Mormonism's Last Colonizer

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Growing Up in Franklin

On April 14, 1860, thirteen Mormon families, led by Thomas Sharratt Smart from Provo, Utah, pulled their wagons into a circle on the Muddy (later the Cub) River in the north end of Cache Valley in what they thought was Utah. The settlement they would build there would become Franklin, the first permanent white settlement in Idaho. It would also become the birthplace of William H. Smart, the man known as the father of Mormon settlement in Utah’s Uinta Basin and the author of the most voluminous and comprehensive journals documenting that settlement.

The Mormons had long eyed the lush, well-watered Cache Valley as an ideal location, although they knew little or nothing of its history. Forty miles long, twelve wide, the mountain-ringed valley was once the Cache Arm of prehistoric Lake Bonneville. One of the world’s most dramatic geologic events occurred at Red Rock Pass, twenty miles northwest of Franklin. There, about 16,000 years ago, the lake breached its northern rim, cutting a chasm through which some 15 million acre-feet of water per second—about three times the average flow of the Amazon River today—roared.

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out into the Snake and Columbia river drainages. When it was over, Lake Bonneville was 350 feet lower, at 5,100 feet. In ensuing millennia it shrank to the 30-foot-deep remnant known as the Great Salt Lake, leaving Cache Valley with the deep, rich soil that attracted settlers.

Ever since John H. Weber led a small party of what would become William Ashley’s Rocky Mountain Fur Company into the area in 1824, what he called “Willow Valley” had been known as a favorite Indian hunting ground, teeming with deer, elk, and mountain sheep as well as bears, wolves, coyotes, and lynx—and, of course, beaver. In 1826, the West’s second fur trapper-Indian rendezvous was held in the valley, possibly not far from where Franklin would be settled. The following year, Jim Beckwourth wrote: “While digging a cache in the bank [probably of the Cub or Little Bear River], the earth caved in, killing two of our party.” The event gave Cache Valley its name.

After the Mormons arrived in Salt Lake Valley in 1847, Brigham Young’s great challenge was to find places to settle the 70,000 land-hungry converts who would gather in Zion before the coming of the railroad. Within a decade, he had pushed settlements as far south as the Virgin River and into most of the Utah valleys in between—with outlying colonies in San Bernardino, California, as well as west to Carson Valley, Nevada, and north to the Lemhi River in Idaho.

But Cache Valley was the home of the Northwestern Shoshoni, a proud, well-armed band, nothing like the more poorly equipped Goshutes and Paiutes being pushed aside farther south. Not until the Utah War ended and the U.S. Army stationed troops at Camp Floyd in 1858 was it considered prudent to challenge the Shoshoni. Then, things moved quickly. In 1859, Young appointed Peter Maughan as presiding Mormon bishop in Cache Valley, and settlements sprang up in Wellsville, Mendon, Logan, Smithfield, and Providence that summer.

When Smart and his party arrived at the Muddy the following spring, the Shoshoni chief, Kittemere, received their gifts of beef and grain and welcomed them to the area’s land, timber, and water. For a while, relations were friendly, although the Indians’ requests—or demands—for food and supplies were a nuisance. But within two years, deteriorating relations led to one of the most horrific slaughters of Indians in frontier history.

By the end of that first summer, some sixty-one families, more than a hundred persons, had arrived at the infant settlement. Most were single men or young married couples, but their leader, Thomas Smart, was different. Born on September 14, 1823, in Shenstone Parish, Staffordshire,
England, he was thirty-six years old, with a wife, Ann Hayter, three children by her former husband, and six children of their own.

He was well qualified for his leadership role. He had learned to carry responsibility at a young age in England, customarily arising as early as 3 a.m. to load the produce from his father’s farm onto a pony cart and haul it to nearby Lichfield for sale in the morning market. At age seventeen, he became a brickmaker in England and subsequently in France, where he met and married his wife. Crop failures, crowded and unsanitary conditions, long working hours, and the growing social discontent that led to the overthrow of Louis Philippe in the Revolution of 1848 made the prospect of a new life in America attractive to the newlyweds. In 1845, after an eight-week ordeal on a sailing ship that must have been misery for pregnant Ann, they eventually settled in St. Louis, where Thomas worked at brick-making, leather manufacturing, and farming. There, they learned of the Mormon Church from an employee on Thomas’s farm and were baptized in 1851.

Like thousands of other converts, they heeded Brigham Young’s manifesto to “gather to Zion,” and started out on April 8, 1852, with Smart as the captain of a company of twenty families in seventeen wagons. Despite the cholera epidemic then raging on the trail, and rain that made the trek miserable most of the time, they arrived in Salt Lake Valley in September with no loss of life.

4. Ann Hayter was born in Portsmouth, Hampshire, England, on September 18, 1822. She married Henry Fleet, by whom she had three children: Mary Ann (1842), Alice (1844), and Louisa (1845). He was a drinking man and neglected the family, so during her third pregnancy they divorced, leaving her to support two daughters by running a boarding house. She married Thomas Sharratt Smart on March 1, 1845, and they emigrated to America that year. Born to Ann and Thomas were Charlotte Elizabeth (1849), Maria (1851), Thomas (1853), Sara Ann (1855), Eliza (1857), Francis Ann (April 1860, either just before or just after they arrived in Franklin; in any event, the infant died the following October), William Henry (1862), and Mary Jane (1866). In 1868, on a trip east with his teams to bring Mormon converts back to Utah, Smart met an Italian woman, Margaret Justet, proposed plural marriage to her, and was accepted. In an interview with Robert Foss Hansen on May 30, 1972, Lorenzo Smart, Thomas Sharratt Smart’s oldest living grandson, related that Smart had been told by a church leader to marry the woman “so as to take care of her and protect her on the trip. When he brought her home his wife was all upset and told him to take the b—— out of there and he could go with her or return alone.” This, Hansen wrote, “was told to Ren [Lorenzo] in somewhat stronger terms by his father.” Thomas and Margaret had a daughter, Margaret Jane (1870), but the mother soon became disenchanted and left. After Ann’s death in 1876, Thomas married Minnie Shrives, by whom he had Leslie Edwin (1880), Vernon (1882, who lived only a day), Iva Lillie (1885), and Melvin Shrives (1889). Of Thomas’s sixteen adopted or natural children, all but Francis Ann and Vernon lived to maturity and were married. See Leonidas DeVon Mecham, Family Book of Remembrance and Genealogy with Allied Lines (Salt Lake City: self-published, 1952), 577–589–94. Also see the 1850 Census Record, Carondelet Township, St. Louis County, Missouri, and Preston Woolley Parkinson, The Family of Samuel Rose Parkinson (Salt Lake City: self-published, 2001), 130–32.

