

# Statements of Martin Harris Concerning The Book of Mormon

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## Marris Harris' Personal Testimony and Pre-LDS Beliefs

Source: Journal of Edward Stevenson, vol. 32, in Joseph Grant Stevenson, "The Life of Edward Stevenson" (M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1955), pp. 163-164. [Salt Lake City, September 4, 1870, Sunday morning: Testimony of Martin Harris, written by my hand [Edward Stevenson] from the mouth of Martin Harris]:

"In the year 1818, fifty-two years ago I was inspired of the Lord and taught of the spirit that I should not join any church, although I was anxiously sought for by many of the sectarians. I was taught I could not walk together unless agreed. What can you not be agreed in? In the trinity, because I cannot find it in any Bible. Find it for me and I am ready to receive it. Three persons in one God--one personage I can not concede to, for this is anti-Christ, for where is the Father as Son. I have more proof to prove nine persons in the trinity than you have three. How do you do so? John tells us of the seven spirits sent into all the world. If you have a right to make a personage of one spirit, I have of the seven--and the Father and Son are two more, making nine. Other sects also tried me. They say three persons in one God, without body, parts or passions. I told them such a God I would not be afraid of. I could not please or offend him. [I] would not be afraid to fight a duel with such a God. The Methodists teach two [one word illegible] them exceed from one. I told them to [retract] to my saying, "God would hold me accountable for the use I made of it. All of the sects called me "Bro" [Brother] because the Lord had enlightened me.

The spirit told me to join none of the churches, for none had authority from the Lord, for there will not be a true church on the earth until the words of Isaiah shall be fulfilled. When interrogated closely, I told them, "If any church [be] the church of Christ, the Christians then claim me. But join and lectuien [?] as much as any other. The time has not come for you to take that name. At Antioch they were called Christians in derision. No thanks for your name, so I remained, for there was no authority, for the spirit told me that I might just as well plunge myself into the water as to have any one of the sects baptize me.

So I remained until the Church was organized by Joseph Smith, the Prophet. Then I was baptized by the hands of Oliver Cowdery, by Joseph Smith's command, being the first after Joseph and Oliver Cowdery. And then the spirit bore testimony that this was all right, and I rejoiced in the established Church. Previous to my being baptized, I became a witness of the plates of the Book of Mormon in 1829. In March the people rose up and united against the work, gathering testimony against the plates, and said they had testimony enough, and if I did not put Joseph in jail and his father for deception, they would me. So I went from Waterloo twenty-five miles southeast of Palmyra to Rogerses, Suscotua [sic] County, New York, and to Harmony, Pennsylvania, 125 [miles] and found Joseph. Rogers, unknown to me, had agreed to give my wife one hundred dollars if it was not a deception, and had whet his knife to eat the [word illegible] of the plates as the Lord had forbid Joseph exhibiting them openly."

## **The Testimony of Martin Harris Written By Himself**

"Joseph Smith, Jr., found at Palmyra, N.Y., on the 22d day of September, 1827, the plates of gold upon which was recorded in Arabic, Chaldaic, Syriac, and Egyptian, the Book of Life, or the Book of Mormon. I was not with him at the time, but I had a revelation the summer before, that God had a work for me to do. These plates were found at the north point of a hill two miles north of Manchester village....

... On the 22d of September, 1827, before day, Joseph took the horse and wagon of old Mr. Stowel, and taking his wife, he went to the place where the plates were concealed, and while he was obtaining them, she kneeled down and prayed. He then took the plates and hid them in an old black oak tree top which was hollow....

Joseph did not dig for these plates. They were placed in this way: four stones were set up and covered with a flat stone, oval on the upper side and flat on the bottom. Beneath this was a little platform upon which the plates were laid; and the two stones set in a bow of silver by means of which the plates were translated, were found underneath the plates.

These plates were seven inches wide by eight inches in length, and were of the thickness of plates of tin; and when piled one above the other; they were altogether about four inches thick; and they were put together on the back by three silver rings, so that they would open like a book.

The two stones set in a bow of silver were about two inches in diameter, perfectly round, and about five-eighths of an inch thick at the center; but not so thick at the edges where they came into the bow. They were joined by a round bar of silver, about three eighths of an inch in diameter, and about four inches long, which, with the two stones, would make eight inches.

The stones were white, like polished marble, with a few gray streaks. I never dared to look into them by placing them in the hat, because Moses said that "no man could see God and live," and we could see anything we wished by looking into them; and I could not keep the desire to see God out of my mind. And beside, we had a command to let no man look into them, except by the command of God, lest he should "look aught and perish."

These plates were usually kept in a cherry box made for that purpose, in the possession of Joseph and myself. The plates were kept from the sight of the world, and no one, save Oliver Cowdery, myself, Joseph Smith, Jr., and David Whitmer, ever saw them. Before the Lord showed the plates to me, Joseph wished me to see them. But I refused, unless the Lord should do it. At one time, before the Lord showed them to me, Joseph said I should see them. I asked him, why he would break the commands of the Lord. He said, you have done so much I am afraid you will not believe unless you see them. I replied, 'Joseph, I know all about it. The Lord has showed to me ten times more about it than you know...

I hefted the plates many times, and should think they weighed forty or fifty pounds.

When Joseph had obtained the plates he communicated the fact to his father and mother. The plates remained concealed in the tree top until he got the chest made. He then went after them and brought them home. While on his way home with the plates, he was met by what appeared to be a man, who demanded the plates, and struck him with a club on his side, which was all black and blue. Joseph knocked the man down, and then ran for home, and was much out of breath. When he arrived at home, he handed the plates in at the window, and they were received from him by his mother. They were then hidden under the hearth in his father's house. But the wall being partly down, it was feared that certain ones, who were trying to get possession of the plates, would get under the house and dig them out. Joseph then took them out, and hid them under the old cooper's shop, by taking up a board and digging in the ground and burying them. When they were taken from there, they were put into an old Ontario glass-box. Old Mr. Beman sawed off the ends, making the box the right length to put them in, and when they went in he said he heard them jink, but he was not permitted to see them. He told me so.

The money diggers claimed that they had as much right to the plates as Joseph had, as they were in company together. They claimed that Joseph had been traitor; and had appropriated to himself that which belonged to them. For this reason Joseph was afraid of them, and continued concealing the plates. Mter

they had been concealed under the floor of the cooper's shop for a short time, Joseph was warned to remove them. He said he was warned by an angel. He took them out and hid them up in the chamber of the cooper's shop among the flags. That night some one came, took up the floor, and dug up the earth, and would have found the plates had they not been removed.

These things had all occurred before I talked with Joseph respecting the plates. But I had the account of it from Joseph, his wife, brothers, sisters, his father and mother. I talked with them separately, that I might get the truth of the matter. The first time I heard of the matter, my brother Preserved Harris, who had been in the village of Palmyra, asked me if [I] had heard about Joseph Smith, Jr., having a golden bible. My thoughts were that the money-diggers had probably dug up an old brass kettle, or something of the kind. I thought no more of it. This was about the first of *October*, 1827. The next day after the talk with my brother,~ went to the village, and there I was asked what I thought of the Gold Bible? I replied, The Scripture says, He that answereth a matter before he hearth it, it is foolishness unto him. I do not wish to make myself a fool. I don't know anything about it. Then said I, what is it about Joe's Gold Bible? They then went on to say, that they put whiskey into the old man's cider and got him half drunk, and he told them all about it. They then repeated his account, which I found afterwards to agree substantially with the account given by Joseph. Then said I to them how do you know that he has not got such gold plates. They replied I)- him, he ought to be tarred and feathered for telling such a d-d lie!" Then I said, suppose he has told a lie, as old Tom Jefferson said, it did not matter to him whether a man believed in one god or twenty. It did not rob his pocket, nor break his shins. What is it to us if he has told a lie? He has it to answer for if he has lied. If you should tar and feather all the liars, you would soon be out of funds to purchase the material.

I then thought of the words of Christ, The kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. I knew they were of the devil's kingdom, and if that is of the devil, his kingdom is divided against itself. I said in my heart, this is something besides smoke. There is some fire at the bottom of it. I then determined to go and see Joseph as soon as I could find time.

A day or so before I was ready to visit Joseph, his mother came over to our house and wished to talk with me. I told her I had no time to spare, she might talk with my wife, and, in the evening when I had finished my work I would talk with her. When she commenced talking with me, she told me respecting his bringing home the plates, and many other things, and said that Joseph had sent her over and wished me to come and see him. I told her that I had a time appointed when I would go, and that when the time came I should then go but I did not tell her when it was. I sent my boy to harness my horse and take her home. She wished my wife and daughter to go with her; and they went and spent most of the day. When they came home, I questioned them about them. My daughter said, they were about as much as she could lift. They were now in the glass box, and my wife said they were very heavy. They both lifted them. I waited a day or two, when I got up in the morning, took my breakfast, and told my folks I was going to the village, but went directly to old Mr. Smith's. I found that Joseph had gone away to work for Peter Ingersol to get some flour. I was glad he was absent, for that gave me an opportunity of talking with his wife and the family about the plates. I talked with them separately, to see if their stories agreed, and I found they did agree. When Joseph came home I did not wish him to know that I had been talking with them, so I took him by the arm and led him away from the rest, and requested him to tell me the story, which he did as follows. He said: "An angel had appeared to him, and told him it was God's work."...

Joseph said the angel told him he must quit the company of the money-diggers. That there were

wicked men among them. He must have no more to do with them. He must not lie, nor sweat; nor steal. He told him to go and look in the spectacles, and he would show him the man that would assist him. That he did so, and he saw myself, Martin Harris, standing before him. That struck me with surprise. I told him I wished him to be very careful about these things. "Well," said he, "I saw you standing before me as plainly as I do now." I said, if it is the devil's work I will have nothing to do with it; but if it is the Lord's, you can have all the money necessary to bring it before the world. He said the angel told him, that the plates must be translated, printed and sent before the world. I said, Joseph, you know my doctrine, that cursed is every one that putteth his trust in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and we know that the devil is to have great power in the latter days to deceive if possible the very elect; and I don't know that you are one of the elect. Now you must not blame me for not taking your word. If the Lord will show me that it is his work, you can have all the money you want.

