Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

______________Background to the Problem

Adult education, “the largest and the fastest growing segment of American education” (Blakeley, 1960, p. 5), came into its own in the twentieth century and continues in the twenty-first century as an integral part of the educational community. It can be found in a variety of settings and locations throughout the United States. It can also be found in an assortment of formats ranging from “highly formal” to “highly informal” settings (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 152). Many universities, in the form of continuing education, have included adult education as part of the services they offer. Likewise, numerous communities have organized adult education centers offering a variety of learning opportunities. At the same time, there have been many independent adult education agencies established throughout the country providing an assortment of programs to match the educational desires and needs of adults in their area. Courses offered in all these settings range from academic (including remedial and vocational) to arts and crafts.

Examining many successful adult education programs, practitioners (Flint, 1999; Manusco et al., 1999; Mancuso, 2001) have synthesized the “best practices” of these programs including the following:

1. Those operating these programs have the adult learner foremost in their minds.
2. These programs have a clearly defined mission.
3. Administrators and staff engage the adult learner in an on-going dialogue to determine learner needs and wants, prior learning, and educational goals.
4. Faculty and staff collaborate to meet the educational needs of those they serve by not only offering the courses needed but at times and places most convenient to the adults.

5. Multiple instructional delivery methods are employed.

6. Such programs have open admissions policies as well as a variety of student services.

7. Faculty often perform both teaching and administrative duties.

8. Adjunct faculty with special expertise are employed to expand course offerings when needed.

9. And every effort is made to ensure that the education offered is affordable.

**Early American Adult Education**

Adult education in America has not always been characterized by such practices nor has it offered such an assortment of educational topics. In its beginning, during colonial times, adult education “was essentially unorganized and primarily vocational” (Knowles, 1960, p. 7). Apprenticeship was the most commonly employed means of adult education in the colonial period (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). There is also evidence however of certain private ventures offering evening classes of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and even some advanced courses, in New Amsterdam in 1661, New York City, Boston, and other New England seaports towards the end of the 1600's. Those who generally attended were apprentices (which generally continued to the age of twenty-one), some young women, and young men readying themselves for college. Surprisingly, some places, depending on interest and qualified instructors, “offered a rich assortment of courses even before the middle of the
eighteenth century: algebra, astronomy, bookkeeping, chronology, English, ethics, French, geography, geometry, German, Greek, gauging, Hebrew, history, Latin, logarithms, logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy, navigation, rhetoric, surveying, and trigonometry” (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994, p. 39). It is not clear how many adults, other than apprentices, were able to attend evening schools.

There were various attempts to organize adult education beyond apprenticeships in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and to offer more than vocational instruction. Most histories of American adult education report two attempts which were met with success (Axford, 1980; Knowles, 1960; Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). The first was Benjamin Franklin’s Junto and the second was the lyceum.

**The Junto**

Benjamin Franklin has been referred to as the “patron saint of adult education” in America (Axford, 1980; Gratten, 1955). In 1727, Franklin established an adult education society in Philadelphia called the Junto (pronounced ‘Hunto’, from the Spanish word meaning “to join” or “assemble”). The Junto was a discussion club which met once a week on Friday. It appears that Franklin borrowed the idea from Cotton Mather, an early American Puritan leader in Boston (Van Doren, 1991). Mather had organized “neighbourhood benefit societies” in every church in Boston which regularly gathered to discuss prearranged questions.

Franklin’s Junto was similar in nature. In fact, many of the questions discussed in Franklin’s Junto were much the same as discussed in Mather’s societies suggesting he borrowed them from Mather (Van Doren, 1991). But Franklin often had the Junto discuss
many questions, he, himself, was pondering.

He limited the Junto to twelve members so that discussions could be controlled. In his autobiography, Franklin (1952) lists the members of his Junto were men of various vocations including a copier of deeds, a self-taught mathematician, a surveyor, a shoemaker, a joiner, a merchant’s clerk, a gentleman of fortune, and a printer. The Junto, which remarkably continued for thirty years, was conducted in the following manner:

The rules that I drew up required that every member, in turn, should produce one or more queries on any point of Morals, Politics, or Natural Philosophy, to be discussed by the company, and once in three months produce and read an essay of his own writing on any subject he pleased. Our debates were to be under the direction of a president, and to be conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute or desire of victory; and to prevent warmth all expressions of positiveness in opinion or of direct contradiction were after some time made contraband and prohibited under pecuniary penalties. (p. 59).

