

IS THERE ANOTHER FIRST VISION ACCOUNT?

Assumption: It is an unstated premise which cannot be logically derived from any existing information. ...

Assumptions are generally given to present some new information. These can also be part of some beliefs.

Inference: It is that piece of information which can be logically deduced from the one or more statements.

The Facts and the Inferences based on data and context of the historical record.

Fact 1.) The Church has a demonstrable [tendency to be deceptive](#) and [hide damaging historical documents and historical context](#) when such is damaging to the [dominant narrative](#). We can argue their motives and we can debate which specific people within the Church have committed the acts but the fact remains. [Multiple examples of historical artifacts with damaging information on them stored away indefinitely or only released once public awareness of them began and public uproar became significant.](#)

Examples: [1832 first vision account](#), [Ronald Poelman Conference talk](#), [Leadership income](#), [the brown egg shaped Seer Stone](#), [Council of Fifty Minutes](#), [Brigham Young blaming the Native Americans even after knowing it was his people who committed the Mountain Meadows Massacre](#), [Denied Access to researchers](#), [Termination of Leonard Arrington as Church Historian due to his motive to be open and transparent](#), suppression of [B.H. Roberts faith crisis](#) and the [Secret Mormon Meetings of 1922](#), Suppression of [John Taylor's 1886 Vision](#), [Denial of Polygamy by Joseph Smith](#), [Denial of Adam God while also admitting privately the teaching existed by Bruce R. McConkie](#). There are literally a hundreds more of such instances. These speak deeply to the credibility of the institution's integrity in handling documents or events with honesty and forthrightness and transparency when those documents or events are damaging to the narrative they wish to promote and to the faith of the members of their Church.

Fact 2.) [Joseph Knight Sr.'s recollection document](#) is missing at least a page and perhaps multiple pages at its beginning. The document as we have it starts mid thought and historians and scholars on both sides agree that a page or pages are missing.

Fact 3.) [Joseph Knight Sr.'s recollection](#) is demonstrably a history of Joseph Smith and not a self history. The writing is intentionally telling Joseph Smith's story and wants the reader to be informed of the events and occurrences in the Life of Joseph Smith Jr.

Fact 4.) The [Joseph Knight Sr.'s recollection](#) is written clearly in chronological order. He shares events and occurrences in chronological order starting with the earliest and working forward in time.

Fact 5.) He begins sharing events that had happened before he had ever met Joseph Smith Jr. We know this because the document as we have it begins mid thought in 1823 where Moroni is informing Joseph Smith of where the plates are located in the hill and it continues to lay out events in chronological order going forward from there. Combine that with our knowing that Joseph Knight Sr doesn't meet Joseph Smith until at least 1825 and likely 1826.

Fact 6.) Joseph Knight Sr. ends his historical narrative in 1833. Any major historical events in Mormonism between 1833 and his death in 1847 are absent from his writing indicating a high likelihood that his history was written and at least completed just after the final 1833 event he concludes with.

Inference 1.) The most similar event if in fact another first vision account is the [1832 First Vision account being cut out of Joseph Smith Jr's personal journal by someone inside the Church and stored away from the public awareness for decades until rumor got out and public outcry had someone inside the Church taping it back into the personal journal and allowing it to enter public awareness and public discourse within the Church.](#) Those are all facts. The educated Inference is that the person on both ends of removing and reattaching the document was Joseph Fielding Smith who became Church historian in 1921. The data deeply implicates him as the person. <https://cesletter.org/pdf/first-vision.pdf>

Inference 2.) Historians inside and outside the Church seem to agree that The missing pages were removed by the LDS Church because something in them was damaging to faith and the dominant narrative.

D Michael Quinn, once a historian under Leonard Arrington and former staff inside the Church history department, has stated,

“Rather than being destroyed, it is more likely that Knight’s first page(s) ended up in the private safe of Joseph Fielding Smith. During his service as official LDS Church Historian from 1920 to 1970, Apostle Smith put in this safe any historical documents he regarded as extremely sensitive. When he became LDS president in January 1970, Joseph Fielding Smith had this safe removed to the vault of the First Presidency, where its contents remain today.”

Quinn, who was deeply familiar with the the archives of the Church recognizes the most likely explanation is that like the 1832 First Vision, Joseph Fielding Smith was deeply uncomfortable with what was within those early page(s) of Knight’s recollection and likely removed them to his private vault.

