

# *THEY LIE IN WAIT TO DECEIVE*

by Robert L. & Rosemary Brown

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## CHAPTER TWO

### WAYNE L. COWDREY: DESCENDANT OR DECEIVER?



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## OBJECTIVES

- To prove that Wayne L. Cowdrey frequently claims to be a **descendant of Oliver Cowdery**. (Oliver Cowdery was the main scribe of Joseph Smith in translating the Book of Mormon. He was an important figure in the early LDS Church.)
  - To prove that Wayne L. Cowdrey's claims to being a descendant of Oliver Cowdery is **false**.
  - To prove that Oliver Cowdery had **no posterity**. He had six children, five of whom died in infancy. The surviving child was a daughter who lived to maturity, married, and died "without issue" (children).
  - To prove that Wayne L. Cowdrey joined the LDS Church under **false pretenses** so he could claim to be a "former Mormon" — and not because of spiritual conversion, the reason most people join a church.
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## CHAPTER TWO

# WAYNE L. COWDREY: DESCENDANT OR DECEIVER?

### WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF DECEIT?

“the act of representing as true what is known to be false; deceiving; lying; the misleading of a person.”

“the quality of being deceitful.”

SYN. — deception, cunning, fraud, trickery, hypocrisy.

Definition by Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary,  
Unabridged Second Edition.

It is a serious matter to accuse someone of deceit, or of being a deceiver. Yet, according to Webster's definition, Wayne L. Cowdrey qualifies on both counts. **And what's worse, he does it in the name of God and Christianity!** The three researchers and “Dr.” Walter Martin want to be sure to inform the LDS, and warn the non-LDS, of the fallacies and deceit of the doctrine of the LDS Church — that was the purpose (they say) of their book. They try to accomplish their aims by using the tactics described below. **Really now — just who is deceitful?**

### DECEPTION #1 — USE OF FALSE GENEALOGY TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY OR TRUST

Wayne Cowdrey goes to great lengths to establish his genealogy as a direct descendant of Oliver Cowdery. Oliver Cowdery was a scribe to Joseph Smith, the founder of the LDS (Mormon) Church, in translating most of the Book of Mormon — one of the standard works of the church. Almost anybody familiar with the early history of the LDS Church knows the name of Oliver Cowdery. He was the second Elder ordained in the Church and was an important figure in the restoration of the gospel to the earth. And Wayne Cowdrey wants everybody to know he is a **direct descendant** of Oliver Cowdery.

On page three of the book WRWTBOM (see p. 64), the authors are attempting to describe the production of the Book of Mormon. It reads: “His translation was said to be dictated to his friend, Oliver Cowdery,<sup>b</sup> and other scribes between 1828 and 1829.” **Notice the reference to footnote “b” in that sentence.** Footnote “b,” shown below, is included in their book to reassure the readers that, although the names are spelled differently, Wayne Cowdrey is still a **descendant of Oliver Cowdery**:

b“Oliver's last name was spelled Cowdery, while many of his

descendants today spell their last name Cowdrey, as does one of the co-authors of this book.”

On the back cover of their book (see p. 68), about the middle of the last paragraph, it refers to Wayne Cowdrey as a descendant of Oliver Cowdery:

“In early 1975, Wayne Cowdrey, a descendant of one of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, contacted Davis with information he had begun to compile.”

On p. 166 of WRWTBOM (see p. 65), Wayne Cowdrey’s relationship to Oliver Cowdery is mentioned again:

“One of us, Wayne Cowdrey, is a former Mormon descended from Smith’s scribe, Oliver Cowdery.”

It is very important to Wayne Cowdrey to be a descendant of Oliver Cowdery. He even told Henry Silver, the first handwriting expert, that he was a **direct descendant of Oliver Cowdery** (see Silver’s affidavit on p. 10). Perhaps he feels that it gives him more credibility. After all, wouldn’t you be impressed if a descendant of one of the important leaders of the LDS Church had reason to leave the Church? Being a descendant he must have real “inside” information. This is exactly what he would like you to believe. He not only quotes his genealogy frequently in his book, WRWTBOM, but he has used other sources to inform the public also.

The following information was supplied to these sources by Cowdrey and his associates. The emphasis is ours. Edward Plowman, in *Christianity Today*, mentioned that Wayne was a **direct descendant of Oliver**. That must mean he is a great-great-grandson of Oliver — possibly even great-great-great-grandson considering the time span from early 1800 to about 1946 when Wayne was born. Here is what Edward Plowman had to say in the magazine *Christianity Today*, July 8, 1977, in the article entitled “WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON?”: (emphasis ours).

“**One of the three California researchers, Wayne Cowdrey, is a direct descendant of Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Smith’s trusted aide. He left the church as a result of his research into the origins of the Book of Mormon.**”

From the *Los Angeles Times*, Metro Section, Thursday, June 30, 1977, by Russell Chandler (see p. 67), you read:

“The three young researchers are Baptists. **Cowdrey, a descendant of the Oliver Cowdery** said to have been a scribe of Joseph Smith, **was a Mormon for a short time**, he said. He and Scales, a delivery person for a drug company, are junior college graduates.”

THE CHRISTIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER, Third Quarter, 1977, directed by Walter Ralston Martin, states:

“. . . Wayne Cowdrey, Orange, Calif., who studied social science in college and is a **descendant of Oliver Cowdery**, confidant and scribe of Joseph Smith Jr., founder of Mormonism. Cowdrey, who was a Mormon, was searching for information on the founding of the Mormon Church to strengthen the bases for his belief when he began to discover inconsistencies and became concerned about the truth . . .”

### DEFINITION OF “DESCENDANT”

Let’s see what Webster’s dictionary has to say about the word “descendant.”

“An individual proceeding from an ancestor in any degree; offspring of a certain ancestor, family, group, etc.; as the descendants of Adam and Eve.”

For a person to be a descendant of a certain person, he must be a **direct descendant of that person**. To further clarify this then, Wayne L. Cowdrey must be a great-great-grandson, or great-great-great-grandson. Uncles, aunts, cousins, etc., aren’t included. This presents an interesting **dilemma** for Wayne.

### OLIVER COWDERY HAD NO POSTERITY!!!

### FIVE OUT OF SIX CHILDREN BORN TO OLIVER COWDERY DIED IN INFANCY OR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Even the **smallest** amount of research would have uncovered the history of Oliver Cowdery and his family. On p. 219-222 of the book **OLIVER COWDERY, SECOND ELDER AND SCRIBE**, by Stanley R. Gunn, Bookcraft, Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah, 1962, it tells of the birth of Cowdery’s six children: (p. 219-222 of the above book has been reproduced for you beginning on p. 70).

“To Oliver and Elizabeth were born six children, only one living to maturity. Maria Louise was born August 11, 1835 at Kirtland, Ohio and was married September 7, 1856 to Dr. Charles Johnson at Richmond, Missouri.

