

A FOCUSCHRIST RESEARCH EDITION

The Evidence Behind Our Joseph

History, interpretation, and the face we chose to remember



This edition distinguishes the historical record, the choices visible in our artwork, and what remains uncertain.

Independent faith-based study. Not an official publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 01

Our focusChrist Joseph

01 · The research

What did Joseph Smith look like? No single surviving source answers the whole question. A cast preserves contours; a portrait records an artist's choices; a description captures what one observer noticed. Here we follow those records to see what supports our portrait, what remains uncertain, and what could justify a change.

Why we kept this likeness

The sources we compared give us no clear reason to change the portrait's facial structure. They leave room to explore a straighter hairstyle, while several details of Joseph's appearance remain uncertain.



Research reference

The portrait being examined

Our adopted portrait remains unchanged. [20]

[Visit the owning portrait study ↗](#)

**Research reference****Joseph's death mask**

Joseph's cast, shown as a detail of a different, newly consulted photograph. It is not established as an original creation input. Closed lids and cast condition limit comparisons to a living face. Open the complete pair for context. Courtesy of LDS Church Archives; BYU item 4109, catalogue date 2001, public-domain designation.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record ↗](#)

[Read the museum's mask history ↗](#)

[Visit the owning portrait study ↗](#)

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 02

Contents and reading guide

02 · The research**Read the labels as limits**

Supported means a source constrains the choice. Plausible means the portrait is compatible with the available record. Unverified means the claim has not been established; it does not automatically mean false.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 03

The research verdict

03 · The research

Keep him as he stands

The evidence supports retaining the approved portrait. Exact anatomy or recognition by a contemporary is not established.

This conclusion follows an audit of the actual approved pixels, the museum mask histories, journal records, written descriptions and the supplied research. The portrait has a long oval face, prominent nose, lighter brown hair and fair complexion. It also contains pores, color variation, folds and unequal contours. Generic criticism that it is textureless or perfectly symmetric does not describe this image.



Source detail · unchanged image

Look at the face we retained

The long oval face, individual skin texture and unequal contours are visible in the adopted portrait. This qualitative inspection supports the description beside it; it is not an authentication. [20] This is a viewing window into the unchanged source. Open it to inspect the complete image.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

Why a rebuild is not presently warranted

No appropriately matched, reproducible comparison has shown a particular structural error in this portrait. Absence of a measured match is not evidence of a mismatch. A replacement should correct a demonstrated material inconsistency or implement an informed artistic choice, not manufacture certainty by starting over.

The most reasonable optional study

The swept waves and hair volume are less firmly constrained than broad facial structure. A restrained, straighter-haired variation could be useful, with light lashes considered separately. Natural texture and arranged hair are not identical questions. Neither change is currently a proven correction. [12]



Source detail · unchanged image

The optional question is in the hair

The swept waves and volume are visible artistic choices. A straighter-haired study has been proposed, not made or proven more accurate. [12] This is a viewing window into the unchanged source. Open it to inspect the complete image.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

What the conclusion does not claim

It does not assign an accuracy percentage, authenticate a photograph, recover an exact eye shade or identify every individual skin mark. It does not prescribe changes to the nose, jaw, eye spacing, iris color, age or scars. The current approved image remains the comparison baseline.

The independent research reviews converge on retaining the portrait. They differ on how strongly a hair change is warranted. That remaining artistic judgment is preserved rather than turned into unanimous certainty.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 04

Masks and life-derived art

04 · The research

The mask as a structural anchor

The original molds date to 29 June 1844; the surviving casts have uncertain manufacture dates. They record postmortem surface contours. Copying, repairs, missing regions and soft-tissue changes limit literal comparison. Related casts are not independent anatomical witnesses. [1]

The [mask comparison in the portrait study](#) now uses this same newly consulted BYU photograph. It supplies source context, not a pose-matched overlay or proof of agreement, and is not established as an original creation input. [1, 20]



Research reference

Two distinct faces

Joseph is on the left and Hyrum on the right in this photograph, identified by BYU's catalogue. This newly consulted reference illustrates the surviving casts; it is not established as an original portrait-creation input. Courtesy of LDS Church Archives; BYU item 4109, catalogue date 2001, public-domain designation.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record ↗](#)

[Read the museum's mask history ↗](#)

[Visit the owning portrait study ↗](#)

Maudsley: a documented sitting, several objects

The journal records a profile sitting on 25 June 1842. The museum says the original sitting drawing is unidentified. Hatch describes the 1982 discovery more precisely as a probable map-source painting; this may resolve Sweat's broader wording if different objects are meant. Neither should simply be equated with the sitting drawing. A profile constrains silhouette, not all frontal dimensions. [2, 3, 5, 23]

Rogers: use within its documented limits

September 1842 journal entries document painting sessions. The familiar oil is attributed to Rogers, with object history and artistic accuracy still requiring care. Curator Robert O. Davis challenges Hatch's scaling and camera-angle assumptions and argues for greater weight to the oil. Its criticism supplies no automatic correction to our portrait. [4, 5, 22]



Historical engraving · cropped detail

An 1842 engraving after Maudsley

A detail of Oliver Pelton's engraving after Maudsley, published in Bennett's *The History of the Saints* (1842). Hatch's reproduced figure corroborates the image; the exact scan ancestry of this small reproduction remains unresolved. It is not the unidentified sitting drawing, a photograph, or a calibrated anatomical reference.

[Read the museum's original-versus-copy account ↗](#)

[Read Hatch's illustrated chapter \(PDF\) ↗](#)

[Image provenance and public-domain record ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Sitting for a painted likeness

Joseph faces us beside the back of an easel. His journal records painting sittings in September 1842. [4]

[Read the September 1842 sitting record ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)



A profile offers a different view

Joseph's profile recalls Maudsley's work in 1842. The forehead, nose, lips and chin form a silhouette. [3]

[Read the museum account of Maudsley's profile ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 05

Descriptions in their own time

05 · The research

The date of a meeting and the date a description was recorded are separate facts. A late firsthand memory may be valuable; it is not a contemporary entry simply because the remembered event occurred in Joseph's lifetime.

Record	What it contributes	How it is weighted
Davis letter, 6 February 1840 [7]	Estimated Joseph as 40-45 when he was 34.	Contemporary impression; apparent age can mislead.
Taggart letter, 10 September 1843 [6]	Young-looking near thirty-eight; approachable to the observer.	Contemporary letter with archival provenance.
Quincy letter, 16 May 1844 [8]	Several days' beard growth and clothes on the visit.	Contemporary, occasion-specific observation.

Record	What it contributes	How it is weighted
Quincy memoir, 1881-1883 [8]	Familiar eye, nose and forehead description.	Later recollection, distinct from his 1844 letter.

380

FIGURES OF THE PAST.