After a brief rest, the Smart family was sent to the infant settlement of American Fork, where Thomas helped build the dirt walls of the area’s fort and, with Ann and their five children, spent the winter in a wagon and tent. After three years of labor to build a farm there, he was sent to Provo to manage a failing tannery and shoe store, which he brought out of debt in one year. Among other responsibilities there, he served as captain of the guard at Fort Utah (Provo). He sent his teams across the plains several times to bring Mormon converts to the valley, and in 1868 went himself as a teamster. He was a big man, strong and athletic, six feet in height, weighing about two hundred pounds. So when the call came, in 1860, to help lead the Mormon colonization in northern Cache Valley, he was seasoned and ready.

Building a Community

Bishop Peter Maughan appointed Smart captain of the new Franklin settlement, with Samuel R. Parkinson and James Sanderson as assistants. Under their direction, the settlement quickly took shape. At first the settlers lived in their wagon boxes, which were clustered together on the ground for protection, while the undercarriages were used to haul logs from the canyons to the east. Cooking was over campfires. Five days after their arrival, house and farm lots were allocated, the choice determined by a drawing. It snowed as late as May 12, but with the group’s cooperative-labor, irrigation ditches were dug, and oats, barley, and wheat were in the ground by first of June. Garden plots soon followed.

The first year’s harvest was small, but Samuel Handy’s journal recorded that we tramped out 48 bushels of wheat on August 2nd. William Woodward and James Sanderson took it to Farmington and got it ground into flour. It was then brought back to Franklin and divided among the people of the camps. We were a happy and united people. . . . The following year, we had gardens on the west side of the fort which were a great benefit to us, potatoes, cabbage, lettuce, onions, cucumbers, peas, mellons, squash and other things were raised, which made our meals more agreeable. We raised good crops that year but did not thresh the grain in the fall of the year. The winter of 1861–62 was very wet; our cellars on the south string of the fort were full of water and our houses were wet nearly every day for a long time. The grain in the stack became wet and it wasn’t threshed until March. Many of the people had to eat musty bread until the next season.

June 10, 1860, brought a visit from Brigham Young, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and governor of Utah Territory, in which Franklin was thought to be located (not until surveys in the

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1870s was it determined to be in Idaho). Brigham named the infant colony Franklin for Franklin D. Richards, an apostle. With his puckish sense of humor, he renamed the Muddy the Cub River, because it flows into the Bear. He also organized the Franklin Ward of the LDS Church, appointing Preston Thomas as bishop. Thomas Smart was named as a counselor in the bishopric.

Being Mormons, they needed a place to meet, so a bowery big enough to shelter 200 people was built of brush and boughs that first summer. They also needed to dance—the Quadrille, Virginia Reel, Schottische, French Four, and Monkey Musk or polygamy dance. That, too, was done in the bowery, the dirt floor sprinkled with water to pack it firm. Even more important, though, was building their homes and providing security from Indian attacks. As was so often done elsewhere, they combined the two functions.

Brigham Young, the experienced and practical colonizer, had some instructions about that.

I propose to the brethren here, and wish them to take my counsel, to build a good, strong fort. If you have not material for building a wall, you can make a strong stockade by putting pickets into the ground, which will answer a good purpose against Indian attacks. The stockade can be easily repaired by replacing decayed pickets. I wish you to build a stockade large enough for corralling your cattle outside the town. Let your grain also be stacked away from your buildings, and so arranged that if one stack takes fire all of the stacks will not necessarily be destroyed. You are very much exposed here. The settlements in this [Cache] valley are, as it were, a shield to the other settlements. You must, therefore, prepare as speedily as possible to make yourselves secure. You have a beautiful location, and plenty of excellent water.

“Serve the Lord,” he concluded, “and try not to find fault with each other. Live so that you will not have any faults to find with yourselves, and never mind the faults of your brethren, for each person has enough of his own to attend to.”

The settlers wasted no time. Under Smart’s direction, homes were begun along the sides of what would be a rectangular fort sixty by ninety rods (330 by 495 feet), enclosing about ten acres. People began moving into their homes in the fort in August 1860. Entrance doors faced inside, with solid walls facing outside. Floors were of dirt. Roofs were covered with what they called “government shingles”—sod laid over rough planks—that, especially during the wet winter of 1860–61, left their homes as sodden inside as out. An adobe or rock fireplace provided some warmth and a place for cooking. The rough logs were split with a broadax to make door frames and the doors themselves. Inside the enclosure were the

community well, the bowery, a two-man sawpit, a corral, and, in the south-
west corner, an adobe pit.

Idaho’s first school was taught by Hannah Comish, who met that first
year with about twenty students in her one-room home on the east side of
the fort. By late spring of 1861, a combination schoolhouse-meetinghouse-
amusement hall, one large room made of rough-hewn logs, was completed
within the fort. Benches were log slabs, flat side up, with legs of maple and
birch. The floor was dirt, and straw—spread as protection from the cold,
damp earth—was replaced every Saturday so the room would be fresh and
clean for Sunday. The roof was sod, far from waterproof, so any substantial
rainstorm meant school was out until the storm was over. Attendance aver-
aged around seventy pupils. Thomas Smart, Samuel Parkinson, and William
Woodward were the school trustees.

By 1863, when the fort was completed, about sixty families were listed as
occupying homes there. Thomas Smart’s house was in about the middle
of the north side—one of only three homes boasting two rooms. In one of
those rooms, on April 6, 1862, the seventh child of Thomas and Ann Hayter
Smart took his first breath. They named him William Henry Smart for his
two grandfathers, William Smart and Henry Hayter.

Thomas Sharratt Smart left no written record of those early years in
Franklin, but his associate in the community’s leadership, Samuel Rose
Parkinson (later to become his son-in-law), did. In a Franklin Founders’
Day celebration in 1911, the eighty-year-old Parkinson described the condi-
tions into which the infant William was born.

The best houses were built of rough logs with dirt floors and dirt roofs.
We had no lumber, no window glass, no store locks or hinges, no furniture
of any description, except that which we made with our own crude tools.
Our food consisted principally of fish and game and roots and a few of the
more fortunate indulged in an occasional meal of boiled wheat. We kin-
dled the fires by striking together two pieces of flint, and then neighbors
would borrow coals of fire from each other. Matches were seldom seen.
The wool from the backs of the sheep was corded, spun and woven into
rough cloth for our clothes. When we were short of wool milk sheep were
killed and their wool was used. Skins of wild animals were made into cloth-
ing. Our wives and daughters became experts at cording and spinning and
weaving and dress-making all of our clothes. I had a family of boys and my
wife was handy with the needle. We all wore buckskin trousers and shirts
and beaver caps and rawhide boots. The girls wore linsey dresses made by
their own hands.