Other children were:

2. Elizabeth Ann, d. May 9, 1837 at Kirtland, Ohio at the age of five months and 25 days.
3. Josephine Rebecca, d. October 21, at Tiffin, Ohio, aged 6 years and seven months.
4. Oliver Peter, d. August 13, 1840 at Tiffin aged five days.

5. Adeline Fuller, d. October 13, 1844 at Tiffin aged 15 days.
6. Julia Olive, d. July 3, 1846 at Tiffin, aged 1 month 5 days.  
(p. 219)

“These names and dates are given by Maria Louise Johnson, the eldest daughter and they are confirmed by the Mehling history of the Cowdery family.” (p. 220)

**“SO IT WAS THAT OLIVER COWDERY HAS LEFT NO DIRECT DESCENDANT TO CARRY ON HIS FAMILY NAME.”** (p. 222, Emphasis ours)

Five out of the six children of Oliver and Elizabeth Cowdery died very young. If Wayne Cowdery was to be a direct descendant of Oliver, he then would have to be descended from that **ONLY** living, Maria Louise Cowdery, who married Dr. Charles Johnson. If that were so, Wayne Cowdery would be a Johnson — not a Cowdery. But we can simplify things because Maria Louise Johnson **“died without issue”**; meaning, she never had a child!!!

### **ONLY SURVIVING DAUGHTER OF OLIVER COWDERY DIES WITHOUT HAVING HAD ANY CHILDREN**

A newspaper article is quoted in the book, **OLIVER COWDERY, SECOND ELDER AND SCRIBE**, pp. 220-221, telling about Oliver’s wife and daughter. Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery lived on at Richmond after Oliver’s death and then she moved to Southwest City, Missouri. She died at the age of 77 years. An account of her death and that of her daughter who died 48 hours later appeared in the news:

“On Tuesday morning, January 7, at four o’clock a.m. Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Cowdery died at the home of Dr. Charles Johnson of this city, at the advanced age of 77 years. She was born in New York State, and was a member of one of the early Mormon families. Her maiden name being Whitmer, her husband Oliver Cowdery was a man distinguished for his services to the church in the early days of that sect.

On Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m., forty-eight hours after the death of her mother, Mrs. Doctor Charles Johnson passed away to that bourne whence no terrestrial traveler ever returns. She was born in Kirtland, Ohio, on August 12, 1835, her maiden name being Maria Louise Cowdery, and came with her parents to Ray County, Missouri. In 1856 she married Dr. Johnson of Richmond, Ray County, and removed to this place with her husband ten years ago, where they have resided since. Mrs. Johnson although being of a retiring disposition was a genial friend and neighbor to all who knew her, devoted to her

husband and household and to her manifold domestic affairs. She was a believer in the creed of the reformed Mormon Church, which renounced polygamy at the time the Mormons went to Salt Lake City. Mrs. Johnson was the only living daughter and the title of valuable lands in Independence and Kansas City were bound up in her during her time, but death has released her family's claim as she died without issue."

### **WHY LIE ABOUT BEING A DESCENDANT OF OLIVER COWDERY?**

Wayne Cowdrey and his associates have gone to great lengths to convince people of his relationship to Oliver Cowdery. They obviously feel that it adds to the credibility of their book or they wouldn't keep reminding the reader that Cowdrey is "a descendant." Does being a descendant of one of the early church leaders somehow give one "inside information" by some magical process such as osmosis? Or maybe Cowdrey would like to impress the public that he has such good "inside information" (because he is a descendant) that his conscience demands that he reveal it even if it means turning against his own "flesh and blood"? Whatever the inference they are trying to create, **to them** there is a special significance to being a descendant of some important religious leader of the LDS Church. Wayne Cowdrey isn't the only one to use this tactic — it is popular with others, too. Consider a taped lecture made by Walter Martin on March 1, 1977, at Melodyland:

"Wayne Cowdrey and I are very close because he is a descendant of Oliver Cowdery, who allegedly wrote down the Book of Mormon that Joseph dictated. He is now a reborn Christian. I am a descendant of Brigham Young — successor to Joseph Smith, ruler of the Latter-day Saints Church — a born again Christian. Would anybody ever think that Cowdrey the scribe and Young the successor would stand together on the platform and expose the whole thing as fraudulent? Here we are, the irony of God is remarkable."

**THE TRUTH IS THAT WAYNE COWDREY IS NOT A DESCENDANT OF OLIVER COWDERY, AND WALTER RALSTON MARTIN IS NOT A DESCENDANT OF BRIGHAM YOUNG.** Martin is discussed in Chapter 3. The "irony" is that **they** are being exposed. **YES, THE IRONY OF GOD IS REMARKABLE!**

### **DOES COWDREY QUALIFY AS A DECEIVER?**

The definition of deceit at the beginning of this chapter was given as meaning **misrepresenting, deceiving, lying, misleading.** The synonyms are just as



descriptive. Did Wayne Cowdrey say anything to deceive you? Is Wayne Cowdrey what he pretends to be, or did he try to deceive you? Why do you think it is so important that he and Walter Martin be a descendant of a famous early Mormon leader? That they will **lie** about it shows it is pretty important to them! There is a term to explain their behavior — it's called **planned, deliberate deception**.

## **DECEPTION #2 — WAYNE L. COWDREY JOINS THE LDS CHURCH UNDER FALSE PRETENSES**

The sequence of events in 1975 and 1976 indicate that Wayne Cowdrey joined the LDS Church for reasons other than spiritual conversion. Consider these timely events:

1. Wayne Cowdrey and Howard Davis came together with their research "early in 1975."
2. Cowdrey "and his colleagues had concluded that Spaulding was the true author" of the Book of Mormon by June, 1975.
3. Wayne L. Cowdrey joined the LDS Church in December, 1975.
4. Cowdrey asked to have his name removed from the records of the LDS Church (excommunication) shortly after baptism. (See newspaper article, p. 67.)
5. Cowdrey was officially excommunicated from the LDS Church in June, 1976, barely six months after joining — long enough, however, to be able to say he is a "former Mormon."

Wouldn't it be dynamite for his new book if Cowdrey could not only be a **direct descendant of Oliver Cowdery**, but, also be a **former Mormon**. That should really make him an authority!

The three researchers are anxious for the reader to know why Cowdrey left the church. In the previously quoted article in *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, "Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?" by Edward Plowman, July 8, 1977, he mentioned the reason why Cowdrey left the LDS Church:

"He left the church as a result of his research into the origins of the Book of Mormon."

Also, in the previously quoted article in *The Christian Research Institute Newsletter*, Third Quarter, 1977 (Walter Martin's organization), it mentions that:

"Cowdrey, who was a Mormon, was searching for information on the founding of the Mormon church to strengthen the bases for his

belief when he began to discover inconsistencies and became concerned about the truth . . .”

Doesn't it sound as if he was a believer first, and then became disenchanted because of something he later found out. Let's consider the facts in their proper time frame.

