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Abstract: This three-part essay describes in detail the experience of the author in obtaining Solomon Spaulding's manuscript, purported to be similar to the Book of Mormon, while in Honolulu. The first part deals with the origin of and initial reactions to the Spaulding Manuscript and its relationship to the Book of Mormon.

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"THE MANUSCRIPT FOUND."

BY PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

I.

In January, 1885, under the somewhat peculiar circumstances of the times, I was sent on a mission to the Sandwich Islands. I sailed from San Francisco on the steamship *Mariposa* on the 2nd day of February following, remaining upon this mission until July, 1887. Not long after my arrival on the islands, I received a communication from Elder George Reynolds, enclosing the following letter over the signature of James H. Fairchild, at that time President of the Oberlin College, Ohio, the same being a clipping from the *New York Observer* of February 5, 1885, which had also been copied into *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Sunday Magazine*. Brother Reynolds suggested that I call upon Mr. L. L. Rice, of Honolulu, with the view of inquiring more particularly into this matter, which I did at the first opportunity. I subsequently narrated the circumstances of my interviews with that gentleman in a communication which was published in the *Deseret News*, over the *nom de plume* "Islander," which gives a detailed account of a

subject which I think still possesses sufficient interest to be presented to the readers of the ERA.

The following is Mr. Fairchild's letter:

SOLOMON SPAULDING AND THE BOOK OF MORMON.

The theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon in the traditional manuscript of Solomon Spaulding will probably have to be relinquished. That manuscript is doubtless now in the possession of Mr. L. L. Rice, of Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, formerly an anti-slavery editor in Ohio, and for many years state printer of Columbus. During a recent visit to Honolulu, I suggested to Mr. Rice that he might have valuable anti-slavery documents in his possession which he would be willing to contribute to the rich collection already in the Oberlin College Library. In pursuance of this suggestion, Mr. Rice began looking over his old pamphlets and papers, and at length came upon an old, worn and faded manuscript of about 175 pages, small quarto, purporting to be a history of the migration and conflicts of the ancient Indian tribes which occupied the territory now belonging to the States of New York, Ohio and Kentucky. On the last page of this manuscript is a certificate and signature giving the names of several persons known to the signer, who have assured him that to their personal knowledge the manuscript was the writing of Solomon Spaulding. Mr. Rice has no recollection how or when this manuscript came into his possession. It was enveloped in a coarse piece of wrapping paper, and endorsed in Mr. Rice's handwriting, "A manuscript story."

There seems no reason to doubt that this is the long lost story. Mr. Rice, myself and others compared it with the Book of Mormon, and could detect no resemblance between the two, in general or detail. There seems to be no name nor incident common to the two. The solemn style of the Book of Mormon, in imitation of the English scriptures, does not appear in the manuscript. The only resemblance is in the fact that both profess to set forth the history of the lost tribes. Some other explanation of the origin of the Book of Mormon must be found, if any explanation is required.

JAMES H. FAIRCHILD.

The letter to the *News*, under date of Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, June 24, 1885, follows:

On the morning of the 16th of April, my companion and I made our way to Punahou, about two miles from Honolulu, to the residence of Mr.

J. M. Whitney, son-in-law of Mr. L. L. Rice, with whom the latter is at present living.

On going to the house we met a very aged, but intelligent-looking man at the rear of the dwelling, whom we found to be Mr. Rice. After introducing ourselves, I informed him that I had seen an article, published in the paper by Mr. James H. Fairchild, relative to Mr. Spaulding's romance, from which it was alleged the Book of Mormon was derived, and that interest and curiosity had led us to call on him, in the hopes of seeing it, and of having some conversation with him on the subject. He invited us into the parlor, and when we were seated he asked,

"Are you Mormons?"

Of course to this we had but one unequivocal answer. He then enquired how long we had been in the country, our business, etc., to all of which we gave appropriate answers, so that he seemed satisfied that we had come no great distance for the special object of our visit. He then began to talk about as follows, to the best of my recollection:

"I have no objection to showing you the manuscript; you shall see it, but it is of no value to anybody. I have, with others, compared it with the Book of Mormon, and I undertook to copy it, but ran out of paper before I got it finished and so discontinued it. There is not one word or sentence in it in common with the Book of Mormon. The only possible resemblance is: they both purpose to give an account of American Indians. This manuscript is nothing but a simple story about the tribes of Indians supposed to have inhabited the country in the vicinity of Conneaut, Ohio, where some ancient mounds existed, and it is a very poor story at that. It came into my possession in 183--, when Mr. Winchester and I bought out the printing establishment formerly owned by Mr. E. D. Howe in Painsville, Ohio, in connection with a large number of old papers found in the place and turned over to us with it. I have had it ever since in my possession. I have looked at it scores of times, and often thought I would look into it to see what it was, but never did until a year ago, on the occasion of President Fairchild's visit. Since then I have often wondered that I did not long ago destroy it with other worthless papers. I have recently had letters from several parties making inquiries about this manuscript, and all desiring to obtain possession of it. Mr. Howe thinks he has a claim upon it, but I have told them all they cannot have it. When I get through with it, I shall most likely deposit it in the Oberlin College Library, as I have promised President Fairchild."

