

“Guide to Treasure-Seeking”

(An adaptation of Joseph T. Antley’s
2010 Web Publication)

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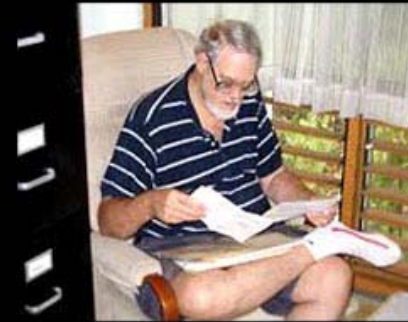


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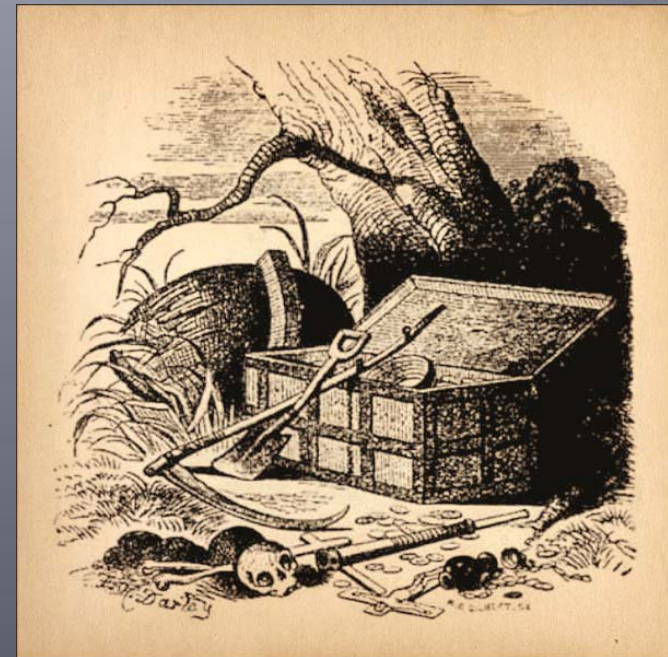


PREFACE

Reproduced here are the main elements of a topical guide of early American treasure-seeking, and specifically the preternatural superstitions and rituals typically associated with such treasure-seeking. The sources utilized are newspapers, town histories, autobiographies, affidavits, interviews, etc. With two exceptions (Benjamin Franklin, -- “Busy Body, II no. 8,” 1729; and E.W. Vanderhoof, *Historical Sketches of Western New York*, 1907), all of these sources were originally published during the late 1700s and throughout the 1800s. Although many were printed in the latter in the 19th century, the majority recount anecdotes come from the 1790s to the early 1830s, when treasure-seeking was popular in the American northeast.

This guide is by no means comprehensive: quotes given do not always convey all of the material from a particular source on a given topic. When multiple sources cite a single event in similar or identical ways, generally only the earliest or most reliable source is provided. For example, although there are many sources that cite Joseph Smith, Jr.’s treasure-seeking activities, only the earliest, most relevant, or most detailed source material is given. In a topical guide, it is impossible to provide context and also keep quotations brief. Some early sources portray treasure-seeking seriously while others are satirical. Readers are encouraged to review the sources for themselves in order to understand their content and context.

This illustrated presentation reproduces the main points contained in the earlier web publication. Please see that paper for the full text.



CONTENTS

Books
Dreams
Gender of Treasure-Seekers
Incantations
Magic Circles
Magic Triangles
Night and the Moon
Prayer and Fasting

Ritualistic Rods and Sticks
Rodsmen and Divining Rods
Sacrifices
Seers and Stones
Silence Ritual
Swords
Treasure-Guardians
Treasure Moving or Sinking

Books Used in the Treasure Search

* "He has all necessary implements for finding and securing the fleeting treasure; the mineral rod, hazel sticks, crow-bars and bibles."

"Money Digging," *The Fredonia Censor*, (Fredonia, NY), 14 September 1831.

* "A company of money diggers consisting of two men, a boy, and an old woman, armed with mining rods, crowbars, and the Bible, were employed on Saturday and Sunday nights in digging for money, over on Seavy's point."

"Money Diggers," *Eastern Argus*, (Portland, ME), 23 October 1833.

* "But when even the most devout, pious and godly Christians, with the Bible, Prayer-book, and Pilgrim's Progress lying near them, to keep off infernal spirits, had dug down to within an inch or two of the treasures, a daemon, in shape of some huge monster, with hideous yawning mouth and enormous white teeth."

Caleb Butler, *History of the Town of Groton*, (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1848), 256.

* "While the operator, reading the chapter in the Apocrypha, where the angel Raphael exorcises the devil, walked round the circle with the course of the sun. This, he asserted from experience, would entirely overcome the charm of the Spanish cross, and the mine be brought to light."

"A History of the Divining Rod; with the Adventures of an Old Rodsman," *United States Democratic Review* 26, no. 141, (March 1850): 225.

* "They came and Mr. Rupert held the Bible open and a lighted candle as prophet Jo directed, while Peter dug for the chest of gold."
Joseph Rogers statement, 16 May 1887, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, (April 1888):1.



Dreams in the Treasure-Search

* "Mrs. Woodbury & her Dafters have Dreemed Sundry Times in a remarkable manor of money or hid Treasure in Brookfield on her husband's farm in Brookfield in the bay state. ... Hannah Bancroft informs that one Col. Enoch Putnam's Sistors **Dreemed** of a Pot of money Sd [said] Dreemer is in Danves Massachusetts."

Silas Hamilton notebook, c. 1787, published in Clark Jillson, *Green Leaves from Whittingham, Vermont: A History of the Town*, (Worcester, MA: By the author, 1894), 115.



* "The money is supposed to have been buried by pirates; but the discovery of the burial-place is hoped for only by dreams. Where dreams have conveyed some general information of the place, then mineral rods are resorted to, for ascertaining the precise spot." Edward A. Kendall, *Travels Through the Northern Parts of the United States in the Years 1807 and 1808*, 3 vol., (New York: I. Riley, 1809), 3:85-86.

* "Having bribed him with a few coppers, he informed us that his father was first induced to undertake the business by a remarkable dream, which was repeated three nights in succession." "Money Diggers," *National Gazette*, (Philadelphia, PA), 27 March 1822.

* "Men and women without distinction of age or sex became marvellous wise in the occult sciences, many dreamed, and others saw visions disclosing to them, deep in the bowels of the earth, rich and shining treasures." Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 3," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 1 February 1831.

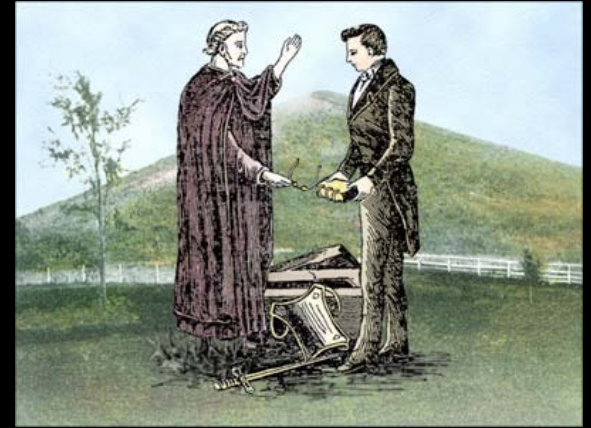
* "One of the party... spoke of a person in Ohio...who had a wonderful facility in finding the spots where money was hid, and how he could dream of the very spots where it was to be found. ... Away they went...to gain his money to pay the expense of bringing the money dreamer from Ohio."

"Mormonism," *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, (Rochester, NY), 31 December 1831.

More Dream Accounts

"Dreams, especially if thrice repeated, guided seekers to a suspected treasure. For example, after an angel appeared three times in a dream to Joseph Smith, Jr., the Mormon prophet, he hurried to the indicated spot near Palmyra, New York and discovered his "Golden Bible." Apparently the rural Yankee's subconscious was peculiarly concerned with finding money."

Alan Taylor, "The Early Republic's Supernatural Economy: Treasure Seeking in the American Northeast, 1780-1830," *American Quarterly*, Spring, 1986, p. 10.



* "The good woman took it upon her, one night, to dream a dream.... She had dreamed that a little old man, in a tarpaulin hat and sugar-paper small-clothes, stood before her...[and] proceeded to inform her, that near at hand, under a certain tree on the banks of the Unadilla, was buried a rich treasure. ... 'Well, good Ruth, go to sleep again, and remember, if you dream it over a third time, it will come true to a certainty.'"

