

Dream Mines and Religious Identity in Twentieth-Century Utah

INSIGHTS FROM

THE NORMAN C. PIERCE PAPERS

IAN BARBER

AN unprocessed Western Americana collection in the Princeton University Library elucidates a religious worldview that trailed the growing assimilation of the formerly polygamous, Utah-based commonwealth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter LDS; more popularly, the Mormons) into mainstream, twentieth-century American society.¹ In 1976, David N. Pierce of

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: This research was supported by a grant from the Friends of the Princeton University Library (2007–2008). I am grateful for the administrative support of Linda Oliveira and the assistance and interest of Alfred L. Bush, as well as the professional library staff of Special Collections, Firestone Library. I acknowledge the further support of the Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University (especially the ever-helpful Anita Kline), and funding assistance from the Humanities Division, University of Otago. In Utah I thank John M. Murphy, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, for interest and for directing me toward the Woodward family collection. At the LDS Church History Library in Salt Lake City, I am grateful for the assistance of William W. Slaughter, Alan Morrell, and Brittany Chapman in locating relevant sources. The revised manuscript has benefited from the observations of the *Chronicle's* editorial board and editor Gretchen Oberfranc, who is thanked for ongoing support, interest, and encouragement.

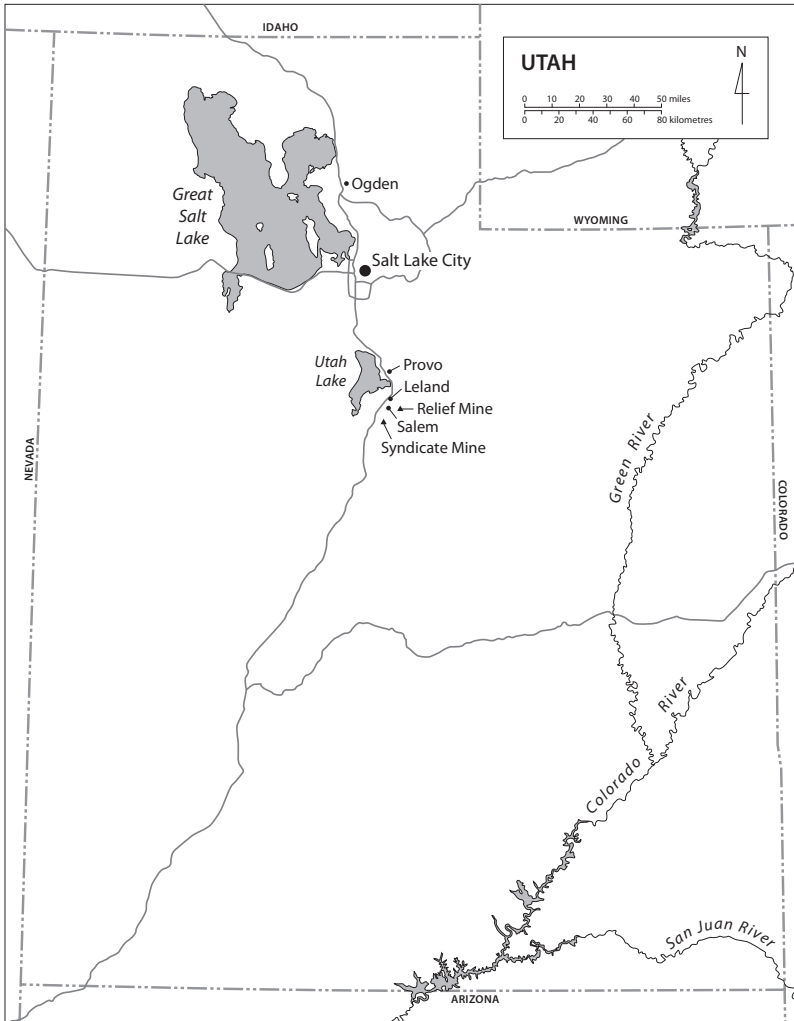
¹ Gustive O. Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1971); Mark P. Leone, *Roots of Modern Mormonism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979); Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984); Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

the Class of 1967 and his siblings donated the personal papers and effects of their late father, Norman C. Pierce (1905–1976), an “insistent Mormon millennialist,” to the Firestone Library.² The papers include typescript drafts of Pierce’s publications, religious experiences, and various meetings; short notes; assorted contemporary publications; mining documents; photographs; and correspondence. Many of these materials relate to the history of Utah visionary John H. Koyle (1864–1949) and his revelations concerning a sacred mine in the mountains south of Salt Lake City. This essay draws on these and other documents to investigate the historical appeal of Koyle’s prophecies to “core area Mormons” and the development of his following into a subaltern variation of an increasingly assimilated LDS cultural identity.³

This investigation of Koyle’s following is part of a larger historical anthropology research project that evaluates the changing place of sacred narratives about American history, ethnicity, and materiality in the making of the Mormon people and in the further emer-

² Alfred L. Bush, “Princeton University,” in *Mormon Americana: A Guide to Sources and Collections in the United States*, ed. David J. Whittaker (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1995), 285. Family records submitted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and at least one website list various years of birth for Pierce (1904, 1905, 1906, 1915; see Norman C. Pierce, Utah entries in Search Records, Family Search, LDS website www.familysearch.org/eng/Search/frameset_search, accessed February 2009). The year 1905 preferred here is consistent with Pierce’s Social Security record (also at Family Search website, accessed February 2005) and with LDS mission records (confirmed in an e-mail response from Jenny St. Clair, Reference Librarian, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah [hereafter CHL], March 18, 2009).

³ Here, “Mormon culture” is interpreted as the shared material and symbolic expressions of a distinctive, Utah-centered social group that is fundamentally religious in nature. In this view, cultural identity is also religious identity insofar as LDS society may be differentiated. On the emergence of a more mainstream Mormon religious identity in the twentieth century, and consequent tensions between the cultural poles of assimilation and peculiarity, see Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, and Cardell K. Jacobson, John P. Hoffmann, and Tim B. Heaton, eds., *Revisiting Thomas F. O’Dea’s “The Mormons”: Contemporary Perspectives* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008). In this essay the “Mormon core area” (after Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 189) refers to the geographical heart of the early Mormon commonwealth centered on Salt Lake City, Utah. In this area, LDS influences underpinned dominant patterns of social organization and economic behavior through much of the nineteenth century and, in central to southern parts, well into the twentieth century.



Map of Utah, showing locations discussed in the text. Prepared by Les O'Neill, Department of Anthropology, Gender and Sociology, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

gence of a global LDS movement. The idea of the (re)construction of religious identity is fundamental both to the larger study and to the present essay, including the question of what it may mean to be Mormon for different LDS communities separated by space, time, or social position.

CULTURAL CHANGE AND RELIGIOUS
IDENTITY IN EARLY UTAH

The nineteenth-century polygamous Mormon commonwealth is interpreted by many scholars as a nascent, theocratic Kingdom of God that was at odds with principles of federal republican government as much as with Victorian morality.⁴ Plural marriage was abandoned by the church at the end of the nineteenth century after the federal government disenfranchised polygamists and confiscated church properties. The further cultural transformation of the separatist kingdom into a relatively respectable twentieth-century religious denomination affected ecclesiastical organization and the cooperative LDS economy as well. It also discouraged the periodic charismatic spirituality of the earlier LDS religious tradition.⁵

Much of the scholarship on the Mormon transformation focuses on the implications for the official church. An official LDS cultural identity incorporates the beliefs, historical narratives, rituals, symbols, and group behaviors that comply with the organization and direction of the priesthood hierarchy at any particular point in time. The last qualification recognizes that all cultural expressions are dynamic to some extent. In the LDS case, the organizational success of the Mormon transformation depended upon compliance to authority (“obedience to the priesthood” or “following the brethren” in popular terminology), which facilitated changes in ritual behavior and belief between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus the contemporary global church now characterizes so-called fundamentalist plural marriage, whether practiced in secret by church members or openly in alternative, self-defined Mormon religious organizations,

⁴ Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (1967; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974); Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1997); David L. Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom: The Mormon Theocracy in the American West 1847–1896* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998).

⁵ Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*; Shepherd and Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed*; Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*; B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

as behavior that automatically separates the practitioners from an official LDS identity.⁶

If official LDS cultural identification is not static, neither is it entirely monolithic or seamless. Differences within the global church have been documented at both hierarchical and local community levels, where a range of theological beliefs and even behaviors can be identified. Unauthorized, local religious expressions are sometimes tolerated to a limited extent in the absence of a formally centralized, systematic LDS theology, or they may persist underground.⁷ Two sociologists who have studied the Mormon transformation define such unofficial expressions as “common religion” or “the shadow of official religion.” In this interpretation, the unofficial religion “is the personalized, practical side of religion as interpreted and implemented by individual believers.... It emerges and is maintained informally. Based on folk beliefs, customs and superstitions, it need not conform to the formal categories of official theology.”⁸ The unofficial religious expression may adapt formal directives so as to accommodate local beliefs or knowledge, or continue earlier ideas and behaviors abandoned by the official religious tradition.⁹

In a study of such expressions in other contexts, anthropologist Christopher Fennell applies the idea of bricolage, following Claude Lévi-Strauss, to describe the recombination of traditions and myths

⁶ Richard Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1984); Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*.

⁷ On religious differences among members of the central hierarchy, and between the hierarchy and sections of the faithful membership in LDS history, see Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, and Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*. For examples of local cultural practices and adaptations, and consequent tensions in the global church, see Ian Barber, “Between Biculturalism and Assimilation: The Changing Place of Maori Culture in the Twentieth-Century New Zealand Mormon Church,” *New Zealand Journal of History* 29 (1995), 142–69, and Thomas W. Murphy, “Reinventing Mormonism: Guatemala as Harbinger of the Future?” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (1996), 177–92. On the “do-it-yourself” theology of twentieth-century Mormonism in the absence of a formal, centralized theological system, see Leone, *Roots of Modern Mormonism*, 7, 168–93.

⁸ Shepherd and Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed*, 11 (see also discussion, 11–12).