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The Bear River Massacre

By the time William Henry Smart was born, relations with the Shoshoni had turned ugly. The entire Cache Valley was “swarming with Indians,” but the Franklin area was a special place for them, especially in winter. Thick brush and willows along the Bear River provided shelter from blizzards, and hot springs offered relief from the winter’s chill. Bands of Shoshoni from a wide area gathered there in summer as well as winter for games, contests, handcrafts, and storytelling.

But with the impact of Mormon settlers in Cache Valley, the Shoshoni were in trouble. Jacob Forney, who had replaced Brigham Young as superintendent of Indian affairs for Utah, wrote of their “naked and starving” condition as the valley filled with settlers and the game in the mountains disappeared. The 1,500 Northwestern Shoshoni had no place to turn, he wrote, and must either “starve or steal.” There was no government response to his appeals for help.

Despite the scarcity that plagued any new settlement, the Mormons followed Brigham Young’s not-always-practical dictum that “it is cheaper to feed Indians than to fight them.” But as the Indians’ situation worsened, beggary turned to extortion and thievery, then to stealing or killing livestock. Throughout Cache Valley, raids on cattle and horses forced settlers to guard their stock day and night. By June 1860, they formed a valley-wide militia called the “Minutemen,” under the command of Ezra T. Benson. The leader of Cavalry Company A’s 5th Ten was Thomas Smart. Tensions increased, and in July 1860, a captured Shoshoni accused of horse-stealing was shot while trying to escape. In retaliation, the Indians killed Ira Merrill and John Reed; Reed, whose grave became the beginnings of the Franklin cemetery, was the father of the first child born in Franklin. Two Indians also died in the gunfight. Only the arrival of the militia the next day averted bloody reprisals.

In 1862, the new superintendent of Indian affairs, James Doty, appealed again for government aid. The Indians, he reported, were “in great numbers, in a starving and destitute condition.” No aid came, but he was instructed to negotiate a treaty. With winter approaching, Doty decided to make the attempt the following spring. By then it would be too late.

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln had sent seven hundred California Volunteers under Colonel Patrick E. Connor to establish Fort Douglas on

the foothills above Salt Lake City. Their mission was to protect the overland mail and telegraph—and to keep an eye on Brigham Young and the Mormons. The assignment did not bode well for the Native Americans. On his way to Utah, Connor had already demonstrated his contempt for Indian life by killing four hostages when stolen horses were not promptly returned. His men, disgruntled that they were assigned to chase Indians around the desert instead of seeking glory in the Civil War, were spoiling for a fight. The chance soon came.

On January 5, 1863, a small party of miners coming south for supplies was attacked on the Bear River, a few miles from Franklin. One man was killed, and a judge in Salt Lake City issued a warrant for the arrest of Shoshoni chiefs Bear Hunter, Sanpitch, and Sagwitch. Colonel Connor was asked to provide a military force to “effect the arrest of the guilty Indians.” Connor promptly prepared to do so, but advised that “it was not my intent to take any prisoners.” He reportedly commanded: “Kill everything. Nits make lice.”

Fearing the Shoshoni might hear of their plans and disperse, depriving them of a killing opportunity, Connor and two hundred Volunteers left Fort Douglas secretly on the night of January 21, during a heavy snowstorm. Guided by Mormon scout Porter Rockwell, they reached the Franklin area and crossed the Bear River in subzero weather in the early morning of January 29. The Shoshoni, determined to resist, were camped on Battle Creek, at its confluence with the Bear River. Fighting was fierce during the troops’ frontal attack, which was repulsed with eighteen soldiers killed, four to die later of their wounds. But the troops flanked the Indian position, attacking from both sides and the rear. The Indians, virtually out of ammunition by then, realized their hopeless situation and tried to escape. The battle turned into a slaughter as the troops followed the order to take no prisoners.

Connor reported 224 Indian dead; Superintendent Doty reported 255. A Mormon observer, James J. Hill, counted 368, including almost 90 women and children. Whatever the figure, the massacre was the bloodiest of the western Indian wars. To complete their work, the troops destroyed 70 tipis, captured 175 horses, seized 1,000 bushels of grain, and burned any clothing or other food they found, leaving those who managed to escape without food or shelter. Chief Bear Hunter was captured, tortured, and finally shot. Chief Sagwitch, though wounded, escaped by riding a horse across the river, was nursed back to health, and eventually was baptized a Mormon.

Franklin settlers used their teams and sleighs to recover wounded soldiers, and both soldiers and Indians with frozen feet, and took them to

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18. Ibid., 34.
Franklin for treatment, later adopting some of the orphaned Indian children. For their part, Connor’s troops were commended for their “heroic conduct and brilliant victory,” and Connor himself was promoted to brigadier general.¹⁹

The Northwestern Shoshoni who were not at the massacre were, of course, enraged. Raids on Cache Valley livestock intensified for a time, and the Minutemen, including Thomas Sharratt Smart, were kept busy. Smart’s son-in-law, Andrew Morrison, was pierced by an arrow, the shaft of which he carried in his body for twenty years; it finally caused his death.²⁰

In September 1833, a drunken Indian was shot in Franklin as he attempted to ride his horse over a white woman. The angry Shoshoni seized a hostage and demanded the surrender of the settler who fired the shot. Only the arrival of 300 Minutemen prevented further bloodshed.

In the summer of 1863, Superintendent Doty got around to negotiating the treaties he had been ordered to attempt the previous year. He managed to arrange treaties with five Shoshoni bands, including one signed by nine Northwestern Shoshoni chiefs on July 20, 1863. It provided for $2,000 worth of goods to be distributed at the time of signing and committed the Indians to peaceful relationships with the settlers, safe emigrant routes, and permission for the government to build telegraph lines, stage routes and stations, and railroads through Indian territory. For this, the government was to make a $5,000 annuity payment each year.

Characteristically, that promise of payment was never kept, and for years it fell to the settlers to feed the destitute natives. Mayor L. H. Hatch of Franklin begged the Utah Indian agent, J. J. Critchlow, to assume his responsibilities to feed the Indians instead of leaving the burden to a “poor frontier people,” and Bishop Peter Maughan wrote that “the good people of the Territory are paying out hundreds of thousands to ‘Poor Lo’ in free-will offerings.”²¹

Franklin Village Takes Shape

With the Shoshoni power largely broken by the massacre, and with the treaty backed by the threat of further military action, in the summer of 1863 the Franklin settlers were able to move out of their cramped houses in the fort and onto the city lots they had been apportioned in 1860. The village that then took shape was patterned, as were many early Mormon settlements in the Great Basin, after the “Plat of the City of Zion” worked out by Joseph Smith in the early 1830s.²² Instead of the then-prevailing custom of

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²⁰. Mecham, Family Book of Remembrance, 577, 591. Morrison was the husband of Smart’s eldest adopted daughter, Mary Ann Fleet.
²². Leonard Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints
homesteads built on widely scattered farms, Smith proposed a settlement pattern based on Mormon concepts of unity, cooperation, and community. His “ideal” village would be one-mile square, laid off in ten-acre blocks. Each block would contain twenty half-acre lots, each with space for a garden and/or small orchard. Houses would be set back twenty-five feet from the streets, which would be wide and run north-south and east-west. Farms with their livestock, corrals, and outbuildings would be outside the village.

