

The Locations of Joseph Smith's Early Treasure Quests

Dan Vogel

IN MID-1971 WESLEY P. WALTERS DISCOVERED Justice Albert Neely's bill of costs for 1826 in the damp basement of the Chenango County Jail in Norwich, New York, confirming Joseph Smith's involvement in treasure digging. Rather than defend Smith's later statements that limited his involvement as a treasure seer to a single, brief instance with Josiah Stowell in November 1825 in Harmony, Pennsylvania, many scholars now accept the essential accuracy of the March 1826 court transcript.¹ In this court record Smith confessed that "he had a certain stone, which he had occasionally looked at to determine where hidden treasures . . . were . . . and had looked for Mr. Stowell several times . . . that at Palmyra . . . he had frequently ascertained in that way where lost property was . . . that he has occasionally been in the habit of looking through this stone to find lost property for three years."²

1. Mormon apologist Richard L. Anderson has noted his change of opinion in "The Mature Joseph Smith and Treasure Searching," *Brigham Young University Studies* 24 (Fall 1984): 491-92, and his review of Rodger I. Anderson's *Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Reexamined* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990) in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 3 (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1991), 63. In the absence of the original document, Gordon A. Madsen and Paul Hedengren have argued that the concluding statement ("And therefore the court find[s] the defendant guilty") in the published version is "a later inclusion" or "an afterthought supplied by whoever subsequently handled the notes" (Gordon A. Madsen, "Joseph Smith's 1826 Trial: The Legal Setting," *Brigham Young University Studies* 30 [Spring 1990]: 106; Paul Hedengren, *In Defense of Faith: Assessing Arguments Against Latter-day Saint Belief* [Provo, UT: Bradford and Wilson, 1985], 216-17). Otherwise Madsen and Hedengren accept the general accuracy of the published record.

2. The original court record has evidently not survived, so researchers must rely on three independent printings: Charles Marshall, "The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt

In what follows I hope to treat Joseph Smith's treasure-seeking activities in the Palmyra/Manchester area, and later at various locations along the Susquehanna River running through Harmony, Pennsylvania, and the southern New York counties of Chenango and Broome (see Map 1). Instead of discussing these activities in general, I will identify specific locations for some of Smith's treasure quests.

PALMYRA/MANCHESTER, NEW YORK,
1822 TO 1825 AND 1827

Non-Mormon journalist James Gordon Bennett, who visited the Palmyra/Manchester, New York, area in August 1831, wrote that "[o]n the sides & in the slopes of several of these hills" in Manchester, Joseph Smith-inspired "excavations are still to be seen."³ On 4 December 1833, fifty-one residents of the Palmyra area affirmed that "large excavations may be seen in the earth, not far from their [the Smiths'] residence, where they used to spend their time digging for hidden treasure."⁴ In 1867 Palmyra resident Pomeroy Tucker wrote,

Numerous traces of the excavations left by Smith are yet remaining as evidences of his impostures and the folly of his dupes, though most of them have become obliterated by the clearing off and tilling of the lands where they were made. . . . The pit-hole memorials of his treasure explorations were numerous in the surrounding fields and woodlands, attracting the inspection of the curious, and the wonder of the superstitious.⁵

As late as March 1881 Hiram Jackway, who was born at Palmyra in 1815, said he knew the location of three holes in the area which the Smiths worked.⁶

The combined testimony from area residents, which is examined in

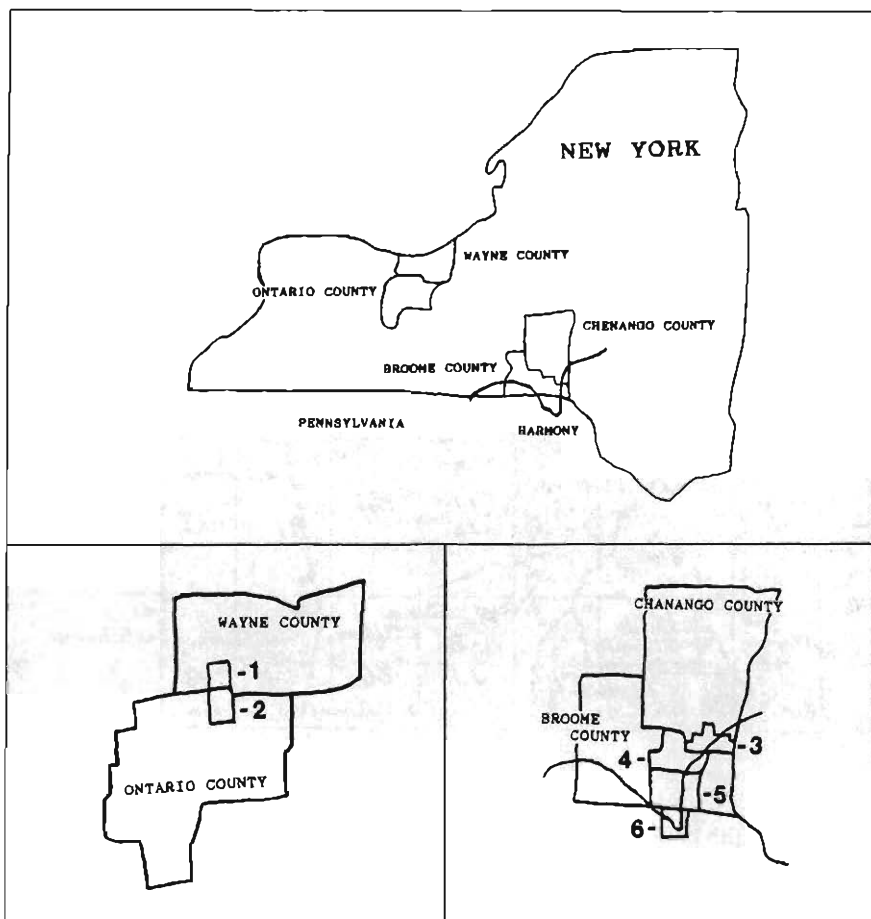
Lake City," *Fraser's Magazine* (London) 7 (Feb. 1873): 225-35 (reprinted in the *Eclectic Magazine* [New York] 17 [Apr. 1873]: 479-88); Daniel S. Tuttle, "Mormons," *A Religious Encyclopaedia*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), 2:1576; and "A Document Discovered," *Utah Christian Advocate* (Salt Lake City), Jan. 1886. Of the three printings, the *Utah Christian Advocate* is apparently the most carefully prepared copy; it is therefore the version used throughout this essay.

3. James Gordon Bennett, "Mormonism," *Morning Courier and Enquirer*, 31 Aug. 1831.

4. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled: or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, OH: E. D. Howe, 1834), 261.

5. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1867), 26, 27.

6. William H. Kelley, "The Hill Cumorah, and the Book of Mormon," *Saints' Herald* 28 (1 June 1881): 166.



RELATIONSHIP OF COUNTIES AND TOWNSHIPS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Palmyra Township. | 4. Colesville Township. |
| 2. Manchester Township. | 5. Windsor Township. |
| 3. Bainbridge (now Afton) Township. | 6. Harmony Township. |

Map 1. Relationship of areas of Joseph Smith's early treasure quests in New York and Pennsylvania

detail below, identifies six specific locations in Manchester for Smith family treasure quests (see Map 2). The majority of these Smith-inspired digs date to the earliest period of Joseph Smith's activities as treasure seer (1822-25), before his employment with Josiah Stowell in October 1825 and subsequent treasure searches in Pennsylvania and southern New York. One dig, which evidently occurred in 1827 on the Joseph Capron farm before Smith procured the Book of Mormon gold plates in September, is also considered.

About four years after their arrival in Palmyra, New York, the Smiths moved south of the village on Stafford Road and took up residence in a small log cabin on the property of Samuel Jennings about fifty-eight feet north of the township line dividing Palmyra and Farmington (Manchester after 1823).⁷ About the same time Joseph Sr. and oldest son Alvin contracted for a 100-acre lot just across the line in Manchester.⁸ According to their Manchester neighbors, Joseph Sr. and other Smith family members began searching for buried treasure in 1820.⁹

The earliest Smith family treasure quests probably occurred on their newly acquired Manchester land. According to Pomeroy Tucker, the "inauguration" of Joseph Jr.'s treasure seeing and resulting dig took place on a "then forest hill, a short distance from his father's house." The account of this first dig, which Tucker said came from participants "yet living," has Joseph Jr. locating the spot by aid of a seer stone, use of a magic enchantment to hold the treasure to the spot, ordering silence, a two-hour dig, a word carelessly spoken, and the seer's revelation that the treasure had

7. A Palmyra highway survey, dated 13 June 1820, locates "Joseph Smith's dwelling house" 58.74 feet northwest of the Palmyra/Manchester town line on Stafford Road ("Old Town Record, 1793-1870," 221, Township Office, Palmyra, New York). Additionally, the positioning of Joseph Smith Sr.'s name on Palmyra road lists from 1817 through 1822 suggests a move from the village sometime between April 1819 and April 1820 ("A Copy of the Several Lists of the Mens Names Liable to Work on the Highways in the Town of Palmyra in the Year 1804 [etc.]," microfilm of typescript, LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah). This is consistent with the testimony of Manchester neighbors Willard Chase, Henry Harris, William, Barton, and Joshua Stafford, who remembered first becoming acquainted with the Smiths about 1820 (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 237, 240, 250, 251, 258). See also Donald L. Enders, "'A Snug Log House': A Historical Look at the Joseph Smith, Sr., Family Home in Palmyra, New York," *Ensign* 15 (Aug. 1985): 14-23.

8. The Smiths could not have contracted for their land until after 14 July 1820, when Zachariah Seymour received power of attorney for the Evertson lands, which included the Smiths' future property (Miscellaneous Records, Book C, 342-44, 347-48, Canandaigua Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York). The Smiths' original contract does not exist, but the record of Esquire Stoddard's purchase of lands to the south of the Smith property in November 1825 states that Stoddard's new land was situated immediately south of "lands heretofore articted to Joseph and Alvin Smith" (Deeds, Liber 44, 220).

9. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 237, 240, 251, 268.

slipped away.¹⁰ Although Tucker places the event in the "spring of 1820," Joseph Jr.'s use of a seer stone dates the event to after 1822, when Willard Chase said the stone was discovered in a well on his family's property.¹¹

William Stafford, an early acquaintance of the Smiths who lived about a mile and a half south on Stafford Road,¹² was invited by Joseph Sr. to participate in a treasure dig on Smith property. According to Stafford's 8 December 1833 statement, Joseph Jr. had seen in his stone "two or three kegs of gold and silver" located "not many rods from his [Smith's] house." Despite Joseph Sr.'s leading the diggers through various folk magic exercises, they failed to unearth any treasure. Joseph Jr., whom Stafford said remained in the Smiths' house during the operation, later explained that the treasure's guardian spirit had caused the money to sink, and Joseph Sr. declared that they had made a mistake in performing the exercises.¹³

While Stafford did not describe the exact location of the dig, he intended the hill east of the Smiths' home since he introduced his account by stating that the Smiths believed

that nearly all the hills in this part of New York, were thrown up by human hands, and in them were large caves, which Joseph Jr., could see, by placing a stone of singular appearance in his hat . . . that he could see within the above mentioned caves, large gold bars and silver plates—that he could also discover the spirits in whose charge these treasures were, clothed in ancient dress.