J. R. Orton, "The Glass-Lookers," *The Rover*, vol. 1 (New York, 1843), 264-66.

* "Soon after joining the Church, he had a very singular dream; but he did not tell his father of his dream, until about a year afterwards. He then told his father that, in his dream, a very large and tall man appeared to him, dressed in an ancient suit of clothes, and the clothes were bloody."

Fayette Lapham, "Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith...", *Historical Magazine* [2nd] 7 (May 1870): 305.

* "He [Porter Rockwell] often heard his mother and Mrs. Smith comparing notes, and telling how Such an one's dream, and Such another's pointed to the same lucky spot: how the spades often struck the iron sides of the treasure chest, and how it was charmed away."

Elizabeth Kane journal, 1872. The text of her remarkable conversations with noted early Mormons was published in Norman R. and Mary Karen Bowen's 1995 *A Gentile Account of Life in Utah's Dixie, 1872-1873* (see p. 73)

Gender of the Treasure-Seekers

* "Men and **women** without distinction of age or sex became marvellous wise in the occult sciences, many dreamed, and others saw visions disclosing to them, deep in the bowels of the earth, rich and shining treasures."

Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 3," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 1 February 1831.



* "'Peep stones' or pebbles, taken promiscuously from the brook or field, were placed in a hat or other situation excluded from the light, when some wizzard or witch (for these performances were not confined to either sex) applied their eyes, and nearly starting their balls from their sockets, declared they saw all the wonders of nature, including of course, ample stores of silver and gold."

Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 3," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 1 February 1831.

* "A company of money diggers consisting of two men, a boy, and an old woman, armed with mining rods, crowbars, and the Bible, were employed on Saturday and Sunday nights in digging for money, over on Seavy's point."

"Money Diggers," *Eastern Argus*, (Portland, Maine), 23 October 1833.

* "His reasons for believing in a mine were extracted from the lips of a sibyl, who, by looking into a magic glass, was enabled to discover the hidden treasures of the earth. Such superstition was frequent in the new settlement."

James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, (New York: George P. Putnam, 1853), 494.

Incantations in the Treasure-Search

* "And then the charms and various observances, to defeat the watchfulness of the spirits that have the treasure in charge."

Edward A. Kendall, *Travels Through the Northern Parts of the United States in the Years 1807 and 1808*, 3 vol., (New York: I. Riley, 1809), 3:85.

* "Walters assembled his nightly band of money diggers in the town of Manchester, at a point designated in his magical book, and drawing a circle around laborers, with the point of an old rusty sword, and using sundry other incantations, for the purpose of propitiating the spirit, absolutely sacrificed a fowl, ("Rooster,") in the presence of his awe-stricken companions, to the foul spirit, whom ignorance had created, the guardian of hidden wealth."

Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 5," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 28 February 1831.

* "He walked around three times on the periphery of this last circle, muttering to himself something which I could not understand."

William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833 .

* "Assuming all the dignity of bearing which he could command, he proceeded to describe a circle around the tree; and stepping within it, he pronounced some cabalistic words, or words, at least, of unknown sound and import to his auditors. Having, by his ceremony, taken possession of the ground, as he termed it."

J. R. Orton, "The Glass-Lookers," *The Rover*, vol. 1 (New York, 1843), 264-66.

* "These wonders they were wont to perform by means of rods of steel or witch-hazel, cunningly wound about with cords and prepared by diabolical incantations."

Caleb Butler, *History of the Town of Groton*, (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1848), 256.

* "The subsequent operations on this head were conducted substantially in the mode and manner of the first performance, as described, with slight variations in the incantations, and always with the same result."

Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, (New York, 1867), 23-24.

* "After some preparatory mystic ceremonies, such as the waving of a magic wand, and utterance of some foolish incantation gibberish, Joe would...indicate the spot where the digging was to begin."

E.W. Vanderhoof, *Historical Sketches of Western New York*, (Buffalo: Matthews-Northrup Works, 1907), 139.



Magic Circles

* "And the Magician led the rabble unto a dark grove, in a place called Manchester, where after drawing a Magic circle, with a rusty sword, and collecting his motley crew of latter-demallions, within the centre, he sacrificed a Cock (a bird sacred to Minerva) for the purpose of propiciating the prince of spirits."

Abner Cole, "Book of Pukei:1," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 12 June 1830.



* "Then mak[e] two Surkels [circles] Round the hid Treasure one of Sd [said] Surkels a Littel Larger in sircumference than the hid Treasure lays in the E[a]rth the other Surkel Sum Larger still."

Silas Hamilton notebook, c. 1787, published in Clark Jillson, *Green Leaves from Whittingham, Vermont: A History of the Town*, (Worcester, MA: By the author, 1894), 119.

* "Walters assembled his nightly band of money diggers in the town of Manchester, at a point designated in his magical book, and drawing a circle around laborers, with the point of an old rusty sword, and using sundry other incantations, for the purpose of propiating [sic] the spirit, absolutely sacrificed a fowl, ("Rooster,") in the presence of his awe-stricken companions, to the foul spirit, whom ignorance had created, the guardian of hidden wealth."

Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 5," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 28 February 1831.

* "Joseph, Sen. First made a circle, twelve or fourteen feet in diameter. This circle, said he, contains the treasure.... Within this circle he made another, of about eight or teen feet or diameter."

William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833

* "It was done by drawing a circle on the surface of the ground round the spot, so large that the earth thrown out of the hole should not roll over the ring nine new nails were then dropped into the ring at equal distances; while the operator, reading the chapter in the Apocrypha, where the angel Raphael exorcises the devil, walked round the circle with the course of the sun. This, he asserted from experience, would entirely overcome the charm of the Spanish cross, and the mine be brought to light."

"A History of the Divining Rod" *United States Democratic Review* 26, no. 141, (March 1850): 225.

More Magic Enclosures

* "On a certain occasion in preparing the **enchanted circle** for digging, *a lamb was sacrificed*, to appease the guardian demons of the supposed treasure."

Franklin B. Hough, *A History of Jefferson County in the State of New York*, (Albany: John Munsell, 1854), 158.

* "The conjuror was present with his divining rod, and would go round making **a circle**. No one was permitted to cross **this circle**, else the charm would be broken and the conjuror be compelled to re-establish **the circle** by going round again."

Lockwood L. Doty, *A History of Livingston County, New York*, (Geneseo, New York: Edward E. Doty, 1876), 605

* "Circles were carefully marked out around the pit to keep the devil out."

W.H. McIntosh, *History of Wayne County, New York*, (Philadelphia: Evers, Ensign, and Everts, 1877), 155.

* "I remember hearing these circles and rods spoken of as necessary to in finding hidden treasures.¶

Clark Jillson, *Green Leaves from Whittingham, Vermont: A History of the Town*, (Worcester, MA: By the author, 1894), 121.

* "[He] cut the artery in the sheep's neck, walk him around the trench and form a circle of blood -- to keep the evil spirit out of the circle -- then commence digging."

Sara Melissa Ingersoll, "Mormonism Unveiled," copy in letter to Hellen Miller Gould, 27 November 1899.

A Magic Triangle:

* "They were to form a triangle around the designated point, and work in perfect *silence* -- *as a word spoken would break the charm*."

J.H. Temple and George Sheldon, *History of the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts*, (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1875), 18.

Night and the Moon

* "All things being ready, the Idle and Slothful fell to work with a zeal deserving a better cause, and many a *live long night* was spent in digging for 'the root of all evil.'" Abner Cole, "Book of Pukei:1," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 12 June 1830.

* "To facilitate those *mighty* mining operations, (money was usually if not always sought after *in the night time*,) divers devices and implements were invented." Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 3," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 1 February 1831.

* "*At Midnight* they repair to the hopeful Spot with Spades and Pickaxes." Benjamin Franklin, *The Busy Body*, No. 8 (1729)



* "The night was chosen for operation -- already had two nights been spent digging, and the third commenced upon." "Imposition and Blasphemy!! Money-Diggers, &c.," *The Gem*, (Rochester, NY), 15 May 1830.

* "Walters assembled his *nightly* band of money diggers in the town of Manchester, at a point designated in his magical Book... and after *digging* until day-light, his deluded employers retired to their several habitations fatigued and disappointed." Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 5," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 28 February 1831.

* "A company of money diggers consisting of two men, a boy, and al old woman, armed with mining rods, crowbars, and the Bible, were employed on Saturday and Sunday *nights* in digging for money..." "Money Diggers," *Eastern Argus*, (Portland, ME), 23 October 1833.

* "The facility of approaching them, depended in a great measure on the state of the moon. New moon and good Friday, I believe, were regarded as the most favorable times for obtaining these treasures." William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833.

* "They kept around them constantly, a gang of worthless fellows who dug for money *nights*, and were idle in the day time." David Stafford affidavit, 12 December 1833.

