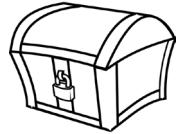




JOSEPH SMITH & MONEY-DIGGING



In 1877 the *Vermont Historical Gazetteer* printed the following information:

About 1800, occurred the "Wood scrape," . . . a strange affair in which the Wood families, then living here, were the leading actors . . . the Woods **dig for money** in various parts of the town, and were engaged in this for nearly a year; . . . they used **hazel-rods** which they pretended would lead them to places where money had been buried, . . . His [Nathaniel Wood's] peculiar religious doctrines will appear as we proceed. . . he regarded himself and his followers as modern Israelites or Jews, . . .

In this condition we find Nathaniel Wood and his followers when the **hazel-rod** was introduced, and the **money digging** commenced; but the Woods did not commence it; . . .

A man by the name of Winchell, as he called himself when he came here, was the first man who used the **hazel-rod**. . . He was a fugitive from justice from Orange county, Vermont, where he had been engaged in **counterfeiting**. He first went to a Mr. **Cowdry's** in Wells, who then lived in that town, near the line between Wells and Middletown, in the house now owned and occupied by Robert Parks, Esq. **Cowdry was the father of Oliver Cowdery**, the noted Mormon, who claimed to have been one of the witnesses to Joe Smith's revelations, and to have written the book Mormon, as it was deciphered by Smith from the golden plates. . . Winchell staid at **Cowdry's** some little time, keeping himself concealed, and it is the opinion of some with whom I have conversed that he commenced his operations of **digging for money** in Wells, but I have been unable to determine as to that. . .

Winchell next turns up in Middletown, at Ezekiel Perry's . . . and here he began to use the **hazel-rod** (whether he had before used it at Cowdry's, in Wells, I cannot say) . . . he gathered quite a number about him . . . and told them there was **money buried** in that region, and with his **rod** he could find it, and if they would assist in digging it out, and forever keep it a secret, he would give them a part of the money . . . we should, perhaps, say a word about this rod, . . . The best description we can give of it is this: It was a stick of what has been known as **witch-hazel** . . . It was cut with two prongs, in the form of a fork, . . . From the use of this **stick** Winchell an[d] [t]he Woods pretended to divine all sorts of things to suit their purpose . . . Winchell held up his **rod**, got some motion from it, and told them the money was in an iron chest and covered with a large stone, and that they would soon come to it. . .

The Woods then commenced using the **hazel rod** and **digging for money**, . . . Winchell was with them, but it was not generally known, he being concealed . . . "Priest Wood," . . . seemed to throw his whole soul into the rod delusion, but his use of the rod was mostly as a **medium of revelation** . . . all the Woods and their followers, **had each a rod**, which was used whenever they desired information. If any one was sick, they sought the rod to know whether they would live or die, and to know what medicine to administer to them. In all their business matters, they followed, as they said, the direction of the rod, . . . there was no show of reason in the affair from beginning to end, their idea was, that it was revelation, that it was made known to them through the medium of **St. John's rod**, . . .

That the system of religion promulgated by Nathaniel Wood, and adopted by his followers in 1800, was the same, or "much the same," as the Mormons adopted on the start, is beyond question. . . The Woods were very fruitful in prophecies, especially after the hazel rod came to their use; so were the Mormons in the beginning of their creed, . . . This same Winchell or Wingate, the **counterfeiter**, who introduced the **rod** here, and was with the Woods in their operations, **afterwards went to Palmyra, New York, the home of Joe Smith**, . . . he was there early enough to get **Joe Smith's father to digging for money**, . . . I have been told that **Joe Smith's father** resided in Poultney at the time of the Wood movement here, and that he was in it, and one of the **leading rodsmen**. Of this I cannot speak positively, for the want of satisfactory evidence, but that he was a **rodsman** under the tuition of this counterfeiter after he went to Palmyra has been proven, to my satisfaction, at least. I have before said that Oliver Cowdry's father was in the "Wood scrape." He then lived in Wells, afterwards in Middletown, after that went to Palmyra, and there we find these men with the counterfeiter, Winchell, **searching for money over the hills**

and mountains with the **hazel-rod**, and their sons **Joe and Oliver**, as soon as they were old enough, were in the **same business**, . . . It is not claimed that any of the Woods . . . ever had anything to do with Mormonism after it was known to the world as such, but their religion and their ways of deceiving the people by pretended **revelations** and otherwise, were brought along down by **the Smiths, the Cowdrys**, and the counterfeiter. They used the **rod**, that is, the elder Smith and Cowdry, and pretended by that to obtain revelation, . . . their sons **Joe jr. and Oliver**, . . . commenced their education with the use of the **hazel-rod or forked stick**, in searching for hidden treasures—though afterwards they used what they called **enchanted stones**. (*Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, edited by Abby Maria Hemenway, Claremont, N.H., 1877, vol. 3, pages 810-814 and 818-819)

In a new book entitled *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging* we have carefully examined the charges which claim that Joseph Smith was a money-digger and believed in divining rods and peep stones. We will give a brief summary of our conclusions in this paper.

The fact that Joseph Smith believed in divining rods has been obscured by two important changes in one of his revelations. These changes were obviously made to cover up the fact that he had endorsed the idea that Oliver Cowdery had a gift from God to work with a divining rod. Below is a comparison of the way this revelation was first printed in the *Book of Commandments* and the way it has been changed to read in recent editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* (see photograph in our *Case Against Mormonism*, vol. 1, page 144, Change F).