As the years rolled on, the Junto had many applicants desiring to participate. Franklin “who preferred the convenient apostolic number, suggested that the Junto be kept as it was and that each member organize a subordinate club” following the same rules as the mother Junto (Van Doren, 1991, p. 78). These proved to be successful. Nonetheless, the Junto and its offshoots were confined to Philadelphia and therefore it did not affect many Americans.

The Lyceum

Knowles declared that “The single most universal instrument for intellectual activity in these times was the church” (p. 8). Certainly people were instructed in the weekly Sabbath sermons, which obviously were theological in nature. Yet during the week, “lectures on a wide variety of subjects by both clergy and laymen” (p. 8) were offered at the church. These
mid-week lectures eventually evolved into an organized system that became known as the lyceum.

Lyceums (Axford, 1980; Bode, 1956; Gratten, 1955; Knowles, 1960; Stubblefield & Keane, 1994) were one of the earliest and most important adult educational programs in America. The name was derived from the place where the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, held his school. In several early American communities, farmers, mechanics, and others who had some formal education organized lyceums for the purpose of self-improvement. The lyceum focused on “self-culture, instruction in speech, debate, and discussion of common public interests” (Axford, 1980, p. 130). The first of these was established in Millbury, Massachusetts, in 1826. After its initial beginning, lyceums were eventually amassed into a national organization. “After flourishing in New England, they spread to the Atlantic states, the South, the Midwest, and even Britain” (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994, p. 87). By 1839, there were nearly three thousand lyceums scattered throughout the United States.

The essential purpose of the lyceum, which normally met once or twice a month, was the general diffusion of knowledge. The first lyceums were “designed for artisans and farmers.” It eventually evolved into “heterogeneous courses of lectures on travel, history, biography, foreign affairs, and the art of living” (Bode, 1956, p. 30). These lectures were given by ministers, scholars, and politicians who often traveled from lyceum to lyceum by appointment. The lecturers included such notables as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Henry Ward Beecher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Mann, Daniel Webster, and Walt Whitman (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). A typical season included ten evening lectures (Bode, 1956).
Later Programs

“In the half-century from the end of the Civil War to the eve of World War I, educative institutions and learning opportunities for adults proliferated” (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994, p. 135). Seeing what was possible with adult education through the lyceum movement, in 1874, Bishop John H. Vincent and his colleagues decided to expand their Sunday School association and establish a broader based educational institution they called the Chautauqua Institution (Axford, 1980; Stubblefield & Keane, 1994). Initially, this was an expanded Sunday School program offering more religious topics. Eventually, however, he added to the curriculum secular subjects including literature, languages, history, art, science, and the like. The success of this venture prompted the Chautauqua Institution to offer correspondence courses in 1878, one of the earliest institutions to make such a move in America. This was expanded to include a program through which an adult could earn a diploma.

The idea behind the Chautauqua Institution immediately became popular. Two years after its commencement, “independent chautauquas that imitated the New York Chautauqua were founded by religious leaders, businessmen, and educators . . . in all but five states and in three countries” (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994, p. 138). Eventually there were over three hundred independent chautauquas.

By the 1920's adult education had taken root. Formal agencies, both private and government, were expanding throughout the United States both at the local and national levels. This expansion led to the current practices of adult education in America today.
The problem this study focused on concerns a series of adult education programs or schools that began about the same time the lyceum movement began (1830's); though its goal was similar to the lyceum in that it sought to educate adults, its practices were quite dissimilar, resembling more like the Chautauqua Institution established forty years later and even the best practices of current adult education. These programs were established and operated between 1833-37 by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (referred to as ‘the Church’ or ‘LDS church’ throughout this study), in Kirtland, Ohio. Courses were offered in theology, science, history, literature, philosophy, penmanship, arithmetic, geography, and languages including English, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. These courses were taught to adults in regular classes that often met daily (Sorensen, 1992). Because of religious persecution, the members of the Church moved from Kirtland to Missouri and then Illinois thus ending the adult education program in Kirtland.

The Kirtland programs appear to be more intensive than either the Junto and the lyceum movements. The weekly discussion/debates of Franklin’s Junto and the once or twice a month lecture on various topics of the lyceum seem tame in comparison to the variety of courses held often daily for adults in Kirtland. However, histories of adult education in America fail to discuss these programs.

