in a more central location on Julianna Street.<sup>42</sup> Winchester’s former counselor, Edson Whipple, who had moved to Nauvoo, wrote to Hess expressing the hope



*George J. Adams.*

*Photograph courtesy of Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.*

that the Julianna Street venue would “have its desired effect that union together with peace and love may be restored.”<sup>43</sup> Hess soon wrote to Hyrum Smith to inform him that “the church in Phila was united” as a result of Hyrum’s visit.

Yet problems continued. When Edwin Woolley visited Philadelphia in November 1842, he learned that Elder E. H. “Derby was making some disturbances in the branch.” The next night, Woolley preached “on the duty of officers and lay members, and endeavored to effect a union of the two parties as there was some likely to be carried away by Derby, I reasoned upon the necessity of adhering to the officer in authority and abiding by his council.”<sup>44</sup>

By December of 1842, a highly charismatic traveling Mormon missionary named George J. Adams arrived in Philadelphia and began aiding Peter Hess in the administration there.<sup>45</sup> Adams soon met with Winchester, who encouraged Adams to “to call conference and cut off all the 3 street members that were refractory,” suggesting Winchester’s feelings that a certain fac-

tion among the Third Street members needed to be removed from the Church. Adams and Hess thought it best to visit the “refractory” members before calling the conference. Hess and Adams first visited “sister Nicholson the object of their [the Chestnut Street leaders’] wrath . . . and found she had a good spirit and was willing to do all that was required.” Adams and Hess visited the rest of the refractory groups and found that they “generally ov[er]all manifested a good spirit and was willing to come and do their duty . . . and have done so till the present.” Hess claimed, “Elder Adams expressed his astonishment and said that he had heard from one individual alone of the Chestnut street branch and you have reason to know who that is, more slander and abuse than he heard from all the rest put together.”<sup>46</sup>

Bigger problems occurred when George J. Adams left Philadelphia. According to Hess, “Those who claimed to be the wheat of the church and whose cry had been support[ing] the Presiding Elder and the church now rose up and opposed [Hess] and [his] measures.” Hess believed the Chestnut Street members “had elected me they thought that they could use me for a tool to effect their purposes” and had become angry when Hess would not cut off Eliza Nicholson and the others. Hess would not cut them off because Hyrum had told Hess to “deal mildly and save all [he] could.” “From that hour,” said Hess, “they began to neglect communion and finally have ceased to attend church altogether and i believe have become my open and avowed enemies.” Ironically, Hess claimed that he had the support of the Third Street members. Despite all the trouble, Hess pointed out that “there has scarce been a week but the ordinance of Baptism has been administered and new members have been added to the church.”<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, Hess felt the “difficulties have been more than i was able to bear in my own strength[.] i have been insulted by them in my own House and letters have been written to me of a most abusive character for the purpose of provoking another trial and plunge the church into another scene of fight and Quarreling.” Hess concluded his letter by noting his belief that from “[t]he howling of the waters that there is a secret spring in this city the source from whence has originated this latter difficulty in the church and if it was removed the church would move forward in her majesty and strength in this city and multitude upon multitude would come forward and embrace the gospel but as things now stand, there is stumbling block and impediments in the way which hinder those from entering who otherwise would and weakens the faith of many of the saints.”

Hess concluded his letter by imploring Joseph Smith to “Call home this secret spring. The two first letters of his name is Benjamin Winchester.”<sup>48</sup> Thus, the Mormon leadership called Winchester back to Nauvoo.

## Portents

At this point, a number of events occurred that set the stage for even greater difficulties for the Mormons in Philadelphia and for others in general. While Winchester was on his way to Nauvoo, Joseph Smith received letters from Eliza Nicholson and a Sister Armstrong “complaining of the slanderous conduct of Benjamin Winchester.” The Prophet “directed the Twelve to act upon the matter.”<sup>49</sup>

Thus, when Winchester arrived in Nauvoo on 27 May 1843, he met a long list of charges. Winchester was charged with “improper conduct, slandering the Saints in Philadelphia, for rejecting the counsel of Hyrum, Joseph and the Twelve, and tearing to pieces the saints instead of building them up.” George J. Adams was at the trial, and his testimony, along with the letters, served as evidence against Winchester. Winchester then “made a lengthy speech trying to justify himself.” However, Joseph “rebuked Elder Winchester in the sharpest manner; said he had a lying spirit and had lied about him, and told him of his many errors.”

