sign 𓊥 𓊱, Alan Gardiner, in *Egyptian Grammar*, states that 𓊥 was used to replace 𓊱 in two Egyptian titles where 𓊱 𓊱 was used to mean the 𓊱 King of Lower Egypt. Thus, the title 𓊥 𓊱 𓊱 𓊱 n-sw-bt was sometimes written as 𓊥 𓊱 𓊱 𓊱 𓊱 n-sw-bt, which literally means “He who belongs to the sedge plant (of Upper Egypt) and to the bee (of Lower Egypt),” normally translated “The King of Upper and Lower Egypt.” This substitution of 𓊥 for 𓊱 has led Nibley to associate the Egyptian word 𓊥 𓊱 and the Book of Mormon word deseret.

The beehive and the word deseret have been used variously throughout the history of the Church. The territory settled by the Mormon pioneers was called the State of Deseret. The emblem of the beehive is used in the seal of the State of Utah and is a common decoration in Utah architecture, symbolizing industriousness. Brigham Young’s house in Salt Lake City is called the Beehive House. Early Sunday schools were part of the Deseret Sunday School Union. A vital part of the Church Welfare Program carries the name Deseret Industries.

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STEPHEN PARKER

DESERET, STATE OF

On February 2, 1846, by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico ceded to the United States an extensive area that included the Great Basin, where Mormon pioneers had begun settlement six months earlier. Even before the treaty was signed, Church leaders began discussing petitioning the U.S. government for recognition as a state or asking for territorial privileges. In July 1849 a committee wrote a constitution. It used as models the U.S. Constitution and the Iowa Constitution of 1846, from which the committee took fifty-seven of the sixty-seven sections of the new constitution. The committee requested that the state be named Deseret and that the boundaries be Oregon on the north, the Green River on the east, Mexico on the south, and the Sierra Nevada on the west, including a portion of the Southern California seacoast. “Deseret,” a word from the Book of Mormon, means “honeybee” (Ether 2:3) and is symbolic of work and industry. A slate of officers was approved, with Brigham Young as governor. Almon W. Babbitt, appointed representative to Congress, was instructed to carry the plea for statehood to Washington, D.C.

This effort by Latter-day Saint settlers to organize themselves into a provisional government was much like the attempt made in the 1780s by settlers in Tennessee, who organized the state of Franklin when they felt neglected by North Carolina, and the settlers of Oregon, who established a

The word “Deseret” appears twice on the Utah stone at the Washington Monument (1978; replica of the cornerstone of the Salt Lake Temple, 1853). The interior of the monument contains 190 stones representing individuals, cities, states, and nations. “Deseret” was a name often used in the territory colonized by the Mormon pioneers. Photographer: Robert L. Palmer.
local government that functioned without recognition from the U.S. government until they were given territorial status in 1848.

The State of Deseret General Assembly met in regular session from December 1849 to March 1850. After special sessions during the summer, the members assembled for their second regular session in December 1850. Earlier, on September 9, U.S. President Millard Fillmore had signed an act to create a much smaller UTAH TERRITORY and appointed Brigham Young the first territorial governor. After word of the creation of the territory reached Utah, the tentative state of Deseret was dissolved on March 28, 1851. The provisional government had lasted only about a year and a half.

The territorial status did not provide the self-government Latter-day Saints desired, and even though Brigham Young was appointed first governor, Church leaders and the territorial legislature continued efforts to obtain statehood. In 1856, delegates met to again write a constitution and propose the state of Deseret, an effort rejected by Congress. As a part of a third effort in 1862, Brigham Young called the State of Deseret General Assembly into session for the first time since 1851. Thereafter it met each year until 1870, each session lasting only a few days and focusing on winning statehood on the basis of the proposed constitution of 1849 with only minor changes.

In the meantime, Brigham Young had been replaced as territorial governor by a series of out-
side appointees, who became progressively more hostile to the meetings of the General Assembly and complained about this “ghost government,” as they called it. In 1872 a constitutional convention drew up a new constitution and dropped the name Deseret from the petition. This petition also failed, and hope for the state of Deseret came to an end.

[See also History of the Church, 1844–1877; Utah Statehood.]

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JEFFERY OGDEN JOHNSON

DESERET ALPHABET

On April 8, 1852, Brigham Young announced that the Board of Regents of the UNIVERSITY OF DESERET was preparing a new method of writing English. The idea was to develop a sort of universal system, especially so that foreign-language speaking converts could learn to read English more easily.

The final version of the Deseret Alphabet utilized thirty-eight characters corresponding to sounds of English. Like Noah Webster and other early Americans who studied language, Brigham Young objected to sounding the letter a differently in the spellings of mate, father, fall, man, and many. In this, he was apparently influenced by studying shorthand with his secretary George D. Watt, who had studied systems of shorthand and spelling reform based on phonemes, the significant sounds of English, under Isaac Pitman.

The Regents discussed letter forms and sounds to be represented. The forms finally adopted were unfamiliar and unadaptable to cursive writing. The range of basic English sounds was close to present-day analyses, but the schwa (the unaccented, reduced vowel in ideA, tradEd, ratify, biolOgy, Upon) was omitted, leading to re-spellings based upon traditional spelling.

Learning the Deseret phonetic system was easy. A previously illiterate missionary wrote letters home after only six lessons. Hosca Stout, Thales Haskell, and others kept diaries in Deseret.

This reader was published in 1868 in the Deseret alphabet. Its title reads “The Deseret Second Book by the Regents of the Deseret University.” Development of the Deseret Alphabet was begun in October 1853, and a few books, including the Book of Mormon, were published in this phonetic script before 1870. Courtesy Rare Books and Manuscripts, Brigham Young University.

However, since pronunciation, which varies, determined spelling, many words might appear more than one way in the same individual’s usage, resulting in some confusion.

Scriptural passages written in the Deseret Alphabet appeared in the Deseret News in 1859. Orson Pratt transcribed further materials that were published in New York City, printed with type designed and cast there, at a total cost of $18,500. These included first and second school readers in 1868 and the Book of Mormon and a third reader of excerpts from it in 1869. Although few of these books were sold, some SUNDAY SCHOOLS as well as territorial schools used them.

In 1873 Pratt estimated the cost of printing a meager library of 1,000 titles at $5 million—