Again Joseph Jr.'s use of a seer stone dates this episode to after 1822.

10. Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 21-22. For a treatment of the Smith family's belief in folk magic, see D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 27-149.

11. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 241. According to Quinn's analysis of the sources, Joseph Jr. possessed at least three seer stones. Unfortunately, Quinn follows Tucker's dating of September 1819 for Smith's acquiring his first stone (see Quinn, *Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 38-41). Tucker misdated discovery of the Chase stone to 1819 and cannot be used as authority for dating Smith's first use of a seer stone (Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 19). The only dateable account of Smith's possession of a stone other than the Chase stone is the transcript of the March 1826 court hearing, which mentions his use of a "white stone" in the Bainbridge area (*Utah Christian Advocate*, Jan. 1886). Moreover, the court record itself limits Smith's stone gazing to the previous three years (ca. 1823). The third stone, described as greenish in color, is believed to have been obtained by Smith at Harmony, Pennsylvania, presumably after his arrival in late October 1825 (Quinn, 40).

12. In 1820 William Stafford paid taxes for sixty acres, then in 1821 for 101 acres on Lot 5 (Farmington/Manchester Assessment Records, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York).

13. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 238-39.

Peter Ingersoll, who first met the Smiths in 1822, saw Joseph Sr. use both a mineral rod and a seer stone to locate buried treasure on his own property. On one occasion, according to Ingersoll, both Joseph Sr. and Alvin Smith placed a stone in a hat and demonstrated its use, Joseph Sr. declaring, "if you only knew the value there is back of my house, (and pointing to a place near)—*there*, exclaimed he, is one chest of gold and another of silver."¹⁴ Joseph Sr.'s phrase "back of my house" may also refer to the hill east of the Smiths' residence.¹⁵

Joseph Jr. was also reportedly involved in treasure digging on Stafford family property. Joshua Stafford (1798-1876), who owned land south of the Smiths on Stafford Road on Manchester Lots 5 (until 1821), 7 and 9,¹⁶ told Isaac Butts that "young Jo Smith and himself dug for money in his orchard and elsewhere nights." Butts personally "saw the holes in the orchard which were four or five feet square and three or four feet deep."¹⁷ Cornelius R. Stafford (b. 1813), son of Jonathan Stafford (brother of William Stafford), remembered that "[t]here was much digging for money on our farm and about the neighborhood," and that he saw his cousin Joshua Stafford "dig a hole twenty feet long, eight broad and seven deep."¹⁸ Samantha Payne (b. 1808), daughter of William Stafford, was possibly living on a portion of Joshua Stafford's property when she said in 1881 that Joseph Smith "dug

14. Peter Ingersoll, Affidavit, 2 Dec. 1833, in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 233. According to Lorenzo Saunders, Peter Ingersoll's "land joined the Smith farm on the north" (see Interview with E. L. Kelley, 12 Nov. 1884, 6).

15. Alvin's presence would necessarily date Ingersoll's experience prior to Alvin's death in November 1823, at which time only the frame of the "house" had been raised. In this instance, "house" possibly refers to the completion of a cabin on the Smiths' property, which a substantial increase in the value of the Smiths' property would suggest occurred after June 1822 and before July 1823 (Farmington/Manchester Assessment Records, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York). While the exact location of this cabin is unknown at this time, it is possible that it was located north of the Smiths' frame house near the township line and on the same side of Stafford Road (see Larry C. Porter, "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, 43-44). It is also possible that Ingersoll unintentionally added the element of the later constructed house into his memory of the conversation.

16. In 1820 Joshua Stafford paid taxes for forty-six acres on Lot 5, which may have been deeded to William Stafford the following year, then in 1823 he was taxed for 123 acres on Lots 7 and 9 (Farmington/Manchester Assessment Records, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York).

17. Isaac Butts, Affidavit to Arthur Deming, ca. Mar. 1885, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Jan. 1888, 2. Stafford's involvement in money digging was observed by Caroline Rockwell, who mentioned his use of a "peepstone," and Cornelius Stafford (*Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Apr. 1888, 1; and Jan. 1888, 3).

18. Cornelius R. Stafford, Affidavit to Arthur Deming, (23?) Mar. 1885, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Jan. 1888, 3.

upon many of the farms in the neighborhood as well as upon the farm on which she now resides and that some of the holes which he dug can now be seen."¹⁹

Another early Smith-inspired dig related by William Stafford and supported in several sources occurred on the hill farther east from the Smith home on the Clark Chase farm. In this instance, Joseph Sr. and one of his sons approached Stafford, informed him that Joseph Jr. had located "some very remarkable and valuable treasures," and asked to use one of his "black sheep" for a blood sacrifice.²⁰ Stafford, who was not present at the dig, said nothing about its location, but late Palmyra/Manchester residents placed it on "Old Sharp," a hill on the west side of the Canandaigua Road just south of the township line in the northwest quadrant of Manchester Lot 2 (see Photo 1).²¹

Probably the most extensive Smith-inspired dig resulted in the excavation of a cave in a hill known to later Manchester residents as "Miner's Hill"²² on land subsequently owned by Amos Miner and his heirs (see Photo 2). Lorenzo Saunders, a Smith family friend and former resident of Palmyra, was an eye-witness to the digging on the hill's northeast side. "I used to go there & see them work," he recalled in 1884. "I seen the old man [Smith] dig there day in and day out. . . . Joseph Smith [Jr.] never did

19. Samantha Payne, Affidavit to Charles C. Thorne, 29 June 1881, Ontario County Clerk's Office, Canandaigua, New York (cf. *Ontario County Times*, 27 July 1881). Samantha Payne is listed with her husband, David Payne, in the 1860 Manchester, Ontario County, New York, census (p. 470). A map of Manchester published in 1867 locates "D[avid]. Payne" on Lot 9, evidently on land formerly owned by Joshua Stafford ([William H. McIntosh], *History of Ontario Co., New York* [Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign & Everts, 1876], 45). In 1880, at the time of her statement, Samantha Payne is listed in the census of Manchester with her son, Cuyler W. Payne, apparently on the same farm (p. 306C).

20. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 239. According to William Stafford's nephew, Cornelius R. Stafford, Joseph Smith was after a "pot of money" (*Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Jan. 1888, 3). Pomeroy Tucker said Smith and company sought an "iron chest of gold" ("The Mormon Imposture—The Mormon Aborigines," *Wayne Democratic Press* [Lyons, New York] 3 [2 June 1858]).

21. As early as 1858 Pomeroy Tucker related that Stafford's sheep was sacrificed "upon a hill near his [Smith's] residence" (Tucker, "The Mormon Imposture"). Wallace Miner and Thomas L. Cook identified the hill as "Old Sharp" (see Wallace Miner's statement in Thomas L. Cook, *Palmyra and Vicinity* [Palmyra, NY: Press of the Palmyra Courier-Journal, 1930], 222). On the exact location of "Old Sharp," see *ibid.*, 237-38.

22. Some residents also referred to this hill as "Mormon Hill," which caused some confusion since the Hill Cumorah was sometimes called "Mormon Hill." During a visit to Manchester in the early 1870s George Q. Cannon was shown this hill by an area resident who explained that it was called "Mormon Hill" because "there was a cave in that hill which the 'Mormons' had dug and some of them had lived in it, so the people said; and, therefore, it was known by that name" (George Q. Cannon, "Visit to the Land and Hill of Cumorah," *Juvenile Instructor* 8 [5 July 1873]: 108).



*Photograph 1. "Old Sharp" Hill, facing east from top
(photo by Dan Vogel, 1992).*



*Photograph 2. Northeast view of "Miner's Hill." Cave site is behind the house
near the summit of the hill (photo by Dan Vogel, 1992).*

work."²³ Joseph Jr. had a different role in the quest. Joseph Sr. told Saunders that "Jo. [Jr.] could see in his peep stone what there was in that cave," and that "young Joe could . . . see a man sitting in a gold chair. Old Joe said he was king i.e. the man in the chair; a king of one of the . . . [Indian] <tribes> who was shut in there in the time of one of their big battles."²⁴ After a tunnel of considerable length had been excavated, the diggers placed a heavy wooden door at the entrance.

While Saunders believed the cave had been dug in 1826,²⁵ historical context suggests an earlier date. Saunders declared, "I am one of them that went & tore the door down to the cave. My Father was in possession & he ordered us to break that door down & Put the hole up."²⁶ The cave had evidently been completed before the death of Enoch Saunders on 10 October 1825.²⁷

Although before his death Enoch Saunders was "in possession" of, or leased, the land on which the hill and cave were situated, Lorenzo Saunders revealed that at the time the door was removed and the cave's entrance blocked "Benjamin Tabor owned the land. . . . It was a farm of a hundred acres; He had it on an article."²⁸ County records confirm Tabor's ownership, although the exact date of purchase cannot be determined.²⁹ County re-

23. Lorenzo Saunders, Interview with E. L. Kelley, 12 Nov. 1884, 12, E. L. Kelley Papers, Library-Archives, the Auditorium, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri (hereafter RLDS archives).

24. Ibid., 8; see also Lorenzo Saunders, Interview with William H. Kelley, 17 Sept. 1884, 7-8, E. L. Kelley Papers, RLDS archives. Independent of Saunders, Sylvia Walker, daughter of early Manchester resident Pardon Butts, said "Jo [Smith] claimed to receive a revelation to dig forty feet into a hill about two miles north of where he pretended to find the gold plates of the 'Book of Mormon,' where he would find a cave that contained gold furniture, chairs and table" (Sylvia Walker, Statement to Arthur B. Deming, 20 Mar. 1885, in *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Apr. 1888, 1).

25. Interview with William H. Kelley, 17 Sept. 1884, 8. Samantha Payne believed the cave had been dug "[a]fter Smith came back from Pennsylvania." See Samantha Payne, Statement in Clark Braden and E. L. Kelley, *Public Discussion of the Issues Between the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Christ (Disciples) Held in Kirtland, Ohio . . .* (St. Louis: Clark Braden, [1884]), 350.

26. Interview with E. L. Kelley, 12 Nov. 1884, 8.

27. On the death date of Enoch Saunders, see *Wayne Sentinel*, 18 Oct. 1825.

28. Interview with E. L. Kelley, 12 Nov. 1884, 8. See also Interview with William H. Kelley, 13 Sept. 1884, 8, where Saunders states that "The cave was on our place." Saunders was related to Benjamin Tabor by marriage, having married Calista Tabor, daughter of Franklin B. Tabor, in 1833 (Cook, *Palmyra and Vicinity*, 239; *Portrait and Biographical Album of Hillsdale County, Mich.* [Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1888], 446).

