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Becoming American: Mormonism and the Mainstream

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When one reminisces about the turbulent time in American history known as the sixties, images of psychedelic drug users, the Beatles and Martin Luther King come to mind. Strangely, religion seems to have flown under the radar in memories of this period, unless one is discussing Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam. Although not often associated with the 1960s, religious tolerance was at quite possibly its highest point in the history of the United States.¹ This period in fact proved to be a critical turning point for one major religious body: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “Mormons,” as followers of the faith were referred to by outsiders since their religion’s inception in the 1820s, have always been known as the strange, cultish step-cousin of Protestant Christianity. In the 1960s however, something palpably changed in how outsiders perceived Mormonism and the Mormon Church.

Religious groups have traditionally been wary of conforming to cultural expectations and norms, and Mormonism was no exception. The slow acceptance of Mormonism by mainstream America seemed slow at best and nonexistent at worst from the founding of Joseph Smith’s religion in the early 19th century through the mid-twentieth century. Suddenly, in the 1960s, the Church appeared to have magically embodied those qualities that American outsiders stood for. How then did the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints change from being a religious outsider to part of mainstream American culture during this era?

This is a complicated question, and not one with straightforward answers. Currently, historiography is quite expansive yet at the same time inconclusive. The major works on the

¹ Trepanier, L. and L. Newswander, *LDS in the USA : Mormonism and the making of American culture*. 2012, Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press. (p. 56)

history of Mormonism as related to American culture have been covered in three major works: Matthew J. Bowman's *The Mormon People: The Making of an American Faith* Lee Trepanier and Lynita K. Newswander's novel, *LDS In The USA: Mormonism and the Making of American Culture*² and Richard N. Ostling's *Mormon America: The Power and The Promise*.³ These three pieces cover the history of the Latter-Day Saints Church from its inception up to the present day. While all three contain useful information regarding the history of the Church, each makes the argument that Mormonism's convergence with mainstream America was a slow process that took almost 200 years from start to finish. In contrast, my research suggests that acceptance into the American mainstream did not take this amount of time but actually occurred during the "long sixties,"⁴ a period in which the Latter-Day Saints solidified themselves as an integral part of American culture.

There was no one day that marked the start of Mormonism as a staple of American culture, nor was there an explicit mass understanding of this change during the 1960s. Nevertheless, when examining the 60's and Mormonism in hindsight, we can begin to understand the trends and patterns that clearly demonstrate the convergence of Mormons with the mainstream. The three key areas that display this are: political involvement, race relations and the civil rights movement, and the worlds of academia and economics. In the Civil Rights movement, Mormons were able to connect with both sides of the struggle through member's unofficial and official affiliations. In politics, their power as a voting group drew the attention of the major party's candidates, enabling Mormons to field a legitimate contender for the

² Trepanier, L. and L. Newswander, *LDS in the USA : Mormonism and the making of American culture*. 2012, Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press.

³ Ostling, R.N. and J.K. Ostling, *Mormon America : the power and the promise*. 1999, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

⁴ Lytle, M.H., *America's uncivil wars : the sixties era : from Elvis to the fall of Richard Nixon*. 2006, New York: Oxford University Press.

Republican Party presidential nomination in 1968. Finally, in economics and academia, big names in these fields were publically recognized as successful, educated Mormons.

Inception

In order for full comprehension concerning the Mormons journey to mainstream America, a brief history of the frequently tormented religion is required. Started by Joseph Smith Jr. in New York, the faith is founded upon various revelations that their leader had in his late teens and early 20s. Beginning in 1823, these visions focused primarily on gold plates which were inscribed with “The Book of Mormon,” which described the tribes of Judah that were on the North American continent. Throughout the 1830s and 40s, Smith steadily gained a following in New York through his charisma and evangelical methods, but was forcefully driven from the area due to religious persecution. This persecution was from protestant Christians in the area who viewed Mormonism as social and religious threat due to their alien beliefs. From there, the Mormons moved quickly across the U.S., first to Illinois and finally to Salt Lake City, Utah, which would be their final resting place.⁵

