

JOSEPH SMITH'S EXPERIENCE OF A METHODIST "CAMP-MEETING"
IN 1820

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ABSTRACT

Since 1967, disbelieving critics of Joseph Smith Jr.'s accounts of his "First Vision" of deity have repeated the arguments and evidence given by minister-researcher Wesley P. Walters against the existence of an 1820 "religious excitement" (revival) in or near Palmyra, New York, as affirmed by the Mormon prophet's most detailed narrative. Since 1969, Smith's believing apologists¹ have repeated the rebuttal arguments and evidence given by BYU religion professor Milton V. Backman Jr. in support of such a revival which, Smith declared, led to his vision in 1820. For four decades, both sides have continued to approach this debated topic as if there were no alternative ways to examine the materials Walters and Backman cited, and as if there were no additional sources of significance to consider. The skeptics have been uniformly intransigent, while some apologists have made significant concessions.

This essay maintains that both sides have examined their evidences with tunnel vision, while both have likewise ignored issues and documents crucial to the topic. As an alternative to myopic polarization, this article provides new ways of understanding Joseph's narrative, analyzes previously neglected issues/data, and establishes a basis for perceiving in detail what the teenage boy experienced in the religious revivalism that led to his first theophany. This is conservative revisionism.

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An oddity in Mormon studies has been the decades-long repetition of Reverend Wesley P. Walters' claim in 1967 that "no revival occurred in the Palmyra area [of western New York State] in 1820." Rejecting all reminiscent accounts by Mormons, he made this assertion because of an allegedly "massive silence" about such a revival in documents written or published during that year. Instead, he argued, "the statement of Joseph Smith, Jr. cannot be true when he claims that he was stirred by an 1820 revival to make his inquiry in the grove [of trees] near his home." Walters insisted that various evidences showed Palmyra having no revivals from the fall of 1817 until 1824. Thus, Smith allegedly invented a fictitious revival to support his allegedly fictitious "First Vision" of deity in 1820 by superimposing on that year the extensive revivals which contemporary sources clearly described for Palmyra in 1824 and the following year.² Likewise, a hostile biographer wrote in 1999: "There was no significant revival in or around Palmyra in 1820," adding that "no known revival occurred in Palmyra between 1818 and 1823," and repeating: "no revivals in or around Palmyra [--] 1820."³

Such unconditional denials seem odd for several reasons. First, the published diary of minister Aurora Seager commented that Palmyra had a revival in June 1818. After returning to his "home at Phelps on the 19th of May," he prepared to attend the annual meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Church's Genesee Conference (the organizational subdivision for western New York):

I received, on the 18th of June, a letter from Brother [Billy] Hibbard, informing me that I had been received by the [eastern] New York Conference, and, at my request, had been transferred to the Genesee Conference. On [Friday,] the 19th [of June 1818,] I attended a camp-meeting at Palmyra [nearly fourteen miles from Phelps]. The arrival of

Bishop Roberts, who seems to be a man of God, and is apostolic in his appearance, gave a deeper interest to the meeting until it closed. On Monday [at Palmyra's camp-meeting,] the sacrament was administered, about twenty were baptized; forty united with the [Methodist] Church, and the meeting closed. I accompanied the Bishop to Brother [Eleazer] Hawks, at Phelps, and on the 14th of July [1818,] I set out [from Phelps] with Brother [Zechariah] Paddock for the Genesee conference, which was to hold its session at Lansing, N.Y.

This was not a distant reminiscence, because Seager died a year after these events.⁴ His narrative in itself undermined Reverend Walters' emphatic declaration that Palmyra had no revival for more than six years after the fall of 1817.

In 1969 BYU religion professor Milton V. Backman Jr. made him aware of this diary entry, and Walters should have recognized that it demonstrated a fundamental flaw in part of his argument. However, he never acknowledged this document. Furthermore, in a 1980 article where he claimed to have read the "entire manuscript" which summarized the above entry from Seager's diary,⁵ Walters ridiculed a Mormon author's assertion that Palmyra's revivals of 1817 continued into 1818.⁶

Reverend Seager's eye-witness narrative has greater importance than merely disproving the claim of no Palmyra revivals for years following 1817. Occurring almost exactly six months after Joseph Smith's twelfth birthday (23 December 1817), this three-day Methodist camp-meeting in June 1818 provided a local context for the following statement from his earliest autobiography (with its errors of spelling and grammar):

At about the age of twelve years[,] my mind become seriously imprest with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul which led me to searching the Scriptures [--] believeing[,] as I was taught, that they contained the word of God [--] thus applying myself to them and [because of] my intimate acquaintance with those of differant denominations[, this] led me to marvel exceedingly [--] for I discovered that they did not adorn their profession by a holy walk and Godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that sacred depository [of the Bible--] this was a grief to my Soul [--] thus from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart ...⁷

Aside from Palmyra's revivalism during the previous year, the renewed fervor emanating from the village's Methodist camp-meeting of June 1818 was a catalyst for the twelve-year-old boy to begin his religious quest that reached a crescendo two years later.

Correspondingly, Palmyra's weekly newspaper was the second oddity in the decades-long repetition of the denials by Reverend Walters. Its edition of 28 June 1820 referred to out-of-town visitor James Couser, who died on June 26th, the day after he drunkenly left "the Camp-ground" following the evening services of "a camp-meeting which was held in this vicinity."⁸ The Palmyra Register's next edition denied that its editor intended "to charge the Methodists" with selling alcohol at "their camp-ground" while they "professedly met for the worship of their God."⁹ Third, farmer's almanacs--on which the Smiths and other village dwellers depended--specified that spring began on 20 March 1820 and ended when summer commenced on 21 June.¹⁰ Traditional LDS statements that Joseph's revival-inspired theophany happened at an unspecified time "in the spring of 1820"¹¹ thus allow for an event as late as one minute before

midnight on June 20th. Fourth, starting with Backman and BYU religion professor Richard Lloyd Anderson in 1969, for more than thirty years LDS authors cited one or both of those newspaper articles as proof that there was at least one religious revival in Palmyra during the first six months of 1820.¹²

Why have some scholars continued to deny that there was a religious revival that year? First, because Joseph Smith's most detailed narration about the pre-vision revival (and especially commentaries on it by his mother Lucy in the preliminary manuscript of her "History," by his brother William, and by his scribe Oliver Cowdery--after consultation with Joseph) referred to circumstances of Palmyra's revival in 1824-25 (such as its occurrence after the death of Alvin Smith--who died in November 1823, the preaching by Methodist minister George Lane, the revival's expansion to include the Baptists and Presbyterian preachers like Benjamin Stockton, and the conversion of "great multitudes," including several Smith family members to the Presbyterian Church). Thus, nay-sayers conclude that Joseph's dating of the crucial revival as 1820 was "anachronistic" at best, and fraudulent at worst.¹³

Second, in his 1969 expansion of the original 1967 article, Walters himself mentioned the Palmyra Register's articles about the camp-meeting of June 1820. Paradoxically, he cited them in a footnote to support his narrative statement: "Even the Palmyra newspaper, while reporting revivals at several places in the state, has no mention whatever of any revival in Palmyra or vicinity in 1819 or 1820."¹⁴

It seems mind-boggling for the minister-researcher to cite confirming documentation as if it were disconfirmation, but Walters did so for a reason he only implied (that the articles did not specify the "camp-meeting" was a "revival"), as well as for two incomplete explanations. In the

footnote, he wrote: "Even the Methodist camp meeting being held in the vicinity of the village has nothing more significant reported about it than that a man had gotten drunk at the grog shops while there and died the next morning." In other words, this meeting was insignificant because Palmyra's newspaper mentioned it in passing as simply the background for reporting a man's death, not as a newsworthy event in its own right. Later in the narrative text, he gave another explanation (again only partly stated): that this 1820 meeting was merely an outdoors gathering of the local congregation at "the Methodist camp grounds a mile from Palmyra, in the wooded area adjoining the Methodist chapel." Therefore, by implication only, Reverend Walters dismissed this "camp-meeting" as a regular congregational service on the evening of Sunday, 25 June 1820--thus, not a special revival.¹⁵

A third reason why some scholars have continued to deny that there was a revival that year is the evidence he presented in 1967 and 1969 that there was no dramatic increase (or "spike") in the denominational membership of Palmyra and surrounding towns during 1820, as one might expect following a religious revival as extensive as Smith described: "Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties ..."¹⁶

In 1969 Backman chipped away at Walters' arguments. During 1819-20, there were revivals in seven towns "within a radius of twenty-five miles of the Smith farm" and also throughout New York State, with increases among Baptists and Presbyterians both locally and statewide. Furthermore, although Methodist records for the immediate vicinity of Palmyra did not survive, existing records verified the denomination's conversions during 1820 in nearby towns, with a total increase of 2,256 Methodists in western New York as a whole for that year.¹⁷

Backman did not specify it in this way, but his expansive geography was justified because Joseph's phrase "the whole district of country" indicated the young man's familiarity with Methodist terms and regional organization. In July 1819 the Genesee Conference of western New York created the Ontario District, which comprised Ontario County, in which Palmyra was then located.¹⁸ Specifically, Palmyra and Farmington (later named Manchester) were among the villages within the smaller Ontario Circuit of the Ontario District, and the Smith family lived in both villages from late 1816 through 1830.¹⁹

As the subdivision of a district, a Methodist circuit comprised "stations" or villages for preaching. One circuit might have few stations, while another had more than forty. Each circuit was served by an itinerant preacher (Methodist "circuit rider") who traveled on horseback to visit each station within a circuit.²⁰ For example, in 1817 the Genesee Conference assigned Alvin Torry to a circuit dozens of miles east of Palmyra, which circuit "embraced Scipio, Cayuga, Mentz, Elbridge, Jordan, Manlius, Onondaga, Owasco, Otisco, Auburn, Skaneateles and Spafford. ... It was a four weeks' circuit, and all we could do in the preaching line, was to give each congregation one sermon once in two weeks; and this required us to preach almost every day in the week ..." ²¹ With an even larger area of responsibility, another circuit-rider in western New York was able to preach at each of his assigned towns only once "every four weeks" in the early 1820s. After whatever period of time was necessary to make one circuit of preaching visits, the circuit-riders started all over again, whether they traveled in pairs or alone.²²

From 1773 onward, the Methodist Episcopal Church published its annual statistics of membership for each conference (such as the Genesee in western New York), for each district

within that conference, and for each circuit within that district. However, the published statistics did not reach to the level of each "station" (town/village within a circuit).²³

Previous to 1819, Palmyra was in the Genesee Conference's same-named subdivision, "the Genesee District [which] embraced the whole territory from Cayuga Lake to Lake Erie, and from Lake Ontario, on the north, into Pennsylvania ..." ²⁴ Backman explained that this was "about five hundred miles" east-to-west, and "about three hundred miles" north-to-south. Also, contrary to Walters' initial assumption that the June 1820 camp-meeting took place at an existing chapel, Backman pointed out that the Methodists did not build a meetinghouse in Palmyra until 1822.²⁵

In his 1980 article, the minister's most significant rebuttal was to challenge as "wishful thinking" the application to Palmyra of Methodist growth in western New York as a whole. This is the "ecological fallacy" in statistics, because an individual case can be very different from the general pattern of which it is only one part. Specifically, Walters charged Backman with wrongly calculating the statistics for Ontario Circuit:

What he should have done is to subtract the July, 1820, figures from the July, 1819, figures to look for any [Methodist] increases for the spring of 1820. Had he done this[,] he would have discovered a total loss of 59 members for the Ontario District [sic], the district where Joseph Smith lived.²⁶

However, to arrive at this net loss, the minister-researcher actually did the opposite of what he described and then (at best) made an error of subtraction in the direction for which he was arguing.

First, he inaccurately claimed in 1980 that his calculations were based on "District" membership (roughly the entire county), when he meant the smallest Methodist unit of reported affiliation, the Ontario Circuit of a few towns/villages. Membership differences at the district level were in the hundreds during those years, and bore no similarity to the result he tabulated. Second, a comparison of the July 1819 Methodist affiliation of the Ontario District's Ontario Circuit (677 total) with the circuit's July 1820 membership (671 total) reveals a net loss of only six members. Walters was able to arrive at the non-existent "loss of 59 members" in only one way: contrary to the years the above bloc-quote claimed he was using, this minister-researcher compared the circuit's July 1821 affiliation (622 total) with the July 1820 total of 671, resulting in a net loss of 49 which he then increased by ten. Those errors in his 1980 article (directed to evangelical ministers) appeared to be intentional, since his 1969 article (directed to Mormon apologists) correctly stated in the narrative text that the Methodist decline "for the entire circuit" was "6 for 1820," which he repeated in a 1969 source-note as "a net loss of 6."²⁷

In fact, his eighteen-page article in 1980 was a polemical screed that began with the emphatic statement: "there was no revival either in Palmyra or anywhere near Joseph Smith's home in the year 1820," which Walters restated sixteen times before his concluding comment that "one cannot expect to find historical support for legendary events." Among the article's denials were: "this supposed 1820 camp meeting," and "without any evidence that there was either a camp meeting or a revival," and "nor can even a spark of a revival be found within at least a 15-mile radius of his home during that year." This 1980 response made no reference to the Palmyra Register's articles about the village's "camp-meeting" in late June 1820--which Reverend Walters had at least mentioned in his 1969 footnote.²⁸

He then prepared a book-length response, which H. Michael Marquardt revised and published in 1994 after the minister's death. Despite the expansiveness of Smith's phrase "the whole district of country," they countered that statewide, region-wide, and even county-wide indications of revivalism and moderate growth cannot compensate for no documentation to support Joseph's narrative of extensive revivalism "in the place where we lived" during 1820.²⁹ By contrast, the spike in conversions described by Smith can be found only in 1824-25. In effect, they also thanked LDS apologists for demonstrating that Palmyra's Methodists had no chapel in June 1820 and therefore had camp-meetings outside for congregational purposes, apparently nullifying the significance of the newspaper's observations.³⁰ Like-minded authors have continued to restate Walters' 1967-94 arguments in part or whole.³¹

However, there was a crucial contradiction in Walters' claim for "massive silence" about Palmyra's 1820 revival. On the one hand, he insisted that it "is completely beyond possibility" that the local "Presbytery should have been ignorant of a great awakening at Palmyra" in 1820. On the other hand, he acknowledged that this same local Presbyterian Church declared in September 1824 that there had been "no remarkable revival of religion within our bounds," even though the Methodists were publishing reports of their own revivals near Palmyra since the late spring of that same year. Rather than acknowledging these as equivalent examples of Presbyterian myopia about the competing revivals by Methodists,³² Walters cited the Presbyterians for making a curious denial of the 1824 Palmyra revivals he emphasized, while he polemically used their 1820 denial as alleged proof of his argument that Palmyra had no revival that year.³³ Ironically, the minister openly used unequal standards to assess the same kind of evidence from the same source in order to arrive at opposite conclusions about 1820 and 1824.

In addition, before and after Palmyra's camp-meeting of late June 1818, the village's newspaper did not refer to this three-day revival (Friday to Monday). This silence is even more glaring because its principal speaker was Robert R. Roberts, one of only three Methodist bishops in North America, and bishops were the highest governing officers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.³⁴ This Palmyra revival (which commenced in the last days of spring 1818) also followed the pattern of "massive silence" in the kinds of documents that Walters emphasized to dismiss Joseph's affirmation of an 1820 revival in the spring.

This contemporary silence about two Methodist camp-meetings that unquestionably occurred two years apart in Palmyra should have raised fundamental doubts about the assumptions and assertions by Walters, as well as about his methodology. He discouraged such assessments by maintaining his own silence about the documentation of Palmyra's 1818 revival. Truly mystifying, however, is the fact that during four decades most apologists ignored the evidence for this 1818 revival, a confirmation that Backman himself buried in a footnote.³⁵

Given ample opportunities for challenging the factual errors, historical misrepresentations, statistical gaffes, logical fallacies, and withheld evidence by Reverend Walters, various authors chose other alternatives for nearly forty years. Thankfully, LDS apologists generally avoided the disreputable approach of ad hominem attack, but a rigorous academic critique does not need to be polemical. Instead, many wrote as if his articles and book did not exist, others critiqued his writings superficially, and some apologists actually deferred to him.

Nevertheless, the most significant problem with Palmyra's camp-meeting of late June 1820 is that the Prophet specifically stated that his vision of deity occurred "early in the spring of

eighteen hundred and twenty."³⁶ Therefore, citing the Palmyra Register in June-July 1820 to demonstrate pre-vision revivalism would seem to be a fallacy of irrelevant proof, and skeptics can accurately say there is no indication of a revival there in March, April, nor even in May of that year. FARMS reviewer Gary F. Novak acknowledged that "merely finding a revival does not clear up every seeming problem with Joseph's story ..."³⁷

As a historian who has analyzed original narratives and revised documents that anachronistically changed Mormon developments,³⁸ I have another perspective about the fact (and it is a fact) that Smith's official narrative about 1820 included circumstances which occurred during Palmyra's revivals of 1824-25. Merging (conflating) circumstances from similar events that happened years apart will certainly confuse the historical record and will perplex anyone trying to sort out basic chronology. Nonetheless, conflation of actual circumstances from separate events is not the same as fraudulent invention of events that never occurred. Conflation also is not the combination of an actual event with a fictional event. Instead, it is very common for memoirs and autobiographies to merge similar events that actually occurred, due to the narrator's memory lapses or her/his intentional streamlining of the narrative to avoid repeating similar occurrences.³⁹

I think the latter was the reason that in describing his 1820 vision, Joseph Smith's official history conflated circumstances of Palmyra's solitary Methodist revival in the late spring of 1820 with the circumstances of Palmyra's extensive revivals of 1824 that resulted in his mother, his sister Sophronia, his brothers Hyrum and Samuel joining the Presbyterian Church. In fact, Joseph's 1838 history gave only one date for a cycle of revivals at Palmyra--merging the

publicized ones of 1816-17,⁴⁰ with the solitary camp-meeting of 1818, with the solitary one of 1820, and with the extensive revivals of 1824.

Thereby, he used conflation to describe--as if one coherent event--what was actually four waves of Palmyra's revivalism, each with differing intensity and significance. The first was a series of interdenominational events (of various sizes) already in progress when young Joseph arrived in Palmyra with his mother and siblings during the winter of 1816-17. Despite biographer Dan Vogel's incorrect omission of the next two camp-meetings, he quite rightly observed that "the Palmyra revival of 1817 would have brought the religious differences of his father and mother to the surface," with resulting tension for Joseph and their other children.⁴¹ The second wave of revivalism (minor by comparison--after about eight months of religious calm in the village) was the Methodist camp-meeting in June 1818 that led to Joseph's spiritual inquiry and Bible-reading at age twelve. This resulted in his "grief" at the hypocritical lip-service of professed Christians he knew personally, probably the camp-meeting's rapid "backsliders" (to be discussed). The third wave of Palmyra's revivalism led to his theophany in 1820, and (to be discussed) that year's camp-meeting was also a significant development for local Methodism. The last of these conflated instances of Palmyra's revivalism was 1824's extensive series of interdenominational events that were marred (in Joseph's view) by sectarian competition for converts and by the Presbyterian conversion of his relatives.⁴²

For narrative flow, he combined four different kinds of religious awakening within the Smith family (his and their first encounters with Palmyra's revivalism during 1817, his uneventful soul-searching at age twelve in connection with the village's camp-meeting of 1818, his theophany in connection with the camp-meeting of 1820, and several of his family members

joining a church during the revivalism of 1824-25). For overall simplicity, he dated this multi-year conflation as 1820. While this is partially inaccurate, I see it as streamlining his narrative, not as an example of fraudulent invention.

This is not "privileging" Joseph's narrative. It is, in fact, acknowledging a general pattern in all autobiographies. A repeatedly published handbook for historical research explained that "not all discrepancies signalize a myth or a fraud. In autobiographies, for instance, one must be prepared to find errors in dates and names without necessarily inferring that the account is false. ... It would be absurd to disbelieve the main fact [simply] because the date is two years off."⁴³

Significantly, New York's Methodist Magazine also conflated its reports of multiple revivals into a single revival. For example, a March 1818 article about "REVIVAL OF RELIGION" in Maine described camp-meetings and chapel-revivals in eight towns during four months, and an article that same year about "REVIVAL OF RELIGION" in Suffolk County, New York, referred to eight towns during a ten-month period.⁴⁴ An 1821 "ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL AND PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF GOD IN FOUNTAIN-HEAD CIRCUIT THROUGH THE LAST YEAR" likewise described eight towns during ten months.⁴⁵ An 1824 article about "REVIVAL AND PROGRESS OF RELIGION" referred to ten towns in six months.⁴⁶

This conflation into one revival also appeared in reports about multiple revivals in a single city of New York State. "A SHORT SKETCH OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF TROY" started with February 1816 and concluded: "Upwards of a year has elapsed, since this good work commenced."⁴⁷ Another "SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF SCHNECTADY" referred to separate outbursts of

religious renewal from December 1818 through April 1819.⁴⁸ Beyond the Empire State, an article on "REVIVAL OF THE WORK OF GOD IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA" also referred to camp-meetings from August 1819 to "last August" (1820).⁴⁹

Even more relevant to the conflation in Joseph's 1838 history, New York's Methodist Magazine--as indicated by the previous example--conflated into a single event various instances of revivalism that actually occurred during a year or more. The magazine's report of one "REVIVAL OF RELIGION" in four towns skipped from camp-meetings in July 1818 to camp-meetings in June of 1819.⁵⁰ Another article referred to "the memorable revival of religion in Chillicothe in 1818-19."⁵¹ In an 1819 article, its minister-author concluded: "It is now fourteen months since this revival began, during which time it has spread an extent of more than twelve miles."⁵² An 1825 article about the "Revival in Bridgetown, N.J." referred to intermittent revivals "in this place during the two last conference years."⁵³ Even in the official magazine of New York's Methodists, it was standard practice to conflate time and space by regarding multiple camp-meetings and revivals as a single "revival."

This is consistent with Joseph's using the phrase "an unusual excitement on the subject of religion"⁵⁴ for local revivals that were actually separated by intervals of three or four years.⁵⁵ Then, as now, the word "excitement" has no plural, and can refer to multiple events.⁵⁶

Whether the Mormon prophet, or a Methodist minister, or magazine editors--early nineteenth-century narrators saw no problem of accuracy when they conflated multiple revivals into one revival while giving retrospective narratives. It reflects the "presentist bias"⁵⁷--used polemically in this case--to hold the unschooled Mormon prophet to a standard of literal

accuracy not manifested by the well-educated editors of New York's Methodist Magazine in their reports about the religious "excitement" of revivalism.

Thus, when LDS apologists insist on the technical accuracy of every detail in Smith's official account of the First Vision,⁵⁸ they misread nineteenth-century narrative style and unnecessarily adopt the assumptions of disbelievers. As the most prominent example, LDS historian Richard Lyman Bushman wrote in 1994:

Can we be absolutely sure that we know Joseph must have been referring to the 1824 revival when he wrote his story? Marquardt speculates that he conflated events: "Perhaps Smith in retrospect blended in his mind events from 1820 with a revival occurring four years later" (p. 32). Possibly, but that conclusion, based on the confidence that we know better than the person who was there, seems premature to me.⁵⁹

Resisting the reasonable explanation that Smith's official account conflated two different responses within his family to different revivals happening four years apart--an explanation which preserves the emphasis on 1820--Bushman paradoxically retreated from the traditional affirmation of 1820.⁶⁰

He omitted from his 2005 bicentennial biography any reference to a revival that year. His "JOSEPH SMITH CHRONOLOGY" mentioned no revival, and his narrative gave specific dates only for Palmyra's "revival of 1816 and 1817." The text and source-notes also made no reference to Palmyra's camp-meeting of June 1818, although Bushman's 1969 response to Walters had cited the manuscript which mentioned it and even though Bushman's 1970 response to another skeptic had paraphrased the manuscript's description of this 1818 revival.⁶¹

One of the source-notes in Bushman's Rough Stone Rolling even seemed to defer to the minister-researcher's assessment "that revivals in 1824 were the background for Joseph's first vision." The book's index reemphasized this with its entry for "Palmyra, New York ... revivals in," whose only page referred to the revival "the year after Alvin's death" (in November 1823).⁶² In view of Bushman's complaint in 1994 about the Walters-Marquardt "attempt to dynamite a segment of the traditional story" by ignoring the 1820 Palmyra Register's references to a local camp-meeting,⁶³ it seems extraordinary that eleven years later his 740-page biography made no mention of the newspaper article he once found so important.

Aside from citing Walters, Bushman's only implied explanation for this lapse in 2005 was the observation: "When the census taker came to the Smiths in 1820, Joseph Jr. was not listed, probably because he was living elsewhere earning [money] during the growing season."⁶⁴ Like Donald L. Enders,⁶⁵ Bushman apparently assumed that the census enumeration commenced in June 1820 (the starting month for subsequent censuses). Since he concluded that young Joseph was absent from the Palmyra area during its camp-meeting, Bushman declined to mention the Palmyra Register's articles. However, census-takers did not begin their work until 7 August 1820.⁶⁶ Joseph's absence from the census of his family had absolutely nothing to do with his whereabouts during Palmyra's religious revival two months earlier.

Nevertheless, Bushman is only one example of the withering effect that Reverend Wesley P. Walters has had on the previously confident declarations by Mormon apologists about dating the First Vision.⁶⁷ In a 2004 interview, Milton V. Backman Jr. declined to name "a Presbyterian minister" whose "pamphlet" had prodded him to begin researching New York State's early revivalism, but the (now emeritus) BYU religion professor commented: "During this research, I

found no evidence of a great revival in Palmyra in 1819 or 1820." In a remarkable turnabout, Backman said nothing about Palmyra's 1820 camp-meeting that had been a sort of rallying cry by LDS authors for thirty-five years. Instead, he claimed that Joseph Smith had been wrongfully interpreted as saying there was an 1820 revival in the immediate vicinity of Palmyra-Manchester, whereas "I found that probably there were more revivals and more people joining churches in upstate and western New York in 1819 and 1820 than in any other region of the United States." Thus, the crucial revivalism was strictly regional and allegedly not in Joseph's neighborhood--a view that seemed to be a full-scale retreat from Backman's earlier emphasis on the Palmyra Register's articles of 1820.⁶⁸

Also for the bicentennial of the Mormon founder's birth, after footnote citations to the findings and objections by the minister-researcher, James B. Allen and John W. Welch ended their 2005 essay (published by Church-owned Deseret Book Company) with these words: "In sum, this examination leads to the conclusion that the First Vision, in all probability, occurred in spring of 1820, when Joseph was fourteen years old. The preponderance of the evidence supports that conclusion."⁶⁹ While I applaud such willingness to be tentative when necessary, the evidence does not require it. In fact, it demands a forthright emphasis on revivalism in Palmyra during the late spring of 1820.

For instance, there is a reasonable explanation for the lack of local reference to religious revivals in or near Palmyra, and for why the village newspaper ignored the "camp-meeting" of June 1820 until someone died. Aside from paid advertisements, it was unusual for small newspapers of this era to report local events.

In his book about New York State's village newspapers, Milton W. Hamilton explained more than forty years ago that "the editor's definition of his function included neither the purveying of neighborhood gossip nor the describing of outstanding happenings in the immediate vicinity." Why? Because small-town editors assumed that local residents would not "pay for information which they could secure by word of mouth from their neighbors." According to Hamilton, not until 1827 did a village newspaper start to regularly include local events, an editorial practice that took years to become common in rural newspapers of New York State. This was Walter A. Norton's 1991 response to the assertion of "massive silence" by Reverend Walters, a critique that skeptical authors have not acknowledged.⁷⁰ Likewise, as indication of his own silent abandonment of an 1820 revival, the seemingly exhaustive bibliography of Bushman's 2005 Rough Stone Rolling cited neither Hamilton nor Norton,⁷¹ even though Bushman had criticized Walters and Marquardt in 1994 for ignoring that evidence and rebuttal.⁷²

Apparently unaware of Reverend Seager's published account of a June 1818 revival in Palmyra that the village newspaper also ignored, Norton omitted this data that would have significantly strengthened his argument. However, as Norton did emphasize, the Palmyra Register was not merely reporting a local death in June 1820. Despite a disingenuous disclaimer, its editor used the dead man's drunkenness as reason to make snide comments about the Methodists who "professedly" gathered for worship. A strident advocate of alcohol "temperance," editor Timothy C. Strong was echoing a decades-long controversy.⁷³

Unlike other evangelical Protestants, Methodists of this era did not require abstinence from alcoholic drinks, nor did most of the denomination's leaders even suggest it. English

founder John Wesley "did not hesitate to recommend ale or beer" and approved drinking "a little bit" of wine every day, but he "drew a rather sharp line between a fermented liquor such as beer, ale, or wine and a distilled liquor such as rum or brandy." The American church's general conference meetings did not include alcohol abstinence among their numerous regulations governing personal conduct, and also followed Wesley's emphasis by forbidding Methodists only from engaging in the sale and manufacture of distilled liquors from 1780 to 1812. Until 1848, their official Disciplines did not even mention beer or wine with regard to the rank-and-file's conduct, despite earlier restrictions on Methodist clergy with regard to alcohol.⁷⁴

This official policy (or lack of it) became obvious during Methodist revivals. In a defense of camp-meetings (published in Brooklyn, New York), one minister acknowledged in 1806 that "some of the wild beasts of the people had half intoxicated themselves with ardent spirits."⁷⁵ Two years later, a critical participant wrote that he "saw many" Methodist revivalists "drinking wine."⁷⁶ In 1810 an observer of a camp-meeting at Bern, New York, reported that the Methodists even set up "grog-tents" to sell alcohol.⁷⁷ The official explanation for alcohol-selling "shops" at camp-meetings was to blame "those in the community who, [are] actuated from monetary motives ..."⁷⁸ As described later in this essay, the isolated setting, physical dimensions, and duration of camp-meetings required the organizers to provide beverages for thirsty revivalists, even if a stream, river, pond, or lake was nearby. Therefore, because bottled beverages of some kind were a necessary supplement to the natural sources of water, Methodist camp-meeting attenders often brought or purchased bottles of beer and wine, which did not have the same stigma as distilled liquors and whiskeys (often called "spirituous drinks," or "spirits," or

"ardent spirits").⁷⁹ Such behavior resulted in the Palmyra Register's sarcastic comments about the local camp-meeting.

