It is with excitement and admittedly some trepidation that we inaugurate a new feature to Sunstone—our “Sunday School Supplement,” a project which increasingly reveals itself as both ambitious and somewhat audacious. The idea at first seemed obvious. How many times on a Saturday afternoon did the work of Sunstone have to be dropped so a number on the staff could rush home to cram for Sunday morning’s rapidly approaching hour of reckoning? How to bring new information or a different slant to topics repeated so many times before? A familiar problem? One such afternoon it dawned on us that there must be many of our subscribers and friends sharing the same frantic rush and frustration. And so Sunstone to the rescue. We could include bibliography, reprints, questions . . .

We discover that it may not be that easy. In spite of the flurry of research and publishing the past ten years, the writing of Mormon history is still in its infancy and there are many gaps. In spite of fine attempts at indexes and bibliographies, it is still difficult to bring a sprawling and uneven body of literature together. So increasingly we see Sunstone offering not a definitive “supplement” but rather providing a forum, a clearinghouse for a group of people who would like to share ideas and help make teaching and learning in the church more stimulating and rewarding for us all. If all we offer in the end is a teaser to open-ended possibilities and a place for even a few to share ideas and experiences, that won’t be such a bad accomplishment.

After the resolve, one of the first problems is deciding where to begin. Gospel Doctrine classes all over the church have been studying the Doctrine and Covenants for at least eight months now, which realistically means some of us are probably still dawdling in Palmyra and others have no doubt resolutely forged ahead to Nauvoo. So for this month we have opted to begin modestly, with an overview of available literature and some background material to help orient us to the setting and time in Missouri and Kirtland.

General Bibliography
We would recommend four books as indispensable helps for anyone interested in a broad background in Mormon church history.


A survey that carries Mormon history from 1830 through the 1970s with an emphasis on institutional development. Written by two members of the LDS historical department and intended primarily for church members, the narrative attempts to balance recent scholarship with the traditional “faithful history.” One of the most helpful aspects for a potential teacher (or student) is the exhaustive and excellent bibliography (62 pages) of books and articles on Mormon history. Chapters 2 and 3 deal with early events in Ohio and Missouri.


Intended as a one volume introduction of the Mormons for a reader approaching the subject for the first time, this book, written by the church historian and assistant church historian, provides helpful insights for those with more extensive background in Mormon history as well. The book provides a helpful context for the restoration and attempts to highlight problems and comparisons which can spark productive discussions among church members. Chapter 2 which discusses the appeals of Mormonism to nineteenth century contemporaries and Chapter 3 which elucidates some of the causes for Mormon/non-Mormon conflict in Missouri, then Ohio, and finally Illinois could be particularly helpful in understanding the background for many of the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.


This narrative of the life of Joseph Smith, also written by a Mormon, necessarily chronicles in some detail the development of the church through the prophet’s life time. Like the previous books, The First Mormon also provides a current bibliography which is very helpful.

William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, Among the Mormons. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1958, 482 pages.

Unlike the previous books, Among the Mormons is not a narrative but rather a source book of “Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers” which can provide useful primary material, including some material which dates from the early Ohio and Missouri period.

Since this “Supplement” is primarily introductory, we will not attempt to break the material down by sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. We include a bibliography of the Missouri period as well as a bibliography listed under general topics. Some of the material listed under general topics may deal with Kirtland. Other materials relating to the Kirtland history of the church will be in the “Sunday School Supplement” for Volume 4, Number 3.

Early Missouri Period (1830-1833)


January, 1979 Ensign.


Dean Hughes, Under the Same Stars (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979). A new novel aimed primarily at the adolescent reader, Under the Same Stars, brings to life the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County for adults as well. Based on careful research into the period, the feelings of the old Missouri settlers and the Mormon newcomers are portrayed concretely through the eyes of a young
boy caught in the middle of the conflict.


Early Communitarianism


Lawrence G. Coates, "A History of Indian Education by the Mormons, 1830-1900" (Ed.D. diss., Ball State University, 1969).


We realize that an extensive bibliography may not be helpful to everyone. Time is always a problem and may not necessarily have access to the materials listed. Therefore we would like to share excerpts which may provide context or perhaps spark interchange. We would also like to include thought-provoking discussion questions. As readers, please let us know what you think would be the most helpful to you. And please, share with us your successes or frustrations.


Misc.


The land which the Saints encountered in Missouri (and on the trek in between) was not the landscape familiar to most early church members who were from New England stock forced or lured west by a gentler climate and the prospect of a better chance at life. Many were also unfamiliar with Southerners. W. W. Phelps wrote the following in a letter dated July 23, 1831:

The state of Missouri is sui generis—containing two-thirds rolling prairies, and the rest patches of timber. The upland: oak, hickory, walnut, etc.—and the bottoms: bas wood, cotton wood, locust, coffee, bean, etc., etc. The soil, especially in the western portion of the state, and generally upon the prairies, is a rich black mould, bedded on clay, from 3 to 8 feet deep. The prairies are beautiful beyond description, yielding prairie grass, wild sunflowers, small flowers in variety and color, and continually presenting or "keeping up appearances" of a highly cultivated country without inhabitants. Milk, gooseberries, and raspberries and wild strawberries, dew berries, blackberries, and raspberries (sic) are.