In Utah, the religion further solidified its various beliefs and teachings, and worked to separate itself from American culture. Their beliefs were such that they were both blatantly unacceptable in the U.S. (polygamy) and some that were so foreign to protestant Christianity they were unable to explain and reconcile these beliefs with other religious groups. Though they eventually gained admittance to the Union as a state after facing through internal strife and external pressure to do so, they remained a religious outsider to American society and culture for over a century. Throughout this period Mormonism remained shrouded in mystery to the general

⁵ Shipp, J., *Mormonism : the story of a new religious tradition*. 1985, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

American public, often negatively associated with the group's former practice of polygamy. David O. McKay, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of The Latter-Day Saints from 1951-1970⁶, talked to the *Los Angeles Times* about his firsthand experience of this undesirable association while on mission in Scotland in the early 20th century. "Many a housewife slammed the door in my face, saying as she did so: 'You don't get my daughters, you polygamist!'"⁷ This mindset illustrates the general consensus about Mormons both in the United States and abroad.

It is astonishing then, that a culture that dismissed Church members as polygamists and outsiders, would so readily accept them into the mainstream. This change in perception by the general American public during the 1960's was due to the public's interaction with Mormons in the three important areas of American social and political life: involvement in national political campaigns, changing attitudes about race, and the interaction between the Mormon Church and the worlds of Academia and Economics. We will first examine the political sphere, which in turn had a direct impact on how issues of race were treated within the Mormon Church. Then we will look at the convergence of the Church with the mainstream through the both academia and economics. Although these realms have only little, if any, relationship to the political realm and the Civil Rights Movement, they provide further evidence of the union of Mormonism to mainstream American life.

Politics

The 1960s shows the interesting relationship between the Church and politics, and how politics acted as a catalyst which pushed Mormonism towards mainstream America. During this time, Mormon voters had a heavy influence on the state of Utah and also on the surrounding

⁶ *Mormon President David McKay Dies at 96 After Long Illness*, in *Los Angeles Times* 1970: p. 2-a1.

⁷ Thrapp, D.L., *Gov. Romney Assured Mormon Backing but 'He's On His Own'*, in *Los Angeles Times* 1966: p. 1.

western states of Nevada, California and Arizona.⁸ This large voting bloc demanded that Presidential nominees address the Church in order to win their votes in the Electoral College. Presidents and presidential hopefuls thus attempted to relate to the Mormons, and in doing so legitimized them as a credible Christian sect. This relationship between politicians and members of the Mormon religion was one of the largest steps in the convergence of Mormonism and the mainstream.

Politicians from outside the Church displayed their acceptance of Mormonism by directly addressing Mormon voters. In 1963, for example, John F. Kennedy delivered a speech at the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah. There, he highlighted several key points by which Mormons were able to relate to the larger American society, and which proved that Mormons imbibed characteristics of typical Americans and cared about the same issues that they did as voters. In his speech, Kennedy delved into how Mormons were, and always had been, model Americans who exemplified moral qualities and behaviors that defined this nation's central values.

“Of all the stories of American pioneers and settlers, none is more inspiring than the Mormon trail. The qualities of the founders of this community are the qualities that we seek in America, the qualities which we like to feel this country has, courage, patience, faith, self-reliance, perseverance, and, above all, an unflagging determination to see the right prevail.”⁹

This comment warmed the Church to Kennedy's side, by acknowledging their past not in terms of polygamy or other strange practices, but as a people whom were historically linked to

⁸ Trepanier, L. and L. Newswander, *LDS in the USA : Mormonism and the making of American culture*. 2012, Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press.

⁹ Kennedy, J.F., *Address at the Mormon Temple*, U. Salt Lake City, Editor Sept. 26, 1963, The Miller Center.

admirable American qualities. This sentiment was an important signal to the public that Mormons were “true” Americans as one of the greatest leaders of the decade praised them for their “American” qualities.