In the case of Franklin, the original land allotments, made within a week of the settlers’ arrival, were for 1 ¼-acre lots in town and ten-acre farms outside. But ten acres would not support a family, and farms were soon enlarged by consolidation or purchase or, after the land was surveyed in 1872, homesteading of 160 acres under the Homestead Act of 1862. The Desert Land Act of 1877 made up to 640 acres available at $1 an acre, and dry farming soon developed.

Thomas Sharratt Smart built his home and farm just east of the original town plat on land he claimed was bought through revelation. Twice in one night, he reported, he was wakened by a voice telling him to arise and buy it. The next morning he did.23 His bottomlands were covered with wild native grasses, which the settlers learned to thicken with timothy, clover, and alfalfa; the mixture made highly nutritious hay. On the benchlands to the east, with their better air circulation, frost generally came a month later, so wheat and barley prospered, but only after backbreaking labor.

After the large, deep-rooted sagebrush was cleared, the land was prepared with what tools they could fashion by hand. A plow was a crude piece of timber with an iron point. A harrow consisted of poles in an A-shape, with holes augured into them, and hawthorn or maple pegs driven into the holes. Wheat was sown by hand and covered by dragging brush attached to an eight-foot pole.24 Grain was cut by scythe and bound by hand. Clay was smoothed and hardened into a threshing floor, where the grain was flailed out by hand, trod out by livestock, or rolled out by a heavy log. With straw and husks raked away, the grain was then tossed into a wind strong enough to blow away the chaff. But progress soon ended that. In 1864, Samuel Parkinson wrote in his journal: “I put in a crop and bought a half of a caterpillar threshing machine.” A year later he reported that he “bought one-fourth of a new Pitts threshing machine.”25

Life was no easier for the women. Until they married, Ann Smart had the help of five teenage daughters, but the burden was still heavy. There

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25. Taylor, Samuel Rose Parkinson, 72.
was a large garden to cultivate and harvest, much of the produce of which went into the root cellar for winter use. There were chickens to tend, cows to milk, and wild berries to harvest and preserve either by drying or storing them in earthen crocks. Until a gristmill was built in 1865, women ground their wheat in hand-turned coffee grinders. Soap had to be made by leaching maple ash as a substitute for lye, and then boiling it with fat rendered from a slaughtered hog.

Keeping the family warm and clothed was a major task. Wool sheared from their own sheep had to be carded, either for batts for handmade quilts, or spun into yarn on the spinning wheel every family owned, then woven into cloth on hand looms and sewn into whatever garment was needed. Or a summertime linsey dress might be made from home-grown flax. Since the family’s only sons were Thomas, nine years old when they arrived at Franklin, and William, born two years later, the older girls pitched in to help with the field work. Any idle hour was seized to knit socks or sweaters.

Farming was not Thomas Sharratt Smart’s only occupation. In 1863, he built a water-powered sawmill that replaced the sawpit in the fort. Although a joke was that two men laboring in the sawpit could cut logs faster, this primitive mill produced lumber for the community’s buildings until a steam-powered sawmill was built in 1872. Smart’s partner in the sawmill was Samuel R. Parkinson, his assistant in Franklin’s initial leadership and later to become his son-in-law when he took Thomas’s two daughters to wife, Charlotte as his second (1866) and Maria as his third (1868).

The One-eyed Co-op

The sawmill partnership was the beginning of Parkinson’s extensive business involvement with the Smart family. In the first year of Franklin’s settlement,

27. Daniel Bachman and Ronald K. Esplin, “Plural Marriage,” in Encyclopedia of Mormonism, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1092–95. Polygamy was publicly announced as a policy of the Mormon Church in 1852, although its principles were contained in the revelation to Joseph Smith published in 1843 as section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Evidence suggests that the principle was probably revealed to him in early 1831 in connection with his study of the bible.

A family story, not untypical in early Mormonism, relates that shortly before settling in Franklin in 1860, Parkinson lost a team of mules and found them by looking into a peepstone. His first and, at the time, only wife, Arabella, asked if the peepstone would show him who might be his future wife. He asked and, the story goes, immediately saw two girls arm in arm, dressed alike. Arabella saw them, too, and agreed that if they ever appeared, they could become his wives. Years later, at a meeting in Franklin honoring Brigham Young, Parkinson, as a member of the bishopric, was seated on the stand. He saw two girls enter the chapel arm in arm, dressed alike, and recognized them as the girls he had seen and also as the daughters of his good friend, Thomas Sharratt Smart. He married seventeen-year-old Charlotte a year later and sixteen-year-old Maria fourteen months after that. See Taylor, Samuel Rose Parkinson, 104. These were the sisters of William H. Smart, who was five years old when Maria married.
Parkinson opened a tiny general store.\(^{28}\) It prospered for a decade, up until the time when Brigham Young sought to bring all such independent enterprises under the umbrella of his church-wide cooperative movement. When Brigham foresaw the completion of the intercontinental railroad, he became concerned that more and more “outside” merchants would profit from business with church members. Mormon people, he declared in September 1868, should not “trade another cent” with a man “who does not pay his tithing and help gather the poor, and pray in his family.”\(^{29}\)

In the October conference that year, he formalized this policy, declaring that “we sustain only ourselves and those who sustain us.” Action was fast; on October 24 the constitution was adopted for Zion’s Co-operative Mercantile Institution, or ZCMI. Its preamble began: “The inhabitants of Utah, convinced of the impolicy of leaving the trade and commerce of their Territory to be conducted by strangers, have resolved, in public meeting assembled, to unite in a system of co-operation for the transaction of their own business.”

But establishment of the central cooperative in Salt Lake City was only the beginning; Brigham wanted a cooperative in every Mormon community. Seventy-eight were operating within six weeks after ZCMI’s opening, and by 1870 no settlement was without one.\(^{30}\) Eventually there were at least 150. The Franklin Co-operative Mercantile Institution was one of the first, as Parkinson merged his general store into the new enterprise. Like all local co-ops, above the door it bore the inscription “Holiness to the Lord” over a Seeing Eye that earned it the local nickname of the One-eyed Co-op. Its two-story, rough-stone building now houses Franklin’s Pioneer Relic Hall with its small museum.

