Mormon Archival and Manuscript Holdings
at
Weber State University
Stewart Library

By
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Weber State University in Ogden, Utah, was organized in late 1888 as Weber Stake Academy, and its first classes were held on January 7, 1889. The school was established as part of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’ academy system, which was begun in the 1870s and expanded in the next decade, as LDS Church leaders sought to provide schools “where the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the . . . Doctrine and Covenants can be used as textbooks, and where the principles of our religion may form a part of the teachings of our schools.”1 The academies were established under the direction of a stake board of education, which was in turn supervised by the Church’s General Board of Education.

From 1889, when Louis F. Moench was selected as principal, until 1933, when Aaron W. Tracy served as president, Weber was administrated by the LDS Church. During that period it was known by several names, including Weber Stake Academy, Weber Normal School, Weber Junior College, and finally Weber College. In the spring of 1933, the Utah State Legislature provided for the transfer of Weber (and other LDS Church-owned colleges in Utah) to the state. During that forty-four-year period, Weber was closely associated with developments in the LDS Church, and a number of prominent Latter-day Saints had taught at or attended the school, including David O. McKay, Thomas E. McKay, Ernest L. Wilkinson, Lydia H. Tanner, J. Willard Marriott, David M. Kennedy, and Fawn McKay Brodie.
The Archives and Special Collections departments of the Weber State University Stewart Library work together to preserve the history of the university and the surrounding communities, and to make resources available to researchers. In the following pages we highlight some of the significant resources for scholars of the Mormon experience housed within both departments.

I. Archives

Because of the close ties between Weber College and the LDS Church, the Weber State University Archives contains several records of interest to students of Mormonism. Among these are the files of the Registrar’s Office (WA 90), which include both general information on curriculum, and individual student records. These archival records would be of interest to scholars researching the development of curriculum and pedagogy in LDS Church schools. Also within the record of the registrar’s office are commencement files from 1895 to 1933. A second major record group is the Centennial History Project (WA 38), a compilation of various record series containing materials accumulated in preparation for writing a centennial history of the school. These include Devotional Minutes 1911-12, 1924-30; Board of Directors’ Minutes 1888-93; Board of Education Minutes, 1888-1933; and other compilations which bring together information on Weber during the period it was a Church school. The papers of Charlotte Fenton Wetzel (WA 86/36) include correspondence of a Weber Academy faculty member in 19009 and 1910. They afford an interesting insight on the school during a crucial period.

In addition, the Archives holds the papers of several individual faculty members associated with developments in Mormon history and literature. These include the papers of Gene Sessions (WA 86/7) pertaining to his book, *Mormon Thunder: A Documentary*
History of Jedediah Morgan Grant, the files of Leland H. Monson (WA 86/4), a member of the LDS Church Board of Education and the author of several Sunday School manuals; and a major collection of manuscripts and correspondence of Levi S. Peterson (WA 86/8), which are currently being processed. They trace the development of his work and include files on his novel The Backslider and his biography, Juanita Brooks. The papers of Donald Moorman (WA 86/5), a deceased history faculty member at Weber State, are also housed in the archives. His collection—which includes research files on various topics of Mormon history, especially regarding Mountain Meadows and Brigham Young—was opened in late 1989.

In addition to these collections, the Archives has photographic holdings and a number of printed works—including student newspapers, annuals, and literary magazines—which would be helpful in studying aspects of life at a LDS Church school in the early twentieth century. Moreover, the Archives maintains an oral history program, and many of the transcribed interviews are related to Mormon history. Among these are interviews with Elder Joseph Anderson recalling his days at Weber as a student in 1905 and several interviews which focus on the proposed transfer of Weber back to the LDS Church in the 1950s.