Further signaling that Mormons were true Americans was one of the main topics that Kennedy covered during his speech: communism. He considered communism one of, if not the, greatest threat to America during his administration. This subject stirred fear in the heart of American listeners and this fear linked Mormons to the general American public.

“...we would be inviting a Communist expansion which every Communist power would so greatly welcome. And all of the effort of so many Americans for 18 years would be gone with the wind. Our policy under those conditions, in this dangerous world, would not have much deterrent effect in a world where nations determined to be free could no longer count on the United States.”¹⁰

If history is any indicator, nothing does more to bring a people together than fear of a common enemy, and the threat of Communism was the greatest enemy America had faced after two world wars. These statements, along with others made about communism in the speech by President Kennedy, are but one example of how political platforms were able to merge Mormonism with mainstream America.

Richard Nixon however, may prove to have been the strongest political link between Mormons and non-Mormons during the sixties. Although in the 21st century his name is analogous with lack of morals and political suicide, in 1960 former Vice-President Richard Nixon was loved by many Americans for his political platform as well his military and political

¹⁰ Kennedy, J.F., *Address at the Mormon Temple*, U. Salt Lake City, Editor Sept 26, +1963, The Miller Center.

career. In 1960, he ran for President for the first time against John F. Kennedy.¹¹ Although the race ended in his defeat, newspapers chronicled Nixon's interaction with the Latter-Day Saints across the United States, signifying the Church's place in American society, as well as the acceptance that major political leaders had extended to the Church. For the first time in the history of the United States, the Mormon Church backed a presidential candidate.¹² The words Nixon spoke in Utah while receiving his endorsement reinforced his party's acceptance of Mormons through the world of politics. The *Los Angeles Times* made note of these words and their significance in an article from October 11th, 1960:

“The interview began with the presentation to the candidate of a genealogical chart showing him to be an eighth cousin of Reuben Clark, a first president of the church ranking immediately below Dr. McKay and of Mary Todhunter Clark Rockefeller, wife of Gov. Rockefeller. The chart showed their descendance from William Brinton and Ann Bagley in colonial Pennsylvania. “All we ask in Utah is the vote of our relatives,” Nixon quipped.”¹³

Both the way in which the President of the Mormon Church introduced Nixon, and the way in which Nixon tried to woo the vote of Utah serve as signs that as early as 1960 Mormonism was far along in legitimizing itself as part of the American mainstream. The act of referring to himself as a “relative” of Mormons is the most intimate relationship the Mormons had thus far to a political figure who was clearly not Mormon, no matter what Nixon or McKay wished Church

¹¹ Lytle, M.H., *America's uncivil wars : the sixties era : from Elvis to the fall of Richard Nixon*. 2006, New York: Oxford University Press.

¹² Edwards, W., *HEAD MORMON GIVES NIXON AN INDORSEMENT*, in *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)*1960: Chicago, Ill., United States, Chicago, Ill. p. 5-5.

¹³ Shannon, D., *Mormon Church Head Gives Support to Nixon*, in *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*1960: Los Angeles, Calif., United States, Los Angeles, Calif. p. 1.

members to believe. Inversely, as this statement connected Nixon to the Mormon community, it also signified the welcoming of Mormons to the greater American “family.”

These interactions between key political figures of the 1960s and the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints are just one aspect of the Mormon’s involvement in the political realm; The Church itself endorsed a candidate for the Presidency, the second Mormon to ever decide to submit their name as a nominee: George Romney. His first campaign resulted in being elected governor of Michigan in 1963. Being a state election, this naturally garnered less national attention than a race for a national office would. In 1968 however, Governor Romney ran for the Republican nomination for President. Although he eventually withdrew his name from the Republican primaries, the widespread acceptance of his attempt proves that Mormons had become secure in their place in American culture. Trepanier notes this acceptance, but refers to it mildly as “religious tolerance.”