I remarked: "There is no use disguising the fact that we would like to obtain it, or a copy of it," to which he very emphatically replied: "Well, sir, you can't have it."

He went into another part of the house and soon returned with a parcel wrapped in a piece of old, brown wrapping paper, and fastened with an old, tow string. I judge the manuscript to be six and a half inches wide and eight inches long, and about an inch in thickness. Holding the parcel before my eyes, he said: "This is just as I received it, and as it has been in my possession for over forty years, tied with that same string. You see that pencil writing? That was written there before it came into my hands."

This writing in pencil, quite legible, was "Manuscript Story." "But," continued he, "this writing in ink I foolishly wrote there myself very recently; I suppose I ought not to have done it, but with that exception it is just as it came into my hands, and as it has remained for over forty years."

This writing in ink was as follows: "Writings of Solomon Spaulding," and was inscribed partly over the "Manuscript Story" written in pencil. Mr. Rice then untied the tow string and took off the wrapper, when we saw a time-worn, dingy, somewhat dilapidated old manuscript. I glanced over a portion of the preface, which set forth that in consequence of the existence of large mounds in the vicinity of Conneaut, indicating the former occupation of the country by a numerous people, etc., the author had been induced to write, etc., etc. I do not pretend to give the text, but merely the sense as I gathered it from a hasty glance. Mr. Rice called our attention to the certificate on the last page, which was referred to by Mr. Fairchild in his article published in the *New York Observer* of February 5, 1885. This certificate gave the names of several persons, known to the writer and signer of the same, who had made affidavits, which the certificate says were "on file in this office," to the effect that they "personally know this manuscript to be the writing of Solomon Spaulding." The certificate and the signature are in the same handwriting, and are those of Doctor Philastus Hurlburt, or rather, the signature is plain, "D. P. Hurlburt."

Mr. Rice is now about 84 years of age, but he is in good mental and physical condition. He chatted freely relative to his early recollections and acquaintances, not forgetting to give us his mind respecting plural marriage. He said: "I was well acquainted with Sidney Rigdon, both before and after he became a 'Mormon,' and I have heard him preach as a Campbellite and as a 'Mormon.' He was a very smart man, but I never knew the cause of his leaving your Church, or whether he ever denounced 'Mormonism' and the Book of Mormon or not."

I said: "One cause of his leaving the Church was that he assumed to be the guardian and leader of the Church after the death of the

Prophet Joseph, while that authority had been conferred through Joseph Smith upon the Twelve Apostles; and that to my knowledge, Mr. Rigdon had never at any time denied or denounced either 'Mormonism' or the Book of Mormon."

He said: "I was very well acquainted with Joseph Smith in Kirtland, and I saw him once in Nauvoo." He was also quite well acquainted with Sister E. R. Snow Smith: he said she used to write poetry for his paper, and he always thought her "a very nice, intelligent young lady," and wanted to know if she was still living. As he had refused so emphatically to part with the manuscript or allow it to be copied, I asked him if he would part with the copy he had made, so far as he had gone, for reasonable compensation for his time and labor. At first he refused, but after some talk on the subject, he promised to write Mr. Fairchild by the next mail, and if he made no objection he would perhaps do so.

There is no doubt that this is the identical, much-talked-of, long-lost, much-believed, but very innocent "Manuscript Found." The facts already demonstrated beyond contradiction stamp its identity with unmistakable certainty. In 1834, it was obtained by Hurlburt from Jerome Clark, at Hardwicks, New York, upon an order from Mrs. Davidson, the widow of Solomon Spaulding, certified to as being the writing of Solomon Spaulding by several persons personally knowing the fact, and subscribed to by D. P. Hurlburt himself, by whom it was taken to the printing establishment of Mr. E. D. Howe, the reputed author of "Mormonism Unveiled," and transferred to Mr. L. L. Rice on his purchasing the printing establishment, and by Mr. Rice preserved until now, without even knowing what it was, for some forty years. It seems that the hand of Providence is plainly visible, for some wise purpose, in the whole affair. And now it has been carefully examined and compared with the Book of Mormon by Mr. L. L. Rice, Mr. James H. Fairchild, President of the Oberlin College Library, Ohio, and by others, and by them declared without similarity in name, incident, purpose or fact with the Book of Mormon. Mr. L. L. Rice declared to Brother Farr and myself that he "believed it to be the only romance of the kind ever written by Mr. Spaulding; and", said he, "somehow I feel that this is a fact."

