

Original Members of the 1830 Church of Christ

3/19/2019

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Introduction

Confusion has existed around the organization of the Church since the mid 1830's. Questions include: "Who were the original six members?" and "Where did the first meeting take place?" Early published sources such as the *Book of Commandments* and *The Evening and the Morning Star* place the meeting of April 6, 1830 at the Smith residence in Manchester; however, the traditional setting of the organization has long been established as the Whitmer farm in Fayette. The meaning of "six original members" is also clouded by enduring assumptions, and names of the original six have been offered in conflicting statements.ⁱ

Just as the image of a jigsaw puzzle comes into view as the pieces are placed in their proper position, the story of the organization of the Church is unveiled as the body of evidence is harmonized to render a clear picture of founding activities. A deep delve through the historical record reveals *two* distinct days in 1830 that were known to early saints as "April 6th."

The traditional narrative presents the organization of April 6, 1830 as a meeting of thirty or more believers, gathering from multiple locations, to initiate a formal and legal church structure that would act as an umbrella over individual branches. Logic follows that individual branches would then be organized within this established structure. Upon closer inspection however, it appears the process that actually played out in 1830 was the reverse. David Whitmer explained that branches existed before the Church was organized at his family farm, and the body of evidence does support his order of events.

The story that emerges is of a small branch founding as the first meeting of the Church - an event that produced in total six original members on the sixth day of April 1830. A second branch was created soon after, bringing the membership total up to eighteen. The organizational meeting that David Whitmer described took place weeks later, with thirty to forty members gathering from various locations to more formally organize a legal religious society. This later gathering is the meeting early saints remembered as the organization of the Church, which occurred on the day they confused with, or effectively named "April sixth." The full story unfolds through identifying the circumstances of the first twenty-seven baptisms of the Church.

The Day Porter Rockwell Was Baptized:

The account has been recited for generations: Porter Rockwell, friend and bodyguard of Joseph Smith, was baptized on April 6, 1830. The original source for this date – the one on which all other works ultimately rely – is found in History of the Church, Volume 1, p. 79:

“Several persons who had attended the above meeting, [the organization of the Church on April 6, 1830] became convinced of the truth and came forward shortly after, and were received into the Church; among the rest, my own father and mother were baptized, to my great joy and consolation; and about the same time, Martin Harris and Orrin Porter Rockwell.”

Virtually all narratives written on Porter Rockwell, from the late 19th century through 2016, have placed his baptism on this same date, referencing this account.¹ Today, however, the original documents are available on the Joseph Smith Papers website. In these sources, two mistakes are identified in the second draft of Joseph Smith's 1839 history, which together gave birth to the incorrect dating. The first, on page 42, is a transcription error; the second, on p. 38, is a blank space improperly filled. The result is the above account of Porter being baptized on or near the first day of the organization of the Church, which was printed in Joseph Smith's official history and, subsequently, in History of the Church. Such a revered account and associated legacy is not easy to correct in full, but, today with online access to the documents, the originating mistakes are readily accessible.

Draft 1 of Joseph Smith's history, written in June 1839 by James Mulholland, names Porter Rockwell and ten others who were baptized on June 9th 1830, at the June conference in Fayette.² Others baptized on this date with Porter include four members of the Smith family and two of Porter's own sisters.

Page 42 of the 1839 History, Draft 2, lists the same 11 individuals baptized by David Whitmer in Seneca Lake as named in the first draft, except Porter Rockwell is transcribed as “Peter Rockwell” in the later draft.³

Four points provide assurance that this change is in fact an error and not a correction. First, there are no correcting marks in the original draft. Second, William Smith, the brother of the prophet, as well as a neighbor, peer, and assumed friend of Porter Rockwell, also was baptized on June 9th – and he names Porter as having been baptized on that same day.⁴ Third, none of the primary witnesses to the baptisms of April 6th report Porter being baptized. Fourth, no contemporary record, correspondence, or casual mention has been found to confirm the existence of a Rockwell brother named Peter. While modern Rockwell family records create a space for “Peter”, and later published lists of Porter's siblings likewise have added a son to the Rockwell family, no other vital information can be found for this name, which appears to have been created by the aforementioned transcription error.⁵

Furthermore, the Rockwell baptism associated with the April 6th organization is confirmed to be that of Porter's mother, Sarah Witt Rockwell. In addition to a note of clarification along the bottom of Draft 1, pgs. 9-10, identifying “Sister” Rockwell as the fourth new member,⁶ observing neighbors place her

baptism in the company of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith, who were baptized at and “shortly after” the April 6th meeting.⁷ Draft 2 attempted to incorporate this added detail into the narrative, expanding the list to name an additional new member:

Draft 1:

“Several persons who attended this meeting, but who had <not> as yet been baptized, came forward shortly after, and were received into the church having on that occasion got entirely convinced of the truth of the work. <Among th[e] rest Father Smith, Martin Harris & Mother Smith>”

Draft 2:

“Several persons who had attended the above meeting, and got convinced of the truth, came forward shortly after, and were received into the church, among the rest My own Father and Mother were baptized to my great joy and consolation, and about the same time Martin Harris and a [*blank*] Rockwell.”⁸

The prior naming of three individuals became four in the later draft – an obvious effort to make use of the clarifying note found at the bottom of Draft 1 page 10. The informal titles of “Father Smith” and “Mother Smith” were changed to the more personal “My own Father and Mother.” Perhaps James Mulholland wanted to find and articulate the name “Sarah” to sharpen the less precise “Sister Rockwell” and better match the name “Martin Harris”, but, ultimately, he left a blank on page 38 before the name “Rockwell.” Unfortunately, Mulholland never returned to fill in that blank, and the later scribe, Thomas Bullock, mistakenly filled the space with “Orrin Porter” – unwittingly throwing a wrench into the historical record.

It is of interest why Thomas Bullock would feel justified writing “Orrin Porter” in the blank space. At least two others, Julia Ann Jolly, and Katharine Smith, who were baptized at the June conference with Porter, apparently believed that they were baptized at the April 6 founding.⁹ If Thomas Bullock spoke with an individual who likewise confused the June 9 conference with the April 6 meeting, then perhaps he was told that Porter was baptized on April 6th.

Porter Rockwell's baptism misdate was discovered in the course of researching the first twenty-seven members of the 1830 Church of Christ. These early members hold the story of the origin of the Church. The first members have been listed in the past, earnest efforts include Larry Porter in 1971, and Dan Vogel in 2003.¹⁰ The current effort unwittingly duplicated much of Dan Vogel's work, and is corroborated by the same. The present objective is to document the locations of the baptisms, detail the complete list of the first 27 members, and clarify past assumptions through the synthesis of accounts.