⁹ This last category of cultural behavior is illustrated in the clandestine plural marriages contracted by some local and elite hierarchical leaders for more than a decade after the church formally renounced the practice in 1890 (see Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*).

in new cultural forms. In so doing, Fennell notes that the “bricoleur” may draw on cultural symbols from open or external as well as closed or internal systems (where an allowance for the former represents a departure from the bricolage of Lévi-Strauss). For Fennell, this means that bricolage may incorporate new or innovative as well as traditional ideas and instruments in the changing cultural system.¹⁰

This form of bricolage can be identified in the Mormon “folk magic” practiced in local communities and by some members of the nineteenth-century hierarchy. These practices continued ideas that were present at the birth of the LDS movement, as well as some that were picked up from new social contacts and environments. According to historian D. Michael Quinn, magical practices among early Mormons extended to the use of talismans and amulets for protection and healing, predictions based on astrology, and conjuring by means of sacred instruments, such as divination rods and seer stones (the last representing a precedent established by founding prophet Joseph Smith [1805–1844]). Quinn observes that some of these magical practices persisted in twentieth-century Mormon communities after (and in spite of) their repudiation by LDS leaders. Among these practices, Quinn notes that some early Mormons used rods and seer stones to locate missing or hidden objects, including buried treasure and eventually, in the mineral-rich Mormon core area, valuable ore deposits.¹¹

SACRED MINING AND MORMON HISTORY

In Mormon history circles, Norman C. Pierce is perhaps best known for documenting an enterprise that combined nineteenth-century LDS foundation narratives and sagas of the American West devoted to mining quests. Pierce wrote that his family’s involvement with the

¹⁰ Christopher C. Fennell, *Crossroads and Cosmologies: Diasporas and Ethnogenesis in the New World* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007). For Fennell, cultural symbols are reconfigured in the African and European diasporas to form “new social networks—new, socially constructed ethnicities” (130; see also larger discussion, pp. 127–32). He cites the example of so-called folk-magic conjuring among some German-American Protestant immigrants in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America. In seeming opposition to Reformation theology and preaching, they invoked various forms of instrumental magic to heal, protect, or curse (96–126).

¹¹ D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, revised and enlarged (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998).

Relief or Dream Mine identified by the visionary bishop John H. Koyle began with his father, Andrew Pierce, who “became converted to it as early as 1909” and “loved the Dream Mine and ... taught me to do the same.” Norman Pierce began laboring at the mine in 1934 and was impressed “with the need for someone getting the correct version of his [Koyle’s] dreams and visions and writing it down so that they could not be changed.”¹²

The dream mine narrative is a recurring theme in western American folklore. Its various expressions include the supernatural revelation of abandoned (lost) but still productive early European or Indian mine workings, or the miraculous identification of undiscovered mineral deposits. The revelation often comes to a person of relatively modest means and status and may take the form of a spiritual manifestation (especially from the spirit guardian of the mine), a dream, or a vision.¹³

In LDS history, the dream mine narrative as cultural bricolage has a novel setting. The church’s founding scripture originated in a manifestation to the youthful Joseph Smith in upstate New York. In some hostile, near-contemporary accounts, the young Smith was employed at this time as a treasure-seeking seer, and the church founder himself later confessed to early if brief employment as a “money-digger.”

¹² Norman C. Pierce, *The Dream Mine Story* (1958; reprint, Salt Lake City: Norman C. Pierce, 1972). Pierce clarified that he read the narrative to Bishop Koyle and his wife, “who helped me to correct the errors I made” (1). In a master’s thesis from the early 1960s, James Christianson observed that “no serious history of the mine had been written” until Pierce first self-published his 1958 account. Christianson characterized Pierce’s book as a “credible work in some respects,” with an “emotional bias” in the mine’s favor. James R. Christianson, “An Historical Study of the Koyle Relief Mine 1894–1962” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1962), 3.

¹³ Gerald T. Hurley, “Buried Treasure Tales in America,” *Western Folklore* 10 (1951), 197–216; Byrd Howell Granger, *A Motif Index for Lost Mines and Treasures Applied to Redaction of Arizona Legends, and to Lost Mine and Treasure Legends Exterior to Arizona*, Folklore Fellows Communications no. 218 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977); J. Frank Dobie, *Coronado’s Children: Tales of Lost Mines and Buried Treasures of the Southwest* (1930; reprint, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978); Wayland D. Hand, “The Quest for Buried Treasure: A Chapter in American Folk Legendry,” in *Folklore on Two Continents: Essays in Honor of Linda Degh*, ed. Nikolai Burlakoff and Carl Lindahl (Bloomington, Ind.: Trickster Press, 1980), 112–19; Carma Wadley, “The Stories They Tell,” in *From the Ground Up: The History of Mining in Utah*, ed. Colleen Whitley (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006), 81–93.

As the story was subsequently told, on the evening of September 21, 1823, Smith was visited by the angel Moroni, who identified the location of a sacred record inscribed on gold plates buried in a local hill. Moroni informed Smith that he was not yet to recover the plates and warned him at the hill that the plates were not to be used for personal enrichment. After the plates were finally in Smith's possession in 1827, the young seer "translated" part of the record using sacred stones. Smith also permitted chosen witnesses to view the plates before their final return to Moroni in 1829.¹⁴

The subsequent Book of Mormon (1830) identifies itself as the record of an Israelite family and its New World descendants, who are traced back to the history of Israel just after 600 B.C. The new scripture described the family's American arrival and subsequent separation over time into two lineages: the initially more righteous and "fair" Nephites and the dark-skinned Lamanites. Among the former, Moroni was identified as the last Nephite and the record keeper who hid the gold plates.¹⁵

Beyond the Book of Mormon plates, other supernatural incidents involving ancient buried treasure are recorded in LDS history.¹⁶ In Utah, the earlier treasure-seeking lore merged with western dream mine narratives in a new sacred mining bricolage that was encouraged to some extent by the LDS hierarchy. For example, although church president Brigham Young (second president, 1847–1877) warned against the harm of commercial mining,¹⁷ he also taught that the Saints would eventually possess "the gold mines and the treasures

¹⁴ For different scholarly treatments of these events and sources, and the debate concerning Book of Mormon manifestations and magical treasure-seeking lore, cf. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 30–65, and Richard L. Bushman with the assistance of Jed Woodworth, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 41–83.

¹⁵ Title page and text of Joseph Smith Jr., *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi* (1830; reprint, Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2008).

¹⁶ Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 258–68.

¹⁷ *Journal of Discourses by Brigham Young, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, reported by G. D. Watt et al., 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards et al., 1855–1886), 10:271 (October 6, 1863), 13:176 (May 29, 1870), 19:39 (June 17, 1877); Eugene Edward Campbell, "The Mormon Gold Mining Mission of 1849," *BYU Studies* 2, no. 1 (1959–1960), 2–3; Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 299.

of the earth.”¹⁸ “When it is necessary that we should possess gold in great abundance,” Young preached, “the Lord will show it to us in vision, and we shall not have to prospect and dig to find it, as the wicked have to do. The liberty of the Saints is to possess power with God to open gold mines, when we want gold.”¹⁹

In an 1877 discourse the church president conflated supernatural gold mining and the sacred gold records and other hidden treasures of the ancient Nephites. Young recalled that “certain parties” who dug for Nephite treasures “near by where the plates were found” had been frustrated in their efforts. “These treasures that are in the earth are carefully watched,” Young advised, adding that “it is just as easy for an angel to remove the minerals from any part of one of these mountains to another, as it is for you and me to walk up and down the hall.” A faithful man, noted Young, “never goes hunting for gold or silver, unless he is sent.”²⁰

A number of sacred mining enterprises can be documented in the Mormon core area from the late nineteenth century, perhaps encouraged by the economic hardships of the century’s end. In the 1880s a mining company dispute among several Saints in Salt Lake City was said to involve “a little astrology.” In 1890, the year the LDS Church formally suspended plural marriages, a “number of brethren” accompanied a woman who located a mine with a seer stone near Fillmore, Utah.²¹ In 1894 LDS miner Jesse Knight reported that he was shown the future location of a mine in a “remarkable dream” while prospecting near Payson, Utah. A further spiritual manifestation in 1896, the year Utah was admitted to the Union, assured Knight that he would save the credit of the church. He did in fact discover a rich ore deposit that year and thereafter contributed \$10,000 to the church and further sums to individual church leaders.²² And in 1894 John

¹⁸ *Journal of Discourses*, 10:332 (June 22–29, 1864).

¹⁹ *Journal of Discourses*, 10:288 (November 6, 1863).

²⁰ *Journal of Discourses*, 19:36–37, 39 (June 17, 1877). Consistent with this latter sentiment, Young had permitted selected LDS leaders to “call” a small number of men to the California gold fields on gold mining “missions” in 1849. See Campbell, “Mormon Gold Mining Mission,” 1–11.

²¹ Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 268.

²² J. William Knight, *The Jesse Knight Family: Jesse Knight, His Forebears and Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1940); J. William Knight and Jennie K. Mangum, “Jesse Knight,” in *Treasures of Pioneer History*, comp. Kate B. Carter, 6 vols. (Salt

Koyle informed associates of a supernatural experience in which he had been shown the location of a substantial gold resource buried deep in a mountain near Salem, Utah.