Book of Commandments

Now this is not all, for you have another gift, which is the gift of **working with the rod**: behold it has told you things: behold there is no other power save God, that can cause this **rod of nature**, to work in your hands, . . . (*Book of Commandments* 7:3)

Doctrine and Covenants

Now this is not all thy gift; for you have another gift, which is the **gift of Aaron**; behold it has told you many things;

Behold, there is no other power, save the power of God, that can cause this **gift of Aaron** to be with you. (*Doctrine and Covenants* 8:6 and 7)

The reader will notice that the words "working with the rod" and "rod of nature" have been entirely deleted from this revelation without any indication. While the Utah Mormon leaders have failed to come to grips with this important issue, Richard P. Howard, Reorganized LDS Church Historian, made these startling admissions in a book recently published by his Church:

◆ **NEW BOOK — *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging***

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner. This book deals with such subjects as money-digging in Joseph Smith's time, treasures that slipped into the ground, statements by Martin Harris and Brigham Young on money-digging, Joseph Smith's "seer stone," the use of the "seer stone" to find the Book of Mormon plates and its use to translate the book itself, the agreement between Joseph Smith and other money-diggers, other seer stones among the Mormon, the "cave" in the hill Cumorah, the relationship of money-digging to the story of the gold plates of the Book of Mormon and to the text of the book, the use of the divining rod in the early Mormon Church, the revelation regarding treasure hunting, the 1826 trial of Joseph Smith, an analysis of different accounts of the trial, Joseph Smith's use of the "seer stone" to find treasures for Josiah Stowell, and the practice of sacrificing lambs to find treasures. This book also contains a photographic reprint of the affidavits regarding Joseph Smith's money-digging activities which were published by E. D. Howe in 1834.

Price: \$2.50 — 2 for \$4.00 — 5 for \$8.00 — 10 for \$15.00

Several writers have established that both in Vermont and in western New York in the early 1800's, one of the many forms which enthusiastic religion took was the adaptation of the **witch hazel stick** (used then and even to this date for locating underground water sources) to religious purposes. For example, the "**divining rod**" was used effectively by one Nathaniel Wood in Rutland County, Vermont, in 1801. Wood, Winchell, **William Cowdery, Jr., and his son, Oliver Cowdery**, all had some knowledge of and associations with the various uses, both secular and sacred, of the **forked witch hazel rod**. Winchell and others used such a rod in seeking buried treasure; . . . **when Joseph Smith met Oliver Cowdery in April, 1829, he found a man peculiarly adept in the use of the forked rod** . . . He soon was Joseph's close friend and confidant, his scribe and trusted counselor. In the midst of such mutual rapport and against the background of his own experiments with and uses of oracular media, **Joseph Smith's April, 1829, affirmations about Cowdery's unnatural powers related to working with the rod are quite understandable**. . . .

By the time that Joseph Smith approached the reinterpretation and **rewording of this document for the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants**, he had the time and experience necessary to place his **1829 assessment** of the meaning of Cowdery's **gift of working with the rod** in a somewhat more accurate perspective. Both he and Cowdery had developed away from an emphasis on the religious or **mystical** meanings in such mechanical objects as the **water witching rod**. Joseph's **1835 wording** of this document . . . left behind the apparent 1829 reliance upon external media, which by 1835 had assumed in Joseph's mind **overtones of superstition and speculative experimentation**. (*Restoration Scriptures*, Independence, Mo., 1969, pages 211-214)

In our new book, *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging*, we have photographically reproduced the affidavits relating to money-digging which were first printed by E. D. Howe in 1834. In one of these affidavits Peter Ingersoll stated:

I, Peter Ingersoll, first became acquainted with the family of Joseph Smith, Sen. in the year of our Lord, 1822. . . .

The general employment of the family, was **digging for money**. . . . I was once ploughing near the house of Joseph Smith, Sen. about noon, he requested me to walk with him a short distance from his house, for the purpose of seeing whether **a mineral rod would work in my hand**, saying at the same time he was confident it would. . . . he cut a small witch hazel bush and gave me direction how to hold it. He then went off some rods, and told me to say to the rod, "**work to the money**," which I did, in an audible voice. He rebuked me severely for speaking it loud, and said it must be spoken in a whisper. This was rare sport for me. While the old man was standing off some rods, throwing himself into various shapes, I told him the rod did not work. He seemed much surprised at this, and said he thought he saw it move in my hand. (Affidavit of Peter Ingersoll, as found in *Mormonism Unveiled*, Painesville, Ohio, 1834, page 232)

It would appear, then, that Joseph Smith learned about "working with the rod" from his father. He approved of this practice, and even claimed to have a revelation from God which spoke of Cowdery's "gift of working with the rod." Later, however, he became embarrassed about his money-digging activities and changed the revelation to remove all reference to the rod.

