

---

## MORMONISM AND THE BRITISH PRESS, 1880–90

Penrose, Roberts, and Sloan Fight for Fair Treatment

SUSAN W. HOWARD

↑ The rise in literacy rates in Britain's middle and working classes in the nineteenth century created a tremendous demand for inexpensive publications that could inform, entertain, and educate readers. Technological improvements in the printing press and the manufacture of cheap paper, along with the final repeal of the Stamp Act in 1855, "the tax on knowledge,"<sup>1</sup> resulted in an explosion of newspapers, periodicals, tracts, and pamphlets. The successful completion of the transatlantic cable in 1866 cut the time news took to travel from New York to London from ten days, depending on the weather, to less than one. In order to meet the demand from new readers, London became the center of "the manufacture of words," and Fleet Street, "the street of ink,"<sup>2</sup> became the heart of the rapidly growing newspaper industry. The spread of the printed word and the introduction

---

*Susan W. Howard is an independent researcher and retired attorney in San Jose, California.*

SUSAN W. HOWARD

of Mormonism into Europe also created a demand for information about this new religion from the United States.

The British press prided itself on being a fair and ethical institution, yet on occasion newspapers had published "willfully dishonest and grossly untrue fabrications."<sup>3</sup> When false or misleading information about Mormonism did appear in print, the task of writing and submitting corrections often fell on the missionaries who wrote and edited the *Millennial Star*. The subject of this paper is the work of three Salt Lake City journalists, all talented writers and orators, who lobbied for "fair play and justice" from the British press while serving missions in during the latter half of the 1880s. They were Charles W. Penrose, editor in chief of the *Deseret News*; Robert W. Sloan, prize-winning essayist and editor with the *Salt Lake Herald*; and Brigham H. Roberts, an associate editor of the *Salt Lake Herald*.

Shortly after arriving in London in March 1885, Charles Penrose wrote to the *Deseret News*, "The storm that has been raging in Utah has had no effect in this part of the world. . . . It is difficult to explain the situation in Utah to an Englishman, . . . for he could not comprehend how or why people would put up with such infamous outrages."<sup>4</sup> By "infamous outrages" Penrose meant the actions of the United States marshal and his deputies, together with the conduct of federal judges, court officials, and grand juries under the Edmunds Anti-Polygamy Act of 1882. Under the new law, federal officials in Utah Territory in October 1884 successfully tried and convicted Rudger Clawson of polygamy, signaling that noncompliance with Edmunds would be punished.

In early February 1885, a Salt Lake City grand jury indicted Penrose for unlawful cohabitation after subpoenaing members of his family, including his eight-year-old son, to appear for questioning. At the time, Penrose was in Washington, D. C., on a mission to promote statehood so that the citizens of Utah, rather than federal officials, would administer the laws. Rather than have him return home,

del

add non-breaking space

del / close up

del / close up

## THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

President John Taylor sent Penrose to the British Mission, where he had begun his journalism career on the staff of the *Millennial Star* during two earlier missions (from 1851 to 1861, and 1865 to 1868). From 1870 to 1877 he was the editor of the *Ogden Junction*. He then joined the staff of the *Deseret News*, where he became editor in chief in September 1880. As editor he exchanged critical and at times rancorous editorials with C. C. Goodwin of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, whose editorial policy was aimed at eliminating polygamy and undermining the power of the "Mormon Theocracy." Now at age fifty-three, well seasoned in journalism and politics, Penrose began his third mission in his native land.

European Mission president Daniel H. Wells appointed <sup>Penrose</sup> him to be president of the London Conference. The assignment suited him: Penrose had been born and raised in London, where he converted and where his mother and three sisters still lived. He remained for seven months before being released to return to Utah in late October.

Penrose's mission overlapped with that of the second missionary, Robert Wallace Sloan. Born in Cavan, Ireland, Sloan was a young boy when his family joined the Church. After settling in Salt Lake, his father, Edward L. Sloan, cofounded an independent newspaper, the *Salt Lake Herald*, in 1870. Rob, as Penrose called Sloan, was recognized as a brilliant young writer. He was twenty-eight and unmarried when called to his first missionary assignment, which was to assist Penrose and Utah lobbyists in Washington, DC, and New York for three months before sailing for Great Britain. He arrived in April and was assigned to the Irish Mission until his release in August 1886.

The third missionary, Brigham H. Roberts, was called to the British Mission shortly after he was arrested for unlawful cohabitation in December 1886. During a hasty meeting in the offices of the *Salt Lake Herald*, the two Apostles present made the decision to send him to Liverpool where President Wells could use his talents with the *Millennial Star*.<sup>5</sup> Although he was only thirty, Roberts, a native

New York and Washington, DC,

SUSAN W. HOWARD

of Warrington, Lancashire, had served two missions in the southern states, and had presided over the Tennessee Conference, where he saw firsthand the tragic consequences of an irresponsible anti-Mormon press.<sup>6</sup> In August 1884, Roberts disguised himself as a tramp and risked his life to recover the bodies of two missionaries killed during a violent attack on a local branch in what became known as the Cane Creek Massacre.

### Mormonism in Print

Within a year of the arrival of the first Mormon missionaries at Liverpool in 1837, anti-Mormon tracts appeared in areas where the elders had been preaching. Craig L. Foster's *Penny Tracts and Polemics*<sup>7</sup> traced the first anti-Mormon pamphlet to a Methodist minister who found his material in newspapers while living in Massachusetts. Foster analyzed the content of thousands of these documents that appeared in response to the presence of American missionaries in Great Britain in the years from 1837 to 1860.