### ACTIVITIES IN 1975

A **second** article was written by Edward E. Plowman in *Christianity Today* on October 21, 1977, about 4 months after Henry Silver's visit to Salt Lake. Here is a portion of that second article by Plowman (reproduced on p. 74). He begins by quoting Cowdrey: (Emphasis ours)

“He pointed out that he and his colleagues had concluded that Spaulding was ‘the true author of the majority of the Book of Mormon **fully two years before we had any handwriting evidence**, and our case is neither made nor broken on the basis of the handwriting question.’ Martin, who has worked closely with the three researchers, has maintained for years that much of the Book of Mormon is taken from Spaulding's writings.”

Cowdrey didn't know it at the time, but the phrase that he and his colleagues knew that Spaulding wrote much of the Book of Mormon “**fully two years before we had any handwriting evidence**” is absolutely devastating to his cause. June 28, 1977, was the date that Henry Silver, the first handwriting expert hired, and Wayne Cowdrey visited the archives in Salt Lake City. **This would mean that Dav, Cow, Sca definitely “knew that Spaulding wrote the Book of Mormon” some time before June, 1975.** (June, 1977, minus 2 years = June, 1975).

Actually they had accumulated a lot of information by “early” 1975 according to the paragraph on the back cover of their book. The back cover states: (Emphasis are ours.)

In late 1974, Dr. Howard Davis read Dr. Walter Martin's research on the origin of the Book of Mormon. An independent researcher who has contributed to numerous books, he immediately began his own investigation. **In early 1975** Wayne Cowdrey, a descendant of one of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, **contacted Davis with information he had begun to compile.** Comparing notes, their enthusiasm and determination grew. Later that same year, Donald Scales joined the team, contributing his expertise, knowledge and dedication to researching the truth about the Book of Mormon.”

1975 was an important year in the lives of the three researchers. In 1974 Davis read Martin's book and began an investigation. Cowdrey contacted Davis in **early 1975** with his information and the two researchers grew in enthusiasm and

determination. Later in 1975, Donald Scales joined the team making it now three researchers. With all their combined investigative knowledge and expertise, you would think that Cowdrey wouldn't have been able to get out of the church fast enough. However, **HE COULDN'T — HE WASN'T EVEN A MEMBER YET!** But that was only a temporary problem.

**WAYNE L. COWDREY  
JOINED THE LDS CHURCH IN DECEMBER, 1975  
AND WAS OFFICIALLY EXCOMMUNICATED IN JUNE, 1976**

Wayne Cowdrey obviously is a man that does not act true to his own convictions. His joining a church he does not believe in, which he is actively fighting against, is proof. The following affidavit was obtained by James R. Clark, a Mormon and friend of Wayne L. Cowdrey during the short time he was a member of the LDS Church.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MY PREVIOUS ACQUAINTANCE WITH

WAYNE L. COWDREY

Affadavit by James R. Clark

Friendshipper  
Orange 1st Ward  
Orange California Stake  
Orange, California

I became acquainted with Wayne Cowdrey as a result of my commitment to the voluntary "friendshipping" program of the Orange 1st Ward, Orange, California. Our Ward Mission Leader, at that time, introduced Wayne to me. I believe that he had previously mentioned that Wayne was believed to be a direct descendant of Oliver Cowdery.

After I got to know Wayne a little better, I asked him how he became interested in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. He said that he had gone to a bulletin board at college to check the listing of grades to see how he had done and a woman said to him, "Did you know that your name is spelled the same as Oliver Cowdery, a very important man in the history of the Mormon Church?" He said that he had never known much about the Mormon Church but became interested because of her remark and asked her more about the Mormon Church and genealogy. He said that she had encouraged him to check out his genealogy because it could be very important to him.

My recollection is that Wayne indicated that he had done some investigation and was pleased with his findings thus far. Because of my impression, I felt that such a historical relationship would be of interest to members of our Ward and consequently I alluded to his direct lineage on several occasions when I introduced him (i.e., that he was a direct descendant of Oliver Cowdery). One occasion I remember well was during the Elders Quorum Priesthood meeting. He appeared to be pleased at this and made no effort to correct me on this or any other occasion. I mention this because he later acknowledged that he could not find proof that he was actually a direct descendant when I questioned him directly about it in private. I had the strong impression that he wanted to avoid my question and also direct eye contact.

I also recall that our Ward Mission Leader at the time remarked more than once that Wayne was impatient to complete the lessons and to be baptized. I recall that he asked me how the Welfare Program and Tithing worked and afterward remarked that the Welfare Program was a good thing but that he had to think some more about the Tithing.

Giving Wayne the benefit of the doubt at the time, I thought that he might be naturally reticent or shy, rather than evasive or insincere, so I made a special effort to friendship him at church services and activities. On one occasion, I inquired about his college program. In our conversation, he mentioned that he was very interested in Parapsychology and had become acquainted with a man who claimed to have levitational and extra-sensory powers. To my surprise, he went on to explain that he had been to visit the man at his apartment where a strange phenomenon had occurred. (I won't go into all the details of my efforts at this point to caution him about the importance of concentrating on the message of the lessons and proper professional guidelines for the study of Parapsychology, especially since I hold a B.A. and M.A. in Psychology.)

As I recall, he was so excited about the event that he seemed not to really hear me and he visibly trembled as he talked. He went on to explain how the room shook and how an ash tray jumped off a table and smashed on the floor for no apparent reason. He also commented that the same man was inviting him to a seance which he was eagerly looking forward to. Wayne seemed to "tune out" my counsel and personal testimony.

The next time I saw Wayne after a sacrament service he excitedly asked me if he could talk to me privately. I invited him into the Jr. Sunday School room which was not in use at the time. As I feared, he quickly launched into an excited description of the events which had occurred at the seance. He was so excited that he visibly shook as he paced back and forth. I tried to terminate the conversation with a strong statement again of my testimony which Wayne seemed unable to focus on. While I said to myself that I should not give up trying to testify to him, I was discouraged very much about Wayne from this point on.

Within a very short time after Wayne was baptized, around Christmastime in 1975, I noticed that he was no longer attending church services. While I personally did not have a good feeling about Wayne being baptized, I decided to try once more to try to testify to him and encourage him to strive for a testimony. I called the telephone number he had given me. He indicated that he would be glad to see me. He was friendly to me when I arrived, but indicated in so many words that he had other interests and couldn't always attend church meetings any more. He was non-committal in response to my questions except to say that he would have something interesting to tell me about soon.

He did call me soon after this and asked me if I could come over to talk with him. After I arrived, he said that he wanted to explain some things to me and show me some materials which he had. He then proceeded to show me a copy of a purported report filed by a court clerk in New York which claimed that Joseph Smith had been convicted of "glass looking". He then brought forth a large booklet which he said some man had furnished him which was the work of a real expert on Egyptology and interpreting the hieroglyphics of the type which Joseph Smith claimed to translate by the power of God. He then stated that this expert proved that the symbols Joseph Smith used were not authentic.