29. The incomplete assessment records indicate that Tabor was taxed for 100 acres on Manchester Lot 2 in 1830 (Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York; assessment records between 1823 and 1830 are missing). On 23 January 1834, Tabor deeded the land on Manchester Lot 2 to Lorenzo Saunders for \$3,000 (Deeds, Liber

cords also suggest that the previous owner was Abner Cole,³⁰ who as editor of the *Palmyra Reflector* later ridiculed Joseph Smith's treasure-seeking activities. Cole mortgaged the property in 1820 but continued paying taxes on it until at least 1823.³¹ In 1824 Cole experienced great financial difficulty which resulted in the seizure of several properties in Palmyra and Macedon, including his office lot on Palmyra's Main Street.³² About this time Cole also lost possession of Manchester Lot 2.

Cole's interest in Manchester Lot 2 explains his awareness of Smith's treasure-seeking activities, particularly his knowledge of "Walters the Magician," who has since been identified as Luman Walters (ca. 1788-1860) of Gorham, New York.³³ According to Saunders, "At the time the big hole was dug in the hill they was duped by one Walters who pretended to be a conjurer, I heard Willard Chase say that he was duped. They could not be deceived in it after he had gone through with a certain movements & . . . charged them \$7."³⁴ Cole claimed that after Walters's departure from Manchester, "his mantle fell upon the prophet Jo. Smith Jun."³⁵

On 23 January 1834, Benjamin Tabor deeded about 100 acres of land on

55, p. 368, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York).

30. When Tabor deeded the land to Saunders on 23 January 1834, the record stated that the 100 acres on Lot 2 was "the same lot formerly owned by Abner Cole and since became the property of the state of New York by foreclosure of a mortgage by said Cole to the state, and by the Commissioner of the land office of the state sold to the said Benjamin Tabor" (Deeds, Liber 55, p. 368, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York).

31. Extant Manchester tax records list Cole's ownership of Lot 2 for the years 1820, 1821, 1822, and 1823 (Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York).

32. Announcement of Cole's mortgage default first appeared in 1822 (see *Palmyra Herald*, 24 July 1822-5 Sept. 1822; *Western Farmer*, 5 June 1822). For announcement of the seizure of Cole's land in Palmyra and Macedon (by "S[amuel]. Lawrence, late Sheriff"), see *Wayne Sentinel*, 7, 14 Jan. 1824, 18 Feb. 1824. For announcement of the sale of Cole's lands, including several postponements (until 5 March 1824, until 16 April 1824, until 17 May 1824, until 7 July 1824, until 19 August 1824), see *Wayne Sentinel*, 17 Mar., 14 Apr., 5, 12, 19 May, 14 July, and 8 Aug. 1824.

33. On Luman Walters, see Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 82-84, 85-97. A document which has recently come to my attention confirms this identification. The document, written by Diedrich Willers, Jr. (1820-1908), of Fayette, New York, reads: "Fortune tellers are consulted as to the future, many in this neighborhood where ~~ever~~ they wish to find out something <anything> which is lost, or pry into the <hidden> mysteries of hidden things will consult Dr Walters" ("Ambition and Superstition," Miscellaneous Undated Items, Diedrich Willers Papers, Box 1, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York). This was evidently written before Walters's death in 1860.

34. Interview with E. L. Kelley, 12 Nov. 1884, 12.

35. "The Book of Pukei. —Chap. 1," *Palmyra Reflector*, 12 June 1830, 37.

Manchester Lot 2 to Lorenzo Saunders for \$3,000.³⁶ On 26 November 1836, Saunders visited Albany and obtained a Letter of Patent from the state for the same property.³⁷ On 28 January 1839, Saunders deeded about forty-eight acres of this land to Amos Miner, who then became owner of the hill and cave.³⁸ Miner's heirs held the property for three generations, and the family's understanding regarding the cave is best explained by grandson Wallace Miner (b. 1843), who told Brigham Young University professor M. Wilford Poulson in 1932 that

He [Smith] dug a 40 ft. cave right on this vary farm. . . . He dug in about 20 ft. and the angel told him this was not holy ground, but to move south [to Cumorah]. Martin Harris stayed at this home when I was about 13 yrs. of age [ca. 1856] and I used to go over to the diggings about 100 rods or a little less S.E. [southeast] of this house. It is near a clump of bushes. Martin Harris regarded it as fully as sacred as the Mormon Hill diggings.³⁹

Christopher M. Stafford, a nephew of William Stafford who moved from Manchester to Ohio in 1831, claimed to have been inside the cave, evidently before it was closed by the Saunders family.⁴⁰ In 1867, Pomeroy Tucker reported that "[f]rom the lapse of time and natural causes the cave has been closed for years, very little mark of its former existence remaining to be seen."⁴¹ Manchester resident Ezra Pierce told the Kelleys in 1881 that

36. Deeds, Liber 55, p. 368, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

37. Deeds, Liber 61, pp. 376-77, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York. The Letter of Patent identifies the property as "being part of the lands mortgaged to us by Abner Cole by Indenture of Mortgage bearing date the 23d day of August 1820."

38. Deeds, Liber 65, pp. 177-78, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York. With imperfect memory, Saunders said when Tabor's "article run out & he was likely to lose it[,] I went to Albany & I sold it to Amos Macy" (Interview with E. L. Kelley, 12 Nov. 1884, 8). Saunders's Letter of Patent was obtained from Governor William L. Marcy on 26 November 1836; he deeded the land to Amos Miner on 28 January 1839.

39. Wallace Miner, Statement to M. Wilford Poulson, 1932, "Notebook containing statements made by residents of Palmyra, N.Y., and other areas . . .," M. Wilford Poulson Collection, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

40. Christopher M. Stafford, Statement to Arthur B. Deming, 23 Mar. 1885 (*Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Apr. 1888, 1). Lorenzo Saunders's memory that the cave was ordered closed by his father before his death in October 1825 apparently contradicts other late accounts, traceable to Pomeroy Tucker, which claim Joseph Smith translated in the cave (Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 48-49; Kelley, "The Hill Cumorah, and the Book of Mormon," 165; John H. Gilbert, Interview, *New York Herald*, 25 June 1893).

41. Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 49.

the cave was still closed.⁴² But in 1884, Samantha Payne said that the cave "can be seen to-day. The present owner of the farm, Mr. [Wallace] Miner, dug out the cave, which had fallen in," and that she had been in it once.⁴³ Orson Saunders, a nephew of Lorenzo Saunders, who also visited the cave about this time, said that "he found quite a large chamber many feet in extent, with the marks of the pick plainly visible in the light of his candles. The passageway within the chamber was eight feet wide and seven feet high."⁴⁴

In 1893, a reporter from the *New York Herald*, accompanied by Orson Saunders and John H. Gilbert, visited the cave and reported that "[t]he door jambs leading into the cave are still sound and partly visible, but the earth has been washed down by storms and the opening to the cave nearly filled, so that it cannot be entered at present. . . . The door jamb is heavy plank of beech or maple, and the inscriptions, which had evidently been cut deeply by a sharp knife, were partially worn away."⁴⁵ By 1932, Palmyra historian Thomas L. Cook reported that "no trace of the old Joe Smith cave can be found."⁴⁶ The cave remained closed until April 1974 when Andrew H. Kommer, owner of the property, cleared the cave's opening with a bulldozer (see Photo 3). At that time the cave was described as "about six feet high at the largest point in the middle and 10-12 feet long," and "carved into a rock-hard clay hillside. . . . The walls and ceiling of the cave appear to have been dug or picked by hand."⁴⁷ Today the entrance of the cave is closed and overgrown with foliage (see Photo 3).

Undoubtedly the most significant of Smith's treasure quests occurred on a prominent hill, now known as the "Hill Cumorah," situated on the east side of the Canandaigua Road in the northwest quadrant of Manchester Lot 85, then part of the Randall Robinson farm (see Photo 4).⁴⁸ Certainly

42. Kelley, "The Hill Cumorah, and the Book of Mormon," 163.

43. Braden and Kelley, *Public Discussion*, 350. According to Thomas L. Cook, "For several years this cave remained practically intact. After it had commenced to fall in, Wallace W. Miner, a grandson of Amos Miner, the owner of the hill at that time, partly restored the old cave" (*Palmyra and Vicinity*, 238).

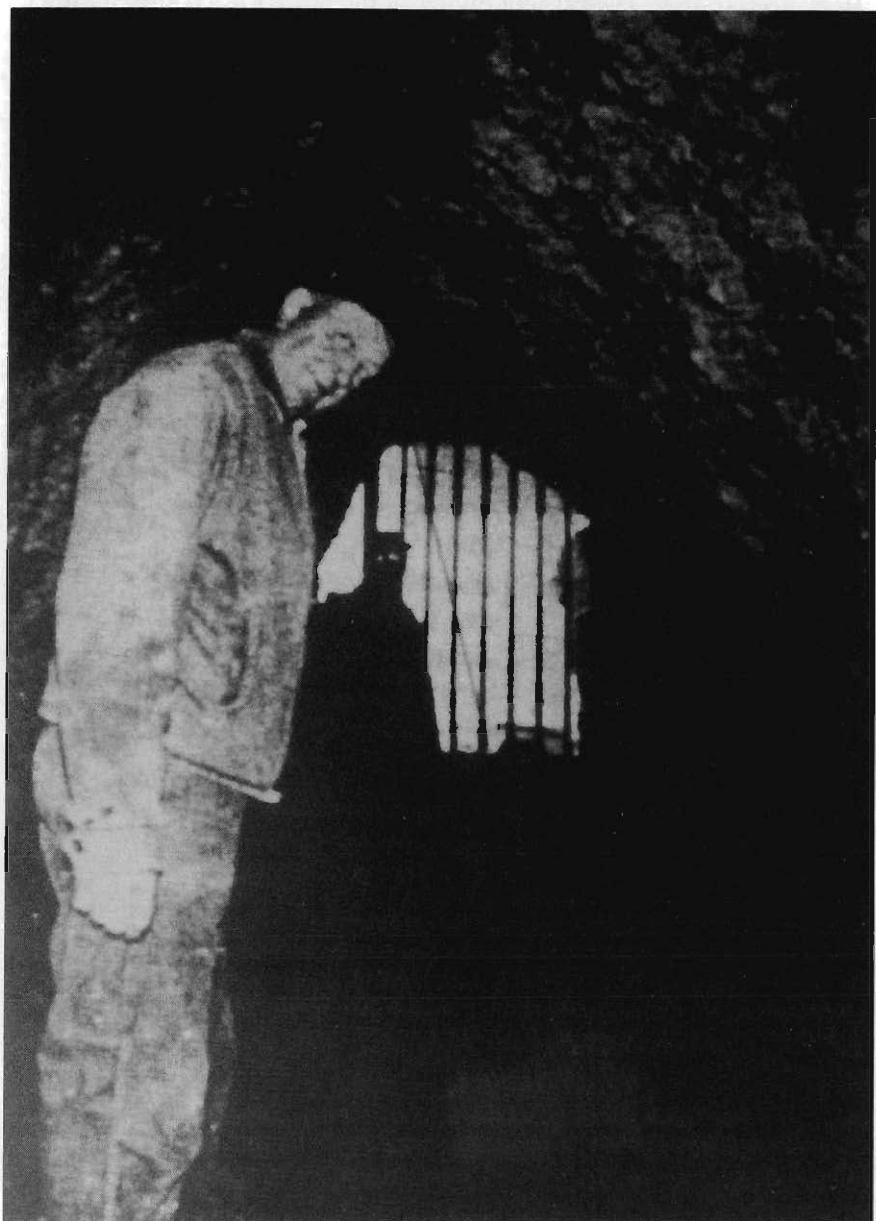
44. *New York Herald*, 25 June 1893.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Cook, *Palmyra and Vicinity*, 238. After the cave closed, some exaggerated descriptions surfaced. Manchester resident Charles W. Brown (b. ca. 1849), for instance, described the cave as follows: "The cave itself was about sixty feet in length and ten feet high. From the door for the distance of forty feet, there was a hall fifteen feet wide which led to the chamber beyond. This chamber or audience room was twenty feet square, and was furnished with one rude table and half a dozen uncouth stools" ([Charles W. Brown], "Manchester in the Early Days," *Shortsville Enterprise*, 18 Mar. 1904).

