

# The Untold Stories of *Mormonism Exposed*: Material Culture, Dime Novels, and Mormonism in American Society

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**History**

*Mormonism Exposed*, a dime novel that librarian Demian Katz acquired for Villanova University Special Collections, is stored with a group of dime novels classified as the John Regan Five Cent Pamphlets. 10 centimeters long, 6.9 centimeters wide, and .10 centimeters thick, the tiny book's yellowed pages shed crumbly paper fragments when touched and are peeling free of the stapled spine. *Exposed* still catches the eye because of its title's reference to a controversial religion, its cover seemingly depicting a polygamous family, and the claim on page two that it is written by a "Mormon slave wife."<sup>1</sup> This paper is an object biography of *Mormonism Exposed*, considering the book in relation to dime novels and American Mormonism. The study of dime novels as a form of book history matters because, while scholarship on pulp literature exists, the staggering quantity of extant dime novels in U.S. archives leaves many research topics unexplored. The study of Mormonism and genre fiction matters, as Terryl Givens argues in *The Viper on the Hearth*, because pulp stories reveal non-Mormons' "hostility or contempt" toward Mormons, the "cultural propagation" of prejudice, and "the psychological and ideological causes and consequences of those tensions among the non-Mormon populace."<sup>2</sup> Overall, the portrayal of Mormons in pulp fiction sheds light on how mainstream Christian Americans envisioned the *other* in their society.

My paper uses *Mormonism Exposed* for a case study of Mormon portrayals in American pulp fiction circa 1896, therefore privileging the *history of things*

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<sup>1</sup> *Mormonism Exposed*, n.p. [Chicago: J. Regan & Co.], n.d. [1896], Villanova University Digital Library, last modified January 9, 2014, accessed August – December 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:289036>, 2. Also: John Regan Five Cent Pamphlets, Villanova University Library Special Collections, Villanova, PA.

<sup>2</sup> Terryl Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy*, 1st ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4. See also: Larry E. Sullivan, "Introduction," in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, edited by Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia Cushman Schurman (New York: The Haworth Press, 1996), 3: "these novels maintained the cultural hegemony . . . ."

technique. I also use the *history from things* technique, studying other Mormon-themed dime novels and books from the John Regan collection to establish comparative historical context.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, this project tests Karin Dannehl's ideas about reconciling the gaps between biographies and life cycle studies, so that the two methods produce a portrait of *Exposed* from multiple perspectives.<sup>4</sup> I argue that *Exposed*, produced during dime literature's shift from adult to youth readership, reveals the fluidity of the dime novel publishing industry while reusing common anti-Mormon arguments from the nineteenth century, so that the makers of *Mormonism Exposed* largely conformed to nineteenth-century conventions for publishing and culture. Through *Exposed*, the creators reiterated their status quo notions of pulp fiction publishing and U.S. religion, even though nascent changes to dime novels and Mormonism would soon render the book obsolete.

The Beadle and Adams firm published the first classic dime novel in 1860, but historians have since used the term *dime novel* to describe several formats – story papers containing many short stories, standalone dime novels, and anthologies called libraries – that carried nineteenth-century genre fiction.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, once Beadle's ten-cent publications became popular, “The generic American term ‘dime novel’ was subsequently applied to any inexpensive paper-covered ‘sensation’ novel.”<sup>6</sup> In nineteenth-century America, “Compulsory school laws had created a demand for reading material, and more of the general public could now read and write.”<sup>7</sup> Additionally, “As the distance between residential neighborhoods and factory districts grew in the late nineteenth century, more time was spent

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<sup>3</sup> Giorgio Riello, “Things That Shape History: Material Culture and Historical Narratives,” in *History and Material Culture*, edited by Karen Harvey (London: Routledge, 2009), 25-26. Phyllis Andrews, Manuscript Librarian at the University of Rochester Libraries, and Gerrit van Dyck, Mormon History and Doctrine Librarian at Brigham Young University's Harold B. Lee Library, provided much assistance in tracking down LDS-related primary sources.

<sup>4</sup> Karin Dannehl, “Object Biographies: From Production to Consumption,” in *History and Material Culture*, edited by Karen Harvey (London: Routledge, 2009), 132-134.

<sup>5</sup> Michael L. Cook, *Dime Novel Roundup: Annotated Index 1931-1981* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983), 19-20; Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America*, The Haymarket Series (New York: Verso, 1987), 10-12; Edward T. LeBlanc, “A Brief History of Dime Novels: Formats and Contents, 1860-1933,” in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, edited by Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia Cushman Schurman (New York: The Haworth Press, 1996), 14; John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangsta-Rap, 1830-1996* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 169; Sullivan, “Introduction,” 3.

<sup>6</sup> Springhall, *Youth*, 169.

<sup>7</sup> LeBlanc, “Brief History,” 14.

commuting, and cheap reading matter accompanied the journey . . . .”<sup>8</sup> Dime novels thus answered consumers’ demand for light reading.

Publishers regularly recycled stories and pirated the contents of other imprints, creating a fluid and contentious industry.<sup>9</sup> In the 1870s, some publishers began using color covers to attract buyers as sales in stores, where books could be seen and compared, outgrew mail-order subscriptions.<sup>10</sup> After 1890, movie theaters and new publications such as “the pulp magazine” began stealing adult readers, so publishers tried to recover profits by increasingly marketing dime novels to children.<sup>11</sup> The two trends of colorization and writing for children collided in 1896, as Edward LeBlanc relates: Street and Smith produced a new periodical, *Tip Top Weekly*, “with colored pictorial covers,” which was such a hit that “[w]ithin a year most dime novels were being published with colored covers, and their content was mostly directed at the younger audience.”<sup>12</sup> Despite this brief surge, the dime genre went extinct early in the twentieth century, after which nostalgic collectors preserved dime novels privately or in academic archives.<sup>13</sup>

Some detective work is necessary to situate *Exposed* within the historical life cycle of dime novels. The Villanova copy of *Mormonism Exposed* lacks publisher information or a publication date, which makes its provenance initially obscure. *Exposed*’s back cover has a strip of tape or glued-on paper in the same place that several other books in the collection state some variation of the phrase, “John Regan, 417 Dearborn Street, Chicago.”<sup>14</sup> Based on the books’ shared format, font,

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<sup>8</sup> Denning, *Accents*, 39. See also: Sullivan, “Introduction,” 3.

<sup>9</sup> Cook, *Roundup*, 19-20; Paul J. Erickson, “Judging Books By Their Covers: Format, the Implied Reader, and the ‘Degeneration’ of the Dime Novel,” *American Transcendental Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (September 1998), Humanities Full Text (H.W. Wilson), EBSCOHost, accessed October 2, 2014: 249, 252; Clay Reynolds, “Introduction: The Great Rascal,” in Ned Buntline, *The Hero of a Hundred Fights: Collected Stories from the Dime Novel King, From Buffalo Bill to Wild Bill Hickock*, edited by Reynolds (New York: Union Square, 2011), xvii; Lydia Cushman Schurman, “The Librarian of Congress Argues Against Cheap Novels Getting Low Postal Rates,” in *Pioneers, Passionate Ladies, and Private Eyes: Dime Novels, Series Books, and Paperbacks*, edited by Larry E. Sullivan and Lydia Cushman Schurman (New York: The Haworth Press, 1996), 61.