The issue then became that of what the Mormon leaders would do about Winchester. Brigham Young “said he had made up his mind, and his decision was that Elder Winchester should give up his license and cease preaching until he should reform.” At this point, Hyrum pleaded that no decision be made until Winchester had “a chance to get more testimony if he could.” Young then suggested that Joseph should handle the matter, but Joseph reiterated that it was the Twelve’s responsibility and that he wouldn’t mind if the matter were put off to the next day.<sup>50</sup> At this point:

President Brigham Young arose and spoke in the majesty of his calling; and among other remarks, said that his mind was made up, and that the remarks of Brother Hyrum and Brother Joseph had not altered it. As for himself, he would not sit upon the case another day. He considered the course Brother Winchester had taken an insult upon his office and calling as an apostle of Jesus Christ, and he would not bear it. As for the rest of the Twelve, they might do as they pleased. As for himself, he would not submit to it. Benjamin Winchester has despised and rejected the counsel of the Presidency and the Twelve—has said they had no jurisdiction over him in Philadelphia, and to say where he should go &c. But he and others will find there is power in the Twelve. We know through whom we have received our power and who are our benefactors, and we are thankful for it. Benjamin Winchester has never for the first time received our counsel, but has gone contrary to it. No one is safe in his hands. He calls Hyrum an old granny, and slanders everybody. He says there is a contradiction between Hyrum and the Twelve—is there, Brother Hyrum? [Hyrum answered, “No.”]<sup>51</sup>

In the end, “It was moved and seconded that Elder Winchester be silenced, and give up his license, and come with his family to Nauvoo, The

motion carried unanimously.” Wilford Woodruff, who recorded the proceedings in his journal, summed events up as follows: “Hyrum pleaded for mercy, Joseph for justice, and the Twelve decided according to testimony; and in all we had an interesting time.”<sup>52</sup>

Soon after, the trouble in Philadelphia began spilling over into Mormon branches outside of the city. In 1843, J. H. Newton from Philadelphia had been successful in Mount Holly, New Jersey, where he converted about fifty people. Soon after, according to a local convert, Thomas Terry, Newton leaked “the doctrine of the plurality of wives” to the Mormons in Mount Holly, which “upset the whole branch but two of the members.”<sup>53</sup> In February 1844, the local newspaper reported, “Much excitement prevails in the community at present, in regard to Mormonism.” Apparently, a local convert named Corless was particularly upset by polygamy and began actively preaching against Mormonism. This action created some raucous scenes in the town when the Mormon faithful sought to respond.<sup>54</sup>

Trouble also broke out in New Egypt, New Jersey, when a quarrel erupted between New Egypt’s presiding elder, Abraham Burtis, and the Prophet’s brother, William Smith. Smith described the conflict in a pamphlet that told a long story of discourtesies exchanged between the two. Smith claimed that Burtis had been harboring ill feelings toward Smith for more than two years. The problems further heated up when Smith essentially accused Burtis’s wife, Sarah, of adultery with a Dr. Lee in the area, claiming that Smith had a letter that proved it. A good deal of slander was exchanged, and Burtis was finally excommunicated from the Church along with some of his friends. Benjamin Winchester, who had been reinstated by then, served on the council that tried Burtis and was one of only two dissenting votes. Smith said he later ran



*William Smith, brother to the Prophet.  
Photograph courtesy of Community of Christ  
Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.*

into Winchester and noted that Winchester did not believe Smith had a letter against Burtis's wife.<sup>55</sup> When Smith related the story to Nauvoo, he mentioned that Burtis was "a particular favorite of Bros. Winchester."<sup>56</sup> These events foreshadowed the continued infighting among Mormons in the area, particularly between Benjamin Winchester and William Smith.

Frustrated with all these events, the Mormon leadership issued the following:

*To the Saints in Philadelphia:* All the members of that branch of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which is located in Philadelphia, Penn., who are desirous of doing the will of Heaven, and of working out their own salvation by keeping the laws of the celestial kingdom, are hereby instructed and compelled to remove from there without delay, and locate themselves in the city of Nauvoo where God has a work for them to accomplish. . . . By order of the Quorum of the Twelve.<sup>57</sup>



Jedediah M. Grant.  
Photograph courtesy of LDS Church Archives.

As a remedy for the situation in Philadelphia, Jedediah Grant was appointed to be the branch's presiding elder in April of 1843. On Grant's appointment, Edson Whipple remarked to a friend in Philadelphia, "Poor soul I pity him and you all know why."<sup>58</sup> In the meantime, Winchester reopened the Chestnut meeting hall.<sup>59</sup> Historian Gene Sessions speculates that Grant was sent to Philadelphia to keep an eye on William Smith, who had just arrived in Philadelphia and who was out of favor with the Mormon hierarchy.<sup>60</sup> This was the situation Jedediah Grant took charge of when he arrived on 4 June 1843. "Mormon Thunder" was a good choice for the job, and

he soon became a stabilizing force for Mormonism in the region. Grant set to work on putting the branch's finances in order and also responded to the trouble in Mount Holly where he was able to reclaim "about half of the members."<sup>61</sup>

Thus, with the general problems in the Philadelphia Branch, the tension increasing between Benjamin Winchester and Mormon leadership, coupled with rumors of polygamy that were beginning to circulate, Mormonism in the Delaware Valley was headed for a crisis. With the strong personalities of Winchester, William Smith, and Jedediah Grant all in one locale, the situation was particularly volatile. Thus, when events took place that would shock the whole of Mormonism, Mormonism in the Philadelphia area was in a particularly vulnerable position.

