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The Miraculous Timing of the Translation of the Book of Mormon

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THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES.

BE it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, his brethren, and also of the people of Jared, which came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety, that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shewn unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an Angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true; and it is marvellous in our eyes: Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things.— And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgement seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,
DAVID WHITMER,
MARTIN HARRIS.

The Testimony of the Three Witnesses, which appeared at the end of the 1830 first edition of the Book of Mormon. Courtesy Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.

The Miraculous Timing of the Translation of the Book of Mormon

John W. Welch

The translation of the Book of Mormon, completed by Joseph Smith in June 1829, was an amazing feat. By any standard, this 588-page holy book is extraordinary. Isaiah's words, "a marvelous work and a wonder" (Isa. 29:14), which can be translated from the Hebrew more literally as "a miraculous work and a miracle," readily describe the coming forth of this key restoration text.

Divine manifestations of several kinds directed the rapid course of the translation. Through angelic ministrations, the gift of powers to translate, the guidance of visions, and in many other ways, the hand of God was evident in the truly astounding work of bringing forth the ancient Nephite record. Through the Book of Mormon came many crucial revelations opening the heavens for all to receive: vital testimonies of the divinity of Jesus Christ, abundant declarations of God's plan of salvation, heavenly dispensations of ethical teachings, and prophetic patterns for religious rites and ordinances. It is impossible to imagine Mormonism without the Book of Mormon. Its translation was a key event that unlocked a treasury of God's dealings with mankind in the past and, in so doing, opened the way for his work to go forward in the present and on into the future.

While the embedding had occurred centuries earlier, the unfolding process commenced in September 1823, when Joseph Smith Jr. was visited several times by the angel Moroni, who informed him that God "had a work for [him] to do" (JS-H 1:33). The angel went on to

state that a book written upon gold plates containing the fullness of the gospel was deposited in a stone box in a nearby hill, and that in due time he, Joseph Smith, would be given stewardship over that book. This extensive record had been compiled mainly by the final Nephite leader, Mormon, who lived in the fourth century AD. Painstakingly, he had engraved onto the final set of plates carefully quoted, purposefully abridged, and paraphrased materials that he drew from a much larger collection of historical and religious records that had been written by his predecessors over the previous centuries. Most prominently, Mormon's account featured numerous instances of angelic and divine manifestations, including appearances of Jesus Christ during the year after his resurrection. In about AD 385, Mormon, after adding his own concluding narrative, gave the plates to his son Moroni (who died about AD 421). After appending his abridgement of the Jaredite records, a few ecclesiastical documents, and his own farewell, Moroni finally deposited the plates in the Hill Cumorah in modern-day western New York. On September 22, 1827, Moroni released those plates to Joseph, thus inaugurating one of the most important stages in the Restoration of the gospel.

Numerous approaches can and should be taken in approaching the Book of Mormon. This complex book has been read and scrutinized in many ways: textually, doctrinally, historically, comparatively, literarily, legally, statistically, geographically, philosophically, practically, biographically, intellectually, prayerfully, and spiritually—to name some of the most obvious. The richness of this book inevitably invites several questions: How was this book written? Where did it come from? Joseph Smith testified that he translated the Book of Mormon miraculously, by the gift and power of God. Is that testimony credible?

The following set of over two hundred documents assembles data pertinent to that ultimate question. In particular, from these contemporaneous historical records, this study focuses on determining, as precisely as possible, *when* the Book of Mormon was translated, *how long* it took to complete this impressive task, and *where* to place the translation into the few known surrounding events of Joseph Smith's life. The overwhelming accumulation of the consistent historical details provided by eyewitness participants and local observers leads

to the solid conclusion that the Book of Mormon was translated in a very short period of time. Inside of three astonishingly compressed months, Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon. Its text simply emerged as it fell from his lips, line after line, recorded by his attentive scribe. The rapidity of the translation left no time for steps normally taken in producing translations.

The historical records corroborating the translation of the Book of Mormon are indeed copious and quite detailed. In addition to several contemporaneous references in the Doctrine and Covenants to the translation as it was under way (documents 1–9 below), accounts were left by many of the participants, eyewitnesses, or observant people who were closely associated with the unfolding translation. These people include Joseph Smith (documents 10–37) and Emma Smith (documents 38–43). Next come the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon—Martin Harris (documents 44–68), Oliver Cowdery (documents 69–78), David Whitmer (documents 79–100). The thirty-seven accounts given by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, who were most directly involved in the translation process, are notably specific and powerfully consistent. Next comes John Whitmer (documents 101–4), who was another of Joseph’s scribes. Further statements by members of the Joseph Smith Sr. family come from Joseph Smith Sr., Lucy Mack Smith, William Smith, and Katharine Smith Salisbury (documents 105–13), and additional testimonies were left by other people who were close to those involved with the translation: Sarah Conrad, Elizabeth Ann Whitmer, Alva Hale, Isaac Hale, Joseph Knight Sr., and Joseph Knight Jr. (documents 114–19).¹

1. See generally, Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981); Milton V. Backman Jr., *Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1983; reprint Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986); Michael Hubbard MacKay and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, “Firsthand Witness Accounts of the Translation Process,” and Steven C. Harper, “The Eleven Witnesses,” and Amy Easton-Flake and Rachel Cope, “A Multiplicity of Witnesses: Women and the Translation Process,” in *The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, ed. Dennis L. Largey and others (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2015), 61–80, 117–54; Royal Skousen, “Another Account of Mary Whitmer’s Viewing of the Golden Plates,” *Interpreter* 10 (2014): 35–44. On the translation in general, see Michael Hubbard MacKay and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith’s*

Many other accounts listed chronologically by publication date (documents 120–206) have survived from people who were not personally involved with or close to the work of translating the Book of Mormon but who may have had contact with some who were; some of these contemporaneous reports or rumors were circulated by people who were farther removed from these events. Even though their words are patently less useful in reconstructing the historical sequence of events regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon, all such identifiable accounts, including the hostile statements, are interesting to compare and analyze.

Consisting of 206 documents, the entire collection is presented in the document section following this article. Underlining is reproduced from the original document. Editorial marks include angle brackets < > to indicate insertions made by the author of the document. Strikeouts are shown by ~~strikeouts~~. Brackets [] indicate editorial comments.

By way of introducing these documents, an annotated chronology is first given, detailing the main events and heavenly manifestations that transpired during the translation and publication of the Book of Mormon from 1827 through 1830. Despite a few minor uncertainties in this historical data, most of the information falls clearly into a single logical sequence of events. The historical record abundantly sustains the basic narrative concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The sheer number of witnesses, friendly or otherwise, who were aware of this work as it progressed and who sensed its importance enough to speak or write to others about it renders alternative accounts of fabrication or deception unlikely. At least, perpetrating such a ruse would have necessarily involved the willing collusion of many others who do not appear likely to have been willing coconspirators.

In sum, it is shown that nearly all the 590 pages printed in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon were translated, dictated, and written within an extremely short and intensely busy period of time, almost entirely from April 7 to the last week of June 1829. Virtually no excess

time existed during those three months for Joseph Smith to plan, to ponder about, to research, to hunt for sources, to organize data, to draft, to revise, or to polish the pages of the original manuscript of this book. Although Joseph became aware of and began contemplating this assignment in September 1823, and while he translated the 116 pages containing the book of Lehi from April 12, 1828, to June 14, 1828, which were sadly lost that summer, once Joseph and Oliver set to work on April 7, 1829, the pages of the Book of Mormon flowed forth in rapid succession. The text of the Book of Mormon was dictated one time through, essentially in final form. This was done despite significant interruptions and distractions. Such a feat, in and of itself, constitutes a considerable achievement, given the length, quality, and complexity of the Book of Mormon alone.

Further details concerning the description of the plates, complex structure of the Book of Mormon, and what can be gathered concerning Joseph Smith's means and methods of translating the Book of Mormon can be found conveniently at the beginning of published editions of the book, in standard histories of the Church,² in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*,³ or in other surveys of scholarship about the

2. See "Book of Mormon Translation," one of the Gospel Topics Essays, available on *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, <https://www.lds.org/topics/book-of-mormon-translation?lang=eng>; Joseph Smith—History, in the Pearl of Great Price; "The Gold Plates and the Translation of the Book of Mormon," Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/the-gold-plates-and-the-translation-of-the-book-of-mormon>; Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:15–72 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*); Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965).

3. For example, Monte S. Nyman and Lisa Bolin Hawkins, "Book of Mormon: Overview," 1:139–43; Royal Skousen, "Book of Mormon Manuscripts," 1:185–86; Grant R. Hardy and Robert E. Parsons, "Book of Mormon Plates and Records," 1:195–201; and John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith," 1:210–13, all in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992).

Events Surrounding the Translation of the Book of Mormon

1827	Sep	Joseph obtains the plates from the angel Moroni.
	Dec	Joseph and Emma move to Harmony, Pennsylvania.
1828	Feb	Martin Harris visits Professor Charles Anthon in New York City.
	Apr 12	
	↓	The 116 pages are translated.
	June 14	
	June 15	Joseph and Emma's first child is born and dies. Martin Harris loses the 116 pages.
	July	Joseph travels to Manchester, New York.
	Sep 22	Joseph again obtains interpreters and plates.
	Dec	David Whitmer makes a business trip to Palmyra, New York, where he meets Oliver Cowdery.
1829	Feb	Joseph's parents come from Manchester to Harmony. Joseph receives Doctrine and Covenants 4. The Lord first appears to Oliver Cowdery.
	Mar	A few pages may have been translated. Martin Harris visits Joseph from Palmyra.
	Apr 5	Oliver Cowdery arrives in Harmony.
	Apr 7	
	↓	The Book of Mormon is translated (see text on pp. 100–14 and chart on pp. 121–25).
	Late June	
	July	E. B. Grandin and T. Weed decline to print.
	Aug	E. B. Grandin agrees to print. Martin Harris mortgages his farm for the printing. Typesetting commences.
	Nov	Oliver Cowdery's preparation of the Printer's Manuscript reaches Alma 36.
1830	Mar 26	Publication of the Book of Mormon completed.

Book of Mormon.⁴ More than this brief mention of these additional topics, however, goes beyond the limited purpose of this documentary presentation.

I am grateful to several people who have assisted over the years in gathering and editing these documents and processing this information for this publication, in particular Erick Carlson, Heather Seferovich, and Jed Woodworth. While everyone involved has attempted to be as thorough as possible, I recognize that further research may yet discover additional information to clarify various individual points. If there are faults, they are ours alone. Dates listed in the chronology are, for the most part, historically verifiable, but some have been approximated. Taken together these details coalesce into a clear picture of the miraculous time of translation of the Book of Mormon.

Chronology of Events from September 1827 to April 1830 relating to the Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon

September 21–22, 1827. This was the appointed time when Joseph Smith received the plates from Moroni (documents 107, 110, 119, 149).⁵ In 1831, Joseph described the box, the plates (which “resembled gold”), the interpreters (which “resembled spectacles”), and explained that by looking into them “he could read a writing engraven upon the plates” (document 14) by the gift and power of God (documents 16, 20, 21, 22, 32, 33, 34, 37, and several others). Moroni charged Joseph

4. For a thorough discussion of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, its structure, and the various religious and scholarly receptions or reactions it evoked, see Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). See also the entry “Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith translation,” in *Studies in Mormon History, 1830–1997: An Indexed Bibliography*, ed. James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2000), 532–33, updated at [https://atom.lib.byu.edu/smh/search/?adv=subjects%3A%22Book+of+Mormon,+Joseph+Smith+translation%22](https://atom.lib.byu.edu/smh/search/?adv=subjects%3A%22Book+of+Mormon,+Joseph+Smith+translation%22;); and s.v. “translation” in the index of Donald W. Parry, Jeanette W. Miller, and Sandra A. Thorne, *A Comprehensive Annotated Book of Mormon Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1996), 640.

