



Vermont Conference Draws Record Attendance

The words of one conference attender, "It just doesn't get better than this" express the sentiments of many of the attendees at the Killington, Vermont conference. In recognition of the bicentennial of Joseph Smith's birth, the conference drew 602 people. This was a record for a conference away from Utah's Wasatch front, and just about equaled the count for the Provo Conference in 2004. In addition to the celebration of the birth of Joseph Smith, the conference also provided an opportunity to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Mormon History Association in December 1965. (For a detailed report on the conference please turn to pages 4-7.)

Exciting Changes

During the conference it was announced that the third issue of the *Journal* is scheduled for publication during 2005. Rather than receive the *Journal* in April and October, the format will be to publish in April, July and October. Watch for the coming summer issue.

It was also announced that the *Journal* index is scheduled to go on line at www.mhahome.org this summer and a hard copy will be sent to all members this fall with the October issue of the *Journal*. The digitation of all past issues of the *Journal* is planned to begin this fall and by next year, an MHA member will be able to go online and look at any past issue or do a complete word or topic search. Watch for more details as this activity unfolds.

To support these actions, a modest increase in membership fees is needed. Our current schedule has been in place

for four years and the ever increasing costs of printing and administration require this adjustment. This increase will go into effect for the 2006 year. The new schedule will be as follows:

Individual	\$45.00
Joint/w spouse	\$55.00
Student	\$20.00
Institution	\$55.00
Sustaining	\$125.00
Patron	\$250.00
Donor	\$500.00

MHA Presidency Changes Hands



MHA President, Philip L. Barlow presents a plaque to retiring President, Donald Q. Cannon

During its annual business meeting, Philip L. Barlow was elected president of MHA. Phil is Professor of Theological Studies at Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana. He is already working diligently on the 2006 Casper Wyoming conference and the other duties required of the president of this organization.

All MHA members extend their gratitude to Don Cannon who has been a thoughtful and active president. His leadership made the Vermont conference a great success.

We also extend appreciation, for all their good works, to retiring council members Maurine Carr Ward and Lola Van Wagenen.

Ronald K. Esplin was chosen as President Elect for the year 2005-2006.

New council members who were elected are:
Sherilyn Cox Bennion, Salt Lake City, Utah.
Ronald O. Barney, Kaysville, Utah.





*Mormon History
Association*

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President-Elect

Ronald K. Esplin

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Published quarterly by the
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announcements, calls for
papers, and letters to
Larry & Alene King

Volume 40
No. 3

An Anniversary Thought

You can change the past.
Not all MHA members will be startled by this assertion. As a younger man, however, I was stirred to conclude, while reading Lowell Bennion one evening, that one can change the past. If this were true, I further reasoned, one could take control of one's fate in ways that were, to me, new.

Sometimes I introduce this concept during a course I teach at Hanover College: "Theological Responses to Evil and Human Suffering." After a dreadful but necessary grapple with global and personal agonies in utter disproportion to reasonable explanation, we explore theological responses. Some are crafted by professional theologians, some

we construct ourselves. Somewhere in there I may raise the possibility that we have power to change the past. The students' faces imply a range of reactions: confusion—what is this guy talking about?; an occasional glint of anticipation and possibility, as if magic might be legitimate; and a large group of condescending smiles from heads unwilling to take my inquiry seriously. "Well, you can change your interpretation of the past," they say, "and you can bring new facts to your knowledge of the past, but you cannot change what happened in the past."

Then I may ask them: "What other meaningful past do you have other than the one you carry in your head? Is it not true that the way you interpret and make choices in the present depends crucially on your map of the past—the highly selective and highly interpretive thing we call memory, which carries some portion of your personal experience as well as your understanding of people and circumstances you have learned of? So the only functional past you have is the one you have interpreted. For example, you may not be able to alter the reality that, decades ago, a war occurred in Vietnam. Yet the only enduring thing that matters about that war is its meaning—and this is debated, remains up for grabs. Change your (honest) interpretation, and you change the only past that matters."