* "Observing all the required formalities, they commenced to dig, the moon shining brightly the while." William B. Lapham, *History of Woodstock, Me.*, (Portland: Stephen Berry, 1882), 134.

* "Mr. Thompson, an employee of Mr. Stowell, was the next witness. He and another man were employed in digging for treasure... attended the Deacon and Smith in their **nocturnal labors**." William D. Purple account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 1826 court proceedings: "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism," *Chenango Union* 30, no. 33, (Norwich, NY: 3 May 1877).

* "**At midnight**, dupes, laborers, and himself, with lanterns, repaired to the hill-side near the house of Smith, where, following mystic ceremony, digging began by signal in enjoined silence." W.H. McIntosh, *History of Wayne County*, (Philadelphia: Evers, Ensign, & Everts, 1877), 150.

* "Joshua Stafford, a good citizen, told me that young Jo Smith and himself dug for money in his orchard and elsewhere **nights**. All the money digging was done **nights**." Isaac Butts statement, c. March 1885, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, (January 1888):2.



* "On several farms northeast of Rose Valley they assembled at night and silently dug for the treasure.... Night after night was passed in hard labor under the particular direction of this invisible spirit." W.H. McIntosh, *History of Wayne County, New York*, (Philadelphia: Evers, Ensign, and Everts, 1877), 155.

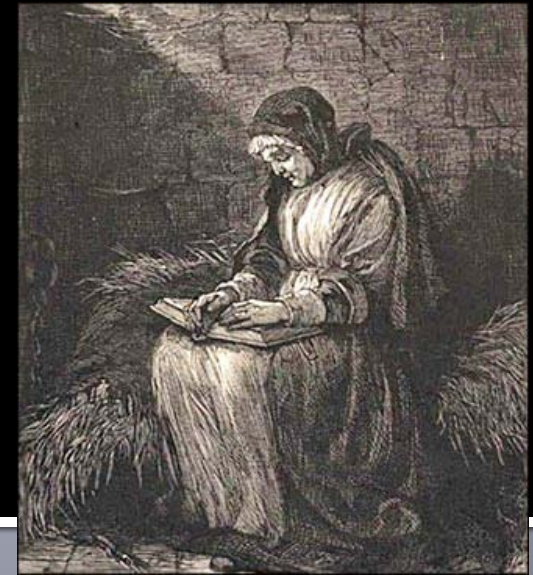
* "He usually named some unfrequented spot and the dead hour of night as the place and time of rendezvous." E.W. Vanderhoof, *Historical Sketches of Western New York*, (Buffalo: Matthews-Northrup Works, 1907), 139.

* "Seekers preferred to dig during the summer because, as Joseph Smith, Sr., of Palmyra, New York explained, "the heat of the sun caused the chests of money to rise near the top of the ground." Almost all seekers insisted that digging could only succeed at night, particularly between midnight and dawn. They also thought that the phase of the moon affected their chances of success, but disagreed over whether a new moon or a full moon drew treasure chests closer to the surface." Alan Taylor, "The Early Republic's Supernatural Economy," *American Quarterly*, Spring, 1986, p. 10.

* "An excavation like a large well was made, only leaving a core a few feet across in the center. Under this the wonderful deposit was to be found in a box or chest. The digging was done by moonlight. After the excavation had reached a depth of twelve feet, the strategic point was reached. On a certain night when the moon was full, and at a certain hour of the night, the search was renewed. Five men went cautiously to the charmed spot. They felt at the bottom of the pit with their rods, and the test was satisfactory, assurance became doubly sure that fabulous fortunes that night were to be theirs." Helen B. Gorman, *Old Houses and Churches of Wayne County*, Daughters of the American Revolution, [Palmyra?, 1940?] .

Prayer and Fasting in the Treasure Search

* "So, after arming themselves with **fasting and prayer**, they sallied forth to the spot designated by Smith." -- William D. Purple account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 1826 court proceedings:
"Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism,"
Chenango Union 30, no. 33, (Norwich, NY: 3 May 1877).



* "After they had all convened, the first manoeuvre was, both the deceiver and the deceived unite in prayer upon their bended knees; then parading according to their age proceed rotating the room... and drawing a circle, about twelve feet diameter, they all stepped within it, unfolding their papers, extending them with one arm, fell with their faces to the earth, continuing in prayer with their eyes closed, that the spirits might enter within the circle..."
An Account of... Ransford Rogers, (Morristown, New Jersey, 1788), p. 21.

* ""I look in a little stone... and see things, and then everything looks like stars, and I pray... I look in the stone for people and tell them what I see,"... she heard the spirits talk at Brighton and believed there was money there."
"Gold Digging in Brighton!" *Rochester DailyTimes*, (Rochester, NY: May 28, 1851).

* "Mr. Stowell went to his flock and selected a fine vigorous lamb, and resolved to sacrifice it to the demon spirit who guarded the coveted treasure. Shortly after the venerable Deacon might be seen on his knees at prayer near the pit, while Smith, with a lantern in one hand to dispel the midnight darkness, might be seen making a circuit around the spot, sprinkling the flowing blood from the lamb upon the ground, as a propitiation to the spirit that thwarted them."
"Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism," *Chenango Union* 30, no. 33, (Norwich, NY: 3 May 1877).

* "after an hour's devotion, in which the junior Smith was very active, the party proceeded to explore the mysterious depths. When they reached the twenty-foot hole Smith commanded all to descend. The mandate was complied with, and while all were engaged in prayer there was a sudden illumination... The elder Smith gave one sepulchral grunt and then all was in confusion."
"Birth of Mormonism," *Chicago Times*, October 14, 1888.

Ritualistic Rods and Sticks

* "Early American and early Mormon beliefs about water witching and mineral dowsing may explain Joseph Smith Junior's switch from the traditional forked rod to a straight stick or staff. Palmyran Pomeroy Tucker wrote that Joseph Smith began divining for treasure in 1820 with his newly discovered seer stone and "some sort of wand" held in only one hand."

Mark Ashurst-McGee, "A Pathway to Prophethood..." (Utah State University Master's thesis: 2000), 143.



* "Tak[e] Nine Steel Rods about ten or twelve Inches in Length Sharp or Piked to Perce [pierce] in to the Earth, and let them be Besmeared with fresh blood from a hen mixed with a hogdung."

Silas Hamilton notebook, c. 1787, published in Clark Jillson, *Green Leaves from Whittingham Vermont: A History of the Town*, (Worcester, MA: By the author, 1894), 119.

* "They have entrenched the *kettle* all around, and driven a steel ramrod into the ground directly over it, to break the enchantment."

"Wonderful Discovery," *Wayne Sentinel*, (Palmyra, NY), 27 December 1825.

* "He has all necessary implements for finding and securing the fleeting treasure; the mineral rod, hazel sticks, crow-bars and bibles."

"Money Digging," *The Freedom Censor*, (Fredonia, NY), 14 September 1831.

* "Accordingly, orders were given to stick a parcel of large stakes in the ground, several rods around, in a circular form. This was done directly over the spot where the treasures were deposited."

Joseph Capron affidavit, 8 November 1833

* "He then stuck in the ground a row of witch hazel sticks, around the said circle, for the purpose of keeping off the evil spirits.... He next stuck a steel rod in the centre of the circles."

William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833.

Rodsmen and Divining Rods

* "Where dreams have conveyed some general information of the place, then **mineral rods** are resorted to, for ascertaining the precise spot at which to put the spade and pick-axe into the ground. ... He was soon found to possess enchanted **mineral-rods**, which had grown in the mystic form, and been cut at the proper age of the moon."

Edward A. Kendall, *Travels Through the Northern Parts of the United States in the Years 1807 and 1808*, 3 vol., (New York: I. Riley, 1809), 3:85.



* "Much, however, depends on the skillful use of the genuine *mineral rod*."

"Every Country Has Its Money Diggers," *New-Hampshire Sentinel*, (Keene, NH), 4 May 1822.

* "After having been directed by the mineral rod where to search for the money, he excavated the earth about 15 feet square to the depth of 7 or 8; and all the while it was necessary to keep his pumps working to keep out the water."

"Money Digging," *Windsor Journal*, (Windsor, VT), 17 January 1825.

* "The instrument of their miraculous powers, was a cleft stick, or rod, something of the form of an inverted Y; and when this talisman was firmly grasped in either hand, by its two points, it was believed to indicate the proper course to be pursued, or point out some substance of medicinal utility, or fix the locality of some valuable mine; -- whichever of these the agent was pleased to wish."

"The Rodsmen," *Vermont American*, (Middlebury, VT), 7 May 1828.

* "Mineral rods and balls, (as they were called by the imposter who made use of them,) were supposed to be infallible guides to these sources of wealth."

Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 3," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 1 February 1831.

* "He has all necessary implements for finding and securing the fleeting treasure; the mineral rod, hazel sticks, crow-bars and bibles."

"Money Digging," *The Fredonia Censor*, (Fredonia, NY), 14 September 1831.

More Rodsmen and Divining Rods

* "Joe Smith was born in Sharon, Vt., in 1805, and was removed at 10 years of age to Palmyra, N. Y. In youth he led an idle, vagabond life, roaming the woods, dreaming of buried treasures, employing his brain in endeavors to find them by the medium of **divining rods, twisting forked sticks**, and looking through enchanted stones. His father was a "**water witch**," and little Joe was taught to follow in his footsteps."

"An Interesting Sketch of Joe Smith...", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 9, 1877.



* "Where dreams have conveyed some general information of the place, then mineral rods are resorted to, for ascertaining the precise spot at which to put the spade and pick-axe into the ground. ... He was soon found to possess enchanted mineral-rods, which had grown in the mystic form, and been cut at the proper age of the moon."

Edward A. Kendall, *Travels Through the Northern Parts of the United States in the Years 1807 and 1808*, 3 vol., (NYC: I. Riley, 1809), 3:85.

* "A company of money diggers consisting of two men, a boy, and an old woman, armed with mining rods, crowbars, and the Bible, were employed on Saturday and Sunday nights in digging for money, over on Seavy's point."

"Money Diggers," *Eastern Argus*, (Portland, ME), 23 October 1833.

* "These wonders they were wont to perform by means of rods of steel or witch-hazel, cunningly wound about with cords and prepared by diabolical incantations."

Caleb Butler, *History of the Town of Groton*, (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1848), 256.

* "Daniel Lambert, the father, gave out, that by aid of witch-hazel rods he had discovered untold wealth."

John W. Hanson, *History of the Old Towns, Norridgewock and Canaan*, (Boston: Coolidge and Wiley, 1849), 148.

* "WITH a large portion of the simple-hearted people in the agricultural districts of the country, from the earliest ages there has been an implicit belief in the powers and virtues of the Divining Rod -- either for the discovery of water, mines, or hidden treasures."

"A History of the Divining Rod...", *United States Democratic Review* 26, no. 141, (March 1850): 218.

More Rodsmen and Divining Rods

* "One Sunday they came into our house; I saw **their rods**, all made of witch hazel so they would turn in their hands and point where the money lay."

Nancy F. Glass letter, printed in Hiland Paul and Robert Sparks, *History of Wells, Vermont, for the First Century After Its Settlement*, (Rutland, VT: Tuttle and Co., 1869), 81.

* "A little, withered old man, [yclept] a *wizard*, armed with a **twig of witchhazel**... was actually seen traversing the highways of Essex north, and seeking, under supernal and infernal guidance, the buried gold which the credulous still believed these oblivious robbers had concealed somewhere in the neighborhood of the bridge."

E. Vale Smith, *History of Newburyport*, (Boston: Damrell and Moore, 1854), 211.

* "Here he began to use the hazel rod (whether he had before used it at Cowdry's, in Wells, I cannot say). ... He gathered quite a number about him from the immediate neighborhood, and told them there was money buried in that region, and with his rod he could find it; and told them if they would assist in digging it out, and forever keep it a secret, he would give them a part of the money."

Barnes Frisbie, *History of Middleton*, (Rutland, VT: Tuttle & Co., 1867), 47.

* "The conjuror was present with his divining rod, and would go round making a circle."

Lockwood L. Doty, *A History of Livingston County, New York*, (Geneseo, NY: Edward E. Doty, 1876), 605 .

* "Hazel rods were used to detect the spot of concealment."

W. R. Cochrane, *History of the Town of Antrim, New Hampshire* (Manchester, NH, 1880), 317.

* "He could discover water and precious metals in the earth by means of a rod, which would turn in his hands of itself and point down when he came to the right place."

William Little, *The History of Weare, New Hampshire*, (Lowell, MA, 1888), 589.

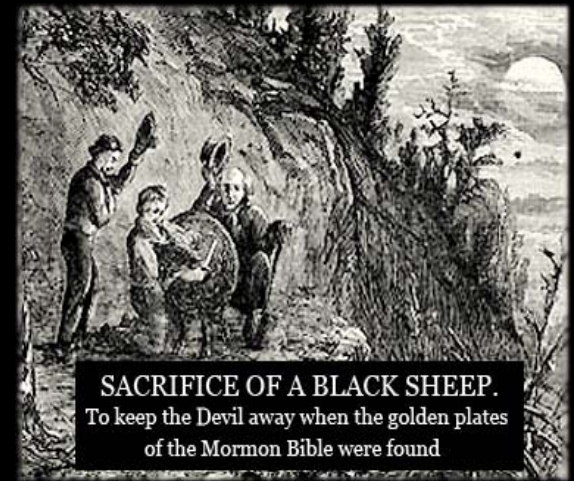
* "[there were] accounts of wonderful things accomplished near Rutland by persons who had found "St. John's rod."...A number of men had obtained rods by which they claimed to be able to find roots and herbs curing all diseases.... [one of whom, in Middletown,] believed that the rods possessed a mysterious power; that marvelous things could be accomplished by them; that, according to Isaiah, God would cause his people, in the latter-days, "to pass under the rod," when the latter-day glory should be ushered in."

"St. John's Rod..." *Boston Daily Advertiser*, July 11, 1879.

Sacrifices in the Treasure-Search

* "And the Magician led the rabble unto a dark grove, in a place called *Manchester*, where after drawing a Magic circle, with a rusty sword, and collecting his motley crew of *latter-demallions*, within the centre, he sacrificed a *Cock* (a bird sacred to Minerva) for the purpose of propitiating the *prince of spirits*."

Abner Cole, "Book of Pukei:1," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 12 June 1830.



* "Walters assembled his nightly band of money diggers in the town of Manchester... and drawing a circle around laborers, with the point of an old rusty sword, and using sundry other incantations, for the purpose of propitiating the spirit, absolutely sacrificed a fowl, ("*Rooster*," in the presence of his awe-stricken companions, to the foul spirit, whom ignorance had created, the guardian of hidden wealth."
Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 5," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 28 February 1831.

* "That was, was as follows: -- That a black sheep should be taken on to the ground where the treasures were concealed -- that after cutting its throat, it should be led around while bleeding. This being done, the wrath of the evil spirit would be appeased."
William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833.

* "On a certain occasion in preparing the enchanted circle for digging, *a lamb was sacrificed*, to appease the guardian demons of the supposed treasure; but this act was generally regarded as a sacrilege."
Franklin B. Hough, *A History of Jefferson County in the State of New York*, (Albany, NY: John Munsell, 1854), 158.

* "Smith gave out the revelation that a 'black sheep' would be required as a sacrificial offering upon the enchanted ground.... Smith described a circle upon the ground, where the blood of the animal was to be shed... to secure the glittering gold."
Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, (New York, 1867), 24-25.

* "Joseph now declared... that Harper must get a perfectly *white dog*, and sprinkle his blood over the ground, and that would prevent the enchantment from removing the treasure.... but no perfectly white dog could be found. Joseph said he thought a *white sheep* would do as well. A sheep was killed, and his blood sprinkled as directed."
Emily C. Blackman, *History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, 1873), 580.

Sacrifices (continued)

* "Mr. Stowell went to his flock and selected a fine vigorous lamb, and resolved to **sacrifice it** to the demon spirit who guarded the coveted treasure. Shortly after the venerable Deacon might be seen on his knees at prayer near the pit, while Smith, with a lantern in one hand to dispel the midnight darkness, might be seen making a circuit around the spot, sprinkling the **flowing blood** from the lamb upon the ground, as a propitiation to the spirit that thwarted them."

William D. Purple account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 1826 court proceedings, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism," *Chenango Union* 30, no. 33, (Norwich, NY: 3 May 1877).

* "Jo Smith, the prophet, told my uncle, William Stafford, he wanted a fat, black sheep. He said he wanted to cut its throat and make it walk in a circle three times around and it would prevent a pot of money from leaving."

Cornelius R. Stafford statement, 23 March 1885, *Naked Truths About Mormonism* (January 1888):3.

* "One of his followers had a nice black, fat, pet sheep. He told them it was revealed to him that they should dig a trench around a certain spot...[and] cut the artery in the sheep's neck, walk him around the trench and form a circle of blood -- to keep the evil spirit out of the circle. -- then commence digging; but if any one spoke a word the treasure would surely vanish."

Sara Melissa Ingersoll, "Mormonism Unveiled," copy in letter to Hellen Miller Gould, 27 November 1899.

