



# The Joseph Smith Memorial Monument and Royalton's "Mormon Affair": Religion, Community, Memory, and Politics in Progressive Vermont

*In a state with a history of ambivalence toward outsiders, the story of the Mormon monument's mediation in the local rivalry between Royalton and South Royalton is ultimately a story about transformation, religion, community, memory, and politics. Along the way—and in this case entangled with the Mormon monument—a generation reshaped town affairs.*

By KEITH A. EREKSON

**O**n December 23, 1905, over fifty members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) gathered to dedicate a monument to their church's founder, Joseph Smith, near the site of his birth on a hill in the White River Valley. During the previous six months, the monument's designer and project managers had marshaled the vast resources of Vermont's granite industry to quarry and polish half a dozen granite blocks and transport them by rail and horse power; they surmounted all odds by shoring up sagging

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*Joseph Smith Memorial Monument (Lovejoy, History, facing 648).*

bridges, crossing frozen mud holes, and beating winter storms to erect a fifty-foot, one-hundred-ton monument considered to be the largest of its kind in the world. Since 1905, Vermont histories and travel literature, when they have acknowledged the monument's presence, have generally referred to it as a remarkable engineering feat representative of the state's prized granite industry.<sup>1</sup>

What these accounts have omitted is any indication of the monument's impact upon the local community in which it was erected. Though once ignored or considered merely as artifacts, monuments have been increasingly viewed as exerting a transformative influence—upon our perceptions of the past, certainly, but also upon the very definitions of our selves and our communities. Modern “culture wars” over public school history curricula or the content of museum exhibits demonstrate the impassioned contestability of the past, and cultural geographer Wilbur Zelinsky has argued that because changes in the landscape (such as monuments) are the most durable, they are the most contested. For historians, the contours of such contests not only describe the origins of

historical monuments, but, more significantly, they reveal the values and aspirations of the participants in the debate, ultimately telling us far more about the rememberers than the remembered. Some studies of historical monuments have sought broad national or international comparisons; however, monuments are created through the interaction of local people in local communities.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the Joseph Smith Monument produced its greatest impact in Royalton Township, which contained most of the memorial property and all of the major transportation routes to it. The Mormons and their monument arrived in the township at a time when residents of its two villages—Royalton and South Royalton—were competing with each other for control of the township’s economic, political, and cultural affairs. The interposition of the monument into the existing debates galvanized the rivals, refocused their cultural conflict on historical issues, and ultimately became central to a controversy over funding the town library—the issue that settled the contest once and for all in favor of South Royalton.<sup>3</sup>

But a monument of this size and character also influenced early-twentieth-century Vermont. The multi-thousand-dollar project employed firms and workmen throughout the state, and the presence of the monument sparked reflection, reaction, and retribution. In an era when people throughout Vermont (and the nation) began to experience the challenges associated with urbanization, industrialization, immigration, family disruption, religious change, and deepening class divisions, the past came to be considered a static place of peace and agrarian ideals. The budding Vermont tourism industry sought to capitalize on these feelings by promoting Vermont’s farms and maple sugar products as emblematic of “what America was”—and the idea worked. In 1905, the year the Joseph Smith Monument was erected, Vermont witnessed its largest tourist season in history.<sup>4</sup> The resulting influx of outside ideas, influences, tourists, and money sparked deep controversy among Vermonters. Some reached out to the technologies, such as the railroad, telephone, and automobile, that promised to connect their “island communities” with the broader national culture. Others argued that local autonomy must be preserved, however quick or seemingly irreversible the pace of change.<sup>5</sup>

Royalton is an ideal place to witness Progressive-Era transitions, reactions, and implications because the division between advocates for connection and isolation mirrors geographic divisions within the township: Residents of the older village of Royalton urged moderation and tradition while those of the newer village of South Royalton welcomed stronger connections to outside communities. Religion and history also enrich this story because while residents of both villages debated the

propriety of reaching out to the world, the world reached back in the form of Mormons and their monument. Developments in Royalton Township also reflect the significant impact of women in the Progressive Era. Once seen only as settlement workers or suffragettes, recent historical scholarship has found women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries actively engaged with public issues through a variety of women's clubs. Through these clubs women not only emphasized education and reform, they "domesticated" politics, worked in opposition to men, and reshaped American life.<sup>6</sup> In Royalton, women from both villages actively shaped public debates about the meaning of their town's past, the tensions between free religious expression and the tenets of Mormonism (especially polygamy), and the place of Mormons within their present community.

In a state with a history of ambivalence toward outsiders, the story of the Mormon monument's mediation in the local rivalry between Royalton and South Royalton is ultimately a story about transformation, religion, community, memory, and politics. Along the way—and in this case, entangled with the Mormon monument—a generation reshaped township affairs. What follows is a story of the contest between farmers and professionals, lawyers and women's club presidents, outsiders and old-timers who, as a result of the construction of a monument to Joseph Smith in their backyards, were compelled to answer for themselves and with their neighbors what their town's past was and what it meant for their present and future. The construction of the monument forced Royalton residents to reflect on the meaning of their past, and set the terms of contemporary cultural and political debates. With stakes so high, the tide of events shifted at the whim of seemingly unrelated and insignificant events, such as property purchases, Old Home Week festivities, and unexpected but timely deaths. The uncertainty and contingency make this an engaging story about Vermont in the Progressive Era, set in Royalton, with a Mormon twist.

#### RIVAL VILLAGES

Like many central Vermont towns, Royalton's roots date to before the Revolutionary War. In 1771, a settler first stopped in what would become Royalton, and while the township was formally organized ten years later, the first building was not erected in Royalton village until 1784. During the War, a British-led band of Indians raided the settlement, burning homes, killing residents, and carrying others away captive. By 1800 the blossoming little village of Royalton supported five merchants and a lawyer, and by 1810 "the great forest trees that had shut out the sun were disappearing fast. Good dirt roads ran between

fields walled in stone, past neat frame houses with long open ells filled with wood and barns filled with hay.” In 1807, Royalton Academy opened, and throughout the nineteenth century it grew into a renowned teaching institution. The opening of the Vermont Central Railroad in 1848 brought a train station to Royalton village and put the township squarely on the major overland transportation route through the state.<sup>7</sup>

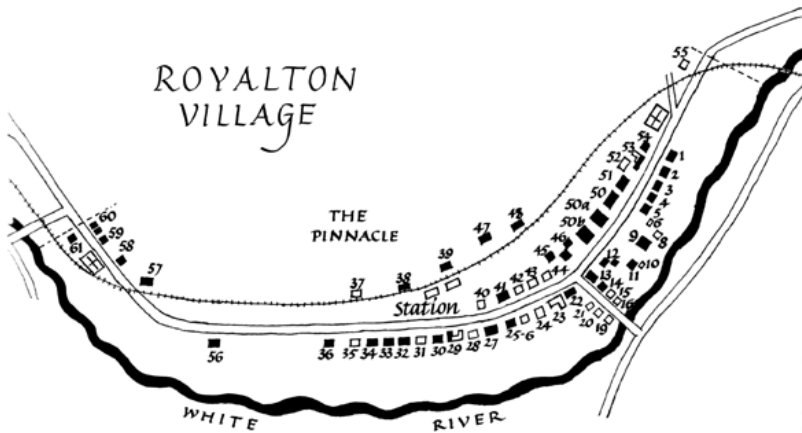
Unfortunately for Royalton’s long-time residents, the railroad also created an invitation for outsiders. As the new rail line was being laid, Daniel Tarbell of neighboring Tunbridge to the north and Lyman Benson of neighboring Sharon to the south collaborated on the most successful railroad speculation in Windsor County. Near the mouth of the White River’s First Branch, the pair built a bridge over the White River, set up a store and railroad station, and Tarbell built a hotel across the street. Soon a church, school, and several houses were constructed and by the end of 1848 South Royalton had sprung up “like a mushroom overnight.”<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to Royalton village, whose farming families had lived in the township since the 1780s, South Royalton invited a new wave of settlers attracted by the prospects of a blossoming railroad town. By the opening of the twentieth century, South Royalton’s population had grown to nearly three times the size of Royalton’s, supporting two lawyers, two doctors, a dentist, a hotel, livery stable, and several merchant operations. In 1900, the village installed electric lights, and the original bridge over the White River was replaced by a steel one in 1903. Three fires (the most recent in 1886) had gutted the original village and most of the buildings had been rebuilt in a modest style of Greek revival architecture, featuring “money and fashion, gingerbread and lacework, turrets and towers and verandas and trim.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, in half a century, South Royalton had clearly established itself as the economic center of the township, characterized by local historian, Hope Nash, as the “village of trade.”<sup>10</sup>

While South Royalton grew and prospered economically, Royalton residents clung tenaciously to their long-timer status and prominence as the “village of culture.”<sup>11</sup> Royalton Academy maintained its tradition in education, and hosted a library for students and residents. The village’s Congregational Church (founded in 1777) began to gather books before the Civil War, and a small library association arose in the post-war years. But in 1893, a new graded school opened in South Royalton, and the following year the books previously gathered into various places were turned over to the school. That same year, however, the legislature passed a law providing state aid for towns that elected trustees



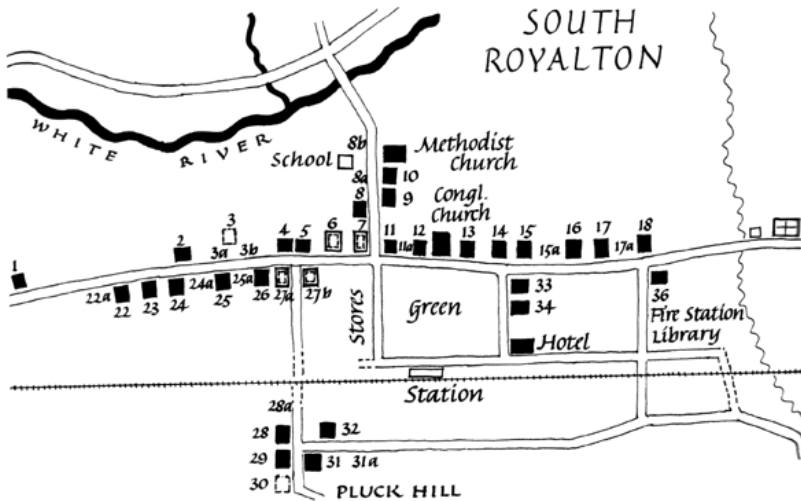
*Royalton, the “village of culture” (Lovejoy, History, facing 602).*



*Royalton Village hosted the town hall (no. 9), the town clerk’s office (45), Royalton Academy (50b), and Congregational (50a) and Episcopal (13) churches. Residents Levi and Emily Wild (28), George and Gertrude Laird (39), Clara McClellan Denison (50), and Rev. Joel Whitney (48) had houses nearby (Nash, Royalton, Vermont, 119). Printed by permission of the family of Hope Nash, August 2005.*



South Royalton, the “village of trade” (Lovejoy, History, facing 616).



