

“Git Them Translated”: Joseph Smith, Ancient Characters, and Translating the Plates.

The Book of Mormon

(the interpreters of languages)

4. 21

O. . . C. . .

I. Joseph Smith received spectacles with the plates, but did not use them to translate until February 1828

II. Joseph attempted to obtain a secular translation of the plates

III. He learned how to translate

IV. Reconciling Joseph Smith's History

Miraculous Instruments of the Book of Mormon

- Liahona “Look upon the ball, and behold the things which are written.” (1 Nephi 16:10, 16, 26.)
- King Mosiah’s translating instrument (Mosiah 8:9-13)
- The brother of Jared’s spectacles



Nephite Interpreters

2200
BC

Brother of
Jared



120
BC

King Limhi



73
BC

Alma
passes to
Helaman



385
AD

Mormon



420
AD

Moroni



of a wicked man who has set at naught the Councils
& ~~has~~ broken the most sacred promises which ^{was} made
God & ~~has~~ depended upon his own judgement & bowed
his own ~~own~~ wisdom & this is the reason that thou
lost thy Privileges for a Season for thou hast
that the beginning of thy work shall go forth & accomplish ^{the} purposes
the beginning of thy work shall go forth & accomplish ^{the} purposes
into the world & shall the knowledge of my people the
& the Jacobites shall the knowledge of my people the
Lamanites knowledge of the Lamanites, & the Lamanites
the Ishmaelites which dwindle in unbelief because
the iniquities of their Fathers who ~~have~~ been suffered
destroy their Brethren because of their iniquities & the
Abominations & for this very purpose are these ^{preserved}
~~preserved~~ which contain these Records that the
of the Lord might be fulfilled which he made
People & that the Lamanites might come to the kn

Did Joseph Know How to Use the Spectacles to Translate Before February 1828?

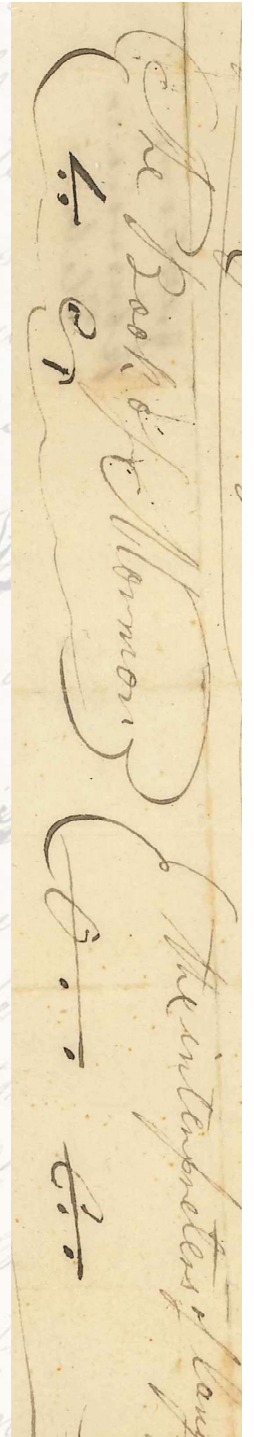
The Book of Mormon
L. O. R.

The Interpreter of Languages
L. O. R.

Using the Spectacles before February 1828



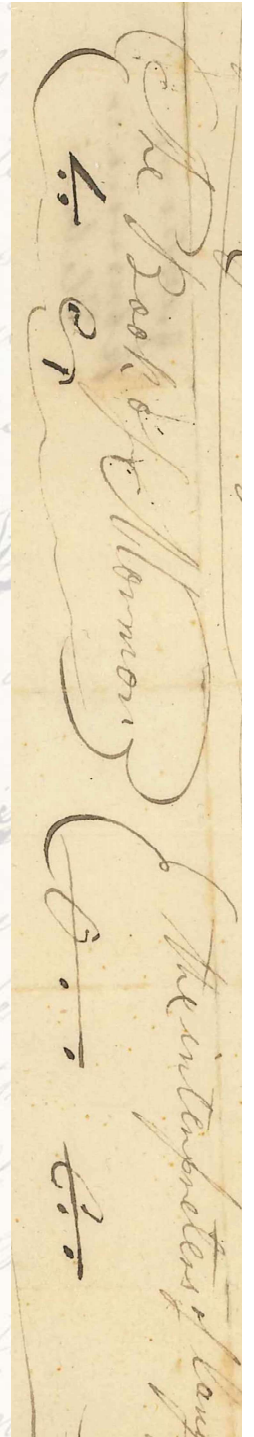
- "I have got a key"
- "Joseph kept the urim and thummim constantly about his person he could by this means ascertain at any moment if the plates were in danger having just looked into them before Emma got there he perceived her coming...he told her that the record was perfectly safe for the present"
(from Macedon) Lucy Mack Smith