### The Succession Crisis

At the time when Mormon leaders were demanding that the Mormons in Philadelphia move to Nauvoo, Mormonism in Nauvoo was experiencing its own difficulties. Despite these difficulties, Joseph Smith decided to run for president of the United States. The Prophet sent out a massive canvassing effort of Mormon elders throughout the United States, and Jedediah Grant was called back to Nauvoo to help in the effort. John Horner was sent to New Jersey and relayed the following:

One night while speaking to a full house of attentive listeners, I invited all to speak who wished to, at the close of my lecture. One gentlemen got up and said: "I have one reason to give why Joseph Smith can never be President of the United States; my paper, which I received from Philadelphia this afternoon, says that he was murdered in Carthage jail, on June 27th." Silence reigned; the gathering quietly dispersed; but the grief and sadness of this heart was beyond the power of man to estimate.<sup>62</sup>

Great sadness was the consensus among accounts. When Joseph Stratton heard the news of Smith's death, "It created a very singular sensation it seemed to run through me like an electric shock." He was preaching in Delaware at the time, and he and his colleagues "all seemed to have some hopes that our Brethren was yet alive." They soon, however, saw a newspaper report that convinced them that Joseph and Hyrum were dead. Stratton reported, "My feelings at this intelligence [sic] can easily be imagined as described & it seemed so with others for they set down and wept like children."<sup>63</sup> The members of the Philadelphia Branch voted to "wear an appropriate badge of mourning for thirty days" in response to the martyrdom.<sup>64</sup>

The death of Joseph Smith had more dire effects on Mormonism than mere melancholy thoughts among its adherents. As the *Burlington Gazette* reported, "It was thought by many that [the Mormons] would disband."<sup>65</sup> Brigham Young was quickly able to gain the support of the majority of the Mormons at Nauvoo, but the eastern branches were up for grabs. Sidney

Rigdon soon turned his attention eastward, establishing his headquarters in Pittsburgh. Jedediah Grant returned to Philadelphia in July of 1844 to advocate Young's cause.<sup>66</sup> Rigdon soon began canvassing the Philadelphia Mormons for adherents; and, according to Jacob Gibson, Rigdon's visit to Philadelphia "made quite a stir in the church."<sup>67</sup> One of the first to follow Rigdon in Philadelphia was Benjamin Winchester.

As the succession crisis was just beginning, Mormons in Philadelphia continued to meet together, regardless of whom they supported as the new Mormon leaders (as many were likely confused). With the many strong-minded personalities in the area and with the question of succession among them, the discord in the Philadelphia Branch erupted into even greater acrimony. As each of the competing factions used some form of the Church's name, in the discussion that follows, I call them by the name of their leaders to designate them from each other.

At a conference in the fall of 1844, William Smith "took the occasion to reprove Elder B. Winchester for his course against the Quorum of the Twelve in New York, Philadelphia, and other places." At that point, "Elder Winchester arose before the Church and stated that the Quorum had slandered him. Had taken his license from him, that he had spent 400 dollars in going and returning from Nauvoo and other places to attend to charges preferd [sic] against and that the Twelve never explained the reason why he was suspended: and," in the words of William Appleby, "many other charges against them too aidicutous [sic] to mention." An accounting of the various branches in the region was then made, and it was reported that the Philadelphia Branch consisted of 334 members. However, "The standing of many members not fully known, a call was then made" among the priesthood holders to determine who supported the Twelve. "Whereupon all present arose except Elders Winchester[,] Wharton[,] and McLane."<sup>68</sup>