DREAM MINES AND THE EARLY TWENTIETH-
CENTURY LDS CHURCH

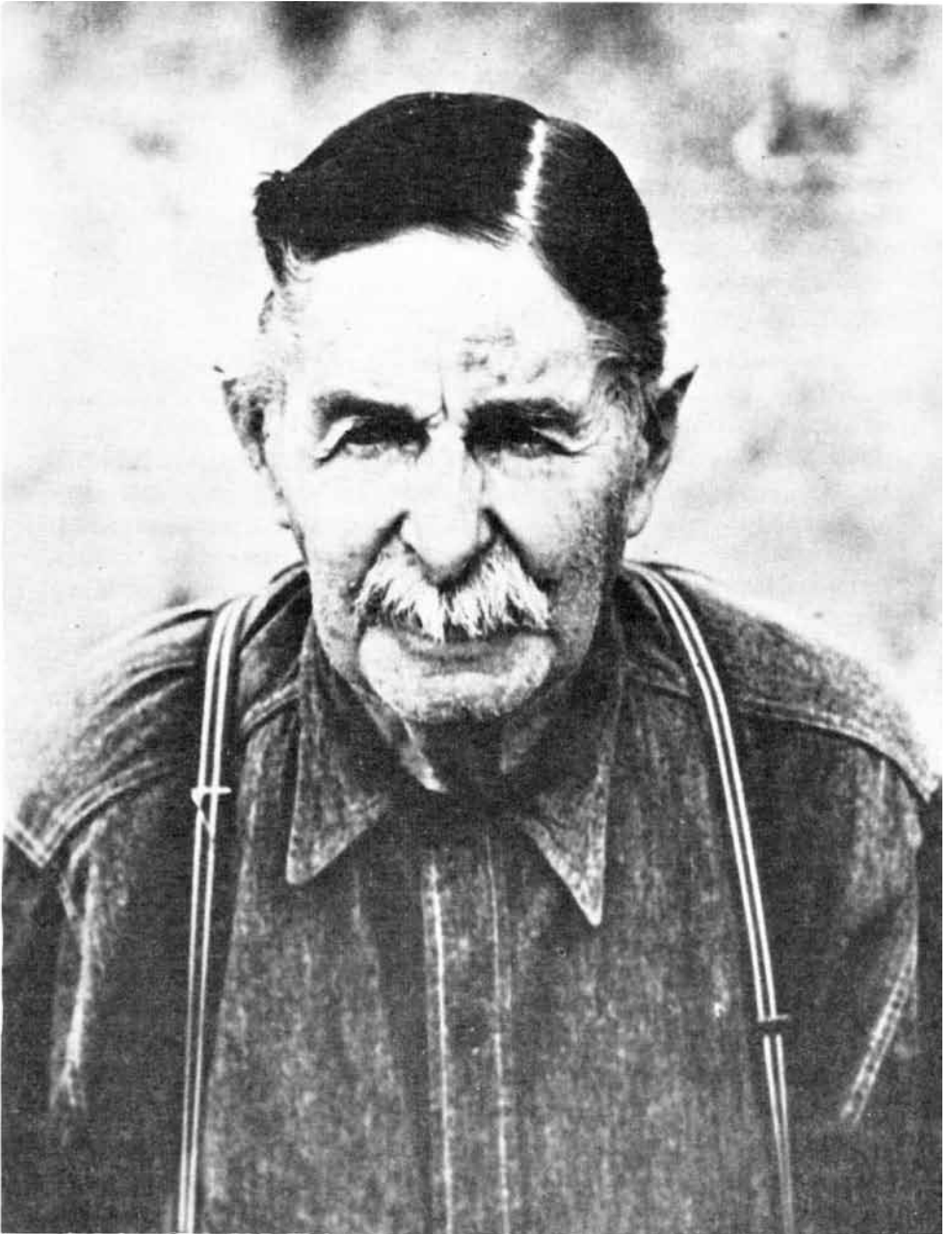
In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the new state of Utah experienced a period of sustained economic growth in mining and agriculture, especially as the formerly cooperative Mormon commonwealth was integrated into the national capitalist system. For some Mormon workers, farmers, and even entrepreneurs, however, the capricious free market did not always deliver individual prosperity, and these early decades were marked by union unrest.²³ At the beginning of the third decade, Utah also experienced the downside of closer economic integration. The postwar depression of 1920–1922 brought the commercial mining industry almost to a halt at the same time that declining values of agricultural products were aggravated by drought. In the Mormon core area, as one historian observes, “some tendency existed to see the depression of 1920–1922 as the result of personal sin rather than market forces.”²⁴

Not surprisingly, dream mine narratives, with their promise of miraculous relief to believers, were nurtured in some Utah communities during these trying first decades of economic adjustment and cultural change. Near the settlement of Salem, Utah, some sixty miles south of Salt Lake City, farmer John Koyle gained local renown after 1886 as a recipient of divine messages and warnings. In August 1894, as Pierce would later record the event, a supernatural visitor

Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1952–1957), 1:178–82; Frank Esshom, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Western Epics Inc., 1966), 8.

²³ Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 181–90; Leonard J. Arrington and Thomas G. Alexander, *A Dependent Commonwealth: Utah's Economy from Statehood to the Great Depression*, Charles Redd Monographs in Western History no. 4, ed. Dean May (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1974).

²⁴ Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 189–90; Thomas G. Alexander, “The Economic Consequences of the War: Utah and the Depression of the Early 1920s,” in Arrington and Alexander, *Dependent Commonwealth*, 57–89; Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 338.



Bishop John H. Koyle (1864–1949), “The Old Man of the Mountain,” in an undated photograph from Norman C. Pierce, *The Dream Mine Story* (1972), [iv]. Princeton University Library.

conveyed Koyle spiritually into a high mountain near Salem that would produce rich deposits at a time of great crisis. In the course of this spiritual journey Koyle and the angel visitor followed a “cream-colored leader” over a thousand feet to a buried capstone. Below the hard rock a “rich chimney” of white quartz containing “leaf gold” extended 175 feet to nine gigantic caverns from which ore had been mined. The messenger visited Koyle three nights in a row, impressing upon him the need to begin mining.

Koyle and a friend proceeded to the “designated location,” where they dug and found a cream-colored formation. On September 7, 1894, Koyle and five friends returned and staked out seven numbered Relief Mine claims. Mining work was carried out thereafter into the early twentieth century by unpaid local workers committed to Koyle’s vision. He directed them in the excavation of a shaft that would finally reach a depth of 1,400 feet, following the cream-colored leader from the surface. Periodically, Koyle’s workers were encouraged by new formations encountered in the deepening shaft, which they believed the bishop had predicted earlier.²⁵

Mineral wealth was not discovered, however, and by the close of the first decade of the twentieth century financial support was required to sustain the operation. Consequently, the Koyle Mining Company was incorporated in 1909 with an offer of 114,000 shares of stock. Reportedly, the mine was promoted as a means of financing the “redemption of Zion,” an eschatological reference to the restoration of faithful Mormons to the “consecrated lands” of Jackson County, Missouri, from which the Saints had been expelled in 1833, and where LDS scripture promised that the faithful would gather to build a New Jerusalem.²⁶

²⁵ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 13, 15. A letter from company director and mine worker Benjamin Franklin Woodward offers insight into the beliefs and perseverance of these workers. In August 1909 Woodward wrote that the parent rock had been reached in the shaft: “So no question now about the dream in my mind ... I never had such a feeling in my life before to be looking for near 15 years for what I found yesterday & to see how well it was covered up.” Woodward to “Spencer Woodward & all,” August 13, 1909, Benjamin Franklin Woodward and Benjamin Spencer Woodward family letters, MSS 5992, 1/1 (hereafter Woodward family letters), L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University (hereafter LTPSC BYU).

²⁶ Christianson, “Study of the Koyle Relief Mine,” 18–21; Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 1–14. In April 1913 the First Presidency advised the Nebo Stake presidency

During the first decade of the twentieth century Koyle also served as a counselor in the bishopric of Leland Ward, Nebo Stake, and from May 1908 he was the bishop of this “small farm country church.”²⁷ Following the mine’s incorporation, the respected Bishop Koyle and his associates were responsible for stock sales among hundreds of core-area Mormons. The spiritual claims for the Relief Mine generated widespread interest, and it became known more generally as the Dream Mine or, by some followers, simply as “the dream.”²⁸ But the sale of mine stock based on spiritual claims troubled the LDS hierarchy in Salt Lake City. As prophet, seer, and revelator, the church president alone is authorized to receive divine revelation for the entire

that “we are informed ... [that the Koyle mining company] is selling stock on the strength of a promise that that the mine is going to yield immense wealth, which is to be used for the redemption of Zion.” In 1914, in a letter to the church president seeking clarity on the church’s position concerning the Relief Mine, a local man noted that some mine followers believed that they would soon be in a position to do “a vast amount of Temple work, also that they would be some to help build up Jackson Co.” Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose [First Presidency] to President J. S. Page and counselors, Nebo Stake, April 21, 1913, retained typescript copy, and Ralph Snelson to Joseph F. Smith, holograph, May 6, 1914, both in Joseph F. Smith [First Presidency] stake correspondence 1901–1918, CR 1 191, box 7, folder 41, CHL. For a scholarly interpretation of LDS scriptural traditions, history, and various eschatological beliefs concerning the redemption of Zion in Missouri, see Craig S. Campbell, *Images of the New Jerusalem: Latter Day Saint Faction Interpretations of Independence, Missouri* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004).

²⁷ Pierce (*Dream Mine Story*, 16) notes that Koyle became “a much respected Bishop.” For further references, see Christianson, “Study of the Koyle Relief Mine,” 42. The bishop is an important local leader in a Mormon community. In the post-nineteenth-century LDS Church organization, a bishop is ordained as the presiding officer of a congregation, or “ward,” and serves with two counselors. A group of contiguous wards forms the next level of organization, the “stake,” presided over by a “stake president.” With the approval of the church hierarchy, a bishop is called and, where applicable, released by the stake president. The bishop is also “sustained” in his position by the vote of his local congregation. The ward bishop is expected to continue in non-ecclesiastical employment, although early twentieth-century bishops also received small stipends from donated tithing funds (Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 93–94, 100, 103, 106).

²⁸ July 16 entry in James E. Talmage, “Personal Journal of James E. Talmage January 1–July 31 1913,” 86, paginated typescript, James E. Talmage Collection, MSS 229 (hereafter Talmage Collection), LTPSC BYU. Members of the Woodward family, who were involved with the mine from the outset, commonly referred to it as “the dream” in 1909 and 1910 correspondence; see the Woodward family letters, LTPSC BYU.

church.²⁹ Concerns may also have been heightened in a church that now discouraged public charismatic spirituality and millennial fervor, as well as the sacred mining lore of the nineteenth century.³⁰

On July 16, 1913, James Talmage, one of the church's twelve governing apostles and a trained geologist, inspected the mine as directed by the First Presidency. Talmage rode by horse from the foot of the mountain to the mine, where he found thirty men working for company stock, "all having faith in the divine direction by which they say the mine was located." Talmage inspected the "irregular shaft" that had been excavated by then to a depth of 1,100 feet. The geologist-apostle found it "devoid of any mineralization" and noted that water had to be pumped from the base. At the surface he identified the so-called leader that the shaft followed as an unremarkable fault slip. Talmage explained to the workers that it was "utterly contrary to wisdom" to sink a shaft from the mountain top rather than tunnel in from the canyon side. In turn, Talmage listened to the workers relate the events that seemed to justify Koyle's divine direction and heard testimonies of "manifestations and inspiration directing them to continue." Talmage advised them to abandon the work and concluded that "the source of the inspiration which they claim is the very opposite of divine."³¹

Subsequently, the August 2 edition of the LDS newspaper published a "warning voice" over the signatures of the First Presidency. With clear reference to Koyle and his salespeople, the statement di-

²⁹ At the top of the governing LDS Church hierarchy is the First Presidency, composed of the church president and his counselors (usually two in number), followed by the Quorum or Council of Twelve Apostles. By custom, the senior or presiding apostle becomes the next church president. Although the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles are all ordained as prophets, seers, and revelators, it is understood that the church president is the sole conduit or authority for revelation that governs the church (Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*).

³⁰ Christianson, "Study of the Koyle Relief Mine," 42–43. Alexander (*Mormonism in Transition*, 290–98) notes that a declining emphasis on the "imminence" of the millennium in LDS rhetoric after 1890 was coincident with a tendency to discourage charismatic spiritual experiences. On the last, see also Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, 1–6.

