

# RELIGION OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

RACE AND THE  
MORMON STRUGGLE FOR WHITENESS



W. PAUL REEVE

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*To Mom, Dad, and Roene  
for teaching me to look on the heart*



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either on 5 January or 5 February 1852. I wanted to clear up the ambiguity of the timeline of Young's speeches to the legislature and get as close as possible to his original words, rather than rely on Wilford Woodruff's truncated summary. I also wanted to know if his most important speech was delivered on 5 February or 5 January. The only response I received from the Church History Library was that there was no shorthand version of a 5 January speech and no mention of 5 February. Not entirely satisfied, I decided to try again later. In the meantime, I thought I had solved the chronology problem of Young's speeches, yet I still had lingering questions. I sent a version of chapter 5 to Christopher Rich to read. He believed that Young's most fully enunciated rationale for a race-based priesthood denial was delivered on 5 February, not 5 January. His feedback prompted me to again inquire at the Church History Library, so this time I requested a shorthand version of a 5 February speech. This new request led not only to the discovery of shorthand for Young's speech but also to speeches by Orson Pratt and Orson Spencer that had never been transcribed, as well as a vigorous debate over the Indian indenture bill. These discoveries led to a meeting and a new friendship with LaJean Purcell Caruth, the first person to transcribe some of these speeches since they were originally recorded by George D. Watt in 1852. Information from the speeches also led to new insights into the beginnings of the race-based priesthood ban in Mormonism that have never been considered before. LaJean and Christopher have since joined me in coediting and contextualizing the 1852 legislative bills, debates, and speeches for publication for the first time. The result of this editorial collaboration is slated to appear as a book of its own entitled "*Enough to cause the Angles in Heaven to Blush*": *Race, Servitude, and Priesthood at the 1852 Utah Legislature*.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BYC	Brigham Young Collection, CHL.
CHL	Church History Library, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
FHL	Family History Library, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
HBLL	Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
HL	Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
JH	Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronology of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830 to the present), CHL.
JWML	J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.
LTPSC	L. Tom Perry Special Collections, HBLL.
USHS	Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

# Religion of a Different Color



# Introduction

## All “Mormon Elder-Berry’s” Children



On 28 April 1904, less than two months after the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joseph F. Smith, spent a withering six days as a witness before a US Senate committee, *Life* magazine published a political cartoon that offered a profound pictorial vision of what Mormonism looked like at the dawn of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Cartoonist C. J. Rudd simply labeled his drawing “Mormon Elder-Berry—out with his six-year-olds, who take after their mothers” (see figure 0.1). As was typical of period magazines, there was no text or story to accompany the cartoon. There was only Rudd’s short caption and the picture itself.<sup>2</sup>

The image seems incongruous with present-day expectations of what a Mormon family looked like in 1904. Apart from the blatant attack on polygamy explicit in the image, if the cartoon were to appear in 2014 the LDS Church’s public affairs department might well embrace Elder Berry’s racially diverse international family. The church might even recruit several of Elder Berry’s children for its “I’m a Mormon” media campaign, which is an effort to promote a heterogeneous and global identity for Mormonism in the twenty-first century.<sup>3</sup>

In 1904, however, the *Life* magazine cartoon was certainly not meant as a compliment, nor was it intended as a celebration of Mormon diversity. In fact, it was intended as a lingering critique, a holdover from the nineteenth century when politicians, Protestant ministers, journalists, news editors, overland migrants, dime novelists, graphic artists, and others contributed to the construction of mythic mixed-race Mormon families similar to that of Mormon Elder Berry’s.

*Life*’s publication came at the very moment when Mormon leaders were attempting to orchestrate a new image for the faith and to make the transition from a polygamous and racially suspect past toward a monogamist and racially pure future. Following his testimony before the US Senate, Joseph F. Smith





Figure 0.1 “Mormon Elder-Berry—Out with His Six-Year-Olds, Who Take After Their Mothers.” Reprinted from *Life*, 28 April 1904, 404.

returned to Salt Lake City and on 6 April 1904, issued what historians refer to as the “Second Manifesto.” Smith, in essence, enforced the first manifesto delivered almost fourteen years earlier by then church president Wilford Woodruff, who had promised to use his influence to ensure Mormon compliance with the laws of the land and to end Mormon polygamy. Insisting he would keep that earlier promise, Smith warned the LDS faithful that any “officer or member” of the church who entered into any future plural marriage would be “deemed in transgression against the Church” and subject to excommunication.<sup>4</sup>

The *Life* cartoon was part of an effort to trap Mormons in a racially suspect past even as Mormon leaders attempted to shape a whiter future. This profound moment of transition played out on a national stage with intense media scrutiny. The Senate hearings in Washington, DC generated curiosity and at times appealed to the nation’s prurient interests. The hearings dragged on for three years as the US Senate decided if it would allow Reed Smoot, a sitting LDS apostle, a monogamist, and a Republican, to retain his seat. In this setting and beyond, the nation attempted to come to terms with Mormonism, to situate this uniquely American-born faith within a broader religious landscape and to decide if it belonged.<sup>5</sup>

The Utah state legislature elected Smoot in 1903, but reports of continuing plural marriage among the Mormons, church interference in politics, and lingering questions over Mormon loyalty to the nation prompted the Senate investigation. The Reed Smoot hearings were the culmination of an Americanization process that began with the Woodruff Manifesto in 1890, continued through Utah statehood in 1896, and finally solidified when the Senate voted in 1907

to allow Smoot to retain his seat.<sup>6</sup> It was an important period of transition for Mormonism, from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, from polygamy to monogamy, from outsider to insider, from communalism to capitalism, from isolation to integration, and perhaps even from insular to global. Those transformations were gradual and messy, and they left lingering vestiges of the old mixed with the new. Nonetheless, Mormonism was in fact "in transition" and the Smoot hearings served as an important harbinger of change.<sup>7</sup>

This book argues that one of those transitions was racial: from not securely white in the nineteenth century to too white by the twenty-first century. Being white equaled access to political, social, and economic power: all aspects of citizenship in which outsiders sought to limit or prevent Mormon participation. At least a part of those efforts came through persistent attacks on the collective Mormon body. Outsiders suggested that Mormons were physically different and racially more similar to marginalized groups than they were to white people. Mormons responded with aspirations toward whiteness. It was a back-and-forth struggle between what outsiders imagined and what Mormons believed. The process was never linear and most often involved both sides talking past each other. Yet, Mormons in the nineteenth century recognized their suspect racial position. One leader complained that Mormons were treated as if they were "some savage tribe, or some colored race of foreigners" while another acknowledged that the Saints were not "considered suitable to live among 'white folks.'"<sup>8</sup>