This leads to the very specific understanding about the kind of religious gathering mentioned in Palmyra's newspaper of June 1820--a perspective that Walters never acknowledged and that Mormon apologists have insufficiently emphasized. Southern Methodists invented both the practice and term of "camp-meeting" that swept the nation after 1801.⁸⁰ From its first issue in January 1818 through December 1828, New York's Methodist Magazine never used the term for the regular Sunday service of a congregation, whether it had a chapel or not. After attending such meetings for decades, a Methodist minister from New York State wrote emphatically: "Camp Meetings were never held to supply the lack of church buildings."⁸¹

Although it was customary to refer to a camp-meeting "in" or "at" a community, the gathering's structured space actually required a forest within walking distance from the outskirts of the community. Thus, the 1820 Palmyra newspaper referred to the "camp-meeting which was held in this vicinity."

Even when convening near a chapel, as in the 1819 "camp-meeting at Fountain-head meeting-house," Methodists shunned the confining structure of a building: "Here we had a large encampment" of revivalists in tents, and the writer observed that by the end of this camp-meeting, "the slain of the Lord [i.e., ecstatic converts] were lying in almost every direction--in the altar, in the woods, and in the tents ..."⁸² Even this camp-meeting's "altar" was not inside a chapel, as a non-Methodist observed at one of New York's forest-revivals in 1810: "Before the [preaching stand or] stage was a yard about thirty feet square, (which they called the altar). Their tents were made chiefly of canvas ..."⁸³

Correspondingly, in an 1819 "revival of religion" in Westchester County, New York, although there were too few Methodists to have a "house for divine worship" in the community, they could sleep in their own houses during the locals-only revival which, therefore, was called "the assembly," not "camp-meeting."⁸⁴ Repeatedly, when Methodists held a "revival of religion" in a chapel, they called it an assembly, or a "prayer meeting," or a "class meeting," but never "camp-meeting."⁸⁵ New York's Methodist Magazine explained in 1819: "But in general, no church or churches near [a camp-meeting], could hold half the congregations which assemble on those occasions."⁸⁶ Ignoring the denomination's procedures, Reverend Walters and like-minded authors have also contradicted all historical documentation by even implying that Palmyra's 1820 "camp-meeting" was a regular Sunday meeting of local Methodists--with or without a chapel.

A camp-meeting was a revival, but Methodists rarely used the cumbersome phrase "camp-meeting revival."⁸⁷ In fact, because local Methodists had no need to sleep in tents overnight in order to worship, the Palmyra Register's articles were actually emphasizing the non-congregational nature of this June 1820 gathering and its non-local attenders by referring to its "Camp-ground." In view of Palmyra's newspaper articles, it is significant that the Prophet's official reminiscence said this "unusual excitement ... commenced with the Methodists."⁸⁸

Moreover, there was no relevance in the objection by Walters that "the Methodists did not acquire their property in Palmyra 'on the Vienna Road' until July 7th, 1821."⁸⁹ The Methodist Church rarely owned the forested land on which its members held camp-meetings during these early decades, because the only necessity was to obtain permission from the landowner for this temporary use. From 1804 to 1842, New York State's Methodists owned only one "permanent" camp-ground for camp-meetings (in Ossining, 298 miles from Palmyra).⁹⁰

But if the crucial revival "in the place where we lived" actually commenced in the late spring of 1820, then Joseph Smith's First Vision occurred no earlier. Why did he specify "early in the spring"⁹¹ while giving his most detailed account in 1838? First, "early" or "late spring" might have seemed a distinction without a difference as he related events that happened eighteen years earlier in his tumultuous life.

Second, and more to the point, "early spring" of 1820 was too cold for a New York farmboy to visit "the woods" in "the morning of a beautiful clear day" for the motionless activity of solitary prayer.⁹² During that year, an official of the U.S. Weather Service recorded temperatures for western New York at 7 AM, 2 PM, and 6 PM daily. After the technical arrival of spring, temperatures were under 50 degrees Fahrenheit even at two in the afternoon for all but two days during the rest of March 1820. Those relatively warmer days of 25-26 March reached no higher than 64 degrees at 2 PM, after the mornings started at 54 degrees and 56 degrees, respectively. It was snowing on 31 March, 5 April, and 7 April 1820. The first two weeks of April 1820 were chilly, reaching no higher than 58 degrees at two in the afternoon on the fifteenth, which began with a temperature of forty degrees at 7 AM. The last two weeks of April were not much better, and when the temperatures finally reached 72 degrees at 2 PM on April 21st, the morning commenced at 50 degrees. The next day was a bit warmer, but then the month cooled again until morning temperatures were in the low-fifties. The last two days of April 1820 reached only 62 degrees by 2 PM.⁹³ Although such weather conditions can occur on "the morning of a beautiful clear day," those frigid temperatures would not encourage any teenager to think of kneeling in a shaded grove of trees, which would be even colder than temperatures recorded by the weather service in the open air.

Published in Canandaigua, seventeen miles from Palmyra,⁹⁴ The Farmer's Diary had even predicted: "Clear and pretty cold" weather for 6-8 April 1820, with "some showers of hail, rain, or snow" for 14-18 April.⁹⁵ In one of its rare observations about local events, the Palmyra Register commented on 24 May 1820 that "we have been visited with two or three severe frosts, followed by a storm of snow, which happened on the morning of the 17th inst. [instant, i.e., of this month] ... It is worthy of remark, that on the morning of the 17th May 1819, we had a similar snow storm, preceded and followed by very similar weather."⁹⁶ Therefore, because most people connect spring with warmer temperatures (above 70 degrees Fahrenheit), it is understandable that (eighteen-years-after-the-fact) Joseph forgot the late-arrival of spring weather to western New York in 1820.

He remembered it was warm enough to kneel in the wooded grove for an hour or so. This seemed like "early spring" in retrospect, especially because he began dictating this official narrative to clerk George W. Robinson on 27 April 1838 in Missouri, a southerly latitude where early spring was much warmer. This memory conflation (which changed western New York's chilly "early spring" of 1820 into comfortably warm morning weather) continued in the late spring of 1839 (on 10 June), when clerk James Mulholland started rewriting Robinson's 1838 version (now missing) into the final form known officially as "Joseph Smith's History."⁹⁷ Both believers and non-believers should accept the assessment of non-Mormon historian Lawrence Foster about Smith's first theophany: "whether or not an error was made in dating precisely when a vision occurred has no necessary connection with whether it [actually] occurred ..."⁹⁸

The unpredictability of warm days followed by chilly temperatures, rain, and even snow from March through May was why New York State's Methodists waited until late spring to

schedule the first of each year's camp-meetings. They wanted a reasonable likelihood of several days with "agreeable weather,"⁹⁹ by which camp-meeting organizers meant "no rain,"¹⁰⁰ and "no breezes to disturb the candles, and no cold winds nor chilling damps, to render it very uncomfortable," even at night.¹⁰¹

In every report by New York's Methodist Magazine about revivals from 1818 through 1828, where the report included the word "camp-meeting," not a single one in the Northern States began earlier than June and none occurred after September.¹⁰² The earliest reported date was 4 June 1819 when the "camp-meeting for Erie circuit" commenced.¹⁰³ In 1825 the earliest was June 7th in western New York,¹⁰⁴ while Palmyra hosted an 1826 camp-meeting that started on Thursday, June 8th.¹⁰⁵ Concerning the Susquehanna River border of western New York State, one minister wrote in 1825 that "our last campmeeting in the district commenced on the 15th of September,"¹⁰⁶ and another New York camp-meeting began as late as September 26th.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, Methodist revivalists wanted to avoid the unfortunate experience of a camp-meeting in western New York's Genesee Conference that pushed the weather boundary too far into September 1817: "the season being cold and rainy, rendered our situation in the tented wilderness very unpleasant."¹⁰⁸ Therefore, for the best outcome, a Camp Meeting Manual later specified that these outdoor gatherings in "the latitude of the Middle States" should start no later than "the 15th of September."¹⁰⁹

Small revivals did occur in the Northern States from October through May each year, but rain, cold weather, and snow limited such gatherings to homes, chapels, barns, or school houses.¹¹⁰ Compared with Methodist camp-meetings attended by hundreds or thousands in a forest, the October-May revivals were family-sized. A series of small revival events, especially

when interdenominational, could create significant local revivalism, as in Palmyra's revivals of 1816-17.

However, limited to Methodists, the situation was very different in this era when their members were few and often temporarily converted (see discussion of "retention" to follow). Through the still-existing records of Presbyterians and Baptists, Reverend Walters clearly established that there were no interdenominational revivals in Palmyra from the end of 1817 until 1824.¹¹¹ Because there were too few Methodists in Palmyra to have a meetinghouse until 1822, it was impossible for the village (in Ontario County at that time) to host a revival of significant size except during the camp-meeting "season," as Methodists called the revival period from June through September.¹¹²

A revival that "commenced with the Methodists ... in the place where we lived"¹¹³ was not available to teenage Joseph until the late spring of any year. The "camp-meeting" mentioned by the Palmyra Register in June 1820 was the first local revival he could have attended that year. As indicated, although Walters would not acknowledge that fact, his published research actually demonstrated it.

In reality, Methodist revivals had uniform characteristics, as reported in numerous publications before 1820. By referring to early descriptions of camp-meetings, we can understand what fourteen-year-old Joseph saw and experienced at Palmyra that June. Even those who disbelieve his account of an 1820 revival have agreed that Methodism was the only denomination for which he showed any interest and participation.¹¹⁴

Methodist camp-meetings did not happen spontaneously, but were planned far in advance to occur in a physical space created according to instructions by the denomination's ministers

and in printed guidelines. As the Camp Meeting Manual observed, "it was soon reduced to a regular system."¹¹⁵

By 1817, multiple editions of a New York hymn book advised: "A Camp-meeting ought not to consist of less than fifty or one hundred tents or places for lodging" in the woods. Its Methodist author John C. Totten further specified: "It should continue, if the weather admitted, not less than three days and nights. It is not desirable to have more than two or three thousand people present, unless the majority were [converted] Christians."¹¹⁶ The several-day duration was standard, and his caution was necessary because Methodist camp-meetings were sometimes attended by "two or three hundred spectators" who were not believers.¹¹⁷

Out-of-town worshippers dominated camp-meetings because the most devout followed revivalist preachers from place to place, while word-of-mouth notified an entire region of what would otherwise be a local event. From June to September, people journeyed "from fifty and sixty miles around" to attend Methodist camp-meetings, and "many families" drove wagons for one-to-two days from their homes to the camp-ground.¹¹⁸ While most traveled such distances in carriages, wagons, or on horseback, "a Sister Hendricks, who is the mother of seventeen children, fifteen of whom are living, walked seventeen miles to this [1819 Methodist] meeting."¹¹⁹ Fifteen-year-old David Marks, a New York Baptist also living in Ontario County, routinely walked "about 25 miles" in all kinds of weather to revivals in the early months of 1821.¹²⁰

During the Methodist camp-meeting season, there was need for outsiders to "camp" in tents, while local residents could sleep at home--unless they wanted to participate in late night revivalism that "was carried on until morning without interruption."¹²¹ For example, "several

thousands of precious souls" attended a four-day camp-meeting at Rhinebeck, New York. There "the line of tents encircled the [preaching] ground, in most parts three deep, in number eighty five, besides covered waggons [sic]. On Thursday a person undertook to count the waggons [sic] and other carriages, and after reckoning several hundred, was obliged to desist, as he could not go through them all."¹²²

Another Methodist author explained: "Sometimes there were many circles of tents divided by narrow streets and alleys, allowing room for the vast multitudes to pass, and space for small fires for the purpose of cooking." In keeping with Methodist regimentation, each camp-meeting's tent-lined "several streets, [were] numbered and labelled, so that they may be distinguished one from another" within the surrounding forest.¹²³

Having a three-day duration as their minimum, camp-meetings most commonly lasted four days, according to New York's Methodist Magazine. At Long Island in August 1818, "there were from six to eight thousand people on the encampment" from Tuesday morning to Saturday morning.¹²⁴ "Between five and six thousand" attended a "Camp-meeting, held at Barre, Vermont" from Thursday to Monday in 1820.¹²⁵ "Not less than five thousand people" attended another 1820 "Camp-meeting, which commenced on Friday, July 14th," and ended on Tuesday, followed by "an extra Camp-Meeting" lasting from Friday to Tuesday in August.¹²⁶ One of the "highly favoured Camp-Meetings" in the Hudson River Valley began on 2 September 1822 "and closed on the 6th of September."¹²⁷ In 1825 a camp-meeting in the Champlain District lasted from Thursday, "the first to the morning of the fifth of September," Monday.¹²⁸

Five-day revivals were the next most common. An 1821 camp-meeting in Kentucky started "on Friday night," and "we continued the meeting until Wednesday."¹²⁹ Another "camp-

meeting" in New Hampshire "commenced on Thursday, and closed on Tuesday."¹³⁰ An 1823 camp-meeting in Maryland began on Friday, ending on Wednesday.¹³¹ "From four to five thousand persons" attended a New Jersey camp-meeting that "commenced on [Thursday] the 5th and continued till [Tuesday] the 10th of August, 1824."¹³² One in August 1825 started on Thursday and ended on Tuesday,¹³³ and two camp-meetings in 1826 began on Friday and ended on Wednesday.¹³⁴

A six-day camp-meeting on Long Island was attended by "not less than 10,000" New Yorkers in August 1821.¹³⁵ An 1830s history of American Methodism (by the editor of New York's Methodist Magazine in 1820-28) noted that "the meeting generally continues for four or five days, and in some instances eight or nine days."¹³⁶

Even that was not the maximum duration. In 1810 Jesse Lee said: "I have known some Camp-Meetings to continue eight or ten days." Another Methodist minister wrote in 1822: "This is the tenth day of the revival," and an 1825 camp-meeting in western New York's Genesee Conference "continued ten days."¹³⁷

Although Palmyra's 1820 camp-meeting might have been as short as three days or as long as ten days, its mention in the newspaper's weekly issue on Wednesday, 28 June 1820 gave clues for the revival's commencement. Camp-meetings started on various days of the week, but Methodists showed a clear preference for beginning them on Thursday or Friday.¹³⁸ In 1810 the first published guidelines for camp-meetings stated: "We generally begin these meetings on Fridays, and continue them until the Monday following [--] about the middle of the day" (i.e., noon).¹³⁹ For example, Palmyra's three-day camp-meeting of June 1818 began on Friday, while the village's June 1826 camp-meeting began on Thursday.¹⁴⁰

This Methodist preference indicates a likely start-date of June 22nd or 23rd (early summer) for a short revival before the newspaper story about Couser's death, with an equally likely start-date of June 15th or 16th (Thursday-Friday) for a long camp-meeting commencing in the late spring of 1820. While not precise, these beginning parameters are possible because his death was "a fixed point: [where] no doubt is possible" for verifying chronology.¹⁴¹

Neither the weekly newspaper nor another "fixed point" indicated when this camp-meeting revival adjourned, but almost none did so on Sundays, according to New York's Methodist Magazine. If a camp-meeting included Sunday, it typically ended on one of the following weekdays--in the morning or around noon. Palmyra's Methodist revival was definitely not concluding when Couser left it on the Sunday "evening preceding" his death.¹⁴² Even with the extended daylight of summer, camp-meetings never ended during evening hours, because single females and out-of-town revivalists with children needed at least half a day of sunlight to travel safely back to their homes.¹⁴³

Six years after this revival in late June 1820, "not less than ten thousand people" attended a camp-meeting "near the village" of Palmyra.¹⁴⁴ Such multitudes dwarfed the total population of host-villages such as Palmyra which had 3724 residents in 1820.¹⁴⁵ This was just one reason why camp-meetings were sensational events wherever they occurred.

Minister-researcher Walters repeatedly distorted the historical evidence by implying that a camp-meeting was an inferior kind of revival, not even worth mentioning as "a spark of a revival" in his discussion of Joseph's narrative about "religious excitement" in 1820. For American Methodists from 1800 to 1830, a camp-meeting was the most significant kind of religious revival.

As previously indicated, Zechariah Paddock was the traveling companion of Reverend Seager after Palmyra's camp-meeting in June 1818. Paddock "was licensed to preach in Canandaigua, N.Y., in the spring of 1817," and later wrote concerning the year "1817-18," that "the woods seemed to the Methodists to be God's special earthly temple. Their greatest revival triumphs were achieved in the grove."¹⁴⁶ During the summer of 1825 a Methodist minister in western New York wrote: "In America, perhaps no single means has been more successfully used for the awakening and conversion of sinners, than campmeetings." Likewise, in describing "the great revivals of religion," the 1830s History of the Methodist Episcopal Church (by the editor of Methodist Magazine in 1820-28) stated that "the camp meetings were among the most efficient means of awakening the attention of the people to the things of eternity."¹⁴⁷

In keeping with their general silence about local matters during this time-period, weekly newspapers did not need to inform a town's residents about what had happened days earlier at such gatherings. For example, even though New York's Methodist Magazine reported that "not less than ten thousand people" attended the Sunday session (11 June 1826) of Palmyra's several-day camp-meeting, the village newspaper ignored this revival in its limited reporting of local events. Titled the Wayne Sentinel at that time, the newspaper's co-editors Pomeroy Tucker and John H. Gilbert obviously saw no point in telling residents (days-after-the-fact) about an event that nearly tripled Palmyra's population.¹⁴⁸ By contrast, a week later, these editors did report something that might be "news" to most residents: a lumber wagon "passed through this village from the westward, drawn by twenty-five horses."¹⁴⁹ The only references by Palmyra's newspaper to the village's huge camp-meeting of 1826 were in two paid advertisements: first, the Genesee Conference's invitation for non-Methodists to attend it; and second, a resident's

notice that his horse was lost or stolen while "hitched to the fence in the pasture of the subscriber, near the Camp Ground, on the 12th, inst. [instant, i.e., of this month of June], where he had been for nearly two days..."¹⁵⁰

Therefore, due to the above evidence, it is historically unsound to claim that small attendance was the reason why Palmyra's newspaper made no mention of the camp-meeting in June 1818 and only passing reference to the Methodist revival in June 1820. Since Palmyra's editors did not regard a local camp-meeting of ten thousand participants as newsworthy in 1826, it is reasonable to conclude that the previous editor of the village newspaper likewise ignored an attendance of at least a thousand at Palmyra's forest-revival in 1820.

Aside from the enormous increase of visitors, the noise of camp-meetings was another reason for not reporting the obvious to village residents. First was the day-and-night "sound of the singing, which was heard several miles" from a Methodist camp-meeting, due to its multitude of singers.¹⁵¹ Second, both favorable and unfavorable observers reported that the blare of trumpets heralded the commencement of Methodist preaching at 8 AM, 10 AM, 2 PM, 6 PM, and even at midnight during these camp-meetings.¹⁵² After the midnight sermon, it was common that "singing, prayers and exhortation were continued more or less until three o'clock next morning ..." ¹⁵³

In the stillness of June nights, sounds from the 1820 camp-meeting's trumpets and singers easily reached the Smith farm, creating an irresistible magnet for curious teenagers who were not already at the camp-ground. Fourteen-year-old Joseph was known around Palmyra as "inquisitive."¹⁵⁴

Aside from unusual sounds, in the evenings a Methodist camp-meeting created an enchanting sight of sacred space, "illuminated in every part by lamps, and formed the appearance of a populous city." In these forest-revivals, "at night the whole scene was awfully sublime. The ranges of tents, the fires reflecting light amidst the branches of the forest-trees, the candles and lamps illuminating the ground, hundreds moving to and fro with torches like Gideon's army ..." ¹⁵⁵

But three-to-ten days of religious revivalism were only part of a camp-meeting's actual duration for a community. First, it took days to clear the camp-ground.

It required "two whole days" to clear the campsite attended by "several thousands" at Rhinebeck, New York. "Some of the brethren came more than ten and twelve miles to assist in the preliminary labours. When the underwood and lower branches of the trees were cleared away, the [preaching] stand for the preachers [was] erected and covered with an inclined canopy of boards ..." ¹⁵⁶ This took days because camp-meetings required a huge space.

For example, an 1825 Connecticut "encampment stretched about three quarters of a mile through a beautiful grove of oaks and cedars." Equal to thirteen American football fields placed end-to-end, this was the space necessary for the 1825 camp-meeting's "congregation of ten thousand" as they camped in tents. ¹⁵⁷ Because that was two or three times more people than at Rhinebeck, it would correspondingly require more time to clear the camp-ground of trees and foliage--probably four to six days. This was the only description of a camp-meeting's physical dimensions in New York's Methodist Magazine, but its attendance was the same as the following year's camp-meeting in Palmyra. ¹⁵⁸

Whether at Rhinebeck or at Palmyra, New York Methodists chose heavily wooded areas in order to control access. For instance, near Albany, "the place, that they had chosen for their

rendezvous, was situated in a forest, at the foot of a large hill, with a creek on the opposite side, and about one hundred rods distant [i.e., 550 yards, five football fields] from any clearing or road; so that it could not be easily approached with a carriage or on horseback, except in one narrow path."¹⁵⁹

In describing a camp-meeting at Petersburg, New York, Reverend Francis Ward specified why he and fellow Methodists preferred the painstaking labor of carving out a worship space within a forest of dense undergrowth: "The place was chosen in a close forest, and was well suited for the purpose. Surrounded on all sides by a thicket, which was rendered almost impassable by the brush and underwood piled outside the lines, and only one narrow road opening into it, we found ourselves well secured against any annoyance from the wicked: a guard having been placed at the entrance to keep out those who came intoxicated or riotously ..."¹⁶⁰

Palmyra had not hosted a revival since June 1818.¹⁶¹ Even if the organizers chose the same location for this 1820 camp-meeting, they had to use axes, saws, and hatchets against two years of new trees, branches, bushes, and brambles. Reverend Ward noted that this was noisy work: "The groves echoed with the strokes of the axe ..."¹⁶²

Furthermore, clearing away trees and undergrowth was only the first phase in the physical preparations for a camp-meeting. As indicated, the second phase required those with skills in carpentry to build the preaching stand and cover it "with an inclined canopy of boards."¹⁶³ The third phase, which the Camp Meeting Manual regarded as "especially" important, was "the grading" (or leveling) of the ground on which tents would be pitched and of the cleared space of ground ("the altar") in front of the preacher's platform.¹⁶⁴ This flat, cleared

area for the standing listeners was at least 25-30 feet square, and sometimes "two or three acres, nearly square."¹⁶⁵

There was yet a fourth phase in the physical preparations for a camp-meeting. While some families brought small tents of their own,¹⁶⁶ the organizers also provided huge "society tents" which were "canvas shelters, sometimes as large as fifty feet long and thirty feet wide ..."¹⁶⁷ In a hostile 1807 publication, a non-Methodist in New York referred to these large tents as "canvass [sic] domes" and groused in doggerel verse: "Such spacious domes, rear'd up in modern days,/ Old Greece and Rome, were seldom known to raise."¹⁶⁸ A camp-meeting organizer wrote that "many of which would hold several hundred persons" each.¹⁶⁹ These Methodist "society tents" were of substantial construction, as described for an August 1819 camp-meeting: "The place was in a beautiful grove--the tents were generally well built of plank, with good floors, so as to be quite comfortable."¹⁷⁰

This fourth phase of camp-meeting preparation required more days of work by volunteer carpenters after they finished the preaching stand, plus the time needed in the surrounding woods for "the cutting of poles for [these] tents."¹⁷¹ Furthermore, it required time for laborers to raise these heavy poles to secure the massive tents against collapse from the multitudes jostling in and out of them almost constantly for days. In the Champlain District, "one week preceding the time appointed for the commencement of this [camp-]meeting, a number of tents was erected; and two or three days before the meeting began, there were many engaged in rearing up [more] tents ..."¹⁷²

Whether Palmyra had a short camp-meeting (with opening prayer and sermon on Thursday or Friday, 22-23 June) or a long camp-meeting (opening on June 15th or 16th), the

four phases of its physical preparations were expected to take a total of "some weeks."¹⁷³ In other words, these "preliminary labours" began at the Palmyra campsite as early as the first week of June 1820. Even that was no surprise to Palmyrans because, as the Camp Meeting Manual later specified, the local clergy or a Methodist circuit-rider was supposed to give the town's residents advance "notice of several months" for the event.¹⁷⁴

The village newspaper maintained its general policy of avoiding local news (except paid advertisements), but Palmyra's anticipation of this camp-meeting led to the front-page story on Wednesday, 7 June 1820 about "Great Revivals in Religion." This article described "the religious excitement which has for some months prevailed" in Schenectady and five other communities of New York State, resulting in "not less than twelve hundred" converts. Next to it another article, a letter to a Palmyra resident (dated 1 May 1820), stated that "the glorious work of divine Grace" in Providence, Rhode Island had resulted in "not less than FIVE HUNDRED" converts locally and that "the work has spread into" ten other towns.¹⁷⁵

With a newspaper editor as shrewd as bookseller Timothy C. Strong, there is every reason to believe that (for maximum sales of this issue of Palmyra Register) he timed these front-page articles to appear during the week the camp-meeting's noisy preliminaries started. For Palmyrans in early June 1820, the obvious question was: "What will be the results of our revival?" Although not "early spring," the first week of June was still well within the spring of 1820.

Two years earlier, Enoch Mudge's handbook had summarized the regimentation that Methodists imposed on these gatherings: "the setting [of] the watch [i.e., sentries]--the duty of the watch--their call to the people in the morning." In addition, these sentries were "appointed to

superintend the encampment at night, to keep order, to see that no stragglers are on the ground, and to detect any disorderly conduct."¹⁷⁶ Thus, an 1819 booklet stated: "A Methodist camp-meeting has the appearance of a military expedition. The people generally take with them their luggage, [food] stores and provisions, and encamp in a forest."¹⁷⁷

In reporting on a subsequent camp-meeting at Palmyra, the Methodist Magazine described its location: "a most beautiful and picturesque grove, near the village ..."¹⁷⁸ As already stated, the camp-meeting in such a "grove" sometimes extended "three quarters of a mile" (thirteen football fields in length). Marquardt and Walters acknowledged that the later camp-meeting was "undoubtedly" at the same "site which also received mention in the Palmyra paper during the last week of June 1820 ..."¹⁷⁹

Nevertheless, Walters ignored the significance of the Palmyra newspaper's report and also contradicted all the descriptions of revivals he claimed to have read in New York's Methodist Magazine when the minister-researcher wrote: "Joseph's account of the revival does not speak of it in terms that are compatible with it having been a camp meeting. It is clearly a local meeting where one could drop in on the meetings `as occasion would permit."¹⁸⁰

As previously indicated, it was only after "some weeks" of physical preparations that the Methodist organizers regarded Palmyra's "Camp-ground" as ready for the arrival of out-of-town revivalists in June 1820. Even at the smallest reported camp-meeting, "the number of Methodists [was] probably, about four hundred,"¹⁸¹ but there was no way to know in advance whether attendance would be small.

