

# Editorial Method of the Wilford Woodruff Papers

The Wilford Woodruff Papers Project presents verbatim transcripts of Wilford Woodruff's papers for users to study Woodruff's participation in the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ from 1833 to 1898. The papers include documents created by Wilford Woodruff, whether written or dictated by him, or that were received by him (as with incoming correspondence). The Project intends to publish every extant Wilford Woodruff document it can access.

High resolution images of the documents are published online alongside verified, searchable transcriptions supplemented with reference material including biographical sketches, geographical descriptions, a glossary of terms, images, and a timeline.

## Document Selection

Multiple versions of some Wilford Woodruff documents were created during his lifetime. For example, some discourses originally written in his journal were revised and published. Individuals with access to the handwritten or printed versions might have made or obtained copies for personal use. In some cases the only record of a discourse is in the minutes of a meeting. Original documents are featured when they are extant. When originals are not available, the earliest extant version of the text is featured. In rare instances a later version is featured for reasons explained in the source notes preceding the document. Eventually a comprehensive catalog of documents will list all known (including nonextant) versions of documents and will be available on the website.

## Transcription Rules

Document transcription requires informed but subjective judgment calls. Wilford Woodruff's documents require more informed subjective judgment than most. Here are the rules that govern these judgments.

Judgments about capitalization are informed not only by looking at the specific case at hand but by understanding Woodruff's usual characteristics as a writer. Wilford Woodruff uses upper case, lower case, and a distinct form of "middle case" letters. The middle-case letters are silently amended to conform to modern capitalization rules. For example, "the Congregation met at smith's house in carroll County" will be rendered "the congregation met at Smith's house in Carroll County." Regardless of their form, Woodruff's letters are only capitalized when editors judge that he clearly intended a capital letter *or* he used a middle case letter to begin a proper noun. The same is true for interpreting original spelling and punctuation. If a letter or other character is ambiguous, deference is given to the author's or scribe's usual spelling and punctuation. Where this is ambiguous, modern spelling and punctuation are favored. Interested readers should compare the transcripts with the images of the documents on the website to see how these rules were applied.

The initial transcription of a document will be followed by a two-stage verification. To ensure accuracy, each verification stage is done by a different person using a different method. The first verification is done using high-resolution scanned images. If there are differences based on judgments made by the transcriber, a text expert will resolve the discrepancies in the third stage. At this stage, the verifier may employ magnification as needed to read badly faded text, recover heavily stricken material, untangle characters written over each other, and recover words canceled by “wipe erasures” made when the ink was still wet or removed by knife scraping after the ink had dried.

The approach to transcription employed in the Wilford Woodruff Papers is a conservative style of what is known as “expanded transcription.” The transcripts render most words letter by letter as accurately as possible, preserving the exact spelling of the originals. This includes incomplete words, variant spellings of personal names, repeated words, and idiosyncratic grammatical constructions. The transcripts also preserve substantive revisions made by the original scribes. Canceled words are typographically rendered with the strikethrough bar, while inserted words are enclosed within two carets. Cancellations and insertions are also transcribed letter by letter when an original word—such as “sparingly” or “attend”—was changed to a new word simply by canceling or inserting letters at the beginning or end of the word—such as “sparingly” or “attend^ed^”. However, for cases in which an original word was changed to a new word by canceling or inserting letters in the middle of the word, to improve readability the original word is presented in its entirety, followed by the revised word in its entirety. For example, when “these” was revised to “there” by canceling the “s” and inserting an “r”, the revision is transcribed as “~~these~~ ^there^” instead of “thes^r^e”.

Insubstantial cancellations and insertions—those used only to correct spelling and punctuation—are silently emended, and only the final spelling and punctuation are reproduced. For example, a manuscript reading “Wilford & and Phebe” will be rendered in the transcript as “Wilford and Phebe”. And a manuscript reading “on Thirsday 31<sup>th</sup>^st^ arrived at Buffalo” will be rendered “on Thirsday 31st arrived at Buffalo”.

The transcription of punctuation differs from the original in a few other respects. Single instances of periods, commas, apostrophes, and dashes are all faithfully rendered without regard to their grammatical correctness, except that 1) periods are not reproduced when they appear immediately before a word, with no space between the period and the word; 2) periods are not reproduced when they appear immediately before or after numbers if not intended to indicate the end of a sentence, such as “18.36” or “.7. men rode”; 3) if the writer implies the end of a sentence by either including a comma or leaving a space after the last word and capitalizing the next word, a period will be silently added after the last word; 4) commas used as apostrophes are silently rendered as apostrophes; and 5) punctuation in numbers is standardized (e.g. when 1,00 indicates one dollar it is standardized to 1.00). Also, in some cases of repetitive punctuation, only the final mark or final intention is transcribed while any other characters are silently omitted.

