DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 325 CS 006 994

AUTHOR Grover, Susan Hendricks; Cranney, A. Garr
TITLE Reading on the Utah Frontier, 1850-1877: The History of the Deseret Alphabet.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 95p.; Some examples in appendix will not be legible.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Alphabets; Diachronic Linguistics; Educational History; *Letters (Alphabet); *Orthographic Symbols; *Reading Instruction; *Spelling; State of the Art Reviews; Written Language
IDENTIFIERS *Deseret Alphabet; Mormons; Utah

ABSTRACT

This report presents a history of the Deseret alphabet, beginning with a chapter on English orthography in general and the various attempts that have been made in orthographic reform. The second chapter examines the motives behind the creation of the Deseret alphabet, including the possibilities of a secret Mormon code, a protection from unwholesome literature, a case of being in the right place at the right time, a phonetic English orthography, and a preparation for a pure language. The third chapter traces the roots of the Deseret alphabet: the roots (pre-1850), the developmental period (1852-1857), and the rises and falls (1858-1877). The remaining three chapters examine the practical application of the alphabet, its successes and failures, and the effect the alphabet had on English orthography. Appendixes include a table of common English spellings, the initial teaching alphabet, the Deseret alphabet, an alphabet comparison table, Remy's version, a title page to exercises in phonography, a flyer on secret "Mormon Language," tracings of a coin with the Deseret alphabet, the Deseret alphabet First Book, a section on play from the Deseret Second Book, "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" in Deseret characters, the title page and table of contents of "The Book of Mormon" in Deseret characters, the minutes of the Parowan State 1855 in the Deseret alphabet with translation, a journal page of Thomas Haskell and his version of the Deseret alphabet, tracings from a tombstone with Deseret characters, and the "Deseret News" printing of the "Sermon on the Mount." (HOD)

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Reading on the Utah Frontier, 1850-1877: The History of the Deseret Alphabet

Susan Hendricks Grover

A. Garr Cranney

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1982

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Chapter 1

English Orthography

As both a teacher of critical reading and as a tutor in the Reading Lab at B.Y.U, I often work with students who have problems with English phonetics. Recently Jerry--a bright student with a poor reading and vocabulary background--looked at me over the top of a drill in spotting the silent e and complained: "Why do they make English so hard? Why don't they have one way to do it that fits all the time?" Jerry is not alone in her frustration over English orthography.

George and Evelyn Spache, two noted authorities on reading skills, point out that "there are a disturbing number of exceptions to almost any [phonetic] generalization [or rule] that can be framed."[1] In other words, the phonetic rules of English orthography do not apply in many cases. Spache cites a study by Theodore Clymer as support for his statement. Clymer first studied commonly used basal readers and workbooks to determine what phonetic generalizations or rules they teach. He found over 121 different phonetic generalizations. He narrowed down these rules to those that he considered the most reasonable and useful. Next Clymer compared these rules with word lists from the texts. He suggests that the phonetic rule should apply in 75% of the cases if it is to be considered a sound generalization. Of thirty-seven phonetic rules, only nine were found to be "sufficiently valid and widely applicable."[2]

John Widstoe also criticized the unphonetic nature of English: "English spelling must be memorized rather than learned from the sounds of the words. Therefore, bad spelling is a very common fault among

English-speaking people."[3]

Indeed, there are a variety of spellings for the sounds in English as reference to a dictionary key will show. For example, the American College Dictionary lists 44 sounds of the English language (see Appendix A). Only one sound the th sound as in thin has one spelling. However, the letter combination of t and h has two possible sounds: th as in thin and th as in then. A few of the sounds have only two possible spellings such as the a sound. It can be spelled with an a as in hat or an ai as in plaid. However, the spelling ai also can be used to make the ā sound as in rain and the â sound as in chair. Most of the sounds in the English language have multiple spellings. According to American, the most possible spellings per sound is 14. The sh sound has 14 possible spelling combinations. In addition, six English sounds--e as in ebb, ē as in see, k as in kill, ō as in oh, ū as in use, and ə as in alone--have eleven possible spellings. As one considers this list with its multiple spelling combinations, one appreciates the complaints of students about English orthography. Written English is clearly not dominantly phonetic.

These irregularities also cause havoc for students learning to read English. When confronted with the letters ai, should the student read ā, ă, or â? Or when confronted with the homophone hear should the reader think of his ears or his location? In the profession of teaching reading there is a lot of controversy over the role of English phonetics in learning to read.

A 1982 issue of U. S. News and World Report illustrates this debate with interviews from Rudolf Flesch and Stanley Sharp.

Flesch supports the learning of English phonetics as a valuable approach to reading. In answer to the question: "Isn't the widespread

difficulty that many people have with spelling proof that English is not phonetic?" Flesch replied:

> No. Poor spelling is the result of too many years of improper reading instruction--not the fault of the language.
>
> Let's take the word "independence," for example. A phonics-trained student will read it off the page immediately, and so will a look-and-say-trained student--if he has seen it many times. Now, suppose they come across the word "interdependence." Phonics-trained students will read it and understand what it means, but look-and-say students--90 percent of the time--will read it as "independence." They will never see the "ter," because for years and years they have had drummed into their minds to guess a word by its general shape and appearance. You see, look-and-say doesn't teach reading or spelling; it teaches guessing.

He concludes: "It is an unforgetable moment when a child first discovers the key to the secret code of reading."

Sharp disagrees with Flesch. In answer to the question: "Can't a phonics-based reading curriculum compensate for illogical spelling?", Sharp answered:

> No, and that is a principal reason why phonics reading classes are so tedious for many children. Basal readers--the textbooks used in the early grades--are obliged to use as many words as possible that are spelled regularly or phonetically. The result is that most of the reading matter is horribly boring or inane to many pupils. Some educators are convinced that children resist getting involved in reading because the early texts are so insipid.

He concludes: "Eventually, children should be taught letter-sound relationships that are reliable, but they should also be made aware from the beginning that most words don't conform to the rules of phonics."[4]

Attempts at English Orthographic Reforms

Many scholars have recognized these discrepancies and have attempted to reform English orthography. Reformation have ranged from minor modifications in the present romanic system to the use of completely new characters.

Early in the United States, there were several attempts at reformation. Benjamin Franklin noted the existence of more sounds in the English language than letters in the romanic alphabet, so he designed six new symbols.. However, his system never won support. Noah Webster also tried to simplify the existing spellings of English words. Many of his spellings are still used; however, the used number are minimal in comparison with the number of simplifications he suggested.[5]

In the 1800's in England, Isaac Pitman popularized his phonetic shorthand system. Shorthand approaches such as the John Willis system had been practiced as early as 1602, but Pitman's system won tremendous public support.[6] After his success with phonetic shorthand, Pitman set to work to phonetically reform English spelling spending the rest of his life and fortune on the project.[7] His work did have some far reaching effects, though not on English orthography. The International Phonetic Association based much of their international phonetic alphabet (IPA) on Pitman's symbols. Some of his symbols are used even today in the IPA.[8]

More recently, various groups have attempted reforms but these attempts have also failed to seriously affect the English spelling system. In the early 1900's Melville Dewey and Andrew Carnegie promoted the Simplified Spelling Board. However, their efforts affect us little today except for the occasional spelling nite or tho.[9]

Meanwhile in England, George Bernard Shaw advocated drastic reforms for the English spelling system. Shaw willed his estate to institutions to promote and invent a new system of English spelling. This funding led to the development of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (see Appendix B) which was used for a period of time in Australia, South Africa, Canada, England and a few places in the United States. The ITA consisted

of 24 letters from the basic roman alphabet and 20 new symbols for the letters with more than one sound like the th or the sh. It was used to teach children to read initially then the children were weaned to the regular alphabet. The ITA appears to have lost some of its popularity now.[10]

None of these attempts have succeeded in significantly reforming English orthography.

The Mormon Attempt

A man, not directly associated with the teaching of reading but deeply concerned with the education of his community, also dreamed of a reformed phonetic English. In the mid-1800's Brigham Young, in the isolated Mormon community in the Great Salt Lake Basin, promoted a system of new characters that were to correspond to the specific sounds of the English language; this system was called the Deseret alphabet.

As the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, called the Mormon Church, Young led the church members out of Nauvoo, Illinois where their prophet, Joseph Smith, had been buried after he had been murdered. The Mormons had left the jurisdiction of the United States government to establish their own community in the Great Salt Lake Basin.

In the Great Basin not only was Young the religious leader, he was the political leader. Under his leadership, the Deseret alphabet was compiled.

Characteristics of the Deseret Alphabet. The Deseret alphabet was a system of new characters, nonromanic (see Appendix C). It was:

> designed to represent the sounds heard in the English language [sic], as extensively as is deemed consistent, without entering too minutely into nice distinctions, which the ear does not readily catch, and whose omission causes no loss.

In this alphabet there was to be no distinction between vowels, consonants, liquids, or dipthongs.[11]

Only the letters C D L O P S and W of the romanic alphabet were kept. Of these, three represented new sounds: C represented che, D represented esh, and L represented eth. Watt took some of the other thirty-one characters from a front piece in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary and designed others himself.[12] The g sound was represented by an Egyptian symbol that had had the Egyptian sound of e.[13]

The number of characters in the Deseret alphabet ranged from 32 to 44 at different times after various revisions (see Appendix D for a comparison of various versions). This range explains the discrepancy among historians as to the number of characters in the alphabet. For example, Bancroft claims of "the Deseret alphabet [that] the number of letters or rather sounds [was] 32 . . . ."[14] Historian B. H. Roberts agrees that "the alphabet consisted of 32 letters."[15] In contrast, Remy calls the Deseret alphabet "an alphabet composed of forty characters, as simple as they are inelegant"[16] (see Appendix E). However, the first publication of the Deseret alphabet in the Deseret News was the 38 character version. This version was also the system used for the books that were printed using this alphabet. Therefore, the best-supported version seems to be the 38 character alphabet.

The name Deseret alphabet has interesting connotations. Deseret was a commonly used term among the Mormon people of this time. The word deseret comes from The Book of Mormon Ether 2:3. This verse refers to the refugees fleeing the Tower of Babel who ". . . . also did carry with them deseret, which by interpretation is a honey bee."[17]

The Creators. It is difficult to attribute the Deseret alphabet to

one creator since at least four different committees of two to six members worked on its construction and revision. Again various historians attributed various committee members with its invention.

Remy claims: "To give every man his due, we ought to say that the idea originated with the Apostle W. W. Phelps, one of the regents of the University [of Deseret, now the University of Utah,] and that it was he who worked out the letters."[18] He probably based his conclusion on the fact that in 1850 W. W. Phelps presented what has been called the "Mormon alphabet" to a group of Mormon leaders. This was his version of a phonetic alphabet. The group, however, did not approve Phelp's alphabet but resolved to consider orthographic reform.[19] However, Remy seems to have confused Phelps as the author of the Deseret alphabet instead of the "Mormon" alphabet.

Most historians credit the Deseret alphabet to George D. Watt who was on three of the various committees on the Deseret alphabet and who did one revision himself. Brigham Young's secretary T. W. Ellerbeck explains that the "alphabet was designed principally by George D. Watt, a phonetic expert employed by [Brigham Young]."[20]

Watt had studied Pitman's shorthand system in England where he was the first convert to the Mormon church. He immigrated to Nauvoo, Illinois, the focal point of the church, in about 1840.[21] In Nauvoo, he served as scribe for Joseph Smith and other church leaders. In 1842, he also taught the Pitman system in shorthand classes of which Brigham Young was an avid pupil.[22] Thus, Watt was probably influential not only in the actual creation of the alphabet but also in initiating the idea by kindling in the Mormon community the spark of orthographic reform that was burning in England.

Watt, like many of the reformist in England, felt that written

English was extremely inferior to spoken English. In his introduction to Exercises in Phonography (see Appendix F), Watt explains the advantages of spoken English in contrast with the disadvantages of written English:

> There has hitherto existed among all nations the greatest disparity, in point of facility and dispatch, between the usual methods of communicating thought--speaking and writing; the former has always been comparatively rapid, easy, and delightful; the latter tedious, cumbrous, and wearisome. It is most strange that we, who excel our progenitors so far in science, literature, and commerce, should continue to use the mode of writing which they have handed down to us, (with but very slight changes in the form of the letters,) and which, by its complexity, obliges the readiest hand to spend at least six hours in writing what can be spoken in one. Why should we not attempt to simplify our written characters, and make them correspond in some degree, to the simplicity of spoken sounds.[23]

Though Watt is speaking of his shorthand system here, he communicates the basic assumption that underlies his reformation attempts in the Deseret alphabet: Watt believed written English needed to be simplified to correspond with spoken sounds.

Besides his work with written language, Watt worked for the Church as a missionary serving two missions, the first in Virginia and the second in England. On his English mission, he was not only to preach but also to refine his shorthand skills.[24]

Another man who contributed a great deal to the application of the Deseret alphabet was Orson P. Pratt. Pratt served as the chief translator of written English into the Deseret alphabet.

Watt and Pratt probably put in the most time on the development of the alphabet, but Brigham Young seems to be the major supporter of the alphabet. Repeatedly, he encouraged the public to use it. Even when Watt and other committee members supported other methods of reform, Young defended the Deseret alphabet. Brigham Young was the driving force behind

the Deseret alphabet.

The Deseret alphabet covers a time period from approximately 1852 to 1877. Monson says that "the Deseret alphabet failed; but it had a greater chance of success than any movement toward thorough spelling reform in English since printing became firmly established."[25] Why did this alphabet have a greater chance for success? What caused its failure? We must first consider the motivation for the creation of the alphabet and the history of its development for clues to the Mormons' successes and failures. Perhaps learning from such attempts as the Deseret alphabet can be an asset to reading teachers today.

References in Chapter 1

[1]George D. Spache and Evelyn B. Spache, Reading in the Elementary School, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1977) p. 373.

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[3]John A. Widstoe, "What Was the Purpose of the Deseret Alphabet?," Improvement Era, 47:33.

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[5]Samuel C. Monson, "The Deseret Alphabet,"(M.A. thesis Columbia University Library, 1947), p. 1.

[6]Monson, p. 3.

[7]Kenneth Beesley, "The Deseret Alphabet: Can Orthographical Reform for English Succeed," (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1975), p. 1.

[8]Monson, p. 7.

[9]Samuel C. Monson, Interview at Brigham Young University, Dec. 7, 1982.

[10]John A. Downing, "Initial Teaching Alphabet," Encyclopedia of Education, vol. 5, pp. 89-94.

[11]"The Deseret Alphabet," Document from Brigham Young University Special Collections.

[12]Leslie L. Sudweeks, "The Deseret Alphabet: The Story of an Ingenious Attempt to Reform the Written Language of the West," The Improvement Era, vol. 57, p. 805.

[13]William Powell, "Utah Territory," March 1968, p. 2.

[14]Hubert Howe Bancraft, History of Utah, vol. XXVI (San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1889), p. 712.

[15]B. H. Roberts as quoted by Kate B. Carter, Heart Throbs of the West, (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1940), p. 226.

[16]Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, A Journey to Great-Salt Lake City, vol. II (London: W. Jeffs, 1861), p. 184.

[17]S. S. Ivins, "The Deseret Alphabet," Utah Humanities Review, vol. 1, No. 3, (July, 1947), p. 223.

[18]Remy, p. 185.

[19]Beesley, p. 3.

[20]T. W. Ellerbeck in a letter to F. D. Richards dated Feb. 23, 1855, as quoted by Carter, p. 265.

[21]Carter, p. 267.

[22]William V. Nash, "The Deseret Alphabet," (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Library School, 1957), p. 8.

[23]George D. Watt, Exercises in Phonography, (Great Salt Lake City: W. Richards, 1851), p. 1.

[24]Sudweeks, p. 805.

[25]Monson, p. 57.

Chapter 2

The Motives Behind the Creation of the Deseret Alphabet

What motivated the construction of the Deseret alphabet? Different historians give different reasons for the creation of the Deseret alphabet. It would be hard to point to one reason for its creation. Probably, as in most real life cause-effect situations, there were numerous causes for its creation.

A Secret Code

Some critics of the Mormons claim that the Deseret alphabet was a code to hide the secrets of the Mormon church. Recently the author received a flyer which had Deseret characters on the cover. The flyer explained that the purpose of a "Mormon language"* was to keep the secrets of Mormon literature from the world (see Appendix G).

Jules Remy, a visitor to Salt Lake City in 1855 who was himself somewhat critical of Mormons, disclaims the idea of a secret code saying:

> Some persons have supposed that the object of this alphabet was to prevent access to the Mormon books and writings; but it is more probable that the only thing intended was to simplify the reading of the English language by establishing a determinate and uniform relation between the sign and its sounds; in fact a phonetic alphabet.

There are some other facts that disprove the claim of the Deseret alphabet as a secret ecclesiastic code. Cards were printed which had the

---

*The creators of the Deseret alphabet did not intend the alphabet to be a new language, but a simplification of English orthography.

Deseret alphabet with its equivalent sounds. These cards were sold to the public for 10¢ per card, 25¢ for three, and 75¢ for a dozen.[2] If the secret code claim were true, it seems unlikely Mormon officials would make decoding devices readily available.

A Protection from Unwholesome Literature

Some considered the Deseret alphabet not as a method for keeping Mormon writings from the world, but vice-versa--as a way of keeping the writing of the world from the Mormons. T. W. Ellerbeck explained that the Deseret alphabet was adopted ". . . to hinder or prevent [the Mormon youth] access to the yellow-colored literature of our age, or any unwholesome reading."[3] On August 13, 1868, an editorial writer in the Deseret News echoed similar attitudes. He seems to conclude it would be better not to be able to read "the miserable trash that now obtains extensive circulation."

