Where did the minutes come from?
Record
of the
Council of Fifty
Kingdom of God
1840

Organization December 27th, 1839; page 26-27.
Letter of the organization page 30.
Committee to draft Constitution page 29.
Explanation of meaning of Article 3 page 84.
Instruction to the Council page 120.
Directions to be observed; page 35.
Instruction: Democracy page 39.
Definition of Democracy page 103.
Letter to Lamanitis on Constitution page 125.
Meeting at Bullskin: page 113.
Assurance of Reverence for those not of the Church page 115.
Resolution: days for those not in the Church page 121.
Work on Constitution page 120.
Breaking the mission on page 121.
Report of Constitution page 143.
Names 151.
Constitution page 305.
Ages of the members page 278.
This Council was organized on the strength of the contents of two letters from the brethren in the Pine country which President Joseph Smith received by the hands of George Miller and Alexander Red- 

lows on Sunday the 10th day of March, A.D. 1844. The letters read as follows: "Black River Falls.  

February 15th 1844  

To the First Presidency and the quorums of the Twelve of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Dear Brethren, Through the goodness and mercy of God the Eternal Father, and grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are permitted to write and send by a special messenger a concise
The following is a list of the names of the members of this Council with their ages and station in the Council according to age, as they stood at the adjournment in May 1844:

1. President, Joseph Smith — born December 21, 1805
2. Elder and Chairman, Joseph Smith — born July 19, 1805
3. John Smith — born July 16, 1801
4. Alpheus Butter — born February 27, 1804
5. Uriah Brown — born May 9, 1804
6. Reynolds Hawker — born April 30, 1801
7. Emnha Thayer — born October 24, 1801
8. Mrs. M. Phelps — born February 17, 1802
9. James Fielding
10. Mrs. Marks — born November 15, 1802
11. Sidney Rigdon — born February 15, 1815
12. John D. Green — born September 5, 1815
13. George Miller — born November 23, 1815
14. Newel K. Whitney — born February 5, 1815
15. Peter harms — born February 17, 1816
16. Lyman Night — born May 9, 1816
17. Joseph Fielding — born March 26, 1817
18. Cornelius Pauley — born September 27, 1818
19. Lucien Woodruff — born April 3, 1819
20. Levi Richards — born April 14, 1819
21. John D. Parker — born November 12, 1819
22. Hyde Smith — born February 9, 1800
23. Brigham Young — born June 1, 1801
24. Heber C. Kimball — born June 14, 1801
25. Orson Spencer — born March 14, 1802
27. Philip B. Lewis — born January 16, 1804
About the time the council met the last times, there arose considerable excitement amongst the advocates against first Joseph Smith and others. The excitement was got up by Mrs. Milam, Louisa Bristow, Francis O. Kirch, Robert D. Foster, Francis M. D. Christy, D. Keigher, and Joseph K. Jackson. Others, they yielded to the influence of wickedness because of...
When and why was the council established?

March 11, 1844: “All seemed agreed to look to some place where we can go and establish a Theocracy either in Texas or Oregon or somewhere in California.”
The Kingdom of God

• “Theodemocracy”
  – Protect minority rights against tyranny of the majority
  – Allow for dissent and free discussion
  – Involve Latter-day Saints and others
  – Increase righteousness in preparation for the Second Coming
  – Religious liberty
“He concluded by offering a motion that this honorable assembly receive from this time henceforth and forever, Joseph Smith, as our Prophet, Priest & King”
Joseph Smith: “There is a distinction between the Church of God and kingdom of God [or Council of Fifty]. The laws of the kingdom are not designed to effect our salvation hereafter. It is an entire, distinct and separate government. The church is a spiritual matter and a spiritual kingdom; but the kingdom which Daniel saw was not a spiritual kingdom, but was designed to be got up for the safety and salvation of the saints by protecting them in their religious rights and worship.”
What did the Council accomplish?