All this, of course, is only part of the truth. As we later amend things, our classroom discussion acknowledges that we are influenced by countless layers of the past that we may know nothing about. In the end, I want my students to consider that while they cannot control the past, they can and do affect it—that is, its meaning, the part of it that matters. I want them to understand that knowledge and interpretations of the past are not trivial matters. To read them one way rather than another is to alter the context in which we see our present, to alter our consciousness, to change the choices we make, to change who we become. The stakes, in short, are high. To study history is not merely to stir the ashes of the past or to be charmed by antique ways. To study history is to condition who we are.

Forty years ago—a biblical generation—a group of pioneers gathered to form the Mormon History Association. They were far-sighted both backward and forward. They dedicated the Association to the proposition that Mormon history is consequential, both for Mormons and for interested others. They established avenues, still with us, for its disciplined, sustained, debated, and collaborative study. Ten of these pioneers were with us at the annual meeting this past May in Killington, Vermont.* Join me in offering them, as well as those who could not be with us, honor and thanks.

* **C. Blythe Ahlstrom**
James B. Allen
Davis Bitton
Richard L. Bushman
Richard O. Cowan

Klaus J. Hansen
B. Carmon Hardy
G. Wesley Johnson
Armand L. Mauss
Jan Shippis



Philip L. Barlow
MHA President

Phil Barlow

CASPER CONFERENCE SLATED FOR MAY 2006

If you have not done so, you will want to make plans now to attend the Casper, Wyoming conference, scheduled for May 25-28, 2006. Come and celebrate the sesquicentennial of the Mormon Handcart companies. Visit Independence rock to see if your ancestors left a record of their personal graffiti; experience Rock Creek where the Willy handcart company was stranded; see what all the ruckus is about over Martin's Cove; and at the new National Historic Trails Interpretive center learn about the convergence of the many national and historic trails (Mormon, Oregon, California and Pony Express) through Casper. Besides the traditional days of papers and plenary sessions, a pre-conference tour is scheduled for Thursday and a post conference tour is under consideration. The conference will be located at the Casper's Parkway Plaza Hotel and Conference Center. A block of rooms has been set aside.

MHA Call for Papers – Casper, Wyoming

During May 25-28, 2006, the Mormon History Association will gather in historic Casper – the first time the organization will have held its annual meeting in Wyoming. The Program Committee welcomes proposals on a broad array of topics, especially those showing promise of innovative approaches to the Mormon past. The committee particularly solicits proposals exploring the Conference theme: **Centers and Peripheries**.

Recent scholarship has eroded the metaphor of a “mainstream” American religious history (formerly conceived largely as Puritanism and its legacy). This development is among the reasons that Mormonism has assumed a more prominent place among scholars of religion across the nation. The conference theme is an invitation to consider and reconsider the realities, the perceptions, the concepts, and the relations among various centers and peripheries – construed spatially or metaphorically – in Mormon history. This might, for example, include new attention to established, competing, or shifting geographical centers and outposts, as well as life on the trails between them. (2006 is the sesquicentennial of the Willie and Martin handcart companies.)

By contrast, “Centers and Peripheries” might be thought of in social terms, as in, for instance, gender, race, or family relations. Or the theme might be approached through theological frameworks of perceived and evolving orthodoxies and heresies, or in organizational contexts considering the denominational heirs of Joseph Smith's revelations and ini-

tiatives. Both in former and more contemporary times, the theme might prompt exploration of the relation of the Restoration churches in the U. S. with those abroad. It might also be thought of in terms of main currents and competing eddies in the historiographical stream: what has been, and what in the future should be, the central thrust of Mormon history? Perhaps, as with American religious history generally, questions should be posed about the very notion of centers and peripheries in several of these areas.