> The greatest evils which now flourish, and under which Christendom groans, are directly traceable to the licentiousness of the press. It sends forth a prurient and dangerous literature, which corrupts and distorts the minds and judgments of men. It is our aim to check its demoralizing tendencies, and in no way can we better do this, than by making the knowledge of the Deseret alphabet general and by training the children in its use.[4]

There may have been another motive for church leaders wanting to isolate themselves from the world. In previous areas in which the Mormons had settled, some residents of the areas had mistreated the Mormons. Some of the Mormon leaders viewed the U.S. government suspiciously, since it had not protected them from the mobbings in the pre-Utah period. In fact, some felt the government had been one source of their problems.

These fears were rekindled in 1852 in the Great Basin. The U.S. Congress had refused to recognize the State of Deseret because of the

Mormon practice of plural marriage even though the area had more than the required population needed for statehood. Instead, the Congress created the Territory of Utah and threatened to replace Brigham Young as governor. Some historians explain that the Mormon leaders may have wanted to keep the church and political documents in a foreign alphabet to guard against intruders from Washington.[6]

The Right Place at the Right Time

The birth of the Deseret alphabet may have been the product of bringing together the right time period and the right place. The 1800's were a time of great interest in orthographic reform. In 1837, Issac Pitman produced a popular shorthand system and was hailed as the Father of 19th Century Orthographical Reform.[7] Widstoe explains that "Pitman's phonography touched the popular imagination" and that the idea of phonographic reform spread quickly.[8] In 1840, Benn Pitman, a brother to Isaac, opened a shorthand school in the eastern United States. Meanwhile, Andrew Graham had developed his phonetic alphabet. During the entire 19th Century there was a great interest in orthographic reform both in the U.S. and England.

The isolated Mormon community in the Great Salt Lake Basin seemed to be the ideal place for a reformation of English spelling. Brigham Young comments on Utah's isolation in his governor's message on December 11, 1854:

> Utah! Fair Utah!! Behold her in the midst of snow-capped mountains, narrow vales, or extended plains;-- no navigable river penetrates her surface, nor proceeds from her mountain fastnesses, on which to bear to her the commerce of the nations. The iron horse has not yet found his way along her narrow vales, nor yet have the lightning wires conveyed to her citizens the 'latest news.'

> In silent grandeur she reposes, content in her internal resources, unacquainted with the hurrying excitement of the day, or the passing wonder of the fleeting moment. For weeks, aye, months, the ox trains drag their heavy weights, along with whatever mail matter might have been entrusted in a day long since past, and forgotten. Perhaps there are no people, in this age of rapid communication, so isolated as ourselves. In our internal intercourse, we have frequent exchanges with each other--but outside of this narrow compass, from two to seven months frequently intervene without a word from any source beyond the limit of the Great Basin.[9]

In Utah, there were several reasons why an orthographic reform could succeed: a) the people were a well-educated people; b) they were isolated from large numbers of people who read only standard written English; c) they were unified under one central leader.

Monson comments on the role of education in Utah:

> Literacy was an ideal more nearly attained [in Utah] than in the United States as a whole. In 1860 one out of twelve persons in the United States over the age of twenty was illiterate; in Utah not more than one out of thirty was.* One out of seven in the United States was in school, compared to one out of five in Utah. The first school in Utah was started in October 1847, just three months after the settlement of Salt Lake Valley. In 1850 the University of the State of Deseret was incorporated by the General Assembly of the State of Deseret (which later became the Territory of Utah), and a Board of Regents appointed, which supervised the activities of the public schools of the state.[10]

When the Deseret alphabet was in the planning stages the railroad and telegraph were not yet in Utah. The Mormons seemed to be a community separate from the world. And they recognized their unique position.

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*Utah is still the state with the lowest percentage of adult illiteracy according to Carman Hunter and David Harman in Adult Illiteracy in the United States (1979), pp. 38-39.

The Deseret Evening News of December 20, 1867 reports a plan of Congress to phonetically simplify English spelling. The editors explain that since large numbers of people resist dramatic change the reform would never succeed. However, in isolated Utah, the people "would eagerly adopt any alphabet that had authoritative sanction."[11]

Besides contrasting Utah's isolated populace with the rest of the nation, this article points to the unity of the people behind their leaders. On August 13, 1868, an article in the News again emphasizes their unique characteristics: "But our position is unique. We are united. This system [the new alphabet] can be made universal with but little trouble."[12]

If a reformation of the English spelling system were to succeed, the isolated Mormon community seemed to be the ideal place. The Mormons were unified politically and religiously under the leadership of Brigham Young.*. Also, they were relatively well-educated. So the 1800's seemed to be the time for orthographic reform and the Great Salt Lake Basin seemed to be an ideal place for such a reform if it were at all possible.

A Phonetic English Orthography

The 19th century orthographic reformist sought to simplify the learning of reading and writing in English. Mormon leaders also had the same

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*Alistair Cooke, in Alistair Cooke's America "Domesticating a Wilderness," says Young had dictator-like authority over the faithful Mormons. However, many Mormons would explain the influence of their leaders like Brigham Young by pointing out that the president of their church is considered a prophet. Therefore, church members respect their prophet's advice.

motivation: "It is not expected that this alphabet is perfect, but it is a decided improvement, and its use will greatly simplify our orthography. . . . It will also tend much to train the ear in the nice discrimination of sounds preparatory to bringing about a more uniform pronunciation."[13]

George Albert Smith, a Mormon leader, spoke in General Conference voicing the problems of English orthography that he saw:

> According to the present system, it is a very long and difficult job for a man to learn to spell. I commenced as soon as I was old enough to put three letters together, and I have been at it ever since, and I hardly dare write a letter now without consulting the dictionary to see how some word or other should be spelled. The spelling of the English language is very arbitrary. For several generations it has been undergoing improvements and modifications and it will, no doubt, go on until English orthography will become so perfect that every letter will have but a single sound, instead of having, as now, in some cases, four or five sounds to the same letter. Now, when a child learns to spell, he learns first to give to the vowel a its long sound, as heard in the word male, supposing that to be its only sound. In another position he gives it the Italian or grave sound--as in the word father, and so on, until he finds it has four or five distinct sounds, and then he has to depend upon the judgment of some other man, to know which of these sounds to use. . . .
>
> I wish our brethren to give this subject their serious and candid consideration, and do their best to introduce into our schools a system that will greatly abridge the time required to gain the various branches of a good education.[14]

Thus the church leadership felt the present English orthography was inferior and wanted a phonetic spelling system such as the Deseret alphabet to replace it. There were several reasons why they felt they needed a phonetic system: a) to facilitate the quicker learning of written English by foreigners and by English speaking children, and b) to make the writing of English easier and faster.

Since Mormon missionaries were proselyting in Europe during this time, many non-English speaking converts to Mormonism were coming to

the Salt Lake Valley. In 1860, of a total population of 40,244 in Utah, 12,754 were from foreign countries. True many were from England, but a notable portion were from Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.[15] Language barriers were causing many problems in the Great Basin. The Deseret News comments on this problem:

> Now the people are gathering, and the varied and most general influx of the diverse tribes, nations, kindreds, and tongues, is even at our doors. Provision must be speedily made for this forthcoming crisis and event. Can we suppose that a few interpreters will answer the demands of a constant inter-communication between several thousand languages. May we not, and must we not, look for a standard to be lifted up? Should not that language be such as can be acquired by the most ordinary minds, within a few days or months at the outside? Now is it possible to simplify and reduce the English language, or in any way remould it so as to make it answer the emergency that awaits the saints of this generation? Tell us ye wise men.[16]

A story is told of Brigham Young listening to his daughter teaching a Scandinavian girl to read. The Scandinavian convert pronounced throw with the ow sound as in cow. When the English speaking girl explained the word had a long o sound as in go, her foreign-speaking friend asked why the word was not spelled thro. Allegedly, this experience motivated Brigham Young to try to simplify English spelling to facilitate the learning of English.

Many Mormon leaders hoped and believed the Deseret alphabet would solve the problems of learning English. Favorable results were reported of a tour by Superintendent of schools Robert Campbell and Edward Stevenson to teach the Deseret alphabet in the predominantly Scandinavian settlements in central Utah. Accordingly, "the present system of orthography" was "the subject of many a laughable joke," but the "Scandinavians hailed the new system [the Deseret alphabet] with much pleasure."[17]

Brigham Young also voiced his belief that the new alphabet would simplify the learning of English:

> The advantages of this alphabet will soon be realized, especially by foreigners. Brethren who come here knowing nothing of the English language will find its acquisition greatly facilitated by means of this alphabet, by which all the sounds of the language can be represented and expressed with the greatest ease. As this is the grand difficulty foreigners experience in learning the English language, they will find a knowledge of this alphabet will greatly facilitate their efforts in acquiring at least a partial English education. It will also be very advantageous to our children. It will be the means of introducing uniformity in our orthography, and the years that are now required to learn to read and spell can be devoted to other studies.[18]

Notice that Young says the new alphabet would not only help foreigners but also English-speaking children. One of the purposes of the Deseret alphabet was to make it easier for school children to learn to read and write English. Superintendent Campbell not only felt the new system would be an asset to the children, he felt the old system was a detriment. He said that the traditional system of English orthography "does greater violence to the moral perceptions of the child than is commonly imagined. The Persians said, the first thing to teach a child is to speak the truth; the first thing we teach children seems to be not unlike a mass of literal falsehoods. . . ,"[19] Early definitions of the Deseret alphabet also explain that it would allow even the youngest school children to quickly and easily learn written English.[20]

Another reason for wanting a simplified orthography was to make writing in English faster and easier. There were many stenographic reporters in the church like J. V. Long and G. D. Watt. In their stenographic efforts, the discrepancy between the spoken and written language caused problems.[21] The Deseret News explains that use of the new characters

in writing would alleviate such problems:

> These characters are much more simple in their structure than the usual alphabetical characters; every superflous mark supposable, is wholly excluded from them. The written and printed hand are substantially merged in one.
>
> . . . There will be a great saving of time and paper by the use of the new characters; and but a very small part of the time and expense will be requisite in obtaining a knowledge of the language.
>
> The orthography will be so abridged that an ordinary writer can probably write one hundred words a minute with ease, and consequently report the speech of a common speaker without much difficulty. . . .
>
> In the new alphabet every letter has a fixed and unalterable sound; and every word is spelt with reference to given sounds. By this means strangers can not only acquire a knowledge of our language much more readily, but a practised reporter can also report a strange tongue so that the strange language when spoken can be legible [sic] by one conversant with the tongue.[22]

Thus, the new phonetic system was intended to facilitate reporting in any language not merely English. It seems to have been intended as a cure-all for the problem of discrepancy between the spoken and written language. Perhaps such high expectations expressed early in its history led to great disappointments later on.

A Preparation for a Pure Language

Another reason for the creation of the Deseret alphabet may have been the Mormon belief in a pure language, called the Adamic language or language of Adam, that was to be restored. Mormon scripture, Moses 6:6, explains that Adam's sons and daughters taught their children "to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled." Brigham Young often commented on his desire for a time when the pure language of Adam would be restored to the earth. In one speech Orson Pratt also commented on the imperfections of English, then he said: "Will there be a pure language restored? There will; through the testimony of the prophets."[23]

Later in 1855, George Watt in an address to the Deseret Typographic Association called the Deseret alphabet "a forerunner in that series of developments in philology which shall prepare mankind for the reception of a pure language."[24] However, no one associated with the creation of the alphabet claimed revelation for the specific characters or their application. Nonetheless, the desire for and knowledge about a pure language may have prompted this attempt at reforming English.

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[3] Deseret News, August 13, 1868, as quoted by Nash, p. 4.

[4] Deseret News, August 13, 1868, as quoted by Monson, p. 23.

[5] Monson Interview.

[6] Nash, p. 4.

[7] Beesley, p. 1.

[8] Widstoe, p. 33.

[9] Deseret News, Dec. 15, 1853, as quoted by Monson, p. 52.

[10] Monson, p. 6.

[11] Deseret Evening News, Dec. 20, 1867, as quoted by Monson, p. 21.

[12] Deseret News, August 13, 1868, as quoted by Monson, p. 22.

[13] "The Deseret Alphabet" document.

[14] Journal of Discourses, vol. 12, p. 140.

[15] Monson, p. 7.

[16] Deseret News, November 24, 1853, as quoted by Monson, p. 7.

[17] Deseret News, December 10, 1868, as quoted by Monson, p. 23.

[18] Journal of Discourses, vol. 12, p. 298.

[19] "Report of Territorial Superintendent of Schools," dated Feb. 16, 1869, Journals of the Legislature, 1869, p. 179, as quoted by Monson, p. 23.

[20] "The Deseret Alphabet document.

[21] Widstoe, p. 33.

[22] Deseret News, Jan. 19, 1854, as quoted by Monson, pp. 11-12.

[23] Journal of Discourses, vol. 3, p. 110.

[24] Deseret News, August 15, 1855, as quoted by Ivins, p. 228.

Chapter 3

The History of the Deseret Alphabet

The Roots, pre-1850

It is difficult to say exactly when the Deseret alphabet's history begins. Did it begin in 1845 when Watt taught shorthand classes that Young attended? Perhaps it was during this time that the idea was born. Did it begin with the discussions at Winter Quarters by Mormon Leaders concerning use of Pitman's 1847 alphabet? Did it begin in 1850 when the Board of Regents of the University of Deseret began discussing orthographic reform? The roots of the Deseret alphabet may even go back to 1837 when Isaac Pitman's shorthand system stimulated interest in orthographic reform.

1837 -Isaac Pitman produces the first widely-practiced and widely-studied shorthand system.[1,2]

1840 -Ben Pitman, Isaac's brother, opens a shorthand school in U.S. Andrew Graham has developed a phonetic alphabet in U.S.[3]

1845 -George D. Watt, moves to the U.S. and begins work as scribe for Joseph Smith and other church leaders.[4,5] He teaches classes in shorthand that Brigham Young attends.

1847 -At Winter Quarters, Brigham Young and other church leaders consider introducing Pitman's phonetic printing. Watt, who was on a mission in England, is asked by Brigham Young to get a set of Pitman phonotype. This is referred to as the 1847 alphabet.[6]

-July. The Mormons reach Salt Lake Basin.[7]

1850 -There is prosperity in Utah: farms, ranches, cities, trade with Californian 49ers.[8]

-March 20. The newly organized Board of Regents of the University of Deseret meets for the second time in Parley P. Pratt's log cabin. The secretary records a discussion of the idea that the "conection [sic] of the English Language . . . and

pronunciation should be same. . . . His Excellency [Brigham Young] gave his views upon the subject and placed it upon the Regency to do and act by the spirit of wisdom."[9] The Regents focused on orthographic reform from 1850-1877.

-One week later W. W. Phelps presents his "Mormon" alphabet to the Board which is not approved.[9]

The pre-1850 period in the history of the Deseret alphabet is the period when the roots were established for its development later on.

The Developmental Period, 1852-1857

In 1852 Brigham Young announced to the Mormon people at General Conference that the Board of Regents was working on a reformed English orthography. From that year, the work on the Deseret alphabet was done by committees appointed by the Board of Regents under the direction of Brigham Young. The work seemed to be going well until it was interrupted in 1857 by the Utah War.

1852 -Watt again opens a shorthand class which Brigham Young attends.[10]

-The U.S. Congress refuses to recognize the State of Deseret because of polygamy[11] and installs the Territory of Utah.[12]

-April 8.[13][14] Young introduces reformation of English spelling in General Conference:

> I have asked the Board of Regents to cast out from their system of education, the present orthography and written form of our language, that when my children are taught the graphic sign for A, it may always represent that individual sound only. But as it now is, the child is perplexed that the sign A should have one sound in mate, a second sound in father, a third sound in fall, a fourth sound in man, and a fifth sound in many, and in other combinations, soundings different these, while, in others, A is not sounded at all. I say let it have one sound all the time. And when P is introduced into a word, let it not be silent as in phthisic, or sound like F in physic, and let two not be placed instead of one as in apple.[15]

1853 -Oct.[16] 27.[17] The Board of Regents appoints a committee of Parley P. Pratt, Heber C. Kimball, and George D. Watt, to prepare school books in a reformed English.[17] (Watt is called home from his mission.)[16]

-Nov. 24. The Deseret News reports the progress of the Deseret alphabet and explains the debate among committee members as to the form for the new system--romanic versus a new set of characters.[18] The News reports:

> . . . a query has arisen and occasioned some warm debate whether the present old Roman alphabet is sufficiently perfect to carry forward this reformation. It is objected by some that the characters of the old alphabet are like the white man (as the Indian says) too uncertain. That is, their sounds are too variable: too many letters enter into the composition of single words, and some of these letters are silent and unmeaning. . . . Will the old bottles answer for the deposit of the new wine?[19]

-Dec. 12. Young speaks to Utah legislature in his governor's message and encourages the reformation of English spelling.[20]

-Dec. 22. A 38 character version of a phonetic alphabet is presented to the Board of Regents which is adopted and called the Deseret alphabet.[20]

-Dec. 26. Parley P. Pratt announces that "the Regency are getting out a new alphabet, and when we learn our letters ourselves, we will teach others."[21,22]

1854 -Jan. 19. The Deseret News announces the new 38 character alphabet:[23]

> The Board of Regents, in company with the Governor and heads of departments, have adopted a new alphabet, consisting of 38 characters. . . which are more simple in their structure than the usual alphabetical characters; every superfluous mark supposable is wholy excluded from them.[24]

-March. The new alphabet is printed in a presentation to the Board of Regents. Regent Hosea Stout demonstrates it to the Deseret Theological Institute and the Deseret Typographical Association[25,26] (see Appendix D).