We left our lowly bed in the gray light of the morning, to find the rain descending in torrents and the roads knee-deep in mud. Intelligence of our arrival had in some mysterious manner reached General Smith, and the prophet's own chariot, a comfortable carryall, drawn by two horses, soon made its appearance. It is probable that we owed the alacrity with which we were served to an odd blunder which had combined our names and personalities and set forth that no less a man than ex-President John Quincy Adams had arrived to visit Mr. Joseph Smith. Happily, however, Dr. Goforth, who had got upon the road before us, divided our persons and reduced them to their proper proportions, so that no trace of disappointment was visible in the group of rough-looking Mormons who awaited our descent at the door of the tavern. It was a three-story frame house, set back from the street and surrounded by a white fence, that we had reached after about two miles of the muddiest driving. Pre-eminent among the stragglers by the door stood a man of commanding appearance, clad in the costume of a journeyman carpenter when about his work. He was a hearty, athletic fellow, with blue eyes standing prominently out upon his light complexion, a long nose, and a retreating forehead. He wore striped pantaloons, a linen jacket, which had not lately seen the washtub, and a beard of some three days' growth. This was the founder of the religion which had been preached in every quarter of the earth. As Dr. Goforth introduced us to the prophet, he mentioned the parentage of my com-

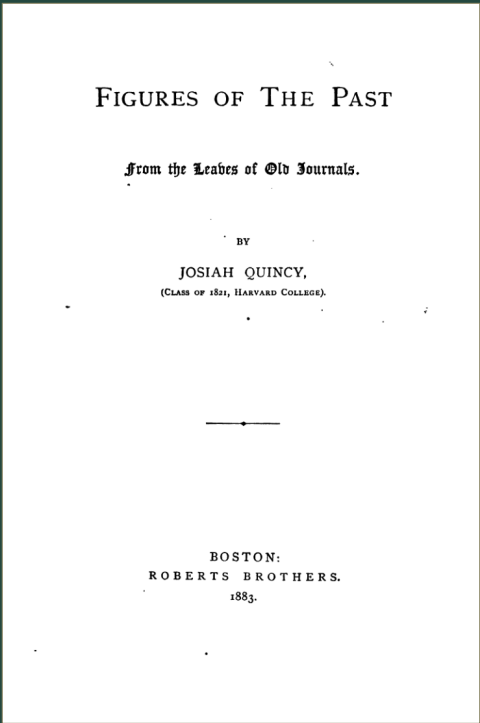
Historical document · later publication

Quincy remembers the visit

Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 1883, printed p. 380. A later memoir, distinct from his May 1844 letter.

[Read this scan in the archive ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)



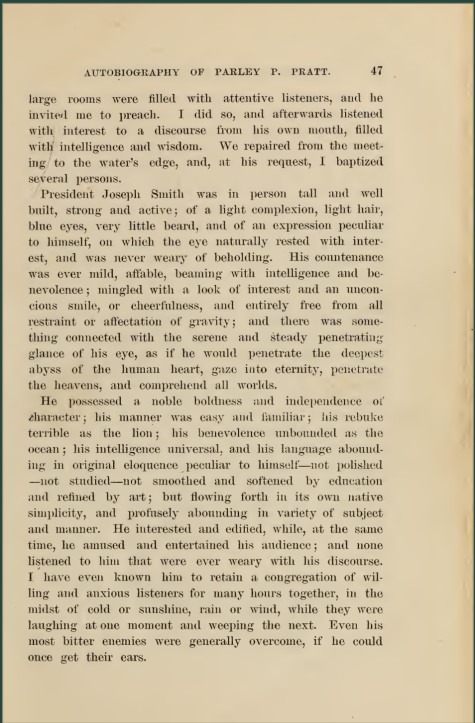
Historical document · publication record

The letter and the later book

Title page of the 1883 memoir, shown with its description on page 380. This is not Quincy’s separate May 1844 letter.

[Read this scan in the archive ↗](#)
[Continue this research chapter](#)

Record	What it contributes	How it is weighted
Pratt autobiography; Knight biography [9, 10]	Color, build, manner and grooming traditions.	Posthumously edited memoir / later mediated biography.



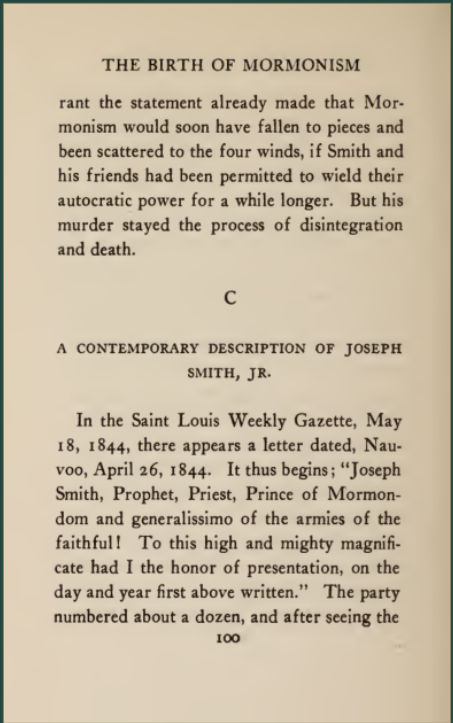
Historical document · later publication

A memoir published in 1874

Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography, 1874, printed p. 47. Retrospective memoir; this is the published book page, not a contemporary diary.

[Read this scan in the archive ↗](#)
[Continue this research chapter](#)

Record	What it contributes	How it is weighted
Gazette description attributed to May 1844 [11]	Hazel eyes, fine light hair and notable lashes.	Verified here through later transcription; original issue not inspected.



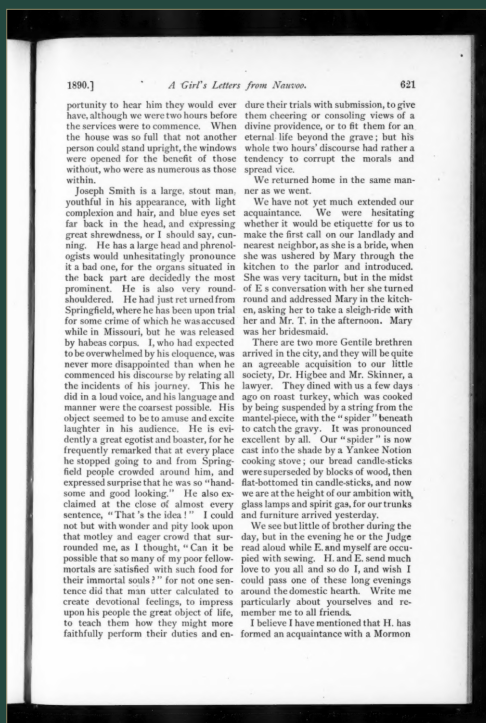
Historical document · later publication

Where the later book gives its attribution

The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 100. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified. The narrator’s personal judgments are not anatomical evidence. Read the attribution and surrounding pages together.

[Read this scan in the archive ↗](#)
[Read the appendix from its attribution ↗](#)
[Continue this research chapter](#)

Record	What it contributes	How it is weighted
Haven letter dated 1843, published 1890 [21]	Blue eyes, light hair/complexion, youthful stout build.	Actual 1890 scan inspected; original manuscript unchecked.



Historical document · later publication

An 1843-dated letter, printed in 1890

Charlotte Haven, *A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo*, published December 1890, printed p. 621. The letter is dated January 1843; its autograph and editorial transmission have not been inspected.

[Read this scan in the archive ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

These sources do not form a simple vote. Independence, record date, editing and transmission matter more than the raw number of quotations. The conflict between hazel and blue therefore remains explicit.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 06

Trait audit: facial structure

06 · The research

Look closely · Follow the evidence

01 Face length and breadth

In our portrait. Long oval face, broad upper face narrowing toward the chin.