The First Baptisms of the 1830 Church of Christ:

Book of Mormon witnesses are identified with “w3” and “w8.”

<u>Name</u>	<u>Baptism Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
1. Oliver Cowdery ^{w3}	May 15, 1829 ¹¹	Harmony ¹¹
2. Joseph Smith Jr.	May 15, 1829 ¹¹	Harmony ¹¹
3. Samuel H. Smith ^{w8}	May 25, 1829 ¹²	Harmony ¹²
4. Hyrum Smith ^{w8}	June 1829 ¹³	Fayette ¹³
5. David Whitmer ^{w3}	June 1829 ¹³	Fayette ¹³
6. Peter Whitmer Jr. ^{w8}	June 1829 ¹³	Fayette ¹³
7. John Whitmer ^{w8}	June 1829 ¹⁴	Fayette ¹⁴
8. Martin Harris ^{w3}	April 6, 1830 ¹⁵	Manchester ¹⁶
9. Joseph Smith Sr. ^{w8}	April 6, 1830 ¹⁵	Manchester ¹⁶
10. Lucy Mack Smith	April 8 or 9, 1830 ¹⁷	Manchester ¹⁶
11. Sarah Witt Rockwell	April 8 or 9, 1830 ¹⁷	Manchester ¹⁶
12. Hiram Page ^{w8}	April 11, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
13. Catherine [Whitmer] Page	April 11, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
14. Christian Whitmer ^{w8}	April 11, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
15. Anne [Schott] Whitmer	April 11, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
16. Jacob Whitmer ^{w8}	April 11, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
17. Elizabeth [Schott] Whitmer	April 11, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
18. Mary Page	April 11, 1830 ¹⁹	Fayette ¹⁹
19. Peter Whitmer Sr.	April 18, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
20. Mary [Musselman] Whitmer	April 18, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
21. William Jolly	April 18, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
22. Elizabeth [Stones] Jolly	April 18, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
23. Vincent Jolly	April 18, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
24. Richard (Ziba) Peterson	April 18, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
25. Elizabeth Ann Whitmer	April 18, 1830 ¹⁸	Fayette ¹⁸
26. Solomon Chamberlain	April 1830 ²⁰	Fayette ²⁰
27. Newel Knight	May 25-31, 1830 ²¹	Fayette ²¹

Far West Record establishes the total church membership at 27 as of June 9, 1830.

Eleven were baptized on June 9th 1830 near Fayette:²²

28. John Poorman
29. John Jolly
30. Julia Ann Jolly [Whitmer]
31. Harriett Jolly
32. Jerusha [Barden] Smith
33. Katharine Smith [Salisbury]
34. William Smith
35. Don Carlos Smith
36. Orrin Porter Rockwell*
37. Caroline Rockwell
38. Electa Rockwell

Four additional individuals have previously been credited with baptism dates prior to June 9th:

*Porter Rockwell -

See “The Day Porter Rockwell was Baptized” above.

Hope [Haskins] Chamberlain -

Larry C. Porter, in 1971, assumed Hope Chamberlain was an April 1830 baptism, in the absence of Mary Page. Hope was apparently known for standing by her husband’s side while not always being recognized, but Mary Page was named in the first draft of Joseph Smith's history, so she won the position on this list. Either name will produce the same result of 26 members in April. “*A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania*” 2000, 102

Almira Mack -

Lucy Smith's niece Almira has been given a baptism date of May 1830 by Larry Porter and also the Joseph Smith Papers Project, but Lucy said Almira was converted and baptized while Samuel was preparing for his mission – which would have been June. Samuel was ordained an Elder on June 9th, called as the first missionary shortly after, and then began serving a mission on June 30th. There is mention of a letter Almira sent in May, presumably from the Smith Manchester home, which gives opportunity for baptism. Larry Porter references *The Pilgrimage of Temperance Mack* by John and Aubrey Cumming. In *Early Mormon Documents vol 5*, Vogel (p.368 note 19), gives a likely baptism date of September 1830 for Almira. Whether in June or September she would not have been one of the first 27. Until more information is discovered the assumption is she was baptized after June 9th.

David Lewis -

In his own late account written in 1908, David Lewis claimed to be baptized on May 5 1830. His account is highly problematic and determined to be completely unreliable.

Solving the Story of April 6, 1830:

In *History of the Church*, volume 1, B.H. Roberts included a long comment on pages 76-77 regarding the possible number of baptisms occurring before April 6, 1830. Here he highlighted the confusion and erroneous reports surrounding the number of previously baptized members at the founding meeting of the church, refuting numbers of thirty or more as “beyond all question too large.” Roberts made it obvious that a well researched list of the first twenty-seven baptisms could answer questions, and even add a framework of known people at specific locations during events of the organization. The present research was inspired by that comment.

Baptisms provide shape:

As a skeleton gives a body size and shape, baptisms reveal the general size and location of organizational activities. Reliable documentation of each early member is vital to the integrity of the overall picture of the organization. Every baptism during the first two months of organization has been accounted for, lending confidence to the assembled image. After a careful study of the above list and its notes, a few key observations come into view:

- The list reveals seven men who were baptized prior to April 6, 1830, a curious finding. Why do we hear of only six original members and not seven?
- The only baptisms of April 6-9 were local residents baptized near the Smith Manchester home, revealing a conspicuous absence of any new members from the Fayette area on April 6.
- The most prominent followers of the Fayette area, the Book of Mormon witnesses, were baptized on April 11th. These were the believers who were waiting for their chance to join. It is hard to imagine, and perhaps the most difficult to explain, how an organizational meeting was held near Fayette before April 11 without any of these witnesses/believers becoming members.
- An April 6 branch meeting in Manchester, with no Whitmers present, would produce exactly six confirmed members at the end of the day.

B.H. Roberts' question, regarding the number of individuals baptized prior to the organization, is answered. Seven men in total had been baptized prior to April 6, 1830. Then on April 6, two more were baptized during the events of that day. The question of original members necessarily rests on the confirmations of April 6, 1830. Entertaining the possibility of a small branch meeting in Manchester, an answer emerges that six men could have been confirmed as the first members of the Church of Christ, and on that day they would have comprised the full membership of both the Manchester branch and the entire Church.