Within the framework of this theme, MHA is actively seeking proposals for the conference. Each year MHA receives a growing number of proposals for conference papers, and the Program Committee therefore prefers full panels of three papers and a commentator. Single paper proposals, however, are still welcome. For all proposals, please attach the Proposal Form (available at www.mhahome.org) to your document. Proposals that do not address the theme explicitly will also be considered. The deadline for all proposals is Oct. 1, 2005.

Proposals should be mailed to the Program Committee Chair, Michael N. Landon, Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, 50 East North Temple Street, 2EW, Salt Lake City, UT 84150. Electronic proposals may also be sent, by the deadline, to landonmn@ldschurch.org. Updated information about the process will be available on the MHA website. We expect notifications of acceptance or rejection to be mailed by January 1, 2006.

2006 MHA PROGRAM COMMITTEE

- Michael N. Landon, Chair
- Peter DeLafosse
- William G. Hartley
- Tom Kimball
- Sara Patterson
- Jennifer Reeder
- Barbara Walden
- Archivist, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, UT
- University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT
- Brigham Young University, Provo, UT
- Signature Books, Salt Lake City, UT
- Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, CA
- New York University, NY
- Kirtland Temple Historic Center, Kirtland, OH

Vermont Conference Report

WHEN HISTORIANS GATHER

By *Davis Bitton*

JoAn and I have just attended the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association in Killington, Vermont. Before describing this meeting, let us review the history of historical associations.

As part of the seventeenth-century scientific revolution in Europe, scholars found it advantageous to organize. The Royal Society of London was the first and greatest, but not the only, of the new organizations. In the Society's transactions, articles were published by contributors from near and far. If you were a scientist, professional or amateur, you would probably want to keep up with the activities of others by studying the latest reports of findings from Scotland, from France, from Poland. Scientists engaged in similar research could correspond with each other.

Thus was set in motion a process by which the physical sciences organized themselves. As time went on, separate organizations were established for biologists, astronomers, zoologists, and many others, proliferating in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries until now hundreds of such organizations exist.

The layman may not know that other disciplines also organized themselves, including history. At first these took the form of antiquarian societies, often regional or local, and their number grew in all European countries. Then national historical societies appeared and with the professionalization and specialization that characterized the discipline from the end of the nineteenth century through the twentieth, the number of historical societies, like their scientific counterparts multiplied.

When the Mor-

mon History Association was organized at San Francisco in 1965, it was simply one manifestation of the founding of new historical societies that was occurring nationally and internationally. But those of us who participated in the organization were excited. We felt we were doing something that would have lasting importance.

As envisioned by its founders, the Mormon History Association would promote the cause of research, writing, and disseminating Mormon history. Not sponsored by the LDS Church or by a university, it would welcome all those, church members or not, who were pursuing historical research in Mormon history or who were just interested in learning. Meetings would be held and papers presented and critiqued. The MHA would not, we hoped, become a vehicle for anti-Mormons, but neither would it serve as a proselytizing tool. Professional standards would be insisted upon. Leonard Arrington, Eugene Campbell, Richard Poll, S. George Ellsworth—those serving as presidents for the first few years were the deans of Mormon historical studies, respected scholars in their own right.

Historians from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ) joined in, participated in giving papers, served as officers in the Association, and even presided as president. Non-Mormon scholars interested in Mormon history also joined in and made valuable contributions. Lasting friendships were formed.

Can it be that forty years have passed since the foundation? Some leading participants have died, many new historians and buffs have joined, and a periodical, *Journal of Mormon History*, is now published three times a year.



Cutting the 40th Anniversary Cake



**Governor and Mrs. James Douglas
State of Vermont**



Frederic Chrislip and Paul Griswold from Oneanta, New York.

The days when MHA meetings consisted of one session or two or three sequential sessions are over. I think fondly of those days when you could hear every paper presented, and when the group was small enough to allow forming acquaintanceship with all who attended the meetings. Just as well pine for the old five and dime store or the corner drug store as for such a simple, intimate association. Better to enjoy the lively, booming MHA of the present with its multiple concurrent sessions.