Dashes of various lengths are standardized to a consistent pattern. Dashes used as terminal punctuation are silently emended to a period. Dashes used to insert thoughts are rendered as [word]em-dash[word] (ex: said—He). The short vertical strokes commonly used in early American writing for abbreviation punctuation are transcribed as periods, except that abbreviation punctuation is not reproduced when an abbreviation is expanded in square brackets.

Horizontal lines in the text used to communicate a break between thoughts are not reproduced but are indicated by a paragraph break in the transcription.

Flourishes and other embellishments and symbols are not reproduced but noted in brackets as FIGURE or FIGURES, with a link to the table of symbolic meanings, if known.

Wilford Woodruff sometimes included names and dates within a decorative border to emphasize a location or an event, such as a wedding or the death of a loved one. In such cases, the words inside the border will appear following the bracketed [FIGURE].

Unless found within square brackets, ellipsis marks appear in the featured text only where they occur in the original manuscript and are standardized to a consistent format; they do not represent an editorial abridgment. With the exceptions below, punctuation is never added silently. When the original document sets off a quotation by using quotation marks at the beginning of each line that contains quoted matter, the quotation is formatted as a block quote, without the original quotation marks preserved.

When quotation marks are written after a date, such as Jan. 1", Jan. 2", Jan. 3", Jan. 4", the marks are replaced with the proper superscript ordinal indicators: Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> without brackets. If only one letter is missing ("2<sup>d</sup>"), it is supplied without brackets: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Notable exceptions:** Wilford Woodruff often combined letters such as "ed," "ny," and "ng." If he consistently dropped a letter in that combination, it is added silently in the transcription.

Incorrect dates, place names, and other errors of fact are transcribed as they appear in the original. The intrusive *sic*, sometimes used to affirm original misspelling, is never employed. However, where words or phrases are especially difficult to understand, editorial clarifications or corrections are inserted in brackets. Correct and complete spellings of personal names are supplied in brackets the first time each incorrect or incomplete name appears in a document (or natural subdivision of a lengthy document such as a journal), unless the correct name cannot be determined. Place names that may be hard to identify are also clarified or corrected within brackets. When two or more words are inscribed together without any intervening space, and the words were not a compound according to standard contemporary usage or Wilford's consistent practice, a space is silently inserted between the words. Journal entries appear in their original sequence, retaining any out-of-order or duplicate entries.

To aid readers in navigating Woodruff's journals, standardized headings giving dates and days of the week are supplied in a bold typeface for each journal entry. Original first dates are retained in the transcript. Woodruff's later dating of entries are not transcribed, however. Original or implied page numbers are not reproduced. Formatting is standardized. Original paragraphing is retained, except that in journal texts the first paragraph of the journal entry is run in with the original dateline. Paragraphs are indicated with an empty line between paragraphs. Blank space of approximately five or more lines in the original is noted, as are lesser amounts of blank vertical space that appear significant. Extra space between words or sentences is not captured unless it appears that Woodruff left space as a placeholder to be filled in later. Block quotations in originals are set apart with block indents. Because of the great number of words broken across a line at any point in the word, with or without a hyphen, end-of-line hyphens are not transcribed and there is no effort to note or keep a record of such words and hyphens. This leaves open the possibility that the hyphen of an ambiguously hyphenated compound escaped transcription or that a compound word correctly broken across a line ending without a hyphen is mistakenly transcribed as two words.

When the writer draws the borders of a table and enters information in separate columns and rows, the table borders will not be reproduced. The words written in the cells will be transcribed in the rows as written on the page. When pages are divided vertically into different groups of text, transcription is rendered by section rather than attempting to replicate the exact horizontal layout of the page. This will help the reader avoid confusion. Vertical squiggle marks connecting groups of text are not rendered.

Address pages of letters are transcribed, insofar as possible, in the order in which the writer penned the words. Stamps are transcribed with ink color noted in brackets: [stamp in red ink]. Non-contemporaneous notations and archival marks are not recorded.

In transcripts of printed sources, typeface, type size, and spacing have been standardized. Characters set upside down are silently corrected. When the text could not be determined because of broken or worn type or damage to the page, the illegible text is supplied based on another copy of the printed text, if possible. Printers sometimes made changes to the text, such as to correct spelling mistakes or replace damaged type, after printing had already begun, meaning that the first copies to come off the press often differ from later copies in the same print run. No attempt has been made to analyze more than one copy of the printed texts transcribed here, aside from consulting another copy when the one used for transcription is indeterminable or ambiguous.

Changes in ink color may indicate breaks during writing or provide other clues about the composition process. Many but not all changes in color of ink are noted. In some cases, the ink color changes mid-entry to match the ink color of the following entry, indicating that the latter portion of an entry likely was added at the time the subsequent entry was inscribed. These and other significant color changes are noted. In some entries, cancellations and insertions were made in a different color than the original inscription. Because these cancellations and insertions are already marked as revisions—with the horizontal strikethrough bar for

cancellations and with a pair of carets for insertions—the color of the ink used for the revision is not noted.