<sup>10</sup> Erickson, “Judging,” 258.

<sup>11</sup> The phrase “the pulp magazine” is quoted from LeBlanc, “Brief History,” 19. See also: Erickson, “Judging,” 255; Demian Katz, *Paper for the People: Dime Novels and Early Mass Market Publishing*, “Successors,” Villanova University Falvey Library Exhibits, accessed October – December 2014, <http://exhibits.library.villanova.edu/dime-novels/relatives/>; LeBlanc, “Brief History,” 17, 19-20; Springhall, *Youth*, 170.

<sup>12</sup> LeBlanc, “Brief History,” 17. See also: Springhall, *Youth*, 172

<sup>13</sup> Cook, *Roundup*, 9-15; LeBlanc, “Brief History,” 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Exposed*, 16. Another tape strip appears on pg. 15, suggesting that duplicate publisher data was also hidden. For modified Regan books, see: No. 6 – *Dr. Courtney’s Guide to Happy Marriage*,

and library classification, it is clear that they all came from the Regan firm. A Google Books entry for *Mormonism Exposed*, which lists “J. Regan” as publisher and also gives an 1896 publication date, substantiates the existence of an *Exposed* published by Regan.<sup>15</sup> The question, then, is why someone concealed the publisher of the Villanova *Exposed*.

A November 1896 copy of *The People’s Home Journal* sheds some light on this question.<sup>16</sup> The *Journal’s* back cover features an advertisement by the Sawyer Publishing Co. of Waterville, Maine, offering *Mormonism Exposed* and thirty-five other dime novels (twelve of which appear in the Regan collection) for free if readers subscribe to another journal. The ad sensationally summarizes *Exposed*: “Mormonism Exposed, by a Mormon slave wife. Telling about the rites of the Danites, doings of Polygamists with their numerous wives, etc. etc. This book is of thrilling interest.”<sup>17</sup> Villanova librarian Michael Foight has theorized that the Sawyer firm gave away the Regan books at a discount as a sales promotion. In this case, the tape on *Exposed* would constitute a modification of Regan books for use in Sawyer’s promotion, making it seem that the books originated with Sawyer.<sup>18</sup> There is no evidence that the Villanova *Exposed* is one of the editions Sawyer offered in the *People’s Home Journal*. The tape on the Villanova copy may have been from a *third* publisher who modified *Mormonism Exposed* for publication.

WorldCat and Google Books list more versions of *Exposed* – one published by New York’s J.B. Nichols in 1896, another published by Chicago’s Watson Supply House in 1896, and one published by A.B. Courtney in 1894<sup>19</sup> – so the

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No. 7 – *Dr. Parkhurst’s Exposures of Vice in New York*, No. 21 – *White Slaves of Turkey Egypt and America*, and No. 31 – *How to Get a Government Position* in the John Regan Five Cent Pamphlets, Villanova University Library Special Collections, Villanova, PA.

<sup>15</sup> “Mormonism Exposed,” Google Books, accessed September 29, 2014,

<http://books.google.com/books?id=jd0hnQEACAAJ&dq=%2B%22Mormonism+Exposed%22+%2B%22Regan%22&hl=en&sa=X&ei=MAaGVOjVBIImGyQT4poEg&ved=0CCkQ6wEwAA>.

<sup>16</sup> *The People’s Home Journal* (New York: F.M. Lupton) 11, no. 11, November 1896, Villanova University Digital Library, last modified September 4, 2014, accessed September – December 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:359167>.

<sup>17</sup> *The People’s Home Journal*, rear cover.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Foight, interview with author, Villanova, PA, August 27, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> *Mormonism Exposed* (A.B. Courtney, 1894), Google Books, accessed December 9, 2014,

<https://books.google.com/books?id=GZtctwAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=editions:OCLC57149081>;

*Mormonism Exposed* (J.B. Nichols, 1896), Google Books, accessed December 9,

2014, <https://books.google.com/books?id=QzJCAQAAMAAJ&dq=editions:OCLC57149081>;

Phyllis Andrews, email messages to author, September 29, 2014; search results for “Mormonism Exposed [Title Phrase, date 1896],” WorldCat, accessed September 29-30, 2014. Proof the J.B.

Nichols book is the same as Villanova’s version: *Mormonism Exposed* (New York: J.B. Nichols, ca. 1896), HathiTrust, accessed December 9, 2014, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/>

manuscript went through more iterations than merely Sawyer and Regan. Since the text of the Courtney version is not readily available online, it cannot be examined to see if it is truly the oldest edition of the book. Chad Flake's monumental bibliography of Mormon-themed books also fails to clarify the book's provenance. While Flake's bibliography lists Chicago as the site of *Exposed's* publication, the book's entry gives no publisher name or date, so the Regan, Watson, or perhaps even Courtney edition could be the first version.<sup>20</sup> The origins of *Exposed* thus cannot be determined definitively. There is no guarantee that Regan was *Exposed's* original publisher; because of the Courtney version, *Exposed* likely predates 1896, when most of the variants were published.

The many *Exposed* variants and Sawyer-versus-Regan editions of the same pamphlets reveal a volatile dime novel industry, where the unlicensed reprinting and pirating of manuscripts was pervasive and standard. Nineteen of the Regan books in Villanova's collection appear in the Sawyer ad, and given the history of dime novel piracy, it appears likely that either Regan stole Sawyer's books, or Sawyer stole Regan's books.<sup>21</sup> Another possibility is that Regan or Sawyer bought a stock of books or printing plates from the other company,<sup>22</sup> but the considerable number of *Exposed* variants from other publishers makes it unlikely that such an orderly sale happened every single time the book was reprinted. Considering nineteenth-century consumers' massive demand for reading material – "Beadle's total sales between 1860 and 1865 approached the then-immense figure of five million"<sup>23</sup> – publishers likely engaged in this wild recycling of other books to answer the demand. Reprinting stories without attribution fits modern standards of plagiarism and copyright infringement, but the secondary literature on dime novels lacks accounts of legal repercussions for piracy during the nineteenth century. Ultimately, the convoluted provenance of *Mormonism Exposed* indicates that printers of dime literature committed constant piracy, or at least constant textual recycling, to continue reaping profits from American readers.

The fact that the Sawyer firm offered twenty-five cents for thirty-six dime novels, including its possibly stolen variant of *Exposed*, has further speculative implications for dime novel economics. Why so many books for so little? Perhaps

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<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100182726> (the text on page 3 matches page 3 of the VU edition exactly).

