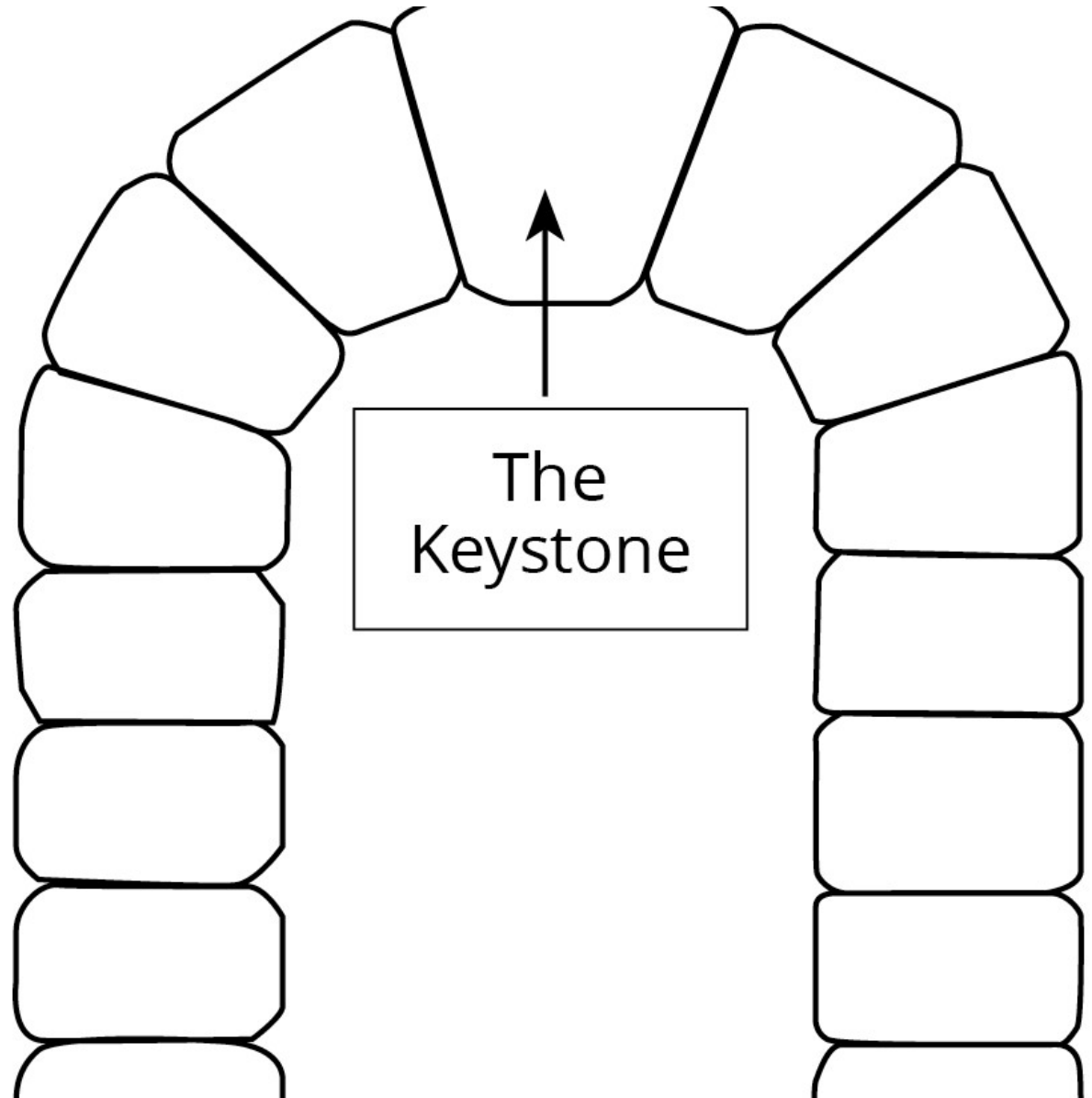
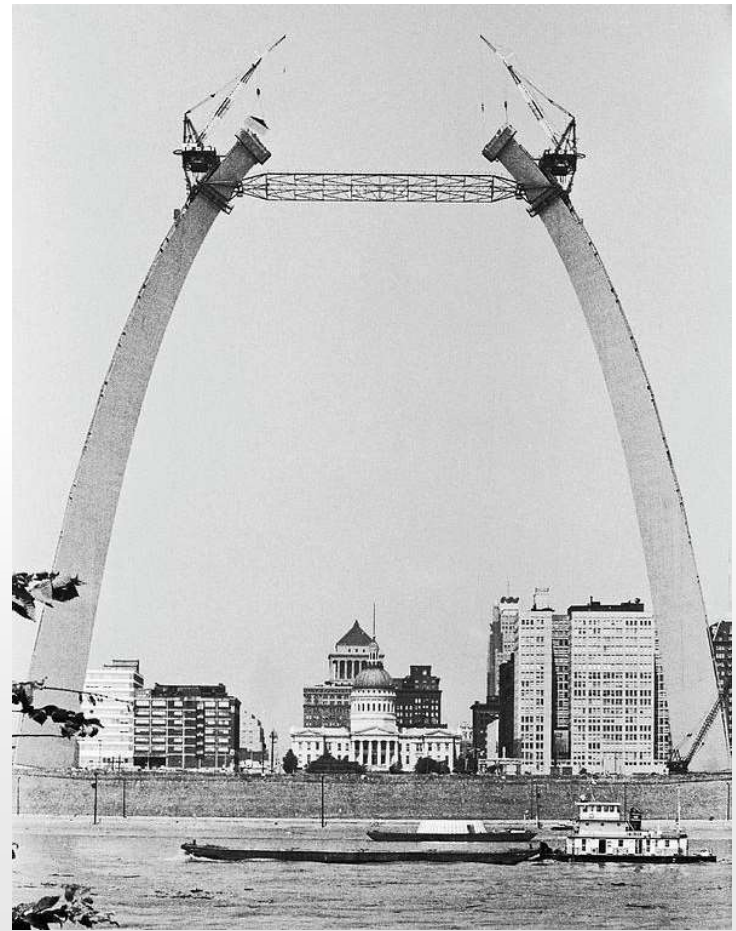
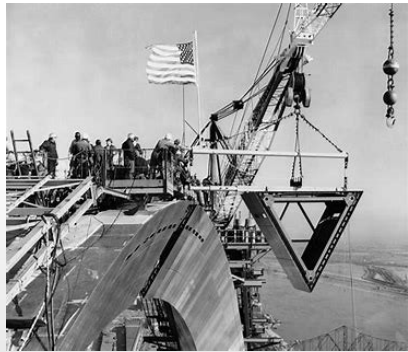