Separate branches:

Joseph Knight Sr. wrote a personal account of the rise of the Church. In it he recalls taking Joseph Smith to Manchester at the end of March 1830, just as the Book of Mormon was coming off the press. The following are the key points of this trip to Manchester in his account. These are in the original order to summarize his memory of founding activities:²³

- “Now in the Spring of 1830 I went with my Team and took Joseph out to Manchester to his Father. When we was on our way he told me that there must be a Church formed But did not tell when.
- I stayed a few Days wating for some Books to Be Bound. Joseph said there must Be a Church Biltup. I had Ben there several Days.
- Old Mr Smith and Martin Harris Come forrod [forward] to Be Babtise[d] for the first. They found a place in a lot a small Stream ran thro and they ware Babtized in the Evening Because of Persecution. They went forward and was Babtized Being the first I saw Babtized in the new and everlasting Covenant.
- On the sixth Day of April 1830 he Begun the Church with six members and received the following Revelation Book of Covenants Page 177 [D&C 21]. They all kneeld down and prayed and Joseph gave them instructions how to Bild up the Church and exorted them to Be faithfull in all things for this is the work of God.
- Now after he had set things in order and got a number of Mormon Books we Returned home. Then in June as I Before said I and my familely and a number more ware Babtised, Joseph Being present and Confirmed them. And through that season there ware many Babtised in Many places and the Church grew and multiplied.”

It is difficult for members in the present day, almost 190 year later, to comprehend the expectations that Joseph Smith and those around him held in early 1830 regarding how the restored Church should be organized, and how it would operate. Joseph would not have experienced a church in his youth that was structured and led in the same way as what would ultimately develop. Joseph would have been familiar with churches around him that were autonomously operating congregations, with some affiliation and common doctrine between congregations of the same denomination.

It is fair to assume that Joseph would have, by default, pictured the new church operating to some extent as churches did in his day, as affiliated but largely independent congregations.²⁴ The wording of Doctrine and Covenants 20:81 may reflect this general concept:

“It shall be the duty of the several churches, composing the church of Christ . . .”

These are words from those early days of organization in 1830, and seem to allow Joseph the assumption that this common characteristic of church structure would apply. This point becomes significant to the story when we realize the first organizational meeting was likely originally seen as the formation of one

branch or congregation, with others to follow. This small meeting in Manchester is what Joseph Knight Sr. observed in his account above. A call to believers to meet and organize, such as in a revelation from the previous summer, could therefore be seen in this case as applying to those in the immediate area, individuals who would regularly attend that specific local branch or congregation. This model is supported by a line from the 1833 Evening and Morning Star, which is surprisingly compatible with the list of first members:

“Soon after the book of Mormon came forth, containing the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the church was organized on the sixth of April, in Manchester; soon after, a branch was established in Fayette, and the June following, another in Colesville, New York.”

- *The Evening and the Morning Star*, April 1833, 84.

In this statement if “the church was organized” was worded “a church (or branch) was first organized”, it would more directly reflect what the baptism evidence presents as a small branch meeting in Manchester. Regardless, the statement above is in striking agreement with the list of early baptisms, each supports the other and the whole story makes sense. However, if the April 6 meeting is moved to Fayette, the logical procession of meetings, in the context of known baptisms, is difficult to repair. If there was an error in the published sequence the correction may have placed the first meeting at Fayette on April 6, with a branch established in Manchester soon after, with a record of baptisms to verify the sequence. But history places the second meeting in Fayette on the 11th as stated above, with seven new baptisms on that day, with no alternative for the Manchester branch meeting except the 6th or 8/9, unless a piece of the puzzle is left out of place.

Some may want to assign the Manchester meeting a date of April 8/9 to harmonize with tradition, but the accounts of baptisms on the 6th make that shift difficult. The idea of a dual meeting on April 6, or an early morning meeting in Fayette followed by a day of travel and late baptisms in Manchester, is technically possible, if stretched - but the proposition ultimately creates more questions than it answers, as the numbers don't match the scenario. The details will emerge as we progress.

Before the founding members can be named it must be determined if the baptisms of April 6 took place before, during, or after the meeting. Joseph Knight Sr. placed the baptisms in the evening, but in his account he mentioned the baptisms first, then the meeting after, possibly as if recalling the sequence of events. Lucy Smith also mentioned the baptisms immediately before the organizational meeting. If Doctrine and Covenants 23 was received during the activities of April 6, or the Manchester branch meeting, then it appears Joseph Smith Sr. had already been baptized, as the revelation speaks to him as a member while it urges Joseph Knight Sr. to join the Church.²⁵

Six original members:

William Smith remembered a meeting at Hyrum's farm as the first meeting of the Church. Four of the original six members were his family members:

“It was in this house [the Smith Manchester home] that the first conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was held, on the 6th day of April, 1830, at which I was present. The Church then consisted of but six members. My father and brothers were baptized at this time and commenced preaching in the vicinity.” - *William Smith on Mormonism*, 1883

Historians and Church members in the past have believed or assumed that the number of six original members held some legal significance. In his paper, “Legal Insights into the Organization of the Church in 1830,” David Stott explains that the intent in early 1830 was most likely to form a legal religious society, not a corporate entity.²⁶ This is a vital point that requires study and reflection, as it conflicts deeply with traditional assumptions, but for immediate emphasis let’s restate: the intent in early 1830 was most likely to form a legal religious society, not a corporate entity. Organizing as a religious society would explain why, after extensive searching, no certificate of incorporation has been found. Furthermore, a legal society would have no need for trustees or charter members. As Stott concludes:

“Unfortunately, understanding the Church’s organization as that of a religious society rather than a corporation fails to shed light on why Joseph chose to recognize six men as original members, other than it was probably *not* because any statute or law required it.” (emphasis added)

Why did Joseph recognize six original members? The answer appears to be as simple as William Smith’s observation above, that on April 6th “The Church then consisted of but six members.”²⁷ This is an obvious answer that has occasionally been voiced as the default assumption.²⁸ Thanks to the work of David Stott this question for practical purposes has been answered – and perhaps the historical record affirms that the number of six original members is a clue in resolving the location and dating questions.