II. Special Collections

Other holdings of interest to students of Mormon history and literature can be found in the Weber State University Special Collections. Holdings include general church history information, sources on Weber County wards and stakes, architectural drawings, missionary journals and correspondence, papers of LDS literary figures, political papers, and photograph collections.
Church History

Not surprisingly, Special Collections contains numerous manuscript collections pertaining to the history of the LDS Church generally, and the Church in the Weber County area particularly. There are a number of autobiographies of Mormon pioneers, including the *Life of Job Pingree* (MSS 128), an early Church member, Ogden City leader, and polygamist; the *Alfred Douglas Young Diary* (MS 180), in which he recounts his experiences as an early Church member in Tennessee, including his proselytizing efforts; and the *George W. Taggert Manuscript Collection* (MSS 14), which contains a typescript copy of Taggert’s diary relating his experiences as a member of the Mormon Battalion.

Other collections deal with Church leaders at both the general and local levels. The *Aaron F. Farr Letter* (MSS 204) is written to Brigham Young and other Church leaders, and a *Wilford Woodruff Vision* (MSS 279) is described in a diary excerpt from Judge Stanley A. Hanks. The *Sarah Snyder Richards Funeral Broadside* (MSS 301) announces the death and funeral of Sarah Richards, one of the plural wives of apostle Franklin D. Richards, and an important figure in her own right. Of particular note is “A Circular of the High Council,” (MSS 3) from the Nauvoo High Council. It is this circular that makes the announcement to the Saints that they will leave Nauvoo and head west. Finally, the *Arvil B. Harris Manuscript Collection* (MS 12) contains information on Martin Harris and his family.

Several collections are concerned with the history of LDS Church members in Ogden and the surrounding areas. The *Laura Moench Jenkins Manuscript Collection* (MSS 22) contains several biographies of Louis Frederick Moench written by his
children. Moench was an Ogden teacher, and first principal of Weber Stake Academy.

*The Kerr Family Papers* (MS 36) contain biographical information and correspondence of early LDS Church members, the Belnaps, but also heavily document the Church, civic, and educational activities of Walter A. and Marion B. Kerr. The *Personal Papers of David W. Evans* (MS 136) include his correspondence with David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, his ward members, and other local LDS Church leaders. The *Rich Diaries* (MS 74) contain the diaries of Dr. Edward I. and Emily Almira Cozzen Rich. Edward was a prominent doctor, and both he and Emily were also involved in Church and civic activities. Emily’s diaries are particularly extensive, spanning the years 1897-1951. Finally, *The Alfred E. Stratford Collection* (MS 40), and the *Ogden Tabernacle Collection* (MSS 288) detail the history of the Ogden Tabernacle and its choir with written histories, memorabilia, and newspapers.

Several prominent Ogden businessmen were also LDS Church members, and their family papers are housed in Special Collections. Thomas D. Dee was involved in banking and canning, and was also a justice of the peace. The *Thomas D. and Annie Taylor Dee Family History Collection* (MS 52) contains journals, correspondence, legal and financial papers, and photographs of the Dee family. After Dee’s 1905 death, the family worked to improve health care in Ogden in his honor. The *Thomas D. Dee Memorial Hospital Collection* (MS 51) and the *Thomas D. Dee School of Nursing Student Records* (MS 41) record these efforts through meeting minutes, student records, personal interviews, and other documents.

David Eccles was involved in several business ventures, including insurance, real estate, railroads, logging, sugar, banking, and construction. The *David Eccles Papers*
(MS 76) include personal, business, and church correspondence; account books;
biographical information and reminiscences; and legal documents. The Hinckley Family
Business Papers (MS 63) include account books, correspondence, legal documents, and
business records of the family’s local car dealerships.

Other items of general Utah and LDS Church history include impressions of Salt
Lake City and the LDS Church recorded in a German Journal Excerpt (MSS 238); a
blank Voter Registration Form (MSS 96) for Utah women, including the oath they signed
denying any involvement in polygamy; and additional basic printed sources housed in
Special Collections.

Wards and Stakes

There is also a great deal of information in Special Collections regarding specific
wards and stakes in Weber County. A number of small manuscript collections detail
disputes in the ecclesiastical courts between Nathan Tanner, Jr. and Job and Annie
Pingree, including the Weber Stake High Council Collection (MSS 53), the High Council
of the Weber Stake of Zion Letters (MSS 245), and the Tanner/Woodruff
Correspondences (MSS 261). Other collections are also concerned with the ecclesiastical
courts, including the Raymond T. Swenson Collection (MSS 26), the Thomas D. Dee &
Joseph Stanford Collection (MSS 55), the Weber Stake of Zion Collection (MSS 57), and
the Weber Stake Correspondence Collection (MSS 101).