“...in 1968, a Mormon, George Romney, sought the Republican nomination for the White House. In 1844, Mormons were considered outcasts and ultimately persecuted in the United States. But the 1968 presidential election year could be characterized as one of religious tolerance and respect for Mormons. Americans had come to accept Mormons as American citizens in a period where an ideology of religious tolerance was predominant among the political elite, and religion after John F. Kennedy’s election to the presidency in 1960, played little role in the public mind.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Trepanier, L. and L. Newswander, *LDS in the USA : Mormonism and the making of American culture*. 2012, Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press.

There can be no doubt that George Romney's foray into a national election was a pivotal point in the social journey of Mormons.

Rather than the "religious tolerance," asserted by Tepanier being the sole reason for Romney's success, an argument can be made instead in relation to Catholicism and John F. Kennedy, as vaguely alluded to in the previous excerpt. It would be quite a stretch to say that Catholicism, though considered slightly strange due to their need for a Pope by mainstream Protestants, ever had the same amount of disapproval aimed at it as the Mormons did. However, the oddness attributed to Catholics was evident when Kennedy ran for President, and questions were raised about his alliance to the Pope. After his election however, all doubts subsided and there were no second thoughts about Catholics. Many in America thought that the same would hold true for Romney, and if elected, Mormonism would be considered a normal Christian religion.¹⁵

This comparison indicates that though Mormons were no more distant from mainstream America than Catholics were before Kennedy ran for President, despite their outsider status. The argument could then be made, that it was not the act of Kennedy being elected President that normalized Catholicism, but rather the act of him running as a legitimate candidate; the same fashion in which Romney ran for President. This sentiment was stated in the Los Angeles Times on November 27th, 1966: "Romney's emergence as the front-runner for the GOP nomination marks a milestone for the Mormon Church in the long road from the violent persecution it faced in the 19th century to the point where one of its members is in the race for the nation's highest

¹⁵ Trepanier, L. and L. Newswander, *LDS in the USA : Mormonism and the making of American culture*. 2012, Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press.

office.”¹⁶ Later, Thrapp’s article expresses the positive reaction from the Mormon Church concerning Governor Romney’s possible presidency: “The fact that Governor Romney is now spoken of for President pleases many Mormons today, but it does not surprise them.”¹⁷ These statements, made in one of the nation’s leading newspapers, provide evidence for the argument concerning the relation between the Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints. Mormons were happy that their religious beliefs were no longer considered taboo in American culture after a long persecution, but were not surprised by this as they were already on the cusp of acceptance before George Romney’s bid for candidacy.

In conclusion, the political realm proved to be key in the acceptance of Mormonism in American culture during the 1960’s. Both non-Mormon politicians, and Church politicians alike made strong advances in solidifying the place of Mormonism in culture. However, if the political realm stood alone as the only interaction with American society, Mormonism may still be a religious outsider.

Changing Racial Attitudes

From the beginning of Mormonism up until the late 20th century, African Americans were banned from the “priesthood,” of the Latter-Day Saints Church, due to the Mormon belief that people of African lineage were born with “The Curse of Cain.”¹⁸ This belief persisted, astonishingly enough, until the year 1978.¹⁹ An internally disputed belief, the argument could be made that the in-Church schism concerning this tenet of faith helped Americanize the Church

¹⁶ Thrapp, D.L., *Gov. Romney Assured Mormon Backing but 'He's On His Own'*, in *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*1966: Los Angeles, Calif., United States, Los Angeles, Calif. p. 1.

¹⁷ Thrapp, D.L., *Gov. Romney Assured Mormon Backing but 'He's On His Own'*, in *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*1966: Los Angeles, Calif., United States, Los Angeles, Calif. p. 1.

¹⁸ Edward B. F., *Mormons: Still No Place in The Pulpit For Blacks*, in *New York Times (1923-Current file)*1969: New York, N.Y., United States, New York, N.Y. p. 1.

¹⁹ Bringhurst, N.G. and D.T. Smith, *Black and Mormon*. 2004, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

during the tumultuous period of the 1960's, in the sense that it mirrored shifts in the greater American consciousness.