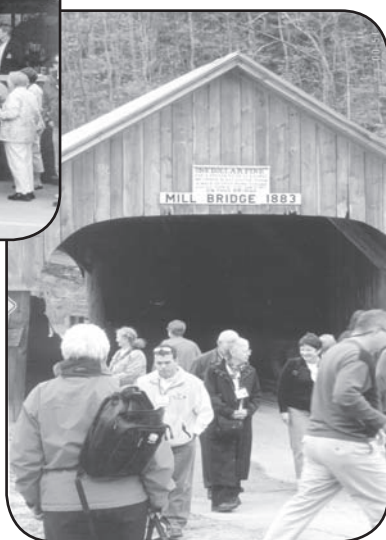
At the meeting this year in Vermont, about six hundred people attended. A bus tour was provided for those who came early. Another bus tour on Friday afternoon took almost everyone to Royalton, Tunbridge, of course Sharon, the birthplace of Joseph Smith, and other places whose names resonate in the early history of the Smith family. The verdure seemed to extend forever through the hilly country. Beautiful, yes, but one can imagine how difficult it might be to make a living from the soil alone.

I cannot give an adequate description of the richness of the meetings without listing every session and every paper. Since I did not attend all of these sessions, I can only offer examples, but they may help to provide



a sense of the electricity in the air.

Two of the sessions were devoted to music. One featured songs from the 1844 Bellows Falls hymnal, beautifully performed by



The other focused on hymns penned by Eliza R. Snow. Intelligent commentary placed her works in a context, recognized their frequent lapses, but also praised those that achieved excellence. LDS students and academics from the Boston area sang now forgotten songs. Finally, commenting on the previous speakers were Tona Hangen, of Brandeis University, and the renowned Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, of Harvard University. What a feast! Where else, I asked myself, could one have this experience?

An example of the wide variety of presentations was Bryher Pennells, an experienced school teacher from Kent, England. Having played a significant role in providing materials on Mormon history for the English school system, she gave examples of how the subject is treated there. One had to wonder how many American students could intelligently respond to the essay questions used there.

Following what has now become the standard procedure, an invited scholar with expertise in American religious history, this time Charles L. Cohen, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, gave an insightful address on the construction of Mormon identity linked to the house of Israel. At a luncheon meeting our speaker was J. Kevin Graffagnino, director of the Vermont Historical Society.

Awards were bestowed for best book, best article, best paper by a student, best documentary work, and others. One way of encouraging serious work in Mormon history is to recognize excellence.

An unexpected treat at the Saturday dinner meeting was the appearance of Vermont's governor and first lady. The governor greeted us, recognized the importance of Vermont to the rise of Mormonism, and encouraged us to return. MHA president Donald Q. Cannon delivered the annual presidential address on "Joseph Smith and the Globalization of Mormonism."

Naturally, since 2005 is the bicentennial of Joseph Smith's





birth, many participants spoke of him. I attended a session where Mark McConkie and Joseph Fielding McConkie spoke, the former on Joseph's unusual but effective leadership style ("making correct principles work"), the latter on teachings that were strikingly different from the other religions of the time but that were greeted enthusiastically by the Saints.

At a plenary session, Richard L. Bushman's paper on "The Inner Joseph Smith" gave an insightful view of the dynamics between the Prophet and his father. We are all looking forward to the appearance in the fall of Richard's full-scale biography, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*.

If other attendees at the convention were like me, they were frustrated by the necessity of choosing between equally enticing talks offered concurrently during the same hour. Long ago I learned to think of these gatherings as smorgasbords. You pick and choose. If one paper does not interest you or rubs you the wrong way, simply choose something else. Some of the papers have been summarized by Carrie Moore, reporter for the *Deseret Morning News*. No doubt many of them will eventually be published.



Elder Jensen spoke feelingly about the blessings he had experienced in his own life, thanks to teachings and principles restored by Joseph Smith.