THE BOOK OF MORMON = THE KEYSTONE

Elder Eric English
January 2023





THE
GATEWAY
ARCH




“I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the **keystone of our religion**, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”

~ Joseph Smith, Jr

The Book of Mormon



The
Keystone
of Our
Religion



“God sendeth more witnesses and He proveth all His words.”

~ God (II Nephi 8:6)

“Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ...”


~ Nephi (II Nephi 8:7)

“Since 1830 the attention of the public has been focused almost entirely upon the manner in which the book was found and translated, rather than upon its content.

Scores of volumes have been written to prove or disprove the “validity” of the book by authors who display such ignorance of the story that one can only conclude they never read the text.”

~ Verneil Simmons

Peoples, Places, and Prophecies



“Hopefully the 21st century will be a moment in time when the Book of Mormon can be heard for its message to the present age. Too much effort has been made trying to “prove” the Book of Mormon. Too little time and too little writing have addressed the message of the book.”

~ John Wolf
Forest of Priests and Prophets

“Some supporters of the book scarcely get into the story. They become so intent on “proving” that it is “of God” that they scarcely delve into the book itself... From these fields can come assisting data, but these cannot take the place of permitting the book to speak for itself.”

~ Roy Cheville

The Book of Mormon Speaks for Itself

“And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation.

And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all; and they shall remain under this condemnation **until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon** and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written,

That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father’s kingdom... “

D&C 83:8

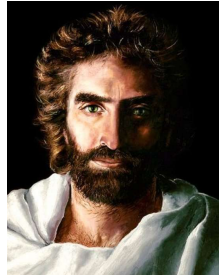
“The whole church was brought under condemnation. The Book of Mormon is still treated lightly by many. The success or failure of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is caught up in this scripture. As we explore the purpose of the Book of Mormon in scripture keep in mind the importance God has placed upon this sacred record. It is spoken of as containing the fullness of the gospel.”

~ Walter Weldon

1976, The Purpose of the Book of Mormon

Invitation to join the Journey

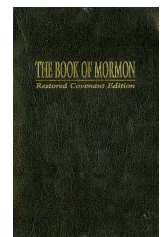
Daily walk with the Author of the book



Life transformed by the message of the book

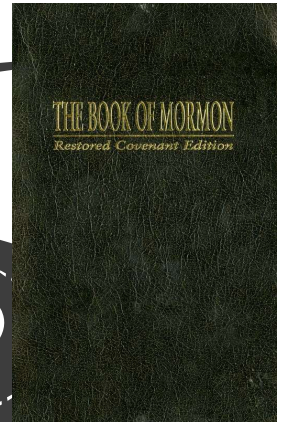
Testimony of the book

Read the book



Where we're heading

- Overview
- Chronological walk through the insights in the book (Ether, 1 Nephi,...)
- Literary, philosophy, history, geography, theology, analogy, prophecy
- Most important - spiritually



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND ALONG THE JOURNEY

- The purpose principle – what's in the book is in it for a reason!
 - Ask why along the way
- Don't take my word for it
- The hero in the story isYou!



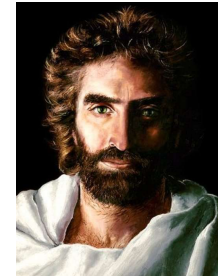
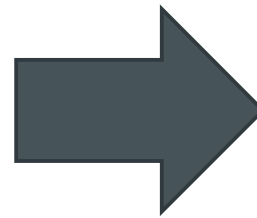
HOMEWORK

- Review the Overview of the Book of Mormon
- Begin reading through the Book of Mormon – title page, witness' statements, Ether
- Begin sharing with someone else what you're learning from the Book or how it's changing your life