While at Mr. Smith's I hefted the plates, and I knew from the heft that they were lead or gold, and I knew that Joseph had not credit enough to buy so much lead. I left Mr. Smith's about eleven o'clock and went home. I retired to my bedroom and prayed God to show me concerning these things, and I covenanted that if it was his work and he would show me so, I would put forth my best ability to bring it before the world. He then showed me that it was his work, and that it was designed to bring in the fullness of his gospel to the gentiles to fulfill his word, that the first shall be last and the last first. He showed this to me by the still small voice spoken in the soul. Then I was satisfied that it was the Lord's work, and I was under a covenant to bring it forth.

Martin Harris, in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in Anwrice*, 2:377~2.

(also in Best Loved Stories of the LDS People, Vol. 3, P. 3, Deseret Book, Salt Lake City Utah, 2000 )

**Martin Harris, Interviews,**  
**by John A. Clark**

Source: John A. Clark, Gleanings by the Way (1842), pp. 222-31.

It was early in the autumn of 1827 that Martin Harris called at my house in Palmyra, one morning about sunrise. His whole appearance indicted more than usual excitement, and he had scarcely passed the threshold of my dwelling, before he inquired whether he could see me alone, remarking that he had a matter to communicate that he wished to be strictly confidential. Previous to this, I had but very slight acquaintance with Mr. Harris. He had occasionally attended divine service in our church. I had heard him spoken of as a farmer in comfortable circumstances, residing in the country a short distance from the village, and distinguished by certain peculiarities of character. He had been, if I mistake not, at one period, a member of the Methodist Church, and subsequently had identified himself with the Universalists. At this time, however, in his religious views he seemed to be floating upon the sea of uncertainty. He had evidently quite an extensive knowledge of the scriptures, and possessed a manifest disputatious turn of mind. As I subsequently learned, Mr. Harris had always been a firm believer in dreams, and visions, and supernatural appearances, such as apparitions and ghosts, and therefore was a fit subject for such men as Smith and his colleagues to operate upon.

On the occasion just referred to, I invited him to accompany me to my study, where, after having closed the door, he began to draw a package out of his pocket with great and manifest caution. Suddenly, however, he stopped, and wished to know if there was any possibility of our being interrupted or overheard? When answered in the negative, he proceeded to remark, that he reposed great confidence in me as a minister of Jesus Christ, and that what he had now to communicate he wished me to regard as strictly confidential. He said he verily believed that an important epoch had arrived - that a great flood of light was about to burst upon the world, and that the scene of divine manifestation was to be immediately around us.

In explanation of what he meant, he then proceeded to remark that a Golden Bible had recently been dug from the earth, where it had been deposited for thousands of years, and that this would be found

to contain such disclosures as would settle all religious controversies and speedily bring on the glorious millennium. That this mysterious book, which no human eye of the present generation has yet seen, was in the possession of Joseph Smith, Jr., ordinarily known in the neighborhood under the more familiar designation of Jo Smith; that there had been a revelation made to him by which he had discovered this sacred deposit, and two transparent stones, through which, as a sort of spectacles, he could read the Bible, although the box or ark that contained it, had not yet been opened; and that by looking through those mysterious stones he had transcribed from one of the leaves of this book, the characters which Harris had so carefully wrapped in the package which he was drawing from his pocket.

The whole thing appeared to me so ludicrous and puerile, that I could not refrain from telling Mr. Harris, that I believed it a mere hoax got up to practice upon his credulity, or an artifice to extort from him money; for I had already, in the course of the conversation, learned that he had advanced some twenty-five dollars to Jo Smith as a sort of premium for sharing with him in the glories and profits of this new revelation. For at this time, his mind seemed to be quite as intent upon the pecuniary advantage that would arise from the possession of the plates of solid gold of which this book was composed, as upon the spiritual light it would diffuse over the world. My intimations to him, in reference to the possible imposition that was being practiced upon him, however, were indignantly repelled. He then went on to relate the particulars in regard to the discovery and possession of this marvelous book. As far as I can now recollect, the following was an outline of the narrative which he then communicated to me, and subsequently to scores of people in the village, from some of whom in my late visit to Palmyra, I have been able to recall several particulars that had quite glided from my memory.

According to Martin Harris Jo, while he lay upon his bed, had a remarkable dream. An angel of God seemed to approach him, clad in celestial splendor. This divine messenger assured him that he, Joseph Smith, was chosen of the Lord to be a prophet of the Most High God, and to bring to light hidden things, that would prove of unspeakable benefit to the world. He then disclosed to him the existence of this Golden Bible, and the place where it was deposited - but at the same time told him that he must follow implicitly the divine direction, or he would draw down upon him the wrath of heaven. This book, which was contained in a chest, or ark, and which consisted of metallic plates covered with characters embossed in gold, he must not presume to look into, under three years . . .

After his marriage and return from Pennsylvania, he became so awfully impressed with the high destiny that awaited him, that he communicated the secret to his father and family. The propensity of the old man operated so powerfully, that he insisted upon it that they should go. The terror which the appearance of the divine messenger awakened, instantly struck Smith to the earth, and he felt his whole frame convulsed with agony, as though he were stamped upon by the iron hoofs of death himself. In language most terrific did the angel upbraid him for his disobedience, and then disappeared. Smith went home trembling and full of terror. Soon, however, his mind became more composed. Another divine communication was made to him, authorizing him to go along by himself and bring the chest and deposit it secretly under the hearth of his dwelling, but by no means to attempt to look into it. The reason assigned by the angel for this removal, was that some report in relation to the place where this sacred book was deposited had gone forth, and there was danger of its being disturbed. According to Harris, Smith now scrupulously followed the divine directions. He was already in possession of the two transparent stones laid up with the Golden Bible, by looking through which he was enabled to read the golden letters on the plates in the box. How he obtained these spectacles without opening the chest, Harris could not tell. But still he had them; and by means of them he could read all the book contained. The book itself was not to be disclosed until Smith's child had reached a certain age. Then it might be published to the world. In the interim, Smith was to prepare the way for the conversion of the world to a new system of faith, by transcribing the characters from the plates and giving translations of the same.

This was the substance of Martin Harris' communication to me upon our first interview. He then carefully unfolded a slip of paper, which contained three or four lines of characters, as unlike letters of hieroglyphics of any sort, as well could be produced were one to shut up his eyes and play off the most antic movements with his pen upon paper. The only thing that bore the slightest resemblance to the letter of any language that I had ever seen, was two uprights marked joined by a horizontal line, that might have been taken for the Hebrew character. My ignorance of the characters in which the pretended ancient record was written, was to Martin Harris new proof that Smith's whole account of the divine revelation made to him was entirely to be relied on. . . .

[Journey to New York] He [Martin Harris] was so much in earnest on this subject, that he immediately started off with some of the manuscripts that Smith furnished him on a journey to New York and Washington to consult some learned men to ascertain the nature of the language in which this record was engraven. After his return he came to see me again, and told me that, among others, he had consulted

Professor Anthon, who thought the characters in which the book was written very remarkable, but he could not decide exactly what language they belonged to. Martin had now become a perfect believer. He said he had no more doubt of Smith's commission, than of the divine commission of the apostles. The very fact that Smith was an obscure and illiterate man, showed that he must be acting under divine impulses: - "God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised - yea, and things that are not to bring to nought - things that are - that no flesh should glory in his presence:" that he was willing to "take of the spoiling of his goods" to sustain Smith in carrying on this work of the Lord; and that he was determined that the book should be published, though it consumed all his worldly substance.

It was in vain I endeavoured to expostulate. I was an unbeliever, and could not see afar off. As for him he must follow the light which the Lord had given him . . . The way that Smith made his transcripts and translations for Harris was the following. Although in the same room, a thick curtain or blanket was suspended between them, and Smith concealed behind the blanket, pretended to look through his spectacles, or transparent stones, and would then write down or repeat what he saw, which, when repeated aloud, was written down by Harris, who sat on the other side of the suspended blanket. Harris was told that it would arouse the most terrible divine displeasure, if he should attempt to draw near the sacred chest, or look at Smith while engaged in the work of deciphering the mysterious characters. This was Harris' own account of the matter to me. What other measures they afterwards took to transcribe or translate from these metallic plates, I cannot say, as I very soon after this removed to another field or labor where I heard no more of this matter till I learned the Book of Mormon was about to be published . . . This book, which professed to be a translation of the Golden Bible brought to light by Joseph Smith, was published in 1830-- to accomplish which Martin Harris actually mortgaged his farm.

### **Martin Harris' Early Experiences with Mormonism As Related by the New York Press, 1831**

Source: "Golden Bible," Painesville Telegraph, 1831, p. 3.

"Golden Bible," Painesville Telegraph, 22 Sep 1829, p.3

"Golden Bible." -- The Palmyra. Freeman Says, the greatest piece of superstition that has ever come within our knowledge, now occupies the attention of a few individuals of this quarter. It is generally known and spoke of as the "Golden Bible." Its proselytes give the following account of it: In the fall of 1827, a person by the name of Joseph Smith of Manchester, Ontario County, reported that he had been visited in a dream by the spirit of the Mighty, and informed that in a certain hill in that town, was deposited this Golden Bible, containing an ancient record of a divine nature and origin. After having been thence thus visited, as he states he proceeded to the spot and after having proceeded to the spot and after having penetrated "mother earth a short distance, the Bible was found together with a huge pair of spectacles! He had directed, however, not to let any mortal being examine them, under no less penalty than instant death! They were therefore nicely wrapped up and excluded from the vulgar gaze of poor wicked mortals!" It was said that the leaves of the Bible were plates of gold about eight inches long, six wide and one eighth of an inch thick, on which were engraved characters or hieroglyphics by placing the spectacles in a hat, and looking into, Smith could (he said so at least) interpret the characters.

An account of this discovery was soon circulated. The subject was almost invariably treated as it should have been with contempt. A few however believed the "Golden" story, among whom was Martin Harris, an honest and industrious farmer of the town of Palmyra. So blindly enthusiastic was Harris, that he took some of the characters interpreted by Smith, and went in search of some one; besides the interpreter, who was learned enough to English them; but to all whom he applied (among the number was Professor Mitchell, of New York,) happened not to be possessed of sufficient knowledge to give satisfaction! Harris returned, and set Smith to work at interpreting the Bible. He has at length performed the task, and the work is soon to be put to press in Palmyra. Its language and doctrines are said to be far superior to the book of life!