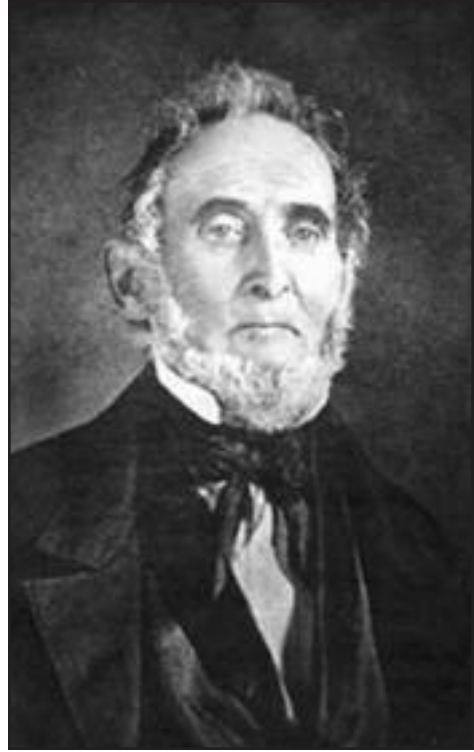
On 25 September 1844, William A. Moore wrote to Brigham Young, informing him that Benjamin Winchester was campaigning hard against the Twelve and denouncing them on the point of polygamy.<sup>69</sup> Young excommunicated Winchester the next day.<sup>70</sup> The Philadelphia Branch minutes show that individuals began resigning from Mormonism soon after. In October 1844, Jedediah Grant reported to Nauvoo that "Winchester, has walked foremost in the Ranks, of the factions, to oppose the Quorum of the Twelve and the building of the temple." Grant reported that Winchester was currently in Pittsburgh, but "when Benj comes back form Pittsburg [sic] we expect to have times, times, & the deciding of thing."<sup>71</sup>

Shortly after, Grant held a special conference in "which he [Grant] stated the reasons why certain individuals have been cut off from the church at Nauvoo That they had received the doctrines of Sidney Rigdon and upheld



him as the Head of the Church, rejecting and speaking evil of the Quorum of the Twelve,” and therefore Rigdon “had been lawfully tried, and excommunicated from the church.”<sup>72</sup> Grant therefore took the opportunity to “request all present to state their feelings in regard to this matter openly and freely.” Twenty-three present came out for Rigdon and were “cut off” by Grant.<sup>73</sup> Yet, in the words of RLDS historian Walter Smith, the dissidents “did not withdraw from the church as they understood it, as they continued to uphold and defend the gospel . . . but simply withdrew from the leadership of those whom they declared were perverting the way of truth.”<sup>74</sup> Indeed, many of the Philadelphia Branch’s leaders went with Rigdon, and a branch of Mormons under Rigdon’s helm was soon established in Philadelphia under the leadership of William Wharton, the former presiding elder of the Third Street branch.<sup>75</sup> Rigdon also ventured into New Jersey, where at Woodstown he established a following.<sup>76</sup>

Grant acted quickly against Rigdon, starting with the excommunication of his followers from the Philadelphia Branch. For instance, Jacob Gibson had “voted to sustain him [Rigdon]” but “nearly . . . recinded [sic] the vote . . . but the church disfellowshipped me.”<sup>77</sup> Soon after, Gibson requested that Young’s followers reconsider his case, and Gibson was allowed to come back on condition of being rebaptized. Grant also attacked Rigdon in the press, printing a lengthy pamphlet called *Grant’s Rigdon*. In the pamphlet, Grant asserted that Rigdon had never been sufficiently dedicated to the Mormons’ cause and also that he was mentally unstable.<sup>78</sup> Also, Grant, accompanied by Andrew Hunter Scott, visited Woodstown, New Jersey, and convinced all but three in the branch to follow Young instead of Rigdon.<sup>79</sup> Thus, despite the continuing trouble in Philadelphia and the challenge Rigdon presented,



Sidney Rigdon.

*Photograph courtesy of Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.*

Grant was able to keep 60 percent of the Philadelphia Branch with Young.<sup>80</sup> In December 1844, Wilford Woodruff wrote to Brigham Young, saying that Woodruff believed Grant had “saved the church in Philadelphia.”<sup>81</sup> Soon, Rigdon’s following at Pittsburgh fragmented, and most of his followers dispersed.<sup>82</sup> Though Rigdon continued asserting his claims to leadership for the rest of his life, he never again figured significantly in Philadelphia-area Mormonism.<sup>83</sup>

In the midst of the rancor of the Twelve versus Rigdon, vehement personal attacks broke out among various eastern Mormon leaders. First, George J. Adams attacked Benjamin Winchester in an eastern Mormon periodical. Winchester must have responded to Adam’s attack, as Adams later sued Winchester for slander. Soon, William Smith began attacking Winchester in the press. Smith accused Winchester of being a party to the conspirators who plotted Joseph Smith’s death in Nauvoo. Winchester sued Smith for slander, and Smith, who would have faced prison time if convicted, wrote to Brigham Young for help in proving his accusations against Winchester. However, Wilford Woodruff soon wrote to Young to inform him that Smith and Adams were using the Mormons’ eastern press, *The Prophet*, for their own purposes. Young sent Parley P. Pratt to take charge of *The Prophet*, and Young later excommunicated both Adams and Smith.<sup>84</sup>

