



NO. 35, 36 1987

it came to pass that i beckoned unto them and i  
did say unto them with a loud voice that they should  
come unto me and partake of the fruit which was  
desirable above all other  
at they did come unto me  
Also and it came to pass that i was desirous that lamuel  
and hemual should come and partake of the fruit  
Therefore i cast mine eyes toward the head of the river  
that perhaps i might see them and it came to pass  
that i saw them but they would not come unto  
me and partake of the fruit and i beheld a rod  
of iron and it extended along the bank of the river  
and led to the tree by which i stood and i also  
saw a straight and narrow path which came along  
by the rod of iron even to the tree by which i stood  
and it also led by the head of the fountain unto a  
large and spacious field as if it had been a world  
and i saw numberless concourses of people many of  
whom were pressing forward that they might obtain  
the path which led unto the tree by which i stood  
and it came to pass that they did come forth and  
entered the path which led to the tree and it came  
to pass that there arose a mist of darkness yea and  
even an exceeding great mist of darkness inasmuch  
that they which had commenced in the path did  
thereby say that they were lost and were  
came to pass that i beheld others pressing forward  
and they came forth and caught hold of the end of



# ZARAHEMLA RECORD

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#### Credits

*Cover* Lehi's vision of the tree of life from Chapter 2 of First Nephi. From a photo of the Original manuscript, courtesy of the Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

*Photos* Photos of the Original manuscript in figures 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9 are courtesy of the Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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# P E R S P E C T I V E

All research is conducted with a bias or "viewpoint." This is true no matter how "objective" the researcher may be. The bias or viewpoint held by Zarahemla Research Foundation is that the Book of Mormon was written by ancient Hebrews on metal plates, divinely preserved and delivered to Joseph Smith. While this is primarily a conviction based on faith, there is a rising tide of evidence to support this viewpoint.

The past two issues of the *Record* have explored some of the most convincing testimony ever that this assertion is true. The presence of quality Hebrew poetry in such abundance within the Book of Mormon must be accounted for outside of Joseph Smith or anyone else in the 1830's.

When the true significance of the poetry dawns upon us, we then realize the importance of each word of the text. Therefore, we now turn to a study of the words of the original and printer's manuscripts. This issue and the next issue will be devoted to the manuscripts and editions of the Book of Mormon. We believe this research will provide a better understanding of, and greater appreciation for, this miraculous book.



## HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS PROBABLE FORGERIES

In the early 1980's, Mark William Hofmann "discovered" the original Anthon transcript between the pages of a 1668 Cambridge Bible purported to have been owned by Samuel Smith. ZRF published an article based on the "new" Anthon transcript in the *Zarahemla Record* #11 which was then reprinted in *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*, pp. 51-53.

The Joseph Smith blessing document of 1981 came through Mark Hofmann to the LDS Church and then to the RLDS Church in exchange for an 1833 Book of Commandments (ibid. p. 16).

In 1982, Brent Ashworth, a Provo lawyer, purchased from Hofmann a letter supposedly written

by Lucy Mack Smith to her sister-in-law. The letter contained the information that Sariah was the sister of Ishmael. It was believed that this new information came from the 116 pages which would have been the only part of the Book of Mormon translated by the date of the letter. Ashworth also purchased from Hofmann a letter supposedly written by Martin Harris reaffirming his testimony of the Book of Mormon (ibid. pp. 96-97).

Unfortunately, all of the above documents are now suspected forgeries. In a plea-bargaining arrangement in Utah where he has been indicted for murder, Mark Hofmann has confessed to forging the "Salamander Letter." Authorities have found the tools and equipment necessary to create "authentic" documents in Hofmann's home. A transcript of his confession, giving more details of the forging process, will be available shortly.

Because so many authorities in the various fields have been deceived by these documents, a symposium was held at Brigham Young University on August 6 to discuss and explore the problems of authenticating historical documents.

# Gold Plates, Foolscap, & Printer's & Ink

*In this first of two articles, the history and description of the Book of Mormon manuscripts will be presented. Part II – Editions of the Book of Mormon – will be an overview of the 1830, 1837, 1840, 1874 and 1908 editions with examples comparing the texts with the manuscripts. We hope that this review of the manuscripts and editions of the Book of Mormon will give the reader a greater understanding of the present-day editions of the Book of Mormon. Table 1 illustrates the sequence and relationships of the different manuscripts and editions.*

by Shirley R. Heater

## THE 116 LOST PAGES (Book of Lehi)

The golden plates were delivered to Joseph Smith, Jr., by the angel Moroni on September 22, 1827. They consisted of Mormon's abridgment of the large plates of Nephi, along with Moroni's writings, the unabridged small plates of Nephi, and a sealed portion. Joseph began his work of translation from Mormon's abridgment which began with the Book of Lehi.

Using divinely prepared interpreters, Joseph read from the plates (2 Nephi 11:142; Isaiah 29:22 I.V.), dictating to a scribe who wrote as he spoke. Joseph's wife, Emma, and her brother, Reuben Hale, were scribes during this early period of translation. Martin Harris became the primary scribe after he joined the work. At least 116 pages were completed by mid-June, 1828. After much persistence, Martin obtained Joseph's permission to borrow the manuscript. In addition to showing the manuscript to his wife, father and mother, brother and sister-in-law, Martin also showed it to others; the manuscript disappeared and was never recovered.

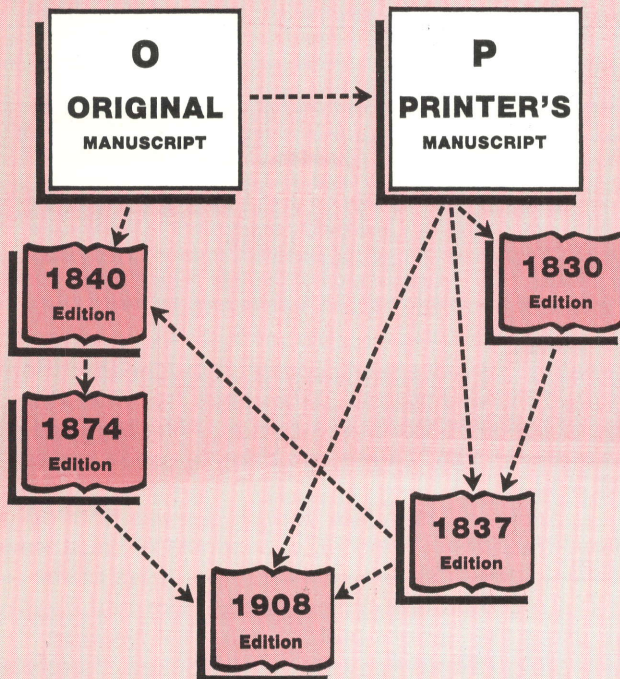
After the loss of the manuscript, Joseph lost his gift to translate and had to surrender the plates and interpreters to the angel Moroni. They were returned to Joseph three months later on September 22, 1828.

## ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

It was some time before the work of translating began again as evidenced by Joseph's statement: "I did not however go immediately to translating, but went to laboring with my hands upon a small farm which I had purchased of my wife's father, in order to

TABLE 1

### SEQUENCE AND RELATIONSHIPS of Book of Mormon Manuscripts and Editions



provide for my family” (T&S 3:817). Joseph resumed translating during the winter of 1828-1829 with Emma Smith and Samuel Smith assisting as scribes. Only a small portion had been translated when the work was interrupted again. This is evidenced by a revelation given in March, 1829, (D&C 5:6a) which states: “When thou hast translated a few more pages thou shalt stop for a season . . .” Translation began full-time after Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania in April and became Joseph’s primary scribe. Martin Harris also wrote again for Joseph at some point.

Then, in the first four days of June, 1829, Joseph, Emma and Oliver moved with David Whitmer to the home of his father, Peter Whitmer, in Fayette, New York. Translating resumed on June 5th with members of the Whitmer family also assisting in recording. Application was made for a copyright on June 11, 1829, and it is believed that the work of translating the Book of Mormon was completed by July 1, 1829.