Although much has been written about the economic, cultural, doctrinal, marital, legal, religious, and political differences that set Mormons apart from mainstream nineteenth-century America, much less is known about the ways in which Protestants believed Mormons were physically different.<sup>9</sup> The Mormon body in fact became a key battleground in the conflict between church and state that played out among the Mormons.<sup>10</sup>

In many regards, the Mormon struggle for whiteness is a microcosm of the history of race in America, this time taught through the lens of religion. Mormons were conflated with nearly every other "problem" group in the nineteenth century—blacks, Indians, immigrants, and Chinese—a way to color them less white by association. In telling the Mormon racial story, one ultimately tells the American racial story, a chronicle fraught with cautionary tales regarding whiteness, religious freedom, and racial genesis.

As the historian David R. Roediger contends, "In the United States of a century ago people did not talk about race in the way we do."<sup>11</sup> Ever shifting and frequently contradictory definitions of race and racial hierarchies functioned at all levels of American society. Race operated as a hierarchical system designed to create order and superiority out of the perceived disorder of the confluence of peoples in America. Race could variously be marked by language, national

origin, religion, laws and government, marital relationships, and a variety of cultural characteristics. In general, “race” was a loosely used word that sometimes referred to nationality more than skin color, especially in reference to immigrants from Europe. Nineteenth-century writers did not simply refer to “the Irish,” they discussed “the Irish race.” Yet, race as nationality increasingly became entangled with race as skin color, especially in the power dynamics that played out between the white majority and black, red, and yellow minorities. In the case of the Mormons, such distinctions blurred dramatically. Latter-day Saints were white-skinned and often native born. If they had not converted, they would have been categorized as Nordic or Anglo-Saxon people and placed at the top of the racial hierarchy. Instead they were labeled “Mormons,” a derogatory term used to define an ever shifting set of group characteristics similar to the ways in which “Celt” and “Dago” were sometimes used to delineate people of Irish-Catholic and Italian descent. In defining a group identity for Mormons, outsiders frequently conflated believers with other marginalized groups to imagine them as more red, black, yellow, or less white than white. Race, then, was a socially invented category and not a biological reality. It was employed by the white Protestant majority to situate Mormons at various distances away from the top of a racial hierarchy and thereby justify discriminatory policies against them.<sup>12</sup>

The significance of whiteness in American history has largely been taught through an immigration and labor lens. It is a story that typically involves the arrival of immigrant groups, foreigners who underwent an Americanization process as they transitioned from not-white to white. Immigrants experienced racialization in their neighborhoods and more often in America’s factories, mines, and smelters as they “worked toward whiteness.”<sup>13</sup>

Mormonism challenges that story. No longer is it solely a tale about immigration and labor. Whiteness was also a powerful mediator between the Protestant majority and the Mormon minority. The intriguing racial twist to the story lies in the fact that the Protestant majority gave birth to its own despised offspring. Nineteenth-century Mormons came from the same stock as the white Protestant majority who quickly turned on its own and then cast about for ways to warrant its behavior. A fluid, illogical, and highly charged American racial context offered a variety of readymade justifications.

Outsiders were convinced that Mormonism represented a racial—not merely religious—departure from the mainstream, and they spent considerable effort attempting to deny Mormon whiteness. Mormons thus became “inbetween peoples,” somewhere between “hard racism and full inclusion,” “neither securely white nor nonwhite.”<sup>14</sup> Mormons in turn fought to maintain and ultimately claim their white identity, a fact that underscores the ways in which race was both “ascription” and “aspiration.”<sup>15</sup> While the Mormons aspired to define themselves, outsiders ascribed certain characteristics to the Mormons. The Mormon

experience, in fact, highlights both halves of that formulation uncommonly well. The consistent denial of the blessings of whiteness emphasized for Mormons the ways in which Americans essentialized skin color and found them wanting. Although Mormons initially challenged the white status quo, they eventually participated in it. It was a struggle from which they ultimately emerged triumphant—but certainly not unscathed.

\* \* \*

When the Mormons arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847, they were fleeing almost two decades of persecution in New York, Ohio, Missouri, and finally Illinois. Suspicion, mistrust, and outright animosity followed Joseph Smith from the time in 1820 when he announced Mormonism's genesis miracle, a visitation from God the Father and his son Jesus Christ. Smith's audacious claims to heavenly intervention grew to include ancient American prophets such as the angel Moroni, as well as biblical luminaries such as Moses, Elijah, Noah, John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John. Smith went on to publish the Book of Mormon, new scripture he claimed to translate from gold plates. The text narrated God's dealings with peoples in the Americas long before Columbus arrived. In 1830 Smith formally organized the Church of Christ—later renamed the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—and declared it a pure restoration of the primitive church established by Jesus Christ. Persecution only intensified as adherents to the new religion gathered together for strength, unity, and worship. Driven from their homes at the hands of angry vigilantes, Mormons followed a frontier trajectory, attempting to find solace as a people apart, at the very edges of the American republic. Following the murder of Smith and his brother Hyrum in 1844, Mormons fled the United States altogether and sought refuge in isolated northern Mexico.