47. "Palmyra Farmer Claims: Cave Dug by Mormon Prophet, Church Founder," *Courier Journal* (Palmyra), 1 May 1974; Lou Ziegler, "Palmyra Cave Mormon Holy Ground," *Times-Union* (Rochester), 25 April 1974.

48. See Cook, *Palmyra and Vicinity*, 246; and Manchester Assessment Records, 1830,



*Photograph 3. Andrew Kommer standing in "Miner's Hill" cave
(Palmyra Courier Journal, 1 May 1974).*

Smith's discovery of the gold plates in 1823 and subsequent activities on the hill occurred within a treasure-seeking context.⁴⁹ Of particular interest is the claim that Smith and his friends dug on the hill sometime before Smith removed the plates on 22 September 1827.

One unidentified Manchester resident said that "'Mormon Hill' had been long designated 'as the place in which countless treasures were buried;' Joseph, the elder, had 'spaded' up many a foot of the hill side to find them, and Joseph Jr., had on more than one occasion accompanied him."⁵⁰ In 1880, Frederick G. Mather said, "Returning to the vicinity of Palmyra [from Pennsylvania], Smith and his followers began to dig for the plates on the eastern side of the hill."⁵¹ Mather connected this digging with events of 22 September 1827, but five years later Lorenzo Saunders corrected Mather's dating. Saunders, who visited the hill within days after Smith removed the plates, said he found no disturbance of the earth except "a large hole" which had been dug by the "money diggers" about "a year or two before."⁵² In August 1831, James Gordon Bennett noted that on "Golden Bible Hill . . . there is a hole 30 or forty feet into the side—6 feet diameter."⁵³ The existence of this hole on the northeast side of the hill in 1867 was verified by Pomeroy Tucker, who said that the excavation was "yet partially visible,"⁵⁴ and by Edward Stevenson, who reported seeing the hole in 1871.⁵⁵ Early residents of Palmyra/Manchester mistook this

Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

49. For a discussion of the treasure-seeking context of Smith's discovery of the plates and subsequent activities on the hill, see Quinn, 114-43.

50. "Mormonism in Its Infancy," *Newark* [New Jersey] *Daily Advertiser*, ca. Aug. 1856, newspaper clipping in Charles Woodward, Scrapbook, 1:125, New York Public Library.

51. Mather, "The Early Days of Mormonism," 200. See also O[rsamus]. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase* (Rochester, New York: William Alling, 1851), 216, who also mentions the Smiths' previous digging on the Hill Cumorah.

52. Saunders's statement to Gregg is as follows: "I went on the next Sunday following with five or six other ones and we hunted the side hill by course and could not find no place where the ground had been broke. There was a large hole where the money diggers had dug a year or two before, but no fresh dirt" (Lorenzo Saunders to Thomas Gregg, 28 Jan. 1885, in Charles A. Shook, *The True Origin of the Book of Mormon* [Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing Co., [1914]], 135). Saunders similarly told William H. Kelley: "We went there & we examined the hill all over where he claimed to got the plates & we could not find a place that was broke & there was no plates on the ground where the hill was not broke. Robinson said he tried many times to find the hole where he took them out, that is on the west hill it was cleared off" (Interview of 12 Nov. 1884, 16-17, E. L. Kelley Papers, RLDS archives).

53. James Gordon Bennett Diary, 7 Aug. 1831, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

54. Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 34.

55. Edward Stevenson, *Reminiscences of Joseph, the Prophet and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Edward Stevenson, 1893), 12-13. Stevenson was incorrectly told that the hole was made by a company of treasure seekers from Rochester.

northeastern excavation for the location of the plates' repository, which Oliver Cowdery later said was "on the west side of the hill, not far from the top down it side."⁵⁶

Whatever the nature of Joseph Smith's involvement with money diggers on the hill, both the location and timing of the digging suggest at least an indirect connection with Smith. However, Martin Harris's statement that Smith did not separate from the money diggers until after he obtained the plates indicates a more direct involvement.⁵⁷ Moreover, the suggestion that Smith's fellow money diggers had previously dug on the hill explains why they later believed that they had a right to the plates and tried to take them from Smith.⁵⁸ According to Joseph Knight, at least one of Smith's treasure-seeking friends, Samuel F. Lawrence, who was also a seer, "had Bin to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and he was trying to obtain them."⁵⁹ Willard Chase also said Lawrence had been to the hill with Smith in 1825 and had seen the plates in his stone, but that Smith later said that he had

56. David Whitmer, who visited Manchester in 1828 and discussed the plates with Oliver Cowdery, reported conversations with "several young men" who claimed to have seen "the plates [place] in the hill that he [Smith] took them out of just as he described it to us before he obtained them" ("Mormonism," *Kansas City Journal*, 5 June 1881; for Whitmer's correction of "plates" to "place," see *ibid.*, 19 June 1881; see also *Chicago Times*, 14 Oct. 1881). In a letter to E. D. Howe, dated 15 January 1831, W. W. Phelps reported that "[t]he places where they dug for the plates, in Manchester, are to be seen" (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 273). John A. Clark, who visited Manchester in 1840, reported seeing "an excavation in the side of a hill, from whence, according to the assertion of the Mormon prophet, the metallic plates, sometimes called THE GOLDEN BIBLE, were disinterred" (*Episcopal Recorder* 18 [5 Sept. 1840]: 94). Cowdery's statement is found in his letter to W. W. Phelps, *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2 (Oct. 1835): 196 (cf. the addition to Joseph Smith's 1839 history in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith. Volume 1: Autobiographical and Historical Writings* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 281).

57. In his interview with Joel Tiffany, Harris states, "Joseph said the angel told him he must quit the company of the money-diggers. That there were wicked men among them. He must have no more to do with them. He must not lie, nor swear, nor steal" (*Tiffany's Monthly* 5 [May 1859]: 169). William Stafford said the Smiths were treasure seekers "until the latter part of the season of 1827" (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 240).

58. In his interview with Joel Tiffany, Harris said: "The money-diggers claimed that they had as much right to the plates as Joseph had, as they were in company together. They claimed that Joseph had been a traitor, and had appropriated to himself that which belonged to them" (*Tiffany's Monthly* 5 [May 1859]: 167). David Whitmer stated: "I had conversations with several young men who said that Joseph Smith had certainly golden plates, and that before he attained them he had promised to share with them, but had not done so, and they were very much incensed with him" (*Kansas City Journal*, 5 June 1881).

59. Joseph Knight, Sr., "Manuscript of the History of Joseph Smith," ca. 1835-47, LDS archives, as published in Dean C. Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *Brigham Young University Studies* 17 (Autumn 1976): 32. Lawrence, in his forties, is listed in the 1830 Palmyra census (1830:37). His whereabouts after 1830 is uncertain.

taken Lawrence to the wrong location.⁶⁰

After their marriage on 18 January 1827 at Bainbridge, Joseph and Emma Smith went to Manchester where they resided in the Smith home until their removal to Harmony, Pennsylvania, in December. During this stay in Manchester, Joseph Smith engaged in treasure-seeking activities before obtaining the plates in September. Both Martin Harris and Lorenzo Saunders state that Smith led a treasure-digging company up to the time he received the gold plates; Harris specifically claimed that Josiah Stowell was visiting the Smiths in Manchester "digging for money" when Joseph took the plates from the hill.⁶¹

Joseph Capron, who lived south of the Smiths on Manchester Lot 1, reported that Joseph Jr. using a stone in his hat had located "a chest of gold watches . . . north west of my house," and that in 1827 a company of money diggers, led by Samuel F. Lawrence, attempted to unearth the treasure.⁶² Capron's farm was situated on the most southern portion of Manchester Lot 1, and the dig possibly occurred on the west side of Stafford Road.⁶³

HARMONY, PENNSYLVANIA, NOVEMBER 1825

The only known Smith-inspired dig in Pennsylvania occurred in the township of Harmony (now Oakland) on land owned by Joseph McKune, Jr.⁶⁴ In October 1825, Josiah Stowell of South Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York, made his way up the newly-opened Erie Canal to visit his oldest son, Simpson Stowell, in Palmyra, Wayne County, New York. By this time, Joseph Smith Jr.'s activities in the Palmyra/Manchester area as a treasure seer were well known. For

60. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 243. See also Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 137-39.

61. Lorenzo Saunders, Interview with E. L. Kelley, 12 Nov. 1884, 7; and *Tiffany's Monthly* 5 (May 1859): 164-65.

62. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 258-60. Joshua Stafford also related that Smith told him of locating a "box of watches" (*ibid.*, 258).

63. Capron's name appears immediately before Joseph Smith Sr.'s in the 1830 Manchester census. In 1830, Capron was taxed for five acres of land on Manchester Lot 1 (Manchester Tax Records, 1830, Ontario County Historical Society, Canandaigua, New York; see also Squire Stoddard to Joseph Capron, 1833, Deeds, Liber 53:392, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York).

64. John B. Buck's claim that Joseph Smith's "first diggings were near Capt. [Ichabod] Buck's saw-mill, at Red Rock," a village several miles west of Harmony, together with his claim that Smith had been lumbering in the area about 1818, are unlikely (see Emily C. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania* [Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen and Fellefing, 1873], 577).

years Stowell had attempted to locate a lost Spanish silver mine along the banks of the Susquehanna River near Harmony, Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania.⁶⁵ Thus a mutual interest in treasure seeking drew Stowell to the Smiths' Manchester home. In fact, Lucy Smith said Stowell came to their home "on account of having heard that he [Joseph Jr.] possessed certain keys, by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye."⁶⁶ Stowell was amazed by young Smith's ability to see distant places in his stone and hired him on the spot.