³¹ July 16, 1913, entry in Talmage, "Personal Journal," 86–87, Talmage Collection. On Talmage's "appointment" or "assignment" by the First Presidency to investigate the Koyle Relief Mine, see Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 38, citing Talmage's July 19, 1928, address to the Nebo Stake conference. See also November 1 entry in "Personal Journal," Talmage Collection.

rected that no person should induce fellow church members “to take stock in ventures . . . on the specious claim of divine revelation, vision or dream.” Financial schemes promoted for the purpose of “redeeming Zion” should not “deceive anyone acquainted with the order of the church,” the statement added. In an unprecedented appeal to rational science as much as to church order, the statement cautioned against being led by any influence that “contradicts true scientific principles and discoveries, or leads away from the direct revelations of God for the government of the church.”³²

The full text of this warning was reprinted in the church paper on August 16 under the title “Dream Mines.” A new preface warned the Saints against investing in “worthless stock, even if promoters allege that they are guided by dreams and revelations.” The preface also suggests that the dream mine narrative was widespread in the Mormon core area: “Almost everyone has heard stories of how such and such found a rich mine by following directions given in a dream, and may fondly hope for similar luck, but in most instances . . . such stories have little or no foundation in fact.”³³ The intriguing qualification “in most instances” may be a concession to Jesse Knight’s dream mine, which had been so beneficial to the turn-of-the-century church.

Despite these warnings, dream mines continued to surface, and Norman Pierce’s papers offer insight into this cultural phenomenon beyond the person and mine of John Koyle. According to *The Dream Mine Story*, Benjamin H. Bullock was “given divine charge of a similar mountain and mine some six or seven miles to the south of the Dream Mine” as confirmed in a March 1915 “plowfield vision” concerning the Syndicate Mine.³⁴ In 1960 the elderly Bullock recalled that in this heavenly manifestation he was promised that he would become a steward of great wealth for the building of the kingdom.³⁵

³² *Deseret News* [LDS Church section], August 2, 1913, 1, cited in Christianson, “Study of the Koyle Relief Mine,” 43–45. According to Pierce (*Dream Mine Story*, 24), Talmage prepared this statement for “the First Presidency to sign.” In private correspondence, Joseph F. Smith and the First Presidency confirmed that this statement had been prepared in direct response to the claims about Koyle’s mine. Joseph F. Smith [First Presidency] stake correspondence 1901–1918, CR 1 191, box 7, folder 41, CHL.

³³ *Deseret News* [LDS Church section], August 16, 1913, 1, cited in Christianson, “Study of the Koyle Relief Mine,” 46.

³⁴ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 31, 61.

³⁵ Christianson, “Study of the Koyle Relief Mine,” 92.

The Pierce papers include a more contemporary perspective in a typescript copy of Bullock's account as recorded in 1920. Bullock recalls the financial hardship that followed his 1913 appointment as bishop of the Provo Ward and his subsequent visit to ask Bishop John Koyle of Leland "to pray for me." "The Bishop promised to do so," according to Bullock, "and the next morning told his wife that Bishop Bullock was going to get some financial relief because the impression came to him that way in answer to his prayers."³⁶

Bullock's relief came initially from an unsolicited financial donation, after which the bishop received a series of spiritual impressions while in his field (the "plowfield vision"). Bullock was assured that he "would be intrusted with great wealth which would come from the earth ... for my salvation and the salvation of others; or for my condemnation and the condemnation of others." "It was also made very plain to me," Bullock recalled, "that I would get ore from the earth." The "first relief" would come once the Syndicate Mine was started, after which wealth would pour in from all directions.³⁷ In a later redaction of this account (by Pierce), Bullock had decided "to quit mining after I had been appointed bishop until this great visionary experience of the plowfield, which was followed a few days later by a dream, in which I was shown that there was a large silver-lead ore body in this Syndicate property southeasterly on the same level we had been operating, and that the development of it was directly connected with my mission regarding the treasures of the earth."³⁸

In the 1920 account of the plowfield vision, Bullock was also warned of severe tests ahead from local church leaders and others. This early account concludes with details of the sale of Syndicate

³⁶ Benjamin H. Bullock as related to A. Nelson and D. W. Davies ("witnessed and signed in Spanish Fork, Utah, on October 11, 1920"), "The Story of a Dream Mine and Great Riches of the Earth," paginated typescript bound with Benjamin H. Bullock, patriarchal blessings, typescript copies, pp. 1-4 (quotation at 4), box 16, Norman C. Pierce Papers (wco52) (hereafter Pierce Papers), Princeton Collections of Western Americana, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

³⁷ Bullock, "Story of a Dream Mine," 5.

³⁸ Norman C. Pierce ["N.C.P."], "The Earth And The Fullness Thereof [caps]," paginated typescript, p. 15, box 10, Pierce Papers. On page 1 Pierce clarifies that Bullock's story as set out in this typescript was taken in part "from a brief sketch he wrote and had witnessed in October of 1920" (a clear reference to Bullock, "Story of a Dream Mine"), and "the rest he told to me."



Stock certificate for the Syndicate Mining and Milling Company, signed by Ben H. Bullock, president. Bullock claimed that he was shown the location and wealth of the Syndicate Mine in the so-called “plowfield vision” of March 1915. Stock in the Syndicate Mine continued to be sold through the twentieth century. Norman C. Pierce Papers, box 16, Princeton Collections of Western Americana, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

stock in Utah County, other prophetic dreams received by Bullock (one of which anticipated a strike at the mine), and the mounting concerns of the stake president over Bullock’s personal debt.³⁹ Bullock was released from his bishopric by the stake presidency in 1918 with the “condemnation” that he had not provided a home for his ward (a meetinghouse, presumably) and was “a total failure financially.” For Bullock, this event was “just as it was given to me” in March 1915: “that I would become a hiss and a by-word, hated and despised, that I would be condemned financially by the Stake Presidency, people,

³⁹ Bullock, “Story of a Dream Mine,” 6–10.

business houses, bankers and my fellow men before this relief came from the earth; and that ... all manner of fun would be made of me for mining where there was no ore.”⁴⁰

Bullock’s experiences would be mirrored by those of Koyle, and the bishops’ paths would cross as work proceeded on the two dream mines.⁴¹ In one account, the two men would fall out eventually as issues of stock from both mines were sold competitively through the twentieth century, and Bullock reportedly disparaged Koyle’s mine.⁴² In the end, Koyle’s Dream Mine venture would have a more enduring presence and following in the Mormon core area.

MINING, PROPHECY, AND THE NEPHITES: THE MAKING OF A SUBALTERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

In late August 1913 Koyle was officially released as bishop at the direction of church president Joseph F. Smith (sixth president, 1901–1918). Under subsequent threat of excommunication, Koyle discontinued all mine activities in 1914, declaring to a July 1914 meeting of Nebo Stake authorities “that he did not wish to be out of harmony or do anything contrary to Church discipline.” At this meeting, Nebo authorities also discussed the First Presidency’s opposition to the mine, to which Kolye responded: “if President Smith fully understood he would look at it differently.”⁴³

According to later accounts, 1914 was also an important year for the supernatural direction of mine operations. On January 6, 1914, Koyle told the mine workers of a dream in which he was shown where to dig a straight tunnel to connect with the base of the deep mine shaft. The bishop predicted that the location of the tunnel would be identified by two bare spots in the snow, which were located.⁴⁴ A few days later Koyle experienced a further supernatural visit concern-

⁴⁰ Bullock, “Story of a Dream Mine,” 10.

⁴¹ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 31–32, 59–60, 61.

⁴² “Bullock’s Billions,” partly paginated [16pp] typescript, p. 16, box 16, Pierce Papers.

⁴³ Notes from this 1914 meeting are included in Justin A. Loveless, Nebo Stake clerk, to Nebo Stake presidency, Payson, Utah, September 24, 1931, typescript letter, LR 5983 23, CHL. See also Christianson, “Study of the Koyle Relief Mine,” 45–47; Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 24–26, 30.

⁴⁴ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 16–19.

ing the future of the mine. As Pierce would later describe the event, two men in gray clothes and with white hair and beards appeared to Koyle as he lay awake in his bed at the mine on the evening of January 10. The shorter man did all the talking and “declared that he and his companion” had “divine custody of the mine.” In a two-hour conversation with his visitors, Koyle was promised that men and money would always come to his assistance and that, in spite of ridicule and persecution, he would be honored by his fellow Saints eventually. Koyle was forbidden to relate more than a half hour of this conversation, “except to the church authorities, should they be willing to listen to him.”⁴⁵

The mine was reopened in 1920, and drilling work recommenced on the tunnel. In *The Dream Mine Story*, Pierce reported that the new church president, Heber J. Grant (seventh president, 1918–1945), gave permission so that a debt owed by the mine to a church subsidiary could be repaid from stock sales. A 1934 manuscript draft has a less cynical take on this turnaround: “The mine ... remained closed from June, 1914, until September, 1920, when a new administration came into the church which realized that its authority should not be so extensive, and upon request, they gave permission for the mine to be re-opened.”⁴⁶

In the following decade the tunnel was extended 3,400 feet into the mountain toward the base of the shaft. According to Pierce, “the work went on ... as fast as miners with hand drills and powder, could drive a tunnel into solid mountain rock that needed no timbering.” Hundreds of visitors also arrived at the mine in this decade to see whether the formations would appear where Koyle had foretold.⁴⁷ In some cases Koyle’s followers, or Dreamers as they would become known, had dramatic experiences of their own. Henry Armstrong, for example, reported an out-of-body vision as he prayed about the Dream Mine. He was brought before a “Throne of Glory” and a “Glorified Being” who confirmed the truth of the mine and urged him to do all within his power to “help it along.” Armstrong was so

⁴⁵ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 20–22.

⁴⁶ Norman C. Pierce, “Relief Through A Dream Mine [caps, dated annotation above heading, ‘(Read and acknowledged by John H. Koyle) Springville, Utah July 26, 1934’],” paginated typescript, p. 11, box 2, Pierce Papers; cf. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 30–31.