### **A NEGATIVE ACCOUNT OF MARTIN HARRIS' CONVICTIONS, 1831**

Source: "Golden Bible," Painesville Telegraph, 15 Mar 1831, p. 3.

"Golden Bible," Painesville Telegraph, 15 Mar 1831, p.3

"Martin Harris, another chief of the Mormon impostors, arrived here last Saturday from the bible quarry in New York. He immediately planted himself in the bar-room of the hotel, where he soon commenced reading and explaining the Mormon hoax, and all the dark passages from Genesis to Revelations. He told all about the gold plates, angels, spirits, and Jo Smith. He had seen and handled them all, by the power of God! Curiosity soon drew around thirty or forty spectators, and all who presumed to question his blasphemous pretensions, were pronounced infidels. He was very flippant, talking fast and loud, in order that others could not interpose an opinion counter to his. Every idea that he advanced, he knew to be absolutely true, as he said, by the spirit and power of God. . . . [He] had a fair specimen of the Mormon slang, in this display of one of their headmen. The meeting was closed, by a request of the landlord that the prophet should remove his quarters, which he did, after declaring, that all who believed the new bible would see Christ within fifteen years, and all who did not would absolutely be destroyed and damned."

**ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY OF MARTIN HARRIS**  
**(ONE OF THE THREE WITNESSES)**  
**TO THE COMING FORTH OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.**

September 15, 1853.

Be it known to all whom this may concern that I, David B. Dille, of Ogden City, Weber County, Salt Lake, en route to Great Britain, having business with one Martin Harris, formerly of the Church of Latter-day Saints, and residing at Kirtland, Lake County, Ohio, did personally wait upon him at his residence, and found him sick in bed; and was informed by the said Martin Harris that he had not been able to take any nourishment for the space of three days. This, together with his advanced age, had completely prostrated him. After making my business known to Mr. Harris, and some little conversation with him, the said Martin Harris started up in bed, and, after particularly inquiring concerning the prosperity of the Church, made the following declaration: "I feel that a spirit has come across me - the old spirit of Mormonism; and I begin to feel as I used to feel; and I will not say I won't go to the valley." Then addressing himself to his wife, he said, "I don't know but that, if you will get me some breakfast, I will get up and eat it."

I then addressed Mr. Harris relative to his once high and exalted station in the Church, and his then fallen and afflicted condition. I afterward put the following questions to Mr. Harris, to which he severally replied with the greatest cheerfulness: "What do you think of the Book of Mormon? Is it a divine record?"

Mr. Harris replied and said, "I was the right-hand man of Joseph Smith, and I know that he was a Prophet of God. I know the Book of Mormon is true." Then smiting his fist on the table, he said, "And you know that I know that it is true. I know that the plates have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice declared it unto us; therefore I know of a surety that the work is true." "For," continued Mr. Harris, "did I not at one time hold the plates on my knee an hour and a half, whilst in conversation with Joseph, when we went to bury them in the woods, that the enemy might not obtain them? Yes, I did. And as many of the plates as Joseph Smith translated I handled with my hands, plate after plate." Then describing their dimensions, he pointed with one of the fingers of his left hand to the back of his right hand and said, "I should think they were so long, or about eight inches, and about so thick, or about four inches; and each of the plates was thicker than the thickest tin."

I then asked Mr. Harris if he ever lost 3,000 dollars by the publishing of the Book of Mormon. Mr. Harris said, "I never lost one cent. Mr. Smith," he said, "paid me all that I advanced, and more too." As much as to say he received a portion of the profits accruing from the sale of the book.

Mr. Harris further said, "I took a transcript of the characters of the plates to Dr. Anthon, of New York. When I arrived at the house of Professor Anthon, I found him in his office and alone, and presented the transcript to him, and asked him to read it. He said if I would bring the plates, he would assist in the translation. I told him I could not, for they were sealed. Professor Anthon then gave me a certificate certifying that the characters were Arabic, Chaldaic, and Egyptian. I then left Dr. Anthon and was near the door, when he said, "How did the young man know the plates were there?" I said an angel had shown them to him. Professor Anthon then said, "Let me see the certificate!" - upon which I took it from my waistcoat pocket and unsuspectingly gave it to him. He then tore it up in anger, saying there was no such thing as angels now - it was all a hoax. I then went to Dr. Mitchell with the transcript, and he confirmed what Professor Anthon had said."

**EDWARD STEVENSON DESCRIBES INCIDENTS**  
**IN LIFE OF MARTIN HARRIS**

Source: Edward Stevenson to Editor of the Deseret News, in "One of the Three Witnesses," Millennial Star 44 (30 Jan 1882):78-79; (6 Feb 1882):

"While I was living in Michigan, then a territory, in 1833, near the town of Pontiac, Oakland County, Martin Harris came there, and in a meeting, where I was present, bore testimony of the appearance of an angel exhibiting the golden plates, and commanding him to bear a testimony of these things to all people whenever opportunity was afforded him to do so; and I can say that his testimony had great effect in that vicinity. Martin had a sister living in our neighborhood. About this time Oliver Cowdery, one of the other three witnesses also, in company with Joseph Smith the Prophet bore the same testimony, and further, Joseph the Prophet promised those who with honest hearts obeyed the Gospel should receive the Holy Ghost, and signs would follow them.

As a proof of their testimony, several of that branch of the church enjoyed various gifts; one, Elijah Fordham, who recently died in this territory, spoke in tongues, and as two French travellers were passing they heard him speaking and said to a boy outside the house where they were, that he was speaking in French, bearing testimony to the gospel, he having no knowledge of that language. Martin often bore his testimony while in that neighborhood.

In the year 1869 I was appointed on a mission to the United States. Having visited several of the eastern states, I called at Kirtland, Ohio, to see the first temple that was built by our people in this generation. While there, I again met Martin Harris, soon after coming out of the temple. He took from under his arm a copy of the Book of Mormon, the first edition, I believe, and bore a faithful testimony, just the same as that I had heard him bear 36 years previous. He said that it was his duty to continue to lift up his voice as he had been commanded to do in defense of the book that he held in his hand, and offered to prove from the Bible that just such a book was to come forth out of the ground, and that, too, in a day when there were no prophets on the earth, and that he was daily bearing testimony to many who visited the temple.

After patiently hearing him, I felt a degree of compassion for him, and in turn bore my testimony to him, as I had received it through obedience to the gospel, and that the work was still [going] onward, and the words of Isaiah, second chapter, were being fulfilled, that "the house of the Lord was in the tops of the mountains," and that under the leadership of President Brigham Young all nations were gathering to Zion to learn of God's ways and to walk in His paths, and that the worst wish that we had, was for him to also prepare himself and go up and be a partaker of the blessings of the House of the Lord. My testimony impressed him. A Mr. Bond, who held the keys of the temple, and who had been present at the dedication, and then a faithful Latter-day Saint, said to me he felt as though he would have been far better off if he had kept with the Latter-day Saints, and that if I would preach in the temple, he would open the doors to me. I promised to do so at some future time.

After my arrival in Utah in 1870, I was inspired to write to Martin Harris, and soon received a reply that the Spirit of God, for the first time prompted him to go to Utah. Several letters were afterward exchanged. President Brigham Young, having read the letter, through President George A. Smith, requested me to get a subscription and emigrate Martin to Utah, he subscribing twenty-five dollars for that purpose. Having raised the subscription to about \$200.00, on the 19th of July, I took the railroad cars for Ohio, and on the 10th of August, filled my appointment, preaching twice in the Kirtland Temple, finding Martin Harris elated with his prospective journey.

A very singular incident occurred at this time. While Martin was visiting his friends, bidding them farewell, his pathway crossed a large pasture, in which he became bewildered. Dizzy, faint and staggering through the blackberry vines that are so abundant in that vicinity, his clothes torn, bloody and faint, he lay down under a tree to die. After a time he revived, called on the Lord, and finally at twelve o'clock midnight, found his friend, and in his fearful condition was cared for and soon regained his strength. He related this incident as a snare of the adversary to hinder him from going to Salt Lake City. Although in his 88th year he possessed remarkable vigor and health, having recently worked in the garden, and dug potatoes by the day for some of his neighbors.

After visiting New York and calling to visit the sacred spot from where the plates were taken, upon which the characters of the Book of Mormon were engraven, I found there an aged gentleman, 74 years old, who knew Martin Harris, and said that he was known in that neighborhood as an honest farmer, having owned a good farm three miles from that place. He further said, he well remembered the time when the Mormons used to gather at Mormon Hill, as he termed it, where it was said the plates came from.

On the 21st of August [1870], Martin was with me in Chicago, and at the American Hotel bore testimony to a large number of people, of the visitation of the angel, etc. The following is from the Iowa State Register, Des Moines, August 26, 1870:

"Elder Stevenson, of Salt Lake, together with Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Mormon Bible, called at our sanctum yesterday. Mr. Harris is now in his 88th year, hale and hearty, with many interesting things to relate in reference to the finding of the tablets of the testament. We shall have occasion to mention some of these in another issue."

While in Des Moines, the capitol of Iowa, Brother Harris had opportunity of bearing testimony to many, and at a special meeting held in a branch of our Church, brother James M. Ballinger, president, Brother Harris bore testimony as to viewing the plates, the angel's visit, and visiting Professor Anthon, with characters from the plates, who after giving him a certificate, etc., as to the correctness of the characters, asked him to fetch the plates for him to see. Martin said that they were sealed, and that an angel had forbidden them to be exhibited. Mr. Anthon then called for the certificate, tore it up and consigned it to the waste basket, saying that angels did not visit the earth in our day, etc.

On the following day, I baptized a sister to President Ballinger, in the Des Moines River. The branch here contributed a new suit of clothes to Brother Harris for which he felt to bless them. On the 29th of August [1870] we landed in Ogden, and the Ogden Junction said:

"Martin Harris arrived, (with Elder Edward Stevenson) whose name is known almost throughout the world as one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. They left Kirtland on the 19th of August."

August 31st [1870], the Salt Lake Herald said:

"Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon, arrived in Salt Lake City last night, accompanied by Elder Edward Stevenson. Two members of the Des Moines Branch of the Church accompanied them to our city."