In 1846, Jedediah Grant left Philadelphia, and Jacob Gibson was made presiding elder of Young’s followers there. According to Gibson, “That summer Strang came on I supposed he new something as he clamed to be a grate man and a Profit I desiring in my hart to se[e] the church rited up and a first President apointed.” Strang planned to make Gibson the leader of his organization in Philadelphia. However, as with Rigdon, Gibson decided against following Strang and was baptized back into Young’s fold by William Appleby in 1847.<sup>85</sup> Yet, for some time, Strang was the strongest opponent to Young in Philadelphia and elsewhere generally. In Philadelphia, Strang won the allegiances of George J. Adams, who became a member of Strang’s hierarchy, and Peter Hess, who became Strang’s presiding elder in Philadelphia. Strang convinced William Smith and John E. Page of the Twelve to join him for a time. Strang was successful in Philadelphia for a few years, but his branch in Philadelphia collapsed in 1850.<sup>86</sup>

In 1848, William Smith put forth his own claim for leadership. Smith set up a branch of his followers in Philadelphia and soon began proselytizing in New Jersey. Smith sent an Aaron Hook to Cream Ridge, New Jersey, and enlisted “some seven or eight” to Smith’s cause. Later, William Appleby debated with Hook and claimed, “The result was all the Members led astray was restored back to the Church again,” meaning they followed Young rather than Smith.<sup>87</sup> Smith’s Philadelphia branch, like Strang’s, collapsed in 1850.<sup>88</sup>

Thus, through Young's administrative adroitness and the vigor of Grant and others, the Twelve were the only Mormon faction to have a continual presence in the Philadelphia area in the years immediately following Joseph Smith's death. However, many of the Mormons in the area eventually left Mormonism altogether.

### Young's Followers Called to Utah

Brigham Young continued Mormonism's gathering policy; one of Jedediah Grant's charges against Sidney Rigdon was for "rejecting Nauvoo as the gathering place of the Saints."<sup>89</sup> Young soon looked westward, and gathering to Utah was preached at least as urgently as gathering to Nauvoo had been. When Jesse Little visited Young's followers in Philadelphia, he "delivered a discourse on the present situation and condition of the church and the things most important to be attended to by the Saints at the present time, in which the doctrine of the gathering was clearly set forth."<sup>90</sup> Many Mormons in the area had already moved to Nauvoo, and many continued to move. At that time, Mormon leaders considered another route to the West in the form of sailing around Cape Horn. The Mormons purchased the *Brooklyn*, and with Samuel Brannan as their leader, many Mormons from the Philadelphia area sailed around Cape Horn to California. This was the only time this route was attempted because of concerns over the Mexican-American War.<sup>91</sup>

The gathering to Utah actually took an increased urgency because of an apocalyptic foreboding among Young's followers. This apocalypticism was based on Joseph Smith's Civil War prophecy.<sup>92</sup> With the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the Mormons felt that God's fury upon the "Gentiles" was due. Thus, Mormon leaders' admonitions to gather were laden with this apocalypticism. William Appleby said as much in an 1847 circular to the Mormons in the East:

Then let us in haste flee from the impending storm that is about to burst forth upon all nations. . . . Already the clouds of War are gathering thick and fast around in our own *once happy land*; consternation, fear and division are on every side and the people cannot comprehend the meaning or result. But permit me to say, that the Destroying Angel had been commissioned to go forth in his anger . . . and rides upon the waters, scattering death and destruction with unsparing hand, and stirs up the nations to jealousy, one with another. . . . And how then shall the Saints escape, but by gathering to the place God has commanded, and promised deliverance.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, the Mormons were expecting a civil war. As Edson Whipple put it in a letter to Utah from the Philadelphia area in 1849, "Circumstances

[are] such that I still remain in Babylon although contrary to my feelings," because he felt "this nation . . . [is] in my humble opinion about ripe for destruction. It does appear that the Lord has withdrawn his spirit from them; and they are now left to themselves, and ready to slay each other."<sup>94</sup> This rhetoric seemed to have an effect on the Mormons in the Philadelphia area. In 1853, Maria Brooks wrote from Delaware to a friend in Utah, saying, "When I look at last April's Seer [a Mormon periodical] concerning the revelation on war and see how fast things are coming to be fulfilled it makes me grieve to think that I can not get out of here."<sup>95</sup> This tendency is summed up best by Sarah Palmer Sharp in her autobiography: "It was 1861 and the Civil War broke out. By this time, my parents had decided they could offord [sic] to go to Utah."<sup>96</sup>

### Aftermath

Although Young's followers were the only Mormon faction to maintain a continual presence in the Delaware Valley following Joseph Smith's death, other groups made attempts to establish themselves. As mentioned, Rigdon's, Strang's, and William Smith's branches had all collapsed by 1850, but a variety of other lesser-known Mormon factions also made attempts. In 1849, Jacob Syfritt headed up a Mormon faction started by George Hinkle called "The Bride, The Lamb's Wife" until the group moved to Missouri and fell apart. In 1852, John M. Powers arrived from St. Louis as "a travelling teacher of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion," but he met with little success. In 1853, Peter Burney of the "Truth Association" preached in Philadelphia.<sup>97</sup> Thus, Mormonism in the Delaware Valley continued to have a varied experience.