Many British readers' first encounter with Mormonism may have been in fiction rather than newspapers or tracts. The first novel about Mormonism appeared in 1843 when British author Frederick Marryat published *Travels and Adventures of Monsieur Violet*. A new subgenre, the antipolygamy novel, appeared in the mid-1850s. Almost one hundred novels (which featured stereotypical Mormon characters and melodramatic plots), along with countless exposés,<sup>8</sup> magazine and newspaper stories, were published before the end of the century.<sup>9</sup> By the time Arthur Conan Doyle's first Sherlock Holmes detective story, *A Study in Scarlet*, which painted Mormon characters as kidnappers and murderers, arrived in London bookstores in 1887, readers had encountered the stock characters in books by British travel writers, such as Emily Faithful,<sup>10</sup> as well as in the theater. In the 1880s they could see a comedy, "The Exiles from Erin: or St. Abe

and his Seven Wives,"<sup>11</sup> later performed as "The Mormons" or "The Danites," a hit so in demand that simultaneous performances took place in different London theaters in the mid-1880s.<sup>12</sup>

In historian Jan Shipps's analysis of the Mormon image in the American press she found that negative attitudes peaked in the nineteenth century during the years between 1881 and 1885.<sup>13</sup> Shipps excluded British magazines and books, and while no comparable study has been done for Great Britain, it seems likely that the trends there would echo the results of Shipps's study. J. Spencer Fluhman also excluded British materials from his history of nineteenth-century anti-Mormonism,<sup>14</sup> but as Craig Foster's research found, the sources for the earliest British anti-Mormon tracts came from old American newspapers. Patrick Q. Mason explored how nineteenth-century journalism was a part of a broader anti-Mormonism that contributed to a "culture of violence" against Mormons in the American South.<sup>15</sup> Rebecca Bartholomew's *Audacious Women: Early British Mormon Immigrants* examined how the fictional stereotypes differed from the actual lives of the British women who did convert and move to Utah.<sup>16</sup>

Two British authors did write honest travel accounts of Mormon life. The Honorable James W. Barclay, a British Member of Parliament, described his visit to Utah in 1883 in a positive article for the *Nineteenth Century*, an important British periodical.<sup>17</sup> In the same year Phil Robinson, a war correspondent and reporter for the *London Telegraph*, traveled through Utah Territory and the western territories on behalf of the *New York World*. Although Robinson did not approve of polygamy, the Saints regarded his articles and his book on his experiences, *Sinners and Saints*,<sup>18</sup> to be fair as well as complimentary in their portrayal of Mormon Utah.<sup>19</sup>

Robinson complained, however, that the Mormons were "most foolishly negligent of the power of the press, and of the immense value in forming public opinion of a free use of type."<sup>20</sup> He also noted that they did not understand that with a "public contradiction of a public

SUSAN W. HOWARD

calumny," or "that by anticipating malicious versions of events"<sup>21</sup> they could as often as not get an accurate statement before the public.

Yet as one *Millennial Star* editorial put it, Mormonism was unpopular in Great Britain, and editors were "afraid to be impartial towards such an unpopular cause."<sup>22</sup> The critics of Mormonism often claimed that it was not so much the religion itself, but rather the practice of polygamy that they opposed. Many regarded the practice as barbaric and "Asiatic,"<sup>23</sup> an institution "never meant to flourish on American soil,"<sup>24</sup> and in a modern age that was increasingly cognizant of the rights of women, a step backward. The missionaries defended polygamy as a commandment of God supported by biblical precedent and a pragmatic solution to certain modern ills.

Baptismal statistics show that in the fourth year after the missionaries arrived in Britain, more than two thousand converts joined the church. During the peak years of 1849, 1850, and 1851, more than eight thousand British men and women joined the Church annually. In January 1853, after the *Millennial Star* announced the doctrine of plural marriage, the number of convert baptisms dropped dramatically, and by the 1880s they were less than 10 percent of what they had been in peak years.<sup>25</sup> While other factors contributed to the decline, the popularity of books and news articles about polygamy and predatory Mormon missionaries sold more newspapers than did portrayals of the Saints as honest people who were victims of unjust persecution. The press had become more commercialized, and advertisers looked at circulation numbers in deciding where to place their ads.<sup>26</sup>

### The British Press 1885

Ongoing digitization of British newspapers has made an enormous supply of materials available to researchers.<sup>27</sup> In my survey of Mormon topics in the decades from 1870 to 1890, I found that many of the straight news articles on Mormons were one or two paragraphs long,



THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

usually in the back pages. Frequent news topics were notices of the departure of a Mormon emigration company, local district conference reports, and occasionally, a letter to the editor from a missionary or member. During the 1870s, British readers could read about controversial topics such as Brigham Young, the "Mormon Murders," and the trials of John D. Lee. Depending on the newspaper, the reports were generally straightforward, accurate, and, if in need of correction, follow-ups appeared, although these articles were not always timely.<sup>28</sup> Occasionally a reporter visited a Mormon branch meeting and followed up with a review, which in general were unflattering.<sup>29</sup> After the Supreme Court decision in *Reynolds v. United States* in 1879, however, overall reporting on Mormonism took a darker turn.

The British papers contained more reprints from the press in the eastern United States where the antipolygamy movement, disappointed by the failure to pressure the Saints into giving up polygamy, pushed for passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887. Once the stricter law took effect, headlines such as "The Last Struggle of Mormonism" predicted not only the end of polygamy, but also the possible demise of the Church.<sup>30</sup> While these articles were not written with the caustic tone that often appeared in the *New York Times*, for example, it is understandable that mission leaders believed the press was aligned against Mormonism.