<sup>20</sup> Chad J. Flake, ed., *A Mormon Bibliography, 1830-1930: Books, Pamphlets, Periodicals, and Broadsides Relating to the First Century of Mormonism*, introduction by Dale L. Morgan (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1978), 438.

<sup>21</sup> John Regan Five Cent Pamphlets; *People's Home Journal*, rear cover.

<sup>22</sup> Demian Katz brought this possibility to my attention. [Demian Katz, email messages to author, January 2, 2015.]

<sup>23</sup> Springhall, *Youth*, 169.

this product line was not selling well and the Sawyer businessmen lowered the price to get rid of the excess stock. Alternatively, perhaps Sawyer anticipated selling so many subscriptions that the firm would make its money back quickly. Either way, since *Exposed* and the rest of its product line were used to entice readers into subscribing to a journal, it appears that *Exposed* and other dime novels held some value among American readers. Although dime novels were not great literature, they worked as short-term literature to be read, enjoyed, and forgotten.

Scholars disagree about who actually read dime novels, though. Michael Denning and John Springhall argue that the books were meant for a working class audience, whereas Paul Erickson, Michael Cook, and Clay Reynolds think all classes read dime novels.<sup>24</sup> These scholars, along with dime novel bibliographer J. Randolph Cox, agree that dime novels were not exclusively intended for children before the shift to an all-youth readership in the mid-to-late 1890s.<sup>25</sup> Returning to our 1896 Regan edition of *Exposed*, one book cannot reveal the intended class and age of *all* dime novel readers, yet the book comments on how, late in the genre's heyday, publishers designed their books to attract readers.

*Exposed's* cover lists the price as five cents,<sup>26</sup> but it is difficult to find significance in that price, since a variety of dime periodicals were sold for that value and the historiography of dime novels lacks consensus on pricing. Denning mentions both "nickel and dime pamphlets"; Demian Katz contends that nickel books "were designed to cost less than the early dime novels"; Edward LeBlanc mentions how twenty-five-cent books were too expensive "when wages were \$1.00 a day for most laboring positions," implying that dime and nickel prices were more affordable; and Springhall mentions Street and Smith's successful 1896 line of color books which he describes as "nickel weeklies."<sup>27</sup> From this debate, it appears that, if nothing else, the nickel price helped put dime literature in the hands of more readers.<sup>28</sup> The one historian who finds a genuine clue to the demographics of readers in the books' pricing is LeBlanc, who argues that, once dime publishers sought a teenage audience instead of adults, "ten cents [was] for fiction for adults,

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<sup>24</sup> Cook, *Roundup*, 19-20; Denning, *Accents*, 39, 60; Erickson, "Judging," 255; Reynolds, xvii; Springhall, *Youth*, 73.

<sup>25</sup> J. Randolph Cox, *The Dime Novel Companion: A Source Book* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), xx; Denning, *Accents*, 30; Erickson, "Judging," 254, 255; Springhall, *Youth*, 73.

<sup>26</sup> *Mormonism Exposed*, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Quotes in order of citation: Denning, *Accents*, 12; Katz, *Papers for the People*, "Evolution," <http://exhibits.library.villanova.edu/dime-novels/the-basics/>; LeBlanc, "Brief History," 14; Springhall, *Youth*, 172.

<sup>28</sup> Still, the nickel price of Street and Smith's 1896 *Tip Top Weekly* was far less significant than the periodical's all-color covers, which became the new standard for dime novels late in the genre's life cycle.

[and] five cents for teenagers.”<sup>29</sup> If LeBlanc’s interpretation is taken as a given, then the price of *Exposed*, combined with the fact that it was printed during the transition to youth readership, means that the book was meant for youths.

However, if we consider the materiality of *Mormonism Exposed*, namely the book’s luxury-good advertisements for a dice game and an automatic pencil, then we get a different intended age demographic.<sup>30</sup> Page fifteen’s ad for the dice game promises that “Boys will find much amusement” in playing, but the ad’s text, which also details the price and shipping for the game, could be seen as addressing the boys themselves or their parents.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, page sixteen’s ad for a mechanical pencil, which asserts that pencils are “an absolute necessity with us all,” could be targeting youth readers with extra pocket money or adult readers.<sup>32</sup> Additionally (and crucially), *Mormonism Exposed*’s plot, which I will discuss later, is not appropriate for children. When considered together, the ambiguous advertisements and plot indicate that the Regan employees did *not* design *Mormonism Exposed* for the youth demographic. Still, *Exposed*’s 1896 publication date, during the transition to youth readership and LeBlanc’s argument about age-related pricing leave some unresolved ambiguity about the intended reader’s age. Indeed, *Exposed* is such an unusually designed dime novel that one must wonder if it was actually sold for five cents, or if it was sold at all. Perhaps it was merely used as a promotion of some kind.<sup>33</sup>

As for the class of the intended reader, there is evidence that the John Regan firm did not intend *Mormonism Exposed* to be exclusively for workers. According to the advertisements, a bulk order of a dozen dice games cost seventy-five cents, while a bulk order of a dozen mechanical pencils cost ninety cents.<sup>34</sup> Recall that LeBlanc describes one dollar as a baseline daily wage in the late nineteenth century.<sup>35</sup> The *Historical Statistics of the United States* and Kathy Peiss’s *Cheap Amusements* corroborate LeBlanc’s claim. Peiss describes “six to seven dollars weekly” as a standard laborer’s wage in turn-of-the-twentieth-century New York City,<sup>36</sup> while the *Statistics* database lists \$439 yearly, or approximately \$1.20 daily,

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<sup>29</sup> LeBlanc, “Brief History,” 16.

<sup>30</sup> Oddly, *Exposed* does not feature advertisements for other dime novels – a typical feature at the back of these books. See: Erickson, “Judging,” 254.

<sup>31</sup> *Mormonism Exposed*, 15.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> In our conversations, Demian Katz raised the possibility that *Exposed* was never sold for its cover price. [Demian Katz, email messages to author, January 2, 2015.]

<sup>34</sup> *Mormonism Exposed*, 15, 16.

<sup>35</sup> LeBlanc, “Brief History,” 14

<sup>36</sup> Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 53.

as the average salary for non-farm employees in 1896, the year of *Exposed's* publication.<sup>37</sup> If a potential reader made only a dollar each day and already spent a nickel on *Exposed*, it seems highly unlikely that such a reader would be willing or able to spend ninety cents, almost a day's full wage, on a triviality like a mechanical pencil. Based on this analysis, the Regan firm intended *Mormonism Exposed* for middle-class readers, or at least not exclusively for average laborers.