-April. Geoege Watt and Albert Carrington, the Deseret News editors, are lecturing on the advantages of the Deseret alphabet.[27]

-Aug. Watt proposes his complete revision of 33 characters as a replacement. His proposal is not accepted but it later influences the final version.[28]

1854 -Dec. In his annual governor's message to the legislature, Brigham Young recommends that the Deseret alphabet be taught in schools.[29,30]

1855 -Feb. Lorenzo Snow suggests that the Deseret alphabet be taught to members of the Polysophical Institute.[31]

-Feb. 20. John T. Morris dies. His tombstone is inscribed in the Deseret alphabet.

-Feb. 24. T. W. Ellerbeck, Young's secretary, writes an explanation of the alphabet to Franklin D. Richards. In the letter, he explains that Watt is the chief creator and that besides simplifying English orthography the alphabet will protect Mormon youth from corrupt print.[34]

-Aug. The News reports progress on the Deseret alphabet and promotes its use.

-Aug. 2. Watt, representing the committee on the Deseret alphabet, presents three resolutions to the Deseret Typographical Association. They were a) the new alphabet should be used to prepare men for the pure or Adamic language; b) the Association should strive to make the Deseret alphabet used universally; c) Watt should instruct the members in the Deseret alphabet. The resolutions were unanimously accepted.[35,36]

-Aug. 15. The Deseret News reports that Brother Sabins is preparing the material needed for the type-casting of the Deseret alphabet. Nothing came from his work.[37]

-Sept. 25. Remy and Brenchly, disguised as prospecters, visit Salt Lake City.

-Dec. The Regents and the Territorial government appropriate $2,500 for fonts, printing, etc. of the Deseret alphabet.[39]

1856 -Jan. Remy prints copies of the Deseret alphabet in San Francisco. Some say this is the first printing of the Deseret alphabet. It is a 40 character version[40,41] (see Appendix E).

-Feb. 4. Wilford Woodruff, Samuel W. Richards and George Watt are appointed to "get up" school books in the Deseret alphabet.[42,43,44]

-Feb. 6.[45] The Deseret News reports that a separate committee for spelling revision has been formed. On it are Daniel H. Wells, Albert Carrington[47] and William Willis.[46] (Ivins says this date was February 11).

1857 -Erastus Snow goes to Saint Louis to get type fonts for the Deseret alphabet.[48]

-Aug. 29. The font for the Deseret alphabet using pica type is started in Saint Louis.[49]

1857 -Fall. The Deseret alphabet type is delivered to Salt Lake.[50]

-The Utah War interrupts work on the school books. President James Buchanan sends General Albert Johnston to accompany Alfred Cummings to Utah to replace Brigham Young as Governor. There is no actual fighting though most of the able-bodied men in Utah unite under the command of Daniel H. Wells.[51] (See Bancraft's History of Utah, pp. 512-543.)

-The textbook manuscripts are moved south to Fillmore Utah for safety in anticipation of Johnston's Army.[51]

-May 13. Parley P. Pratt, one of the original committee member, is murdered by Hector J. H. McLean near Van Burden, Ak.[52]

From 1852 to 1857, Watt's 38 character version for the Deseret alphabet was approved by the Board of Regents. Also, a committee began to put together manuscripts for school books in the Deseret alphabet. The manuscripts included such topics as "the pioneers, the Mormon Battalion, Salt Lake Valley and Utah Territory, grisley [sic] bears, and buffalo bull fights."[53] Also during this developmental period type font for the Deseret alphabet was shipped from Saint Louis to Salt Lake. The ground work had been lain for the actual printing to be done. The Deseret alphabet had been created, but whether it would rise or fall remained to be seen.

Rises and Falls, 1858-1877

The end of the Utah War in 1858 could have inspired both optimism and pessimism in those interested in promoting the Deseret alphabet. Since the war was over, work could begin again. However, the textbook manuscripts had been lost, so work on new textbooks had to start again. During this time period, Orson Pratt was assigned responsibility for the school books and translating other texts into the Deseret alphabet. However, the publishing of books did not insure the Deseret alphabet's support and

enthusiasm. It had many periods when it nearly died.

1858 -The Utah War has been resolved.

-Nov. 20. At 4 p.m. Brigham Young tells Wilfred Woodruff to work with Watt and make more manuscripts for textbooks to replace those taken to Fillmore which were lost.[54]

-Nov. 27.[55] The Deseret alphabet printed with the type from St. Louis is first used on cards for Brigham Young's office which are presented to the Church Historian, George A. Smith.[56] [55] (Powell says these cards were Smith's personal cards).[57]

1859 -Jan. The Quorum of the Twelve estimates that the Deseret alphabet reform will cost approximately a million dollars and decides to settle with a reformed spelling system using the roman alphabet for economic reasons. Within a week, Brigham Young revives the Deseret alphabet again.[58]

-Feb. 16. The Deseret News prints the "Sermon on the Mount" in the Deseret alphabet--the 38 character version (see Appendix P). This is considered the first text.[59] From this date until May of 1860 the News carries excerpts of the scriptures using the Deseret alphabet.[60]

-Feb. 16. One person[61] comments that the alphabet looks like a Turkish tax list.

-Feb. 16. Many are disappointed in the type set used in the Deseret News article; they feel its appearance is rough. John Rummell offers to prepare a new type set without pay if his work is not acceptable. Young denies the offer by saying that after the characters are revised a new type set will be done in England.[62]

-Feb. 23. Cards[63] with the "latest" version of the Deseret alphabet go up for sale. These cards are to be sold for 10¢ each, 25¢ for three, and 75¢ for twelve. (Ivins says[64] the Deseret News advertised the cards in the summer of 1856.)

-Orson Pratt, now the Chancellor of the University of Deseret, and George Watt begin a translation of Webster's Dictionary into the Deseret alphabet.[65]

-March 21. Pratt gives notice that he will no longer work on the translation. He explains that because of his dislike for writing, the strain on his eyes, and the hardship his family is suffering as a result of his work that "all the gold in California could not hire him to engage in copying and arranging Webster's Unabridged into the Deseret alphabet as a speller and pronouncer or for a dictionary." Campbell seconds Pratt's refusal calling the job

1859 "a Herculean task for which we are unprepared."[66]

-April. As Young had suggested, clerks are hired to do the work of translating the dictionary under the direction of Pratt and Watt. A committee of Daniel H. Wells, Levi W. Richard and Robert Campbell hire the clerks who only work a short while before Young dismisses them.[67]

-May. An editorial in the Deseret News by A. B. assures the audience that in a few years prejudices toward the alphabet will be overcome and its use will be widespread.[68]

-Superintendent of schools Robert Campbell voices his support of the reform: "The Superintendent takes great pleasure in seconding the efforts of President Brigham Young and the Board of Regents of the University of Deseret in the introduction of the Deseret alphabet."[69]

1860 -The Deseret alphabet has appeared on handbills, shop signs, journals, alters, coins, a tombstone, etc. but overall general public support is lacking.[70]

-A Utah coin is designed using the Deseret alphabet. This coin only circulates one year then Governor Cummings forbids its use.[71]

1862 -Young rejects Campbell's school books in the romanic alphabet.[72]

1864 -A few items using the Deseret alphabet reappear in the Deseret News from May-Aug. and Nov.-Dec.[73]

1866 -Dec.10. The Board of Regents proposes to use Benn Pitman's phonemic alphabet instead of the Deseret alphabet.[74,75] (Ivins says this meeting was on Dec. 18, 1867.)[76]

1867 -June. Watt travels to New York to get the phonotype of Benn Pitman's "Standard Phonotype." Here, he observes the Graham system and recommends it to Brigham Young in a letter.[77,78]

-April. Edward L. Sloan[79] (who becomes the editor of Daily Herald in 1879[80]) writes a letter which is published in the News calling for all those interested in a phonographic society to meet.[81] This reactivates Deseret alphabet proponents.[79]

-Oct. At General Conference, Brigham Young and George Albert Smith speak again urging use of the Deseret alphabet.

1868 -Feb. 3. The Deseret alphabet was once again accepted by the Board of Regents.[82,83,84]

-May 15. The Board of Regents petitions the legislature for $10,000 and assigns Orson Pratt to prepare school books.[85,86]

1868 -June 22. Heber C. Kimball, one of the early supporters of the Deseret alphabet, dies.[87]

-June 25. Pratt and Superintendent Campbell send the completed manuscripts of the school books, to David Calder in New York for printing.[88,89]

-Aug. 13. The Deseret News announces the publication of these school books by Russell Brothers for the University of Deseret. The First book was 36 pages for 15¢ and the Second 72 pages for 20¢[90] (see Appendix I).

(Monson says there were 10,000 copies of each book by late Oct. and that they went on sale in December.)[91]

-Oct. The forthcoming arrival of the books were announced in General Conference.[92,93]

-Oct. 30. The Committee votes to print an errata sheet to correct the numerous errors in the Deseret First and Second Books.[93]

-Campbell and Stevensen tour Utah promoting the readers.[94,95]

-Dec. 9. Brigham Young sends a letter to Albert Carrington in England telling him that Orson Pratt will come to England perhaps in the next year to supervise printing.[96]

1869 -Jan. 25. The teachers and trustees of the Salt Lake City schools discuss the use of the Deseret alphabet and agree to use it.[97]

-Jan. The Juvenile Instructor encourages support of the Deseret alphabet.[98]

-March. Orson Pratt tells the Board of his completion of the translation of the Book of Mormon.[99,100]

-April 20. Pratt leaves for New York to supervise the printing of two editions of the Book of Mormon: one-volume for families and the second edition of three parts to be used for classroom work,[101,102] as advanced readers.[103]

-Sept. 1. The Book of Mormon is published. Five hundred copies of the family edition are made. Eight thousand copies of the first third of the school edition are printed. (The other two parts were never printed).[104,105,106]

-Sept. 28. Pratt rides the railroad home.[107,108]

-Dec. 16. The Deseret News advertises copies of the Book of Mormon in the Deseret alphabet: "Deseret Books of Mormon--$2.00. For Part First, (containing 116 pgs.) designed for a Third Reader--75 cents. Heavy discount to wholesale purchases."[109]

1870 -Sales of the books are not good as evidenced by discounted prices in the News.[110] In the fall, the Deseret News discontinues ads for the primers.[111]

1872 -The Deseret News mentions the alphabet only occasionally.[111]

-Sometime between 1870-1872, the Board of Regents asks Pratt to translate the Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants which he did, but these books are never published.[112]

-Orson Pratt petitions the legislature to pay him $6,537.37 for his work. He had submitted his bill to the University of Deseret two years earlier, but the University had declined payment because of a lack of funds. He received about $6,000.[113]

-March 7. W. W. Phelps, one of the early committee members, dies.[114]

1874 -Robert Campbell, the superintendent of schools and avid supporter of the Deseret alphabet, dies.[115]

-At a meeting in Salt Lake City, George Q. Cannon again urges the reading of the Book of Mormon in the Deseret alphabet.[116]

1875 -The Juvenile Instructor announces a new approach to orthographic reform.[117]

-Pratt is sent to Liverpool to supervise the printing of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants in Pitman Phonotype.[118]

-Election advertisements with the People's Party printed in the Deseret alphabet are circulated.[119]

1877 -Brigham Young dies.[120,121] Pratt is called home.[122]

1878 -The last printing in the Deseret alphabet appears to be an election ballot partially printed in the Deseret alphabet.[123]

1893 -The University of Deseret becomes the University of Utah.[124]

With the death of Brigham Young in 1877, the Deseret alphabet for all practical purposes died also. In the 1860's it had begun to wane, but each time Brigham Young had revitalized it. In 1868, the Board of Regents had proposed to use Benn Pitman's alphabet instead of the Deseret alphabet. In fact, the Deseret News wrote this sort of obituary for the alphabet: "whether from ignorance or design, the matrices were widely made, and did the characters great injustice. . . . [It had been decided by the Regents]

to adopt the Pitman Phonetic alphabet recommended to the people for their adoption. . . . Pitman characters are available. This is the reason for their selection and not because they were thought to be the best characters. . . ."[125] However on February 3, 1868, the Regents met with Young to reconsider use of the Pitman alphabet. After this reconsideration, the group "drew forth a universal expression in favor of our characters known as the Deseret alphabet, as being better adopted; and a motion was made to take the necessary measures to introduce it in printed works."[126] Thus, while Young was alive the alphabet would not die. However, when Young died in 1877, Orson Pratt was called home from England. Early supporters such as Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, W. W. Phelps, and Robert Campbell had already died. No one took Brigham Young's place as a promoter and advocate of the Deseret alphabet.

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[3]Nash, p. 6.

[4]Nash, p. 8.

[5]Monson, p. 11.

[6]Beesley, pp. 1-2.

[7]Nash, p. 8.

[8]Nash, p. 8.

[9]Minutes of the Board of Regents of the Deseret University, March 20, 1850, as quoted by Beesley, pp. 2-3.

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[11]Monson, p. 2.

[12]Nash, p. 9.

[13]Beesley, p. 3.

[14]Nash, p. 9.

[15]Journal of Discourses, April 8, 1852, vol. 2, p. 68.

[16]Nash, p. 10.

[17]Monson, p. 8.

[18]Monson, p. 89

[19]Beesley, p. 4.

[20]Monson, p. 10.

[21]Deseret News, Jan. 12, 1854, as quoted by Nash, p. 11.

[22]Monson, p. 11.

[23]Nash, p. 11.

[24]Beesley, p. 5.

[25]Beesley, p. 5.

[26]Monson, p. 13.

[27]Monson, p. 30.

[28]Beesley, p. 6.

[29]Nash, p. 13.

[30]Monson, p. 12.

[31]Monson, p. 30.

[32]Beesley, p. 8.

[33]Monson, p. 30.

[34]Carter, p. 265.

[35]Ivins, p. 228.

[36]Deseret News, Aug. 15, 1855, as quoted by Monson, p. 13.

[37]Monson, p. 14.

[38]Beesley, p. 8.

[39]Beesley, p. 10.

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[41]Remy, p. 185.

[42]Journal of History, Feb. 4, 1856, as quoted by Beesley, p. 10.

[43]Deseret News, Feb. 6, 1856, as quoted by Ivins, p. 229.

[44]Monson, p. 15.

[45]Monson, p. 15.

[46]Beesley, p. 11.

[47]Ivins, p. 230.

[48]Nash, p. 15.

[49]Widstoe, p. 49.

[50]Monson, p. 16.

[51]Monson, p. 16.

[52]Andrew Jenson, Church Chronology (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1899), p. 58.

[53]Journal History, Feb. 6, 1856, as quoted by Beesley, p. 11.

[54]Monson, p. 16.

[55]Powell, p. 5.

[56]Monson, p. 17.

[57]Powell, p. 5.

[58]Nash, p. 16.

[59]Monson, p. 17.

[60]Beesley, p. 13.

[61]Powell, p. 5.

[62]Monson, p. 18.

[63]Monson, p. 19.

[64]Monson, p. 19.

[65]Monson, p. 19.

[66]Monson, p. 19.

[67]Monson, p. 19.

[68]Monson, pp. 19-20.

[69]Sudweeks, p. 806.

[70]Beesley, p. 14.

[71]Powell, p. 6.

[72]Monson, p. 20.

[73]Monson, p. 20.

[74]Samuel W. Richards to Franklin D. Richards, Millenial Star, (Feb. 2, 1867), 29:77, as quoted by Beesley, p. 16.

[75]Monson, p. 20. (He also refers to the Millenial Star, 29:77.)

[76]Deseret News, Dec. 19, 1867, as quoted by Ivins, pp. 231-232.

[77]Beesley, p. 17.

[78]Monson, p. 20.

[79]Ivins, p. 231.

[80]Jensen, p. 83.

[81]Nash, p. 17.

[82]Deseret News, Feb. 4, 1868, as quoted by Ivins, p. 186.

[83]Deseret News, Feb. 3, 1868, as quoted by Nash, p. 186.

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[85]Ivins, p. 232.

[86]Nash, p. 18.

[87]Jensen, p. 78.

[88]Beesley, p. 88.

[89]Monson, p. 22.

[90]Nash, pp. 18-19.

[91]Monson, p. 23.

[92]Beesley, p. 18.

[93]Powell, p. 9.

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[98]Nash, p. 20.

[99]Beesley, p. 18.

[100]Monson, p. 24.

[101]Beesley, p. 18

[102]Monson, p. 24.

[103]Powell, p. 10.

[104]Beesley, p. 19.

[105]Monson, p. 24.

[106]Sudweeks, p. 806.

[107]Beesley, p. 19.

[108]Monson, p. 24.

[109]Monson, p. 24.

[110]Beesley, p. 19.

[111]Nash, p. 21.

[112]Monson, p. 24.

[113]Monson, p. 26.

[114]Jensen, p. 270.

[115]Nash, p. 22.

[116]Ivins, p. 231.

[117]Beesley, p. 20.

[118]Monson, p. 26.

[119]Monson, p. 26.

[120]Monson, p. 26.

[121]Beesley, p. 21.

[122]Beesley, p. 21.

[123]Monson, p. 26.

[124]Nash, p. 23.

[125]Deseret News, Dec. 19, 1867, as quoted by Ivins, p. 232.

[126]Deseret News, Feb. 4, 1868, as quoted by Ivins, p. 232.