It is not possible to separate America in the 1960s from the civil rights movement and the fanatical groups formed in its wake, nor the inverse. Race and racism were divisive issues in American life, with outspoken proponents on both sides of the line. The John Birch Society was an extremist group during the 1960's.²⁰ Although the Society reserved their hatred mainly for communists, they were also vocal concerning the issue of segregation, positioning themselves as against equality for the races. Throughout the 1960's, the LDS Church faced claims from outsiders about being affiliated with this pro-segregation group. These claims, which the Church publically refuted, helped Mormons align themselves with the greater American public. This occurred in the sense that it took the focus away from their more peculiar religious beliefs, and placed it on social viewpoints which every mainstream religion had to face.

During this situation, The Latter-Day Saints were consistent in their disapproval of being associated with the John Birch Society (because of their theology concerning African-Americans) as a whole, yet promoted their intrinsic American value of Church members having the freedom to decide whether they would want to be in non-Church groups:

“We deplore the presumption of some politicians, especially officers, co-ordinators and members of the John Birch Society, who undertake to align the church or its leadership with their partisan views...[however] The church recognizes and protects the right of its members to express their personal political beliefs, but it reserves to itself the right to formulate and proclaim its own doctrine... We encourage our members to exercise the

²⁰ Lytle, M.H., *America's uncivil wars : the sixties era : from Elvis to the fall of Richard Nixon*. 2006, New York: Oxford University Press.

right of citizenship, to vote according to their convictions, but no one should seek or pretend to have our approval of their adherence to any extremist ideologies.”²¹

This notion of freedom to disagree on social and political matters than the religious body one is affiliated with was an example of Mormons not being a “cult” but rather a traditional American faith.

This is not to say however that the negative attention given to the Mormons for their theology banning African Americans from the priesthood and accusations about a relationship with the John Birch Society always contributed to aligning Mormons into the mainstream. In a 1969 *New York Times* article entitled “Mormons: Still No Place in The Pulpit For Blacks,” by journalist Edward B. Fiske, Fiske blasted the ban on blacks in the Priesthood saying, “How in this age can any American institution with nearly three million members raise second class citizenship to the level of principle? How can it maintain a virtually unchallenged authoritarian rule when most similar systems are besieged with internal dissent?”²² He was not the only journalist to voice this concern. John Dart of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote that, “Mormons are accused of racism by militant Negroes,”²³ and this seemed to be an underlying concern of many Americans. In the context of the times however, accusations of racism were much preferred to the accusations of polygamy pointed only at Mormons which were so prevalent less than 50 years before.

²¹ *Mormon Head Clarifies Stand on Birch Society*, in *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*1963: Los Angeles, Calif., United States, Los Angeles, Calif. p. 5.

²² Edward B. F., *Mormons: Still No Place in The Pulpit For Blacks*, in *New York Times (1923-Current file)*1969: New York, N.Y., United States, New York, N.Y. p. 1.

²³ Dart, J., *Mormons Set Training of Negro Executives*, in *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*1968: Los Angeles, Calif., United States, Los Angeles, Calif. p. 18-18.

Ironically, Mormon's also supported the Civil Rights Movement which helped the Church to merge into mainstream America from another direction. Although the Latter-Day Saints faced heat from the public because of their seemingly racist theology concerning African Americans, George Romney, who could arguably be the face of Mormonism during the mid to late 1960s, was a strong proponent of the civil rights movement in his state of Michigan. As author Lee Trapanier explains,

“In his first State of the State address, [Governor] Romney declared that “Michigan’s most urgent human rights problem is racial discrimination,” and he created the state’s first civil rights commission. One of the first to praise the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Martin Luther King, he personally led a civil rights march in Detroit in 1965. Romey also strongly disagreed with the conservative wing of the Republican Party, especially on civil rights, stating, ‘Whites and Negroes, in my opinion, have *got* to learn to know each other’”²⁴

These views supporting Civil Rights, spoken by one of the most well-known followers of the Mormon religion, helped ease the racist accusations being thrown at the Church.