The Deseret News of August 31, 1870, in over one column, notices the arrival of Martin Harris last evening, at 7:30, "who is in his 88th year. He is remarkably vigorous for one of his years, his memory being very good, and his sight, though his eyes appear to have failed, being so acute that he can see to pick a pin off the ground . . . He has never failed to bear testimony to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. He says it is not a matter of belief on his part, but of knowledge. He with the other two witnesses declared, and their testimony has accompanied every copy of the book, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon. This declaration he has not varied from in 41 years . . . We are glad to see Martin Harris once more in the midst of the Saints."

The Salt Lake Herald, September 3, [1870] said:

"We had a call yesterday morning from Elder Edward Stevenson, who introduced Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Mr. Harris is now 88 years of age, and is remarkably lively and energetic for his years. He holds firmly to the testimony he has borne for over forty years, that an angel appeared before him and the other witnesses, and showed them the plates upon which the characters of the Book of Mormon were inscribed. After living many years separated from the body of the Church, he has come to spend the evening of life among the believers in that book to which he is so prominent a witness. Mr. Harris, who has a number of relatives in the territory, came from the east under the care of Elder Edward Stevenson."

Monday Evening News, September 5, 1870, contains the following:

"SABBATH MEETINGS. The congregation in the morning was addressed by Elder Edward Stevenson, Martin Harris and President George A. Smith. In the afternoon the time was occupied by Elder John Taylor, the house was crowded to overflowing."

Martin Harris related an incident that occurred during the time that he wrote that portion of the translation of the Book of Mormon which he was favored to write direct from the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said that the Prophet possessed a seerstone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seerstone. Martin explained the translation as follows: By aid of the seerstone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used. Martin said, after continued translation they would become weary, and would go down to the river and exercise by throwing stones out on the river, etc. While so doing on one occasion, Martin found a stone very much resembling the one used for translation, and on resuming their labor of translation, Martin put in place the stone that he had found. He said that the Prophet remained silent, unusually and intently gazing in darkness, no traces of the usual sentences appearing. Much surprised, Joseph exclaimed, "Martin! What is the matter? All is as dark as Egypt!" Martin's countenance betrayed him, and the Prophet asked Martin why he had done so. Martin said, "to stop the mouths of fools," who had told him that the Prophet had learned those sentences and was merely repeating them, etc.

Martin said further that the seerstone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembling spectacles, only they were larger. Martin said there were not many pages [116] translated while he wrote, after which Oliver Cowdery and others did the writing.

Brother Martin visited many of the wards, continuing to bear his testimony both of what he had beheld with his own eyes, and verily knew to be true. He publicly said that many years ago, in Ohio, a number of persons combined and sought to get Martin to drink wine for the purpose of crossing him in his testimony. At the conclusion they asked him if he really believed the testimony that he had signed in the Book of Mormon to be true? He replied no, he did not believe it, but, much to their surprise, he said he knew it to be true!

Soon after receiving his blessings in the house of the Lord, he went to Smithfield, Cache Valley, and lived with his son until he left this mortal life. Just before he breathed his last he sat up in his bed holding the Book of Mormon in his hand, and bore his last testimony to those who were present. Edward Stevenson.

The economy of Martin Harris was particularly illustrated on the occasion of our visit to the Fifteenth Ward of Salt Lake City. The meeting was crowded, as usual, with those anxious to see him, and to hear his constant, undeviating testimony. Sister M. H. Kimball, of the Fifteenth Ward, eminent in the Relief Societies, on their behalf offered to have a new set of artificial teeth made for Brother Harris, to which he replied, "No, sisters, I thank you for your kindness, but I shall not live long. Take the money and give it to the poor."

This calls to my mind a little incident or two that he related to me while we were on our journey from Ohio to Utah. He said that Joseph Smith, the Prophet, was very poor, and had to work by the day for his support, and that he (Harris) often gave him work on his farm, and they had hoed corn together many a day, Brother Harris paying him fifty cents per day. Joseph, he said, was good to work and jovial and they often wrestled together in sport, but the Prophet was devoted and attentive to his prayers. Brother Harris gave Joseph \$50.00 on one occasion to help translate the Book of Mormon. This action on the part of Martin Harris so displeased his wife that she threatened to leave him. Martin said that he knew this to be the work of God, and that he should keep the commandments of the Lord, whatever the results might be. His wife, subsequently, partially separated from him, which he patiently endured for the Gospel's sake.

He also stated that the Prophet translated a portion of the Book of Mormon with a seerstone in his possession. The stone was placed in a hat that was used for that purpose, and with the aid of this seerstone the Prophet would read sentence by sentence as Martin wrote, and if he made any mistake the sentence would remain before the Prophet until corrected, when another sentence would appear. When they became weary, as it was confining work to translate from the plates of gold, they would go down to the river and throw stones into the water for exercise. Martin on one occasion picked up a stone resembling the one with which they were translating, and on resuming their work, Martin placed the false stone in the hat. He said that the Prophet looked quietly for a long time, when he raised his head and said: "Martin, what on earth is the matter, all is dark as Egypt." Martin smiled and the seer discovered that the wrong stone was placed in the hat. When he asked Martin why he had done so he replied, to stop the mouths of fools who had declared that the Prophet knew by heart all that he told him to write, and did not see by the seerstone; when the true stone was placed in the hat, the translation was resumed, as usual.

At an evening visit of some of my friends at my residence in Salt Lake City, to see and hear Brother Harris relate his experience (which always delighted him), Brother James T. Woods, who is now present while I am writing this article, reminds me that himself and G. D. Keaton were present on that occasion, and asked him to explain the manner in which the plates containing the characters of the Book of Mormon were exhibited to the witnesses.

Brother Harris said that the angel stood on the opposite side of the table on which were the plates, the interpreters, etc., and took the plates in his hands and turned them over. To more fully illustrate this to them, Brother Martin took up a book and turned the leaves over one by one. The angel declared that the Book of Mormon was correctly translated by the power of God and not of man, and that it contained the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Nephites, who were a branch of the lost sheep of the House of Israel, and had come from the land of Jerusalem to America. The witnesses were required to bear their testimony of these things, and of this open vision to all people and Harris testified not only to those present but to all the world, that these things were true, and before God whom he expected to meet in the day of judgment, he lied not. Brother Woods testifies that he was present at the time above mentioned, and to him it was marvelous to see the zeal that was manifested, and to him it was marvelous to see the zeal that was manifested by Martin Harris, and the spirit of the Lord that accompanied his words.

That Martin Harris was very zealous, somewhat enthusiastic, and what some would term egotistical, is no doubt the case; but the Lord has shown this generation that He can carry on His work independently of all men, only as they live closely and humbly before Him. I will give one or two instances of Martin's enthusiasm.

When President George A. Smith and others of us were being driven by John Henry Smith in a carriage to take a bath in the warm springs, near Salt Lake City, while passing over a high hill, President Smith directed the curtains of the carriage to be raised, giving a magnificent view of the city below. The immense tabernacle and the temple -- and in fact the beautiful city in full view -- looked wonderful to Brother Harris, who seemed wrapped in admiration and exclaimed, "Who would have thought that the Book of Mormon would have done all this!" On one occasion while celebrating a baptism, several persons being in attendance, Brother Harris with joyful feelings said, "Just see how the Book of Mormon is spreading." Having been absent so long from the body of the Church and considering his great age, much charity was necessary to be exercised in his behalf. His abiding testimony, and his assistance with his property to publish the Book of Mormon, have earned a name for him that will endure while time shall last. Soon after he had received his endowments and performed some work for his dead, he retired to live with his son, Martin Harris, at Smithfield in Cache Valley, where he was comfortably cared for in his declining old age.

On the afternoon of his death he was bolstered up in his bed, where, with the Book of Mormon in his hand, he bore his last testimony to those who were present. Brother Harris was over ninety years of age at the time of his death, and had always enjoyed good health. Bishop Rigby, who preached his funeral sermon, placed the Book of Mormon on his breast, while he lay in his coffin, and it was buried with him. Edward Stevenson.

Before Oliver Cowdery's demise, he left with David Whitmer the manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was printed, or at least, it is claimed to be the same; but this is in dispute, as it is claimed that there were two manuscripts, one being a copy of the other, and that the original one was deposited by the Prophet in the corner stone of the Nauvoo House, at Nauvoo. Be this as it may, it would be hard to convince David Whitmer of it, and would make very little difference, as we have the substance in the book itself, while the difference in either of them would merely be the shadow. There was also a transcript of a portion of the characters as found on the golden plates taken or copied on a small piece of paper, perhaps about six or seven inches by four or five. Seven or eight lines of them were very carefully transmitted to this paper as the words of this book, which were taken to Professor Charles Anthon, of New York, Martin Harris being the bearer of them. Oliver Cowdery also left this relic with David Whitmer.

I had the pleasure of seeing and handling this choice piece of paper last February, and was very much gratified at seeing the singular characters of curious workmanship placed regularly in lines, in system and order. Martin Harris stated to me that the professor pronounced them correct Egyptian characters, but somewhat changed, and gave him a certificate accordingly; but after asking him (Harris) regarding the book of plates, Professor Anthon desired Mr. Harris to bring the plates or book to him. The reply was that they were sealed and he could not do so. Then Mr. Anthon replied that he could not read a sealed book. Upon inquiry how they came by them, Martin replied that an angel from heaven delivered them to the Prophet Joseph Smith. At this juncture of the conversation, the professor asked Brother Harris to let him see the certificate that he had given him. As soon as Brother Harris handed him the paper, Mr. Anthon tore it up, saying there were no angels who visited men in this enlightened day and age of the world. Martin Harris' statement having been published, was disputed by some, and a Mr. E. D. Howe of Painesville, Ohio, addressed a letter of inquiry to Professor Anthon, and obtained the following reply:

"Dear Sir, -- I received your letter of the 9th, and lose no time in making a reply . . . Some years ago a plain, apparently simple-hearted farmer called on me with a note from Dr. Mitchel, requesting me to decipher, if possible, a paper which the former would hand me . . . He gave me the following account: 'A gold book, consisting of a number of plates . . . was dug up in the northern part of the State of New York,'" etc. etc.