Less than seven months after their arrival in the Great Basin, Mexico signed the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ceding 55% of Mexican territory to the United States. The Mormons found themselves once again on American soil. Before that transfer took place, however, in late December 1847 and early January 1848 John C. Calhoun, US Senator from South Carolina, introduced a resolution into the Senate that held far-reaching and unintended implications for the Mormon refugees. US military forces then occupied Alta California or northern Mexico as well as Mexico City itself. Some of America's most ardent expansionists even clamored for the annihilation of Mexican nationhood and for the annexation of the entire country. In Calhoun's mind, to do so would have been inconsistent with the war's objectives and with America's "character and genius." More importantly, Calhoun feared that swallowing Mexico whole would be "subversive of our free and popular institutions." He made it clear that he did not have a problem with the United States taking land from Mexico as indemnity for US

losses during the war, but he did object to “the annihilation of the nationality of Mexico” and the potential for “eight or nine millions of Mexicans, without a government, on our hands, not knowing what to do with them.” In other words, it was not so much the acquisition of land that Calhoun opposed as it was the people on that land.<sup>16</sup>

Calhoun later detailed the racial ideology that lay at the heart of his concern: “We have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race—the free white race. To incorporate Mexico, would be the very first instance of the kind of incorporating an Indian race; for more than half of the Mexicans are Indians, and the other is composed chiefly of mixed tribes. I protest against such a union as that! Ours, sir, is the Government of a white race.”<sup>17</sup> Calhoun feared incorporating new “races” into the United States and being forced to create territorial governments for them. To do so, he fretted, would place “them on an equality with the people of the United States.” He went on to suggest that in the entire history of humankind “there is no instance whatever of any civilized colored races being found equal to the establishment of free popular government.” Calhoun wondered, “Are we to associate with ourselves as equals, companions, and fellow-citizens, the Indians and mixed race of Mexico?” “We make a great mistake . . . when we suppose that all people are capable of self-government.” Only “people advanced to a very high state of moral and intellectual improvement are capable, in a civilized state, of maintaining free government.”<sup>18</sup> For Calhoun, only white people possessed the race, morals, intellect, and democratic capacity necessary for self-rule.

Ironically, Mormons of mostly white American and Euro-American descent, about 17,000 strong by 1850, were then living in northern Mexico.<sup>19</sup> Even though their skin color conformed to Calhoun’s definition of whiteness, it was not enough. Protestant America over the course of the nineteenth century constructed elaborate illogical arguments that struck at the morals, intellect, and the heart of a fabricated Mormon body. In doing so their disparate arguments gave rise to the idea that Mormonism was spawning an entirely “new race.”

So rather than being an anomaly in frontier history, the Mormons helped to define America’s racial and religious identity. In doing so they fit well with the people living in the last four contiguous states admitted into the United States, three of which came from land acquired as a result of the US-Mexican War. As Calhoun suggested, Congress and the federal government were the gatekeepers and as such held the power to decide who was fit for democracy. Calhoun’s “Indians and mixed race of Mexico” applied to Oklahoma, initially created as Indian territory, and to the large Hispanic populations of New Mexico and Arizona. But what of the mostly white Mormons of Utah? The United States was a Protestant nation and the Constitution a Protestant document.<sup>20</sup> Congress and the American people made decisions along religious as well as racial lines.

Sometimes with the Mormons, however, that distinction blurred and even disappeared altogether.

In the eyes of the Protestant majority, members of the "Mormon race" were incapable of democracy. Mormons from Utah applied seven times for statehood between 1849 and 1896 but were deliberately kept at bay until the end of the nineteenth century. Polygamy, theocracy, and Mormon clannishness were deemed too un-American to allow Utah into the sisterhood of states. In building its rhetorical barriers against full citizenship for Mormons, the Protestant majority racialized a predominantly white religious group alongside Indians, blacks, Chinese, and immigrants. The Mormon experience can thus be recast as one of race, citizenship, civil rights, identity, and equality, much like that of other peoples living on land acquired from Mexico as a result of the US-Mexican War. It is only in viewing Mormon whiteness as a contested variable, not an assumed fact, that makes such a paradigm shift possible.

In nineteenth-century America, whiteness dominated the social, political, and economic life of the country. Politicians equated being white with citizenship and fitness for self-rule. It was a socially imagined category that was taken for granted, deemed normal or natural, and functioned as the preferred condition in American history. In 1790 the US Congress established a precedent when it passed a naturalization act that limited citizenship to "free white persons." Senator Calhoun reinforced that principle in his 1848 speech. The US Supreme Court in its *Dred Scott* decision in 1857 expressed a similar sentiment when it declared that blacks possessed no rights "which the white man was bound to respect." Even Abraham Lincoln, the future "great emancipator" announced in 1858 that he was not in favor "of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people." As he saw it, as long as blacks and whites coexisted, "there must be the position of superior and inferior." In such a situation he favored "the superior position assigned to the white race." Following the Civil War and the demise of federal Reconstruction in the South, the Supreme Court sided with those who attempted to reassert white supremacy. In 1896 it ruled that separate-but-equal facilities were constitutional, a decision that legalized a color barrier and condoned Southern attempts to segregate most facets of American life.<sup>21</sup>

Even still, historian Nell Irvin Painter contends that "hatred of black people did not preclude hatred of other white people," especially those "considered different and inferior." Mormonism's founding decades coincided with a period in which whiteness itself came under question. Between the 1840s and 1920s, America underwent a dramatic industrial transformation which in turn produced a demand for cheap labor. Immigrants swarmed to America to meet that demand. Corresponding nativist backlashes also permeated the same period, especially as older Americans perceived the new influx of immigrants as threats to



a smooth-functioning republic. As a result “a fracturing of monolithic whiteness” occurred, shored up by “scientific doctrines of race” which blended with “political concerns over the newcomers’ fitness for self-government.” These forces all combined to produce an emerging hierarchy of whiteness, with Anglo-Saxons on top and other undesirable less-white “races” situated at various lower rungs on the racial ladder.<sup>22</sup> Immigrants from Ireland were singled out for their “physical traits, their moral character and their peculiar customs.” Their “wild look and manner, mud cabins and funeral howlings,” all conjured “the memory of a barbarous age” in the mind of one observer.<sup>23</sup>

It was not just the Irish, however, who complicated ideas about whiteness in America. Racial schemes flourished as early as the eighteenth century with each one “offering a different number of races, even a different number of Caucasian races.” Mormons, like their Protestant neighbors, tended to draw upon biblical genealogy, specifically Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, to divide the globe into three racial groups: yellow, black, and white, respectively. For Judeo-Christian believers, Noah’s three sons repopulated the globe following the great flood and thereby accounted for racial differences. However, by the 1840s, “science” also informed racial understanding and gave rise to competing ideas regarding whiteness, a process that further complicated the racial landscape. White, Caucasian, Nordic, Anglo-Saxon, Celt, Slav, Alpine, Hebrew, Mediterranean, Iberic, Latin, and other such identifiers emerged to additionally blur racial categories. This fracturing of whiteness sent racial thinkers and the popular imagination scurrying to invent an ordered hierarchy out of a growing multiplicity of “races,” with Anglo-Saxons generally at the top.<sup>24</sup> Mormonism was born into this era of fracturing whiteness and did not escape its consequences.