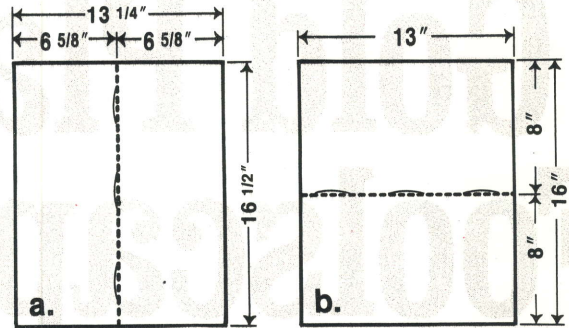
It is estimated that the actual time spent translating was 65 to 75 days. This was a miraculous feat—a manuscript of over 288,000 words, written one time, straight through, in spite of several interruptions—when compared with “scholarly” translations of the Bible. For example, it took thirteen years for Martin Luther to translate the Bible, fifteen years for 32 scholars to translate the Revised Standard Version, and fourteen years for 82 translators to prepare the English Revised. The King James Version was translated in two years and nine months by 54 scholars.

**W**hen Joseph’s gift to translate was restored to him, he was instructed not to redo what he had previously translated. Instead, he was to translate the unabridged small plates of Nephi (which covered the same period of time as the 116 lost pages translated from the large plates) and then continue where he had left off in translating the abridgment.

However, we know that some pages from the initial translating effort (beyond the 116 lost pages) remained in Joseph’s possession. In D&C 3:9b, Joseph was told:

... therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of King Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, *which you have retained*; (Emphasis added)

Joseph shared very little about the actual process of translating. He was told by the Lord that people “would not believe you, my servant Joseph, if it were possible you could show them all these things. . . I have reserved those things which I have entrusted unto you, my servant Joseph, and it shall be made known unto future generations” (D&C 5:2c,3a). Joseph was asked by his brother, Hyrum, to relate “the information of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon” at a church conference which was held October 25, 1831, at Orange, Ohio. The minutes record his response—that “it was not intended to tell



**Fig. 1.** Two sizes of “foolscap” paper were used in the Original manuscript. The drawing above illustrates how they were folded to create two different page sizes. **a.** The longer pages resulted when 13-1/4” x 16-1/2” sheets were folded and sewn the long direction, thus creating a page size of 6-5/8” x 16-1/2”. First and Second Nephi of the surviving Original manuscript pages are this size. See figure 2. **b.** The shorter pages were created from 13” x 16” sheets, which were folded and sewn the short length, resulting in a page size of 8” x 13”. This is the size of the existing pages from the Book of Alma.

the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and also . . . it was not expedient . . . to relate these things.” A revelation received seven days after the conference states that “after having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., might have power to translate, through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon” (D&C 1:5d; see also T&S 3:707). The Book of Mormon text itself corroborates that this record would come forth “by the gift and power of the Lamb” (1 Nephi 3:185).

Concerning the translation of the title page of the Book of Mormon, Joseph said in his personal history:

I wish also to mention here, that the title page of the Book of Mormon is a *literal* translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated; the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general; and that, said title page is not by any means a modern composition either of mine or of any other man’s who has lived or does live in this generation. Therefore, in order to correct an error which generally exists concerning it, I give below that part of the title page of the English version of the Book of Mormon, which is a genuine and *literal* translation of the title page of the Original Book of Mormon, as recorded on the plates. (Emphasis added)

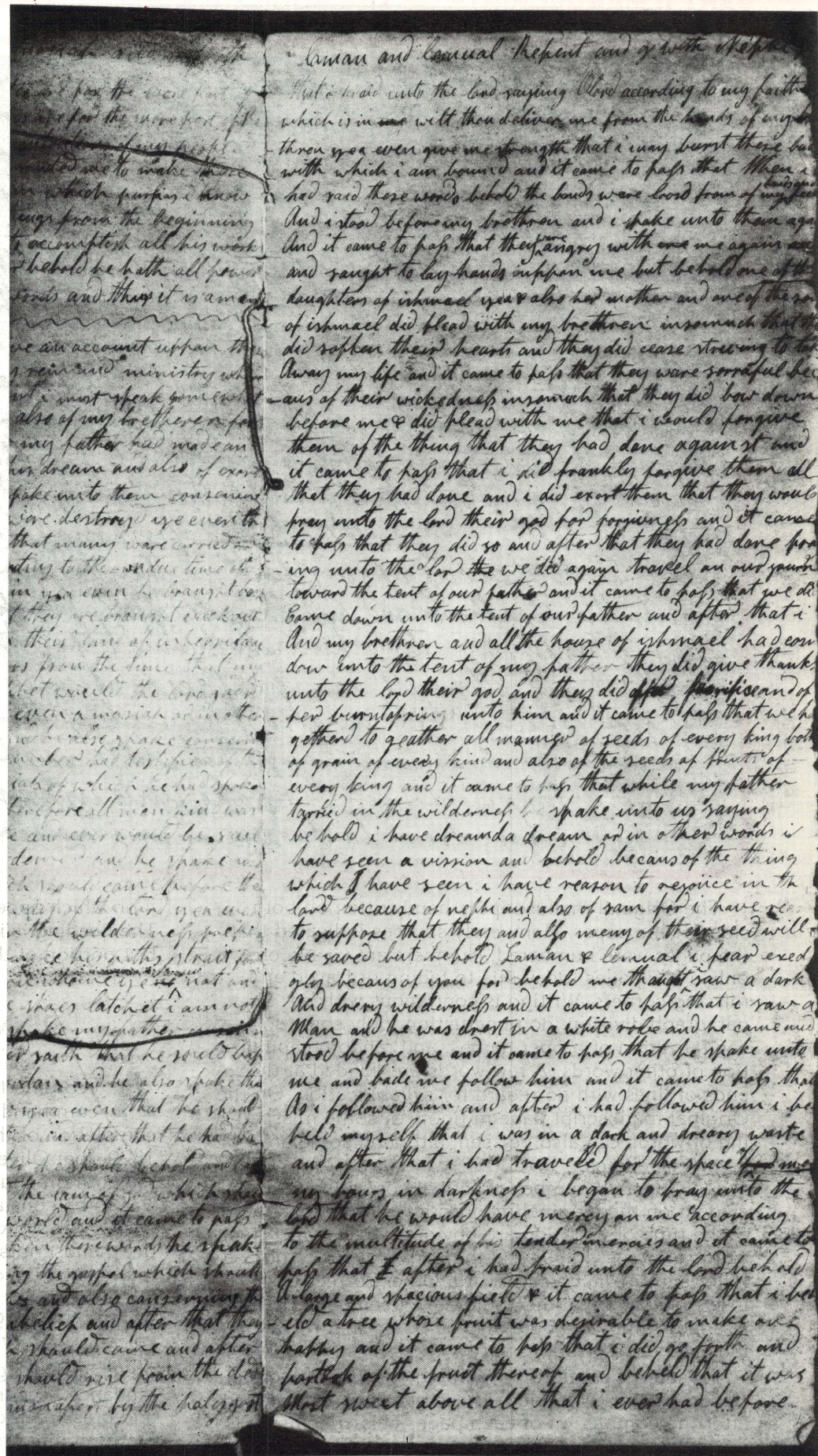
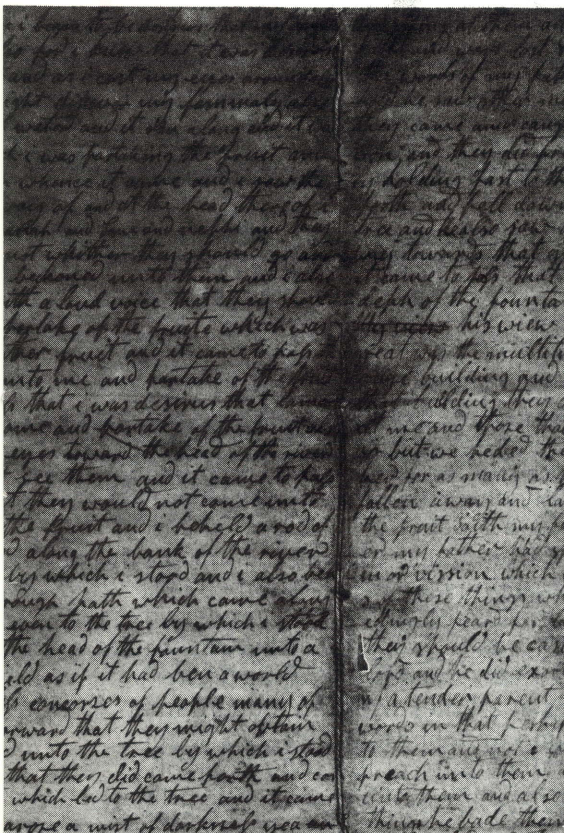
Following this statement, Joseph includes the title, sub-heading, and the two paragraphs from the title page of the 1830 Book of Mormon. “The remainder of the title page is of course, modern,” Joseph states (T&S 3:943).