Press reports of the mobbing of British missionaries marked a disturbing trend that began as early as 1881.<sup>31</sup> In 1883 the *Star* alerted its readers that William Jarman, former resident of Utah who called himself an "Ex-Mormon Priest," had founded the British Anti-Mormon Association with the goal of driving the Mormon missionaries out of the British Isles. Based in Exeter, Devon County, Jarman had published an exposé of Mormonism, *U.S.A.: Uncle Sam's Abscess, or Hell upon Earth*.<sup>32</sup> Jarman attracted large crowds to his lectures, which often took place wherever a Mormon district conference had been announced. He drew upon the stereotypes of Mormons found

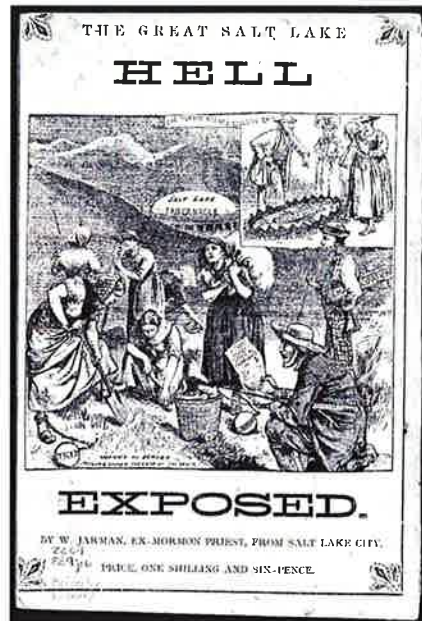
del

if they needed

1  
M

1  
M

1  
M



One version of the cover to William Jarman's 1884 exposé of Mormonism.

in fiction and travel reports, embellishing exaggerated stories about life in Utah, including easily disproved claims that the Mormons had murdered over five hundred thousand people, including Jarman's own son. He never tired of proclaiming that the missionaries enticed British women into polygamy and lives of misery and slavery in Utah.

Sloan and Penrose both wrote for the *Millennial Star*, but during their missions they continued to write for home newspapers as well. Penrose signed his letters to

the *News* with the alias "Exile." He wrote about life and politics in Great Britain and in defense of the Utah Saints. Sloan wrote columns on his travels and politics for the *Herald* as "Wanderer," or, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, "Wandering Bobbie."<sup>33</sup>

For the April 1885 general conference, the First Presidency had prepared a letter to be read to the Saints claiming that the federal government had violated basic rights of the Latter-day Saints, for example, the right to a fair jury trial and the right of an accused to be deemed innocent until proven guilty. Penrose initially approached the London press in May to submit copies of the letter to the major London dailies. On May 20 he sent copies to more than six of the leading dailies: "Times, Telegraph, Standard, Chronicle, Globe, Echo, etc."<sup>34</sup> The next day he sent copies to at least four weeklies, namely,

ital  
 Deseret (?)  
 defended  
 What newspaper is this referring to?  
 (-)

5

1  
M



## Circulation

Utah		Great Britain	
Utah population (1884)	145,000	Great Britain Population	35,000,000
Salt Lake Population	45,000	London Population	4,500,000
<u>Combined Editions</u>		<u>Weeklies</u>	
Deseret News	9,500	Lloyd's	750,000
Salt Lake Herald	13,000	Times	200,000
Salt Lake Tribune	19,340	Reynolds' (1870)	200,000
<u>British Mission</u>		<u>Dailies</u>	
Millennial Star (1850)	18,000	London Star	200,000
		London Times	100,000
		Manchester Guardian	38,000

*Comparison of Population and Newspaper Circulation in the 1880s: Utah and Great Britain.*

“Lloyds, Reynolds’, Dispatch, News of the World etc.” On Friday, May 22 he sent the letter to the *Nineteenth Century*. The letter was long, taking up nearly one full page in the *Deseret News*, so in each case Penrose offered to condense it and turn it into an article. Within days he received rejections from every single paper, although the summary was eventually printed in the *Western Mail* in Wales.<sup>35</sup> The length of the letter alone could have been reason enough for editors to reject it.

Two weeks later he again sent copies of an official protest by the Saints addressed to Congress and President Cleveland to leading London papers, again with no acceptances, although at least two articles appeared, one in a Scots newspaper and the other in Wales.<sup>36</sup> Missionaries did have success with letters to the editor in areas outside metropolitan London. Penrose’s first acceptance was a letter to the editor of the *Belfast Evening Telegraph* (Ireland) after an unruly crowd prevented him from speaking on the Custom House steps.<sup>37</sup>

Penrose

Penrose



Charles W. Penrose, Editor of Deseret News, London Conference, October 1885. Used by permission of the Utah State Historical Society.

In Penrose's opinion, the British press was dull. In his June letter to the News he wrote:

ins. name of newspaper

What a dreary and leaden thing is ordinary

ENGLISH JOURNALISM

It lacks the spice, piquancy, snap and enterprise of American newspaperdom. Much fault is found with the Associated Press at home, but something of the kind here would put new life into the sleepy columns of the London dailies. . . There is more "meat" in the Deseret News in a week, than in an English paper for six months."<sup>38</sup>

ins.

nom

Is this Penrose or Stead?