This oversight is tempered however when it is understood that information regarding the adult education programs in Kirtland is not generally known, even among the current members of the Church. At least two reasons can be given for this lack of understanding. First, the Church has never published a specific history concerning the schools. Second, the information regarding the schools is scattered throughout various histories of the Church, and
in published and unpublished biographies, autobiographies, and journals of early members of the Church.

The Church has published three major histories. The most prominent of these histories is the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Smith, 1980), sometimes called the *Documentary History of the Church* (for example, see, Smith, 1938) because it reads more like a daily journal and includes documentation of historical events such as letters and avadavats. This history makes several references to the schools or programs but because the history is written in journal fashion, the information is scattered throughout the history offering the reader only a fragmented view of the schools. Further, the information regarding the schools is incomplete. Likewise, the other two histories, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint* (Roberts, 1957) and *Essentials in Church History* (Smith, 1950), have scattered references to the schools but do not provide a comprehensive history of the schools.

There are several published and unpublished biographies, autobiographies, and journals of early members of the Church that make reference to the schools. Published biographies and journals, such as *The Orson Pratt Journals* (Watson, 1975), *Orson Hyde* (Baron, 1977), *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Whitney, 1945), men who participated in the adult education programs in Kirtland, are readily available. But the unpublished biographies, autobiographies, and journals of many who participated in the programs have for the most part been located in the archives of the Church headquarters in Salt Lake City. The Church has allowed scholarly access to these records and they have often been used in historical research. A few published histories, such as Milton Backman’s (1983), *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio 1830-1838* and Karl Anderson’s (1989),
Joseph Smith’s Kirtland: Eyewitness Accounts have made limited use of these journals in their discussion of the schools. The best attempt at a definitive history of the adult educational programs in Kirtland, using histories, biographies, autobiographies, and journals is an unpublished Master’s Thesis by Peterson (1972), entitled, *A History of the Schools and Educational Programs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ohio and Missouri, 1831-1839*. Peterson’s sources were mainly from the published histories of the Church and biographies of church members as well as some unpublished sources. Since his writing, however, with the aid of computers, many unpublished biographies, autobiographies, and journals have been put into electronic format and made available to the general public through CDs (such as LDS Collectors Library) and internet. These formats not only provide access to all, but also make searching their contents much easier and more effective.

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**The Purpose of this Study**

The purpose of this study was twofold:

1. To write a history of the adult education programs located in Kirtland, Ohio, between 1833 to 1837 under the direction Joseph Smith, the founder and head of the Church, by bringing together in one place the scattered information presently available. This will comprise the bulk of this dissertation.

2. To compare what we know of the Kirtland adult education programs against the “best practices” of adult education today.
**Research Questions**

In order to accomplish these stated purposes, this study answered several questions. Regarding the first objective, writing a history, the grand tour question this study answered was: *What was the philosophy and praxis of the adult education program of Kirtland, Ohio, during 1833-37?* Of necessity, there were several sub-questions that were answered to accomplish the first objective of this dissertation:

- In what was frontier America, why were such intensive courses being offered to adults when the general adult education in America consisted mainly of evening lectures given by traveling scholars once or twice a month?
- What courses were offered?
- Who taught them?
- What were the credentials of those who taught the courses?
- What texts were used?
- How many people attended the courses?
- What were the outcomes?
- Why were the courses no longer offered after 1837?

Regarding the second purpose of this study, how the Kirtland adult education programs compare to the best practices of today’s adult education, the following questions were answered:

- What are the “best practices” of current adult education?
- In what ways were the practices of the Church adult education programs in Kirtland similar and dissimilar to the “best practices” of today?
**Delimitations and Limitations**

This study is delimited to a description of the history of the Church’s education programs in Kirtland, Ohio, during the years of 1833-37, and from sources not intended to give a full description of these programs.

**Significance of the Study**

This study of the adult education schools of Kirland, Ohio, 1833-37, is important for three reasons. First, it brought together into one place the history of an intensive adult education program in early America hitherto unknown in any history of adult education in America.

Second, this is a study of the grassroots of the Church Educational System (CES) of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The adult education program of Kirtland was the Church’s first educational effort. Because of religious persecution, the Church was forced to move to various locations in frontier America. Eventually the Church left the United States and settled in the great basin in what eventually became the state of Utah. From there, the Church expanded into many other areas in what became Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, and Arizona. Wherever branches of the Church were located it was the policy of the Church to set up educational institutions to educate its people. Eventually the educational efforts of the early Church developed into the CES, an educational organization within the Church that consists of several levels.