In the 29th chapter, and 11th to 14th verses, is found an excellent illustration of the above as viewed in vision by the Prophet Isaiah: "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned (Professor Anthon), saying, read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed; and the book (not the words or transcript) is delivered to him that is not learned, (Joseph Smith), saying, read this, I pray thee, and he saith, I am not learned." In the following verses, the Lord said He would proceed to do "a marvelous work and a wonder," and did He not verily do so?

Edward Stevenson.

### **TESTIMONY OF MARTIN HARRIS RECORDED**

## IN IOWA NEWSPAPER, 1870

"A witness to the Book of Mormon.--The main facts, or fiction, as the case may be, relative to the discovery of the golden plates from which was translated the present, Book of Mormon, are doubtless as familiar to many of our readers as to ourselves. None of us can claim to have been an eye witness, by those who claimed to have been there, to have seen and handled the tablets of gold, and afterwards, under the divine commission, to have assisted in the translation of the mystic characters inscribed upon them.

A few days since we acknowledged a call at our sanctum, from Martin Harris, who was on his way from Ohio to take up his residence at Salt Lake City, to spend the remainder of his days with the "chosen people." Mr. Harris was now in his 88th year, though still quite vigorous and sprightly, and he is Mormon, soul and body. He, as he claims, and as Mormons claim, together with two others, Oliver Cowdery deceased, and David Whitmer, now an apostate living in Missouri, were the divinely appointed witnesses to the Book of Mormon. The old gentleman evidently loves to relate the incidents with which he was personally connected, and he does it with wonderful enthusiasm.

In September, 1828, as the story goes, Joseph Smith, directed by an angel, proceeded to a spot about 4 miles from Palmyra, New York, and upon the point of a hill, extending northward, dug up a very solid stone chest within which were the tablets of gold, inscribed with the characters which no man could read. Joseph Smith was the first to handle the tablets, and Martin Harris, one of the appointed witnesses, the second. Mr. Harris describes the plates as being of thin leaves of gold, measuring seven by eight inches, and weighing altogether, from forty to sixty lbs. There was also found in the chest, the Urim and Thummim, by means of which the writing upon the plates was translated, but not until after the most learned men had exhausted their knowledge of letters in the vain effort to decipher the characters.

It had been revealed to Joseph Smith that the writing upon the tablets contained a history of the aborigines of this country down to the time of Columbus' discovery, and after, all human means had failed to secure a translation, Smith was commissioned to undertake the task. By means of the Urim and Thummim "a pair of large spectacles," as Mr. Harris claims to have written, of the translations as they were given by Smith, "116 solid pages of cap." The remainder was written by others.

Soon after the finding of these plates of gold, Mr. Harris sold his farm, of which he owned a large one, and consecrated himself to the new religion, to which he has adhered himself tenaciously throughout a long life, and still adheres to its tenets and advocates its genuineness with all the earnestness of an enthusiast. He believes in visitation of angels in bodily form, he has seen and conversed with them, as he thinks and is satisfied.

The old gentleman related some incidents, which, could one feel that they were verities, would be interesting, but as they seem largely imaginative they lose interest."

### "Martin Harris, One of the Witnesses of the Book of Mormon,"

Deseret News, 31 Aug 1870, p. 3.

"Considerable interest has been felt by our people in the arrival in this city of Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. He arrived here at 7:30 p.m. yesterday, in the company of Elder Edward Stevenson, who left this city on the 19th of last July for the purpose of bringing him out from Kirtland, Ohio, where he has been living since the Saints first moved there--1831--thirty-nine years ago. Bro. Stevenson has had a strong desire to have Martin Harris brought here. But he himself has thought for years that his mission was in Kirtland, he feeling that the Lord required him to stay there and bear testimony to the Book of Mormon and the first principles, which he has been earnest in doing, and he has felt reluctant to leave. But when Bro. Stevenson corresponded with him about coming out to the Valley, he replied that the spirit testified to him that he should come here, and in every letter that he afterwards received from him he expressed a still stronger desire to come. Bro. Stevenson made a collection, and after raising sufficient means, went to Kirtland and brought him here.

Martin Harris is in his 88th year. He is remarkably vigorous for one of his years, and still retains the use of his faculties, his memory being very good, and his sight, though his eyes appear to have failed, being so acute that he can see to pick a pin off the ground. He has experienced many changes and vicissitudes; but one point, so far as we have heard, he has never changed:--he has never failed to bear testimony to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. He says it is not a matter of belief on his part, but of knowledge. He with the other two witnesses declared, and their testimony has accompanied every copy of the book, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon.' This declaration he has not varied from in forty-one years; and it is a remarkable fact that, thought away from the Church, and not maintaining their

connection with the Prophet Joseph Smith, not one of the three witnesses has ever failed, so far as known, to bear testimony to the truth of their united declaration contained in the preface of the Book of Mormon!

We are glad to see Martin Harris once more in the midst of the Saints. He feels that this people are led by God, that they are a happy and a blessed people and have the appearance of enjoying God's favor. They are doing the very work which the Book of Mormon said should be done, and are the only people, who as a people, believe in that Book.

The history of this veteran member of the Mormon church would no doubt be as interesting, if written, as his course, since the severance of his connection with the Prophet Joseph Smith at the early rise of the church has been singular. One of the original witnesses of the Book of Mormon, he saw the angel, and handled the plates from which that book was translated. In relation to this, his testimony has never wavered, yet he, for some cause or other, has kept himself aloof from the church for many years, and has taken no part in carrying on the great work, of which he, in connection with Joseph and others, laid the foundation. No greater proof could be given, than the history and course of this man, that the work of God is not dependent upon any man, however great, talented, illustrious or favored he may be. Martin Harris having seen that which few in the flesh are favored to behold, and having received a testimony of the divinity of this work, and of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon that it was utterly impossible to destroy, one might have supposed, viewing things from a merely human standpoint, that the progress and prosperity of this work would have depended to some considerable extent on his co-operation, and that, lacking that, it would have been retarded. But such is not the case, and in this fact human pride, vanity and talent may learn a salutary lesson if it will.

Mr. Harris saw fit to withdraw himself from the cause, but its course, owing to the workings of Divinity through faithful agents, has been onward to a most remarkable degree."

**STATEMENTS OF MARTIN HARRIS  
TO H. B. EMERSON, 1870-71**

Source: Martin Harris to H. B. Emerson, in The True Latter-day Saints' Herald 22 (15 Oct 1875):630.

Smithfield, Utah November 23d, 1870

Mr. Emerson, Sir: -- I received your favor. In reply I will say concerning the plates, I do say that the angel did show to me the plates containing the Book of Mormon. Further, the translation that I carried to Professor Anthon was copied from these same plates; also, that the professor did testify to it being a correct translation. I do firmly believe and do know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; for without I know he could not have had that gift; neither could he have translated the same. I can give if you require it one hundred witnesses to the proof of the Book of Mormon. I defy any man to show to me any passage of scripture that I am not posted on or familiar with. I will answer any questions you feel like asking to the best of my knowledge, if you can rely on my testimony of the same. In conclusion, I can say that I arrived at Utah safe, in good health and spirits, considering the long journey. I am quite well at present, and have been, generally speaking, since I arrived.

With many respects I remain your humble friend, Martin Harris.

Smithfield, Cache County, Utah January, 1871.

To H. Emerson, dear sir: -- Your second letter, dated December 1870, came duly to hand. I am truly glad to see a spirit of inquiry manifested therein. I reply by a borrowed hand, as my sight has failed me too much to write myself. Your questions: Question 1, "Did you go to England to lecture against 'Mormonism?'"

Answer. I answer emphatically, No, I did not; -- no man ever heard me in any way deny the truth of the Book of Mormon, the administration of the angel that showed me the plates; nor the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, under the administration of Joseph Smith, Junior, the prophet whom the Lord raised up for that purpose, in these the latter days, that he may show forth his power and glory. The Lord has shown me these things by his Spirit -- by the administration of holy angels - - and confirmed the same with signs following, step by step, as the work has progressed, for the space of fifty-three years.

The Lord showed me there was no true church upon the face of the earth, none built upon the foundation, designated by the Savior, "The rock of revelation," as declared to Peter. See Matthew 16:16, 17, 18 verses. He also showed me that an angel should come and restore the holy priesthood again to the earth, and commission his servants again with the holy gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth. See Revelation 14:6, 7 verses -- He further showed me that the time was nigh when he would "set his hand again the second time to restore the kingdom to Israel," when he would gather the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth," "when he would bring the record of Joseph which

was in the hand of Ephraim, and join with the record of Judah, when the two records should become one in the hand of the Lord to accomplish his great work of the last days." See Exodus 36 and 37 chapters; also Isaiah 29 chapter; also from the 58 chapter to the end of the book; also Psalms 50.

Question 2. What became of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated?

Answer. They were returned to the angel Moroni, from whom they were received to be brought forth again in the due time of the Lord; for they contain many things pertaining to the gathering of Israel, which gathering will take place in this generation, and shall be testified of among all nations according to the old prophets; as the Lord will set his ensign to the people, and gather the outcasts of Israel:-- See Isaiah 11 chapter.

Now, dear sir, examine these scriptures carefully, and should there still be any ambiguity relative to this great work of the last days, write again and we will endeavor to enlighten you on any point relative to this doctrine.

I am, very respectfully, Martin Harris, Senior

[Affidavit of John E. Godfrey, dated June 2, 1933]

STATE OF UTAH County of Cache

A F F I D A V I T

John E. Godfrey, being duly sworn deposes and says that in the spring of 1875 in the month of May, one beautiful spring morning as I walked down in the town, I met William Sparks and Samuel Stewart, and we passed the morning with one another and I asked, "Where are you going, brethren," and they said "We are going to hear Martin Harris bear his testimony. Come and go with us." I accepted of this invitation and we went down to where Martin Harris lived. He was then living in a log house with a dirt roof and as we knocked on the door, his daughter-in-law answered it and we told her what our errand was, and she said, "Come in, brethren, and we walked in and she said to Martin Harris, "Grandpa, some of the brethren have come to hear you bear your testimony, and Martin Harris said, "All right, brethren, I am pleased to have you come." He was seated in one corner of the house, and was very feeble. As he straightened himself up, he shook hands with us and said, "Come and sit close to me so that I can see you." One of the brethren said, "Brother Harris, we have come to hear you bear your testimony in regard to the Book of Mormon." He said, "I am pleased to have you come, and I wish I could bear my testimony to the whole world."