It is apparent that what Joseph did was not “ordinary” translating. Normally, a translator must know both languages. We are told by the authors of the Book of Mormon that they wrote in reformed Egyptian, using the Hebrew pattern, and that because “none other people knoweth our language, therefore he [the Lord] hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof” (Mormon 4:100).

## Description of the Original Manuscript

The paper used for the Original manuscript was called "foolscap." Foolscap refers to a watermark of a jester's cap on writing paper. This special writing paper was unruled and generally measured 12" to 13-1/2" wide by 15" to 17" long. The surviving Original manuscript pages are of two sizes. They were folded and then hand-sewn with binding thread along the fold. However, it is not known when the sewing of the folded sheets actually occurred. The original paper sizes and fold lines are shown in the drawings in figure 1. Two manuscript pages with the fold and binding threads visible are shown in the photo in figure 2. When the LDS church prepared the sheets for laminating, the threads were removed and the pages cut along the fold.

Fig. 2. The Original manuscript page to the right (1 Nephi 2:28-50) shows the fold line and stitching before the binding threads were removed and the sheets cut apart for deacidification and lamination. A portion of the other side of the same page (1 Nephi 2:50-75) is shown below with the fold line and threads from the reverse side visible.



did soften their hearts and they did cease striving to take  
 away my life and it came to pass that they were sorrowful be-  
 caus of their wickedness in so much that they did bow down  
 before me & did plead with me that i would forgive  
 them of the thing that they had done against me and  
 it came to pass that i did frankly forgive them all  
 that they had done and i did exort them that they would  
 pray unto the lord their god for forgiveness and it came  
 to pass that they did so and after that they had done pray-  
 ing unto the lord we did again travel on our journey  
 toward the tent of our father and it came to pass that we did  
 come down unto the tent of our father and after that i  
 and my brethren and all the house of ishmael had com-  
 down unto the tent of my father they did give thanks  
 unto the lord their god and they did offer farrifician of  
 first born spring unto him and it came to pass that we had  
 gathered to gather all manner of seeds of every kind both  
 of grain of every kind and also of the seeds of fruits of  
 every kind and it came to pass that while my father  
 tarried in the wilderness he spake unto us saying  
 behold i have dreamed a dream or in other words i

**Fig. 3.** This page from the Original manuscript (1 Nephi 2:32-41) shows that the writing is continuous without punctuation or paragraph divisions. Final letters are sometimes dropped and words are divided improperly, such as “bec-aus” at the end of line 2 and beginning of line 3. Sometimes divided words were hyphenated (see beginning of lines 3, 10 and 16) but usually they were not.

Some words are misspelled or archaic spellings are used, such as “ware” for “were” on line 2.

Some words are unnecessarily capitalized (“Away,” line 2; “Came,” line 12; “And,” line 13), while other proper nouns are not capitalized (e.g., “i,” “god,” repeated several times; “ishmael,” line 13).

The Original manuscript is handwritten on both sides of the paper. Many early sources indicated that the pages were numbered. Numbers are visible on only a few pages today due to fading or frayed and missing corners. Writing is continuous with no paragraph division, no punctuation, only some capitalization of proper names, and random capitalization of other words. A few words are divided at the ends of lines with no regard for syllabification. On the Original manuscript page in figure 3, some misspelling of words can also be seen, although some are archaic spellings.

Only a small number of scribal corrections are evident on the Original manuscript. Corrections made at the time of dictation are obvious because incorrect words are crossed out and the correct word or phrase follows immediately afterward. Other corrections inserted above the line could have been done then or at a later time. It should also be noted that misspellings and capitalizations vary with scribes.

A “subject caption” or heading appears at the top of each manuscript page. These headings were added after the completion of each page. This conclusion is drawn from examples such as the page seen in figure

4 on which appear the handwritings of two scribes. The heading is in the same handwriting as that on the last portion of the page.