Regardless of the racial scheme employed, outsiders were uncertain where to situate Mormons. Were they more nonwhite than white, or were they more black, yellow, or red? Even though outsiders could never fully agree where to place Mormons on competing racial hierarchies, some were, nonetheless, convinced that Mormonism represented a backward racial descent. Some social evolutionists focused upon “development,” contending that as societies progressed from savagery to barbarism to civilization, they left behind such barbaric practices as polygamy and a devotion to authoritarian rule.<sup>25</sup> Mormonism, in contrast, represented a fearful decline, especially as supposedly civilized Americans and western Europeans joined the new faith and then devolved into polygamy and despotism. As one commentator warned, if America failed to eradicate polygamy from its soil, a debilitating process would only end “in animalizing man, in corrupting the very founts of virtue and purity, and, finally, in barbarism.”<sup>26</sup>

Rather than being an undesirable immigrant group, however, Mormons were already American insiders who were first generation converts from America or western Europe. Yet the Protestant majority repeatedly called into question their

whiteness and capacity for self-rule. The Mormon experience therefore highlights the racialization process at work from the very birth of a suspect group. Among other things, it shows how "native-stock" Americans imagined religious conversions among their own neighbors as somehow a sign of racial decline. As early as the 1840s, some cultural observers began to speak of a "Mormon race" but always in terms of racial regression, never racial progress.

In this light, Mormon Elder Berry's family violated existing American norms in a variety of ways. Elder Berry's marriages represented blatant abuses of anti-miscegenation laws then in force in most states, including Utah, that made one form or another of white and black, white and red, and/or white and yellow marriages illegal. Elder Berry's failure to segregate whiteness and his unabashed flaunting of race mixing marked him as not just religiously suspect but racially suspect as well. Clearly Mormons were not only a threat to America's religious life but also a racial threat to American democracy. The irony, of course, was that nineteenth-century Mormons were overwhelmingly white and should have easily blended into the racial mainstream. Yet their ability to blend only seemed to exacerbate anxiety among outsiders, so much so that they grew increasingly intent upon seeing a difference where none existed.

George A. Smith's experience as a Mormon missionary in 1838 is illustrative. When Smith learned of mob activity against his coreligionists in Missouri, he left his proselyting work in Kentucky to join the main body of Saints and assist them in their time of need. On his way through Missouri he stopped for the night at the home of a man who lived near DeWitt in Carroll County. Smith wisely did not identify himself as a Mormon so that his host would feel at liberty to speak to him about the Mormon expulsion then taking place. As Smith recounted it, the man "was very bloodthirsty toward the Mormons. He said he hated them worse than he did the Indians, for he could tell an Indian when he saw one, but he could not always tell a Mormon."<sup>27</sup> To compensate, outsiders became preoccupied with distinguishing Mormons from their neighbors. As one late-nineteenth-century memoir recounted, Missouri Mormons were "clannish, traded together, worked together, and carried with them a melancholy look." Their appearance was distinct enough "that one acquainted with them could tell a Mormon when he met him by the look upon his face almost as well as if he had been of a different color."<sup>28</sup> Although outsiders could never fully agree upon the color, they conjured a variety of Mormon bodies upon which to inscribe their hatred: red, black, yellow, and "not white." Mormonism thus became a religion of a different color, a pariah faith with racially aberrant adherents.

In this regard, Mormon Elder Berry's fictional family represented a culmination of nineteenth-century efforts to racialize Mormons. Their interracial solidarity underscored a blatant violation of legal segregation, antimiscegenation laws, societal norms, Protestant ideals, and generally understood standards of



decency. In seeking to understand the historical roots of Elder Berry's family, a myriad of sources give life to the branches of his family tree. News clippings, editorials, pictures, stories, speeches, letters, laws, journals, diaries, and commentaries each offer a small piece in a much larger montage of efforts designed to exclude Elder Berry's family from the broader American family. That montage accentuates the intricacies of religious discrimination cloaked in racial garb and a way for outsiders to justify discriminatory policies against Mormons and mark them as unfit for self-rule. America's religious *and* racial purity were at stake.

For their part, the Mormons were by no means willing to leave the definition of their identity to others. The Mormon body, thus, became a battleground on which the LDS hierarchy and the federal government grappled to inscribe very different values, laws, and morality signifying either racial ascendancy or racial deterioration. Mormon leader George Q. Cannon, for example, asserted that "here in these [Utah] valleys, we shall raise a race of men who will be the joy of the earth, whose complexions will be like the complexions of angels—full of health, purity, innocence and vitality." Rather than racial regress, Mormons imagined racial progress through efforts to fashion an equally mythical yet racially pure family for themselves designed to counter that of Mormon Elder Berry.<sup>29</sup>

Mormons tapped into then-current notions of "British Israelism" and "Anglo-Saxon Triumphalism" as one means of claiming racial purity for themselves. The idea that the peoples of Great Britain were direct lineal descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel predated Mormonism but was still current in Britain and America throughout the nineteenth century and found expression as the British-Israelism movement. At the same time, some thinkers argued that the Anglo-Saxon "race" represented the triumph of Western civilization as it marched across Europe to Britain and from Britain to America. The fact that the bulk of Mormon missionary success came from England and the "Nordic" or Scandinavian nations of Europe offered ready evidence to Mormons that their proselyting efforts were doing more than winning converts: they were redeeming ancient Israel. Mormons became convinced that the lost descendants of Israel possessed "believing blood," a condition inherent in a convert's character—in his or her blood—that prepared proselytes to respond favorably when they heard the Mormon gospel.<sup>30</sup> In 1851 there were more Mormons in the United Kingdom and Ireland than there were in Utah Territory. An estimated 32,000 British and Irish Latter-day Saints immigrated to the Great Basin between 1847 and 1869. As Mormon revelation put it, "The field is white already to harvest" (Doctrine and Covenants, 4:4). The white conversions that followed only added certainty to the ways Mormons constructed a triumphal Anglo-Saxon identity for themselves.<sup>31</sup>

British Israelism and Anglo-Saxon triumphalism as Mormon identity markers take on a different hue, however, when placed in dialogue with the negative

racial identities outsiders imagined for Mormons. In this light, Mormon efforts at asserting Anglo-Saxonism can profitably be reconsidered as one facet of the Mormon move toward whiteness: it was an attempt to position Mormons at the top of America's racial ladder while others tried to push them several rungs down. It was that attack on Mormon Anglo-Saxon triumphalism that Mormon Elder Berry's imagined 1904 family captured so well.