June 9th 1830 was called April 6th:

Upon close examination of several early member accounts, a pattern becomes evident that June 9, 1830 was referred to as April 6. In multiple interviews and personal writings, David Whitmer seemed to be confusing a later conference of the Church with the first organizational meeting of April 6. For example in June 1882, Bro. J. W. Chatburn of Harlan, Iowa, wrote to *The Saints Herald* about his visit with David Whitmer, a witness to the Book of Mormon:²⁹

“...We visited Bro. David [Whitmer] in the forenoon; and again in the evening at his request. He remarked that we had brought a good spirit with us and he felt like talking. He did talk, and I learned many things that I did not know before about the rise of this work. One thing in particular; he says there were about forty or fifty members in the Church when organized on April 6th, 1830. We have been told and so recorded in history that there were only six members. He explained it this way, - there were only six Elders. He said that he baptized fourteen in Seneca Lake, a few days before the Church was organized. I asked his wife if she was present when the Church was organized on April 6th, 1830. She replied, ‘Yes; and was a baptized member at that time’.”³⁰

This interview took place 52 years after the organization of the Church, and some of the details were understandably fuzzy. David Whitmer, and his wife Julia Ann Jolly, were confusing a later conference of the church, held at the Whitmer home in Fayette, with the founding meeting of April 6. Julia claimed that she did attend the April 6 organization, “and was a baptized member at that time.” The records are clear however, and Julia was baptized with 10 others by her future husband on June 9, 1830.

David Whitmer was also speaking of June 9 when he said there were six elders present. June 9 was the only meeting when six Elders existed in the Church, as Ziba Peterson, the sixth Elder, was baptized on April 18, and ordained subsequently. Samuel Smith became the seventh Elder on June 9.³¹ Accordingly, Whitmer's estimate of forty members is within range of the thirty-eight that existed at the end of the conference. The official number is twenty-seven members prior to June 9, and then eleven more added on that day.

Even more intriguing is the discovery that this tendency to confuse the two dates is not isolated to David Whitmer and his wife. Katharine Smith Salisbury, sister of Joseph Smith, wrote a letter to *The Saints Herald* (volume 33, 1886 p. 260) dated 10 March 1886:

“I have been a member of this church ever since its first organization on 6th day of April, 1830 . . . I was one of the number who met in the first conference held in these last days, when the church was first organized. We only numbered thirty, but we were a happy little band. It was a great day of rejoicing for us, and a number were added to the fold by baptism.”

Katharine was also baptized on June 9, 1830, and it was on that day that the early membership would have “numbered thirty.” Katharine appears to be calling June 9th the “6th day of April . . . when the church was first organized.”³²

History of the Church mentions the June 9th conference, and the approximate number of members on that day:

“On the ninth day of June 1830, we held our first conference as an organized Church. Our numbers were about thirty, beside whom, many assembled with us, who were either believers or anxious to learn.”³³

The extent and the significance of this confusion begins to emerge with the discovery that the first draft of Joseph Smith's 1839 history additionally confuses June 9th with the April 6th founding. The first insertion into the narrative, regarding the number of members attending on April 6th, reads “being about 30 in number.” As noted above, this is the rough membership number for the June conference. The “about 30” was subsequently marked through, and “six” written above to accurately reflect the membership on the sixth of April.³⁴

On the following page of the first draft, a redacted section gives further evidence that a later meeting was initially confused with April 6th as the draft was originally being written. Newel Knight was identified as a

participant, and Christian Whitmer was named as one called and ordained to the priesthood. Christian Whitmer, a Book of Mormon witness, was not baptized until April 11th - so he could not have been called to the Priesthood on April 6th - and Newel Knight would not have been present at a Fayette meeting before May.³⁵

Additional statements by early members illustrate the same confusion between these dates. Joseph Knight Jr. said his father was not at the April 6 organization,³⁶ but his father does place April 6 within his visit to Manchester, does claim he was there for the April 6 baptisms, and gives a descriptive first hand account of Joseph Smith's reaction to his father being baptized. Knight's unique details demonstrate that he was present, at least for the baptisms.³⁷ Knight is also named in D&C 23, the revelation presumably given during the Manchester branch meeting. This discrepancy is explained by the confusion between the two dates - if when mentioning April 6 the younger Joseph Knight was talking about a meeting in Fayette that included his brother Newel from Colesville, then he was referring to the June 9 conference, at which his father would not have been present.

As detailed above, virtually every biography or life summary ever written about Porter Rockwell has placed his baptism on April 6, 1830. In reality Porter was baptized on June 9 with ten others, seven of them from the Manchester area. This was the first meeting where a significant number of participants had traveled some distance to attend, it was also the first time any group of early members had been baptized away from their home branch location. These details distinguish June 9 as the first meeting of the new church that matches the traditional description of the organizational meeting in Fayette.

Counting Heads:

The minutes of the second conference of the Church, September 26, 1830, note sixty-two members in total. This was a gain of thirty-five members from the twenty-seven member Church that existed at the June 9 conference.³⁸ By naming and accounting for each of these first 27 members we discover that twenty-six were confirmed as members in the month of April 1830.

A statement in *The Evening and the Morning Star* affirms that twenty-six members in total joined the new Church in the month of April 1830, corroborating what the list of baptisms above has named. After mentioning the meeting of April 6th, with its implied six members, it states:

“Twenty more were added to the church in Manchester and Fayette, in the month of April;”
- *The Evening and the Morning Star*, April 1833, 84.

These twenty-six, with the addition of Newel Knight who was baptized in the last week of May, brings the total to twenty-seven members in the Church before June 9th. The above statement also confirms that six men comprised the total membership of the Church on April 6, 1830. A verified total of six members on April 6 indicates that no Whitmers were included in the confirmations of that first day, they must be counted later for the numbers to match both the published records and individual claims. Interestingly, there is a reported memory of April 11th that correlates with these numbers:

Michael MacKay in *Sacred Space* chapter two, mentioned the April 11th organization of the Fayette branch and offered this point:

“Furthermore, as individuals reflected back to April 1830, this was an event where Smith and Cowdery had baptized over a dozen people at one time.”³⁹

The list of First Baptisms names seven individuals who were baptized on April 11th 1830. There would have been ten members confirmed that day if the three Whitmers baptized in June 1829 were included in the number confirmed. The ten new members of April 11th would include David, John, and the younger Peter Whitmer, in addition to the seven new baptisms listed for that day. The list reveals that the church consisted of eighteen members in total as the sun set on April 11, 1830. If early participants remembered “a dozen” new members at the Fayette branch organization, then we can be confident that the first meeting ever held at the Whitmer home occurred on April 11th, as the baptism data suggests. If the Church grew from six members on April 6, to eighteen members on April 11, then it did grow by twelve members in the first five days, most of them added at the Fayette branch meeting. The above memory can be attributed to events that the list bears out.⁴⁰

