

# Occult Americana

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## SUPPLEMENTARY SKETCHES no. 2

"Excerpts from the Book of Mormon"



JOSEPH SMITH : the Prophet

The following selections are from the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon printed by E.B. Grandin in Palmyra, New York.

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The Book of Mormon  
An Account Written by the Hand  
of Mormon, Upon Plates Taken  
From the Plates of Nephi.

By Joseph Smith Jr.  
Author and Proprietor

Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites-Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to the Jew and Gentile-Written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation-Written and sealed up, and hid up into the Lord, that they might not be destroyed-To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof-Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up into the Lord,

to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile-the interpretation thereof by the gift of God...

### Origion of THE BOOK OF MORMON

Joseph Smith, through whom, by the gift and power of God, the ancient Scripture, known as THE BOOK OF MORMON, has been brought forth and translated into the English tongue, made personal and circumstantial record of the matter. He affirmed that during the night of September 21, 1823, he sought the Lord in fervent prayer, having previously received a Divine manifestation of transcendent import. His account follows:

"While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

...  
Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him I was afraid; but the fear soon left me.

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be for good and evil among nations, kindreds and tongues, of that it should be spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from which they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.

...

## THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES

Be It Known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands: and we also saw the engraving thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of the surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not. God bearing witness to it.

Christian Whitmer  
Jacob Whitmer  
Peter Whitmer Jun.  
John Whitmer  
Hiram Page  
Joseph Smith Sr.  
Hyrum Smith  
Samuel H. Smith

### THE FIRST BOOK OF NEPHI His Reign and Ministry Chapter 1.

An account of Lehi and his wife Sarian, and his four sons, being called, (beginning at the eldest,) Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi. The Lord warns Lehi to depart out of the land of Jerusalem, because he prophesieth unto the people concerning their iniquity; and they seek to destroy his life. He taketh three days journey into the wilderness with his family. Nephi taketh his brethren and returns to the land of Jerusalem after the record of the Jews. The account of their suffering. They take the daughters of Ishmael to wife. They take their families and depart into the wilderness. Their sufferings and afflictions in the wilderness. The course of their travels. They come to the large waters. Nephi's brethren rebelleth against him. He confoundeth them, and buildeth a Ship. They call the place Bountiful. They cross the large waters into the promised land. This is according to the account of Nephi; or in other words, I Nephi wrote this record.

Lehi's vision of the pillar of fire and the book of prophecy-he predicts an impending fate of Jerusalem, and foretells the coming of the Messiah-the Jews seek his life.

I. Nephi, having been born of godly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen the afflictions in the course of my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.

Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.

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### THE SECOND BOOK OF NEPHI Chapter 12

Prophecies as recorded on the plates.

The word that Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks -- nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord; yea, come, for ye have all gone astray, every one to his wicked ways."

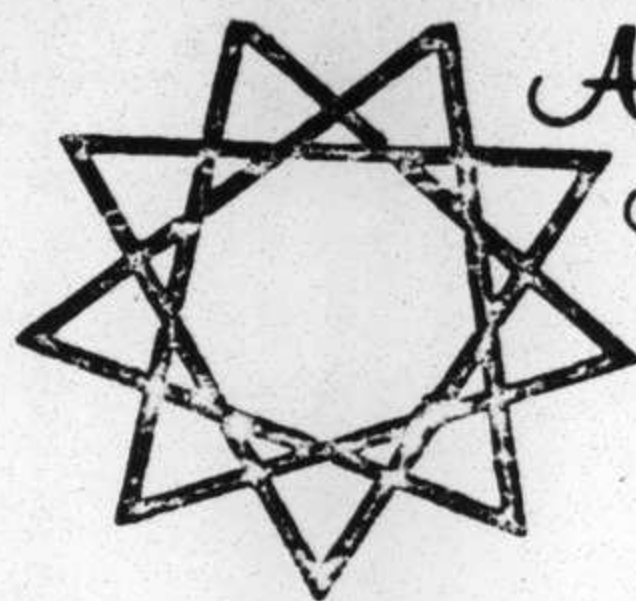
THE EDITOR

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m/j



All  
Things  
Magic  
and Secret

## SPIRITUALISM AND THE SHAKERS

Communes and experiments in alternative life-styles were as popular in America a century ago as they are today. Most of these communes were inspired by socialistic idealism. Owenism and Fourierism had come to this country to be received and tried out with enthusiasm. Some groups were based on the proclamations of a religious prophet or sect. A few of this last type were successful enough to have been recorded in our history books.