* "At one time they were so near the box that the spade of one of the devoted band struck the lid, and it gave back a hollow sound. For this harsh blow of the spade the box took its flight away through the ground. "There it goes," said Smith, "hear it rumble as it sinks and flies away." He induced the men that supported and followed him, and dug where he bade them, to sacrifice a bitch dog to remove the enchantment."

"Joseph Smith, a New Chapter of His History," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, X:98 (Chicago), July 16, 1881.

* "Another case of digging occurs to my particular recollection, as it was the crime for which Deacon Stowell was excommunicated. Smith had discovered... another chest of money and valuables; but being enchanted by evil spirits, the enchantment must be broken. To do this Smith, with some of his followers attended by the deacon, built an altar and offered a burnt sacrifice, offering thereon two black slut dogs and two black ewe lambs, the deacon sprinkling the blood and calling upon God to take away the evil spirits."

"Mormonism: Incidents in its First Appearance," *The Homiletic Review*, XLVII:2 (NYC), February, 1904.

Seers and Stones in the Treasure-Search

* "Like the girl, who a few years since, in the western part of the State of New-York, put a **certain stone** into a hat, and placing her face in front so as entirely to exclude the light, pretended, and made some credulous people believe, that by so looking into it she could see the whole world and what was there going on."

H. Biglow and Orville L. Holley, *American Monthly Magazine and Critical Review*, vol. 2, (New York: Kirk and Mercein, 1817).



* "A few days since was discovered in this town, by the help of a *mineral stone*, (which becomes transparent when placed in a hat and the light excluded by the face of him who looks into it, provided he is fortune's favorite,) a monstrous *potash kettle* in the bowels of the old mother Earth, filled with the purest bullion."

"Wonderful Discovery," *Wayne Sentinel*, (Palmyra, NY), 27 December 1825.

* "They had a wonderful son... who... discovered a round stone of the size of a man's fist, the which when he first saw it, presented to him on the one side, all the dazzling splendor of the sun in full blaze – and on the other, the clearness of the moon. ... The oracle, after adjusting the stone in his hat, and looking in upon it sometime, pronounced that there was [treasure]."

"Imposition and Blasphemy!! Money-Diggers, &c," *The Gem*, (Rochester, NY), 15 May 1830.

* "'Peep stones" or pebbles, taken promiscuously from the brook or field, were placed in a hat or other situation excluded from the light, when some wizzard or witch (for these performances were not confined to either sex) applied their eyes, and nearly starting their balls from their sockets, declared they saw all the wonders of nature, including of course, ample stores of silver and gold."

Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 3," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 1 February 1831.

* "It is well known that Jo Smith never pretended to have any communion with angels, until a long period after the *pretended* finding of his book, and that the juggling of himself or father, went no further than the pretended faculty of seeing wonders in a "peep stone," and the occasional interview with the spirit, supposed to have the custody of hidden treasures."

Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 5," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 28 February 1831.

Seer Stones (continued)

* "Hamack then arose & in his hand he held a stone which he pronounced transparent -- tho' it was not transparent to common eyes. -- Thro' this he could view things present & things to come -- could behold the dark intrigues & cabals of foreign courts -- & discover hidden treasures, secluded from the eyes of other mortals.... Such was the clearness of his sight when this transparent stone was placed before his eyes."

Solomon Spalding, from pages 74-75 of the LDS-published *Manuscript Story by Rev. Solomon Spaulding*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News) 1886.

* "And he took his *book*, and his rusty sword, and his *magic* stone, and his *stuffed Toad*, and all his implements of *witchcraft* and retired to the mountains near Great Sodus Bay, where he holds communion with the Devil, even to this day."
Abner Cole, "Book of Pukei -- Chap. 1," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 12 June 1830. [Pukei 1:9]

* "The power he pretended to have received through the medium of a stone of peculiar quality. The stone was placed in a hat, in such a manner as to exclude all light, except that which emanated from the stone itself. This light of the stone, he pretended, enabled him to see any thing he wished. Accordingly he discovered ghosts, infernal spirits, mountains of gold and silver, and many other invaluable treasures deposited in the earth."
Joseph Capron affidavit, 8 November 1833.

* "I picked up a small stone and was careless tossing it from one hand to the other.... No, said the old man, it is of great worth; and upon this I gave it to him. ... He then put the stone which I had given him, into his hat, and stooping forward, he bowed and made sundry maneuvers, quite similar to those of a stool pigeon. At length he took down his hat, and being very much exhausted, said, in a faint voice, -- if you knew what I had seen, you would believe."
Peter Ingersoll affidavit, 2 December 1833.

* "Joseph, Jr., could see, by placing a stone of singular appearance in his hat, in such a manner as to exclude all light; at which time they pretended he could see all things within and under the earth."
William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833.

Seer Stones (continued)

* "One day, in company with several others, he [Smith] called on a man in the neighborhood named [Stowell?] and asked him to direct the party to Monument hill, where he said there was a gold mine. [Stowell] consented, and, upon their arrival at the foot of the hill, Smith said: "Do you see a stump on which there seems to be something resembling fur?" ... one of the party noticed... fine black slivers which all agreed resembled fur. Smith told them all to be seated while he went through a series of ceremonies with the seeing stone," placing it in his high hat while he examined it closely with his head on the ground. "There is a vein of gold 25 feet under this place," said Smith. If Mr. [Stowell] will board the men while digging we will begin work at once and I will give him stock in the mine in payment."
"Mormons' Religion...", *Binghampton Press*, 1:4 (Binghampton, NY), April 14, 1904.



* "We discovered a singularly appearing stone.... Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat. ... After obtaining the stone, he began to publish abroad what wonders he could discover by looking in it."

Willard Chase affidavit, 11 December 1833.

* "His occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see by means of a stone placed in his hat, and his hat closed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure."

Isaac Hale affidavit, 20 March 1834,

* "He exhibited a flat opaque glass, or stone, about the size of his palm; which, he said, was found in the grave of an Indian magician, lying upon the bones of the skeleton, over the heart; and which possessed the property of revealing to him the hidden things of earth. ... Arrived thereat, Smidt [sic – Smith] very gravely put the magical glass into his hat, and that to his face, in such a manner as to shut out all the light; while Samuel and Brown placed themselves on either side of him, and awaited in a very trying suspense his expected revelations. Soon Joe brought down the hat, and with an exclamation of delight, informed them that he had discovered the box of gold, buried but a few feet below the surface of the ground."

J. R. Orton, "The Glass-Lookers," *The Rover*, vol. 1 (New York, 1843), 264-66.

* "One of those impostors who, by looking into a mysterious glass, or rather stone, pretended to be able to discover hidden treasures, or lost things, and even foretell future events...which he could plainly see by looking into his dark hat, having this stone in the crown."

Nathaniel Stacy, *Memoirs of the Life of Nathaniel Stacy*, (Columbus, PA: W. Heughes, 1850), 171-172.

Seer Stones (continued)

* "With some labor and exertion he found the stone, carried it to the creek, washed and wiped it dry, sat down on the bank, placed it in his hat, and discovered that time, place and distance were annihilated; that all the intervening obstacles were removed, and that he possessed one of the attributes of Deity, an All-Seeing-Eye. ... On the request of the Court, he exhibited the stone. It was about the size of a small hen's egg, in the shape of a high-insteped shoe. It was composed of layers of different colors passing diagonally through it. It was very hard and smooth, perhaps by being carried in the pocket."

William D. Purple account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 1826 court proceedings, -- "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism, " *Chenango Union* 30, no. 33, (Norwich, NY: 3 May 1877).

* "A negro boy named 'Mike' had a rare faculty bestowed on him. He could place a perforated stone which he had in his possession, in his hat, and immediately he could reveal the hiding places of buried treasure."

John W. Hanson, *History of Gardiner, Pittston, and West Gardiner*, (Gardiner, MA: William Palmer, 1852), 169.

* "His reasons for believing in a mine were extracted from the lips of a sibyl, who, by looking into a magic glass, was enabled to discover the hidden treasures of the earth. Such superstition was frequent in the new settlement."

James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, (New York: George P. Putnam, 1853 – reprint of 1823 ed.), 494.

* "I then took Joseph on surprise, and said to him -- I said, 'Take your stone.' I had never seen it, and did not know that he had it with him. He had it in his pocket. He took it and placed it in his hat -- the old white hat -- and placed his face in his hat."

Martin Harris interview, "Mormonism – No. II, " *Tiffany's Monthly*, August 1859, 164.