The historical evidence. Masks and the Gazette transcription constrain broad shape; no pose-controlled ratios for this image were established. [1, 11]

Our assessment. Retain; no justified narrowing or widening.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

The adopted face outline

The upper and lower face can be compared without changing the artwork. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical cast photograph · detail

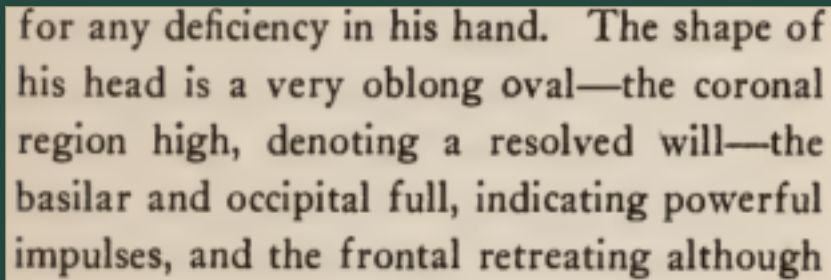
Joseph's surviving face outline

The complete facial contour remains visible, including surface damage. BYU item 4109, catalogued 2001; courtesy of LDS Church Archives, public-domain designation. This photograph is a later comparison source, not an established original creation input.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record ↗](#)

[Read the museum's mask history ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)



for any deficiency in his hand. The shape of his head is a very oblong oval—the coronal region high, denoting a resolved will—the basilar and occipital full, indicating powerful impulses, and the frontal retreating although

Historical document · later printing

An oval described in a later transcription

The closing lines describe shape; the accompanying phrenological claims are not accepted anatomical evidence. The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 101. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the complete source page ↗](#)

[Read the later book's attribution ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The portrait has a long oval outline, broad above and narrower toward the chin. Joseph's surviving cast offers a useful contour reference; the later transmission of the Gazette description also calls his head an oblong oval. [1, 11]

This explains a resemblance visible today. It does not recover the original artist's individual decisions.

What this can and cannot tell us

Different views, postmortem changes and cast condition prevent a measured face-width match.

[Look closely](#) · [Follow the evidence](#)

02 Forehead and brow structure

In our portrait. Broad textured forehead, fine lines and substantial brow.

The historical evidence. Masks and profiles are relevant; later Quincy wording is not a contemporary measurement. [1, 3, 8]

Our assessment. A proposed slope change first needs a matched profile.

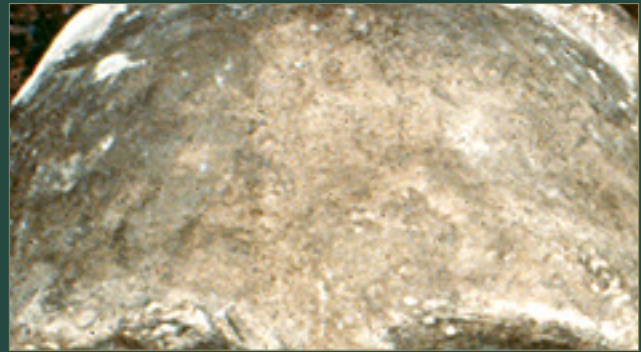


Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Forehead and brow in the artwork

Fine lines and brow texture are visible artistic choices. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical cast photograph · detail

Forehead above the cast's brows

The cast provides contour, not a living hairline. BYU item 4109, catalogued 2001; courtesy of LDS Church Archives, public-domain designation. This photograph is a later comparison source, not an established original creation input.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record](#) ↗

[Read the museum's mask history](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)

his work. He was a hearty, athletic fellow, with blue eyes standing prominently out upon his light complexion, a long nose, and a retreating forehead.

Historical document · later printing

Quincy's later description of the forehead

This anatomical description belongs to the 1883 memoir, not the separate 1844 letter. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 1883, printed p. 380. A later memoir, distinct from his May 1844 letter.

[Read the complete source page](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Light changes what seems prominent

Even light and side light give different impressions of the nose, brow and cheek. Consider illumination before treating a shadow as a structural difference.

[Read the history and limits of the casts](#) ↗
[Continue this research chapter](#)

The adopted forehead is broad, with restrained lines and a substantial brow. The cast preserves surface contour, while Quincy's later memoir describes a retreating forehead. These are different kinds of evidence. [1, 8]

What this can and cannot tell us

A forehead's apparent slope depends on viewpoint. Neither the cast photograph nor a verbal description fixes living wrinkles or hairline.

Look closely · Follow the evidence

03 Nose

In our portrait. Long prominent bridge, rounded tip and visible alar breadth.

The historical evidence. Masks and Maudsley matter most. A criticism of Rogers is not a demonstrated defect here. [1, 3, 5]

Our assessment. Retain; no evidence-derived rotation, narrowing or millimeter adjustment.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Bridge, tip and nasal breadth

This detail shows the adopted shape, not a measurement. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical cast photograph · detail

Nose in the surviving cast

Observe the bridge and nostril region with the photograph's lighting in mind. BYU item 4109, catalogued 2001; courtesy of LDS Church Archives, public-domain designation. This photograph is a later comparison source, not an established original creation input.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record ↗](#)

[Read the museum's mask history ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical engraving · cropped detail

An 1842 engraving after Maudsley

A detail of Oliver Pelton's engraving after Maudsley, published in Bennett's *The History of the Saints* (1842). Hatch's reproduced figure corroborates the image; the exact scan ancestry of this small reproduction remains unresolved. It is not the unidentified sitting drawing, a photograph, or a calibrated anatomical reference.

[Read the museum's original-versus-copy account ↗](#)

[Read Hatch's illustrated chapter \(PDF\) ↗](#)

[Image provenance and public-domain record ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Bridge, tip and breadth

The light follows the bridge to the rounded tip and the sides of the nose.

[Read the history and limits of the casts ↗](#)

[Read the museum account of Maudsley's profile ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The portrait retains a prominent bridge and rounded nasal tip. The cast and the profile engraving provide different views of this central feature. [1, 3]

What this can and cannot tell us

The engraving passes through an artist and engraver; the cast photograph has its own angle and lighting. No exact profile registration was performed.

[Look closely](#) · [Follow the evidence](#)

04 Mouth and upper-lip region

In our portrait. Noticeable skin distance above the mouth, moderate upper lip and fuller lower lip.

The historical evidence. Skin distance and red-lip thickness are different observations. The transmitted Gazette description is not a precise anatomical measurement. [11]

Our assessment. Retain; define the feature before proposing a change.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Upper-lip distance and mouth

The space above the lip and the lip itself are both visible. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical cast photograph · detail

Mouth in the cast

The closed cast mouth supplies limited contour evidence. BYU item 4109, catalogued 2001; courtesy of LDS Church Archives, public-domain designation. This photograph is a later comparison source, not an established original creation input.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record](#) ↗

[Read the museum's mask history](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)

. . . His hair is quite light and fine—
complexion pale—cheeks full—temperament
evidently sanguine—lips thin rather than
thick, and by no means indicative of boldness

Historical document · later printing

The transmitted lip description

The passage distinguishes complexion, cheeks and lips, then adds the writer's judgments. The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 102. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the complete source page](#) ↗

[Read the later book's attribution](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Above the mouth and within the lips

The skin between nose and mouth is distinct from the colored surface of the upper lip. Keeping those regions separate helps us read a verbal description more carefully.