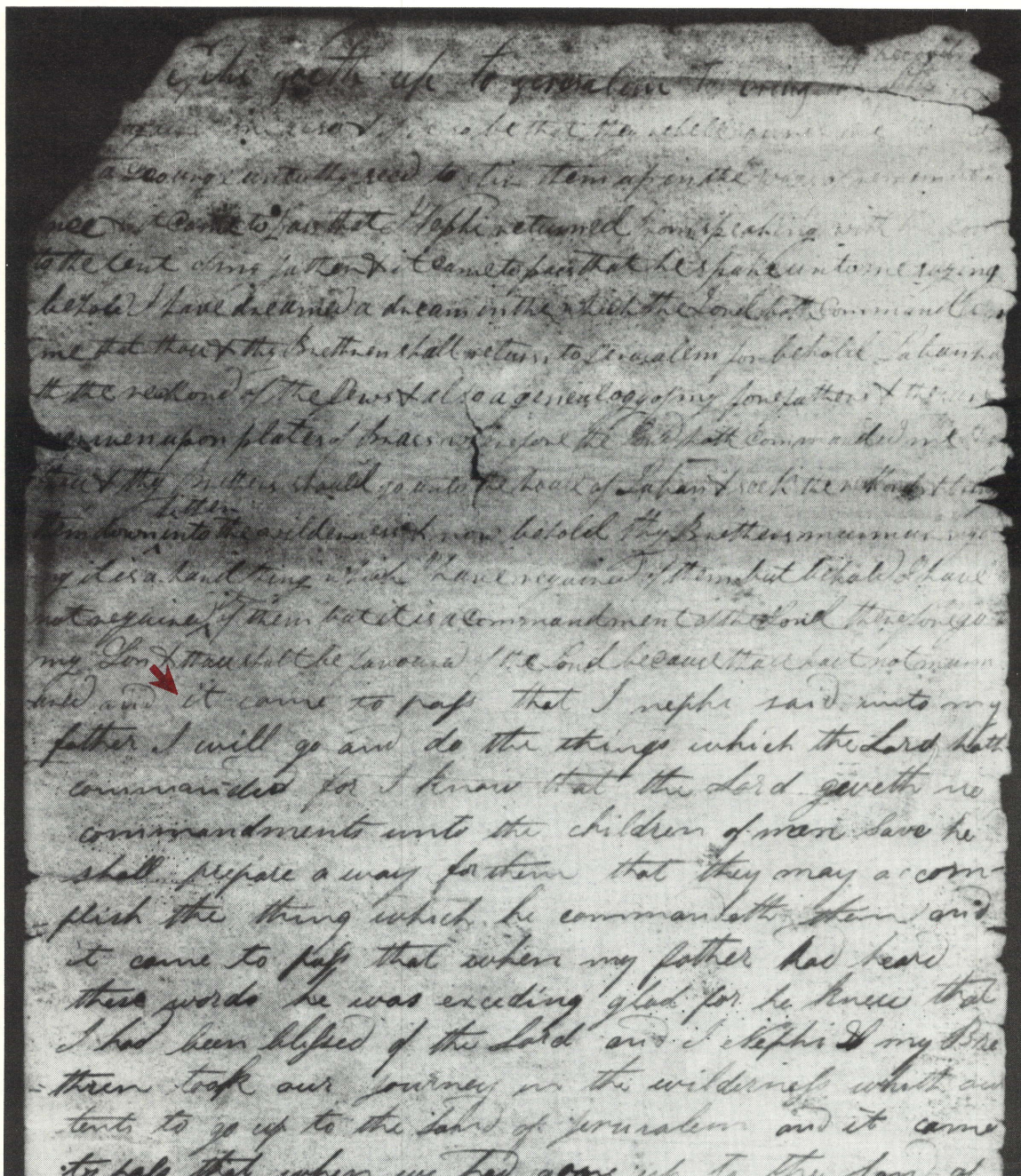
## PRINTER’S MANUSCRIPT

According to his mother, Lucy, Joseph received a commandment from the Lord following the completion of the Original manuscript by July 1, 1829, that Oliver Cowdery was to prepare a copy of the entire manuscript for security purposes. A guard was to be constantly on watch at the house where Oliver was working in order to provide protection for the manuscripts. Oliver began copying the manuscript immediately and printing began a short time later, after a contract was secured with E. B. Grandin on August 17, 1829. It was the copy made by Oliver—the “Printer’s copy”—which was carried to the printer’s office, a few pages at a time, also with a guard in attendance. According to John H. Gilbert, typesetter and pressman for the printer of the 1830 Book of Mormon, the first installment delivered to the printer

was 24 pages long and was picked up and returned at the end of the day's work. This ritual was repeated daily, except for the few times when Gilbert took portions home to read and punctuate in preparation for printing.

Oliver continued to work on the copy while the typesetting and printing was in process. (Others must have assisted him due to the appearance of other handwritings on the Printer's manuscript.) It took some time for the task of copying to be completed, as noted in a letter from Oliver to Joseph almost four

months after the work was begun. In the letter, dated November 6, 1829, Oliver states, "I have just got to Alma [sic] commandment to his Son [sic] in copying [sic] the manuscip [sic] . . ." This passage is just past the half-way point (Alma 17) in the Book of Mormon. We know that the printing and binding was completed by March 26, 1830, when the first copies of the 1830 edition (5,000 total) of the Book of Mormon were offered for sale to the public. This indicates that Oliver was just keeping ahead of the printer in preparing the manuscript copy.



**Fig. 4** This page of the Original manuscript (1 Nephi 1:57-80) was written by two different scribes. Oliver Cowdery wrote the first portion. An unidentified scribe (previously thought to be John Whitmer) wrote the second half of the page (see arrow midway down the page). The unidentified handwriting matches that of the heading at the top of the page, indicating that the headings (which occur at the top of each page) were added after the page had been written. The heading on this page reads, "Nephi goeth up to Jerusalem to bring his father/the records of the Jew."

The Book of Nephi his reign & ministry - An account  
of Lehi & his wife Sarah & his four sons being called the firming of  
the eldest Lemuel Lemuel Lemuel Lemuel the Lord caused Lehi to depart  
out of the land of Jerusalem because he prophesied unto the people con-  
cerning their iniquity & they sought to destroy his life he took three days jour-  
ney into the wilderness with his family Nephi took his brethren & set-  
tled in the land of Jerusalem after the manner of the Jews - the account of their  
sufferings - they take the daughters of Ishmael to wives - they take their  
families & depart into the wilderness - their sufferings & afflictions in  
the wilderness - the course of their travels - they come to the large waters  
Nephi's brethren rebelled against him he confided with them & built  
a ship they call the place beautiful - they cross the large waters  
into the promised land &c. This is according to the account of Nephi  
on another world I Nephi wrote this record - I Nephi having been  
born of goodly parents therefore I was taught somewhat in all the lan-  
guages of my father & having seen many afflictions in the course of my  
days nevertheless having been highly favored of the Lord in all my  
days for having had a great knowledge of the goodness & the mercies  
of God therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days & I  
make a record in the language of my father which consisteth of the  
learning of the Jews & the language of the Egyptians & I know that  
it shall become which I make to be true & I make it with mine own  
hand I make it according to my knowledge for it came to pass in  
the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah King of Judah my fa-  
ther Lehi having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days & on the same  
year the Counselors prophesied unto the people that they must  
repent of their great City Jerusalem must be destroyed therefore it came to  
pass that my father Lehi was fervent with prayer unto the Lord yearning  
in all his heart in behalf of his people & it came to pass and he prophesied  
the Lord should come a pillar of fire & dwell upon a rock by the sea & he saw  
a vision and he saw because of the things which he saw a man he did speak  
of himself exceedingly & he came to pass that he returned to his own land  
Jerusalem & he cast himself upon his bed being overcome with the spirit of the Lord  
things which he had seen & being thus overcome with the spirit of the Lord

was 24 pages for  
the end of the  
daily except for  
positions home  
for printing  
Oliver count  
typsetting and  
have assisted  
handwriting on  
some time for  
noted in a letter

Fig. 5. This is the first page of the text from the Printer's manuscript (First Nephi, Chapter 1). It includes Nephi's synopsis and verses 1 through 7. It was copied from the Original manuscript using the same form (no punctuation or paragraph division).  
The following 26 words are missing from verse 7 at the bottom of the page: "the . . . carried away in a vision even that he saw the heavens open and he thought he saw God sitting upon his throne surrounded with numberless . . ."



## Description of the Printer's Manuscript

The Printer's manuscript is comprised of 464 numbered pages with two unnumbered pages of preface material (the Copyright Certificate and Preface written by Joseph Smith, Jr., both of which were printed in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon). The manuscript is complete and legible except for the bottom of the first sheet of text (see figure 5). The bottom of this first sheet is worn away, losing the last two lines of writing; 26 words are missing from the front side and 30 words are missing from the back side of the sheet. An occasional word or partial word is missing along the edge of a page or a corner which has frayed. The pages measure 7-5/8" by 12-11/16" with hand-ruling added, possibly by the individual scribes. The number of lines of writing varies from 32 to 38.

As on the Original manuscript, the writing is one long paragraph without punctuation. Every line is filled. Also as on the Original, some words are separated at the ends of lines. RLDS Church Historian Richard Howard notes that "only sporadic punctuation and printer's marks appear on a small number of pages" and that they "appear to have been added later, some with pencil and some with instrument and ink different from those used in writing the manuscript" (1969:37). First-hand testimony of John Gilbert confirms that there was no punctuation and that he was responsible for pencil marks on the manuscript: "For two or three nights I took it home with me and read it, and punctuated it with a lead pencil. This will account for the punctuation marks in pencil" (Wood 1958).

In the process of copying, the scribe corrected some words which were misspelled on the Original manuscript. However, additional misspellings and archaic spellings are noted on the Printer's manuscript which did not occur on the Original. In some instances, proper names which had not been capitalized on the Original were not capitalized on the Printer's.

### WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MANUSCRIPTS?

After the first edition of the Book of Mormon was printed in 1830, Joseph Smith kept the Original manuscript in his possession, and Oliver Cowdery retained the copy he had prepared—the Printer's manuscript. In addition to the Printer's manuscript being used to print the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, it was also used to prepare the 1837 edition. When Oliver left the church in 1838, he took the Printer's manuscript with him. Oliver died in 1850 and the Printer's manuscript went to his brother-in-law, David Whitmer, who kept the manuscript under his bed tied in old newspapers.

### Original Manuscript

With the Printer's manuscript out of the picture, the Original manuscript (the only manuscript then available) was the source for a small number of changes in the next edition of the Book of Mormon

(the 1840 edition, which was based on the 1837). On October 2, 1841, Joseph Smith placed the Original manuscript, along with other items, in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House. Joseph specified that it was the Original manuscript in a statement dated December 29, 1841.