Using the Spectacles before February 1828



- Did Joseph translate with the spectacles before February 1828?
- Lucy wrote: "Joseph was very solicitous about the work but as yet no means had come into his hand of accomplishing it." What about the spectacles?





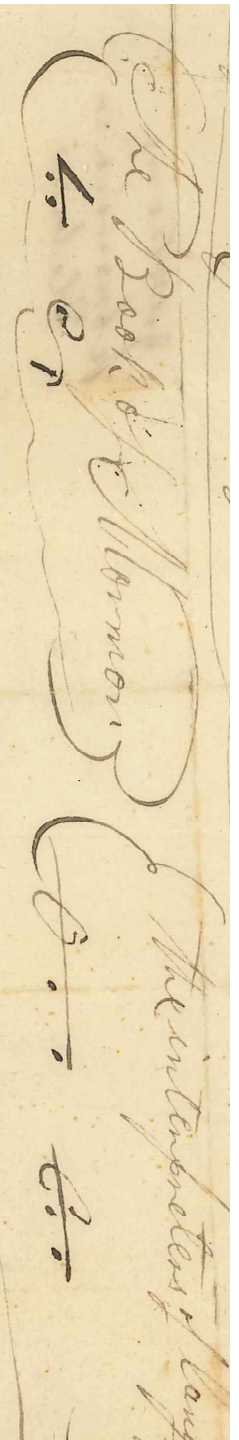
Joseph Fielding Smith declared that
“nothing was done towards translating the
record that year [1827].”

He explained that Joseph Smith “was busy
studying the characters and making himself
familiar with them and the use of the Urim
and Thummim. He had a great deal more
to do than merely to sit down and with the
use of the instrument prepared for that
purpose to translate the characters on the
plates.”

The Book of Mormon
L. E. S.
The Interpreter of Languages
L. E. S.

Why had he not used the spectacles for translation?