[Read the later Gazette description ↗](#)

[Read the history and limits of the casts ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The skin between nose and mouth is distinct from the red part of the upper lip. The portrait shows a moderate upper lip and fuller lower lip; the later Gazette transcription describes thin lips. These statements should not be treated as one measurement. [11]

What this can and cannot tell us

A closed postmortem mouth cannot determine every living mouth position or the appearance of a smile.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 07

Trait audit: chin and living eyes

07 · The research

[Look closely](#) · [Follow the evidence](#)

05 Chin and jaw

In our portrait. Firm chin with rounded-square corners.

The historical evidence. Mask coverage, repairs and orientation limit comparison. Round/square verbal labels are not measurements. [1]

Our assessment. No justified width or projection correction has been demonstrated.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Chin and lower jaw

The retained lower-face shape can be inspected in the original pixels. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical cast photograph · detail

Chin and jaw in the cast

Surface condition is part of the evidence and must remain visible. BYU item 4109, catalogued 2001; courtesy of LDS Church Archives, public-domain designation. This photograph is a later comparison source, not an established original creation input.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record](#) ↗

[Read the museum's mask history](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Breadth from the front, projection from the side

A frontal view reveals breadth; a near-profile reveals the forehead, nose, lips and chin in silhouette.

[Read the history and limits of the casts ↗](#)

[Read the museum account of Maudsley's profile ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The adopted chin has rounded-square corners and a firm lower contour. The cast offers a physical reference for discussing that shape. [1]

What this can and cannot tell us

Cast damage, coverage and orientation limit chin-width and projection comparisons. No corrective measurement is established.

Look closely · Follow the evidence

06 Iris color

In our portrait. Blue-gray appearance in this rendering.

The historical evidence. Haven's 1843-dated letter, published in 1890, adds independent blue-eye support. Later blue recollections coexist with the Gazette hazel description, transmitted later. [8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 21]

Our assessment. Blue is defensible, but exact shade is unresolved; no compulsory recoloring.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

The adopted blue-gray iris

A close window of one eye in the unchanged portrait; its exact color is interpretive. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical cast photograph · detail

What the closed lids can preserve

The cast preserves closed eyelids and surrounding form, not the color of a living iris. Read the blue and hazel descriptions beside the modern artistic choice. This photograph was consulted in the later research, not recovered as an original creation input.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record ↗](#)

[Read the museum's mask history ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

Joseph Smith is a large, stout man, youthful in his appearance, with light complexion and hair, and blue eyes set far back in the head, and expressing

Historical document · later printing

Blue eyes in Haven's published letter

The dated-letter text was printed decades later; its moral judgments do not validate anatomy. Charlotte Haven, *A Girl's Letters* from Nauvoo, published December 1890, printed p. 621. The letter is dated January 1843; its autograph and editorial transmission have not been inspected.

[Read the complete source page ↗](#)
[Continue this research chapter](#)

neither of these. . . . The hue is light hazel, and it is shaded, and, at times, almost veiled, by the longest, thickest, light lashes

Historical document · later printing

Hazel in the later Gazette transmission

The color description is visible here; the original newspaper remains unverified. *The Birth of Mormonism*, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 102. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the *Saint Louis Weekly Gazette*; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the complete source page ↗](#)
[Read the later book's attribution ↗](#)
[Continue this research chapter](#)



The living color the cast cannot retain

Blue-gray irises bring the adopted face to life. The plaster contains no evidence of iris color. The full artwork remains available when opened.

[Read Haven's published blue-eye description ↗](#)
[Read the later hazel-eye description ↗](#)
[Continue this research chapter](#)

The adopted eyes are blue-gray. Haven's 1843-dated letter, printed in 1890, describes blue eyes; the later Gazette transcription describes light hazel. [11, 21]

Blue-gray remains an artistic interpretation within conflicting descriptions. It was not recovered from plaster.

What this can and cannot tell us

Neither a death cast nor a monochrome portrait establishes pigmentation. Haven's autograph and the original Gazette issue were not inspected.

[Look closely](#) · [Follow the evidence](#)

07 Eye depth and lids

In our portrait. Open attentive eyes, natural lower-lid folds and unequal contours.

The historical evidence. Closed postmortem lids do not determine living aperture; illumination affects apparent depth. [1]

Our assessment. Do not invent droop or copy the death-state eyelids as a living face.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Living eyelids and lower folds

The opening and folds belong to the living-face interpretation. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical cast photograph · detail

Closed lids in Joseph's cast

The cast cannot supply a living gaze. BYU item 4109, catalogued 2001; courtesy of LDS Church Archives, public-domain designation. This photograph is a later comparison source, not an established original creation input.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record](#) ↗

[Read the museum's mask history](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)

Joseph Smith is a large, stout man, youthful in his appearance, with light complexion and hair, and blue eyes set far back in the head, and expressing great shrewdness, or I should say, cun-

Historical document · later printing

An observer's impression of eye depth

Read the physical description separately from the writer's character judgments. Charlotte Haven, A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo, published December 1890, printed p. 621. The letter is dated January 1843; its autograph and editorial transmission have not been inspected.

[Read the complete source page](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The portrait gives Joseph open, attentive eyes with natural lid folds. The cast records closed lids; Haven's printed description gives an impression of eyes set back in the head. [1, 21]

What this can and cannot tell us

Closed lids cannot fix living eye opening. Light and head angle also change the apparent depth of the eyes.

[Look closely](#) · [Follow the evidence](#)

08 Brows and lashes

In our portrait. Substantial brows; lashes less conspicuous than the Gazette description.

The historical evidence. Long light lashes are a source lead, not a measured specification. The original newspaper image remains unverified here. [11]

Our assessment. An understated lash study is optional, not a proven correction.



[Adopted portrait](#) · [native-source detail](#)

Brow hairs and lashes

Native portrait detail preserves the current brow and lash treatment. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

hazel, and it is shaded, and, at times, almost veiled, by the longest, thickest, light lashes you ever saw belonging to a man, whatever the facts respecting the 'dear women.' The brows are, also, light and thick—indeed, precisely of that description called beetle-brow.

[Historical document](#) · [later printing](#)

Lashes and brows in the transmitted account

The lower passage describes lashes and brows; subjective judgments remain the narrator's. The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 102. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the complete source page](#) ↗

[Read the later book's attribution](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The portrait has substantial brows and relatively unobtrusive lashes. The Gazette description transmitted in 1916 emphasizes long, light lashes and light, thick brows. [11]

What this can and cannot tell us

This is one transmitted observer's description, not a count or measurement of hairs. The cast does not resolve their color or living appearance.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 08

Trait audit: hair and complexion

08 · The research

[Look closely](#) · [Follow the evidence](#)

09 Hair color

In our portrait. Brown with lighter strands and highlights.

The historical evidence. Descriptions support a lighter brown/dark-blond range, influenced in appearance by age and light. No exact colorimetry was established. [9, 11, 12]

Our assessment. Retain the general range; no precise color value is recoverable.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Brown hair and lighter strands

The selected color is visible in the original artwork. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

President Joseph Smith was in person tall and well built, strong and active; of a light complexion, light hair, blue eyes, very little beard, and of an expression peculiar

Historical document · later printing

Light hair in Pratt's memoir

The physical description is retrospective and posthumously published. Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography, 1874, printed p. 47. Retrospective memoir; this is the published book page, not a contemporary diary.