5. September 22 that year happened to coincide with the Jewish New Year celebration of Rosh Hashanah.

that he “should be responsible for them” and that he would be “cut off” if he should let them go carelessly (JS–H 1:59), that is, by “tattling the secrets of the work among his neighbors” (document 95). This charge was strict, for there were reasons to know that “strenuous exertions” would soon be made to try to get the plates from Joseph (JS–H 1:60). Joseph Knight wrote sometime before 1847, but possibly as early as 1835, that he was in Palmyra for several days in September 1827 and that “Joseph [Smith] was some affraid of him [Samuel Lawrence] that he mite be a trouble to him” (document 119). Joseph sent his father to watch Lawrence’s house that evening, but no trouble materialized.⁶ Joseph (leaving Emma⁷ with Joseph Knight’s carriage) then went after midnight to the site on the hill, which was two to three miles south-east of the Smith home, and received the plates from Moroni.⁸ Joseph

6. Joseph Knight, *Reminiscences*, 2, MS 3470, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, available on *Church History Library*, https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE1276586, image 3 (document 116); Dean Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection of Early Mormon History,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 1 (1976): 32–33; brackets in original. Samuel Lawrence is presented as a friend by Willard Chase in document 150.

7. Joseph had married Emma Hale on January 18, 1827. Joseph Smith—History 1:57.

8. Midnight marked the beginning of the 22nd. Joseph Smith—History 1:59; “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 8, Church History Library, available on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-1839-circa-1841-draft-2/10>; Karen Lynn Davidson and others, eds., *Histories: Volume 1, Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844*, vol. 1 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2012), 236–37; *History of the Church*, 1:18; Oliver Cowdery, “Letter VII,” *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (July 1835): 158–59, available on “Mormon Publications: 19th and 20th Centuries,” *BYU Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections*, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/7126>. Along with the plates, Joseph also received spectacles, a rod, and a breastplate; Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 3 [image 4] (document 119); Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 33; William Smith, according to J. W. Peterson, “The Urim and Thummim,” *Rod of Iron* 1 (February 1924): 6–7 (see also documents 110–12); “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 5, p. 7, and book 6, p. 2, Church History Library, available on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/61> (documents 106–7).

then hid the plates “in an old black oak tree top which was hollow”⁹ according to Martin Harris, or in “a birch log” according to Lucy Mack Smith. Shortly thereafter, he retrieved the plates and brought them home wrapped in a linen frock.¹⁰

A few days later a mob (possibly consisting of Samuel Lawrence, Luman Walters, Willard Chase, and others) attempted to get the plates from Joseph. According to Lucy Mack Smith’s history (a preliminary manuscript transcribed from Lucy’s dictation by Martha Jane Coray around 1844–45) and according to Brigham Young in 1855, during this time a conjuror (likely Luman Walters of Sodus, Pultneyville, New York) and several others attempted to get the plates from Joseph, which were hidden at his father’s home in Manchester Township.¹¹

9. As reported by Martin Harris to Joel Tiffany in “Mormonism—No. II,” *Tiffany’s Monthly* 5 (August 1859): 165. In “a birch log” according to “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 5, p. 11; Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1:86.

10. Joseph Smith’s sister Katharine was at home “when he came in running and burst through the door carrying the plates; and that his hand was injured from striking one of the villains [who had chased him]. He told her that he had jumped over a rail fence; when one of the villains grabbed for the plates, he knocked him down with his right fist while carrying the plates under his left arm clasped to his body. Then he ran the gauntlet with several more, and when he came in the house she said he was completely out of breath. She took the plates from him and laid them on the table temporarily, and helped revive him until he got breathing properly and also examined his hand, and treated it for the bruises on his knuckles, where he had struck the villain and thus defended himself and the plates.” H. S. Salisbury (grandson of Katharine Smith Salisbury), “The Prophet’s Sister Testifies She Lifted the Book of Mormon Plates,” interview by Isaac B. Ball, August 31, 1954, 2, Church History Library. See also “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 5, p. 12; and Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1:90–91. On the weight of the plates, see Robert F. Smith, “The ‘Golden’ Plates,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: The F.A.R.M.S. Updates*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992), 275–77.

11. Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 3 [image 4]; Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 33–34; *History of the Church*, 1:18–19; “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 5, p. 9; Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 2:180–81 (February 18, 1855), available on “Journal of Discourses,” *BYU Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections*, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/5954>; 5:55 (July 19, 1857), <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/2321>; see also documents 127, 137, 141.

October 1827. Joseph “commenced work with his Father on the farm.”¹² Several attempts were made to get the plates from Joseph, such as the one by Willard Chase’s sister, who used a green glass to see the precise place where Joseph had hidden the plates,¹³ and another attempt by a mob of fifty.¹⁴

12. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 1. Further confirmation is found in Lemuel Durfee’s Account Book, in particular the entry for August 1827, “Credit by Joseph Smith by mowing three days & Joseph Smith Junr. two days mowing & Hiram Smith one day mowing.” Lemuel Durfee, Account Book, p. 42, MSS 3943, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

13. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 3; see also document 198.

14. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 6. Note also the Joseph Bates Noble reminiscence of Joseph Smith and the plates: “My first introduction to this young woman [Mary A. Beman] was at McMillens my place of boarding, She was teaching School in the neighbor hood. her parents Father Alvah Beman lived about two ½ miles distance a man well off as to houses and land and goods of this world and verry highly esteemed among men for his word this man was well aqua[i]nted with the Smith family before the coming forth of the book of Mormon. and was with Joseph at one time assisted him in hiding the Plates, from a mob he was permitted to handle the Plates with a thin cloth covering over them. This Mary A. Beman Brought the Book of Mormon into the Neighbour, the first I had ever heard of.” Joseph B. Noble, Autobiographical Sketch, 1810–1836, MS 1031, Church History Library, available on *Church History Library*, https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE2571880, image 17.

Likewise Mary A. [Beman] Noble speaks of her father, Alvah Beman, the mob, and the plates: “Father sold his place in Livonia and removed with his family to Avon Livingston County some years previous my Father became acquainted with Father Joseph Smith the Father of the Prophet he frequently would go to Palmira to see Father Smiths and his family during this time Brother Joseph Smith come in possession of the plates that contained the Book of Mormon as soon as it was noised around that there was a golden Bible found (for that was what it was called at that time) the minds of the people become so excited and it arose at such a pitch that a mob collected together to search the house of Father Joseph Smith to find the records my Father was there at the time and assisted in concealing the plates in a box in a secluded place where no one could find them although he did not see them my Father soon returned.” Mary Adeline Beman Noble, Autobiography, 1810–1834, Church History Library.

Joseph began to “take some measures to accomplish the translation of the record into English but he was instructed to take off a fac simile of the alphabet Egyptian characters” (document 108).¹⁵

November 1827. “[The Smiths] had to garde the house until some time in November. He [Joseph] obtaind fifty Dollars in money and hired a man to move him and his wife to Pennsylvany to hir Fathers,”¹⁶ namely Isaac Hale. Alva Hale, Emma’s brother, arrived to assist Joseph and Emma in moving to Harmony, Pennsylvania. Martin Harris gave Joseph fifty dollars to pay off debts (including a debt to Lucy Harris) and move (document 67).¹⁷

December 1827. Joseph moved from his parents’ frame house in the Manchester township, New York, to Emma’s parents’ house in Harmony, while hiding the plates in a barrel of beans.¹⁸ Isaac Hale recalled Joseph’s arrival at this time as follows: “In a short time they returned . . . and subsequently came to the conclusion they would move out and reside upon a place near my residence.”¹⁹ Records of the Hale family suggest that Joseph and Emma lived with Emma’s parents until February 1828, when a small frame home built by Emma’s brother Jesse Hale became available.²⁰ Immediately after arriving in Harmony, Joseph

15. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 3, gives the impression that this was done at the Smith home. Joseph and Emma may have begun this work, however, after arriving in Pennsylvania. Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 3 [image 4]; Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 34.

16. Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 3 [image 4]; Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 34; see also documents 115, 116, 147, 154.

17. Mark Lyman Staker and Robin Scott Jensen, “David Hale’s Store Ledger: New Details about Joseph and Emma Smith, the Hale Family, and the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (2014): 85–88.

18. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 6. Alva Hale, Emma’s brother, assisted the Smiths in their move from Manchester to Harmony. Larry C. Porter, “A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1971; *BYU Studies*, 2000), 83, 130.

19. Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, 2 vols. (Independence, Mo.: Zion’s Printing and Publishing, 1942), 1:135, noting that a copy of the 1833 deed for that land is in the Church History Library. Joseph and Emma may have moved into a nearby house that Joseph purchased from Jesse Hale, one of Isaac’s sons. Porter, “Origins of the Church,” 133.

20. Staker and Jensen, “David Hale’s Store Ledger,” 95.

with Emma “Drew off[f] the Caricters exactley like the ancient”²¹ (document 119; see also 25). Before his departure from Manchester township, Joseph had made arrangements with Martin Harris to join him in Harmony for a specific purpose:

it was agreed that Martin Harris should follow him as soon as he <Joseph> should have sufficient time to transcribe the Egyptian alphabet which Mr. Harris was to take to the east and through the country in every direction to all who were professed linguists to give them an opertunity of showing their talents.²²

December 1827–February 1828. Joseph translated some characters.²³ According to one description of this process given by Joseph, he would put his finger “on one of the characters and imploring divine aid, then looking through the Urim and Thummin, he would see the import written in plain English on a screen placed before him” (document 23). Emma and Reuben Hale acted as scribes: “Now when he Began to translate he was poor and was put to it for provisions and had no one to write for him But his wife, and his wifes Brother would sometimes write a little for him through the winter”²⁴ (document 119). David Hale substantiated the idea that his brother played some role when he said that Reuben “assisted Joe Smith to fix up some characters such as Smith pretended were engraven on his book of plates”²⁵ (document 178). Also, Joseph McCune boarded in the neighborhood and attended school at Hickory Grove during the time Joseph Smith was translating at Harmony. He was “quite often in

21. Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 3 [image 4]; Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 34. “I commenced copying the characters off the plates. I copied a considerable number of them.” Joseph Smith—History 1:62. Reuben Hale may have helped prepare a transcript of the characters; see note 24.

22. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 7. Lucy Harris obtained a copy of the transcript surreptitiously through the services of her prospective son-in-law, a Mr. Dikes. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 8; see also documents 12, 49, 67, 98, 105, 119, 122, 167.

23. Joseph Smith—History 1:62; *History of the Church*, 1:19; “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 9; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 240.

24. Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 4 [image 5]; Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 35.

25. Statement of David Hale, cited in Emily C. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1873), 104.

Smith's house," and stated that "Reuben Hale acted as scribe a part of the time"²⁶ (document 200). At this time, Joseph and those working with him were "thretned By a Mob" and Joseph Knight "came Down" from Colesville (Coleville) on one occasion (document 36).

Apparently during this time, when the book of Lehi was being translated and Emma was acting as scribe, Joseph translated a passage describing Jerusalem as a walled city (compare 1 Ne. 4:4) and stopped to ask Emma if Jerusalem indeed had walls. In 1856, Emma Smith described how she wrote down part of the translation as Joseph

dictated each sentence, word for word, and when he came to proper names he could not pronounce, or long words, he spelled them out, and while I was writing them, if I made a mistake in spelling, he would stop me and correct my spelling, although it was impossible for him to see how I was writing them down at the time. Even the word *Sarah* he could not pronounce at first, but had to spell it, and I would pronounce it for him.