Brigham was emphatic in wanting ownership in the co-ops open to all. “When you start your co-operative Store in a ward,” he cautioned the bishops in a sermon on September 8, 1869, “you will find the men of capital stepping forward, and one says, ‘I will put in ten thousand dollars’; another says, ‘I will put in five thousand.’ But I say to you, bishops, do not let these men take five thousand, or one thousand, but call on the brethren and sisters who are poor and tell them to put in their five dollars or their twenty-five, and let those who have capital stand back and give the poor the advantage of this quick trading.”\(^{31}\) The Franklin Co-op heeded the counsel; its stock sold for $5 a share. The co-op became not only Franklin’s sole retail store, but also an outlet to market its produce. Twice a week it shipped

\(^{28}\) Taylor, Samuel Rose Parkinson, 91.

\(^{29}\) Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, September 19, 1868. Quoted in Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 296.

\(^{30}\) Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 303.

locally produced eggs and butter and, after the railroad came, dressed chickens to ZCMI stores in Salt Lake City and Ogden in exchange for goods needed by the settlers. Over time it expanded, building a steam sawmill to replace the water-powered one Parkinson and Thomas Smart had established, a gristmill, a furniture store, a butcher shop, and a blacksmith shop. In 1879, when sheep raising had become important to the local economy, it opened the North Star Woolen Mill that became the area’s major employer. Parkinson’s brother-in-law, Thomas Smart Jr., had become a substantial investor in the enterprise. In subsequent years William H. Smart became an investor as well.

In 1882, during the presidency of John Taylor, the LDS Church ended its formal support of the co-ops and the movement gradually faded. The Franklin Co-op lasted longer than most, but in 1889 it was dissolved and merged into what became the Oneida Mercantile Union. For a decade that enterprise flourished, and in 1898 built in Franklin the fifth creamery in Cache Valley’s growing dairy industry. By the time Samuel Parkinson decided to sell out, at the turn of the century, the stock was held primarily by the Smart and Parkinson families and the influential former apostle Moses Thatcher. As will be seen later, William H. Smart would play the principal role in negotiating a difficult settlement of ownership issues, demonstrating qualities of reason and persuasion that would characterize his later leadership career.

*Exciting Times*

The Franklin of William’s boyhood was, for most of its existence, a quiet town on the outskirts of Mormondom. But it had its moments of excitement, even of history-making. One was on July 5, 1876. Ten days earlier, on a grassy hill above the Little Big Horn River in southern Montana, General George Armstrong Custer and his entire command perished at the hands of Sioux warriors. Riders rushed with the news to Bozeman. Telegraph lines from there were down, probably cut by hostile Indians, so the message was copied by hand and sent via stage to Eagle Rock (Idaho Falls) and Blackfoot. Lines were down there, too, so a horseman from Fort Hall rushed the message on to Franklin. There, in the southwest corner of the Franklin ZCMI building, young Hezekiah Hatch huddled over a key of the Mormon Church’s Deseret Telegraph and tapped out the message that

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32. John Taylor, "An Epistle to the Presidents of Stakes, High Councils, Bishops and Other Authorities of the Church," Salt Lake City, 1882, 1–4, Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter referred to as LDS Church Archives).


34. In 1866, after the end of the Civil War made it possible to obtain the necessary equipment, Brigham Young pursued his goal of connecting all Mormon settlements by telegraph. It was a cooperative venture. Each settlement, with tithing contributions and labor, was to build, equip, and staff the part of the line running through its area. Each
gave the War Department and the world their first knowledge of the disaster. It took five and a half hours to send. At the end, Hatch tapped “That’s all,” to which the receiving operator in Salt Lake City tapped “Thank God!”35 The next day newspapers from coast to coast carried the story.

That event was only part of the excitement during Franklin’s most tumultuous period, when, for nearly four years, it was an end-of-the-line railroad town with both the economic boom and social upheaval such towns experienced. Again, Mormon leaders were deeply involved in events that brought the railroad to and eventually through Franklin. Early on, Brigham Young recognized the importance of the transcontinental railroad that was then under construction, both as a source of employment for the Saints and as a conduit to and from eastern and, later, West Coast markets. He contracted with the Union Pacific Railroad to build the line down Echo Canyon, through Ogden, and on to Promontory Summit. Some 5,000 Mormons, recruited by their bishops, worked on this contract.

At about the same time, under Brigham’s direction, three Mormon partners, Ezra Taft Benson of Cache Valley and Lorin Farr and Chauncey West of Weber County, contracted with the Central Pacific to grade two hundred miles of its line west of Ogden. A thousand Mormons from Cache and Weber valleys found employment there. Wages were good—$3 to $6 a day for a man, $10 a day for a man and team. Farmers prospered as well, selling their produce in the work camps for inflated prices.

For the investors and the church itself, though, realities were harsher. Once the rails were joined at Promontory Summit in 1869, the best the church could get for the last $1,250,000 of its contract with the Union Pacific was some $600,000, not in much-needed cash but in surplus iron and rolling stock. The Central Pacific defaulted even more disastrously. Lorenzo Hatch, who, as the bishop in Franklin, subcontracted for part of the line, had to use his $2,000 wheat crop to pay the Franklin workers. His son, Hezekiah Hatch, wrote: “The name of Leland Stanford never sounds

good to me. He and his associates lived in affluence and died worth millions, while my father found himself ruined.”

For two of the three major contractors, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson and Chauncey West, the disaster was worse—and final. Benson, also financially ruined and stressed by his inability to collect the money due him, died suddenly at age fifty-eight on September 3, 1869, three months after the golden spike was driven. West, his health broken by exposure and immense labor in the frantic final months of the great race between the two railroads, went to San Francisco to try for a settlement so he could meet his obligations. He failed, and died there on January 9, 1870, at age forty-three, leaving thirty-six children.

Despite these frustrations, the Mormons were quick to jump at the next opportunity to build a railroad. That came with the plan for a narrow-gauge railroad from Ogden through Cache Valley and on north to the mining camps in Montana. The Cache Valley men knew the territory; ever since the mines opened in 1862, many of them had freighted north, making good profits by the sale of Cache Valley farm produce to the miners. With Brigham’s encouragement, his son John W. Young formed the Utah Northern Railroad Company and contracted with eastern investors to furnish the rails and rolling stock.

Labor was to be done by Mormon men recruited by local bishops. Their pay would be vouchers redeemable for stock in the railroad at twice their face value. Seventeen Mormon leaders, all but one from Cache Valley, became directors of the new company. One of them was the once-burned but still optimistic Bishop Lorenzo Hatch of Franklin.

The plan worked. By 1884, the company and its successor had pushed the rails, laid a scant three feet apart, 466 miles from Ogden to a connection with the Northern Pacific at Garrison, Montana. It was the longest narrow-gauge railroad in the world and one of the most profitable western railroads. It gave enormous stimulus to the economy of Cache Valley.