While Mormon writers have had little to say about the use of a divining rod, they have been willing to admit that Joseph Smith possessed a "seer stone." The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts made this statement:

The **seer stone** referred to here was a chocolate-colored, somewhat egg-shaped stone which **the Prophet found while digging a well** in company with his brother Hyrum, for a Mr. Clark Chase, near Palmyra, N.Y. **It possessed the qualities of Urim and Thummim**, since by means of it—as described above—as well as by means of the Interpreters found with the Nephite record, **Joseph was able to translate** the characters engraven on the plates. (*Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 1, page 129)

In *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging* we reproduce an affidavit from Willard Chase which contains these revealing statements:

I became acquainted with the Smith family, . . . in the year 1820. At that time, they were engaged in the **money digging business**, which they followed until the latter part of the season of 1827. In the year 1822, I was engaged in digging a well. I employed Alvin and **Joseph Smith** to assist me; . . . After digging about twenty feet below the surface of the earth, we discovered a

singularly appearing **stone**, which excited my curiosity. I brought it to the top of the well, and as we were examining it, **Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat**. . . . After obtaining the **stone**, he began to publish abroad what wonders he could discover by looking in it, . . .

There is a great deal of evidence to show that Joseph Smith used the "seer stone" to search for buried treasures. Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon, made these comments concerning Joseph Smith's "stone":

These plates were found at the north point of a hill two miles north of Manchester village. Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase, twenty-four feet from the surface. In this stone he could see many things to my certain knowledge. **It was by means of this stone he first discovered these plates**.

"In the first place, he told me of this stone, and proposed to bind it on his eyes, and **run a race** with me in the woods. A few days after this, I was . . . picking my teeth with a pin while sitting on the bars. The pin . . . dropped from my fingers into shavings and straw. I jumped from the bars and looked for it. Joseph and Northrop Sweet also did the same. We could not find it. I then took Joseph on surprise, and said to him—I said, 'Take your stone.' I had never seen it, and did not know that he had it with him. He had it in his pocket. **He took it and place it in his hat—the old white hat—and placed his face in his hat**. I watched him closely to see that he did not look one side: he reached out his hand beyond me on the right, and moved a little stick, and there I saw the pin, which he picked up and gave to me. I know he did not look out of the hat until after he had picked up the pin.

"Joseph had had this stone for some time. There was a company there in that neighborhood, who were digging for money supposed to have been hidden by the ancients. Of this company were old Mr. Stowel . . . Joseph Smith Jr., and his father, and his brother Hiram Smith. They dug for money in Palmyra, Manchester, also in Pennsylvania, and other places." (*Tiffany's Monthly*, 1859, pages 163-164)

THE 1826 TRIAL

In her book, *No Man Knows My History*, Fawn M. Brodie states:

In March 1826 Joseph's magic arts for the first time brought him into serious trouble. One of Stowel's neighbors, Peter Bridgeman, swore out a warrant for the youth's arrest on the charge of being a disorderly person and an impostor. . . . the court pronounced him guilty, though what sentence was finally passed the record does not say. (*No Man Knows My History*, page 30)

We quote the following from the "court record" as it was first published in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1873:

Warrant issued upon written complaint upon oath of Peter G. Bridgeman, who informed that one **Joseph Smith** of Bainbridge was a disorderly person and an impostor.

Prisoner brought before Court March 20, 1826. Prisoner examined: says that he came from the town of Palmyra, and had been at the house of Josiah Stowel in Bainbridge . . . That he had a certain stone which he had occasionally looked at to determine where hidden treasures in the bowels of the earth were; that he professed to tell in this manner where gold mines were a distance under ground, and he looked for Mr. Stowel several times, and had informed him where he could find these treasures, and Mr. Stowel had been engaged in digging for them. . . . he had occasionally been in the habit of looking through this stone to find lost property for three years, but of late had pretty much given it up on account of its injuring his health, especially his eyes, making them sore; that he did not solicit business of this kind, and had always rather declined having anything to do with this business.

Josiah Stowel sworn: says that prisoner had been at his house . . . he pretended to have skill of telling where hidden treasures in the earth were by means of looking through a certain **stone**: . . . **he positively knew that the prisoner could tell, and did possess the art of seeing those valuable treasures through the medium of said stone**; . . . that prisoner had told by means of this **stone** where a Mr. Bacon had buried money; . . . that had said it was in a certain root of a stump five feet from surface of the earth, and with it would be found a tail feather; that said Stowel and prisoner thereupon commenced digging, found a tail feather, but money was gone; that he supposed the money moved down.

That prisoner did offer his services; that he never deceived him; that **prisoner looked through stone** and described Josiah Stowell's house and outhouses, while at Palmyra at Simpson Stowell's correctly; . . . That he had been in company with prisoner digging for gold, and had the most implicit faith in prisoner's skill. (*Fraser's Magazine*, February 1873, page 229)

In our book *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging* we have printed this document in its entirety and have devoted over 15 pages to an examination of its authenticity.

When Fawn Brodie printed this document Mormon writers claimed that it was spurious. She had reprinted it from the *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Since this encyclopedia did not print this account until 1883, there was a wide gap between the date of the trial and the published version. Since Mormon scholars contested the authenticity of the trial, scholars began to search to find more documentation. Helen L. Fairbanks, of Guernsey Memorial Library, Norwich, N.Y., made a very interesting discovery. She found that Dr. W. D. Purple, who had lived at Bainbridge and claimed to be an eyewitness to the trial had written concerning it in *The Chenango Union*, May 3, 1877. We have reproduced this article in its entirety in *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging*. While Mormon writers were willing to concede that Purple mentioned the trial in 1877, they felt confident that no earlier mention of the trial would be discovered. Dr. Francis W. Kirkham made this statement: "No account of the life of Joseph Smith confessed in a court of law that he had used a **seer stone** for any purpose, and especially that the record of such confession was in existence" (*A New Witness for Christ in America*, vol. 1, pages 386-387). Further research led to the discovery that the "court record" had been printed ten years previous to this in *Fraser's Magazine*. In a "Supplement" to his book, Dr. Kirkham conceded that it had been printed in 1873.