"The Prophet Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdrey [Cowdery], and David Whitmer and myself went into the woods to pray that we might have the privilege of seeing the golden plates. We bowed our heads in prayer, but we seemed to be praying with no results. The prophet was the spokesman. He prayed with no results twice, then I withdrew from them, telling them that it was on my account that their prayer was not answered. After they had been visited by the angel, the Prophet then came over to me where I was praying, and I asked the Prophet to pray with me so that I might have the privilege also of seeing the golden plates, and after praying some time, the angel appeared with the golden plates and I saw with these two eyes the angel stand with the gold plates in his hands, and I saw him turn leaf by leaf the plates of gold, and I also heard the voice of the lord saying that these words were true and translated correctly."

One of the brethren who visited Martin Harris asked him as my brother, Thomas Godfrey, did if he believed the Book of Mormon to be true, and he said, "No, I KNOW it is true."

I was standing in back of one of the other brethren, and while Martin Harris was bearing his testimony, I have never had such a feeling go over me from my head to my feet. I had never had such a feeling in my life, and I knew that Martin Harris was bearing a faithful testimony.

I am 79 years of age, I came to Clarkston in 1865, and have lived here ever since. I was 21 years of age when I heard Martin Harris bear his testimony.

/s/ John E. Godfrey

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 2nd day of June, 1933, A.D.

/s/ Jesse P. Rich

Jesse P. Rich, City Judge

Logan, Utah

**TESTIMONY OF MARTIN HARRIS**  
**RECORDED BY ALMA L. JENSEN**

Source: Statement of Alma L. Jensen of Dayton, Idaho,  
dated 1 Jun 1936

In the summer of 1875, my father, Ole A. Jensen, then a counselor to Bishop Jardine of Clarkston, Utah, told me that a man by the name of Martin Harris was living in Clarkston, Utah, and that the said Martin Harris was one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, and that he had seen and heard an angel from God

testify to the truth of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Being of an inquisitive nature, I determined to learn for myself as to what the testimony of Martin Harris would be. I asked two of my chums, James Barker and Isaac Stokes to go with me to see Martin Harris. We called on him July 4, 1875, this being on my 11th birthday. Thomas Godfrey introduced us to Mr. Harris who was living at the home of William Carbine.

In introducing us, Mr. Godfrey said, "Brother Harris, I have brought these young men to hear your statement as to whether or not you believe the Book of Mormon to be true." His face was turned to the wall. He turned and faced us and said, "Now I don't believe, but I know it to be true, for with these eyes I saw the angel and with these ears (pointing to them) I heard him say it was a true and correct record of an ancient people that dwelt upon this the American continent, and I hereby testify to you young men that it is true."

I had such a feeling come over me that I shall never forget. I was convinced he spoke the truth. This statement is made by me of my own free will and choice this 1st day of June, 1936.

### **ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY OF MARTIN HARRIS** **RECORDED BY OLE A. JENSEN**

Source: Ole A. Jensen, "Testimony of Martin Harris  
(One of the Witnesses of the Book of Mormon),

"It was in Clarkston, Cache County, Utah, July in the year 1875. Early in the morning a thought came to me that I would go and see how Brother Harris was. He was staying at his son's and was only three blocks from my home. I had heard he was not feeling well.

People came from other towns during the day to see how Brother Harris was and to hear his testimony on the Book of Mormon. When I arrived, there were already two men present. Brother Harris lay on his bed, leaning on his elbow.

I said, "How are you, Brother Harris, this morning?" He answered slowly, "Pretty well."

"We came to hear your testimony on the Book of Mormon," I said. "Yes!" he said in a loud voice as he sat up straight in bed. "I wish I could speak loud enough that the whole world could hear my testimony." He then stretched out his hand and said, "Brother, I believe there is an angel here to hear what I shall tell you and you shall never forget what I say."

"The Prophet Joseph Smith, and Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer and myself, went into a little grove to pray to obtain a promise that we should behold it with our natural eyes, that we could testify of it to the world. We prayed two or three times and at length an angel stood before Oliver and showed them the plates, but I had gone off by myself for I knew it was me that was keeping the angel from appearing. In my desperation I asked the Prophet seer to kneel down with me and to pray for me also that I may also see the plates, and we did kneel down and pray. Immediately, the angel stood before me and said, "Look" and when I glanced at the angel, I fell, but I stood on my feet and saw the angel turn the leaves of gold and I said, "It is enough, my Lord and my God." I then heard the voice of God say, "The book is true and translated correctly."

Brother Harris then turned himself as though he had no more to say and we made ready to go. He then spoke again and said, "I will tell you a wonderful thing that happened after Joseph had found the plates: three of us took a notion to take some tools and go to the hill and hunt for some more boxes or gold or something, and indeed we found a stone box; we got quite excited about it; and dug quite carefully around it. We were ready to take it up, but behold, by some unseen power, it slipped back into the hill. We stood there and looked at it. One of us took a crowbar and tried to drive it through the lid to hold it; but it glanced and only broke one corner off of the box."

"Sometime that box will be found and you will see the corner broken off; then you will know I have told you the truth. Again brethren, as sure as you are standing here and see me, just that sure did I see the angel with the golden plates in his hand for he turned the golden leaves and showed them to me. I have promised that I would bear witness both here and hereafter."

His lips trembled and his eyes filled with tears; tears also came to my eyes. I should have liked to ask another question, but I failed to do so. I then shook his hand and thanked him and left. When I think of the day when I stood before Martin Harris and saw him stretch forth his hand and raise his voice to bear his wonderful testimony, the feeling that thrilled my whole soul, I can never forget nor can I express the joy that filled me through and through."

**MARTIN HARRIS' TESTIMONY (1875)**  
**RECORDED BY SIMON SMITH**

Source: Simon Smith to President Joseph Smith, 29 Dec 1880,  
in The Saints' Herald 28 (1 Feb 1881):43.  
[Simon Smith] Clifton, Bristol, England; December 29, 1880

President Joseph Smith: . . .

I have often thought of writing a few lines to you since my conversion to the doctrine of Christ for which your father spent his days and life to establish, respecting an interview I had with Martin Harris, Senior, a few days before his decease.

**MARTIN HARRIS' TESTIMONY.**

On the 5th day of July, 1875, hearing of his sickness, I visited him, and as I entered the room where he was in bed he held out his hand, shook hands with me and said, "I am going to leave you now, Bishop," meaning that he was going to die. At the time he was very low; and apparently, it was hard work for him to talk, but he was perfectly rational. I laid my hand on his head, and asked the Lord to give him strength. I then commenced to talk to him and ask him questions respecting the Book of Mormon and your father, and he revived and talked to me very freely and with much earnestness for about two hours.

I will give you in substance the answers he gave me to a few prominent questions respecting his knowledge of your father, the plates, and etc. First I asked him if he could still testify that he saw the plates and the angel of God. His answer was that he could; and he did truly testify to me that he both saw and handled the plates that the Book of Mormon was translated from, that an angel of God did lay them before him and the other two witnesses as recorded in the Book of Mormon, and said he, "I tell you of these things that you may tell others that what I have said is true, and I dare not deny it; I heard the voice of God commanding me to testify to the same."

He said also he knew not the reason why the Lord had suffered him to live to such a great age unless it was that he might testify of these things. He was nearly ninety-three years old. He said also that he acted as scribe for him, when your father was translating from the plates by the Urim and Thummim, for nearly one-third of what is published. He mortgaged his property to get the first edition of the Book of Mormon published to the world. He, by command, took part of the manuscript with the translation thereof to one Professor Anthon, Professor of Language, in New York City, to get his opinion in regard to the language and translation, and said that what had been published concerning the same by the Church was true. I asked him of your father's education at the time of those circumstances and he said: "Joseph Smith's education was so limited that he could not draw up a note of hand."

These were Martin Harris' exact words to me. I do not mention this part to throw any gloom upon your father's mission; but to the contrary. I mention it to show that it was out of his power with such a limited education to produce such a book as the Book of Mormon, much less to translate such a book from foreign language, unless he did it by the gift and power of God. I might mention more that he told me; but it is so irksome for me to write, and will give you too much trouble to prepare it for the press, even if you thought it proper to publish it. One more item, however, I will mention. He (Martin Harris, Senior) assured me that polygamy was not taught or practiced by Joseph Smith (your father) nor was it a doctrine of the Church in his day.

Before the mortal remains of Martin Harris, Senior, were conveyed to their last resting place in Clarkston grave yard, I placed in his right hand a Book of Mormon, which was buried with the remains. Some may think that a strange affair; but I did it out of respect for a man so highly favored of the Lord, and because of the interest he took to help bring forth to the world that record of divine truth. I also had a head board placed at his grave, and on it written his name, nativity, and his age; also his testimony concerning the plates, and etc., as recorded in the forepart of the Book of Mormon. Your brother in the cause of truth, Simon Smith.

**MARTIN HARRIS, JR. REPORTS**  
**DEATH AND TESTIMONY OF HIS FATHER**

Source: Adventure Vol. 1, No. 4

Died at Clarkston, Cache County, Utah, July 10th 1875, of old age . . . . . aged 92 years, 1 month, 22 days.

. . . . .

"He went by the request of the Prophet Joseph Smith to the city of New York, and presented a transcript of the records of the Book of Mormon to Professor Anthon and Dr. Mitchell and asked them to translate it. He also presented the same transcript to many other learned men at the different schools of learning in Geneva, Ithica, and Albany with the same request but was unsuccessful in obtaining the translation of the transcript from any of them. After his return from the City of New York he was employed as a scribe to the Prophet Joseph in the translation of the records of the Book of Mormon.

Martin Harris, Jr. to Editor, Adventure

After the translation was completed he was called by divine revelation to be one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon. The testimony of the three witnesses forms part of the preface to the book. He paid for the printing of 5,000 copies and labored as proof reader of the book. He traveled some 2,500 miles in its interest before the book was finished and bore his own expenses.

He was one of the six members of the organization of the Church . . . . .