He next launched into an excited explanation of how he was working with some men who had assured him that they had located an authentic copy of Solomon Spaulding's manuscript which contained many portions found in the Book of Mormon. He excitedly explained how arrangements had been made to purchase it for considerable money, but that it would be worth it because they planned to retain handwriting experts that would prove that most of the writings of Joseph Smith's scribes were actually Solomon Spaulding's handwriting.

He very confidently stated that this would be the beginning of the downfall of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and he was sorry but it had to be done because the Church was taking a lot of money from many people in the tithing program and it was wrong, and somebody had to put a stop to it. He also commented that he was invited to be a co-author of a book along with the men who were financing the purchase and fees of the handwriting experts and they expected to sell thousands of copies all over the world. (I must interject here my personal opinion that Wayne's manner left me with an overwhelming impression of boastfulness and ego satisfaction.) As though an afterthought, Wayne stated that he wanted to tell me what they were planning so that I could get out of the Church in time before its collapse, because he felt that I was an honest man who was trying to do the right thing for people and had been sincere and friendly to him. He conceded spontaneously that the Welfare Program of the Church was very good and that there were many good, loving members of the Church, but it still had to be done.

As a personal note, I would like to record the fact that I felt only pity for Wayne Cowdrey at this point and told him that I truly felt sorry for him because I discerned that he was being used by others for their purposes and that it appeared to me that he was primarily allowing his vanity and a promise of fame to completely blind him to the truth. I testified once more of the truthfulness of the restoration of the fullness of the Gospel through Joseph Smith and of my belief that the Church would roll forth through the earth as God intended, regardless of what he or anyone else did of this nature. That was the last I saw or heard from him. Wayne Cowdrey was excommunicated from the LDS Church in June of 1976.

*James R. Clark*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 James R. Clark  
 Orange, California

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF Los Angeles

ON May 25, 1983

before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State; personally appeared: James R. Clark

known to me  
 to be the person whose name is subscribed  
 to the within instrument and acknowledge that he  
 executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Signature

*Suzanne L. Thomson*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Suzanne L. Thomson

(name typed or printed)



When we refer to the previous James R. Clark affidavit, we find that Wayne Cowdrey was baptized around **Christmastime in 1975** (within a few days actually). How very interesting! I wonder why Dav,Cow,Sca failed to tell the public that Wayne had been researching the Spaulding theory for a **full year** with Howard Davis, and a good part of a year with Donald Scales **before** he asked for baptism into the LDS Church. Recall in the James R. Clark affidavit that Wayne was **most eager to be baptized**. He was in a hurry to get into the Church, and then when he was a member, he immediately “cooled off” and seldom attended church. Why was he so eager to be baptized? **The only explanation is that the three researchers needed Cowdrey to join the LDS Church so that they could use his “former membership” and his “relationship to Oliver Cowdrey” to convince an unsuspecting public that their work is authentic.**

Cowdrey mentioned how long he was a member of the church in several newspapers accounts. In the *Mesa Tribune* article June 29, 1977 (see p. 24), **it tells how long Cowdrey considered himself a Mormon:**

“Cowdrey, who left the Mormon church in 1976 a month after being baptized a member, said, ‘I’m trying to arrive at the truth.’ ”

Cowdrey also mentioned that he was in the LDS Church only a short time in the *Los Angeles Times*, Thursday, June 30, 1977 (see p. 67):

“The three young researchers are Baptists. Cowdrey, a descendant of the Oliver Cowdrey said to have been a scribe of Joseph Smith, was a Mormon for a short time, he said. He and Scales, a delivery person for a drug company are junior college graduates.”

This author gave a lecture in central Arizona. At a dinner in an LDS member’s home, just before the lecture, the subject of our next book came up. The names of Davis, Cowdrey, and Scales were mentioned. As has happened so very often in our research, the Lord leads us to information. A lady that sat right next to this author said, “Cowdrey? I knew of a Cowdrey when we lived in California. My husband helped teach a fellow by the name of Wayne Cowdrey in Orange, California, that was supposed to be a direct descendant of Oliver Cowdrey.” We obtained an affidavit from her which substantiates many of the statements made in the previous affidavit by James Clark.

AN AFFIDAVIT BY GLORIA L. ANDERSON  
TO MR. ROBERT L. BROWN  
RE: WAYNE COWDERY

Nov. 1, 1983

Never having been directly involved with any close association or fellowshiping of Wayne Cowdery during the time of his "conversion" and baptism, I, nevertheless, will rely on my memory to state facts about him that I remember and know to be true.

My late husband, Ray L. Anderson (he died Oct. 29, 1976), was a Stake Missionary in the Orange California Stake and was one of the missionaries who gave the Mission discussions to Wayne Cowdery, a man reported to be very anxious to be baptized. I was told that Mr. Cowdery was a direct descendant of Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Naturally it was exciting to some of us that this "relative" of Oliver Cowdery soon might become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Ray was never one to betray confidences of those whom he taught, whether it was in the capacity of missionary work or Home Teaching, or other such work. Consequently, I was not privy to very many of the details. The few times that he did confide in me, concerning Mr. Cowdery, were when he (Ray) began to be weary and discouraged at the turn of events.

At the beginning, Ray seemed quite pleased with the progress that was being made. However, as time went on he became quite distraught. Although Mr. Cowdery expressed a desire to be baptized, Ray asked that the decision be delayed because of Mr. Cowdery's seeming interest in some anti-Mormon literature being provided him by his friends, and less interested in Gospel truths. Ray felt that because of Mr. Cowdery's obsession with the anti-Mormon element as time went by, it was becoming increasingly difficult to enter Cowdery's home and feel the proper spirit that is so necessary when presenting missionary discussions. Through it all, Mr. Cowdery still expressed a desire to be baptized.

I don't know who made the final decision to go ahead with the baptism. I only know that Ray's "gut" feeling was to the contrary. Inasmuch as it was always my custom to accompany Ray to the Stake baptisms, I also attended the baptism of Wayne Cowdery. I do not remember for certain who performed the baptism. Ray assisted in the Confirmation.

Immediately after the Confirmation I stepped forward to shake Mr. Cowdery's hand to congratulate him. I shall never, ever forget that chilling experience. I can only describe it as a feeling of standing in the midst of cold, utter darkness. Mr. Cowdery's eyes shifted away from any direct contact. The Spirit of the Holy Ghost, that usually accompanies most Confirmations, was absent. I remember questioning in my mind, "Why did this man want to be baptized?" He obviously had no testimony. He was devoid of any spiritual expression. His decision to be baptized puzzled me greatly.

I never saw Mr. Cowdery at any Church meetings following his baptism. It's possible he attended and I didn't see him. However, after a short period of time, Wayne Cowdery sent the Bishop a letter, the contents of which espoused anti-Mormon information, assailing the divinity of Joseph Smith's calling. The Bishop gave the letter to Ray to read and he, in turn, let me read it. I am assuming the letter was returned to the Bishop, as I never saw it again... Nor have I ever seen or heard anyone about Wayne Cowdery since my move from California to Arizona, 6 years ago, up to the present time.