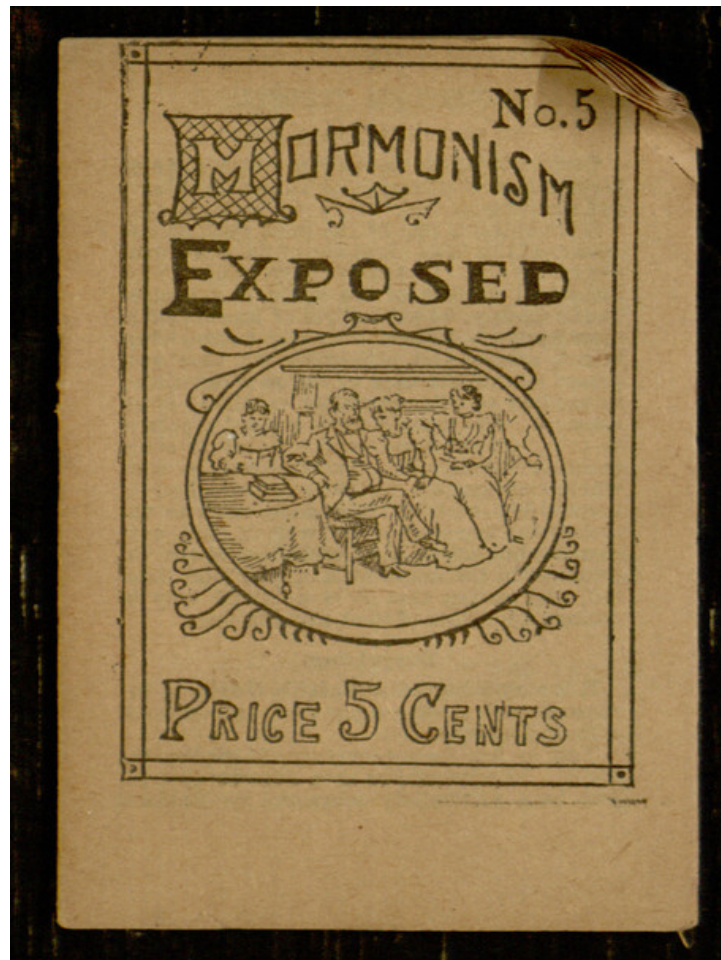


Figure 1. Cover of *Mormonism Exposed*. Dime Novel and Popular Literature Collection, Digital Library, Villanova University. Reprinted with permission. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:289036>.

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<sup>37</sup> Robert A. Margo, "Daily and annual earnings of employees – all and nonfarm: 1860–1929," Table Ba4280-4282 in *Historical Statistics of the United States, Earliest Times to the Present: Millennial Edition*, edited by Susan B. Carter, Scott Sigmund Gartner, Michael R. Haines, Alan L. Olmstead, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), accessed December 10, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/ISBN-9780511132971.Ba4214-4544>.



Labor also figures into a consideration of *Exposed*'s artwork and layout. An unknown illustrator working for the Regan firm composed the book's cover to make it look attractive despite the tiny size, low price, and cheap acidic paper stock.<sup>38</sup> A double rectangular bracket, 5.5 centimeters wide by 8.5 centimeters long, fills most of *Mormonism Exposed*'s front cover, enclosing the title, a series classification ("No. 5"), the price statement, and the cover illustration within 46.75 cm<sup>2</sup>. Everything within the bracket is visually balanced, allowing the viewer's eye to flow easily from one line of text to another. A tiny circle at each of the bracket's four corners, boxed in a square, creates the illusion of a formal picture frame, thus heightening the product's aura of respectability.

Small decorative details further the illustrator's goal of creating a cover that evokes high standards. The capitalized, blocky "M" in "Mormonism," surrounded by a four-cornered box with concave left and right sides, is ostentatious. The leading "M" in "Mormonism" and "E" in "Exposed" are larger than the ensuing letters, emulating how, in older books, the first letter of a chapter or section of text would be much larger than ensuing letters. A diamond combined with straight lines and curls sits between "Mormonism" and "Exposed;" while not perfectly geometric, the pseudo-diamond looks decorative and suggests that meticulous care went into the book's design. Flowing curled lines around the cover's central, circle-shaped illustration serve no function except ornamentation. Finally, a small hook-like ornament at the top of the circular drawing suggests that the circle is a pocket watch, and the illustration is a photograph tucked inside the watch.<sup>39</sup> These many flourishes – the round drawing, the frilly lines and decorative squiggles, varying font styles and sizes, and always a series identifying number – appear on every Regan cover.<sup>40</sup> By keeping the design uniform for all books in the series, the Regan artist ensured that all the books had some emulation of high-class publishing and provided consistency of appearance for potential readers.

Despite these successful visual strategies inside the bracket, the design of *Exposed*'s cover outside the bracket fails to maintain the illusion of professionalism. The bracket is tilted slightly to the right and is flush with the top of the page, so that the bracket and its contents are too far up, rather than squarely in the page's center. The 22.25 cm<sup>2</sup> of empty cover space not enclosed with the bracket is mostly located at the bottom of the page, making the cover illustration and title information look too small for the page, and making the page as a whole

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<sup>38</sup> Paper stock comment derived from: Michael Foight, interview with author, Villanova, PA, November 6, 2014.

<sup>39</sup> *Mormonism Exposed*, 1. There is also an unusual line under the double bracket – it is unclear, even under a magnifying glass or with digital magnification, if the line is dirt or if it was once text (the name of the cover illustrator?), now smudged beyond legibility.

<sup>40</sup> John Regan Five Cent Pamphlets.

appear unbalanced. These elements do not necessarily mean that the illustrator was untalented, though: “Publishers often used the same artist for all of their publications; such an artist might have to work rapidly to produce several covers each week.”<sup>41</sup> Besides, the rapid printing and binding of a large number of dime novels would also lead to numerous variations in how the finished pamphlets turned out.<sup>42</sup> As such, the printing errors and tilted, small image likely stem from the economic pressures of working for a fiction factory like J. Regan & Co., and not from a lack of artistic ability. Quite a few books in the Regan collection also feature tilted, incorrectly positioned, or incorrectly scaled cover illustrations, further showing that the need to meet quotas affected the output of the printers and artists engaged in dime novel production.<sup>43</sup>

*Exposed*'s cover illustration, framed by that not-entirely-symmetrical, watch-like circle, reveals to the viewer an iconic element of the LDS faith – the polygamist family unit. A bearded man dressed in a three-piece suit sits before the hearth; with his legs crossed and one arm resting on a raised surface, he appears relaxed. The reader infers that this man is a polygamist Latter-day Saint based on the pamphlet's title and because four women, rather than one, sit around him. Three of the women sit comically close to the hearth, another likely sign of the artist's haste to complete his or her batch of illustrations (rather than illogically putting people so near a fire). The woman at the man's right may be the first wife, since she is seated at the traditionally preferred right hand. She reads a book, with several more books stacked on the table. It is difficult to tell, even under magnification, but this wife may have her fingers wrapped around her husband's arm. As for the three women (i.e., sister wives) to the left of the husband, one engages the husband in conversation; the next looks concerned, her mouth a perfect “O” (more easily visible under magnification) of alarm or surprise; and the third is only partially drawn, with no face. All the wives wear dresses with long sleeves, long skirts, and high collars, with their hair pulled up. The scene appears quite pleasant and ordinary, except for the plural spouses, who set this family apart from most non-LDS American families of that era. Then again, all may not be perfect in this family. The first wife's engrossment in her book and indifference to the rest of the scene, combined with the second wife's proximity to her husband and the third wife's concerned appearance, suggest jealousy or contention among the wives.<sup>44</sup> This image is striking, but although *Exposed* discusses polygamy,<sup>45</sup> no family like the one on the cover figures in the story's plot.

