

were approximately 246,000 high priests in the Church.

From Adam to Moses, righteous men holding the holy priesthood were ordained high priests. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, and many others were all ordained high priests (D&C 107:53; Alma 13). After the time of Moses the Melchizedek Priesthood was generally withdrawn from the earth, except among the prophets, and the law functioned under the Aaronic Priesthood. Thus, under the LAW OF MOSES a high priest was the chief priest in the AARONIC PRIESTHOOD. He presided over all other priests in their functions and ordinances, particularly those of the temple. Only a direct descendant of the first-born son of AARON anointed to be the spiritual head of the people could become the high priest.

In the Book of Mormon, there were apparently no Levites or descendants of Aaron among the people. High priests were the presiding spiritual authorities and held the Melchizedek Priesthood (e.g., Alma 8:23; 30:20, 23).

In the epistle to the Hebrews, Paul declares Christ to be the promised high priest “after the order of Melchisedec,” an order higher in authority than the Aaronic Priesthood and not dependent upon the Aaronic lineage (Heb. 5:4–6, 10; 7:3, 11, 14–15; Ps. 110:4). As the great high priest, Christ made an eternal sacrifice, once for all time and all people (Heb. 9:11–12), and he continues to preside over all the ordinances and the organization of the Church, which bears his name (*see* HEAD OF THE CHURCH).

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A. LEGRAND RICHARDS

HIRAM, OHIO

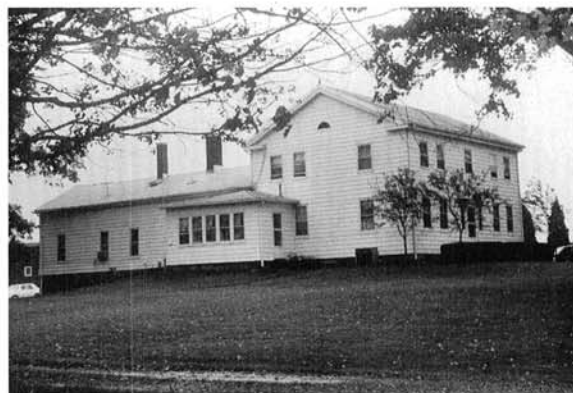
Hiram, Ohio, a small town twenty-five miles south and slightly east of KIRTLAND, OHIO, was the site of a large branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1830s and served for one

year as home to the Prophet Joseph SMITH. John and Elsa Johnson, a prosperous farmer and his wife, residents in Hiram Township, welcomed Joseph, Emma, and their adopted twins to live with them in September 1831. Joseph had healed Elsa's arthritic arm several months earlier.

During the Smiths' stay, Joseph received an outpouring of fifteen of the revelations now published in the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS. Section 1, known as the Preface, was given at one of many Church conferences held there. On February 16, 1832, Joseph and his scribe at this time, Sidney RIGDON, beheld a divine vision of the eternal worlds that forms the basis of Latter-day Saint understanding of life after death. In this vision (*see* DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: SECTION 76) they reported seeing both God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and bore witness of Jesus Christ: “He lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God” (verses 22–23). A Hiram conference in November 1831 voted to print all revelations received up to that date as the BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS.

On the cold night of March 24, 1832, a mob dragged Joseph and Sidney from their beds into a nearby meadow, beat them, and poured tar and feathers on their bodies (HC 1:261–65). Joseph and Sidney bore the marks of that night for the rest of their lives. Another consequence was the death of Joseph and Emma's adopted eleven-month-old son. Ill with the measles at the time, he was exposed to the cold and died five days later.

While living in Hiram, Joseph accomplished a significant portion of his translation of the Bible (*see* JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE



The John Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio. Joseph Smith received several revelations here, including D&C 76, known as the Vision, about the degrees of glory in heaven. Courtesy LaMar C. Berrett.

[JST]). He left the area only once for a trip to Missouri and for several nearby preaching missions.

The Johnson home is now owned by the Church and is open as a VISITORS CENTER. The Hiram Ward meetinghouse stands nearby.