Finally, Dale L. Morgan, a noted historian, discovered that the trial was actually mentioned as early as 1831 in a letter published in the *Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate*, printed in Utica, N.Y., the letter is "signed A.W.B., and Mr. Morgan identifies him from subsequent articles as A. W. Benton" (*No Man Knows My History*, page 418 A). Since Mr. Benton lived in Bainbridge, his account is very important. Wesley P. Walters had furnished us with a photograph of Benton's account as it appears in the *Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate*. We cite the following from that publication:

Messrs. Editors—. . . thinking that a fuller history of their founder, **Joseph Smith, Jr.** might be interesting. . . I will take the trouble to make a few remarks. . . . For several years preceding the appearance of his book, **he was about the country in the character of a glass-looker: pretending, by means of a certain stone, or glass, which he put in a hat, to be able to discover lost goods, hidden treasures, mines of gold and silver, &c . . .** In this town, a wealthy farmer, named **Josiah Stowell**, together with others, spent large sums of money in **digging for hidden money**, which this **Smith** pretended he could see, and told them where to dig; but they never found their treasure. At length the public, becoming wearied with the base imposition which he was palming upon the credulity of the ignorant, for the purpose of sponging his living from their earnings, **had him arrested as a disorderly person, tried and condemned before a court of justice.** But considering his youth, (he then being a minor,) and thinking he might reform his conduct, he was designedly allowed to escape. **This was four or five years ago.** (*Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate*, April 9, 1831, page 120)

In *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging* we have photographically reproduced A. W. Benton's entire letter. From what we quoted above, however, the reader will notice that Benton claimed that Joseph Smith was "arrested as a **disorderly person.**" This agrees well with the "court record" for it states that Joseph Smith was "a **disorderly person** and an impostor." Benton's statement also agrees with the "court record" in stating that Joseph Smith was found guilty. The "court record" states that the trial took place on March 20, 1826. This would have been five years prior to the time Benton wrote his letter in 1831. Mr. Benton states that the trial took place "**four or five years ago.**"

Dr. Hugh Nibley tries to dismiss Benton's letter as "fiction." In his book, *The Myth Makers*, page 157, he states: ". . . we are inclined to regard A.W.B.'s story of the 1826 trial as fiction. . . without the reality of the peep-stones, the whole legend of the 1826 trial collapses. . . the 1826 trial, unattested in any source but his for fifty years, was a product of A.W.B.'s own wishful thinking."

Actually, there is some very good evidence from a Mormon source to show that Joseph Smith had some trouble with the law at the time he was working for Josiah Stowell. In 1835 Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, wrote the following:

Soon after this visit to Cumorah, a gentleman from the south part of the State, . . . employed our brother. . . This gentleman, whose name is **Stowell**, resided in the town of Bainbridge, . . . Some forty miles south, . . . is said to be a cave . . . where a company of Spaniards, . . . coined a large quantity of money; . . . our brother was required to spend a few months with some others in **excavating the earth, in pursuit of this treasure.** . . .

On the private character of our brother I need add nothing further, at present, previous to his obtaining the records of the Nephites, only that while in the country, **some very officious person complained of him as a disorderly person, and brought him before the authorities of the county;** but there being no cause of action he was honorably acquitted." (*Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, October, 1835, vol. 2, pages 200-201)

While Oliver Cowdery disagrees with the "court record" when he states that Joseph Smith was acquitted, he is in agreement with the "court record" and with A. W. Benton's letter in stating that Joseph Smith was charged with being "a disorderly person."

Although the "court record" itself was not published until many years after Joseph Smith's death, the information given in the record seems to agree well with facts derived from many other sources. For instance, in the "court record" we read that **Josiah Stowell** "positively knew that the prisoner could tell, and did possess the art of **seeing** those **valuable treasures** through the medium of said **stone**; . . ." Joseph Smith's own mother confirms the fact that Stowell came to her son for help in locating hidden treasures:

A short time before the house was completed, a man, by the name of **Josiah Staal**, came from Chenango county, New York, with the view of getting Joseph to assist him in digging for a silver mine. He came for Joseph on account of **having heard that he possessed certain keys**, by which he **could discern things invisible to the natural eye.**

. . . Joseph and several others, returned with him and commenced digging." (*Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, London 1853, page 91-91)

The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts states that Stowell came to Joseph Smith because he had "**heard of Joseph Smith's gift of seership**" (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 82).

Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, gave this very revealing information:

When Joseph found this stone, there was a company digging in Harmony, Pa., and they took Joseph to look in the stone for them, and he did so for a while, and then he told them the enchantment was so strong that he could not see, and they gave it up. (*Tiffany's Monthly*, 1959, page 164)

A careful examination of the whole story of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and even the text of the book itself reveals that it originated in the mind of someone who was familiar with the practice of money-digging. We deal with this at some length in *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging*, but for lack of space in this paper we will simply point out that the "seer stone" used in "translating" the book seems to have been nothing but a common "peep stone." Isaac Hale, Joseph Smith's father-in-law, made these statements in an affidavit dated March 20, 1834:

I first became acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. in November, 1825. He was at that time in the employ of a set of men who were called "money-diggers;" and his occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see by means of a **stone placed in his hat**, and his hat closed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure. . . . Young Smith gave the "money-diggers" great encouragement, at first, but when they had arrived in digging, to near the place where he had stated an immense treasure would be found—he said the enchantment was so powerful that he could not see. . . . Young Smith made several visits at my house, and at length asked my consent to his marrying my daughter Emma. This I refused, and gave my reasons for so doing; some of which were, that he was a stranger, and followed a business that I could not approve; . . . he returned, and while I was absent from home, carried off my daughter, into the state of New York, where they were married. . . . they returned, bringing with them a Peter Ingersol, . . .

Smith stated to me, that he had given up what he called “glass-looking,” and that he expected to work hard . . . Soon after this, I was informed they had brought a wonderful book of Plates down with them . . . **The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money-diggers, with the stone in his hat,** and his hat over his face, while the Book of Plates were at the same time hid in the woods!

The reader will, no doubt, be interested in reading all of Isaac Hale’s affidavit in *Joseph Smith and Money-Digging*.

Mormon writers claim that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon through the “Urim and Thummim,” but many of them are willing to admit that Joseph Smith also used the “seer stone.” David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, stated:

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. **Joseph would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat,** drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, page 12)

The fact that Joseph Smith used a stone in a hat for money-digging as well as for translating the gold plates casts a shadow of doubt upon his entire story of the Book of Mormon.

COUNTERFEITING

Laban Clark made these statements concerning an incident which occurred among the “Rodsmen” in Vermont:

. . . I inquired of Bro. Done respecting the rods. . . He told me the rods were able invisibly to remove gold and silver . . . I then asked him if they had any person who understood **refining gold?** He said they had one who understood it perfectly well. “Where is he,” I said. “He keeps himself secreted in the woods,” he replied. I asked his name, and he told me it was Wingate I remembered at once: it was the name of a man who was detected about two years before in Bradford, Vt., **in milling counterfeit dollars.** (*The Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, vol. 3, page 816)

It is interesting to note that the plates from which the Book of Mormon was “translated” were supposed to have been made of gold. If Joseph Smith was not capable of making a set of gold plates, he probably had friends that were. Oliver Cowdery, for instance, had some training in “blacksmithing” (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, vol. 1, page 119). The reader will also remember that the “counterfeiter” was supposed to have stayed at his father’s house in Wells, Vermont. Oliver Cowdery later became one of the three special witnesses to the Book of Mormon. We have already shown from one of Joseph Smith’s revelations that Cowdery used a divining rod, and there is some evidence from Mormon sources which indicates that he became involved in counterfeiting. The “Far West Record” contains some important information on this subject. The “Far West Record” is an unpublished “record book containing minutes of meetings in Kirtland and Far West, Missouri.” The original is in the L.D.S. Church Historian’s Office. Leland Gentry, a Mormon who was working on his thesis at the Brigham Young University, was permitted access to it. On page 117 of the “Far West Record” Leland Gentry found testimony given by Joseph Smith and Fredrick G. Williams that tended to link Oliver Cowdery with the bogus money business. Leland Gentry states:

[Fredrick G.] Williams, . . . testified that **Oliver had personally informed him of a man in the Church by the name of Davis who would compound metal and make dies which could print money that could not be detected from the real thing.** Oliver allegedly told Williams that there was **no harm** in accepting and passing around such money, provided it could not be determined to be unsound.

Joseph Smith’s testimony was similar. He claimed that a non-member of the Church by the name of Sapham had told him in Kirtland that **a warrant** had been issued **against Oliver** “for being engaged in making a purchase of **bogus money and dies** to make the counterfeit money with.” According to the Prophet, he and Sidney Rigdon went to visit Oliver concerning the matter and told him that **if he were guilty, he had better leave town;** but if he was innocent, he should stand trial and thus be acquitted. “That night or next,” the Prophet said, **Oliver “left the country.”** (*A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri From 1836 to 1839*, page 146)

From this information it would appear that Joseph Smith was almost an accessory after the fact, since, according to his own statement, he warned Cowdery to flee from the law if he was guilty. A few years later a man by the name of Joseph H. Jackson claimed that Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders operated a bogus press in Nauvoo, and that Joseph Smith told him “that in Ohio, he, Dr. Boynton, Lyman Wight, Oliver Cowdery, and Hyrum, were engaged with others in a bogus establishment on Licking Creek, but that their operations were cut short by the bursting of the Kirtland Bank” (*The Adventures and Experience of Joseph H. Jackson*: . . . Warsaw, Illinois, 1846, page 15).

Jackson revealed Joseph Smith’s connection with counterfeiting in a letter printed in the *Warsaw Signal* on June 5, 1844. Within a few weeks, however, Joseph Smith had been murdered, and therefore he was never brought before the law on this charge. Brigham Young and some of the other Mormon Apostles were indicted. On January 7, 1846, the *Warsaw Signal* contained the following:

During the last week, twelve bills of indictment, for counterfeiting Mexican dollars, and American half dollars and dimes, were found by the Grand Jury, . . . embracing some of the “Holy Twelve,” and other prominent Mormons, . . . From incidental remarks made by some of the witnesses in private conversation (not before the jury,) we are led to believe that a large amount of counterfeit coin of the above description, is, and has been for a long time past, circulating in the western country . . . It was said that the Mormons had three presses for counterfeiting the coin named, and that Joe Smith worked most industriously at the business.