The row of stores in South Royalton Village hosted five merchants, two barbers, two lawyers, a jeweler, a dentist, a grocer, a photographer, and the post office. Residents Marvin H. Hazen (no. 15a), Edgar J. Fish (13), Evelyn Lovejoy (18), Charles Tarbell (right and down from the Library), and Perley Belknap (right of 36) had houses nearby (Nash, Royalton, Vermont, 122). Printed by permission of the family of Hope Nash, August 2005.

and appropriated money toward a town library. In 1896, the township met the requirements and the Royalton Free Public Library was born, though it did not actually open its doors for two more years.<sup>12</sup> Seven months after voting on the library, the women of Royalton village organized a women's club to provide for their "mental culture and intellectual improvement." Over the next ten years the women studied current events, the history of Rome and the British Isles, English and American literature, and practical sciences of art, forestry, household science, and civil service. In their community they installed first kerosene and then electric street lamps, furnished supplies for schools and the town library, and coordinated memorial services for President McKinley. But their primary purpose was to promote the history and heritage of Royalton. Their meetings were called to order by the rap of a gavel made of charred wood that had survived the Indian raid of 1780, and they spearheaded a project to restore the original town charter and to repair the aging Academy building, two tangible symbols of the heritage and cultural significance of Royalton.<sup>13</sup>

The rivalry between the village of trade and the village of culture surfaced in township politics. As South Royalton grew, its residents introduced motions at town meeting to move the meeting place and clerk's office to their village, though Royalton residents consistently and successfully argued that it should stay where it was—in their village. Over the years, a few South Royalton men had been elected to local office, but Royalton residents had generally held two-thirds of the total public offices and always maintained a majority of the seven most influential positions—three selectmen, town clerk, treasurer, moderator, and constable. But when long-time Royalton resident and moderator Dudley Chase Denison died in February 1905, he was succeeded the following month by South Royalton resident Marvin H. Hazen. At that same meeting, voters elected two South Royalton selectmen and gave the newer village its first majority in township history, a majority that Royalton never recaptured.<sup>14</sup> Town historian Evelyn Lovejoy described this period as "a critical time in [the township's] history."<sup>15</sup> The upstart village of South Royalton dominated trade and now held its first majority in local politics. Royalton residents clung to the status derived from their traditions of education, religion, and, history, but the new school in South Royalton provided an opening for a threat. Long-time residents recognized (and some probably feared) that the shifting of political power in March 1905 could possibly unsettle the balance between the rival villages; but no one knew that while they squabbled at town meeting, a Mormon designer and a Montpelier businessman were in Boston laying plans that would change the township's history forever.



## COMPETING RESPONSES TO THE MORMON MONUMENT

The Joseph Smith Memorial Monument was designed by Junius F. Wells, a Utah-born Mormon who dabbled in mining, publishing, and politics. In the words of a Boston journalist, Wells was “a typical western man, quiet, resourceful, interested, vivid in speech” and “most courteous, but he does things when things are to be done.”<sup>16</sup> At a Boston meeting in March 1905, Wells shared his idea with Riley C. Bowers, a businessman and granite industry insider from Montpelier. Even though they would be hard pressed to complete the monument in time for the one hundredth anniversary of Joseph Smith’s birth in December, Bowers thought it a workable idea and accepted the proposition. The pair traveled to South Royalton in May where, drawing upon the town records of Royalton and Sharon, they identified the site of Smith’s birth and purchased the property on behalf of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>17</sup>

The purchased property straddled the township border with Sharon, though most of the property—and specifically the site where the monument was to be erected—lay in Royalton, a few miles outside of South Royalton village. Two days after the sale, South Royalton’s local editor of the *Randolph Herald and Times* (each village had its own local editor, of course) reported the transaction and Wells’s intention “to erect a monument and shrine, lay out walks and otherwise beautify the place.”<sup>18</sup> Sharon’s local editor remained silent about the monument, but perhaps an Associated Press report that circulated a month later captured the tenor of that township’s reaction. The report described the action of secret agents who purchased the birthplace of Joseph Smith in Sharon and “greatly amused the Royalton People and they gently chaffed the Sharonites.” Then the Sharon selectmen hired a surveyor who found “that the whole of the [purchased] property was in Royalton. Now the Sharonites are gloating and Royalton folk are preparing to give the Mormons a warm reception.”<sup>19</sup> While the details of the survey are erroneous and contemporary local records do not corroborate the story, it is true that Sharon residents paid little attention to the monument, to this day considering it Royalton’s affair.<sup>20</sup>

Though Sharon and Royalton did not openly disagree about the monument, its announcement and construction did provoke three distinct reactions from Vermonters in general and Royalton residents in particular. On one hand, a large number of Vermonters stood to benefit, at least a little, from the \$15,000 construction project. Bowers contracted the quarrying work out to one Barre firm and the polishing to another, and the railroads collected their fees for laying new lines and transporting the granite pieces to Royalton.<sup>21</sup> In South Royalton, Wells

noticed “an undercurrent of genuine interest” as he employed several local young men in addition to outside crews, paid seven local families to provide meals for all of the workers, and hired oxen and wagon teams as they were needed.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, many Vermonters held little regard for Mormons and were ashamed that their state had anything to do with them. In the nineteenth century, Vermont congressmen had sponsored tough anti-polygamy legislation, and a local study of notable men of Vermont had relegated three Vermont-born Mormon leaders—Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Heber C. Kimball—to a short list of “Queer Characters” from Vermont’s past.<sup>23</sup> Since 1903, national presses had carried reports of the hearings over the propriety of allowing Reed Smoot, a Mormon Apostle and senator-elect from Utah, to take his seat in the nation’s highest legislative body.<sup>24</sup> In June 1905 the *Interstate Journal* described “Mormonism as a species of deep-sea octopus, with ever-reaching tentacles, seeking whom it may devour.” The following month *The Burlington Free Press* reprinted Wells’s summary of the project, adding “this reads finely, nevertheless Joseph Smith was an imposter, and the religion he founded a delusion and a snare.”<sup>25</sup> Throughout the state, Congregational circuit speakers found increasing success in their anti-Mormon lectures, especially those speakers who could share firsthand accounts of the shameful moral and educational conditions in Utah.<sup>26</sup>

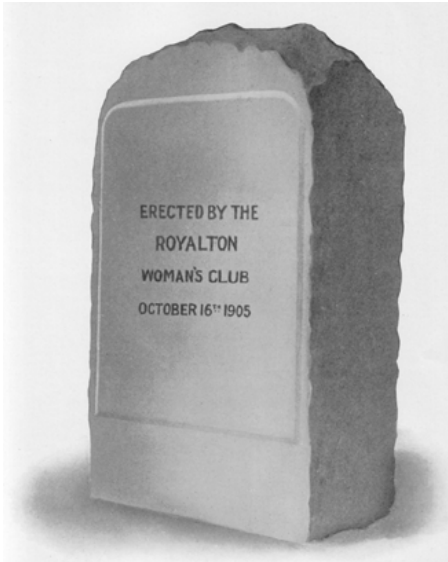
Both reactions found expression in Royalton Township, and, interestingly, residents split along village rivalry lines. During the first week of December, Reverend Levi Wild of Royalton village wrote to the editor of the local paper on behalf of those “who regard with deep concern the present Mormon invasion of our community.” Wild introduced a leaflet prepared by the Woman’s Home Missionary Union of Vermont that decried the church and claimed the monument would provide a foothold in Vermont for Mormon missionary work. The women also condemned all who had a hand in the monument, those locally who were “tempted” to sell their land or to accept employment on Wells’s “liberal payroll,” as well as the “owners of those granite hills” and the “people at our state capital” who were duped into supporting the project. The monument, they announced, “marks the grave of the virtue of women” and “is an insult to the womanhood of Vermont, of our country, and of the world.”<sup>27</sup> South Royalton lawyer Charles Tarbell challenged the professed piety of Wild and the women, asserting that “the Mormons have the same right to worship God that we claim for ourselves,” and that “they may exercise that right wherever and whenever they please, provided they do not violate the law or interfere with like vested rights in other people.”<sup>28</sup> Tarbell’s polished public reply

was seconded by the other citizens of the township, men and women, who signed a petition welcoming visiting Mormons to their town. The petitioners included most of the prominent citizens of South Royalton (thirty-three of the forty-three signers), and three out of four elected township officials.<sup>29</sup> A few weeks later, South Royalton resident and state senator Edgar J. Fish spoke at the monument's dedication ceremony, and the guest register on that occasion reflected the same township divide in starker contrast: sixty South Royalton residents to four from Royalton (with only two from Sharon).<sup>30</sup>

A third reaction to the monument turned Vermonters away from the present toward the celebration of their own past. One week after the property purchase, an editorial in the *St. Albans Messenger* predicted that "attention again will be directed to the fact that not a few of the sons of the commonwealth, who 'fought a good fight' and who 'kept the faith' have no memorial." Another local journal noted that "Vermont has too few memorials to the great men of her past but a movement to establish such seems to be gaining headway." Monument building was not a new endeavor in Vermont. In 1799 Vermonters marked the site of a baby born to an Indian captive with two slate slabs, and during the nineteenth century they had erected monuments to the memory of Ethan Allen and two Revolutionary War battles. Most recently, they had constructed a remarkable 306-foot limestone monument at the site of the Battle of Bennington (1891) and identified and marked the birthplace of Chester A. Arthur (1903).<sup>31</sup>

Residents of Royalton township needed little persuasion to celebrate their township's heritage—they had hosted celebrations throughout the nineteenth century—but the arrival of the Mormon monument and the claims it made on their past changed the contours of their endeavor. Arriving in the midst of a fractious and wavering village rivalry, the monument foregrounded history in the township's cultural contest, and galvanized residents along village lines in what became a decade-long race to celebrate Royalton's past. Many Progressive Era towns experienced cultural debates over dance halls, theater performances, public zoos, or science exhibits, but the Mormon monument turned Royalton's past into present politics, giving the upstart "village of trade" new grounds on which to challenge the fading "village of culture"; but the first move, ironically, came from the outside.

The first native of Royalton to propose a monument to Royalton's past had moved away almost fifty years earlier. Daniel G. Wild, retired lawyer and uncle of Royalton's outspoken reverend, contacted the Woman's Club from his home in New York and offered \$1,000, half of which he directed to be used to erect a monument to Royalton's heri-



*The Royalton Woman's Club erected a monument to the 1780 Indian Raid in 1906 (Dunklee, Burning of Royalton, 76).*

tage.<sup>32</sup> The club members quickly decided to commemorate the white survivors of the 1780 Indian raid, an event that made Royalton unique among Vermont towns (a uniqueness certified by the Marquis de Lafayette's tributary visit to the village in 1825). The decision combined the veneration of hardy pioneer ancestors with Vermont's tradition of individualism and frontier democracy, all part of what made Royalton inheritor of "New England's true heritage."<sup>33</sup> Though the raid had been celebrated by a parade and speeches on its centennial in 1880, now it could be commemorated in stone.<sup>34</sup>

On October 16, 1905, on the one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary of the raid (and while Wells was still only transporting the pieces of the Mormon monument to the site), Royalton's selectmen officially granted the right to erect a monument. That afternoon the Woman's Club hosted a groundbreaking ceremony that included a recitation of the raid story to the children.<sup>35</sup> The contract for the monument was announced the following month, and, like the monument to Joseph Smith, the raid monument would be of Barre granite.<sup>36</sup> However, the onset of winter weather delayed the construction and dedication until May.