Though Young's followers maintained a continual presence, the membership soon began to taper off. Many of the rural branches in the Philadelphia area quickly dwindled and often stopped meeting in the years following Joseph Smith's death. Nevertheless, there was a general surge in Mormonism in the area in the mid-1850s. An encouraging report at a conference in Philadelphia in 1855 brought the comment that "Mormonism might have taken a nap for awhile in the east, but it has awakened up and was now alive and kicking."<sup>98</sup> Further, the leader of the conference felt that "Elder Harrison, too, deserved credit for keeping the saints together in Philadelphia, in the dark and cloudy day; they although feeble found a nucleus [sic] to gather to, and he now saw the reward of his labors."<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the membership numbers reported at the conference were as high as or higher than Mormonism's initial surge in the area in the early 1840s. Further, Angus M. Cannon reported in 1856 that he had "baptized quite a number of

persons” in the area and that “a spirit of reformation was stirring up old members, and they were renewing their covenants, with a determination to prove more faithful.”<sup>100</sup> At a conference in April of 1857, all the Mormon branches in the Philadelphia area were “in a flourishing condition.”<sup>101</sup>

While the Mormons were still making converts, part of the reason for their impressive numbers at this time was attributed to the flow of Mormon emigrants from Europe. As John Taylor, then president of the Eastern States Mission, explained in 1857, “At Philadelphia and around, there have been some few brought in, but most of the Saints there are those who have come in from England and other places.” Further, Taylor claimed foreigners were pouring in “from England, France, Germany, Denmark and other places; they form quite a body, there is now five or six hundred.”<sup>102</sup> Samuel Harrison, then president of the Philadelphia Branch, claimed that “union peace and harmony prevailed. . . . Mormonism fused and united different elements; national predilections gave way and new and old members, foreign and American were all one.”<sup>103</sup>

Yet the proselyting of Young’s followers soon began to meet with frustration. Said John Taylor in 1857:

It is almost impossible to produce any effect on the feelings of the people. In New Jersey I held several days’ meeting, to see if something could be done. They turned out in great numbers; “Mormonism” was popular; as many as 200 carriages were present; we were treated well and preached faithfully; somebody came and set up a little groggery, and it was removed forthwith. Was anybody converted? No. They turned their ears like a deaf adder to the cause, and this is the general feeling so far as I have discovered.<sup>104</sup>

With the Utah War of 1858, Brigham Young called everyone home; and the Eastern States Mission was shut down. Efforts were revived again immediately after the Civil War, but Young’s followers had a difficult time reestablishing themselves. In 1870, the *Deseret News* reported, “As a general thing their [missionaries’] labors are not resulting in many additions to the church.”<sup>105</sup> Although the *Millennial Star* later that year reported a renewed effort “and consequently a grand rally around the banner of Mormonism may be expected,”<sup>106</sup> with few exceptions, Young’s followers did not make sustained progress in numbers of adherents in the Delaware Valley until the end of the nineteenth century.

In the 1860s, a group calling themselves the Independent Branch, which recognized the claims of none of the Mormon factions, began meeting in Philadelphia. When RLDS missionaries arrived in Philadelphia, many from the Independent Branch joined their cause.<sup>107</sup> The RLDS Church soon began reorganizing Mormon branches in the places where Mormon branch-

es had previously been.<sup>108</sup> The rural RLDS branches tended to last only as long as the lives of the elderly members of which they were made. Thus, the RLDS Church, like Young's followers, experienced only gradual growth in the Philadelphia area beginning in the late nineteenth century, with Philadelphia as the hub.

The story of Mormonism in Philadelphia is a study in early Mormon success. Though the many conversions in the area were the most salient feature of this success, the overcoming of so many obstacles was a success as well. Though these obstacles left their scars in the forms of bitter disputes and the loss of many members, they nevertheless demonstrated the strength of the movement and the resolve of its adherents.

### Notes

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

2. Benjamin Winchester to Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith, 10 February 1840, *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 7 (May 1840): 104.

3. *Daily State Gazette* (Trenton, New Jersey), 7 May 1870.

4. The Philadelphia Branch was established 23 December 1839. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 1, typescript, Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri, copy of typescript in L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The Brandywine Branch in Chester County was established on 25 January 1840. See also Lorenzo Barnes to Don Carlos Smith, 29 January 1840, *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 5 (March 1840): 78–79.