The Barker Family Records (MS 152) include a history of the 15th Ward Relief
Society that details past and present presidencies and the building of their Relief Society
House. Arthur Dale (MS 238), Thomas Dunn (MSS 44), and Lorenzo Peterson (MS 56)
were all bishops in Ogden and their collections include correspondence, photographs,
and/or memorabilia related to their wards. Other items of significance to those researching Weber County wards and stakes are the 5th Ward Grade Book (MSS 205) kept by Louis F. Moench; the Ogden 3rd Ward Bishop’s Storehouse Donation Book (MS 209), which lists ward members alphabetically; and the Petitions for the James Brown and Lorin Farr Monuments (MS 137), which lists contributors from numerous local wards.

**Architecture**

Other holdings related to the LDS Church include the architectural drawings of local Church buildings. The *Thomas R. Moore & Carolyn Rich Nebeker Collection* (MS 19) contains drawings of several LDS meetinghouses, as well as drawings by the prominent architect, Leslie Hodgson. The *Ken W. Jones Architectural Drawings Collection* (MS 132) contains other drawings by Hodgson, and drawings for the Ogden branch LDS genealogical building. The *James Chamberlain Architectural Drawings Collection* (MS 157) contains the drawings for the LDS chapel for the deaf.

Special Collections also houses collections pertaining to the lives of prominent architects Leslie Hodgson and Truman Angell, Jr. Oral history interviews were conducted with two of Hodgson’s daughters and several of his grandchildren. These interviews are found in the *Hodgson Family Oral Histories* (MS 249) collection. *Laura Pauline Angell King* (MS 239) was the daughter of Truman Angell, and her collection contains biographical information on him, as well as a small amount of correspondence from him.

**Missionary**

For those wishing to research the LDS missionary experience, Special Collections contains several missionary journals, as well as correspondence to and from missionaries.
The *Hyrum Wheelwright* (MS 24) collection contains his journal while he served his mission in California in 1912-15. Both *Fred Kotter* (MS 163) and *Henry Nelson* (MS 261) served their missions in Germany around the same time (1902-04 and 1904-05, respectively), and *Grant Aadnesen* (MS 60) served a mission in Germany in 1933. Kotter’s letters describe his banishment from several German towns, and his meeting with apostle Heber J. Grant. It should also be noted that many of Aadnesen’s journal entries are written in German.

The personal correspondence of *Claude T. Barnes* (MS 70), and *James Lindsay, Jr.* (MS 186) include letters to and from them while serving their missions in England and Houston-Louisiana, respectively. The *Ira Owen Horsfall Collection* (MS 82) is particularly noteworthy because it contains the correspondence of Horsfall, one of the first LDS missionaries to the Middle East.

**Literary Figures**

For researchers interested in LDS literary figures, Special Collections houses manuscript collections pertaining to Bernard DeVoto, Rodello Hunter, Clinton Larson, Jennings Olson, and Vardis Fisher. The *Chester “Chet” Olsen Manuscript Collection* (MS 2) contains correspondence from Bernard DeVoto and his wife to Olsen, and other items pertaining to the death of DeVoto and scattering of his ashes. A separate photograph collection (P 3) contains pictures of the day that DeVoto’s ashes were scattered in Idaho.

The *Rodello Hunter Collection* (MS 5) contains the correspondence, author’s proofs, and legal papers of this local author; and the *Clinton Larson Manuscript Collection* (MS 8) contains copies of his poetry and other writings. *Dr. Jennings Olson*
(MS 18) was a Weber State University philosophy professor, and his collection contains his writings regarding the LDS Church and education.