This dichotomy of both the Church’s anti-civil rights views and it’s most prominent member’s pro-civil rights stance can appear irreconcilable at first. However, after examining the evidence available during this era it is clear that both of these views fulfilled different roles which were equally necessary in solidifying The Latter-Day Saints as prototypically American during the 1960s. The Church’s view on African Americans being lesser than whites took the focus away from their storied past and focused the public eye instead on their social stances.

²⁴ Trepanier, L. and L. Newswander, *LDS in the USA : Mormonism and the making of American culture*. 2012, Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press.

George Romney's public support and approval of the civil rights movement enforced the view that like other Churches, the Saints were not a cult controlling their followers but instead had a following of people with different viewpoints and opinions. The varying viewpoints themselves seem to stand as a symbol of how divisive the Civil Rights Movement was during the mid to late sixties.

Economics and Academia

During the 1960s the Mormon Church made strives toward the mainstream in the realm of economics and academia as well in the 1960's. In 1966, the *New York Times* ran an article concerning a new intellectual journal produced by Mormon scholars. The inception of an academic journal by the LDS Church was a key step in becoming conventionally American. "*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*,"²⁵ was the first academic journal released by Mormons, and worked to end the stereotype that Mormons were purely religious and unconcerned with education as a people. The article itself proclaims how Mormons are no longer confined to their western habitat and indeed are active members of both the academic and non-Mormon world as a whole. "'Mormons have long remained isolated from their neighbors by choice and by necessity' he [Johnson] said. Today, however, more than half of the church's members live outside Utah, and Mormons are 'participating freely in the social, economic and cultural currents of change sweeping twentieth century America.'"²⁶ The public took notice of this journal, impressed that Mormons were no longer self-imposing a scholarly isolation.

²⁵ By, E.B.F., *Mormon Scholars Produce New Intellectual Journal*, in *New York Times (1923-Current file)*1966: New York, N.Y., United States, New York, N.Y. p. 111-111.

²⁶ By, E.B.F., *Mormon Scholars Produce New Intellectual Journal*, in *New York Times (1923-Current file)*1966: New York, N.Y., United States, New York, N.Y. p. 111-111.

If the fact that Mormons were actively producing an intellectual journal is not evidence enough of their entrance into the social mainstream, that they were becoming less isolated geographically also attests to their entrance. In 1970, the *New York Times* ran an article entitled, “Mormons Trade Hills for Skyscrapers in Spreading Faith,” chronicling the Church’s progress from a western phenomenon to a nationwide staple of religion.²⁷ It is interesting that the *New York Times* would run this article as opposed to the Salt Lake City newspaper. In of itself, this is evidence suggesting that the Mormons were no longer confined to just Utah, but were being accepted as mainstream Americans by the media.

In addition to both the academic and social progress, Mormons could quite possibly be considered the most financially savvy religion in America during the 1960s. Although the church, “vigorously denounces and discredits any attempt to estimate its finances,”²⁸ it was estimated that the Church was taking in roughly a million dollars a day in 1962.²⁹ In a country built on the foundations of capitalism and of reaping what you sow, Mormons clearly embodied the Protestant work ethic so valued in the 1950s and 1960s. Their economic prosperity gave them credibility among wealthy Americans and enabled them to interact more with the outside world through the opening of new temples and other LDS Church establishments, “A visitor’s center containing \$260,000 worth of displays and artwork was opened to the public this week on the grounds of the Mormon Temple in West Los Angeles.”³⁰ Visitor centers such as this provided a

²⁷ By, P.L.M., *Mormons Trade Hills for Skyscrapers in Spreading Faith*, in *New York Times (1923-Current file)*1970: New York, N.Y., United States, New York, N.Y. p. 47-47.