The chapters that follow trace each of Elder Berry's children: where they came from, how they found their way into such a mythical multiracial and international Mormon family, and what that means for the history of race in America. The chronological focus is on the nineteenth-century roots of Elder Berry's family, although the concluding chapter considers what happened to Elder Berry's hypothetical descendants in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, culminating with Mitt Romney.

Perhaps as typical in most families, not all of Elder Berry's children receive equal treatment. The six white children are considered collectively in chapter 1. Even though they were immigrants from western and northern Europe, their conversion to Mormonism marked them as suspect in the popular American imagination, so much so that outsiders perceived Mormonism as a foreign and alien problem on American soil. It was also a racial problem, an argument that unfolded in stages over time with an assumed set of group characteristics coming to define "the new race."

Chapters 2 and 3 consider Mormon Elder Berry's Indian daughter, the third child from his right (see figure 0.1). Chapter 2 traces her story up through the Mormon expulsion to the Great Basin and chapter 3 from 1847 to the end of the century. Mormon theological views of Native Americans certainly affected how outsiders imagined Mormon race mixing between red and white. Mormon leaders did in fact encourage Mormon men to marry Native American women as a means of racial uplift, even as outsiders envisioned those same marriages as evidence of racial decline. Beyond intermarriage, outsiders persistently imagined Mormons conspiring with Indians against white Americans and sometimes descending below the level of savages themselves.

The third child from Elder Berry's left, the black pickaninny girl, is the focus of chapters 4 through 7. This attention is indicative of how the black-white binary dominated racial thought in nineteenth-century America and the way it dramatically impacted Mormonism. It also indicates how fully the Mormon racial story was both ascribed from the outside and something that Mormons aspired to from within. The first black convert joined Mormonism in 1830, its founding year, and other blacks trickled in over the course of the century. At least two black men were ordained to the faith's highest priesthood before Joseph Smith's death in 1844. Yet the space for full black participation gave way, in fits and starts, across the course of the nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century Mormon

leaders had put firm policies in place that racially segregated the Mormon priesthood and temples. That story is situated here within a broad national context wherein Mormons were depicted as facilitators of race mixing despite forceful internal policies to the contrary. Chapter 4 demonstrates that dialectic at work when outsiders racialized Mormons as black during the faith's first two decades and Mormons moved away from black toward white, with the two processes informing and shaping each other. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 shift to monologues with each side alternately speaking past the other. Chapter 5 focuses on the internal story, the beginning of a priesthood ban, and the way Brigham Young theologized and practiced race. Chapter 6 shifts back toward outside perceptions as interracial polygamous families and the "Mormon coon" animated public opinion, this despite Mormonism's internal policies to the contrary. Chapter 7 returns to the view from within as Mormon leaders enacted temple restrictions designed to bar black women and men from the faith's crowning rituals, solidified a race-based priesthood ban, and curtailed missionary efforts among blacks.

Chapter 8 explores Elder Berry's oriental child, the second child to his right (see figure 0.1). Muslims, Turks, and Chinese immigrants on the West Coast all provided opportunities for outsiders to orientalize Mormonism and heighten fears of civilization's backward descent. In the view of some thinkers, polygamy was racial and Eastern, marking Mormons as incapable of shouldering the blessings of democracy. In 1879 the US Supreme Court utilized such a rationale when it upheld antipolygamy legislation. Mormons, in short, represented an oriental threat on American soil and put the nation's democratic experiment at risk.

By the early decades of the twentieth century, Mormons had successfully passed as white. Yet, as the concluding chapter explores, whiteness for Mormons came at a significant cost. During the civil rights era, the price of that passage began to manifest itself as Mormons yet again found themselves on the wrong side of white. This time, segregated priesthood and temples marked them as too white, especially as LDS leaders dug in their heels in efforts to shore up black-white racial barriers. The faith's passage back toward universalism began in 1978 when it reintegrated its priesthood and temples and ushered in a racially diverse and global future, despite a persistent effort among outsiders to trap it in a pre-1978 whiteness.<sup>32</sup>

Elder Berry's family thus provides a useful lens into a moment of racial transition for Mormons. In this book his fabricated children serve as guides for an exploration into the intersections among race, whiteness, and religion in the nineteenth century. While Elder Berry's children act as organizational tools, this method conceals the messiness of the historical record, suggesting a systematic approach to a topic that was not systematic in its creation. Those Americans who racialized Mormons did not neatly organize their views in ways that always fit into one child or another's family tree. In 1836 Mormon missionaries

in Tennessee, for example, faced rumors that they "walk[ed] out with colored women" and that their church had "long communion with the Indians."<sup>33</sup> Americans did not always know how to think about Mormons and race; many of the sources discussed here shift almost randomly between racial groups with no firm notion of a specific racialization in mind. Even still, evidence abounds to give life to each branch of Elder Berry's family tree.

Focusing so intently upon race also has the potential to obscure other ways in which Mormons were marginalized. The evidence presented here does not seek to supplant the argument that Mormons were denigrated as religiously different but to enrich it.<sup>34</sup> Racialization is an additional facet of the Mormon story that helps explain how outsiders justified discriminatory policies against this American-born faith. Although it is impossible to know how deeply the racialization rhetoric deployed against Mormons penetrated the average American mind, or what readers thought or listeners heard when they read an editorial or listened to a sermon, the evidence of racialization is overwhelming. Moreover, that evidence comes from most segments of American society, from diaries of overland immigrants to newspaper columns, from Protestant tracts and sermons to Supreme Court decisions and Congressional debates, from political cartoons to dime novels, and from letters and journals to presidential speeches. In total these sources reveal new insights into the place of whiteness and religion in America's racial history.

# CHAPTER 1

## “The New Race”



The northern and western European children in Elder Berry's family, the children who one might logically believe were white and acceptable, were instead subject to scorn. The Scottish boy, the wild Irish girl, the two British street urchins seemingly straight out of *Oliver Twist*, the Dutch girl, and the spinster in the making, were all at least white, children who should have drawn no special attention and been easily assimilated. Such was not the case.