The *Vardis Fisher Correspondence Collection* (MS 134) contains letters to Clarence Major of Nebraska, regarding Fisher’s writing and politics. A small manuscript collection (MSS 2) also contains items pertaining to Fisher: a press release titled, “Vardis Fisher Was Not a Mormon,” and an open letter to President Spencer W. Kimball—both written by Fisher’s wife, Opal Laurel Holmes.

**Political Papers**

Special Collections also holds the papers of several LDS political figures. *Richard Richards* (MS 16) was the Republican National Committee Chairman, 1981-83, and his collection contains a great deal of correspondence related to the Committee, press releases, polls and surveys on policies supported by the Republican party, reports from various state organizations, and tape recordings of Chairman Richards’s addresses and interviews.

The *Myrene R. Brewer Collection* (MS 17) contains correspondence, reports, and newsletters related to her time as the Republican National Committeewoman for Utah from 1972-76. Particularly interesting are her letters with then Republican National Committee Chairman, George Bush, and her papers related to the Watergate Investigation, and E.R.A. opponent, Phyllis Schafly.

*Elizabeth Vance* (MS 119) was a fourteen-year-member of the Utah House of Representatives, and was the Utah Democratic National Committeewoman from 1976-84, serving on various committees within that organization. Her collection highlights her career and her work with Democratic Party notables including: Jimmy Carter, Hubert H.
Humphrey, John F. Kennedy, and Herbert B. Maw, through correspondence, newspaper clippings, and other papers.

The Lawrence J. Burton Collection (MS 20) covers his five terms as a member of Congress from Utah’s First Congressional District, and contains his correspondence, including letters with LDS Church leaders, and political leaders; his committee files, including those related to the Appropriations Committee, the Judicial Committee, the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, and the Un-American Activities Committee; files related to the Republican Party; and his files concerning legislation before the House. Burton’s personal papers have been separated from his Congressional papers into MS 117.

Other collections of political interest include the Nephi Jensen Scrapbook (MS 57), and the Mrs. Henry Aldous (Lucille) Dixon Collection (MS 118). Jensen was a local LDS Church member who supported progressive and independent politics. His collection consists of a scrapbook containing newspaper clippings and a few pieces of correspondence related to local and national politics. Henry Aldous Dixon was a former Weber State president, and a member of Congress. His collection was donated by his wife, and includes correspondence, speeches, press releases, three bound volumes of newspaper and magazine articles, and other papers all highlighting his campaign and six-year term as a member of the House of Representatives. A separate photograph collection (P 26) contains Dixon’s personal and Congressional photographs.

Photographs

In addition to the two photograph collections mentioned previously—and photographs contained in individual manuscript collections—Special Collections houses
several photograph collections pertaining to LDS Church buildings in Ogden and Salt Lake, and to LDS Church members. The *Mona D. Ritchie Photograph Collection* (P 37) and the *John Lewis Photograph Collection* (P 102) both contain photographs of Salt Lake City’s Temple Square. The *Wheelwright, Worth Photograph Collection* (P 44) contains pictures of the Ogden Tabernacle, 12th Ward Sunday School, and the Wheelwright family. Pictures of LDS meetinghouses can be found in the *Ogden Chamber of Commerce Collection* (P 55) and the *Richard Roberts Historical Ogden Collection* (P 91). Roberts’s collection also contains some photographs of LDS Church members and their homes. The *Loni Prout Photograph Collection* (P 90) contains photographs of the Ogden and Salt Lake City tabernacles, and the Ogden Tabernacle Choir. Finally, the *Marriner Eccles Collection* (P107) contains photographs of the David Eccles and Ellen Stoddard family—particularly of their son, Marriner Eccles. David Eccles was a prominent LDS businessman from Ogden.

The Weber State University Archives (801-626-6911) is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Special Collections (801-626-6540) is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. During the academic year, Special Collections is also open on Tuesday until 7:30 P.M., and Saturday from noon to 5:00 P.M. Both the Archives and Special Collections provide various finding aids, including published registers and container lists. Both are open to researchers, though restrictions may apply to some collections. Photocopying facilities are also available. For more information on the Stewart Library Archives and Special Collections, and to visit our digital collections, please visit [http://library.weber.edu](http://library.weber.edu).

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