The organizers had to prepare Palmyra's camp-ground for an attendance of thousands, or they invited chaos. That was a potentially dangerous outcome that Methodist regimentation had

avoided for two previous decades of forest-revivals. For example, prior to commencing a Delaware camp-meeting, "seats were prepared for about two thousand. Meeting opened at three [PM]--a small congregation, and a small sermon." Yet within three days, the camp-meeting's attendance was "about three thousand."¹⁸²

The objection of Reverend Walters and others¹⁸³ about the small increase of membership in Palmyra's churches during 1820 is based on the inaccurate assumption that a several-day revival always resulted in large numbers of local converts. To the contrary, at Canaan, New York: "In the year 1808 a revival broke out, and for a short time went on gloriously; fifteen or twenty souls were delivered from the bondage of sin," and then Canaan's Methodist minister wrote enthusiastically about an 1815 revival: "In this meeting several found redemption ..."¹⁸⁴

In November 1814 Methodist bishop Francis Asbury even tabulated the small rate of conversions. After listing three camp-meetings with exactly one-percent total converts out of the thousands in attendance at each, he concluded with even lower rates of success:

At Louisville camp meeting[,] there were scarcely more than one thousand, [and] there might be ten converts. At the Warren [camp-meeting,] two thousand five hundred persons [were there] to hear, and but few converts: each camp meeting continued four days.

From that perspective, a local Methodist minister understandably wrote that it was "most consoling" when "about a dozen sinners were converted" out of the six hundred persons who attended a camp-meeting in September 1822. That was double the conversion rates recorded by Bishop Asbury nearly eight years earlier.¹⁸⁵

It was common for Methodist ministers to regard twenty total converts as cause for celebrating the success of camp-meetings with large attendance, and Palmyra's 1818 camp-meeting resulted in "about twenty" baptized converts.¹⁸⁶ Rather than always producing a spike in local church affiliation, in the 1820s a Methodist revival sometimes resulted in a few conversions that "not so much resembled a sudden and violent tempest, as the soft and fertilizing shower ..."¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, the emotionalism of Methodist camp-meetings led to a retention problem. As early as 1809, Bishop Asbury expressed "fear" about "sudden conversions [that are] not sound nor not lasting," and his letter even mocked the "Oh Glory! Glory!" exclamation that seemed to be mandatory for ecstatic converts at camp-meetings.¹⁸⁸ A Methodist minister later acknowledged: "It is objected that many who are, or profess to be converted in revivals, soon relapse into their old habits and are as bad, and sometimes even worse than they were before. We are frank to admit that these statements are too true."¹⁸⁹ Circuit-riders found it difficult to maintain the loyalty of these Methodists who had not attended a recent camp-meeting.

For example, another Methodist pastor recorded that half of the converts in his area became "backsliders" within months after an 1812 camp-meeting. A Baptist observer also wrote that "because of these impermanent conversions[,] the [local Methodist] churches themselves fell into a state of collapse shortly after the revival tide had passed."¹⁹⁰ This disaffiliation was evident in the annual statistics of Methodist membership in various local circuits, even though the denomination as a whole was growing rapidly in New York State and throughout the nation during these years.¹⁹¹

In that regard, there was a very significant (and heretofore overlooked) pattern in the data of Methodist affiliation as reported in 1819-20 for the area surrounding Joseph Smith's home. It is true that Ontario Circuit (which included Palmyra) declined from 677 Methodists to 671 in the period from 1 July 1819 to 20 July 1820, a net loss of six members. However, this decline of less than one percent was spectacularly lower than the declines reported in July 1820 for every other circuit in Ontario District, as compared with each circuit's membership a year earlier. From the report of July 1819 to that of July 1820, Crooked Lake Circuit had a 42.9 percent decline in Methodist affiliation, Lyons Circuit had a 44.4 percent decline, Canandaigua Circuit had a 56.0 percent decline, and Seneca Circuit had a 56.6 percent decline in Methodist membership.¹⁹² In other words, shortly after spring 1820, the Methodist retention rate in the immediate vicinity of Palmyra was 40-50 times greater than in the surrounding region.

What can explain the radically different statistics in Ontario Circuit? The obvious answer is that there were enough local converts to Methodism at Palmyra's camp-meeting of June 1820 to compensate for the rest of the circuit's decline in membership as reported in late July. In this case, the ecological fallacy of statistics has been to regard Ontario Circuit's very small decline as reflecting a decline in Palmyra's religious affiliation. To the contrary, as only one of the circuit's several preaching stations, Palmyra's significant conversions at its 1820 revival were what raised Ontario Circuit so far above the plummeting statistics of Methodist membership in the adjacent circuits. Rather than being some insignificant event, Palmyra's 1820 camp-meeting was a crucial factor in local Methodism and in at least one person's life who attended it.

Orsamus Turner, a nineteen-year-old apprentice in the office of the Palmyra Register, helped set the type for the articles of June 1820 about "Great Revivals" and about the local revival. He later described Joseph Smith Jr. "catching a spark of Methodism in the camp meeting, away down in the woods, on the Vienna road ..." ¹⁹³ Even in his most polemical publication, Reverend Walters admitted that Turner "left Palmyra about 1822," two years before the extensive revivalism the minister-researcher emphasized. ¹⁹⁴

Some non-Mormons in western New York also maintained a father-to-son tradition of significance for this 1820 camp-meeting. A resident of Farmington (later called Manchester), New York since 1808, Caleb Coates had a son Allen (born in 1797). ¹⁹⁵ A devout Methodist, Allen Coates occasionally employed young Joseph to do agricultural work "on the old Coates homestead" in Manchester, the village adjacent to Palmyra. Concerning "the time they were having revival meetings in the Methodist church," his grandson and namesake related what he had learned from his own father:

... my grandfather [Allen] invited Joseph Smith, the boy, to go up with him, you see. And, at a great revival, the spirit moves things, and he got interested and excited and involved in the meeting so that when he went home[,] he had some kind of a dream or vision or something. ... he claimed he was lead [sic] into some orchard, [and] they call it the sacred orchard, you know, the Mormons do, out near Palmyra.

Apparently intending no insult by calling the "Sacred Grove" (of Joseph's theophany) an "orchard," the grandson was not able to remember the year of this event, even though his father "told me all the way [growing] up, different times we talked about it." Furthermore, rather than this revival occurring inside a chapel, the grandson used the phrase "revival meetings in the

Methodist church" to mean "of the Methodist church." Likewise, he described his relative as "a deacon in the church in Manchester," meaning of the Methodist organization, not inside its chapel.¹⁹⁶

Like autobiographies, oral traditions about one's ancestor can both conflate and mix up details,¹⁹⁷ but this father-to-son story is consistent with my findings about Palmyra's revivals.¹⁹⁸ By stressing "a great revival" among local Methodists and mentioning no other denomination as being involved, the Coates family tradition fits Palmyra's solitary camp-meetings of 1818 and 1820, but is not consistent with the interdenominational revivals of 1816-17 and 1824-25. By linking this Methodist revival with young Joseph's visionary claim, this reminiscence points only to Palmyra's camp-meeting in the late spring of 1820. The village's non-Mormon newspaper editor verified the existence of this crucial revival, and this non-Mormon family independently verified that Joseph Smith actually attended it before his First Vision in a grove of trees.

From contemporary accounts of such Methodist revivals, this was what teenage Joseph experienced at the camp-meeting in June 1820:

... the meeting was conducted agreeably to the arrangements determined at its beginning. Family prayer in the morning at the tents; at eight o'clock, general prayer meeting at the stand; preaching; followed by exhortation, as occasion would require, at ten, two [in the afternoon], and six o'clock [in the evening], and the congregation called together by sound of trumpet. The intervals were occupied with occasional exercises [of faith and prayer] by groups of people in different parts of the [camp-]ground. In the midst of those groups, one might observe some struck down to the earth by the power of God,¹⁹⁹ and others agonizing for them in mighty prayer. As souls were brought out into

the liberty of either justifying [grace] or sanctifying grace, and as distress changed to spiritual joy, prayer would also turn to praise, and the songs and shouts of salvation [would] break from the glad hearts and voices of scores and hundreds. ...

... Now shrieks and groans of terror and distress issue from hearts pierced with the arrows of the Lord, and from hearts rejoicing in the Holy Ghost [issue] bursts of ["glory, glory, glory, glory,[" and those words] reverberate through the echoing woods. But these praying companies were generally broken up when the voice of the trumpet proclaimed the publication of the gospel [by preachers] ...

On the successive days[,] we had vast congregations, who appeared possessed of invincible patience and fortitude, while with fixed attention they listened to the sermons ...

On Friday and Saturday nights, at a very late hour, the people seemed exhausted with fatigue and retired to rest; but on Sunday night the work broke out with fresh power, and was carried on until morning without interruption. The camp exhibited a truly grand and magnificent scene. Very large fires were lighted up and blazed high all round inside the circle of tents--lighted candles were fastened to the trees, [so that] the reflection of the light on the tents and [on] the faces of the people, the variegated green of the spreading foliage above, and the deep sylvan shades which arrested the eye in every direction, were sufficient to impress the mind of the beholder with solemnity.--At twelve o'clock [midnight on Sunday,] the well known sound [of the trumpet] spread through the grove, and invited the people to attend the word of God--a profound silence ensued--the [preaching] stand was illuminated; and soon the midnight cry of judgment was

anticipated: the Lord, who preached from heaven through the meeting, sent his word into the hearts of saints and sinners; the prayer meetings were increased with new convicts and converts, and on Monday morning [the camp-meeting's final day,] the love-feast²⁰⁰ commenced at the rising of the sun. It was opened with singing and prayer, and many spoke feelingly of the things of God; their joy was full, their cups were running over, and others caught the streaming bliss. ...

[After] the love-feast[,] succeeded the last prayer-meeting ... At length the last sermon was delivered and followed by exhortation, when the preachers, about twenty in number, drew up in a single line, and a procession was formed four deep, led by a preacher, in front of a number of little children singing hymns of praise, and followed by hundreds who joined in the songs of Zion, marching round the encampment.

... no eloquence can picture the animation, the affection, the tenderness of the people and preachers on separating ... tears gushed from their eyes: some attempting to bid an adieu, sobs and sighs almost choked their utterance, while in others it was like a torrent bursting through every obstruction ... the big drops rolled down their faces, or glistened in their eyes, and they seemed to say in the language of the ancient heathens, "See how these Christians love!" The tents were struck and the people dispersed ...²⁰¹

Although the above was Reverend Ward's description of a revival in Connecticut, this was how the highly regimented Methodists conducted every camp-meeting (including Palmyra's of 1820).

He verified this when next describing a Methodist camp-meeting in rural New York: "The plan of our proceeding was arranged in the usual way: family prayers at the opening and close of each day, in the tents--general prayer meetings before the [preaching] stand at eight

[AM]--preaching at ten [AM], two [PM], and six o'clock [PM] in the day, and also at midnight--the intervals [in between] to be occupied with irregular [i.e., spontaneous] services."²⁰² Thus, another Methodist minister wrote: "the exercises at that [1818] meeting [near Marcellus in western New York] were neither new or strange to us: they constituted only a common camp-meeting scene."²⁰³ This Methodist regimentation was still evident decades later in the Camp Meeting Manual's nine-point outline for the daily "order of exercises and of domestic arrangements."²⁰⁴

Who were the ministers at Palmyra's 1820 revival? As already indicated, the traditional Mormon claim for Reverends George Lane and Benjamin Stockton as the preachers is anachronistic conflation of memory and narrative. At a camp-meeting with small attendance, 20-40 percent of the participants were ministers who traveled from a large region surrounding the host-village (in this case, in western New York): "It was not very numerously attended, probably from 500 to 1000 persons, upwards of 200 of whom were professors of religion."²⁰⁵ But what about Palmyra's camp-meeting?

A partial answer to that question was in the decades-later "Notes for a History of Methodism in Phelps" by Reverend Marvin P. Blakeslee. Harry Sarsnett said that preacher Elisha House "held" a "camp-meeting," at which Sarsnett converted to Methodism. Blakeslee did not give a specific date for this revival, but his chronological discussion mentioned it after comments for 1 July 1819 and "for 1820," but before Blakeslee's comments on events in November-December 1820.²⁰⁶ Although camp-meeting convert Sarsnett's exact birthdate seems unavailable and existing sources give various possibilities for it, this African-American in mid-

1820 was about twenty-one years old.²⁰⁷ Thus, he was about six years older than teenage Sarepta Marsh, the only other convert at this Methodist revival whom Blakeslee interviewed.²⁰⁸

How far in advance of November? Because participant Sarsnett remembered it as a "camp-meeting," this happened during the "season" from June to September. With the extensive preparations necessary, did two camp-meetings occur in the area between Palmyra and Phelps during the 1820 "season"? or did only one? Fragmentary evidence cannot answer that question definitely, but the evidence can support my conclusion that Sarsnett converted at the June 1820 camp-meeting held near Palmyra, the same revival Joseph Smith attended (according to the Coates family).²⁰⁹

Noted as a Methodist elder since 1818,²¹⁰ House was a resident of Phelps, nearly fourteen miles from Palmyra,²¹¹ yet much closer than Canandaigua. As indicated by Reverend Seager in June 1818, residents of Phelps traveled to camp-meetings in Palmyra, an out-of-town attendance which certainly occurred at Palmyra's revival in June 1820.

The list of unclaimed letters at Palmyra's post office provided a contemporary answer to the question of attendance at this camp-meeting, even though the list obviously did not identify all visitors. Most probably did not arrange for mail to be sent to them in Palmyra, while others picked up the mail they did receive there. The postal notices therefore mentioned only a very small percentage of actual visitors.

Nevertheless, the postmaster's notice for 30 June 1820 included "Rev. Benj. Bailey," who had traveled fifteen miles from his residence in Lyons to Palmyra, probably to attend its camp-meeting. He was the only Benjamin Bailey in Ontario County according to the censuses of 1810 and 1820.²¹² As the Presbyterian minister assigned to Macedon (later named "East Palmyra"),²¹³

Reverend Bailey's attendance at Palmyra's 1820 Methodist revival was undoubtedly why Joseph Smith linked it with the Presbyterians, even though he conflated that linkage with the conversion of his relatives to the Presbyterian Church four years later.

In addition, the same postal notice showed that at least two ministers had journeyed long distances to Palmyra, undoubtedly to attend its camp-meeting in June.²¹⁴ Subsequently a Methodist minister in Victor, only eighteen miles distant, Samuel Talbot in 1820 was a resident of Pompey, eighty-five miles from Palmyra.²¹⁵ The postal notice also listed "Deacon Barber," but no one by the name of Barber resided in Palmyra according to the 1820 census. Although Barber families lived in Ontario County at this time, there apparently was only one "Deacon Barber" in western New York. "Deacon William Barber" (apparently a Methodist) lived near Scipioville, Cayuga County, nearly fifty miles from Palmyra. This was not an unusual distance even for non-ministerial attenders of camp-meetings.²¹⁶

Because camp-meetings "ought to be almost continually vocal with psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs,"²¹⁷ publishers circulated hundreds to choose from. "HYMN XII" in Methodist minister Stith Mead's 1811 collection was one that Palmyra's revivalists of 1820 probably sang, just as Latter-day Saints have continued to do so to the present:

SWEET is the work, my God, my King.

To Praise thy name[,] give thanks and sing.²¹⁸

Another selection for New York's rural camp-meetings was "Hymn 44" as published at Poughkeepsie the same year as Mead's hymnal:

I know that my Redeemer lives,

What comfort this sweet sentence gives!

He lives, he lives, who once was dead,

He lives[,] my ever living head.²¹⁹

Of these two hymns, only the latter was in the first hymnal of the new church Joseph Smith Jr. eventually organized.²²⁰

Of greater importance for understanding the First Vision were other selections from New York hymnals. Among the songs Joseph undoubtedly joined in singing at Palmyra's camp-meeting in June 1820 was this one from the 1811 Poughkeepsie collection of hymns Usually Sung at Camp-Meetings:

O do not be discourag'd

For Jesus is your friend,

And if you lack for knowledge,

He'll not refuse to lend;

Neither will he upbraid you,

Though often you request

Those words restated the "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" passage from the New Testament's Epistle of James that Joseph said inspired him in 1820. This hymn's first line ("O When shall I see Jesus") implied that such "knowledge" could reach the teenager through actually seeing the Savior during this life.²²¹

Palmyra's 1820 camp-meeting attenders definitely heard that hymn as revivalists "almost continually" participated in days and nights of singing. Its words were also in Reverend Mead's 1811 hymnal,²²² and by 1817 had been reprinted in nine editions of Totten's New York hymns USUALLY SUNG AT CAMP-MEETINGS.²²³ In addition to eight printings of a Boston hymnal

by 1817, those words were also in two hymnals of 1819, including New York's fourth edition of Hymns and Spiritual Songs For the Use of Religious Assemblies.²²⁴ Rather than a sermon, it was a universally sung camp-meeting hymn that inspired Joseph Smith with the promise of James 1: 5.

From 1809 to 1817, nine editions of Totten's New York hymnal even affirmed the literal reality of having a daytime vision of Jesus:

As at the time of noon,
My quadrant FAITH, I take,
To view my CHRIST, my sun,
If he the clouds should break:
I'm happy when his face I see,
I know then whereabouts I be.²²⁵

By 1817, these words had also appeared in the eight editions of Boston's hymnal.²²⁶ It should be no surprise that many American revivalists published their visions of Jesus, even of seeing the Father and Son together.²²⁷

In 1809 Totten's New York collection of hymns USUALLY SUNG AT CAMP-MEETINGS even explained how a young man could obtain such a vision:

ONE ev'ning, pensive as I lay,
Alone upon the ground,
As I to God began to pray,
A light shone all around.
These words with power went through my heart

I've come to set you free;
Death[,] hell[,] nor grave shall never part,
My love (my son) from thee.²²⁸

Although Totten did not reprint this as often as the one about daytime theophany, Palmyra's 1820 camp-meeting almost certainly sang this hymn. It was in Reverend Mead's 1811 hymnal, in the 1811 Poughkeepsie collection of hymns Usually Sung at Camp-Meetings, in Totten's 1811 edition, in the second edition of an 1818 collection of Camp-meeting Songs for the Pious, and in the second edition of Collection of Camp Meeting Hymns by the wife of famed revivalist Lorenzo Dow.²²⁹ If (as seems very likely) Joseph sang this hymn at Palmyra's Methodist revival of 1820, it explains why the fourteen-year-old boy thought it not unusual to pray to God alone, to see Him in a "pillar of light," and to be "lying on my back, looking up into heaven."²³⁰

The teenager took the words of these hymns literally, as he did the scripture from James. Even though they often read the same biblical passage and sang the same modern hymns, most Methodist ministers by 1820 regarded those words as literal only for biblical times and for the afterlife. This was a reversal in American Methodism, whose members and leaders had sometimes professed visions of Jesus from the 1790s through the first decade of the nineteenth century. However, "by the 1820s and 1830s in the mostly white Methodist Episcopal Church, there was a noticeable shift away from overt enthusiasm," especially visions and dreams.²³¹ As Joseph Smith said, these nay-sayers insisted "that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them."²³²

In this regard, it is crucial that a leader of the Methodist Episcopal Church criticized some of those at Palmyra's June 1820 camp-meeting. In reporting on the later upsurge of revivals in the Ontario District (which included Palmyra), Reverend Abner Chase wrote on 1 July 1824 that "four years" ago [i.e., June 1820] "wild and ranting fanatics, caused the spirits of the faithful in a degree to sink." Previously a circuit-rider, he was "presiding elder" of the Ontario District as of July 1820. At Palmyra's 1820 Methodist camp-meeting, unnamed persons acted "wild" (like its drunk revivalist James Couser) and others said things that Reverend Chase regarded as fanatical.²³³

"Some few days after I had this vision," teenage Joseph confided his theophany to "one of the Methodist preachers who was active in the before mentioned religious excitement." The minister condemned Joseph's description "with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil ..."²³⁴ Various writers have assumed that George Lane was the preacher.²³⁵ Nevertheless, in June-July 1820 Reverend Lane's responsibility was in the Susquehanna District on the Pennsylvania border, and there is no evidence that he attended Palmyra's camp-meeting revival in June 1820.²³⁶ On the other hand, although one of the Methodists in the Coates family attended this revival with Joseph Smith, no member of that immediate family was a preacher or Methodist office-holder in 1820 (nor until a decade afterwards).²³⁷

William Barlow would be a likely candidate for this disbelieving preacher. He was circuit-rider for Ontario Circuit (in which Palmyra was located) from 1815 to July 1817. In July 1819 he became circuit-rider for his hometown of Canandaigua, seventeen miles from Palmyra.²³⁸ However, within months he left the Methodists "in an irregular, unofficial manner," converted to "the Protestant Episcopal Church" (i.e., Anglican Episcopalian), and became

Canandaigua's Episcopal rector in January 1820.²³⁹ Without its own resident Methodist minister, Palmyra was served by circuit-riders, and Barlow's apostasy removed one of the nearest organizers for the town's camp-meeting of June 1820.

Although Methodist elder Elisha House was not currently a circuit-rider for this area,²⁴⁰ his residence in Phelps was even closer to Palmyra, and it was practical for him to take over at least some of Barlow's responsibilities for the upcoming revival. As previously indicated for another camp-meeting in rural New York, "some of the brethren came more than ten and twelve miles to assist in the preliminary labours." It is therefore understandable why revival-convert Sarsnett, also living in Phelps,²⁴¹ remembered fellow-resident House as leader of the 1820 camp-meeting. By commenting that Reverend House was "very efficiently aiding the preaching" at this revival,²⁴² a local history (ten years earlier than Sarsnett's reminiscence) clarified that House only assisted in holding it, rather than being its principal leader.

This camp-meeting was a turning point in the differing religious vitality of the two towns. Phelps had a Methodist meetinghouse by 1819, three years before Palmyra. Following Palmyra's 1820 revival, however, the Ontario Circuit (which included Palmyra) nearly maintained its rate of Methodist retention, while the Lyons Circuit (which included Phelps) plummeted. By the end of the 1820s, Palmyra was its own Methodist preaching circuit--four years before Phelps.²⁴³ The camp-meeting of June 1820 began a shift of Methodist strength toward its host-village of Palmyra, a pattern that intensified with the dramatic revivals of 1824-25 and continued into the next decade. It is no wonder that Joseph Smith and three residents of Phelps emphasized 1820 for this religious transition.²⁴⁴

Official appointments for western New York's Methodists occurred only at the annual meetings of the Genesee Conference each July, but (during the six-month interim after Barlow's apostasy from Methodism in January 1820) Abner Chase apparently helped substitute for his abandoned duties at the upcoming revival in Palmyra. Barlow had married in the town of Pompey two years before Chase's 1818 appointment to its circuit, and the Methodist conference appointed Chase as Ontario District's presiding elder on 20 July 1820.²⁴⁵

As an isolated fact, Reverend Chase's pre-July assignment to Pompey, eighty-five miles from Palmyra, might seem to make it unlikely that he had any role in Palmyra's camp-meeting of June 1820. However, since one of his Methodist associates (Talbot) also went from Pompey to Palmyra before the village's postal notice at the end of June, this indicates that both men traveled to the camp-meeting that month, probably together.

Although this trip was arduous, Methodist circuit-riders and presiding officers routinely covered such distances on horseback in two days. During November 1811 Bishop Asbury wrote: "Thursday, 28. We took to horse, and rode forty miles." That was three months after his comment in Pennsylvania: "My flesh is ready to think it something for a man of sixty-six, with a highly inflamed and painful foot, to ride nearly four hundred miles on a stumbling, starting horse, slipping or blundering over desperate roads from Paris [fifty-seven miles east of Syracuse, New York] to this place in twelve days." During May 1815 he wrote about consecutive days of such travel in New York State: "Wednesday, to Rhinebeck, forty miles. Thursday, to Judge Van Ness's, forty miles--in rain, cold, and suffering."²⁴⁶ Younger, healthier Methodist ministers would have had no trouble completing the eighty-five miles to Palmyra in two days. Whether a

walking mother of seventeen children or Methodists on horseback, there were few limits to the exertions the devout would make to attend a camp-meeting revival.

Elisha House or Abner Chase was probably the Methodist minister who listened to the teenager's testimony of seeing God in June 1820. Either way, Chase learned of Joseph's assertion and dismissed the unschooled farmboy as a "ranting" fanatic.

Eighteen years after his First Vision of deity in 1820, Joseph Smith Jr. created problems for historical understanding by misremembering "early spring" and by conflating circumstances of that year with circumstances of Palmyra's revivals in 1824-25. Nevertheless, I disagree with BYU religion professor Paul H. Peterson's 1995 assessment "that Marquardt and Walters have a strong case in claiming that the 1824-25 revival satisfies all of the elements of Joseph's 1838 history more adequately than any other account."²⁴⁷ That conclusion is based on the unnecessary assumption that all details in his account of local "excitement on the subject of religion" must apply to only one year's experience with revivalism.

Fourteen-year-old Joseph Smith caught "a spark of Methodism" at Palmyra's camp-meeting revival in the late spring of 1820. This led him to seek forgiveness "for my own Sins" and to find theophany.²⁴⁸

1. For example, from 1994 to 1998 I published "revisionist" books that nonetheless cited Backman and emphasized his point of view about the First Vision (see my note 38 in this article). I use "apologist" as a non-judgmental, descriptive term, as explained in D. Michael Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View, rev. and enl. ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), x:

"Not every believer is an apologist, but apologists take special efforts to defend their cherished point of view--whether in religion, science, history, or some other belief/endeavor. It is not an insult to call someone an 'apologist' (which I often do), nor is 'apologist' an unconditional badge of honor. Like drivers on a highway, some apologists are careful, some are careless, some unintentionally injure the innocent, some are Good Samaritans, and a few are sociopaths. Like drivers, even good apologists make errors in judgment and occasionally violate the rules. The same is true for those who don't think they're apologists.

"In a tradition as old as debate, polemics is an extreme version of apologetics. Defending a point of view becomes less important than attacking one's opponents. Aside from their verbal viciousness, polemicists often resort to any method to promote their argument. Polemics intentionally destroys the give-and-take of sincerely respectful disagreement. In the resulting polarization, 'all are punish'd.' Moving beyond apologist persuasion, LDS polemicists furiously (and often fraudulently) attack any non-traditional view of Mormonism. They don't mince words--they mince the truth."

By those definitions, I have always regarded myself as an honest apologist for Mormonism, especially in its controversies (where I have included both traditional and controversial evidences, have acknowledged perspectives of disbelief but also options for faith, have stated my assessments of the evidence, and have expected readers to arrive at their own conclusions). As in the above book, this article uses the term "apologist" to describe authors writing from a faith-perspective I share, even though we have not always approached various topics in the same ways.

In that regard, current readers can decide whether the following is an honest summary of my above-quoted statements, or whether the following is an example of polemics. Terry L. Givens, By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 292n71, commented on "his [Quinn's] vitriolic response to his critics (some LDS apologists are, he suggests in his revised work, 'sociopaths' [x])."

2. The nicknames "Mormon" and "Mormons" derive from Joseph Smith Jr.'s publication of The Book of Mormon in 1830 at Palmyra, New York, as his "translation" of extra-biblical scripture written by a small group of people who lived anciently in the western hemisphere. See John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., Encyclopedia of Mormonism: The History, Doctrine, and Procedure of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 1: 210-12; D. Michael Quinn, "The Ancient Book of Mormon As Tribal Narrative," Sunstone 137 (May 2005): 67.

Wesley P. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 67 (for "massive silence"), 61 (for "cannot be true"), 66 (for Palmyra "revivals in the years 1817, 1824, 1829, etc."), 77n44 (for "reports of the

1816 [Palmyra] revival can be found in" various sources, with last citation as "Nov. 1, 1817"). Although Walters published a similar article by that title in Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society 10 (Fall 1967) in which these quotes first appeared, he expanded it by one-third for what Dialogue's editors called a "reprint" in their introductory essay, "Roundtable: The Question of the Palmyra Revival" (59). Because readers are more likely to have access to the Dialogue version of Walters' article, I quote from it and cite its pagination. With one exception (in my note 14), I do not indicate variations between his 1967 and 1969 articles of the same title.

3. Robert D. Anderson, Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 9, 69, 75. For discussion of his biography's unrelenting hostility, see D. Michael Quinn, "Biographers and the Mormon 'Prophet Puzzle': 1974-2004," Journal of Mormon History 32 (Summer 2006): 231.