In July, London's *Pall Mall Gazette* remedied the lack of "spice" in a demonstration of "the New Journalism" in Britain.<sup>39</sup> Beginning July 6, the *Gazette* published a series titled "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,"<sup>40</sup> based on several months of investigative research into practices that resulted in the sexual exploitation of innocent girls and young women. Before publishing the articles, *Gazette* editor William T. Stead assembled a secret commission to assist him in finding solid evidence to prove his allegations. He was motivated by the failure of Parliament to pass a law changing the age of consent for women from thirteen to fifteen after the bill had passed the House of Lords three times.<sup>41</sup> The series sparked controversies in the press that continued for months in Britain and in the United States. Inevitably, comparisons between corrupt Englishmen and Mormon elders were made.<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, the "Maiden Tribute" series may have opened the door for Penrose to gain access to the London press in a roundabout way. In mid-August, after a crowd stirred up by Jarman confronted Wells, Penrose and other leaders at a district conference in Sheffield, it became necessary for the police to escort them to safety through what Penrose described as a "howling crowd."<sup>43</sup> Although as recorded in Penrose's diary the incident did have comical aspects, the threat of violence was genuine.

Ten days later a news item headlined "A Mormon Riot at the East End of London" appeared in several London newspapers on August

26 (Keep on same page)

## MORMONS MOBBED

Elders in London are Attacked by Infuriated Rioters.

### A RICH MAN'S MURDER.

Sullivan Preparing for Another Pugilistic Encounter-- General News.

By Western Ass'd Press to the HERALD.

#### Cholera Record.

TOULON, Aug. 27.—Seventeen persons died here yesterday from cholera.

MARSEILLES, Aug. 27.—Eleven deaths from cholera were reported here yesterday

### ANTI-MORMON RIOT.

Missionaries Blasted and Terribly Abused by a Mob.

NEW YORK, Aug. 26.—Sun's London: For some time past several Mormon missionaries have been laboring with great energy in the East End of

London, and have succeeded in making many converts and proselytes, in spite of persistent opposition. There have recently been reports that these missionaries have been systematically kidnapping young women and shipping them to Utah to be "sealed" to rich Mormons. All sorts of stories have been told about the harems kept by wealthy Mormons, and the indignities inflicted upon girls who were entrapped into becoming their concubines. These reports have greatly exasperated the East Enders and to night an infuriated mob invaded and took possession of the hall in which the missionaries were speaking. The invaders stormed the platform, smashed most of the furniture in the hall, and made a wreck of everything on the platform. Seven elders who had been conducting the services fled for their lives. The rioters chased them through the streets, pelting them with mud and every missile that could be picked up. Several of the elders were captured and terribly abused by the mob. Their clothing was torn to shreds, and they were beaten until they were unconscious and almost lifeless. The rioters, evidently believing them dead, fled and left the Mormons lying naked and bleeding on the pavement, where they were afterward found by the police.

This Page one article appeared in papers throughout Great Britain and the United States. The story was not true.

SUSAN W. HOWARD

26 and again the following day. The story was reprinted in the weeklies, in local presses, and in newspapers in the United States and in Utah, but not the *Deseret News*.<sup>44</sup> According to the report, on Tuesday evening, August 25, a mob attacked and beat Mormon missionaries after becoming enraged by reports that the elders were “systematically kidnapping young women and shipping them to Utah to be ‘sealed’ to rich Mormons,”<sup>45</sup> thus evoking the July series in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. On August 29 the *Salt Lake Tribune* noted that Jarman had sent a letter to the editor indicating that he “means business and that the mobbing may have been due to his work.”<sup>46</sup> The letter was dated August 16, the day of the Sheffield disturbance. Following an investigation, the *Millennial Star* denied the attack story. The *London Evening Standard* rejected a letter from Penrose, who then published it in the *Millennial Star*. Penrose asserted, “I am in a position to state, positively, that no attack whatever has been made upon the ‘Mormon’ missionaries in London during the present year.”<sup>47</sup> He himself had been in London that evening in the area near Mile End Road where the incident supposedly took place.<sup>48</sup>

Penrose objected to two items in the *London Daily Chronicle*; a September 1 editorial followed by a September 3 letter to the editor, both stating that while there were Irish people in Utah, none of them had ever joined the Mormon Church. The *Chronicle* agreed to publish Penrose’s rebuttal, “Irish in Salt Lake City,” signed “A Londoner from Utah.”<sup>49</sup> Penrose complimented the *Chronicle*, noting that it “gave place to the ‘other side,’” and that “it is so seldom that the ‘Mormon’ side of any question relating to Utah is permitted to occupy the columns of English newspapers, in spite of their boasts about freedom of speech and British fairness.”<sup>50</sup> The *Evening Standard*, however, ignored Penrose’s offer of a response to an untruthful article.<sup>51</sup>

Although the *Pall Mall Gazette* had published the report of the East End attack, W. T. Stead decided to send a reporter to interview Penrose on September 9.<sup>52</sup> With unintentional irony, the *Gazette*’s

mean[t]

it

!

oh  
love  
up

account of the interview began. "So little is known about Mormonism, and so much curiosity has recently been shown respecting that sect, that we decided to take advantage of the conference which the Latter Day Saints are at present holding in London in order to gather a few actual facts from one of themselves."<sup>53</sup> Penrose's opinion of the interview published September 15 was that it was "garbled but not hostile."<sup>54</sup> He must have been pleased with the reporter's description as "an Interview with Mr. C. W. Penrose, the intelligent and talented president of the conference."<sup>55</sup> This was his last opportunity to influence the press. Penrose was called back to Utah in October.