²⁸ Ostling, R.N. and J.K. Ostling, *Mormon America : the power and the promise*. 1999, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

²⁹ Ostling, R.N. and J.K. Ostling, *Mormon America : the power and the promise*. 1999, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

³⁰ *L.A. Mormon Temple Visitor Center Opens*, in *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*1967: Los Angeles, Calif., United States, Los Angeles, Calif. p. 19-19.

forum to show their religious beliefs as being Christian, as well as their power and economic stability.³¹

Another example of how the realm of economics merged Mormonism with the mainstream, is through the person of David M. Kennedy. Kennedy, a Mormon, was the “chairman of the board of the Continental Illinois Bank, the biggest bank in Chicago.”³² This position made him the face of the Mormon church in economics. He would go on to lead his bank to being the eighth largest in the nation, with branches at multiple locations overseas, and also to serve as the Secretary of the Treasury for Richard Nixon.³³ The media referred to him as, “one of the most deliberate and contemplative men in the Administration,”³⁴ and he became one of the most highly respected bankers and economists in the country. His allegiance to the Latter-Day Saints was attributed as the foundation for his work ethic and integrity, with never a bad word said about the church. David M. Kennedy was the face of the Latter-Day Saints in the economic world, and as such represented them faithfully and honorably.

In both academia and economics, it was highly publicized in the 1960s that Mormons were heavily involved on a national level. There is no doubt that these advancements in withdrawing from the shell of religious isolationism and into the public eye contributed to the overall acceptance of Mormonism as being apart of mainstream America.

³¹ *L.A. Mormon Temple Visitor Center Opens*, in *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*1967: Los Angeles, Calif., United States, Los Angeles, Calif. p. 19-19.

³² By, A.C.W.S.t.T.N.Y.T., *Personality: The Head of a Big-Little Bank*, in *New York Times (1923-Current file)*1966: New York, N.Y., United States, New York, N.Y. p. 1-F3.

³³ By, A.C.W.S.t.T.N.Y.T., *Personality: The Head of a Big-Little Bank*, in *New York Times (1923-Current file)*1966: New York, N.Y., United States, New York, N.Y. p. 1-F3.

³⁴ Special to The New York, T., *A Banker Who Never Says Never*, in *New York Times (1923-Current file)*1969: New York, N.Y., United States, New York, N.Y. p. 22.

Conclusion

After examining the role of Mormons in 1960's American culture, it is clear that they were a growing, driven and intellectual group of people. It is also clear that by the end of the era, they were no longer considered outsiders by Americans. From politics to racial attitudes to academics and economics, in every aspect of public life the Mormons exemplified American qualities and aligned themselves with the nation founded on Christian values.

In politics, the speeches given by Kennedy and Nixon represent the acceptance of Mormons into the "American family". The issues that these politicians addressed to the Mormons were the exact same issues they would have addressed to any other Christian community, harping heavily on the fear of communism, and also attempting to relate oneself to the community through family ties. George Romney's attempt for the White House represented the first legitimate chance that a Mormon had to win the highest office. The lack of concern about his religious beliefs by the American public also insinuated the Mormon's acceptance in the political realm.

In racial issues, the Mormon Church's approach concerning its adherent's political viewpoints was similar to that of any other Christian Church: that recommendations could be made, but in the end politics and the Church are separate, and the Church would not force a vote in either direction (segregation or equality).

Academically, Mormons finally seemed to catch up with the rest of the United States, by issuing the first Academic Journal written by Mormons. Although BYU had already been established, the act of sending out an academic journal into the greater public represented the Mormons rising from their intellectual shell. Economically, leaders in the field who were Mormon represented

the intelligence and fiscal responsibility of Mormons in general. They were moral and showed America that Mormons were in fact like everyone else, including their bank. In conclusion, The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints was successfully a staple of mainstream American culture after the long sixties.³⁵ Due to the Church's involvement in politics, race issues, academia, and economics they proved to Americans that they were no longer the strange cult which outsiders had long attributed them to be. Rather, they embodied the values of the average American and were increasingly involved in the greater national and global context on issues which historically would have been deemed outside their control. Finally able to distance themselves from their troubled past, the Church of the Latter-Day Saints can be secure in the knowledge that they are, at long last, completely American.

³⁵ Lytle, M.H., *America's uncivil wars : the sixties era : from Elvis to the fall of Richard Nixon*. 2006, New York: Oxford University Press.

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