[Read the complete source page](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The artwork uses brown hair with lighter strands. Pratt's retrospective account describes light hair, and Haven's published letter also uses a broad light-hair description. [9, 21]

What this can and cannot tell us

These words do not determine an exact brown or blond shade. Age, illumination and terminology can affect the descriptions.

Look closely · Follow the evidence

10 Hair texture and arrangement

In our portrait. Swept hair with visible wave and volume.

The historical evidence. Fine, straight natural texture creates tension with the coiffed appearance; arranged waves alone do not establish natural curl. [12]

Our assessment. Less wave and volume is the strongest optional study, not a compelled identity correction.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

The arranged sweep of the hair

The visible waves are part of this portrait's styling. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

. . . His hair is quite light and fine—
complexion pale—cheeks full—temperament

Historical document · later printing

Fine hair in the transmitted account

This passage describes hair quality and lightness, without measuring curl. The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 102. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the complete source page ↗](#)

[Read the later book's attribution ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical engraving · cropped detail

An 1842 engraving after Maudsley

A detail of Oliver Pelton's engraving after Maudsley, published in Bennett's *The History of the Saints* (1842). Hatch's reproduced figure corroborates the image; the exact scan ancestry of this small reproduction remains unresolved. It is not the unidentified sitting drawing, a photograph, or a calibrated anatomical reference.

[Read the museum's original-versus-copy account ↗](#)

[Read Hatch's illustrated chapter \(PDF\) ↗](#)

[Image provenance and public-domain record ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)



A sweep made from individual strands

The sweep, waves and lighter strands are easy to inspect. Descriptions of fine or light hair do not fix an exact hairstyle.

[Read the later Gazette description ↗](#)

[Read Pratt's remembered appearance and manner ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The adopted hair is swept back with visible wave and volume. A description of fine hair concerns strand quality; a hairstyle concerns how the hair is arranged. The two should be considered separately. [11]

What this can and cannot tell us

The cast provides no scalp hairstyle, and an engraved coiffure cannot prove natural curl or a single everyday arrangement.

Look closely · Follow the evidence

11 Complexion and skin detail

In our portrait. Fair skin with warm/red cheeks, pores, freckle-like marks and folds.

The historical evidence. A light complexion has support; each mark and degree of redness remain interpretation. [9, 10, 11, 12]

Our assessment. The actual pixels defeat a blanket smoothing criticism. Do not add artificial grime or aging.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Cheek color and skin texture

This detail exposes the artwork's individual skin marks and color choices. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

President Joseph Smith was in person tall and well built, strong and active; of a light complexion, light hair, blue eyes, very little beard, and of an expression peculiar

[Historical document · later printing](#)

A broad complexion description

Pratt's later memoir supplies descriptive words, not a calibrated skin sample. Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography, 1874, printed p. 47. Retrospective memoir; this is the published book page, not a contemporary diary.

[Read the complete source page ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The portrait uses fair, warm skin with visible pores and reddish cheeks. Historical light-complexion descriptions offer broad support for a light palette, but not for each mark or degree of warmth. [9, 21]

What this can and cannot tell us

Plaster supplies no living skin color. Individual freckles, pores, redness and fine lines remain artistic choices.

Look closely · Follow the evidence

12 Facial hair

In our portrait. Clean-shaven appearance.

The historical evidence. Retrospective sparse-beard descriptions and Quincy's contemporary several-day growth can coexist with changing grooming. [8, 9]

Our assessment. Retain for a general portrait; stubble belongs to an appropriate dated scene.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

The clean-shaven mouth and chin

Grooming in this portrait is an artistic choice for this presentation. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

He wore striped pantaloons, a linen jacket, which had not lately seen the washtub, and a beard of some three 'days' growth. This was the founder of the religion which had been preached in every quar-

Historical document · later printing

Beard growth in Quincy's later memoir

The printed passage describes temporary growth. Its clothing wording differs from the contemporary letter. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 1883, printed p. 380. A later memoir, distinct from his May 1844 letter.

[Read the complete source page ↗](#)
[Continue this research chapter](#)



A visit does not freeze a lifetime of grooming

Quincy described several days of beard growth during his May 1844 visit. [8]

[Read Quincy's May 1844 letter ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The adopted portrait is clean-shaven. Pratt remembered very little beard, while Quincy described several days of growth during his May 1844 visit. Grooming can change between occasions. [8, 9]

What this can and cannot tell us

Quincy's 1883 memoir is shown here as a later source; his contemporary letter is separate. Neither requires a permanent bearded identity.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 09

Trait audit: age and presentation

09 · The research

Look closely · Follow the evidence

13 Apparent age

In our portrait. Mature adult, plausibly in his late thirties.

The historical evidence. Contemporary impressions disagree: Davis estimated older, Taggart younger-looking. Joseph died at thirty-eight. [6, 7]

Our assessment. Do not age him merely to look historical. Each future scene needs its actual date and age.



Joseph Smith is a large, stout man, youthful in his appearance, with light complexion and hair, and blue eyes set

Historical document · later printing

A youthful impression in the published letter

This is the 1890 printing of an 1843-dated description. Charlotte Haven, *A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo*, published December 1890, printed p. 621. The letter is dated January 1843; its autograph and editorial transmission have not been inspected.

[Read the complete source page ↗](#)
[Continue this research chapter](#)

Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Age in the eyes and cheeks

Fine lines and texture give this interpretation its apparent age. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

Joseph was 38 when he died in June 1844. Observers' estimates of his apparent age differed: Davis thought him older in 1840, while Haven's published letter called him youthful. [7, 21]

What this can and cannot tell us

An observer's age impression is not his birth date. The portrait's late-thirties appearance remains an interpretation.

[Look closely](#) · [Follow the evidence](#)

14 Expression

In our portrait. Calm, attentive gaze and closed mouth.

The historical evidence. Descriptions of manner do not prescribe one permanent expression. [6, 9]

Our assessment. Retain as an artistic choice. Historical recognition cannot be assigned a defensible percentage here.



[Adopted portrait](#) · [native-source detail](#)

The portrait's attentive expression

The relationship of eyes and mouth gives this portrait its present expression. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

est, and was never weary of beholding. His countenance was ever mild, affable, beaming with intelligence and benevolence; mingled with a look of interest and an unconscious smile, or cheerfulness, and entirely free from all restraint or affectation of gravity; and there was some-

[Historical document](#) · [later printing](#)

A remembered manner and smile

This retrospective account describes manner rather than a single posed instant. Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography, 1874, printed p. 47. Retrospective memoir; this is the published book page, not a contemporary diary.

[Read the complete source page](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)



A small smile changes the face

Look at the corners of the mouth and the lifted cheeks to see the effect of expression.

[Read Pratt's remembered appearance and manner ↗](#)

[Read the history and limits of the casts ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The portrait's calm attention is one chosen expression. Pratt's memoir remembers an affable manner and an unforced smile; those impressions suggest movement and variety rather than one permanent look. [9]

What this can and cannot tell us

A fixed cast cannot recover personality or a living smile.

Look closely · Follow the evidence

15 Asymmetry and scars

In our portrait. Unequal brow, lid and mouth contours; no prominent diagnostic scar.

The historical evidence. An unproven photograph's supposed scar or eye droop does not establish Joseph's living marks.