He went up to Missouri in company with the Prophet Joseph Smith and others at the time when they were afflicted with the cholera and was one of those who were afflicted but was healed instantly by the power of God. He was one who witnessed the dispensing of the mob by a terrible storm, which, while it proved fatal to many of the mob brought salvation to the Saints. He was one who assisted in purchasing land in Missouri for the gathering of the Saints, he having paid Bishop Partridge the sum of \$1,200. He was present at the dedication and witnessed the powerful manifestations of God on that momentous occasion. He figured conspicuously in nearly all of the early movements of the Church and was one who never withdrew his substance or means when it was requested to establish and forward the interests of the Church. He always thought and said that his mission was to stay in Kirtland where the first temple was built, as he did not move with the Church but remained in Kirtland till the year 1870 when he came to Utah.

Since coming to Utah he has resided with his son Martin Harris, Jun., in Cache County. He was in his 88th year when he came to the territory. He has enjoyed good health and a good appetite, and has been industrious all the time since his arrival. He would never be idle so long as there was anything that he could do. He has always borne a faithful and undeviating testimony to the divinity of the Book of Mormon, whether in Kirtland in the midst of the riched and ungodly, or in Utah, or in any of the different places where the Saints have resided.

He was in his happiest mood when he could get somebody to listen to his testimony and he never appeared to get tired of talking about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and testifying to its truth. And if at any time he felt dull or tired from any cause whatever and he could get an opportunity of testifying to the truth of that book he would revive immediately.

His health first began to fail him about 8 or 9 days before his death. He first experienced severe pains in his legs, and finally lost the use of his limbs so that he became entirely helpless and was confined to his bed. He continued to talk at intervals until a few hours before his death. His last audible words were something about the Book of Mormon and the three witnesses. He sank gradually day after day and finally expired on Saturday, July 10, 1875.

Martin Harris, Jr.

**WILLIAM H. HOMER'S ACCOUNT OF THE**  
**PASSING OF MARTIN HARRIS**

Source: William Harrison Homer, "The Passing of Martin Harris,"  
The Improvement Era 29 (March 1926):468-72

"I first saw Martin Harris in Kirtland, Ohio, about the last of December, 1869. On my return from a mission to England, I stopped to visit some of my relatives in Pennsylvania. On resuming my journey, one of my cousins, James A. Crockett, who was not a member of the Church, came as far as Kirtland, Ohio, with me. We remained in Kirtland over night, and the next morning after breakfast we asked the landlord who was custodian of the Mormon temple at Kirtland, and he informed us that Martin Harris was custodian and pointed out to us where we would find the old gentleman. Accordingly we went to the door and knocked. In answer to our knock there came to the door of the cottage a poorly clad, emaciated little man, on whom the winter of life was weighing heavily. It was Martin Harris. In his face might be read the story of his life.

There were the marks of spiritual upliftment. There were the marks of keen disappointment. There was the hunger strain for the peace, the contentment, the divine calm that it seemed could come no more into his life. It was a pathetic figure, and yet it was a figure of strength. For with it all there was something about the little man which revealed the fact that he had lived richly; that into his life had entered such noble experiences as come to the lives of but few.

I introduced myself modestly as a brother-in-law of Martin Harris, Jr. - as he had married my eldest sister and as an elder of the Church who was returning from a foreign mission. The effect of the introduction was electric. But the fact of relationship was overwhelmed by the fact of Utah citizenship. The old man bristled with vindictiveness. "One of those Brighamite Mormons, are you?" he snapped. Then he railed impatiently against Utah and the founder of the Mormon commonwealth. It was in vain that I tried to turn the old man's attention to his family. Martin Harris seemed to be obsessed. He would not understand that there stood before him a man who knew his wife and children; who had followed the Church to Utah.

After some time, however, the old man said, "You want to see the temple, do you?" "Yes, indeed," I exclaimed, "if we may." "Well, I'll get the key," he answered. From that moment, Martin Harris, in spite of occasional outbursts, radiated with interest. He led us through the rooms of the temple and explained how they were used. He pointed out the place of the school of the prophets. He showed where the temple curtain had at one time hung. He related thrilling experiences in connection with the history of the sacred building. In the basement, as elsewhere, there were many signs of dilapidation the plaster had fallen off the ceilings and the walls; windows were broken; the woodwork was stained and marred. Whether it was the influence of these conditions or not it is difficult to tell, but here again Martin Harris was moved to speak against the Utah Mormons. An injustice, a gross injustice had been done to him. He should have been chosen president of the Church.

When the old man was somewhat exhausted, I asked, "Is it not true that you were once very prominent in the Church; that you gave liberally of your means, that you were very active in the performance of your duties?" "That is very true," replied Martin. "Things were all right then. I was honored while the people were here, but now that I am old and poor it is all different."

"Really," I replied, "how can that be?" "What about your testimony to the Book of Mormon? Do you still believe that the Book of Mormon is true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet?" Again the effect was electric. A changed old man stood before me. It was no longer a man with an imagined grievance. It was a man with a message, a man with a noble conviction in his heart, a man inspired of God and endowed with divine knowledge. Through the broken window of the temple shone the winter sun, clear and radiant.

"Young man," answered Martin Harris with impressiveness, "Do I believe it! Do you see the sun shining! Just as surely as the sun is shining on us and gives us light, and the moon and stars give us light by night, just as surely as the breath of life sustains us, so surely do I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, chosen of God to open the last dispensation of the fullness of times; so surely do I know that the Book of Mormon was divinely translated. I saw the plates; I saw the angel; I heard the voice of God. I know that the Book of Mormon is true and that Joseph Smith was a true Prophet of God. I might as well doubt my own existence as to doubt the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, or the divine calling of Joseph Smith."

It was a sublime moment. It was a wonderful testimony. We were thrilled to the very roots of our hair. The shabby, emaciated little man before us was transformed as he stood before us with hand outstretched toward the sun of heaven. A halo seemed to encircle him. A divine fire glowed in his eyes. His voice throbbled with sincerity and the conviction of his message. It was the real Martin Harris, whose burning testimony no power on earth could quench. It was the most thrilling moment of my life.

I asked Martin Harris how he could bear such a wonderful testimony after having left the Church. He said, "Young man, I never did leave the Church; the Church left me."

Martin Harris was now in a softer mood. He turned to me and asked, "Who are you?" I explained again our relationship. "So, my son Martin married your sister," repeated the old man, shaking my hand. "You know my family then?" "Yes," I replied. "Wouldn't you like to see your family again?" "I should like to see Caroline and the children," mused Martin naming over the children, "But I cannot, I am too poor." "That need not stand in the way," I answered, "President Young would be only too glad to furnish means to convey you to Utah." "Don't talk Brigham Young," warned Martin, "he would not do anything that was right." "Send him a message by me," I persisted, now deeply concerned in the project. "No," declared Harris emphatically, "yet, I should like to see my family." "Then entrust me with the message," I pleaded. Martin paused. "Well," he said slowly, "I believe I will. You call on Brigham Young. Tell him about our visit. Tell him that Martin Harris is an old, old man, living on charity, with his relatives. Tell him I should like to visit Utah, my family and children - I would be glad to accept help from the Church, but I want no personal favor. Wait! Tell him that if he sends money, he must send enough for the round trip. I should not

want to remain in Utah." For twenty-five years he had nursed the old grudge against the leaders of the Church, probably because nobody had had the patience with him that I had shown.

After we had bidden Martin Harris good-bye, and had taken a few steps from the temple, my cousin placed his hands on my shoulders and said, "Wait a minute." Looking me squarely in the eyes, he said, "I can testify that the Book of Mormon is true. There is something within me that tells me that the old man told the truth. I know the Book of Mormon is true."

In due time I reached my home in the Seventh Ward in Salt Lake City. I recounted to my father the experience with Martin Harris and we two set out immediately to report at the office of President Young. The president received us very graciously. He listened attentively to my recital of my visit with Martin Harris. President Young asked questions now and again to make clear on certain points. Then, when the story was told, he said, and it seemed to me that he beamed with pleasure, "I want to say this: I was never more gratified over any message in my life. Send for him! Yes, even if it were to take the last dollar of my own." "Martin Harris spent his time and money freely when one dollar was worth more than one thousand dollars are worth now. Send for him! Yes, indeed I shall send! Rest assured, Martin Harris will be here in time. It was Martin Harris who gave the Prophet Joseph Smith the first money to assist in the translation of the Book of Mormon. Martin Harris was the first scribe to assist in the translation of the Book of Mormon from the original plates, as dictated by the Prophet, who was led by the Holy Ghost. It was Martin Harris who was called, by revelation, to assist in the selection and ordination of the first quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the newly organized Church. It was Martin Harris who was called upon to accompany the Prophet to Missouri to assist in the selection of the land of consecration. Martin Harris also aided in the selection of the first high council of the Church, and he was a member of said council. When the new presidency of the Church was chosen, Martin felt greatly disappointed that he was not called to leadership, but Martin Harris never denied the faith, never affiliated with any other sect or denomination, but when the Church came west, Martin Harris remained behind. It is true that Martin Harris did not apostatize; he was never tried for his fellowship; he was never excommunicated."

During the summer of 1870, Elder Edward Stevenson was authorized to collect money by subscription to bring Martin Harris to Utah. About two hundred dollars was raised; and on August 30, 1870, Martin Harris arrived in Salt Lake City, in the company of Elder Stevenson.

When Martin Harris reached Salt Lake City, he visited Brigham Young at his home. They became reconciled, and Martin Harris was invited to speak in the tabernacle, and he bore a faithful testimony. He went to Smithfield, and later to Clarkston and made his home with his son, Martin Harris, Jr., and in course of time he returned to full fellowship and communion with the Saints.

Early in July, 1875, five years after he had come to Utah, Martin Harris was stricken with a kind of paralysis. It was the venerable witness' last illness, but through it all he remained true to his faith. At that time I and my small family lived in Clarkston. With other members of the Clarkston ward, I called at the Harris home to relieve them in the care of the old man.

We began to think that he had borne his last testimony. The last audible words he had spoken were something about the Book of Mormon but we could not understand what it was, but these were not the aged witness' last words.