In 1857, just ten years following the arrival of the Mormons as religious refugees in the Great Basin, they gained a profound understanding of the depth of suspicions then percolating in Washington, DC, about them. In what would come to be called the “Utah War,” the most extensive and expensive military expedition between the US-Mexican War and the Civil War, President James Buchanan ordered a 2,500-man army to Utah to suppress a reported Mormon rebellion and replace Brigham Young as territorial governor.<sup>1</sup>

The Utah War left lingering fears and prejudices on both sides of the already strained relationship between the Mormons and the federal government. It further shaped and solidified long-standing public opinion about Mormons as distinct, peculiar, suspicious, and potentially dangerous outsiders. One military physician in the Utah War moved the discourse on Mormon differences firmly into the realm of the racial as he constructed an explicit description of Mormons as a degenerate and deformed race. Dr. Roberts Bartholow's first significant assignment as an army doctor was with the Utah expedition in 1857. Bartholow spent a challenging and uncomfortable winter bivouacked with the Fifth Army outside the burned-out remains of Fort Bridger in present-day southwestern Wyoming. Then in June 1858 he entered the Salt Lake Valley and caught his first glimpse of the Mormon people. In a report to the US Senate printed in 1860, he detailed his observations of the Mormons over the course of his two-year stay in Utah.<sup>2</sup>

“The Mormon, of all the human animals now walking this globe, is the most curious in every relation,” Bartholow wrote. He called Mormonism a great social

blunder that seriously affected "the physical stamina and mental health" of its adherents. As a result of their isolated location, their "grossly material" religion, and the practice of plural marriage, he concluded that "the Mormon people have arrived at a physical and mental condition, in a few years of growth, such as densely-populated communities in the older parts of the world . . . have been ages in reaching." Polygamy, in Bartholow's estimation, was the central issue, especially as it created a "preponderance of female births," high infant mortality, and a "striking uniformity in facial expression," which included "albuminous and gelatinous types of constitution" and "physical conformation" among "the younger portion" of Mormons.<sup>3</sup>

In Bartholow's view, polygamy forced Mormons to unduly interfere with the normal development of adolescence and was in sum a "violation of a natural law." Mormon men were at the heart of the problem, constantly seeking "young virgins, [so] that notwithstanding the preponderance of the female population, a large percentage of the younger men remain unmarried." To sustain this system Bartholow claimed that girls were married to the waiting patriarchs "at the earliest manifestations of puberty" and when that was not soon enough, Mormons made use of "means" to "hasten the period." The result was high fertility among polygamous wives, but there was also an equally high infant mortality rate, natural evidence of the wrongs bound up in polygamy. In fact, the progeny of the "peculiar institution" demonstrated its "most deplorable effects" in "the genital weakness of the boys and young men." Polygamy created a "sexual debility" in the next generation of Mormon men, largely because their "sexual desires are stimulated to an unnatural degree at a very early age, and as female virtue is easy, opportunities are not wanting for their gratification."<sup>4</sup>

All of this, to Bartholow, combined to create a distinct, even degraded, Mormon body. Bartholow could not tell if it was due to "the practice of a purely sensual and material religion," the "premature development of the passions," or simply to Great Basin "isolation," but no matter the reason, he observed a unique body type among the Mormons: "An expression of countenance and a style of feature, which may be styled the Mormon expression and style; an expression compounded of sensuality, cunning, suspicion, and smirking self-conceit. The yellow, sunken, cadaverous visage; the greenish-colored eyes; the thick, protuberant lips; the low forehead; the light, yellowish hair; and the lank, angular person, constitute an appearance so characteristic of the new race, the production of polygamy, as to distinguish them at a glance." "The degradation of the mother follows that of the child," Bartholow concluded, "and physical degeneracy is not a remote consequence of moral depravity."<sup>5</sup>

In Bartholow's mind the consequences of polygamy manifested themselves quite literally in the next generation of Mormons. Because of the "genital weakness" he observed among the men, Bartholow suspected that if Mormons

received no additional converts from “outside sources,” the so-called Mormon problem would “eventually die out” and solve itself. The “Mormon problem” or “Mormon question,” as it was variously known in nineteenth-century politics, was cultural shorthand for the national debate over Mormonism and what to do about it. Bartholow pushed that debate in new directions as he suggested that the stream of converts, especially from the lowest stratum of European society, provided an influx of “new blood” and perpetuated “the new race” into the future.<sup>6</sup>

Fear of Mormon foreignness emerged early in the new faith’s history and only grew more intense as the century progressed. In this regard, Bartholow both summarized and foreshadowed the Mormon question as an immigrant issue that would eventually take on international dimensions. Bartholow additionally evidenced the characteristics that outsiders frequently ascribed to the male, female, and child Mormon bodies: the men were painted as lecherous and lascivious patriarchs, the women as helpless victims enslaved in a system against their will, and the children as the deformed offspring of moral depravity.

In sum, Bartholow’s report synthesized prevailing cultural ideas regarding the existence of a “Mormon race,” as well as moved them squarely into the realm of racial science and medicine. His report, filed just thirty years after the founding of Mormonism, offers significant insight into the ways in which Mormon racial purity was called into question by mid-century. Despite being overwhelmingly white, Mormons were imagined as a racial deterioration from the advances of Western civilization. Even though Mormon converts hailed from America and western Europe, the very fact that they joined a suspect and hierarchical religion signaled their racial susceptibility to superstition and despotic rule. After the Mormons openly acknowledged polygamy in 1852, it confirmed to the outside world a conclusion already made, that Mormonism represented both a religious and a racial decline.