When he stopped for any purpose at any time he would, when he commenced again, begin where he left off without any hesitation, and one time while he was translating he stopped suddenly, pale as a sheet, and said, "Emma, did Jerusalem have walls around it?" When I answered, "Yes," he replied "Oh! I was afraid I had been deceived." He had such a limited knowledge of history at that time that he did not even know that Jerusalem was surrounded by walls.²⁷ (document 38; details corroborated in documents 40, 54, 90, 95, 97, and others)

26. Statement of Joseph Fowler McCune, cited in Rhamanthus M. Stocker, *Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: R. T. Peck, 1887), 556. Michael Morse, brother-in-law of Emma, recalled seeing Joseph translate in Harmony, with Emma and others acting as scribes. W. W. Blair, "Letter of W. W. Blair about Mr. Michael Morse," *Saints' Herald* 26 (June 15, 1879): 190–91; recollection may also be of events in 1829.

27. Edmund C. Briggs, "A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856," *Journal of History* 9 (October 1916): 454. See also Edmund C. Briggs, "Interview with David Whitmer," *Saints' Herald* 31 (June 21, 1884): 396–97: "This brings to my mind a statement of the Elect Lady, Emma, in the winter of 1856. She said to me, 'When you see David Whitmer you will see an honest man.' And in the same conversation, she remarked of her husband Joseph's limited education while he was translating the Book of Mormon, and she was scribe at the time, 'He could not pronounce the word Sariah.' And one time while translating, where it speaks of the walls of Jerusalem, he stopped and said, 'Emma, did Jerusalem have walls surrounding it.' When I informed him it had, he replied, 'O, I thought I was deceived.'"

Several further accounts similarly focus on the point that Joseph Smith was poorly equipped educationally to produce the Book of Mormon. David Whitmer stated that “Joseph Smith was a man of limited education” who was “ignorant of the Bible” (document 97). In 1875, David Whitmer expressed a similar view:

So illiterate was Joseph at the time, said Mr. Whitmer, that he didn’t even know that Jerusalem was a walled city and he was utterly unable to pronounce many of the names which the magic power of the Urim and Thummim revealed, and therefore spelled them out in syllables and the more erudite scribe put them together.²⁸

On January 1, 1828, Joseph Smith hired David Hale, Emma’s brother, to cover his mittens with leather so he could perform farm labor. He likely worked for a neighbor, James Westfall.²⁹

February 1828. Martin Harris arrived in Harmony as Joseph and Martin had planned (document 12). Martin then left for Palmyra, Utica, Albany, New York City, and Philadelphia, visiting with Professor Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchill (the vice president of Rutgers Medical School, located in New York City) (documents 122, 135, 151), and with Professor Charles Anthon (documents 51, 66, 88, 135, 151, 161, 168) at Columbia College and others concerning the characters copied from some part of the unsealed plates of Mormon, perhaps even calling upon Lt. Governor Luther Bradish for consultation.³⁰ Joseph wrote

28. “The Golden Tables,” *Chicago Times*, August 7, 1875, 1. See also Blair, “Letter of W. W. Blair about Mr. Michael Morse,” 190–91.

29. Staker and Jensen, “David Hale’s Store Ledger,” 92–93, 110.

30. See “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 9; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 240–42; *History of the Church*, 1:19–20; Richard E. Bennett, “Martin Harris’s 1828 Visit to Luther Bradish, Charles Anthon, and Samuel Mitchill,” in Largey and others, *Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon*, 103–15; FARMS Staff and others, *Martin Harris’ Visit with Charles Anthon: Collected Documents on the Anthon Transcript and Short-Hand Egyptian*, FARMS Preliminary Report 85a (1990); *FARMS Update*, “What Did Charles Anthon Really Say?” (May 1985); and Stanley B. Kimball, “The Anthon Transcript: People, Primary Sources, and Problems,” *BYU Studies* 10, no. 3 (1970), 328–30. Wayne C. Gunnell, “Martin Harris—Witness and Benefactor to the Book of Mormon” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1955), 114, and Rhett Stephens James, *The Man Who Knew: The Early Years. A Play about Martin Harris*,

in 1832 that the Lord appeared to Martin in a vision, instructing him to go to New York City “<with> some of the c<h>aracters so we proceeded to cobby some of them” (document 12). Martin took with him the transcript of the characters and a translation.³¹ That Philadelphia was possibly among the “Eastern Cittys” mentioned by Joseph is contained in Joseph Knight Sr.’s recollection that Emma and Joseph drew off some of the characters exactly like the ancient and sent Harris to Albany, Philadelphia, and New York City to get them translated.³²

April 12, 1828. Martin Harris returned from New York to Joseph’s home in Harmony and consulted with Joseph (document 25). Apparently during this time, Harris stated in 1859, “did I not at one time hold the plates on my knee an hour-and-a-half, whilst in conversation with Joseph, when we went to bury them in the woods” (document 46). Harris then returned to his farm in Palmyra township where he “arranged his affairs” for an extended absence.³³ On this date, he and his wife, Lucy, returned to Pennsylvania, where Martin joined Joseph as his scribe for the translation of the plates of the Book of Mormon (documents 45, 49) beginning with the book of Lehi³⁴ (document 86). Lucy Harris wanted to see the plates:

She began to by ransack<ing> every nook & corner of the house chest cupboard trunk &c the day after she went out and hunted the ground over adjacent to the house she kept up the search till 2 o'clock in <the> afternoon when she came in very ill natured . . . The woman

1824–1830 (Cache Valley, Utah: Martin Harris Pageant Committee, 1983), 56–62, note that Martin left Palmyra by wagon with Hyrum, since the Erie Canal was closed for the winter. See also “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 7. For more information on Mitchill, see Alan David Aberbach, *In Search of an American Identity: Samuel Latham Mitchill, Jeffersonian Nationalist*, vol. 46 of American University Studies, Series IX, History (New York: Peter Lang, 1988). On Bradish, see Allen Johnson, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, 10 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927), 1:567–68.

31. Joseph Smith—History 1:64.

32. Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 3 [image 4]; Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 34. See above at December 1827 for this and related statements.

33. “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 9; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 244; *History of the Church*, 1:20.

34. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 10.

was so disappointed and perplexed in everything she undertook that [she] left the house and took lodgings at ~~the nearest tavern~~ <the house of a near neighbor> here.³⁵

Isaac Hale also wrote of this time: “About this time, Martin Harris made his appearance upon the stage; and Smith began to interpret the characters or hieroglyphics which he said were engraven upon the plates, while Harris wrote down the interpretation. It was said, that Harris wrote down one hundred sixteen pages”³⁶ (document 117; see also 49, 86, 95, 119). Although usually kept indoors, the plates were apparently placed in a box and sometimes secreted in the woods or “in the Mountin” (according to Joseph Knight, document 119; see also 105), or elsewhere, when they were not being employed.³⁷

April 12–June 14, 1828. The book of Lehi was translated (document 10). According to Martin Harris’s account, “The Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone”³⁸ (documents 52, 56; see also 94–96, 100, 108, 110–12). Harris once tested Joseph with the seer stone by replacing the stone with one of a similar shape and color, but Joseph immediately apprehended the difference, thus satisfying Martin (document 55).³⁹

35. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, p. 9.

36. Isaac Hale, “Statement of Mr. Hale,” *Montrose Susquehanna Register*, May 1, 1834, available on “19th-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections*, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/BOMP/id/869>.

37. Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 3 [image 4]; Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 34.

38. “One of the Three Witnesses: Incidents in the Life of Martin Harris,” *Millennial Star* 44 (February 6, 1882): 86, available on “Mormon Publications: 19th and 20th Centuries,” *BYU Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections*, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/MStar/id/5128>, from lecture of Martin Harris recorded by Edward Stevenson, September 4, 1870, Salt Lake City, reprinted in “One of the Three Witnesses,” *Deseret News*, December 28, 1881, 762–63, reprinted with slight differences in Andrew Jenson, ed., “The Three Witnesses,” *Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 216–17.

39. “One of the Three Witnesses,” *Millennial Star* 44 (February 6, 1882): 87.

June 15, 1828. Joseph and Emma's first child, Alvin (Alva?), was born but died shortly thereafter.⁴⁰

Late June or Early July 1828. The 116 pages of the book of Lehi, which Martin Harris had borrowed from Joseph around June 14 and taken to Palmyra to show to his wife and family, were lost. Lucy Smith and others suspected that Martin Harris's wife, Lucy, stole the 116 pages.⁴¹ Joseph tried with "utmost exertions" to recover these pages (document 10).

July 1, 1828. Joseph remained with Emma for two weeks after the death of their child.⁴² He then left for his father's farm in Manchester, New York, and asked Martin to come to his father's house to tell him what happened to the 116 pages. The 116 pages were lost. The interpreters and the plates were then taken from Joseph by an angel⁴³ (documents 87, 94–96, 113, 119).

40. Dates and the words "infant son," but no name, appear on the tombstone in Harmony; see Porter, "Origins of the Church," 146. Richard L. Anderson reports that the Smith family Bible clearly reads "Alvin."

41. "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," book 7, p. 8; Porter, "Origins of the Church," 146; J. B. Haws, "The Lost 116 Pages Story: What We Do Know, What We Don't Know, and What We Might Know," in Largey and others, *Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon*, 81–102.

42. "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," book 7, pp. 1–2.

43. "History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," 10; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 246; *History of the Church*, 1:21–23. William E. McLellin mentions this period in a letter to Joseph Smith III, Independence, Mo., July and September 8, 1872: "When Joseph delivered the 116 pages of the translation to Martin Harris, his plates, his Interpreters, and his gift were taken from him for some two months. The Plates and gift of translation was restored to him, but not the Interpreters. He translated the entire book of Mormon by the use of a little stone he had in his possession before he obtained the plates." Library-Archives, Community of Christ, Independence, Mo. (hereafter cited as Community of Christ Library-Archives).

Elsewhere in his letter, McLellin cites certificates he has from Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery (Oliver's widow), Martin Harris, and Emma [Smith] Bidamon, as well as testimony from John and David Whitmer, and refers to "The Directors, or Interpreters," and differentiates them from the Urim and Thummim (the so-called spectacles). For discussions of the possible meanings of such terminology, see Richard Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing,'" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (1982): 48–68; Robert F. Smith,

July 1828. Joseph returned to Harmony and stayed “for nearly two months.”⁴⁴ There the spectacles were returned to him long enough to receive a revelation from the Lord chastising him for allowing “the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon,” and assuring him that “nevertheless, my work shall go forth” (D&C 3:15, 16).⁴⁵ The spectacles were taken again.⁴⁶ Portions of Doctrine and Covenants 10 may have been received around this time (document 2), although it took its final form essentially in 1829, as discussed below, May 15–May 25, 1829. On August 12, 1828, Joseph purchased items from David Hale’s store, including a pocketknife and a pocketbook, possibly indicating that he planned to do some writing. In September, he hired someone to help him dig a well, slaughtered farm animals to provide meat for the winter, and sold pork for credit.⁴⁷

September 22, 1828. It was promised that Moroni would return the plates to Joseph on this familiar date.⁴⁸ David Whitmer said of this time that “the plates, however, were not returned, but instead

“‘Translation of Languages’ (*hermeneia glosson*, 1 Corinthians 12:10),” unpublished paper, Independence, Mo., 1980, Community of Christ Library-Archives; and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Seventy’s Mission Bookstore, 1981), 122–23.

44. See “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, p. 8.

45. Document 1. See also “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, p. 10.

46. Whitmer interviews: “The Golden Tables,” *Chicago Times*, August 7, 1875, 1; “The Book of Mormon,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 17, 1885, 3; “An Old Mormon’s Closing Hours,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 24, 1888, 5; “David Whitmer’s Death,” *Chicago Times*, January 26, 1888, 8. All these interviews are reproduced in Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991).