Our assessment. Preserve natural variation; invent no diagnostic mark to manufacture agreement.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Unequal eye and brow contours

The two sides are shown together without mirroring or retouching. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)



Historical cast photograph · detail

Uneven cast surface and contours

Damage and material texture must not be mistaken for documented living scars. BYU item 4109, catalogued 2001; courtesy of LDS Church Archives, public-domain designation. This photograph is a later comparison source, not an established original creation input.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record ↗](#)

[Read the museum's mask history ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The adopted eyes, brows and mouth are not perfectly symmetrical. Retaining these visible differences avoids turning a living face into an idealized mirror image.

What this can and cannot tell us

No reliable evidence reviewed here establishes a prominent diagnostic facial scar. Uneven cast surfaces cannot simply be transferred into living scars.

Look closely · Follow the evidence

16 Build and clothing

In our portrait. Bust in a dark coat and white neckcloth.

The historical evidence. A bust cannot establish stature, weight or full-body shape. Quincy describes different occasion-specific clothing. [8, 9]

Our assessment. Retain the period-plausible presentation without certifying exact clothing or body fidelity.



Adopted portrait · native-source detail

Coat, shoulders and neckcloth

The visible garment details are the extent of the bust's clothing evidence. Detail window of the unchanged modern portrait; open the complete image for context.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

President Joseph Smith was in person tall and well built, strong and active; of a light complexion, light hair, light eyes, and a high forehead of an amiable, regular

Historical document · later printing

Build in a retrospective description

Pratt describes stature, build and strength in words; this is not a body measurement. Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography, 1874, printed p. 47. Retrospective memoir; this is the published book page, not a contemporary diary.

[Read the complete source page](#) ↗

[Continue this research chapter](#)

The bust shows a dark coat and white neckcloth. Descriptions of Joseph's stature and strength concern his whole body; they cannot be verified from this crop. Clothing descriptions also belong to particular occasions. [8, 9]

What this can and cannot tell us

This portrait does not establish height, weight or body proportions. Quincy's later work clothes do not prescribe the clothes for every Joseph scene.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 10

Decision and conditional construction

10 · The research

Present decision: retain

No replacement identity is proposed for approval now. Preserve this portrait.

A bounded study, if later chosen

First define a dated scene or an explicitly late-Nauvoo portrait at about age 36-38. Identify the exact mask objects, Maudsley variants and Rogers-attributed work, including copying and repair relationships. Disputed photographs are not ground truth.



Research reference

The retained comparison baseline

This exact portrait remains the baseline for any later study. Proposed variants or measurements are not completed results. [20]

Continue this research chapter

Before any structural change, demonstrate a stable material discrepancy in appropriately matched views. Record missing contours, perspective limits and independent reviewer disagreement. Design landmarks can document source consistency; they cannot supply identity probabilities or a forensic authentication. Unrestricted warping can manufacture an apparent fit. [15]

If a visual study is selected, test restrained hair first, with lashes separately. Keep other traits fixed so the comparison is meaningful. Current evidence supplies no replacement nose, jaw, eye spacing, iris shade or scar.

Evidence that would change the verdict

A repeatable mismatch that survives source condition, pose and analyst uncertainty; a newly authenticated contemporary depiction; or new original documentation could change a trait. A pleasing overlay or subjective confidence cannot substitute for those results.

Approval remains separate

Any future variation should receive independent historical and visual review before use. Adopting a new identity or publishing it remains a separate owner decision. A well-presented study or a technically sound image does not itself establish historical accuracy.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 11

How our portrait was created

11 · The research

Recorded creation

The project identity record names Joseph's masks as primary proportional references and Hyrum's as comparative. The original prompt and intermediate fitting records have not been recovered.

Actually examined afterward

The retained portrait's visible features, historical descriptions, cast histories and source publications were qualitatively reviewed. Newly consulted evidence is identified as later research.

Still proposed

Pose-controlled measurements, blinded comparisons and a restrained hair or lash variation have not been performed. Museum photogrammetry records casts; it does not validate this portrait.

A documented artistic process

The project record describes a reconstruction informed by museum death-mask references. It does not establish a measured recovery of every living feature. [27]

The historical-identity record identifies Joseph's death masks as the primary proportional reference and Hyrum's as comparative material. It records the exact image adopted by Wyatt on 14 September 2026 as the identity reference for future Joseph scenes. [27]



Research reference

The documented reference roles

Joseph is on the left and Hyrum on the right in this photograph, identified by BYU's catalogue. This newly consulted reference illustrates the surviving casts; it is not established as an original portrait-creation input. Courtesy of LDS Church Archives; BYU item 4109, catalogue date 2001, public-domain designation.

[View the BYU catalogue and rights record ↗](#)

[Read the museum's mask history ↗](#)

[Continue this research chapter](#)

A mask cannot supply living eye color, skin color, hair, expression, clothes or light. Those parts of the finished portrait are artistic choices informed to differing degrees by historical description and period context. Joseph and Hyrum were distinct people; comparison does not make their faces interchangeable.

What the creation record does not establish

The reviewed project record does not include a contemporaneous landmark measurement log or a complete original generation prompt. We therefore cannot certify that every dimension was measured against a cast, or that every source in this study was used during creation.



Source detail · unchanged image

The living features the cast cannot supply

Hair, living eyes, skin color and lighting are visible choices in the finished artwork. They were not mechanically recovered from plaster. [27] This is a viewing window into the unchanged source. Open it to inspect the complete image.

[Continue this research chapter](#)

Creation and later research are separate

This audit examines the retained image against a broader historical record. Sources newly recovered during the audit strengthen or qualify our assessment; they are not retroactively described as original design inputs. The exact approved pixels remain the comparison baseline.

Why the distinction matters

A transparent process explains why the picture was made as it was. Historical accuracy still depends on the evidence for each feature. A documented workflow and owner approval establish provenance and acceptance of the artwork, not authentication of Joseph's exact living appearance.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 12

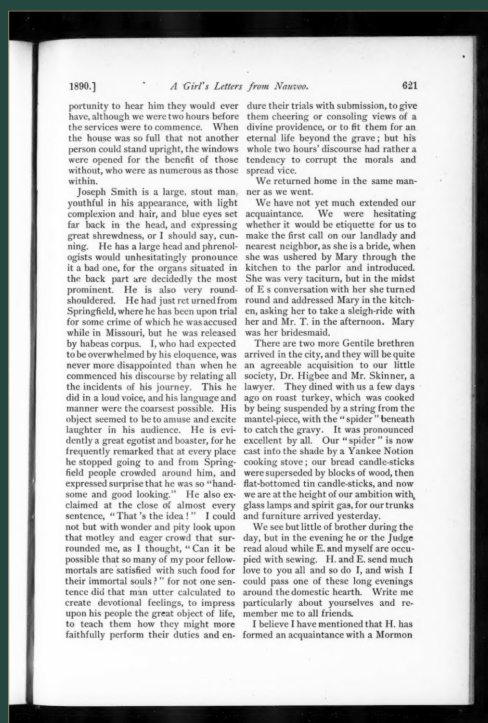
Discovery coverage and remaining gaps

12 · The research

The investigation combined the supplied research with a broad, documented public-source search: Joseph Smith Papers, Church museum and library material, BYU Studies and RSC, digitized books and periodicals, newspaper catalogs, and methodological literature. This is not an exhaustive search of every internet page, archive or private collection.