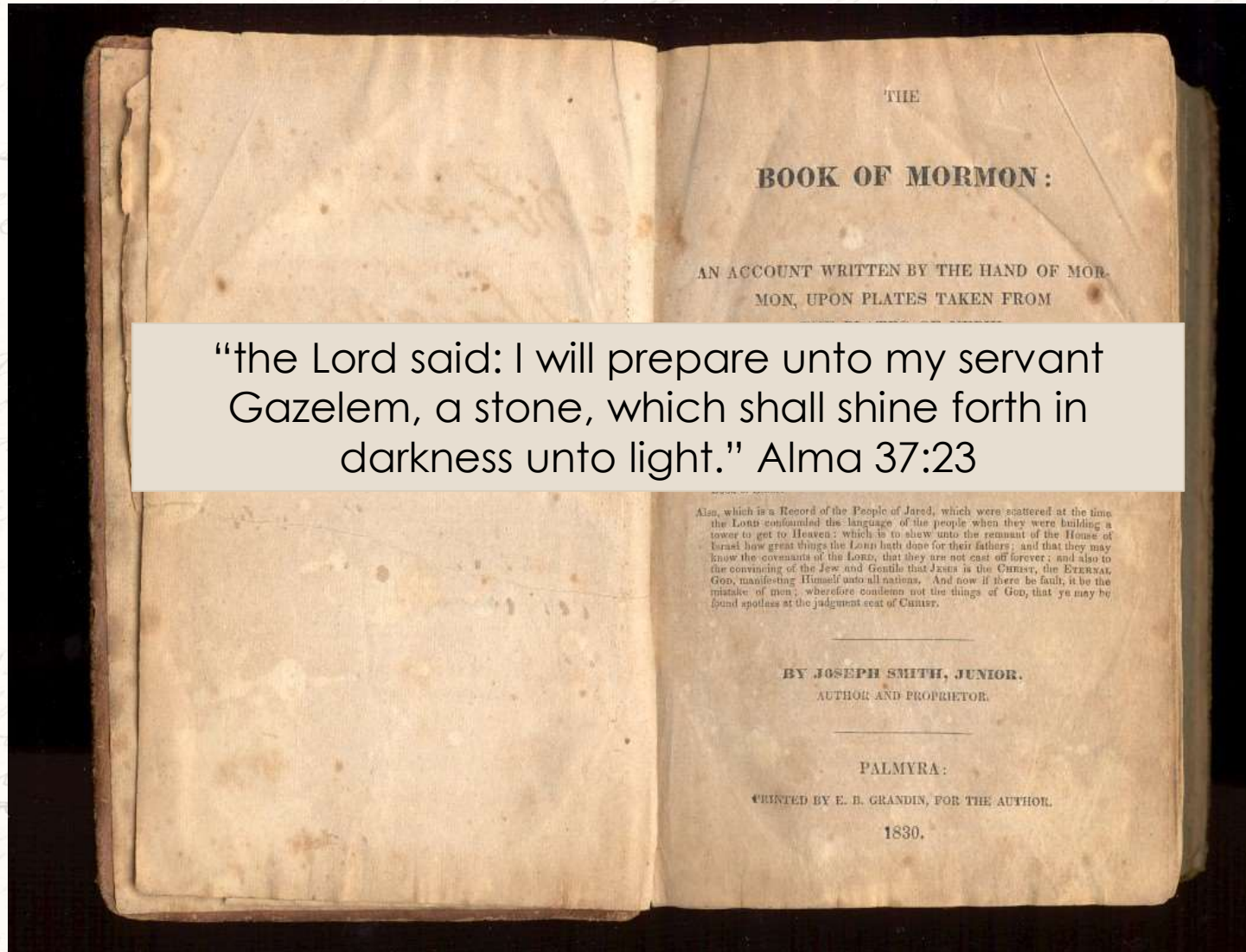
- Joseph had been using a seer stone since 1822.
- For up to five years he had never used the earlier seer stone to translate.



- Joseph had been using another seer stone since around 1822, for which he also did not use for translation to that point.

The Book of Mormon
L. O. R.
The Interpreters of Lang.

The Prophecy of Joseph's Seer Stone



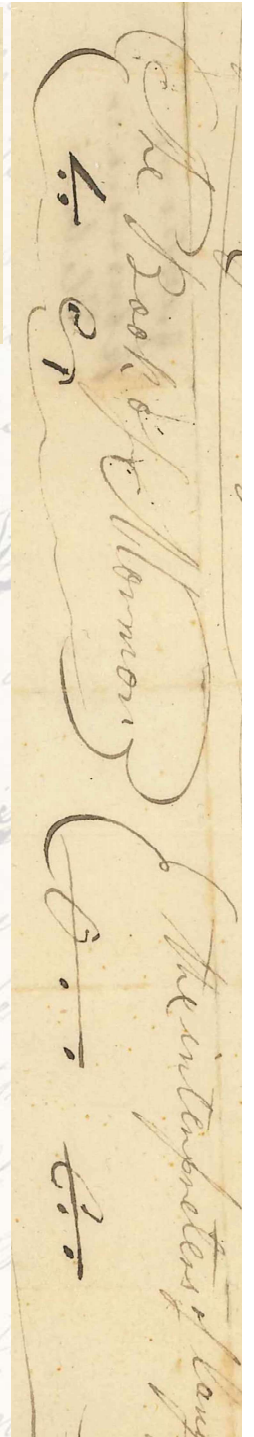
The Book of Mormon
L. O. T.
The Interpreter of the
L. O. T.



Wilford Woodruff



- “the seer stone known as ‘Gazelem’, which was shown of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph to be some thirty feet under ground, and which he obtained by digging under the pretence of excavating for a well.”
- Woodruff had apparently seen and touched Gazelem because he wrote in his journal on 18 May 1888, when the Manti, Utah temple was dedicated, that he “consecrated upon the Altar the seers Stone that Joseph Smith found by Revelation some 30 feet under the Earth.”