From his remarks we inferred that it was his belief that the reason it was not published by Mr. Spaulding himself was because it was not worth publishing, "For," said he, "it is only a very simple story, and a very poor one at that."

Taking this statement as the unreserved judgment of an old editor and a newspaper man, who has not only carefully read it and compared it with the Book of Mormon, but with his own hand copied about two-

thirds of it, his opinion must be accepted as of great weight; and it corresponds with the alleged message sent by Mr. Patterson with the Manuscript, when it is said he returned it to Spaulding, "declining to print it," and said, "Polish it up, finish it, and you will make money out of it." It no doubt needed, and still needs, a great deal of "polish."

On the first instant, (May 1st, 1885,) Brother Farr and I called again on Mr. Rice, when he allowed us to examine the "Manuscript Found." We read the preface and two chapters of the manuscript, which we found what I would call rather a far-fetched story about the discovery of some "twenty-eight sheets of parchment" in an "artificial cave" about "eight feet deep," situated in a mound on the "west side of the Conneaut River." With this parchment, which was "plainly written upon with Roman letters in the Latin language," was a "roll of parchment containing the biography of the writer."

The first two chapters which we read purport to be a translation of this biography, which sets forth that the writer's name was Fabias, that he was "born in Rome, and received his education under the tuition of a very learned master, at the time that Constantine entered Rome, and was firmly seated as Emperor," to whom Fabias was introduced and was appointed by him one of his secretaries.

Soon after this, Fabias was sent by Constantine "with an important message to a certain general in England." On the voyage the heavens gathered blackness, obscuring the sun and stars, and a terrific storm arose which continued unabated for five days, when it lulled, but the darkness continued. They were lost at sea. They began to pray "with great lamentations," etc., when a voice came telling them not to be afraid, and they would be taken to a "safe harbor." For five days more they were swiftly driven before the wind and found themselves in the mouth of a very "large river" up which they sailed "for many days," when they came to a village and cast anchor. The natives were alarmed, held a council, and finally extended towards them the hand of friendship, made a great feast for them, sold them a large tract of land for "fifty pieces of scarlet calico and fifty knives," and established with them a covenant of perpetual peace.

Not daring to venture the dangers and uncertainties of the unknown deep over which they had been so mysteriously driven, they concluded it better to remain than attempt to return to Rome, etc., etc. The ship's company consisted of twenty souls, seven of whom were young women who had embarked at Rome to visit their relatives in England. Luian or Lucian was the name of the captain of the vessel, and Trojenous was the name of his first mate; one of the sailors is called Droll Tom

another Crito. There were three ladies of rank among the women. On motion of one of the sailors the women chose their husbands; Lucian, Fabias and Trojenous were of course selected by the three ladies of rank, but six poor fellows had to go without wives, or marry the natives, etc.

This is about the thread of the story so far as we have read.

Among those who had written to Mr. Rice for the manuscript were Eber D. Howe, of Painsville, Ohio, (since which Mr. Rice informs me he had a stroke, and was supposed to be on his death-bed); Mr. A. B. Demming, also of Painsville; Albert D. Hagar, librarian of the Chicago Historical Society, Chicago; and Mrs. Ellen S. Dickenson of Boston, grand-niece of Solomon Spaulding. Mrs. Dickenson demanded that the manuscript be sent forthwith to her or to Mrs. McInstry, from whose mother it had been "stolen by D. P. Hurlburt." She also asserted that she is writing a book against the "Mormons," and desired the manuscript from which to make extracts, provided it is the one that Hurlburt stole "which she scarcely thinks is the one." Mr. Demming says he does "not think it is the Manuscript Found," for it is rumored that Hurlburt sold it to the "Mormons," and they destroyed it, which he says, "I believe to be true." He was nevertheless clamorous to have this manuscript sent to him immediately, for, writes he, "I desire to make extracts from it as I am writing a book, to be entitled 'The Death-blow to Mormonism.'" Joseph Smith of the Reorganized church did not ask for the manuscript for himself, but that it might be sent to the Chicago Historical Society, 140 and 142 Dearborn St., Chicago, for preservation. Mr. Hagar, secretary or librarian of said society, desired it also sent there, and promised to defray the postage or expressage, and to have it neatly bound, etc., etc. But Mr. E. D. Howe laid claim to it on the ground that when he sold his printing establishment to his brother, from whom it was turned over to Messrs. Rice & Winchester, in 1839, the manuscript was inadvertently turned over to them with the office. He further states in his letter that the manuscript was left in his office by D. P. Hurlburt, pending efforts to obtain evidence against the Book of Mormon. Mr. Rice showed all these letters which we carefully read and noted. Mr. Demming, who is a reverend gentleman, wrote two letters, both of which seemed to savor of a spirit smarting under the sting of conscious imbecility, and reeking with venom and the bitterness of gall.

