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The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839. Edited by Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen. Salt Lake City, Utah, The Church Historian's Press, 2008. lxi, 506 pp. ISBN 978-1570088490, \$49.95.

Kenneth P. Minkema

With the long-anticipated appearance of the first volume of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, a landmark project in American religious history and in Mormon Studies commences. Containing the scribal and printed remains of the founder and organizer of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, when completed, will amount to some thirty-two volumes—a phenomenal undertaking in an age when the magisterial, multivolume printed edition is an endangered species. Under the general editorship of distinguished historians Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman, the edition is arranged in six series: Journals, Documents, Revelations and Translations (which will include the printer's manuscript of *The Book of Mormon*), History, Legal and Business, and Administrative. Documents included in this collection are those created by Joseph Smith or by staff whose work the Prophet directed, as well as papers received, collected, and generated by his office.

The *Journals* series begins this ambitious project in American religious history with the unaltered and unabridged transcripts of each of Smith's known journals. A general introduction contextualizes the five journals presented here, highlighting the diverse roles these journals played—recording movements, visits, decisions, letters, disciplinary cases, revelations, and personal details—and the features that distinguish each journal from the others. Especially interesting is the role of Smith's scribes, such as Oliver Cowdery, Frederick Williams, and Parley Pratt, who took dictation from Smith, kept entries in his name, or committed their own memoranda relating to Smith and church activities to the record books. The journals are sporadic, with many lacunae, reflecting the unsettled nature of the movement at this time, subject to animosity, lawsuits, forced relocations, and violence. Through it all, what emerges from these documents is not only the historical consciousness that Mormons possessed, but also the importance of the impulse for community—"gathering," as Smith and his followers called it. This impulse, formative for church, community, family, and self, was at once the strength of the movement but also its bane, because of the fear that gathered Mormons engendered among others.

The first journal, from 1832, is the book that contains the most entries by Smith himself; with the exception of only a few contributions in Smith's hand, subsequent journals were kept by scribes. The second journal (1835–36) is by far

the largest of the five, preserving a wide range of activities though focused around the construction and dedication of the House of the Lord in Kirtland, to which Smith lent an incredible amount of energy. The third journal (March–September 1838) bridges the move from Ohio to Missouri, where Smith established a new church headquarters. The next journal, covering the two succeeding months of 1838, a time of increasing legal threats against Smith and the church, was kept by scribe James Mulholland, probably to keep track of Smith’s whereabouts. Finally there is the 1839 “Minute Book,” covering the period from Smith’s escape from a Missouri jail and arrival in Illinois, up to the point when he and other representatives were preparing to depart for Washington, D.C., to meet with political leaders, including President Van Buren, for a redress of their grievances.

There has been no lack of voluminous histories of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, produced by its church historians and others; indeed, the Mormons have been more conscious of their own history, arguably, than nearly any other religious movement. None of the earlier narratives and documentary collections, however, had access to the range of manuscripts, ephemera, and other sources that the staff of the Joseph Smith Papers enjoys, and none employs the modern standards that will surely make this the authoritative edition. Readers need not raise a skeptical eyebrow when they see this edition is produced by LDS members and printed by an LDS press. While this project is meant in part to be a resource for its own constituency, there is an impartiality and professionalism here in the tone, subjects, and sources that bode well for this series and edition as a reliable resource for all. What some readers may quibble with is the short shrift that some important questions have been given, such as Joseph Smith’s association with a band of treasure-seekers (p. xix)—though the argument can be made that this phase of Smith’s life predates this collection—or the dissension within the leadership that led to the 1838 excommunication of several significant leaders (pp. xl, 231).

The texts are presented as “verbatim transcripts,” preserving original wording, spelling (which varies greatly, reflecting the different levels of education among Smith and his scribes), punctuation, capitalization, insertions, deletions, and later interpolations. (It is the intention of the Smith Papers to make digital scans of the original documents available on the project’s website, josephsmithpapers.org.) Original line lengths are not preserved. Handwriting changes are noted along with other textual features. Entries and words in Smith’s own handwriting are printed in boldface.

Annotation is copious. Though the editors do not pretend to present a “unified narrative,” besides editorial headnotes to each source, additional headnotes do fill in gaps between and within journals. Footnotes utilize a broad variety of primary and secondary literature. References to contemporary sources range over newspapers, territorial, county, and state records, genealogical records,

correspondence, diaries, and iterations of journal entries in Mormon scriptures. The notes also incorporate an impressive array of multidisciplinary monographs, articles, theses, and dissertations on American history and from the rapidly growing body of titles in Mormon Studies.

The primary sources provided in this volume, and to be included in subsequent ones, are supplemented by an array of reference aids. These include, placed at appropriate locations through the text, timelines, maps, images of individuals, locations, and sample manuscript pages. A series of appendices, entitled "Reference Materials," presents chronologies, a geographical directory, more maps, a pedigree chart, a biographical directory (identifying individuals named in the texts), ecclesiastical organizational charts, a glossary of terms, and other aids.

While this is not a born-digital project, the Smith Papers staff intends to mount digital, searchable versions of the transcripts on its site in the near future. Ideally, the archive will be mounted on an XML-based, open-access platform that will allow for cross-searching with other digital archives, whether already online or in process. This interoperability will greatly enhance scholars' abilities to frame questions of both greater breadth and detail, and acquire almost instantaneous results.

Some readers will be disappointed about the lack of an index in this premier volume. However, the intention of the editors is to include a cumulative index in the third and final volume of the *Journals*. In the meantime, a printable, searchable index for volume 1 is available at the project's website.