Chapter 4

Practical Application of the Deseret Alphabet

Though the Mormon community as a whole did not use the Deseret alphabet extensively, a few individuals did use it. These supporters were those associated with Brigham Young. For example, the clerks in the Church Historian's Office used it.[1] On this use, Richard Burton, a traveler to Utah, recorded:

> "One of my favorite places of visiting was the Historian and Recorder's Office, opposite Mr. Young's block. It contained a small collection of volumes, together with papers, official, and private, plans, designs and other requisites, many of them in the Deseret alphabet."[2]

Also, according to Powell, the first printing done with the Deseret type, was the personal cards of George A. Smith, the Church Historian on November 27, 1858.[3]

Not only did those associated with Young in a religious context use the alphabet, those working with Governor Young used the alphabet. In 1860, a new five dollar gold piece was cast using Deseret symbols. One side pictured an eagle with wings spread behind a beehive. On the other side was a lion which was to represent Brigham Young, "the lion of the Lord." The inscription around the edge was in Deseret characters and read "Holiness to the Lord"[4] (see Appendix 4).

Brigham Young oversaw three completed books printed in the Deseret alphabet and a fourth started. Orson Pratt translated the books and supervised the printing of these books.

The first two books were school primers (see Appendix I). On

May 15th, 1868, The Deseret First Book of 36 pages was published. Later The Second Book of 72 pages was published.[5] On August 13, 1868, the Deseret News announced the sale of these primers, the First book for 15¢ and the second for 20¢.[6] A note at the end of the Second book tells us Pratt had borrowed illustrations from Wilson's Readers described as "so justly popular and so universely used in the territory."[7] Pratt had meant the books as more than exercises in the Deseret alphabet. He had intended them to truly be readers patterned after readers of the period. They contained not only interesting examples of the Mormon alphabet, but also interesting examples of Mormon attitudes and experience.

The books comment on the everyday Mormon experience. For example, two lessons discuss horsemanship and gun use. "A gun is good to keep off the dogs and bad men at night."[8] They also teach how to dig a well, how to train colts, how to weave hats, and other work related activities. They also teach scripture and moral lessons. Pratt included scriptures from the Bible throughout the books including the entire "Sermon on the Mount" in the last pages of book two. Moral lessons include such topics as honesty, charity, and not using tobacco. The lessons on playing also primarily teach morals:

> It is pleasing to children, to have their seasons of play, and to have their choice sports. This is right, and it is good for children thus to amuse themselves, at a proper time and place.
>
> These children enjoy their frolic, and are glad to have such times. They live in the country, and were it not for their plays and games, they would be dull; but they have all sorts of sport, and they enjoy it too; for they are healthy, and full of vigor. They breathe the pure air. They rise early in the morning; and have all their little tasks to perform; and when these are over they have leave granted them to play.[9] (see Appendix J).

Science has not been overlooked as a topic for the lessons of these primers although they only simplistically present science related topics. For example in lesson 17 of the Second Book, Pratt includes the poem "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" called "The Stars" (see Appendix K). After the poem, the primer reads:

> The poetry, printed above, called "The Little Star," is often spoken by young boys and girls. It tells very happily their thoughts about the star. But there are many things which the youthful do not know about the stars. There are also many things about the starry heavens which are unknown to the aged and the learned. The stars are too numerous to be counted by men: many of them are at a very great distance from the earth which we inhabit. They are also much larger than this globe.[10]

The lessons seem to be intended for instruction and practice with little concern for the students' interest. For example, a section in the early lessons of book one reads: "I see a fly. May I get the fly? Yes you may get it, but it will fly off. It bit an ox. The ox can run. Can the fly run? Yes, the fly can run up the high wall."[11]

The third book printed in the Deseret alphabet was The Book of Mormon (see Appendix L). Two editions of the Book of Mormon were to be published. The first, published January 25, 1869, was intended for family use. The second was to have three parts and was intended for use in schools as advanced readers. George A. Smith explained this edition: "The manuscript of the Book of Mormon is in the Deseret alphabet and is now ready for publication. It is designed to publish an edition in ten thousand copies, suitable for the use in the schools."[12] However, only the first part of the text for the classroom edition was printed.

The printing of these books proved to be an expensive experiment. Orson Pratt received $6,038.05 for his translating work.[13] The cost of the printing of these books come to $12,453.86.[14] Sales of the books

were intended to pay back this expense. But, sales weren't sufficient to repay much of this expense.

Though not printed as was the Book of Mormon, other religious documents were kept in the Deseret alphabet. For example, James Henry Martineau kept the Parowan Stake minutes of 1855 using the Deseret alphabet. Martineau was also an artist and probably illustrated the record[15] (see Appendix M).

Other handwritten materials like journals and correspondence were kept in the Deseret alphabet. Thales Haskell, a missionary to the Hopi Indians of Northern Arizona, recorded 14 pages of his missionary journal in the Deseret alphabet (see Appendix N). He used a less common version of 40 characters.[16] Marion J. Shelton, a fellow missionary of Haskell's, also used the Deseret alphabet to correspond with his family. While teaching the Hopi, these missionaries taught a few characters of the Deseret alphabet to some of the tribe. On this topic, Shelton writes to George A. Smith in November of 1859:

> "I employ my time in studying the language and instructing them [the Hopi] in the Deseret alphabet. I find that I acquire the language very readily, and those to whom I have given lessons have taken right hold to the alphabet and several of them know the first six characters, and we can hear them hollowing the sounds throughout the village. They have some pecularities in their tongue that I never have heard in any other. You will please tell the President [Brigham Young] that I have had to introduce another character which I sincerely hope will meet with his approval. It is simply, I, a straight mark."[17]

By 1860, in addition to handwriting, the Deseret alphabet appeared in a few uses publically. Remy reports that he saw it on some shop signs.[18] And when John Morris died on February 20, 1855 in Cedar city, his tombstone was carved in characters from the Deseret alphabet, "with the exception of his Welsh birthplace, Lanfair Talhairn"[19] (see Appendix O).

References in Chapter 4

[1]Ivins, p. 228.

[2]Richard F. Burton, The City of the Saints, (New York: Harper Brothers, 1862), p. 419.

[3]Powell, p. 5.

[4]Leslie Sudweeks, "Deseret Gold: a Historical Sketch of Pioneer Money." Improvement Era, vol. 50,(1947), p. 151.

[5]Leah R. Frisby and Hector Lee, "The Deseret Readers," Utah Humanities Review, vol. 1,(1947), p. 240.

[6]Deseret News, August 13, 1868, as quoted by Nash, p. 18.

[7]Frisby, p. 240.

[8]Frisby, p. 242.

[9]Frisby, p. 243.

[10]Frisby, p. 242.

[11]Frisby, p. 241.

[12]Frisby, p. 240.

[13]Frisby, p. 241.

[14]Nash, p. 22.

[15]Bob Bingham to Chad Flake, April 5, 1981, Original at Brigham Young University, Special Collections.

[16]Thales H. Haskell "Journal," Utah Historical Quarterly, vol. 12, no. 1, (Jan. 1944), p. 69.

[17]Utah Historical, p. 97.

[18]Remy, p. 184.

[19]Monson, p. 13.

Chapter 5

Successes and Failures of the Deseret Alphabet

The successes of the Deseret alphabet stem mainly from the support of the leaders of the Mormon community. Brigham Young was the major supporter and promoter of the Deseret alphabet. As both governor and church president, Young was the political and religious leader of the area. Perhaps his support influenced other leaders. In contrast, the failures of the Deseret alphabet stem from a lack of support from the public.

The Successes

The first announcements and endorsements of the Deseret alphabet came over the pulpit. It was in conference on April 8th, 1852 that Brigham Young first announced a reformation of English. Furthermore, when the Board of Regents of the Deseret University appointed a committee to implement orthographic reform, George Watt was called home early from his mission in England to be on this committee. This unusual action demonstrates the amount of support by church leaders for the project.

Many times the presidency of the church advocated the Deseret alphabet and urged members to learn and use it. On April 13, 1854, the Deseret News printed the "Eleventh General Epistle of the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to the Saints in the valleys of the mountains and those scattered abroad throughout the earth." In this announcement, church leaders said:

> The Regency have formed a new alphabet, which it is expected will prove highly beneficial in acquiring the English language to

> foreigners as well as to the youth of our country. We recommend it to the favorable consideration of the people, and desire that all of our teachers and instructors will introduce it in their schools and to their classes. The orthography of the English language needs reforming; - a word to the wise is sufficient.[1]

The Deseret alphabet also had the support of state leaders. In December of 1854, Young in a governor's message recommended the Deseret alphabet be "thoroughly and extensively taught in all schools" because it was "a basis of instruction for the attainment of the English language, far surpressing in simplicity and ease any known in existence."[2] Later in 1867, Robert Campbell, the superintendent of the common schools, stressed the value of this alphabet in his annual report to the legislature.[3] And on January 25, 1869 the teachers and trustees of the Salt Lake City schools held a meeting in which the Deseret alphabet was discussed. In this meeting, these school leaders agreed to adopt the Deseret alphabet.[4] Widstoe claims that many classes taught the Deseret alphabet, but Monson points out that those classes in which the alphabet were taught were mainly Sunday School classes.[5]

However, there are reports of the alphabet being taught in schools. George Smith reports that "Elder John B. Milner is teaching the Deseret alphabet with considerable success having 60 scholars at Lehi, 28 at American Fork, 25 at Mountainville, 28 at Pleasant Grove, 22 at Provo, first ward, who are making good progress."[6] Another report comes from W. R. May of Nephi. This teacher of eighty students of all ages explains that one simply needs to "put the First and Second Readers into the children's hands and they will learn to read them without teaching." He says that he teaches the alphabet extensively and urges other teachers to do the same. He concludes: "Do not throw cold water upon the efforts

of our leaders in this respect. . . ."[7] May's last comment once again reflects the influence of the leadership's support of the Deseret alphabet.

Community groups also supported the Deseret alphabet. On August 2, 1855, Watt representing the "Committee of the Deseret Alphabet" presented to the Deseret Typographical Association three resolutions: a) the alphabet was to prepare men to receive a pure language; b) the association would strive to make the Deseret alphabet universal; and c) Watt would instruct the members of the association in the Deseret alphabet. The Typographical Association members unanimously accepted the resolutions.[8] In February of 1854, Lorenzo Snow advertised his Polysophical Institution which was to offer evening classes in, among other things, the Deseret alphabet.[9]

The community publications also endorsed the alphabet. At one point the Deseret News was skeptical saying: "The characters will appear crude and impractical at first sight. We deemed them so when we were first shown them." Evidently they changed their minds: "But it was not long before we saw our error."[10] The majority of the time the Deseret News spoke positively of the alphabet's progress and purpose. For example, when announcing that the Board of Regents had adopted the 38 character alphabet, it reported as follows:

> These characters are much more simple in their structure than the usual alphabetical characters. . . . We may derive a hint of the advantage to orthography from spelling the word "eight" which in the new alphabet requires only two letters instead of five to spell it, via "AT." There will be great saving of time and paper by the use of the new characters, and but a very small part of the time and expense will be requisite in obtaining a knowledge of the language. . . . In the new alphabet every letter has a fixed and unalterable sound. By this method strangers cannot only acquire a knowledge of our language much more readily but a practiced

reporter can also report a strange language when spoke. . . .[11]

The Juvenile Instructor, a major magazine of the church, also published editorial support of the alphabet.[12]

Failures

The Deseret alphabet had more support than other reformations like it. However, despite this support from the leadership of the community, the Deseret alphabet did not gain the support of the majority of the general public. Failures of the Deseret alphabet could be categorized into three types: outside forces, problems in the alphabet itself, and lack of public support. This last failure was probably the partial result of the first two difficulties and the main reason the Deseret alphabet reformation did not succeed.

Examples of outside forces hindering the development of the Deseret alphabet can be seen in the Utah War and in the coming of the railroad. These were factors the leaders of the community could not control.

Only ten years after the 1847 alphabet of Winter Quarters, the work on the Deseret alphabet had progressed far enough that manuscripts had been prepared using it. However in 1857, an army supporting a new Washington-appointed governor came into Utah. The arrival of army, under the direction of Johnston, started what has been called the Utah War. Because of the threat to Salt Lake City, the finished manuscripts were moved to Fillmore, south of Salt Lake. Evidently in the move, the manuscripts were lost. However, this loss only delayed the alphabet's development.

The next external factor hindering the Deseret alphabet was the arrival of the railroad in 1869. Of this factor, Frisby said, "With the coming of the railroad in 1869, school books become more plentiful.

There came also the distracting influence of the outside world."[13] As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons a new alphabet had a chance to succeed in the Great Salt Lake Basin was the isolation and unity of the people. The railroad threatened this isolation with intrusion of the rest of the nation. It was not desirable for the Mormons to learn a new alphabet that would hinder trade with the outside world just at a time when this trade was made possible by the railroad. Sudweeks blames the downfall of the Deseret alphabet on the arrival of the railroad. She says that "had the project [the books written in the Deseret alphabet] been put into operation more promptly. . . it [the Deseret alphabet] might well have succeeded." She explains that the alphabet would have had a chance to become popular fifteen years earlier if it would have been printed before the coming of the railroad. However, though the railroad may have contributed to the lack of success of the Deseret alphabet, it was not the cause of its demise. The Deseret alphabet did not have enough public support.

One of the reasons for its failure involved the text itself. It was expensive to develop type set in the new unromanic characters, to translate books into the new alphabet, and to have the books printed. The cost for the printing of the two primers and the two editions of the Book of Mormon was $12,453.86.[15] In addition, Orson Pratt received around six thousand dollars for his services.[16] Totally, the Utah Territory and Mormon Church spent about $18,500--a large amount in that time period. Sales of the works were intended to make up the cost. Sales, however, were never good as indicated by the absence of an errata sheet in most of the books found today. Because the primers had some errors in them, the advertisement for the primers said that in each book sold there would be an errata sheet with corrections. Few books today contain errata sheets pointing to low sales.[17]

One of the major reasons for the failure of the Deseret alphabet was the form of the alphabet itself. Nash says: ". . . an entire page in Deseret print not only tires the eyes but is unpleasant to look at."[18] He suggests that none of the designers were trained in "the art of designing type."[19]

Nash points out many failures of the characters. For example, there was no cursive script, so handwritten characters appear "rather disconnected" and "jumbled."[20] He also calls the alphabet primitive because of its lack of ascendors and descenders and serifs--marks which the Deseret alphabet founders had called "superflous." He points to the similarity of characters such as and ; and ; and , etc. as making reading difficult because they were hard to distinguish. Furthermore, he says because of their variety in width and height, the letters did not fit well together. For example, characters like and are narrow while characters like and are wide. He summarizes saying: "The monotonous, tailless, uneven characters of the Deseret alphabet violates the principles of good book type."[21]

Maybe this factor contributed to the lack of overall public support. Or maybe it is simply impossible to get a majority of the citizens to relearn to read and write. F. D. Richard wrote, ". . . the Deseret alphabet went out of use by a kind of tacit neglect, or by general distaste for it."[22]

The Deseret alphabet was more successful than most such reformations because of the strong support of the leaders of the united and isolated Mormon community. Considering the impossibility of completely changing the writing and reading habits of a large population, considering the

economic problems, and the problems in the alphabet itself, it seems that the reason for the success of the alphabet was the enthusiasm of Brigham Young--the political and church authority.

References in Chapter 5

[1]Monson, pp. 12, 29.

[2]The Millenial Star, vol. 12, (1855), p. 262 as quoted by Ivins, p. 228.

[3]Nash, p. 19.

[4]Nash, p. 20.

[5]Monson Interview.

[6]George A. Smith letter dated Mar. 7, 1855, as quoted by Monson, p. 13.

[7]Deseret News, Jan. 17, 1870, as quoted by Monson, p. 25.

[8]Ivins, p. 228.

[9]Monson, p. 12.

[10]Deseret News, Feb. 16, 1859, as quoted by Beesley, p. 12.

[11]Deseret News, Jan. 18, 1854, as quoted by Ivin, p. 227.

[12]Nash, p. 20.

[13]Frisby, p. 244.

[14]Sudweeks, p. 806.

[15]Nash, p. 22.

[16]Frisby, p. 241.

[17]Nash, p. 37.

[18]Nash, p. 26.

[19]Nash, p. 29.

[20]Nash, p. 29.

[21]Nash, p. 29.

[22]Ivins, p. 231.

Chapter 6

The Effect of the Deseret Alphabet

Though the Deseret alphabet eventually failed to permanently affect English orthography, it seems to have had more chance for success than other such attempts because of the Mormon leaders' great motivation to instigate such a reform and because of the unique circumstance in the Salt Lake Valley. There were probably several motives for the creation of the Deseret alphabet. The Mormon leaders may have wanted to protect their people from worldly literature. They may have seen reformed English orthography as a step closer to a pure Adamic language. They did truly want to simplify English orthography, and in this dream, they were not alone. The 1800's were a period of great interest in orthographic reform and the Mormon situation seemed ideal for such reform because of their isloation, because of their respect for education, and because of their unity behind their leader Brigham Young.

The history of the Deseret alphabet has many highs and lows. Several times there was a lot of enthusiasm for the new alphabet. Other times the alphabet seemed about to die. But while Brigham Young was alive, he constantly rekindled the commitment for the Deseret alphabet.

The Deseret alphabet was successful in some respects. At its height, it had the vocal support of many of the church and state leaders, many public organizations, and the major publications in the area. The main reason for its success was again the support of the Mormon leader--the support of Brigham Young. Conversely, the cause for its failure was the lack of public support. One reason the public may have not been supportive

was the completion of the transcontinental railroad and the telegraph system. With new trade at their door, it may have seemed foolish to the Mormons to hinder commerce by using a new writing system. Or the public neglect may have been because of problems in the alphabet itself. However, the new alphabet failed probably chiefly because of the improbability of convincing a large group of people to support an unfamiliar orthography. As Monson pointed out, since the invention of the printing press, the spoken language has continued to evolve while the written language has remained relatively constant.[1] Millions of books have been published in standard English orthography. If a person were to learn the Deseret alphabet and still have access to written information, he would have two alternatives: have all written information translated into the Deseret alphabet so that he could read it, or learn regular English orthography as well as the Deseret alphabet. The first alternative would be impossible and the second would be impractical. This reason is just one of the many reasons why changing orthography would be difficult. Because of the magnitude of a change in a people's orthography, it is surprising that the Deseret alphabet was as successful as it was.