47. Staker and Jensen, “David Hale’s Store Ledger,” 100–102, 110, 111.

48. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, p. 11, speaks only of the “plates” or “record,” with “urim and Thummim” added above the line later in a different handwriting; compare Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: published for Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, 1853), 125, available on “Mormon Publications: 19th and 20th Centuries,” *BYU Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections*, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/16401>, which says that Joseph would have to give up the Urim and Thummim into the angel’s hands. Joseph did not use the spectacles for translation after this time according to Emma, in Emma Smith Bidamon to Emma Pilgrim, March 27, 1870, Emma Smith Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, cited in John T. Clark, “Translation of Nephite Records,” *Return* 4 (July 15, 1895): 2.

Smith was given by the angel a Urim and Thummim of another pattern” (document 95; see also 96, 99, 108).

1828–1829 in general. A February 1879 interview with Emma Smith detailed information about the translation during this time period:

Q. Who were scribes for father when translating the Book of Mormon?

A. Myself [Emma Smith], Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and my brother, Reuben Hale. . . .

Q. What is the truth of Mormonism?

A. I know Mormonism to be the truth; and believe the Church to have been established by divine direction. I have complete faith in it. In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us. . . .

Q. Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?

A. The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book. . . .

Q. Could not father have dictated the Book of Mormon to you, Oliver Cowdery and the others who wrote for him, after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book?

A. Joseph Smith [and for the first time she used his name direct, having usually used the words “your father” or “my husband”] could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, . . . it is marvelous to me, “a marvel and a wonder,” as much so as to any one else. (document 41)

A generally reliable non-Mormon journalist stated that “the little low chamber in Smith’s house was used as a translating-room,” naming the scribes as Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, and Reuben Hale.⁴⁹

49. Frederic G. Mather, “The Early Days of Mormonism,” *Lippincott’s Magazine* 26 (August 1880): 198–211, esp. 201.

Later, Harris stated that he “wrote for him about one third of the first part of the translation” of the 116 pages (document 53).

Winter 1828–29. Joseph and Emma visited Joseph Knight: “He and his wife Came up to see me [Joseph Knight] the first of the winter 1828 and told me his Case.”⁵⁰ Probably during this season, David Whitmer made a business trip from Fayette, New York, to Palmyra, where he met Oliver Cowdery for the first time and learned of Joseph and the golden plates (document 88).⁵¹ Joseph labored for neighbors to provide for himself and Emma.⁵²

February 1829. Joseph’s parents came from New York and visited him in Harmony.⁵³ Joseph received Doctrine and Covenants 4 for his father. Joseph Sr. and Lucy returned to Manchester. Oliver, who was boarding with Joseph Sr. and Lucy at this time, began “importuneing Mr. Smith” for information concerning the plates and after “a long time” succeeded in receiving information.⁵⁴ About this time, Joseph Smith wrote in 1832, “[the] Lord appeared unto a young man by the name of Oliver Cowdry and shewed unto him the plates in a vision

50. Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 5 [image 6]; Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 35.

51. “Mormonism,” *Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 5, 1881, 1; reprinted in “Mormonism,” *Millennial Star* 43 (July 4, 1881): 421–23; (July 11, 1881): 437–39; cited in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 58–71. David Whitmer states that he made this trip “in the year 1828.” The trip was probably late in 1828, because Oliver probably first arrived at the district school in Palmyra in fall 1828. David Whitmer says in his June 5, 1881, statement that it was only a matter of “several months” after this visit that Oliver went to Harmony in April 1829 to “see [Joseph] about the matter.” It also appears that David would have been in Palmyra at a time when Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy were away (as they were in the first part of winter 1828) or else David would likely have met them at the same time he met Oliver. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, p. 12, and book 8, p. 1, seems to indicate that Oliver taught the full term of fall and winter at school while boarding with the Smiths and was able to leave Palmyra at the close of school.

52. Staker and Jensen, “David Hale’s Store Ledger,” 103, 112.

53. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, p. 8; *History of the Church*, 1:28; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 266; “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 11.

54. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, p. 12.

and also the truth of the work and what the Lord was about to do through me his unworthy servant therefore he was desirous to come and write for me to translate” (document 13).

March 1829. A few pages were translated. Emma acted “some” or “but little” as scribe (documents 38, 43, 80, 81, 88, 108), as did Samuel Smith also (document 13).⁵⁵ During this month, Martin Harris visited Joseph from Palmyra, “seemingly for the prime purpose of being permitted to see the plates. According to other testimonies Martin had not seen the plates during the time he was writing for the Prophet, and he wanted to know of their existence.”⁵⁶ This visit was the catalyst for Doctrine and Covenants 5. Joseph was told to translate “a few more pages” and then to “stop for a season” (D&C 5:30; document 3).

April 5, 1829. Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony to assist Joseph with the translation of the Book of Mormon.⁵⁷ This was their first meeting in person. Joseph told Oliver “his entire history as far as it was necessary for his information in those things which concerned him” (document 108). Oliver was given assurances that “the words or the work which thou hast been writing are true” (D&C 6:17, 1833 ed.; document 4), and he was offered “a gift, if you desire of me, to translate, even as my servant Joseph” (document 4; see also 5). David Whitmer,

55. “Letterbook 1,” [6]; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 16. The text adds “also my Brother Samuel H Smith” had written for Joseph. It is possible that Emma acted as scribe only on the book of Lehi in Harmony, or 1 Nephi in Fayette, since she remembers Joseph asking her as the translation proceeded whether Jerusalem had walls (document 38), a point mentioned in 1 Nephi 4:4, 5, 24, 27; see pages 91–92 above. In addition, Samuel and Emma may have acted as Joseph’s scribe for other early revelations.

56. Gunnell, “Martin Harris,” 29–30.

57. “History, 1834–1836,” 47, Church History Library, available on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1834-1836?p=49>; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 41; *History of the Church*, 1:32; O. Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, September 7, 1834 [Letter 1], printed in *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (October 1834): 14; Knight, *Reminiscences*, p. 6 [image 7]; Jesse, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 36; “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, p. 12 through book 8, p. 4. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 8, p. 4, states that Joseph had been praying for assistance and had been assured by the angel of the Lord that a scribe “should be forthcoming in a few days” (document 108).

who was first among the Whitmers to hear of Joseph Jr., recalled speaking with Oliver about the matter in 1828.⁵⁸

Oliver explicitly dates his first meeting with Joseph Smith Jr. as April 5, 1829: “Near the time of the setting of the Sun, Sabbath evening, April 5th, 1829, my natural eyes, for the first time beheld this brother”⁵⁹ (document 70; see also 119). On the same page printed in 1834, Oliver said he had endured many “fateagues and privations . . . for the gospel’s sake, since 1828, with this brother.” Apparently Oliver had begun suffering criticism as early as 1828 for his interest in Joseph and the plates. In 1835 he said he had known Joseph intimately for “almost seven years.”⁶⁰ From 1829 to 1835 is seven years inclusive. Clear evidence supports April 5, 1829, as the date for the first meeting of Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith.

April 6, 1829. Oliver recorded: “On Monday the 6th, I assisted [Joseph] in arranging some business of a temporal nature”⁶¹ (document 70). The business was Joseph’s payment of \$64 to Isaac Hale as a first payment on his purchase of the small house and thirteen acres on which he and Emma were already living.⁶² This ownership gave Joseph more control, privacy, and security as he recommenced translating.

April 7, 1829. Oliver began writing as scribe to Joseph Smith, as he remained for the greater part of the translation. Joseph and Oliver probably started writing at or shortly after the beginning of the book of Mosiah. Several considerations point to this conclusion.

58. See above at Winter 1828–29. Oliver apparently began boarding with Joseph Sr. in 1828. Larry C. Porter, “The Prophet’s New York Years: Restoration, Publication, and Organization, 1829–1830,” lecture, October 18, 1984, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. See note 51 above.

59. Cowdery, “Letter I,” 14. Oliver apparently mentions his “natural eyes” because he had seen the plates and perhaps Joseph before in a vision; see above at February 1829.

60. Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, “Letter VIII,” *Messenger and Advocate* 2 (October 1835): 196.

61. Cowdery, “Letter I,” 14.

62. Joseph Smith, Agreement with Isaac Hale, witnessed by Oliver Cowdery, April 6, 1829, Church History Library, on display at the Church History Museum. Joseph’s purchase of the property was completed on August 25, 1830.

First, 2 Nephi 27:12, 22, and not Ether 5:2–4, was most likely the scripture that triggered the experience of the Three and the Eight Witnesses toward the end of June 1829. If they were translating 2 Nephi in June, that would mean that they had begun with Mosiah in April and had returned, after finishing Moroni and the title page in May, to translate the small plates of Nephi in June. The *History of the Church* first appeared in print as a serial in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842.⁶³ A blank was left in the sentence that was to tell which passage in the Book of Mormon inspired the manifestation to the Three Witnesses.⁶⁴ Page 25 of one of the manuscripts of the *History of the Church*, however, contains a note that the relevant scripture was found “in the 1st ed. . . . page 110 [2 Nephi 27:4–14].” This information was added to the manuscript sometime after 1852, as is evident since that scribe also refers to a European edition of the Doctrine and Covenants of that date.⁶⁵ Therefore, the earliest recorded understanding saw 2 Nephi 27 as the relevant scripture, working together with the previously translated passage in Ether to authorize the manifestation to the Witnesses.⁶⁶

63. “History of Joseph Smith,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 15, 1842): beginning on p. 726, available on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/times-and-seasons-15-march-1842/9>.

64. “History of Joseph Smith,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (September 1, 1842): 897, available on “Mormon Publications: 19th and 20th Centuries,” *BYU Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections*, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/NCMP1820-1846/id/9935>. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 5; and Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 314–15, likewise have a blank at this point.

65. “History of the Church,” A-2, 25, Church History Library. Compare the text in “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834],” 23, Church History Library, on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/29>: “In th[e] course of the work of translation, we ascertained that three special witnesses were to be provided by the Lord, to whom he would grant, that they should see the plates from which this work (the Book of Mormon) should be translated, and that these witnesses should bear record of the same; as will be found, recorded, Book of Mormon First edition <second book of Nephi, chap. 11.> Page 110. and second edition Page [blank]. <third european edition section 17, page 102.>”

66. B. H. Roberts, however, chose to refer principally to Ether 5 in the published edition of *History of the Church*, 1:52, but he also mentioned 2 Nephi 11:3 in this context. Significantly, the scripture in 2 Nephi 27 authorizes more

Second, Joseph and Oliver were prompted by 3 Nephi 11 to pray about baptism and remission of sins on May 15, when John the Baptist restored the Aaronic Priesthood (document 70). Beginning with Mosiah 2 through the account of the ministry of Christ among the Nephites in 3 Nephi, and for the completion in June of the entire translation moving at about the same rate.⁶⁷ It also allows for a significant number of pages being translated at the Whitmer home in Fayette.

Third, the title page of the Book of Mormon was translated before June 11, 1829, the date on which this text appears on the copyright application. Since the title page was written by Moroni and was found at the end of the plates of Mormon,⁶⁸ this would require that the books up to and including the title page, namely 4 Nephi, Mormon, Ether, Moroni, and the title page itself, were translated after May 15 and probably before the move from Harmony to Fayette the first week in June.

Finally, although no pages of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon have survived for the book of Mosiah, handwriting of Scribe 2 on the original manuscript of 1 Nephi has been identified as John Whitmer (probable) and Scribe 3 as Christian Whitmer (possible), which would situate the translation of the small plates in

precisely what in fact transpired with the witnesses (as discussed below under the date “Around June 20, 1829”).