Both Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. accompanied Stowell to South Bainbridge, then proceeded with his small band of treasure seekers to Harmony. On 1 November 1825 "Articles of Agreement" were drawn up and signed stipulating how the interested parties were to divide the treasure among themselves. According to this document, the diggers were seeking "a valuable mine of either Gold or Silver and also . . . coined money and bars or ingots of Gold or Silver" located "at a certain place in Pennsylvania near a Wm. Hale's."⁶⁷ Since William Hale, a resident of Colesville, New York, does not appear in either land records or tax rolls for Harmony, he was evidently renting or boarding in the area of the diggings.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, this clue does not help locate the site of the Spanish mine. The earliest

65. According to Joseph and Hiel Lewis, the circumstance which began Stowell's treasure-digging venture in Harmony was as follows: "[S]ome time previous to 1825, a man by the name of Wm. Hale, a distant relative of our uncle Isaac Hale, came to Isaac Hale, and said that he had been informed by a woman named Odle, who claimed to possess the power of seeing under ground, (such persons were then commonly called peepers) that there was great treasures concealed in the hill north-east from his, (Isaac Hale's) house. By her directions, Wm. Hale commenced digging, but being too lazy to work, and too poor, to hire, he obtained a partner by the name of Oliver Harper, of [New] York state, who had the means to hire help" (*Amboy [Illinois] Journal*, 30 Apr. 1879). After the murder of Harper in May 1824 the company of diggers returned to Harmony and "work[ed] during a considerable part of the past summer [of 1825]" ("Articles of Agreement," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 Apr. 1880). Michael Morse, Joseph Smith's brother-in-law, said he thought "three different companies had been digging for it in all and that Mr. Stowell with his company were one of the three" (William W. Blair Journal, 8 May 1879, RLDS archives). Morse may have been referring to the William Hale/Oliver Harper company (1822/1823?), the William Hale/Josiah Stowell company (summer 1825), and the William Hale/Josiah Stowell/Joseph Smith company (November 1825).

66. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 91-92.

67. The original "Articles of Agreement" is lost. For the published version, see *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 Apr. 1880.

68. William Hale was a distant relative of Isaac Hale, according to Joseph and Hiel Lewis (*Amboy Journal*, 30 Apr. 1879). William Hale, in his forties, is listed in the 1830 Colesville, Broome County, New York, census (p. 55). He was also acquainted with Joseph Knight, Sr., who sold land to him on 7 October 1823 (Deeds, Liber 8, p. 332, Broome County Clerk's Office, Binghamton, New York).

account to locate the exact place of Stowell's treasure-seeking venture is Emily C. Blackman's 1873 *History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, which states:

Jacob I. Skinner . . . has the deed of the land on which Joe's followers experimented. It is something over a quarter of a mile north of the river to "the diggings," up Flat Brook. . . . Starting from Susquehanna Depot to reach his place, one crosses the bridge and turns to the left following the road nearest the river, which strikes the old river at Shutt's house; then continuing on down until he crosses a creek and comes in sight of a school-house, with a grove beyond it, in front of which, on the opposite side of the road, is a graveyard. Just above the school-house he turns into a road on the right, and follows up "Flat Brook" to the farm now owned by J. I. Skinner. From his house a path leads about 120 yards southeast to the largest excavation.⁶⁹

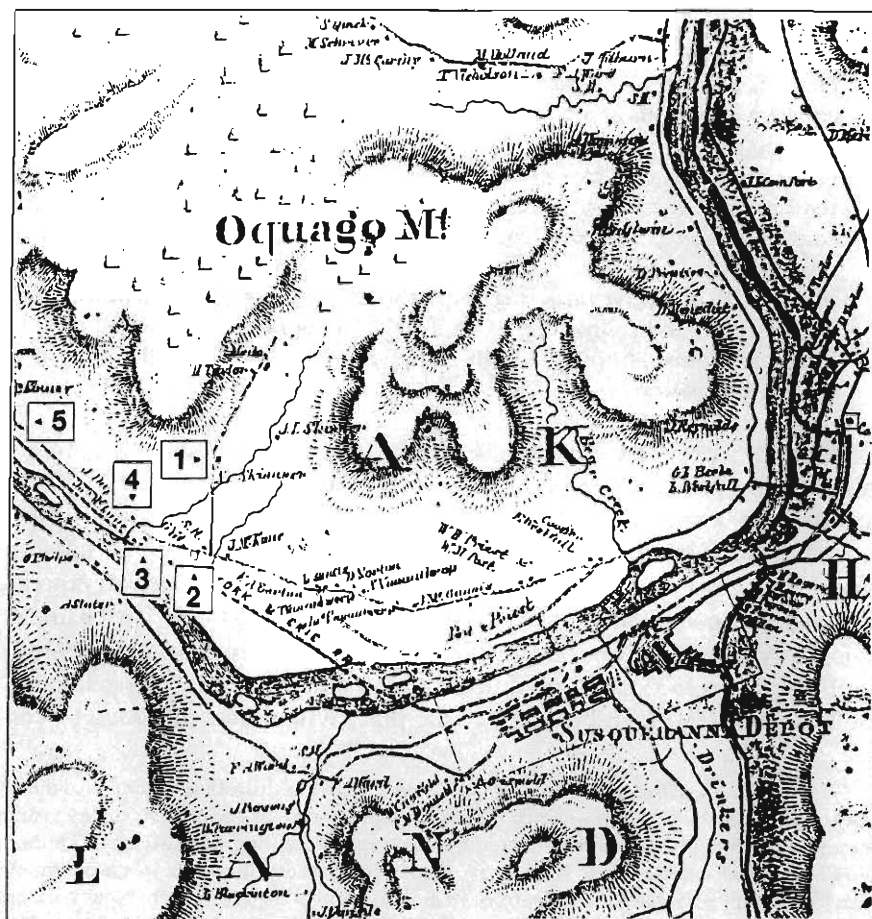
Skinner's property was situated in the foot hills of Oquago Mountain immediately north of Joseph Smith's former residence (see Map 3).⁷⁰ According to tax records, Skinner's father (Jacob) and uncle (Abram) purchased the land from Joseph McKune, Jr., in 1830.⁷¹ R. C. Doud of Windsor, New York, asserted that "in 1822 he was employed, with thirteen others, by Oliver Harper, to dig for gold . . . on Joseph McKune's land."⁷² McKune's wife, Sally (b. 1794), reported in 1880 that before her husband purchased Smith's land in 1833, she "lived upon a farm adjoining Joe Smith's lot and the Isaac Hale farm, and in sight of the place where they dug for a ton of

69. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 581. The historical setting in which Blackman places the diggings—which requires Joseph Smith's presence in Harmony years before November 1825—is incorrect, and Quinn errs in accepting Blackman (see Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 43-44). Josiah Stowell said he was acquainted with Joseph Smith "6 years," that is, from 1825 until Smith's departure from New York in 1831 (Josiah Stowell, Jr., to John S. Fullmer, 17 Feb. 1843, LDS archives; cf. *Church News*, 12 May 1985, 10). Isaac Hale also said he "first became acquainted with Joseph Smith, Jr. in November, 1825" ("Mormonism," *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 [1 May 1834]; cf. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 262).

70. Oquago Mountain occupies the greater area of the "Great Bend" of the Susquehanna River. It is likely the area Josiah Stowell identified as "Bend Mountain in Pennsylvania" in his statement at the March 1826 court hearing (*Utah Christian Advocate*, Jan. 1886).

71. The 1831 assessment for Jacob and Abram Skinner reads in part: "This property was transferred from Joseph McKune Jr since last assessment[.] The above persons came to live here since last assessment" (Harmony Tax Records, 1831, Susquehanna County Courthouse, Montrose, Pennsylvania).

72. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 580. An R. C. Dowd, in his forties, appears in the 1840 Windsor, Broome County, New York, census. He may be the same Russell Dowd listed in the 1820 and 1830 censuses of Windsor (1820:15; 1830:92).



HARMONY SITES

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Jacob I. Skinner home; southeast of Skinner home location of Spanish mine. | 3. Joseph Smith home. |
| 2. McKune Cemetery. | 4. Isaac Hale home. |
| | 5. Nathaniel Lewis home. |

Map 3. Harmony, Pennsylvania, Wall Map, ca. 1860, Susquehanna County Historical Society, Montrose, Pennsylvania.

silver, on Jacob I. Skinner's farm."⁷³ This confirms Blackman's location of Stowell's diggings. Joseph (b. 1807) and Hiel (b. ca. 1817) Lewis, sons of Nathaniel Lewis and cousins of Emma Smith who grew up on the farm that adjoined Isaac Hale's on the west, did not object to Blackman's placement of the diggings, locating the excavations themselves "in the hill north-east from his, (Isaac Hale's) house."⁷⁴ Hiel probably exaggerated when he claimed that "he could stand on his door step and lodge a bullet in the hole with a rifle."⁷⁵

According to Blackman's description and diagram (see Photo 5), there were five pits, the largest, which included a drainage ditch, was twenty feet deep and 150 feet in circumference. To the south were three smaller pits, and one other directly east. The number of pits, as Blackman explains, was due to the movement of the enchanted treasure and Smith's discovering its new location through his stone. Blackman also described the erosion of the pits that had occurred up to 1873, reporting that one of the smaller pits was entirely filled and another partly filled.⁷⁶ A photograph of what appears to be one of the smaller excavations was taken by George E. Anderson in 1907.⁷⁷ Larry C. Porter, who visited the site in 1968 and 1970, reported: "There are definite disturbances of the earth in the area represented by her [Blackman's] diagram, and one can piece together her intended identification of those 'pits' on the ground. Some have been filled in and are practically obscured by the undergrowth. However, it is obvious that there was a 'man-made' effort to excavate a series of holes at some time or another."⁷⁸ I failed to find any traces of the pits in October 1992.

Joseph Smith was ambiguous about the circumstances ending the project. After "nearly a month without success in our undertaking," he

73. Frederick G. Mather, "The Early Mormons. Joe Smith Operates at Susquehanna," *Binghamton Republican*, 29 July 1880. See also Joseph Smith, Jr., and Emma Smith, Deed to Joseph McKune, Jr., 28 June 1833, original in LDS archives (cf. Deeds, Liber 9, p. 290, Susquehanna County Courthouse, Montrose, Pennsylvania).