Overall, rejections had outnumbered acceptances. Penrose summarized his nearly seven months of struggle with the London press in his September 28 editorial: "The metropolitan press fights shy of anything that would indicate the slightest favor to the Latter-day Saints, and communications containing facts or rectifying errors about Utah or "The Mormons" are usually drowned in the cold depths of utter silence."<sup>56</sup>

### "The Battle Cry," 1886

Robert Sloan was released from his mission the following year, in August 1886. President Wells asked him to remain a few weeks longer to organize a series of meetings in London intended to bring to the attention of the metropolitan press the ~~claims of the~~ Mormon people that the United States government was unjustly persecuting them. Sloan approached Phil Robinson, who agreed to host and act as chair for the program. Robinson scheduled St. George's Hall for the first event, held Tuesday evening, October 12. According to the *Salt Lake Herald*, St. George's, a theater located on Langham Place, Regent Street, in London's West End, was "one of the finest and most aristocratic halls in London."<sup>57</sup> Ten thousand handbills were printed and distributed, and larger bills were "placed on boards and carried

ms.

which was

Penrose's

Mormons' claims

del / close up



SUSAN W. HOWARD

through Fleet Street, Strand, Regent Street and many of the principal thoroughfares by twenty men, all in a row, commonly known as 'Sandwichmen,' and of which the streets are never free." The bills were titled "A Bitter Cry from the Persecuted Mormons of Utah" and "For Fair Play and Justice." The organizers chose the location, three-quarters of a mile from Fleet Street, in order to attract newspapermen and a class of nearby residents who otherwise would have little contact with the missionaries.

On Tuesday evening attendance was sparse, in part perhaps due to the rain. A reporter for the *Salt Lake Tribune* counted sixty-three in the audience, while the correspondent for the *Herald* estimated one hundred in a hall that held more than five hundred. In introducing the speakers, Robinson proclaimed his objectivity and monogamous

status as well as his admiration for the Mormons.<sup>58</sup> The crowd was antagonistic, and heckling grew more intense when Rob Sloan began to speak in defense of polygamy, yet his wit and sincerity won over several of the reporters.

Sloan later wrote that the evening was a financial failure and that Robinson, who had backed it, was out twenty pounds.<sup>59</sup> According to his survey, the meeting was noticed in five of the morning dailies and an equal number of evening papers—and only one of



Nineteenth-century sandwichmen strolled the Strand to advertise events and products.

del/  
close  
up

them was “extremely fair.” With this exception, the reviews of the evening were almost universally negative. The *Salt Lake Tribune* printed a letter from its correspondent in London, Mr. E. Hamilton, who said that Elder Sloan was the “only really sincere Mormon he had ever seen. He is a smart young fellow and pleased the audience hugely.”<sup>60</sup> A second *Tribune* article printed negative reviews quoted from several London papers: the *Globe*, *Standard*, and *Telegraph*,<sup>61</sup> where the reporter pointed out that the elders “left practically untouched the question of persecution.”<sup>62</sup> The *Herald* story submitted by “Varah” quoted the *Echo*, the *London Daily Times*, the *Telegraph*, and the *Daily Chronicle*.<sup>63</sup> Varah wrote that until the meeting it had been nearly impossible for the Mormons to preach to the wealth and the aristocracy of London, but now, despite contempt, the newspapers provided the means for readers to conclude that the Mormons had been wronged.

According to George Osmond, an assistant editor of the *Star* who was tireless in denouncing misleading press reports, the account in the *Chronicle* was “tolerably fair,”<sup>64</sup> and that the uniformity of the newspaper reports seemed to indicate “an almost common origin.” Osmond noted that the *London Daily Telegraph*, “one of the greatest newspapers in the world,” deemed Mormonism sufficiently important to publish three articles on it. Yet when asked for space in the paper to deny the most reckless charges the *Telegraph* invariably denied requests.<sup>65</sup>



Robert W. Sloan, compiler of *Utah Gazetteer*, 1884. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

from.  
of the

del

↑

SUSAN W. HOWARD

No further meetings were held. Sloan returned to Utah in October 1886, but within weeks he was sent back to the East to lobby on behalf of the Church.<sup>66</sup>

### The Debate Challenges, 1887-1888

B. H. Roberts arrived in Liverpool in March 1887. Throughout 1886 and 1887, Jarman and his anti-Mormon colleagues continued to confront the missionaries. Jarman issued repeated challenges to meet in a public debate on the doctrines and practices of the Utah church.<sup>67</sup> At the request of local missionaries Roberts accepted the challenge, but he insisted on a neutral chairman to preside and a set of rules to be followed.<sup>68</sup> The debates, which drew crowds in the thousands, took place in Yorkshire, London, and Sussex, with a final confrontation in

Swansea, Wales, in July 1888.

At the final debate, three thousand noisy, antagonistic listeners made it difficult for Roberts to be heard. The crowd voted that Jarman had proven his charges against the Church. Although he lost the vote, Roberts's performance resulted in his letters appearing in the *Barnsley Independent* and the *Cambrian Daily Leader*.<sup>69</sup> The *Herald of Wales* sent a reporter to interview him, allowing Roberts to counteract and offer proof of Jarman's falsehoods.<sup>70</sup> Brief articles



Brigham H. Roberts, editor Salt Lake Herald  
Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

Morm.

at the  
of the

AAA  
FN

cap  
stet

Roberts

"counteract and offer proof of" is contradictory.

## THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

on the debates appeared in newspapers as far away as Manchester.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, several witnesses to the lectures by Jarman and his Society members expressed their disgust with his behavior in letters to the local papers.<sup>72</sup>

lc

Jarman's campaigns against the Mormons brought negative attention to his activities and turned public opinion against him. Readers had a chance to see another side of the anti-Mormon in news reports of a criminal case brought against him in the Swansea Police Court on a charge of inciting violence against a Mormon, and later a lawsuit by two of his deputies who claimed he had defrauded them.<sup>73</sup> The *Deseret News* later reported that after years of "apathetic indifference," there had been a remarkable revival of interest in Mormonism in Wales.<sup>74</sup> A number of newspapers opened their columns to favorable reports on the subject of Mormonism. The *Pall Mall Gazette* published a brief piece commending the Swansea court for not tolerating interference with liberty of speech.<sup>75</sup>

While carrying out his editorial duties at the *Millennial Star*, Roberts began the work of research and writing that would occupy much of his later career. The materials for his debate preparations became the basis for pamphlets published for the use of missionaries. The mission office printed and sold thousands of copies to be distributed in advance of Jarman's lectures. With the encouragement of the mission president, he researched and published his first book, *The Gospel: Man's Relationship to Deity*, (1888).<sup>76</sup> Shortly after he returned home, Roberts was called to the First Council of ~~the~~ Seventy. During the antipolygamy prosecution, he decided to surrender to the federal prosecutor and plead guilty, then served a four-month prison sentence for unlawful cohabitation.

del  
ins

The three missionaries returned home at a time of crucial importance for the Church and Utah. Penrose and Sloan soon became involved in lobbying efforts in Washington and New York against the Edmunds-Tucker Bill as well as the 1887 attempt to win statehood for

SUSAN W. HOWARD

Utah. Penrose also took on the challenge of trying to place more positive articles about the Church into the eastern press.<sup>77</sup> With one hiatus in the 1890s when the *Deseret News* was privately owned, Penrose served as editor in chief until 1906 when he became president of the European Mission, returning to his native land as a member of the Quorum of Twelve. Roberts continued writing and speaking and served as assistant Church historian, army chaplain, and mission president. In 1889 Robert Sloan bought an interest in the *Logan Journal* and became its editor. The People's Party, which was organized in Utah Territory 1870 to counter non-Mormon influence, was disbanded in 1891, leaving members free to join either national party. Penrose, Sloan, and Roberts joined the Democratic Party and became active in party politics and political controversies.

In the decades following the Manifesto, anti-Mormonism did not disappear from the press. Another era of violent anti-Mormonism arose in Britain in the early twentieth century.<sup>78</sup> The threatening figure of the predatory Mormon missionary continued to haunt the pages of newspapers, fiction, and eventually, ~~the~~ silent movies. Mormonism, however, had gained a powerful defender. When stories about elders luring English girls into polygamy surfaced once again prior to World War I, editor W. T. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette* took the press to task. He wrote to the London *Daily Press* demanding that unscrupulous journalists provide proof of salacious stories about Mormonism before publishing such in the British newspapers. He publically urged opponents of Mormonism to remember "the principle of religious toleration."<sup>79</sup>

## Conclusion

Charles W. Penrose, Robert W. Sloan, and Brigham H. Roberts did not succeed overall in achieving a change in the public image of Mormonism in Great Britain during the 1880s. It is important to



## THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

remember that their primary duties lay in missionary work and assisting the members. They were among the better known Mormon journalists who took on Phil Robinson's challenge to answer the calumnies against their adopted religion, yet there were many others, not professional journalists, who took up the challenge as well, and whose experiences remain to be told. Most histories of Mormonism during this critical decade understandably have focused on the struggle between church and state on the North American continent. Systematic studies of Mormonism and local presses throughout the world will be a great resource for future Mormon studies.

## Notes

1. Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 31-33.
2. Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century: A Human Awful Wonder of God* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), 226, 230.
3. Richard L. Evans, *A Century of "Mormonism" in Great Britain* (Salt Lake City: Publisher's Press, 1984), 202.
4. Exile, "A Voice from Abroad," *Deseret News*, May 1, 1885.
5. Gary James Bergera, ed., *The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts* (Salt Lake City, 1990), 163-64.
6. Patrick Q. Mason, *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 40-41, 52-53. See also J. Spencer Fluhman, "A Peculiar People": *Anti-Mormonism and The Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).
7. Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain, 1837-1860* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002), 51-52.
8. A reviewer for a British illustrated weekly called Fanny Stenhouse's 1880 book, *An Englishwoman in Utah*, "more sensational than the wildest novel." "The

SUSAN W. HOWARD

Reader," *The Graphic* (London), April 24, 1880. Permission for quotations from British newspapers has been granted by the source, the British Newspaper Archive, <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

9. Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century Literature," *Western Humanities Review* 22, no.3 (Summer 1968): 243-60; Leonard J. Arrington and Rebecca Foster Cornwall, "Perpetuation of a Myth: Mormon Danites in Five Western Novels, 1840-90," *BYU Studies* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1983): 149. Terry L. Givens updated and deepened the understanding of how these stereotypes affected American readers' perceptions of Mormonism. <sup>See</sup> Terry L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 2013).
10. Karen M. Morin and Jeanne K. Guelke, "Strategies of Representation, Relationship, and Resistance, British Women Travelers and Mormon Plural Wives, ca. 1879-1890," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88, no. 3 (September 1998): 436-62, 449.
11. "Described as "illustrations of the social inconveniences of polygamy," "The London Theaters," *The Era* (London), May 14, 1881; a page one review, "Last Night's Theatricals," *Lloyd's Weekly*, May 1, 1881.
12. Leonard J. Arrington, "Mormonism: Views from Without and Within," *BYU Studies* 14 no. 2 (Winter 1974): 144.
13. Jan Shipps, "From Satyr to Saint: American Perception of the Mormons, 1860-1960," in *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 58, 64.
14. Fluhman, "A Peculiar People", 19.
15. Mason, *The Mormon Menace*, 29-32, 164-65.
16. Rebecca Bartholomew, *Audacious Women: Early British Mormon Immigrants* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 1-24.
17. James W. Barclay, "A New View of Mormonism," *Nineteenth Century* 15, no. 83, (January 1884): 167-84.
18. Phil Robinson, *Sinners and Saints: A Tour Across the States, and Round Them; with Three Months Among the Mormons* (1883; repr., Ulan Press, 2013).

take out underline

ins.

THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

19. "A Distinguished Journalist," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 28, 1883. The *Tribune* accused Robinson of being in the pay of the Mormons, but he had in fact written the articles for the World.
20. Robinson, *Sinners and Saints*, 245.
21. Robinson, *Sinners and Saints*, 246; Arrington, "Mormonism: Views from Without and Within," 140–41. Leonard Arrington later confirmed Robinson's observations. He wrote that after they settled in Utah, "the Saints were not aggressive and resourceful in their own image creations" until the 1930s.
22. G. O., "The London Meeting," *Millennial Star*, October 25, 1886, 680–83. See "Popular Governments and Unpopular Religions," *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 15, 1880.
23. "Asiatic" and "Oriental" were derogatory terms sometimes used along with "harem" to describe Mormon plural marriage.
24. Christine Talbot, *A Foreign Kingdom: Mormons and Polygamy in American Political Culture, 1852–1890* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 133.
25. Evans, *Century of "Mormonism" in Great Britain*, 244. See Richard L. Jensen and Malcolm R. Thorp, eds., *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 25–26.
26. Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850–1950*, 164–65.
27. British Newspaper Archive, Findmypast Newspaper Archive Limited, <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>
28. The first correction to the erroneous report appeared in the *Millennial Star* days, if not weeks, in advance of general press reports: S. S. Jones, "President Young's Resignation," *Millennial Star*, April 22, 1873, 248–49; supplement to the *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, May 2, 1873 (reprint of Brigham Young's letter to *New York Herald*); "Resignation of Brigham Young," *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, May 10, 1882.
29. "The Mormons in London," *The Standard* (London), January 27, 1872, (reporter attended a Sunday meeting at Barnsbury Road); "A Sunday with the Mormons," *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 7, 1882 (reporter attended meeting at Pentonville Branch, London).

Is this a newspaper title, or is it referring to the actual world?

del/close up

also

del

del

del/nom.

del

SUSAN W. HOWARD

30. "The Last Struggle of Mormonism," *York Herald*, April 3, 1886; "Decay of Mormonism," *Birmingham Daily Post*, August 4, 1887; "Disestablishment in Deseret," *Shields Daily Gazette* (Tyne and Wear, Northeast England), August 22, 1887.
31. "The Mormons in London," *Portsmouth Evening News*, December 31, 1881; "Mormons in London," *Morning Post*, January 28, 1882.
32. William Jarman, U.S.A. <sup>↑</sup> *Uncle Sam's Abscess, or Hell upon Earth for U. S. Uncle Sam* (Exeter, England: H. Leduc's Steam Printing Works, 1884).
33. "Wandering Bobbie," *Salt Lake Tribune*, September 2, 1885, 4.
34. Charles W. Penrose, diary, May 20, 1885, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Transcript in possession of the author.
35. Penrose, diary, May 27, 1885, <sup>↑</sup> *Mormonism on Its Trial: A Remarkable Presidential Address*, *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), June 2, 1885. <sup>See also</sup>
36. "The Latter-day Saints and Their Grievances," *Glasgow Herald*, June 8, 1885; "Mormons and the United States Government: Declaration of Grievances and Protest," *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), June 16, 1885. See also Charles W. Penrose, "How to Roll On the Work," *Millennial Star*, June 15, 1885, 376-78.
37. Charles W. Penrose, "Mormonism in Belfast," *Millennial Star*, August 10, 1885, 497-98. Reprinted from *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, July 21, 1885. Penrose was prevented from preaching as had been advertised. Robert W. Sloan's account of the meeting is found in "On the Ould Sod," *Salt Lake Herald*, August 16, 1885.
38. Exile, "Exile's Letter: Affairs Political, Religious, and Otherwise, in Europe, and Reflections on Doings in Utah," *Deseret News*, July 8, 1885, 398. Robert Sloan agreed: "There is more news, a greater variety of style, better taste, and infinitely more profitable reading in an average, or even ordinary American daily in a city the size of Salt Lake than there is in two-thirds the English, or British papers combined." Wanderer, "Home News: Dublin Items. The Prince of Wales Blown to Atoms," *Salt Lake Herald*, May 3, 1885, 6.
39. Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain*, 36-39, 76.
40. W. T. Stead, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," *Pall Mall Gazette* (London), July 6-10 1885. See full series at <http://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk/pmg/tribute/mt1.php>

## THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

41. The Criminal Law Amendment Act passed August 14, 1885. The act raised the age of consent to sixteen and criminalized additional acts of sexual exploitation reported by the *Gazette*.
42. "The Mormon Threat," *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 29, 1885, 4, quoting *New York Commercial Advertiser*.
43. Penrose, diary, August 16, 1885. Penrose wrote that no one was hurt.
44. "Special Telegrams: Seven Mormon Elders Whipped in London: Anti Mormon Riots in London," *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 27, 1885, 1. Versions also were published in the following: *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 26; *Daily London*, August 26; *London Sun*, August 26; *Birmingham Daily Post*, August 27; *Liverpool Mercury*, August 27; *Belfast News-Letter*, August 29; *Lloyd's Weekly* (London), August 30; *Reynolds's* (London), August 30.
45. "Special Telegrams," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1.
46. "Elder Jarman: He is Showing Up the Monkey Game in England," *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 29, 1885, 4.
47. Charles Penrose, "'Mormonism' and the Press," *Millennial Star*, September 28, 1885.
48. Penrose, diary, August 25, 1885; Penrose, "'Mormonism' and the Press," 616; "Explanation," *Millennial Star*, September 7, 1885, 570. The news reports placed the attack at the location of the Whitechapel Branch meetings, Orson's Hall (Orson's Academy).
49. Penrose, diary, September 5, 1887.
50. Penrose, "'Mormonism' and the Press," 616.
51. Penrose, diary, September 11, 1885; "'Mormonism' and the Press," 616.
52. Penrose, diary, September 9, 1885.
53. "Among the Mormons," *Pall Mall Gazette*, September 15, 1885.
54. Penrose, diary, September 17, 1885.
55. The *New York Times* published a negative comment on Penrose in "The Defiant Polygamists," *New York Times*, September 28, 1885.
56. Penrose, "'Mormonism' and the Press," 616.
57. Varah, "Mormonism in Style," *Salt Lake Herald*, October 31, 1886, 12.



SUSAN W. HOWARD

58. Earlier that day, the *Pall Mall Gazette* published an article by Phil Robinson, "The Mormons in Trouble." "Phil Robinson and the 'Mormons,'" *Millennial Star*, December 13, 1886.
59. Constance L. Lieber and John Sillito, eds., *Letters from Exile: The Correspondence of Martha Hughes Cannon and Angus M. Cannon, 1886-1888* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 67-70, <http://signaturebookslibrary.org/?p=7017>. Sloan asked Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon, a plural wife of Angus M. Cannon, to speak at the meeting. Despite his persuasive plea, she refused for fear that news of her presence in London would jeopardize her husband's freedom. Twenty pounds in 1886 was equivalent to ninety-seven dollars then, approximately worth \$2,450 purchasing power in today's dollars.
60. "Mormons in London," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 31, 1886, 6.
61. "The St. George's Hall Meeting," *Salt Lake Tribune*, November 2, 1886, 2.
62. Varah, "Mormonism in Style," 12. Probably he was British missionary John Varah Long.
63. Varah, "Mormonism in Style," 12.
64. George Osmond, "The London Meeting," *Millennial Star*, October 25, 1886, 680.
65. George Osmond, "The London Telegraph on 'Mormonism,'" *Millennial Star*, November 1, 1886, 698-70.
66. "Jottings," *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 7, 1886, 3.
67. "Mormonism on the Stump in Swansea," *Millennial Star*, September 19, 1887, 604-7.
68. Bergera, *Autobiography of B.H. Roberts*, 165-173.
69. "Correspondence," *Millennial Star*, November 21, 1887, 748-50; "The Mormon Controversy: James J. Chandler, Jarman Challenged," *Millennial Star*, November 21, 1887, 750; B. H. Roberts, "A Lover of Fair Play," *Millennial Star*, November 28, 1887, 760-63; "The Notorious Jarman," *Deseret News*, December 21, 1887, 768; "Discussion on Mormonism at Swansea," *Millennial Star*, July 16, 1888, 461; B. H. Roberts, "Elder Roberts' Letter to the Leader," *Millennial Star*, July 23, 1888, 475-76; John Hays, "Old Country Correspondence," *Deseret News*, August 15, 1888, 493.

#

br. cap  
Should this whole comment be moved to note 57?

del/close up

del.  
(James J. Chandler is the author of the piece, but we haven't included authors for most other articles.)

## THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

70. "Interviewing Elder Roberts, The Mormon," *Millennial Star*, July 30, 1888, 484-87, published July 14 in *Herald of Wales*.
71. "The Mormons in Wales: An Extraordinary Scene," *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, September 24, 1887.
72. Exile, "Anti-Mormonism in Bristol," *Deseret News*, November 11, 1885, 686. An Englishman, John H. White, citing "British Fair Play" met Jarman's debate challenge armed with police and reports on Jarman's divorces from his two wives in Utah. Jarman turned the meeting against him. Swayne's Eye, "Mr. Jarman and the Mormons," *Millennial Star*, October 15, 1888, 660.
73. *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), September 18, 1888, quoted in "Jarman's Trial," *Deseret News*, October 24, 1888, 645.
74. "In Wales: A Remarkable Revival of Interest in 'Mormonism,'" *Deseret News*, December 12, 1888, 756. See also D. M. McAllister, "The Anti-'Mormon' Show," *Deseret News*, September 14, 1889, reprint from *Eccles Advertiser* (Manchester) of July 27.
75. "Occasional Notes," *Pall Mall Gazette*, September 18, 1888. "In the good time coming even policemen will not be allowed to break the heads of the preachers of unpopular doctrines, and even now that is a luxury which no constables are allowed outside London."
76. Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 441. Roberts wrote over thirty books, three hundred articles, and over a thousand sermons and discourses.
77. Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 43-48, 76.
78. Malcolm R. Thorp, "The Mormon Peril: The Crusade Against the Saints in Britain, 1910-1914," *Journal of Mormon History* 2 (1975); Malcolm R. Thorp, "Winifred Graham and the Mormon Image in England," *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1979).
79. Peter J. Vousden, "The English Editor and the 'Mormon Scare' of 1911," *BYU Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002), 70.

del

ens.

close up

del

tr.

The Mormon Peril?