While the Indian Raid Monument construction crew waited for the ground to thaw, the Woman's Club turned up the heat. At town meeting in March 1906, club president Frances Joiner addressed the assembled citizens, "an unheard of thing" for the time.<sup>37</sup> In what the town

clerk described as “well chosen and deserved comments,” Joiner described Wild’s gift and announced that \$500 was given “for the purpose of writing and publishing a History of Royalton.” R. B. Galusha, Royalton’s representative to the state legislature, moved, and it was voted unanimously, that the town match Wild’s donation and recommended the establishment of a committee to oversee the project. In the coming weeks the committee shifted into shape, four members appointed by the Woman’s Club and eight by the town. The committee elected Joiner president and Galusha treasurer, but Joiner died unexpectedly and Levi Wild resigned without recorded explanation.<sup>38</sup>

The Woman’s Club successfully lobbied the town for additional money, but in so doing they compromised their exclusive control over future local commemoration. Nevertheless, they retained control of the monument’s dedicatory exercises. On May 23, 1906, over seven hundred people—residents, former residents, and descendants of those captured by the Indians—gathered on the Royalton village green to witness the monument’s unveiling. Proceedings in the Congregational church included prayers, hymns, a poem read by Rev. Levi Wild, and an address by Governor Charles Bell. After the ceremony, the Woman’s Club hosted an exclusive reception for the friends and families of the township’s oldest village.<sup>39</sup> The monument to the Indian raid in the heart of Royalton village was clearly a response to the Joseph Smith monument, but, in the context of the rivalry with South Royalton, it was also a statement about the historical preeminence of the northern village. In culture wars with political implications, such calls never go unheeded.

Three days after dedicating their monument, the historical committee voted that work on the town history should begin at once, and that the only person for the job was Evelyn Lovejoy. Born in the adjoining township of Pomfret, Evelyn M. Wood received training at the Royalton Academy and the Randolph Normal School. In 1874, she married into the Lovejoy family, one of Royalton’s most distinguished founding families, but within six years both her husband Daniel Webster and her first and only child died. Lovejoy stayed in Royalton as principal of Royalton Academy and superintendent of schools, but in 1886 she went west. After eight years of teaching in South Dakota, Lovejoy enrolled at the University of Chicago, graduating with an A.B. degree in 1897. She taught for two years at St. Cloud Normal School in central Minnesota, where she devoted her spare time to writing a novel, *Dandelion*, published in 1899.<sup>40</sup> By 1906, Lovejoy had been teaching high school grammar and literature in the Helena, Montana, schools for five years. She most likely would have stayed in the West had she not been invited to return to Royalton.<sup>41</sup>



*Educator, author, South  
Royalton Woman's  
Club president  
Evelyn M. Lovejoy  
(1847–1928)  
(Lovejoy, History,  
facing 331).*

During the summer of 1906, Lovejoy made her residence in South Royalton and set to work on the town history, a project that took five years to complete. She personally “visited and examined the records of all the neighboring towns,” and pored through “hundreds of genealogies, town histories, and State papers.” She marshaled the members of the Woman’s Club into a force of research assistants who scoured local cemeteries.<sup>42</sup> Leaving no stone unturned she filled thirty-one 8½-by-7-inch composition books with information about deeds, cemeteries, vital records, probate records, and family information. Additionally, she sent out hundreds of handwritten letters requesting genealogical and historical information, and received responses from people throughout New England and the Midwest. The resultant *History of Royalton, Vermont* is a one thousand-page history with over one hundred illustrations, maps, genealogical records, and a comprehensive index.

Despite its impetus to commemoration in Royalton, the Joseph Smith Monument and the Smith family received guarded coverage in Lovejoy’s *History*. The project is announced as having risen out of the “active, successful” work of the Royalton Woman’s Club and the generosity of Daniel G. Wild simply “because [Royalton] is one of the most pro-

gressive, up-to-date towns in the State of Vermont.” Notwithstanding contemporary local knowledge to the contrary, Smith’s birthplace is stated as lying outside of their township, and he is not mentioned in the section on religion. Lovejoy did include a description of the monument and the Smith family, placed in the front matter of the genealogical section where it was safely disconnected from both the town’s history and its residents’ genealogies.<sup>43</sup>

Her research made Lovejoy one of the foremost experts on Vermont’s early history and the leading expert on the township’s past, though it did not convert readily into economic well-being. For the first three years, Lovejoy did not receive any monetary compensation for her work other than an occasional reimbursement for her traveling or material expenses, though she supplemented her income from 1906 to 1908 by working as principal of the Royalton Academy. In 1908, Lovejoy began a campaign to collect five hundred advance subscriptions of five dollars to help cover the costs.<sup>44</sup> Daniel Wild’s \$500 donation was not made available until 1909, at which time Lovejoy finally received \$100 “in partial payment of services as historian.”<sup>45</sup> At the 1909 town meeting, residents reluctantly approved an interest-free loan to the Historical Association, allowing it to draw up to fifteen dollars from the town “to complete the printing, writing, binding and publication of the History of Royalton.” This loan was granted, however, on the condition that proceeds from the history go to pay off the town loan first.<sup>46</sup> With enough money to continue, Lovejoy finished the history, and made all the arrangements for publication, although she acknowledged in the preface that her work was “in large part a labor of love.”<sup>47</sup> Six hundred volumes were printed in 1911, and by 1913, Lovejoy received six hundred dollars for her work.<sup>48</sup>

While Lovejoy studied the town’s past, her contemporaries in South Royalton organized themselves. In the summer of 1906, the women of the newer village, upset with their exclusion from Royalton’s woman’s club, organized their own association for “mutual improvement and social ability” with a motto promoting “Lofty Thoughts and Noble Deeds.” Over the next two years the South Royalton Woman’s Club studied history, geology, industry, public institutions, persons, buildings, and the influence of women.<sup>49</sup> Yet, for all their studying, they remained open to criticism from the Royalton women whose club, the northerners announced, “has proved its right to existence by the good works it has done.”<sup>50</sup>

As her *History* rolled off the press, Evelyn Lovejoy was elected president of the South Royalton Woman’s Club. Once all the publishing debts had been paid, members of the Historical Committee wanted to



*Proceeds from Evelyn Lovejoy's History of Royalton paid for a monument to Hannah Handy in South Royalton. Photograph by author, 2001.*

give the profits to Lovejoy, but she instead recommended that the committee “set aside 125 copies, the sales of which shall be used in erecting a fitting memorial” in South Royalton village.<sup>51</sup> Like Royalton’s monument, this monument would be placed on the village green, but there would be several significant differences. Rather than celebrating the raid survivors generally, South Royalton’s monument emphasized two people: Hannah Handy, a mother who pleaded for the freedom of herself and nine children, and Phineas Parkhurst, “Vermont’s Paul Revere” who rode off on horseback to Sharon to sound the alarm.<sup>52</sup> The monument design featured a stone archway with the front inscriptions memorializing Handy and Parkhurst and the rear inscriptions listing the names of the four men killed, the twenty-five people taken prisoner, and the nine children rescued during the raid.<sup>53</sup> And while the aging Daniel Wild agreed with Lovejoy’s recommendation, money for the monument was raised not by private contribution but by soliciting subscriptions from local (South Royalton) residents, the list of donors being published in the local paper and sealed in the base of the monument.<sup>54</sup> Though both Royalton’s 1905 monument and South Royalton’s 1915 arch drew their inspiration from the same event, the



celebrated messages could not have been more divergent: The former idealized an innocent community savagely attacked by the outside world, while the latter recognized individuals who reached out to others in a time of stress; one an island community, the other part of a larger society.

One final difference is also revealing. Rather than dedicating the monument on the raid's anniversary in October, the committee hosted services in August during Royalton's Old Home Week.<sup>55</sup> The week-long festival was the largest in township history, drawing over 3,500 visitors who more than tripled the township's population. The week opened with a community religious service and parade in South Royalton. Tuesday was designated as "Royalton's Day," but rain forced the poetry reading and storytelling indoors. On Wednesday, festivities resumed in South Royalton with another parade, the monument's unveiling, a motion picture show, concerts, a baseball game, a theatrical presentation depicting the "Burning of Royalton," and a historical pageant in which the horn that heralded Lafayette's arrival in 1825 sounded again, announcing an old stage coach pulled by four white horses who brought the Lafayette reenactor not to Royalton village as he had come nine decades earlier, but to South Royalton. The theatrical presentation was repeated and visitors danced until 2:30 A.M.<sup>56</sup> The celebration proved an overwhelming success, and the local paper noted Lovejoy's efforts—both organizational and financial.<sup>57</sup> Congressman Frank L. Greene, who had spoken at the monument's dedication ceremony, was likewise impressed, writing privately to Lovejoy: "I only wish more towns in Vermont would follow your example, more women of gifted nature would emulate you in your untiring energy and public spirit, and that we would all be more frequently brought to 'Remember the days of old.'"<sup>58</sup>

Thus, by August 1915, Royalton Township had dedicated two monuments, published a history, and initiated a new Old Home Week tradition. The festivities padded the pockets of South Royalton residents primarily, but they also gave the village added cultural prominence as both villages now featured active woman's clubs and monuments to the 1780 Indian raid. In the ten short years since construction of the Joseph Smith Monument, South Royalton's cultural reputation grew to rival the elder village, and the statewide renown of Evelyn Lovejoy threatened to tip the scale in favor of her younger village. In the meantime, South Royalton residents continued to hold the majority of elected public offices, and South Royalton, finally, found itself in a position to exert total dominance over township affairs—economic, political, and cultural. The final confrontation came over plans for a new memorial library.

### “THE MORMON AFFAIR”

While South Royalton flourished culturally, Royalton residents increasingly focused their attention on the township’s Free Public Library where, once again, a cultural issue became historical and political. Local residents selected library trustees alternately each year for five-year terms at town meeting, and for the first twenty years after 1896 they overwhelmingly elected trustees from the older village. In 1909, as Lovejoy brought her research toward its conclusion, Rev. Joel F. Whitney of the Royalton Congregational Church became chair of the trustees and began an active campaign to expand the library, purchase books, prepare a catalog, and open two branches (one in each village). Whitney successfully petitioned the town to increase its annual allocation eightfold and by 1911 there were 1,200 books in the collection.<sup>59</sup>

However, at the 1912 town meeting, residents voted Evelyn Lovejoy to the board of library trustees, and she immediately made her presence felt. Lovejoy, who had just completed her *History* and was just beginning to think about the Handy monument, became the first woman elected to public office in Royalton.<sup>60</sup> Over the next few years, the reverend’s collection of primarily patriotic and religious books blossomed with the addition of over 700 works on literature, history, and biography.<sup>61</sup> Significantly, after Lovejoy’s first year of service, the annual town report began to list the holdings for each village’s library branch separately.<sup>62</sup> The village rivalry, first geographic, then economic and monumental, appeared once again in township library politics.