What the expanded search changed

Haven's 1843-dated letter was verified in its 1890 publication. It strengthens the blue-eye choice and adds light complexion, youthful stout build and round shoulders. The original manuscript remains unchecked. These details do not validate every feature of a bust. [21]



Historical document · later publication

A recovered publication, with a remaining gap

The inspected 1890 publication transmits a letter dated 1843. The original manuscript was not checked, so the printed page adds evidence without closing that gap. [21]

Read this scan in the archive ↗
Continue this research chapter

Davis's critique shows why a mask-to-portrait ratio is not automatically decisive. His preference for greater weight to the frontal oil is a substantive alternative, not proof that the oil is exact. Hatch's map-source account also refines the identity of the Maudsley object rediscovered in 1982. [22, 23]

Conflicting descriptions stay visible

The descriptions do not all agree. Caswall's large hands contrast with the Gazette's small hands; youthful and older-looking impressions coexist. Hostility, memory, editing, viewpoint and occasion can affect descriptions. We retain the conflict instead of counting quotations as votes. [6, 7, 11, 26]

Still unresolved

The original Gazette issue, Haven autograph, complete chains for some art objects, and a controlled measurement of our portrait remain gaps. Additional nondigitized and private records may matter. None of those gaps is proof that the portrait is wrong; neither is their absence a reason to call it exact.

The revised conclusion is therefore specific: the evidence supports retaining this interpretation, but does not substantiate every visible trait or prove it is the closest image that could ever be made.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 13

Sources: original records and art

13 · The research

[1] Church History Museum: Joseph and Hyrum Smith death masks ↗
Institutional object history; original molds and surviving casts distinguished.

[2] Joseph Smith journal, 25 June 1842, manuscript p125 ↗
Contemporary sitting entry; artist identification also uses JSP annotation 251.

[3] Church History Museum: Lt. General Joseph Smith, Maudsley ↗
Object-specific gouache provenance; distinguish original sitting drawing.

[4] Joseph Smith journal, September 1842, manuscript p205 ↗
Contemporary Rogers-sitting context and editorial identification.

[5] Anthony Sweat: Joseph Smith in the National Portrait Gallery ↗
Scholarly art history; pp 354-356 and 362-365. Includes attribution and recollection limits.

[6] Ronald Barney: Susannah and George Taggart letter, 10 September 1843 ↗
Scholarly transcription of contemporary letter with archive provenance.

[7] JSP: Discourse, 5 February 1840; Matthew Davis letter dated 6 February ↗
Original letter and historical introduction; age impression tied to actual date.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 14

Sources: descriptions and review

14 · The research

[8] Jed Woodworth: Josiah Quincy's 1844 Visit with Joseph Smith ↗
Transcription of 16 May 1844 letter; distinguishes 1881-1883 recollection.

[9] Parley P. Pratt: Autobiography, chapter VI ↗
Accessible 1888 edition; first published 1874 with posthumous editing. Retrospective firsthand account.

[10] Susa Young Gates (Homespun): Lydia Knight's History, 1883 ↗
Later third-person biography, not a contemporary Knight autograph.

[11] The Birth of Mormonism, appendices, 1916 ↗
Transmission of Gazette description attributed to 18 May 1844 issue. Original newspaper image not verified here.

[12] Janet Thomas: What Did Joseph Smith Really Look Like? December 2005 ↗
Institutional synthesis; not itself a contemporary eyewitness document.

[15] FISWG: Facial Comparison Overview and Methodology Guidelines v2.1 ↗
26 February 2026, sections 6.2-6.4. Professional method limits; this report is not an expert forensic examination.

[20] focusChrist: Joseph Smith likeness study and approved portrait ↗
Current public interpretation and source-use statement. Process description is not measured historical fidelity.

Review record: the source and pixel audit received independent research review. Remaining judgments are identified in the text. Exact image and review records are retained with the project evidence; they establish which artwork was examined, not its historical fidelity.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / 15

Sources: expanded research and process

15 · The research

[21] Charlotte Haven, *A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo* ↗

Letter dated 22 January 1843; December 1890 *Overland Monthly*, printed p. 621. Original publication scan inspected; autograph letter and editorial transmission not checked.

[22] Robert O. Davis, *review of Joseph Smith Portraits* ↗

BYU Studies 38:4, p. 185 onward. Museum curator's direct methodological criticism of Hatch's scaling, viewing angle and treatment of the frontal oil; not measurement of our portrait.

[23] Ephraim Hatch, *Joseph Smith Portraits*, p. 34 ↗

BYU digitized book page. Distinguishes the Young Family map-source painting found in 1982 from the Smith Family versions and hypothetical retained sitting drawings.

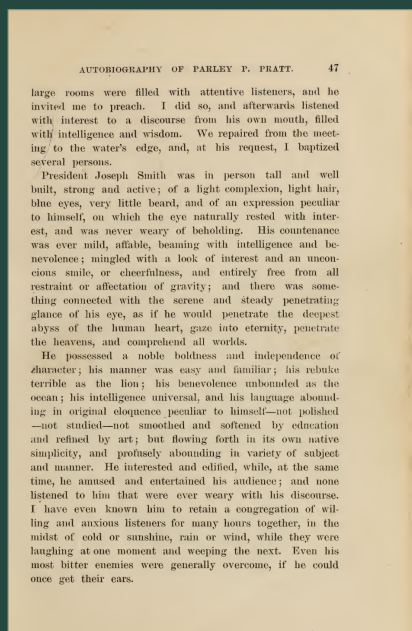
[26] Henry Caswall, *The City of the Mormons* ↗

Contemporary 1842 account, compared with the 1843 edition. Hostile source with edition differences; large hands conflict with *Gazette* small-hands wording. No iris-color specification adopted.

[27] *focusChrist* historical identity and creation record ↗

Project record at the retained production revision. Distinguishes the documented mask-based creation account from this later audit.

The final source set distinguishes contemporary documents, later publication of contemporary-dated letters, later recollections, art-object scholarship, institutional synthesis and the modern project record. Search logs and access failures are preserved with the private research evidence.



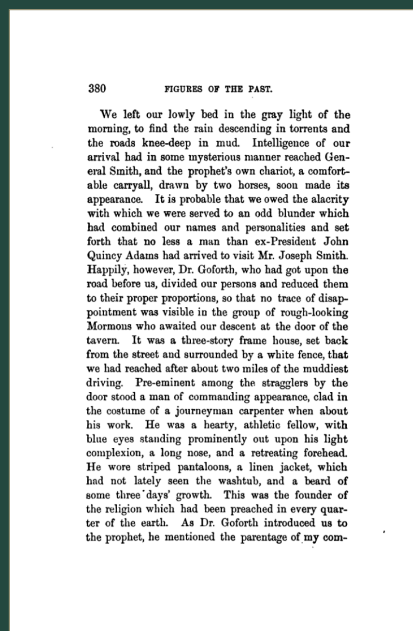
[Full historical page](#)

Pratt 1874 P47

Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography, 1874, printed p. 47. Retrospective memoir; this is the published book page, not a contemporary diary.