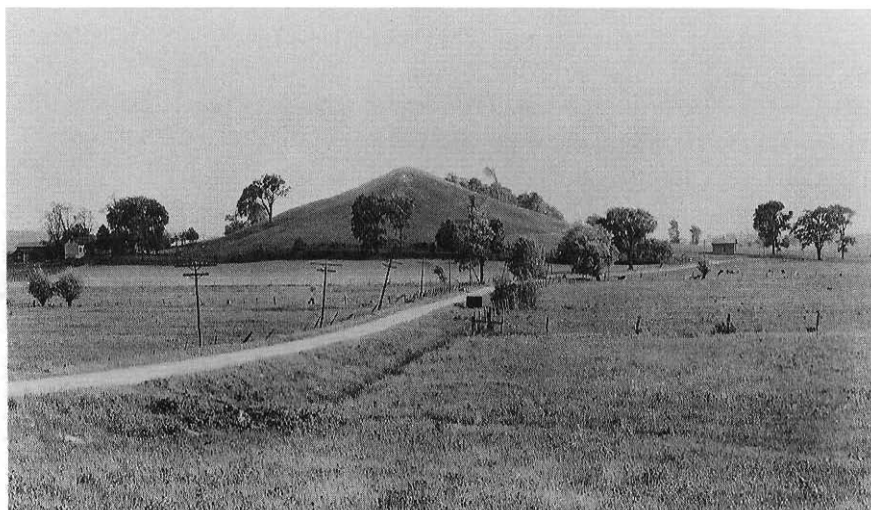
74. *Amboy Journal*, 30 Apr. 1879. The Lewises unfortunately adopted Blackman's historical interpretations and inaccurate chronology regarding Joseph Smith's involvement (see n69 above).

75. "The Histories of Mormonism," *Amboy Journal*, 23 Apr. 1879.

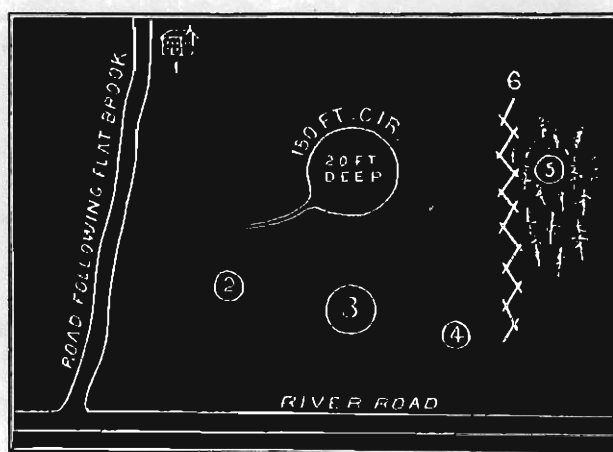
76. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 581-82. In an 1880 interview with Frederick G. Mather, Jacob I. Skinner, who incorrectly believed Joseph Smith discovered the plates while digging on his property, said "[h]e has been engaged for years in dumping stones into the holes to fill them up, because they were dangerous traps for his cattle." Also, according to Skinner, "the big hole" was at one time "covered by a rough board house" (*Binghamton Republican*, 29 July 1880).

77. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Palmyra and New England: Historic Photographs and Guide* (Santa Ana, CA: Fieldbrook Productions, Inc., 1991), 163.

78. Porter, "Study of the Origins," 127.



Photograph 4. "Hill Cumorah," a view of its northern summit, 1920
(courtesy Utah State Historical Society).



JON SMITH'S DIGGINGS.

1. Situation of J. I. Skinner's house.
2. Pit filled and grain growing over it.
3. A larger pit filled.
4. A smaller one partly filled.
5. A pit that has not been disturbed, in the woods.
6. Fence. Relative positions only, not exactly proportionate distances, are here given.

Photograph 5. Diagram of holes in Harmony Pennsylvania (Emily C. Blackman,
History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania
[Philadelphia: Claxton Remsen and Haffelfinger, 1873], 581.

recalled, "finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it."⁷⁹ According to Isaac Hale, "Young Smith gave the 'money-diggers' great encouragement, at first, but when they had arrived in digging, to near the place where he had stated an immense treasure would be found—he said the enchantment was so powerful that he could not see. They then became discouraged, and soon after dispersed."⁸⁰

CHENANGO AND BROOME COUNTIES, NEW YORK,
NOVEMBER 1825 TO MARCH 1826

Although Smith's later accounts limited his treasure-seeking activities to his experience with Stowell in Pennsylvania, he continued similar ventures in Chenango and Broome counties until his arrest and court hearing in March 1826. Peter Bridgeman, a nephew of Josiah Stowell who believed Smith was conning his uncle, issued a warrant accusing Smith of being "a disorderly person and an Impostor." While the court's findings remain a matter of controversy, conclusions of innocence or guilt are less important than the evidence of Smith's continued practice of treasure seeing and the central role he played in those operations.⁸¹ Accordingly, residents of South Bainbridge (now Afton), Chenango County, New York, identify four possible locations in the area for Joseph Smith's treasure quests (see Map 4).

In his March 1826 statement to Justice Albert Neely, Josiah Stowell said Smith had boarded at his home the previous five months and occasionally used his stone to locate "hidden treasures" in the area. On one occasion Smith "looked through said stone for Deacon Attl[e]ton—for a mine [he] did not exactly find it but got a (piece) of ore which resembled gold, he thinks."⁸² Regarding this man, Dale Morgan observed: "No person of this

79. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 282. According to Isaac Hale, at whose home the company boarded, the money diggers disbanded on 17 November ("Mormonism," *Susquehanna Register*, and *Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 [1 May 1834]; cf. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 262).

80. "Mormonism," *Susquehanna Register*, and *Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 (1 May 1834); cf. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 262.

81. Of the recent discussions of Joseph Smith's 1826 court hearing, the following are most useful: Wesley P. Walters, "Joseph Smith's Bainbridge, N.Y., Court Trials," *Westminster Theological Journal* 36 (Winter 1974): 123-55; Marvin S. Hill, "Joseph Smith and the 1826 Trial: New Evidence and New Difficulties," *Brigham Young University Studies* 12 (Winter 1972): 223-33; Paul Hedengren, *In Defense of Faith: Assessing Arguments Against Latter-day Saint Belief* (Provo, UT: Bradford and Wilson, 1985), chap. 13; and Gordon A. Madsen, "Joseph Smith's 1826 Trial: The Legal Setting," *Brigham Young University Studies* 30 (Spring 1990): 91-108.

82. *Utah Christian Advocate*, Jan. 1886.

name appears in the census returns, but the name itself was obviously a puzzle to the transcriber[s].⁸³ Morgan then suggested the person was "Charles Atherton" listed in the 1820 census of South Bainbridge.⁸⁴ According to Chenango County records, Atherton held deeded land on South Bainbridge Lots 60 and 63 in 1819 and 1824 respectively.⁸⁵ However, the court record is unclear about the location of the digging, stating only that Smith looked in his stone for the deacon not that the digging occurred on the latter's property. If the abbreviated record intended to locate the digging on the deacon's land, then a Smith-inspired dig occurred somewhere on one of Atherton's properties in South Bainbridge.

William D. Purple claimed in 1877 to have seen holes on Josiah Stowell's farm, which he assumed were Smith inspired. According to Purple, Jonathan Thompson, who accompanied Stowell and Smith in their treasure-seeking ventures, testified at Smith's 1826 court hearing that "Smith had told the Deacon [Stowell] that very many years before a band of robbers had buried on his flat a box of treasure, and as it was very valuable they had by a sacrifice placed a charm over it to protect it, so that it could not be obtained except by faith, accompanied by certain talismanic influences." But despite such efforts, the treasure slipped away.⁸⁶ Martin Harris told Joel Tiffany in 1859 about an "old Presbyterian," evidently meaning Josiah Stowell, who told him that "on the Susquehannah flats he dug down to an iron chest, that he scraped the dirt off with his shovel, but had nothing with him to open the chest; that he went away to get help, and when they came to it, it moved away two or three rods into the earth, and they could not get it."⁸⁷

The most prominent hill in South Bainbridge is directly west of the

83. The three transcribers deciphered the reading as follows: Charles Marshall "Attleton," Daniel S. Tuttle "Attelon," and the editors of the *Utah Christian Advocate* "Attltlon."

84. John Philip Walker, ed., *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 398n5.

85. Horace Stowe, Deed to Charles Atherton, 28 July 1819, Liber AA, p. 249 (also Liber KK, p. 487); George Clapper, Deed to Charles Atherton, 1 Sept. 1824, Liber GG, p. 418 (Land Records, Chenango County Office Building, Norwich, New York). Atherton evidently held on to these properties until the 1830s (see Liber OO, p. 207; Liber 54, p. 435). In 1826, Atherton was taxed for seventeen acres of third-rate land in South Bainbridge ("Assessment Roll of the town of Bainbridge," 1826, original in Bainbridge Town Hall, Bainbridge, New York; thanks to H. Michael Marquardt for this source).

86. W[illiam]. D. Purple, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism. Historical Reminiscences of the Town of Afton," *Chenango Union* (Norwich, New York), 3 May 1877, 3. Purple states that he was at the court hearing and was instructed by Justice Neely to keep notes. Jonathan Thompson's statement appears in the court record without his account of digging on Stowell's property (cf. *Utah Christian Advocate*, Jan. 1886).

87. Tiffany *Monthly* 5 (May 1859), 166.

village and immediately northeast of Stowell's former home. Three holes exist on this prominence that folklore attributes to Joseph Smith. The holes are situated about one mile northeast of Stowell's farm in the northeast quadrant of Afton Lot 59. They are in close proximity to one another, the two largest being approximately three feet deep and twelve in circumference and eight feet deep and sixteen in circumference.⁸⁸ Long-time resident Hollis Barre says he first learned of the holes from his father and grandfather, who pointed them out to him sometime before 1920.⁸⁹ These are perhaps the same holes mentioned by Lu B. Cake in 1912: "On the hills [in Afton] are holes where he [Smith] and his dupes hunted for hidden treasures."⁹⁰

According to Hamilton Child's 1869 *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chenango County*, South Bainbridge Lot 62 was the "seat" of one of Smith's "mining operations."⁹¹ In 1880, Smith Baker of Center Village, Broome County, told Frederick Mather that Smith saw in his stone "an extensive and rich silver mine on the farm of Abraham Cornell, at Bettsburgh . . . and a hole was dug there to the depth of over thirty feet, but no silver was found except what was contributed by Josiah Stowell to provide for the expenses of the diggers."⁹² Abraham Cornell (or Cornwall) was an original settler of South Bainbridge and his farm was situated immediately east of the Village of Bettsburgh in the northeast quadrant of Lot 62.⁹³ In 1900, Harvey Baker (possibly related to Smith Baker), a great-grandson of Abraham Cornell who visited the site of the claimed Smith-inspired dig on the Cornell farm in the early 1830s, described its location in detail. Baker, who was told that the diggers were after "gold in an iron chest," described the site as follows:

The next day two of my wife's cousins and myself started to examine

88. With a map prepared by Walter R. Rose, I visited the site of the holes with resident historian Charles Decker on 7 October 1992.

89. I am grateful to Walter R. Rose of Afton for this information. Rose is uncommitted about the origin of the holes (Walter R. Rose, "Considerations regarding the so-called Joseph Smith treasure holes near the Village of Afton, New York," 13 Aug. 1986, unpublished paper).

90. Lu B. Cake, *Susquehanna Stories* (New York: L. B. Cake, 1912), 9.

91. Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Chenango County, N.Y., for 1869-70* (Syracuse, NY: Journal Office, 1869), 82-83.