4. E. Latimer, The Three Brothers: Sketches of the Lives of Rev. Aurora Seager, Rev. Micah Seager, Rev. Schuyler Seager, D.D. (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1880), 12 (for Aurora's death in 1819), 21-22 (for quotes, including his 1818 "diary"); also F[rancis]. W. Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1876), 139, for the July 1818 annual meeting in Lansing, New York, attended by Methodist bishop Robert R. Roberts; Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828 (New York: T. Mason, G. Lane, J. Collord, 1840), 316 (for Billy Hibbard in New York Conference), 317 ("Aurora Seager goes to the Genesee Conference"), 318 (for Aurora Seager in Clarence Circuit of Genesee District in Genesee Conference and for "Zechariah" Paddock in Ridgeway Circuit of Genesee District--his brother Benjamin G. Paddock was assigned to a different district--roughly a county--this year and was less likely to be the "Brother Paddock" in Seager's diary entry). For modern studies, see Charles A. Johnson, The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religious Harvest Time (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955); Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact Upon Religion in America (Boston: Little, Brown, 1958), esp. 31-50; Dickson D. Bruce, And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974), esp. 61-95; Ellen Weiss, City In the Woods: The Life and Design of an American Camp Meeting on Martha's Vineyard (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), esp. 3-12 (for pre-1830 camp-meetings); Kenneth O. Brown, Holy Ground: A Study of the American Camp Meeting (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992); Ellen Eslinger, Citizens of Zion: The Social Origins of Camp Meeting Revivalism (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999).

Although the town of Vienna did not change its name to Phelps until the 1850s, various sources had previously referred to Phelps as if it were a town (including Reverend Seager in 1818 and the U.S. censuses from 1820 to 1850--see my notes 207, 209, 211, and 241), when Phelps was actually a "township" containing several towns. Likewise, History of Ontario County, New York (Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign, and Everts, 1876), 179, noted: "seven villages have an existence, either wholly or in part, within the bounds of Manchester," the township where the Smith family lived in the village of Farmington (re-named Burt in 1821 and finally named Manchester in 1822) during the 1820s (see my note 19). Because several quotes in this

article's text refer to the town by its subsequent name of Phelps, my narrative uses the later name instead of the cumbersome alternatives "Vienna (later named Phelps)" or "Phelps (called Vienna in 1820)." For 13.6 miles as the distance from Palmyra to Phelps, consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet. For explanation of this article's use of Mapquest, see my note 94.

5. Milton V. Backman Jr., "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District: New Light on the Historical Setting of the First Vision," BYU Studies 9 (Spring 1969): 307, 307n14. His footnote did not cite Seager directly, but referred to a document whose full title and location are "NOTES FOR A HISTORY OF METHODISM IN PHELPS by Rev. M. P. Blakeslee, 1886," photocopy of typescript (17 numbered pages), Folder 5, MSS 847, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Blakeslee's manuscript stated on page 7: "Some interesting notes are gathered from published portions of the diary of Rev. Aurora Seager. He mentions the quarterly meeting held in Phelps, [where] Jonathan Huestis, the presiding elder preached. This was on Saturday, May 23, 1818. ... Mr. Seager also mentions in his diary a camp meeting at Palmyra, which he attended on the 19th of June, at which Bishop Roberts was present. At this meeting he says twenty were baptized and forty united with the church." Blakeslee's page 8 also gave the first name for the Methodist identified as "Bro. Hawks" in Seager's published diary. For the connection of Phelps with Vienna in western New York and for the distance of nearly fourteen miles from Palmyra to Phelps, see my note 4.

Aside from pre-publication access to Backman's 1969 article (see my note 14), Wesley P. Walters, "A Reply to Dr. Bushman," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 98, indicated that he had read Blakeslee's manuscript by commenting that Richard L. Bushman "appeals to an equally late reminiscence by a Mr. Sarsnett" (see narrative for my note 206 and comments within my notes 206-209). Neither Backman nor Bushman mentioned Sarsnett in their articles of 1969, a name Walters knew in this regard only because he had already consulted Blakeslee's manuscript, which was in a source-note for Bushman, "The First Vision Story Revived," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 9 (Spring 1969): 93n15.

In addition, Wesley P. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," Journal of Pastoral Practice, 4 (1980), No. 2: 103, also referred to his having read "Blakeslee's entire manuscript, which catalogues events consecutively under separate years ..." Despite the fact that Walters had read the "entire" Blakeslee document (and therefore knew about this published diary reference to a Palmyra revival in June 1818) and despite the corresponding fact that a copy of Blakeslee's "Notes" is in Folder 13, Box 164, of H. Michael Marquardt's research papers, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, they did not acknowledge that Palmyra had a camp-meeting revival in June 1818--neither in H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record ([San Francisco:] Smith Research Associates, 1994), 18-19, 35n11, 239 (index for "Palmyra, NY ... revival ..."), nor in H. Michael Marquardt, The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844 (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2005), 19, 20n20, 668 (index for "Palmyra, New York ... revival"), 670 (index for "Revival in Palmyra"); also comments within my notes 14 and 180. However, in fairness to Walters and Marquardt, see text discussion for my notes 35, 61, 62, 67, 68, 69, 73, as well as comments within my notes 35, 58, 61, 62, 67, 73, 161.

6. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 108, stated that the author "erroneously moves the revival date [in Palmyra] ahead a year (shades of Backman) to 1817-1818." Compare with last paragraph in my note 5.

7. Joseph Smith Jr., "History" (written in 1832), available in Milton V. Backman Jr., Joseph Smith's First Vision: Confirming Evidences and Contemporary Accounts, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 155; Scott H. Faulring, ed., An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith Research Associates, 1989), 4; Dean C. Jessee, ed., The Papers of Joseph Smith, 2+ vols., with a different subtitle for each volume (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989-92+), 1: 4-5; Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, Joseph Smith: The Choice Seer (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 370; Dan Vogel, comp. and ed., Early Mormon Documents, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996-2004), 1: 27.

8. "Effects of Drunkenness," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 28 June 1820, [2]; Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Circumstantial Confirmation of the First Vision Through Reminiscences," BYU Studies 9 (Spring 1969): 380. Because I cannot find a modern transcription that is readily available in print or on the Internet of this important article, here it is in full:

"Effects of Drunkenness.--DIED at the house of Mr. Robert M'Collum, in this town, on the 26th inst. [instant, i.e., of this month,] James Couser, aged about forty years. The deceased, we are informed, arrived at Mr. M'Collum's house the evening preceding [i.e., Sunday, June 25th], from a camp-meeting which was held in this vicinity, in a state of intoxication. He, with his companion who was also in the same debasing condition, called for supper, which was granted. They both stayed all night--called for breakfast next morning--when notified that it was ready, the deceased was found wrestling with his companion, whom he flung with the greatest ease,--he suddenly sunk down upon a bench,--was taken with an epileptic fit, and immediately expired.--It is supposed he obtained his liquor, which was no doubt the cause of his death, at the Camp-ground, where, it is a notorious fact, the intemperate, the lewd and dissolute part of the community too frequently resort for no better object, than to gratify their base propensities.

"The deceased, who was an Irishman, we understand has left a family, living at Catskill [in] this state."

Because my article has so many quoted references to "camp-ground," the narrative follows that archaic spelling, rather than the modern spelling of campground.

9. "'Plain Truth' is received," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 5 July 1820, [2]; also quoted in Walter A. Norton, "Comparative Images: Mormonism and Contemporary Religions as Seen by Village Newspapermen in Western New York and Northeastern Ohio, 1820-1833" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1991), 255. Because I cannot find a modern transcription that is readily available in print or on the Internet of this important article, here it is in full:

"Plain Truth' is received. By this communication, as well as by the remarks of some of our neighbors who belong to the Society of Methodists, we perceive that our remarks accompanying the notice of the unhappy death of James Couser, contained in our last [weekly issue], have not

been correctly understood. 'Plain truth' says, we committed 'an error in point of fact,' in saying that Couser 'obtained his liquor at the camp-ground.' By this expression we did not mean to insinuate, that he obtained it within the enclosure of their place of worship, or that he procured it of them, but at the grog-shops that were established at, or near if you please, their camp-ground. It was far from our intention to charge the Methodists with retailing ardent spirits while professedly met for the worship of their God. Neither did we intend to implicate them by saying that 'the intemperate, the dissolute, &c. resort to their meetings.'--And if so we have been understood by any one of that society, we assure them they have altogether mistaken our meaning."

10. This requires some explanation because all U.S. almanacs in 1820 skipped a step, due to their publishers' assumption that American farmers were so knowledgeable about both the seasons and astrology that they did not need an explanation that spring begins when the sun enters Taurus in March and that summer begins when the sun enters Pisces in June. Like all the other almanacs, the one published near the Smith home simply gave astrological symbols showing that for "1820--3d Mo. MARCH," the sun enters Taurus on 20 March, and for "1820--6th Mo. JUNE," the sun enters Pisces on 21 June. See THE FARMER'S DIARY, OR BEER'S ONTARIO ALMANACK FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1820 (Canandaigua, NY: J. D. Bemis, [1819]), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 47953 in the "Early American Imprints, 2nd Series," microform collection available at university libraries. For Canandaigua as nine miles from Joseph Smith's home, see his mother's statement in Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 369.

The words "spring" and "summer" were absent from nearly all U.S. almanacs published in 1820, but The Farmer's Almanack For The Year of Our Lord 1820 (Portland, ME: A. Shirley and F. Douglas, [1819]), Shaw and Shoemaker item 47948, specified that the "THIRD MONTH. MARCH 1820" was the month of "spring's return" and that the "SIXTH MONTH. JUNE 1820" was when "summer's full bounty will be displayed." For the general public's astrological awareness, upon which these early almanacs relied, see George Lyman Kittridge, The Old Farmer and His Almanack (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 39-61; Marion Barber Stowell, Early American Almanacs: The Colonial Weekday Bible (New York: Burt Franklin, 1977); David J. Whittaker, "Almanacs in the New England Heritage of Mormonism," BYU Studies 29 (Fall 1989): 91-92, 109; Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (1998 ed.), 21-24.

11. Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: Latter Day Saints Book Depot, 1854-86), 11: 2; Brigham H. Roberts, The Missouri Persecutions (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1900), 10; James E. Talmage, "A Theophany Resplendent," Improvement Era 23 (April 1920): [514]; Brigham H. Roberts, ed., A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: "By the Church," 1930), 1: 51; Joseph Fielding Smith, The Restoration of All Things (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1945), 30; David O. McKay, Pathways to Happiness (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1957), 42; Roy W. Doxey, The Doctrine and Covenants Speaks, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 1: 10, 524, 2: vi-

vii, 13-14; Bruce R. McConkie, The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 57, 74, 87, 100, 105, 112, 125, 175, 334, 389; Dean Hughes, The Mormon Church: A Basic History (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 5; Ezra Taft Benson in I Know That My Redeemer Lives (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 215; James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, rev. and enl. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 8; Milton V. Backman Jr., "First Vision," in Ludlow, Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 2: 515; McConkie and Millet, Choice Seer, 35, 37, 114, 367; Clyde J. Williams, ed., Teachings of Howard W. Hunter (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 28; Gordon B. Hinckley, Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 141; Terry L. Givens, The Latter-day Saint Experience in America (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 9; Stephen C. Harper, "On the Eve of the First Vision," in Susan Easton Black and Andrew C. Skinner, eds., Joseph: Exploring the Life and Ministry of the Prophet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 31.

12. Backman, "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District," and Anderson, "Circumstantial Confirmation of the First Vision," BYU Studies 9 (Spring 1969): 309, 380; Bushman, "First Vision Story Revived," 87, 93n14; Donna Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 458n30; Backman, Joseph Smith's First Vision, 74; Norton, "Comparative Images," 254-56; Richard Lyman Bushman, "Just the Facts Please," FARMS Review of Books 6 (1994), No. 2: 126, and 126n3; Paul H. Peterson, untitled book review, BYU Studies 35 (1995), No. 4: 214; Gary F. Novak, "'The Most Convenient Form of Error': Dale Morgan on Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon," FARMS Review of Books 8 (1996), No. 1: 155, 155n69; Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (1998 ed.), 136, 456n2; Craig N. Ray, Joseph Smith's History Confirmed (Redding, CA: Foundation for Apologetic Information & Research [FAIR], 2002), 5; Davis Bitton, "The Charge of a Man with a Broken Lance (But Look What He Doesn't Tell Us)," and Stephen C. Harper, "Trustworthy History," FARMS Review of Books 15 (2003), No. 2: 261, 295. However, see narrative text for my notes 60-63 and 67-69, plus comments within my notes 60-62 and 67.

13. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 62-64; Walters, "Reply to Dr. Bushman," 95-96; Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 98-100; Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 15-16. The anachronisms are best presented in the verbatim printing of the Smith family's reminiscent accounts and Cowdery's narrative, as discussed in footnotes by Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 1: 58n19, 59n20, 146n1, 213, 243n33, 288n87, 306nn103-104, 487n13, 490nn1-2, 494n5, 495nn6-7, 504n4, 512n8, 513n10.

Compare Roberts, Comprehensive History, 1: 51-53; Joseph Smith, Jr., et al., History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Period I: History of the Joseph Smith, the Prophet and ... Period II: From the Manuscript History of Brigham Young and Other Original Documents, ed. B.H. Roberts, 7 vols., 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 1: 2-3, available as "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 5-7, in recent editions of The Pearl of Great Price, published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at Salt Lake City, Utah; Backman, "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District," 69; Larry C. Porter, "Reverend George Lane--Good 'Gifts,' Much 'Grace,' and Marked 'Usefulness,'" BYU Studies 9 (Spring 1969): 337-38; Milton

V. Backman Jr. and James B. Allen, "Membership of Certain of Joseph Smith's Family in the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra," BYU Studies 10 (Summer 1970): 482-84.

In his 1999 "The William Smith Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," LDS apologist Elden J. Watson's first declaration was that "the 1893 William Smith statement places Reverend Benjamin B. Stockton and Reverend George Lane in the milieu of the first vision (spring, 1820), instead of the time frame of the visitation of the angel Moroni (fall, 1823) where they actually belong," and Watson wrote immediately prior to his note-number 33: "William here stated that Hyrum, Samuel, Katherine, and his mother, Lucy, became members of the Presbyterian church, but that his father would not join because of some feelings engendered at Alvin's funeral. Thus, by implication, these family members joined near the time of Alvin's death [in November 1823]. Lucy Smith, in her account, indicated that she and several of her family became interested in joining with a church shortly after Alvin's death. This would indicate that they probably joined the Presbyterian church early in 1824" (available, without page numbers, on the Internet as <http://eldenwatson.net/wmsmith.htm>). Also Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 204n32, observed that, contrary to his brother William, Joseph Smith's decades-earlier narrative was more accurate about the identity of the sister who converted to Presbyterianism, and that the elder of the two sisters, "Sophronia was more likely to be the sister who joined."

14. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival" (in 1969 Dialogue "reprint"), 67 (for narrative quote), and 78n47 (for citation to Palmyra Register's "issues of June 28 and July 5, 1820, p. 2"), which latter citation was not in the source-notes of his original 1967 article in Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society. Before submitting his article for its expanded "reprint" in Dialogue, Walters had pre-publication access to Backman's 1969 article, as did Richard L. Bushman for his "First Vision Story Revived" in the same issue of Dialogue. Bushman cited (93n13) Backman's essay by its preliminary title "An Awakening," but Reverend Walters did not acknowledge it as his source for the articles of 1820 he cited. The minister-researcher's 1969 article also rebutted Backman's arguments without acknowledging the existence of the 1969 article in BYU Studies to which Walters was actually responding.

That the minister recognized he was violating an expectation of honest disclosure in scholarly writing is obvious from Wesley P. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," Journal of Pastoral Practice, 4 (1980), No. 2: 92-109, in which he complained on page 93: "Although written to answer our [1969] article [which had been "revised and enlarged"--92], Dr. Backman nowhere refers to it, either in the text, the footnotes, or in the 12-page Bibliography of his [1971] book." Walters added with obvious irritation on 94n2: "In the second edition (1980) of his book, Dr. Backman finally included in a footnote (p. 195) a passing reference to our [1967] article. However, he has still avoided all reference to the enlarged version of this article in Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought. He is aware of its existence for he quotes from Dr. Richard Bushman's rebuttal to it (p. 196), but he ignores our reply. The footnotes in that [1969] printing answered a number of criticisms raised by Dr. Backman in his present edition [of 1980]." Walters' ministerial readers in 1980 might have been puzzled by this claim that his 1969 article had replied to criticisms in Backman's book, which was first published in 1971. If Walters recognized that the two editions of Backman's book gave the reverend-researcher's 1969 article

the same silent-treatment as Walters had given his advance reading of the BYU professor's 1969 article, Walters did not explain this to his fellow ministers in 1980.

In making this and other stark assessments about the publications by Wesley P. Walters, I hope that I am not perceived as engaging in polemics or in ad hominem attacks (see my note 1). Aside from trying to avoid both, I personally regarded him as a kind, thoughtful, and congenial man--a diligent researcher who invited me to his home in Marissa, Illinois, for dinner, for hours of engaging conversation, and for an overnight stay during one of my research trips in the mid-1970s. Nonetheless, while writing about Mormon history, Reverend Walters demonstrated academic and ethical lapses that I cannot ignore (nor minimize) while I closely examine the same topics and (especially) the same sources. See text discussion for my notes 5-6, 27, 28, 33, 180; see text after my notes 79, 86, 89, 113, 145; see comments within my notes 5 and 180; also see the minister-researcher's ethical lapses involving his unauthorized removal of official documents about Joseph Smith's 1826 court appearance for treasure-scriving, as related (with copy of letter from New York county court officer to Walters) in Larry C. Porter, "Reinventing Mormonism: To Remake or Redo," FARMS Review of Books 7 (1995), No. 2: 141-43.

When I began researching and writing this present article in June 2005, I did not want to mention Porter's observation and initially rejected it as tangential to my analysis. Even after my own unexpected discoveries of the minister-researcher's ethical lapses, it required dozens of re-writes before I concluded that Porter's observation seemed too relevant to withhold from this article's commentary about the historical approach of Reverend Walters toward Joseph Smith Jr.

15. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 69 (for "adjoining" quote), 78n47 (for the happenstance reference to the camp-meeting); with a close paraphrase of Walters' note-comments in Marquardt, Rise of Mormonism, 20n20. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see "Our Village," Western Farmer (Palmyra, New York), 17 Oct. 1821, [3]; "Palmyra Village," Palmyra Herald and Canal Advertiser (Palmyra, New York), 31 July 1822, [3].

16. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 64-65, 66, 69, 76n37, 77n40; Walters, "Reply to Dr. Bushman," 98-99; compare Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 2-3; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 5.

A fourth argument against the 1820 revival has involved analysis of land transactions to dispute Joseph's statement that it began "some time in the second year after our removal [from Palmyra] to Manchester," Ontario County, New York. I skip that discussion-controversy here because it seems to be another example of the Prophet's conflation of actual events surrounding Palmyra's solitary revival of 1820 with the village's extensive revivals of 1824-25 (see narrative text for my notes 39-43). However, readers may agree with me that there is logical circularity (and corresponding weakness) in nay-sayer objections about this matter, as most recently expressed in the summary by Marquardt, Rise of Mormonism, 12.

17. Backman, "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District," 311 (for quote), 314-18 (for statistics); also Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 34n7 ("The records of the Palmyra Methodist Church were burned in a fire at Rochester, New York in 1933").

18. Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 160.

19. For the Smith family's residence in first Palmyra and second in Farmington (re-named Burt in 1821 and finally named Manchester in 1822), New York, see Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 2; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 3. For both Palmyra and Manchester during this period as in the Methodist Ontario Circuit of Ontario District, see Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 63; Backman, Joseph Smith's First Vision, 70; Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 97. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see my note 15.

While Joseph Sr. arrived in Palmyra by the fall of 1816, his wife Lucy arrived with Joseph Jr. and the other children after the snows of winter had begun. Since 1816 was a very cold year (due to worldwide cooling caused by the massive explosion of an Indonesian volcano), the presence of snow does not clarify whether the entire family arrived in Palmyra in late 1816 or early 1817. Compare two prize-winning biographies: Dan Vogel, Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 21 ("they began their trip perhaps as late as January 1817" in leaving Vermont for Palmyra, New York) and 542 (for their departure from Manchester in December 1830); Richard Lyman Bushman "with" Jed Woodworth, Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), [30] ("the Smiths arrived in western New York in the winter of 1816-17"), with no specificity about their departure from Manchester in 1830.

Although it is customary to list co-author(s) in narrative references, my text refers only to Bushman as the biographer because his name is imprinted as sole author on the dustjacket, front cover, and spine-binding of Rough Stone Rolling. Its preface (xxiii) showed that his research assistant's role as "collaborator" was significantly less than co-authorship, even though "with the assistance of Jed Woodworth" appeared on the title-page and on the Library of Congress cataloging-page. Because of the latter, my bibliographic citations use the non-traditional "with" for Woodworth's role, because even Bushman's title-page and LC cataloging specifically avoided the traditional "and" of co-authorship.

20. George Peck, Early Methodism Within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828 (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1860), 353 ("On horseback, and to a Methodist preacher there was then no other mode of conveyance"), 355 ("circuit rider"); Milton V. Backman Jr., "The Quest for a Restoration: The Birth of Mormonism in Ohio," BYU Studies 12 (Summer 1972): 348 (concerning "the Grand Circuit which consisted of forty-four preaching stations in Ashtabula, Geauga, and Trumbull counties" of Ohio); W. P. Strickland, ed., Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley; or Pioneer Life in the West (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern/R. P. Thompson, 1854), 237 ("This circuit was large, having twenty-five appointments [i.e., stations for preaching], and I increased the number to thirty-eight before the expiration of the year"--1811). Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 145-69, gives a very good description of circuit-riders and their significance in various regions of the nation; also last paragraph of my note 191 and quote in the narrative for my note 246.

21. William Hosmer, ed., Autobiography of Rev. Alvin Torrey (Auburn, NY: William J. Moses, 1861), 16, for list of towns in his circuit during "this year (1817)"

22. Manly Tooker, Poems, and Jottings of Itinerancy in Western New-York (Rochester, NY: E. Darrow & Brother/Benton & Andrews, 1860), 125 (for quote in which he emphasized how often he was able to visit one town within his circuit, Cazenovia, "during my first year" in 1821-22); also Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 168 (for Cazenovia in 1820), 184 (for this author's name as "Manly"). Milton V. Backman Jr. also wrote: "One of the most famous [Methodist] circuit-riders of early America was Peter Cartwright. At the age of sixty-eight, this itinerant had a circuit [of] almost 500 miles by 100 miles," in American Religions and the Rise of Mormonism (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 284, citing W. P. Strickland, ed., Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1857), 484-86; compare with quote in the narrative for my note 246.

23. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828; also Bushman, "First Vision Story Revived," 87 ("Methodist figures take in an entire circuit and fail to note changes in smaller locales"); Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 97 ("The individual church figures are not available, it is true, but the membership figures for the Ontario Circuit on which Palmyra was located are part of the printed Minutes of the denomination").

24. Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 142, referring to the situation before July 1819.

25. Backman, "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District," 308 (for quote), 305 (for chapel); his statement of dimensions was taken from "GENESEE CONFERENCE," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 5 (November 1822): 428. Backman observed that Joseph's phrase might have the "meaning possibly [of] western New York or eastern and western New York and not necessarily Palmyra, Farmington [re-named Burt in 1821 and finally named Manchester in 1822], or just the neighborhood where he lived" (315). However, see narrative text for my note 68.

26. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 103 (for "wishful thinking"), 103-04n6 (for statistical quote, emphasis in original). For "ecological fallacy" (a term and concept Walters did not actually use), see Wikipedia on the Internet, whose entry cites Stephen K. Campbell, Flaws and Fallacies in Statistical Thinking (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974). Because the Methodist membership reported in July 1819 was larger than the membership reported in July 1820, Walters wrote that the 1820 figures should be subtracted from the 1819 figures. Statistically, earlier figures should always be subtracted from the later figures, which would show "negative growth" in this instance.

27. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 66, 76n21. For narrative flow, I reverse the order of the first two phrases as quoted from his text on page 66, but the meaning remains the same as in the original. Aside from my narrative's quotation from his above note, his source-note (77n41) for the statements on page 66 correctly reported the total "white and Negro membership for the Ontario Circuit," as given for 1819, 1820, and 1821 in Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 330, 346, 366. With reference to his 1980 article's claim for an arithmetical result of "59," those numbers were also not a stray memory of contiguous numerals in the figures for Ontario District in 1820 (the newly created district's first annual report), nor in 1821, nor in the difference between those years. The Ontario District (roughly the entire county) had 3128 "white" and 19 "colored" members in 1820 (3147 total), and had 3528 "white" and 17 "colored" in 1821 (3545 total), which was an increase in Ontario District of 400 "white" members, a loss of two "colored" members, and a net increase of 398. Created in July 1819, the Ontario District was not in the 1819 report for the period from July 1818 to 1 July 1819.
28. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 92 (for "there was no revival"), 100 (for "this supposed 1820 camp meeting"), 104 (for denial of "either a camp meeting or a revival"), 106 (for denial of "even a spark of a revival"), 109 (for "legendary events"); compare with narrative quotes for my notes 14-15. For definition of "polemics," see my note 1. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see sources cited within my note 15.
29. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 2; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 5.
30. Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, xxvi-xxviii, 15-41 (with page 29 for new chapel in 1822), 36n13.
31. Dan Vogel, Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 43n32; Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 1: 58n19, 288n87, 306n103, 2: 424n6, 3: 94n31, 416n2, 5: 390; Anderson, Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith, 106-07; Grant H. Palmer, An Insider's View of Mormon Origins (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 240-44; Vogel, Making of a Prophet, 587n11 (for discussion on his page 58); Marquardt, Rise of Mormonism, 13-16, 670 (index citation for "Revival in Palmyra").
32. Strickland, Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, 287 ("When they [Methodists] were few and despised, Presbyterian dignity could not stoop to a recognition of them..."); also see last three paragraphs within my note 111 for Presbyterian hostility toward Methodist camp-meetings.
33. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 64 (for the local Presbytery's statement about "no remarkable revival" in 1824), 77n39 (for "completely beyond possibility" about similar statement of alleged absence in 1820); also Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 18, 22, in which Marquardt dropped his deceased co-author's statement of "beyond possibility."

34. Latimer, Three Brothers, 22 (for quotation from Reverend Aurora Seager's "diary" about his attendance with "Bishop Roberts" at Palmyra's camp-meeting, 19-22 June 1818); also Blakeslee, "NOTES FOR A HISTORY OF METHODISM IN PHELPS," manuscript page 7; compare Palmyra Register's weekly editions (on Tuesdays during this period) from 19 May 1818 through 21 July 1818 for total absence of any reference to this Methodist revival (compare with narrative text for my notes 148-150); "Who are the bishops and superintendents?" in Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 290 (for 1817), 305 (for 1818); also Charles Elliott, The Life of the Rev. Robert R. Roberts, One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: G. Lane and C. B. Tippet, 1846), 167; Worth Marion Tippy, Frontier Bishop: The Life and Times of Robert Richford Roberts (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1958), 106, 130. Neither biographer mentioned Roberts' attendance at Palmyra's camp-meeting nor at most other revivals after his ordination as bishop in 1816, emphasizing instead his attendance at regional and national meetings.

35. Concerning the evidence he cited from BYU's library, Backman commented in 1980: "Blakeslee discusses in his manuscript history a camp meeting held near Palmyra in 1818, in which twenty were baptized and forty converted to the Methodist society, and which was not reported in the newspapers and religious journals of that age" (Backman, Joseph Smith's First Vision, 74n34). Rather than burying the last phrase in a footnote, Backman should have emphasized this fact repeatedly in the text as one of the most significant answer to the "massive silence" argument by Walters, to whom Backman was responding. However, because Backman subordinated this conclusive evidence for Palmyra's 1818 revival and its absence from newspapers, those facts failed to show up in subsequent writings by both apologists and disbelievers. Compare text discussion for my notes 4-7, 61, 73, 148-150, as well as comments within my notes 5, 61, 73, 161. For definition of "apologist," see my note 1.

36. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 5; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 14.

37. Novak, "Most Convenient Form of Error," 155.

38. D. Michael Quinn, The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith Research Associates, 1994), 5-32 (for analysis of revised documents and problems of anachronism), also 268n10 (for citation of two of Backman's publications about the First Vision, with acknowledgement of the differing view by Walters and Marquardt), and with my concluding statement (269n10): "For me this is sufficient evidence from two different directions that Smith's vision of deity occurred in 1820, as officially dated." I restated this in Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (1998 ed.), 136-37, 456n2 (citing both Backman and Walters, but emphasizing Backman's point of view), and 457nn9-10 (citing Backman and Bushman, but not Walters, nor Marquardt).

39. For example, Victor H. Matthews, A Brief History of Ancient Israel (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2002), 80 ("an unintentional conflation of events"); also Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, trans. by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago

Press, 1992), 83. Also see last paragraph of my note 206 for similar conflation of revivals by Mrs. Sarepta Marsh Baker and Reverend Marvin P. Blakeslee.