67. Otherwise, everything from around the beginning of 1 Nephi 1 through the middle of 3 Nephi would have to have been translated at a much faster rate, and very little would need to be translated in June. However, the translation continued for three more weeks when “many pages” were translated at the Whitmer house in Fayette. One report indicates that John Whitmer acted as scribe for as many as “sixty pages.” John Whitmer, interview by Zenas H. Gurley, in “Synopsis of a Discourse Delivered at Lamoni, Iowa,” reported by S. F. Walker, *Saints’ Herald* 26 (December 15, 1879): 37ob.

68. Joseph Smith stated: “I wish 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.” “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 34, Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 352; *History of the Church*, 1:71.

Fayette in June.⁶⁹ And so, while we are left without direct manuscript evidence in Mosiah,⁷⁰ the conclusion that Joseph and Oliver began on April 7 very near the beginning of the book of Mosiah is widely accepted.⁷¹

Oliver said he transcribed all of the Book of Mormon “with the exception of a few pages” (document 76). Joseph remembered that Oliver wrote “with little cessation” (document 25). Oliver later recalled, “These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration* of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated . . . ‘The book of Mormon’”⁷² (document 70; see also 72).

69. See part 5 of Royal Skousen’s forthcoming *The History of the Text of the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3 of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project. The handwriting at the beginning of 1 Nephi may be Reuben Hale’s, which would support the Nephi-first theory, but it is also possible that it is one of the Whitmers’, which would favor the Mosiah-first theory. Royal Skousen, *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2001), 33, notes that “there is some evidence that Joseph Smith translated the small plates of Nephi at the very end of the process.”

70. On the patching that seems to have occurred at Words of Mormon verse 11 and the possibly missing first pages of Mosiah, see Jack M. Lyon and Kent Minson, “When Pages Collide: Dissecting the Words of Mormon,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2012): 120–36.

71. Those who have accept this view include see George Reynolds, “History of the Book of Mormon,” *Contributor* 5 (November 1883): 41–47; (February 1884): 161–68; (June 1884): 321–27; (July 1884): 361–67; Stanley R. Larson, “A Most Sacred Possession: The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign* 7 (September 1977): 87–88; Max H. Parkin, “A Preliminary Analysis of the Dating of Section 10,” in *Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, January 27, 1979* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1979), 76; Bushman, *Beginnings of Mormonism*, 105; MacKay and Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light*, 124; see also John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, “How Long Did It Take to Translate the Book of Mormon?” in Welch, *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 1–8. For ruminations about the implications of this matter, see Alan Goff, “Positivism and the Priority of Ideology in Mosiah-First Theories of Book of Mormon Production,” *FARMS Review* 16, no. 1 (2004): 11–36, arguing that the Mosiah-first theory need not pose any compositional difficulties.

72. Cowdery, “Letter I,” 14.

The Rest of April, 1829. Sometime during April 1829, Doctrine and Covenants 6 (document 4), 8 (document 5), and 9 (document 6) were received, and Joseph made a quick trip to Colesville (document 31), perhaps at the beginning of the month. Oliver unsuccessfully attempted to translate (document 6). Oliver also wrote two letters to David Whitmer, telling him that “he was convinced that Smith had the records” and giving “a few lines of what they had translated” and assuring David “that he knew of a certainty that [Joseph] had a record of a people that inhabited this continent, and that the plates they were translating gave a complete history of these people” (document 86).

May 1–15, 1829. The work progressed steadily until Joseph and Oliver reached the account of the ministry of the resurrected Christ to the inhabitants of ancient America in 3 Nephi. “After writing the account given of the Savior’s ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent,”⁷³ the question arose in the minds of the Prophet and his scribe concerning the mode and authority of baptism (documents 70, 108).

May 15, 1829. The Aaronic Priesthood was restored to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by John the Baptist. Oliver and Joseph baptized each other as commanded by God.⁷⁴ (See D&C 13.)

May 16–May 25, 1829. Around this time, Joseph and Oliver ran out of provisions (document 25). They went to Colesville (about twenty miles away, a day’s journey) to see if Joseph Knight would help them with some provisions, but he was in “Cattskill” (document 119). An account attributed to Joseph Smith might relate to this same trip to Colesville, although an occasion in 1830 is possible:

When I first commenced this work, and had got two or three individuals to believe, I went about thirty miles with Oliver Cowdery, to see them. We had only one horse between us. When we arrived, a

73. Cowdery, “Letter I,” 15 (document 70).

74. “One morning however they sat down to their usual work when the first thing that presented itself to Joseph was a commandment from God that he and Oliver should repair to the water each of them be baptized they immediately went down to the susquehanah river and obeyed the ~~comm~~ mandate given them through the urim and Thumim.” “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 8, p. 4 (document 108). See also Brian Q. Cannon and BYU Studies Staff, “The Earliest Accounts of the Restoration of the Priesthood,” herein, document 20.

mob of about one hundred men came upon us before we had time to eat, and chased us all night; and we arrived back again [in Harmony] a little after daylight, having traveled about sixty miles in all, and without food.⁷⁵

This may have been the time when the Melchizedek Priesthood was restored as Joseph and Oliver were returning from Colesville, but the dating of that event is uncertain.⁷⁶ Joseph and Oliver returned to

75. “Journal, December 1842–June 1844; Book 1, 21 December 1842–10 March 1843,” 46–47, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library, available on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/journal-december-1842-june-1844-book-1-21-december-1842-10-march-1843?p=52>; Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*, vol. 2 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), 213; *History of the Church*, 5:219, taken from Willard Richards’s journal. It is possible, however, that this trip to Colesville occurred after May 25, but this would allow little time for Joseph Knight to have made “several” visits (“History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 2–3, Church History Library, available on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/2>; *History of the Church*, 1:47; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 304) before Joseph and Oliver left for Fayette on June 1. The account in *History of the Church*, 1:97, contains most of the same elements, making an 1830 date equally likely, although then the reference to only “two or three” believers seems odd; see below at May 15–May 31, 1829.

It is possible, but highly unlikely, that Joseph had to appear in court in Colesville at this time, as claimed by Addison Everett in his letter of February 17, 1881, St. George, Utah, to Oliver B. Huntington, recorded in Oliver Boardman Huntington, Journal no. 14, January 31, 1881, Perry Special Collections, and discussed in Larry C. Porter, “The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” *Ensign* 26 (December 1996): 43–44. See also Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 135, but Lucy’s reference here is vague (“After Samuel left them, they still continued the work as before, until about the time of the trial that took place in New York”), and she was never in that area. No legal records of any kind for such a trial or court appearance are presently known. The sources may be confusing various events with an inconclusive hearing in Lyons, Wayne County, N.Y. (“Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 8, pp. 5–7), or with the Bainbridge, N.Y., trial, *New York v. Smith* (June 29 and 30, 1830).

76. See sources discussed in Porter, “Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” 33–44. See also Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1:183. Richard L. Bushman discusses the date of this event in *Beginnings of Mormonism*, 163, esp. n55, as does

Harmony and looked to see “if they Could find a place to work for provisions, But found none. They returned home and found me [Joseph Knight] there with provisions, and they ware glad for they ware out” (document 119). Joseph Knight brought writing paper (foolscap) and other provisions for the translation and visited “several times” during May, traveling the distance of at least thirty miles each way (from his farm in Broome County).⁷⁷ Joseph was admonished by the Lord to “be patient until you shall accomplish it” (document 7).

Apparently after the completion of 3 Nephi, Doctrine and Covenants 7 may have been received, speaking about John not tasting death. Within a couple weeks the final form of Doctrine and Covenants 10 (particularly 10:38–70) was essentially dictated or collated.⁷⁸ Doctrine

Cannon and BYU Studies staff, “Earliest Accounts of the Restoration of the Priesthood,” 233–45 herein.

77. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 2–3; *History of the Church*, 1:47; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 304.

78. The dating of Doctrine and Covenants 10 has been discussed on several occasions. The discussion in the Historical Introduction for “Revelation, Spring 1829 [D&C 10],” at Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-spring-1829-dc-10/1#historical-intro>, reviews the inconsistencies in the extant versions of the text and suggests that while part of the revelation may have been given in 1828, it was not written until April or May 1829. Stanley R. Larson, “A Study of Some Textual Variations in the Book of Mormon comparing the Original and the Printer’s Manuscripts and the 1830, the 1837, and the 1840 Editions” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974), 17–18n15, stated: “The date of section 10 has become a problem. When the original manuscript of the ‘History of Joseph Smith’ was written, the discussion about this section was accidentally omitted. This omission was soon noticed and two additional sheets with the text of the revelation and the correct date of May 1829 were inserted into the history; but unfortunately it was placed in the wrong context. This incongruity caused later editors to attempt to rectify the situation by altering the date of the revelation to ‘the summer of 1828.’ During the lifetime of Joseph Smith the date was consistently reported as May 1829. *The Book of Commandments* in 1833 first printed this revelation in its proper chronological order and with the correct date.” See also Stephen Snow, “Queries,” *Mormon History Association Newsletter* 44 (June 1980): 15; Max H. Parkin, “Queries,” *Mormon History Association Newsletter* 45 (November 1980): 2–4; Parkin, “Preliminary Analysis of the Dating of Section 10,” 68–84; Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet*, 17, 122; Robert J. Woodford, “The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants,” 3 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 1:200–205. Lyndon Cook and Max Parkin

and Covenants 10:41 appears to instruct Joseph to translate the small plates of Nephi at a time when he had already translated the account of the reign of King Benjamin: “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.” Katharine Smith Salisbury confirmed in 1895 that Joseph had “fasted and prayed several days,” and the angel told him “to begin where he had left off” (document 113). This would eventually bring him to the portion he still “retained” from his translation apparently of the first pages of the book of Mosiah, which he had not given to Martin Harris (D&C 10:41; document 2).⁷⁹

May 25, 1829. Oliver Cowdery baptized Samuel Smith,⁸⁰ who possibly arrived in Harmony in April with Oliver.⁸¹ The translation continued after Samuel’s baptism.⁸² Hyrum visited a few days later.⁸³ Doctrine and Covenants 11 to Hyrum and Doctrine and Covenants 12 to Joseph Knight Sr. were then received. Doctrine and Covenants 11:19

argue for an 1828 date for the first part of Doctrine and Covenants 10, with additional material being added in 1829. For example, Parkin points out several clear similarities between Doctrine and Covenants 10:49–70 and 3 Nephi that support their concurrent dating. If references to receiving the “gospel” in Doctrine and Covenants 10:62 and 11:16, 19 refer to the impending translation of “which was ministered unto” the Nephites in 3 Nephi, and if, similarly, the statement in 18:17 was made at a time after Joseph, Oliver, and David had received 3 Nephi, then those sections bracket the translation of 3 Nephi, as Monte Nyman points out. On the other hand, it is possible that 10:62, which speaks of “that which you have received,” is already speaking of the account of the ministry of Christ among the Nephites in 3 Nephi.

79. See Dean C. Jessee, “The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript,” *BYU Studies* 10, no. 3 (1970): 260, 277–78, citing also Doctrine and Covenants 5:30.

80. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 1–2; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 298; *History of the Church*, 1:44. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 8, p. 4, however, gives the impression that Samuel was baptized on the same day as were Joseph and Oliver.

81. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 8, p. 3. *History of the Church*, 1:44; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 298; and “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 1–2, however, report that Samuel did not come to visit until a few days after May 15.

82. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 8, p. 4.

83. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 2; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 298; *History of the Church*, 1:44–45.

told Hyrum to be patient: “You may assist in bringing to light those things of which has been spoken—yea, the translation of my work” (document 7).