Several unexpected events in 1917 dramatically changed the library’s course forever, and the Mormon monument carried several uncanny ties to the town’s past and its present developments. That year, Levi Wild, who had introduced the Vermont Woman’s Missionary Union letter opposing the Joseph Smith Monument in 1905, was not reelected as a trustee, so his Royalton neighbor and fellow trustee, George A. Laird, resigned. Two South Royalton residents—Charles Tarbell, who had responded to Wild’s anti-Mormon letter in 1905, and Emma Hubbard—were elected, and Lovejoy assumed Laird’s position as library treasurer. Overnight, the trustee board composition changed from three-to-two in Royalton’s favor to four-to-one for South Royalton, with Rev. Whitney the only remaining voice from the older village. In addition to Lovejoy, Hubbard, and Tarbell, South Royalton was also represented on the board by postmaster and South Royalton’s local newspaper correspondent Perley Belknap, who maintained correspondence with the monument’s designer, Junius Wells, wore an inch-high replica of the Joseph Smith Monument on a chain strung across his vest, and visited the Mormon monument each summer with his family.<sup>63</sup>

Simultaneously as trustee representation shifted toward the newer village, a \$360 bequest from the Ella C. Latham Estate to the Royalton Free Public Library finally became available. Latham, who died in 1901 before the arrival of the Mormon monument, had been a teacher in the South Royalton schools for several years, but she had grown up on the property on which the monument was later erected, her father having owned the land and testified to Wells that it was the site of the Mormon founder's birth.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, in 1917, the Library Committee found itself dominated by South Royalton residents and holding a substantial sum of disposable money. The committee acted quickly on the Latham bequest by merging with the township's Historical Association to form the Royalton Memorial Library Association—composed of the five library trustees and three representatives from the Historical Association, only one of whom, President Laura Dutton, lived in Royalton village. The new association proposed to raise money through subscriptions to build a permanent library building. In recognition of their subscriptions, donors could memorialize their ancestors on a special memorial tablet. On May 25, 1917, the group (except Dutton) gathered at Lovejoy's home in South Royalton to discuss the construction of a library building. Six sites were recommended, "to all of which objections were raised" before Perley Belknap offered a piece of property he owned located in South Royalton at the corner of Stafford Street and Pleasant Street, one block from the village green. The property was worth \$500, but Belknap offered it to the library for \$200, and the committee voted unanimously to purchase it.<sup>65</sup>

Over the next few years the library began to take shape. By 1919 the cement basement was in place and by the end of 1921 the frame exterior was nearly complete. However, the tangible progress of construction paralleled ever-growing expenses. In 1920 the association spent more than it received in pledges, and by 1921 it was in debt. Lovejoy, secretary of the Memorial Library Association, felt the financial pinch personally, paying the workers out of her own pocket at one time when funds were scarce.<sup>66</sup> She probably reflected on the similar difficulties she had surmounted in preparing her *History*, and knew that now, as before, she had to take action or the project would fail.

Late in 1921, the seventy-four-year-old Lovejoy accepted a friend's offer of a car and chauffeur and "canvassed" the township "from house to house" soliciting contributions to the library. Since the dedication of the Joseph Smith Monument sixteen years earlier, Mormons had resided at the site, but when Lovejoy called the on site director, Heber C. Smith, he was away, so she simply left a flyer. During the winter Smith

sent her a large maple log for fuel. Early in the summer of 1922, Lovejoy continued “striving to get funds to pay our bills,” and she wrote to Smith suggesting that in addition to a log he might be interested in making a monetary contribution as well. Smith replied that he would think about it, and a few weeks later he appeared with a \$200 contribution in hand. Having “no authority as secretary to refuse money,” Lovejoy accepted the donation and informed Smith of his commemorative privilege, to which he replied that he wanted to place Joseph Smith’s name on the memorial.<sup>67</sup> “As soon as he handed me what he wished placed on the tablet,” Lovejoy recalled, “I told him the matter would have to be decided by the Association.” Lovejoy had no objection to accepting the money or including Joseph Smith’s name, so she contacted other association members and library donors until she found that a majority approved and deposited Smith’s donation in the association account.<sup>68</sup>

The fact that Lovejoy and a majority of Library Association members approved can by no means be generalized to Vermonters in the 1920s. The *Burlington Free Press* decried Mormon missionaries who traveled from village to village “passing out Godless tracts, and holding their heathen revival meetings.”<sup>69</sup> Local papers throughout the state had reprinted a 1916 warning that “this cult is growing in the state. Speakers from abroad skilled in dialectical sophistry will strive to make their doctrines innocuous and attractive, and lure the unwary by their specious presentations of this insidious American menace. Between their permanent home with its basis of real estate at Sharon, their sporadic conferences at Barre and elsewhere and their peripatetic missionaries going into homes and poisoning the minds of those who listen to them, Mormonism is making some dangerous inroads into the religious life of the state.”<sup>70</sup> While some Vermont promotional literature did acknowledge the Joseph Smith Monument as a fine representation of the state’s granite industry, it would require another decade before Charles Edward Crane dared link Smith with John Dewey as two examples “of the eccentric pattern which flourished so well in Vermont.”<sup>71</sup> And it would be thirty years before Joseph Smith could be briefly included in *A Treasury of Vermont Life*, over Dorothy Canfield Fisher’s emphatic contemporary protest that though Smith was “born here, geographically, [he was] certainly not produced by Vermont tradition.”<sup>72</sup>

Antipathy for Joseph Smith and the Mormons ran deep in the 1920s, expressing itself in a variety of ways. Perhaps future hotel giant, J. Willard Marriott, experienced the most extreme manifestation of this sentiment when he, as a young Mormon missionary in Colchester, was run out of town and shot at.<sup>73</sup> More typically, Vermonters throughout the

state sponsored Congregational circuit riders who educated them about the evils of Mormonism. Though the results of the Reed Smoot hearings in 1904–1905 had generally settled the contemporary threat of polygamy, speakers continued to warn against the “America’s Greatest Peril” and to promote the passage of an anti-polygamy amendment to the Constitution—just in case Mormons should change their minds. Referring to the Mormon senator, one speaker warned Vermonters that “the Mormon system is a cancer eating its deadly way into the very heart of the nation, which it has already poisoned at the fountain-head.”<sup>74</sup> One of the most successful speakers in New England (and the nation) was Lulu Loveland Shepard who, as the former president of the Utah chapter of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union for twelve years, presented a lurid exposé of Mormon doctrines and temple marriage ceremonies and alleged the existence of vast fortunes amassed from liquor trafficking. Shepard’s writings frequently appeared in periodicals of the pre- and post-World War I era that also addressed temperance, divorce, war, and education—issues that interested a wide nexus of the nation’s Progressives.<sup>75</sup>

In the summer of 1922, Shepard spoke in Barre, Randolph, Bethel, and South Royalton, the latter presentation drawing out several residents of the township. Thus, when Evelyn Lovejoy mentioned Smith’s generous donation to Royalton residents Gertrude Laird and Levi and Emily Wild, the former made a “courteous protest,” but the Wilds were alarmed that the association members even considered including Smith’s name with “those whom Royalton delights to honor.” They decided that the library meant too much and that “something more than a simple protest was needed if Joseph Smith’s name was to be kept from appearing on it.”<sup>76</sup>

Rev. Wild acted first, penning a brief note to Lovejoy on July 22, 1922. “I am told that it is proposed to memorialize the name of Joseph Smith in connection with our Library building,” he began formally. “If this is the case I hereby enter my earnest protest against doing so. If it is done the name of my father, John Wild, must be left out.” Lovejoy recalled that none of the association members “objected until after Mr. Wild did, then John Waterman did.” Waterman had replaced Rev. Whitney on the board of trustees and was Wild’s neighbor. But Wild did not stop with the trustees; he and his wife spread their influence throughout their social circle in Royalton village, primarily members of the Congregational Church and the Woman’s Club. Former town representative, George Ellis, is reported to have predicted “that if money was accepted the library was ruined.” William Pierce’s daughters “were thinking of giving \$100 to memorialize their father when they heard

that Joseph Smith's name might be placed on the tablet they decided to wait." One woman wrote to Lovejoy that when she told her husband of the prospect he answered, "Thunder. No. I wouldn't memorialize Joseph Smith." She agreed with her husband. "We both think it. No money from the Church of the Latter Day Saints and no honoring of Joseph Smith."<sup>77</sup> Through Levi and Emily Wild's persuasive influence several other families were likely involved.<sup>78</sup>

The exact details of the resulting explosion of opinion were not recorded. Much of the discussion went on in parlor rooms and pastures where only the participants and cattle bore record. Lovejoy insisted on keeping the matter quiet to "avoid as much publicity as possible." "I appreciated the fact," she recalled, "that Mr. Smith was brought up in a Mormon household, that he loved and revered Joseph Smith, and I wished to spare his feelings as much as I could." Her wishes were largely fulfilled, as the local paper made only oblique references to Mormons during the summer months, showing more interest in the feared spread of the Ku Klux Klan into Maine.<sup>79</sup>

In private, however, the issue raged. Two months after the excitement subsided, Lovejoy and Gertrude Laird exchanged correspondence in which they restated their cases. Laird, the wife of the former library committee treasurer succeeded by Lovejoy, was a member of the Congregational Church and the Royalton Woman's Club. Though she struggled to accept Mormons into the community, her curiosity had drawn her out to visit the Joseph Smith Monument at least twice.<sup>80</sup> The correspondence indicates that the debate covered a range of doctrinal, historical, and contemporary concerns. Additionally, the style of the debate possessed significant implications for its resolution: Laird wrote about "the library affair" in a generalized manner that both detached her personally from the negative sentiment and suggested that all of her social circle shared the expressed opinions. Lovejoy, on the other hand, refuted their claims regarding "the Mormon affair" with personal knowledge and experience. To Laird's charge that Mormon money was tainted by their doctrinal beliefs in polygamy, the Book of Mormon, or reverence for Joseph Smith, Lovejoy responded, "When our churches refuse tainted money from brewers, saloon keepers, harmful trust magnates, etc., they can talk about taking no money from a Mormon." Other charges were historical in nature—the Smith family was disreputable, Joseph Smith was a bad child, and a fraudulent man—but to these Lovejoy spoke from her experience in preparing the *History of Royalton*. "I have seen, as I suppose, all the early records of Sharon, Tunbridge, and Royalton, and never found anything derogatory to this family."<sup>81</sup>

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*Royalton Woman's Club  
president Gertrude Laird  
(1862–1940) (Lovejoy,  
History, facing 603).*