In September, 1882, after Emma Smith's death, her second husband, Major Lewis Bidamon, opened the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House during a remodeling project. He removed the Original manuscript only to find that its condition had deteriorated due to damage from water seepage. It was believed that Bidamon equally divided the surviving pages between the LDS and RLDS churches (CH 6:62; also Burgess 1934:137). However, the LDS church did not receive portions of the Original manuscript directly from Bidamon. Instead, the pages were given to individuals who visited Nauvoo and then later turned them over to the church. According to Dean Jessee, of the LDS Church Historian's Office, that church now holds a total of 144 pages (seventy-two leaves), plus numerous partial pages and fragments, or about one-third of the total manuscript (1970:276; see also F.A.R.M.S. 1984a). These pages and fragments are from First and Second Nephi, Alma and Third Nephi. However, many of the surviving pages are damaged, with holes or missing corners. It is not likely that much survived beyond Third Nephi, since the bottom sheets of the manuscript would have received the most severe damage while in the cornerstone. Additional manuscript portions remain in private and public holdings. It is also conceivable that other leaves or fragments still exist and may turn up in the future. Figure 6 shows fragments of the Original manuscript.

When Joseph Smith III was residing in Lamoni, Iowa, Bidamon sent him pages from the Book of Jacob. Brother Smith stated at the 1908 General Conference that he had received "half a dozen pages" (GCM 1908:1129). Within two to three months after obtaining the pages, the writing had faded and the pages eventually deteriorated and crumbled. In 1951, in an address at a Book of Mormon Institute, Israel A. Smith stated that "an examination of photostats of pages we received from Bidamon causes us to believe they were in Cowdery's handwriting" (Smith 1951:255). No other mention of these photostats has been found, and their whereabouts is unknown.

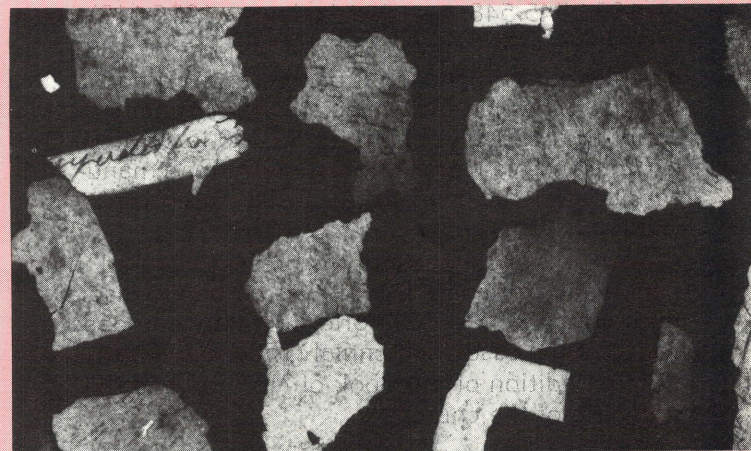


Fig. 6. Many fragments from the Original manuscript give evidence of the manuscript's fragile condition—a result of the damp conditions in the Nauvoo House cornerstone.

were filled with the holy ghost and they had power given unto them in so much that they  
 could not be confined in dungeons neither were it possible that any man could lay  
 their hands upon them nevertheless they did not reverse their power until they were bound in bonds  
 and cast into prison now this was done that the Lord might show forth his power in  
 them and it came to pass that they went forth and began to preach and to prop-  
 -hese unto the people according to the spirit and power which the Lord had given  
 them —

with the edge of his sword inasmuch that they began to be astonished, &  
 began to flee before him; yea, & they were not few in number, he caused them  
 to flee by the strength of his arm, now some of them had fallen by the sling  
 but he slew none save it were their leaders, <sup>with this sword</sup> he smote off as many of  
 their arms as <sup>were</sup> lifted against him, & they were not a few, & when they  
 had driven them away off, he returned, & they watered their flocks, & retu-

Fig. 7. Two handwriting samples are shown here from the Printer's manuscript (upper photo – Alma 6:38-42; lower photo – Alma 12:57-60). Hand-ruling by the scribe caused irregular line spacing which is seen in the lower photo. Also note the added punctuation marks.

### Printer's Manuscript

Meanwhile, in June, 1884, less than two years after the Original manuscript was taken out of the Nauvoo House cornerstone, William Kelley and Heman C. Smith from the RLDS church met with David Whitmer and examined the Printer's manuscript. The following month, a committee from the RLDS church gathered at Whitmer's home for the purpose of comparing the Printer's manuscript with the 1830, 1840, and the first RLDS 1874 editions. Their report was published in the *Saint's Herald* (Kelley, et al. 1884:545-548; see also Anderson 1936:113).

When David Whitmer died in January of 1888, custody of the manuscript passed to his grandson, George Schweich. Schweich sold the Printer's manuscript to the RLDS church for \$2,450 in April 1903 (CH 6:62). This manuscript—the Printer's manuscript—was the basis for the 1908 Authorized Edition.

The printer's manuscript is presently stored in a bank vault in Kansas City. It was on public display during the 1980 RLDS World Conference in observance of the sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) of the first edition of the Book of Mormon and the founding of the church.

Microfilms of the Original and the Printer's manuscripts are available for individual study at both the RLDS and LDS church headquarters. A photocopy of the Printer's manuscript is also available in the RLDS Library-Archives. Those portions of the Original manuscript which are in private and public holdings are not included on the above-mentioned microfilms.

### Which manuscript is which?

As noted above, during the time that David Whitmer was custodian of the Printer's manuscript, several individuals examined and compared the manuscript with the printed editions. They correctly determined that the manuscript in Whitmer's possession was the one used by the printer, based on the appearance of printer's markings on portions of the manuscript. However, they incorrectly called this manuscript the Original, thereby causing confusion about the identity of the manuscripts for the next eighty or more years.

After the RLDS church obtained the Printer's manuscript from Whitmer's heir, the 1906 General

Conference appointed a committee to make a comparison of the recently-acquired manuscript with the 1837 and 1874 editions and to produce a corrected Book of Mormon. The 1908 Authorized Edition, on its title page as well as in its Preface, refers to the Printer's manuscript as the Original manuscript, thereby contributing to the confusion.

One of the reasons for their erroneous conclusion was the identification of multiple handwritings on the Printer's manuscript (refer to figure 7). It was known that Oliver Cowdery, as principal scribe during the original dictation, was assisted by others, but it was wrongly supposed that Oliver had solely prepared the Printer's copy; therefore, the assumption was made that the Printer's manuscript, with its multiple handwritings, was the Original (Kelley, et al. 1884; *CH* 4:451,459).

However, they were forgetting the manuscript from the Nauvoo House cornerstone. It, too, contains the handwritings of others in addition to Oliver Cowdery (refer to figure 4). Remember that Joseph Smith, Jr., himself, said that it was the Original manuscript which was placed in the cornerstone. Because both manuscripts contain the handwriting of others besides Oliver, this criteria cannot be used to determine which manuscript is the Original and which is the Printer's copy.

At the 1908 General Conference, in response to the question "as to whether we have the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon," statements were made by several individuals who had examined the Printer's manuscript. The general consensus was that this—the only intact manuscript—was *one of the two* made prior to the printing of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, and that the manuscript in possession of the RLDS church contained printer's marks in some places. But again, the presence of multiple handwritings made them assume it was the Original manuscript (*GCM* 1908:1128-1130).

Heman C. Smith later noted:

There has been some controversy as to which was the original. It matters not which was written first. The manuscript from which the book was printed is the one now preserved, for it has the printer's marks upon it in many places. So when we speak of the printed volume there is no question but this is the *original* from which it was produced. (Emphasis added) (Smith 1912:170; see also *CH* 6:279)

Clear identification of the Printer's manuscript was further confused when RLDS Church Historian, S. A. Burgess, declared that the manuscript actually "consisted of two-thirds of the original which was preserved and one-third of the manuscript which was sent to the printer" (1930:396). His conclusion was probably based on the appearance of punctuation on about one-third of the manuscript which we now know was done by Gilbert. However, because the Printer's manuscript is consistent in page numbering, page size, and continuity of writing, it is obviously one

complete manuscript.

In the summer of 1968, handwriting specimens were compared with the Printer's manuscript, but no certain identification could be made even though earlier statements identified several handwritings as noted above (Howard 1969:27). To this date, no additional handwriting samples of adequate size have been found to allow a firm identification of scribes on the Printer's manuscript.