* "Joseph requested the privilege of looking into the stone, which he did by putting his face into the hat where the stone was. It proved to be not the right stone for him; but he could see some things, and, among them, he saw the stone, and where it was, in which he could see whatever he wished to see. Smith claims and believes that there is a stone of this quality, somewhere, for every one.... After this, Joseph spent about two years looking into this stone, telling fortunes, where to find lost things, and where to dig for money and other hidden treasure."

Fayette Lapham, "Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith..." *Historical Magazine* [2nd series] 7 (May 1870): 305.

Seer Stones (continued)

* "About the year 1818 a teamster in the salt works by the name of Joseph Belcher found a peculiar stone... Soon after the discovery of this "find," Belcher and family removed to Susquehanna county, Pa., where Joe Smith was at the time engaged... as a gold hunter, prophet, and treasure-hunter. Belcher called his find "a seeing stone." It was green, with brown irregular spots on it, and about the same shape and size as a goose egg.... strange stories were told of lost animals and children that were found by the aid of this stone. The modus operandi was to conceal the stone in a dark place, and Belcher's little boy could then see from its unnatural powers the exact location of any object he desired to find. Joe Smith heard of this miniature information bureau and soon sought out Belcher, secured the stone and renewed his researches. "Belcher's Lucky Stone," *The Syracuse Journal*, XLVII:41, Feb. 17, 1891.



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* "Prisoner pretended to him that he could discover objects at a distance by holding this white stone to the sun or candle; that prisoner rather declined looking into a hat at his dark coloured stone, as he said that it hurt his eyes."

Charles Marshall account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 1826 court proceedings, *Fraser's Magazine* 7 (London): February 1873, 225.

* "He did so, and was permitted to look in the glass, which was placed in a hat to exclude the light. He was greatly surprised to see but one thing, which was a small stone, a great way off. It soon became luminous, and dazzled his eyes, and after a short time it became as intense as the mid-day sun."

William D. Purple account, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism," *Chenango Union* 30, no. 33, (Norwich, NY: 3 May 1877).

* "The interpreter of the "money-diggers," as they were called, pretended to see the "money-chests," or hidden treasure, through a large, peculiar stone, which he always retained with him. He held it to his eyes, and claimed the power to see through it into the earth." W.H. McIntosh, *History of Wayne County, New York*, (Philadelphia: Evers, Ensign, and Everts, 1877), 155.

* "The neighbors use to Claim Sally Chase Could look through stone she had & find money -- Willard Chase use to dig when she found where the money was"

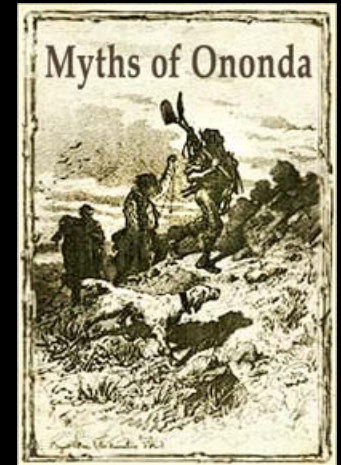
William Kelley, Notebook, No.5, 15, [6 March 1881], William H. Kelley Papers, CoC Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; EMD 2:87.

* "Joseph A. S. Austin was by me duly sworn, and says "that he had been acquainted with Smith, the prisoner, for several years; that prisoner pretended to look in a certain glass, or stone, and said he could tell where stolen goods were, and could discover mines of gold and silver under ground."

"Mormonism," *Morning Star*, (Limerick, Maine: VII:29, Nov. 16, 1832).

The Silence Ritual

John Nutt sen. said that... Mowe located a spot, to dig... and Mr. Nutt "tried the ground" with the "magic spear" ... he struck something that felt and sounded like the top of a box. He forced the spear down through the cover.... **Not a word was spoken** but picks and shovels flew fast, and a great hole was dug. The spear and box sank deeper and finally the box remained firm. Then the men reached and uncovered it: the box danced about, the men seized it, and **one remarked** -- "we've got it at last?" Instantly the box was wrenched from their hands and the party heard it move, rattling away into the hill some thirty feet or more. George H. Harris, "Myths of Ononda" (manuscript, Rochester, NY, c. 1887) page 6.



* "Then they conclude, that thro' some Mistake in the Procedure, some rash Word spoke, or some Rule of Art neglected, the Guardian Spirit had Power to sink it deeper into the Earth and convey it out of their Reach."

Benjamin Franklin, "The Busy Body," No. 8 (1729)

* "One of the company drove an old [file] through the rotten lid of the chest, and perceiving it to be nearly empty, exclaimed with an oath, "There's not ten dollars a piece." No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than the chest moved off through the mud, and has not been seen or heard of since."

"Money Digging," *Windsor Journal*, (Windsor, VT), 17 January 1825.

* "The effect was powerful, and contrary to an explicit rule laid down by himself he exclaimed, "d--n me, I've found it!" The charm was broken! – the screams of demons, – the chattering of spirits – and hissing of serpents rent the air, and the treasure moved!"

"Imposition and Blasphemy!! Money-Diggers, &c," *Rochester Gem*, (Rochester, NY), 15 May 1830.

* "He...then enjoined profound silence upon us, lest we should arouse the evil spirit who had the charge of these treasures."

William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833.

* "Having, by his ceremony, taken possession of the ground, as he termed it, he charged his associates, that, while the work was in the progress, they must not, on peril of their lives, or, what with them was of equal moment, the loss of the treasure now so nearly within their grasp, utter a single word."

J. R. Orton, "The Glass-Lookers," *The Rover*, vol. 1 (New York, 1843), 264-66.

The Silence Ritual (continued)

* "On several farms northeast of Rose Valley they assembled at night and **silently** dug for the treasure. A single word spoken before it was found was fatal; the treasure would disappear, and the evil spirits would rise against them."

W.H. McIntosh, *History of Wayne County, New York*, (Philadelphia: Evers, Ensign, and Everts, 1877), 155.

* "**Absolute silence** was the condition of success. Work would then go on for hours and hours without a word being spoken. At length some tired and perhaps disgusted digger, "tempted by the Spirit of Evil," would speak, and the treasure would vanish."

E.W. Vanderhoof, *Historical Sketches of Western New York*, (Buffalo: Matthews-Northrup Works, 1907), 139.

* "And upon the slightest word or whisper from one of the party, the chest, almost within their grasp, would move off with a rumbling noise, to some distant and less attainable spot."

Caleb Butler, *History of the Town of Groton*, (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1848), 256.

* "After digging a few feet he came to the flat stone over the pot, when Steel involuntarily cried out, -- " By the Lord we have got it! " when instantly, with a low rumbling sound, it settled down out of sight. It is said such searches must always be conducted in silence, as the sound of the human voice irritates the evil spirit who has charge of the hidden treasures, and they vanish away."

"A History of the Divining Rod; with the Adventures of an Old Rodsman," *United States Democratic Review* 26 (April 1850): 320-321.

* "As usual, not a word was to be spoken during the ceremony, nor until after the prize was brought forth."

Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, (New York, 1867), 24-25.

* "Not a word must be spoken while digging for money; if they did the money would fly away."

Nancy F. Glass letter, in Hiland Paul and Robert Sparks, *History of Wells, Vermont*, (Rutland, VT: Tuttle and Co., 1869), 81.

* "They were to form a triangle around the designated point, and work in perfect *silence* -- as a word spoken would break the charm."

J.H. Temple and George Sheldon, *History of the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts*, (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1875), 18.

* "At midnight, dupes, laborers, and himself, with lanterns, repaired to the hill-side near the house of Smith, where... digging began by signal in enjoined silence.... when, just as the money-box was about to be unearthed, some one spoke and the treasure vanished."

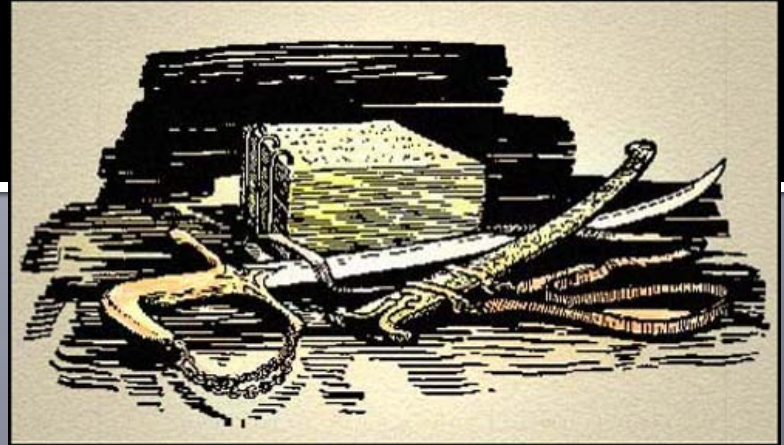
W.H. McIntosh, *History of Wayne County, New York*, (Philadelphia: Evers, Ensign, and Everts, 1877), 150.