There seems to be few concrete effects of the Deseret alphabet today. The University of Utah does have boxes of unsold First and Second Books. And often bookstores will have an occasional book or two in this unusual looking print. Jennie Larsen, a resident of a rural Mormon town in Utah, relates an interesting tidbit illustrating the surprising appearance of such books in bookstores. She explains:

> I was in the Deseret Bookstore* in Salt Lake looking

*There is no direct relationship between the Deseret alphabet and the name of this bookstore.

> for a story book. I had asked about a poster. . . . The sales clerk said he would go downstairs to the nether regions and see if they had any left from years back. When he came back he did have what I had wanted and also had a couple of copies of the Deseret alphabet books. I recognized them as copies like I had of Grandpa Wood's [books] and [I] asked him where he found them. He said while he was hunting for my poster he had found a box of these books. Evidently they had been buried for years and years under other boxes.[2]

The alphabet is occasionally referred to by history buffs or the grandchildren of early pioneers. Mrs. Larsen relates the following story about her grandfather learning the Deseret alphabet.

> My grandfather Josiah Leigh Wood learned to read with the Deseret alphabet. I can remember him telling me he learned to read when he was a boy, but he could not read the books I had in school. It didn't make sense to me at the time and I thought he must be quite stupid but now I can understand. He learned [to read] in the Deseret alphabet books, and it was a totally foreign language to learn to read English even though he was speaking it all the time.[3] It must have been very confusing for children then.

If few people remember the Deseret alphabet today, what is the verdict on its effect? Was it one man's ill-considered fancy or the hope of a man who dreamed of a perfect society?

Various historians pass different verdicts on the alphabet. Remy calls its characters "as simple as they are inelegant."[4] Nash calls it "an impractical dream of a very practical man--a dream which failed."[5] On the other hand, Sudweeks titles it "an ingenious attempt to reform the written language of the West,"[6] and Weller and Reid label it as "an unusual accomplishment by a remarkable people."[7] Frisby sums up the impact of the Deseret alphabet in an interesting way. She explains that "to the historian, the Deseret alphabet is little more than a noble experiment. But to the folklorist it becomes another significant expression of that yearning found in the hearts of all people--the yearning for a more perfect and harmonious society."[8]

Brigham Young expressed his desire for a society not hindered by the imperfections of communication systems. He dreams:

> I long for the time that a point of the finger, or motion of the hand, will express every idea without utterance. When a man is full of [the] light of eternity, then the eye is not the only medium through which he sees, his ear is not the only means by which he understands.[9]

Young is not alone in his belief in a pure form of communication. In the Bible, Zephaniah 3:9 states:"For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." Young is one of the many who through time have longed for a "more perfect and harmonious" means of communication.

The responsibility for teaching students to understand written communication lies on reading teachers. Such professionals often look for ways to make reading easier and simpler to learn. Therefore, attempts at improving written communication, attempts like the Deseret alphabet, should have a message for reading teachers.

Firstly, these attempts convey the message that teachers need to respect students' frustrations. When students such as Jerry--who was mentioned in Chapter 1--complain about English orthography, their protests are not merely ignorant grumblings but valid complaints. Throughout history, many philosophers have sought a simpler means of communication. Furthermore, English orthography does have many inconsistencies. Secondly, teachers need to help students recognize the validity of their struggle with English orthography. They should help students deal with frustration and helplessness in the face of orthographic inconsistencies. Casual reference to earlier attempts at orthographic reform may help students realize that they are not alone. If

students know the motivation for such reforms, the successes and failures of such attempts, and the result of these attempts, they may better understand the limitations of orthographic reform. If they understand the problem clearly, they may be able to cope with it with less frustration.

When students complain about the inconsistencies of English orthography, reading teachers should remember that such frustrations reflect a similar desire of many in the profession--a desire for an easier way to understand written communication. In accordance, the Deseret alphabet was also an expression of the universal yearning for a better means of communication.

References in Chapter 6

[1]Monson Interview.

[2]Jennie Larsen to Susan Grover dated May 19, 1982.

[3]Larsen letter.

[4]Remy, p. 212.

[5]Nash, p. 41.

[6]Sudweeks, p. 804.

[7]Sam Weller and Ken Reid, "The Deseret Alphabet: An Unusual Accomplishment by a Remarkable People," True West, Oct. 1958, p. 10.

[8]Frisby, p. 244.

[9]Journal of Discourses, vol. 1 (1854), p. 71.

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Appendix A

TABLE OF COMMON ENGLISH SPELLINGS

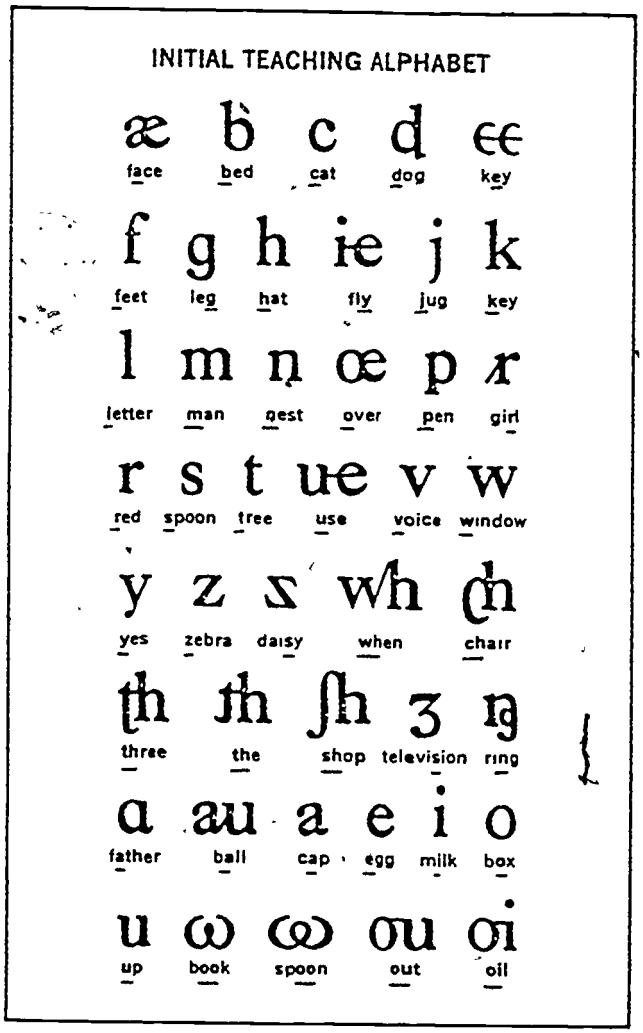
This chart is taken from the American College Dictionary.

ACD SYMBOL	SPELLING	EXAMPLES
a	a, ai	hat, plaid
a	a, ai, ao, au, ay, ea, eh, ei, ey	ate, rain, gaol, gauge, ray, steak, eh, veil, obey
a	a, aı, ay, e, ea, ei	dare, chair, prayer, there, wear, their
a	a, e, ea	father, sergeant, hearth
b	b, bb	bed, hobby
ch	ch, tch, te, tı, tu	chief, catch, righteous, question natural
d	d, dd, ed	do, ladder, pulled
e,	a, ae, ai, ay, e, ea, eı, eo, ie, oe, u	any, aesthetic, said, says, ebb, leather heifer, leopard, friend, foetid, bury
e	ae, ay, e, ea, ee, ei, eo, ey, i, ie, oe	Caesar, quay, equal, team, see, deceive people, key, machine, field, amoeba
f	f, ff, gh, ph	feed, muffin, tough, physics
g	g, gg, gh, gu, gue	give, egg, ghost, guard, demagogue
h	h, wh	hit, who
i	e, ee, i, ıe, o, u, ui, y	England, been, if, steve, women, build busy
i	ai, ay, ei, ey, i, ie, uy, y, ye	aisle, aye, height, eye, ice, tie, buy, sky, lye
j	ch, d, dg, dge, dı, g, gg, j	Greenwich, graduate, judgment, bridge soldier, magic, exaggerate, just
k	c, cc, cch, ch, ck, cq, cque, cu, gh	car, account, bacchanal, character, back, acquaint, sacque, biscuit, lough, kill, liquor
l	l, ll	live, call
m	chm, gn, lm, m, mb, mm, mn	drachm, paradigm, calm, more, limb, hammer, hymn
n	gn, kn, mn, n, nn, pn	gnat, knife, mnemonic, not, runner
ng	n, ng, ngue	pneumatic, pink, ring, tongue
o	a, o	wander, box
o	au, eau, eo, ew, o. oa, oe, oh, oo	hautboy, beau, yeoman, sew, note, road, toe, oh, brooch, soul, flow
o	a, ah, al, au, aw, o. oa, ou	tall, Utah, talk, fault, raw, order, broad, fought
oo	eu, ew, o. oe, oo, ou, u, ue, ui	maneuver, grew, move, canoe, ooze, troupe, rule, flue, fruit.
oi	oi, oy	wolf, look, should, pull oil, toy
ou	ou, ough, ow	cut, bough, brow
p	p, pp	pen, stopper
r	r, rh, rr, wr	red, rhythm, carrot, write

ACD SYMBOL	SPELLING	EXAMPLES
s	c, ce, ps, s, sc, sch, ss	city, mice, psychology, see, schism, loss
sh	ce, ch, ci, psh, s, sch, sci, se, sh si, ss, ssi, ti, chsi	ocean, machine, special, pshaw, sugar, schist, conscience, nauseous, ship. mansion, tissue, mission, mention, fuchsia
t	ed, ght, phth, pt, t, th, tt	talked, bought, phthisic, ptomaine, toe, thyme, bottom
th	th	thin
th	th, the	then, bathe
u	o, oe, oo, ou, u	son, does, flood, couple, cup
u	eau, eu, eue, ew, ieu, iew, u, ue yu, yew, you	beauty, feud, queue, few, adieu, view, use, cue, yule, yew, you
ur	er, ear, ir, or, our, ur, yr	term, learn, thirst, worm, courage, hurt, myrtle
v	f, ph, v, vv	of, Stephen, visit, flivver, choir,
w	o, u, w	quiet, well, choir
y	g, i, j, y	lorgnette, union, heallehujah, yet
z	s, sc, ss, x, z, ss	has, discern, scissors, Xerxes, zone
zh	g, s, si, z, zi	dazzle garage, measure, division, azure,
e	a, ai, e, ei, eo, i, ia, o, oi	brazier alone, mountain, system, mullein, dungeon, easily, parliament, gallop,
r	ar, er, ir, or, our, ur, yr	porpoise, curious, circus liar, father, elixir, labour, augur, martyr

Appendix B

Initial Teaching Alphabet (ITA)



THE DESERET ALPHABET.

THE DESERET ALPHABET.

Long Sounds.

Letter.	Name.		Sound.
𐐀	e	as in	*eat.*
𐐁	a	"	*ate.*
𐐂	ah	"	*art.*
𐐃	aw	"	*aught.*
𐐄	o	"	*oat.*
𐐅	oo	"	*ooze.*

Short Sounds of the above.

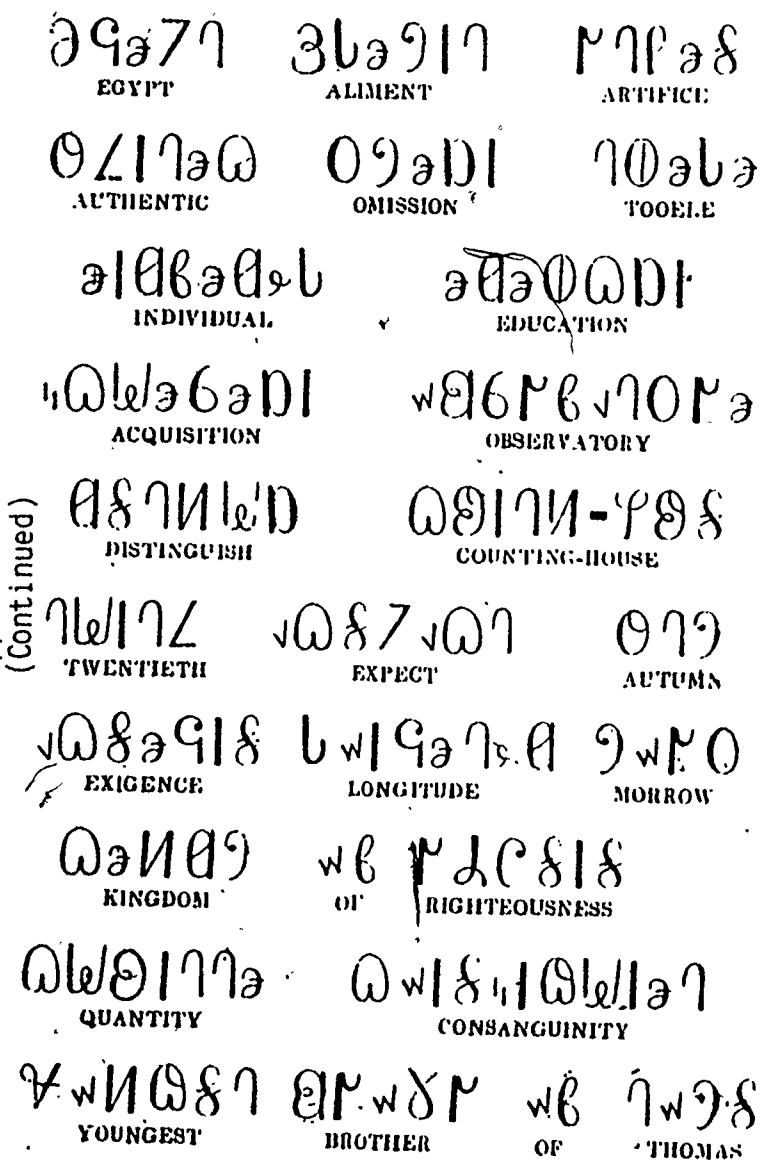
𐐆		as in	*it.*
𐐇		"	*et.*
𐐈		"	*at.*
𐐉		"	*ot.*
𐐊		"	*ut.*
𐐋		"	*book.*
𐐌	i	as in	*ice.*
𐐍	ow	"	*owl.*
𐐎	woo		
𐐏	ye		
𐐐	h		

Letter.	Name.		Sound.
𐐑	p		
𐐒	b		
𐐓	t		
𐐔	d		
𐐕	che	as in	*cheese.*
𐐖	g		
𐐗	k		
𐐘	ga	as in	*gate.*
𐐙	f		
𐐚	v		
𐐛	eth	as in	*thigh.*
𐐜	the	"	*thy.*
𐐝	s		
𐐞	z		
𐐟	esh	as in	*flesh.*
𐐠	zhe	"	vision.
𐐡	ur	"	*burn.*
𐐢	l		
𐐣	m		
𐐤	n		
𐐥	eng	as in	*length.*

Appendix C
The Deseret Alphabet

This 38 character version of the Deseret alphabet is printed in the introduction to the Deseret Book of Mormon.

WORDS OF TWO OR MORE SYLLABLES.



WORDS OF ONE SYLLABLE.

Appendix D
Alphabet Comparison Table
(Beesley, 1975)

	I.P.A.	Stout	Remy	Watt	Haskell *	Speller **	News	Books	Benn Pitman
1	i								ɛ
2	ei								ɑ,ą
3	a								q
4	ɔ								e
5	ou								ə
6	u								ɑ
7	ɪ								i
8	ɛ								e
9	æ								a
10	ɒ								o
11	ʌ								u
12	ʊ								ɯ
13	aɪ								i
14	aʊ								ɤ
15	ɔɪ								ʊ
16	ju								ų
17	j								γ
18	ω								ω
19	h								h
20	ʔ								ʔ

*Thales H. Haskell had the habit of dropping his r's before consonants.