The following comparison of the word content of the manuscripts should help to explain the consensus in both the LDS and RLDS churches—that the Original manuscript is the one which was placed in the Nauvoo House cornerstone (just as Joseph Smith, Jr., said it was) and the Printer's manuscript is the one retained by Oliver Cowdery and presently owned by the RLDS church.

## COMPARING THE MANUSCRIPTS

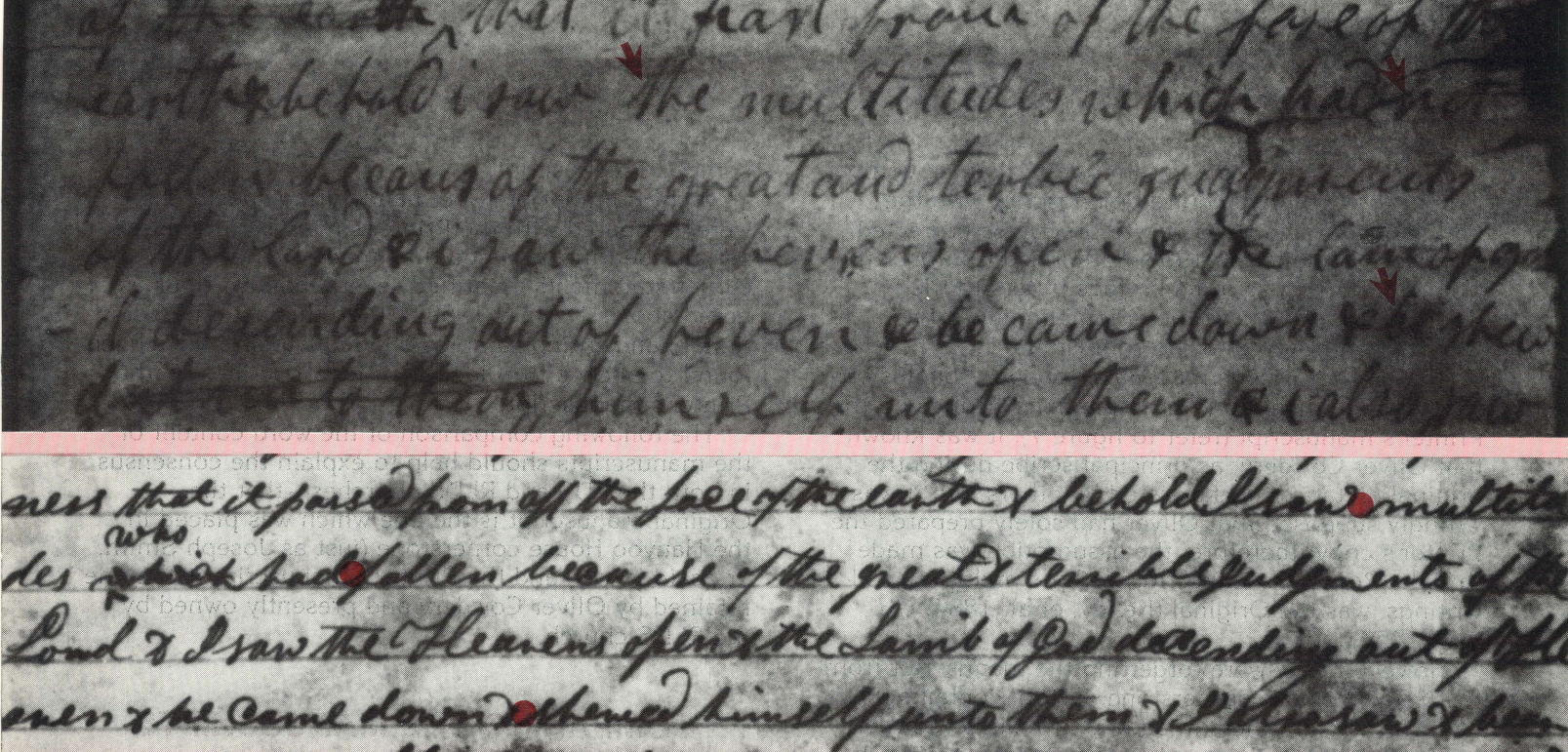
**A**s the scribes hand-copied line after line from the Original manuscript, there occurred copying errors such as writing the wrong word, adding or dropping s's or other final letters, and omitting a word or phrase. In addition, spelling and capitalization on the Printer's manuscript differed in some places from the Original. Some errors occurred which were immediately corrected. Other corrections appear to have been made during a proofing step and prior to printing of the 1830 edition. Therefore, the resulting text of the Printer's manuscript differs from that of the Original manuscript. See all of these elements in figures 3 and 5. Additional changes made directly on the Printer's manuscript show that it was also the manuscript used to produce the 1837 edition; specific examples of this will be presented in the second article.

### Omissions

**I**n the process of copying the Original manuscript, omissions of words or phrases occurred, most of which do not change the meaning. Most words or phrases that were omitted have never appeared in any edition. An example is found in 1 Nephi 2:39:

"And they did offer sacrifice and *offer* burnt offerings unto him."

The word in italics, "offer," was written on the Original manuscript but was not copied by the scribe onto the Printer's manuscript. It can be seen in figure 3, lines 15 and 16. Because the word is divided at the end of the line (*of - fer*) and is also a repeated word, it is easy to see how it could have been unintentionally omitted during the process of copying.



**Fig. 8.** When the Printer's manuscript was being prepared from the Original manuscript, the copyist would occasionally omit a word or a phrase. In First Nephi 3:111-112, on the Original manuscript (above), the words "the," "not," and "he" (see arrows) are clearly visible. On the Printer's manuscript (below), all three of these words were omitted during copying; the positions of the missing words are indicated by dots.

While most omissions do not change the meaning when restored to the text, the next example from 1 Nephi 3:111-112 is one which obviously does. Following is a side-by-side comparison of the text which is shown in the photographs of both the Original and Printer's manuscripts in figure 8:

Original	Printer's
of darkness that it past from of the fase of the*/ earth	ness that it passed from off the face of the earth
& behold i saw the multitudes which had <i>not</i> / fallen because of the great and terble judgments / of the lord	& behold i saw [] multitu/des which had [] fallen because of the great & terrible Judgments of the / Lord
& i saw the heavens open & the lam of go*/d descending out of heven	& i saw the Heavens open & the Lamb of God descending out of He/aven
& he came down & he shew*/d himself unto them & i also saw	& he came down & [] shewed himself unto them & i also saw & bear

Note: The "\*" indicates the end of a line on the manuscripts. \*Edge of page is frayed and words or letters are missing. [] Words omitted when making Printer's manuscript.

Three words, "the," "not," and "he," are found on the Original manuscript but were omitted by the copyist, and have not appeared in any edition until the 1981 LDS, which includes the word "not" for the first time. "The" and "he" have still not appeared in any edition.

The essence of this passage from Nephi's vision as recorded on the Original manuscript is that the Lamb of God came down and showed himself to them, i.e.,

**TABLE 2**

**PRINTER'S MANUSCRIPT OMISSIONS**

**The First Book of Nephi**

**Italicized Words Which Appear on the Original Manuscript But Were Omitted on the Printer's Manuscript During Copying**

Chapter & Verse	Reference
1:37	And he also spake unto Lemuel <i>saying</i> :
1:121	And after he had smote off his <i>own</i> head
1:142	<i>Yea</i> , and he also made an oath unto us
2:39	did offer sacrifice and <i>offer</i> burnt offerings
2:61	they would not come unto me <i>and partake of the fruit</i>
3:28	And the way is prepared for <i>all men</i> from the foundation
3:45	and after that ye <i>shall</i> have witnessed him
3:47	the tree which is <i>most</i> precious above all
3:104	And I saw the earth <i>that it</i> rent
3:111	I saw <i>the</i> multitudes which had <i>not</i> fallen
3:112	he came down and <i>he</i> shewed himself unto them
3:171	many plain and <i>most</i> precious things
3:179	because of the <i>most</i> plain and most precious parts
3:183	because of the <i>most</i> plain and <i>most</i> precious parts
5:59	and provide <i>ways and means</i>
5:60	he did provide <i>ways and means</i>
5:204	near to be cast <i>with sorrow</i> into a watery grave
5:221	engraven upon those <i>first</i> plates
5:226	And <i>now</i> this I have done
5:251	<i>they</i> shall be scourged by all people
5:252	And because they <i>have</i> turned their hearts aside
7:23	lands of their <i>first</i> inheritance

“**the** multitudes which had **not** fallen.” He obviously could not show himself “to multitudes which had fallen.” When the scribe copied this line from the Original, “the” and “not,” were omitted, totally changing the meaning (compare with 3 Nephi 4:6ff).