The Book of Mormon

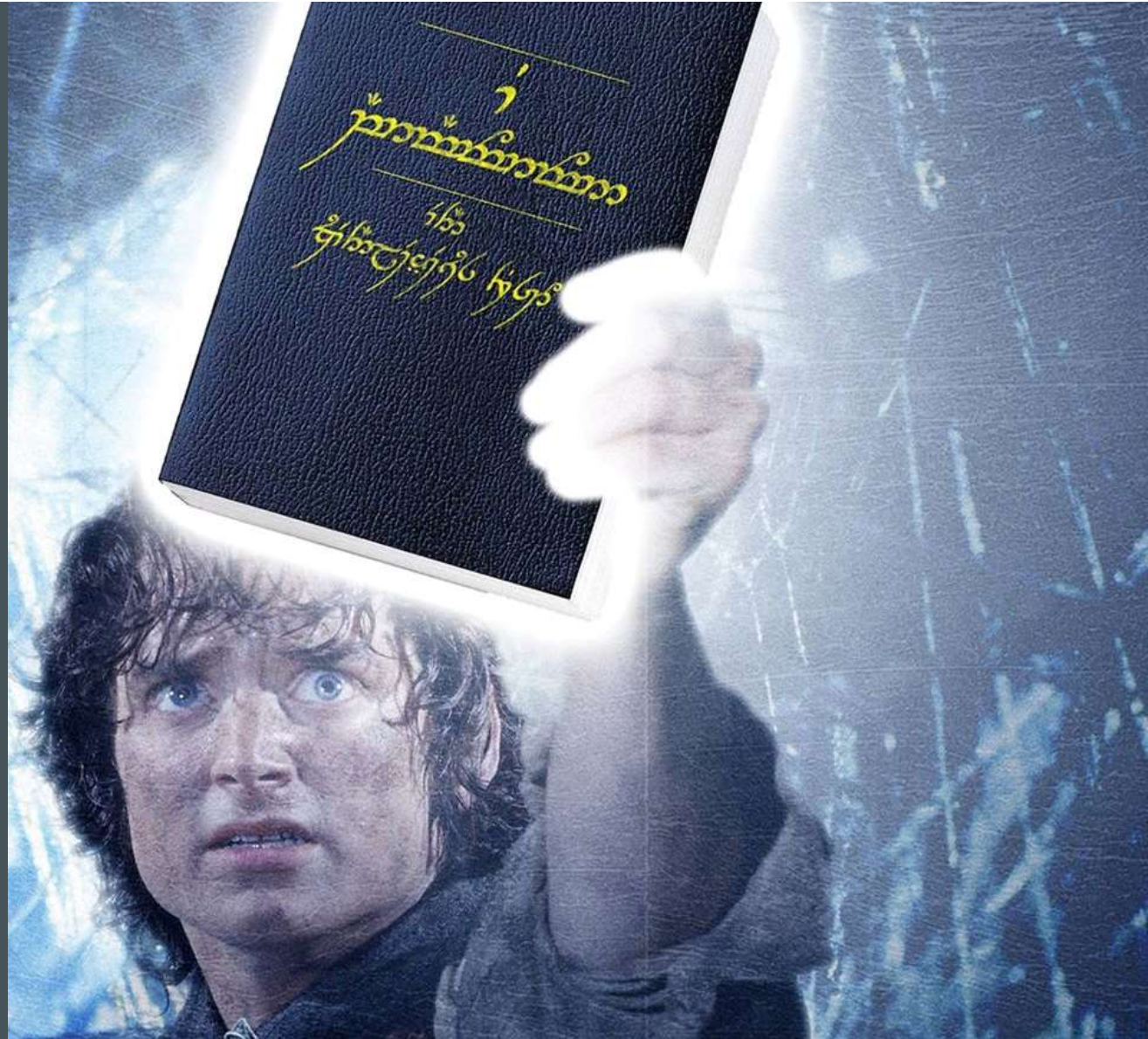


One of the major things that all Restoration factions have in common

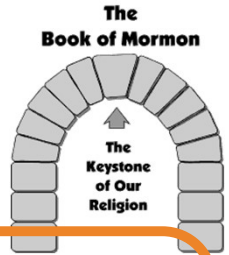


“MAY IT BE A
LIGHT TO YOU IN
DARK PLACES,
WHEN ALL
OTHER LIGHTS
GO OUT.”

~ LADY GALADRIEL
(LORD OF THE RINGS)



AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF MORMON



- Overview of the class
- Coming forth of the Book of Mormon
- The witnesses
- The Story – the peoples, lands, travels, languages, and records
- The purposes of the Book of Mormon
- The lands of the Book of Mormon



HOW DID WE GET
THE BOOK?

THE COMING
FORTH OF THE
BOOK OF
MORMON





THE VISION AND VISITATIONS OF MORONI

- Joseph Smith Jr Birth – December 23, 1805
- First Vision in the Grove – Early spring 1820
- Moroni visited 3 times - September 21-22, 1823
- Told his father of the experience on 9/22 and went to find the plates that day
- Visited the same spot and conversed with Moroni each year on anniversary
- Obtained the plates – September 22, 1827

MORONI'S MESSAGE

... on the evening of the ... twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God.

... While I was thus in the act of calling upon God ... a personage appeared at my bedside ...

Church History, Volume 1, page 12

MORONI'S MESSAGE

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni. That God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil, among all nations, kindreds, and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

Church History, Volume 1, page 12, 13

MORONI'S MESSAGE

He said there was a book deposited written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.

Church History, Volume 1, page 13

MORONI'S MESSAGE

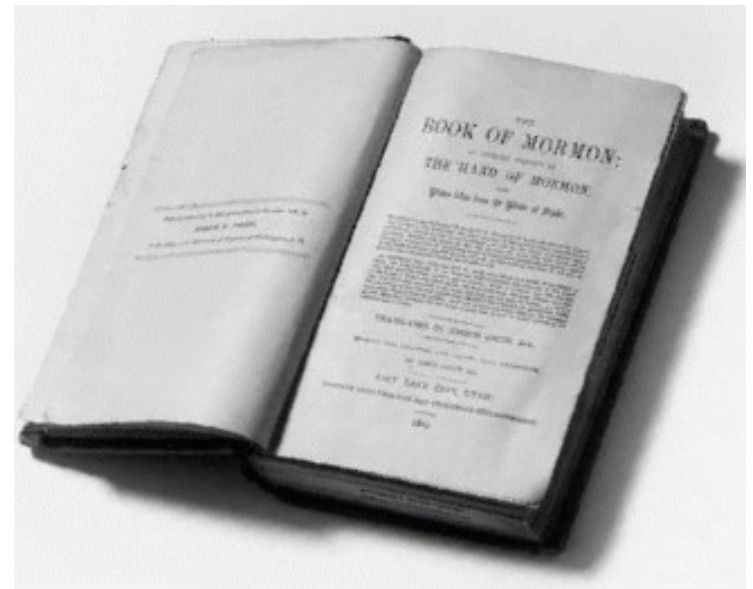
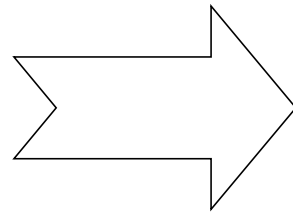
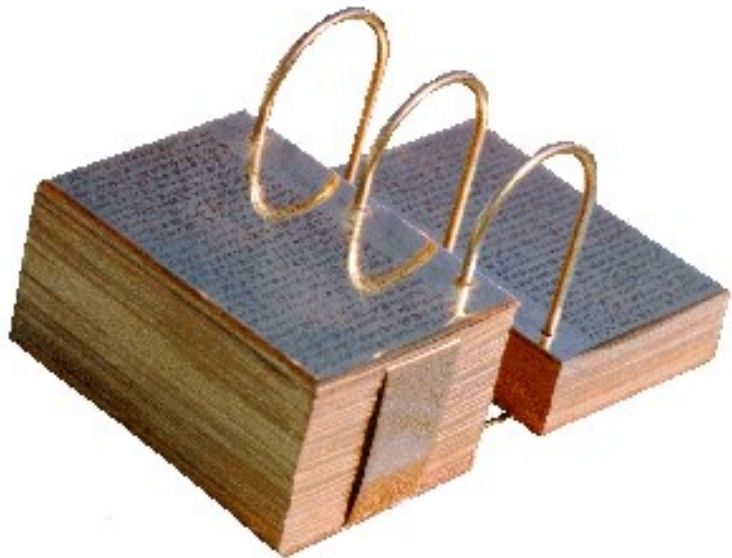
After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament ... He also said that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be.