The Shaker communes can still boast of surviving members today. In 1854 an itinerant Scotch printer visited a Shaker community in Ohio. He had devoted the last ten years of his life to visiting, 'all the Associations and Communities' and painstakingly recorded details of their origins, methods, successes and failures. A.J. MacDonald left his manuscript to his brother-in-law as a memento. Fortunately these rare records were discovered by an historian who had them printed in 1870. In his original document, MacDoanld devotes nearly 100 pages to the Shaker community. In one section of his report he refers to the relationship of the Shaker beliefs to Spiritualism. His description vividly details belief in spiritualism by the Shakers which they hoped would make itself manifest to the world. The Shaker community was closed to outsiders for a period of seven years, since the world was not yet ready for this manifestation and would not have understood. After the seven year period elapsed, the Shakers had to wait another four years until the events at Rochester, New York officially ushered in the age of Spiritualism as manifested through the Fox sisters.

The Shakers were a celibate and communistic group brought to America from England in 1774 under the religious leadership of Mother Ann Lee. She was regarded as a divinely inspired prophetess. The 'Shaking Quakers' split from the English Quakers under her leadership. She was imprisoned in 1770 and received a series of visions which became the doctrinal basis of

her church. She rejected the atonement, virgin birth and the resurrection and taught that as God had appeared in his male aspect as Jesus Christ, so she was the manifestation of God in the female aspect.

The Editor

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Shaker Quarterly is published by the United Society of Shakers  
Sabbath Day Lake  
Poland Springs, Maine, 04274  
Editor; Theodore Johnson  
Bus. Manager; Sister Mildred  
Historical Societies  
Shaker Historical Society  
Shaker Hgts., Ohio, 44120  
Western Reserve Historical Society  
10825 E. Blvd., University Circle  
Cleveland, Ohio

Visions of the Heavenly Sphere  
A study in Shaker Religious Art  
1969, University Press of Va.

The Shaker Adventure, Melcher, M.F.  
1951, Princeton University Press

The Shaker Cook Book, (Not by bread alone) Peirce, C.B., Crown Publishers  
New York, or historical societies

The excerpts from MacDonald in this issue were quoted from an 1870 edition of his manuscript published under the name;

History of American Socialism.  
There is a later edition published by Hillary House, 1961, under the same title and edited by John Humphrey Noyes. This newer edition can be found in most large public and university libraries.

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SUB-SCRIPTS

Notes from Subscribers

Share your specific interest in Occult Americana with other readers. The editor does not always share the opinions in this column, but offers space for a free exchange of ideas and interests. Use 200 words or less, exclusive of your name and address.

In reference to the article in the March/April issue which describes Andrew Jackson Davis' trance states, a teen-age reader writes:

'That description of 'out-of-body tripping was so similar to some drug experiences. Also the psychedelic art forms which grow right in the head and can be transferred to paper or solid materials are like spirit drawings. I saw some in the museum made by Shakers in the 1800's. This tree is called the 'Tree of Life' and there were lots of other drawings made by the Shakers when they were in the spirit.'