Mr. Rice informed us that his friends, among them the Rev. Sereno E. Bishop, of Honolulu, had advised him not to allow the "Mormons" to get hold of a copy of the manuscript. When I asked them for what reason, he replied, "What, indeed?" The old gentleman had a son in the States who is a minister, (to whom Mr. Demming's letters were addressed,) and

he wrote him to make enquiry respecting the existence of Messrs. Aaron Wright, Oliver Smith and John N. Miller, who testified to the identity of the manuscript as Spaulding's writings, and he found them to have been "veritable persons, but they are now all dead." This was the statement which Mr. Rice made to us. Here is a copy of the certificate:

"The writings of Solomon Spaulding, proved by Aaron Wright, Oliver Smith, John N. Miller and others. The testimonies of the above gentlemen are now in my possession. D. P. Hurlburt." (The signature is written as here given.)

I made another visit to Mr. Rice a few weeks ago, and read several more chapters of the manuscript.

We again took a good look at the manuscript, which had been returned to him by Mr. Hide, a minister to whom it had been loaned for a time, and by whom I suspect it was copied, although I do not know. We counted the pages and found 169 numbered pages and one and two-thirds pages not numbered, and two loose sheets not apparently belonging to the manuscript, which made in all 175; less pages 133 and 134 which are missing.

Mr. Rice said that when he was publishing a newspaper, the *Republican Monitor*, at Cazenovia, New York, he published a very interesting story entitled, "Manuscript Found," and some ten or fifteen years later, while editing the *Ohio Star*, at Ravenna, Ohio, he republished this story, which was a romance predicated upon some incidents of the Revolutionary War. He was of the opinion that the name of this story by some means had been confounded with Spaulding's manuscript or writings, and that this is the only novel that Spaulding ever wrote.

I also read another letter from Mr. A. B. Demming, fairly clamoring for the possession of the manuscript. He said he had called on E. D. Howe and D. P. Hurlburt, and spent several days with one and the other of them on the subject of the manuscript, and urged that it be sent at once to Mr. Rice's son, in Painesville, Ohio, with instructions to let no one know of the fact but Mr. Demming.

On June 15th, 1885, I called upon Mr. Rice again in company with a couple of the brethren, to read a little more of the manuscript. He informed us that he had that day forwarded the original to the Oberlin College Library in care of a lady who was going there, and then made us the following proposition: to let me have the copy he had now finished provided I would have it printed verbatim, complete with erasures, or crossed out parts in italics, and explanation in preface: and after printing, to send fifty copies to Oberlin, twenty-five copies and the manuscript back

to him. I accepted the proposition, and he was to draw up a paper setting forth these terms, and he would deliver the copy of the manuscript and a copy of the agreement into my hands at 6 p. m.

When I returned at the appointed hour, he took me to his room and said: "Mrs. and Mr. Whitney (his daughter and son-in-law) have protested against my letting you have the manuscript until I get the consent of President Fairchild. Now, in view of my promise to you, this places me in a very embarrassing position, for I want to please them, and I regret having to fail in my promise to you; but I think it best to postpone the matter for two or three weeks until I can hear from President Fairchild."

"What reason," I asked, "do they give for their objection? We agree to your proposition; it is all your own way. The original is beyond our reach, and we could have no other than the most honest motives, with all the expense on our part, in carrying out your proposition."

The only answer was; "They are not as liberal as I am." I do not know whether this meant that they wanted something more for it, or that they were not as liberal in their sentiments or feelings toward us. I took the last meaning.

I then said, "Well, Mr. Rice, my curiosity leads me to desire to read it, and I would be pleased if you would lend it to me to read." To this he consented, provided I would return it when I got through. So I brought it home with me, and had it from the evening of the 15th to the morning of the 21st, when I sent it back. I got home with the manuscript on the evening of the 16th.

We read it. It is a shallow, unfinished story, but with all somewhat interesting in parts, as containing some ideas which the author must have gathered from the traditions of the Indians. * * *

Mr. Rice claims that his copy is *verbatim et literatim* copy, with scratches, crosses and bad spelling all thrown in. The names "Sambol," "Hamboon," "Labaska," "Labona," "Lamesa," "Mammoona," occur in the story, which might easily be changed. Mammoths were the author's beasts of burden. The two principal tribes of Indians were "Ohions" and "Kentucks," with numerous adjacent tribes—"Sciotams," "Ohons," etc.