Doctrinal and historical questions also possessed present implications. Laird asserted, on the testimony of Levi Wild's brother-in-law, that twentieth-century Mormons were deceptive lawbreakers: There was not "one home only but . . . hundreds of homes in Idaho where polygamy is practiced and . . . some government officials in Washington have plural wives." For Lovejoy, on the other hand, the question of modern Mormon character need not rely on secondhand perceptions, as there were Mormons in the township. A succession of Memorial directors and their families had lived in the community for seventeen years. "Their children have been and are in our schools," Lovejoy reminded Laird, "they used to come to our church and Sunday School until some unpleasant remarks were made about it." The wife of one of the directors "was a member of the 'Parent-Teacher Association' and active in it, and used her exceptional talents to further many good enterprises here."<sup>82</sup>

Laird agreed that the Mormons "who have been sent to So. Royalton are charming people. The church would never have attained its present power had it not shown more sagacity than to send among Gentiles those who would antagonize." For Royalton residents there existed no clearer example of this than Junius F. Wells, who had established

friendships with many South Royalton residents, including Tarbell and Belknap of the Library Association. In a form of scare rhetoric that persists into the twenty-first century, Laird compared Mormons to the “Mohammadans” of the mysterious Middle East. “You have read in the last month what a perfect gentleman the Turk is and what winning personalities Turkish people when foreigners have shown.” The daily paper to which Laird referred concluded that it was an “illusion that the Turkish nature in mass is to be judged from the personal characteristics of a few picked Muslims of the higher life,” and she added in emphasis, “This might have been written of the Mormons.”<sup>83</sup>

Lovejoy countered that only the Monument’s director and his family were Mormons, but Laird explained, “You must then understand when I said South Royalton is largely Mormon, or something to this effect, I did not mean that the residents had joined the Mormon church. Two days before you were here two residents of South Royalton, neither of them church members so far as I know, said I would be astounded if I knew how many and who then in So. Roy. were dominated by Mormon influence.” As evidence, she pointed out that local newspaper editor and library committee member Perley Belknap had not published an announcement for Lulu Shepard’s presentation. To which Lovejoy countered specifically that Belknap had reported on the event, and generally, “I do not think it is right to call So. Royalton people Mormons, because they have friendly relations with the Mormons here.” In fact, Lovejoy recalled, “I said to Mr. Smith the day he gave me the check, ‘You and I could never agree on religious matters, but we can have friendly relations.’” And she pleaded, “if you quote me as praising the teachings of the Mormons, do not leave it to be inferred that I approve the Mormon doctrine in full or many of its practices, or believe in the revelation of Joseph Smith. I do admire, and said so years ago, their insistence upon abstinence from alcohol as a beverage, tobacco, and profanity, and their practice of thrift and cleanliness.” Perhaps in playful jest toward the Royalton residents’ expressions of personal piety, she added, “This all tends [to the] development of a strong people physically, and intellectually, and they will get ahead of us, if we do not practice these virtues.”<sup>84</sup>

Her back against the wall, Lovejoy invited Heber Smith to call on her and she “told him the situation.” Though Smith “said he would be glad to talk with any of the protestants,” Lovejoy “felt it was not wise to have a conference. Things might be said on both sides that had better not be said.”<sup>85</sup> Smith “at once proposed to withdraw the \$200, showed no bitterness of spirit, and wished [Lovejoy] to express to the objectors his regret at their attitude.” Lovejoy returned the money with a diplo-



matically written statement: “As the Royalton Memorial Library Association solicits subscriptions from no church, and as the invitation of its secretary to Mr. Heber C. Smith, agent for the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, to subscribe to the library fund was construed by Mr. Smith as a solicitation from said church, and \$200 was given by said church for the new library building, the said Association, to avoid any disharmony among its members and the supporters of the Memorial library, gratefully accepts the proposal of Mr. Heber C. Smith, offered in a truly Christian spirit, to withdraw the \$200, and at the same time the Association expresses its appreciation of the interest shown by the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints in the cause of education and its promotion in Royalton.”<sup>86</sup>

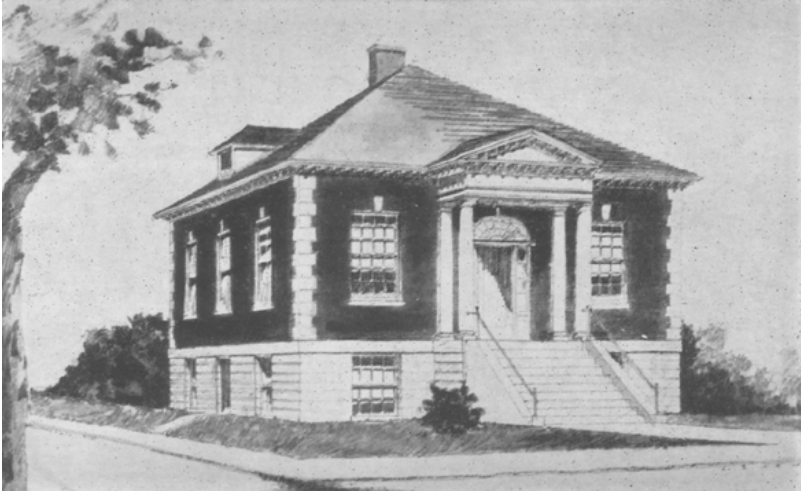
By returning the money, Evelyn Lovejoy hoped to put the protest behind her, but in reality, the most difficult part of the whole affair lay ahead. While most accusations were made in private conversation, one Royalton resident, Clara Denison McClellan, “advocated telling the whole world.”<sup>87</sup> Clara’s grandfather, doctor Jo Adam Denison, delivered the future Mormon founder in 1805. A century later, while the Joseph Smith Monument was under construction, the local paper announced Denison’s Mormon connection, but Clara, in writing the family genealogy for Lovejoy’s *History*, flatly denied the connection. Perhaps it was Clara and not her grandfather who wrote in the margin of his account book, “If I had known how he was going to turn out I’d have smothered the little cuss.”<sup>88</sup> McClellan also harbored antagonistic feelings toward industrial expansion in general and South Royalton in particular. When she was only four years old, her father, also a doctor, was thrown from his wagon and fatally injured, but the railroad that gave birth to South Royalton “now obliterates the spot,” she wrote coolly in 1911.<sup>89</sup> An artist, writer, and witty conversationalist, in 1922 Clara was a seventy-eight-year-old widow who lived with her daughter in New York during the winters and alone in the “Old Denison Place” in Royalton during the summers.<sup>90</sup>

Writing in August 1922, McClellan offered two hundred dollars—available immediately—to memorialize her grandfather and brother “upon condition of a statement signed by the president and secry. of the Library Board that the name of the Founder of the Mormon Church is debarred for ever from the memorial list.”<sup>91</sup> Lovejoy and Tarbell responded that as publicly elected officials they could only affirm that they personally would not commit to including Smith’s name in the current tablet. On August 21, 1922, Lovejoy sent McClellan a formal “statement which, I trust, will be satisfactory to you, though I regret that you deemed it necessary.” She also requested that McClellan submit

“a concise formal statement giving your reason or reasons why you object to the name of Joseph Smith on the tablet” so that it might be filed in their records for future reference. She also suggested that McClellan ask Levi Wild “to send in his formal reasons. You two were the only memorialists who said that names of friends you memorialized could not be on the tablet if Joseph Smith’s was.”<sup>92</sup> The following week McClellan responded with a curt handwritten note: “My opinion as to the unfitness of placing Joseph Smith’s name upon a tablet dedicated to the Memory of Citizens worthy of the town, being that of the majority of Royalton People,” she began, made it “unnecessary to make a ‘concise formal statement’ of the same,” though she approved of Lovejoy’s statement and submitted her two-hundred-dollar pledge.<sup>93</sup>

Recognizing that she and Wild did not constitute a majority of Royalton residents, McClellan plied her friends to submit formal protests. Within weeks, Sarah C. Doubleday, a founding member of the Royalton Woman’s Club, expressed her written opposition to including Smith’s name and a request for a signed statement before making her donation. But by this point, Lovejoy took the matter personally: “I judge you must have known the statement we gave Mrs. McClellan, which is all we have the authority to do,” she wrote to Doubleday, “and it seems entirely unnecessary to repeat the same thing, unless our integrity is in doubt.” Offended, Lovejoy suggested to Doubleday that the best way to assure that Smith’s name would never appear on the tablet would be to fill the entire tablet with other names, thereby making it “practically certain that the prophet’s name will not be on the list.”<sup>94</sup>

Sensing that the problem had been resolved, and not wanting to further antagonize Lovejoy, Royalton residents dropped the issue. Laird wrote to assure Lovejoy that her “Royalton friends would regret exceedingly any separation,” as “[w]e all admire you too much to needlessly hurt you,” adding that she personally had “never doubted your ‘honesty.’”<sup>95</sup> For her part, Lovejoy “once more realized how easy it is to lose one’s friends.”<sup>96</sup> She confided to Laird that “[t]he simple protest did not hurt me. It was the feeling exhibited along with it, the lack of confidence in our sincerity . . . I knew from the first that I should be blamed by one side or the other or by both, and so it proves . . . I was in a difficult position. No doubt some one else would have handled the matter more judicially and wisely.” With feelings however placated, Lovejoy still needed money to finish the library. “If those who informed the Pierce daughters about the Mormon gift will be equally zealous in informing them that there is not the least danger of Joseph Smith’s name being on the tablet, the favor will be appreciated.” Lovejoy



*Royalton Memorial Library Postcard, 1924. Author's collection.*

closed her letter to Laird, and ended her private commentary on “the Mormon Affair” by simply noting that Clara McClellan, who died within a month of making her protest and donation, now “knows more than any one of us.”<sup>97</sup> The only public reference Lovejoy ever made to “the Mormon Affair” came five months later in the annual Town Report, where she reported that her financial report did “not include a subscription of \$200 which was returned.”<sup>98</sup>

The “Mormon Affair” debate over the Memorial Library marked the end of Royalton’s claim to exclusive cultural influence and thus, effectively, ended the village rivalry. In the coming months, donations trickled in and the Memorial Library was dedicated one year later during Old Home Week in August 1923.<sup>99</sup> The memorial tablet—still hanging in the library—never memorialized Joseph Smith; though, in time, the names of Clara Denison McClellan and Evelyn Lovejoy were added.<sup>100</sup> Exerting their all to bar Joseph Smith’s name from the library tablet, Royalton residents had made their last effectual stand. Levi Wild and his associates continued to sound a voice of moral warning against the “public nuisance” of dance halls and liquor sales, but never again were their efforts sufficient to overrule their upstart counterparts in South Royalton.<sup>101</sup> The Flood of 1927 that devastated so many Vermont communities swept through the older village, taking an entire street with it—a physical loss paralleling the symbolic loss of influence in township life: The Royalton Woman’s Club disbanded, Royalton Academy closed

its doors, Gertrude Laird and Levi Wild passed away, and the Denison house was sold at auction. The economic, political, and cultural transformations left Royalton “just a string of houses” along the roadside.<sup>102</sup>