- Managed Joseph Smith’s presidential campaign
- Provided a forum for making practical decisions in Nauvoo
- Played a major role in the exploration of the West for new settlement sites
Jeffersonian Democracy.

Protection of Person and Property.

For President,
JOSEPH SMITH.

For Vice President,
SIDNEY RIGDON.

Elector for the State of Michigan,
Mephibosheth Sirrine,
William Van Every,
Samuel Graham,
Alvan Hood,
Seth Taft.
Early Discussions of Relocating
Early Discussions of Relocating

THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS

The Council of Fifty’s Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints

Church History Department
Early Discussions of Relocating

15 February 1844
Latter-day Saints at Black River Falls, Wisconsin Territory, write to Joseph Smith, suggesting the "table lands" of the Republic of Texas as an additional gathering place.

The Joseph Smith Papers
The Council of Fifty's Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints

Church History Department
20 FEBRUARY 1844
Joseph Smith and the apostles at Nauvoo begin planning for an expedition to Oregon territory and the Mexican territories of California to find a new home for the Saints.

15 FEBRUARY 1844
Latter-day Saints at Black River Falls, Wisconsin Territory, write to Joseph Smith, suggesting the "table lands" of the Republic of Texas as an additional gathering place.
20 FEBRUARY 1844
Joseph Smith and the apostles at Nauvoo begin planning for an expedition to Oregon territory and the Mexican territories of California to find a new home for the Saints.

11 MARCH 1844
Joseph Smith organizes the Council of Fifty in part to seek places of refuge “in Texas or Oregon or somewhere in California.”

15 FEBRUARY 1844
Latter-day Saints at Black River Falls, Wisconsin Territory, write to Joseph Smith, suggesting the “table lands” of the Republic of Texas as an additional gathering place.
Council of Fifty under Joseph Smith

THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS

The Council of Fifty’s Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints

Church History Department
14 MARCH 1844
The council sends Lucien Woodworth to Texas to negotiate for a Mormon settlement with Texas president Sam Houston.
Council of Fifty under Joseph Smith

4 APRIL 1844
The council sends Orson Hyde to Washington DC to seek information on potential gathering sites and to seek permission for church leaders to raise a military force to protect American settlers in Oregon and Texas.

14 MARCH 1844
The council sends Lucien Woodworth to Texas to negotiate for a Mormon settlement with Texas president Sam Houston.
3–6 MAY 1844
The council approves plans for the Wisconsin Saints to settle in the Republic of Texas.

14 MARCH 1844
The council sends Lucien Woodworth to Texas to negotiate for a Mormon settlement with Texas president Sam Houston.

4 APRIL 1844
The council sends Orson Hyde to Washington DC to seek information on potential gathering sites and to seek permission for church leaders to raise a military force to protect American settlers in Oregon and Texas.
27 JUNE 1844
Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum are killed in the jail at Carthage, Illinois.

3–6 MAY 1844
The council approves plans for the Wisconsin Saints to settle in the Republic of Texas.

14 MARCH 1844
The council sends Lucien Woodworth to Texas to negotiate for a Mormon settlement with Texas president Sam Houston.

4 APRIL 1844
The council sends Orson Hyde to Washington DC to seek information on potential gathering sites and to seek permission for church leaders to raise a military force to protect American settlers in Oregon and Texas.
Council of Fifty under Brigham Young
Council of Fifty under Brigham Young

4 FEBRUARY 1845
The council is reorganized, and council members accept Brigham Young, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as Joseph Smith's successor.

THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS
The Council of Fifty's Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints

Church History Department
FEBRUARY–MARCH 1845
The council considers sites for settlement outside the U.S., including the Republic of Texas, Oregon territory, Mexican California, and Monterrey, Mexico; or possibly among the Cherokee or other Indians in the West.