Gloria L. Anderson  
Gloria L. Anderson

STATE OF ARIZONA )  
                          ) ss.  
County of Yavapai )

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November, 1983.

My Comm. Expires Sept. 1, 1985

Lois Granger  
Notary Public

## SUMMARY

The three researchers have used planned, deliberate deception to try to build their attack on the beliefs of the LDS Church. It is this author's firm belief that these are the last days before the second coming of the Savior in his glory. **Surely men like these are the false prophets the Lord had in mind when he said that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."** (Matthew 24:24) It is obvious they are **not** on the Lord's side, for our Lord would never tolerate such deception. Now that you know whose side they are on, and that it takes **planned, deliberate deception** to fight the LDS Church, perhaps the church deserves an honest, open-minded investigation. Again, we hope that you will prayerfully read material about the LDS Church **from our sources** (not from hate groups) and let **our** missionaries explain the gospel. We would encourage you to study all religions prayerfully and with an open mind. Anti-groups are not the source of truth. **This author has never seen any anti-material on any religion that encourages you to use prayer and open-mindedness in your search for truth.** Indeed, most anti-Mormon ministers and their anti-Mormon propaganda teach that you can't trust prayer (prayer being the method stressed by LDS missionaries to obtain a testimony). Instead, they would rather have you believe their stories because "I am a direct descendant of Oliver Cowdrey," or Brigham Young, or somebody else; or because "I am a former Mormon." **It should be an insult to your intelligence that the three researchers think they can influence your mind merely because one of them carries the genes of an important person (which he doesn't anyway).** If you trust the Lord to reveal the truth to you, you won't need to waste your time on material against any religion.



**Page 3 in WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON**  
**Wayne Cowdrey is described as a descendant**  
**of Oliver Cowdery even though**  
**the names are spelled differently**

*Introduction / 3*

translated the mysterious symbols (he called them "reformed Egyptian")<sup>a</sup> on the golden plates. His translation was said to be dictated to his friend, Oliver Cowdery,<sup>b</sup> and other scribes between 1828 and 1829. This 275,000-word document is known today throughout the world as the first of the Mormon sacred books, *The Book of Mormon*. Each volume today is prefaced by the testimony of eight men who each claimed that they had seen Smith's golden plates. Three other signatures offer testimony that the men saw the plates and viewed and heard an angel of God assuring them of the truth of the book.

#### **Contested Origins**

Serious scholars have long contested this story of the origin of *The Book of Mormon*. From the first public circulation of Smith's story, controversy has raged as to the true source of the stories of America's past. It is scarcely possible to find an informed non-Mormon who puts any credence in the "official" story, and yet these non-Mormon critics differ among themselves as to the true story.

Basically, two theses are the most widely held. The first school of thought believes that Joseph Smith, Jr., was the author of *The Book of Mormon*, and that the entire production was one of his own imagination. Various ideas have circulated as to whether he took any other people into his confidence and enlisted their aid. (Some say only Oliver Cowdery, others say one or more of the scribes besides Cowdery, and still others say it was someone not otherwise associated with Mormonism.)

<sup>a</sup>Such a type of Egyptian is nonexistent, according to Egyptologists.

<sup>b</sup>Oliver's last name was spelled Cowdery, while many of his descendants today spell their last name Cowdrey, as does one of the coauthors of this book.



## Page 166 in WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON

Wayne Cowdrey is described as:

**Former Mormon Descendant of Oliver Cowdrey**

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Rigdon showed his clandestine manuscript. We have the testimony of those who placed Rigdon within reach of the Spalding novel at the time it was lost. We have the testimony of those who heard Rigdon allude to a "coming new religion." We have the testimony of those who knew that Rigdon and Smith were acquainted with each other long before Mormonism started, and long before Rigdon was "converted." We have the testimony of those who heard Rigdon preach Mormonism before his "conversion." The aggregate force of this testimony is overwhelming: *The Book of Mormon* was taken from Solomon Spalding's *Manuscript Found*.

In Appendix 8 we present parallels between Spalding's first novel, *Manuscript Story*, and *The Book of Mormon*. If there are numerous parallels between these two books, then it is certainly easy to see the connection between Spalding's literary concepts and *The Book of Mormon*. In the face of all this evidence, the Mormon Church contends that not a single such parallel exists, and that there is no connection at all between *The Book of Mormon* and the writings of Solomon Spalding. One of us, Wayne Cowdrey, is a former Mormon descended from Smith's scribe, Oliver Cowdrey. Wayne Cowdrey was told by the Mormon Church that there is not one single parallel between the surviving Spalding work (his first novel) and *The Book of Mormon*. This claim sparked his curiosity. If true, Cowdrey could not use *Manuscript Story* as a key to unlock the mystery surrounding the origin of *The Book of Mormon*. But Davis' study revealed to Cowdrey that there were not just a few parallels between these two works, but scores of parallels! After discovering these parallels, Cowdrey made a firm resolution to leave the Mormon Church, and he also mentioned these parallels at his "trial of excommunication."

# Added Support Seen for Challenge to Mormon Text

BY RUSSELL CHANDLER  
Times Religion Writer

A handwriting analysis expert said Wednesday he is satisfied that photocopies of several pages he had been asked to examine from the Book of Mormon are "true copies" of originals preserved in Mormon archives in Salt Lake City.

Amid vigorous denials from officials of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the three Southern California researchers who asked for the examination said the expert's conclusion further supports their challenge to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, one of the church's sacred writings.

Their contention is that part of the Book of Mormon was written by a Congregationalist minister and novelist named Solomon Spalding (sometimes spelled "Spaulding"). Spalding died 10 years before Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Church, is said to have received the revelations from God through "Egyptian hieroglyphics" on golden plates.

The analyst, Henry Silver of Los Angeles, was flown Tuesday to Mormon headquarters to compare the

photocopies with several pages of the original, which is in a collection of 140 laminated pages in the archives.

He and two other handwriting experts, retained by the researchers, had previously said that in their opinion Spalding, who died in 1816, had written the material they had examined, assuming the samples were true copies.

Mormon teaching is that the Book of Mormon was dictated to scribes by Joseph Smith as he translated with the assistance of an angel, from golden plates he dug from a hillside.

Meanwhile, a Mormon historian and former president of the Western History Assn. called the Spalding theory, which has cropped up since the Book of Mormon was first published in 1830, "preposterous."

"All of the original draft of the Book of Mormon was taken down from the lips of Joseph Smith by a series of scribes, and there is absolutely

Please Turn to Page 4, Col. 1

## Continued from First Page

nothing to the idea that Solomon Spalding wrote any part of the manuscript," Leonard J. Arrington said.

Wayne L. Cowdrey, 31, of Orange, one of the researchers, accompanied Silver to Salt Lake City Tuesday. Cowdrey said that Mormon officials were "very cooperative" in letting them examine the manuscript pages.