Brigham Young and the other Mormon leaders had no intention of submitting to the law. Although Young denied he was guilty of counterfeiting, he admitted in the *History of the Church* that he had tricked the U.S. Marshal. Under the date of December 23, 1845, we find the following:

One-five p.m. Almon W. Babbitt came into the Temple and informed me that there were some of **federal officers** . . . in the city for the purpose of **arresting some of the Twelve,** especially Amasa Lyman and myself. . . .

William Miller put on **my cap** and Kimball’s cloak and went downstairs meeting the marshal . . . as he was about getting into my carriage the marshal arrested him, on a writ from the United States court, charging him with **counterfeiting** the coin of the United States. . . .

The marshal put up at Hamilton’s Tavern, and the rumor soon spread through town that Brigham Young was in the custody of the marshal . . . William Backenstos was called in and he told them William Miller was not Brigham Young. . . .

Eight-twenty, I left the Temple **disguised** . . . to elude the vexatious writs of our persecutors. (*History of the Church*, vol. 7, pages 549-551)

While the Mormon leaders remained in Nauvoo they were constantly bothered by the law. They claimed that they would not allow themselves to be arrested because they might meet the same fate as Joseph Smith. John Taylor, who became the third President of the Mormon Church, threatened the officers who attempted to serve writs with death. Brigham Young stated:

Saturday, 12. . . the U.S. deputy marshal for the district of Illinois arrived in town with writs for myself and others.

Sunday, 13.—Meeting at the stand. Elders Heber C. Kimball and John Taylor preached. Several officers attended meeting. **Elder Taylor** gave them to understand that **if they made an attempt to serve writs on him it would cost them their lives.** . . . (*History of the Church*, vol. 7, page 395-396)

In 1846 the Mormon leaders fled from Nauvoo and headed west. While the anti-Mormons were demanding that the Mormons leave Illinois, the indictments for counterfeiting apparently speeded up the process. The Mormon writer Kenneth W. Godfrey made this statement:

Warrants pending for the arrest of Brigham Young and other leaders on charges of counterfeiting were among the reasons for the early departure of the Saints from the “city of Joseph” in February rather than in the spring as originally proposed. (*Brigham Young University Studies*, Winter 1968, page 215)

The United States Government has preserved some important records concerning the indictment of the Mormon leaders for counterfeiting. In a “Reference Service Report,” dated December 11, 1963, Hardee Allen made these statements:

Inquiry: Information about Records Relating to the Indictment in Illinois of Brigham Young, Mormon Leader, and Apostles of the Mormon Church, 1845-1848, for counterfeiting.

Report: The records of the Solicitor of the Treasury (National Archives Record Group 206) contain a few summary references to the indictment, and proceedings thereunder, of Brigham Young and eleven other men on the charge of counterfeiting, the indictments having been presented in December 1845 in the United State Circuit Court for the District of Illinois. . . . The National Archives can furnish negative photostats of the pertinent United States Attorneys' reports (from *Reports of the U.S. District Attorneys, From 1845 to 1850*), as follows:

"1. Report of Suits Pending in the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Illinois at its December Term 1845, listing suits brought in that court on indictments for counterfeiting, dated December 17 and December 18, 1845, against Brigham Young and 11 other men, . . .

"2. Report of Suits Pending at the June Term 1846, which identifies Brigham Young and most of the others charged with counterfeiting as 'not arrested.' 1 page; negative photostat, 75 cents.

"The United State Attorneys' reports in the records of the Solicitor of the Treasury do not show the disposition of the charges against Brigham Young and 10 others. . . . the reports of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Illinois, . . . do contain a report for the December Term 1848 which shows that the cases against Brigham Young and 10 others (not including Edward Bonney), indicted for counterfeiting, had been dismissed at that Term of the court. The National Archives can furnish negative photostats of the pertinent Clerks' reports (from *Reports of the Clerks of the U.S. Court, 1846 to 1850*) . . ."