If participating in some of the ongoing historical research on Mormon history entices you, you might consider joining

the MHA. Dues are reasonable, and in return you receive the issues of the *Journal of Mormon History*. Many who do not find it possible to attend the conventions like to "keep up" with historical scholarship by joining the Association. Details can be found at the official website—www.mhahome.org.

Another organization doing significant work is the Mormon Historic Sites foundation. Not content with words alone, this organization has played a central role in the mapping, refurbishing, and restoration of Mormon historic sites, including Palmyra, Kirtland, and in Salt Lake City This is the Place Heritage Park and Deseret Village. A valuable benefit of membership is receiving the periodical *Mormon Historical Studies*, every issue of which contains at least one article of great interest.

Not everyone is interested in history. But those who enjoy history and the expansion of awareness its study produces have little reason to complain about an insufficiency of articles and books. In my experience, one of the most satisfying

ways of keeping up with the ferment of ongoing research is to join historical associations, read their journals, and when possible attend their conventions.

Published 2005 in Meridian Magazine. www.meridian-magazine.com/



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Your Executive Directors are seeking volunteers to help with some secretarial duties, or, as Larry says, "some pick and shovel work." We would be willing to mail or email the information on tasks that need to be done.

If you have a computer, scanner, and OCR capabilities, and are willing to help it would be greatly appreciated. Call us at 888-642-3678; email to klarry@comcast.net; or write to Larry and Alene King, 581 South 630 East, Orem, UT 84097.

MHA 2005 Book and Article Awards

(Awards given for work published in 2004)

THE MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION PRESENTS THE FOLLOWING AWARDS EACH YEAR TO ENCOURAGE AND FOSTER THE HIGHEST IDEALS IN SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION

LEONARD J. ARRINGTON AWARD

DONALD L. ENDERS
LDS Museum of Church History & Art

MHA BEST BOOK AWARD - \$1,500

KATHLEEN FLAKE
The Politics of American Religious Identity, The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot
North Carolina University Press



Don Enders receiving award from Jim Allen

SMITH-PETTIT BEST FIRST BOOK AWARD - \$1,000

VAL D. RUST
Early Mormon Converts and Their Colonial Ancestors
University of Illinois Press

TURNER-BERGERA BEST BIOGRAPHY AWARD - \$1,000

DAN VOGEL
Joseph Smith, the Making of a Prophet
Signature Books

CHRISTENSEN BEST DOCUMENTARY AWARD - \$700

JOHN SILLITO
History's Apprentice, The Diaries of B.H. Roberts, 1880-1898
Signature Books

THOMAS RICE KING BEST FAMILY OR COMMUNITY HISTORY AWARD - \$500

STEPHEN L. PRINCE
Gathering in Harmony, A Saga of Southern Utah Families, Their Roots and Pioneering Heritage, and the Tale of Antone Prince, Sheriff of Washington County
Arthur H. Clark Company

T. EDGAR LYON BEST ARTICLE OF YEAR AWARD - \$300

RONALD W. WALKER
"Grant's Watershed: Succession in the Presidency, 1887-1889,"
BYU Studies 43, no. 2 (2004), 195-229.

J. TALMAGE JONES AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE - \$500

MARY (POLLY) AIRD
(\$250)

"'You Nasty Apostates, Clear Out!': Reasons for Disaffection in the Late 1850s"
Journal of Mormon History, vol. 30, no. 2 (Fall 2004), 129-207



Polly Aird receiving award from Ron Barney

ROGER D. LAUNIUS
(\$250)

"'Mormon Origins: The Church in New York and Ohio,' an Essay published in *Excavating Mormon Pasts: The New Historiography of the Last Half Century*
Greg Kofford Books



Jacob Olmstead receiving award from Alex Baugh

JUANITA BROOKS BEST GRADUATE PAPER - \$400

JACOB OLMSTEAD
Brigham Young University
"The Mormon Hierarchy and the MX"

JUANITA BROOKS BEST UNDERGRADUATE PAPER - \$300

STEPHEN BIGGS
Brigham Young University
"Mormon Missionaries in Napoleon III's France: The French Mission, 1850-1864"