92. *Binghamton Republican*, 29 July 1880. This information was repeated in Mather's subsequent article "The Early Days of Mormonism," *Lippincott's Magazine* (Philadelphia) 26 (Aug. 1880): 203.

93. I have been unable to locate a record of the original sale of land to Abraham Cornell. By the taking of the 1826 assessment in South Bainbridge, Cornell's land had evidently transferred to his sons Enos and Thomas ("Assessment Roll of the town of Bainbridge," 1826, original in Bainbridge Town Hall, Bainbridge, New York).

Smith's hole in the rocks. A creek crossed the Cornwall farm that came from the range east of the Susquehanna river and on the flat joined its waters with that stream. We followed up the creek deep into the gorge until we came to a huge pile of rocks that had but a few years before been tumbled down on the east side of the stream from a place high up the gorge—probably fifty or more feet. We climbed up the broken pile to where these huge rocks had been sent down. There in the steep side hill from solid rocks had this hole been excavated. Far above huge logs held back other rocks and large amounts of dirt from falling into the excavation.⁹⁴

In October 1992, in company with local historian Charles Decker, I visited the area described by Baker. While there were several interesting crevices, I was unable to determine the precise location described by Baker.⁹⁵

Windsor, Broome County, New York, home of Josiah Stowell's former money-digging companion Oliver Harper (murdered by Jason Treadwell in 1824), was the scene of other Smith-inspired digs. One location specifically mentioned by Stowell was "Monument Hill," where Smith saw in his stone a deposit of gold. The location of this hill was known to those in South Bainbridge, for Justice Neely failed to specify its location as he had previously done for "Bend Mountain in Pennsylvania." An article about the early history of Windsor published in the *Binghamton Daily Republican* on 18 August 1880 locates "Monument mountain" in the chain of hills on the west side of the Susquehanna River in the northern section of Windsor township. According to Stowell, Smith located the "digging part," which I take to mean evidence of previous digging. And William R. Hine claimed Asa Stowell, a relative of Josiah from nearby Bettsburgh, Broome County, "furnished the means for Jo to dig for silver ore, on Monument Hill."⁹⁶

94. Harvey Baker, "The Early Days of Mormonism," *Oneonta Herald* (Otsego County, New York), 18 Jan. 1900 (a clipping of this article is found in the Jacob Morris Papers, John M. Olin Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York). According to Baker, he visited his relatives in South Bainbridge in the "summer of 1828 or 9." But Baker's statement that Hezekiah Medbury "owned the farm next above that of Thomas Cornwall" dates his visit to 1831-35. The federal census for 1830 lists Hezekiah Medbury in New Berlin, Chenango County, New York. Medbury held land interests in New Berlin until he sold out in 1831 (Deeds, Liber PP, p. 114, 115, Chenango County Office Building, Clerk's Office, Norwich, New York). In 1835, Medbury deeded a large portion of land on South Bainbridge Lot 62 to E. C. Medbury and others (Liber 55, pp. 454-55; see also Annis Medbury to Enos Cornwall, 9 Mar. 1835, Liber 55, p. 453).

95. For many years a state historical marker stood near the bridge over Cornell Creek on Route 41 with the inscription: "Joseph Smith in 1827 dug for and claimed to find some of the plates of the Mormon Bible, one-fourth mile up this creek." This incorrect marker was removed and is now on display in the Afton Museum.

96. William R. Hine Statement, ca. Mar. 1885, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Jan. 1888, 2. Asa Stowell's father, Hezekiah Stowell, was Josiah Stowell's second cousin once removed. Asa became the first inn-keeper of Bettsburgh in 1788. He died on 3 November

According to the 1826 court record, Stowell said that Joseph Smith saw in his stone "where, a Mr. Bacon had buried money—that he and prisoner [Smith] had been in search of it; that prisoner said that it was on a certain Root of a stump 5 feet from [the] surface of the earth, and with it would be found a tail feather[;] that said Stowel and prisoner there-upon commenced digging, found a tail feather, but the money was gone, that he supposed that money moved down."⁹⁷ The only Bacon in the 1830 census for either Chenango or Broome County is Asher (or Ashel) Bacon of Windsor, Broome County, New York.⁹⁸ In the same court record, Horace Stowell perhaps described the same instance when he said that by means of a stone Smith pretended to "tell where a chest of dollars were buried in Windsor a number of miles distant, [and] marked out size of chest in the leaves on ground."⁹⁹ I have been unable to locate Bacon's land in Windsor, assuming Bacon's land was the focus of the treasure search, but the evidence is sufficient to place at least one of Smith's operations in this township.

The 1826 court record alludes to another treasure dig in the Windsor, New York, area. According to Jonathan Thompson (1787-?), a shoemaker living at Plymouth, Chenango County, New York,

[Smith] was requested to look [at/for?] Yoemans for [a] chest of money—did look and pretended to know where it was, and that Prisoner [Smith], Thompson, and Yoemans went in search of it; that Smith arrived at Spot first, was in night, that Smith looked in Hat while there and when very dark, and told how the chest was situated—after digging several feet struck upon something sounding like a board or plank . . . but on account of an enchantment, the trunk kept settling away from under them while digging.¹⁰⁰

1826, at age sixty-six (see S. S. Randall, "Historical and Personal Reminiscences of Chenango-County, New York," *Historical Magazine* 3 [Feb. 1874]: 92; James H. Smith, *History of Chenango and Madison Counties, New York* [Syracuse, NY: D. Mason and Co., 1880], 161, 165; Death Records, Chenango County Historical Society, Norwich, New York; see also Porter, "Study of the Origins," 178-79). Hine's claim that Smith "dug over one year without success" on Monument Hill is an error.

97. *Utah Christian Advocate*, Jan. 1886.

98. U.S. Census, 1830:83. He is also listed in the 1825 state census of Windsor, Broome County (Broome County Historical Society, Binghamton, New York). On 14 July 1832, Bacon applied for a patent on his design for a water wheel (original patent in Broome County Historical Society).

99. Although Horace Stowell has been identified either as Josiah Stowell's son or cousin, the latter is probably correct (see Walters, "Joseph Smith's Bainbridge, N.Y., Court Trials," 123-55). Horace Stowell, in his thirties, is listed in the 1830 South Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York, census (1830:2).

100. *Utah Christian Advocate*, Jan. 1886.

While the "Yeomans" mentioned by Thompson could be Andrew Yeomans of Preston, Chenango County, New York,¹⁰¹ Dale Morgan had suggested either William, Solomon, or Jeremiah Yeomans, all apparently of the same family, living in Windsor.¹⁰² Land records indicate that the Yeomanses owned property on Windsor Lot 11, on the south or east side of the Susquehanna River and just east of Ouaquaga Mountain, and across the river on Colesville Lot 287 (original Lots 22/23).¹⁰³ If the court record means that Smith looked for treasure on Yeomans's property, then Windsor Lot 11 may have been the scene of the treasure dig described by Thompson.

Other sources place Smith's treasure quests at three additional locations in Windsor (see Map 5). According to William R. Hine, Smith and his father dug for salt "two summers" at the south end of Ouaquaga Mountain, "near and in sight of my house."¹⁰⁴ Hine claimed that Joseph Jr. had other men dig two wells, one thirty feet deep and the other seventy-five. In his 1885 statement, Hine also said that his "nephew now owns the land he [Smith] dug on," but I have been unable to learn either the identity of his nephew or the location of the claimed diggings.¹⁰⁵ Broome County land records also fail to list either William R. Hine or his neighbor Calvin Smith, although the latter is listed in the 1830 census of Windsor.¹⁰⁶ While it is possible for Joseph Smith to have inspired the excavations, the time required for the digging tends to preclude his direct involvement.¹⁰⁷

101. U.S. Census, 1830:229.

102. Cf. Walker, *Dale Morgan*, 399n13.

103. See Jeremiah Yeomans to Solomon Yeomans, 9 Feb. 1825, Liber 9, p. 108; 4 Sept. 1827, Liber 10, p. 344; 5 Sept. 1827, Liber 10, pp. 344-45; Solomon Yeomans to William Yeomans, 28 June 1827, Liber 10, p. 364, Broome County Clerk's Office, Binghamton, New York.

104. William R. Hine Statement, ca. Mar. 1885, in *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Jan. 1888, 2. Hine's affidavit is undated, but it was probably taken at the time Arthur Deming collected other dated statements in Geauga County, Ohio.

105. The salt wells may have been dug on one of the three lots situated at the south end of Ouaquaga Mountain (Lots 17, 18, and 19).

106. Hine mentions that Calvin Smith's farm "joined mine." Calvin Smith, in his thirties, is listed in the 1830 census of Windsor, Broome County, New York (1830:84; also 1820:16). However, I have been unable to document Hine's residence in Windsor.

107. His statement that Smith dug in the area "two summers" is especially troublesome. Smith's first visit to the area was in the late fall and winter of 1825-26 (November 1825-March 1826), which evidently did not include digging for salt in Windsor. During the 1826 court hearing, Josiah Stowell mentioned Smith's looking "once" for a "Salt Spring," and Jonathan Thompson testified that Smith said that "it appeared to him that salt might be found in Bainbridge." According to Joseph Knight's recollection, Smith returned to the area about November 1826 and remained until his marriage on 18 January 1827 (Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," 32). Smith was apparently in Manchester during the summer of 1827, and his subsequent visits to the Colesville area between 1828 and 1831 were apparently limited to his new roles of translator



WINDSOR SITES

1. General location of "Monument Hill"; location of digging for gold.
2. Lot 11, on which Yeomans family owned land; possible location of digging for money chest.
3. South side of Ouquaga Mountain; approximate location of digging for salt.
4. West bank of Susquehanna River; approximate area of digging for Captain Kidd's treasure.

Map 5. Windsor, New York, Plat Book of Broome County
(Des Moines, Iowa: Northwest Publishing Co., 1908), 20-21.

Hine located another Smith-inspired dig "on the west bank of the Susquehanna, half a mile from the river, and three miles from his salt wells." According to Hine, who must be regarded skeptically, Smith dug for Captain Kidd's money at this location.¹⁰⁸

R. C. Doud, a resident of Windsor who claimed to have worked for Oliver Harper in 1822, also asserted that "[o]n the old Indian road from Windsor to Chenango Point [now Binghamton], about four miles west of Windsor, men were digging, at the same time, for silver, upon Joe's telling them where it could be found."¹⁰⁹ However, Doud's mistaken assumption that Smith was involved with Harper's digging in Harmony also brings this claim into question.

COLESVILLE, NEW YORK,
FALL 1826 TO 18 JANUARY 1827

According to Joseph Knight, Joseph Smith returned to the Colesville area to work for him in the late fall of 1826 and left shortly after his marriage to Emma Hale on 18 January 1827. Knight states, "Joseph then went to Mr Stowels whare he had lived sometime Before. But Mr Stowel Could not pay him money for his work very well and he came to me perhaps in November [1826] and worked for me until about the time that he was Married, which I think was in February [18 January 1827]."¹¹⁰ Some sources suggest that Smith may have engaged in treasure seeking during this time. Two areas have been specifically identified (see Map 6).