4 FEBRUARY 1845
The council is reorganized, and council members accept Brigham Young, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as Joseph Smith's successor.
Focus on Upper California
Focus on Upper California

OREGON
Joint U.S. and British occupancy

UPPER CALIFORNIA

MEXICO

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

IOWA TERRITORY

WISCONSIN TERRITORY

ILLINOIS

MISSOURI

THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS

The Council of Fifty’s Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints

Church History Department
11 MARCH 1845
News of the annexation of Texas by the United States reaches Nauvoo, after which Mormons no longer consider Texas a viable gathering place.
Focus on Upper California

18 March 1845
The Council of Fifty focuses its attention on Upper California, particularly near the mouth of the Colorado River (in the Gulf of California).

11 March 1845
News of the annexation of Texas by the United States reaches Nauvoo, after which Mormons no longer consider Texas a viable gathering place.

The Joseph Smith Papers
The Council of Fifty's Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints

Church History Department
18 MARCH 1845
The Council of Fifty focuses its attention on Upper California, particularly near the mouth of the Colorado River (in the Gulf of California).

23 APRIL 1845
Missionaries travel to Indian tribes west of the Missouri River seeking temporary places of refuge for the Saints.

11 MARCH 1845
News of the annexation of Texas by the United States reaches Nauvoo, after which Mormons no longer consider Texas a viable gathering place.

THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS
The Council of Fifty’s Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints
"The Upper California Oh thats the land for me
It lays between the mountains & great pacific sea,
The Saints can be supported there & enjoy sweet liberty
With flocks and herds abounding Oh thats the land for me

"We'll go and lift our Standard, we'll go there and be free
We'll go to California and have our Jubilee
A land that blooms with endless spring
In Upper California Oh thats the land for me."
— John Taylor, 18 March 1845

**18 MARCH 1845**
The Council of Fifty focuses its attention on Upper California, particularly near the mouth of the Colorado River (in the Gulf of California).

**23 APRIL 1845**
Missionaries travel to Indian tribes west of the Missouri River seeking temporary places of refuge for the Saints.

**11 MARCH 1845**
News of the annexation of Texas by the United States reaches Nauvoo, after which Mormons no longer consider Texas a viable gathering place.

**THE JOSEPH SMITH PAPERS**
The Council of Fifty's Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints

---

Church History Department
Focus on Great Salt Lake Area
EARLY AUGUST 1845
Church leaders receive positive reports of the Great Salt Lake area from Mormons living among fur trappers on the Vermillion River in present-day South Dakota.
Focus on Great Salt Lake Area

Early August 1845
Church leaders receive positive reports of the Great Salt Lake area from Mormons living among fur trappers on the Vermillion River in present-day South Dakota.

27–31 August 1845
Church leaders meet to discuss the latest intelligence on western North America brought by Parley P. Pratt, who had been living in New York City.

Church History Department
**Focus on Great Salt Lake Area**

**EARLY AUGUST 1845**
Church leaders receive positive reports of the Great Salt Lake area from Mormons living among fur trappers on the Vermillion River in present-day South Dakota.

**9 SEPTEMBER 1845**
The council reconvenes. Brigham Young announces his intention to settle “somewhere near the Great Salt Lake,” and the council begins preparations for a mass exodus from Nauvoo.

**27–31 AUGUST 1845**
Church leaders meet to discuss the latest intelligence on western North America brought by Parley P. Pratt, who had been living in New York City.

---

**The Joseph Smith Papers**

The Council of Fifty’s Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints

---

Church History Department
The Mormon Exodus
11–19 January 1846

The council meets to finalize preparations to move west.

“The Saying of the Prophets would never be verified unless the House of the Lord should be reared in the Tops of the Mountains & the Proud Banner of liberty wave over the valley’s that are within the Mountains & I know where the spot is & I no (know) how to make the Flag.”

— Brigham Young, 13 January 1846

The Council of Fifty’s Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints
4 FEBRUARY 1846
The first group of Saints crosses the Mississippi River into Iowa Territory.

11–19 JANUARY 1846
The council meets to finalize preparations to move west.