5. "From the Elders Abroad," *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 2 (December 1839): 26.

6. Lorenzo Barnes to Don Carlos Smith, 78–79.

7. Erastus Snow to Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith, 31 October 1840, *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 2 (15 November 1840): 221.

8. A conference in Philadelphia in August 1844 reported a membership of 334. This seems to have been the high-water mark. "Minutes of a Conference in Philadelphia," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 20 (1 November 1844): 701.

9. Works on Mormonism in Philadelphia include Walter W. Smith, "History of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Branch," (published serially) *Journal of History* 11 (July 1918): 358–73; 12 (January 1919): 111–18; and 13 (October 1920): 509–30; and David W. Whittaker, "East of Nauvoo: Benjamin Winchester and the Early Mormon Church," *Journal of Mormon History* 21, no. 2 (1994): 31–83. Smith, the leader of the RLDS Church in Philadelphia at the time, made excellent use of local records but did not have access to the extensive records at the LDS Church archives. Whittaker's article focuses more on Winchester than on the branch; though Winchester was the major figure in the story, this article has a different emphasis. Both articles were invaluable to this study.

10. Edwin D. Woolley to the Editors of the *Times & Seasons*, 17 June 1841, *Times and Seasons*, 2, no. 21 (1 September 1841): 531.

11. See Fleming, "Examination of the Success of Early Mormonism in the Delaware Valley," 73–77.

12. John E. Page, "To the President and Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints," *Journal History of the Church*, 1 September 1841, 7, LDS Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

13. Samuel James to Don Carlos Smith, n.d., *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 3 (January 1840): 45.

14. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 2.

15. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 18.

16. "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 14 (15 May 1841): 413.

17. Joseph Smith, "To the Saints Abroad," *Times and Season* 2, no. 15 (1 June 1841): 434.

18. Edson Whipple to Peter Hess, n.d., typescript, 4, 5, Edson Whipple Collection, Perry Special Collections.

19. For instance, in 1842, Elijah Malin, the presiding elder in Chester County, Pennsylvania, wrote Edward Hunter in Nauvoo, saying, "I feele Just as if I was a mormon by myself, with the Exception of some few that I can put confidence in at all times." Elijah Malin to Edward Hunter, 13 September 1842, Edward Hunter Collection, Perry Special Collections.

20. Lorenzo D. Wasson to Joseph and Emma Smith, 30 July 1842, *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 20 (15 August 1842): 892.

21. S. George Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830–1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1951), 241.

22. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 1, 2.

23. Erastus Snow, Journal, box 1 fld. 2, typescript, 27, Perry Special Collections.

24. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 7–8.

25. Smith, "History of the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Branch," 367–68.

26. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 4.

27. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 4, 5.

28. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 1971), 4:274, 372 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

29. Whittaker, "East of Nauvoo," 48–51.

30. Page, "To the President and Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints."

31. Page, "To the President and Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints."

32. *History of the Church*, 4:423.

33. *History of the Church*, 4:443.

34. *History of the Church*, 4:494.

35. John E. Page to "Presidents and the twelve of the church of Latter day saints," 30 January 1842, Joseph Smith Collection, LDS Archives.

36. *Philadelphia Gazette* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), as cited in the *Delaware State Journal* (Wilmington, Delaware), 4 January 1842.

37. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 10–11.

38. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 11.

39. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 12.

40. *Journal History*, 22 April 1842.

41. "Notice," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 14 (16 May 1842): 798.

42. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 12–13. For information on the meetinghouse on Julianna Street, see Smith, "Philadelphia Branch," 115.