⁴⁷ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 33–36.

devoted to the venture thereafter that he raised funds to pay for the mine's operations "for about eight years during the 20s."⁴⁸

From at least the 1920s, Koyle's prophecies were marked by an increasingly apocalyptic tone. As reported by Pierce, Koyle spoke of judgments that would affect the church, state, and nation, and of a reformation that would be required of the Saints. The Dream Mine would be a critical source of deliverance at this time, with the construction of grain bins marking the beginning of a beautiful "White City." In this place and other holy "Cities of Refuge" the righteous would be gathered for safety at the end time.⁴⁹

Documents in the Pierce papers offer further perspectives on these prophecies and their effect on the Dreamers. Norman Pierce and others first learned of Koyle's prophecy of a pending financial crisis two months before the stock market crash that precipitated the Great Depression. Pierce recalled the details in his 1934 manuscript:

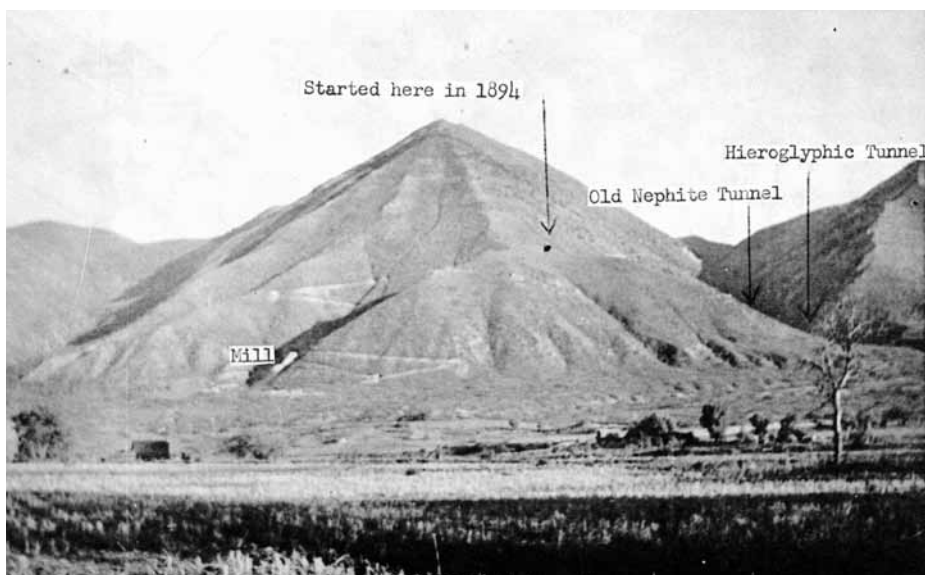
Back in 1929, a few of us chanced to interview Mrs. Koyle, as her husband was out. We asked her regarding her opinion of her husband's dreams, and she unhesitatingly declared: "Of course, he hasn't got the ore yet; but his other dreams have come true, so I don't see why this one shouldn't. You know he had another one about two months ago that we're watching very closely. He saw that just four months from that day some kind of a money crash would happen, and it would affect the whole country, and the wisest men in the whole world couldn't remedy it. The other day he went down to see Mr. Gardner, the cashier of the bank, and told him all about it. He talked with him for about an hour and told him that he had better get his sheep, cattle, and mortgage loans back in before October, because the trouble would begin then. I don't know what he'll do about it, but if this crash in money matters comes, then I'll believe more than ever we are going to get the ore."⁵⁰

Koyle's ongoing spiritual experiences and pronouncements through the 1930s encouraged and sometimes interrupted work at the mine. The apocalyptic challenges ahead and the national significance of the mine as a means of relief were persistent themes. In early March 1931, Carter E. Grant, a mine supporter and nephew of the

⁴⁸ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 28–29.

⁴⁹ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 48–69.

⁵⁰ Pierce, "Relief Through A Dream Mine," 13–14. A shorter account also appears in Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 48–49.



“The Relief Mine,” from an undated photograph in Norman C. Pierce, *The Dream Mine Story*. The caption states that the “‘White City’ is to be built on the foothill in the foreground.”

then church president, recorded Koyle’s declaration to several visitors that the hard times would “grow worse each week; that even the Church would become so hard pressed that the cry of the needy could not be satisfied.” Grant noted further: “Brother Koyle made many predictions last evening regarding the terrible days of sorrow immediately ahead. He has been show[n] that the time will soon come when we cannot buy.”⁵¹

Koyle was equally emphatic that the mine would play a critical role in these events. As the former bishop exited the mine tunnel on March 13, 1931, “inspiration came to him like a voice speaking, telling him to build double cement bins on the side hill near the powder.” Grant observed bluntly that although “Brother Koyle was exceedingly happy” with the direction to build connecting grain bins, “knowing as he does that the matter had been revealed by the Lord,” the revelation “has completely upset our former plans of building elevators, etc.” Koyle, however, was adamant: “This plan ... will put

⁵¹ Carter E. Grant, March 4, 1931, extract from January–March Journal, 1931, in “Notes From My Journal [caps]—July 14, 1934,” typescript, box 9, Pierce Papers.

the grain upon our property where no one can molest it, where we can make distribution as we see fit. All eyes are to look toward us for relief.”⁵²

Norman Pierce recorded a further prophecy of apocalyptic events as they would affect core-area Mormons. On June 13, 1934, Pierce had stopped to talk to Koyle while working on a dugway that would reach over a saddle to the upper mining claims. As the men chatted, Pierce recalled, “the Bishop got the spirit of prophecy and pointing to me said, ‘Just as sure as you are standing there with that pick on your shoulder the time will soon come when you young fellows will have to take your guns and defend this country against other factions.’” Koyle clarified that “they will send an army out here worse than Johnston’s Army to put us down,” a reference to the U.S. Army expedition sent to Utah in 1857 under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston to put down the so-called Mormon rebellion. Presumably, Koyle anticipated that a comparable national force would be sent to Utah as the federal government turned against the Mormons again. Koyle continued:

They will offer protection to all who will surrender to them and all the Gentiles will go over to them and 1/3 of the Mormons will surrender to them. Then when they are just ready to come against us and do away with us things will break out in the East that will call them back. At that time this road may serve as a means of refuge for both people and their supplies.

Pierce observed that Koyle was “so weakened” by this utterance that he “had to sit down to recover his strength.”⁵³ In this prophecy, Koyle

⁵² Grant, March 14, 1931, extract from January–March Journal, 1931, in “Notes From My Journal.”

⁵³ Typescript page headed “Springville, Utah, October, 13, 1934,” signed [typed] Norman Clifford Pierce, box 2, Pierce Papers. On “Johnston’s Army” see William P. MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword’s Point*, part 1, *A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2008). This 1934 prophecy was not included in Pierce’s “Relief Through A Dream Mine” manuscript. It is published with some minor changes in Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 75–76, and Norman C. Pierce, *The 3 1/2 Years* (Salt Lake City: Norman C. Pierce, 1963), 176. In publication, Pierce added the detail that after the threat of the force worse than Johnston’s army was over, “we will also have the Russians to fight, and they will get half way across this country before they are put down” (*Dream Mine Story*, 76). This redaction clearly reflects a later cold war mentality.

was clearly encouraging a more separatist LDS identity linked to the nineteenth century, as opposed to that of the official, early twentieth-century church and its increasing alignment with national American political culture and interests.

Mine operations and stockholder commitments continued to blend into a local religious expression through the 1930s, in spite of shareholder disillusionment and state opposition. Claims in the late 1920s that platinum had been found at the mine were not substantiated, and some disappointment followed. From the 1920s shareholder complaints against the mine's operations were also investigated by the Utah State Securities Commission and briefly, in 1935, by the Federal Securities and Exchange Commission. The state commission eventually attempted to establish a charge of fraud against Koyle at a hearing in March 1933, but the case was dropped when several key witnesses changed their testimony and would not speak against Koyle's mine.⁵⁴

After 1929 in particular, it would seem that the coincidence of the Great Depression and Koyle's apocalyptic prophecies assured a number of local people that the mine's promises would soon be fulfilled. In 1932 construction began on a concrete mill near the tunnel portal to provide for ore treatment using a new processing method. By 1933, however, it became clear that the machine would not deliver on its promise.⁵⁵ Hopes were raised again in 1937 when inventor John Harper and two associates from Colorado visited the Relief Mine to demonstrate "a new and revolutionary" chemical process "for the extraction of metals and minerals." Sufficient interest was aroused to call a special meeting of stockholders and other interested parties.⁵⁶ According to the minutes of the October 10, 1937, meeting, "a throng of about 1000 stockholders" from the "surrounding country as far north as Logan [Utah]" gathered to hear the report of "three mining experts." After one of the Colorado experts expressed surprise at the "rich indications of mineral deposits" found at the mine, Philip Tadge, chairman of the mining company's board, "made the remark

⁵⁴ Christianson, "Study of the Koyle Relief Mine," 29–31, 60–75; Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 40–48.

⁵⁵ Christianson, "Study of the Koyle Relief Mine," 32–35; Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 70–72.

⁵⁶ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 72–73; see also Christianson, "Study of the Koyle Relief Mine," 35–36.



Construction on the concrete Relief Mine ore mill began in 1932. This early photograph was reproduced in Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 71. Norman C. Pierce Papers, box 2.

that about 25 years ago the Bishop had prophesied that when the time had come for this mine to turn out, a man or men would come from somewhere east of here with a new refining process that would revolutionize the whole mining industry.” Harper noted that the mill built earlier was “perfect” for the new process. “If you did not have it, you would have to build one just like it,” Harper added.⁵⁷ John Koyle’s son Merrill spoke later, bearing his personal witness in terms that might have been heard in a formal LDS religious meeting:

I have been on the hill for 11 years. It only took three days to see my father’s first prophecy fulfilled. We have had many ups and downs with our progress at the mine, but I know that the Dream Mine is true.... I know this is the Lord’s work, and that it will succeed.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ “Notes On Koyle Mining Co. Stockholders Meeting Held At Spanish Fork, Utah, Sunday, October 10, 1937,” paginated typescript, pp. 1–3, box 4, Pierce Papers. See also Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 72–74.

⁵⁸ “Notes On Koyle Mining Co. Stockholders Meeting,” 4. On the form of a standard LDS witness or “testimony” in a religious meeting, see Leone, *Roots of Modern Mormonism*, 180–88.

“Bishop Koyle” spoke finally, referring to recent dissension among his followers, as well as his prophetic anticipations.

I saw our people would sink to the bottom and withdraw their support just as you have done this last winter and before, but that they would rally again and put this thing over in the end. That was as it had to be—because I saw it that way.

This mill was shown to me as a nice green place and we reached this green spot by going up a ravine that hid us from sight where no one could get a shot at us. When we reached this green spot, everything was harmonious with both Church and State. When we start this mill to operating we will have reached this green spot.⁵⁹

Koyle referred further to the mill building that had been identified by the mining experts as almost made-to-order for the new extraction process. These experts had been sent by the Lord, Koyle asserted. Furthermore,

When it came time to build the mill, a voice said, “You will have enough money to build it.” That was in the worst part of the depression in 1932. I didn’t tell anybody, not even my wife, what we were going to do, but the money came and we built the mill. If we had to build it now it would cost about double.... These men say they would not think of staying here if we had no mill.

I don’t want to chastise you, because you do deserve credit for building that mill. You have stayed together pretty well, and those of you who have left us have been glad to come back in later on.

We must support this thing right now and put it over. It is too big a thing to let go any longer.⁶⁰

Following this meeting, the stockholders “scraped the bottom of their depression-worn pockets” to buy the equipment needed for the new process.⁶¹

⁵⁹ “Notes On Koyle Mining Co. Stockholders Meeting,” 5. This record of Koyle’s remarks includes an apparent reference to the “Green Spot Dream.” As recorded subsequently, in this dream-vision from the 1920s Koyle, Ben Bullock, and others climbed a ravine at the mine under fire from “enemies.” They persevered nevertheless to reach a beautiful green spot on the hill, where they met with heavenly beings. “The seal was then broken on the mine and vindication was theirs” (Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 59–60).