40. Although most Mormon-focused publications, including my own, emphasize the year 1817 for Palmyra's first extensive revivalism (because Joseph Jr. might not have arrived until January 1817--see my note 19), that year's revivalism actually began in 1816. Thus, Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 77n44, referred to published "reports of the 1816 revival," and Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, 37, referred to "the revival of 1816 and 1817."

41. For the circumstances of the Smith family's arrival in Palmyra, see my note 19; and Vogel, Making of a Prophet, 27 (for the quote). For those parental differences about religion, see Vogel (3-5, 8-9, 16, 43-44, 59-60, 62); also Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, 23, 37. For Vogel's emphasis on "the Palmyra revival of 1817," see my note 40.

My discussion of the "waves of Palmyra's revivalism" is in response to comments by Mark A. Scherer, official historian of the Community of Christ in Independence, Missouri, after he read the preliminary version of this article as posted on 12 July 2006 to Dialogue's website.

42. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 2-3; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 5-8, as follows (dated as "my fifteenth year"--January through November 1820--but actually referring by conflation to Palmyra's interdenominational revivals of 1824-25):

"... Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist.

"For, notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody converted, as they pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased; yet when the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued--priest contending against priest, and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions.

"I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely my mother, Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia.

"... [while] my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect ..." Compare Palmyra's denominational competition for converts with my note 111; Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, 37 ("Forced to choose between his father's and his mother's religion, Joseph stood by his father"); also last paragraph of my note 13 for an LDS apologist's conclusion that this Presbyterian conversion occurred no earlier than 1824.

43. Jaques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, The Modern Researcher, 4th ed. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 119. Also see last paragraph of my note 206 for similar conflation of

revivals by Mrs. Sarepta Marsh Baker and Reverend Marvin P. Blakeslee.

44. "REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN KENNEBECK DISTRICT" [page-heading], Methodist Magazine [New York City] 1 (March 1818): 119-20; "REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN SUFFOLK COUNTY," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 1 (June 1818): 237-40. This periodical had no issues for 1829 and changed editorial format in the first issue of its "new series" in January 1830, after which it did not give the same attention to individual revivals. For its editorship, see my note 136.

45. "ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL AND PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF GOD IN FOUNTAIN-HEAD CIRCUIT THROUGH THE LAST YEAR," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (February 1821): 69-71. Although there is a town of the same name in New York State, the article's internal references identify this as Fountain-Head, Kentucky.

46. "REVIVAL AND PROGRESS OF RELIGION ON WEST-JERSEY DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 7 (March 1824): 115-16.

47. "A SHORT SKETCH OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF TROY, A.D. 1816," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 1 (April 1818): 152 (for its beginning), 154 (for quote).

48. "A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF SCHNECTADY," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (July 1819): 275.

49. "REVIVAL OF THE WORK OF GOD IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (May 1821): 197-99.

50. "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON OHIO DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (August 1819): 308-10.

51. "REVIVAL OF THE WORK OF GOD IN CHILLICOTHE, OHIO," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (April 1825): 155.

52. "ACCOUNT OF THE LATE REVIVALS OF RELIGION IN THE PROVINCE OF UPPER-CANADA," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (January 1819): 33 (for above title, with page-heading of "REVIVAL" on all subsequent pages for this article), 37 (for quote).

53. "Revival in Bridgetown, N.J." [page-heading], Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (June 1825): 238.

54. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 2; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 5. He referred to this as the "before mentioned religious excitement" in Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 6; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 21. As affirmed in Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (1998 ed.), xxxii: "Consistency also is not proof, but the discipline of history depends on

context and consistency in the effort to reconstruct the probable past."

55. During 1824-25, Palmyra experienced its most extensive revivalism of the 1820s, but in "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON ONTARIO DISTRICT," letter dated 1 July 1824, Methodist Magazine [New York City] 7 (November 1824): 426, Reverend Abner Chase (currently the presiding elder of this district) indicated that this was a crescendo of revivalism that actually began in 1823: "The work [of revivals] has been gradually progressing for eight or ten months."

Ten months before his letter was 1 September 1823, a little over three years since Palmyra's camp-meeting of late June 1820. Even though Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 105, quoted from this letter, the minister-researcher asserted on page 104: "Just how Joseph could be stirred in 1823 by a revival that did not occur until September 1824, the writer does not explain." Walters disregarded the possibility that just as a spring 1820 camp-meeting was a likely catalyst for Joseph Smith's vision of deity, a September 1823 revival was a likely catalyst for his vision of an angel on 21 September 1823. For the latter, see Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 9-11; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 27, 29-33. For other circumstances of Joseph's 1823 epiphany, see Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (1998 ed.), 137-58.

56. Noah Webster, An American Dictionary of the English Language, 2 vols. (New York: S. Converse, 1828), s.v. "excitement." For example, "Great Revivals in Religion," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 7 June 1820, [1], used the phrase "religious excitement" to describe seven different locations/occurrences of revivalism in New York State.

57. Barzun and Graff, Modern Researcher, 50 (for "the distortions brought about by 'present-mindedness,' the habit of reading into the past our own modern ideas and intentions"); Harry Ritter, Dictionary of Concepts in History (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 9 ("the conscious or unconscious attribution of present attitudes, values, and modes of behavior upon the past is 'presentism,' an inexcusable violation of the past's integrity"); Paul K. Conkin and Roland N. Stromberg, Heritage and Challenge: The History and Theory of History (Wheeling, IL: Forum Press, 1989), 204; also James B. Allen, "Emergence of a Fundamental: The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Religious Thought," Journal of Mormon History 7 (1980): [43], began the article with this statement: "One of the barriers to understanding history is the tendency many of us have to superimpose upon past generations our own patterns of thought and perceptions of reality."

58. Larry C. Porter, "Reinventing Mormonism: To Remake or Redo," FARMS Review of Books 7 (1995), No. 2: 129 (referred unapologetically to "apologists"--see my note 1) and insisted on page 125: "If the long-established Latter-day Saint chronology of events can be thrown out of whack, then doubt can be cast on the integrity of the whole continuity of occurrences recounted by the Prophet and the brethren in the recorded history of the Church." To avoid what he perceived as a slippery slope, his essay regarded only one kind of historical revisionism as legitimate: "when valid dates and events are discovered," they can "readily be added to the early chronology of Mormonism" to fill in the "numerous informational voids [which] are to be found

in the early history of the Latter-day Saint Church." In other words, filling gaps within traditional LDS history is legitimate as long as that process does not revise a single date or interpretation in the official-or-traditional accounts.

It was apparently for this reason that neither in his essay against the approaches of Wesley P. Walters and H. Michael Marquardt, nor in Porter's doctoral dissertation about pre-1831 Mormonism, nor in its subsequent publication (for which he added information to some of the source-notes)--nor in other historical articles, nor in any of his other book reviews against critics of Smith's claims for an 1820 revival--has Porter even mentioned the Palmyra Register's references to a local camp-meeting in June 1820, despite its repeated citation since 1969 by other apologists for Smith's claims (including myself). See 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. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1971), 45-62 (no reference to Palmyra Register in section, with source-notes, on "The Revival of 1820"), 341-42 (no reference to Palmyra Register in bibliography of "NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS"); Porter, A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania (Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies, 2000), iii ("occasionally, the author has included additional information in the endnotes to update old material"), 17-23 (no reference to Palmyra Register in section on "The Revival of 1820"), 39-40 (no additions to the source-notes for "The Revival of 1820"); with same absence in the text and notes of Porter's 2005 article, "The Youth of the Grove and the Prophet of the Restoration," in Black and Skinner, Joseph, 36-46.

Paradoxically, without those citations, Porter made a revisionist expansion of Joseph's official history to allow for chronological possibilities after "early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty," as follows: "The 'First Vision' probably occurred before July, 1820" (see Porter, "Study of the Origins," 58; Porter, Study of the Origins, 21). I have no explanation for why Porter made that statement (and allowed it to be published twenty-nine years later) while he likewise declined to mention possible evidence for a June dating of the First Vision; also see narrative quote for my note 69.

59. Bushman, "Just the Facts Please," 128. As an odd coincidence in typesetting, Marquardt's quote appeared on the same numbered page in books published eleven years apart. Compare Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 32, with Marquardt, Rise of Mormonism, 32.

60. Seventeen years earlier, a similar retreat seemed to occur in BYU religion professor Paul R. Cheesman's The Keystone of Mormonism: Early Visions of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Provo, UT: Eagle Systems International, 1988), 9-21, which discussed the 1820 vision without specifically asserting that there was a revival that year, instead stating on page 9: "It was during one of these revival periods that four of the Smith family were influenced and united with the Presbyterian Church."

61. Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, [xiii, for "JOSEPH SMITH CHRONOLOGY"], 35, 37 (for quote), 39-41, with no specific mention of the Palmyra Register articles, nor of a revival of 1820 in his endnotes on 569-71; compare with Bushman's 1969 "First

Vision Story Revived," 93n15 (which cited "M. P. Blakeslee, 'Notes for a History of Methodism in Phelps, 1886,' pp. 7-8, copy located in the Brigham Young University Library. Cited in Backman, 'An Awakening,' note 16"); Richard L. Bushman, "Mr. Bushman Replies," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 5 (Autumn 1970): 8 ("In June of 1818, for example, twenty people were baptized and forty united to the church"), which was a close paraphrase of Blakeslee's manuscript (see my note 5). Aside from failing to mention the 1818 revival in Palmyra, Bushman's biography in 2005 avoided specific reference to an actual "revival" in 1820 while discussing Smith's "First Vision," substituting a less affirmative comparison of Smith with "countless other revival subjects" (39).

62. Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, 46 (for revival "after Alvin's death"), 729 (index entry). His source-note (570n57) on the matter referred to "a debate on the timing of the revivals. For the argument that revivals in 1824 were the background for Joseph's first vision, see Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 15-41. The [earlier] rebuttal is in Backman, First Vision." In the absence of specifying Backman's emphasis on 1820, Bushman in 2005 seemed to tip the scales in favor of 1824 and against Smith's veracity. In his 1984 Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism, 53, 204n31, Bushman at least mentioned the year 1820 in the text and source-note about this matter.

63. Bushman, "Just the Facts Please," 124 (for quote), 126, and 126n3, which replayed his less emphatic 1969 complaint in Bushman, "First Vision Story Revived," 87, 93n14.

64. Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, 32. See Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 3: 422-23, for the Smith family's residence as Farmington (re-named Burt in 1821 and finally named Manchester in 1822), next to Palmyra, during the 1820 census.

65. Donald L. Enders, "The Joseph Smith, Sr. Family: Farmers of the Genesee," in Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate Jr., eds., Joseph Smith: The Prophet, the Man (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1993), 215, where Enders claimed that "enumerated in June, [the] (1820 Federal Census), also identifies the Smith family as living there by June 1820," thus giving the wrong month for the commencement of this census (see my note 66).

66. Ronald Vern Jackson, ed., New York 1820 Census Index (North Salt Lake, UT: Accelerated Indexing Systems, 1977), 17 (for date census began); Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 3: 422, that "census taking by law was to begin on the first Monday in August (7 August 1820) and was completed by 5 February 1821."

67. For the 1988 retreat by BYU religion professor Paul R. Cheesman about the 1820 revival, see my note 60; for the 1989 reversal by BYU historian Marvin S. Hill, see my note 98; for the 1995 concession by BYU religion professor Paul H. Peterson, see the quote for my note 247; for several kinds of retreat in Richard Lyman Bushman's 2005 biography, see narrative discussion for my notes 60-63; for the reversal in 2004 by BYU religion professor Milton V. Backman Jr., see narrative for my note 68; for the tentativeness of BYU professors James B. Allen (historian)

and John W. Welch (lawyer) in 2005, see narrative quote for my note 69.

The First Vision and its related topics were not among the issues examined in John-Charles Duffy, "Defending the Kingdom, Rethinking the Faith: How Apologetics Is Reshaping Mormon Orthodoxy," Sunstone 132 (May 2004): 22-55. Nonetheless, the shifts in apologist positions regarding traditional claims for an 1820 revival are consistent with Duffy's observation (37) that "orthodox intellectuals are willing to judge the truth of traditional faith claims by how well those claims coincide with conclusions yielded by scholarship." However, it is inexplicable that LDS apologists eventually abandoned their own confirming evidences and deferred instead to the polemical writings by Reverend Walters, whose historical lapses and misrepresentations can be so easily demonstrated and documented.

68. Steven C. Harper, "History Is People, Places, Sources, and Stories: An Interview with Milton V. Backman, Jr.," Mormon Historical Studies 6 (Spring 2005): 110-11. Even though the introduction (99-100) leaves the impression that this interview occurred in 1994, internal references show that it was after the 1999 death of Backman's first wife (113), and a couple of years after he and his new wife (in photo on 118) served a mission as newly married couple. Thus, the latter couple's photo (captioned as 2004) was taken the year of this interview.

69. James B. Allen and John W. Welch, "The Appearance of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith in 1820," in Welch "with" Erick B. Carlson, eds., Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 55 (for quote), with their citations to Reverend Walters on 71n4 and 73n18. See also the decades-earlier statement of a more liberal probability by apologist Larry C. Porter in last paragraph of my note 58.

70. Milton W. Hamilton, The Country Printer: New York State, 1785-1830, 2nd ed. (Port Washington, Long Island, NY: Ira J. Friedman, 1964), 139 (for quote), 143 (for Cayuga's newspaper in 1827), as quoted in Norton, "Comparative Images," 249, also 252n69 for Hamilton's emphasis on the 1827 newspaper. On page 249, Norton also cited David J. Russo, "The Origins of Local News in the U.S. Country Press, 1840s-1870s," Journalism Monographs, No. 65, ed. Bruce H. Westley (Lexington, KY: Association for Education in Journalism, 1980), 2, for this assessment of the national pattern of the early 1800s: "In the intimate little rural communities of this time, local news would be spread by word of mouth long before a weekly newspaper could be put into print."

Neither Hamilton, Russo, nor Norton claimed that there was a total absence of local events in village newspapers. Norton explained (250): "Village editors like Timothy Strong did publish some items of local interest. These included the local advertisements which sustained the paper, some deaths and marriages, legal notices, town celebrations, especially for the Fourth of July or for the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, town meetings, and church dedications. In larger villages unusual accidents, spectacular fires, and serious crimes were occasionally reported. These few items, however, except for the advertisements, were usually brief and occupied only a few lines or paragraphs in the paper. ... But society news, town gossip, individual religious experiences, and other village incidents did not appear in the local paper." See also narrative text

for my notes 148-150.

Too late to be included in Marvin S. Hill's relevant publications, or in the publications of Reverend Walters before his death, or in Dan Vogel's early publications--Norton's 1991 dissertation was absent from all source-notes and bibliographies in the previously cited books after 1991 by Robert D. Anderson, H. Michael Marquardt, Grant H. Palmer, and from Vogel's post-1991 publications. Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 2: 555, did list Hamilton in the bibliography for that volume, but only because of Vogel's footnote citation to establish a man's place of death (518n4), not to cite Hamilton's explanation for the absence of local news in village newspapers like Palmyra's.

71. Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, 686, 699.

72. Bushman, "Just the Facts Please," 126 and 126n3.

73. Norton, "Comparative Images," 254-56 (for the newspaper editor's opposition to alcoholic beverages and his tongue-in-cheek apology to the Methodists), with no reference in Norton's bibliography to the sources that verified Palmyra's 1818 revival--Aurora Seager's diary, its publication by Latimer, and its summary by the Blakeslee manuscript in BYU's Library (see my notes 4, 5, 34). This oversight was especially odd, because Milton V. Backman Jr. (see my note 35) served as the main adviser for Norton's dissertation. For other apologists who overlooked Seager's published reference to Palmyra's 1818 revival (despite its location in BYU's library), see my notes 61 and 161. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see my note 15. For Norton's overlooking the most conclusive demonstration of his argument, see narrative discussion for my notes 148-150.

74. Ivan Blackwell Burnett Jr., "Methodism and Alcohol: Recommendations For a Beverage Alcohol Policy Based on the Ever-Changing Historic Disciplinary Positions of American Methodism," D.M. dissertation, Claremont School of Theology, 1973, 33-34 (for Wesley's views and practices, with order of quotes reversed in my narrative), 80-81 (for regulations from 1780 to 1812), 90 (for new emphasis in 1848).

75. Francis Ward, An Account of Three Camp-Meetings, Held By the Methodists, At Sharon, in Litchfield County, Connecticut; at Rhinebeck, in Dutchess County [New York State]; and at Petersburgh, in Renssalaer County, New York State (Brooklyn: Robinson and Little, 1806), [6], available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 11793.

76. Anonymous, A Faithful Narrative of the Transactions Noticed At the Camp-Meeting, In Goshen, Connecticut, September, 1808 (N.p., 1809), 18, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 17473, emphasis in original; also see Anonymous, The Camp Meeting. By the Druid of the Lakes (N.p.: 1810), 5, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 19707.

77. Anonymous, A Treatise on the Proceedings of a Camp-Meeting Held in Bern, N.Y.[.] County of Albany; Which Commenced on Friday, the Seventh of September, 1810, and Ended the Monday Following, By a Spectator (Albany: Webster and Skinner, [1810]), 10, available as

Shaw and Shoemaker item 21512. For a lengthy, sarcastic response to a similar accusation, see "Dr. Ely's Review of 'Methodist Error' Reviewed," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (December 1819): 471-72.

78. Nathan Bangs, A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2 vols. (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1839), 2: 268. "A. J." [pseud. for John C. Totten?], An Apology For Camp-Meetings, Illustrative of Their Good Effects, and Answering the Principal Objections Urged Against Them (New York: John C. Totten, 1810), 28, had previously commented on "avaricious persons" who sell "spirituous liquors from tents and hovels, erected for that purpose, near the places of [camp-meeting] worship ..." Absent from the microform collection of Shaw and Shoemaker, an original of this Apology is in the Center for Methodist Studies, Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

79. B. W. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual: A Practical Book for the Camp Ground (Boston: H. V. Degen, 1854), 134, observed that a camp-meeting "will consume an amount of water entirely incredible to persons not experienced in such matters ..." Although Methodists located their revival campsites near a stream or other natural source of drinking water, camp-meetings sometimes extended thirteen football fields in length (see my note 157), which required some revivalists to make a mile-roundtrip from their tents for a drink of water. Thus, forest-revivalists needed bottled beverages. For Barlow W. Gorham as a minister in the Oneida Conference of New York State, see Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church For the Years 1829-1839 (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane/J. Collord, 1840), 395.

80. "Introductory remarks to Short Sketches of Revivals of Religion, among the Methodists in the Western Country," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (May 1819), 186 ("In the summer [of 1800,] they took to the woods [of Kentucky]. The people in order to accommodate themselves, carried provisions for their families and beasts, in their waggons [sic]; erected tents, and continued some days in the exercises of singing, praying and preaching! Thus commenced what has since received the appellation of 'Camp-Meetings'"); also Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "camp-meeting"; Charles Yrigoyen Jr. and Susan E. Warrick, Historical Dictionary of Methodism (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 45.

While the above is the traditional account of how the sensational revivalism in Kentucky quickly resulted in camp-meetings throughout the Northeast and Old Midwest, Brown's Holy Ground, 5-10, gives a revisionist discussion of pre-1800 camp-meetings that had no impact on the Northern States--occurring in Georgia (1790), North Carolina (1794), South Carolina (1795), and Tennessee (1796), all of which were organized by Methodists alone. See the second paragraph of my note 111 for the interdenominational sponsorship of the Kentucky camp-meetings in 1800-01.

81. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 24. For Gorham as a minister in the Oneida Conference of New York State, see my note 79.

82. "ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL AND PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF GOD IN FOUNTAIN-HEAD CIRCUIT THROUGH THE LAST YEAR," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (February 1821): 72, also a less-detailed reference to a forest "camp meeting at Pleasant-Run meeting-house" on page 70. Although there is a town of the same name in New York State, the article's internal references identify this as Fountain-Head, Kentucky.

See the family-sized tents in illustration labeled "A western camp meeting in 1819. after lithograph by J. Miller," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 60. This lithograph, for style and convenience, depicted barely 150 attenders, giving a false impression that camp-meetings were the size of a small congregational meeting; see also last comments in my note 157. Sources cited in this article (including New York's Methodist Magazine from 1818 through 1828) described no camp-meeting with fewer than 400 attenders and described many with attendance in the thousands. See second paragraph in my note 181.

83. Anonymous, Treatise on the Proceedings of a Camp-Meeting Held in Bern, N.Y., [3]; also Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 131 ("The altar should generally be at least twenty-five feet square"); see the preaching stand and space in front of it for revivalist listeners in illustration labeled "A western camp meeting in 1819. after lithograph by J. Miller," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 60; and in the painting reproduced in Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 51.

84. "REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN WEST FARMS," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (May 1819): 200.

85. "A SHORT SKETCH OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF TROY, A.D. 1816," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 1 (April 1818): 152-53; "A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF SCHNECTADY," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (July 1819): 275; "REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN KENSINGTON CHAPEL, PHILADELPHIA," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 7 (November 1824): 399; "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON ROCKINGHAM CIRCUIT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (July 1826): 273-74 (which began with summer camp-meetings, then shifted to October "prayer-meetings"--the latter described as "this revival ... at the Spring Creek meeting-house"); "REVIVAL OF THE WORK OF GOD AT UTICA," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (August 1826): 309 (which began "in the month of March last, at a prayer-meeting held at the meeting-house"); "Extract of a letter from the Rev. B. Sabin, dated Ithica [sic], Jan. 13, 1827," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 10 (March 1827): 133; "Revival in Baltimore," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 10 (April 1827): 181 ("confined to Wesley chapel").

86. "Dr. Ely's Review of 'Methodist Error' Reviewed," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (December 1819): 472.

87. By contrast to numerous references only to "camp-meeting" before and after, see Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 185; also see the use of "camp-meeting revival" by Mark Twain in The Californian, 18 November 1865

(www.twainquotes.com/calif/18651118.html on the Internet); by Arthur Dicken Thomas Jr., "History of the Messiah United Methodist Church" (www.emmitsburg.net/messiah/history.htm); by Eslinger, Citizens of Zion, 235; by News Briefs: North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church (www.nccumc.org/docs/newsbriefs06/09-11-06.htm).

88. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 2; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 5.

89. Walters, "Reply to Dr. Bushman," 99; repeated in Vogel, Religious Seekers, 42n21, in Vogel, Making of a Prophet, 589n33, in Marquardt, Rise of Mormonism, 49. For the connection of Phelps with Vienna in western New York and for the distance of nearly fourteen miles from Palmyra to Vienna (now named Phelps), see my note 4.

90. See Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, [3], 11, for the separate references in 1806 to arrangements with the owner and "proprietor" to use their forested lands as the site for camp-meetings; Strickland, Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, 398 ("the camp meeting which I attended in the summer of 1809, on the farm of the Rev. John Collins"); John F. Wright, Sketches of the Life and Labors of James Quinn, Who Was Nearly Half a Century a Minister of the Gospel in the Methodist Episcopal Church (Cincinnati: Methodist Book Concern and R. P. Thompson, 1851), 101 (for a camp-meeting "in the month of September, 1810, that we pitched our tents in a beautiful sugar grove, on the lands of Richard Lee"); Peck, Early Methodism Within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828, 154 ("the camp-meeting on Squire Light's ground"), 322 ("a camp-meeting in September of this year on the land of Edward Paine"); George Peck, The Life and Times of Rev. George Peck, D.D., Written By Himself (New York: Nelson & Phillips; Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1874), 82 ("a camp-meeting on Broome Circuit, on the ground of Charles Stone" in 1817); Charles Giles, Pioneer: Narrative of the Nativity, Experience, Travels, and Ministerial Labours of Rev. Charles Giles (New York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford/J. Collord, 1844), 267 ("Two camp meetings were held this year [1818] on the same ground, in the town of Marcellus [in western New York] ... The proprietor of the land was a respectable worldling: though not pious himself"); also Bushman, "Mr. Bushman Replies," 8 ("Again in 1820 the Palmyra paper referred to activities at the Methodist camp ground. But the Methodists did not own property yet. As was the usual practice elsewhere, they held camp meetings on borrowed land").

Brown, Holy Ground, 25-28, gives a list of "permanent early campgrounds" throughout the United States, which shows that New York State's first was in 1804 at Ossining (page 26) and New York's second was in 1842 at West Chazy (page 28). For 298.4 miles as the distance from Palmyra to Ossining, New York, consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet. For explanation of this article's use of Mapquest, see my note 94.

By 1850, the Methodists were the largest denomination in the nation, accounting for 34.2 percent of religiously affiliated Americans. See Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, "How the Upstart Sects Won America: 1776-1850," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 28 (March 1989): 31. American Methodists now had chapels in virtually every town and in most villages, but even by the mid-1850s, the Methodist Church rarely owned the land on which it held camp-meetings. Gorham's 1854 Camp Meeting Manual, 122, said it was always necessary for the

organizers to carefully consider: "Will the owner of the ground, or of contiguous woodlands, allow the cutting of poles for tents, and the use of wood for fuel?"

91. For Joseph Smith's 1838 account as the only one of his various retellings to specify "early spring," see Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 1: 27-28, 36, 37, 39, 44, 60, 169-70, 181-82, 184, 187-88, 189-90, 192, 194, 207, 208.

92. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 4-5; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 14. I acknowledge the subjectivity in this discussion of chilly-cold weather as a barrier to morning prayer in a grove of trees. In itself, this is a weak argument against "early spring" for the First Vision, but the role of history is to avoid seeing evidence in isolation. When combined with the discussion connected with my notes 110-113, this weather-data seem compelling as further evidences that Palmyra's camp-meeting of June 1820 was, in fact, the catalyst for Joseph's prayer-vision that actually occurred in the late spring.

93. Partial photos of the left-side in manuscript pages for March-April 1820 of the weather diary kept at Sackets Harbor, western New York, plus complete transcription of left-and-right side for March 1st through April 15th, in Don C. Lefgren, "Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning: Sun., 26 Mar 1820," Meridian Magazine: The Place Where Latter-day Saints Gather, Internet publication on 9 October 2002 (available at www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2002/vision).

Holding to Smith's "early spring" description, Lefgren argued that 25-26 March 1820 (Saturday-Sunday) were the only possible days warm enough for young Joseph to attempt to pray in a forested grove, and Lefgren chose Sunday as likelier. Even those two days seem very unlikely for a visit to pray under shade trees, since the outside temperature would have been no higher than 59 degrees Fahrenheit at 10 AM--even in direct sunlight.

94. Consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet (for 17.05 miles as the distance from Palmyra to Canandaigua, New York). Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 106, referred to "Canandaigua, which according to the 1824 gazetteer was 13 miles from Palmyra." Even though that source strengthens my narrative commentary (especially in connection with my note 238) about the near proximity of the two towns, this article gives various mileages from the Internet source, due to its easier access for readers (as compared with the difficulty of consulting an old gazetteer, which also did not give distances between all the towns mentioned in this article).

95. THE FARMER'S DIARY, OR BEER'S ONTARIO ALMANACK FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1820 (Canandaigua, NY: J. D. Bemis, [1819]), calendar for April, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 47953. These farmer's almanac predictions for weather varied from town to town within the same state. For example, FARMER'S DIARY; OR Catskill Almanack, FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1820 (Catskill, NY: J. S. Lewis, [1819]) predicted different weather for 15-16 April 1820 ("C. [Clouds] together then clear"), with "and more pleasant" for 18-20 April. Available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 47954.

96. "SNOW STORM," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 24 May 1820, [2]; also Elmer T. Clark, J. Manning Potts, and Jacob Payton, eds., The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, 3 vols. (London: Epworth Press; Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1958), 2: 780 (for "rain, cold, and suffering" on 18 May 1815 in New York State). Although I cite this modern edition for convenience, a published version was available during Joseph Smith's sojourn in New York as The Journal of Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, From August 7, 1771, to December 7, 1815, 3 vols. (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1821).

97. Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 1: 54 (for the spring dates in which this history was dictated/written, first in 1838 and again in 1839). He made no reference to the idea of a seasonal-temperature conflation as discussed in my narrative.

98. Lawrence Foster, "First Visions: Personal Observations on Joseph Smith's Religious Experience," Sunstone 8 (September-October 1983): 40. This echoed Marvin Hill, "The First Vision Controversy: A Critique and Reconciliation," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 15 (Summer 1982): 41 ("if Joseph Smith in 1838 read back into 1820 some details of a revival that occurred in 1824, there is no reason to conclude that he invented his religious experiences"), which seemed to be a confident conclusion to Hill's observation on page 37: "even by Walters' standards[,] the 1819-20 season of revivals was not so dull as Walters said."