But for the Mormon investors and the workers who hacked out the grade, built the bridges, cut the ties, and spiked down the rails, the outcome was not so great. Hatch and the other investors got ten cents on the dollar for their stock. Instead of redeeming their vouchers for twice their value in stock, the workers were unable to redeem them for any price. Eventually, the LDS Church accepted them as tithing and thus became a major stockholder in the company, until it traded off its interests after the death of Brigham Young.

38. Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 1:753.
For Franklin, the impact of the railroad was, for a short time, enormous. The rails reached the town on May 2, 1874, to a big, planned celebration that was considerably dampened when the tiny train bringing Brigham Young and others jumped the track and never arrived. The rails moved no farther until the fall of 1877. The Panic of 1873 dried up eastern capital and the promoters ran out of money. Also, time was lost when the route being graded to Soda Springs was found to be impractical and abandoned. Franklin was the northern terminus for four shipping seasons, and the character of the town changed dramatically.

Warehouses sprang up overnight as freighting companies established their terminals in Franklin, some moving there from the non-Mormon town of Corinne. An estimated three or four thousand tons of freight a year were off-loaded from railroad cars and onto three-wagon trains pulled by nine yoke of oxen or ten mules. Some six hundred freighters operated out of Franklin, with an average of eighty wagons on the road night and day. The largest, Diamond R Fast Freight and Express, operated with one hundred wagons and six hundred mules, promising seven-day delivery to Butte, Helena, Virginia City, and other Montana towns.40

As in other terminal towns, hotels, boarding houses, and saloons sprang up. Striving to retain its Mormon character, Franklin outlawed liquor, but it tolerated two wholesale liquor firms and a beer brewery. There was, of course, no prohibition in Montana; one freighter reported hauling sixty barrels of whiskey north on one trip.

Until construction of the line resumed and the rails moved on north, Franklin, one writer reported, had “everything except a red light district.”41 When the rails moved on, the town slipped back into its quiet existence, although later there was a murder, of railroad agent Joel Hinckley,42 and subsequently a hanging, of one Michael Mooney.

Shaping the Man
All this excitement was witnessed by young William during the most impressionable years of his early teens. Oddly, for one who would leave some of the most voluminous and detailed journals in Utah and Mormon history, he left no record of these or other events during that time. In fact, Smart left virtually no contemporary record of his growing-up years in Franklin, no mention of his schooling, his activities, or his service as a young Aaronic Priesthood-holder in the LDS Church, no hint of any employment outside the family farm or of what he did in his leisure time. Was he a hunter, a fisherman, a member of the town baseball team? There is no clue. The less-than-robust health reflected throughout his journals as an adult suggests

40. Ibid., 183–85.
42. Deseret News, October 28, 1891, 3.
that physical activities may not have been a big part of his youth. The same highly literate journals imply that omnivorous reading, including the classics—and certainly the scriptures—was.

Biographical essays written about his father and mother much later give William’s only two known accounts of specific events in his boyhood years in Franklin. The first tells much about the hardships and, perhaps more importantly, the faith in which the boy was raised. Grasshoppers and crickets were a recurring plague in Cache Valley. As early as 1860, settlers reported losing much of their grain to grasshoppers. 1862 was another bad year, and from 1865-72 the insects repeatedly destroyed crops. The summer of 1869 was perhaps the worst of all, with less than half the crops throughout the valley surviving. It was probably of that year, when William was seven years old, that he wrote later in life.

Once when I was a very small boy, during a season of grasshopper war at Franklin, father and I were going up and down the garden shooing grasshoppers off the potatoes with rags that were tied on sticks. Missing father I looked down the hill behind our lot and there discovered him on his knees beneath a clump of bushes praying. The scene was hallowed to me and I at once quietly and unnoticed returned to my work. Soon father returned and said, “Willie, it is fast meeting time.” I answered that the hoppers would eat the “taters.” But he said, “Never mind, son, we will leave them in the hands of the Lord.” We went to the meeting and the spirit in prayer and speech was supplicating the Lord to remove the hoppers, that some remaining crops might be saved. As we returned home the sky was full of hoppers on the wing south, and upon arriving, found but 100 few hoppers on our lot. I am confident that father’s secret prayer was foreshadowing the prayers of the meeting and the Lord answered them.

The second event ended more tragically. William ended his brief biographical essay of his mother with this poignant account: “During a storm she was instantly killed in her farm home by a shaft of lightning, I [age 14] at her side, June 22, 1876, [She] was buried in the home farm private cemetery.”

44. Until 1896, Sabbath services in the LDS Church consisted of Sunday school in the morning and Sacrament Meeting in the afternoon or early evening. The Priesthood Meeting was held weekly on Monday evenings, and the Fast and Testimony Meeting on the first Thursday of each month. In 1896, fast day was changed to the first Sunday to make attendance more convenient and less disruptive to members in their employment, and in the 1930s the Priesthood Meeting was changed to Sunday mornings. William B. Smart, “Sabbath Day,” in Ludlow, Encyclopedia of Mormonism, 3:1242.
45. W. H. Smart in Mecham, Family Book of Remembrance, 592. A fuller version of this event is found in a three-page letter from Smart to church historian Joseph Fielding Smith, “In response to your request for faith-promoting incidents and testimonies in a recent number of the Deseret News,” September 14, 1934. Access #276, William H. Smart Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.
Local tradition is that as the sky darkened with the approaching storm, Ann moved her sewing machine and ironing board to the front entrance for better light. When the lightning bolt hit, she dropped the hot iron onto her nearby family bible. The leather binding of the bible, now housed in Franklin’s Relic Hall, clearly bears the scorched imprint of the iron.47

Except for its brief period of excitement, Franklin, the town of William H. Smart’s childhood and youth, was not particularly different from other Mormon towns that dotted so much of the Intermountain West. What was it in those early years that shaped the man he became: a man driven by a sense of mission that virtually consumed him, and compelled to record that lifetime mission in such intimate and copious detail? The answers to such questions are usually best found in the school and at home. In Smart’s case, some influences seem evident.

The account he wrote of his parents for a family history,48 no doubt softened by time and colored by a son’s love and respect, emphasizes certain qualities clearly reflected in Smart’s life. He portrayed his father as a goal-oriented, hard-working, entrepreneurial man, who never profaned, used slang, or told immoral stories, upheld the rights of the weak and downtrodden, and was honest to the core. William H. Smart became all of that, although on a vastly different stage.