In time, town meeting moved to South Royalton’s new high school gymnasium, and in 1957 residents converted the Memorial Library’s unfinished basement into the town clerk’s office.<sup>103</sup> In 1976, the core of South Royalton village—including the library and the Handy monument—was entered on the National Register of Historic Places as a “reflect[ion of] the nineteenth century development of a railroad community.” Three years later this “town that never changed” served as the set for a Public Broadcasting System film of Mark Twain’s *The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg*, the 1890s railroad town of Fredonia, New York. Barred from contributing to the Memorial Library in 1922, Mormons remained in the community, where they established a congregation (1945), constructed a chapel (1965), and have been elected to a variety of public offices, including the presidency of the South Royalton Woman’s Club (1980).<sup>104</sup>

By paring away the personal and religious issues of the “Mormon Affair,” Evelyn Lovejoy identified the motivating concern of Royalton residents: Their fears about commemoration and the Mormon presence were intertwined with their anxiety over South Royalton’s increasing influence. Over the previous half century, South Royalton had grown until it surpassed Royalton in population, trade, political representation, and, finally, cultural prominence. As modernizing America wrenched these isolated communities into contact with national society, the changes threatened previously considered stabilities. Many Royalton residents linked these economic and social transformations with the arrival of the Mormons and their monument to Joseph Smith. Without fully comprehending the nature or extent of the shifting, residents of the older village made sense of their changing world by personifying structural changes into Mormon actors. This subtle conspiracy theory—from the published suspicion of secret agents who purchased the birthplace property in 1905, to the circuit preacher warnings of Mormon infiltration of the nation’s capital, to the rumors of South Royalton residents dominated by Mormon influence—provided an interpretive framework that both identified the source of stress and provided a rallying point for its attempted removal. Arriving in the midst of the community rivalry between Royalton and South Royalton, the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument became integral to the township’s economic, political, and cultural affairs. Its presence fused memory, history, religion, and politics in the story of a community forced to reconcile the profound transformations of Progressive Era Vermont.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A sampling of Vermont perspectives includes: Stanley F. Blomfield, "James M. Boutwell—Man and Mayor," *The Vermonter* 22 (April 1917): 57–67; Barbara Brainerd, "A Winding Route in Vermont," *The Vermonter* 47 (March 1942): cover, 33–36; *A Guide to New Hampshire-Vermont Heartland* (South Royalton, Vt.: Manning House, 1960), 8; Ken Bush, "Joseph Smith: Memorial Vermont Ingenuity," *Barre Life* (Winter 1997): 4–5. On the place of the monument in Mormon histories and their relation to Vermont accounts see Keith A. Ereksen, "American Prophet, New England Town: The Memory of Joseph Smith in Vermont" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Wilbur Zelinsky, *Nation into State: The Shifting Symbolic Foundations of American Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), especially chapter 5. For a national outline with international comparisons see Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991). John Bodnar highlights local power structures in *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992). Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen interviewed hundreds of Americans and concluded that most people do not use national narratives to frame their view of the past, employing personal, local, or family-based narratives instead, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Fortunately, the history of Royalton has been carefully preserved by local record keepers, journalists, and historians. Past guardians of Royalton's records are acknowledged throughout the article in the notes. For assistance with my research I am indebted to Royalton's present keepers of the past: town historian John Dumville, who introduced me to the Mormon Affair correspondence between Lovejoy and Laird; Theresa M. Harrington, Alison S. Gravel, and Janfra D. Tompkins of the Royalton Town Clerk's Office; Elaina Griffith and Karen Anderson of the Royalton Memorial Library; Dick Drysdale and Bob Eddy of the *Herald of Randolph*; Beverly Thomas of the South Royalton Woman's Club; and G. Lester Corwin, II, and Judson H. Flower, Jr., who privately collected much regarding the town's past and present Latter-day Saints. Paul Carnahan and Marjorie Strong from the Vermont Historical Society and the staff at the Bailey/Howe Library at the University of Vermont provided valuable and timely assistance.

<sup>4</sup> Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 135–167; Andrea Rebek, "The Selling of Vermont: From Agriculture to Tourism, 1860–1910," *Vermont History* 44 (Winter 1976): 14–27.

<sup>5</sup> Robert H. Wiebe characterized the period from the 1880s to the 1920s as "a way station between agrarian and urban America" in which "island communities" became an organized nation, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), xiii; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944).

<sup>6</sup> See Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," *The American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 620–647; Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Maureen Flanagan, *Seeing With Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871–1933* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Hope Nash, *Royalton Vermont* (Lunenburg, Vt.: The Stinehour Press, 1975), 3–12; see also Evelyn M. Wood Lovejoy, *History of Royalton, Vermont, with Family Genealogies, 1769–1911* (Burlington, Vt.: Burlington Free Press Printing Company, 1911), 79; "Centennial at Royalton: Commemorative Exercises at the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Organization of the Congregational Church of Royalton, Vermont," 10 October 1877, Vermont Historical Society; Royalton Town Reports, 1885–1925.

<sup>8</sup> Nash, *Royalton*, 30–31. Tarbell unsuccessfully tried his hand at a steam mill and bank.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of 3 March 1896 Town Meeting, Royalton Town Records, 1880–1916, 101. Residents donated books and the state sent one hundred dollars worth of books, enough so that when the library opened in 1898, some of the books were housed in the town clerk's office in Royalton and the rest at the graded school in South Royalton. The library opened once every other week, Lovejoy, *History*, 627–629; Patricia W. Belding, *Where the Books Are: The History and Architecture of Vermont's Public Libraries with Photos and Anecdotes* (Barre, Vt.: Potash Brook Publishing, 1996), 145–146.

<sup>13</sup> "Royalton Woman's Club, 1896–1936," *The Vermonter* 41 (Oct 1936): 189–190; Ivah Dunklee, *Burning of Royalton, Vermont, By Indians* (Boston: Geo. H. Ellis Co., 1906), 53–54.

<sup>14</sup> The annual town reports list the names of public officers elected to service, Royalton Town Reports, 1885–1935. Using the genealogical information in the local histories by Lovejoy and Nash,



as well as U.S. Census data, it is possible to identify the village residence of town officers, *Fourteenth Census* (1920). In 1905, Royalton residents held the offices of clerk (W. Skinner), one selectman (H. C. Benson), and treasurer (E. Winslow) while South Royalton held moderator (M. H. Hazen), two selectmen (E. B. Doyle, C. E. Black), and constable (M. H. Hazen).

<sup>15</sup> Lovejoy, *History*, vii.

<sup>16</sup> *Boston Sunday Globe*, 17 December 1905.

<sup>17</sup> The official record of the monument's construction and dedication is [Joseph Fielding Smith, comp.], *Proceedings at the Dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument* ([Salt Lake City, Ut.], 1906), hereafter *Proceedings*. The uncatalogued papers of Junius F. Wells are collected and housed in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah., hereafter, Wells Collection.

<sup>18</sup> *Randolph Herald and Times*, 25 May 1905, 7, hereafter *RH*. There has been a newspaper in Randolph, Vermont, since 1801, though it has gone by different names: the *Weekly Wanderer*, the *Green Mountain Aegis*, the *Orange County Eagle* (1865), the *Green Mountain Herald* (1873). L. P. Thayer purchased the paper in 1874 and began providing a local section for the communities in the White River Valley, thus it was titled *Herald and News*. This local edition was later named *The White River Valley Herald* (1941) and *The Herald of Randolph* (1989). All Randolph newspapers have been microfilmed and catalogued in the Vermont library system under the *White River Herald*. During the period examined in this article, the sections of the paper containing information about Royalton and South Royalton were prepared by local correspondents Mark J. Sargent and Perley Belknap, and I refer to the paper in the text as the "local paper."

<sup>19</sup> *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 June 1905, 1.

<sup>20</sup> One week after the purchase was announced the local paper clarified: "So far as can be ascertained by records and surveys, after careful examination in the clerk's office in Royalton and Sharon made by J. [F.] Wells, an attorney representing the Mormon church at Salt Lake city, Messrs. Tarbell & Whitham, attorneys of this village, and F. A. Walker of Montpelier, surveyor, it was determined that the house in which Smith was born, stood in Royalton and within six feet of the Sharon town line and the deed was made accordingly," *RH*, 1 June 1905, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Initial quarry work was performed by Marr & Gordon Quarry in Barre, before it was bought out by Boutwell, Milne & Varnum, Boutwell being Barre's mayor at the time. The pieces were polished at the Barclay Brothers shed in Barre. The Vermont Central Railroad built new rail spurs in Barre and Royalton. Montpelier surveyors Walker and Gallison laid out the site landscape and the roads connecting the monument to existing local roads. The construction is treated in Erekson, "American Prophet, New England Town," 51–101.

<sup>22</sup> *Proceedings*, 13; *RH*, 16 November 1905, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Jacob G. Ullery rounded out his list with John Humphrey Noyes, *Men of Vermont: An Illustrated Biographical History of Vermonters and Sons of Vermont* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Transcript Publishing Company, 1894), 197–201. Vermonters Justin Morrill (1862), Luke Poland (1874), and George Edmunds (1882, 1887) sponsored the legislation, see Edward Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). On Morrill see William B. Parker, *The Life and Public Services of Justin Smith Morrill* (1924; New York: Da Capo Press, 1971); Coy F. Cross II, *Justin Smith Morrill: Father of the Land-Grant Colleges* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999). On Edmunds see Walter Hill Crockett, "George F. Edmunds," *The Vermonter* 24 (1919): 28–42.

<sup>24</sup> Kathleen Flake makes a strong case for the religious significance of, and a weaker case for the Joseph Smith Monument's connection to, the Smoot hearings, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> "Mormon Shrine in Vermont," *Interstate Journal* 10 (June 1905); *Burlington Free Press*, 10 July 1905.

<sup>26</sup> See *RH*, 16 November 1905, 21 December 1905.

<sup>27</sup> Levi Wild to *RH* editor, 4 December 1905 and "A Protest from the Woman's Home Missionary Union of Vermont" printed in *RH*, 7 December 1905, 7. The tract continued to be printed for several years, and a post-1944 copy may be found in the LDS Church Archives.

<sup>28</sup> Charles P. Tarbell to *RH* editor, 9 December 1905, printed in *RH*, 14 December 1905, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Seven Royalton residents signed the petition, including the town clerk, treasurer, and selectman. The original petition is in Wells Collection, LDS Church Archives. A transcribed list was published in *Proceedings*, 6, however it contains several errors that vary from the original. A corrected list may be found in Erekson, "American Prophet, New England Town," 312–313.

<sup>30</sup> Edgar J. Fish, *RH*, 28 December 1905, 5; "Register of Visitors to Joseph Smith's Birthplace," 1–6, LDS Archives; sorted by residence in Erekson, "American Prophet, New England Town," 316.



There were also seven Vermonters with ties to the granite industry in attendance, including Bowers and Boutwell, Milne, and Varnum, owners of the granite quarry.