Nevertheless, despite criticizing Walters for his polemical approach, this 1982 article was a mid-point in the BYU history professor's gradual acceptance of the minister-researcher's basic argument, as stated in Marvin S. Hill, Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight From American Pluralism (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 193n54 ("I set down here my reasons for believing that none of the small revivals around Palmyra and environs before 1823 and described by Backman satisfy all the conditions in Joseph's descriptions"). There was one indication that Hill was already moving toward his 1989 conclusion by 1982: he referred to Backman's use of the Palmyra Register without acknowledging that Backman cited it to show that Palmyra had a camp-meeting revival in 1820 ("First Vision Controversy," 36). See also my note 247.

99. "ACCOUNT OF A CAMP-MEETING AT BARRE, VT." Methodist Magazine [New York City] 3 (December 1820): 470.

100. "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN NEW-HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (March 1821): 109, concerning "our camp-meeting in September last."

101. "DESCRIPTION OF A CAMP-MEETING HELD ON FAIRFIELD CIRCUIT, LANCASTER DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (December 1819): 475; also Abel Stevens, Memorials of the Early Progress of Methodism in the Eastern States ... (Second Series) (Boston: C. H. Peirce, 1852), 275 (for letter on "Friday, the 14th of September" [1804] to Methodist bishop Francis Asbury from William Thacher about a camp-meeting near New Haven, Connecticut: "There was not a breeze to disturb the candles, the three nights we were on the ground. Evening exercise continued till after midnight"). Although Stevens did not

give the year of Thacher's letter, a reference to his account of the camp-meeting was in Asbury's letter on 26 January 1805, verifying that Thacher's letter was in September 1804. See Clark, et al., Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, 3: 306.

102. For references to which months a "camp-meeting" occurred (including its variant spellings) in the Northern States, see Methodist Magazine [New York City] 1 (March 1818): 119; 1 (June 1818): 237; 1 (September 1818): 356; 2 (February 1819): 75; 2 (June 1819): 233, 235; 2 (August 1819): 308, 309, 310; 2 (December 1819): 474; 3 (May 1820): 199; 3 (December 1820): 470; 4 (January 1821): 70-71; 4 (February 1821): 78; 4 (March 1821): 109; 4 (May 1821): 197; 4 (October 1821): 387, 392-93; 5 (March 1822): 116; 5 (October 1822): 375, 394; 5 (December 1822): 474, 475; 6 (March 1823): 117; 6 (October 1823): 397; 7 (March 1824): 115, 116, 117; 7 (September 1824): 353; 7 (October 1824): 397; 7 (November 1824): 436; 8 (March 1825): 111; 8 (April 1825): 158, 159, 162; 8 (June 1825): 240; 8 (July 1825): 285; 8 (August 1825): 321; 8 (November 1825): 436, 438, 440; 8 (December 1825): 481, 482, 483, 484; 9 (August 1826): 313; 10 (September 1827): 423; 11 (April 1828): 161; 11 (June 1828): 234, 235; 11 (September 1828): 356.

Because of the more temperate weather in the Southern States, Methodist camp-meetings were reported as early as May but no later than October for the South in Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (June 1819): 223; 3 (April 1820): 156; 4 (January 1821): 37; 4 (February 1821): 70, 71; 4 (May 1821): 191-92, 193, 194; 4 (December 1821): 475; 5 (October 1822): 400; 6 (February 1823): 72, 74, 75; 7 (September 1824): 351, 352, 353; 7 (November 1824): 436; 8 (November 1825): 442; 8 (December 1825): 487; 9 (July 1826): 273; 9 (November 1826): 432, 433, 475; 11 (April 1828): 160; 11 (July 1828): 279. When it was unclear to which region various articles referred, I compared the named circuits and districts with entries in Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828.

103. "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON OHIO DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (August 1819): 308-09.

104. "GOOD EFFECTS OF CAMPMEETINGS," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (August 1825): 321 (concerning a camp-meeting part-way between Mount Pleasant in western New York State--now in Oswego County--and the town of York, now in Wayne County); for the distance between them as 37.5 miles, consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet.

105. "There will be a camp meeting ... to commence on the 8th of June," in paid advertisement for "The Genesee Annual Conference," Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, NY), 19 May 1826, [3]. Only the general meeting's opening date of 7 June was given in "GENESEE CONFERENCE," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (August 1826): 313, which obscured the fact that the camp-meeting did not begin until the second day of this general meeting; reprinted in Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 239.

106. "STATE OF RELIGION ON THE SUSQUEHANNAH DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (December 1825): 482.

107. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, 17.

108. "ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN ONEIDA DISTRICT, IN THE GENESEE CONFERENCE," written on 2 August 1818, Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (February 1819): 75.

109. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 123. Although this 1854 manual also conservatively recommended a start-date no earlier than "the 20th of June," New York's Methodists were obviously having successful camp-meetings during the first week of June from 1819 to 1826.

110. "ACCOUNT OF THE LATE REVIVALS OF RELIGION IN THE PROVINCE OF UPPER-CANADA," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (January 1819): 33; "Account of a remarkable revival of Religion in Chillicothe, (O.) [Ohio]," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (June 1819): 239 ("From the commencement of this revival of religion--say in October last, till the close of it in the month of February following"); "A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY OF SCHNECTADY," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (July 1819): 274-75 (regarding revival meetings from December 1818 through April 1819); "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON ONTARIO DISTRICT," letter written on 25 January 1825, Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (April 1825): 159 (in Palmyra, "at a prayer meeting at Dr. Chase's, there were seven [converts]"); "Extract of a letter from the Rev. B. Sabin, dated Ithica [sic], Jan. 13, 1827," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 10 (March 1827): 133. This periodical published many other reports of winter revivals in chapels and houses from 1818 to 1828, but I did not take notes on most of them because of my research emphasis on camp-meetings. My notes show no references to barn-revivals in the Methodist Magazine.

For October-May revivals in barns and school houses, see Hosmer, Autobiography of Rev. Alvin Torry, 17-18 ("the people assembled in the barn"); Maxwell Pierson Gaddis, Brief Recollections of the Late Rev. George W. Walker (Cincinnati: Swormsted & Poe/R. P. Thompson, 1857), 112 (in 1825 the Methodist "congregation was too large to crowd into the dwelling-house, and the meeting was held in a large barn, which was no uncommon occurrence at that early period"); "REVIVAL OF RELIGION: EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM REV. CYRENIUS M. FULLER, DATED Dorset, [Vermont,] March 28, 1822," The American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer [Boston] 3 (September 1822): 437-38 ("Meetings were attended almost every day ... In one instance[,] after attending a lecture at a school house, a number of young people returned to a neighbouring house when it was soon ascertained, that one of the family had entertained a hope in Christ during the meeting"). This Baptist minister used "lecture" to refer to sermons given on days other than Sunday.

111. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 64-65, 66, 69, 76n37, 77n40; Walters, "Reply to Dr. Bushman," 98-99.

The continuation of "Introductory remarks to Short Sketches of Revivals of Religion, among the Methodists in the Western Country," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (June 1819): 223, noted that when Presbyterians and Methodists co-sponsored such revivals in 1800-02, "they took the name of GENERAL CAMP-MEETINGS." However, Presbyterians almost immediately

expressed divergent reactions to the emotional outbursts of revivalism that were nationally publicized after the camp-meetings at Cane Ridge, Kentucky in August 1801 (see my note 190).

In 1803-04, this caused an actual schism among American Presbyterians who were divided between strict Calvinists "known as Anti-Revival men" and camp-meeting supporters "called Revival men." See William Warren Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier: The Presbyterians, 1783-1840 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936), 90-92. Interdenominational revivals continued--but for the next three decades, Presbyterian ministers who participated in a Methodist camp-meeting as more than observers were risking criticism or formal censure.

Therefore, as early as 1810 in New York, "A. J." [pseud. for John C. Totten?], Apology For Camp-Meetings, 47, commented: "In this glorious work [at Cane Ridge in 1801], the Methodist and Baptist ministers and people heartily united at this early period, or introduction of camp-meetings, and mutually agreed with the Presbyterian brethren, to drop all disputes about non-essentials ... and why the same union has not continued to the present time, or why those other denominations in the northern and eastern states, have not shewn the same catholic spirit towards the Methodists, in uniting with them in this respect, and on those occasions, I shall not pretend here to say ..."

In the officially published History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 2 vols., rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1873), 2: 173, author E. H. Gillett made no effort to conceal his contempt for camp-meetings and their "excesses," grouching that their defenders "affected a kind of holy superiority." More than a hundred pages after describing the revivalist schism that began in 1803, Gillett acknowledged (2: 310) that in the 1830s the Presbyterian Church attempted a renewal of the "old system" of camp-meetings (with strict efforts to control emotionalism), but he approvingly noted that even these controlled camp-meetings were "discountenanced by the more judicious, [and] fell into disuse"; also see my note 32.

112. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 120, referred to its "season" (for Gorham as a minister in the Oneida Conference of New York State, see my note 79); also the more contemporary "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON SCIOTO DISTRICT, (OHIO)," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (June 1819): 233 ("Camp-Meetings have been rendered a great blessing to this country, especially during the last season"); also, "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN HOLSTON DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 7 (September 1824): 352 ("Our first Camp-Meeting was held in the last week of July. ... Many in the neighbourhood have become convinced of the utility of Camp-Meetings, and have resolved to build tents by the next season"); also Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 86, about "establishing a camp meeting season." For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see my note 15.

113. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 2; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 5. For narrative flow, I reverse the order of these separate phrases, but the meaning remains the same as in the original.

114. Walters, "Reply to Dr. Bushman," 99; Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 101; Vogel, Religious Seekers, 30; Hill, Quest for Refuge, 12; Marquardt and

Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 54-55, 61n49; Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 1: 59, 59n21, 213; Anderson, Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith, 5, 140; Palmer, Insider's View of Mormon Origins, 44, 252; Vogel, Making of a Prophet, 59, 127-29, 505; Marquardt, Rise of Mormonism, 48, 50, 136.

Although Methodist regimentation produced camp-meetings with "uniform" characteristics in many respects, there were differences in geometric design and in the matter of whether the organizers provided seating for the forest-revivalists. See my note 182.

115. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 16 (for quote), which was a briefer statement in 1854 of the 1839 observation by Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 265 ("soon led to a regular method of holding them in different parts of the country, by previous appointment and preparation"). For Bangs, see my note 136.

The earliest published guidelines for camp-meetings appeared as a five-point outline of instructions in Jesse Lee, A Short History of the Methodists; Beginning in 1766, and Continued until 1809 (Baltimore: Magill and Clime, 1810), 365-67, available as #LAC 11049 in the Library of American Civilization microform collection in university libraries. This edition of 402 pages had different pagination from the same publisher's imprint of the same book with 366 pages, also published in 1810. The longer version was probably the first version, but if readers consult the shorter imprint for that year, the camp-meeting guidelines are at the beginning of "CHAPTER XIV. The Conclusion," about pages 360-62; also Weiss, City In the Woods, 9 ("Lee's numbered list of instructions is in the style of the Discipline, suggesting that he was intentionally filling the void left by the Methodist handbook").

116. A Collection of the Most Admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs, with the Choruses Affixed: As usually sung at Camp-Meetings, &c. To Which Is Prefixed A Concise Account of the Rise of Camp-Meetings, And some observations relative to the manner of conducting them, 3rd ed. (New York: John C. Totten, 1813), 5 (for Totten as Methodist), 5-6 (for quotes), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 28180; John C. Totten, comp., A Collection of the Most Admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs, with the Choruses Affixed: As usually sung at Camp-Meetings, &c. To Which Is Prefixed A Concise Account of the Rise of Camp-Meetings, And some observations relative to the manner of conducting them, 5th ed. (New York: By the author, 1815), 7 (for Totten as Methodist, also 24, 94), 7-8 (for quotes), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 34391. The same quotes appeared on pages 7-8 in Totten's eighth New York edition of Hymns and Spiritual Songs in 1817 (not in Shaw and Shoemaker, but an original is available at Special Collections, Honnold Library, Claremont Colleges, Claremont, California).

117. Anonymous, Treatise on the Proceedings of a Camp-Meeting Held in Bern, N.Y., 6.

118. Robert Drew Simpson, ed., American Methodist Pioneer: The Life and Journals of The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, 1752-1827 (Rutland, VT: Academy Books/Drew University Library, 1984), 318 (for quote from Garrettson's diary entry on Thursday, 3 [not "4"] August 1809 about a Delaware camp-meeting); Peck, Early Methodism Within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828, 166 ("This year [1809] the first camp-meeting was held in

Luzerne county. ... People were there from fifty miles around"); Giles, Pioneer, 93 ("a camp meeting would be held in the town of Western, over forty miles from my father's residence"). The editor did not clarify Garrettson's one-day error in dating his entries before 7 August 1809.

The two-day travel for "many families" to reach the camp-meeting is calculated from letters Methodist bishop Francis Asbury wrote after arriving at a camp-ground in Pennsylvania. On Thursday, 18 August 1803 (probably in the afternoon), he referred to the "campmeeting that begins this day ... 30 miles from Pittsburgh." He started a second letter on 19 August but continued writing diary-type entries in that manuscript for the remaining days of this camp-meeting, until: "Tuesday [--23 August,] the provisions of many families failed and they had been 6 or 7 days from home. They struck their tents and moved their waggons" [sic]. See Clark, et al., Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, 3: 269, 270.

Because this camp-meeting lasted five days (from Thursday evening to Tuesday daytime), the "6 or 7 days" of absence indicates that these "many families" spent one-to-two days of one-way travel by wagon from their homes to the camp-ground. Aside from canal boats and river transport, the means of overland travel had not improved for common people in America by the spring of 1820. For the ability of even an aging and unhealthy Methodist minister to travel eighty miles in two days on horseback, see quotes in the narrative for my note 246.

119. "COPY OF A LETTER TO REV. JAMES QUINN," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 3 (February 1820): 79. She walked this distance to a revival held at a "quarterly meeting."

120. Peter Crawley, "A Comment on Joseph Smith's Account of His First Vision and the 1820 Revival," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 6 (Spring 1971): 107. For scholarly perspectives about the religious devotion of these rural New Yorkers, see Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), and Curtis D. Johnson, Islands of Holiness: Rural Religion in Upstate New York, 1790-1860 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), which together replace what was once the standard work by Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (1950; New York: Octagon Books/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981).

However, Paul Johnson's landmark study is not applicable to this article on Methodist revivalism during Joseph Smith's residence in western New York from 1817 to 1830, even though Rochester in 1820 was a village with less than half the population of nearby Palmyra. A Shopkeeper's Millennium suffered from "the lack of full Methodist records" (155), an absence of evidence so extreme that "the only Methodist revival on record came in 1836" (156).

121. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, [6]; see my note 166 for example of a family bringing its own tent.

122. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, 12.

123. Wright, Sketches of the Life and Labors of James Quinn, 107 (for the camp-meeting's "narrow streets and alleys"); Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 266 (for its

"numbered and labelled" streets); also "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN NASHVILLE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (May 1821): 192 ("The camp-ground had been considerably enlarged; but still we had to double the lines of tents"); see my notes 167 and 173 for the difference between the small "family tents" and the huge "society tents." For Bangs as Methodist minister in New York State, see my note 136; for the extensive size of typical camp-meetings, see my note 157.

124. "A SHORT ACCOUNT OF A CAMP-MEETING HELD AT COW-HARBOUR, LONG-ISLAND, WHICH COMMENCED AUGUST 11th, 1818," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 1 (September 1818): 356 (for beginning on Tuesday morning and for its attendance), 359 (for ending on Saturday morning).

125. "ACCOUNT OF A CAMP-MEETING AT BARRE, VT.," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 3 (December 1820): 470-71 (Thursday to Monday).

126. "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN NASHVILLE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (May 1821): 191-92, 194.

127. "PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF GOD ON HUDSON-RIVER DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 5 (December 1822): 474-75.

128. "CAMPMEETING ON THE CHAMPLAIN DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (December 1825): 484; also Anonymous, A Short Account of the Proceedings of the Camp Meeting, Holden By the Methodists, In Pittsfield, [New York,] June 1808, by a Spectator (Albany, NY: Van Benthuysen & Wood, 1808), 24 ("during the four days this meeting was holden"), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 16234; plus quotes in narrative text for my notes 122 and 185.

129. "ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL AND PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF GOD IN FOUNTAIN-HEAD CIRCUIT THROUGH THE LAST YEAR," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (February 1821): 72. Although there is a town of the same name in New York State, the article's internal references identify this as Fountain-Head, Kentucky.

130. "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN NEW-HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (March 1821): 109.

131. "ACCOUNT OF CAMP MEETINGS ON THE BALTIMORE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 6 (October 1823): 397.

132. "ACCOUNT OF A CAMP-MEETING IN GLOUSTER COUNTY, NEW JERSEY," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 7 (October 1824): 397. For narrative flow, I reverse the order of these separate phrases, but the meaning remains the same as in the original.

133. "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON ROCKINGHAM CIRCUIT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (July 1826): 273, regarding the previous year's camp-meeting; also see last paragraph of my note 118 for starting on Thursday.
134. "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON HANOVER CIRCUIT," and "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON BOTETOURT CIRCUIT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (November 1826): 432, 433.
135. "ACCOUNT OF A CAMP-MEETING HELD ON LONG-ISLAND, NEW-YORK STATE, FROM THE 7TH TO THE 13TH OF AUGUST, 1821," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (October 1821): 387. This occurred at a time when a resident referred to Brooklyn as "this village," in "PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF GOD IN BROOKLYN, LONG-ISLAND," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 6 (March 1823): 117.
136. Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 266; Abel Stevens, Life and Times of Nathan Bangs, D.D. (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1863), 203 (for his appointment as presiding elder of the Rhinebeck District of eastern New York in May 1813), 222 (for end of that appointment in June 1817), 243 (in "1820-1828, Bangs was also editor of the Methodist Magazine"). Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 79n55 cited an 1853 edition of Bangs (which had same volume and page as for my quote from the 1839 edition).
137. Lee, Short History of the Methodists, 367 (for first quote); "REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 5 (October 1822): 400 (for second quote); Peck, Life and Times of Rev. George Peck, 144 (for third quote about the 1825 camp-meeting). Jesse Lee served in New York from 1801 to 1803 (Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 292). Therefore, Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 89, clearly made an overstatement ("four-day camp meetings ... became the rule"), which he partially corrected a few lines later by acknowledging: "in the East, some encampments were even held for eight or nine days."
138. When days of the week or dates of the month were given in the sources cited for this article, 68.75 percent of camp-meetings began on Thursday or Friday, compared with a random expectation of 28.6 percent for those days combined. Determining this often required cross-referencing scattered dates within the sources, and/or comparing those sources with calendars for 1800-1825.
- In addition to the starting days already given in the narrative text, see Clark, et al., Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, 2: 362 ("Friday: 17 [of September 1802] I attended a camp meeting which continued to be held four days"); Stevens, Memorials of the Early Progress of Methodism in the Eastern States ... (Second Series), 275 (for letter from William Thacher to Bishop Asbury: "Friday, the 14th of September [1804], we ... began our camp-meeting"--see my note 101 for the year); Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, [3, "Our camp meeting was held at Sharon, from Friday the 27th"--1806], 17 ("the camp meeting at Petersburg began on

Friday the 26th"--1806); Anonymous, Treatise on the Proceedings of a Camp-Meeting Held in Bern, N.Y. specified in the title that it Commenced on Friday, the Seventh of September, 1810, and Ended the Monday Following; Peck, Early Methodism Within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828, 154 ("Saturday, 11, brought us to the camp-meeting on Squire Light's ground. We found it had been in operation two days," i.e., since Thursday), 242 ("August 9 [1805--Friday]. A Camp-meeting was held on my circuit, which was kept up almost day and night"), 429 ("Our camp-meeting commenced on the 13th of September [Thursday]" in 1821), 437-38 ("This year [1825] a camp-meeting was held in Canaan, commencing on the seventh of September"--Wednesday); Strickland, Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, 290 (camp-meeting on 24 July 1817, Thursday), 293 (on 1 August 1817, Friday), 294 (on 8 August 1817, Friday), 295 (on 12 August 1817, Tuesday), 301 (on 4 June 1819, Friday), 302 (on 10 June 1819, Thursday), 303 (on 18 June 1819, Friday); "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON OHIO DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (August 1819): 309 (for Friday, 4 June 1819 and Thursday, 10 June 1819); "DESCRIPTION OF A CAMP-MEETING HELD ON FAIRFIELD CIRCUIT, LANCASTER DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (December 1819): 474 (began Friday and ended on Monday); "ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVAL AND PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF GOD IN FOUNTAIN-HEAD CIRCUIT THROUGH THE LAST YEAR," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (February 1821): 70-72 (for Friday, 11 June 1819, followed by camp-meetings starting on the two following Fridays); "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN NASHVILLE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (May 1821): 193-94 (for Friday, 21 July 1820, for Thursday, 3 August 1820, for Thursday, 21 September 1820); "PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF GOD ON HUDSON-RIVER DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 5 (December 1822): 474 (for Thursday, 27 June 1822); "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN HOLSTON DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 7 (September 1824): 352 (for Friday, 19 September 1823); "GOOD EFFECTS OF CAMPMEETINGS," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (August 1825): 321 (for Friday 24 June 1825); "STATE OF RELIGION ON THE SUSQUEHANNAH DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (December 1825): 481 (for Thursday, 11 August 1825, and for Thursday, 15 September 1825).

139. Lee, Short History of the Methodists, 367 (for quote); John Stewart, Highways and Hedges; or, Fifty Years of Western Methodism (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden; New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1872), 80 (for similar quote), with 1818 as the year of his first camp-meeting (44, 51). Jesse Lee served in New York from 1801 to 1803 (Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 292).

Although current readers might think of mid-afternoon as "middle of the day," Lee was writing at a time when Americans used the phrase technically to refer to noon (12 PM), "the middle of the day; the time when the sun is in the meridian," as stated in Webster, American Dictionary of the English Language (1828), s.v. "noon" (first definition).

140. Latimer, Three Brothers, 22; Blakeslee, "NOTES FOR A HISTORY OF METHODISM IN PHELPS," manuscript page 7, for the 1818 revival; "There will be a camp meeting ... to commence on the 8th of June," in paid advertisement for "The Genesee Annual Conference,"

Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, NY), 19 May 1826, [3]. Calendars show that 8 June 1826 was on Thursday.

141. Barzun and Graff, Modern Researcher, 115.

142. "Effects of Drunkenness," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 28 June 1820, [2], which is fully transcribed in my note 8. For the noontime ending of camp-meetings, see the quote for my note 139 and explanation within that note.

143. In one instance, Methodist ministers were unable to dissuade some revivalists from leaving an August camp-meeting with their families on Tuesday evening, but the camp-meeting itself adjourned during the daytime on Wednesday. See "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON HANOVER CIRCUIT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (November 1826): 433.

144. "GENESEE CONFERENCE," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (August 1826): 313; Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 239. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see my note 15.

145. "Aggregate amount of each description of persons within the Northern District of New York," with totals for various towns, including Palmyra, from unnumbered page in manuscript U.S. census of 1820 for Ontario County, New York, microfilm 193,717 in LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see my note 15.

146. Samuel Gregg, The History of Methodism Within the Bounds of the Erie Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1865), 194 (for Paddock's licensing in 1817); Z. [Zechariah] Paddock, Memoir of Rev. Benjamin G. Paddock (New York: Nelson & Phillips; Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1875), 163n (for "special earthly temple"); compare my note 4 about the latter author and his brother Benjamin.

147. "GOOD EFFECTS OF CAMPMEETINGS," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (August 1825): 321 (see my note 104 for its location); Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 142 (for second quote); also my note 136. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 79n55 cited an 1853 edition of Bangs (which had same volume and page as for my quote from the 1839 edition).

148. "GENESEE CONFERENCE," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (August 1826): 313; compare Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, NY), weekly issues on Fridays from 9 June through 28 July 1826, which was the village's only newspaper this year. For Palmyra's total population as 3724 in 1820, see my note 145.

149. "A 'Full team,'" Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, NY), 16 June 1826, [2], emphasis in original.

150. "There will be a camp meeting ... to commence on the 8th of June," within the paid advertisement for "The Genesee Annual Conference," Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, NY), 19 May 1826, [3], which was repeated weekly until the issue of 2 June 1826, [3]; and my narrative quote from the advertisement "TAKEN UP, or FOUND," Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, NY), 16 June 1826, [3].

151. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, 11.

152. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, [4], [5], 6; Anonymous, Treatise on the Proceedings of a Camp-Meeting Held in Bern, N.Y., 4-5, 9; Anonymous, Short Account of the Proceedings of the Camp Meeting, Holden By the Methodists, In Pittsfield, [New York], [5], 7, 8, 12, 13. In keeping with Methodist regimentation wherever these camp-meetings were held, "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON OHIO DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 2 (August 1819), 310, reported: "The solemn trumpet had summoned us to the concert of prayer"; and "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN NASHVILLE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (May 1821), 192 ("We had the trumpet blown according to the order of the meeting"); also "GOOD EFFECTS OF CAMPMEETINGS," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (August 1825): 321; "Campmeeting at Compo, Con. [Connecticut]," and "NEWBURGH CAMPMEETING," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (November 1825): 435, 441; also Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 267.

153. "A SHORT ACCOUNT OF A CAMP-MEETING HELD AT COW-HARBOUR, LONG-ISLAND, WHICH COMMENCED AUGUST 11th, 1818," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 1 (September 1818): 359; Anonymous, Faithful Narrative of the Transactions Noticed At the Camp-Meeting, In Goshen, Connecticut, 12 ("about three o'clock [AM,] as I judged, the exercises concluded ... [and] I wished for day," emphasis in original); also Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, [6]; Anonymous, Short Account of the Proceedings of the Camp Meeting, Holden By the Methodists, In Pittsfield, [New York], 12-13, 21 ("Thursday morning at one o'clock [AM,] a sermon was preached"), 22 ("Between the hours of four and five [AM,] they formed their circular prayer meetings"); and Rev. Thacher's quote within my note 101.

154. Orsamus Turner, History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase (Rochester, NY: William Alling, 1851), 214, reprinted in Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 3: 49.

155. "Campmeeting at Compo, Con. [Connecticut]," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (November 1825): 438 (first quote); Wright, Sketches of the Life and Labors of James Quinn, 108 (second section of quotes); compare with Roger Robins, "Vernacular American Landscape: Methodists, Camp Meetings, and Social Respectability," Religion and American Culture 4 (Summer 1994): 165-91 (esp. 169-73). A. P. Mead, Manna In the Wilderness; or The Grove and Its Altar, Offerings, and Thrilling Incidents (Philadelphia: Perkinpine & Higgins, 1859), x, stated the early Methodist view of sacred space: "The camp ground is a hallowed place. Every tree seems clothed with richer verdure, and becomes sacred. We worship in the shady grove with

peculiar emotions. The places where camp meetings are held, are consecrated. We feel that we are treading on holy ground." That last phrase inspired the main title of Kenneth O. Brown's 1992 study of camp-meetings (see my note 4).

156. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, 12 (for "several thousands"), 11-12 (for rest of my quotes); see the preaching stand, with its inclined roof of boards, in illustration labeled "A western camp meeting in 1819. after lithograph by J. Miller," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 60; and in the painting reproduced in Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 51.

157. "Campmeeting at Compo, Con. [Connecticut]," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (November 1825): 438 (for quote and also "a congregation of ten thousand"). For a mile as equal to 1760 yards, see "WEIGHTS AND MEASURES" entry-chart in any standard dictionary, or do a Google search on the Internet; for American football field as 100 yards in length, see DK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary (London: DK Publishing; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 317, or do a Google search on the Internet. Thus, three-fourths of a mile equals 1320 yards, which equals 13.2 football fields. Compare with the inaccurately compressed space and unrealistic visual perspective in illustration labeled "A western camp meeting in 1819. after lithograph by J. Miller," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 60; also see second paragraph in my note 82. For an accurate, contemporary illustration of the huge physical space occupied by Methodist camp-meetings, see architect Benjamin Latrobe's sketch of an 1809 forest-revival, as published in Weiss, City In the Woods, 10.

158. "GENESEE CONFERENCE," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (August 1826): 313 (for "not less than ten thousand people" attending Palmyra's camp-meeting); also in Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 239.

159. Anonymous, Treatise on the Proceedings of a Camp-Meeting Held in Bern, N.Y., [3]. For a rod as equal to 5.5 yards, see "WEIGHTS AND MEASURES" entry-chart in any standard dictionary, or do a Google search on the Internet; for length of football field, see my note 157.

160. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, 17.