**A** preliminary survey of the words from the First Book of Nephi found on the Original manuscript but not copied onto the Printer’s manuscript—a total of thirty-four words—is shown in table 2. Because of the availability of the microfilms of the Original and Printer’s manuscripts, it will be easy to correct these

types of omissions in future editions of the Book of Mormon.

### Word changes

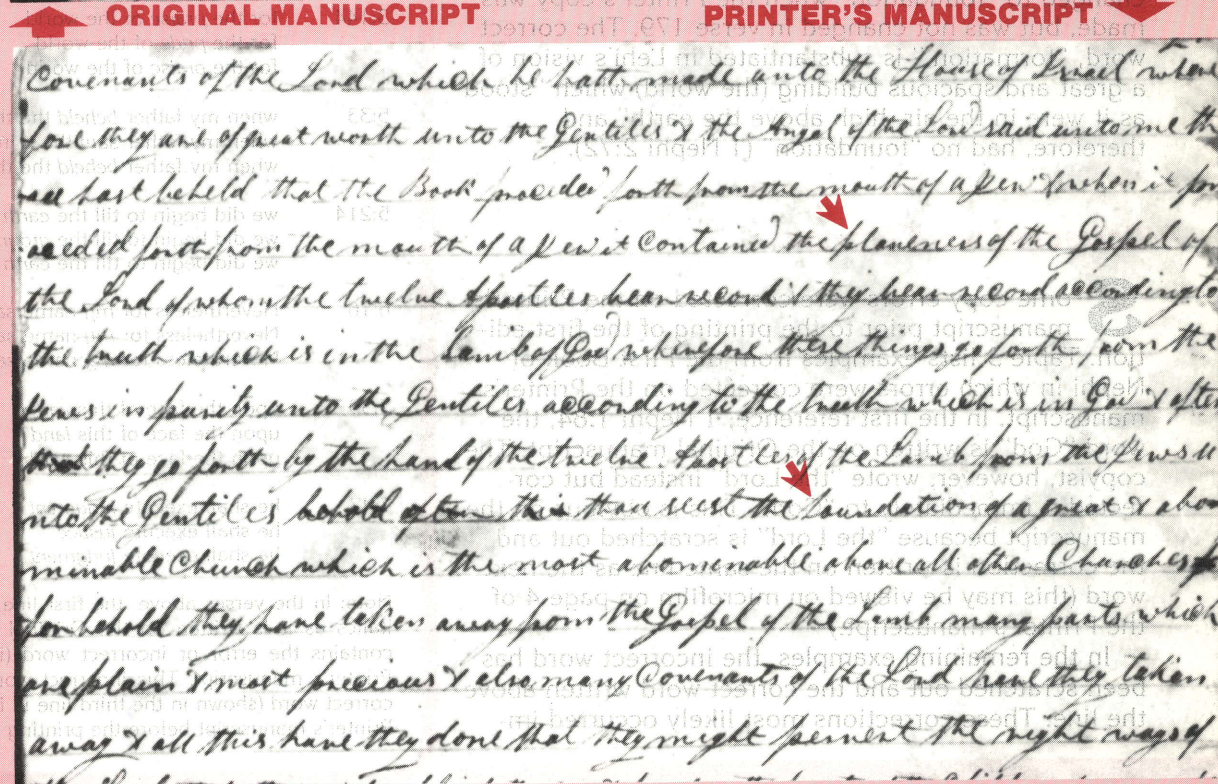
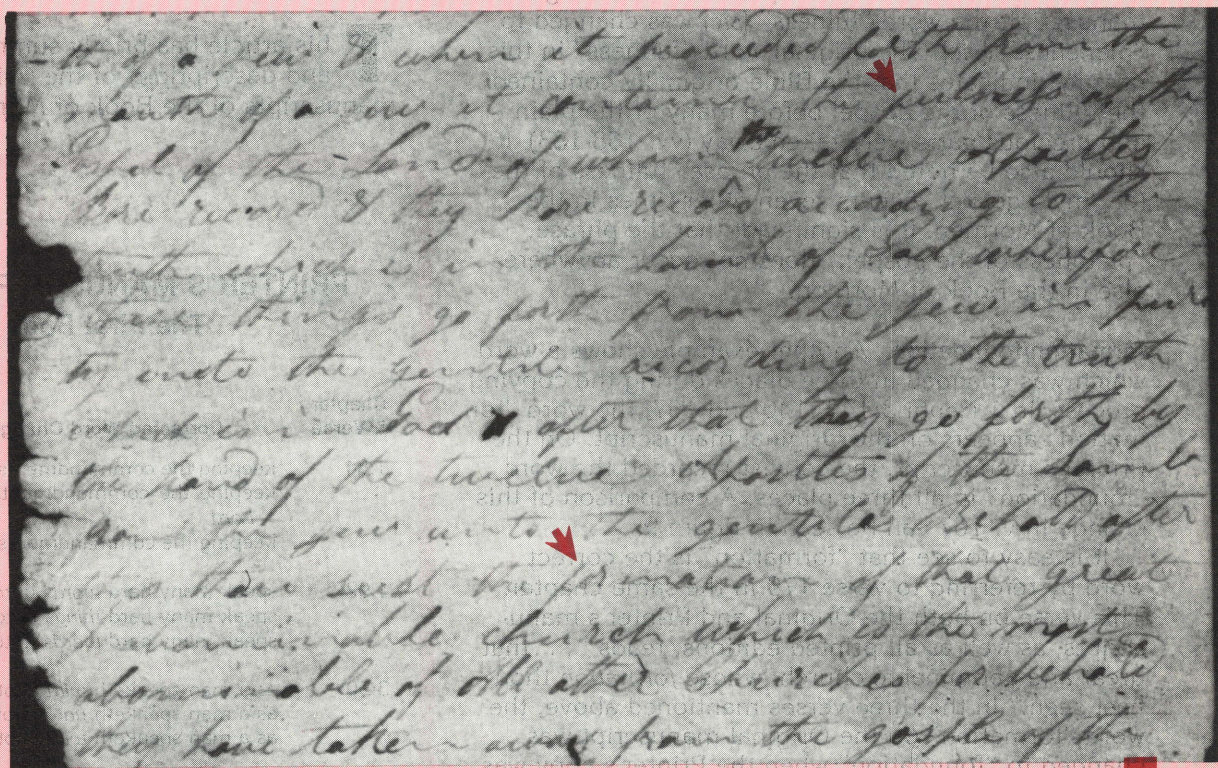
**A**nother type of copying error was changing a word when it was copied from the Original onto the Printer’s manuscript: Some errors could possibly have been caused by misreading the original word.

**fullness/plainness.** This first example in figure 9 shows the change of a word in Chapter 3 of the First

**Fig. 9.** In preparing the Printer’s manuscript (below), the copyist sometimes wrote a different word than the one which appeared on the Original manuscript (above).

In First Nephi 3:165 on the Original manuscript segment, line 2, the word “fullness” [sic] has been recorded. In the corresponding reference on the Printer’s manuscript, line 4, the word “plainness” [sic] was written instead of “fullness”.

Verse 167 on line 11 of the Original manuscript portion reads “formation,” while on line 9 of the Printer’s manuscript, “foundation” is written.