May 15–May 31, 1829. After returning from the trip to Colesville, on about May 17, Oliver wrote a third letter to David Whitmer telling him “to come down into Pennsylvania and bring him and Joseph to my father’s [Peter Whitmer Sr.] house, giving as a reason therefor that they had received a commandment from God to that effect” (document 86). David came, met Joseph Smith for the first time (documents 88, 108), and remained in Harmony “long enough to satisfy himself of the divine inspiration of Smith” (document 99).

June 1–4, 1829. Joseph and Oliver moved with David Whitmer from Harmony to Fayette, Seneca County, New York, to the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. The journey from Harmony to Fayette (ninety-eight miles direct) would have taken about three days.⁸⁴ Emma came a short time afterward (document 91).

June 5–end of June 1829. The translation of the Book of Mormon recommenced the day after their arrival (document 87) and was finished in the upstairs room of Peter Whitmer’s home by July 1, “about one month” later (document 86). Some of the Whitmers helped as scribes (document 82): “They continued so, boarded and lodged us according to arrangements; and John Whitmer, in particular, assisted us very much in writing during the remainder of the work” (document 25, see also 81, 82).⁸⁵ Christian Whitmer is also mentioned as

84. As reported by Joseph F. Smith, David Whitmer told him and Orson Pratt that Joseph prophesied to Oliver “a perfect description of what David did on the way” before David arrived. Joseph F. Smith, Statement, written April 25, 1918, typescript, 2, Church History Library, available on *Church History Library*, https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE4987096. They traveled on “an ordinary wagon with two long poles in it at each end across the end gates of the wagon box, and then two boards laid across that for seats on those hickory poles. Joseph and Emma were on the hind seat and Oliver and David on the front seat.” Joseph F. Smith, Statement, 2. The plates were carried to Fayette by Moroni in a bundle on his back. Joseph F. Smith, Statement, 3. “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 8, p. 10, does not include Emma on this trip to Fayette (Waterloo). See also Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 114–15, 197.

85. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 3–4; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 308; *History of the Church*, 1:49. John Whitmer later said that he wrote “sixty pages” (document 104). Gurley, “Synopsis of a Discourse,” 37ob.

a scribe (documents 80, 88). Oliver B. Huntington records in his journal a conversation in 1897 with Sarah (Sally) Heller Conrad, who may have been a cousin of the Whitmers and who was at the Whitmer home during these days. She recalled seeing the men “come down from translating room several times when they looked so exceedingly white and strange that she inquired of Mrs. Whitmer the cause of their unusual appearance” (document 114). She soon embraced the gospel.⁸⁶ An affidavit of Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery also pertains to this period: “I often sat by and saw and heard them translate and write for hours together. Joseph never had a curtain drawn between him and his scribe while he was translating”⁸⁷ (document 115). Concerning the translation in Fayette, David Whitmer reported a time when Joseph was “put out about . . . something that Emma, his wife, had done.” As a result, “he could not translate a single syllable. He went downstairs, out into the orchard and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour—came back to the house, and asked Emma’s forgiveness and then came upstairs where we were and the translation went on all right”⁸⁸ (document 89, also 96, 98). Sometime

At this time, Joseph translated with some aid from a seer stone (documents 84, 87, 94) or the Urim and Thummim (documents 85, 86, 88, 93, 99), though these instruments were not essential (document 100). He used “no manuscript notes or other means” (document 88; see also 41).

86. She married David Edwin Bunnell in the Peter Whitmer home on April 15, 1830, and was the mother of Stephen Bunnell of Provo, Utah. See Oliver B. Huntington, “History of the Life of Oliver B. Huntington,” typescript, 49–50, Perry Special Collections and Church History Library, available on *Church History Library*, https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE5829301; Pearl Bunnell Newell, interview by Carma DeJong Anderson, January 1970, 3–4, Perry Special Collections, provides a similar reminiscence of Sally Conrad; marriage date of Sally Conrad courtesy of Helen Bunnell Weeks of Orem, Utah. See article by Richard L. Anderson, “The House Where the Church Was Organized,” *Improvement Era* 73 (April 1970): 16–25, for full discussion of the one-and-a-half story log house with attic and of the Whitmers and their relatives.

87. Copy contained on obverse of William E. McLellin to “My Dear Friends,” February 1870, Community of Christ Library-Archives; cited in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 233–34.

88. David Whitmer, Statement of September 15, 1882, to William Kelley and G. A. Blakeslee, in *Public Discussion of the Issues between The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and The Church of Christ (Disciples)* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing, 1884), 186, available on *Internet Archive*, <https://>

probably during June 1829, Mary Musselman Whitmer, wife of Peter Whitmer Sr., who had taken on extra work because of the guests, was met by an “old man” who showed her the gold plates.⁸⁹

June 5, 1829. About this day, Joseph began translating the small plates of Nephi, beginning with 1 Nephi 1. About this time, the voice of God was heard in the chamber of Father Whitmer authorizing Joseph and Oliver to ordain each other and others to the office of elder in the Church of Jesus Christ.⁹⁰

June 11, 1829. Before the end of May, Joseph and Oliver had translated all the plates of Mormon and the title page inscribed by Moroni. On June 11, the copyright for the Book of Mormon was secured at the office of the Federal District Court Clerk, Richard R. Lansing. The application contains the title page of the forthcoming book.⁹¹

June 5–14, 1829. Doctrine and Covenants 14, 15, 16 (revelations for David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and Peter Whitmer Jr.) were received around this time; Doctrine and Covenants 18 was then also received by Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer.⁹²

archive.org/details/publicdiscussion00kellrich; also cited in Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 1:131; see also document 89.

89. David Whitmer, as cited in “Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith,” *Deseret Evening News*, November 16, 1878, 1, as cited in Larry C. Porter, “The Peter Whitmer Log Home: Cradle of Mormonism,” in *Religious Educator* 12, no. 3 (2011): 179–80, which gives additional sources. See also Royal Skousen, “Another Account of Mary Whitmer’s Viewing of the Golden Plates,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* (2014): 35–44; and Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 13, 28, 41–43, 50–51, 182, 214–18.

90. “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1,” 27; compare “Journal, December 1841–December 1842,” 200, for the wording “the voice of God”; *History of the Church*, 1:60–61; Porter, “Peter Whitmer Log Home,” 179.

91. The recipient’s (Joseph Smith’s) copy of the copyright document is found in the Church History Library, available as “Copyright for Book of Mormon, 11 June 1829,” Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/copyright-for-book-of-mormon-11-june-1829/1>; and the Library of Congress copy may be seen in Nathaniel Hinckley Wadsworth, “Copyright Laws and the 1830 Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 3 (2006), 97–99, updated in Nathaniel Hinckley Wadsworth, “Securing the Book of Mormon Copyright in 1829,” in *Sustaining the Law: Joseph Smith’s Legal Encounters*, ed. Gordon A. Madsen, Jeffrey N. Walker, and John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2014), 101–2.

92. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 4; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 306–12; *History of the Church*, 1:48–51.



Engraving of Hyrum and Joseph Smith (c. 1840s) by Sutcliffe Maudsley. The Nauvoo Temple appears in the background. Library of Congress.

June 14, 1829. Oliver wrote a letter to Hyrum from Fayette, stating, among other things: “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God” (compare D&C 18:10); “behold the Lord your god . . . suffered the pains of all men that all men might repent and come unto him. . . . behold he commandeth all men . . . every where to repent” (compare 2 Ne. 9:21–23); “that there they may be willing to take upon them the name of Christ for that is the name by which they shall be called at the Last day and if we know not the name by which we are

called I fear” (compare Mosiah 5:9–10); and instructing Hyrum to baptize all men, women, and children over the age of accountability (compare Moro. 8).⁹³

Mid-June 1829. The translation of 2 Nephi continued. John Whitmer “assisted us very much in writing during the remainder of the work” (document 25), and previous to that David Whitmer had offered “his own assistance when convenient.”⁹⁴ Finishing was “slow work, and they could write only a few pages a day” (document 90). Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer, and Peter Whitmer Jr. were baptized

93. Original no longer extant. Copy found in “Letterbook 1,” 5–[6].

94. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 4; “History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2],” 21; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 308, 306; *History of the Church*, 1:49. Zenas Gurley’s interview with John Whitmer, reported in Gurley, “Synopsis of a Discourse,” 370b; John stated “that he had written [as scribe] sixty pages” of the Book of Mormon [about thirty pages of manuscript?]. See also documents 94, 104.

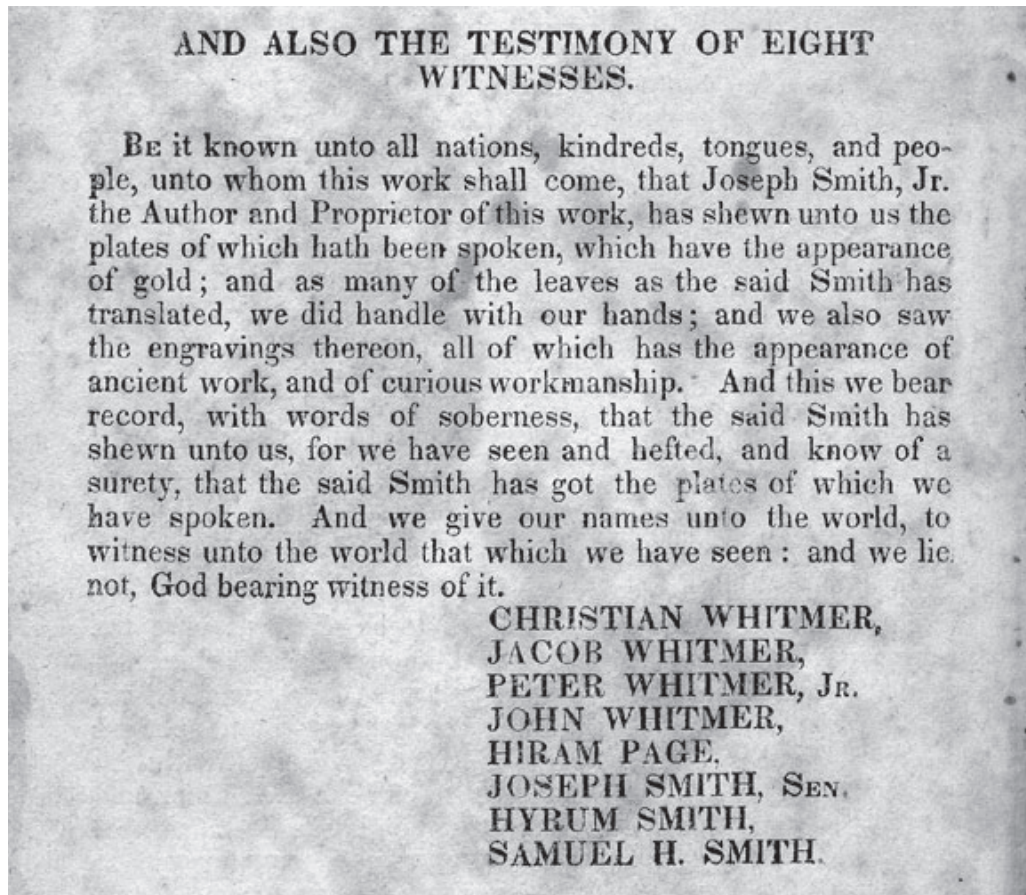
sometime in the middle of June 1829 in Seneca Lake, Fayette township, Seneca County, New York.⁹⁵ Discussions were also held in mid-June “with many from time to time who were willing to hear us, and who desired to find out the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and apparently willing to obey the Gospel, when once fairly convinced and satisfied in their own minds. . . . From this time forth many became believers, and some were baptized whilst we continued to instruct and persuade as many as applied for information.”⁹⁶ A document entitled “Articles of the Church of Christ” was prepared by Oliver Cowdery around this time or later in June 1829.⁹⁷

Around June 23, 1829. In Fayette, the Three Witnesses were shown the plates (D&C 17:1–4; documents 46, 51, 61–65, 72, 75, 139, 158). It

95. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 4; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 312–14; *History of the Church*, 1:51; Doctrine and Covenants 27:12. On January 14, 1885, David Whitmer stated: “Sometime in June 1829 Joseph ordained Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder, and Oliver ordained Joseph to be an Elder in the church of Christ. And during that year Joseph both baptized and ordained me an elder in the church of Christ.” Z. H. Gurley, “Questions asked of David Whitmer at His Home in Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, 1885,” 4, Church History Library. Brigham Young later stated that the first Apostles of this dispensation were Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer. See discussion in Porter, “Prophet’s New York Years,” citing a Smith family prayer and Brigham Young. David Whitmer later maintained that he continued to hold that apostleship. “The Book of Mormon,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 17, 1885, 3, col. 5; cited in Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 179.