<sup>31</sup> Reprinted in *RH*, 1 June 1905, 2; "Ethan Allen Memorial," *Inter-State Journal* 10 (June 1905): n.p. See Edward Conant, *Conant's Vermont: Geography, History, and Civil Government of Vermont*, revised by Mason S. Stone (Rutland, Vt.: The Tuttle Company, 1908); Deane C. Davis, "Ethan Allen, An Address," *Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society* 10 (September 1942): 137-147; John Spargo, *The Bennington Battle Monument: Its Story and Its Meaning* (Rutland, Vt.: The Tuttle Company, 1925); Thomas C. Reeves, "The Mystery of Chester Alan Arthur's Birthplace," *Vermont History* 38 (Autumn 1970): 291-304.

<sup>32</sup> Wild was born in Royalton in 1833, studied at the Royalton Academy, graduated from Dartmouth, then moved to New York City where he established a successful law practice. He possessed "a total indifference to political and social ambitions," and in his spare time he made several trips to Canada, the south, and the west, even visiting Utah in 1898. The following year Wild retired comfortably, spending his time reading, driving, walking, and admiring botanical gardens, see Frank G. Wild, "Ancestor Book," 34-36, Vermont Historical Society, Barre. His maternal grandfather, Garner Rix (1769-1854), had been taken captive during the Indian raid of 1780, and one year later became one of the original grantees of Royalton, see Lovejoy, *History*, 924-925.

<sup>33</sup> Brown, *Inventing New England*, 135-167. See also Michael Sherman, "Memory, Commemoration, and the Storyteller's Creed: Lessons about History and a Bicentennial Celebration," in *A More Perfect Union: Vermont Becomes a State, 1777-1816*, ed. Michael Sherman (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society and Vermont Statehood Bicentennial Commission, 1991), 172-183. On the peculiarities of Vermont character see Dorothy Canfield Fisher, *Vermont Tradition: The Biography of an Outlook on Life* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953). See also Charles Edward Crane, *Let Me Show You Vermont* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937); *A Treasury of Vermont Life*, ed. Stephen Greene, Arthur W. Peach, Ralph N. Hill, and Walter Hard, Jr. (Woodstock, Vt.: The Countryman Press, 1956); Cora Cheney, *Profiles from the Past: An Uncommon History of Vermont* (Taftsville, Vt.: The Countryman Press, 1973). In commemorating the Indian Raid, Royalton residents did not celebrate the Indians, but the colonial survivors who bested the Indians in a contest for "an absolutely uninhabited wilderness" (Peter S. Jennison, ed., *The 1976-77 Official Vermont Bicentennial Guide* [Taftsville, Vt.: The Countryman Press, Inc., 1976], 5). See also John Hayward, *A Gazetteer of Vermont* (Boston: Tappan, Whittemore, and Mason, 1849; reprinted Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1990), 7. Recent scholarship is showing the inaccuracy of this belief: Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975); Colin G. Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600-1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); Colin G. Calloway, *Dawnland Encounters: Indians and Europeans in Northern New England* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1991); William A. Haviland and Marjory W. Power, *The Original Vermonters: Natives Inhabitants, Past and Present*, revised and expanded edition (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> See Dunklee, *Burning of Royalton*, 40; Nash, *Royalton*, 18; Lovejoy, *History*, 176-177; Daniel L. Burnett, "The Burning of Royalton," *Inter-State Journal* 7 (October 1903), n.p.

<sup>35</sup> Dunklee, *Burning of Royalton*, 51-52.

<sup>36</sup> *RH*, 23 November 1905, 7.

<sup>37</sup> Nash, *Royalton*, xiii.

<sup>38</sup> Royalton Town Records, 1880-1916, 222-223.

<sup>39</sup> Dunklee, *Burning of Royalton*, 55-74; Lovejoy, *History*, 177-182; *RH*, 31 May 1906.

<sup>40</sup> Mary Evelyn Wood Lovejoy, *Dandelion; or, Out of the Shadows* (London, New York, and Chicago: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899). The novel is about a young schoolteacher, abandoned at birth, who strives to discover her true parents and thus her true identity. The work provides a striking window on Lovejoy's personal experience. The school teacher (like Lovejoy) heroine marries a doctor (as Lovejoy had). The primary setting is the village of Stockweed, Rockmore County, Vermont, though the characters travel to Chicago, South Dakota, and Europe (as Lovejoy had). Along the way, Lovejoy shares through the narrator (a widow like Lovejoy), her opinions about the philosophy of education, the education of women, Progressive reform, higher criticism, and Christian morality. The mystery/adventure/romance ends with a twist of fate and brims with literary allusions to the likes of Lowell, Hawthorne, Shakespeare, and Greek literature.

<sup>41</sup> Lovejoy, *History*, 336-339, 858; Nash, *Royalton*, xiii, 61, 228. Lovejoy's papers were sorted by Nash and are stored in the attic of the Royalton Memorial Library. There is only one diary in the Lovejoy Collection, labeled "#3," which begins 7 May of an unstated year, describes a trip to Europe, and ends with her return to South Royalton on 24 June of the same year. Lovejoy's papers also include notes from town records, plates of illustrations, letters about families, a typed copy of *History*, correspondence with printer and engraver, letters about the library.

<sup>42</sup> Lovejoy visited town clerks in Royalton, Bethel, Woodstock, Hartford, Pomfret, Sharon, Tunbridge, Chelsea, Barnard, Hartland, Norwich, Thetford, and Randolph in Vermont, as well as Hanover and Lebanon, New Hampshire. She also visited the New England Genealogical and Historical Association, the Vermont Historical Society, and the Dominion Archive in Ottawa, Canada, Lovejoy, *History*, v–vi.

<sup>43</sup> Lovejoy, *History*, vi, 25, 193–244, 644–648. The Smith insert was prepared by the monument's designer, Junius F. Wells.

<sup>44</sup> A copy of the advance subscription flyer is in the Lovejoy Collection.

<sup>45</sup> Alice D. Grant, "Report of the Treasurer of the Royalton Historical Society, 9 Feb 1909," Royalton Town Records, 1880–1916, 280–281.

<sup>46</sup> Royalton Town Records, 1880–1916, 269–270.

<sup>47</sup> Lovejoy, *History*, vii. In the Lovejoy Collection there is a large wooden crate containing indexing note cards, correspondence with the publisher and other letters about errors, and a complete manuscript of the *History*. Another crate contains more index cards, two more copies of the manuscript, page proofs, and correspondence about the proofs and subscriptions. Another crate holds all of the original blocks used with the photos.

<sup>48</sup> "Report of Royalton Historical Association," Royalton Town Report, 1912, 61–62.

<sup>49</sup> "South Royalton Women's Club Calendar, 1906 & 1907," Wilbur Collection, Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont; Lovejoy, *History*, 603–604.

<sup>50</sup> From the submission, prepared by the Royalton women for Lovejoy, *History*, 602–603.

<sup>51</sup> Evelyn M. Lovejoy (hereafter EML) to Daniel Burnett, 1 April 1912, Daniel Burnett to EML, 5 April 1912, Royalton Historical Society.

<sup>52</sup> Lovejoy, *History*, 97–182.

<sup>53</sup> Charles P. Tarbell, Perley Belknap, Evelyn Lovejoy, and Laura Dutton composed the subcommittee that reviewed various estimates, Royalton Historical Society. The contract was awarded to Adams and McNichol for \$245, Adams and McNichol to EML, 7 September 1914, Royalton Historical Society.

<sup>54</sup> *RH*, 5 August 1915, 5; Daniel G. Wild to EML, 14 April 1912, Lovejoy Collection.

<sup>55</sup> New Hampshire Governor Frank Rollins invented Old Home Week in 1899. In the face of economic trouble caused in part by a decline of farming, Rollins created the week-long celebration to raise spirits, foster a sense of pride, and to encourage former residents to return with their money and spend it in the state. In 1901, the occasion was celebrated in Vermont and by 1904 every state in New England had adopted the practice. Royalton had acknowledged the practice in the 1910s, but the 1915 celebration was easily the largest in the town's history. See Brown, *Inventing New England*, 135–50; J. Kevin Graffagnino, "Arcadia in New England: Divergent Visions of a Changing Vermont, 1850–1920," in Nancy Price Graff, ed., *Celebrating Vermont: Myths and Realities* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1991), 45–59; "Vermont Old Home Week," *The Vermonter* 6 (May 1901): 166–67; "The First Observance of Old Home Week," *The Vermonter* 7 (September 1901): 1.

<sup>56</sup> *RH*, 19 August 1915, 6; 26 August 1915, 5; "Royalton's Old Home Week," *The Vermonter* 20 (August 1915): 153.

<sup>57</sup> *RH*, 26 August 1915, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Frank L. Greene to EML, 19 August 1915, Royalton Historical Society.

<sup>59</sup> The allocation increased from \$25 to \$200 annually, Royalton Town Report, 1910, 34–36; 1911, 32–36; 1912, 55–59.

<sup>60</sup> In 1870, the women of school district no. 14 in Royalton held a vote on woman suffrage—only two of the sixty-seven women voted for it. Women in the town kept account books, wrote novels and poetry, painted and took photographs, and worked in the neighborhood schools, but had not shown much interest in public office, Nash, *Royalton*, 61.

<sup>61</sup> In Whitney's collection titles such as *The Voice of the People*, *Men Who Found America*, and *Poems of American History* found their place on the library shelves next to *The Sword of the Lord*, *Priscilla of Good Intent*, *The Road to Providence*, and *Moral Instruction of Children*. Also collected were books dealing with social gospel issues, *A Woman for Mayor*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*. Lovejoy's years brought works by Hawthorne, Churchill, Dickens, Hugo, London, Greeley, Bunyan, Louisa May Alcott, Shakespeare, Tenneyson, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Sir Walter Scott. *Keller, The Story of My Life* and *Life of Florence Nightingale* were added along with *History of the Roman Empire*, and *The Civil War Through Camera*. See Royalton Town Report, 1910, 34–36; 1911, 32–36; 1912, 55–59.

<sup>62</sup> Royalton Town Report, 1912, 55–59; 1913, 43–52.

<sup>63</sup> Correspondence between Wells and Belknap is preserved in the Wells Collection; the Belknap family signatures appear regularly in "Register of Visitors to Joseph Smith's Birthplace," LDS Church Archives; the inch-high replica was a gift from Wells, Alice Vesper to Mrs. Robert [Helen] Dumville, 28 January 1990, Royalton Historical Society.



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<sup>64</sup> Calculating for inflation places the 2005 value of the bequest between \$5,000 and \$6,000. On Lathan, see Lovejoy, *History*, 848.

<sup>65</sup> Meeting minutes recorded by EML in Royalton Town Records, 1916–1937, 39.

<sup>66</sup> “Report of Royalton Memorial Library Association,” Royalton Town Report, 1919, 26; 1920, 33; 1921, 29; EML to Clara Denison McClellan, 9 August 1922, Royalton Historical Society.

<sup>67</sup> EML, to Gertrude S. J. Laird (hereafter GL), Royalton, 6 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence, Royalton Historical Society; Receipt worded “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, per Heber C. Smith 200.<sup>00</sup> [sic].” Lovejoy Library Correspondence. Smith was the adopted son of former Church president Joseph F. Smith, son of the Prophet’s brother Hyrum.

