

tant clerks have responsibility for gathering most statistical data about members that enable the Church to function properly.

To ensure accurate and complete Church records, clerks coordinate the gathering of information, train assistant clerks, supervise record keeping, and make certain that proper financial controls and procedures are followed. They also ensure compliance with audit findings and oversee the use and support of computer information systems. Clerks keep the financial records, recording the expenditure of funds to support Church programs and making it possible for bishops to provide members with information regarding their personal tithes and offerings.

Clerks maintain MEMBERSHIP RECORDS that include demographic information and ordinance information for each member. They record the participation of members in some Church services. Stake and ward priesthood leaders use this information to help members prepare to receive the ordinances and covenants of the gospel. Modern technology has simplified record keeping in the Church. Most stake and ward clerks in the United States and Canada use computer systems that enable them to produce information quickly for stake presidents and bishops and to send information to Church headquarters.

JEFFREY C. BATESON

COFFEE

Active Latter-day Saints abstain from drinking coffee. This practice derives from an 1833 revelation known as the WORD OF WISDOM, which states that "hot drinks are not for the body or the belly" (D&C 89:9). Hyrum Smith, Assistant President of the Church, later defined "hot drinks" as coffee and TEA (*T&S* 3 [June 1, 1842]:800), establishing the official interpretation for subsequent generations. The Word of Wisdom was given originally to show the will of God, though not as a commandment. Abstinance from coffee has been expected of fully participating members since the early twentieth century (*see* DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS: SECTION 89).

The main chemical in coffee that has caused health concerns is caffeine, a cerebral and cardiovascular stimulant. A large number of other sub-

stances are also found in coffee, and their effects on health are not yet well understood.

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JOSEPH LYNN LYON

COLESVILLE, NEW YORK

Colesville, New York, is a township located in Broome County, in the south central part of the state, where one of the earliest BRANCHES of the Church was organized in 1830. The central part of the township lies approximately ten miles northeast of the present city of Binghamton. In October 1825 Joseph Smith went to the area to work intermittently for Josiah Stowell for a little over a year. Stowell lived just south of the village of South Bainbridge in adjoining Bainbridge Township, Chenango County (since 1857 the village of Afton, Afton Township). Sometime during 1826 Joseph Smith also worked for Joseph Knight, Sr., who with his family resided on a farm located on Pickerel Pond, immediately east of Nineveh, a village in Colesville Township on the Susquehanna River.

Joseph Smith maintained a friendly relationship with the Knight family and others in the Colesville area. In 1829, when Joseph and Oliver COWDERY were translating the Book of Mormon in HARMONY, PENNSYLVANIA, Joseph Knight, Sr., came from Colesville to visit and to give them food and writing materials. At other times, Joseph traveled the thirty miles from Harmony to Colesville for supplies. Joseph Smith related that the Melchizedek Priesthood was bestowed upon him and Oliver Cowdery by Peter, James, and John along the banks of the Susquehanna River between Colesville and Harmony (D&C 128:20; *see* MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD: RESTORATION OF).

After the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, in FAYETTE, NEW YORK, Joseph made several visits to the Knight family in Colesville to preach the gospel. On one of these visits, he cast an evil spirit out of Newel Knight, a son of Joseph Knight, Sr. This was the first miracle performed in the Church after its organization (*HC* 1:82–83).