

Dennis
Logan, Utah
April, 2007

**“Logan Temple Lamanites”
Supernatural Religious Legend**

Informant:

Dennis has been a member of the Post-Mormon group. He is in his sixties. He would like to have his last name excluded from this research study for the sake of privacy. The only event I know of from his history, that he is willing to share at this time, was that he did serve a 2-year mission for the LDS church.

Context:

I became interested in studying the Post-Mormon group in Cache Valley when I saw their billboard on the main street of Logan, Utah. I visited their website and learned more about their organization. The Post-Mormon group began in Cache Valley and they now have chapters across the globe, including France, Australia, and Sweden. The Post-Mormon group differs from some of the other Ex-Mormon groups that I have attended, because they refrain from perpetuating anti-Mormon sentiments. They are open to discussing negative aspects of the Mormon church, but they are also ready and willing to explore positive aspects of their religious experience.

Jeff Ricks is the leader of the Post-Mormon group in Cache Valley. He was very excited to have me come and visit his group, and sent an email out to all of the members to let them know I was coming. He also informed me that the sensitivity and privacy of members is very important. I assured him that I had also left the Mormon Church four years previously, and I understood the delicacy situation. I let him know that my intention was to collect and research these stories in order to better understand the dialogue between Mormons and Post-Mormons. It is one of my goals to eliminate many of the misunderstandings that circulate between these two groups. Jeff liked what I had to say and suggested that it would be best if I collected folklore during their usual meeting time.

The Post-Mormon group meets at 6:30 every Sunday at Ruby Tuesdays. Ruby Tuesdays is an American casual dining, food chain restaurant. When I arrived, I asked the host where the Post-Mormon group met. He pointed to an enclosed room at the back of the restaurant. The room had glass walls, two tables, and was relatively soundproof. The group meets in this room every week and its reclusive nature allows members to speak freely without fear of being overheard.

There were four people sitting at the first table when I entered the room. I had been previously acquainted with one of the younger men on the table. He greeted me with a handshake and introduced me to Jeff Ricks and the other members. I was immediately swept up in an intense conversation with the members concerning the philosophical

implications of religion. Everyone at the table appeared to be well informed on academic, religious, and popular literature concerning the subject of Mormonism. I have been an avid student of religious studies for many years and I was impressed by their extensive knowledge, willingness to share personal experiences, and their scientific approach to understanding belief. This first conversation set the tone for the rest of the night.

People began slowly filtering into the room over the next half an hour. Most members, presumably those who attended meetings on a regular basis, came up to shake my hand and introduce themselves. They ranged in age from mid-twenties to late-eighties, making me the youngest attendee. At one point in the night, I counted twenty-four people in the room. Jeff explained that this was the largest crowd that had ever come to his meeting. He attributed the high attendance to the new billboard—the one that had originally attracted my attention—and my folklore project.

When everyone had arrived I stood up and gave a brief presentation. First, I explained that I grew up in the Mormon Church and gave a short explanation of why I left. This appeared to make everyone in the room comfortable. Then, in order to help them understand what I was looking for, I read several popular Mormon jokes and religious supernatural experiences. This immediately fueled interest, and people began raising their hands and offering to contribute stories before I could finish my explanation.

Dennis offered the most information for my folklore project. He was very willing to share his stories and interested in what I was going to do with them. However, because some of the things he told me are of a personal nature all names have been excluded. Dennis was sitting across the table from me when he told me this legend. The following is a loose transcription of handwritten notes.

Text:

I heard this story about the Logan temple. There was some temple president that had to wear a disguise because people were coming to invade the church and steal their records. When he snuck in the temple at night while in disguise, he saw a Lamanite guarding the front gate, another one by the door, and more of them inside. They were keeping the records safe.

Texture:

Dennis did not believe this story and offered it simply to help with my project. His memory regarding the story was vague and so the structure of his telling was somewhat disjointed and he paused several times to try and recall certain parts.

Tanya Collings
Utah State University
Survey of American Folklore
Professor Lynne McNeil
Spring 2007