

The Story versus the Artifact

Jesse N. Smith's Story

- Jesse N. moved to Nauvoo in February 1843
- Joseph Smith gave Jesse a book (*repeated*)
- Jesse N. described the book as having a "new and beautiful binding" (*emphasized*, not 1830)

The Artifact

- *Not* Joseph Smith's handwriting
- Inscription date of 1842
- *Significant* repair work in 1944
- Text block from 1849
- Non-descript boards and leather

Impossible to link the boards to Joseph Smith

Conclusions

A. Yes, Joseph gave Jesse a book

B. No, this is not that book



How You Can Recognize the Book

How to Search

1. Gather all of the pieces of the past you can find.
2. Record all of the family stories.
3. Ask lots of questions.
4. Read sources and stories closely to corroborate details.
5. Read the artifact closely to verify authenticity.
6. Pay attention to provenance.

What to Look For

- An edition published in 1837, 1840-42, or 1841 (not 1830)
- Stories about the book's provenance (how it got from past to present)



Other Original Records to Find



Summary

Joseph Smith gave Jesse N. Smith a Book of Mormon in 1843.

The Book of Mormon in the Church History Library is not that book because:

- Its text block was published in 1849 (after Joseph Smith's death).
- Its inscription was written later, most likely after Jesse N.'s death.
- Its provenance does not trace all the way back.

The actual Book of Mormon may still be out there, *somewhere*.

The Church History Library does hold several authentic Jesse N. Smith items that are viewable online.

Your Assignments . . .

1. Visit the Church History Library next week (closed July 25)
2. Search for the actual Book of Mormon
3. Search for the original journals and autobiographical sketch
4. View digital copies of authentic items in the Church History Library's online catalog (churchhistorycatalog.lds.org)

Note: Due to the nature of the repairs to the 1849 edition, we have posted digital images in the catalog. The artifact will no longer be pulled out for viewing.