Bartholow’s report was reprinted almost without critique in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, the *Georgia Medical and Surgical Encyclopedia*, the *London Medical Times and Gazette*, the *St. Louis Medical and Surgical Journal*, and *The Pacific Medical and Surgical Journal* in 1860 and 1861. This “unusually wide distribution” certainly had an impact on the way outsiders viewed the Mormon body.<sup>7</sup>

By December of 1860 Bartholow’s report was the topic of discussion at the New Orleans Academy of Sciences meeting, where it encountered at least some resistance from one member of the medical community. Dr. James Burns was skeptical of Bartholow’s methods and his conclusions. Burns resisted “speaking of any people as a new ‘race,’” especially a group whose “origin did not date more than thirty years back.” As Burns saw it, Mormon existence was more dependent on immigration than reproduction, a fact that complicated any notion of racial



genesis. Rather than an entirely separate species, he wondered instead if Mormons were "only a variety" in the human family.<sup>8</sup>

As he made clear, Burns had no sympathy for Mormonism, especially "its fanaticism, its impostures, its misery, and its polygamy." Nonetheless, he could not accept Bartholow's conclusion that "in consequence of polygamy, the Mormon community has degenerated." Burns noted that "it is scarcely more than thirty years since Joe Smith, the founder, was first heard of. It is incredible, that, in so brief a period has been produced a well-marked inferior 'race,' with salient facial angles, low and retreating forehead, thick lips, green areola about the eyes, gelatinous or albuminous constitutions, and the other alleged characteristics of 'race.'" He was "at a loss" to guess what Bartholow meant by a "gelatinous or albuminous constitution" and was especially concerned with Bartholow's methodology. In Burns's estimation, Bartholow's observations had not met the "rigorous requirements of science" and were based more on impressions than the systematic gathering of data. Mormons and their offspring would need to be studied for a decade or more in an empirical manner before the existence of a new race could be verified.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to Burns, other members of the New Orleans Academy pushed Bartholow's conclusions forward with inferences of their own. Professor C. G. Forshey accepted Bartholow's observations to be "just and true" and then offered collateral remarks designed to amplify their significance. "The European (or white race of men) has never been a polygamist before," Forshey asserted, "it is contrary to his nature and his instincts." The white race was "created, manifestly, for a higher destiny—an instinctive abhorrence of the brutality of promiscuous intercourse is impressed upon the males and especially the females of the race," he declared. This was true "through untold centuries and through every state of barbarism and civilization." Mormons were thus a "temporary and local exception, sustained by craft and power on the one hand, and by religious bigotry, fear, and ignorance, on the other." The isolation of the Great Basin and the Mormons' violation of the "natural law" of whiteness, he assured listeners, would eventually work out the "extinction" of the new race. As Forshey saw it, monogamy was "the normal condition of the white race of mankind" and the Mormons' violation of that normality would lead to its demise.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright supported Forshey and Bartholow with his own observations. Polygamy not only impacted the "outward or physical form" of those who practiced it but also had a "blighting influence upon the mind and morals of the white race." The "nations and tribes" who were "most addicted to polygamy" were also "most deficient in physical prowess." "Polygamy is too injurious to the mind and body to be tolerated among a progressive and Christian people," Cartwright concluded.<sup>11</sup>

Members of the New Orleans Academy ultimately voted to publish Cartwright's and Forshey's papers along with excerpts from Bartholow's report in



*DeBow's Review*, the antebellum South's "most prominent economic journal."<sup>12</sup> *DeBow's* printed the entire proceedings as "Hereditary Descent; Or, Depravity of the Offspring of Polygamy among the Mormons." Dr. Burns's criticisms notwithstanding, the Academy's publication added to the growing sense in the medical community that polygamy was producing a "new race" in the American West.<sup>13</sup>

In 1863, after visiting Utah himself, Dr. Charles Furley, assistant surgeon of the Second California Calvary, followed Bartholow's report with one of his own. For Furley, "a marked physiological inferiority strikes the stranger, from the first, as being one of the characteristics of this people." As he observed, "a certain feebleness and emaciation of person is common amongst every class, age, and sex; while the countenance of almost all are stamped with a mingled air of imbecility and brutal ferocity." Mormon faces exhibited "a general lack of color" with "sallow and cadaverous" cheeks signaling "an absence of good health." "The eye is dull and lusterless—the mouth almost invariably coarse and vulgar." In fact, Furley concluded that "the features—the countenance—the whole face, where the divinity of man should shine out, is mean and sensual to the point of absolute ugliness." Furley's report, like Bartholow's before it, found a wide audience in a variety of medical journals.<sup>14</sup>

Bartholow did not retract or refine his views over time but went on to amplify them. As a professor at the Medical College of Ohio he addressed the Cincinnati Academy of Medicine in 1867 on the "Physiological Aspects of Mormonism." This time he referred to the Mormon people as a "congress of lunatics" without offering additional evidence to support his conclusions. "Lean and weak of body, depraved of mind, precocious manhood and womanhood are the characteristics of the new population," Bartholow contended. "The cadaverous face, the sensual countenance, the ill-developed chest, the long, feeble legs, and the weak muscular system . . . are recognized as the distinctive feature of the Mormon type," he said. The *Cincinnati Lancet and Observer* published his lecture in its entirety and then excerpts were reprinted in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*.<sup>15</sup>

Bartholow and Furley were reasonable, intelligent men and medical professionals with respected reputations. Their arguments fit well within one aspect of nineteenth-century notions about race: that it was based upon phenotype or physical appearance. Race was, in part, what one could see with the eye, and both doctors were convinced that Mormons were physically peculiar. Bartholow and Furley also fed into then-current ideas about sexuality and the perceived debilitating impact that lustful desires had upon conception and the development of an unborn child. They both pointed to the "sensual" nature of Mormon countenances and alluded to the inherently lustful aspects of polygamy, which they believed passed on a carnal weakening to the next generation. Other observers would make similar claims. It is impossible to know which Mormon people the

doctors observed or why they arrived at the conclusions they did. Dr. Burns was clearly skeptical of Bartholow's initial assessment, yet medical journals republished his reports and spread his findings. In sum, the doctors promulgated with scientific certainty a growing sentiment that polygamy produced physical decline.

It was only later, in 1875, that US Army surgeon E. P. Vollum filed a government report to contradict those of Furley and Bartholow. Vollum, like Burns before him, believed that it was "too early" to arrive at a solid conclusion regarding the impact of polygamy upon the "health or constitution or mental character of the Anglo-Saxon race as seen in Utah." Vollum could detect no difference between the offspring of polygamy and monogamy in Utah. Polygamy furnished "no idiocy, insanity, rickets, tubercles or struma, or other cachexia, or debasing constitutional conditions of any kind." In his estimation, the "polygamous children are as healthy as the monogamous, and the proportion of deaths is about the same." In fact, because he perceived the polygamous families he observed to be of a higher socioeconomic class, he believed any difference fell in their favor. Vollum's commentary did not receive the same type of wide distribution as the earlier reports from Bartholow and Furley and did little to stem the tide of popular opinion regarding degraded Mormon bodies.<sup>16</sup>

Bartholow's and Furley's reports and the subsequent attention they received marked a midpoint in the Mormon racialization process and not its beginnings. Mormon racialization began much earlier, almost with the birth of the faith, and developed deep roots in a fertile and inventive American racial culture. Like "race" in general, however, it existed solely in the minds of those who imagined it, not in a physical or biological reality. For the Mormons, the consequences were nonetheless real.