Environment

A discussion about the physical and intellectual environment which necessarily influenced events of church history and thus contents of the Doctrine and Covenants might be fruitful in conjunction with many different lessons.

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common. The milk on the bottoms is sometimes found to be poison, in which case those using it and the cows die. The consequent diseases are the cold plague in the spring, and the ague and fever in the fall. The cash trade is carried on with Santa Fe, a Spanish port on the Pacific, in 36 degrees north latitude, and about 900 miles distant, across the prairie, where there is not a tree. The fur trade is to the Rocky and Shining Mountains, 800 miles distant, where is said to exist a kind of frog, with hard sharp scales, which he hoists and lowers at pleasure, and when swallowed by a snake cuts out in great agony. The weather is warmer than in York state and when it grows cold at night with the wind from an easterly direction, dependent upon a deluging rain before morning, and then it clears off hot enough to roast eggs. The inhabitants are emigrants from Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, and the Carolinas, etc., with customs, manners, modes of living and a climate entirely different from the northerners, and they hate yankees worse than snakes, because they have cheated them or speculated on their credit, with so many Connecticut wooden clocks, and New England notions. The people are proverbially idle or lazy, and mostly ignorant; reckoning nobody equal to themselves in many respects, and as it is a slave holding state, Japheth will make Canaan serve him, while he dwells in the tents of Shem (pp. 275-276 of Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Jackson County in Early Mormon Descriptions," see early Ohio bibliography).

The spectacle of the flowering prairie must have inspired one of Phelp's hymns, first published in Jackson County, which begins with the phrase "earth with her ten thousand flowers."

Teaching the Children
The admonition in D & C 68:25 (given in November, 1831) that parents in Zion are responsible to teach their children the gospel or "the sin be upon the heads of the parents" seems as timely as today. A circular letter by Bishop Edward Partridge to the Saints in Clay County in 1834 demonstrates that parents and children have not changed:

It is not wisdom for either husband or wife, to interfere with the other, at the time he or she is correcting a child, but if either party discover an error in the other, with regard to his or her government, be careful not to tell your partner of it before the children; but rather when you are alone by yourselves, point out the fault of your partner in the spirit of meekness. I consider that for either party to interfere with the other, and to take the child's part, at the time of its being corrected, is one of the surest means that could be taken, to make the child headstrong and ingovernable.

It is wrong to whip a child, when it accidentally lets a plate or tumbler fall and it breaks it; a word of admonition, instructing them to be more careful for the future is sufficient. But when a child gets into a passion, and throws a plate or tumbler upon the floor, whether it breaks it or not, it is certainly an error to let that child go unpunished. It is also an error, to suffer ourselves to be in a passion when we punish a child.

I have known instances, of a child, while in a passion, throwing a teacup or saucer upon the floor and break it; the mother would, in haste strike the child, perhaps, two or three times; the child would bawl for a long time; perhaps she would threaten to whip it if it did not stop, the child would still continue to cry, because it was in a passion; the mother would at last become tired of the noise, and instead of punishing the child in a proper manner for the fault, she would give it a piece of sugar, to stop it from crying; this is a very great error.

Parents run into another great error, by promising their children this, that, or the other thing, and then not performing those promises. It is a common thing for Parents to speak to their children, and to tell them to do this and so; the child frequently pays but little attention to what is told it by its parents; the parent speaks again, saying, you must do what you was bidden to do, or I will whip you: the parent perhaps threatens the child in this way, a number of times; the child does not heed the command but goes and does the very reverse from what it was bidden to do; the parent neglects to fulfil its promise to the child; the child soon learns that its parents word is not to be depended upon, therefore, he heeds it not. No doubt many do not consider that such treatment is actually lying to their children; but in reality it is, and is a practice, that ought to be done away with.

Peculiar People
by Calvin Grondahl

WAIT A MINUTE, IF YOU BECOME A BURGERSTAND MANAGER AND I STAY HOME WITH THE KIDS, WHERE AM I GOING TO FIND TIME TO USE MY DOCTORATE IN NUCLEAR PHYSICS?
IMPROVE YOUR WRITING SKILLS

ROCKY MOUNTAIN WRITERS' CONVENTION

INSPIRATION
Beautiful BYU Campus
Mingle with Fellow Writers
Sharing Ideas
Recognition of Literary Achievements

INSTRUCTION
Former Roving Editor Reader's Digest
Markets Editor-Writer's Digest
Accomplished Poets, Writers, and Teachers
Stimulating Workshops Sessions

*Writing magazine articles, teaching children to write, writing personal histories, writing science fiction, writing poetry, writing fiction, writing for the religious market, writing for the trade magazines, writing for the outdoor market, obtaining photos for articles.

JULY 25-27 '79

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Former Roving Editor, Reader's Digest
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