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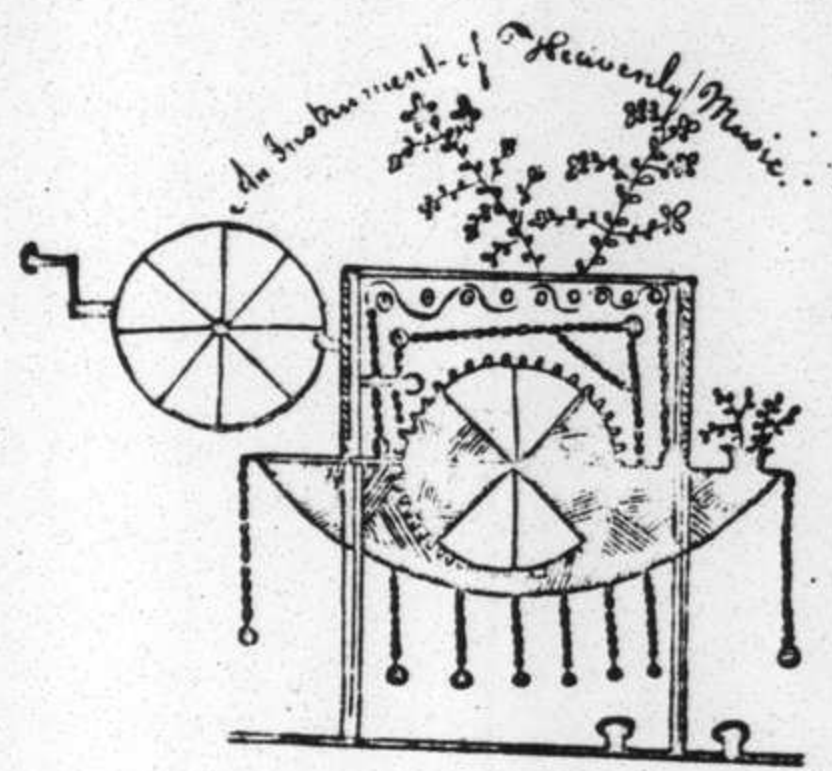
This particular picture is one of many spirit drawings in the book Visions of the Heavenly Sphere, listed in the bibliography.



The author of the spirit drawing Tree of Life also left a vivid description of her vision.

" City of Peace, Monday, July 3rd. 1854. I received a draft of a beautiful tree pencil'd on a large sheet of white paper bearing ripe fruit. I saw it plainly; it looked very singular and curious to me. I have since learned that this tree grows in the Spirit Land. Afterwards the spirit shew'd me plainly the branches, leaves and fruit, painted or drawn on paper. The leaves were check'd or cross'd and the same colors you see here. I entreated Mother Ann to tell me the name of this tree: which she did Oct. 1st 4th hour P.M. by moving the hand of a medium to write twice over YOUR TREE is the TREE OF LIFE.

Seen and painted by  
Hannah Cohoon



Spirit drawing titled 'An Instrument of Heavenly Music'.

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READER'S EXCHANGE

What aspect of historical occultism interests you?

Several readers have written to protest the lack of personal contacts with others who have similar but unusual concerns. If a reader wishes to have his or her address published with a brief description of occultic fascinations, please submit this information to Occult Americana and it will appear in the next issue as a communications service.

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INSPIRED LIFE READINGS

Send photo, birth-date.  
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SPIRITUALISM AND THE SHAKERS

MacDonald includes in his manuscript a journal kept by, 'an intimate and esteemed friend' of the Shakers who lived with them for several months during the seven year closed period. The brief account I include here tells of the beginnings of spiritualism within the community of the Shakers.

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At one of the meetings, after a due amount of marching and dancing, by which all the members had got pretty well excited, two or three sisters commenced whirling, which they continued to do for some time, and then stopped suddenly and revealed to us that Mother Ann was present at the meeting, and that she had brought a dozen baskets of spiritual fruit for her children, upon which the Elder invited all to go forth to the baskets in the center of the floor, and help themselves. Accordingly they all stepped forth and went through the various motions of taking fruit and eating it. You will wonder if I helped myself to the fruit, like the rest. No; I had not faith enough to see the baskets or the fruit; and you may think, perhaps, that I laughed at the scene; but in truth, I was so affected by the general gravity and the solemn faces I saw around me that it was impossible for me to laugh.

Other things as well as fruit were something sent as presents, such as spiritual golden spectacles. These heavenly ornaments came in the same way as the fruit, and just as much could be seen of them. The first presents of this kind were received during my residence there, came as follows; A sister whirled for some time; then stopped and informed the Eldress as usual that Mother Ann had sent a messenger with presents for some of her most faithful children. She then went through the action of handing the articles to the Eldress, at the same time mentioning what they were, and for whom. As near as I can remember, there was a pair of golden spectacles, a large eye-glass with a chain, and a casket of love for the Elder to distribute. The Eldress went through the act of putting the spectacles and chain upon

the individuals they were intended for; and the Elder in like manner opened the casket and threw out the love by the handful, while all the hands to receive, and then pressed them to their bosoms. All this appeared to me very childish, and I could not help so expressing myself to the Elder, at the first opportunity that offered. He replied, 'that this was what he labored for, viz., to be a simple Shaker; that the proud and worldly, the so-called great men of this world, must become as simple as they, as simple as little children before they can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. They must suffer themselves to be called fools for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. These were the crosses they had to bear.