SPECIAL CITATION

JAMES CROOKS
For his work in indexing the *Journal of Mormon History*



Howard Lamar receiving award from Lola Van Wagenen

THOMAS L. KANE AWARD

HOWARD LAMAR

President Emeritus and Sterling Professor of History Emeritus at Yale University

For leading the way in providing context through which members of the LDS Church and others might understand the development of the Latter-day Saints experience. He has done this through nearly sixty years of published scholarship, the mentoring of more than sixty PhD candidates – LDS members as well as others, who are now at the forefront of their field – and the presidency of both the Western History Association and Yale University.

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Announcements

GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCE

The 37th annual BYU Genealogy and Family History Conference will be held July 26-29, 2005, in the BYU Conference Center. Eight information tracks will be available, Beginning Family History, Family History Center Support, Computers, Europe/Noridic Research, British Research, U.S. Research, Methodology, and Publishing Family Histories. We invite you to attend the conference to build and strengthen your family ties through genealogy and family history. Keep in mind that limited housing is available.

The Conference Center is located at 770 East University Parkway, Provo, Utah. For more information on this conference visit our Conference Website at: <http://genealogyconferences.byu.edu>.

JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

JWHA will convene for its 2005 Annual Meeting at the Renaissance Springfield Hotel in Springfield, Illinois, September 29-October 2. In the opening session held in the Old State Capitol Building Sterling McMurrin Lecturer Ronald G. Numbers, Hilldale, and William Coleman Professor of the History of Science and Medicine at the University of Wisconsin, will compare Joseph Smith, Jr. with American Prophetesses Ellen G. White and Mary Baker Eddy. Other plenary sessions in this conference focused on Joseph Smith and His Complex Legacy, will feature a lecture by Richard L. Bushman, JWHA's 2005 Distinguished Senior Scholar; a "Saints and the Cinema" Dinner with Richard Dutcher; and the association's traditional annual banquet. "Prophets and Prophets in the Mormon Tradition(s)" is the topic Jan Shippis has chosen for her Presidential Address.

All are urged to call (217) 544-8800 to reserve hotel rooms at \$80 a night for up to four people and to send an e-mail to JWHA Executive Secretary Ken Mulliken <MullikenK@stmary.edu> to register for this exceptional conference.

OREGON CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION

OCTA'S 2005 convention will be held from Sunday, August 14th to Sunday, August 21st in Salt Lake City, at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel, 150 West 500 South Salt Lake City, Utah 84101.

Pre-convention tours will be held on August 14-15. OCTA's board meeting and some workshops will be held on August 16th. August 17th and 19th will feature workshops, papers and banquets, and August 18th and 20th will largely consist of tours, with the extremely fun BBQ that helps conclude the convention, on the 20th. August 21st will wrap up the convention with post-convention tours.

The entire program, including registration details and lodging, can be found at <http://www.utaherosroads.org/OCTA2005/>. Materials may also be requested by calling OCTA headquarters at 888-811-6282.

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH -- DEAN MAY FELLOWSHIP

The Department of History at the University of Utah is seeking to honor the late Professor Dean May by establishing a graduate student fellowship in his honor. May, who suffered a fatal heart attack on graduation day 2003, taught several generations of students in American, U.S. West, and Utah history during his nearly thirty years at the University. May wrote four books and more than 40 articles that sought to highlight the Mormon experience in American history.

The fellowship will support the History Department's most promising student in Utah or Western History. Initially it will pay \$15,000 plus tuition, making it one of the most prestigious and generous fellowships in the College of Humanities. Approximately halfway to the goal of \$350,000, donations are welcome, and those from MHA members will be especially appreciated. To make a gift online, visit <http://www.history.utah.edu/announcements/survey.html> and click on "Give a gift to the Department." More information can be obtained by contacting Robert Goldberg or Eric Hinderaker at 801-581-6121.