“Father,” he wrote, “was very just and had mercy, desiring for himself and all others a square deal. He often took me with him when he settled accounts with men who owed him. In figuring the accounts he wanted it exact to the last cent, but if the party was poor, or had met with reverses, he would invariably have me discount the amount due.” The son’s life reflected the same qualities, although the way his wealth would be dissipated through bad investments in people indicates that mercy occasionally outweighed good judgment.

“One severe winter toward spring,” he recalled, “there was but little hay left in the neighborhood. Father, having a surplus, which was usually the case through his wise husbandry, was sought by men of means who had many stock, and was offered large prices for his entire surplus. He answered them that his hay would be sold in small quantities to the people, and would

47. The large bible, 9 × 12 inches, contains this inscription: “Ann Smart, wife of Thomas Smart, who was born at Kingston-Cross, Porsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire, England, September 22nd, 1822, was baptized at Whealbush, St. Louis Co, Missouri, by Samuel Abray June 11th 1851, came to Utah in 1852, arrived in S L City, Utah Sept. 4, same year. Lived at American Fork more than three years—then removed to Provo, Utah C., Utah, and in 1860 removed to Franklin now in the Territory of Idaho. The maiden name of Ann Smart was Ann Hater the daughter of Henry & Kezia Hater, of Hampshire England. She was killed by lightning at about 28 minutes to five o’clock p.m. June 21, 1876, and was buried on the 23rd of the same month in a mound on the farm of her husband in the city of Franklin, Idaho.” Note that there is a one day discrepancy between the bible record and William Smart’s biographical essay.

be made to go as far as possible in assisting the people; especially the poor
who had but a cow or so, or a farmer who needed to save his team to put in
his crop. . . . [He] would take only $10 or $20 per ton for it when he could
have gotten $40 or $50.” Years later that experience would be exactly dupli-
cated by the son in the Uintah Basin.

Of his mother, William wrote that she was “spiritual-minded in a fair
degree” and “in general she was true and loyal to the church,” but that
“her mind as well as her heart had to be converted,” that “unless it would
bear reasoning it was not easy for her to accept.” William’s life showed
no such reservations; his whole-soul dedication to the church came from
other sources. But, he added, “she was a constant worker in Relief Society,
and was outstanding in charity and in care of the sick and needy in all
directions, her liberality being proverbial.” The son’s life reflected this
trait, as well as the fact that, as he stated, “her business integrity and hon-
esty were unquestionable.”

“She was,” he wrote, “heart and soul with the teachings of the church
against promiscuous interchange of dances at that period, and against card
playing, gambling, and Sabbath breaking in amusements. If her children
deflected therefrom, it was wholly without her wish and consent, and I can-
not recall ever seeing a deck of cards in our home.” As his own children
and grandchildren were to learn, the son inherited that trait of strictness.
Finally, he noted, his mother “respected and was ever loyal to father as the
head and Patriarch of the family and made him the real center and pivot
around whom she and her children revolved. . . . Indeed she sought to
make his word law among us.” In his own family life, William H. Smart
expected, and received, no less.

Another witness to the kinds of home infl uence that shaped Smart’s life
was his nephew, Lorenzo Smart, who in 1978, at age eighty-nine, wrote a
short memoir of his grandfather, Thomas Sharratt Smart, William’s father. Lorenzo wrote of a time he was out checking to see that all the barn doors
were closed. “I noticed that one of the doors was open, so I walked over I
was cussin’ (I was a great hand to always be profaining, I don’t know why,
but maybe it was the class of people I was associating with around the ranch)
but I walked over and there stood Father and Grandfather in the door. Well,
that night when we got home and went to bed, Grandfather came over to
see me (he slept in the same room as I did) and he knelt down and said:
‘Lorenzo, it’s time you and I had a prayer.’ So I got up and Grandfather
gave me a good long prayer, and then he give me a good long lecture—
told me what profaining meant and everything else. Grandfather Smart
was extremely religious.” To those who knew William H. Smart in his later

49. Lorenzo Smart, “Remembrances of Grandfather Thomas Sharratt Smart,” 1-page type-
script, given out at a Smart family reunion, August 19, 1978, Salt Lake City, copy in pos-
session of Robert Foss Hansen.
ministry as church leader in Heber Valley and the Uintah Basin, and to his older grandchildren, that incident, especially the length of the prayer and lecture, exactly illustrates the aphorism “like father like son.”

“I remember,” Lorenzo wrote, “that every night while Grandfather lived with us in Logan, there wasn’t a night passed but what we had family prayers. That was Grandfather’s mainstay. He insisted that all the family (all my brothers and sisters that was home) had to be in a circle for the prayer. . . . We couldn’t be scattered around or in a square. It had to be a circle prayer with Grandfather Smart.” What young William was taught in the home about the importance of formality as well as consistency of prayer stayed with him throughout his life. A granddaughter wrote of him: “One of the things that I remember very clearly, as I think of the few years when we lived in Grandpa and Grama’s home in Roosevelt, is Grandpa’s complete dedication to prayer. He never made a decision, or moved into any action, without making it a matter of prayer. I remember well how important family prayer was to him and, consequently, to Grandma as well. Grandpa’s prayers were very profound, and they were very, very long, as were his blessings on the food at mealtimes.”

School Days

As for his schooling, we know that young William attended Franklin Elementary School until about age thirteen. No school was available in Franklin beyond the eighth grade; not until 1888 was the Oneida Academy for high-school-age students established there in two rooms on the ground floor of the local dance hall, before moving two years later to Preston. But Logan, twenty miles to the south, had established a high school in 1872. By 1876, the year young Smart would have reached high school age, the school occupied the upper floor and four rooms on the ground floor of the city hall. Tuition was $5 a quarter. Education was far from universal in those days; a Logan school census in 1875 showed that fewer than half the children aged six to sixteen were attending school.

In 1873, the Logan School District appropriated $200 to establish a “normal school” to train teachers. A dispatch to the Deseret News described it: “Noticeable among our schools is what is termed the high school taught by Miss Ida I. Cook . . . at which the more advanced pupils of the various settlements may attend and become, if they wish it, prepared for the business of teaching.” But Brigham Young had a much larger vision. As recorded by

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52. Ibid., 324. Miss Cook was clearly the area’s outstanding teacher. At a time when teachers’ salaries were as low as $25 a month, her contract read: “Ninety dollars per month if the school makes it . . . if in the event the school makes $100 per month or over, she is to receive one hundred dollars per month”—notwithstanding that the maximum teacher’s salary was $90 a month as late as 1912. In 1893 she was given the combined office of
I. C. Thorsen, in 1874 he proposed building a different kind of school on the fertile lands then known as the “Church Farm.”

On and by the use of this tract of land we will establish a free educational institution to accommodate from 400 to 1000 young people where they can spend all their time for a period of from four to six years in acquiring a liberal and scientific education as complete as can be found in any part of the world.