161. Latimer, Three Brothers, 22; Blakeslee, "NOTES FOR A HISTORY OF METHODISM IN PHELPS," manuscript page 7; Backman, "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District," 307; Backman, Joseph Smith's First Vision, 74n34. Disbelievers of Smith's narrative about an 1820 revival are not the only ones who have overlooked Palmyra's 1818 camp-meeting revival, as described by Reverend Seager. Anderson, "Circumstantial Confirmation of the First Vision," 373, likewise claimed that the town's pre-1820 revival was in 1817. See the same oversight as discussed in narrative for my notes 35, 61, and 73.

162. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, 3.

163. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, 12.

164. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 125. For Gorham as a Methodist minister in the Oneida Conference of New York State, see my note 79.

165. Anonymous, Treatise on the Proceedings of a Camp-Meeting Held in Bern, N.Y., [3] ("about thirty feet square"); Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 131 ("at least twenty-five feet square"); Anonymous, Faithful Narrative of the Transactions Noticed At the Camp-Meeting, In Goshen, Connecticut, 5 ("two or three acres"); also see revivalists standing in the cleared "altar" space in front of the preaching stand, in illustration labeled "A western camp meeting in 1819. after lithograph by J. Miller," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 60. Concerning the physical misrepresentations within this commonly published lithograph, see second paragraph in my note 82 and see last comments in my note 157.

166. For an example of Methodist families bringing their own tents, see Peck, Life and Times of Rev. George Peck, 79-80 ("During this [1817-18] visit[,] a camp-meeting was held at Columbus, some ten miles from my father's. We took our tent, and spent there a very pleasant and profitable season"). George Peck was a circuit-rider in the Genesee Conference of western New York. Also see the family-sized tents in illustration labeled "A western camp meeting in 1819. after lithograph by J. Miller," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 60.

167. Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 133 (for quote about the "mourner's tents ... [which] were especially popular in the East"); Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 125, 140, called them "society tents" and distinguished these huge tents from "family tents." For Gorham as a Methodist minister in the Oneida Conference of New York State, see my note 79. Because Gorham wrote as an eyewitness participant, my narrative uses his term; also see Johnson's error about these tents in my note 168.

For "society" as another way of referring to the Methodist Church, see "'Plain Truth' is received," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 5 July 1820, [2], which is fully transcribed in my note 9; also The Discipline of the Methodist Society: As Adopted in the City of New-York, 16th of July, 1821 (New York: "Printed for the Society" by Bolmore, 1821).

168. Anonymous, A Poem Written On a Methodist Camp-Meeting (New York: [Rockwell & Churchill], 1807), 11. Absent from the microform collection of Shaw and Shoemaker (which has only its 1819 version by a different title), an original of this 1807 publication is in the Center for Methodist Studies, Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University. The location of this original imprint was brought to my attention by Page A. Thomas, director of the Center, and he generously provided a photocopy.

The narrative's quote from this 1807 imprint demonstrates an error in Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 133. He wrongly claimed that these large tents "began to appear only after 1820."

169. "Campmeeting at Compo, Con. [Connecticut]," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (November 1825): 438. In contrast with this organizer's comment in 1825 that his camp-meeting's tents had a capacity of hundreds, in 1839 Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 265-66, more conservatively suggested that the largest of "these temporary shelters"

should accommodate "perhaps a hundred individuals" each.

170. "LETTER FROM THOMAS KENNERLY," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 3 (April 1820): 156, concerning a camp-meeting "in August last."

171. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 122. For Gorham as a Methodist minister in the Oneida Conference of New York State, see my note 79.

172. "CAMPMEETING ON THE CHAMPLAIN DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (December 1825): 483.

173. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 125, which stated in full: "For obvious reasons, the clearing of the ground, trimming of trees, and especially the grading [i.e., leveling of the ground in front of the preaching stand], should be done some weeks before the meeting." By implication, his estimate of "weeks" included the time necessary to erect "an hundred family tents, or their equivalent in society tents" which he had already mentioned on this page. For Gorham as a Methodist minister in the Oneida Conference of New York State, see my note 79.

174. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 120-21 (for Gorham as a Methodist minister in the Oneida Conference of New York State, see my note 79); also "CAMPMEETING ON THE CHAMPLAIN DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (December 1825): 485, described as exceptional the situation where one town "only had about ten days' notification of the appointment" for a camp-meeting but eagerly rushed to make the physical preparations for it. Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 86, observed: "The keynote of the Methodist way was planning. Nothing was left to chance, from the scheduling of the [camp-]meetings and their advertisement to the sharing of duties among the camp leaders and management of the camp services."

For example, after the weeks or months of word-of-mouth notification that Palmyra's Methodists received early in 1826 for an upcoming camp-meeting, the Genesee Conference (its official sponsor) paid the village newspaper to notify non-Methodists three-weeks in advance: "There will be a camp meeting ... to commence on the 8th of June." See paid advertisement for "The Genesee Annual Conference," Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, NY), 19 May 1826, [3].

175. "Great Revivals in Religion" and "Extract from a letter from a gentleman in Providence, R.I. to his friend in this town, dated May 1, 1820," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 7 June 1820, [1], emphasis in originals. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see my note 15.

176. Enoch Mudge, The American Camp-Meeting Hymn Book (Boston: Joseph Burdakin, 1818), vii (for first quote), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 44918; Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 267 (for second quote). Writing in 1839, Bangs was restating the fourth-numbered instruction in the camp-meeting guidelines published in 1810 by Lee, Short History of the Methodists, 366.

177. Anonymous, A Poetical Description of a Methodist Camp-Meeting (Philadelphia: N.p., 1819), 14n, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 49145. Although its "poetical" content was originally published in 1807 at New York City (see my note 168), this 1819 footnote did not appear in the earlier version.

178. "GENESEE CONFERENCE," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 9 (August 1826): 313. This was changed to "in a beautiful grove" (and stated as "in the vicinity of Palmyra," but without reference to "the village") in Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 239. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see my note 15.

179. Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 29.

180. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 101. His statement of unconditional generality about the characteristics of "a camp meeting" went far beyond that page's arguments against apologist claims for a revival in Vienna (now named Phelps), New York in 1819-20. In 1969 Walters claimed in "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 77n46, that he had "examined all the issues of the following ... The Methodist Magazine (Jan. 1818-Dec. 1821)," and he cited various issues of the magazine's volumes for 1824, 1825, and 1826 in his 1969 source-notes 75nn19-20, 76n22, 76n30, 76n32, 77n43, 79n59.

To me, it is therefore inconceivable that this minister-researcher was unaware of the repeatedly described characteristics of camp-meetings in that official Methodist source, characteristics which he either misrepresented or concealed in his articles of 1967, 1969, 1980, and in his posthumously published book of 1994. Thus, I can only conclude that Reverend Wesley P. Walters knowingly and intentionally misled his readers about the significance of camp-meetings that he knew occurred on the outskirts of Palmyra in June 1818 and in June 1820. See comments about Walters and his approach within my notes 5 and 14.

181. Report in 1810 by Anonymous, Treatise on the Proceedings of a Camp-Meeting Held in Bern, N.Y., 10. By contrast, Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 266, stated in 1839 that his experience was with camp-meetings in New York, and that "five hundred" was their smallest attendance (268). Not only had he served as presiding elder of the Rhinebeck District in the eastern part of the state from 1813 to 1817, but Bangs was also editor of the Methodist Magazine in 1820-28 (see my note 136). Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 79n55 cited an 1853 edition of Bangs (which had same volume and page as for this quote from the 1839 edition), and this should have alerted Walters to the fact that Palmyra's camp-meetings of June 1818 and June 1820 should not simply be dismissed as insignificant.

Concerning my emphasis on 400 as the smallest reported attendance, it is necessary to clarify a sentence from "GOOD EFFECTS OF CAMPMEETINGS," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (August 1825): 321, which stated: "There were about a hundred of them on the encampment, about half of whom were professors of religion." Immediately preceded by a sentence about "the Canadian Indians," this was Thomas Madden's description of their

attendance at the camp-meeting, not including its Anglo attendance (which he did not estimate). See Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 473, for Madden as the "superintendent of the Indian mission schools" in the Niagara District; also my note 104.

182. Simpson, American Methodist Pioneer, 318 (for Rev. Garrettson's diary entry on Thursday, 3 [not "4"] August 1809 that was continued through events on Sunday, 6 August). The editor did not clarify Garrettson's one-day error in dating his entries before 7 August 1809.

For the semi-circle rows of sawn-logs that provided backless seats for camp-meeting attenders in front of the preaching stand, see architect Benjamin Latrobe's 1809 sketch, as published in Weiss, City In the Woods, 10. Such seating was not one of the uniform characteristics of Methodist camp-meetings from 1800 to 1830, as indicated by contemporary reports in New York's Methodist Magazine, by Anonymous, Faithful Narrative of the Transactions Noticed At the Camp-Meeting, In Goshen, Connecticut, 7 ("seated themselves on straw spread on the ground," emphasis in original), and by the standing-only revivalists depicted in the commonly published illustration labeled "A western camp meeting in 1819. after lithograph by J. Miller," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 4 (Spring 1969): 60. Also the geometric layout of camp-meetings was not uniform, but Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 42-43, illustrates how each Methodist camp-meeting conformed to one of three basic types: rectangular, horseshoe, or circular. Also see the detailed examination of the architecture and physical characteristics of camp-meetings throughout Weiss, City In the Woods.

183. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 64-65, 66, 69, 76n37, 77n40; Walters, "Reply to Dr. Bushman," 98-99; Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 96-98; Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 17-18; Palmer, Insider's View of Mormon Origins, 241, 243; Marquardt, Rise of Mormonism, 13, 15-17.

184. "AN ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD IN CANAAN, N.Y.," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 3 (October 1820): 393.

185. Clark, et al., Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, 2: 765 (for quote from entry for 30 November 1814); "REVIVAL OF THE WORK OF GOD ON OCONEE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 6 (February 1823): 72 (for "about a dozen" converts). For Asbury's published journal as available in New York in 1821, see my note 96.

186. "REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN WELLFLEET," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 4 (February 1821): 78 (for "upwards of twenty" converts); "ACCOUNT OF THE WORK OF GOD ON RHINEBECK DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 7 (September 1824): 353 ("ever since our Camp-meeting in Hilldale, in September last, about twenty, principally heads of families, have been added unto the Lord's people in this place"), emphasis in original. Concerning the previously quoted minister who felt comforted with a dozen converts out of 600 revivalists, he next held another camp-meeting that "was more numerously attended than the others ... and about twenty converted" at the largest of these camp-meetings in

September 1822. See "REVIVAL OF THE WORK OF GOD ON OCONEE DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 6 (February 1823): 72. For Palmyra's 1818 camp-meeting, see quotes for my note 4 and within my notes 5, 35, 61.

187. "Revival in Bridgetown, N.J." [page-heading], Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (June 1825): 238.

188. Clark, et al., Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, 3: 411, for quotes from letter on 6 August 1809; also see Anonymous, Poem Written On a Methodist Camp-Meeting, 7n, for a two-year's earlier expression of this by an anti-Methodist writer in New York: "And when the religious tremour is a little subsided, then [the camp-meeting converts] embrace their former principles, and adhere to the same vicious habits as before." For Asbury's published journal as available in New York in 1821, see my note 96.

I researched this paragraph of the narrative text and the next paragraph at the suggestion of Mark A. Scherer, official historian of the Community of Christ in Independence, Missouri, after he read the preliminary version of this article as posted on 12 July 2006 to Dialogue's website.

189. James Porter, Revivals of Religion, (1848; New York: Nelson & Phillips; Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1878), 205, emphasis in original of this commonly available edition of Reverend Porter's 1848 book (for which even the 1849 second edition has survived in few copies, and none of first edition--according to WorldCat computer catalog, available on the Internet at universities as an "electronic database").

190. Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 105 (for "backsliders"), 235 (for "collapse"). Strickland, Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, 172-73, described his religious decline that began "about eighteen months" after he became one of the thousands of charismatic converts at the famous camp-meeting in Cane Ridge, Kentucky in August 1801: "Family prayer was given up, and then followed, in the sad train of evils connected with backsliding, the abandonment of prayer altogether, and a return to my former companions. To mitigate if possible my wretchedness, I also returned to my former practices ..."

Although it was not the first (see my note 80), Cane Ridge became the granddaddy of American camp-meetings. It was an interdenominational event, where as many as 25,000 people attended each session of the camp-meeting. See Eslinger, Citizens of Zion, 206-12; Paul K. Conkin, Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990). To comprehend what that never-repeated experience of mass enthusiasm was like for its participants, current readers should peruse the extended quote in the narrative text for my note 201, and then imagine the sights and sounds of those behaviors occurring amid a standing-room-only crowd in a venue like the Staples Center in Los Angeles, or Marriott Center in Provo, or LDS Conference Center in Salt Lake City, or Madison Square Garden in New York City.

191. This provides an example for the two sides of the ecological fallacy in statistics (see narrative for my note 26). Focusing only on the local circuits with declining membership, one could wrongly conclude that the Methodist Episcopal Church as a whole was declining in

membership. Likewise, looking at the aggregate statistics of Methodist growth by region, state, and nation, researchers could begin with the erroneous assumption that Methodism was growing in any town they might choose.

After analyzing American Methodist membership reports from 1780 to 1865, Richard Carwardine, Trans-Atlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 49, concluded: "This repeated pattern of growth and decline can be seen as a statistical expression of what might be termed the psychology of revivals. ... As conversions multiplied, emotional intensity gathered to a pitch that could not be maintained indefinitely, and eventually the high state of religious interest collapsed: new converts were hard to find; recent converts often failed to make the grade."

Recognizing that fact, Methodist ministers considered re-conversion to be one of the purposes for camp-meetings. As early as 1810, "A. J." [pseud. for John C. Totten?], Apology For Camp-Meetings, 23, explained that "sinners are awakened, souls converted, backsliders reclaimed, the lukewarm quickened, believers sanctified, and the work of God in general revived"; restated in Strickland, Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, 294.

Through the untiring labors of circuit-riders and by repeatedly holding camp-meetings to reclaim backsliders and to gain new converts, the Methodists became the largest religious group in America by 1850 (see last paragraph of my note 90). It remains the most demographically successful example of American religious outsiders not only becoming mainstream, but overwhelming the previous mainstream.

192. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 345-46 (1820 statistics of total "white" and "colored" members for all circuits in Ontario District), as compared with 330 (1819 statistics of total "white" and "colored" members for the same circuits in what was then "Genesee District"), which are summarized here as follows: Lyons Circuit had 374 total in the July 1820 report, as compared with its previously higher total of 673 in the July 1819 report; Seneca Circuit had 438 total in the July 1820 report, as compared with its previously higher total of 1,010 in the July 1819 report; Ontario Circuit had 671 total in the July 1820 report, as compared with its previously higher total of 677 in the July 1819 report; Canandaigua Circuit had 88 total in the July 1820 report, as compared with its previously higher total of 200 in the July 1819 report; Crooked Lake had 374 total in the July 1820 report, as compared with its previously higher total of 656 in the July 1819 report. Such comparison is not possible for the following circuits listed for Ontario District in July 1820, but not in the report for 1819: Catharine, Danville, and Prattstown. Because the above minutes do not specify the exact dates these reports were submitted for the Genesee Conference's annual meeting, see Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 158 (for its annual meeting and reports as of 1 July 1819), 165 (for its annual meeting and reports as of 20 July 1820).

193. Turner, History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, 214, reprinted in Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 3: 50; also discussion in Anderson, "Circumstantial Confirmation of the First Vision," 378-84. For the connection of Phelps with Vienna in western New York and for the distance of nearly fourteen miles from Palmyra to Vienna (now named

Phelps), see my note 4.

Vogel, Making of a Prophet, 589n33, implied that it is anachronistic to apply Orsamus Turner's description to 1820 (since "the Methodists did not acquire their property in the woods on the Vienna Road until July 1821"). However, Making of a Prophet, 153, contradicted Vogel's apparent objection by affirming: "It was this kind of revival meeting that Joseph Jr. experienced firsthand on the outskirts of Palmyra Village," and Vogel's index (705) identified this statement on page 153 as applying to "Palmyra (NY) ... revivals (1817)." With regard to the 1817 revival he affirmed, Vogel clearly recognized that the Methodists had no need to own the property on which they held a revival (as discussed in text for my note 90 and within the note itself). However, he paradoxically seemed to assert that such ownership was necessary in 1820, the year for which he denied there was a Palmyra revival.

As part of a letter to the editor in Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 16 (Spring 1983): 6, Marvin S. Hill referred to Turner's statement and commented: "Charles Brown says that Joseph acquired a 'spark of Methodist fire' on the Vienna Road and became an exhorter in the evening meetings. We have no indication here as to whether Joseph's interest was brief or otherwise, but Brown's comment that he was an exhorter at 'meetings' suggests some length of time." Hill wrote as if (1) Brown were alive to be a contemporary witness of an 1820 revival and (2) as if Brown's statement were independent of Turner, both of which I sincerely wish were true. However, neither of which was the case. Hill was referring to a source described in Backman, Joseph Smith's First Vision, 16n20, as "Charles Brown, 'Manchester in the Early Days.' Files of the Shortsville Enterprise Press, October 18, 1902; October 25, 1902, copy located in the Brigham Young University Library." Not alive to be a credible witness of anything in 1820, Brown was paraphrasing in 1902 what he had read in Turner's 1851 book. Also see comments about Hill's approach in my note 98.

194. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 100; also Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 29, 44, 54-55; Vogel, Religious Seekers, 29-30.

195. Ronald Vern Jackson, Gary Ronald Teeples, and David Schaefermeyer, eds., New York 1810 Census Index (Bountiful, UT: Accelerated Indexing Systems, 1976), 65, for Caleb Coates in Ontario County; Evelyn Coates Aherin, comp., Robert Coates of Lynn, Mass. and Some of His Descendants (Syracuse, NY: N.p.; Chula Vista, CA: Fergus Graphic Arts, 1970), 33 ("and in 1808, he [Caleb, born in 1755] removed to Farmington" which was re-named Burt in 1821 and finally named Manchester in 1822). Although she knew the names of only two of Caleb's children and was uncertain of the birth year for his son Allen, genealogist Aherin wrote (33) that Allen died in "Manchester, N.Y. 16 Sept. 1880, while on a visit from Kalamazoo."

The Ontario County Journal newspaper clarified the year of his birth: "DIED ... In Manchester, Thursday, Sept. 16th, 1880 at 7 o'clock a.m., Allen Coates, aged 83 years [i.e, born in 1797]" (available on the Internet from www.rootsweb.com/~nyontari/ontariocountyjournal/marriagedeath11), which information was repeated on Allen's gravestone in the Sunnyside Cemetery of Manchester, New York (available at www.rootsweb.com/~nyontari/sunnysidecem.htm). However, the "Family Group Record" for Caleb Coates (born "abt 1752") and his wife Mehitable Rogers (at www.familysearch.com)

wrongly claims that their son Allen was born in "1787" at New London, New London County, Connecticut (the alleged birthplace of all his siblings), which would make him ten years older than stated by his obituary and gravestone.

Despite the research submitted by individual LDS genealogists and now posted on www.familysearch.com, this Coates family is not in the original records of birth for New London, New London County, Connecticut from the 1700s to early 1800s, as contained in microfilms 1,312,157 and 1,312,158 (of the year-by-year vital statistics for the town of New London), nor in microfilm 5,082 (of a completely alphabetical compilation of those early records) in LDS Family History Library. Because it is standard historical practice (in the absence of a birth record) to give precedence to death records for determining the year of birth, I accept the statements by his obituary and gravestone that Allen Coates was born in 1797, which was the date given by his grandson in the interview quoted for my note 196, and explained within that note.

196. Allen Wesley Coates oral history interview on 13 February 1974 at Shortsville, New York, MSS OH 853 in Special Collections, Lee Library, a source to which I was alerted by the interviewer Gordon C. Thomasson after he read the preliminary version of this article as posted on 12 July 2006 to Dialogue's website.

This oral history's typescript page 3 gives the grandfather's name as Allen, his year of birth as 1797, the grandson-informant's birthdate as 1879 (which he specified on page 12 as age "95" during the interview), and the informant's father as Wesley F. Coates (born in 1829 at Manchester, New York). Naming a son after founder John Wesley was an indication of the grandfather's Methodist piety.

Also page 7 of the interview typescript (for "old Coates homestead" and "different times we talked about it" and "he was a deacon of the Methodist church"), page 8 (for "a deacon in the church" and "the time they were having revival meetings in the Methodist church" and the blockquote, including "sacred orchard"), and page 11 (for "I can't get just what year that was but I know I got the story [from my father] about the poor boy that come in the neighborhood, you know and commenced looking for work").

Independent sources verify some of the basic details in this interview. The ninety-five-year-old informant accurately remembered the year of birth for his grandfather Allen (see second paragraph of my note 195). He accurately stated that the Coates family resided in Manchester years before the revival (see first paragraph of my note 195). He also accurately remembered his father's year of birth, as indicated by the "1829-1921" entry for Wesley F. Coates in the Sunnyside Cemetery of Manchester, New York (available on the Internet from www.rootsweb.com/~nyontari/sunnysidecem.htm).

197. Even allowing for the variant spelling of this family's name as "Coats" in early documents, the Methodist records do not verify that Allen Coates (b. 1797) ever served as a deacon, nor did his father Caleb (b. 1755). Neither was listed as a deacon, circuit-rider, preacher, or minister in Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, nor in any of the Methodist conference reports published from then to Allen's death in 1880. This Methodist died when interview-informant Allen Wesley Coates was one-year-old,

and ninety-four years later this grandson conflated his grandfather's Methodist devotion with the ministerial service of another relative.

Although Caleb Coates and his wife Mehitable had moved in 1808 with Allen and their other young children to Farmington (re-named Burt in 1821 and finally named Manchester in 1822), their much older son James Coates (born in 1778 or 1779) remained with his own wife and children in Orangeville, New York, seventy miles west. This older son James moved to Manchester in 1821, with his own son Calvin S. Coates (born in 1809). Nephew of "grandfather" Allen and first-cousin of the interview-informant's father Wesley, this Calvin S. Coates (often spelled "Coats") was ordained a Methodist deacon in 1833 and served in various circuits of the Genesee Conference, including his 1847 appointment to the town of Manchester, where the interview-informant's grandfather and father were living. The above is not found in a single source, but is pieced together from incomplete data in the following sources: Those in my note 195; "James Coates" (born "4 Feb 1779" who married "Penelope") and his younger brother Allen Coates in the "Family Group Sheet" for Caleb Coates (born "abt 1751") and Mehitable Rogers in "Family Group Sheets Submitted 1942-1969," microfilm 1,273,833, LDS Family History Library; Jackson, New York 1820 Census Index, 97 (for James "Coats" in Orangeville, Genesee County); Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1829-1839, 211; Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1846-1851 (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1854), 162; Clifton Springs cemetery, Manchester Township, New York State, for "COATS, James, died Oct 12 [--] 1862; ae [age] 84 yrs; [i.e., born in 1778, and] Penelupa [sic, Penelope], wife of James; died Apr. 11 [--] 1851, ae [age] 74 yrs," available on the Internet at www.rootsweb.com/~nyontari/cliftonspringsvillagecem.htm"; the obituary of "CALVIN S. COATS" (concerning moving with his parents from Orangeville, New York, to Manchester in 1821) in Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Year 1875 (New York: Nelson & Phillips; Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, n.p.), 119; Calvin S. "Coats" (son of "James Coats" with birth "about 1798" at unknown birthplace, but shown as resident of Manchester, Ontario County, New York) in "International Genealogical Index--North America" at www.familysearch.org; also www.mapquest.com/directions for 69.93 miles as the distance from Manchester to Orangeville Center, New York.

In the 1974 interview quoted in the narrative text for my note 196, ninety-five-year-old Allen Wesley Coates made a clear error when he mixed up the rank-and-file Methodist devotion of his grandfather Allen with the deacon's office of his grandfather's nephew, Calvin in 1833. However, in my view, this does not invalidate the credibility of the father-to-son tradition about a relative attending a Methodist revival near Manchester with Joseph Smith Jr., who reported that he had a vision soon after the meeting. Nevertheless, in the interest of fairness, I have laid out the evidence that might lead some readers to reject the Coates family's narrative. See my note 1.

198. For the role of "consistency" in historical interpretations, see my note 54.

199. In an 1810 defense of this common occurrence at Methodist camp-meetings, "A. J." [pseud. for John C. Totten?], Apology For Camp-Meetings, wrote about revivalists "falling prostrate on the earth under those religious exercises, apparently lifeless, or in great agitations, both of body

and mind" (17). He insisted that "neither the falling of saints or sinners can stand as an objection to Camp-meetings, or [against] any other religious exercises where God reveals himself to the people by the power of his Spirit and presence" (18).

200. Lester Ruth, "A Little Heaven Below: The Love Feast and Lord's Supper in Early American Methodism," Wesleyan Theological Journal 32 (Fall 1997) explained: "In its most basic form, an American Methodist love feast consisted of sharing bread and water and a time of testimonies. This was apparently little changed from its British [Wesleyan] roots. ... On an official level, polity set the criteria for admission to love feasts, even from the first annual conference held in America in 1773. At that time, the preachers affirmed that no one was `to be admitted into our love-feasts oftener than twice or thrice unless they become members.'" (available on the Internet at http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojnl/31-35/32-2-4.htm)

201. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, [4-5], 6-9; compare with Russell E. Richey, Early American Methodism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 31 ("Methodism as a whole recognized itself in the camp meeting").

202. Ward, Account of Three Camp-Meetings, 12.

203. Giles, Pioneer, 268.

204. Gorham, Camp Meeting Manual, 155-56; also in the 1839 edition of Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 2: 266-67, which included a tenth rule that applied only to New York City, where Bangs had been editor of the Methodist Magazine from 1820 to 1828 (see my note 136).

205. "GOOD EFFECTS OF CAMPMEETINGS," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 8 (August 1825): 321; for its location, see my note 104.

206. "NOTES FOR A HISTORY OF METHODISM IN PHELPS by Rev. M. P. Blakeslee, 1886," manuscript pages 7-8. Walters, "Reply to Dr. Bushman," 98, referred disparagingly (and without mentioning Reverend House) to the "late reminiscence by a Mr. Sarsnett reporting a camp meeting near Vienna."

Interestingly, Backman and Bushman ignored Sarsnett's testimony about the 1820 camp-meeting and instead emphasized Blakeslee's very quotable statement by Mrs. Sarepta Marsh Baker (sometimes without identifying her by name) that this revival was a "religious cyclone which swept over the whole region round about." Blakeslee's phrase (also on page 7 of his manuscript) was "flaming spiritual advance." See Backman, "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District," 308; Bushman, "First Vision Story Revived," 88-89; Bushman, "Mr. Bushman Replies," 8; Backman, Joseph Smith's First Vision, 89.

By contrast, Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 105, wrote that in giving this description, "Blakeslee is three years too early," an assessment repeated in Hill, "First Vision Controversy," 38 ("was three years too early"), and in Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 32 ("three years too early"). In rejecting the relevance of Blakeslee's account to the

First Vision, those statements by Walters, Hill, and Marquardt affirmed that the time-frame asserted by his narrative and witnesses did not refer to the July 1819 quarterly meeting of the Methodist conference at Phelps to which LDS apologists had originally applied the statements by Mrs. Baker and Rev. Blakeslee. Instead, Walters, Hill, and Marquardt dated Blakeslee's evidence as referring to a period no earlier than the summer of 1820, i.e., the camp-meeting "season" three years before Palmyra's revivalism that began in 1823 (see my note 55) and that reached its crescendo in 1824. Thus, these naysayers asserted a chronology for Blakeslee's narrative that is consistent with my emphasis in this essay.

Ironically, neither believing apologists nor disbelieving critics have been willing to consider that Mrs. Baker's statement (which they often attributed to Blakeslee) was a conflation that linked the 1820 camp-meeting she and other residents of Phelps attended with the extensive revivals in "the whole region" during 1824-25. Likewise, for Blakeslee's quotable phrase. My view is that Mrs. Baker and Rev. Blakeslee both made the same kind of conflation that Joseph Smith Jr. did in his own narratives.

207. See third paragraph of my note 206 for published statements by Walters, Hill, and Marquardt indicating that Sarsnett (as reported by Blakeslee) was referring to a camp-meeting revival in 1820; also second paragraph of my note 209.

Ontario County Journal (22 February 1889): "DIED ... In the town of Hopewell, Feb. 10, of pneumonia, Harry Sarsnett, aged 90 years [i.e., born in 1798-99]" (available on the Internet at www.rootsweb.com/~nyontari/ontariocountyjournal/marriagedeath25); with no dates of birth or death on his gravestone, as available in www.rootsweb.com/~nyontario/resthavencemS.htm. Therefore, he was either twenty-one or twenty-two in June 1820.