Clerical notations (such as signatures or posting endorsements, often written on the back of a document or a document wrapper) are transcribed as insertions if they were made at the same time the document was created. Later clerical endorsements will be reproduced in the final source note. However, if contemporary or later notations are integral to the document’s creation, as in the case of payment notations on a bond, they are transcribed as original text, not insertions. Some types of notations, such as later archival markings, may not be reproduced.

Redactions and other changes made on the manuscript after the original production of the text, such as when later scribes used the journals for drafting history, are not transcribed. Labeling and other forms of archival marking are similarly passed by in silence. Excluding later additions from the transcript means that there will sometimes be noticeable differences between the image and transcript.

### **“Interim Content”**

The Wilford Woodruff Papers Project intends to publish twice-verified transcripts of all documents on the [www.wilfordwoodruffpapers.org](http://www.wilfordwoodruffpapers.org) website. To make transcripts available to the public more quickly, the project will publish some documents in an interim phase after they have been transcribed and verified, but before they have been verified a second time by a text expert. Such initial transcripts will be labeled as “interim content.” The label “interim content” will also appear on reference materials, such as biographical sketches. In other words, “interim content” marks any content that will ultimately be replaced by upgraded, expanded, or final content. Transcripts will undergo a third verification if they are to be published in print.

### **Transcription Symbols**

The following symbols are used to transcribe and expand the text:

[Woodruff] Brackets enclose editorial insertions that expand, correct, or clarify the text. This convention may be applied to the abbreviated or incorrect spelling of a personal name, such as Wilford Woodr[u]ff, or to a place, such as Westville [Wesleyville]. Obsolete or ambiguous abbreviations are expanded with br[acket]s. Bracketed editorial insertions also provide reasonable reconstructions of badly miss[p]elled words [words]. Missing or illegible words may be supplied within brackets in cases where the supplied word is based on textual or contextual evidence, including where a page has been damaged (ex: fami[ly] [page torn]). Bracketed punctuation and capitalization is added only when necessary to follow complex wording.

- [Woodruff]* Italicized brackets are added to an italicized word to indicate conjectured editorial insertions, such as entire words *[accidentally]* omitted, where it is difficult to maintain the sense of a sentence without some editorial insertion.
- [Woodruff]- Stylized brackets represent brackets used in the original text.
- [italic] Significant descriptions of the writing medium—especially those inhibiting legibility—and of spacing between the inscriptions are enclosed in brackets: [hole burned in paper], [leaf torn], [9 lines blank], [pp. 99–102 blank].
- [illegible] An illegible word is represented by the italicized word *[illegible]* enclosed in brackets. If more than one word is illegible indicate as, for example, *[3 illegible words]*.
- ◇ An illegible letter or other character within a partially legible word is rendered with a diamond. Repeated diamonds represent the approximate number of illegible characters (for example: sto◇◇◇s).
- underlined Underlining is typographically reproduced. Multiple underlining is standardized to a single underline. Individually underlined words are distinguished from passages underlined with one continuous line. When underlining includes leading and trailing spaces, it indicates handwritten portions of preprinted forms.
- <sup>superscript</sup> Superscription is typographically reproduced.
- ~~canceled~~ A single horizontal strikethrough bar is used to indicate any method of cancellation: strikethrough and cross-out, wipe erasure and knife erasure, overwriting, or other methods. ~~Individually canceled words~~ are distinguished from ~~passages eliminated with a single cancellation~~. Characters individually canceled at the beginning or end of a word are distinguished from ~~words canceled in their entirety~~.
- ^insertion^ Insertions in the text—whether interlinear, intralinear, or marginal—are enclosed in two carets. Letter<sup>s</sup> and other characters individual<sup>ly</sup> inserted<sup>ed</sup> at the beginning or end of a word are distinguished from <sup>words</sup> inserted in <sup>their</sup> entirety. Carets are not used when a letter(s) in a word are at the end of a line of text and added above or below the word because the writer ran out of room on the line.
- [writer] The handwriting of different writers is noted by inserting the name of the writer [Leonard John Nuttal] in square brackets, if known, otherwise by inserting [unknown writer].
- {shorthand} Instances of Taylor shorthand (a phonetic system of symbols first published by Samuel Taylor in 1786) and Pitman shorthand (a system of symbols first published by Isaac Pitman in 1837) are expanded into longhand in the running text and enclosed by {braces}. Conjectured editorial insertions are represented as {{shorthand?}}

◆ A star represents a non-Roman character inscribed by Wilford Woodruff or a scribe; some of these characters were copied from Egyptian records, while other characters came from other sources.

{{Deseret}} Instances of Deseret Alphabet—a phonetic system of symbols created between 1850 and 1853 at the request of Brigham Young and used in some publications and journals until 1877—are expanded into longhand in the running text and enclosed by {{stylized double braces}} with precise transliterations and any necessary description or explanation appearing in footnotes.