Church History, Volume 1, page 13,14

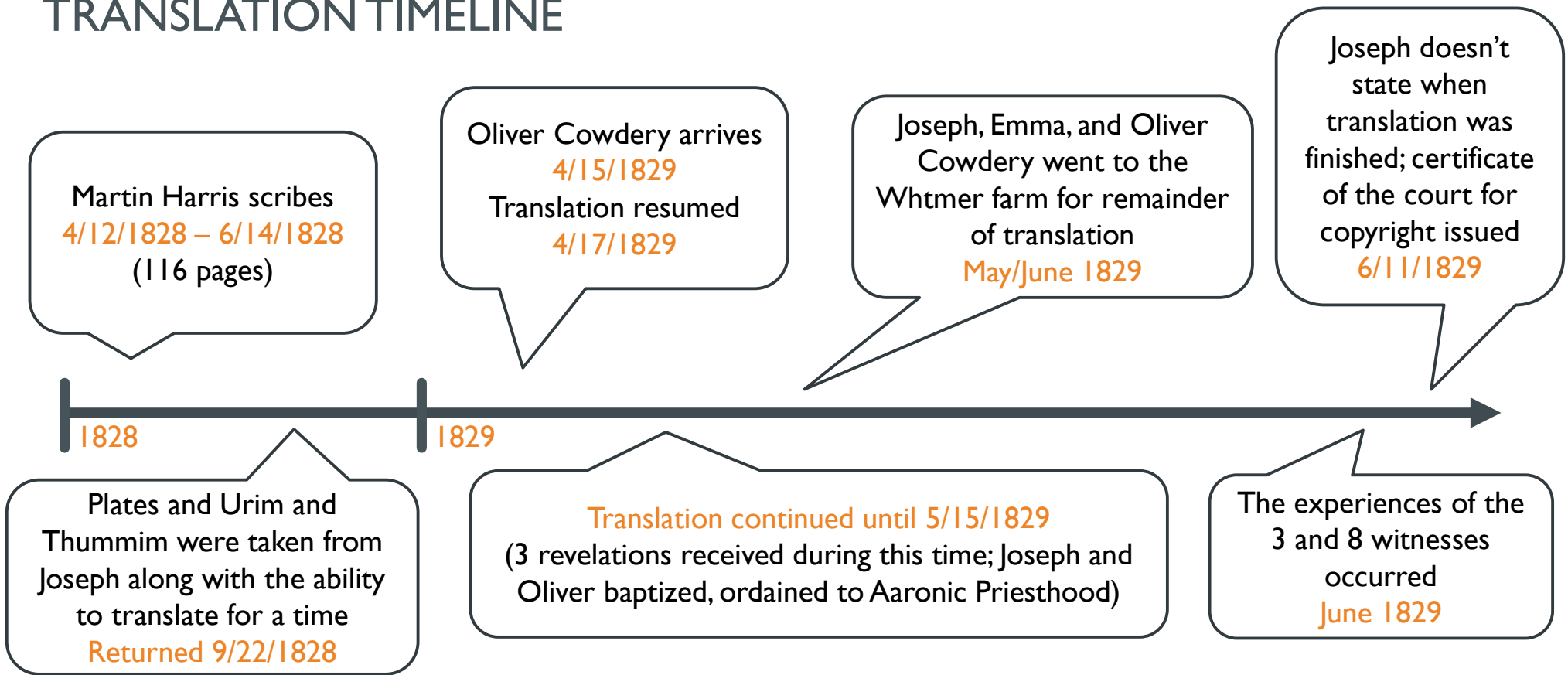
1823 - 1827

- Joseph went the next morning to find the plates after telling his father about the experience
- He went back to visit where the plates were buried each year on the anniversary in September
- September 22, 1827 is when he was told to take the plates
- Went to Pennsylvania that fall, transcribed some characters and translated them between Dec 1827 and Feb 1828