Initially, I regarded Harry Sarsnett as a boy-convert, because his age was given as forty (i.e., born in 1810) in the 1850 census. However, the federal censuses are unreliable for determining his year of birth, because the 1860 census gave his age as forty-seven (i.e., born in 1813) and the 1870 census gave his age as sixty-two (i.e., born in 1808). See film number 444,288 (manuscript page 387), film number 803,831 (manuscript page 631), and film number 552,564 (manuscript page 337, verso) at LDS Family History Library for 1850, 1860, 1870 census of Phelps, Ontario County, New York, for Harry "Sarsnet" or "Sarsnett," identified as "colored" in each census, as well as on his gravestone and in "NOTES FOR A HISTORY OF METHODISM IN PHELPS by Rev. M. P. Blakeslee, 1886," manuscript page 7. Although his son Charles is in the "Soundex" for the 1880 federal census, Harry/Henry Sarsnet/Sarsnett is absent from that phonetic index for 1880. Despite the consistent understating of Harry Sarsnett's age by census-takers, it is standard historical practice (in the absence of a birth record) to give precedence to death records for determining the year of birth. Therefore, Harry Sarsnett was born in 1798 or 1799.

208. Born on 12 October 1804, Sarepta Marsh was age fifteen in June 1820. See second paragraph of my note 206 for her married name as Baker, and see the entry for her in "International Genealogical Index--North America," available at www.familysearch.com on the Internet. See third paragraph of my note 206 for published statements by Walters, Hill, and Marquardt indicating that Blakeslee's quotes from her referred to a camp-meeting revival in 1820; also second paragraph of my note 209.

209. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 102-06, dismissed Blakeslee's account as both irrelevant and erroneous, but again made no comment about the eyewitness Sarsnett's emphasis on Elisha House. Instead, he attacked Blakeslee's passing comment: "For 1820, Loring Grant and John Baggerly were the preachers" (manuscript page 7). To the contrary, Walters asserted: "when the Rev. Blakeslee speaks of the year 1820, he does not mean the calendar year 1820, but the Methodist conference year 1820 ... [which] ran from the summer of one year to the summer of the next, in this case between the summer of 1820 and 1821," and concerning Grant and Baggerly, "these men were not appointed to the Lyons Circuit (on which Vienna was located) until the July 1820 conference, too late to fit the 'spring of eighteen hundred and twenty' date mentioned in Joseph Smith's account" (103); stated similarly in Marquardt and Walters, Inventing Mormonism, 30-31. Emphasizing the precise date of 20 July 1820 for the appointment of Grant and Baggerly is one way of understanding Blakeslee's chronological introduction to Sarsnett's reminiscence, but it is not the only way.

First, the manuscript's narrative clearly indicated that Sarsnett converted to Methodism at a "camp-meeting" before the events Blakeslee chronicled for November-December 1820. As indicated in my narrative text, the first essential question is how far in advance of November? Blakeslee did not address that question, but the camp-meeting season began in June. The second essential question is where exactly? Blakeslee understood that Sarsnett's camp-meeting occurred "on the farm of W.W. Gates" on the outskirts of Phelps (then named Vienna), but Palmyra's newspaper (which Walters did not mention in his assessment of Blakeslee) verified that by Sunday, 25 June 1820, a camp-meeting was occurring in the "vicinity" of Palmyra. The newspaper's apprentice Orsamus Turner said Joseph Smith's conversion occurred "in the camp meeting, away down in the woods, on the Vienna road" (see my note 193), but Vienna (now named Phelps) did not have its own newspaper in 1820, so residents depended on the Palmyra Register. As acknowledged in my narrative, the evidence connecting Palmyra's 1820 camp-meeting with Blakeslee's narrative is nowhere near definitive, but it allows for my conclusion that the two accounts referred to the same camp-meeting, a revival that residents of Phelps attended on the outskirts of Palmyra. For the connection of Phelps with Vienna in western New York and for the distance of nearly fourteen miles from Palmyra to Phelps, see my note 4.

Second, Reverend Baggerly's association with Phelps did not begin in July 1820. The 1876 History of Ontario County, New York stated (181) that he had been the resident minister of "the Methodist Episcopal Church at Clifton Springs" since 1808, and that Clifton Springs was one of the "villages" that were "partly in Phelps" (179). Concerning the ease of Reverend Baggerly's attendance at Palmyra's June 1820 camp-meeting, Clifton Springs was only ten miles distant. Baggerly (sometimes spelled "Beggary" or "Beggerly") was assigned to the Crooked Lake Circuit as of July 1818, replacing Loring Grant as its circuit-rider (Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 302, 318, 337). Due south of Syracuse and nearly seventy-seven miles from Baggerly's residence in Clifton Springs, Crooked Lake involved enormous distances for his assignment as circuit-rider, but this was not uncommon. For example, Aurora Seager resided in Phelps (Vienna) while his assigned circuit was in Clarence, New York (my note 4), nearly eighty-two miles from his home; also Hosmer, Autobiography of Rev. Alvin Torry, 214 ("I immediately took leave of my mother, and started for my circuit, which was some sixty miles distant" from home); Peck, Early Methodism Within

the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828, 353 ("it took me nearly a week to reach my circuit"). For the ability of even an aging and unhealthy Methodist minister to travel eighty miles in two days on horseback, see quotes in the narrative for my note 246. Also consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet (for 9.94 miles as the distance from Palmyra to Clifton Springs, New York, for 76.65 miles from Clifton Springs to Crooked Lake, New York, for 81.7 miles as the distance from Phelps to Clarence, New York)

Third, Reverend Grant's association with Phelps apparently also pre-dated 1820. After Baggerly replaced him in the Crooked Lake Circuit, Grant was assigned to the Seneca Circuit in Ontario District for 1818 and 1819. Depending on which Seneca village the circuit centered, Grant's assignment was either very close (8 miles) or relatively close (25 miles) to Phelps, where both Grant and Baggerly were reported as residents in the 1820 census. Like Seager, Torry, Peck, and Baggerly, Reverend Grant also traveled from his residence to his assigned circuit. See Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 318, 337; Jackson, New York 1820 Census Index, 18, 192; consult www.mapquest.com/directions (for 8.22 miles as the distance from Phelps to Seneca Castle, Ontario County, New York, for 25.2 miles as the distance from Phelps to Seneca Point, Ontario County, New York).

210. Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 141.

211. Jackson, New York 1820 Census Index, 235. For the connection of Phelps with Vienna in western New York and for the distance of nearly fourteen miles from Palmyra to Vienna (now named Phelps), see my note 4.

212. "List of Letters REMAINING in the POST-OFFICE at Palmyra, June 30th 1820," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 19 JULY 1820, [4]; Jackson, Teeples, and Schaefermeyer, New York 1810 Census Index, 12; Jackson, New York 1820 Census Index, 18; consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet (for 15.0 miles as the distance from Palmyra to Lyons, New York).

Because he was a resident of Palmyra (Jackson, New York 1820 Census Index, 247), my narrative does not include "Rev. Jeremiah Irons," even though he was also in the above list. Whereas non-residents were in the list because mail was intended to reach them while they visited Palmyra, Reverend Irons might actually have been away from his Palmyra residence during June, despite the village camp-meeting. However, my own view is that he attended it and was the reason for Joseph Smith's linking the Baptists with the 1820 revival held by the Methodists. For Irons as Palmyra's Baptist minister, see Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association Held At Avon, September 22d and 23d, 1819 (N.p., 1819), 3, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 47119; Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association, Holden At Benton, September 26th and 27th, 1821 (Canandaigua, NY: John A. Stevens, 1821), 3, not available in Shaw and Shoemaker, but in Lee Library; also Backman, Joseph Smith's First Vision, 65.

213. James H. Hotchkin, A History of the Purchase and Settlements of Western New York, and of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1848), 376 ("Rev. Benjamin Baily [sic] was installed as pastor, and sustained to that relation till Sept. 5th 1821, when he was dismissed"). Backman, Joseph Smith's First Vision, 69, follows Hotchkin's spelling of "Baily." However, as explained in the third paragraph of my note 111, there were ecclesiastical reasons for Presbyterian ministers like Bailey to attend Methodist camp-meetings merely as observers or as "fellow Christians"--without giving sermons there--and to limit their revivalistic sermons to the formal, Presbyterian-sponsored revivals within chapels.

214. "List of Letters REMAINING in the POST-OFFICE at Palmyra, June 30th 1820," Palmyra Register (Palmyra, NY), 19 JULY 1820, [4], for "Deacon Barber" and "Samuel Talcot [sic]." The latter was a misspelling or typesetting error, as demonstrated in Jackson, New York 1820 Census Index, 457, which shows no head-of-household named Samuel Talcot, and only two persons named Samuel Talcott--one in Madison County and one in Herkimer County. The same index-page shows no Samuel Talbot or Talbut in Palmyra, nor even in Ontario County, but does list Samuel "Talbot" in Pompey, Onondaga County (see my note 215 for the "Talbot" spelling of his name). My narrative text identifies Barber and explains the significance of the town of Pompey for Palmyra's 1820 camp-meeting.

215. Consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet (for 84.74 miles as the distance from Palmyra to Pompey, New York, and for 17.85 miles as the distance from Palmyra to Victor, New York); the 1876 History of Ontario County, New York, 203 (for "Rev. Samuel Talbot" as one of the early Methodists in Victor); see my note 214 for identifying him as the person listed in Palmyra's postal notice for 30 June 1820 and for his residence in Pompey. For the ability of even an aging and unhealthy Methodist minister to travel eighty miles in two days on horseback, see quotes in the narrative for my note 246.

216. Jackson, New York 1820 Census Index, 24 (for absence of persons named Barber in Palmyra, with the only other Ontario County families by that surname living in Gorham, Groveland, Seneca, and Victor); Elliot G. Storke, History of Cayuga County, 1789-1879 (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason, 1879), 422 (for "Barbers Corners, which place derives its name from Deacon William Barber who was an early settler [in 1796], and died there February 2d, 1844, aged 77"), also 373 (for incorporation of a "Methodist Society" in 1846 by William B. Barber, possibly a namesake-son of Deacon Barber); with no further information (according to research report dated 3 July 2006) about Deacon William Barber in the files of the Cayuga-Owasco Lakes Historical Society, Moravia, New York, which has assembled information about several towns, including Scipio. This "Deacon William Barber" is different from the William Barber of Gorham, Ontario County, whose biographies do not mention him holding any church office. Consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet (for 49.76 miles as the distance from Palmyra to Scipioville, New York, and for Scipioville as the town nearest the junction named "Barbers Corners" on maps). For fifty-to-sixty miles as a distance traveled by camp-meeting attenders, see my note 118.

Various denominations have the office of deacon, but I have been unable to find William Barber as a deacon, minister, or preacher in any of the following sources relevant to the churches of western New York during this period: "Who are the deacons?" (followed by names for all of North America) each year in Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 22-568; Minutes of the Cayuga Baptist Association Held With the First Church in Camillus, Sept 18 and 19, 1817 (Auburn, NY: H. C. Southwick, 1817), which included deacons, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 40094; Minutes of the Cayuga Baptist Association, Held With the First Church in Marcellus, September 16th and 17th, 1818 (Auburn, NY: J. Beardslee, 1818), which included deacons, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 43195; Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association Held At Avon, September 22d and 23d, 1819, which included deacons; Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association, Holden At Benton, September 26th and 27th, 1821, which included deacons; Hotchkiss, History of the Purchase and Settlements of Western New York, and of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section, which also included Congregationalist ministers; A. Russell Belden, History of the Cayuga Baptist Association (Auburn, NY: Derby & Miller, 1851), which included congregations from Scipio to Palmyra; "A list of all who have been members of the Genesee Conference, but whose names were taken from the roll previous to the Centennial session, 1910," in Ray Allen, A Century of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1810-1910 (Rochester, NY: By the author, 1911), 69.

217. Totten's third New York edition (1813) of Collection of the Most Admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 6; his fifth New York edition (1815) of Collection of the Most Admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 8; his eighth New York edition (1817) of Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 8.

218. Stith Mead, A General Selection of the Newest and Most Admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs (Lynchburg, VA: Jacob Haas, 1811), 23, with copyright [page 4] for "Rev. Stith Mead [--] Preacher of the Gospel [--] M.E.C. [Methodist Episcopal Church]," available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 23361.

219. Hymns on Select Passages of Scripture: With Others Usually Sung at Camp-Meetings, &c. (Poughkeepsie, NY: Paraclete Potter, 1811), 83-84, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 23081.

220. Emma Smith, A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Kirtland, OH: F. G. Williams, 1835), "Hymn 79. L.M." [Long Meter] (for "I Know that my Redeemer lives"). For this and other abbreviations in the hymnals, Nancy J. Andersen, "Mormon Hymnody: Kirtland Roots and Evolutionary Branches," Journal of Mormon History 32 (Spring 2006): 151, explains: "Each text indicated a meter pattern referring to the number of lines in a stanza and the number of syllables voiced in each line. The pattern for CM (common meter) was 8,6,8,6; SM (short meter) was 6,6,8,6; and LM (long meter) was 8,8,8,8. Four-line stanzas based on identical metrical patterns could be sung to any tune with a matching meter. Hymn tunes were more fixed for texts designated as PM, meaning 'peculiar meter,' later called 'particular meter.'"

Concerning the selection process for the first LDS hymnal, she notes (146): "The religious

music of early nineteenth-century Ohio was predominantly that heard at the great revivals and camp meetings. ... Following the divine mandate (D&C 25:11), Emma Hale Smith began gleaning beloved, traditional songs from published hymnals of the day."

For "Church of the Latter Day Saints" as the official name in the mid-1830s for the subsequently-named Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, see Richard Lloyd Anderson, "What Changes Have Been Made in the Name of the Church?," Ensign 9 (January 1979): 13-14; Bruce Douglas Porter, "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," and Susan Easton Black, "Name of the Church," in Ludlow, Encyclopedia of Mormonism 1: 276, 3: 979.

221. Hymns on Select Passages of Scripture: With Others Usually Sung at Camp-Meetings, 80 (with first line: "O When shall I see Jesus" on page 79); compare with Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 4; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 11-12.

Even if the detailed, handwritten "Order of Worship" programs could be found for all of the specified preaching times during the days and nights of this Palmyra camp-meeting, they would record only a small percentage of the hymns actually sung at an event that was "almost continually vocal with psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs" (see my note 217). For example, Anonymous, Short Account of the Proceedings of the Camp Meeting, Holden By the Methodists, In Pittsfield, [New York], 22 ("When day-light appeared[,] the people came to the doors of the tents, and sang some of their most pleasing hymns").

222. Mead, General Selection of the Newest and Most Admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 110 (for "HYMN LXIV--Longing to see Jesus," with first line: "O WHEN shall I see Jesus" on page 109). In all the reprintings of this hymn before 1820, only Mead phrased one line as "He'll not forget to lend."

223. A COLLECTION OF THE MOST ADMIRABLE HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, With the Choruses affixed, AS USUALLY SUNG AT CAMP-MEETINGS, &c. (New York: John C. Totten, 1809), 78, first edition, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 17250; John C. Totten, comp., HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, WITH THE CHORUSES AFFIXED: as usually sung at CAMP-MEETINGS, &c., 9th ed. (New York: By the author, 1817), 64, available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 42312.

224. Elias Smith and Abner Jones, Hymns, Original and Selected, For the Use of Christians, 8th ed. (Boston: Thomas G. Bangs, 1817), 4 (for "HYMN I. P.M. [Particular Meter] Longing for Heaven," with first line: "O WHEN shall I see Jesus," and with last line as the variant: "Though oftner you request"), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 42133; Amos Pilsbury, The Sacred Songster; Or, A Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs For the Use of Religious Assemblies, 4th ed. (New York: Duke Goodman and Abraham Paul, 1819), 162 (for "Hymn CXLVI. O WHEN Shall I see Jesus," with last line as the variant "Though often you request"), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 49117; The Spiritual Songster: Containing a Variety of Camp-Meeting, and Other Hymns ("Frederick-Town," MD: George Kolb, 1819), 33-34 (for "Hymn 15. O When Shall I See Jesus"), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 49481.

225. Totten's first edition of COLLECTION OF THE MOST ADMIRERD HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS (1809), 101 (titled "THE HEAVENLY MARINER," with first line: "THROUGH tribulation's [sic] deep" on page 100); also repeated republished until Totten's ninth edition, titled HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, WITH THE CHORUSES AFFIXED: as usually sung at CAMP-MEETINGS, &C., 81.

226. Smith and Jones, Hymns, Original and Selected, For the Use of Christians, 114 (for "HYMN CVIII. P.M. [Particular Meter] The Heavenly Mariner").

227. For quoted examples of American theophanies published from 1791 to 1826, see Neal E. Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft, "Literary Form and Historical Understanding: Joseph Smith's First Vision," Journal of Mormon History 7 (1980): 34-35; Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (1998 ed.), 14-16; Richard Lyman Bushman, "The Visionary World of Joseph Smith," BYU Studies 17 (1997-98), No. 1: 183-204; Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, 41; also Peck, Early Methodism Within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828, 187, observed that in 1800 "the Spirit was poured out from on high upon multitudes, and men and women, old and young, dreamed dreams, saw visions, and were filled with the spirit of prophecy." Lambert and Cracroft dismissed these Protestant visionaries as "St. Pauls-on-the-Hudson" (33).

228. Totten's first edition of COLLECTION OF THE MOST ADMIRERD HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS (1809), 122 ("PART II" OF "Hymn 85. C.M. [Common Meter] THE BACKSLIDER. PART I," with first line: "YE happy souls," by which the second part of the hymn was also indexed).

229. Mead, General Selection of the Newest and Most Admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 63 (for stanza "One ev'ning, pensive as I lay"), which began on page 62 ("HYMN XXII. Recovery from despair," with first line: "YE happy souls, whose peaceful minds"); Hymns on Select Passages of Scripture: With Others Usually Sung at Camp-Meetings, 87 (for "The Backslider -- Part II," with first line: "One ev'ning, pensive"), which was continuation of hymn on 62 (with first line: "Ye happy souls"); A COLLECTION OF THE MOST ADMIRERD HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, With the Choruses affixed, AS USUALLY SUNG AT CAMP-MEETINGS, &c., 2nd ed. (New York: John C. Totten, 1811), 122 ("PART II" OF "Hymn 64. C.M. [Common Meter] THE BACKSLIDER. PART I," with first line: "YE happy souls" on page 120), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 22563; Peggy Dow, A Collection of Camp Meeting Hymns, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: D. Dickinson, 1816), 119 (from "86. A SPIRITUAL HYMN," with first line: "Ye happy Souls"), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 37468; Social and Camp-meeting Songs for the Pious, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: F. Lucas, J. J. Harrod, and John D. Toy, 1818), 130 (of "HYMN 81," with first line: "YE happy souls" on page 128), available as Shaw and Shoemaker item 45747.

230. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 5, 6; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 14, 16, 20; also Johnson, Frontier Camp Meeting, 207 ("Camp meeting hymnody neither began nor ended on the

campground. The songs found their way into the cabins of the backwoodsmen and were not infrequently a part of the family prayer service").

231. John H. Wigger, Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 121-22 (with visions of Jesus on 114, 122), and 124 (for quote); also W. Stephen Gunter, The Limits of "Love Divine": John Wesley's Response to Antinomianism and Enthusiasm (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books/Abingdon Press, 1989), 13 ("This specific accusation of special inspirations and revelations was generally labelled enthusiasm"); and Umphrey Lee, The Historical Background of Early Methodist Enthusiasm (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 147-48 (founder John Wesley "would listen respectfully to the most boresome accounts of visions and inner impulse. But practically speaking, he so regulated this enthusiasm by doctrinal and organizational safeguards," that the final result was: "In Methodism, then, English enthusiasm in the classic sense, came to an end").

232. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 6-7; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 21.

233. Abner Chase's letter from Milo, New York, 1 July 1824, published as "REVIVAL OF RELIGION ON ONTARIO DISTRICT," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 7 (November 1824): 435; also Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 265, 286, 301, 318, 337, for Chase as responsible for more than one circuit from 1815 until his 1820 appointment as presiding elder of the Ontario District (which included Palmyra). He was still its presiding elder when he wrote this letter.

Because of the importance of Chase's letter to this article and due to the erroneous use of his words as cited below, here is the full text of his statement on 1 July 1824 about the Ontario District: "Four years since, Unitarianism or Arianism seemed to threaten the entire overthrow of the work of God in some circuits on this District, and on some others, divisions and wild and ranting fanatics, caused the spirits of the faithful in a degree to sink" (Methodist Magazine, 7: 435).

To support the existence of revivals before the First Vision of 1820, Hyrum L. Andrus, Joseph Smith: The Man and the Seer (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960), 65, mistakenly applied Chase's words to the Genesee Conference's annual meeting of July 1819. However, Chase's 1824 statement about "four years" was an unambiguous reference to 1820 and (in context of his emphasis on revivals) applied to the Ontario District. Likewise, because of that local reference within the reverend's statement, Chase's words did not apply to the Genesee Conference's annual meeting of 20 July 1820, which convened in Niagara, Canada (see Conable, 165; Porter, "Reverend George Lane," 332). There also was no conflict at the Niagara meeting, but instead "a dispassionate multitude [who] eagerly listen to the word of life," as described in the letter of ministers Henry Ryan and William Case from Niagara on 28 July 1820, published as "State of Religion In Upper Canada," Methodist Magazine [New York City] 3 (October 1820): 395.

On the other hand, to dispute the existence of a Palmyra revival in the year claimed for the First Vision, Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins From the Palmyra Revival," 80n65, also misapplied Chase's 1824 statement by claiming that it referred to a dispute at the meeting of the

national General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Baltimore in 1820 (the first convened since 1816). Walters was wrong for several reasons. First, Chase referred specifically to local developments of "this District" in New York, not to distant Maryland. Second, "wild and ranting fanatics" did not fit the way the Methodist minister's autobiography described his opponents in the calm and longstanding dispute: "For eight years previous to this the 'presiding elder question' had agitated the Church generally and our Conference in particular ... But there were moments during the session of that General Conference when the fears of many were exacted for the safety and unity of the Church. But God interposed, and though a partial secession afterward took place, yet it was comparatively small," as quoted in Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 159, with capitalization differences from the original in Abner Chase Recollections of the Past (New York: Joseph Longking, 1846), 125-26. Third, "wild and ranting fanatics" was not consistent with the detailed minutes of this 1820 controversy, during which minister-delegates calmly expressed their opposing views at the General Conference in Baltimore, politely asked for extensions of the allotted time so that they could continue their arguments, which extensions the opposing delegates joined in voting to grant to the speakers. See Journals of the General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1796-1836 (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1855), 211-13, 231, 236. For the role of "consistency" in historical interpretations, see my note 54.

234. Smith, et al., History of The Church, 1: 6; "Joseph Smith--History," 1: 21.

235. Roberts, Comprehensive History, 1: 53, 56n10; John A. Widtsoe, Joseph Smith: Seeker After Truth, Prophet of God (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1951), 16; Hyrum L. Andrus, Doctrinal Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1967), 429; Charles D. Tate Jr., "BYU Studies in the 1970s," BYU Studies 31 (1991): 2; comment of editors Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor for Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith, Revised and Enhanced (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 106n12; Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 1: 61n25.

236. Porter, "Reverend George Lane," 335; Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 337, 352; Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 160, 170.

237. See last paragraph of my note 197.

238. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 265 (for Barlow in Ontario Circuit as of July 1815), 286 (for Barlow in Ontario Circuit as of July 1816), 318 (for Barlow's appointment to the Canandaigua Circuit in July 1819). For the distance, see my note 94.

239. The 1876 History of Ontario County, New York, 111 (for Barlow's conversion in January 1820 from Methodist minister to being rector of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Canandaigua); Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal

Church, 168 (for his abandoning Methodism at an unspecified date before the annual meeting of the Genesee Conference on 20 July 1820); parish register of Saint John's Episcopal Church, Canandaigua, New York (for Barlow performing his first Episcopal ordinance, a marriage, on 13 January 1820), microfilm 1,420,001, item 18, in LDS Family History Library.

240. Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 337, 352.

241. Jackson, New York 1820 Census Index, 403, listed only one Sarsnet/Sarsnett family in the entire state (with John as head-of-household in Phelps, Ontario County). He was the father of the 1820 camp-meeting's convert Harry Sarsnett (whose age is discussed in my note 207). For the connection of Phelps with Vienna in western New York, see my note 4.

242. The 1876 History of Ontario County, New York, 170, which misspelled Elisha House's surname as "Rev. E. Hovar" and omitted Sarsnett (the only "colored" survivor) as one of this camp-meeting's "numerous accessions." See third paragraph of my note 206 for published statements by Walters, Hill, and Marquardt indicating that Blakeslee's account (which quoted only Sarsnett and Mrs. Baker) was referring to a camp-meeting revival in 1820; also second paragraph of my note 209.

243. Bushman, "Mr. Bushman Replies," 8 (for Phelps as "the more vigorous of the two villages in 1819 and 1820" regarding Methodism); Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 569 (for the creation of Palmyra Circuit within the Ontario District in 1828, in addition to the pre-existing Ontario Circuit), compared with 536-37 (when there was no Palmyra Circuit within that district as of the 1827 report); Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1829-1839, 158 (for the creation of "Vienna" Circuit within the Ontario District in 1832), compared with 111-12 (when there was no "Vienna" Circuit within that district as of the 1831 report); also narrative text for my note 192 about spectacular differences in rates of Methodist retention for Ontario Circuit (which included Palmyra) as compared with Lyons Circuit (which included Phelps) after Palmyra's camp-meeting of June 1820. For Vienna as the name for the town of Phelps until the 1850s, see my note 4; for significance of Methodist circuits, see narrative discussion for my note 20.

As a clarification, I do not claim that 1820 was the only turning point for the comparative strength of Methodism in these two towns. Because the early membership records have been destroyed (see my note 17), it is not possible to verify whether the Methodist affiliation shifted back and forth between the two towns before 1820. Furthermore, since I have not made comparisons after the 1832 conference report, I have no knowledge about changes of Methodist strength in Palmyra and Vienna (now named Phelps) during subsequent years.

244. Aside from Joseph Smith's statement quoted for my note 16, see my note 206 for discussion of references by Phelps resident Harry Sarsnett to this "camp-meeting" and by Reverend Marvin P. Blakeslee and Mrs. Sarepta Marsh Baker (also residents of Phelps) to this

1820 revival as causing a "flaming spiritual advance" and "religious cyclone which swept over the whole region round about"; also narrative text for my note 192 about spectacular differences in rates of Methodist retention for Ontario Circuit (which included Palmyra) as compared with Lyons Circuit (which included Phelps) after Palmyra's camp-meeting of June 1820. For Palmyra's self-definition as a "village" during these years, see my note 15. See third paragraph of my note 206 for published statements by Walters, Hill, and Marquardt indicating that Blakeslee's account (which quoted only Sarsnett and Mrs. Baker) was referring to a camp-meeting revival in 1820; also second paragraph of my note 209.

245. "Barlow Marriage Records of New York," available as www.barlowgenealogy.com/NewYork/nymarr.html on the Internet; Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, For the Years 1773-1828, 318 (for Chase's 1818 appointment to Pompey Circuit in Chenango District of Genesee Conference), 337 (for his same assignment as of July 1819); Conable, History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 143, 162, 170; also Chase Recollections of the Past, 125.

246. Clark, et al., Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury, 2: 688 (for first quote on 28 November 1811), 680 (for Paris in New York State), 682-83 (for second quote on 9 August 1811), 780 (for third quote on 17-18 May 1815). Although he gratefully rode horseback only ten to twenty miles on other days, this Methodist preacher-bishop recorded riding forty miles a day in his late-sixties on pages 2: 686, 714, 762, plus 723 (for "a ride of fifty miles"). Consult www.mapquest.com/directions on the Internet (for location of Paris, New York). For Asbury's published journal as available in New York in 1821, see my note 96.

247. Paul H. Peterson, untitled book review, BYU Studies 35 (1995), No. 4: 214, emphasis in original, as restatement of Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," 98 ("The revival that occurred in Palmyra in the winter of 1824-1825, on the other hand, is the only one that matches all the details as set forth by Joseph Smith"--which Walters specified as "Joseph Smith's 1838 story" on page 99n4); also similar statement by Marvin S. Hill within my note 98.

248. For significance of Joseph's seeking forgiveness prior to his First Vision, see Lambert and Cracroft, "Literary Form and Historical Understanding: Joseph Smith's First Vision," 36-37, 39; Jessee, Papers of Joseph Smith, 1: 5-6; Quinn, Origins of Power, 3; McConkie and Millet, Choice Seer, 35, 370-71; Vogel, Early Mormon Documents, 1: 27-28; Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View (1998 ed.), 136-37; Bushman "with" Woodworth, Rough Stone Rolling, 39-40.