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<sup>41</sup> Cox, *Dime Novel Companion*, xviii.

<sup>42</sup> Demian Katz, email messages to author, January 2, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> John Regan Five Cent Pamphlets.

<sup>44</sup> *Mormonism Exposed*, 1.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 11, 13-14.

Dissonance between the outer cover and the inner text was fairly typical for dime novels. As Paul Erickson explains when discussing the dime novel *Old Nick of the Swamp*, “The incident in the [cover] illustration does not take place anywhere in the novel, but it did allow for the inclusion of both an Indian and a trapper, as well as their weapons of choice.”<sup>46</sup> Essentially, a “lively front-page illustration,”<sup>47</sup> even if the scene had no direct connection to the novel, caught the reader’s attention and perhaps led the reader to buy the book. While discussing the rise of in-store dime novel sales from the 1870s onward, Erickson also describes how “[t]he use of cover illustrations increased the similarity these novels bore to more suspicious forms of literature, since the illustrations became more lurid as competition increased.”<sup>48</sup> Erickson does not clarify what forms of pulp fiction were “suspicious,” but his use of the word “lurid” indicates that shock value, even if the shock did not spring from a book’s plot, became a key element of dime covers as the nineteenth century progressed. The frame-like bracket on *Mormonism Exposed*’s cover thus encapsulates an unreliable yet attention-grabbing snapshot of what may lie within the book: *If the reader wants more secrets of these odd Mormon families, read on.*<sup>49</sup> This snapshot engages the reader in a certain degree of voyeurism, spying on real and imagined Mormon families, but perhaps that voyeuristic aspect is the key to capturing the reader’s interest.

Artwork from other LDS-themed dime novels supports Erickson’s claim of lurid covers becoming the norm, even before the 1896 transition to all-color, and also suggests that Mormonism in particular was associated with sensationalism.<sup>50</sup> The cover for 1876’s *Bessie Baine: or, The Mormon Victim* shows a man pointing angrily at a woman, who cries “I never – never shall!” to intrigue the reader, while

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<sup>46</sup> Erickson, “Judging,” 251.

<sup>47</sup> Springhall, *Youth*, 170.

<sup>48</sup> Erickson, “Judging,” 258.

<sup>49</sup> This concept of a bracketed sensational image seems to have endured beyond the end of the dime novel industry. The film poster for the 1919 silent film *Riders of the Purple Sage*, which featured Mormons as villains, has three photographs (two of them bracketed snapshots) that convey thrilling elements of the story. The first bracketed image shows two desperate-looking lovers. The second bracketed image shows a dark, villainous-looking man crouching while a terrified woman and child huddle in the background. Beneath the bracketed snapshots, two men on horseback are pictured. The themes here of suspense, action, and melodrama give the viewer a sense of what will transpire in the film, in a bid to get the viewer to purchase a ticket [“Riders of the Purple Sage [Film Poster Advertisement],” in *Moving Picture World*, September 1918, Wikimedia Commons, last modified September 14, 2013, accessed October – December 2014, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Riders\\_of\\_the\\_Purple\\_Sage\\_1918.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Riders_of_the_Purple_Sage_1918.jpg)].

<sup>50</sup> I found the majority of these books by searching the online index for Northern Illinois University’s Beadle & Adams dime novel project, marking down books with the keywords “Mormon” or “Danite” in their entries, and ordering them through Interlibrary Loan.

a horrified woman and an old man sprawled on a chair look on.<sup>51</sup> Interior illustrations show a masked man visiting another man in prison and crying “I am come to lead you to trial,” as well as a recalcitrant prisoner trying to beat his executioner with a chair.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the cover for 1884’s *California Joe: A Story of the Destroying Angels* showcases a vibrant horse chase, with one man tumbling off his dead white horse but clinging to a donkey, a woman on a black horse trampling the dead horse and racing toward the man, and a posse on horseback in the distance.<sup>53</sup> *Silver Steve the Branded Sport*’s cover depicts a mustached, stylishly dressed man bearing his branded chest to another dapper man, while a bizarre drawing of a racially stereotyped, blindfolded Chinese man, subtitled “The Eyeless Detective,” occupies the upper right corner.<sup>54</sup> *The Doomed Dozen; or, Dolores, the Danite’s Daughter* (the Danites being a supposed LDS paramilitary organization) leads off with a firing squad, all dressed in hoods and dark robes, aiming at a young man trapped in an upright coffin.<sup>55</sup> *The Pilgrim Sharp*’s cover shows an unkempt man in a top hat and striped pants with a revolver in each of his hands hijacking a hearse, while a crowd watches and one man raises a hand to calm him.<sup>56</sup> Finally, the color cover for *Cody Against the Mormons* shows Buffalo Bill capturing two vexed-looking men in matching uniforms.<sup>57</sup> These images reveal that artists frequently used action, interpersonal conflict, motion, and sensation to illustrate Mormon-related stories.

In contrast to these wild illustrations, *Exposed*’s cover shows a sedate family sitting and reading, so that any degree of shock value comes from the unusual family dynamic, not action or violence. The shock of a polygamous family pales in

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<sup>51</sup> M. Quad, *Bessie Baine; or the Mormon’s Victim. A Tale of Utah, The Novelette*, 1876 (Boston: Thomes & Talbot), PDF copy of edition stored at: Merrill-Crazier Special Collections & Archives, Book Collections (LL), Utah State University, Logan, UT, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Quad, *Bessie Baine*, 21, 28.

<sup>53</sup> Col. Thomas Hoyer Monstery, *California Joe’s First Trail: A Story of the Destroying Angels*, *Beadle’s Half Dime Library* 15, no. 376, October 7, 1884 (New York: Beadle and Adams), 1.

<sup>54</sup> Capt. Howard Holmes, *Silver Steve the Branded Sport; or, The Man-Mystery of Moonstone*, *Beadle’s New York Dime Library* 54, no. 701, March 30, 1892 (New York: Beadle & Adams), 1.

<sup>55</sup> Dr. Frank Powell, *The Doomed Dozen; or, Dolores, the Danite’s Daughter. A Romance of Border Trails and Mormon Mysteries*, *Beadle’s New York Dime Library* 13, no. 158, November 2, 1881 (New York: Beadle & Adams), 1.