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KARL RICKS ANDERSON

HISTORIANS, CHURCH

From its beginnings, the Church has considered RECORD KEEPING and history writing an imperative duty (D&C 123:1–7). The Book of Mormon, published in 1830, is a product of ancient records kept by command of God (1 Ne. 9:3, 5; Jacob 1:2; 3 Ne. 23:4, 11–13). Record keeping is also commanded by modern revelation (D&C 21:1; 47:3; 69:3; 72:5–6). Latter-day Saints write history not only to obey divine injunctions but also to combat false reports and to convert and edify future generations (*HC* 1:1; 2:199; 6:409).

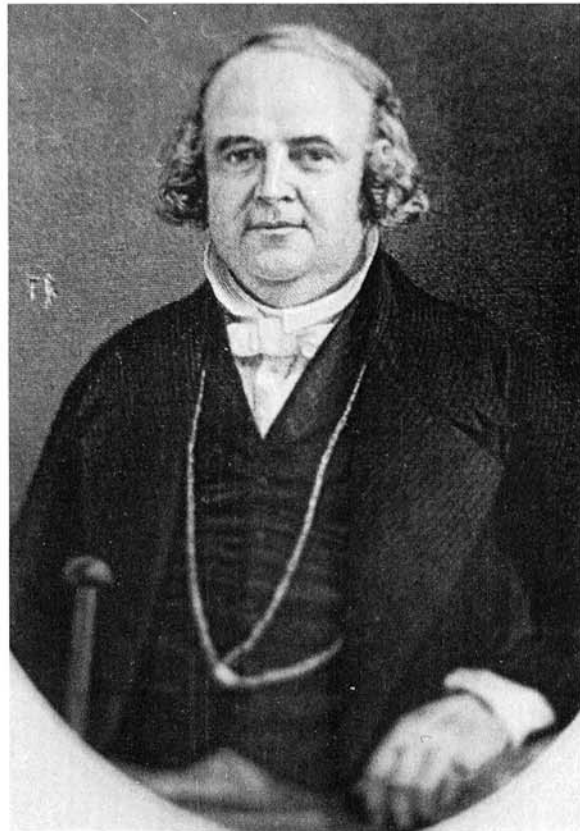
Although most of the early commandments pertained to the keeping of “official” Church records, Latter-day Saints also apply them to individuals. Joseph SMITH and other prominent leaders set the example by keeping journals. Clerks and scribes recorded revelations, minutes of meetings, speeches, correspondence, blessings, and ordinances.

EARLY CHURCH HISTORIANS, 1830–1842. Record keeping and history writing were institutionalized with the appointment of Oliver COWDERY as the first Church Recorder when the Church was organized on April 6, 1830 (D&C 21:1). That the Prophet’s closest associate and most capable scribe, who also served as second elder in the Church, should be called as Church Recorder is an indication of the importance attached to the position. According to his successor, Cowdery wrote the history of the Church up to mid-1831, when he was released; that early history has never been located. During his second term in office (1835–1837), Cowdery completed a series of eight historical letters that he had started publishing in the MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE in October 1834.

John Whitmer, one of the eight BOOK OF MORMON WITNESSES, served officially as Church recorder between 1831 and 1834 and, after his release, wrote unofficially until his excommunication in 1838. His history for 1831–1838 was published in 1908.

George W. Robinson, a son-in-law of Sidney RIGDON, became general recorder in 1837 (*HC* 2:513). He accompanied Joseph Smith in visiting Church settlements in northern Missouri and kept a brief record captioned “The Scriptorium Book of Joseph Smith, Jr.” Robinson was released in 1840 when he moved across the river from Nauvoo.

From 1838 to 1843 there was considerable overlapping in the service of Church recorders and historians. Little progress had been made on the Church annals, which, in part, were being written to help combat highly visible ANTI-MORMON PUBLICATIONS. In a flurry of activity to correct the situation, Joseph Smith had earlier minutes copied into the Far West Record, renewed efforts on his



Willard Richards (1804–54), ordained an apostle in 1840, was one of Joseph Smith’s secretaries. He was appointed a Church historian in 1842 and general Church recorder in 1845. Engraving, c. 1853.