The next day, July 10, 1875, marked the end. It was in the evening. It was milking time, and Martin Harris, Jr., and his wife, Nancy Homer Harris, had gone out to milk and to do the evening's chores. In the house with the stricken man were left my mother, Eliza Williamson Homer, and myself, who had had so interesting a day with Martin Harris in Kirtland. I stood by the bedside, holding the patient's right hand and my mother at the foot of the bed. Martin Harris had been unconscious for a number of days. When we first entered the room the old gentleman appeared to be sleeping. He soon woke up and asked for a drink of water. I put my arm under the old gentleman, raised him, and my mother held the glass to his lips. He drank freely, then he looked up at me and recognized me. He said, "I know you. You are my friend." He said, "Yes, I did see the plates on which the Book of Mormon was written; I did see the angel; I did hear the voice of God; and I do know that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God, holding the keys of the holy priesthood." This was the end. Martin Harris, divinely-chosen witness of the work of God, relaxed, gave up my hand. He lay back on his pillow and just as the sun went down behind the Clarkston mountains, the soul of Martin Harris passed on. When Martin Harris, Jr., and his wife returned to the house they found that their father had passed away, but in the passing, Martin Harris, favored of God, repeated an irrefutable testimony of the divine inspiration and the prophetic genius of the great Prophet, Joseph Smith.

(Signed) William Harrison Homer

## WILLIAM PILKINGTON'S ACCOUNT OF THE "DYING TESTIMONY" OF MARTIN HARRIS

Source: William Pilkington, Testimony sworn before Joseph W. Peterson, 3 April 1934

"I first met Martin Harris, one of the Three Witnesses to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, in Smithfield [Utah] in 1874. I was hired by his son, Martin Harris, Jr., to live in the Harris family [home] for one year. Martin Harris, Senior, was living with his son.

I found him a poor emaciated little man in whom the winters of life were weighing heavily. In his face might be read the story of his life. There were the marks of spiritual upliftment, there were the marks of disappointment. There were the strain and worry of mind, the contentment, the divine calm that it seemed could come no more into his life. He was a pathetic figure, and yet he seemed strong in body and mind. There was something about that little man which you could tell that he had lived richly. Noble experiences had come into his life which had come to the lives of but very few men. At times he would let his mind go back to the early rise of the Church, and would mention the name of Brigham Young very reluctantly, as it seemed that he did not have a great deal of respect for Brigham Young. Although he told me that when he arrived in Salt Lake City from Kirtland, Ohio which was on the 30th day of August, 1870, he was taken to the office of President Young and had a long talk with him, and all their differences were settled and he tried not to hold any ill feelings against President Young.

After staying a few days in Salt Lake City and Ogden, he went to live with his wife and family who were living in Smithfield, Cache County, Utah. His family consisted of his wife Caroline, Martin, Jr., John, Solomon, Ida and Julia.

When I would ask him questions pertaining to the early rise of the Church, his eyes would radiate with interest as he related experiences in connection with the translation of the Book of Mormon. He told me it was he who took some of the copied characters, along with the interpretation "which Joseph Smith had made through the gift and power of God" to Professor Charles Anthon, who pronounced them genuine Egyptian characters, and that the translation was correct and "he gave me a certificate to that effect." "Afterward when I told him where the man Joseph Smith got the plates from and who delivered the gold plates to him, he demanded the certificate back again and destroyed it, saying there is no such thing as ministering of angels in these days, but if I would bring him the gold plates, he would translate them. I told him that a considerable portion of the plates were sealed and could not be opened to human gaze. He then exclaimed, 'I cannot read a sealed book,' and thus the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, which will be found in the 29th chapter and 11 verse, but I did not know that I was fulfilling it at the time."

"I was then convinced that it was true, and offered my services as a scribe for the Prophet in the work of translating. Joseph gladly accepted my offer. It was the 12th day of April, 1828, when I commenced to write for the Prophet. From this time on until the 14th day of June, 1828, Joseph dictated to me from the plates of gold as the characters thereon assumed, through the Urim and Thummim, the forms of equivalent modern words which were familiar to the understanding of the Prophet and seer." From the 12th day of April [1828] until the 14th day of June [1828] he said he had written 116 pages foolscap of the translation. He said at this period of the translation, a circumstance happened. He was the cause of the 116 pages that he had written being lost and never found. He said he believed his wife burned it up, as she was very bitter against him having anything to do with Joseph Smith.

It was caused through her insisting that he bring the manuscript home and letting her and the rest of the family handle and see it. His family then consisted of his first wife, his father and mother, his brother Preserved Harris and his wife's sister, a Mrs. Cobb. "I promised Joseph that I would not let anyone else see it." Joseph inquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim if Harris should be permitted to take them, and was forbidden twice, but the third time he was permitted to take them after promising Joseph that he would not let any more see it. But he said when he arrived home, there were more people in the house besides the five and his wife took the manuscript and he never saw it anymore.

"So you see, Willie, it was stolen from me, and I could not take it back." "But," he said, "the Lord's work cannot be stopped by mortal man, and Joseph was told in a revelation to retranslate from the small plates of Nephi, and thereby thwart the plans of wicked men, but I was never permitted to write for the Prophet anymore. Oliver Cowdery did all the rest of the writing."

He said when the Saints moved to Missouri, he stayed in Kirtland. He was the custodian of the Kirtland temple and he told how the temple was in a dilapidated condition when he left it in August 1870, and how he left his daughter by his first wife, and her two little children.

He told me how his son-in-law was drafted in the army during the Civil War between the North and South, and that he was killed. Himself, his sick daughter and her two children were left alone. "I was in that condition when found by a Mormon elder, namely, William H. Homer (his oldest son's brother-in-law),

who was on his way home from a mission to England." He said a great injustice had been done him. He should have been chosen president of the Church after the death of the Prophet.

I asked him, "Is it not true that you were active in the performance of your duties in the early rise of the Church, and that you gave your money liberally to help the Prophet and the Church along?"

"That is all true," replied Harris. "Everything was all right then. I was honored while the Saints were in Kirtland, but now that I am old and poor, it is all different. I mortgaged my farm to pay for the first publication of 5000 copies of the Book of Mormon." I asked him if he still believed that the Book of Mormon was true, and that Joseph Smith was indeed a true prophet of God.

His whole being became electrified and it seemed that a changed man stood before me. It was no longer a man with an imagined grievance. It was a man with a message, a man with noble convictions in his heart, inspired of God and endowed with a divine knowledge. He said, "Just as sure as you see the sun shining, just as sure am I that I stood in the presence of an angel of God with Joseph Smith, and saw him hold the gold plates in his hands. I also saw the Urim and Thummim, the breastplate, and the sword of Laban. I saw the angel descend from heaven, and when he had finished his message, I saw him ascend up into heaven. The heavens were then opened and I heard the voice of God declare that everything the angel had told us was true, and that the Book of Mormon was translated correctly. I was commanded by God's voice to testify to the whole world what I had seen and heard."

"I cried out in my ecstasy -- 'tis enough; 'tis enough; mine eyes have beheld of the glories of God. Hosanna; hosanna; hosanna, to God and the Lamb.' And I fell on my face on the ground. The next thing I knew, the Prophet was helping me up."

I said, "Brother Harris, this is electrifying to me - to have the privilege of conversing with a man that has stood and talked with angels of the Lord. It is grand to hear you bear your testimony."

I asked him, "Did you, or either one of the other witnesses ever at any time deny your testimony as recorded in the preface of the Book of Mormon?"

He answered, "No! Not one of the Three Witnesses to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon ever at any time denied his testimony. They all died reaffirming it with their last breath." His voice throbbed with the sincerity and the conviction of his message. He was then the real Martin Harris, whose burning testimony, no power on earth could quench. He said again he spent his money freely for the Church. "I was the first scribe for Joseph in the translating of the Book of Mormon. I was called by revelation to assist in the selection and ordination of the first Twelve Apostles of the newly organized church."

It was Martin Harris who was called upon to accompany the Prophet to Missouri to assist in the selection of the land of consecration. It was Martin Harris who also aided in the selection of the first high council to the Church and he was also a member of that body.

No wonder that Martin Harris felt greatly disappointed because he was not appointed president of the Church after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

He said that Edward Stevenson was appointed to collect money by subscription to bring him from Kirtland in Ohio to Utah. He said that he arrived in Salt Lake City on the 30th day of August, 1870. After spending a few days in Salt Lake City and Ogden, he left for Smithfield, Cache County, Utah, to live with his family.

I had many interviews with Martin Harris as I lived in the Harris family [home] eighteen months, about ten months prior to his death. While my name is not Harris, I became a member of the family through living with them so long.

I am the only one alive today of his immediate family that knows anything pertaining to his testimony, as taken from his own lips. In his talks with me, he would say, "Now, Willie, I am not going to live very long; and after I am dead, I want you to tell the people what I have told you. For it is all true." And he would hold up his right hand and swear himself that he was telling the truth. I would invariably tell him: "Yes, Grandpa, I will sure tell the people what you have told me, for I know you have told me the truth."

On the 9th day of July 1875, while he was dying, I knelt by his cot, as he was lying on a cot in the southwest corner of the room in a house owned by a man by the name of Carbine, it was situated on the north side of Clarkston, Cache County, Utah. I wanted to get what I thought would be his last words, but he could not talk audibly. I could not understand what he wanted to tell me. He tried hard to tell me. So I stroked his hair back on his forehead and knelt down and prayed to the Lord and asked him in the name of Jesus to strengthen his servant's voice so that I could understand his last words, but I could get no response. He was lying on his left side, facing in the room and as I knelt down I placed my hands on his right arm. As I moved to stand up, I was in the act of moving my hands and he shook his head as if he did not want me to move. I then knelt down again and prayed to the Lord as before, and I was inspired by the Lord to ask Grandpa if he wanted me to hold up his right hand so that he could bear his testimony. I asked him and his

answer came clear, "Yes." While I held his right hand up, strength was given to him and he bore his testimony as he had done many times before and I understood every word.

He then bore the same testimony to the whole world and then laid back exhausted. There were two other men standing in the room and heard him bear his testimony. One of them was Thomas Godfery of Clarkston who just recently died.

Martin Harris' spirit departed the next day, the 10th day of July, 1875, in Clarkston, Cache County, Utah, aged 92 years. I attended his funeral and assisted in his burial in the Clarkston cemetery.

Signed, William Pilkington Smithfield, Utah