Emily Colburn Austin (b. 1813), sister of Sally Knight (wife of Newel Knight), claimed to have seen "places where they had dug for money" on the Joseph Knight, Sr., farm at Colesville. Austin was told that under Smith's direction a dog was sacrificed on the spot in the hope of breaking the charm that held the "pots of money."¹¹¹ According to Austin, the

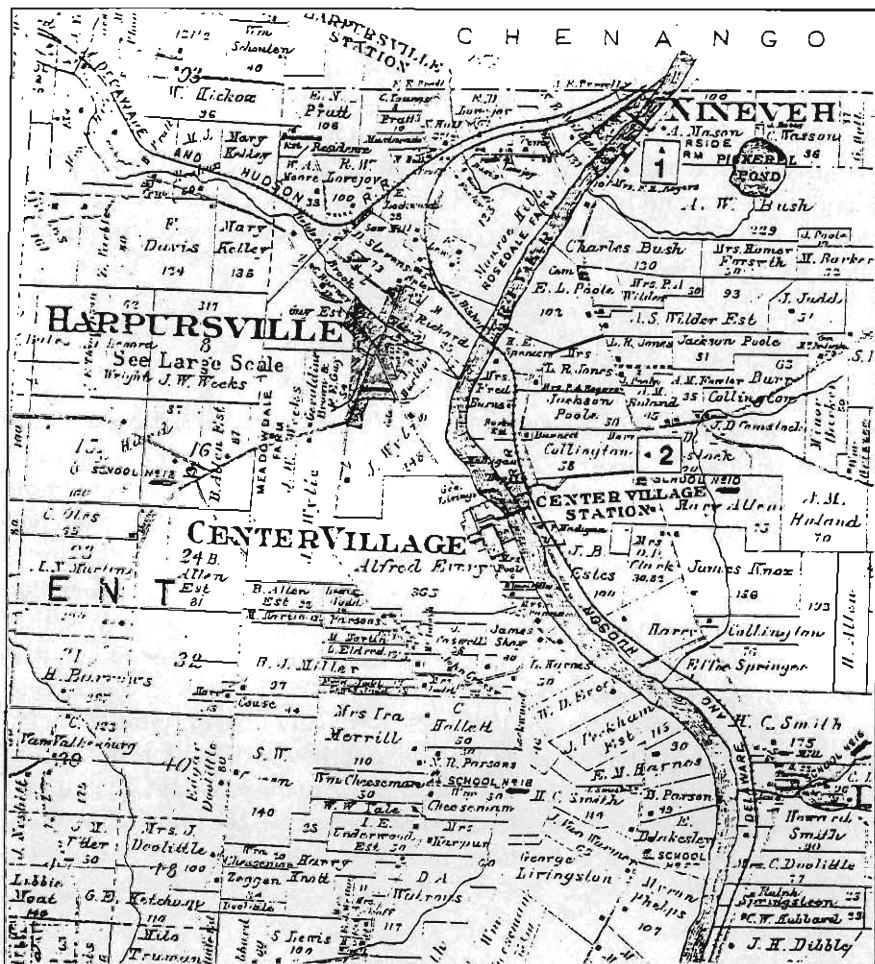
and religious leader.

108. According to Kitchall E. Bell, in another of Arthur Deming's affidavits, Smith dug for Captain Kidd's money in Broome County "near the Susquehana River" (K. E. Bell, Affidavit, 6 May 1885, original in Arthur B. Deming Collection, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois; cf. *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Jan. 1888, 3).

109. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County*, 581.

110. Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," 32.

111. Emily M. Austin, *Mormonism; or, Life Among the Mormons* (Madison, WI: M. J. Cantwell, 1882), 32-33. Regarding the sacrifice of a dog, Justice Joel K. Noble, before whom Smith appeared in July 1830 at Colesville, said: "Jo. and others were Diging for a Chest of money in night [but] could not obtain it[.] they Procured one thing and an other together with [a] *black Bitch* the Bitch was offered a . . . sacrifice [blo]od Sprinkled prayer made at the time (no money obtained) the above Sworn to on Trial" (Joel K. Noble to Jonathan B. Turner, 8 Mar. 1842, Jonathan B. Turner Papers, Illinois State Historical Library,



COLESVILLE SITES

1. Joseph Smith, Sr., home;
approximate location of digging for
pot of money and dog sacrifice.
2. George Collington land; possible
location of digging for salt spring.

Map 6. Colesville New York, Plat Book of Broome County
(Des Moines, Iowa: Northwest Publishing Co., 1908), 36-37)

digging occurred before Smith married Emma Hale.

In 1880, George Collington (b. ca. 1812), a long-time resident of Colesville, told Frederick Mather that he saw Smith with Joseph Knight, his sons, and a number of others dig for a "salt spring in a marsh on the plane opposite Center Village" on land owned by Bostwick Badger.¹¹² Collington, who subsequently owned the land, claimed the men dug a hole thirty-five feet deep under Joseph Jr.'s direction but failed to discover any salt except what had been secretly deposited there by the young Collington as a prank. While Collington subsequently owned land on a number of lots in Colesville, his land on Lot 58 best fits his description.

CONCLUSION

This study has identified eighteen locations of Joseph Smith's early treasure quests (see Chart 1). While it is unlikely that any of these sites will become as famous as the northwestern slope of the Hill Cumorah, each nevertheless deserves scholarly attention as possible historical landmarks leading to the "Gold Bible Hill." The turning point in Joseph Smith's money-digging career came in August 1827, when he, Emma, and Peter Ingersoll visited Harmony, Pennsylvania, to retrieve some of Emma's furniture and other belongings. According to Ingersoll and Isaac Hale, an emotional confrontation occurred between Smith and Hale during which Smith promised to give up money digging and stone gazing and Hale promised to help the couple get established in Harmony.¹¹³ After returning to Manchester, Smith procured the gold plates, quit the money-digging company, and moved to Harmony to open a new farm. Thereafter he used his stone only for religious purposes.

Springfield).

112. *Binghamton Republican*, 29 July 1880; cf. *Lippincott's Magazine*, Aug. 1880, 202-203; and H. P. Smith, *History of Broome County* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason and Co., 1885), 332. Collington is listed in the 1850 census of Colesville, Broome County, New York, as a thirty-eight-year-old farmer (p. 166). Bostwick Badger, in his forties, is listed in the 1830 Colesville, Broome County, New York, census (p. 54). A number of legal transactions connect Badger and Joseph Knight (see Robert Harpur Journal, 22 Nov. 1814, Broome County Historical Society, Binghamton, New York; Grantee Records, 30 Jan. 1811, Liber 3, p. 36; and 20 May 1815, Liber 5, pp. 29-30, Broome County Clerk's Office, Binghamton, New York).

113. Ingersoll, who dated the event to August 1827, claimed: "Joseph wept, and acknowledged he could not see in a stone now, nor never could; and that his former pretensions in that respect, were all false. He then promised to give up his old habits of digging for money and looking into stones" (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 234-35). According to Hale, "Smith stated to me, that he had given up what he called 'glass-looking,' and that he expected to work hard for a living, and was willing to do so" (*Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 [1 May 1834]; cf. Howe, 262).

LOCATIONS OF JOSEPH SMITH'S EARLY TREASURE QUESTS

CLAIMED PLACE OF DIGGING SOUGHT	GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION	KIND OF TREASURE	APPROXIMATE DATE
Joseph Smith, Sr., farm	On hill immediately east of Smith home; northeast quadrant of Manchester, N.Y., Lot 1.	Kegs of gold and silver; chests of gold and silver	1822-25
Joshua Stafford farm	In orchard; portions of Manchester, N.Y., Lots 7 and 9.	Money	1822-25
Clark Chase farm	On "Old Sharp" Hill; in northwest quadrant of Manchester, N.Y., Lot 2.	Treasure	1822-25
Benjamin Tabor farm	On "Miner's Hill"; in southeast quadrant of Manchester, N.Y., Lot 2.	Golden furniture	1822-25
Randall Robinson farm	In Oquago Mountain, Harmony, Penn.	Gold plates	1824-25
Joseph McKune, Sr., farm	On "Hill Cumorah"; in northwest quadrant of Manchester, N.Y., Lot 85.	Gold or silver mine	Nov. 1825
"Deacon Attleton" property	Possibly Charles Atherton land on South Bainbridge, N.Y., Lots 60 and 63.	Gold mine	Nov. 1825-March 1826
Abraham Cornell Property	Northeast quadrant of South Bainbridge, N.Y., Lot 62.	Silver mine	1825-26 (?)
Josiah Stowell property	South Bainbridge, N.Y., Lot 36	Treasure box	1825-26 (?)
Hill northeast of Josiah Stowell's home	Northeast quadrant of South Bainbridge, N.Y., Lot 59.	Treasure	No date
Monument Hill	Northwest area of Windsor Township, N.Y.	Gold	Nov. 1825-March 1826
"Yoemans" property (?)	Possibly Windsor, N.Y., Lot 11.	Money chest	Nov. 1825-March 1826
Windsor, New York (?)	South end of Ouaquaga Mountain (possibly Lots 17, 18, 19).	Salt	No Date
Windsor, New York (?)	Half mile west of Susquehanna River, near southwest side of Ouaquaga Mountain.	Captain Kidd's money	No Date
Windsor, New York (?)	Four miles west of Windsor, on road to Binghamton.	Silver	No Date
Joseph Knight, Sr., farm	Colesville, N.Y., Lot 100 (formerly Lot 2).	Pot of money	1826-27
Bostwick Badger farm	Colesville, N.Y., Lot 58 (formerly Lot 72).	Salt spring	1826-27 (?)
Joseph Capron farm	Northwest of Capron home; in southern portion of Manchester, N.Y., Lot 1.	Chest of gold watches	1827, before Sept.

Chart 1. Joseph Smith's early treasure quests in Manchester, South Bainbridge, Windsor, and Colesville, New York, and Harmony, Pennsylvania.

Considering his past failures, his brush with the law in 1826, his rejection by his in-laws, and his need to find a legitimate livelihood and raise a family, Smith was probably happy to give up treasure seeking. Three years later the Book of Mormon would explain the reason for Smith's failures as a treasure seer and his subsequent success in getting the plates: "whoso shall hide up treasures in the earth shall find them again no more, because of the great curse of the land, save he be a righteous man and shall hide it up unto the Lord" (Hel. 13:18; cf. vv. 17-22, 31; see also Morm. 1:18). This not only confirmed the money-diggers' belief in enchanted treasure, it legitimized Smith's own treasure-seeking activities. Thus a clear distinction between Smith's role as treasure seer and religious seer cannot be made. In fact, Smith's use of the same stone and the same *modus operandi* (i.e., placing the stone in his hat) in translating the gold plates are simply two sides of the same coin. It is impossible to understand fully the mature Joseph Smith without coming to terms with his early role as treasure seer. Indeed, Smith's failure as a treasure seer leads us to a greater understanding of his success as a religious leader.