⁶⁰ “Notes On Koyle Mining Co. Stockholders Meeting,” 6.

⁶¹ Engineering difficulties, poor-quality returns, and the death of one of the inventors caused the abandonment of the work. Even so, Pierce observed later, “one thing

The outcome of this meeting highlights the impact on core-area Mormons of Koyle's visions and prophecies linking opposition, catastrophe, and eventual relief to the faithful. Further religious developments emphasized the involvement of Book of Mormon people, materials, and promises in the sacred dream mine narrative. These developments can be identified in certain discrepancies between early 1930s documents in the Pierce collection, including Pierce's original 1934 Dream Mine account, and the influential *Dream Mine Story* as first published in 1958. In the manuscript version, Koyle and the angel of August 1894 followed the body of ore "into the old workings of an ancient mine that had belonged to a vanished people of an ancient civilization." This simple description was expanded for publication: Koyle and the angel came into "nine large caverns which had been mined out ages ago by a vanished people.... They had left many mute relics of their civilization in the form of impliments [*sic*] ornaments and artifacts, and one entire room filled with gold coins in vases." The angel showed Koyle "other treasures and a large number of sacred records engraved on brass and gold plates." Here the published account incorporates a persistent Utah Mormon tradition that the ancient Nephites had buried many sacred records and artifacts in the earth.⁶²

Details about Nephite treasure and sacred records were also added to Koyle's personal account of his 1894 visitation in *The Dream Mine Story*. The intrusion of new information in the published story over the manuscript account is shown here in square brackets.

The Messenger then showed me nine large rooms from which the ore had been mined. The pillars standing in the middle of the rooms, supporting the roof, were filled with gold [and beautifully carved and engraved]. There was other gold, both mined and refined [and coined, and there were implements and relics which they had left there, as well

that was accomplished was the attraction of a large new group of stockholders to the company." Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 73–74.

⁶² Pierce, "Relief Through A Dream Mine," 4; Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 6. In a narrative that circulated in Utah, traced to early church leaders, Joseph Smith and other associates visited a cave containing many Nephite records and treasures. Accounts differ as to whether this was a visionary experience and whether it occurred at the hill Cumorah, from which the *Book of Mormon* plates had been recovered. See Cameron J. Packer, "Cumorah's Cave," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 13, no. 1 (2004), 50–57.

as great treasures, —and many precious records containing the word of God in great power.] I saw it all plainly.⁶³

Also unique to the published narrative is Koyle's description of the entrance of a "caved-in tunnel" decorated with petroglyphs "depicting a string of peculiar pack animals coming out of the mine loaded" and "another string ... entering the mine empty." At the conclusion of the published account only, it becomes clear to Koyle that his supernatural visitor is none other than "the Angel Moroni, the same who was and is the custodian of the plates of the Book of Mormon."⁶⁴

An important detail about the two visitors of January 10, 1914, is also missing from the manuscript. There they are simply identified as "the ancient custodians of the mine."⁶⁵ In *The Dream Mine Story*, in a chapter now titled "A Nephite Visit," the shorter man introduces himself and his companion as two of the "Three Nephites," a folklore trio of supernatural visitors linked to a Book of Mormon narrative.⁶⁶

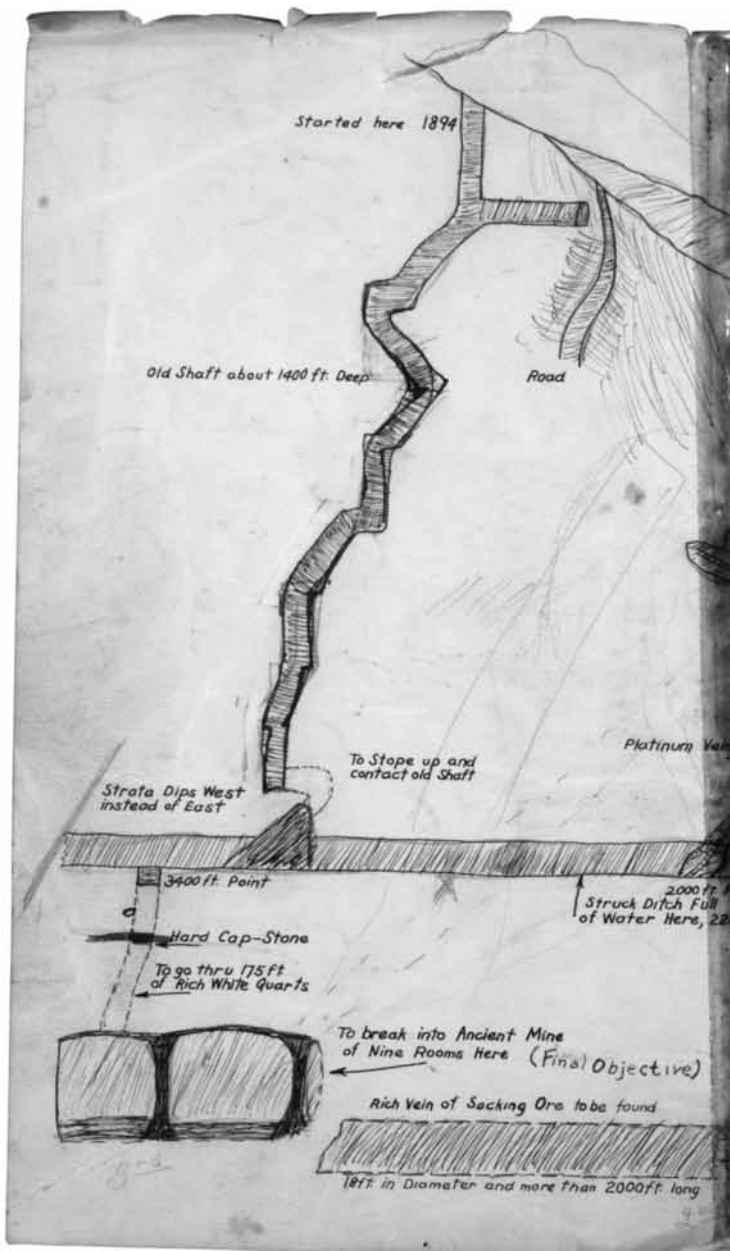
The absence of Moroni, Nephites, and other Book of Mormon cultural references in the 1934 manuscript is consistent with another document in the Pierce collection. Carter Grant dictated his version of Koyle's account of the 1894 dream visit for apostle James Talmage. In this document, dated September 9, 1931, Grant testified, "Brother Koyle told me that in a dream he seemed to be conducted through workings in the mountain, always accompanied by a personage who talked to Brother Koyle very freely and explained the different formations, and the runs." In Grant's version, Koyle describes the "old shaft workings," the tunnel that was to be directed so as to reach the shaft base, and a "white formation ... so rich ... that the gold will

⁶³ Pierce, "Relief Through A Dream Mine," 5, and for text in square brackets, Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 8.

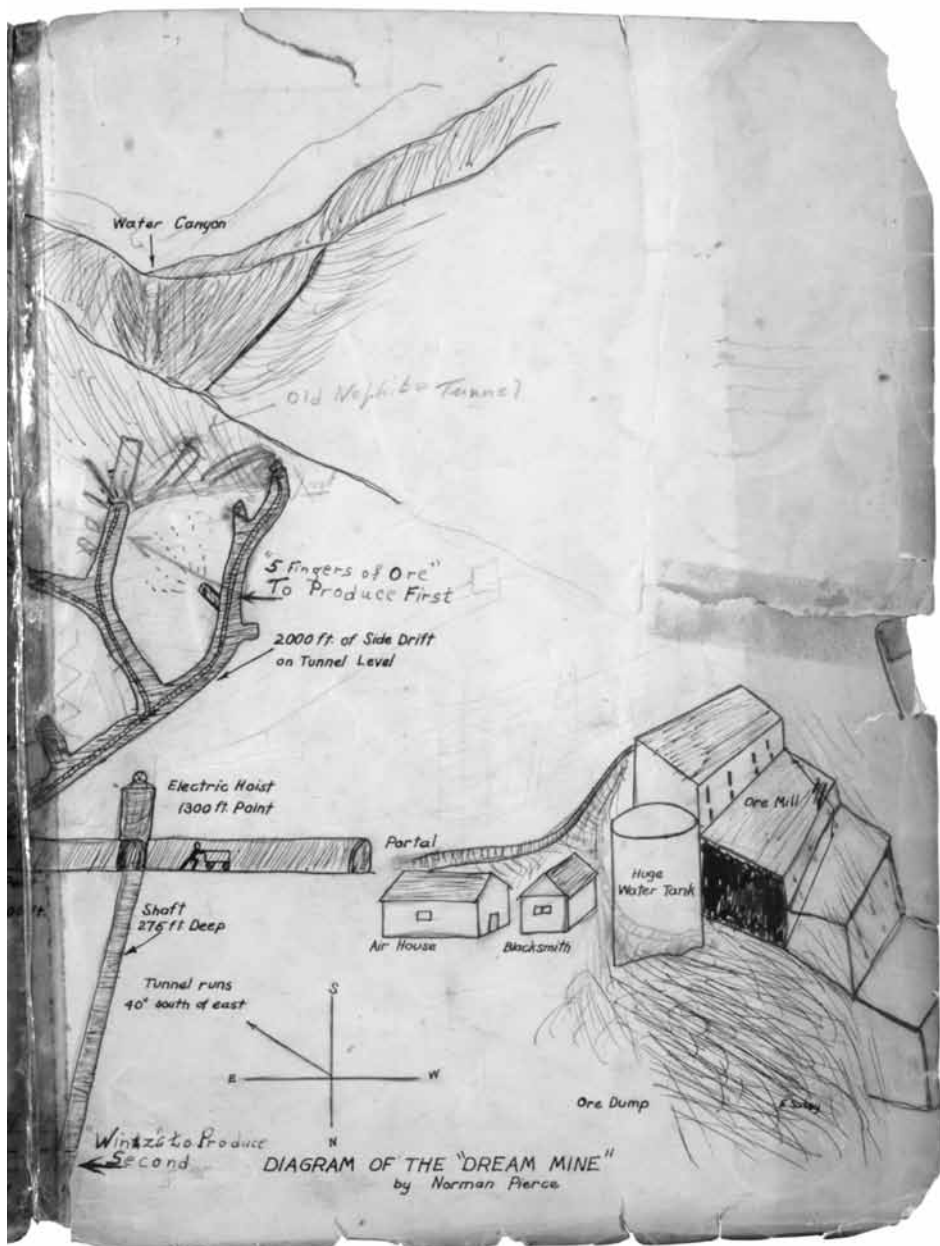
⁶⁴ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 9, 10.