Silver said he still cannot vouch with finality that the handwriting he examined is actually Spalding's until he sees authenticated examples of other writing by Spalding.

Cowdrey said Wednesday that Donald Scales, 27, another one of the researchers, and Silver would go to the Oberlin, Ohio, College library next week to examine a novel by Spalding, "Manuscript Story," written in longhand about 1812.

The other two handwriting analysts, William Kaye and Howard C. Doulter, both of the Los Angeles area, will then be asked to make independent examinations of the original documents at Salt Lake and at Oberlin, according to Cowdrey.

The Christian Research Institute, an organization in Anaheim headed by Walter Martin, a defender of conservative Christianity against various cults and so-called "new" religions, is paying for the handwriting investigations.

Los Angeles Times

# Metro

LOCAL NEWS  
EDITORIAL PAGES

CC PART II ↑

THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 1977

Arrington, a professor at Brigham Young University, said the questioned 12 pages, which Mormons believe were copies by "an unidentified scribe," is "First Nephi, chapter four, verse 20, through chapter 12, verse eight."

According to Melvin A. Jensen of the Public Communications Council of the Mormon Church for the Los Angeles area, the church has had its own handwriting experts identify all the handwriting samples of early church leaders.

But, he added, "to date, to our knowledge, they have not considered it of sufficient importance to study any similarity between the Spalding manuscript and the church Book of Mormon manuscript."

Arrington told The Times: "We think the unidentified scribe was the brother of Emma Smith, the wife of Joseph Smith, but we have no sample of his writing to compare it with."

Another church spokesman also suggested the scribe could have been Martin Harris, an associate of Smith. No samples of his handwriting exist, either, the spokesman said.

One of Arrington's main arguments, advanced during a press briefing after the visit of Silver and Cowdrey to the archives, is that "the handwriting appearing on the 12 pages of the manuscript (alleged by the researchers to have been written by Spalding) in our vault also appears on the headings of the pages which precede it.

"The other handwriting on those same pages is clearly identified as Joseph Smith's scribe, Oliver Cowdrey." Thus, concludes Arrington, whoever wrote the 12 pages also wrote the page headings where Oliver Cowdrey wrote. And since Spalding died in 1816, he could not have written the headings some 10 years later, Arrington says.

Although Silver said he could not ascertain the age of the paper or ink on the originals in the archives because of the lamination, he did say the paper "appears to be of the same stock." Silver said church officials did not show him the page headings.

Mormon spokesmen, since the new challenge to the Book of Mormon surfaced in the press last week, have asserted that the researchers are biased against the Mormon Church and that the handwriting study has been largely financed by an organization set up to discredit nonevangelical Christian groups.

Martin, an author-lecturer who is a professor at Meloyland School of Theology in Anaheim as well as head of the Christian Research Institute, several years ago filed an \$11 million libel, slander and defamation of character suit against the Mormon Church in Orange County Superior Court.

The suit, still pending, alleges that while Martin was delivering a lecture he was interrupted by a Mormon official who accused him of deceiving people and distorting Mormon doctrine.

The three young researchers are Baptists. Cowdrey, a descendant of the Oliver Cowdrey said to have been a scribe of Joseph Smith, was a Mormon for a short time, he said. He and Scales, a delivery person for a drug company, are junior college graduates.

The third researcher, Howard A. Davis, 33, who holds a doctor of theology degree from a California Bible college, is an unemployed lab technician.

Also this week, other proponents of the Spalding authorship theory of the Book of Mormon pointed to material in a Spalding family genealogy printed in 1897 that contains a lengthy letter said to have been written by the widow of Solomon Spalding and printed in the Boston Recorder newspaper on April 8, 1839.

The letter asserts that when the Book of Mormon first came out, the historical part was "immediately recognized" as the work of her husband.

Referring to her late husband's novel, Matilda Spalding Davidson (she remarried after Spalding's death) is quoted as writing: "Thus an historical romance, with the addition of a few pious expressions and extracts from the sacred Scriptures, has been constructed into a new Bible, and palmed off upon a company of poor deluded fanatics as divine."

Arrington insists there is no resemblance between the Book of Mormon and the Spalding manuscript and that Spalding and Smith never knew one another.

The Book of Mormon, according to Latter-day Saints doctrine, is an abridged history of people who came to the Americas from the Middle East at three different times centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. It recounts also the ministry of Christ in the Americas after his resurrection.

"It is a witness with the Holy Bible that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and redeemer of all mankind," said Mormon press spokesman Jerry P. Cahill.



**BACK COVER**  
**OF WHO REALLY WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON**

Copyright © 1977, 1980 by Wayne L. Cowdrey,  
 Donald Scales, and Howard A. Davis

# Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?

## Solomon Spalding?

- 3.8 million people are trusting the Mormon church for their destiny. Are they following a divine book or a revised 19th century novel?
- Could all of the sworn testimonies of Spalding's family, his co-workers and numerous other witnesses be false, as claimed by the Mormon church?
- Did the lives of Solomon Spalding and Joseph Smith intersect merely by coincidence?

Controversy has surrounded the origins of the Book of Mormon ever since its publication in 1830. Until today, critics have had only circumstantial evidence to support their arguments. This book presents the first thorough investigation into the 522-page document that is the foundation of the Mormon church—complete with testimonies, handwriting analyses, and statements from Smith and Spalding themselves!

In late 1974, Dr. Howard Davis read Dr. Walter Martin's research on the origin of the Book of Mormon. An independent researcher who has contributed to numerous books, he

immediately began his own investigation. In early 1975, Wayne Cowdrey, a descendant of one of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon, contacted Davis with information he had begun to compile. Comparing notes, their enthusiasm and determination grew. Later that same year, Donald Scales joined the team, contributing his expertise, knowledge and dedication to researching the truth about the Book of Mormon.