PLATES TO PAGES

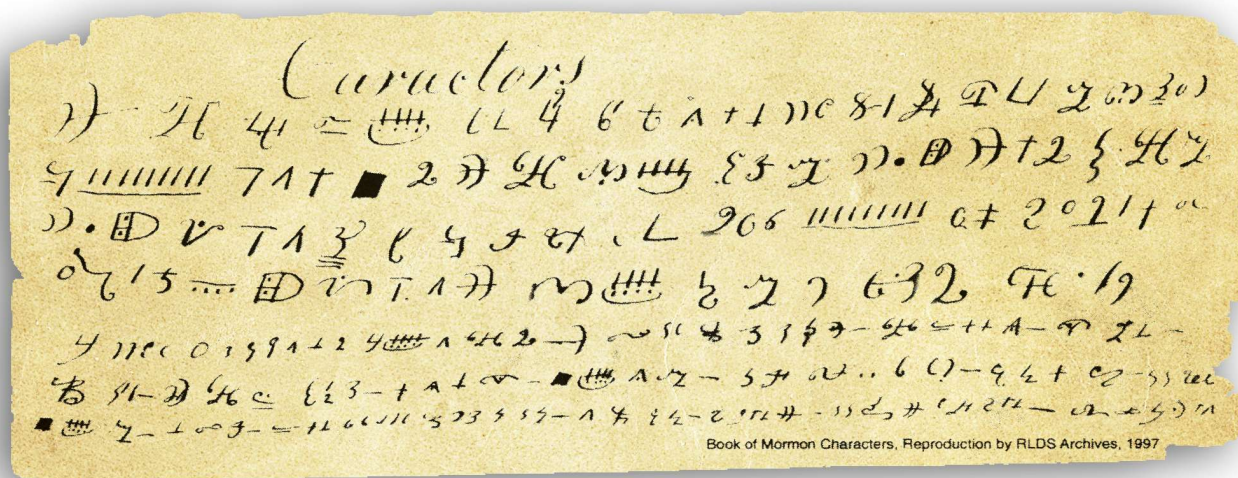


TRANSLATION TIMELINE



Translation occurred between April – June 1829

PROFESSOR ANTHON & THE “CHARACTORS”



- Joseph copied a set of characters from the plates along with a translation of them and gave to Martin Harris
- Martin traveled to New York City to show them to Professor Anthon – February, 1828
- Martin’s testimony is that Anthon confirmed their authenticity as Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic and provided a certificate stating as much, however he took it back and tore it up upon hearing that an angel had told Joseph where to find the plates