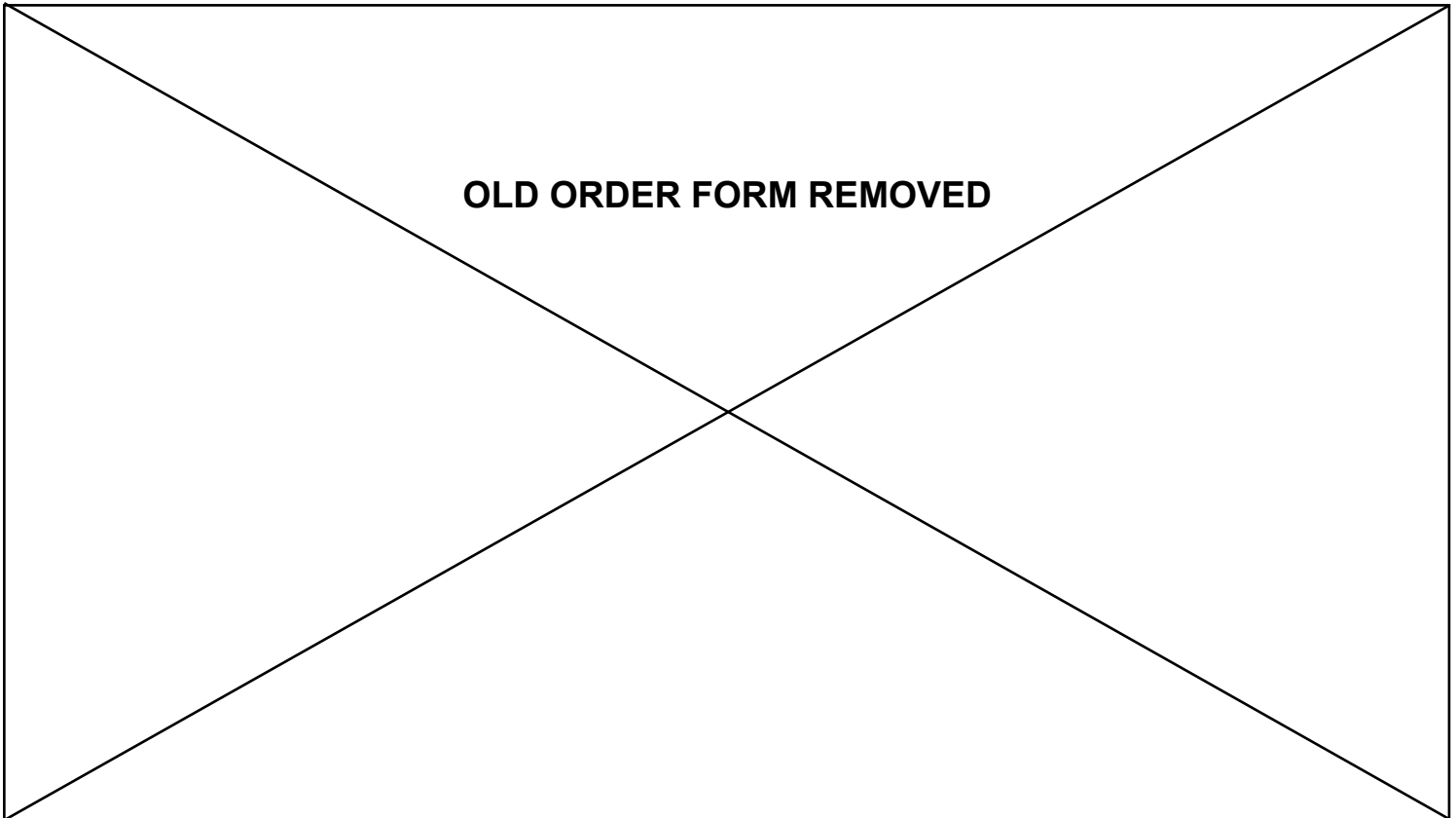
In the same "Reference Service Report," Hardee Allen lists 16 reports that are related to these indictments and states that "The National Archives can supply negative photostats of any of these reports at the price listed, or a 35mm. microfilm of all of them (16 pages) for \$2.50." We have obtained a copy of this microfilm and find it very revealing. According to these records, Brigham Young and four of the other Apostles (Willard Richards, John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt and Orson Hyde) were indicted "for counterfeiting the current coin of the U.S." (A photograph of a U.S. government record showing the indictments against the Mormon leaders for counterfeiting will be sent free upon request.) Among the list of those indicted we find the name of Theodore Turley. This comment concerning Turley appears in a handwritten note on the record showing the indictment: "This is an indictment for counterfeiting

the current coin of the U.S. The defendant, who is the chief manufacturer of dies &c resides at Nauvoo. From the testimony before the Grand Jury, it appeared that counterfeiting coin has been largely carried on at that place for some years. The defendant evades the service of process." Joseph Smith was certainly acquainted with Turley, for he made this statement in his *History of the Church*: "I told Theodore Turley that I had no objection to his building a brewery" (*History of the Church*, vol. 5, page 300). Under the Brigham Young leadership, Theodore Turley became a member of the secret Council of Fifty (*Quest for Empire*, page 224). Under the date of November 16, 1845, Brigham Young recorded that "Elder Theodore Turley has been arrested at Alton on a charge of bogus-making" (*History of the Church*, vol. 7, page 525). Turley apparently received help to pay his bail and then fled west with the Mormons. A. U.S. Government record dated January 12, 1847, contains this statement concerning Turley: "The deft in this case is beyond the reach of process—proceedings against his bail have been had—further proceedings useless." Under the date of March 28, 1846, Brigham Young recorded the following in his "Manuscript History": "I met my captains of Tens at the Post Office at 3:40 p.m.; immediately after which Theodore Turley came into the Council and reported that Edward Bonney, Haight and another man had been in pursuit of him for two or three days, . . . by several meanderings and disguises he had escaped them; that his family were at Richardson's Point, and had not team sufficient to bring them on" ("Manuscript History of Brigham Young," March 28, 1846, typed copy). On November 28, 1847, Brigham Young recorded this statement in the *History of the Church*:

I met with the Twelve and high council in the forenoon, Theodore Turley and Joseph Fielding were voted members of the high council. (*History of the Church*, vol. 7, page 620)

Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith gives this very revealing information concerning counterfeiting in her book:

When we were on the route through Iowa, it occurred, that one day, when one of the wagons was upset, **the press for making bogus money rolled into sight**, . . . the business of counterfeiting was carried on extensively, and that too under the personal sanction and blessing of the Prophet Joseph, and of the Twelve. . . . One thing is certain; this bogus press was carried, to my certain knowledge, to Salt Lake, . . . (*Mormonism: Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition*, Hartford, 1870, pages 28-29)



While dressing the next morning, Wallace [her husband] accidentally left his belt in my room; . . . which I examined . . . and found it to contain about three hundred dollars of bogus money. . . . The discovery . . . sharpened my curiosity, . . . I made it convenient, . . . to question Joseph Young, brother of the Prophet, about it. I commenced by telling him I thought he had given Wallace more than his share of bogus money . . . Brother Joseph, thrown off his guard, replied,

“Did he get me a span of horses?”