Formal organization followed founding:

It is intriguing that two accounts point to a “formal” or “regular” organization in Fayette after initial founding activities had occurred:

As John K. Carmack noted in 1989, Alexander Flick stated in his 1934 history of New York that:

“at Manchester, in 1830, the new sect was founded, and at Fayette was formally organized a few weeks later.”⁴¹

Likewise, David Whitmer viewed the Fayette organization as a formality, to appease critics who claimed the new church had not “regularly organized”:

“Now, when April 6, 1830, had come, we had then established three branches of the 'Church of Christ,' in which three branches were about seventy members: One branch was at Fayette, N.Y.; one at Manchester, N.Y., and one at Colesville, Pa. It is all a mistake about the church being *organized* on April 6, 1830, as I will show. We were as fully *organized*—spiritually—before April 6th as we were on that day. The reason why we met on that day was this; the world had been telling us that we were not a regularly organized church, and we had no right to officiate in the ordinance of marriage, hold church property, etc., and that we should organize according to the laws of the land. On this account we met at my father's house in Fayette, N.Y., on April 6, 1830, to attend to this matter of organizing according to the laws of the land...”⁴²

It is puzzling that they would have faced criticism related to the legality of the organization, because as David Stott clarified in his work - no legal statutes existed in the state of New York in 1830 regulating the

formation of religious societies, or restricting their performance of marriages.⁴³ Churches were free to form and operate under the freedom of religion clause in the United States constitution. In considering possible reasons for claims that the Church had not legally organized, we can only speculate on a few items that relate to customary practices for churches organizing in New York at the time:

- The Articles and Covenants were ratified for the first time by the membership at the June conference. This would have paralleled customary actions of other churches.
- Issuing of priesthood licenses. Most if not all of the existing priesthood holders received licenses for the first time on June 9.
- Members gathered from multiple congregations to organize a type of governing body or general leadership of the church. This call to gather and organize was customary, it was also a formal requirement of incorporation.
- Keeping minutes may have been seen as an element of formal organization, if any minutes were taken during the first branch meetings they have not survived.

In addition to the above items it is difficult to know exactly what happened at the first branch meetings, as compared to the Fayette conference. With the extensive confusion between April 6, and June 9, there is no way of knowing if the sacrament was passed, for example, at both meetings. Joseph Smith's history did confuse some of the details between the two meetings, and without minutes for April 6 it is impossible to know exactly what happened there. The election or sustaining of Ruling Elders of the church by the membership was another common practice in the organization of churches in New York at the time.⁴⁴

Even though there were no actual legal requirements to fulfill, the belief, according to David Whitmer, was that they needed to meet as a conference to work out some details of organization. His claim is this need resulted in the larger meeting at his family farm. Accordingly, as noted above, at least some of the attendees of the June conference seemed to come away with the impression that they had attended the organizational meeting of the Church.

If the actual April 6th meeting was a small gathering in Manchester, then it is easy to see how time and community memory could turn the larger conference of June 9th into the preferred organizational meeting of the Church, effectively assigning it the honored date of April 6th. The conversion of this date in memory explains how David Whitmer could claim that branches, members, and Elders existed before the organization he called April 6th, when the very idea defies logic. A church member cannot be confirmed, nor an Elder ordained, before a church exists. This is not one isolated example with David Whitmer, he offers these same general themes in multiple interviews and writings. The fact that earlier meetings, such as on April 11, took place in Fayette, which David must have attended and where his siblings were baptized, confirms his first-hand knowledge of previous organizational meetings, baptisms, ordinations, and provides evidence that his memory pointed specifically to the later conference(s) as "*the*" organization, in spite of his own experience.

David Whitmer unambiguously stating that branches and Elders existed before the church was organized, is essentially the same as directly asserting that "The Church was first organized after it had been

established” - and he did in fact say the church was fully organized “spiritually” before April 6. Paraphrasing, he effectively claimed: “we are calling a later meeting the organization of the church.” Interestingly, this appears to be his actual memory, there are no obvious indications of intent to deceive. If Whitmer knew he was assigning the wrong date to the June conference, he could have obscured information that makes his error obvious.

The glaring question is - could this same effect apply to the memory of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery? They would have attended all the first meetings, but could they have likewise remembered the formal organization taking place after branches existed? There is plenty of material in the historical record to fuel a healthy debate. The edits in Joseph’s 1839 history do not support a premeditated plan to turn the Fayette conference into the April 6 organization, at least not an effective one, the first draft demonstrates honest mistakes and confusion. Additionally, several other members independently exhibit the same confusion. It is beyond the scope of this paper to determine exactly how or when this memory shift happened, but evidence is present that the collective memory did shift.

Conclusion:

Twenty-seven members in total existed in the Church before June 9, 1830, all are accounted for, and collectively their history confirms a sequence of events:

- 1) The first meeting at which members of the 1830 Church of Christ were baptized and confirmed took place in Manchester New York on April 6, 1830. This meeting produced six confirmed members of the new church - all Manchester residents at that time except Joseph Jr.
- 2) The first members from the Fayette area joined on April 11, ten in total, these include the remaining Book of Mormon witnesses and the three previously baptized Whitmer brothers.
- 3) The first meeting held at the Whitmer farm in Fayette that matches the traditional description of the organization of the church, with members gathering from multiple locations, took place on June 9, 1830.

Joseph Smith’s history describes a larger meeting of gathering saints as the organization of April 6, 1830 at the Whitmer farm in Fayette. However, the absence of baptisms near Fayette on that day must be taken into account. There is also a logical sequence of meetings that together represent the early organizational activities. Either there was a central meeting at Fayette, followed by individual branch meetings - or the founding efforts began with individual branch meetings, followed by a more centralized organization. I propose that the latter scenario is supported by the evidence. David Whitmer testifies to the latter, and the record of baptisms, original member accounts, legal objective, and early published references all support his sequence of events, even if correcting his dates.

Imagine yourself as one of those first members in early 1830. They obviously couldn’t see the end from the beginning, at least not in full detail, but they were willing to forge a path from the start. As they

progressed further down the road they grasped more of the vision, and apparently as they gained a clearer view of the road ahead, some of the sights in the rearview mirror adjusted to match the image of the future.