Swords in the Treasure-Search

* "When the box was once safe upon deck every one then was anxious to hear what was in it, when we were told that it contained fourteen gold plates... together with the sword of Gideon and the spectacles of Samuel, the prophet! Joe, he said, was a very illiterate man, was unable either to read or write; but when he put on his nose the prophet's spectacles, and took the gold plates one by one, letter by letter and word by word presented themselves, and with the aid of an amanuensis the Bible that he held in his hand was a literal translation of the writing upon the gold plates....

The writer's question to him was, "...what kind of a sword was it that could be packed away in an eighteen inch box?" "

"Sidney Rigdon... a Lecture He Delivered Forty Years Ago,"
Pittsburgh Telegraph, IV:112, August 24, 1876.



* "And the Magician led the *rabble* unto a dark grove, in a place called *Manchester*, where after drawing a Magic circle, with a rusty sword, and collecting his motley crew of *latter-demallions*, within the centre, he sacrificed a Cock (a bird sacred to Minerva) for the purpose of propitiating the *prince* of spirits." Abner Cole, "The Book of Pukei. -- Chap. 1," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 12 June 1830.

* "And he took his *book*, and his rusty sword, and his magic stone, and his *stuffed Toad*, and all his implements of *witchcraft* and retired to the mountains near Great Sodus Bay, where he holds communion with the Devil, even to this day." Abner Cole, "The Book of Pukei. -- Chap. 1," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 12 June 1830.

* "Walters assembled his nightly band of money diggers in the town of Manchester, at a point designated in his magical book, and drawing a circle around laborers, with the point of an old rusty sword, and using sundry other incantations, for the purpose of propitiating the spirit, absolutely sacrificed a fowl, ("*Rooster*,") in the presence of his awe-stricken companions, to the foul spirit, whom ignorance had created, the guardian of hidden wealth." Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 5," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 28 February 1831.

Treasure-Guardians

* "But when even the most devout, pious and godly Christians, with the Bible... lying near them, to keep off **infernal spirits**, had dug down to within an inch or two of the treasures, **a daemon**, in shape of some **huge monster**, with hideous yawning mouth and enormous white teeth; or of some ugly **night bird**, with eyes as big as saucers, would appear, as if on purpose to mock them, and **hinder** them from adding wealth to their wisdom."

Caleb Butler, *History of the Town of Groton*, (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1848), 256.

* "He saw in the box **something like a toad**, which soon assumed the appearance of a man, and struck him on the side of his head."

Willard Chase affidavit, 11 December 1833.

* "Even the frightful stories of money being hid under the surface of the earth, and enchanted by the Devil or Robert Kidd, are received by many of our respectable fellow citizens as truths."
"Money Digging," *Windsor Journal*, (Windsor, VT), 17 January 1825.

* "His Satanic Majesty, or some other invisible agent, appears to keep it under marching orders; for no sooner is it dug on to in one place, than it moves off."

"Wonderful Discovery," *Wayne Sentinel*, (Palmyra, NY), 27 December 1825.

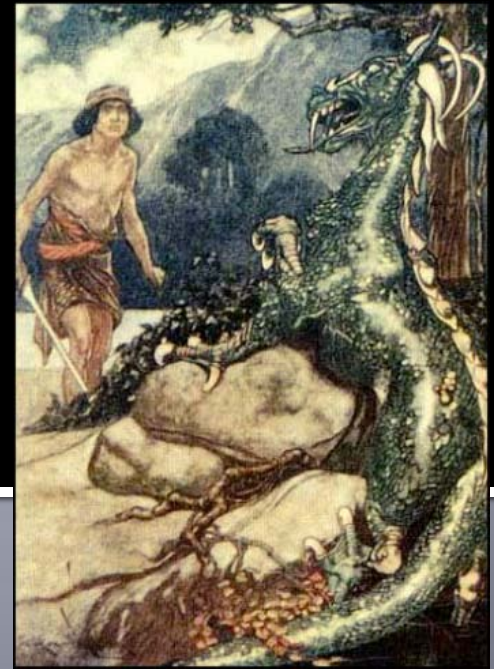
* "The effect was powerful, and contrary to an explicit rule laid down by himself he exclaimed, "d--n me, I've found it!" The charm was broken! – the screams of **demons**, – the chattering of **spirits** – and hissing of **serpents** rent the air, and the treasure moved!"
"Imposition and Blasphemy!! Money-Diggers, &c," *The Gem*, (Rochester, NY), 15 May 1830.

* "Now Walters, the Magician, was a man unseemly to look upon, and to profound ignorance added the most consummate imprudence, – the summons of the idle and slothful, and produced an old book in an unknown tongue, (Cicero's Orations *in latin*,) from whence he read in the presence of the Idle and Slothful strange stories of hidden treasures and of the spirit who had custody thereof."

Abner Cole, "Book of Pukei -- Chap. 1," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 12 June 1830.

* "And I looked, and behold a little old man stood before me, clad, as I supposed, in Egyptian raiment, except his Indian blanket, and moccasins – his beard of silver white, *hung* far below his knees. On his head was an old fashioned military half cocked hat, such as was worn in the days of the patriarch Moses -- his speech was sweeter than *molasses*, and his words were the reformed [Egyptian]."

Abner Cole, "Book of Pukei -- Chap. 2," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 7 July 1830.



Treasure-Guardians (continued)

* "Legends, or traditions respecting hidden treasures, with the SPIRIT, to whom ignorance has formerly given them in charge."
Abner Cole, "Gold Bible," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 6 January 1831.

* "He also revived, or in other words, propagated the vulgar, yet popular belief that these treasures were held in charge by some evil spirit, which was supposed to be either the DEVIL himself, or some one of his most trusty favorites. This opinion however, did not originate by any means with Smith, for we find that the vulgar and ignorant from time immemorial, both in Europe and America, have entertained the same preposterous opinion."
Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 3," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 1 February 1831.

* "Although the spirit was always able to retain his precious charge, these discomfited as well as deluded beings, would on a succeeding night return to their toil, not in the least doubting that success would eventually attend their labors."
Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 3," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 1 February 1831.

* "It is well known that Jo Smith never pretended to have any communion with angels, until a long period after the pretended finding of his book, and that the juggling of himself or father, went no further than the pretended faculty of seeing wonders in a "peep stone," and the occasional interview with the spirit, supposed to have the custody of hidden treasures."
Abner Cole, "Gold Bible, No. 5," *Reflector*, (Palmyra, NY), 28 February 1831.

* "He has no doubt of it, provided he can vanquish the spirits that continually guard it, and break the charm that constantly surrounds it."
"Money Digging," *Fredonia Censor*, (Fredonia, NY), 14 September 1831.

* "A huge misshapen ghost stood before him, as he says, at least 20 feet high. – "Dad, " said the courageous boy, " maydn't I thow a stone at him?" But the old man silenced the boy, and with blanched lips and chattering teeth addressed the ghost in the name of the Lord Jesus and demanded to know how much he would take for interest in the money; the ghost replied in a very surly tone that he wouldn't [sell] out and was about to make a [demonstration] of his power when the money diggers gave way to their fears and fled, closely pursued by more than five hundred ghosts, leaving the Bible on the spot. The old man says next he'll have a "clinch for it." He begins to suspect the ghosts are made of tangible materials."
"Money Diggers" *Eastern Argus*, (Portland, Maine), 23 October 1833.

Treasure-Guardians (continued)

* "One time the old log school-house south of Palmyra, was suddenly lighted up, and frightened them away. Samuel Lawrence told me that while they were digging, a large man who appeared to be eight or nine feet high, came and sat on the ridge of the barn, and motioned to them that they must leave. They motioned back that they would not; but that they afterwards became frightened and did leave. At another time while they were digging, a company of horsemen came and frightened them away." Martin Harris interview, "Mormonism – No. II," *Tiffany's Monthly*, August 1859, 165.

* "He then told his father that, in his dream, a very large and tall man appeared to him, dressed in an ancient suit of clothes, and the clothes were bloody. ... He said to him that, when the treasure was deposited there, he was sworn to take charge of and protect that property, until the time should arrive for it to be exhibited to the world of mankind; and, in order to prevent his making an improper disclosure, he was murdered or slain on the spot, and the treasure had been under his charge ever since." Fayette Lapham, "Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith," *Historical Magazine* [2nd series] 7 (May 1870): 305.

* "They pretended...that he could also discover the spirits in whose charge these treasures were, clothed in ancient dress." William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833.