<sup>56</sup> William F. Cody [“Buffalo Bill” Cody], *The Pilgrim Sharp; or, The Soldier’s Sweetheart, a True Story of the Overland Trail*, *Beadle’s New York Dime Library* 19, no. 243, June 20, 1883 (New York: Beadle & Adams), 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Cody Against the Mormons: A Tale of Stirring Adventures in Colorado*, *Buffalo Bill Library* 667, n.d. [1911-1932] (London: Hazell, Watson, & Viney, Ltd.), Villanova University Digital Library, last modified January 9, 2014, accessed October – December 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl%3A292817>, front cover.

comparison to the action scenes depicted on the other LDS-themed books. *Exposed* looks less sensational – less entertaining – than the more *lurid* dime novels, a difference that would have been plain on a store shelf. Indeed, *Exposed*'s lackluster cover makes one wonder if the Regan cover carried over to the Sawyer or Nichols editions of *Exposed*. Such a placid image might have bored customers and translated into poor sales, which would explain why the Sawyer firm's businessmen ultimately offered the book in a huge discounted bundle of dime novels.

Returning to the Regan edition, though, *Exposed*'s cover image lacks shading, depth, or fine detail, elements common to the art in the Mormon-related dime novels discussed previously. (For instance, *California Joe*'s cover features exquisite pen-and-line shading to detail rampaging horses.<sup>58</sup>) The cover illustration of *Exposed*, as with all of the Regan books, is also small in comparison to other dime novel covers, which tend to have considerably larger dimensions than the pocket-sized Regan books. *Exposed* might have been overlooked in stores alongside bigger pamphlets. Furthermore, *Exposed*'s black and white cover suggests that the book would have been at a disadvantage in the market of 1896, when dime publishers were rapidly embracing color covers. We do not know if the Regan edition was meant for mail-order purchase, but the lack of color could indicate that *Exposed* and other Regan books were not meant for in-store sales in 1896. If Regan were still using mail subscriptions in 1896 instead of store sales, the new industry standard, then *Exposed* would have been even more at a disadvantage. Aside from the comparatively unappealing cover, fewer consumers would have been likely to buy the book through the mail.

One element that might have helped *Exposed*'s sale, whether via subscription or in stores, is the claim on page two that a “Mormon slave wife” wrote the book.<sup>59</sup> Nonfiction writing for dime periodicals was not unheard of; in the 1880s-90s, some pulp libraries included “standard works on diverse subjects: medicine, law, science, history, and religion.”<sup>60</sup> More importantly, *Exposed* resembles other fake memoirs published in the nineteenth century. As Terryl Givens explains, “Anti-Catholic and anti-Mormon writers more commonly – but spuriously – claimed the genre of ‘memoirs,’ as did Maria Monk and Maria Ward, to name but two of the most successful.” Writers were also exploring forms like historical fiction, the gothic novel, and captivity narratives, “but absent their adaptation, the memoir was the closest available form that allowed the presentation of detailed, lurid description with the force and credibility of the personal

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<sup>58</sup> Monstrey, *California Joe's First Trail*, 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Mormonism Exposed*, 2.

<sup>60</sup> Schurman, “Librarian,” 63.

account.”<sup>61</sup> *Exposed* thus resembles *Female Lives of the Mormons* by “Maria Ward,” in which an author used a pseudonym to give her anti-Mormon narrative trustworthiness.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, the fact that a woman *slave* narrates *Exposed* suggests that the book’s author wanted to appeal to female readers and win over their sympathy (and their nickels, in buying the book). Indeed, since multiple publishers reprinted this book, it appears that appealing to female readers’ sympathy was an enduring business conceit.

Surprisingly, the “Mormon slave wife” never discusses her own (fictional) circumstances and does not beg for sympathy, but rather plunges into a polemic.<sup>63</sup> The narrator calls Mormonism “one of the monstrosities of the age,” “a creed repulsive to every refined mind,” and “a faith which commands a violation of the rights of hospitality, sanctifies falsehoods, enforces the systematic degradation of woman [etc.]”<sup>64</sup> This lengthy comment implies that the LDS Church is heretical to mainstream Christianity, and the claim that Mormons degrade women seems like an appeal to women readers’ sympathy, even if we know nothing about this LDS slave wife. The narrator deems Mormonism alien to America, “an autocratic form of government” with a leader “whose despotic power was as great as that of the Czar,” and a false religion based on a plagiarized historical novel.<sup>65</sup> From there, the narrator gives a historical account, beginning with Joseph Smith and the Golden Plates, then signs of trouble (such as the Danites), the start of polygamy, Brigham Young’s rise to power, and the exodus to Utah.<sup>66</sup> Next, the narrator claims the Danites, or “Destroying Angels,” terrorized Utah and kidnapped “[f]resh women” for polygamist harems.<sup>67</sup> The author ends with an account of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, with Mormons and Native Americans joining forces to murder wagon trains, and a reprise of anti-polygamy language, bemoaning the treatment of Mormon women – material so grim and adult in content that this dime

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<sup>61</sup> Givens, *Viper*, 110.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 139. See also: Maria Ward [Mrs. Benjamin G. Harris], *Female Life Among the Mormons: A Narrative of Many Years’ Personal Experience. By the Wife of a Mormon Elder, Recently from Utah* (Philadelphia: J. Edwin Potter, 1863), HathiTrust, accessed October – December 2014, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101079828404>.

<sup>63</sup> Based on the plot, it is apparent that *Exposed*’s cover illustration undermines the author’s goal of lambasting Mormonism. Instead of drawing the Mountain Meadows Massacre or another controversial anecdote from the book, and thus painting Mormons as villains, the artist created a mildly surprising but not particularly compelling cover image of a polygamist home. In this way, the artist matches the historical trend of dissonance between dime novel cover and contents and reiterates that such dissonance could seriously misrepresent a book’s message.

<sup>64</sup> *Mormonism Exposed*, 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-10.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

novel clearly was not meant as children's fare.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, the narrative is so overwhelmingly negative that it is almost certainly not an authentic LDS memoir. Rather, the book uses the pulp genre and a nonfiction conceit to construct an inflammatory, prejudicial argument.

The claims made in *Mormonism Exposed* were routine for nineteenth-century popular discourse, since the era saw many anti-Mormon texts published.<sup>69</sup> As such, *Exposed* presents nineteenth-century prejudices in a fairly unoriginal manner, while still accurately conveying the animosity and disgust many Americans expressed toward Mormons circa 1896, the year Utah became a state.<sup>70</sup> Givens further contends that non-Mormon Americans attacked the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to reinforce their own sense of national identity.<sup>71</sup> Most mainstream Christian Americans viewed the Mormon people as cultural outliers – the *other*:

Just as anti-Catholicism would be subsumed under the nobler banner of patriotism, so can we construe the civic anxiety provoked by an alien (yet not foreign) culture rooted in American soil (as Mormonism came to be characterized) as the projection of religious outrage against a full-blown 'heresy' that stakes a vexing claim to being the authentic Christianity.<sup>72</sup>

Interestingly, critics of Mormonism more often targeted the Church's social practices, notably plural marriage, and not so much the Latter-day Saints' theological arguments: "the dissociation of Mormonism from religion, in fact, reinforces the authority of tolerance as a value that constrains and shapes the terms

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 12-14.