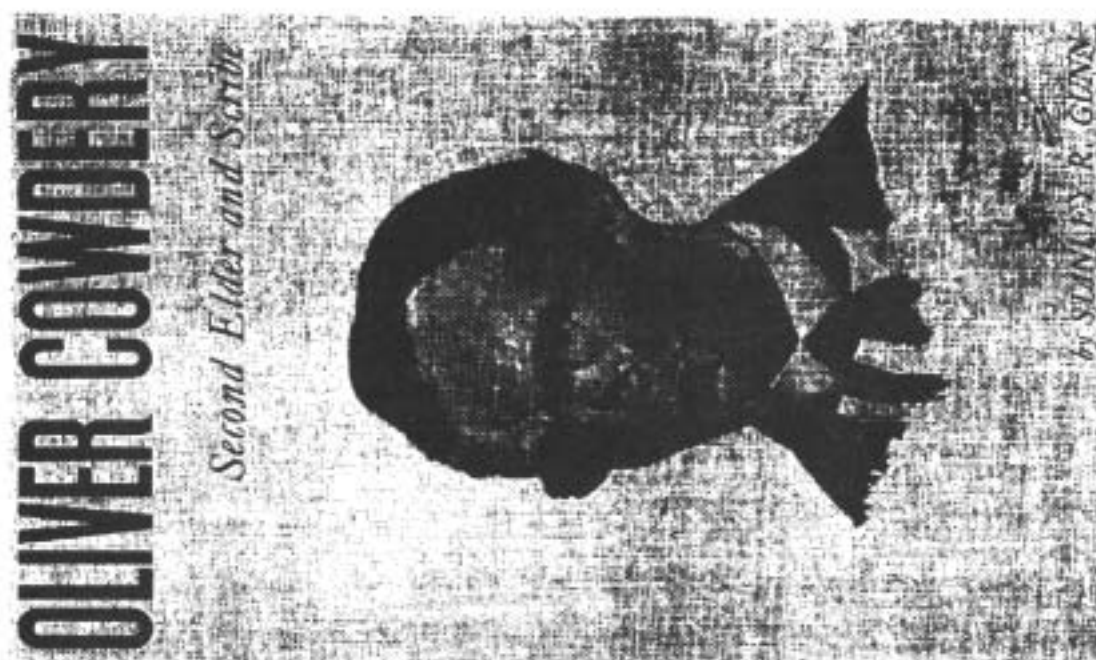
# OLIVER COWDERY

Second Elder and Scribe

by  
STANLEY R. GUNN



HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF UTAH



shall meet in the presence of our Lord, and be separated no more.

May the Lord bless you, father, mother and all the family.

Oliver Cowdery

To Mrs. Elizabeth A. Cowdery<sup>9</sup>

Just when Elizabeth did join Oliver we do not know but from a letter written to Warren A. Cowdery on October 15, 1835 we learn that Elizabeth was at that time in Kirtland and that a child had been born. . . . "My wife is some afflicted with sore breasts, but our babe is well".<sup>10</sup>

While they were residing in Elkhorn, Wisconsin and Oliver was financially hard-pressed, he states that their house was about paid for with the exception of \$15.00. He then goes on to say that Elizabeth had paid the most of it by laboring at her trade. Just what her trade was we do not know, but we do know that the status of women at this time, in the business world, narrowed the field considerably.

To Oliver and Elizabeth were born six children, only one living to maturity. Maria<sup>11</sup> Louise was born August 11, 1835 at Kirtland, Ohio and was married September 7, 1856 to Dr. Charles Johnson at Richmond, Missouri.

Other children were:

2. Elizabeth Ann, d. May 9, 1837 at Kirtland, Ohio at the age of five months and 25 days.
3. Josephine Rebecca, d. October 21, at Tiffin, Ohio, aged 6 years and seven months.
4. Oliver Peter, d. August 13, 1840 at Tiffin aged five days.
5. Adeline Fuller, d. October 13, 1844 at Tiffin aged 15 days.
6. Julia Olive, d. July 3, 1846 at Tiffin, aged 1 month 5 days.<sup>12</sup>

These names and dates are given by Maria Louise Johnson, the eldest daughter and they are confirmed by the Mehling history of the Cowdery family.

In a letter written to Warren A. and Lyman Cowdery dated June 2, 1838 Oliver makes reference to the baby Elizabeth Ann buried at Kirtland. "When I left Kirtland, Salmon Gee was indebted to me a few dollars and agreed to erect a fence or railing around the grave of my little babe, has he done so? If not I hope he will".<sup>12</sup>

Elizabeth Ann Whitmer lived on at Richmond after Oliver's death and then she moved to Southwest City, Missouri. She died at the age of 77 years. An account of her death and that of her daughter who died 48 hours later appeared in the news:

On Tuesday morning, January 7, at four o'clock a.m. Mrs. Elizabeth Ann Cowdery died at the home of Dr. Charles Johnson of this city, at the advanced age of 77 years. She was born in New York State, and was a member of one of the early Mormon families. Her maiden name being Whitmer, her husband Cliver Cowdery was a man distinguished for his services to the church in the early days of that sect.

On Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. forty-eight hours after the death of her mother, Mrs. Doctor Charles Johnson passed away to that bourne whence no terrestrial traveler ever returns. She was born in Kirtland, Ohio, on August 12, 1835<sup>14</sup>, her maiden name being Maria Louise Cowdery, and came with her parents to Ray County, Missouri. In 1856 she married Dr. Johnson of Richmond, Ray County, and removed to this place with her husband ten years ago, where they have resided since. Mrs. Johnson although being of a retiring disposition was a genial friend and neighbor to all who knew her, devoted to her husband and household and to her manifold domestic affairs. She was a believer in the creed of the reformed Mormon Church, which renounced polygamy at the time the Mormons went to Salt Lake City. Mrs. Johnson



was the only living daughter and the title of valuable lands in Independence and Kansas City were bound up in her during her time, but death has released her family's claim as she died without issue.<sup>15</sup>

Among the properties referred to in the above obituary notice, is the Kirtland Temple which has been the subject of much controversy and argument and which finally led to court proceedings.<sup>16</sup>

The Independence Temple lot was also under discussion and in 1891 suit was started to recover the property for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and in this trial it was alleged that the

land was conveyed to Edward Partridge, on December 18, 1832, in trust for the use and benefit of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; that on or about March 28, 1839 said Edward Partridge conveyed said property to Jane Cowdery, Joseph Smith Cowdery, and John Cowdery, children of Oliver Cowdery who died 'intestate' in their infancy; that Elizabeth Ann Cowdery 'mother' of said children and widow of Oliver Cowdery, on May 25, 1886 conveyed the property to Marie Louise Johnson only living child of Oliver Cowdery, who on June 9, 1887 conveyed the property to George A. Blakeslee, Bishop and Trustee-in-Trust of the Reorganized Church.<sup>17</sup>

The trial was heard and the court held that the Reorganized Church was entitled to a decree removing any doubt as to the ownership of the property. This decree was given on a 'deed' "Which was supposed to have been executed in 1839 by Edward Partridge to and in favor of 'John Cowdery', 'Jane Cowdery' and 'Joseph Smith Cowdery', purported children of Oliver Cowdery, but who never actually existed."<sup>18</sup>

Another copy gives the children's actual ages. John Cowdery was supposed to have been seven years old; Jane Cowdery, three years old, and Joseph Smith Cowdery one

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year old. But it has been proved that these three children were nonexistent.

In one letter written by Oliver he states that "Elizabeth, Mary and Mariah are as healthy as could be expected after a long journey".<sup>39</sup> One might suppose that Mary was one of his children, but Mariah did not give that name as one of her sisters. Also in the original letter to W. A. and Lyman Cowdery he states under date of June 1838 "Elizabeth and children are well, so is Mary."<sup>40</sup> We do know that Warren Cowdery had two daughters named Mary and Martha and inasmuch as Oliver had often used Warren's son in the printing business, it is reasonable to assume that Mary as named, could have been one of Warren's daughters probably traveling with Elizabeth to care for the young baby inasmuch as Elizabeth was frail of health.