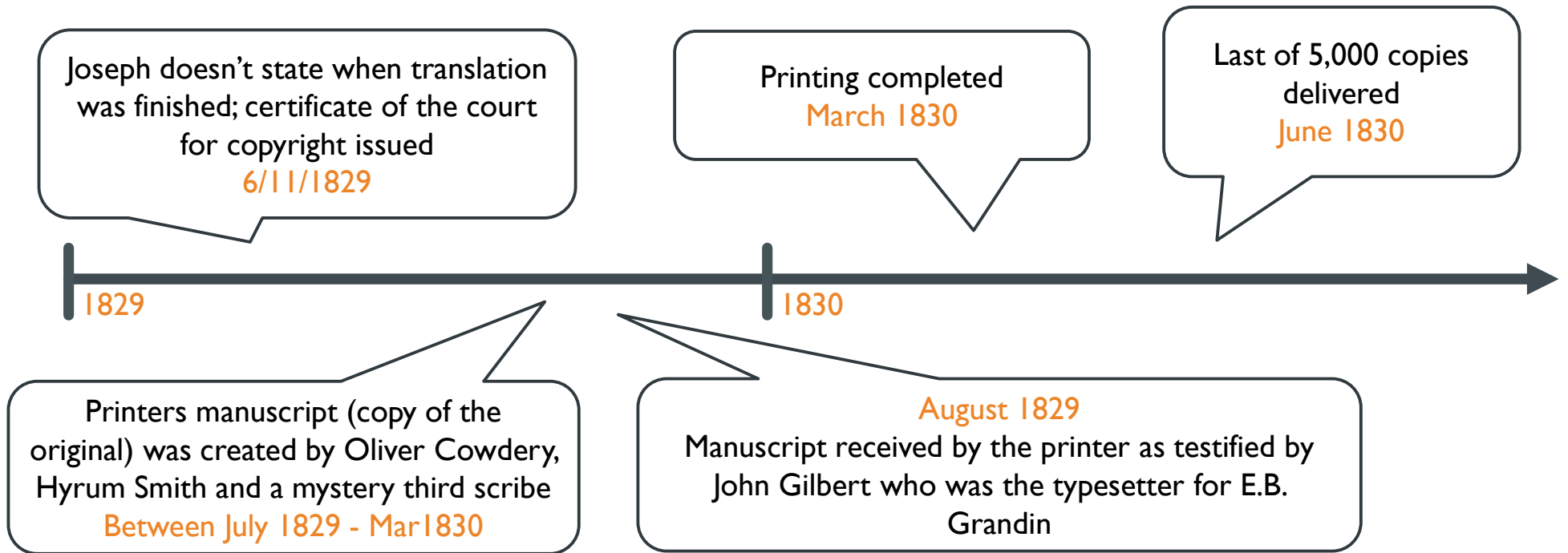
Charles Anthon

Luther Bradish

Samuel Mitchill



PRINTING TIMELINE



Printing occurred between Aug 1829 – Mar 1830



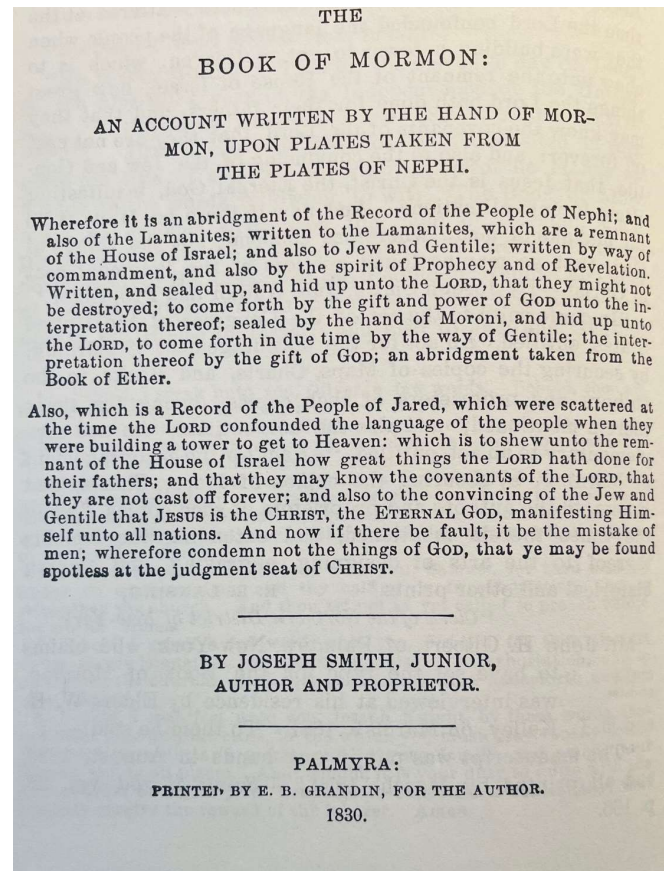
E.B. Grandin Print Shop

August 1829

Martin Harris mortgages his farm to cover the \$3,000 printing cost of the Book of Mormon by E.B. Grandin. He later sells 151 acres of his farm to pay off the mortgage.

THE TITLE PAGE AND “AUTHORSHIP”

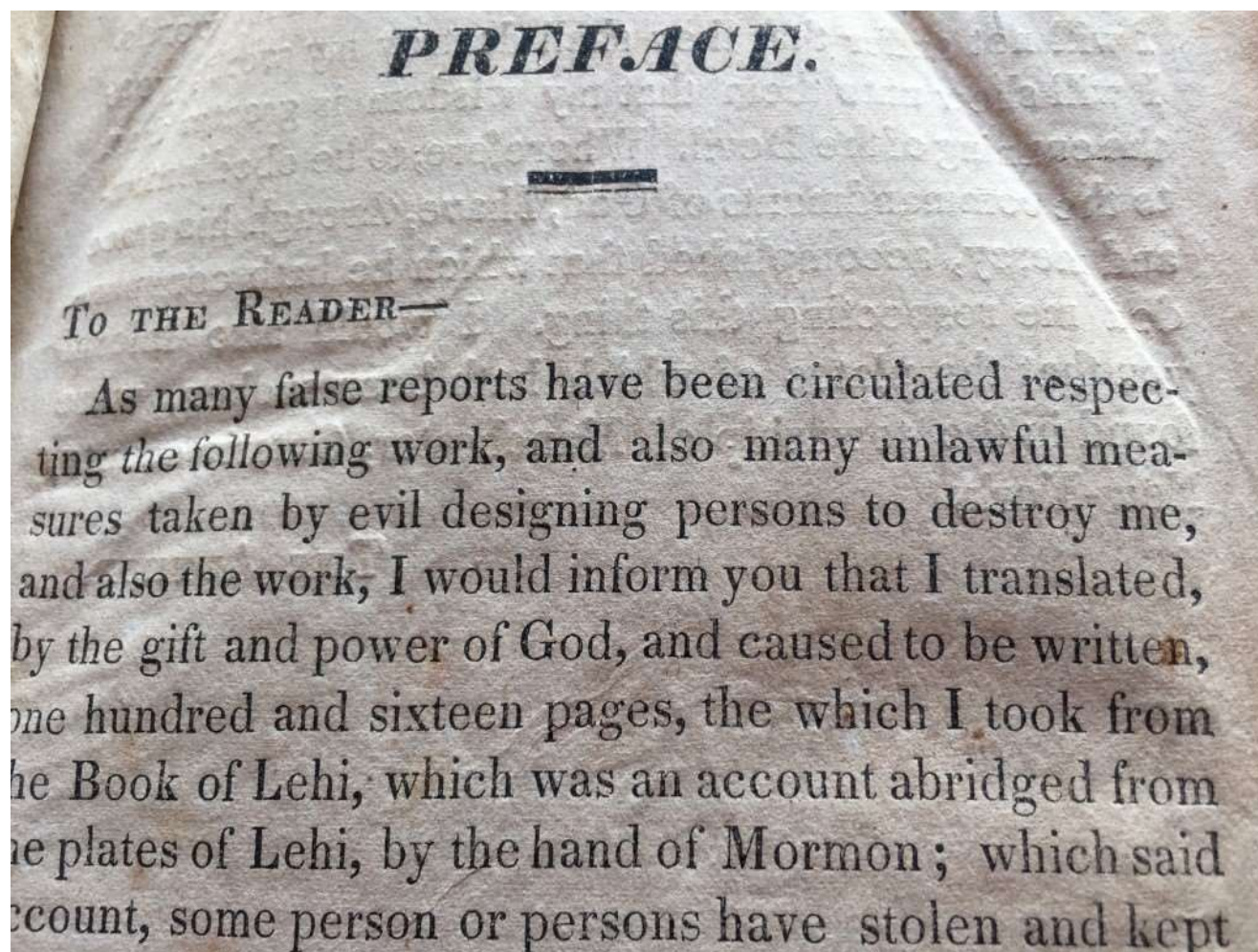
Ancient
origin



Modern
origin

THE PREFACE

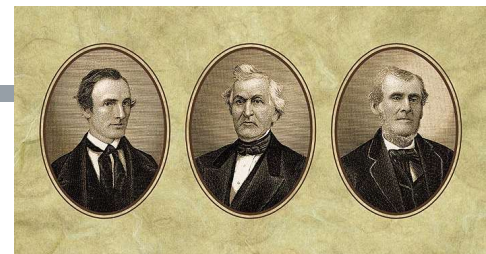
Only included
in the 1830
Palmyra edition



THE WITNESSES

1. The 3 witnesses were shown the plates by an angel
2. The 8 witnesses were shown the plates by Joseph
3. None of the witnesses are known to have ever denied their testimony afterwards, for the remainder of their lives
4. In fact, most continued to reaffirm their testimonies over and over and over again
5. This, in spite of the fact, that several had falling out with the church or leaders of the church or were even ex-communicated