I told him I did not know but he bought one for himself.

“Yes, yes,” said brother Joseph, thinking I knew all about it, as some of the wives of the Prophet did; “he can sell the bogus any time to the Missourians, . . . we shall be off and beyond their reach, and they can whistle.”

I thus ascertained . . . that my husband was a thief and a counterfeiter, . . . soon after this, a man came to our house, who was unknown to me, and had a long conversation with Wallace. . . . Wallace told me it was necessary for us to move to St. Joseph, Mo.; that he was going there by direction, and in the service of the Church, . . .

The reader will not be surprised to know, what I soon learned to be true, that this “business” was selling bogus money, and buying with it various kinds of property needed by the Church, and forwarding it to Council Bluffs . . .

The horses, and other booty purchased or stolen, was forwarded at one to Kanesville, and was there received by **Orson Hyde**, . . . Orson Hyde is one of the “Twelve Apostles,” and is often in the States. There are now many persons living by whom these facts can be proved.

The bogus money used by these men, was mostly made at Nauvoo; but I have heretofore mentioned that **the press** used in its manufacture was taken west, and on to Salt Lake **in the wagon of Peter Hawse**, and was at this time at Kanesville. This man Hawse, is now living on Humbolt River, west of Great Salt Lake City. (*Ibid.*, pages 103-107)

Mrs. Smith’s statement that the Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde received the stolen property at Kanesville is very interesting, for we know that Orson Hyde approved of stealing from the Gentiles. In his journal of October 13, 1860, John Bennion recorded that “after meeting Bp council & **Elder Hyde** had a long talk in my house **Br Hyde said speaking of stealing** that a man may steal & be influenced by the **Spirit of the Lord to do it** that **Hickman had done it years past** said that **he never would institute a trial against a brother for stealing from the Gentiles** but stealing from his brethren he was down on it . . .” (The reader will find the complete statement by Bennion in *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 2, pages 11-12)

It is also interesting to note that the U.S. Government records show that the Mormon Apostle Orson Hyde was indicted for counterfeiting at Nauvoo.

Mrs. Smith states that a bogus press was hauled west in the wagon of “Peter Hawse.” This seems very likely, for Brigham Young himself admitted that Peter Haws was involved in the bogus business after the Mormons left Nauvoo:

While I was standing with Prest. Kimball at his tent, an outcry was heard from **Peter Haws’** Camp; we repaired thither and found that **Haws** and Thomas Williams and two others had a quarrel about some property, ect. that **Haws had let Williams have some bogus money on shares** and Williams had not paid him his share of the profits. I reproved them for dealing in base coin and told Haws he could not govern himself, his family, or a company; and unless he repented and forsook such dishonesty, the hand of the Lord would be against him and all those who partook of such corruption. (“Manuscript History of Brigham Young,” May 12, 1846, typed copy)

The U.S. Government records show that Peter Haws was indicted along with the Mormon leaders for counterfeiting in Nauvoo. Klaus J. Hansen shows that Peter Haws was a member of the “Council of Fifty under Joseph Smith” (*Quest For Empire*, page 223).

Brigham Young’s rebuke of Peter Haws can hardly be taken very seriously, since Haws continued to serve in the “Council of Fifty in Colonial Utah, 1847-49” (*Quest For Empire*, page 225). When we find that both Peter Haws and Brigham Young were under indictment for counterfeiting and were fleeing from the law at the time, it throws a new light on this incident.

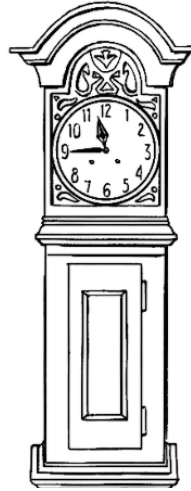
In *The Mormon Kingdom*, vol. 2, we plan to devote about 20 pages to the subject of counterfeiting in the early Mormon Church. So far we have completed 50 pages of vol. 2, and the remaining pages will be mailed out as soon as completed. To receive both these volumes and a vinyl loose leaf binder the customer would normally pay \$7.90. We are having a special, however, and if these two volumes are ordered before October 31, 1970, the price will be only \$6.95!

NEW DISCOVERY?

We have heard from two separate sources that Dr. Nibley has discovered more of Joseph Smith’s papyri—possibly Facsimile No. 2. If any of our readers know the location of the papyri or have any other information on this subject we would appreciate it if they would let us know.

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In the January 1966 issue of the *Messenger* we announced that we had decided to “sell out all of our books” with the exception of 2 or 3. Because we have printed several new books and added books by other publishers to our list, some of our readers have not realized just how many of our publications have sold out. Below we have listed books once printed by Modern Microfilm but no longer available. This list should help to remind our customers that this may be the last chance to obtain some of our publications. Please consult our current book list, and do NOT try to order the books listed below.

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