43. Edson Whipple to Peter Hess, 3.
44. Edwin Woolley, Diary, September–December 1842, 16–17 November 1842.
45. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 13. Adams was a colorful character, particularly after he left Mormonism. See Peter Amann, “Prophet in Zion: The Saga of George J. Adams,” *New England Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1964): 477–500.
46. Peter Hess to Hyrum Smith, 16 February 1843, photocopy, LDS Church Archives.
47. Peter Hess to Hyrum Smith.
48. Peter Hess to Hyrum Smith.
49. *History of the Church*, 5:403.
50. *History of the Church*, 5:410–11.
51. *History of the Church*, 5:411.
52. *History of the Church*, 5:411, 410.
53. Thomas Sirls Terry, Autobiography, microfilm, 3, Perry Special Collections.
54. *New Jersey Mirror* (Mount Holly, New Jersey), 29 February 1844.
55. See William Smith, *Defence of Elder William Smith, Against the Slanders of Abraham Burtis and Others* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking and Gilbert, 1844). Smith said he produced the letter “which quelled his [Burtis’s] temper very much.” 20.
56. William Smith to Joseph Smith, Journal History, 28 October 1843.
57. “Special Message,” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 15 (15 June 1843): 232; *Niles National Register* (Baltimore, Maryland), 22 July 1843, 336.
58. Edson Whipple to Armstrong, n.d., Edson Whipple Collection, 6.
59. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 14.
60. Gene A. Session, *Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 34.
61. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 15–18; see also Terry, Autobiography. *The New Jersey Mirror* claimed, “A number of the Mormons,” who had been disaffected, “have since returned into the Church, through the instrumentality of several Elders.” *New Jersey Mirror* (Mount Holly, New Jersey), 29 February 1844.
62. John M. Horner, “Adventures of a Pioneer,” *Improvement Era* 7, no. 5 (May 1904): 515.
63. Joseph Stratton, Journal, 1844–46, 4–7, LDS Church Archives.
64. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 18.
65. “Murder of Joseph and Hiram Smith,” *Burlington Gazette, and New Jersey Silk and Agricultural Register* (Burlington, New Jersey), 12 July 1844.
66. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 18.
67. Jacob Gibson, “Book of the Generation of Jacob Gibson,” 1849–81, LDS Church Archives.
68. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 19.
69. William A. Moore to Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, Journal History, 25 September 1844.
70. *History of the Church*, 7:275.
71. Jedediah Grant to Newel K. Whitney, 11 October 1844, holograph, microfilm, LDS Church Archives.
72. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 23.
73. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 23.
74. Smith, “Philadelphia Branch,” 513.
75. Jedediah Grant, to Samuel Brannan, 29 July 1845, *New York Messenger* 2 (August 1845): 38; and Smith, “History of the Philadelphia Branch,” 514.
76. Andrew Hunter Scott, Journal, 1844–1869, in Susan Tate Laing, *Andrew Hunter*



Scott: *Builder of the Kingdom* (Provo, Utah: Andrew Hunter Scott Genealogical Association, 2001), 487.

77. Gibson, "Book of the Generation of Jacob Gibson."

78. Jedediah Grant, *Grant's Rigdon* (Philadelphia: Brown Bicking and Gilbert, 1844).

79. Scott, Journal, 487.

80. Whittaker, "East of Nauvoo," 70.

81. Wilford Woodruff to Brigham Young, 3 December 1844, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church Archives, quoted in Ronald W. Walker, "Jedediah and Heber Grant," *Ensign* 9, no. 7 (July 1979): 47.

82. Thomas J. Gregory, "Sidney Rigdon: Post Nauvoo," *BYU Studies* 21, no. 1 (winter 1981): 52.

83. Smith, "Philadelphia Branch," 518.

84. Whittaker, "East of Nauvoo," 69–74.

85. Gibson, "Book of the Generation of Jacob Gibson."

86. Smith, "The Philadelphia Branch," 525.

87. William I. Appleby, *Autobiography and Journal*, 248–49, LDS Church Archives.

88. Smith, "The Philadelphia Branch," 525.

89. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 23.

90. Philadelphia Branch Minutes, 25.

91. See Appleby, *Autobiography and Journal*, 144–47; and Lorin K. Hansen, "Voyage of the Brooklyn," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21, no. 3 (fall 1988): 46–72.

92. Doctrine and Covenants 87:1–2.

93. William I. Appleby, *Circular to the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the East* (Philadelphia: Bicking and Gilbert, 1847), 7.

94. Edson Whipple to Heber C. Kimball, June 1849, Edson Whipple Record Book, LDS Church Archives.

95. Maria Brooks to Ellis M. Sanders, 3 July 1854, 3, Delaware State Archives.

96. Sarah Bethula Palmer Sharp, "Autobiographical Sketch," [1931], typescript, LDS Church Archives.

97. Smith, "Philadelphia Branch," 524–27. I was not able to find any information on any of these groups.

98. Journal History, 7 October 1855, 10.

99. Journal History, 7 October 1855, 10.

100. Journal History, 20 August 1856, 1.

101. Journal History, 29 March 1857. This was particularly the case at Toms River, New Jersey. See Fleming, "'Sweeping Everything before It,'" 94.

102. Journal History, 9 August 1857, 6.

103. Journal History, 7 October 1855, 7.

104. Journal History, 9 August 1857, 6.

105. Journal History, 11 January 1870, 6.

106. Journal History, 8 February 1870, 2.

107. "New York and Philadelphia Districts," *Journal of History* 1, no. 2 (1908): 153.

108. Thus, the *Allentown Messenger* reported in 1905 that "during the late seventies there was a temporary revival of interest in Mormonism in these sections." "When the Mormons Were Here," *Allentown Messenger* (Allentown, New Jersey), 24 August 1905. See Fleming, "'Sweeping Everything before It,'" 95.