96. “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 4; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 312–14; *History of the Church*, 1:51.

97. An early “copy” of the Articles of the Church of Christ initialed by O. C., bearing the date 1829 and discussed by Woodford, “Historical Development,” 1:287–91, is held in Church History Library, available as “Appendix 3: ‘Articles of the Church of Christ,’ June 1829,” on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/appendix-3-articles-of-the-church-of-christ-june-1829/3>. It is unclear of what, if anything, it is a copy, or when the copy or its original was written. It quotes the sacrament prayers in Moroni 4–5 and the sacramental instructions in 3 Nephi 18:28–32 that were translated late in May 1829, and in some other ways the document resembles Doctrine and Covenants 20, but the two documents are not directly connected. Doctrine and Covenants 20 took its basic present form in June 1830. For a full discussion, see Scott H. Faulring, “An Examination of the 1829 ‘Articles of the Church of Christ’ in Relation to Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants,” *BYU Studies* 43, no. 4 (2004): 57–91.



The Testimony of the Eight Witnesses, which appeared at the end of the 1830 first edition of the Book of Mormon. Courtesy Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies.

appears that this manifestation was prompted by the translation of 2 Nephi 27:12,⁹⁸ which reads, “the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the

98. The other possibility is Ether 5:2–4. Ether 5, however, only expressly states that “unto three,” that is, a total of three, “shall they be shown.” 2 Nephi 27, on the other hand, provides that “three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, *besides* him to whom the book shall be delivered” (italics added), and 2 Nephi 27:13–14 refers to the eight witnesses. Since 2 Nephi 27 authorizes more precisely what in fact eventually happened regarding the witnesses, it appears that it was not until that passage was translated that the manifestations to the witnesses ensued. This comports further with the earliest notes on the manuscript history of the Church, discussed above on pages 100–101.

truth of the book and the things therein.” A few days later, around June 29, in Manchester, New York, near the Smith log home, the Eight Witnesses were allowed to see and handle the plates (documents 101, 102). Lucy Mack Smith said that she also, at one point, saw and handled the plates (document 106).

June 26, 1829. The *Wayne Sentinel* published the Book of Mormon title page, perhaps obtaining the text from the federal copyright application. Probably around this time, Martin Harris approached E. B. Grandin to see if he would publish the book, but Grandin declined, considering it financially a “losing speculation.”⁹⁹

July 1, 1829. Before this date the translation was completed. David Whitmer later stated that “the translation at my father’s occupied about one month, that is from June 1st to July 1st, 1829” (document 86). The plates were returned to the angel (document 17).

July 1829. Thurlow Weed, owner-editor of the *Rochester Telegraph*, was approached twice, but he likewise declined to print the book¹⁰⁰ (document 198). Sometime during July 1829, the printer’s manuscript of the Book of Mormon was begun by Oliver Cowdery.

August 25, 1829. Martin Harris mortgaged his farm. Harris promised to deliver the sum of \$3,000 to Grandin within eighteen months. If Harris defaulted, his land was to be “sold at public auction to satisfy

99. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton, 1867), 4, quoted in Kirkham, *New Witness for Christ*, 1:109. John H. Gilbert, “Memorandum made by John H. Gilbert Esq., Sep 8, 1892 Palmyra, N.Y.” typescript, 1, Palmyra King’s Daughters Free Library, Palmyra, N.Y., available on *Church History Library*, https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE5029933, later remembered that Martin Harris approached Grandin twice “in the forepart of June, 1829,” although this seems a little too early. See generally *History of the Church*, 1:71; Davidson and others, *Histories, Volume 1*, 352; “History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1],” 9; see also documents 174, 175, 203.

100. Porter, “Origins of the Church,” 86–87, citing *Life of Thurlow Weed, Including His Autobiography and a Memoir*, ed. Harriet A. Weed, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1884), 1:358–59, available on *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/stream/lifethurlow01weedrich#page/358/mode/2up>. One Rochester publisher did agree to print it. See Bushman, *Beginnings of Mormonism*, 107, citing Tucker, *Origin*, 51–53.

the demand.”¹⁰¹ Around this same time the contract with Grandin for the printing of the Book of Mormon was possibly signed.¹⁰² It was agreed that five thousand copies would be printed, which was an unusually large press run for that day.¹⁰³ Hyrum delivered the first manuscript installment, and typesetting commenced “in August.”¹⁰⁴

Fall 1829. The original typesetter was John H. Gilbert; proofs were printed by J. H. Bortles until December. Grandin then hired Thomas McAuley, a “journeyman pressman.” McAuley and Bortles did the “balance of the press-work” until March 1830.¹⁰⁵ Martin Harris, Hyrum Smith, and Oliver Cowdery visited Grandin’s office frequently during this period; Joseph, returning to Harmony on October 4, came only

101. The mortgage is dated August 25, 1829, signed by Martin alone on August 26, 1829, and was recorded on September 11, 1829 (see documents 126, 203). Martin Harris to Egbert B. Grandin, Indenture, Wayne Co., New York, August 25, 1829, Wayne Co., New York, Mortgage Records, vol. 3, pp. 325–26, microfilm 479,556, U.S. and Canada Record Collection, Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. See also Miner T. Patton, “The Gold That Paid for the Printing of the First Book of Mormon,” unpublished manuscript with copies of documents, August 1983, Sun City, Arizona, with appreciation to Ken Godfrey for this item. See also Gordon A. Madsen, “Martin Harris: Yeoman Farmer, Entrepreneur, Benefactor and Witness” and a full biography of Martin Harris by Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black, both forthcoming.

102. Peter Crawley, “A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (1972): 471. The nature of the contract, however, is uncertain.

103. Gayle G. Ord, “From Golden Plates to Printing Press,” 1972, 11, Church History Library: “A cross sampling of ‘first editions for 138 books published between 1880 and 1882 [still show that] only 28 per cent of these exceeded 1,500 copies. About 15 per cent were 2,500 or more, and the maximum printing’ . . . 6,000 copies—was reserved for one particularly successful book,” quoting Donald Sheehan, *This Was Publishing* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1952), 30.

104. Gilbert, “Memorandum,” 3. John H. Gilbert to F. M. Lyman, October 23, 1887, cited in Kirkham, *New Witness for Christ*, 225; Porter, “Origins of the Church,” 88–89.

105. Gilbert, “Memorandum,” 3; see Ord, “Golden Plates to Printing Press,” 24–43; Richard Lloyd Anderson, “Gold Plates and Printer’s Ink,” *Ensign* 6 (September 1976): 71–76; Wilford C. Wood, comp., *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1958–62), 1: introductory pages.

once for a short visit to Grandin's office.¹⁰⁶ Manuscript pages were hand delivered and retrieved frequently. Oliver "held and looked over the manuscript when most of the proofs were read."¹⁰⁷

November 6, 1829. Oliver wrote a letter to Joseph in Harmony: "The printing goes rather Slow yet as the type founder has been sick but we expect that the type will be on and Mr. Granden still think[s] we <he> will finish printing by the first of feb[r]uary." In a postscript Cowdery noted his progress in preparing the printer's manuscript: "P S I have Just got to alma[']s] commandment to his son in copping the manuscrip," that is, to Alma 36.¹⁰⁸

January 1830. Abner Cole (alias Obediah Dogberry), in his *Palmyra Reflector*, January 2, 13, and 22, printed several extracts of the Book of Mormon¹⁰⁹ from sheets he pilfered at Grandin's printing office (where his own newspaper was printed). This made it necessary for Joseph to return to Palmyra from Harmony and to assert his copyright privileges in order to stop this unauthorized publication of sections of the Book of Mormon.¹¹⁰ The issue was settled by arbitration, and Abner Cole desisted. During that winter, Joseph apparently sent Oliver Cowdery, Hiram Page, Josiah Stowell, and Joseph Knight to Kingston, Ontario, Canada, to try to secure the Book of Mormon copyright in Canada.¹¹¹

January 16, 1830. Joseph Smith Jr. entered into an agreement with Martin Harris which reads:

106. Joseph Smith, "Letter to Oliver Cowdery, 22 October 1829," on Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-oliver-cowdery-22-october-1829/1>; Gilbert, "Memorandum," 2–3, 4.

107. Gilbert, "Memorandum," 3.

108. "Letterbook 1," 8. Original letter not extant—copy is in Joseph's handwriting and follows his own spelling and punctuation.

109. 1 Nephi 1:1–2:3; 2:4–15; and Alma 43:22–40, respectively.

110. Wadsworth, "Copyright Laws and the 1830 Book of Mormon," 86–91; Russell Rich, "The Dogberry Papers and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no. 3 (1970), 319–20. Kirkham, *New Witness for Christ*, 271, confuses the dates and contents.

111. Stephen Kent Ehat, "'Securing' the Prophet's Copyright in the Book of Mormon: Historical and Legal Context for the So-called Canadian Copyright Revelation," *BYU Studies* 50, no. 2 (2011): 4–70.



Restoration of the Grandin print shop, where the Book of Mormon was printed. Courtesy John W. Welch.

I hereby agree that Martin Harris shall have an equal privilege with me & my friends of selling the Book of Mormon of the Edition now printing by Egbert B Grandin until enough of them shall be sold to pay for the printing of the same or until such times as the said Grandin shall be paid for the printing the aforesaid Books or copies[.]

Manchester January the 16th 1830—

/s/ Joseph Smith Jr

Witness /s/ Oliver H P Cowdery.¹¹²

February 12, 1830. Lucius Fenn of Covert, Seneca County, New York, wrote to Birdseye Bronson in Winchester, Connecticut, that

112. “Agreement with Martin Harris, 16 January 1830,” on Church Historian’s Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/agreement-with-martin-harris-16-january-1830/1>; “Note on the sale of the book of Mormon, now printed,” January 16, 1830, Simon Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

the publication of the Book of Mormon was widely awaited; it was expected to tell when “the Millennium day . . . is a goeing to take place” (document 124). About this time, according to David Whitmer, Joseph gave the seer stone to Oliver Cowdery (document 98).

March 26, 1830. The printing was finished, and the book was offered for sale to the public on March 26, 1830, and announced in the *Wayne Sentinel*. After printing the complete title page of the Book of Mormon, the newspaper notice continued: “The above work, containing about 600 pages, large Duodecimos, is now for sale, wholesale and retail, at the Palmyra Book Store, by Howard & Grandin.”¹¹³ Prices at Grandin’s Bookstore seem to have ranged from \$1.25 to \$1.75 per book.¹¹⁴

April 6, 1830. The Church of Christ was organized. Affirmations were given that the Book of Mormon was translated by the power of God, that by repenting, humbling himself, and having faith, Joseph received the power to translate (documents 9 and 10). In the ensuing years, Joseph described and bore testimony of the translation process on several occasions (see documents 16–26, 28–30, 32–35, 37).