<sup>68</sup> EML to GL, 9 August 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>69</sup> *Burlington Free Press*, cited in Robert O’Brien, *Marriott: The J. Willard Marriott Story* (Salt Lake City, Ut.: Deseret Book Company, 1977), 81.

<sup>70</sup> *RH*, 17 February 1916.

<sup>71</sup> Crane, *Let Me Show You Vermont*, 25–26. The monument’s construction is mentioned in Blomfield, “James M. Boutwell;” Walter and Margaret Hard, *This is Vermont* (Brattleboro, Vt.: Stephen Daye Press, 1936), 274; Brainerd, “A Winding Route in Vermont;” and Ralph Nading Hill, *The Winooski: Heartway of Vermont* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1949), 183.

<sup>72</sup> Greene, et al., *A Treasury of Vermont Life*, 155; Fisher, *Vermont Tradition*, 343–44. “Our tradition can claim no credit for the extraordinary Mormon achievement,” she wrote, because Joseph Smith and Brigham Young “shook off that tradition like dust from their feet” by moving away in their childhood (343–344). Similarly, John Noyes “was connected with Vermont but not in any way produced by the State” (344). Instead, as “typical of Vermont,” Fisher favored Senator Justin Smith Morrill, though she made no mention of his role in anti-polygamy legislation. Fisher also included Republican Party founder Horace Greeley who, though born in New Hampshire, “lived happily for five formative years of his youth in Poultney, Vermont” (343–357).

<sup>73</sup> O’Brien, *Marriott*, 81–84.

<sup>74</sup> J. M. Tibbets, of Boston, spoke at Royalton’s Congregational Church on behalf of the National Reform Association and against Mormonism on “America’s Greatest Peril” and “Womanhood and America,” *RH*, 7 September 1922, 10; “Mormonism is Ripped Open,” Newport, Vt., News, reprinted in *RH*, September 7, 1922, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Shepard’s writings frequently appeared in *The Christian Statesman*, a periodical initiated in 1866; see, for example, “The Mormon Church and the Liquor Traffic,” 50 (February 1916): 67–68. A summary of her work and a photograph of Shepard are published in “The Campaign Against Mormonism,” *The Christian Statesman* 50 (February 1916): 84–85. Speaking to an audience in Maine, Shepard boasted that she “is more cordially disliked by [Mormons] than any other individual.” Shepard, “Mormonism in Puritan New England,” *The Christian Statesman* 55 (September 1921): 23. Shepard’s 14-page pamphlet *Getting Their Eyes Open* might have interested Royalton readers as it featured an informal conversation between women, perhaps at a woman’s club meeting. Mrs. Studious, Mrs. Superficial, Mrs. Muchtravel, Mrs. Wideawake, Mrs. Stillamaid, and Mrs. Everready debated Mormon doctrines and practices before calling for an anti-polygamy amendment to punish the “un-American and disloyal” Mormons. Shepard, *Getting Their Eyes Open* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: National Reform Association, n.d.), 12; L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. In 1921, Shepard reportedly paid taxes on a personal income of \$11,000, *RH*, 13 July 1922, 1.

<sup>76</sup> *RH*, 13 July 1922, 1; EML to GL, 9 August 1922; GL to EML, 17 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>77</sup> Levi Wild, to EML, 22 July 1922; EML to GL, 6 October 1922; GL to EML, 18 September 1922; E[ll]en W[est] Ainsworth to EML, 27 July 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>78</sup> Wild and Laird attended a Sunday School convention in Bethel with Rev. Joel Whitney, *RH*, 30 November 1922, 4; Emily Wild traveled with the Watermans, *RH*, 1 June 1922, 5, and held missionary meetings in her home, *RH*, 15 June 1922, 8. In the fall, Mrs. Bigelow hosted a bridal shower for Beatrice Joy attended by Mrs. Culver, Laird, Roundy, Stafford, Wild, Waterman, Whitney, and Woodward, *RH*, 14 September 1922, 3.

<sup>79</sup> A front-page story invited people to visit the Joseph Smith Monument to meet the caretakers who were “quite normal persons” (*RH*, 13 July 1922, 1), while another issue featured a bland plea for contributions: “If any are planning to memorialize friends in this building they should communicate with the committee before the order is given” (*RH*, 17 August, 1922, 5). Fears of the Klan escalated in the fall, *RH* 19 October, 2 November, 9 November 1922.

<sup>80</sup> GL, 25 July 1906, 16 August 1906, in “Register of Visitors to Joseph Smith’s Birthplace,” LDS Church Archives.

<sup>81</sup> EML to GL, 6 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>82</sup> GL to EML, 17 October 1922, EML to GL, 6 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>83</sup> GL to EML, 17 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence. A recent and widely popular

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rhetorical linkage of Mormons and Muslims occurs in Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 2003).

<sup>84</sup> EML to GL, 6 October 1922 and GL to EML, 17 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>85</sup> EML to GL, 6 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>86</sup> EML to Clara Denison McClellan (CDM), 9 August 1922; EML to GL, 9 August 1922; retained copy of the return statement to Heber Smith, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>87</sup> EML to GL, 6 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>88</sup> From *RH*, 28 December 1905, 3. "A notable fact confirming the date of the birth came to light when a search of the account books of old Dr. Joseph Denison, of Royalton, father of the late Dudley C. Denison of Randolph, which had been preserved all these years, proved that he was the attending physician at the prophet's birth a century ago." The same information had been published eleven years earlier, see Ullery, *Men of Vermont*, 198. Had the marginal comment been in the original record at the time of Ullery's writing, he certainly would have included it in his discussion of Smith and the other "Queer Characters."

Denison's contribution is in Lovejoy, *History*, 749–758. "Tradition says that he was the attending physician at the birth of the so-called prophet, Joseph Smith, but investigation fails to verify the story" (751). The published version says only that the history was contributed; that Clara wrote it is found in the Lovejoy Collection, Royalton Memorial Library.

Six decades later, Larry C. Porter reported that the original record book had been "thrown away" and quotes the statement from a descendant of Dr. Denison who had only heard the story passed down through family lore, "A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831," (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1971; reprinted Provo, Ut.: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute, 2000), 13.

<sup>89</sup> In Lovejoy, *History*, 754.

<sup>90</sup> In 1870 she married a Syracuse, New York, native in Royalton, and nine years later she married Robert H. McClellan in Florida. She followed her second husband to his home state of Illinois, living in Galena for several years. When her husband died, Clara moved to New York to live near her only daughter, but she returned to the old Denison home in Royalton each summer, "which had been owned by her grandfather, father, and his heirs for more than a hundred years, and which was very dear to her." Her Royalton village neighbors noted that Clara "was always loyal to the town of her birth." Clara possessed "marked intellectual ability, a strong artistic sense, was a brilliant conversationalist, and had the pen of a ready writer." *RH*, 28 September 1922, 3. Her personal stationery featured simply the printed letterhead "Old Denison Place."

<sup>91</sup> CDM to EML, 14 August 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>92</sup> The statement reads, "At the request of Mrs. Clara Denison McClellan, and as a condition of receiving \$200 for memorializing Dr. Joseph A. Denison, Sr., and Dr. Charles Denison, we, the undersigned officers of the Royalton Memorial Library Association, Inc., qualified by the charter of said Association to sign legal papers, hereby state that the name of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, by no act or consent of ours shall ever be inscribed upon the Memorial tablet which said Association is preparing for a permanent place in the Memorial library building, and on which names of the Denison family are to appear," EML to CDM, 21 August 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>93</sup> CDM to EML, 30 August 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>94</sup> EML to Miss [Sarah C.] Doubleday, 13 September 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>95</sup> GL to EML, 18 September 1922 and 6 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>96</sup> EML to GL, 9 August 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence.

<sup>97</sup> EML to GL, 6 October 1922, Lovejoy Library Correspondence. On September 7, McClellan left Royalton to return to her home in New York. Waiting with her friends at the Royalton train station, she "spoke of her own vigor and exceptionally good health"; ten days later she died, *RH*, 7 September 1922, 6; 28 September 1922, 3, 5.

<sup>98</sup> "Report of Royalton Memorial Library Association," Royalton Town Report, 1922, 38.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*; *RH*, 16 August 1922, 13. After the dedication, donations virtually ceased, but the library remained in debt. Lovejoy spent the next several years soliciting contributions, celebrating an annual Library Day, and selling postcards autographed by notable Americans, Royalton Town Report, 1924, 54–56. When Lovejoy died in 1928 she left a bequest of \$1,000 that finally paid off all of the debts. Charles Tarbell left \$500 at his death in 1934 that provided the library with operating funds, "Library Report," Royalton Town Report, 1934, 37.

<sup>100</sup> The bronze tablet, still hanging in the library, provides a telling commentary on town affairs. The tablet lists two columns of corresponding names, the lefthand column listing the donor and the right the person memorialized. Evelyn Lovejoy, Charles Tarbell, and Perley Belknap of the Library Committee memorialized a husband, mother, and father, respectively. Levi Wild made a contribution to commemorate his father, and the Lairds and Sarah Doubleday honored their ancestors. The

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Royalton Woman's Club made a donation to remember former club president, Francis Joiner, who had helped initiate the celebration of Royalton's heritage in 1905. The Royalton Historical Association, formed at Joiner's request, memorialized Royalton's first patron, Daniel Wild. Four Denison men were celebrated by their descendants. Clara Denison McClellan, who so adamantly opposed the inclusion of Joseph Smith's name, was memorialized by her daughter. The South Royalton Woman's Club, not content to celebrate one person, memorialized themselves, all club members from 1906 to 1934. Joseph Smith's name, of course, did not appear on the tablet, but neither was the tablet completely filled. In time, though the Mormon prophet's name has not been added, several South Royalton residents who had befriended Junius Wells and aided the monument project were memorialized, including Perley Belknap, his father Julius O. Belknap, Mark J. Sargent, and Edgar J. Fish.

<sup>101</sup> Wild, Waterman, Roundy, and Laird submitted a petition against the public dance hall on 2 July 1928, see Royalton Town Records, 1916–1937, 339. At a town meeting on 19 July, the petition was discussed, denied, and dismissed.

<sup>102</sup> Nash, *Royalton*, 69; Mary E. Whitney, "Royalton's Flood," *The Vermonter* 34 (July 1929): 110–111. The flood drove 9,000 Vermonters from their homes and left eighty-four people dead and over one hundred million dollars worth of damage, Jennison, ed., *Vermont Bicentennial Guide*, 13.

<sup>103</sup> Nash, *Royalton*, 68–69, 76; Royalton Town Records, 1937–1972, 371.

<sup>104</sup> "National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form" for the South Royalton Historic District, Royalton Memorial Library; Michael McDermott and Sarah Hall, "This New England: Royalton, Vermont," *Yankee* 47 (March 1983): 60–67, 140–143. In 2005, most of the historic buildings are owned by the Vermont Law School. By 1970, local historian Hope Nash found only one resident "who doesn't like the Mormons." *Royalton*, 80 fn 6.