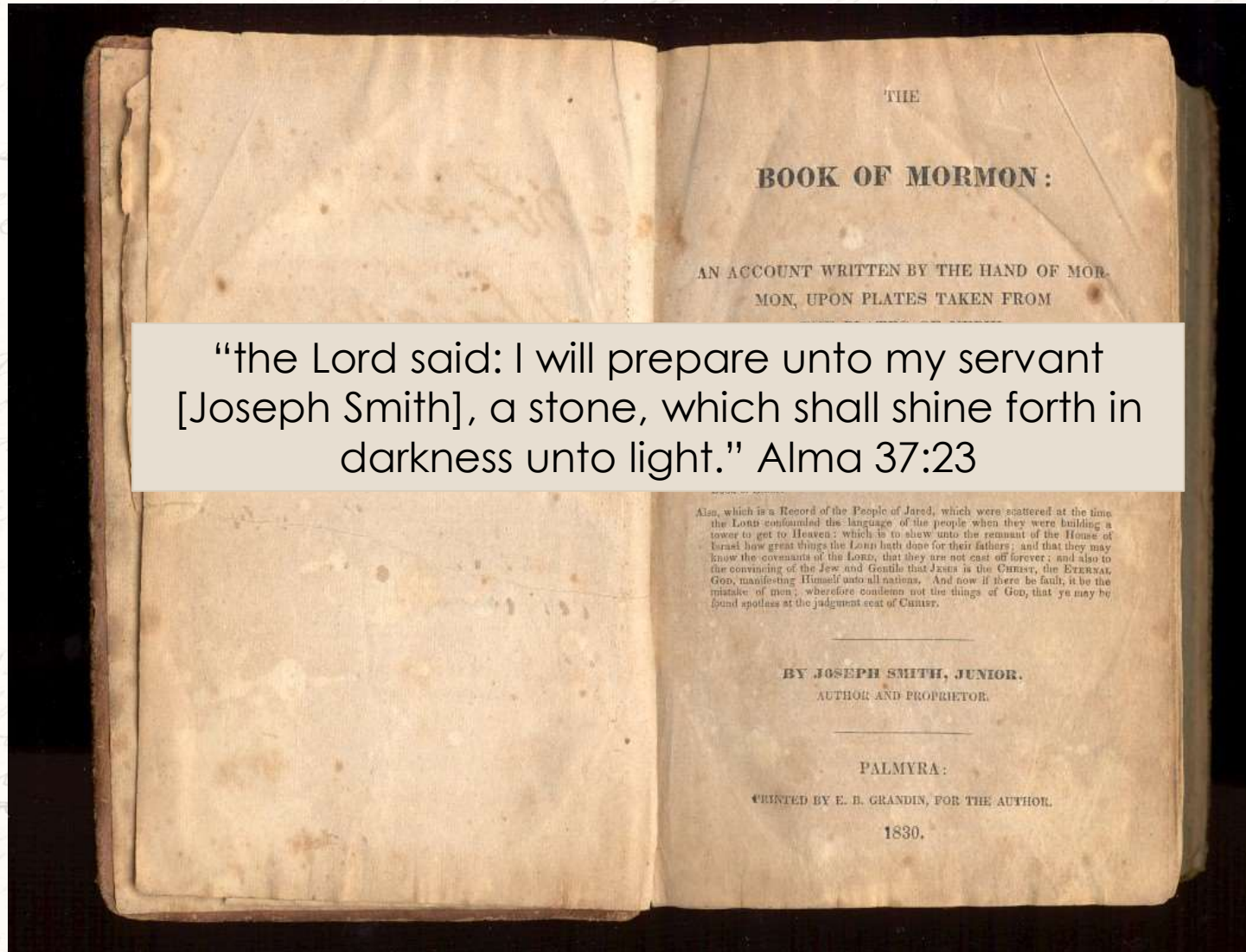


Orson Pratt and D&C 130

- Pratt: "Joseph Smith, who was Gazelam in the spirit world, was, and is, and will be in the progress of Eternity: --The Prince of Light."
- Speaking of the kingdoms of heaven the *D&C 130* states: "a white stone is given to each of those who come into the celestial kingdom, whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word."

