

# Preserving the Treasures of the Restoration

Restoration Archives Project Introduction

Covenant of Christ Conference

Boise, ID - September 2, 2017

We believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe that he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God (*Wentworth Letter*, Joseph Smith Jr., March 1, 1842).

It is not God's purpose to abandon the Restoration, but it is His purpose to preserve the Restoration, which at this moment is in terrible jeopardy. The Restoration itself must be rescued and preserved (Denver Snuffer, Jr., "Preserving the Restoration," September 9, 2014, p. 11).

And then there's 2 Nephi 29, where Nephi laments, asking in effect "What thanks do we give the Jews for the scriptures we have received from them?"

When we think back on all of the marvelous records and writings that have been handed down to us, I think we all feel an obligation to preserve what has already been revealed, to record what is now being revealed, and to prepare for the great and important things that God yet intends to reveal. This is a critical part of rescuing and preserving the restoration itself.

Feeling prompted to act on this obligation, five families spread out over five different states and fellowships started meeting together this past spring to build a framework under which we could start gathering records. We started researching archiving methods and pondering how we could accomplish the tasks ahead. We talked about what things would need to be preserved and why. Each family brought a different perspective and a different skill set to this work. Motivated by a desire to both preserve and to pass on everything we have been given, we began to build a framework for preserving all of the records we have among ourselves. It was during these early planning stages that we started to realize how large a task this would be, as it became apparent how much we have been given, and are currently receiving, that will need to be preserved through the coming tribulations.

Although we had a good start, we really didn't know how important this effort would ultimately become until we saw the following comments from Denver:

*The record-keeping function is more important than I ever appreciated before the scripture project. It is startling how great a mess we have produced in only 180 years in poorly preserving the records. The importance of what we are doing is going to be much more widely understood in the future than it is by the present generation. So whatever we can do to accurately gather and faithfully preserve the material is important.*

*A temple will have both a library and a "treasury" which will consist of available book shelves with accessible texts in the library. The "treasury" sounds like something different, but it also will be a record storage area where sacred and important material is housed and protected. If, for example, the gold plates were ever returned, they would belong in the temple treasury. So also would the brass plates. Any future records of the returning tribes would likewise be stored there. The information would be copied into books that would be added to the library area, but the original would be in the treasury. It is a peculiar way to conduct things, but it is how it will be done when we have a temple (Denver Snuffer Jr., April 13, 2017).*

And so, the Restoration Archives project was born. Our goal is to preserve the records and history of the Restoration, which we have divided into four (4) phases:

PHASE 1: The things of Joseph Smith Jr. and Denver Snuffer Jr.

PHASE 2: The records and histories of our general conferences, both past and future

PHASE 3: The records of regional meetings, fellowship activities, youth conferences and other events

PHASE 4: The records, histories, and stories of individuals and families

These first two (2) phases are fairly well defined, and we are starting there. We are gathering everything we can that came through Joseph and Denver. We have asked the organizers of the two preceding general conferences to write and submit their individual experiences, so a comprehensive history of each of those conferences can be assembled and published, including audio, photography, written records, and transcripts. We plan to do the same for this and future general conferences as well.

For the third phase, between us we have many records of fellowship meetings, regional meetings, committee and group meetings, and various events. However, we know we currently have only a small part of the records that are had among the people in this movement.

The fourth phase will not be addressed for some time yet, but we hope to build this into a vast library filled with testimony and evidence that God is moving among this people.

In the same way that we have received great gifts of knowledge from generations past, future generations - our posterity - are depending on us to pass along everything we have received that is most precious, that we may fulfill the requirements of the covenant to teach our children to honor God (see *Answer and Covenant*), and to demonstrate that we love His words (and we would love more of them!).

So, how do we plan to accomplish this?

### 1. THE ONLINE ARCHIVE

We have purchased some cloud storage, and we are initially gathering everything there.

For easy access, we have built a website to serve as a central place where everyone in this movement can go to safely and securely upload whatever records you may have that you feel should be added to the archive. The website is [restorationarchives.com](http://restorationarchives.com), and it's currently open for submissions of PHASE 1 and PHASE 2 documents. We plan to open it for submission of PHASE 3 items in the near future, with PHASE 4 coming after that. We call it "crowd-sourcing our history," and this is your invitation to participate! There are many more details on the website, so please check it out. Again, we are currently only able to handle submissions of items that came from Denver or Joseph, or is related to one of the general conferences. We will notify everyone when we are ready to start accepting regional conference, fellowship, family, and individual records in the future.

### 2. INDEPENDENT DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Next, we plan to put full copies of the data onto multiple storage devices that are not connected to the internet and store them in geographically diverse locations around the world to minimize the chance that we lose everything should a catastrophe occur.

### 3. ARCHIVAL QUALITY BOOKS

In addition, we plan to purchase or print and preserve hard copies of books, papers, scriptures, and other text. The cloud and the internet will eventually fail. Disk drives and computers are delicate instruments that also eventually fail. In fact, we really can't count on *any technology* we know today being available in the future. At some point

computers, internet, and even electricity may become generally unavailable, which would render a digital archive useless. At that moment, we will be very grateful for everything we have that has been printed out, bound, and archived.