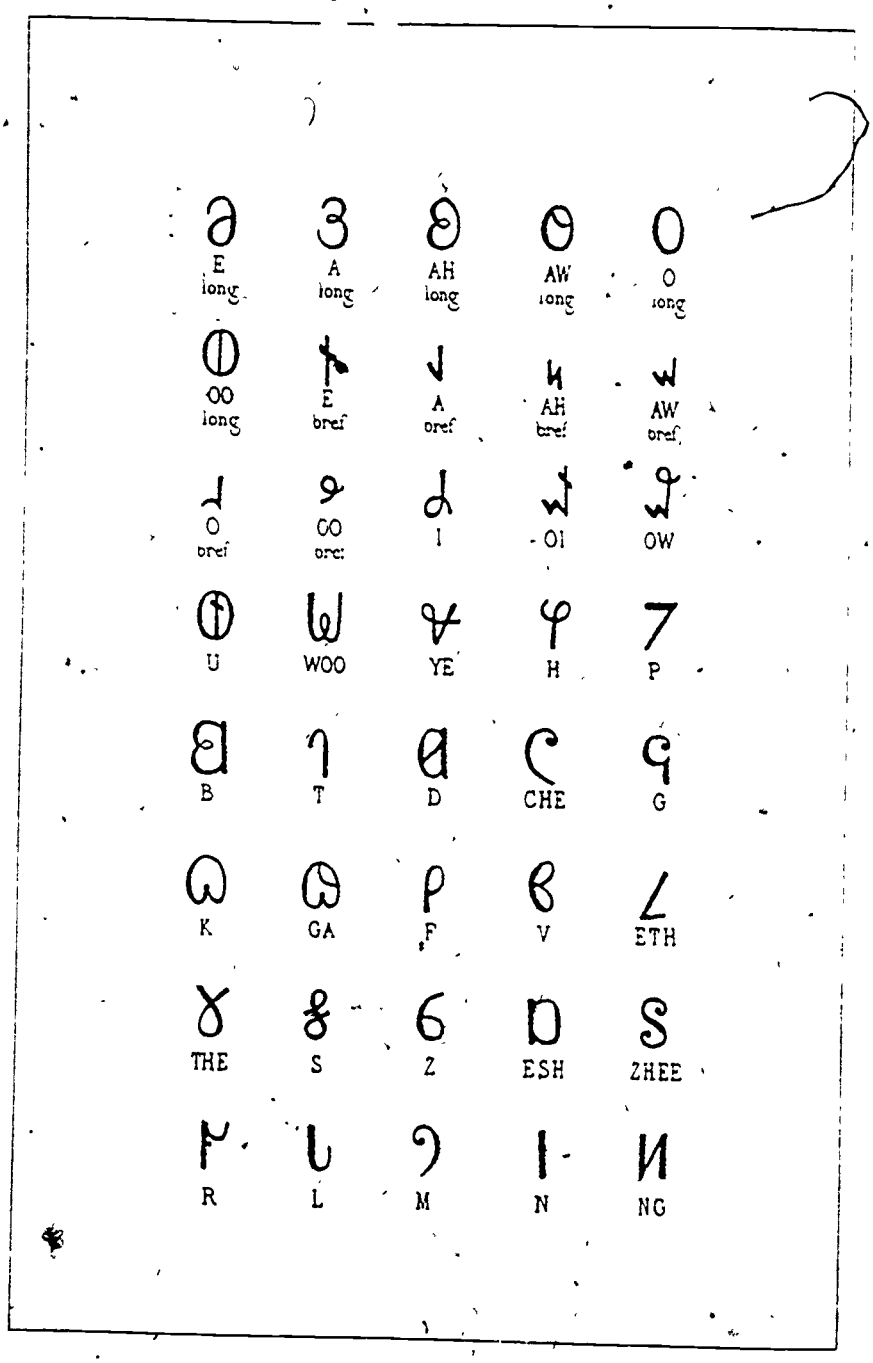
**This is an undated manuscript "The Deseret Phonetic Speller" in the Vault of the L.D.S. Archives.

These comparisons are only approximate. Spellings vary widely in the early manuscripts.

Appendix D
(Continued)

	I.P.A.	Stout	Remy	Watt	Haskell Speller	News	Books	Benn Pitman
21	b							b
22	t							t
23	d							d
24	tʃ							ʧ
25	dʒ							j
26	k							k
27	g							g
28	f							f
29	v							v
30	θ							th
31	ð							th
32	s							s
33	z							z
34	ʃ							sh
35	ʒ							zh
36	r							l
37	l							r
38	m							m
39	n							n
40	ŋ							ng
41	hw								hw
42	ɝ								er
43	ɚ								ar
44	ə								e,a

Appendix E



Alphabet des Mormons

The Mormon Alphabet

The alphabet above is a version taken from Remy and Benchley (1861, p. 185). It was printed in San Francisco in 1856 and is considered to be the first printing of the Deseret alphabet.

Appendix F

EXERCISES

IN

PHONOGRAPHY.

DESIGNED TO CONDUCT THE PUPIL TO A PRACTICAL ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE ART.

[CALLED "THE PHONOGRAPHIC CLASS BOOK."]

BY G. D. WATT.

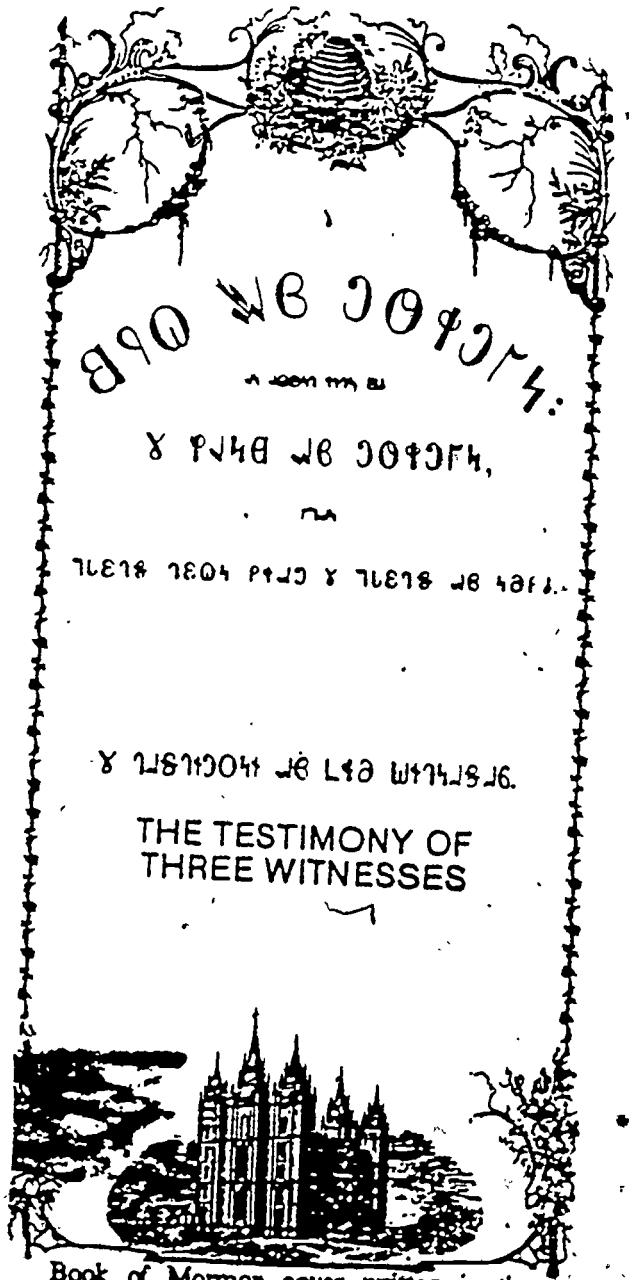
"Who that is much in the habit of writing, has not often wished for some means of expressing by two or three dashes of the pen, that which, as things are, it requires such an expenditure of time and labor to commit to paper? Our present mode of communication must be felt to be cumbersome in the last degree; unworthy of these days of inventions we require some means of bringing the operations of the mind, and of the hand, into closer correspondence."

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY:
W. RICHARDS, Printer.

1851.

Note the quote in the middle of this title page. It restates Watt's desire to simplify English orthography.

Appendix G

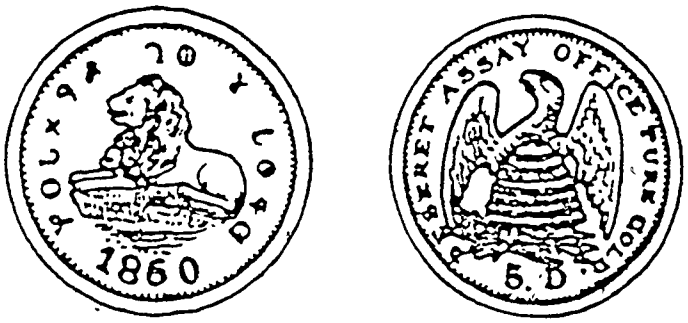


Book of Mormon cover written in the special divinely inspired Mormon language called "Deseret."

This pamphlet cover reflects the opinion that the Deseret alphabet was a secret Mormon code.

Appendix H

The First Issue of the New $5 Gold Piece

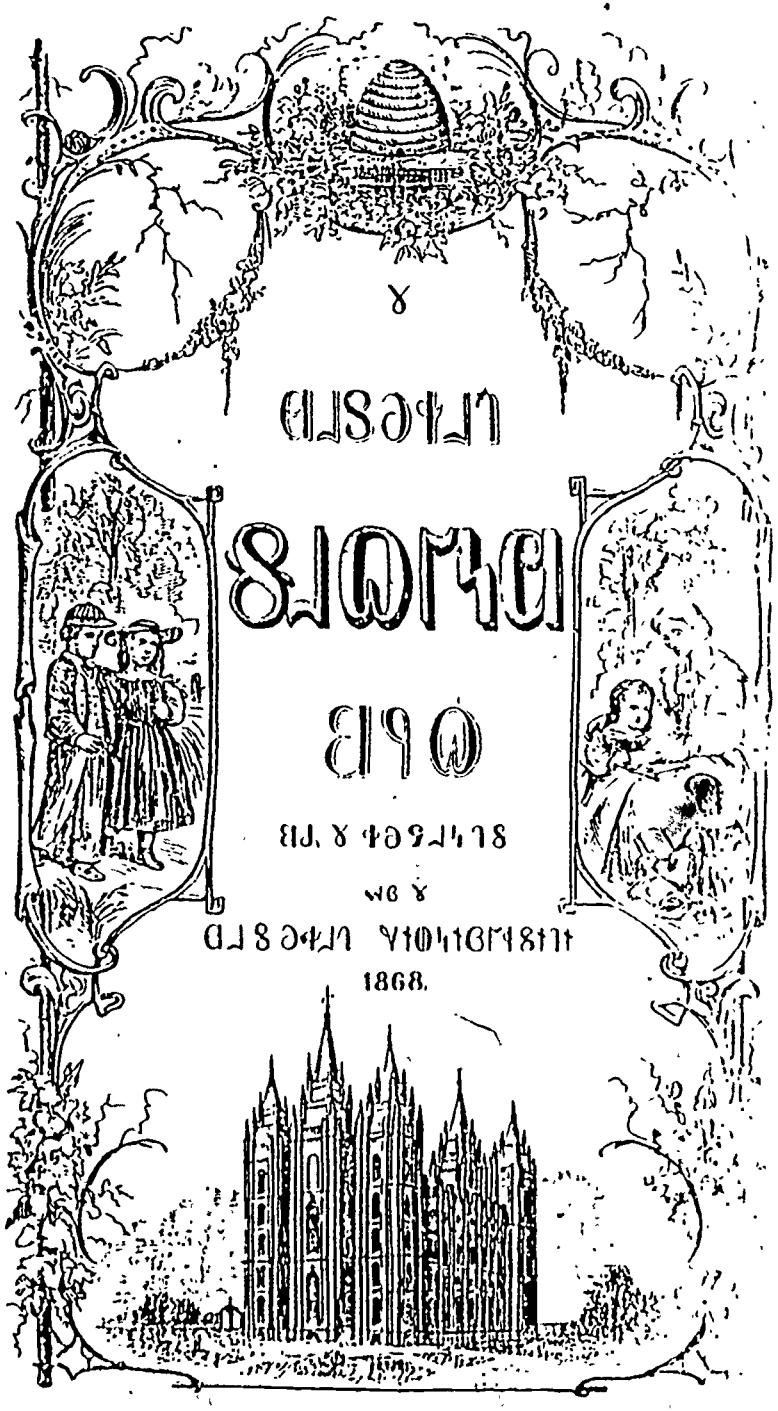


Obverse Reverse

Courtesy of The Deseret News

This coin had on one side the inscription "Holiness to the Lord" in Deseret characters.

Appendix I



The cover of the Deseret First and Second Books have similar pictures. Each had a pronunciation key on the first page. These copies are from the Deseret Second Book.

Long Sounds.			Letter	Name.	Sound.
Letter.	Name.	Sound.	𐐐		p
𐐀	e	as in *eat.*	𐐑		b
𐐁	a	" *ate.*	𐐒		t
𐐂	ah	" *art.*	𐐓		d
𐐃	aw	" *aught.*	𐐔		che as in *cheese.*
𐐄	o	" *oat.*	𐐕		g
𐐅	oo	" *ooze.*	𐐖		k
Short Sounds of the above.			𐐗		ga...ac in...*gate.*
𐐆		as in *it.*	𐐘		f
𐐇		" *et.*	𐐙		v
𐐈		" *at.*	𐐚		eth..as in *thigh.*
𐐉		" *ot.*	𐐛		the " *thy*
𐐊		" *ut.*	𐐜		s
𐐋		" *book.*	𐐝		z
Double Sounds.			𐐞		esh..as in..*flesh.*
𐐌	i	as in *ice.*	𐐟		zhe " *vision.*
𐐍	ow	" *owl.*	𐐠		ur " *burn.*
𐐎	ye		𐐡		l
𐐏	woo		𐐢		m
𐐐	h		𐐣		n
			𐐤		eng.as in.*length.*

Appendix I
(Continued)

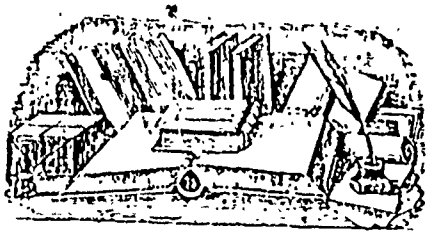
ᏓᏗᏕᏓ I.

ᏓᏥᏚᏓ ᏁᏐ ᏚᏍᏁ ᏍᏗᏓ.

ᏉᏐᏂ ᏄᏓᏍᏚᏓᏁᏓ ᏚᏐ ᏚᏗᏑ ᏕᏓᏓ ᏑᏕᏚᏑᏑᏓ ᏁᏐ ᏓᏥᏚᏓ ᏉᏕᏚ ᏓᏗᏕᏓᏂ ᏓᏓ Ꮙ ᏈᏥᏚᏕᏁ ᏕᏑᏙ, ᏕᏚ ᏓᏕ ᏚᏗᏍᏓ ᏁᏐ ᏕᏍᏕᏓᏓ Ꮙ ᏕᏗᏙᏁᏍᏓᏍᏁ ᏕᏑᏙ. ᏕᏥᏁ ᏓᏕ ᏑᏕᏚ ᏚᏗᏑ ᏓᏗᏗ ᏕᏓᏓ ᏁᏕᏑᏓ,— ᏓᏕ ᏁᏓᏐᏁᏓᏂ ᏚᏗᏑ ᏓᏗᏗ ᏕᏓᏓ ᏗᏁᏁ ᏁᏐ ᏓᏥᏚᏓ, ᏁᏥᏚᏚᏗᏁᏕ, ᏓᏁ ᏋᏕ Ꮥ ᏍᏗᏓ ᏁᏐ ᏁᏥᏚᏓ ᏕᏗᏑ Ꮥ ᏈᏓᏐ ᏓᏗᏕᏓᏂ ᏓᏓ Ꮙ ᏈᏥᏚᏕᏁ ᏕᏑᏙ, ᏗᏓᏍ ᏚᏍᏍ ᏉᏗᏍ ᏗᏑᏗᏓ, ᏕᏍᏈᏐᏚ ᏁᏕᏑᏓᏓ ᏓᏗᏕᏓᏂ ᏓᏓ ᏉᏓᏕ ᏕᏑᏙ. Ꮙ ᏁᏕᏚᏓᏓᏁᏕ ᏗᏑ ᏄᏓᏍᏚᏓᏁᏓ ᏚᏐ ᏑᏗᏓ ᏚᏍᏍ ᏍᏗᏓ, ᏈᏍᏓ ᏁᏚᏕᏓᏍᏁ ᏗᏑ ᏉᏗᏍ.

ᏓᏗᏕᏓ II.

Ꮙ ᏁᏗᏓ.



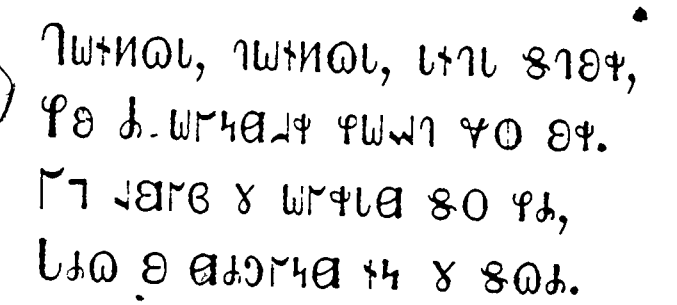
ᏕᏍ ᏚᏓᏁ ᏍᏓᏉ Ꮥ ᏁᏗᏓ. Ꮙ ᏁᏗᏓ ᏓᏂ ᏗᏑ ᏑᏚᏕᏁ ᏔᏓᏐᏕ. ᏕᏍ ᏑᏗᏓ ᏋᏕᏑ ᏓᏐᏓ ᏕᏚ ᏓᏐᏁᏕ, ᏕᏓ Ꮙ ᏔᏓᏐᏕ ᏗᏑ Ꮙ ᏁᏗᏓ. ᏐᏍᏗᏓ ᏍᏍ ᏍᏓᏈ ᏁᏐ ᏁᏐᏑ ᏍᏓᏉ ᏕᏚ ᏈᏚᏓᏍᏁᏂ ᏚᏐ ᏓᏓᏑ ᏈᏕᏚ ᏗᏍᏕ, ᏍᏍ ᏋᏕ ᏕᏓᏁ ᏗᏁ ᏚᏐᏋ, ᏗᏓᏍ ᏁᏐᏑ ᏍᏓᏉ ᏉᏗᏍ ᏕᏓ ᏋᏕᏓᏂ ᏗᏑ Ꮙ ᏁᏗᏓ, ᏗᏓᏍ ᏁᏗᏓ ᏉᏗᏍ ᏐᏓ ᏍᏍ ᏍᏓᏈ ᏉᏗᏍ ᏁᏐ ᏓᏐ. ᏐᏍᏗᏓ ᏍᏍ ᏚᏗᏑ ᏓᏥᏚᏓᏍᏁ ᏁᏐ ᏚᏍᏍ, ᏍᏍ ᏍᏑᏍ ᏋᏓᏕᏐ ᏓᏥᏚᏓ ᏁᏐ ᏚᏓᏁ.

Appendix J

LESSON XLV.