⁶⁵ Pierce, "Relief Through A Dream Mine," 10.

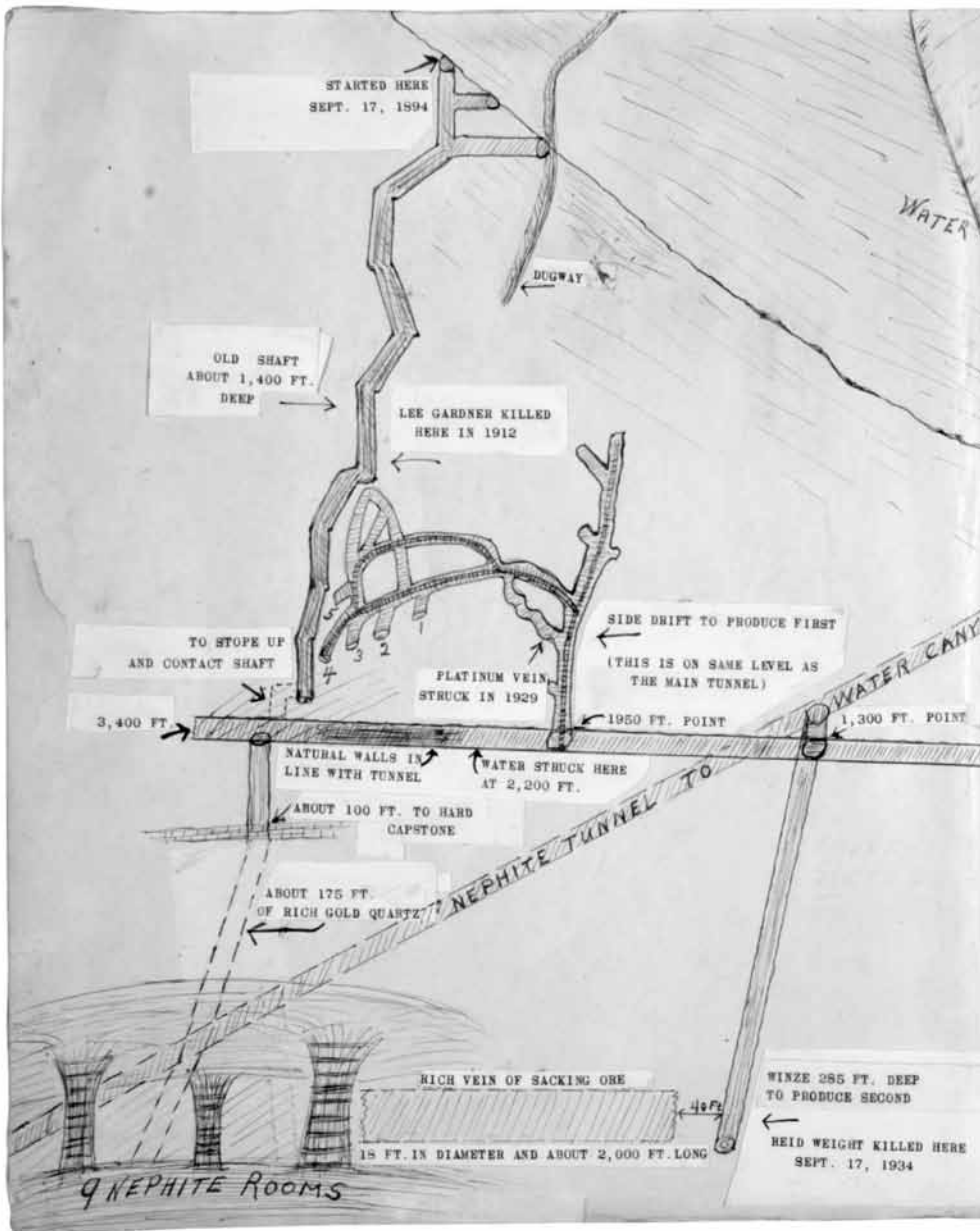
⁶⁶ According to the Book of Mormon, three ancient American Nephite disciples were promised that they would "never taste of death" and that they would continue to minister on the earth until the return of Christ. Although the three Nephites would live among Jews and Gentiles "who shall not know them," they were permitted as angels to petition God to "show themselves unto whatsoever man it seemeth them good" (3 Nephi 28). The personal ministration of the Three Nephites is a persistent theme in western Mormon folklore, appearing in accounts of mysterious strangers who render assistance or warn of future events. See, for example, Hector Lee, *The Three Nephites: The Substance and Significance of the Legend in Folklore* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1949).

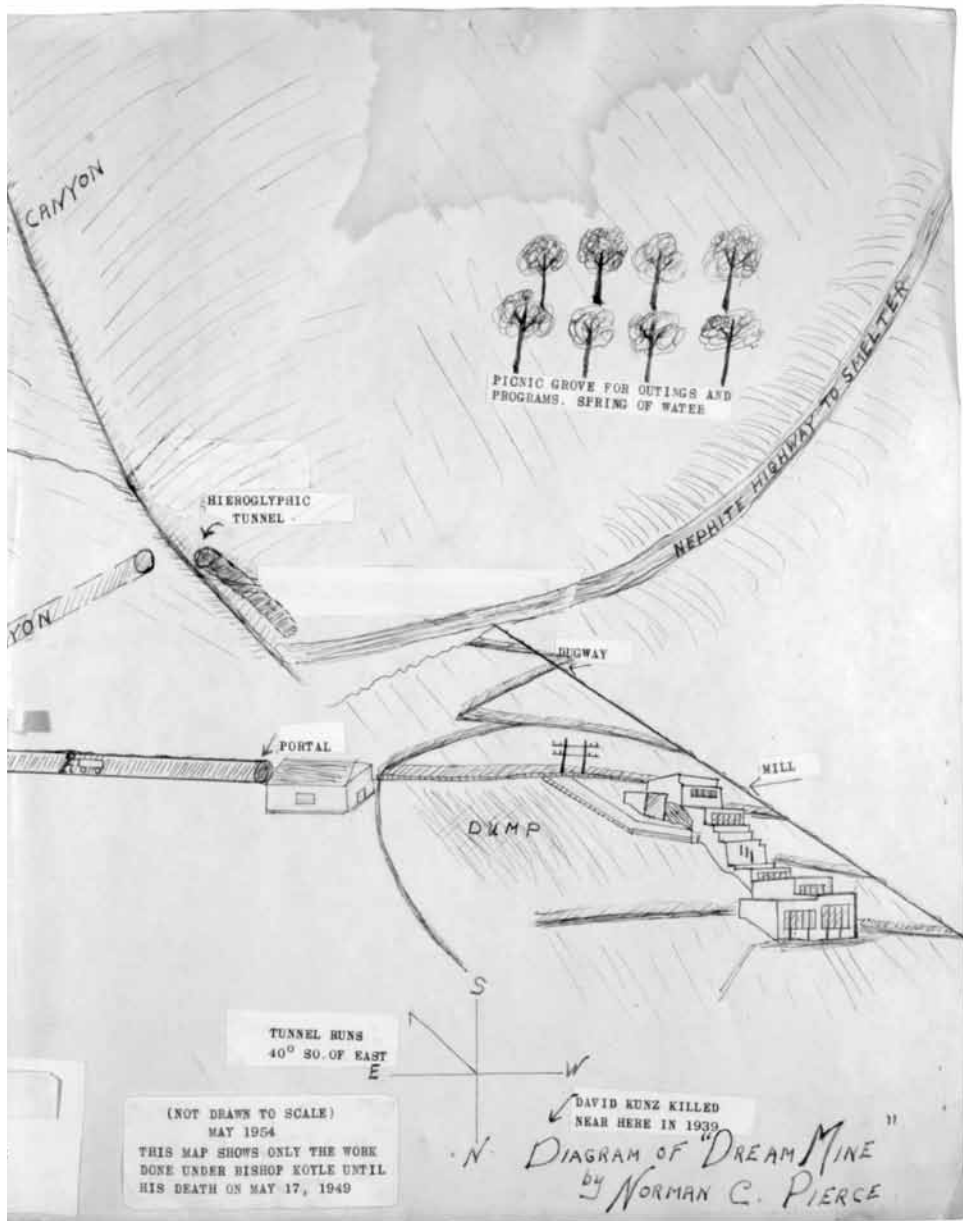


Undated diagram of the Relief Mine workings prepared by Norman Pierce. In this early version, the irregular vertical shaft constructed between 1894 and 1914 is identified as the "old shaft about 1400 ft. deep." The horizontal tunnel constructed through the 1920s to a distance of 3,400 feet is shown as well, along with the mill buildings at the tun-



nel portal. Beyond these known mine works, features predicted or described by Koyle from visionary experiences are also represented. These include a rich vein of ore running below and parallel to the horizontal tunnel, extending toward the "Ancient Mine of Nine Rooms," which is identified as the "Final Objective." In faint pencil, the "Old Nephite Tunnel" extends from the upper part of the mountain below Water Canyon toward the Nine Rooms. Norman C. Pierce Papers, box 7.





The final draft of the Relief Mine diagram prepared by Pierce for publication in *The Dream Mine Story*. Here, the Nephite tunnel is clearly identified, as are a "Nephite Highway" and "Hieroglyphic Tunnel," while the ancient mine below the capstone has become the "Nephite Rooms." As represented, these Nephite features are seemingly as tangible as the tunnel and the irregular shaft workings completed by Koyle and his followers. Norman C. Pierce Papers, box 3.

be visible in leaf-like formations” below the capstone. According to Grant, recent work at the mine had confirmed Koyle’s descriptions. He continues with detailed reference to “side drift” ore workings, including platinum ore. But beyond the indirect reference to “old workings,” there are no Nephite treasures or records in Koyle’s account as recalled by Grant.

Grant also provides an independent version of the two-hour January 10, 1914, visit: “All of our group have listened to the story ... two men dressed in gray clothes, having white hair and beards, one man taller than the other, came stepping up to his bedside. The shorter one doing all the talking declared that he and his companion had charge of the mine.” Confirming Pierce’s version, Grant added that “only part of the information ... did he tell or will he tell”; the rest is “not to be made public until a certain time.” Again, as in Pierce’s 1934 manuscript, the two visitors are not identified as Nephites.⁶⁷

In 1914, however, a mine worker reported to the church president that Koyle “claims that he was shown the workings through out by an Angel of the Lord” and that “it is an old workings of the Nephites.” Later Dream Mine followers would also recall Koyle’s references to Nephite visitors, treasures, and records in the retelling of the mine narrative, including the identification of the 1894 angel as Moroni.⁶⁸ Still, the Pierce and Grant accounts cited above indicate that these associations were not well publicized or developed until the later 1930s. Consistently, Dream Mine shareholder C. F. Weight later recalled Koyle’s account of his 1894 visit: “He was shown various things which were in the old tunnel, some of which he told me would prove the Book of Mormon to be true. He was reluctant to tell us very much about these things at that time.”⁶⁹

The consistent articulation of Nephite associations after 1934 represents an important new direction in the Dream Mine narrative as a common religion expression. In the Mormon scriptural tradition,

⁶⁷ “Statement made by Carter E. Grant, September 9, 1931, to James E. Talmage (As revised by Carter E. Grant),” typescript, pp. 1–2, box 2, Pierce Papers.