“It will be three years the sixth of April next, since the church of Christ was organized, in Manchester, New York, with six members.”⁴⁵ - *The Evening and the Morning Star*, March 1833

The expectation of diverse followers heeding the call to gather and organize the restored Church is understandably not satisfied by the memory of a small Manchester branch meeting. Likewise, the story told is not of a quick trip to meet with six (or seven?) men in Fayette and perform no baptisms, but is of a larger gathering of believers. Therefore, the collective memory formed in harmony with the expectation, notably while still retaining the narrative of “six original members.”

Historical records attest that as time progressed Joseph and Oliver, along with David Whitmer and others, persistently named Fayette as the location of the organization.⁴⁶ Fayette is the location of the community memory, and as a result the location that many documents support. Fayette is the tradition, and demonstrably was in fact the place where saints of multiple locales gathered to organize, on the day they remembered as April 6th 1830.

Modern evidence in context:

The Joseph Smith Papers team discovered several years ago that the earliest surviving copy of the revelation known currently as D&C 21 names Fayette as the location where it was received.⁴⁷ This was seen as strong evidence that the organizational meeting of April 6 did happen at Fayette, as the revelation is understood to have been received at the organization. Joseph Knight Sr. even stated in his account that this revelation was received on April 6. How does this finding fit with the baptism data and a Manchester branch first meeting?

There are two ways to frame this discovery:

1. The revelation was received at Fayette, possibly on April 11, or more likely on June 9 “the day of organization.” It makes a past tense statement that the church “*was* organized and established” on April 6, supporting the possibility that it was written after April 6. In this case Joseph Knight Sr. may have relied on published revelations to influence his later memory of what happened in Manchester.
2. A portion of the revelation was received at or even prior to Manchester, but a final version was received or presented at a later Fayette meeting. This would better explain Knight's memory, and also the past tense wording. We do have precedent of revelations gaining details as more knowledge was given to the prophet. See “The Story of the Doctrine and Covenants” December 1984 Ensign.

Regardless of the exact date or process of revelation, Doctrine and Covenants 21 is an important document of the organization of the Church. The earliest copy naming Fayette confirms that Fayette was the location of significant organizational meetings of 1830, and it was the site of the majority of first baptisms. Tradition, documents, the memory of participants, and the reconstructed record of the earliest baptisms all work together to present a cohesive picture of the organizational events of 1830. Our key to moving forward with clarity is a simple distinction between two meetings: the *founding* at the Smith Manchester home on April 6, 1830, then the *organizational* conference at the Whitmer Fayette home on June 9 - the day early members confused with April 6.

Author's perspective:

I am not a trained historian, I am a hobbyist with an interest in historical puzzles. I became aware of the confusion surrounding the original members and location of the 1830 organization roughly a decade ago, and have researched and pondered the evidence frequently since then. As an active lifelong member I tend to speak to an audience of other active members. My desire is to view the organization from all the available early sources and to frame the findings in an honest and faithful light. I also hope to hold the interest of non-historian fellow members and friends. I see the evidence and resulting story as fully compatible with faith, even if slightly altered from the traditional narrative.

In October of 2015 an article titled "Joseph the Seer" was published in the Ensign. This article introduced to the Church a process by which the Book of Mormon was translated that was foreign to many if not most members of the Church. While the new information may have unsettled or disrupted some, most members trusted the source, assimilated the information, and moved on with their lives. It is my firm personal belief that these challenges to our long held assumptions are an important element of our mortal experience, even vital to our personal and spiritual growth. Not to damage or disrupt our faith, but to exercise and strengthen it.

The story of the organization presented above is not as foreign or potentially disrupting as some topics, however, it has been a sensitive subject of debate among historians for decades. An unfortunate circumstance, in my opinion, is that some minds may have become resistant to the possibility of new insight or interpretation on the topic. My impression is that this entrenchment of tradition, if such exists, may tend to associate any willingness to reconsider the traditional narrative with perceived efforts of critics in disparaging the prophet Joseph Smith. I reject that characterization, if such exists. I do not equate an adherence to tradition with faithfulness. I believe faithful saints interested in historical details can uncover a fuller, richer story that the larger body of evidence supports. A story that enhances faith, because all truth, if confirmed to be truth, will ultimately lead us toward God.

I appreciate a response from President Eyring's father, when asked what he thought about evolution he replied "I believe whichever way it turns out to have actually been." (*Mormon Scientist* p.228)

This is an example I aspire to, I hope to remain open to new truths that are anchored in sound evidence, even if that evidence may conflict with my long held assumptions. I believe my relationship with God will only be strengthened by such an outlook.

Notes:

Introduction:

i. Multiple lists of potential original members are presented in an article from the June 1980 *Ensign*: “Who were the six who organized the Church?”

The Day Porter Rockwell Was Baptized:

1. *Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder* is frequently cited. It names as a source *History of the Church*. (Harold Schindler, 1966/1993, p.6)

2. The first draft, written in June 1839, lists Porter Rockwell as one of the 11 baptized by David Whitmer at the June conference, incorrectly dating it “First day of June.” However, minutes exist providing the correct date of June 9. (ironically Porter died on the same day, June 9th, 48 years later)

"History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [15], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 19, 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/15>

3. The second draft, written between July and November 1839, contains a transcription error, changing “Porter” to “Peter.”

"History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," p. 42, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 19, 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-1839-circa-1841-draft-2/48>

4. *William Smith on Mormonism* 1883, p. 16 <http://archive.org/details/williamsmithonmo00smit/page/16>

5. Ancestry.com, WikiTree.com, Geni.com and others all list a “Peter” Rockwell as one of the children of Orin Rockwell and Sarah Witt, but no vital dates or information is available for Peter other than an assumed birth year. <http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Rockwell-1306>

6. James Mulholland made a note of clarification along the bottom of pages 9 & 10 of the first draft: “Father Smith & Martin Harris baptized this evening 6th April [page 10] Mother Smith & Sister Rockwell 2 or 3 days afterwards.”

"History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [9], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 19, 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/9>

7. The witness accounts of Sarah Rockwell's baptism are detailed in note 16 below.

8. Draft 2 left a blank before the last name Rockwell when listing baptisms corresponding with April 6th 1830. Perhaps James Mulholland intended to change “sister” to a specific name, Sarah [Witt], but the blank was later filled in by Thomas Bullock (who served as Joseph Smith's scribe beginning in 1843) with “Orrin Porter.”