The picture of children on the seasaw accompanied a lesson in the Deseret First Book on recreation.

Appendix K
(Continued)



The poem is "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" written in Deseret characters. In the second book it is called "The Stars." (taken from Samuel C. Monson, "The Deseret Alphabet" Ideas of Order (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1978), p. 248.)

THE BOOK OF MORMON:

AN ACCOUNT

WRITTEN BY THE HAND OF MORMON

UPON PLATES

TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHI.

Translated by Joseph Smith, Jun.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED FOR THE DESERET UNIVERSITY
BY R[illegible] ELL BROS.
1869.

The above page is the title page of The Book of Mormon in Deseret characters. Below is the testimony of the three witnesses and the testimony of eight witnesses as translated by Orson Pratt into the Deseret characters.

BE IT KNOWN UNTO ALL NATIONS, KINDREDS, TONGUES, AND PEOPLE, UNTO WHOM THIS WORK SHALL COME, THAT WE, THROUGH THE GRACE OF GOD THE FATHER, AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, HAVE SEEN THE PLATES WHICH CONTAIN THIS RECORD, WHICH IS CALLED THE BOOK OF MORMON, AND WE KNOW THAT THEY HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED BY JOSEPH SMITH, JUN., FOR WE HAVE HEARD HIS VOICE, AND WE KNOW THAT HE HATH TRANSLATED THEM BY THE GIFT AND POWER OF GOD.

AND WE DECLARE WITH WORDS OF SOBERNESS, THAT THE GLORY OF THE WORK AND THE GLORY OF THE BOOK BE UNTO THE FATHER, AND THE SON, AND THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH IS ONE GOD. AMEN.

OLIVER COWDERY,
DAVID WHITMER,
MARTIN HARRIS.

THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES.

BE IT KNOWN UNTO ALL NATIONS, KINDREDS, TONGUES, AND PEOPLE, UNTO WHOM THIS WORK COMES, THAT JOSEPH SMITH, JUN., THE AUTHOR AND PROPRIETOR OF THIS WORK, HATH SHOWN UNTO US THE PLATES OF WHICH HATH BEEN SPOKEN BY THE PROPHETS, THAT THE PEOPLE OF NEPHI MADE AND KEPT IN THEIR LANGUAGE, WHICH PLATES ARE TRANSLATED BY THE GIFT AND POWER OF GOD, FOR HIS VOICE UNTO US HATH DECLARED IT; THEREFORE WE KNOW WITH A PERFECT KNOWLEDGE THAT THE RECORD IS TRUE. AND WE ALSO TESTIFY THAT WE HAVE SEEN THE ENGRAVINGS WHICH ARE ON THE PLATES; AND THE APPEARANCE THEREOF IS BEAUTIFUL AND GLORIOUS TO BEHOLD; AND WE KNOW THAT HE HATH TRANSLATED THAT WHICH HE HATH TRANSLATED; AND WE BEAR RECORD UNTO THE WORLD THAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HANDLED THESE PLATES, WHICH HAVE THE APPEARANCE OF GOLD; AND AS MANY OF THE LEAVES AS HE HATH TRANSLATED WE HAVE HANDLED WITH OUR HANDS; AND WE BEAR RECORD THAT THE ENGRAVINGS THEREON HAVE BEEN WROUGHT UPON BY THE SKILL OF THE ENGRAVER; AND WE BEAR RECORD THAT THE BOOK HAS BEEN TRANSLATED BY THE GIFT AND POWER OF GOD, FOR WE HEARD THE VOICE OF THE FATHER BEAR RECORD THAT IT WAS TRANSLATED BY HIS POWER; AND WE KNOW THAT THE TESTIMONY WHICH WE BEAR IS TRUE; AND WE KNOW THAT IF WE ARE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST WE SHALL RID OUR GARMENTS OF THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN, AND BE FOUND SPOTLESS BEFORE THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST, AND SHALL DWELL WITH HIM EVERMORE. AND THE HONOR BE TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH IS ONE GOD. AMEN.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,
JACOB WHITMER,
PETER WHITMER, JUN.,
JOHN WHITMER,
HIRAM PAGE,
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.,
HYRUM SMITH,
SAMUEL H. SMITH.

Appendix L
(Continued)

Above, the table of contents for the book of Mormon was translated into Deseret characters. Below can be seen the first page of the text or the introductory verses of "The First Book of Nephi."

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
First Book of Nephi	1
Words of Nephi	1
Nephi's Narrative	2
Lehi's Dream	3
Lehi Warns the Jews of Jerusalem .	3
Nephi Seeks Truth	7
Sariah murmurs at Lehi's God .	8
Obedience of the Two Sons . .	9
Nephi and his Brethren . . .	10
Nephi's Vision, and Mind of Man	11
Lehi's Dream and Vision, etc. .	12
Death and Gift Thereof . . .	14
The Tree of Life	15
Lehi's Counsel to Sons . . .	16
The Messiahship of Christ .	17
The Promises and Prophecy . .	18
Lehi's Exhortation	19
Destruction of Jerusalem .	20
Their Stubbornness	20
Words of Isaiah and Your Gospel Times	21
Israel to be Gathered	22
Their Land Free of Satan's Power .	22
Jesus Christ's Ministry . . .	22
Be Perfect	23
Nephi's Vision of Future Days .	24
Future Judgments (Rev.) . .	24
Nephi's Writings Sealed . . .	25
Isaiah's Words	26
Nephi's Vision of Tree Explained . .	27
Destruction Great (Rev.) . . .	27
Nephi Made King	28
Obedience Their Peril . . .	29
Rebellion Grew.	29
Lehi and Nephi Leave . . .	29
Nephi Ordained to Build a Ship .	30
Nephi Taught to Build and Direction Given	33
Ore Found and Smelted . . .	34
Obedience in a Ship	34
Nephi Broke: Ship Guided . .	34
Sariah and Nephi Healed . . .	35
Jews as of Old	36
Cows, Oxen, and Camp . . .	36
Journey's Ending.	37
Four Wives to Ishmael	42
Seeking Food at Bountiful . . .	44
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Ships Fail and Sail on a . . .	48
Coast so to us	49
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Nephi Teaches to Brethren .	50
Coast's Teachers as Jews Jews	51
Lehi Blind	51
Nephi's Life Son	53
Nephi Separated from Laman . .	53
Nephi Must-	53
Sons of Mosiah's	54
Jacob, etc., Consecrated . .	54
Old Every Jews	54
Journey's Words (to George) . .	55
Engage to a Wife	59

THE BOOK OF MORMON.

AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY THE HAND OF MORMON:

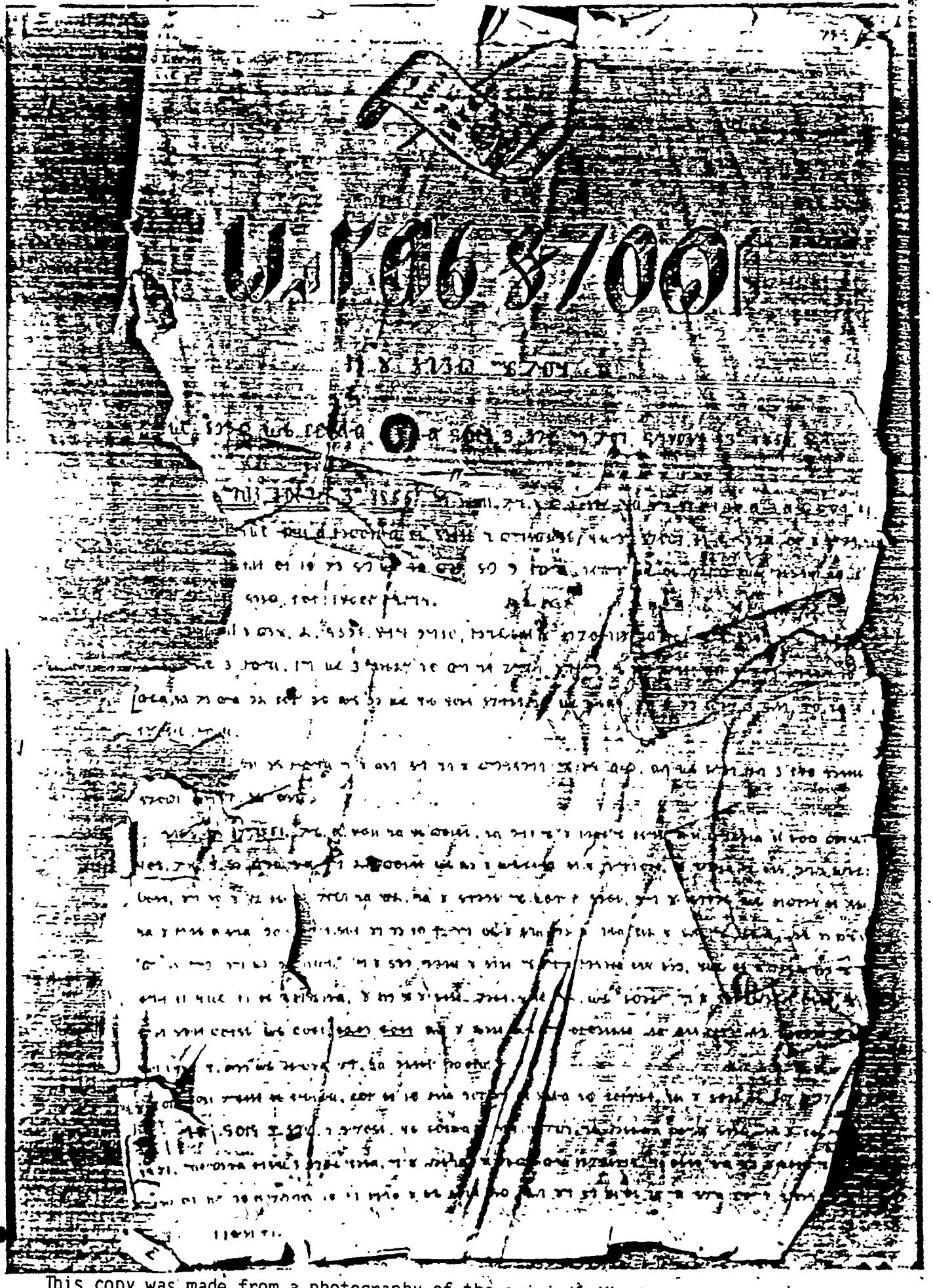
UPON PLATES TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHI.

CHAPTER I.

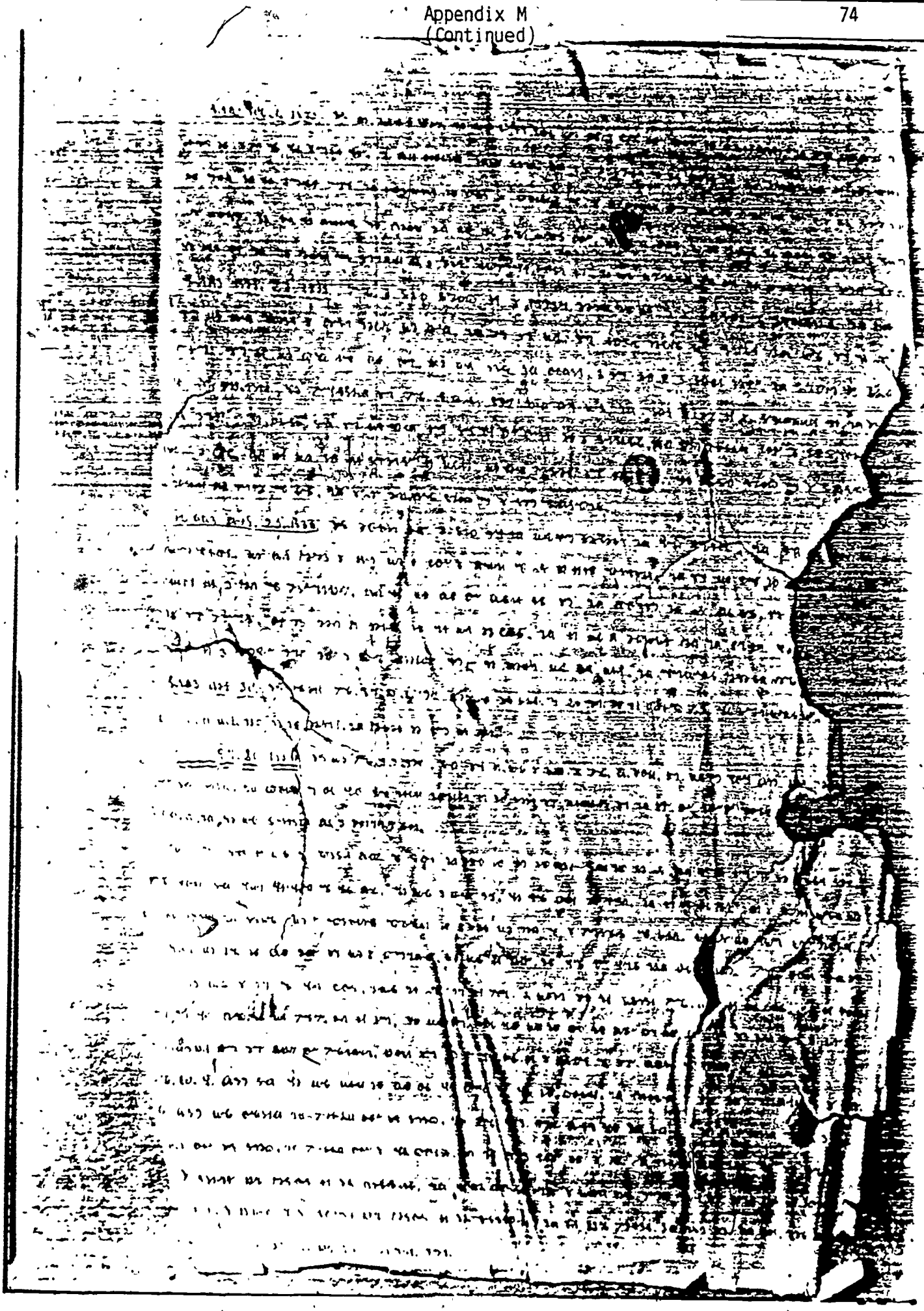
An account of Lehi and the wars Nephi, and the four sons, (according to a journey in a desert,) Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. A Lord warns Lehi to depart in the land of Jerusalem, because he testifieth unto the people concerning their iniquity; and he and his family depart into the wilderness. His record. His father Lehi dwelleth in a tent. Nephi, his younger brother, and others, are exhorted of the Lord. An account of Ishmael and his family. Nephi taketh the daughter of Ishmael to wife. They murmur in the wilderness. The murmurings and rebellions of Laman against Nephi. The ship. They arrive in the promised land, and call it Bountiful. They go up into the wilderness. Nephi maketh plates of ore. His father, Lehi, prophesieth concerning the future of his descendants. Their travels in the wilderness. The Messiah and redemption spoken of. Nephi is taught the things of his father in a vision. The tree of life. The virgin Mary. The Lamb of God. The testimony of three witnesses. The destruction of the wicked. The book sealed.

1 I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I do make a record of my proceedings in my days.

2 Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians, and I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.



This copy was made from a photography of the original Minutes of the Parowan Stake--1855 which is in the Archives at Brigham Young University.



Holiness to the Lord
Words Spoken

In the Stake of Parowan

(which) stake was founded Elder George A. Smith at Parowan January 13th 1851.

Sunday November 3ed 1855. This evening Pres. J.C.L. Smith said that there ought to be a book kept in which should be recorded, all sayings of consequences whether spoken in the stand, or the (seat) ought to pay some one to keep some record, together with all other (records) relating to the and stake, for future reference.

(Considering) the (case) I, James Henry Martineau, realizing the importance and truth of the (saying)(have) now such a record. Not with a desire to (gain)(any) profit therefrom, as , but from a desire to (do) good, and pray God my Father to bless me with his holy spirit and with wisdom, that I may keep a just, true, and a (faithful)(record).

(began) this record on the date (set)(at) the commencement of this book. But (was) first read a few sayings spoken before this date.

Sunday, May 17, 1851 President B. Young and his council, and many of the (leaders) of Israel (meeting) convened in log council house. Pres. H.C. Kimball, said that Iron county will be the wealthiest in the territory, on account of its mineral wealth: also that though the earth is parched and dry, and the streams of water are small, yet the streams will increase in size and the rains descend more then they now are, that all the land may be tilled (by) the (saints) of Zion, until

they shall say "give us room, that we may dwell". At the same meeting the city of Parowan received its name, which is the injun name of the valley in which it is situated. The name of the city, previous to this was "Louisa". At the same session also, the first city council was chosen, vis-a-vis. But the city was not organized under its charter until the November following when William H. Dame was elected mayor, and myself recorder.

The foregoing prophecy is fulfilled, for it now rains more than it used to formerly, and the soil is more damp.

And George A. Smith an apostle, who founded the city of Parowan, and presided over the stake until the fall of 1851, Advocated fencing a small field on the upland and making good improvement. He also said that the course of ought never to be to run into the little salt creek, but that it ought all to be siphoned over the to irrigate it.

Sunday Nov 4 1855 This date, William Heap, who was last fall cut off the church for going to California, and had come back to of his family here. And being invited to the stand, said that commencement of his and apostacy was in neglection to attend to his family, and neglection to obey the councils of the authorities from which the devil led him by x . He said he desired to begin and do his first works over, and had felt as though it was his duty to begin where he left off, and who regained his standing in a place where he lost it. He was baptized at noon and confirmed a member of the church.

Appendix M
(Continued)

April 5, 1981

Mr. Chad J. Flake
c/o Harold B. Lee Library
BYU, Provo, Utah 084602

Dear Mr. Flake,

Thank you for sending me a copy of this document for my collection.