<sup>69</sup> For examples of typical anti-LDS writing, see: *The Demoralizing Doctrines and Disloyal Teachings of the Mormon Hierarchy* (1866 [n.d. on physical edition; date derived from library catalog entry: <http://bit.ly/1phm8QN>]), in *Pamphlets. Pacific States*, 18 pages [bound volume of pamphlets originally published separately], William Henry Seward Pamphlets 196E, University of Rochester Libraries, Dept. of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, Rochester, N.Y., 18; Dr. W. Wyl [pseudonym for Wilhelm Rifter von Wymetal], *Mormon Portraits, or the Truth about the Mormon Leaders from 1830 to 1886. Volume First: Joseph Smith the Prophet, His family, and His Friends: A Study Based on Facts and Documents, With Fourteen Illustrations* (Salt Lake City: Tribune Printing and Publishing Company, 1886), University of Rochester Libraries, Dept. of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, Rochester, N.Y., 11, 13, 14.

<sup>70</sup> Demian Katz has suggested tracking excerpts of the Regan dime novels through digital humanities databases, to see if the novels' contents were recycled from other publications.

[Demian Katz, email messages to author, January 2, 2015.]

<sup>71</sup> Givens, *Viper*, 14, 16, 42.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 18.

of social conflict. In other words, tolerance and patriotism can coexist more comfortably than tolerance and religious bigotry.”<sup>73</sup> Anti-Mormon Americans in the late nineteenth century wanted the moral high ground, so they largely avoided accusations of heresy and couched their denunciations “in nonreligious terms.”<sup>74</sup>

*Exposed* curiously breaks with this trend when its narrator denounces LDS religious beliefs, but the book also advances routine secular critiques. Moralistic crusaders pounced on the fact that “LDS bishops and apostles influenced political party formation,”<sup>75</sup> as well as more spurious “allegations that oaths involving threats of death were taken in the temples and that secret promises to avenge the martyrdom of early Mormons leaders were made.”<sup>76</sup> Critics wrote topical novels denouncing Mormons and plural marriage.<sup>77</sup> For example, the novel *His Three Wives* has characters uttering anti-LDS phrases such as “this hideous dogma of polygamy,”<sup>78</sup> and “I knew that, as far back as ’56, slavery and polygamy were coupled theoretically as twin relics of barbarism.”<sup>79</sup> Like *Exposed*, *Wives* is a didactic anti-LDS narrative, albeit in full novel form.

*Mormonism Exposed* is also not the only dime novel to cast Mormons as villains or portray LDS society in an exaggerated, negative fashion. Some dime periodicals ran short articles on Mormons, such as “Domestic Manners of the Mormons,” which describes incest, polygamist men voraciously seeking virgins, and other unsavory deeds,<sup>80</sup> or “With the False Prophet: A Mormon Wife’s Story,” another fake memoir that describes how polygamy drains a woman’s spirit.<sup>81</sup> Other LDS-themed dime novels were as long as short stories or novellas, relating

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>75</sup> Matthew Bowman, *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith* (New York: Random House, 2012), 155.

<sup>76</sup> B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 128.

<sup>77</sup> Michael Austin, “‘As Much as Any Novelist Could Ask’: Mormons in American Popular Fiction,” in *Mormons and Popular Culture: The Global Influence of an American Phenomenon, Volume Two: Literature, Art, Media, Tourism, and Sports*, edited by J. Michael Hunter (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 5.

<sup>78</sup> Jeannette H. Walworth, *His Three Wives, Or The Bar-Sinister: A Mormon Study* (1885; New York: The Mershon Company, 1900), Internet Archive, last modified November 7, 2006, accessed October – December 2014, [https://archive.org/stream/histhreewivesor00walwgoog/histhreewivesor00walwgoog\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/histhreewivesor00walwgoog/histhreewivesor00walwgoog_djvu.txt), 222.

<sup>79</sup> Walworth, *His Three Wives*, 190-191.

<sup>80</sup> “Domestic Manners of the Mormons,” *Dodge’s Literary Museum* (Boston) 9, no. 13 (Saturday, September 2, 1854), Villanova University Digital Library, last modified January 9, 2014, accessed September – November, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vud1%3A288423>, 199.

<sup>81</sup> “With the False Prophet: A Mormon Wife’s Story.” *Scribner’s Monthly*, 187[-], 677-680.



salacious narratives in greater depth. *Clair: A Story of Mormon Life and Perfidy* has a forceful LDS Elder convert men to polygamy and lead the Mountain Meadows Massacre,<sup>82</sup> while *Esther: A Story of the Oregon Trail* features an evil Mormon conspiring with an evil Native American.<sup>83</sup> *California Joe*, *Heavy Hand the Restless*, *The Pilgrim Sharp*, and *The Doomed Dozen: or, Dolores, the Danite's Daughter* portray the rumored Danite organization as a vindictive secret society.<sup>84</sup> *Silver Steve* and *Bessie Baine* depict Mormon men as kidnappers of women and possessive of their wives.<sup>85</sup> This survey of LDS-themed stories reveals that anti-Mormonism suffused the dime genre. Of the dime novels surveyed for this paper, however, only “With the False Prophet” and *Exposed* claim to be nonfiction, making one wonder if the false memoir conceit, while common in full-length books, was not commonly used for dime novels.

Contrary to the portrayals in *Mormonism Exposed* and these other stories, American Mormonism experienced enormous changes in the 1890s that eventually brought the religion into the country's cultural mainstream.<sup>86</sup> The federal government had subjected the Mormons, gathered mostly in the Utah territory, to intense legal persecution: “Anti-polygamy laws were passed in 1862, and in 1882 the Edmunds Act disenfranchised polygamists, forbidding them from holding public office, including legal office. Then, in 1887, the Edmunds-Tucker Act virtually dissolved the Church as a legal entity and appropriated much of its

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<sup>82</sup> Hudson Tuttle, *Clair: A Story of Mormon Life and Perfidy*, *The American Library* no. 8, June 23, 1883 (Chicago: Donnelley, Loyd, & Co.), 13, 20-23.

<sup>83</sup> Ann S. Stephens, *Esther: A Story of the Oregon Trail* (New York: Beadle and Company, 1889), 21-23, 91-96.

<sup>84</sup> See: Cody, *The Pilgrim Sharp*; Monstery, *California Joe's First Trail*; Powell, *The Doomed Dozen*; Capt. Mark Wilton [William H. Manning], *Heavy Hand, the Restless; or, The Marked Men of Paradise Gulch* (New York: Beadle and Adams, n.d. [*Beadle's New York Dime Library*, no. 311, October 8, 1884]).