Conclusion

The question can now be answered, How long did it take for Joseph Smith to translate the Book of Mormon as it was published in 1830? Assuming that he resumed translating on April 7, 1829, “where he had left off” at the beginning of King Benjamin’s reign, the translation of Mosiah 1 to the title page (about 201,143 words in Royal Skousen’s *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text*,¹¹⁵ or about 75 percent of the book, which is 390 pages in the current edition, including the “few pages”

113. “The Book of Mormon,” *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, N.Y.), March 26, 1830, available on “19th-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections*, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/BOMP/id/219>.

114. Porter, “Prophet’s New York Years.” Hyrum sold copies to missionaries for \$1.25, who sold them for about \$2.50. Hyrum Smith, *Diaries [and Account Book] 1831–1844*, 35, 37–38, Church History Library.

115. This data was generated by Monte Shelley based on the text of the Book of Mormon found in Royal Skousen, *The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

translated in March) took place from April 7 to the end of May. Subtracting time to eat, to sleep, to seek employment to earn money for supplies, to restore the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, to make at least one (and possibly two) trips to Colesville, to baptize Hyrum and Samuel, to write three letters to David Whitmer, to receive Doctrine and Covenants sections 6 through 13, and to worry about rising persecution, there would seem to be at most 53 possible translating days in this window of time. This would mean that Joseph translated and Oliver wrote down on average 7.4 present Book of Mormon pages per day, working “from morning till night” (document 91).

The translation of 1 Nephi to 2 Nephi 27 (about 100 pages) appears to have taken at most 14 days in June, since one must allow most of the first week of June for the move from Harmony to Fayette, some time to acquire the copyright on June 11, several days for preaching and baptizing near Fayette, and one must get at least to 2 Nephi 11:3 and probably to 27:12 before the Three Witnesses see the plates around June 20. This again would be about 7 pages per day. During this time, Doctrine and Covenants sections 14 through 18 were also received and written.

The last block of translation (about 33 pages) could have taken about 7 days, with Joseph and Oliver working a little slower than their regular translating pace. Assuming the last 33 pages took about 7 days’ time, whenever in the end of June those days may have been finished, the total approximate maximum time involved in translating the entire text can be estimated at 74 days (53 plus 14 plus 7), averaging about 8 pages per day overall.

By any standard, the pace of this sustained productivity was blistering. Consider producing all King Benjamin’s speech—final copy, from start to finish (some 13 pages long, Mosiah 1–6)—in less than a day and a half. This rate alone is staggering.¹¹⁶ As Terryl Givens

116. Discussed further in John W. Welch, “How Long Did It Take Joseph Smith to Translate the Book of Mormon?” *Ensign* 18 (January 1988): 46–47; Neal A. Maxwell, “By the Gift and Power of God,” *Ensign* 27 (January 1997): 36–41, reprinted in *Echoes and Evidences of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and others (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 1–15. It is also significant that the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon “gives no aid or comfort” to those who have sought alternative explanations to account for the existence of the Book of Mormon; the manuscript “shows no evidence” of developmental

concludes, “Joseph and Oliver managed a truly prodigious rate of translation during the months of April and May—over 3,500 original words a day essentially set down indelibly as they went.”¹¹⁷ On top of all else that was going on during these weeks, this must have been quite a time. As Oliver Cowdery said, “These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration* of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated . . . ‘The book of Mormon’”¹¹⁸ (document 70).

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research, of revision and rethinking, or rewriting or reformulation. John W. Welch, “What the Original Book of Mormon Manuscript Is Not,” in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), 293–95.

117. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 37.

118. Cowdery, “Letter I,” 14.

Estimated Day-by-Day Translation in 1829

<i>Date (1829)</i>	<i>Possible Chapters Translated</i>	<i>Event</i>
March	Mosiah 1	A few pages translated. The work of translation resumed where it left off after loss of the 116 pages in 1828.
April 5 Sun.		Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania.*
6		Joseph purchased property from Emma's father.* About this time, D&C 6 was received, directed to Oliver Cowdery as he began serving as Joseph Smith's scribe.
7	Mosiah 2-4	Oliver began working as Joseph's scribe.*
8	Mosiah 5-7	
9	Mosiah 8-11	About this time, D&C 8 was received, directed to Oliver about the power to translate. Compare Mosiah 8:11-16, speaking of King Mosiah's power to translate.
10	Mosiah 12-16	
11	Mosiah 17-20	
12 Sun.	Mosiah 21-25	About this time, Oliver wrote a letter to David Whitmer.
13	Mosiah 26-28	
14	Mosiah 29 and Alma 1-2	
15	Alma 3-6	
16	Alma 7-10	
17	Alma 11-13	
18	Alma 14-17	
19 Sun.	Alma 18-19	About this time, Oliver wrote a second letter to David Whitmer.
20	Alma 20-23	
21	Alma 24-26	
22	Alma 27-30	
23	Alma 31-33	
24	Alma 34-36	
25	Alma 37-38	

April 26 Alma 39–40
Sun.

About this time, D&C 9 was received (compare D&C 9:14, “a hair of your head shall not be lost, and you shall be lifted up at the last day,” with Alma 11:44 or 40:23).

27 Alma 41–43

28 Alma 44–45

29 Alma 46–48

30 Alma 49–51

May 1 Alma 52–54

2 Alma 55–57

3 Sun. Alma 58–61

4 Alma 62–63 and
Helaman 1

5 Helaman 2–4

6 Helaman 5–7

7 Helaman 8–10

8 Helaman 11–13

9 Helaman 14–16

10 Sun. 3 Nephi 1–3

11 3 Nephi 4–6

12 3 Nephi 7–10

13 3 Nephi 11–12

14 3 Nephi 13–15

15 3 Nephi 16–18

Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood.*

At this time, Joseph and Oliver went into the nearby woods to pray about baptism for the remission of sins, which they had found mentioned in the translation, presumably in 3 Nephi 11:21–12:2.

16 3 Nephi 19–21

17 Sun. 3 Nephi 22–23

About this time, Oliver wrote a third letter to David Whitmer.

18

About this time, Joseph and Oliver traveled 30 miles to Colesville, New York.

19

Joseph and Oliver returned 30 miles from Colesville. Perhaps at this time, Peter, James, and John appeared to restore the higher priesthood and the power to give the gift of the Holy Ghost, mentioned in 3 Nephi 18:36–38.

20 3 Nephi 24–27

May 21	3 Nephi 28–30 and 4 Nephi	About this time, D&C 7 may have been received, speaking about John not tasting death. Compare material in the account about the Three Nephites in 3 Nephi 28:1 (“what desirest thou?” D&C 7:1); 28:9 (“bring souls,” 7:2); 28:2 (“speedily,” 7:4); 28:7 (“never taste death,” “power over death” in 7:2).
22	Mormon 1–4	
23	Mormon 5–7	
24 Sun.	Mormon 8–9	
25	Ether 1–3	Samuel Smith was baptized.*
26	Ether 4–7	
27	Ether 8–10	
28	Ether 11–12	Near this date, Hyrum Smith and David Whitmer arrived in Harmony, Pennsylvania.
29	Ether 13–15 and Moroni 1–4	
30	Moroni 5–8	About at this point, D&C 12 was received, directed to Joseph Knight Sr. (compare 12:8, “full of love,” “faith, hope and charity,” with Mosiah 3:19; Ether 12:28; Moro. 7:1; 8:14).
31 Sun.	Moroni 9–10 and title page*	About this time, D&C 11 was revealed to Hyrum. Compare D&C 11:16 (“my gospel”), and 11:25 (“deny not”) with 3 Ne. 27:21 and Moro. 10:8.
June 1		Joseph and Oliver packed and moved from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York.*
2		Travel to Fayette.
3		Travel to Fayette.
4		Travel to Fayette and unpack. About this time, D&C 10 was finalized, telling Joseph to translate the plates of Nephi (D&C 10:41).
5	Translation resumes with 1 Nephi 1–2	About this time, the voice was heard in Father Whitmer’s chamber authorizing Joseph and Oliver to be ordained elders.
6	1 Nephi 3–6	
7 Sun.	1 Nephi 7–9	About this time, John and Peter Whitmer Sr. were baptized, and D&C 15 and 16 were received.

June 8	1 Nephi 10–12	About this time, D&C 14 was given for David Whitmer.
9	1 Nephi 13–16	About this time, D&C 18 was received (compare 18:20, “church of the devil,” with 1 Ne. 14:10).
10	1 Nephi 17–19	
11		Copyright form was filed in United States District Court for the Northern District of New York, using the full title page as the “title” of the book on the copyright form.*
12	1 Nephi 20–22	
13	2 Nephi 1–3	
14 Sun.		Oliver wrote to Hyrum.* His letter used some words similar to those in 2 Ne. 9:21–23; Mosiah 5:9–10; and Moro. 8. About this time, David and Peter Whitmer Jr. were baptized.
15	2 Nephi 4–6	
16	2 Nephi 7–9	
17	2 Nephi 10–13	
18	2 Nephi 14–19	
19	2 Nephi 20–24	
20	2 Nephi 25–27	
21 Sun.		About this time, Oliver Cowdery composed the “Articles of the Church of Christ.” This document quotes extensively, verbatim, from the Original Manuscript of 3 Ne. 9:15–16, 18; 11:23–27, 32, 39–40; 18:22, 28–33; 27:8–10, 20; Moro. 3:1–4; 4:1–2; 5:1–2; 6:6; and also from D&C 18:4, 22–25, 31, 34.
22	2 Nephi 28–31	About this time, D&C 17 was received, authorizing Oliver, David, and Martin to obtain a view of the plates (17:2; compare 2 Ne. 27:12).
23	2 Nephi 32–33	About this time, the manifestation of Moroni was given to the Three Witnesses, as prompted by the translation of 2 Ne. 27:12–13.
24	Jacob 1–3	
25	Jacob 4–5	
26	Jacob 6–7	
27	Enos and Jarom	

June 28 Omni and
Sun. Words of Mormon

29

In Manchester, New York.* About this time, the Eight Witnesses were shown the plates.

30

By this date, the translation was finished.* About this time, the testimonies of the Three and the Eight Witnesses were written.

July

About this time, the preface to the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon was written. It uses at least nine phrases found in the title page or in D&C 10.

***Bolded texts give historically documentable details.** For historical documentation, see pp. 85–118.

All other dates are estimates, assuming a relatively consistent rate of translation. Royal Skousen, The Book of Mormon: The Earliest Text, has 269,510 words in the original Book of Mormon text. The number of days allotted for the translation of each book in the Book of Mormon corresponds proportionally with the percentage of total words contained in each book, except for Sundays, for which fewer words were counted.

Large Plates

	words	percent
Mosiah	31,348	11.6
Alma	85,753	31.9
Helaman	20,650	7.7
3 Nephi	28,801	10.7
4 Nephi	1,980	0.7
Mormon	9,483	3.5
Ether	16,720	6.2
Moroni	6,140	2.3
Title Page	268	0.1

Small Plates

	words	percent
1 Nephi	25,441	9.4
2 Nephi	29,531	11.0
Jacob	9,212	3.4
Enos	1,177	0.4
Jarom	737	0.3
Omni	1,406	0.5
Words of Mormon	863	0.3

Maximum number of possible days available for the translation of the Book of Mormon from April 7 to June 30:

Mosiah–Moroni:	53 days
1 Nephi–Words of Mormon:	21 days
Total:	<u>74 days</u>