Book of Nephi, verse 165, (which compares this passage on both manuscripts). The Original manuscript reads:

... thou hast Beheld that the Book proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew & when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the *fulness* of the Gospel of the Lord of whom the twelve Apostles Bore record & they Bore record according to the truth which is in the lamb of God... (Emphasis added)

When these words were copied from the Original manuscript, the word "fulness" [*sic*] was changed to "plainness" [*sic*]. The original word "fulness" in this passage indicates that the Bible originally contained the fullness of the gospel before many of the plain and precious parts were taken away (vv. 168-183). It should also be noted that the phrase "fulness of the (or "my") gospel" occurs seven other times in the Book of Mormon. It is significant that the phrase, "plainness of the gospel," does not occur anywhere else in the Book of Mormon.

**formation/foundation.** Another example shows a word which was changed in three places during the copying process. In 1 Nephi 3:139, 140 and 167, the word "formation" appears on the Original manuscript. On the Printer's manuscript, the copyist recorded the word "foundation" in all three places. A comparison of this change in v. 167 can be seen in figure 9.

It is easy to see that "formation" is the correct word by referring to verse 179 in the same chapter. This verse on both the Original and Printer's manuscripts, as well as all printed editions, reads "... that great and abominable church, whose *formation* thou hast seen." In the three verses mentioned above, the word "formation" on the Original manuscript was changed to "foundation" when the Printer's copy was made, but was not changed in verse 179. The correct word, "formation," is substantiated in Lehi's vision of a great and spacious building (the world) which "stood as it were in the air, high above the earth" and therefore, had no "foundation" (1 Nephi 2:72).

### Corrected word changes

**S**ome copy errors were corrected on the Printer's manuscript prior to the printing of the first edition. Table 3 lists examples from the First Book of Nephi in which errors were corrected on the Printer's manuscript. In the first reference, 1 Nephi 1:84, the word "God" is written on the Original manuscript. The copyist, however, wrote "the Lord" instead but corrected it immediately to "God." This is obvious on the manuscript because "the Lord" is scratched out and the correction is written on the same line as the next word (this may be viewed on microfilm on page 4 of the Printer's manuscript.)

In the remaining examples, the incorrect word has been scratched out and the correct word written above the line. These corrections most likely occurred im-

mediately but could possibly have been made at a later time, perhaps while proofing. However, the correct word in each example does appear in the 1830 edition. See figure 10 for an example of this type of correction.

### Conclusion

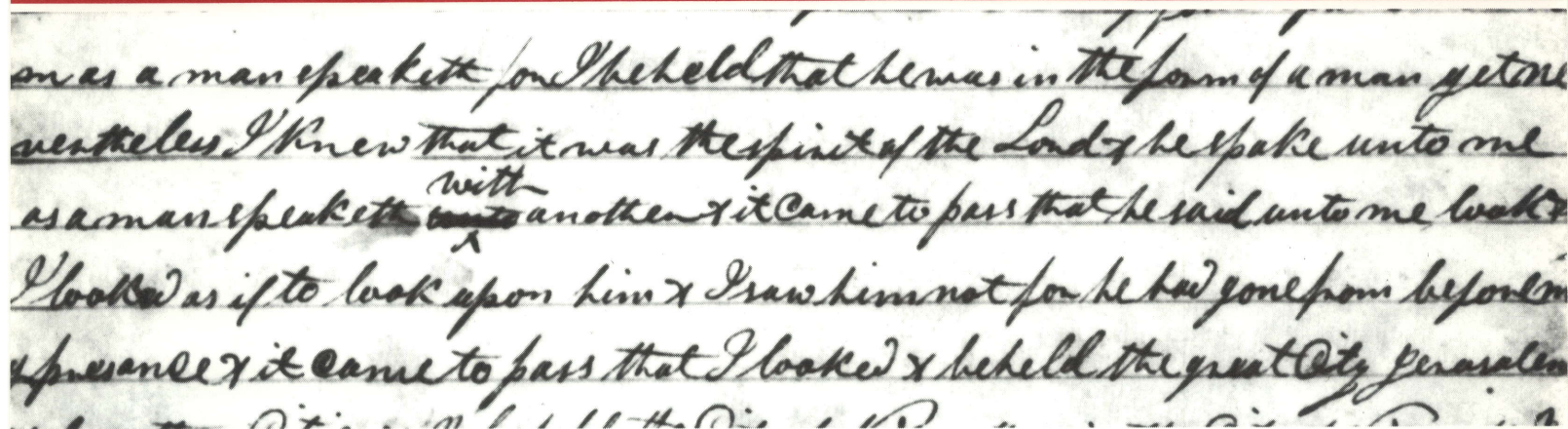
**T**his article has briefly summarized the histories and descriptions of the Original and the Printer's manuscripts of the Book of Mormon, as well as the

**TABLE 3**

### PRINTER'S MANUSCRIPT CORRECTIONS The First Book of Nephi

Chapter & Verse	Corrected Word Changes	Manuscripts
1:84	keeping the commandments of <i>God</i> keeping the commandments of <i>the Lord</i> keeping the commandments of <i>God</i>	Original Printer's Printer's corrected
1:92	speak many hard <i>words</i> unto us speak many hard <i>things</i> unto us speak many hard <i>words</i> unto us	Original Printer's Printer's corrected
3:50	as a man speaketh <i>with</i> another as a man speaketh <i>unto</i> another as a man speaketh <i>with</i> another	Original Printer's Printer's corrected
3:144	for the <i>praise</i> of the world for the <i>pride</i> of the world for the <i>praise</i> of the world	Original Printer's Printer's corrected
5:33	when my father <i>beheld</i> the things when my father <i>saw</i> the things when my father <i>beheld</i> the things	Original Printer's Printer's corrected
5:214	we did begin to till the <i>earth</i> we did begin to till the <i>ground</i> we did begin to till the <i>earth</i>	Original Printer's Printer's corrected
6:16	Nevertheless for <i>my</i> name sake Nevertheless for <i>thy</i> name sake Nevertheless for <i>my</i> name sake	Original Printer's Printer's corrected
7:39	upon the face of this <i>earth</i> upon the face of this <i>land</i> upon the face of this <i>earth</i>	Original Printer's Printer's corrected
7:47	he shall execute <i>judgment</i> he shall execute <i>justice</i> he shall execute <i>judgment</i>	Original Printer's Printer's corrected

Note: In the verses above, the first line indicates the correct word in italics as it is written on the Original manuscript. The second line contains the error or incorrect word (in italics) as copied onto the Printer's manuscript. This incorrect word was scratched out and the correct word (shown in the third line in italics) was then written on the Printer's manuscript before the printing of the 1830 edition.



**Fig. 10.** While copying from the Original manuscript, the copyist wrote the word "unto" as seen on line 3 of this page from the Printer's manuscript (1 Nephi 3:50). He scratched out the erroneous word and inserted the correct word "with" above the line sometime prior to giving the manuscript to the printer.

disposition of both manuscripts. We have also seen that the two manuscripts differ in a few places. Most of the variances are minor and probably only a few are meaningful. After analyzing a variety of examples, the manuscripts can be properly identified based on the sequence of word omissions, changes and corrections. As noted above, the consensus in both the RLDS and LDS churches is that the Original manuscript is the one which was placed in the Nauvoo House cornerstone and the Printer's manuscript is the one retained by Oliver Cowdery and presently owned by the RLDS church.

It is important to know what the original words of

the Book of Mormon are. The more we understand about the Hebrew nature of the Book of Mormon, the more significant each word becomes. We appreciate the cooperation of both churches in this research effort and for their assistance in obtaining photographs of these manuscripts. Another helpful resource has been the *Book of Mormon Critical Text: A Tool for Scholarly Reference*, which compares the manuscripts and editions (F.A.R.M.S. 1984b).

The next article in this series will cover the history and comparison of the 1830, 1837, 1840, 1874 and 1908 editions of the Book of Mormon and how they relate to the manuscripts.

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Photos Photos of the Original manuscript in figures 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9 are courtesy of the Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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