The Book of Mormon
L. Orson Pratt
The Interpreter of the
Book of Mormon

The Prophecy of Joseph's Seer Stone



The Book of Mormon
L. O. T.
The Interpreter of the
L. O. T.

Using his Seer Stone

- Martin Harris's visit and the tooth pick
- Josiah Stowell: Smith "looked through [a seer] stone and described Josiah Stowels house and out houses, while at Palmyra at Simpson Stowels"
- Sally Chase's stone: "He was greatly surprised to see but one thing, which was a small stone, a great way off. It soon became luminous, and dazzeled his eyes, and after a short time it became as instense as the mid-day sun. he said that the stone was under the roots of a tree or shrub as large as his arm, situated about a mile up a small stream that puts in on the South side of Lake Erie, not far from the New York and Pennsylvania line."

The Book of Mormon
L. E. Or
The Interpreter of Language

Seeking for a Secular Translation

Joseph Knight Sr.

for says he & can see any thing they are Haroldus for they are
written in caracters and I want them translated now he was
commanded not to let no one see them

“Now they are
written in caracters
and I want them
translated”

and said he they appear to be gold But he feared to think more of
the glasses or the ruin and thummen then he did of the plates
for says he & can see any thing they are Haroldus for they are
written in caracters and I want them translated now he was
commanded not to let no one see them

came this Samuel Lawrence and one Beaman a great Rodman
and wanted to talk with him and he went into the west room
and they proposed to go shares with him and tried every way
to bargain with him but could not. Then Beaman took out
his keys and held them up and they pointed to the harth
where they were hid. then says Beaman it is under that harth
so they had to guide the house until some time in November he obtained
fifty dollars in money and hired a man to move him and his wife
to Pennsylvania to his fathers his wife being amiable and wanted
to go to her fathers he bought a piece of land of his father
with a house and barn and here the people began to tease
him to see the Book and to offer him money and prosperity and they
provided so hard that he had to hide it in the Mountain -
the news began to be rumoured to get them translated he therefore
with his wife Jones of the Caracters exactly like the original
and sent another Harms to see if he could get them translated
he went to Albany and to Philadelphia and to New York and he found
men that could translate some of the caracters in all these places
were some caracters they could not well understand there fore
stating to him that he thought if he had the original he could
translate it and he sent a very good price to Joseph

The Book of Mormon
L. Or
The Interpreter of Language

Joseph Knight Sr.

- “he now Began to be anxious to git them translated”

at a given time. Now it soon got about that Joseph Smith had found the plates and people came in to see them but he told them that they could not for he must not show them but many insisted and offered money and property to see them but for keeping them from the people they persecuted and abused them and they were obliged to hide them, and they hid them under a brick bath in the west room, about this time came this famous Lamanite and one Barnum a great Godman and wanted to talk with them.

- “with his wife Drew of the Caricters exactly like the ancient and [later] sent Martin Harris to see if he could git them translated.”

to Pennsylvania to his father his wife being unwell and wanted to go to her father he bought a piece of Land of his father with a house and Barnum said I have the people began to tease him to see the Book and to offer him money and property and they crowded so hard that he had to hide it in the Mountain - He now began to be anxious to git them translated he therefore with his wife Drew of the Caricters exactly like the ancient and sent Martin Harris to see if he could git them translated he went to Athens and to Philadelphia and to New York and he found men that could translate some of the Caricters in all those places Mitchel and Anthony of New York were the most Learned but there were some Caricters they could not well understand therefore Nathan told him that he thought if he had the original he could translate it and he gave a very good price to Joseph