As outsiders described it, "race" was also cultural, something that Mormons created in being Mormon. Their fanaticism, perceived ignorance, lower-class status, susceptibility to despotic rule, and ultimately polygamy marked them as inferior. Some of these distinctions emphasized religious aberration more than racial.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, when typically religious markers such as fanaticism or superstition were used to stain an entire group and the implication was that these attributes were somehow inborn in those who were attracted to the Mormon message, the religious bled into the racial. In a circuitous argument, outsiders posited that Mormons were degraded because they did not act white and that they did not act white because they were degraded. Rather than race producing undesirable characteristics, outsiders implied that the undesirable characteristics of the Mormons produced a new race. The pseudosciences of phrenology and physiognomy offered ready evidence to shore up such claims and to push Mormons farther and farther away from whiteness. As the influx of "undesirable" immigrants from Europe fractured American whiteness, Mormons found

themselves caught in the same nativist crosshairs as the Irish and other less-white peoples. Despite the effort of Mormon leaders to assert an Anglo-Saxon-Israelite identity for themselves, outsiders were not convinced.

\* \* \*

The Mormon racialization process began early with a label. Outsiders quickly coined the term “Mormonite” and then “Mormon” to distinguish adherents to the new faith from their neighbors. Even then the label was useful only insofar as it accrued meaning. Initially it centered upon religious distinctions, especially belief in the Book of Mormon. Over time it facilitated the assumption that Mormons shared a group identity bound by characteristics that stretched beyond a common set of religious beliefs to include notions of physical degeneration, foreignness, intellectual inferiority, susceptibility to superstition and delusion, and ultimately racial decline.

Within a year and a half of the founding of the new faith, outsiders described “Mormonites” as a distinct subgroup of people with shared although inconsistent traits. Sometimes the descriptions were positive, but even then they served to reinforce a collective identity for Mormons shorn of individuality. One 1831 account published in the *New York American* entitled “Latest from the Mormonites” described “an active, intelligent and enterprising set of people” among whom were “many intelligent and respectable individuals.” More often, however, the portrayals were negative.<sup>18</sup> Another 1831 report described “a sect of people called Mormonites” who were “ignorant” followers of Joseph Smith and “dupes who put implicit confidence in all his words.” Other accounts variously described Mormonites as “silly sheep,” “infatuated people,” “a community of vagrants, lovers of idleness,” “haters . . . of manual labor,” “strange people,” “poor fanatics,” “a class of simple and credulous people,” and “fanatical and deluded beings” who “degraded themselves” when they agreed to follow the “false prophet” Joseph Smith. In each case, the articles attempted to characterize a “set” or “sect of people” according to an assumed group identity.<sup>19</sup>

Over time, that shared identity was used to justify the expulsion of Mormons from Missouri and Illinois. A significant portion of the distinction was religious, but it frequently included racialization as an underlying rationale. In 1833, 1836, and 1838 respectively, Mormons were expelled from their homes in Jackson County, Missouri; Clay County, Missouri; and from the state of Missouri altogether. Much of the racialization that took place in these expulsions conflated Mormons with Indians and blacks as justifications for driving white people from their homes. Yet a growing sense that Mormons were degraded whites bound together by a shifting set of degenerate traits or that they were “foreigners” or “aliens” also permeated the discussion. In every situation “Mormon” became a distinct nomenclature employed by outsiders to differentiate between themselves

as "citizens," people with rights to life, liberty, and property—or the blessings of whiteness—and "Mormons" as people shorn of those same basic rights.

Jackson County "citizens" described their Mormon neighbors as "deluded fanatics or weak and designing knaves." Had they been "respectable citizens in society" and thus merely religiously "deluded," they "would have been entitled to our pity rather than to our contempt and hatred," one removal petition declared. However, some old settlers found that, with few exceptions, the physical appearance, manners, and conduct of the Mormons signaled that they "were of the very dregs of that society from which they came, lazy, idle and vicious."<sup>20</sup> Another account charged Jackson County Mormons with "gathering together the scum of the earth" and deemed it "extremely natural" that Missourians would "feel disposed to rid themselves of such a pest." The large majority of Jackson County residents, by contrast, were "fearless, honest, and independent citizens."<sup>21</sup>

Similar distinctions were drawn in both Ohio and Missouri as tension between Mormons and their neighbors again escalated in the mid-1830s. One outsider from Kirtland, Ohio, admonished Missourians to protect themselves from "the incursions of [Mormon] savages" who were then on their way to Missouri. He bemoaned the fact that Kirtland was "completely over run" with Mormons or, more precisely, "cursed with them." As he put it, "no greater curse could befall any people than to have these fiends in human shape settle among them." He called the Mormons a "scourge" and warned Missourians of an impending "immense swarms of them." They were people "mostly from the New England States [and] Upper & Lower Canada," yet despite their generally favorable geographic origins, their collective character was deemed "indolent," "vicious," and "unprincipled." The movement of these Mormons represented a transfer of the "worst part of the population of the East to the West," a group of people to whom "the inmates of the Ohio Penitentiary" were deemed "respectable" by comparison.<sup>22</sup>

Missourians used similar rhetoric to expel Mormons from Clay County in 1836. One petition drew a distinction between the "people commonly called Mormons" and the "citizens" of Clay County. The Mormons, it insisted, were "Eastern men, whose manners, habits, customs and even dialect, are essentially different from our own." It urged them to "seek a home where they may obtain large and separate bodies of land, and have a community of their own." If, instead, the Mormons insisted on "flooding the county," civil war would be the "inevitable consequence."<sup>23</sup> It was a clear signal that some Clay County residents deemed removal the only option for dealing with their Mormon neighbors.

In response, the state of Missouri attempted to relegate Mormons to their own county by 1836. Yet over the next two years a continuing influx of Mormons to other counties again raised the ire of Missourians and led to a complete Mormon expulsion. This time Missourians elaborated upon the perceived foreign and alien aspect of Mormons as one justification for their ouster. Residents