TESTIMONY OF THE THREE WITNESSES

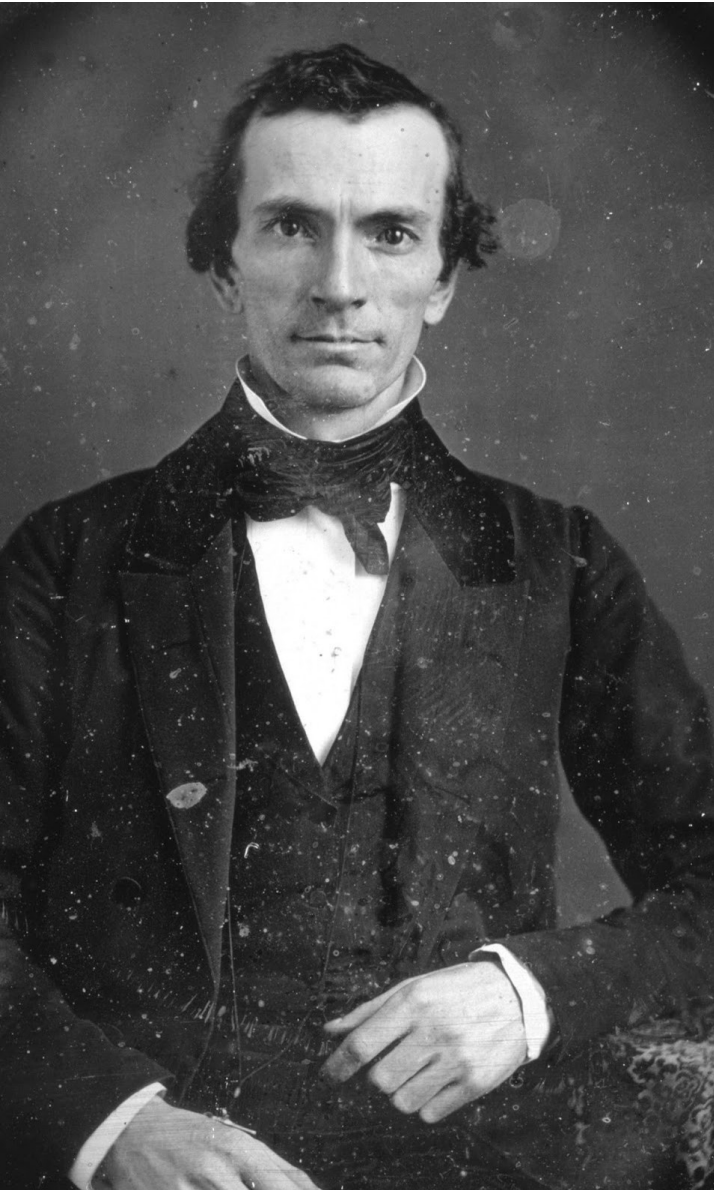


Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

— Oliver Cowdery

— David Whitmer

— Martin Harris



THE THREE WITNESSES – OLIVER COWDERY

“It was a clear, open beautiful day, far from any inhabitants, in a remote field, at the time we saw the record, of which it has been spoken, brought and laid before us, by an angel, arrayed in glorious light, ascend out of the midst of heaven.”

~ Written to a skeptic in Nov 1829 (earliest written corroboration, only few months after the experience)