The tatered paper is a summary of some events in Parowan. The last entry is Jan. 20, 1856. The "Board of the Parowan Stake" (ten pages) has an entry Jan. 3, 1856. They don't seem to have been written in haste, perhaps they were copied from some other record in January of 1856.

My computer projects have priority--but I will put aside my spare hobby time for this work.

I will need some months to proceed in this way. I thought to list some things for your interest.

1. These papers are written in the earlier type of Deseret alphabet. I am using a copy of your N1288.8 D457 1854 (original in vault.)

The original was made with a slight printing error. corrected, its = y B = ve this can be seen in the example on that original copy, and this is the form being used in actual usage on the Documents.

2. My primary time is spent trying to figure out the individual tiny letters, from script correcting lines, blurs and the recorders individuality in writing.

Many letters or words can not be discovered as to their proper meaning as a result. The resolution on some entire pages is also poor. Perhaps only parts can be cyphered.

Often loops are absent and the connecting lines make them appear to be different letters, throwing me off the track. Once I gain in experience, things should become easier.

This alphabet lends itself much better to printing than script.

3. Abbreviations are being used in the text of the original papers.
4. Very helpful is the prior identification of some tiny script letters on the first page of the minutes. Here's a rough draft of a part of the tatered paper.

Robert Bingham translated the minutes from the Parowan Stake into traditional English orthography in 1981. By reading the letter and transcription record following, one can glean the story of this project and get a feel for the process of translating Deseret characters into English. (original in vault at Brigham Young University)

HOLINESS TO THE LORD

WORDS SPOKEN IN THE STAKE OF PON (Parowan)

----------Stake was founded _____LD George A. Smith at Pon. January 13th 1851.

_____November 3rd 1885. This evening _____J.C.L. Smith said that there ought to be a book kept in _____ which should be recorded, all things of consequence wheater spoken in the stand, or the s__t(seat), _____ ought to pay (them or some) (one?) to keep some record. Together with all other records relating to the _____ stake. For future (reprint or reference).

Near the bottom of the other side of this tatered paper I cam across this name and encountered my first complete line.

PRES. W. H. DAME SAID HE WAS WILLING TO DO ALL HE COULD IN HIS NEW CALLING.

The entry is under a Jan. 20, 1956 date.

This apparently after the Dec. 30, 1855 death of Pres. John C.L. Smith mentioned just above this entry.

The original Record in Parowan in 1851 at its founding, was a James Lewis. Its possible he may have been related to Samuel & Tarton Lewis--my ancestors who were also there at the founding.

It is time consuming, tedious, and there will be errors, but I am glad to participate in this work which touches me so closely.

If a transcription from the Salt Lake Archieves appears, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Bob Bingham
P. O. Box 3785
Van Neys, California
91407

The Parowan Stake

MINUTES - 1855

Transcribed under the direction of Bro. Chad Flake, curator, Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

Transcribed by Joseph Robert Bingham between March 30 and September 18, 1981; a descendent of some Parowan pioneers.

Processing of typed pages by Helen Ruth Walker, formerly a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, who lost much when choosing against her parent's religious beliefs and becoming a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Parowan Stake minutes 1855 were recorded in the Deseret Alphabet by James Henry Martineau - counsiler of Pres. J.C.L. Smith as indicated in the document. The drawings on the document were likely drawn by Martineau as he was also an artist The Life and Times of Joseph Fish, Mormon Pioneer 1970, page 67.

Correct spelling for the names of individuals came from that book, but also John Doyle Lee, Juanita Brooks - 1979.

Words enclosed thus - ( ) are likely the correct ones based on the fragments that can be identified. Parentheses are also used by Martineau in the document. The key for the alphabet being used in the original document is in BYU Special Collections. M188.8 DU57 1854 (original in valut) [sic]. This differs from the alphabet key in the 1868 Deseret Alphabet printed books.

The following symbols were found to be present in the original document and are not to be found in either of the above alphabet key sources:

W = OI / W = OW / Ⓓ = U Near the end of the transcribing a still third alphabet key was found by Helen Walker in the Los Angeles City Library which records these actual symbols and is attached. As there is a reference in the original document as to the abandonment of these symbols on October 20, 1855, we can be certain the attached variant alphabet was in use previous to that date.

In addition, Martineau sometimes, though not always, combined letters of the Deseret Alphabet to form an inovative type letter. There are ten types of these letters as follows:

𐐁	= 𐐁𐐥	(BN) as in 𐐁𐐨𐐬𐐣𐐥	(benediction)	𐐁𐐥𐐨𐐬𐐣𐐥
𐐂	= 𐐂𐐩	(PR) as in 𐐂𐐪	(Pres.)	𐐂𐐩𐐪
𐐃	= 𐐃𐐭	(TL) as in 𐐃𐐭	(until)	𐐃𐐭𐐭
𐐄	= 𐐄𐐭	(BL) as in 𐐄𐐭	(able)	𐐄𐐭
𐐅	= 𐐅𐐭	(PL) as in 𐐅𐐭𐐯𐐭	(principle)	𐐅𐐭𐐯𐐭
𐐆	= 𐐆𐐬	(HZ) as in 𐐆𐐭𐐬𐐭𐐯	(history)	𐐆𐐬𐐭𐐬𐐭𐐯
𐐇	= 𐐇𐐩	(TR) as in 𐐇𐐭𐐭	(trial)	𐐇𐐩𐐭𐐭
𐐈	= 𐐈𐐩	(THER) as in 𐐈𐐩	(other)	𐐈𐐩𐐩
𐐉	= 𐐉𐐩	(AHR) as in 𐐉𐐩𐐬	(ark)	𐐉𐐩𐐬
𐐊	= 𐐊𐐩	(DR) as in 𐐊𐐬𐐩𐐬𐐬	(boundries)	𐐊𐐬𐐩𐐬𐐬

Listed below are some particularities of Martineaus' handwriting which may prove invaluable to the cyphering of further Martineau Deseret Material as it may appear:

𐐬 (WR) This shows a variation of the 𐐩 (R).

𐐩 (R) another variation of the 𐐩 (R).

(i)

(i) All are variations of the i sound as in ship

(i)

(i)

(z) very often seen - an unclosed (z) which appears mistakenly to be an (L).

(esh) often seen - an open (esh) appearing to be two separate letters

(B) often seen - an open (B) appearing to be two separate letters

(ow) a tiled (ow) mistakenly appearing to be a (ga)

(i) uncrossed variation of i sound appearing to be a (N

(k) unclosed variation of the (k) appearing to be a (woo)

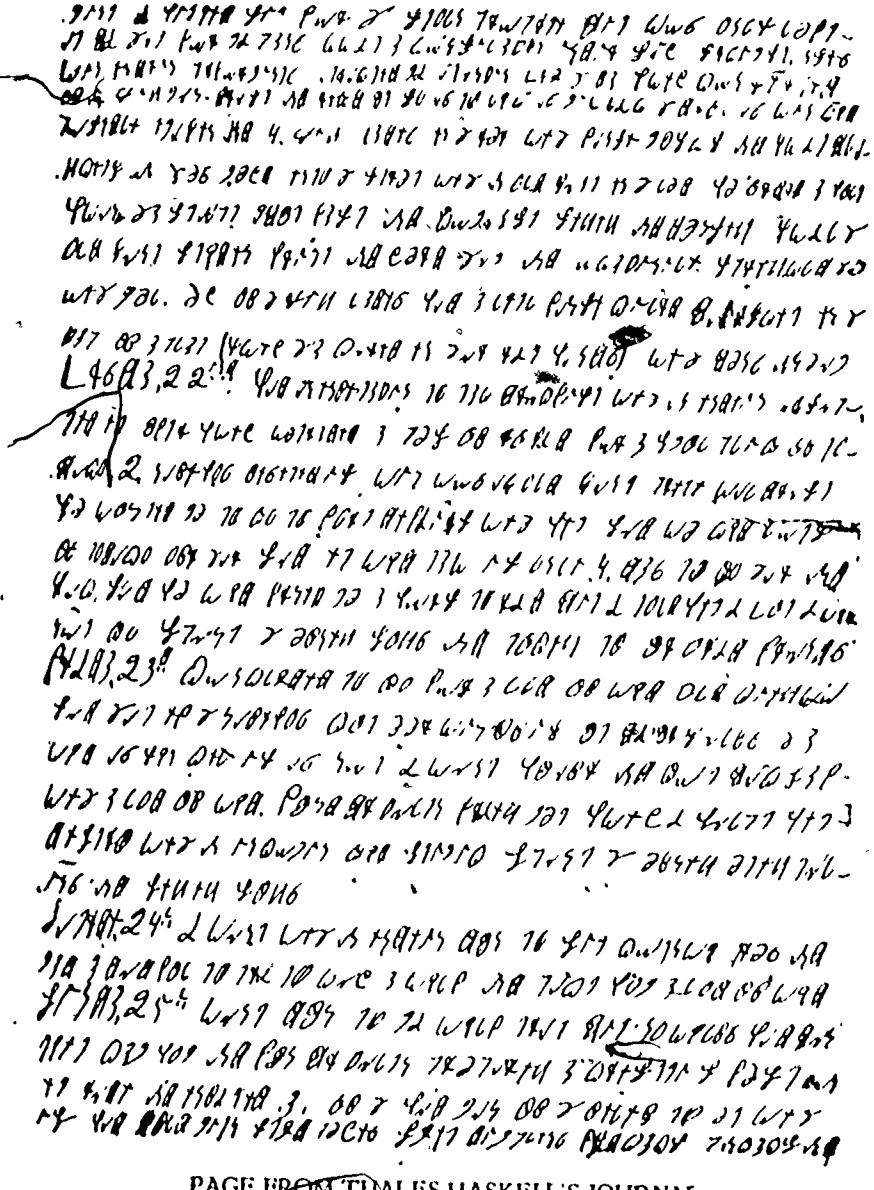
(ga) a variation of the (ga) without a loop appearing to be a (k)

The reference to the "adultury" of Samuel & Sara Lewis in which they were temporarily disfellowshipped is an apparent reference to attempted polygomy without the permission of Brigham Young. See John Doyle Lee - Juanita Brooks 1979, page 188 for a similar case in Parowan two months later.

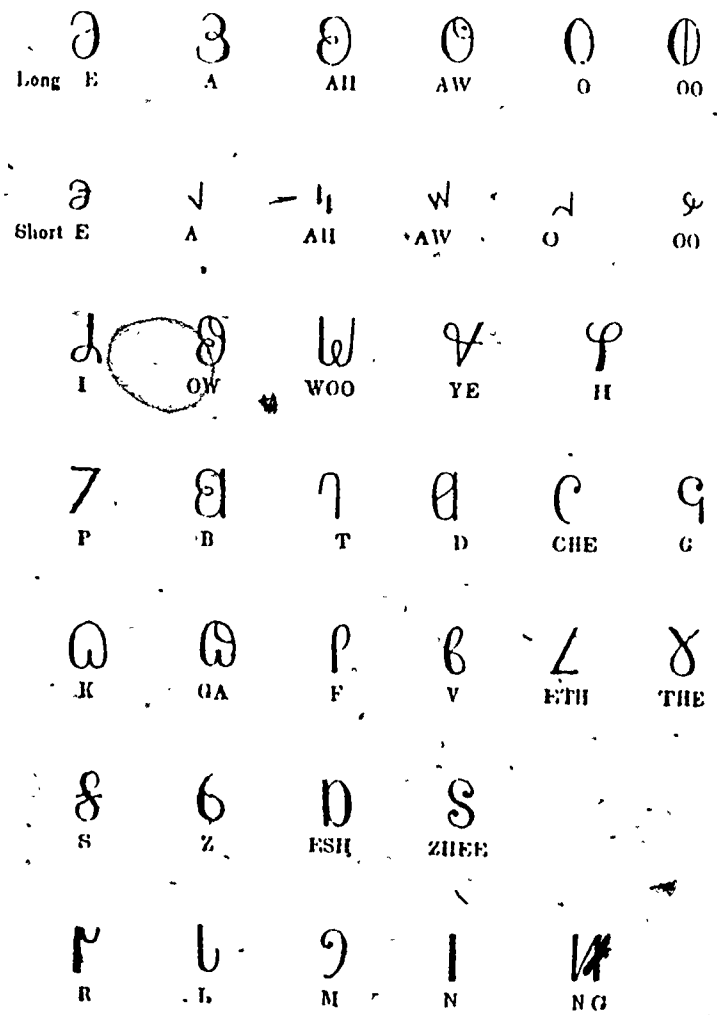
In reference to "Black John" being one of those present at the bedside of Pres. J.C.L. Smith at his death. This may have been the former servant of a Mrs. Robinson who when migrating to Utah reportedly came to Parowan with such an attendant. This was related to me by a Robinson decendant I met while visiting Parowan recently.

--September 15, 1981

J. Robert Bingham
P.O. Box 3785
Van Nuys, California 91407-3785

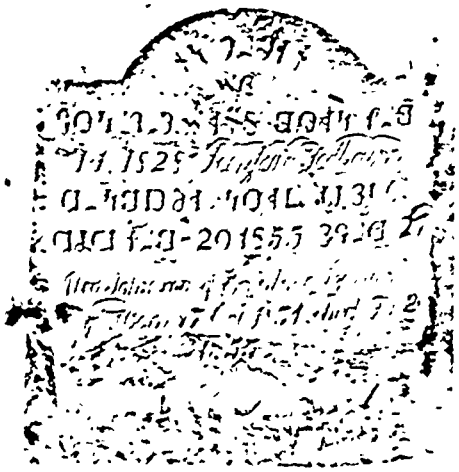


PAGE FROM THALES HASKELL'S JOURNAL
(December 21-25, 1859)
Written in the Deseret Alphabet



(taken from Utah Historical Quarterly)

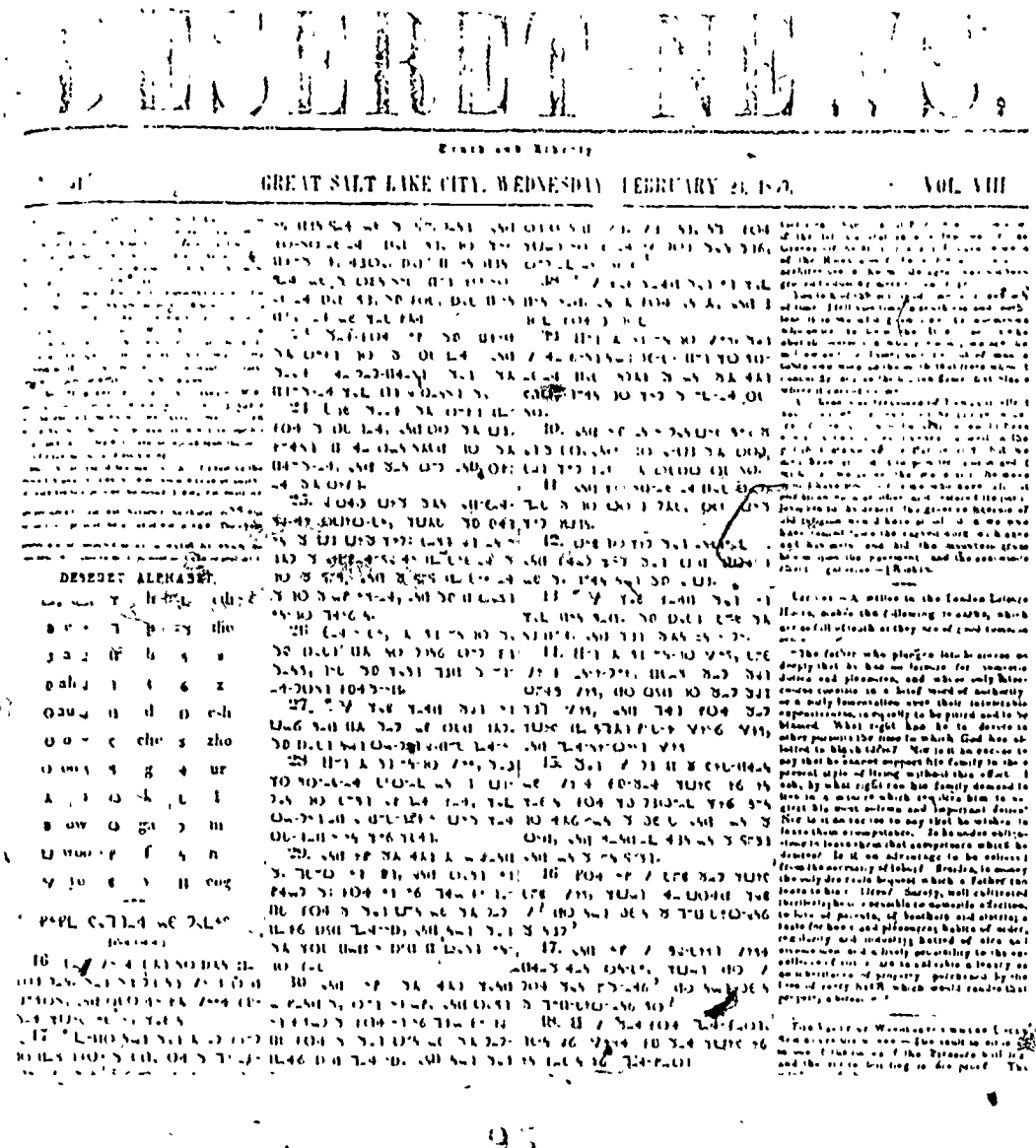
Appendix O



The inscription on John Morris' tombstone is in the Deseret characters. (taken from True West).

Appendix P.

The Deseret News first printed a text in the Deseret alphabet in February 1859.



DESERET ALPHABET.