



## The Joseph Smith Papers: Council of Fifty, Minutes

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**The long-awaited minutes of the meetings of the Council of Fifty, the organization created by Mormon prophet Joseph Smith just three months before he was murdered.**

Historians with the Joseph Smith Papers Project have made available for the first time ever the complete minutes created in Nauvoo, Illinois, of an organization called the Council of Fifty. Joseph Smith, founder and first president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, formed this council in March 1844. The Nauvoo-era record contains minutes of meetings held under the direction of Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young, through January 1846, immediately before the mass Mormon migration out of Illinois. The minutes have never previously been published or available to researchers.

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Members of the council saw its formation as the beginning of the literal kingdom of God on earth; accordingly, much of the discussion under Joseph Smith's chairmanship centered on ideal government. One of the council's purposes was to investigate possible settlements outside of what then constituted the United States. Ultimately, the council played a significant role in planning the church's migration to the American West. The Council of Fifty also helped manage Joseph Smith's campaign for president of the United States in 1844 and helped provide for the government of Nauvoo after the city's charter was repealed.

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"Students of these pivotal events will be forever grateful for the insights and understanding they will find in these pages." --Elliott West, University of Arkansas

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