"History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," p. 38, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 19, 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-1839-circa-1841-draft-2/44>

9. At least two others baptized at the June conference with Porter apparently thought they were baptized at the April 6th founding. For additional confusion between the two dates see the section “June 9th was called April 6th”

10. Larry C. Porter “*A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania*” 2000, and *Early Mormon Documents volume 5* Appendix A, Dan Vogel 2003, Signature Books

The First Baptisms of the 1830 Church of Christ:

11. Oliver Cowdery was first baptized by Joseph Smith

"History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," p. 18, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 23, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-1839-circa-1841-draft-2/24>

Also *History of the Church* 1:41-42.

12. (Samuel) "History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," p. 19, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 23, 2018,

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-1839-circa-1841-draft-2/25>

Also *History of the Church* 1:44

13. (Hyrum, David, Peter) "History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [4], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 22, 2018,

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/4>

The location is named in Draft 2:

"History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2]," p. 23, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 13, 2018,

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-1839-circa-1841-draft-2/29>

Also *History of the Church* 1:51

14. “Biography of John Whitmer” JosephSmithPapers.org, also *From Historian to Dissident* Bruce N. Westergren, 1995, Signature Books

15. Same as note 6 above, the bottom of page 9 of Joseph Smith's 1839 Draft History reads: “Father Smith Martin Harris baptized this evening 6th April...”

"History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [9], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 11, 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/9>

Lucy said her husband and Martin Harris were baptized on the same day the church was organized, April 6, 1830. Oliver Cowdery baptized the Sr. Smith as Joseph waited to greet his father at the edge of the water. "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845, Page [12], bk. 9," p. [12], bk. 9, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed October 31, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/116>

William Smith recorded that his father and brothers were baptized at a meeting on April 6, 1830. *William Smith on Mormonism*, 1883, 14. The brothers baptized in 1829 would have been confirmed members at the meeting.

Martin Harris claimed to be the first baptized when the Church was organized, and by Oliver Cowdery. Larry C. Porter "*A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania*" 2000, p. 108 note 67

An April 6th baptism date for Martin Harris and Joseph Smith Sr. is compatible with the recollection of Joseph Knight Sr., possibly implied, but not dated specifically. Knight said the two men "came forward to be baptized for the first . . . being the first I saw baptized in the new and everlasting covenant" "Joseph Knight's Recollection", *Jessee BYU Studies* 17, 37

16. Joseph Knight Sr. places the baptisms of Martin Harris and Joseph Smith Sr. definitively in "a small stream" which agrees with the other witnesses of the Manchester baptisms, and the available stream near the Smith Manchester home where Knight was visiting. "Joseph Knight's Recollection", *Jessee BYU*

Three non-member Manchester residents claimed to witness the first baptisms, placing them in the Smith home vicinity. Michael Marquardt quotes two accounts in "An Appraisal of Manchester as Location for the Organization of the Church" *Sunstone* Feb. 1992: 50

– Manchester area resident Benjamin Saunders, another friend of the Smiths, remembered the "Smiths held meetings at their house. I was there when they first baptized. Oliver Cowd[e]ry did the baptizing. Old brother Smith was baptized at that time and I think old Mrs Rockwell."

– C. R. Stafford, a neighbor of the Smiths, recalled that as a young man he "saw old Jo Smith [Sr.], his wife and Mrs [Sarah W.] Rockwell baptized by prophet Jo Smith."

Additionally a third, John Stafford, claimed to witness the baptisms of the two women. See note 17

The synthesis of all available accounts paints a scenario of Oliver Cowdery baptizing Martin Harris and Joseph Smith Sr. on April 6th, while Joseph Jr. baptized his mother and Sarah Rockwell a few days later. Discrepancies between accounts are reasonably explained by acknowledging how late memories may combine events witnessed with other known facts. For example if Benjamin Saunders attended the baptism of Joseph Smith Sr., and knew that Sarah Rockwell was also baptized at the same location, we would expect his late memory to be as given. Likewise the memory of C.R. Stafford is consistent with witnessing the baptisms of Lucy Smith and Sarah Rockwell by Joseph, while either witnessing or knowing that Joseph Sr. had also been baptized at the same location earlier that week. Both C.R. and John Stafford are believed to have a personal connection to Sarah Rockwell, bolstering the probability of witnessing her baptism. Sarah's eldest daughter Emily married a Christopher Stafford.

William Smith places a meeting at the Smith home on April 6th, and by association the baptism of his father at the same location. *William Smith on Mormonism*, 1883, 14.

17. The note along the bottom of pages 9 and 10 of Joseph Smith's 1839 history continues on page 10: "...Mother Smith & Sister Rockwell 2 or 3 days afterwards"

"History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [10], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 11, 2017, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/10>

It is important to note that this dating agrees with the personal accounts of Lucy Smith, Joseph Knight Sr., William Smith, and also a Martin Harris testimony. These four individuals who were attending and closest to the events do not include the two women among the baptisms of April 6th. John Stafford also reported witnessing the baptisms of the two women without mentioning either of the men. The memories of two additional observing neighbors, years later, combined the two baptism events of the same week into a single day. The naming of Joseph Jr. as the one who baptized the two women also buttresses the evidence for a second day of baptisms in Manchester, as both Lucy and Martin Harris agree that Oliver baptized the two men on the 6th. Martin Harris testimony and John Stafford interview referenced in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents volume 5*, Appendix A, 364.

18. "History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [11], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 18, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/11>
Also *History of the Church* 1:81

19. Draft 1 of Joseph Smith's 1839 history names Mary Page as the 7th person baptized on April 11th 1830. No additional information is available, the name is simply dropped from draft 2. The drop is a potential transcription oversight with no edit or notation in Draft 1.

"History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [11], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 18, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/11>

The identity of this Mary Page is unknown. The family of Hiram Page is not known. Apostle of 1838 John Edward Page did have a sister named Mary, but a connection to Fayette in 1830 has not been confirmed. Mary Page [Parsons] was married and living in Brownhelm, Lorain, Ohio by late 1829. The Page family appears to have moved from New York to Ohio by 1820, according to the youngest child's birth. Perhaps the best evidence of Mary's church membership pre-dating her brother's August 1833 baptism are the names of her second and third children: Moroni Parsons was born 11 Nov. 1832, and Emma Smith Parsons on 27 April, 1835. www.wikitree.com/wiki/Page-8029

20. "Autobiography of Solomon Chamberlain",
<http://www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/SChamberlain.html>

21. "History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [14], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed July 22, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/14>
Also *History of the Church* 1:84

22. "History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [15], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed August 14, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/15>

Solving the Story of April 6, 1830:

23. Dean Jessee “Joseph Knight's Recollection”, *BYU Studies* 17, 37

<http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1819&context=byusq>

24. For similarities between early Church organization and worship practices, and those of the Methodist church at the time, see "We Latter-day Saints are Methodists" Chapter 4, Christopher Jones 2009

<http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2746&context=etd>

25. D&C 23:5-7: “...I manifest unto you, Joseph Knight . . . And, behold, it is your duty to unite with the true church”, also Lucy’s account:

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/116>

26. David Stott “Legal Insights into the Organization of the Church in 1830”, *BYU Studies* 49, no. 2, 2010

<http://byustudies.byu.edu/content/legal-insights-into-organization-church-1830>

27. *William Smith on Mormonism* 1883, p. 14 <http://archive.org/details/williamsmithonmo00smit/page/14>

The six original confirmed members of the Church, assuming a branch meeting in Manchester on April 6, 1830, would be: Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Samuel H. Smith, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith Sr., and Martin Harris.