Where Quinn differs from our view laid out here is that he wondered if the damaging info was connected to [Joseph Smith’s money digging](#) and use of peep stones for scrying. Quinn pointing to this thought process said,

“Joseph Knight’s personal history tells of his acquaintance with Smith. Housed in LDS church archives, this manuscript is “missing at least one beginning page. This missing portion would cover the period when treasure-digging was allegedly the primary association of Knight with teenage Joseph, as previously stated by Collington and also by other sources. LDS historian Richard L. Bushman observes: “Although a believer from the start, Knight’s ‘Recollection’ has bothered some Mormon readers because of its rough-cut style and its unembarrassed reports of familiar relations with neighborhood money diggers.” That discomfort explains the missing pages in Knight’s history of his first association with young Joseph Smith.”

While D. Michael Quinn and others have guessed that the damaging info leading to its removal had to do with money digging, The document seems to articulate Joseph Smith's relationship with Josiah Stowel in ways that seem to initiate the reader with said relationship and seems to want to steer clear of treasure digging. [On pg 4](#) it reads

"But before September Came his oldest Brother Died. Then he was Disapinted and did not [k]now what to do. But when the 22nt Day of September Came he went to the place and the personage appeard and told him he Could not have it now. But the 22nt Day of September nex he mite have the Book if he Brot with him the right person. Joseph says, "who is the right Person?" The answer was you will know. Then he looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale, Daughter of old Mr Hail of Pensylvany, a girl that he had seen Before, for he had Bin Down there Before with me. Joseph then went to Mr Stowels [Stowell] whare he had lived sometime Before. But Mr Stowel Could not pay him money for his work very well and he came to me perhaps in November and worked for me until about the time that he was Married, which I think was in February"

This language both is written in a way that you feel you are being introduced to Josiah Stowel for the first time and it feels as though Joseph Knight wants to avoid or isn't aware of any treasure digging information to pass along to the reader. Josiah Stowel's relationship with Joseph seems to be glossed over with Knight not wanting or not knowing to add more context and information regarding how Smith and Stowel knew each other or the activities they had been involved in. When the document as we have it begins in 1823, Smith and Stowel had assuredly not met yet and likely would not for another 2 years. This leads to us highly doubting the assumptions by others that the problematic material was related to treasure digging

Inference 3.) Joseph Smith writes his [earliest known First Vision account in 1832](#) in his personal journal. We also know that [Joseph Smith and Joseph Knight Sr's were extremely good friends](#). Combine that with Knight's account being assuredly written in 1833 and we can make the inference that Knight at the time of his writing was aware of and had heard directly from Joseph Smith's own mouth, his First Vision experience narrative.

Inference 4.) This Knight recollection missing pages can be safely assumed to have contained a First Vision account.

Inference 5.) It can be safely assumed based on How Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon articulated Mormonism's early theology that Knight's recollection of Joseph Smith's first Vision in his 1833 writing likely was much more similar to [Joseph Smith's 1832 account](#) than the [official 1838 account](#) and such would be problematic for Mormonism's dominant narrative.

In lieu of the facts and the educated Inferences made based on data and context, and in light of how the Church of Jesus Christ has treated problematic history and documents in the past, it is highly probable and seems to us that the most reasonable, logical, probable explanation is that there is still a missing First Vision account contradictory to Mormonism's dominant narrative that was intentionally removed and hidden away from public awareness and likely done by Joseph Fielding Smith while he served as Church Historian from

1921 to 1970. We believe the LDS Church had and may very well still have a completely unknown First Vision account in the handwriting of Joseph Knight Sr in their possession. And that said account likely is contradictory in significant places juxtaposed against the official 1838 account and the narrative the LDS Church wishes to impose as its founding story.

The argument back from critics of this view is that we have to make several Inferences, that even if educated and probable due to data and context, they cumulatively add up to hurt the likelihood of our conclusion. Our response is as follows.

The LDS Church has in so many instances withheld information and documents and have caused hurt to others who have raised a voice advocating honesty and transparency that the burden falls on the LDS Church to come forward and to explain the documents provenance, what it knows about the removal of the missing page(s), and what was on those page(s) and if the document still exists, to release it so that it and its context can be examined. It is no longer responsible of us to give the benefit of the doubt to the LDS Church and that we are on solid ground not doing so.

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