1806 - 1850

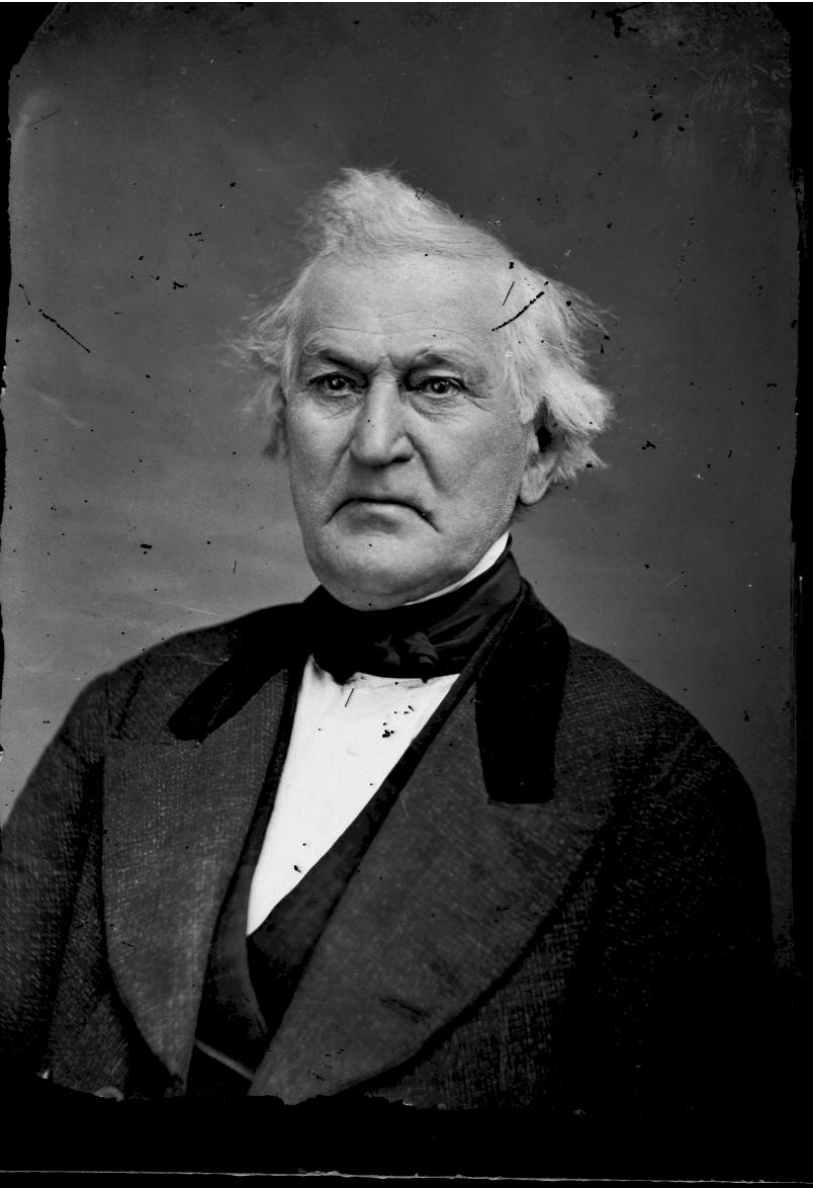
THE THREE WITNESSES – MARTIN HARRIS

“Young man, do you see that sun shining through that window? Just so sure as that sun shines and gives us light by day, and the moon and stars give us light by night, just so sure I know the Book of Mormon is true. For I saw the angel, I heard his voice, I saw and handled the plates upon which the Book of Mormon was written; and by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, the translation was made by the Prophet Joseph Smith, whom I know by the power and gift of the Holy Ghost, was a true Prophet of God....” ~ 1869

1783 - 1875



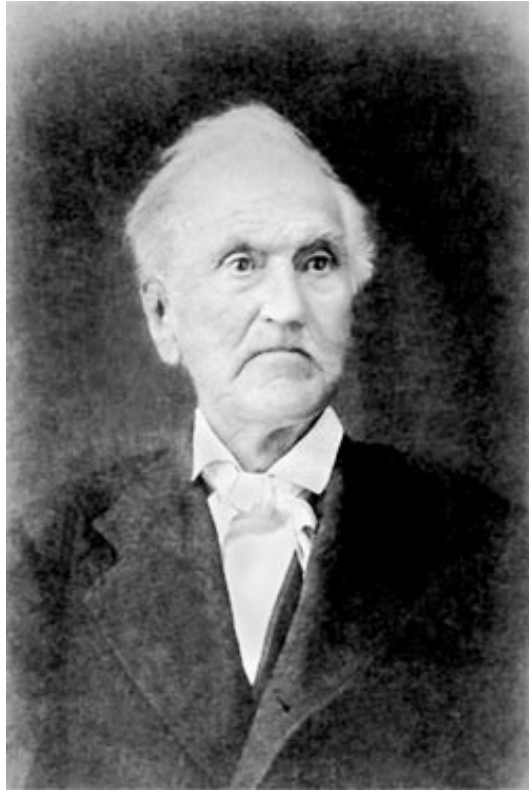
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THE THREE WITNESSES – DAVID WHITMER

“My testimony to the world is written concerning the Book of Mormon, and it is the same that I gave at first and it is the same as shall stand to my latest hour in life, linger with me in death and shine as Gospel Truth beyond the limits of life.”

1805 - 1888



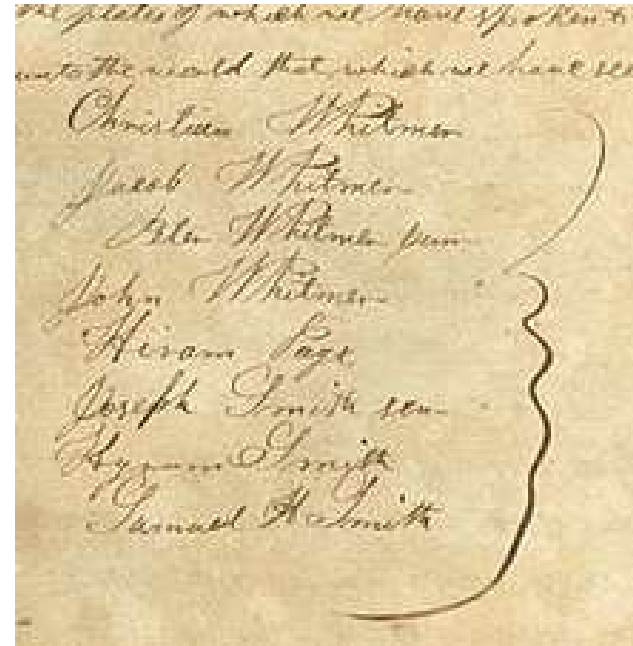
DAVID
WHITMER

THE EIGHT WITNESSES

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

THE EIGHT WITNESSES

1. Christian Whitmer
2. Jacob Whitmer
3. Peter Whitmer, Sr
4. John Whitmer
5. Hiram Page
6. Joseph Smith, Sr
7. Hyrum Smith
8. Samuel H. Smith



* John Whitmer was the last surviving of the 8 and reaffirmed his testimony before his death (1878)

LAST OF THE EIGHT WITNESSES – JOHN WHITMER

“Oliver Cowdery lived in Richmond, Mo., some 40 miles from here, at the time of his death. I went to see him and was with him for some days previous to his demise. I have never heard him deny the truth of his testimony of the Book of Mormon under any circumstances whatever. . . . Neither do I believe that he would have denied, at the peril of his life; so firm was he that he could not be made to deny what he has affirmed to be a divine revelation from God. . . .

I have never heard that any one of the three or eight witnesses ever denied the testimony that they have borne to the Book as published in the first edition of the Book of Mormon. There are only two of the witnesses to that book now living, to wit., David Whitmer, one of the three, and John Wh[itmer], one of the eight. Our names have gone forth to all nations, tongues and people as a divine revelation from God. And it will bring to pass the designs of God according to the declaration therein contained.”

~ John Whitmer, in a letter to Mark Forscutt, 1876



THE QUESTION OF AUTHORSHIP

Possible explanations of the origin:



- 1. Joseph Smith, Jr created the book**
 - Whether completely on his own or via some form of copy, plagiarism, and original content
- 2. Joseph Smith, Jr was influenced by the Devil or some demonic source to create the book**
 - To lead millions away from God?
- 3. The book is exactly what it claims to be, a work of ancient origin, directed by God, and translated into English by Joseph Smith, Jr through the gift and power of God**