⁶⁸ Ralph Snelson to Joseph F. Smith, May 6, 1914, Joseph F. Smith [First Presidency] stake correspondence 1901–1918, CR 1 191, box 7, folder 41, CHL. For later accounts, see Claude Weight, “The Story of the Dream Mine (As related by my Father, C. F. Weight),” n.d., paginated typescript, box 15, Pierce Papers, and Christianson, “Study of the Koyle Relief Mine,” 13, 16 n.24.

⁶⁹ Weight, “Story of the Dream Mine,” 9.

Joseph Smith was unable to translate the greater, sealed part of the Book of Mormon record. That portion was to come forth at a future time and be translated, along with other sacred records, to reveal “great and marvelous things which have been hid up.” The anticipated revelation of these undiscovered records persists to the present day in the LDS community.⁷⁰ Arguably, the eschatological significance of Koyle’s project was heightened by the identification of supernatural Nephite visitors, treasures, and records in the Dream Mine narrative, including Moroni as guardian of the mine as well as the Book of Mormon plates. As the narrative developed, the mine location became a “sacred mountain”⁷¹ and its treasures a critical Nephite revelation for the end times as much as a source of temporal deliverance for the faithful.

Norman Pierce anticipated these events in the early 1950s revision of his Dream Mine manuscript: “Many would thereby be enabled to abide the lean years of a famine and financial chaos.... But more important than this was the great spiritual and temporal mission the mine and its good people would have in helping to redeem Zion, building up her waste places, and providing many who would survive the tests to come with the riches of eternity from the precious records concealed here.”⁷²

THE ENDURING DREAM

As the notes from the 1937 stockholder meeting suggest, Koyle maintained a loyal core-area following through the 1930s in spite of church opposition and mining setbacks. In the following decade Dreamers were impressed when Koyle told a stockholder group that he had been shown in a “remarkable dream” that the war would be over and won three years from August 27, 1942.⁷³

⁷⁰ *Journal of Discourses*, 16:57–58 (Orson Pratt, May 18, 1873); Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 246. For the source of this tradition, see Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 26:6–12 and (for scriptural quotations in text) Ether 4:4–17.

⁷¹ Christianson, “Study of the Koyle Relief Mine,” 52.

⁷² Norman C. Pierce, typescript, no title, no date [draft of *Dream Mine Story*, ca. 1950s], 74pp [to 1954, pagination in pencil] and additional pages [1954–1956, no pagination], p. 6, box 2, Pierce Papers; cf. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 7.

⁷³ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 49–51.

To be sure, the continuation of Koyle's sacred mining movement did not go unnoticed by the official church. In particular, the LDS hierarchy took exception to periodic assertions that the leadership supported the spiritual claims of the Dream Mine. In 1928, for example, apostle James Talmage published a statement in the church newspaper and then addressed a conference in former Bishop Koyle's Nebo Stake to deny that he had endorsed the mine. In both situations, Talmage reiterated the opposition of the church to claims of supernatural guidance in mining operations. In 1932 the church newspaper reprinted the First Presidency's warning from 1913. An accompanying note condemned "erroneous reports" that Talmage was ready to apologize for his statements about the Dream Mine.⁷⁴

In late December 1945, the 1913 First Presidency warning was reprinted yet again in the church press, followed by a September 1946 editorial that reaffirmed the church's opposition to the mine.⁷⁵ In 1947 Koyle was summoned to a formal church court that considered his church standing and membership. At this meeting Koyle agreed to sign a statement repudiating his spiritual claims for the mine. Nevertheless, regular meetings of Koyle's followers continued, where "faithful" stockholders would speak about the mine with religious fervor.⁷⁶ These practices were clearly too much for the church, and Koyle was excommunicated in 1948 "for insubordination and refusal to acknowledge the established order and authority of the Church."⁷⁷ It would appear that Koyle's unofficial religious following was the critical factor in this decision, as a person with local associations noted: "His working of the Dream Mine as a mine, had nothing whatsoever to do with his excommunication. Mr. Koyle was in effect operating as a ward of the Church, holding testimony and other meetings ... contrary to [the] counsel and direction [of the local authorities]."⁷⁸

Following Koyle's death on May 17, 1949, activities at the mine

⁷⁴ Christianson, "Study of the Koyle Relief Mine," 48–52; Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 37–39.

⁷⁵ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 84, 86.

⁷⁶ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 91–95.

⁷⁷ Edna G. Brockbank, "Dream Mine," in *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 1:206.

⁷⁸ Brockbank, "Dream Mine," 206. For further details of Koyle's later difficulties with the LDS Church and his excommunication, albeit from different perspectives, see Christianson, "Study of the Koyle Relief Mine," 52–56, and Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 91–101.

were largely restricted to assessment and maintenance work.⁷⁹ But letters in the Pierce papers document the continued influence of the Dream Mine movement among Mormons of the core area, and even beyond. Pierce's publications were an important factor in keeping that movement engaged. In 1959 Pierce wrote to his stake presidency over concerns about the recently published and influential *Dream Mine Story*. Pierce reminded the presidency that Jesse Knight's mining claims had been "vigorously opposed by his local brethren" and ridiculed before he saved the credit of the church. He also quantified the influence of the Koyle Dream Mine: "there are a number of mission presidents, stake presidents, bishops, as well as civil authorities ... and a great host of good men ... [who have all become stockholders]. And if we number them by families, their numbers mount to twenty or thirty thousand, because there are approximately 7,000 stockholders, most of whom are heads of families."⁸⁰

Pierce himself was finally excommunicated from the church in 1964, following self-publication of *The 3½ Years* (1963), a book of controversial revelations, theology, and prophecies, in which he endorsed a fundamentalist narrative concerning the authorization and continuation of plural marriage.⁸¹ That alone would have been grounds for excommunication in the twentieth-century LDS Church, apart from Pierce's advocacy of the Relief Mine. Yet the Relief Mine has attracted other fundamentalist supporters of plural marriage, including the late independent polygamist Ogden Kraut and, most notoriously, a group that proposed to build a City of Refuge at the base of the mine.⁸²

⁷⁹ Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 103–15. A short period of new mining occurred between 1955 and 1958.

⁸⁰ Norman C. Pierce to Granite Stake presidency, October 12, 1959, retained typescript, box 10, Pierce Papers.

⁸¹ The details of Pierce's excommunication are in Granite Stake presidency to Norman C. Pierce, May 14, 1964, box 12, Pierce Papers. The unofficial account of a divine commission through church president John Taylor (third president, 1880–1887) to authorize ongoing plural marriages, the "1886 Revelation," appears in Pierce, *The 3½ Years*, 73–77. On fundamentalist claims concerning the historical authorization and continuity of plural marriage beyond the nineteenth century, see D. Michael Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31, no. 2 (1998), 1–68, and Brian C. Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations After the Manifesto* (Draper, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2007).

⁸² Two brothers in this group murdered a mother and her daughter in 1984 fol-

The apocalyptic and supernatural themes that run through so many of Koyle's prophecies may explain the appeal of the Dream Mine narrative to polygamous fundamentalists led by charismatic prophet-leaders.⁸³ However, the legacy of the Dream Mine movement is broader than those contemporary fundamentalist believers who are formally outside of the LDS fellowship. Dreamers today still include individuals with closer ties to the official church. Cultural historian Zeese Papanikolas suggests that the idea has affected the lives of perhaps "35,000 people," and observes that believers today are "not ashamed" to call themselves "Dreamers" or "Dream Miners." The Dream Mine, according to Papanikolas, can be seen as a "survival of primitive Mormonism" in a millenarian religious tradition "that has ceased, except in a pro forma sort of way, to be millenarian."⁸⁴ To the present day, in short, the Dream Mine retains its appeal as subaltern cultural bricolage, linking economic and theological concerns about the present to an out-of-favor, if still influential, Mormon past.

Letters in the Pierce papers capture the complex and often conflicted religious identities of twentieth-century Dream Mine followers (including Pierce himself) through the 1970s. A 1973 letter to Pierce from a member of the Weight family is an especially poignant example of a Dreamer's support for the official church that also accommodates unofficial belief in the promises of the Dream Mine narrative.⁸⁵ Perhaps provoked by publication of a revised edition of *The Dream*

lowing a purported revelation from God. See John Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 73–78, 82–86, 157, 281, and passim. For Kraut, see Ogden Kraut, *John H. Koyle's Relief Mine* (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1978).

⁸³ Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven*. See also Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," and Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism*.

⁸⁴ Zeese Papanikolas, *Trickster in the Land of Dreams* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 60–61. On the beliefs of Dreamers within the later twentieth-century LDS tradition, see Joe Stanley Graham, "The Dream Mine: A Study in Mormon Folklore" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1970). On contemporary Dream Mine followers, see Kevin E. Cantera, "A Currency of Faith: Taking Stock in Utah County's Dream Mine" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2008), and current discussions and materials posted at <http://www.reliefmine.com> and <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The-Dream-Mine>.

⁸⁵ On the family association with the Dream Mine, see Weight, "The Story of the Dream Mine."

Mine Story in 1972, “Friend Weight” writes with concern over Pierce’s representation of Koyle and his mission, and calls on Pierce to return to the LDS fellowship. He refers Pierce to the example of “the real” John Koyle as Weight had known him personally.

You[’]r[e] in the wrong camp Norman & sometime you will realize it. [LDS] Pres. [Harold B.] Lee [11th president, 1972–1973] has shown himself to be outstanding in his leadership, even more than some of his predecessors from what I have observed. He may be the man that the Lord will reveal the truth of the mine to. That day will come, & the church is to [be] involved in this. The whole purpose of the mine [is] to be a testimony of the gospel truths through the church.

I know the real J. Koyle loved & respected the Priesthood of God above everything & anything else on earth. I’ve gone to church with him, I’ve been close to him. I know his attitude, his love of the gospel. If he could say today how he actually feels, it would be with the church. So would be my father & so would yours.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ “Friend — Weight” to Norman C. Pierce, March 10, 1973, box 5, Pierce Papers.