28. For example in 1991 LDS president Howard W. Hunter stated “six men comprised the total membership of the Church that day.” “The Sixth Day of April, 1830” April 1991 General Conference,

<http://www.lds.org/general-conference/1991/04/the-sixth-day-of-april-1830?lang=eng>

29. This interview was mentioned by Michael Marquardt “An Appraisal of Manchester as Location for the Organization of the Church” *Sunstone* Feb. 1992

30. *The Saints Herald* volume 29, 1882 p.189 <http://www.latterdaytruth.org/pdf/100196.pdf>

31. "Minute Book 2," p. 1, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed January 21, 2018,

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/3>

32. It may be argued that Katharine knew that it was the “first conference” on June 9th when the church membership “numbered thirty.” In modern times the word “organization” is typically used for April 6, while “first conference” generally refers to June 9. William Smith however did not follow this convention when he called the April 6th Manchester meeting the “first conference.” Therefore, it is not out of the question that his sister may also refer to the April 6th meeting in the same way. Without inserting our modern interpretation of “first conference” into her statement it reads as follows, sounding like the church membership numbered thirty on the day it was organized:

“I have been a member of this church ever since its first organization on 6th day of April, 1830 . . . I was one of the number who met in the first [meeting] held in these last days, when the church was first organized. We only numbered thirty, but we were a happy little band.”

William did not name his sister in his recounting the baptisms of June 9, but included himself and the other nine. This intriguing detail could be due to her claim of an April 6 baptism.

<http://www.latterdaytruth.org/pdf/100704.pdf>

33. *History of the Church vol.1*, p.84

34. "History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [9], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed February 11, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/9>

35. In the original rough draft account most of the following was marked through. The narrative following the blessing and passing of the sacrament . . . "We then laid our hands on each individual member of the Church present, to confirm them members of the Church of Jesus Christ, and that they might receive the Holy Ghost, when immediately the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the whole community in a miraculous manner. Some prophecied, many spoke with new tongues, and <several> of our number were completely overpowered for a time, that we were obliged to lay them upon beds &c &c, and when bodily sensibility was restored to them they shouted Hosannas to God and the Lamb— & declared that the Heavens had been opened unto them, <especially N Knights [Newel Knight]> that they had seen Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and many other great and glorious things. Either at this time or very shortly after <war[d]> the following were (with others) called to the priesthood & ordained <to> the respective offices, according as the Spirit made it manifest, viz Joseph Smith Senior, Hyrum Smith, John Whitmer, Peter Whitmer [Jr.] Christian Whitmer Samuel Smith, Martin Harris."

"History, circa June–October 1839 [Draft 1]," p. [10], The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed February 11, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-june-october-1839-draft-1/10>

36. Larry C. Porter, *A Study of Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania*, BYU Studies 2000 p.99 also Marquardt Feb 1992 Sunstone p.57 note 79

37. Jessee "Joseph Knight's Recollection", *BYU Studies* 17, 37

<http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1819&context=byusq>

38. "Minutes, 26 September 1830," p. 2, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed December 27, 2018,

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minutes-26-september-1830/1>

also *Far West Record*, p.3 Deseret Book, 1983

39. Michael Hubbard MacKay, *Sacred Space* 2016 Deseret Book, chapter 2.

40. Another explanation for the memory could be that a late recollection combined the two Whitmer baptism events of the 11th and 18th into one. This scenario remains compatible with the fact that the first baptisms occurring in Fayette took place on April 11th.

41. Alexander C. Flick, *History of the State of New York* (New York City: New York State Historical Association, 1934), 5:171. Mentioned by John K. Carmack "Fayette:" February 1989 Ensign

42. David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* 1887, p.33: The Colesville branch was organized at the end of June 1830. <http://archive.org/details/addressstoallbeli00whit/page/32>

43. Stott “Legal Insights into the Organization of the Church”, *BYU Studies* 49, no. 2 p. 8 note 56
David Stott’s 2010 paper reveals how activities of the June 9 conference correlated with customary organizational practices at the time. It is apparent that the meeting traditionally described as April 6 can be identified by attendance, location, and activities as the conference of June 9, 1830. Stott also makes the important clarification that religious societies could perform marriages. (Stott note 99)

44. Stott “Legal Insights into the Organization of the Church”, *BYU Studies* 49, no. 2 p. 132

45. *The Evening and the Morning Star*, March 1833, 76.

The traditional list does name six of the first seven men who were baptized in 1829 after the restoration of priesthood authority. It appears that as the memory shifted to the Fayette conference the recognized “original six” members reverted to six of the seven men who were baptized before the founding.

Why would the Whitmers not travel to Manchester for the first meeting? If the meeting at the time was seen as the founding of the first branch then it would have been important for the local residents of the Manchester/Palmyra area to attend. The Whitmers would be the core membership of the Fayette branch, which would meet a few days after. It is notable that in the 19th century Stake presidents were referred to as “President of the Church in (location name),” even in Utah. This was a carry over from the 1830’s when David Whitmer was “President of the Church in Missouri.” If this was the early assumption of how the Church would operate, with each location having a level of autonomy, then perhaps they saw no need for Fayette residents to participate in the Manchester founding.

46. One notable exception comes from the 1842 Wentworth Letter: "On the 6th of April, 1830, the ‘Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,’ was first organized in the town of Manchester, Ontario co., state of New York." "“Church History,” 1 March 1842," p. 708, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 30, 2018, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/church-history-1-march-1842/3>

47. "Revelation, 6 April 1830 [D&C 21]," p. 28, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed April 6, 2018, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-6-april-1830-dc-21/1>

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