First is seminary, a daily religious education program held in a seminary building near the school for grades nine through twelve that provides for the study of the Book of Mormon, Old Testament, New Testament, and Doctrine and Covenants/Church History. Second, institutes of religion adjacent to [university and college] campuses serve students enrolled in post secondary programs by offering
religion classes, usually scheduled twice a week to fit in with college schedules. Third, the Church sponsors four institutions of higher education: Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah; Brigham Young university—Hawaii in Laie, Hawaii; Ricks College [now Brigham Young University - Idaho] in Rexburg, Idaho; and LDS business college in Salt Lake City. In addition, in Mexico and the Pacific, the Church sponsors seven elementary schools, thirteen middle schools, and nine secondary schools that provide both secular and religious training. (Gardner, 1992, 2:444)

Presently, the CES has educational programs in every state of the United States and in over ninety countries throughout the world with faculty and staff in the tens of thousands serving hundreds of thousands of students. It seems logical and important that the grass roots of such a vast educational program should be explored, especially as it relates to adult education.

Third, though the context of the adult education program in Kirtland was a religious community, and the program was sponsored and promoted by a religious organization, and much of the content of the courses offered were either of a religious nature or sponsored for religious reasons, the form and format of the program appears consistent with many of the “best practices” of adult educational programs of today. Whipple (1964) has suggested that understanding the past history of adult education “might increase intelligent borrowing from the past, and it might decrease unintelligent repetition of content and method which is not appropriate to the culture or institutions of our own times.” Continuing, he said, “history can extend our own experience in adult education, revealing many similarities between our problems and ideas and those of our predecessors. It should not be necessary to labor the point that this knowledge of our own past can give us additional insight and help illuminate the adult education [of the] present” (pp. 210-221). This study has added to the corpus of the history of adult education making it possible to accomplish what Whipple has suggested: to
examine the present issues and concerns of adult education with the eyes of the past. More particularly, it might be good for CES to remember its roots while making decisions about its educational goals and practices for the future.

**Definition of Terms**

- **CES**: the abbreviation of the Church Educational System, an educational organization within the Church. The CES has “educational programs throughout the United States and in some ninety other countries to provide an effective combination of religious and secular education to its members. The primary aim shared by these programs is to assist students in gaining an understanding and personal witness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ at the same time as they pursue their secular studies” (Berrett, 1992: 1:274).
- **Book of Mormon**: A volume in the LDS cannon of scripture.
- **D&C**: the abbreviation for Doctrine and Covenants. “The Doctrine and Covenants is a compilation of revelations, most of which were received by the Prophet Joseph Smith for the establishment and governance of the kingdom of God in the latter days. It is a standard work of the Church and functions as its open, ever-expanding, ecclesiastical Constitution” (Doxy, 1992, 1:405). It is also a volume in the LDS cannon of scripture.
- **LDS or LDS church**: a common name for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints founded in 1830 in western New York by Joseph Smith. The Church began with six original members but since has grown into an international Church will millions of members. The present headquarters of the Church is in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- **Primary source**: “those documents in which the individual describing the event was present when it occurred” (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 814).
• **Secondary source**: “documents in which the individual describing the event was not present but obtained a description from someone else, who may or may not have directly observed the events” (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 814).

• **School of the Prophets**: the name of the first adult educational program in Kirtland. This program, which continued on and off from 1833-1837, spawned other programs.

## Conclusion

Every historian knows that no written history is ever complete. As researchers continue to research, new information is discovered forcing revision or addition to the present chronicles and interpretations of past events. Since the history of adult education in America has received only passing interest by most adult educators, it is obvious that more consideration must be given to this topic if modern adult educators are to have a more complete “sense of their past”.

This study has added to the corpus of knowledge of the history of adult education. Broadly speaking, this research has shown that the kind of diverse and intensive adult education programs that characterize the twenty and twenty-first centuries are not unique to those centuries. This is generally unknown in histories of adult education. In a more restricted sense, the history of the Kirtland adult education programs helps define the identity of the CES programs of the Church which were spawned from these early educational efforts. This is also a relatively unknown history for LDS educators. In either respect, this history ought to be of value to modern adult educators.

Any history of value must be produced with clearly defined procedures followed by the researcher. The methodological procedures used in this study will now be delineated.