* "Full of Expectation they labour violently, trembling at the same Time in every Joint, thro' fear of certain malicious Demons who are said to haunt and guard such Places." Benjamin Franklin, "The Busy Body," No. 8 (1729)

* "And then the charms and various observances, to defeat the watchfulness of the spirits that have the treasure in charge." Edward A. Kendall, *Travels Through the Northern Parts of the U. S. in the Years 1807 and 1808*, 3 vol., (New York: I. Riley, 1809), 3:85.

* "His belief was, that he failed in finding the treasure not from any fault in the rod, but from the malevolence of the devil, or evil spirit, who was put in charge of the money by the pirates; and was thus inducted into the office of keeper, by the blood of some man, or animal, killed on the spot, and poured into the pit." "A History of the Divining Rod," *United States Democratic Review* 26, no. 141, (March 1850): 223.

* "They were in some way concerned with buried treasure, and this being concerned by the supposed indication of the divining rod, led in early times to explorations for them, despite of the guardianship of the spirits of the murdered, who according to the most approved demonologists, are ever placed sentries over concealed coffers." Franklin B. Hough, *A History of Jefferson County in the State of New York*, (Albany, NY: John Munsell, 1854), 158.

Treasure-Guardians (continued)

* "The time having come to secure the **treasure**, Smith returned to Palmyra and commenced to dig for the golden plates. The late William Van Camp of Lyons told the writer that as a boy at the time he heard that one night the spades struck a strong box. Thunder and lightning followed. The box sank deeper, and Smith explained the loss by the lack of faith on the part of the diggers. At last the plates were secured on the night of Sept. 22, 1826, the Prophet relating that he had been hit hard by **the chief devil**, who wished to have the plates remain concealed." "A Looked-For Exposure," *New York Times*, Vol. 36, No. 11,385, Feb. 26, 1888.



* "That the last time he looked he discovered distinctly the two Indians who buried the trunk, that a quarrel ensued between them, and that one of said Indians was killed by the other, and thrown into the hole beside the trunk, to guard it, as he supposed." Charles Marshall account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 1826 court proceedings, *Fraser's Magazine* 7 (London): February 1873, 225.

* "Here, having placed the heavy chest in its hole, they sacrificed by lot one of their number, and laid his body a top of the treasure, that his ghost might forever after defend it from all fortune-seekers.... Alas ! for that word. The charm is broken; and instantly the chest settled down out of reach ; and as instantly the disturbed ghost appeared, flitting around them ! And before they can collect their scattered senses, Satan himself – full six feet tall – rises from under the bank, crosses the island "like a wheel," *going right through a hay-stack*, and plunges into the river with a yell and splash!"

J.H. Temple and George Sheldon, *History of the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts*, (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1875), 18.

* "His idea was, that Capt. Kidd, after burying his treasure, made one of his men swear to guard it, and then killed him and buried him above the iron chest containing the gold. When anyone searching for the gold struck the chest, the sentinel ghost would always make some demonstration to frighten them away. ... After digging several feet...there appeared in the hole...a sow with a family of pigs. They understood this to be a demonstration of the guard, and resolved to stand their ground, but the animal became ferocious and caught one of the diggers by the leg."

William B. Lapham, *History of Woodstock, Maine*, (Portland: Stephen Berry, 1882), 134.

* ""Great God! it is gone!" said Getchel. "You have spoken, and Kidd's ghost has spirited it away.""

William Little, *The History of Weare, New Hampshire*, (Lowell, MS, 1888), 589.

Treasure Moving or Sinking

* "And upon the slightest word or whisper from one of the party, the chest, almost within their grasp, would **move off** with a rumbling noise, to some distant and less attainable spot."
o Caleb Butler, *History of the Town of Groton*, (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1848), 256.

* "After digging a few feet he came to the flat stone over the pot, when Steel involuntarily cried out, "By the Lord we have got it!" when instantly, with a low rumbling sound, it **settled down** out of sight. It is said such searches must always be conducted in silence, as the sound of the human voice irritates the evil spirit who has charge of the hidden treasures, and they **vanish away**."

"A History of the Divining Rod; with the Adventures of an Old Rodsman,"
United States Democratic Review 26 (April 1850): 320-321.



* "Then they conclude, that thro' some Mistake in the Procedure, some rash Word spoke, or some Rule of Art neglected, the Guardian Spirit had Power to **sink** it deeper into the Earth and convey it out of their Reach."
Benjamin Franklin, "The Busy Body," No. 8 (1729).

* "Doleful sighs and dismal noises are heard; – the chest **moves** in the earth, almost out of their very hands!"
Edward A. Kendall, *Travels Through the Northern Parts of the U. S. in the Years 1807 and 1808*, 3 vol., (New York: I. Riley, 1809), 3:88.

* "One of the company drove an old [file] through the rotten lid of the chest, and perceiving it to be nearly empty, exclaimed with an oath, "There's not ten dollars a piece." No sooner were the words out of his mouth, than the chest **moved off** through the mud, and has not been seen or heard of since."

"Money Digging," *Windsor Journal*, (Windsor, VT), 17 January 1825.

* "For no sooner is it dug on to in one place, than it **moves off** like – false delusive hope, to another still more remote."
"Wonderful Discovery," *Wayne Sentinel*, (Palmyra, NY), 27 December 1825.

* "Joseph once showed me a piece of wood which he said he took from a box of money, and the reason he gave for not obtaining the box, was, that it **moved**."
Joshua Stafford affidavit, 15 November 1833.

* "He saw the spirit come up to the ring and as soon as it beheld the cone... around the rod, it caused the money to **sink**."
William Stafford affidavit, 8 December 1833.

Treasure Moving or Sinking (continued)

* "In a few feet from the surface the box of treasure was struck by the shovel. on which they redoubled their energies, but it gradually receded from their grasp. One of the men placed his hand upon the box, but it **gradually sunk** from his reach, After some five feet in depth had been attained without success, a council of war, against this spirit of darkness was called, and they resolved that the lack of faith, or of some untoward mental emotions was the cause of their failure." William D. Purple account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 1826 court proceedings, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism," *Chenango Union* 30, no. 33, (Norwich, NY: 3 May 1877).

* "Alas ! for that word. The charm is broken; and instantly the chest **settled down** out of reach." J.H. Temple and George Sheldon, *History of the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts*, (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1875), 18.

* "They could often strike their spades through on to the boxes, but before they could be excavated they would move away; it was like going to the bottom of a rainbow for a treasure." Nancy F. Glass letter, printed in Hiland Paul and Robert Sparks, *History of Wells*, (Rutland, VT: Tuttle and Co., 1869), 81.

* "He [Porter Rockwell] often heard his mother and Mrs. Smith comparing notes, and telling how Such an one's dream, and Such another's pointed to the same lucky spot: how the spades often struck the iron sides of the treasure chest, and how it was charmed away, now six inches this side, now four feet deeper, and again completely out of reach." Elizabeth Kane journal, 1872, published in Norman R. Bowen and Mary Karen Bowen, eds., *A Gentile Account of Life in Utah's Dixie, 1872-1873*, (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, 1995), 73.

* "Thompson says that he believes in the prisoner's professed skill; that the board which he struck his spade upon was probably the chest, but on account of an enchantment the trunk kept **settling away** from under them when digging, that notwithstanding they continued constantly removing the dirt, yet the trunk kept about the same distance from them." Charles Marshall account of Joseph Smith, Jr.'s 1826 court proceedings, *Fraser's Magazine* 7 (London): February 1873, 225.

* "'Great God! it is gone!' said Getchel. _You have spoken, and Kidd's ghost has spirited it away.'" o William Little, *The History of Weare, New Hampshire*, (Lowell, MS, 1888), 589.

* "And might, in the mind of the doubter, recall some of the legendary incidents of money-digging, wherein just as the treasure-chest seems within grasp, it suddenly **sinks away** and is no more seen." D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Essex County, Massachusetts*, vol. 2, (Philadelphia: A.W. Lewis and Co., 1888), 1483 .

Links to Sources Cited

Note: Most of the newspaper articles cited in this presentation can be viewed on-line at "Uncle Dale's Readings in Early Mormon History," located here: <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/artindex.htm>
The Google Books site also has several of the texts.

Another site featuring some of obscure sources is Uncle Dale's "The Money Diggers," located here: <http://olivercowdery.com/smithhome/smithdig.htm>

A Map of Palmyra & Manchester

This is the area where Joseph Smith and others conducted some of their nocturnal treasure-seeking operations during the 1820s.

The Smith family farm was located in the extreme upper left-hand corner of the Manchester portion of the map.

See also the map accompanying Dan Vogel's 1994 *Dialogue* article, "The Locations of Joseph Smith's Early Treasure Quests," available on-line [at this location](#).