#### 4. PERMANENT ENGRAVINGS

In regards to the best way to build a long-term archive, Denver later commented:

*The closest I have found [to a long-term storage solution] is acid-free, archival 100% cotton paper with archival ink. That should last for a thousand years. However, it burns* (Denver Snuffer Jr., April 13, 2017).

There is one form of archival storage that has withstood the test of time: Metal. The longest-living records that we know of have been kept on metal plates. We honor the tremendous sacrifice of those who made and then laboriously engraved on precious plates, lugged them around for decades, protected them, and wrote the things of their souls (2 Nephi 4:15). But today, we are blessed with access to amazing new technologies that allow us to laser-engage micro-text into sheets of fine-gauge 316 stainless steel. They look like this: (HOLD UP SAMPLE).

We have labored long and hard over the past few months to develop a way to preserve our most precious records on metal plates. Through a series of miraculous blessings, we have been able to purchase a specialized laser and make some custom modifications to it that enable the production of these kinds of plates. We are now in the process of producing our first set of plates, consisting of all 10 segments of Denver's "40 Years of Mormonism" talk. After that, we intend to continue the process of preparing and engraving everything from PHASE 1 and PHASE 2, or as much as we possibly can, until such time as a temple is built and accepted by the Lord. Upon his command, the plates and other archival items will be moved to the temple treasury for permanent preservation, where they will be protected by the Lord Himself.

This sample plate has the first two segments of Denver's talk engraved on it. The first talk titled "Be of Good Cheer" is on one side and the second talk on Faith is on the back side.

#### 5. ONLINE SEARCH AND STUDY

The website will also have another function in the near future: it will serve as our online library. Until the temple library is ready, and possibly even after that, we plan to make as many documents and other items as possible available to assist in the study of the gospel. Imagine everything from Joseph and everything from Denver all available and

searchable by topic, phrase, scripture, or date! We want to use the tools the Lord has given us to greatly increase our ability to study and teach the gospel and to have a convenient place to introduce new people to the truth, as well.

We stand here today as beneficiaries of the labor of faithful people who cared so deeply about future generations like us that they sacrificed much to preserve and transmit truth to us. We rejoice in the truth that has been preserved and passed down, and we mourn for what has been lost along the way. We hope that as God continues to reveal truth, we will be able to faithfully record and transmit it to those who come after us.

God is moving again to restore truth. The Joseph Smith Papers project, the Scriptures Committee, Denver, and many others are working tirelessly to recover and restore, to the extent possible, what was lost. The call has now gone out for the long-awaited ancient records to be brought forth - the treasures of the lost tribes - for translation and study.

Now, the call is also going out for OUR records to be brought forth. As records are discovered, created, or brought to our attention, we want to gather and preserve them. And we would love your help in accomplishing this great task.

If you feel called to this work, here are some ways you can begin:

1. Assemble your own archive
2. Submit resources pertaining to Phases 1 and 2
3. Volunteer

Here are a few more details on these three areas:

1. We invite all of you to begin to assemble the audio, video, photos, books, talks, meetings, letters, emails, journals, documents, personal histories, and stories of yourselves, your families, and your fellowships that are pertinent to this movement's evolution and history. In the world of archives, these items are known as "resources". As you gather these things, print them out. Begin assembling your own physical archive of resources. Add whatever books you feel would be of great worth to future generations.
2. For now, if you have resources that came from Joseph Smith or Denver, or that pertain to one of the general conferences, please go to the website to find out if the Restoration Archives already has those items. If not, please submit them! We want the general archive to be as complete as possible. Although we can only

accept resources pertaining to PHASES 1 and 2 right now, please watch for a future announcement that the Restoration Archives website is ready to accept resources pertaining to the other phases.

3. If you have skills that you feel might be beneficial to this project, please go to the website, create an account, and let us know how you might be able to help. This is a huge project, and we will surely need help.

The responsibility lies with each of us to start writing and recording the events of our day. We trust that many of you have experienced great and marvelous revelations, inspiration, miracles, blessings, trials, and visitations. When the time comes, we hope you will submit accounts of them all, so that everyone may benefit from the great gifts you have been given.

This is one way we can thank the Jews for their travails, their labors, their pains, and their diligence in bringing forth salvation to us Gentiles. It's one way we can thank those who came before us on this continent - Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, Moroni, Ether, and Joseph Smith - and one way we can thank God for all He has given us. We honor Him by treasuring up the words of eternal life.

Let me introduce you to those currently involved in this work. If you are a member of one of these five families, and you are in attendance, would you please stand? Please recognize that there are people working on this project who have asked that their names not be presented publicly. We ask that you would please give them the privacy that they deserve.

In the end, we hope to be able to preserve a very accurate and detailed record of the proceedings of this movement. Above all, we hope that our labors are acceptable to both you and to our Lord and God. May He watch over and guide us in our collective efforts to preserve the treasures of the Restoration.

The Restoration Archives Project:

Brian and Jennifer Bowler

Paul Durham

Reed and Lori Larsen

Joy Thatcher

Chris and Noriko VanCampen