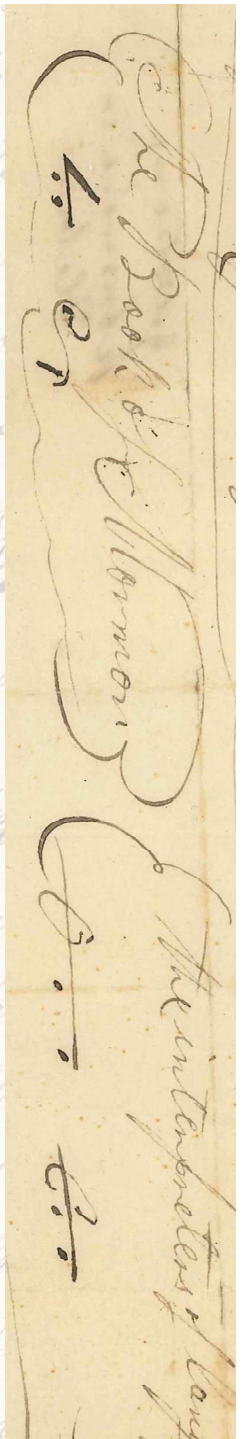
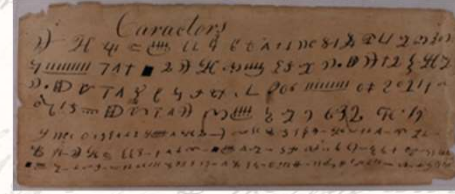
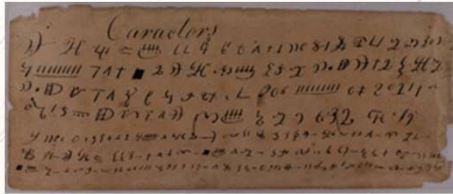
The Book of Mormon
L. E. S.
The Interpreter of Language

Scribes and Multiple Characters Documents

Emma Smith

Reuben Hale

Martin Harris





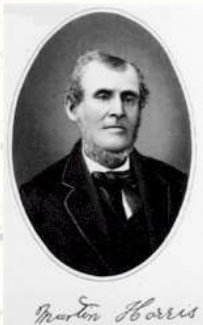
Lucy Mack Smith

It soon became necessary to take some measures to accomplish the translation of the record into English but he was instructed to take off a fac simile of the ~~alphabet~~ ^{composing the alphabet} ~~characters~~ ^{which were called reformed Egyptian} **Alphabetically** and send them to all the learned men that he could find and ask them for the translation of the same. Joseph was very solicitous about the work but as yet no means had come into his hands of accomplishing ~~the same~~ it.

It soon became necessary to take some measures to accomplish the translation of the record into English but he was instructed to take off a fac simile of the **alphabet** composing the characters **Alphabetically** and send them to all the learned men that he could find and ask them for the translation of the same.

the existence of the record 2 or 3 years before it came forth. This was one other than Martin Harris one of the witnesses to the book of Mormon after it was translated. He said Joseph desired me to go and one afternoon as he wished to see him. But he was an old man that I never had decided for his wife was a peculiar sort of a woman from that was habitually of an a very jealous temperamental and being hard of hearing she was always suspicious of some secret being in agitation that was designedly kept from her hearing in this account I would rather not go unless I could approach her upon the subject before I spoke to him about it. Joseph consented to this and I went to Mr. Harris' house according to his request.

The Book of Mormon
The Interpreter of Language



Martin Harris

Martin Harris

- Lucy Wrote: "it was agreed that Martin Harris should follow him as soon as Joseph should have sufficient time to transcribe the Egyptain alphabet which Mr. Harris was to take to the east and through the country in every direction to all who were professed linguists to give them an opertunity of showing their talents."
- Joseph Smith History stated: "Harris came to our place, got the characters which I had drawn off the plates and started with them to the City of New York."



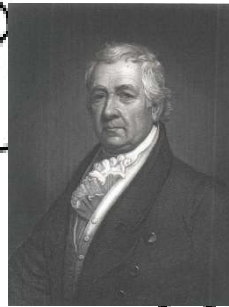
Finding a scholar who can translate an unknown language from a Native American Record