“The Saying of the Prophets would never be verified unless the House of the Lord should be reared in the Tops of the Mountains & the Proud Banner of liberty wave over the valley’s that are within the Mountains & I know where the spot is & I no [know] how to make the Flag.”
— Brigham Young, 13 January 1846
**27 February 1846**
William Clayton crosses the Mississippi River with the records of the Council of Fifty in his possession.

**4 February 1846**
The first group of Saints crosses the Mississippi River into Iowa Territory.

**11–19 January 1846**
The council meets to finalize preparations to move west.

"The Saying of the Prophets would never be verified unless the House of the Lord should be reared in the Tops of the Mountains & the Proud Banner of liberty wave over the valley's that are within the Mountains & I know where the spot is & I no [know] how to make the Flag."
— Brigham Young, 13 January 1846

---

**The Joseph Smith Papers**

*The Council of Fifty’s Role in Seeking a New Place of Refuge for the Latter-day Saints*
He supposed there has not yet been a perfect revelation given, because we cannot understand it, yet we receive a little here and a little there. He should not be stumbled if the prophet should translate the bible forty thousand times over and yet it should be different in some places every time, because when God speaks, he always speaks according to the capacity of the people. The starting point for the government of the kingdom is in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, but he does not know how much more there is in the bosom of the Almighty. When God sees that his people have enlarged upon what he has given us he will give us more.

Brigham Young, April 18, 1844
He then went on to say that for the benefit of mankind and succeeding generations he wished it to be recorded that there are men admitted members of this honorable council, who are not members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, neither profess any creed or religious sentiment whatever, to show that in the organization of this kingdom men are not consulted as to their religious opinions or notions in any shape or form whatever and that we act upon the broad and liberal principal that all men have equal rights, and ought to be respected, and that every man has a privilege in this organization of choosing for himself voluntarily his God, and what he pleases for his religion, inasmuch as there is no danger but that every man will embrace the greatest light. God cannot save or damn a man only on the principle that every man acts, chooses and worships for himself; hence the importance of thrusting from us every spirit of bigotry and intolerance towards a mans religious sentiments, that spirit which has drenched the earth with blood—When a man feels the least temptation to such intolerance he ought to spurn it from him. It becomes our duty on account of this intolerance and corruption—the inalienable right of man being to think as he pleases—worship as he pleases &c being the first law of every thing that is sacred—to guard every ground all the days of our lives. I will appeal to every man in this council beginning at the youngest that when he arrives to the years of Hoary age he will have to say that the principles of intolerance and bigotry never had a place in this kingdom, nor in my breast, and that he is even then ready to die rather than yeild to such things. Nothing can reclaim the human mind from its ignorance, bigotry, superstition &c but those grand and sublime principles of equal rights and universal freedom to all men.

Joseph Smith, April 18, 1844
The chairman said he had never had any trials about brother Wights conduct, and presumed no one present had. We have no right to complain of others while we are as corrupt as they are. Gods way is, never to commence a matter untill he is able to carry it out.

He wanted Elder Wight and every other man who could leave, to go into all the States and preach and electioneer for him to be president. And when he is president we can send out ministers plenipotentiary, who will secure to themselves such influence that when their office shall cease they may be received into everlasting habitations, but we should never indulge our appetites to injure our influence, or wound the feelings of friends, or cause the spirit of the Lord to leave us. There is no excuse for any man to drink and get drunk in the church of Christ, or gratify any appetite, or lust, contrary to the principles of righteousness.

The chairman continued to instruct the council on the principles of sobriety, and every thing pertaining to godliness at considerable length & concluded by remarking that it is best to run on a long race and be careful to keep good wind &c.—

Joseph Smith, May 3, 1844
He looks for a full and perfect emancipation of the whole human race, that the sound of oppression should be buried in eternal oblivion. The paltry considerations of earthly gain and glory falls into insignificance before the glories we now realize. The object we have in view is not to save a man alone or a nation, but to call down the power of God and let all be blessed, protected, saved and made happy – burst of the chains of oppression. This is a kingdom worth having.

-- Amasa Lyman, April 11, 1844