The love story of Oliver and Elizabeth was a sweet, yet tragic one. They spent so much of the early years of their marriage separated—not by choice, but by circumstances. Elizabeth evidently rejoined her parents and adhered to their disbelief in polygamous practices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for she cast her lot with the Reorganized Church.

So it was that Oliver Cowdery has left no direct descendant to carry on his family name.

<sup>39</sup>E. Cecil McGavin, "Romance of Oliver Cowdery," *Deseret News*, April 24th, 1937.

<sup>40</sup>Lang, *loc. cit.*

<sup>41</sup>Huntington Library Letters, microfilm no. 18.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 12.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 12—enclosure.

<sup>44</sup>Huntington Library letters, microfilm no. 11.

<sup>45</sup>This letter must have been dated 1833 for it mentions being married one year and their marriage took place in 1832.

<sup>46</sup>Huntington Library letters no. 16.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 42.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, no. 54.

<sup>49</sup>Oliver, in his correspondence usually used the spelling 'Mariah'.

<sup>50</sup>These names are all typical Cowdery names as verified by the family genealogy.

## Mormon Manuscript Claims: Another Look

Three California researchers have suffered some setbacks in their attempt to prove that the *Book of Mormon* has an origin other than the one taught by the 3.8-million-member Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In June, they released the notarized statements of three handwriting analysts who had concluded from studies of photocopied material that twelve pages of the *Book of Mormon* manuscript were written by a minister-novelist who died in 1816 (see July 8 issue, page 32). Since this was eleven years before Mormon founder Joseph Smith claimed he dug up golden plates in New York containing the *Book of Mormon* in an ancient Egyptian language, the researchers reasoned that Smith was a fraud and that Mormonism's foundations are spurious.

However, the handwriting experts qualified their conclusions saying their findings could be made positive only after study of the original documents. In July, following national press exposure of their preliminary findings, the analysts were able to examine the originals, thanks to officials at Oberlin (Ohio) College and to Mormon leaders in Salt Lake City. The Mormons maintained that their holy book could withstand any challenge hurled at it.

Subsequently, analyst Henry Silver, 66, dropped out of the case without offering a final opinion. He had examined the Mormon manuscript but withdrew without seeing the novel manuscript at Oberlin. Obviously disturbed by all the controversy surrounding the case, Silver claimed he had been misrepresented in initial press accounts, that he had not been told at the outset that the *Book of Mormon* authorship was involved, and that Walter Martin—the person who had financed the research—had “a vendetta” against the Mormon church. (Martin, a teacher at Meadfield School of Theology in Anaheim, California, lectures and writes about non-Christian cults. He recently filed a defamation suit against the Mormon church.)

Silver is involved in another handwriting case involving the Mormon church. He is one of several analysts who have ruled that the so-called Mormon will of Howard E. Hughes was indeed written by Hughes.

Several other experts disagree with Silver on the will. One of them is William Kaye, the second of the three analysts hired by Martin and the three researchers. Kaye studied handwriting samples of the minister-novelist—Solomon Spalding (also Spaulding)—at Oberlin and the twelve *Book of Mormon* manuscript pages of First Nephi attributed by Mormon archivists to “an unidentified

scribe.” Early last month he reported that the comparison he made “shows unquestionably” that the written materials “have all been executed by the same person.”

Two weeks later, the third expert, Howard C. Douider, arrived at an op-



Douider examining Mormon manuscripts

posite conclusion. The pages of the novel at Oberlin and the pages of the *Book of Mormon* manuscript were written, he said, by “different authors.” The highly respected analyst attributed similarities “to the writing style of that century.” The “unexplainable” writing and letter dissimilarities he found led him to conclude that Spalding “is not the author of the disputed *Book of Mormon* pages,” he said.

The researchers—Wayne L. Cowdrey, 31, Howard A. Davis, 33, and Donald R. Scales, 27—have written a book, *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* It was due off the press this month. Scales said it would include Douider's final opinion as well as his preliminary one based on study of the photocopies. It would also include everything the other two analysts had reported, he added. He pointed out that he and his colleagues had concluded that Spalding was “the true author of the majority of the *Book of Mormon* fifty-two years before we had any handwriting evidence, and our case is neither made nor broken on the basis of the handwriting question.”

Martin, who has worked closely with the three researchers, has maintained for years that much of the *Book of Mormon* is taken from Spalding's writings.

Meanwhile, Mormon archivists have assembled a large amount of evidence—some of it impressive—to rebut the Spalding theory. They scored a coup of sorts when they discovered that a manuscript page from another Mormon book, *Doctrine and Covenants*, is apparently in the same handwriting as that of the “unidentified scribe” in the *Book of Mormon* manuscript. It is dated June, 1831—fifteen years after Spalding's death.

The Mormons also published side-by-side photo reproductions showing words and letters from the various manuscript

sources. The average layman can readily note the striking dissimilarities between Spalding's specimens and the others.

The Spalding theory of the origin of the *Book of Mormon* arose in Joseph Smith's lifetime. Its chief advocate was Philastus Hurlbut, who was excommunicated from the Mormon church in 1833. (Smith was shot to death by a mob in Illinois in 1844.) Hurlbut's views were contained in a book published by Ohio newspaper editor Eber D. Howe in 1834. The book contained affidavits signed by eight persons, including Spalding's wife and brother, suggesting that Smith had plagiarized Spalding's work. The affidavits were similar in content and wording. This fact and other aspects, including the lack of hard evidence, have led a number of scholarly critics of Mormonism over the years to disavow the Spalding theory. At the same time, they reject Smith's explanation or beginnings.

Mormons often point out that although many of Smith's early colleagues either left the church in a huff or were excommunicated, none ever differed with his account of how the *Book of Mormon* was produced, (Smith dictated to associates his translation of the golden plates with the aid of “seer” stones in front of his eyes, according to church teaching.)

Among Mormonism's critics are Jerold and Sandra Tanner, ex-Mormons who now operate a Salt Lake City publishing firm that specializes in anti-Mormon research. Tanner made a fresh study of the Spalding theory after the researchers' claims were publicized, managed to accompany Kaye to the Mormon archives to examine manuscript pages and produced a book, *Did Spalding Write the Book of Mormon?* The volume's answer: no. Adding insult to injury, it contains some of the same photocopy reproductions of handwriting samples as the Cowdrey-Davis-Scales book to make its point, and it came on the market earlier.

Why do handwriting experts differ among themselves? And why do they sometimes reach conclusions that are contrary to what seems obvious to an ordinary person? Observers point out that “experts” can be found on both sides in most important court cases involving handwriting analysis. Often it is a case of one analyst emphasizing similarities and the other pointing out dissimilarities. And then one lawyer, looking on the dim side, suggests that the fee may sometimes be a factor: “You are told what you pay to hear.” Most analysts would deny such a suggestion as a vicious smear.

Whatever, everyone seems to agree that handwriting analysis is not an exact science.

EDWARD E. FLOWMAN