NY

Luther Bradish



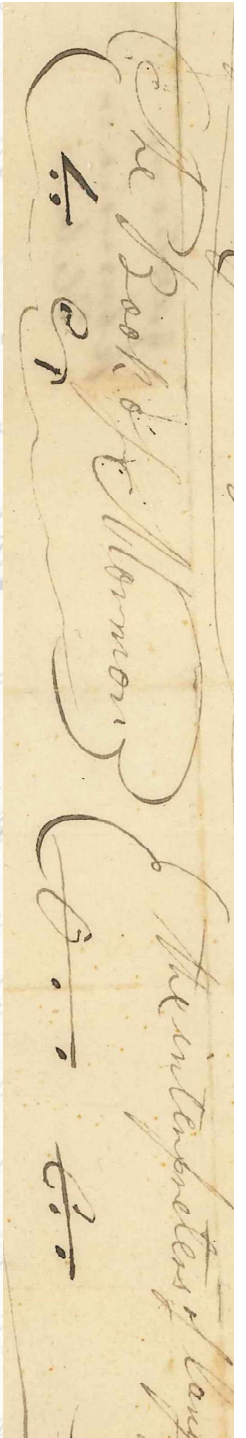
Samuel L. Mitchell



Caleb Atwater
Samuel Rafinsque

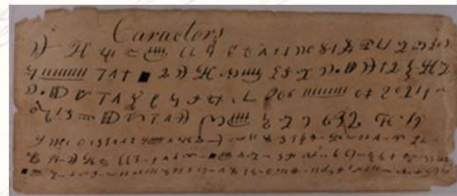


NJ

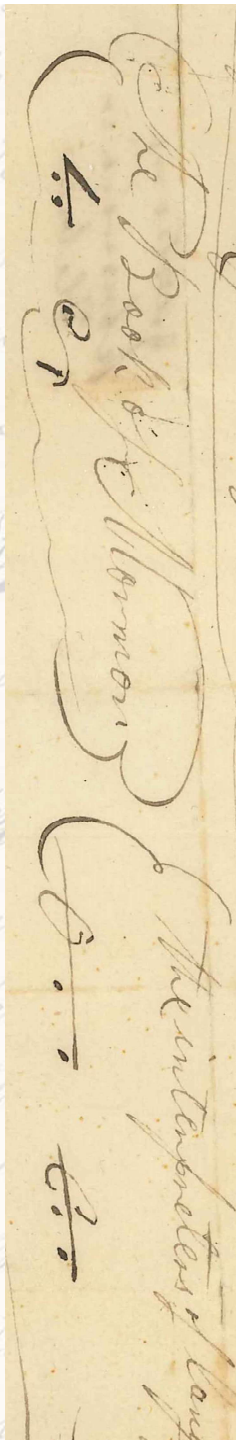
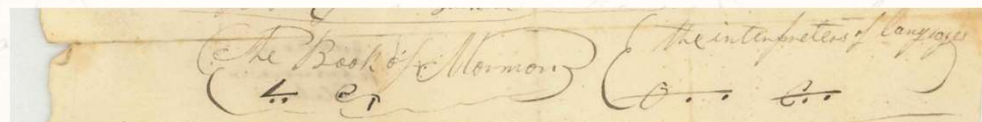


Reconciling Joseph Smith's Histories

- 1838: "I copyed a considerable number of them and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated some"
 - Copied a considerable number



- I translated some (Was this him testing what he saw in the spectacles?)



1832 History

- “we proceeded to copping some of them and he took his Journey to the Eastern Cittys and to the Learned saying read this I pray thee and the learned said I cannot but if he would bring the plates they would read it but the Lord forbid it and he returned to me and gave them to me to translate and I said cannot for I am not learned but the Lord had prepared spectacles for to read the Book”
- “therefore I commenced translating the characters”

The Book of Mormon
L. E. Or
The Interpreter of Languages
L. E. Or

May and June 1829

John the Baptist Visit
May 15

05/15

05/18

05/21

05/24

05/27

05/30

06/02

1829

Peter, James, and John Visit (Assuming it occurred during their travel to
Colesville, NY)

May 17 - May 25

Samuel Smith (Arrival and
departure from Harmony, PA)

May 16 - May 25

Hyrum Smith (Arrival in Harmony, PA and
reception of D&C 11)

May 25 - May 31

Joseph Knight Sr. (Arrival in Harmony, PA and reception of D&C 12)

May 17 - May 25

Joseph and Oliver Move with
David Whitmer to Fayette, NY

Jun 1 -
Jun 4