<sup>85</sup> Holmes, *Silver Steve*, 3, 15, 30; Quad, *Bessie Baine*, 8-10, 23-24.

<sup>86</sup> Mormons were also taking up apologetic writing to introduce their own voices into popular discourse. B.H. Roberts's 1900 pamphlet, *The Second Coming of the Messiah, and Events to Precede It*, contradicts the claim made by the *Mormonism Exposed* author in 1896 that all Mormons are despotic: “To the ‘Mormons’ America is a land of promise, a sacred land, dedicated to righteousness, and to liberty, therefore to free institutions which alone may preserve the liberties and the rights of men” (B.H. Roberts, *The Second Coming of the Messiah, and Events to Precede It* (Independence, MO: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1900 [n.d. on physical edition; date derived from WorldCat entry]), University of Rochester Libraries, Dept. of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, Rochester, N.Y., 13). In this way, we see Roberts countering popular anti-LDS views. The Roberts pamphlet is also notable for retelling early LDS history, something that *Exposed* does, but Roberts frames his story in a way that lauds Joseph Smith instead of attacking him (*Second Coming*, 7-12).

property.”<sup>87</sup> As related by Matthew Bowman, the Edmunds-Tucker Act “revoked the women’s suffrage that the Utah legislature had passed in 1870,” “required that marriages in Utah be regulated by state government,” “declared all children of polygamous relationships to be illegitimate and unable to inherit,” and “required all voters in the Utah Territory to swear that they would uphold the Edmunds-Tucker Act before they would be allowed to cast ballots.”<sup>88</sup> Deeply shaken, “church leaders sought to save the Church by acceding to popular demands.”<sup>89</sup> LDS President Wilford Woodruff rejected polygamy in 1890, and, as stated above, Utah became a state in 1896, the year J. Regan & Co. published their version of *Mormonism Exposed*.<sup>90</sup>

Americans expressed anti-Mormon sentiments and used Mormons as literary and cinematic villains for decades after *Mormonism Exposed*’s publication.<sup>91</sup> As Michael Austin writes, “[C]onnoisseurs of popular fiction would not witness the transformation. In the 1890s, without missing a beat, fiction about Mormons became almost entirely historical in nature – . . . most novelists went on writing exactly the same things about the Mormon past that they once wrote about the Mormon present.”<sup>92</sup> *Exposed*, however, still speaks hatefully of the Mormons *in the present*, not in the past. The dime novel therefore was soon out of place in the public consciousness, where “[t]he lawless, lascivious outlaws of the Utah frontier world, within two generations, [became] ultra-obedient superpatriots [sic] known for their strong family values and their sexual Puritanism.”<sup>93</sup> The LDS Church’s decades-long yet epochal transformation from an alien sect to a widely accepted

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<sup>87</sup> Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 121.

<sup>88</sup> Bowman, *Mormon People*, 147-148. For further information, see: Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840-1910* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 49.

<sup>89</sup> Davies, *Introduction to Mormonism*, 120.

<sup>90</sup> Austin, “Mormons in American Popular Fiction,” 2; Bowman, *Mormon People*, 149, 151; Davies, *Introduction to Mormonism*, 121.

<sup>91</sup> Givens, *Viper*, 9. Randy Astle describes how several anti-Mormon films were made in America and Great Britain between 1917 and 1922. The “latter films came as part of a general anti-Mormon crusade in England, but such was the historical distance from polygamy and the LDS Church’s growing stature that the films apparently actually helped [Mormon] missionary work. After these lackluster productions the anti-Mormon films, though not extinct, slid into remission. By the 1930s Mormonism had outlived its sensationalism, and lurid depictions virtually disappeared from the page, stage, and screen” (Randy Astle, “Mormons and Cinema,” in *Mormons and Popular Culture: The Global Influence of an American Phenomenon, Volume One: Cinema, Television, Theater, Music, and Fashion*, edited by J. Michael Hunter (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 6).

<sup>92</sup> Austin, “Mormons in American Popular Fiction,” 8.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

cultural institution rendered the nineteenth-century polemics of *Mormonism Exposed* obsolete. The book had no staying power in the early twentieth century, given the Church's changing social position, so the book became ephemera.

In conclusion, *Mormonism Exposed* thoroughly embodies nineteenth-century ways of thinking about the dime novel industry and American religion. The book's multiplicity of editions reflects the persistent piracy of dime novels, inspired by consumers' high demand for cheap fiction. The Regan firm did not intend *Exposed* to be read only by a teenage audience, showing that the company resisted the industry's 1890s move toward the youth demographic, and reflecting the fact that, for most of the 1800s, adult Americans regularly read dime novels. Moreover, the Regan firm designed *Exposed* to follow the nineteenth-century tradition of fictional memoirs, appeal to women's sympathies, and be read by multiple social classes, since the advertisements target middle-class readers with leisure money to spend. The book has a black and white cover that, while subtly shocking, ignores the late-1800s innovation of lurid dime novel art (whether in black and white *or* color). Lastly, the book reiterates many of the slanders and fears that nineteenth-century Americans levied against the Mormons. The Regan edition of *Mormonism Exposed* housed at Villanova University therefore reveals how people can believe that their social and cultural environments will never change. In other words, the Regan firm's employees believed the current state of affairs for dime novels (black and white dime artwork, a readership of adults and children alike, etc.) and Mormonism (Latter-day Saints as cultural outliers) would endure.

Probably to the Regan team's utter surprise, the status quo portrayed in *Exposed* fell apart by 1900. Publishers began to make dime novels for children only. Color imagery replaced black and white as the industry standard. Mormons edged closer to the mainstream and ceased to frighten Americans to the extent they once did. The appeal to the youth demographic and the rise of in-store dime novel sales failed to offset the industry's declining revenues. New periodicals and motion pictures that better catered to the tastes of twentieth-century consumers caused classic dime novels to become extinct.<sup>94</sup> History pulled the rug out from under Regan's business and worldview even as *Mormonism Exposed* went to the printers.

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<sup>94</sup> An object that fully reflects these economic, literary, and cultural transformations is *The Girl Rough-Riders*, a hardcover young adult novel from 1903 written by former dime novelist Prentiss Ingraham. The book has a color cover, quality paper stock, a child-friendly plot with no adult themes that can appeal to boys and girls alike, and a portrayal of present-day Mormons as friendly, patriotic Americans who welcome outsiders. See: Col. Prentiss Ingraham, *The Girl Rough Riders: A Romantic and Adventurous Trail of Fair Rough Riders through the Wonderland of Mystery and Silence*, illustrated by L.J. Bridgman (Boston: Dana Estes & Company, 1903) University of Rochester, Dept. of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, Rochester, N.Y., also available in slightly different form: HathiTrust, accessed December 2014,

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