[Read the archival scan ↗](#)

[Return to the source index](#)



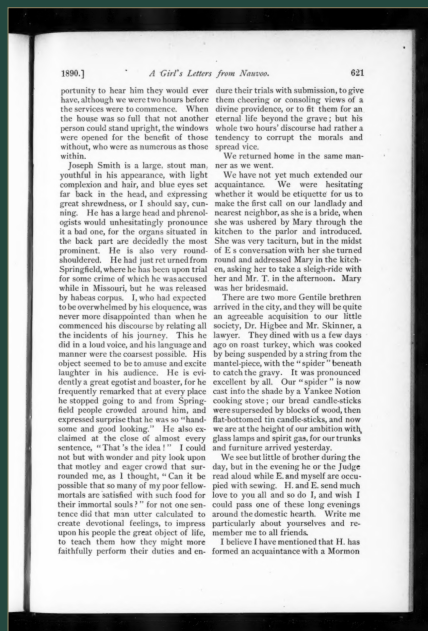
[Full historical page](#)

Quincy 1883 P380

Josiah Quincy, Figures of the Past, 1883, printed p. 380. A later memoir, distinct from his May 1844 letter.

[Read the archival scan ↗](#)

[Return to the source index](#)



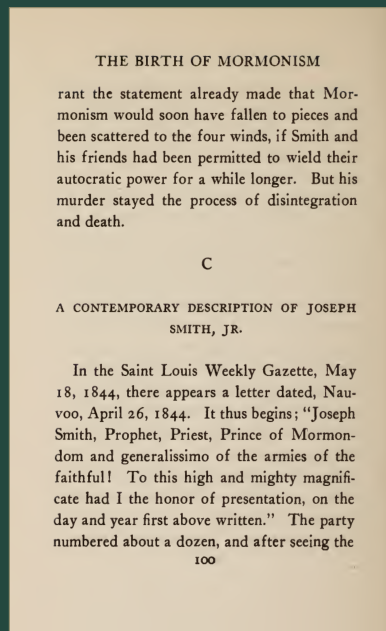
[Full historical page](#)

Haven 1890 P621

Charlotte Haven, *A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo*, published December 1890, printed p. 621. The letter is dated January 1843; its autograph and editorial transmission have not been inspected.

[Read the archival scan](#) ✓

[Return to the source index](#)



[Full historical page](#)

Gazette Transmission 1916 P100

The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 100. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the archival scan](#) ✓

[Return to the source index](#)

THE BIRTH OF MORMONISM

sights of the city were presented to the prophet. "One of our company professed himself an old and familiar friend of the general," and he acted as the chaperon of the party. "My first impression was by no means satisfactory to myself and certainly not flattering to mine host . . . Gen. Smith . . . is in stature and proportion a very large man; and his figure would probably be called a fine one, although by no means distinguished for symmetry or for grace. . . . His chest and shoulders are broad and muscular, although his arms and hands seemed never to have been developed by physical toil, and the latter are quite small for his proportions. His foot, however, is massive enough, and extensive enough, in all conscience, to make up for any deficiency in his hand. The shape of his head is a very oblong oval—the coronal region high, denoting a resolved will—the basilar and occipital full, indicating powerful impulses, and the frontal retreating although

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[Full historical page](#)

Gazette Transmission 1916 P101

The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 101. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the archival scan ↗](#)[Return to the source index](#)

THE BIRTH OF MORMONISM

the region devoted by Phrenologists to the organization of the perceptive powers is unusually prominent. . . . His forehead is white, without a furrow, and, notwithstanding the small facial angle, somewhat symmetrical. . . . His hair is quite light and fine—complexion pale—cheeks full—temperament evidently sanguine—lips thin rather than thick, and by no means indicative of boldness or decision of character. . . . But the Prophet's most remarkable feature is his eye; not that it is very large, or very bright—very thoughtful or very restless—even very deep in its expression or location; for it is usually neither of these. . . . The hue is light hazel, and it is shaded, and, at times, almost veiled, by the longest, thickest, light lashes you ever saw belonging to a man, whatever the facts respecting the 'dear women.' The brows are, also, light and thick—indeed, precisely of that description called beetle-brow. The expression of the prophet's eyes when

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[Full historical page](#)

Gazette Transmission 1916 P102

The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 102. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the archival scan ↗](#)[Return to the source index](#)

THE BIRTH OF MORMONISM

half closed and shaded by their long lashes, was quite as crafty as I ever beheld. . . . His voice is low and soft, and his smile which is frequent, is agreeable."

In another letter the same correspondent gives a long account of his meeting Smith's mother, who showed him the Egyptian mummies, (which is another ridiculous claim and fraud of Smith's) told him who they were, and exhibited the translations, made by her son, of the papyri found with them. He confesses that he does not know how the prophet came into the possession of these so-called "mummies." Of the translation he says; "Important and highly interesting incidents in the lives of the patriarchs of Israel and the monarchs of Hebrew history are read from these Egyptian records."

Two editorial notes; "Our correspondent at Nauvoo gives rather a minute description of Gen. Joseph Smith. Should the great Mormon ever find himself in prison-bounds—

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[Full historical page](#)

Gazette Transmission 1916 P103

The Birth of Mormonism, 1916, appendix C, printed p. 103. This later book attributes the description to an April 1844 letter printed in the Saint Louis Weekly Gazette; the original newspaper issue remains unverified.

[Read the archival scan ↗](#)[Return to the source index](#)

FIGURES OF THE PAST

From the Leaves of Old Journals.

BY

JOSIAH QUINCY,

(CLASS OF 1831, HARVARD COLLEGE).

BOSTON:

ROBERTS BROTHERS.

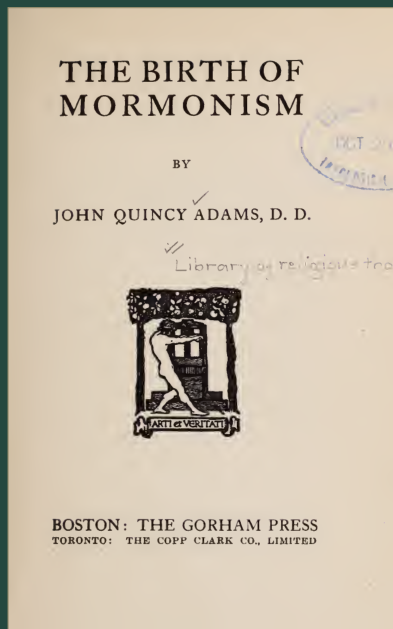
1883.

[Full historical page](#)

Quincy 1883 Title

Title page of Josiah Quincy's Figures of the Past, 1883. Publication date distinguishes this memoir from his 1844 letter.

[Read the archival scan ↗](#)[Return to the source index](#)

[Full historical page](#)

Gazette Transmission Book Title

Title page of The Birth of Mormonism, by John Quincy Adams. This is the later book transmitting the Gazette description, not the original newspaper.

[Read the archival scan ↗](#)[Return to the source index](#)[Full historical page](#)

Gazette Transmission 1916 Date

Publication statement dated 1916 in The Birth of Mormonism. The original Gazette issue has not been verified; this date belongs to the later transmission.

[Read the archival scan ↗](#)[Return to the source index](#)

Keep studying with care

Read the witness in context

Choose one description. What was written at the time, and what reached us through a later publication?

Separate confidence from faith

Which conclusions belong to historical evidence, which to artistic interpretation, and which to spiritual conviction?

Read [1 Thessalonians 5:21](#) ↗.

Leave room for correction

What new source would change your view? Follow the invitation to seek learning in [Doctrine and Covenants 88:118](#) ↗.

[Joseph's portrait study](#) ↗

[Church History](#) ↗

[Restoration history and sources](#) ↗

[Ask about Joseph's appearance](#) ↗

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