The Elder would sometimes kindly invite me to his room and ask me what I thought of the meeting last night. This was generally after those meetings at which there had been some great revelation from heaven, or some pow-wow with the spirits. I could only reply that I must reply that I was much astonished and that these things were altogether new to me. He would then tell me that I would see greater things than these. But I replied that it required more faith to believe them than I possessed. Then he would exhort me to 'labor for faith and I would get it.' He did not expect young believers to get faith all at once; although some got it faster than others.



The Sacred Dance on the Holy Hill of Zion.  
wood engraving from C. E. Sears

During my whole stay with the Shakers a revival was going on among the spirits in the invisible world. Information of it was first received by one of the families in Ohio, through a heavenly messenger. The news of the revival soon spread from Ohio to the families in New York and New England. It was caused as follows: George Washington and most of the Revolutionary fathers had, by some means, got converted, and were sent out on a mission to preach the gospel to the spirits who were wandering in darkness. Many of the wild Indian tribes were sent by them to the different Shaker Communities to receive instructions in the gospel.

At one of the Sunday meetings, when the several families were met for worship, one of the brothers declared himself possessed of the spirit of George Washington; and made a speech informing us that Napoleon and all his Generals were present at our meeting, together with many of his own officers, who fought with him in the Revolution. These as well as many more distinguished personages were all Shakers in the other world and had been sent to give information relative to the revival now going on.

One of the sisters of a neighboring family died, and our family were notified to attend the funeral. On arriving at the place, we were shown into a room, and at a signal from a small bell, we were formed into a procession and marched to the large dancing-hall, at the entrance to which the corpse was laid out in a coffin, so as to be seen by all as they passed in. The company then formed in two grand divisions, the brothers on one side, and the sisters on the other. The service commenced by singing; after which the funeral sermon was preached by the Elder. He set forth in as forcible a manner as he seemed capable of, the uncertainty of life, the character of the deceased sister, what a true and faithful child of Mother's she was, and how many excellent qualities she possessed. The head Eldress also gave her testimony of praise to the deceased, alluding to her patience and resignation while sick, and her desire to die and go to Mother. After a little more singing one of the sisters

announced that the spirit of the deceased was present, and that she desired to return her thanks to the various sisters who waited upon her while she was sick; and named the different individuals who had been kindest to her. She had seen Mother in heaven, and had been introduced to the brothers and sisters, and she gave a flattering account of the happiness enjoyed in the other world. Another sister joined in and corroborated these statements, and gave about the same version of the message. After another song the coffin was closed, put into a sleigh, and conveyed to the grave, and buried without further ceremony.

An order was received from Mother Ann that a day should be set apart for purification. I had no information of this great solemnity until the previous evening, when the Elder announced that to-morrow would be observed as a day for general purification. 'The brothers must clean their respective work-shops, by sweeping the walls, and removing every cobweb from the corners and under their work-benches, and wash the floors clean by scrubbing them with sand. By doing this they would remove all the devils and wicked spirits that might be lodging in the different buildings; for where cobwebs and dust were permitted to accumulate, there the evil spirits hide themselves. Mother had sent a message that there were evil spirits lodging about; and she wished them to be removed; and also that those members who had committed any wickedness, should confess it, and thus make both outside and inside clean.'

At early dawn the next morning, the work commenced, and clean work was made in every building and room, from the grand hall down to the cow-house. At ten o'clock eight of the brothers, with the Elders at their head, commenced their journey of inspection through every field, garden, house, workshop and pig-pen, chanting this rhyme as they passed along:

Awake from your slumbers for  
the Lord of Hosts is going  
through the land.  
He will sweep, He will clean  
His Holy Sanctuary.  
Searchh  
Search ye your lamps. Read  
and Understand.  
For the Lord of Hosts holds  
the lamp in his hand.