But besides that, every young man must learn a trade, such as blacksmithing, carpentry, wheelwright, masonry, etc., and also scientific farming and stock raising. Every young woman must learn to spin, weave, cut, sew, dairying, poultry raising, flower gardening, etc. About one-third of the time of each student should be given to the institution in actual work on the farm, in dairying or shops for its maintenance.

That much of the plan seemed to be patterned after Oberlin College, near Kirtland, Ohio, with which Brigham must have been familiar. But he added principles to which Mormon colleges have tried to adhere ever since.

The Gospel, true theology, must be taught and practiced by all, both students and teachers. Any young men or women of good character should be admitted, whether members of the Church or not, but while there must live the lives of good Latter-day Saints. They must keep the Word of Wisdom, no intoxicating liquor or tobacco will be kept, sold or used in the institution.53

Young’s vision proved too ambitious for the Cache Valley settlements. Not until the fall of 1878 was what became Brigham Young College finally established, and then it was housed in the same city hall space where Ida Cook had operated her high school. Miss Cook became the college’s first principal. William H. Smart, at age sixteen, described as “not very strong physically, but very studious,”54 was one of the seventy-eight students in that first class. The college continued to meet in the city hall until expanding enrollment forced a move in 1882. Then it met in the basement of the Logan LDS Tabernacle until moving, in 1884, to its first real campus, where Logan High School now stands.

Smart at this time had not yet begun his practice of journal-keeping. His only surviving writing from this period is a small, board-bound copy book, typical of those kept by many young scholars at the time. His is 7½ × 6

Principal and superintendent of Logan city schools at a salary of $1,500 a year, the highest salary ever offered a Logan teacher up to that time. She was a tough administrator, importing some competent woman teachers from Chicago and firing anyone she found incompetent. School problems haven’t changed so much from those days; she fired a male teacher who had been hugging and kissing young girls as well as a female teacher. Another teacher was sacked because he frequented saloons.

inches, 140 pages, every one of them filled with his precise, somewhat florid handwriting, recording the results of his studies during those first years of higher education. The first entry reflects his passage from boyhood to manhood, as well as character traits that shaped his lifelong career.

Logan Feb 25th 1879  
Boys Trials

By request of my teacher, Miss Idaho [sic] Cook I have made an effort to write something of boys trials, being a boy, I should be able to write something. I think the greatest trial for me is writing essays or compositions, or on any subject. But we should all try, & the more we try the smaller the trial will get. Some may term it a trial to work, but I am always happier & healthier when I am at work. I feel that it is a trial to be shut up in a school room. Such nice weather, but it is preparing us for trials in after life. It is a great trial for me to leave my friends & come to Logan this winter to school, but expecting to receive knowledge I try to be contented.

W. H. Smart

Subsequent entries are mostly dated 1879–84, but with two as late as 1886. For one so young, they are erudite and literate, with a stolid thoroughness bordering on verbosity—qualities that would characterize his writing throughout his life. The content is eclectic. There are short nature essays, poems, excerpts of sermons and essays, mathematical story problems, geometry diagrams, instructions on elocution and grammar, discussions on the nature of lightning, thunder, light, and electricity, an essay on the geography and history of South America, and a discussion of the way legislation is passed through Congress.

Thirty pages contain what can best be called a capsule history of the ancient world. In a statement that illustrates the juxtaposition of religious and secular knowledge in his young mind, he begins the essay by declaring that “we derive our knowledge of history from two sources; ancient History, or the Bible & other inspired works, and Profane History, or the record of events & kept by individuals.” Then follows a summary of the book of Genesis covering the Creation, the Garden of Eden and the Fall, Cain’s murder of Abel, Noah and the flood, the Tower of Babel and the Diaspora. Next comes the history and cultures of ancient civilizations—China, India, Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Phoenicia, Israel, and Persia. His writing exhibits

55. William H. Smart, student and teacher copybook, 1879–84, holograph, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah. The statement suggests the oft-delivered dictum of LDS Church President Heber J. Grant: “That which we persist in doing becomes easier to do; not that the nature of the thing is changed but that our ability to do it is increased.” Grant was only twenty-three years old at this time; two years later he would be ordained an apostle, with a church-wide audience.
no discernible difference in his regard for the historical reliability of the Old Testament and that of secular history.

But the parts that most reveal the evolving character of his emerging manhood are contained in the homilies interspersed throughout the pages of the copy book. For example:

There are many echoes in the world, & but few voices.
The mill will never grind with the water which has passed.
Riches upon the human mind are like drouth upon a field of wheat.
If we wish to be happy we must learn to make our own sunshine.

Or consider this foreboding but challenging message that seems to reflect Smart’s attitude toward life, perhaps not in his youth, but certainly later:

Life is a leaf of paper white
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night.
Though thou have time but for a line,
Be that sublime;
Not failure but low aim is crime.

But there’s more to school than study and the expression of noble thoughts. Like most young students, Smart found time for things of the heart, and discovered that such things can be painful. Under the heading “Sung by Caddie When I Stopped My Heart” (there’s no hint as to who Caddie was), Smart penned:

Thou has wounded the spirit that loved thee
And cherished thine image for years.
Thou has taught me at last to forget thee
In secret, in silence, in tears.
Like a young bird when left by its mother,
Its earliest pinions to try,
Round the nest will still lingering hover
Ere its trembling wings can fly,
Thus we’re taught in this cold world to smother
Each feeling that once was so dear,
Like that young bird I’ll seek to discover
A home of affection elsewhere.
Though this heart may still cling to thee fondly,
And dream of sweet memories past,
Yet hope like the rainbow of summer
Gives a promise of relief [?] at last.

Smart’s progress at the college was impressive; in just two years, at the opening of the 1880–81 school year, he was added to the faculty, at the tender age of eighteen. As one history reports, “upon the opening of the school year 1880–81, two new teachers were listed in the Circular. Horace
H. Cummings replaced William Apperley, and William H. Smart began his term of service which was one of loyalty and devotion.56

The experience must have cemented his resolve to be a teacher, for the following year he registered in the Normal Department of the University of Deseret (later to become the University of Utah). Tuition was $12 a quarter, considered an exorbitant price but necessary because the institution received no government funding. The young scholar coped by working for his board and room, and by peddling butter and eggs to pay for tuition, books, and other expenses. He completed four ten-week quarters, and in the spring of 1882 was among six males and ten females awarded a one-year teaching certificate.57

In August 1882, he registered for a second year, intending to earn a two-year certificate, but never graduated. School records show he withdrew on April 3, 1883, just weeks before completion of the course, and never returned. The reason may never be known, but it may be that this was the beginning of the instability and confusion of purpose that would characterize his next few years.


57. List of graduates of the Normal Department, Annual of the University of Deseret 1884–85, 42, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.