

JWHA 2019 Membership Survey Results

64 surveys completed, 26% response

Tell Us About You

How many years have you been a JWHA member?

1-5 Year	6-10 Year	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	Over 20 Year
20	19	7	7	11

Why did you join the JWHA?

- I was told about it after going to my first MHA meeting.
- It was interesting and the conference was near my home in Independence.
- Am a RLDS history buff
- Scholarly engagement and the ecumenical tone.
- To support the scholarship of the church
- For the journal (research and insights of scholars) and sometimes the conference.
- Invited by Billie Young
- Good friends and interesting studies
- Professional historian, interested in Latter-day Saint history and genealogy.
- Mormon history interest
- Available with MHA membership
- To join the intellectual discussion of Restoration theology, history, and tradition.
- I love historical conferences. I also wanted to present, which I have now done three times.
- Over the years I have attended various JWHA meetings. Decided I should join.
- Historic information
- Several colleagues and I are currently involved in an academic dialogue with Community of Christ. Knowing this, Alex Baugh encouraged me to become a member of JWHA.
- I have enjoyed the journal for many years, and I like the general mentality/culture of the organization.
- Different perspective
- I've attended multiple conferences and sincerely believe the work done by JWHA needs to perpetuate and grow. Becoming a member, with the added bonus of getting a copy of the journal, seemed like a reasonable way to help.
- Because I enjoy reading scholarly articles written within the context of the restoration.
- Professional development and interest in various branches of Joseph Smith's restoration
- To learn more about the scholars and scholarship related to the early Mormon church, particularly the Community of Christ.
- Great way to connect with scholars of the Restoration Movement.
- Interested in history and theological foundations of Community of Christ
- I presented at a conference, learned about the organization, and decided I appreciated its goals and mission.
- Interest in early church history
- It was cheaper to do spouse membership
- Interested in Mormon history generally.

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- Share Mormon history with other interested parties.
- I enjoy “Mormon” history and am from a very small town in Illinois which had an RLDS Church. As a LDS I always found them, the RLDS, to be interesting....almost Mormon and yet very not-Mormon. As my interest in history grew and I joined the Mormon History Assn, I was surprised to find the JWHA and it nicely bridged the histories and interests of the two traditions.
- I was a young graduate student interested in RLDS history, and JWHA was the best place to meet people who did the same.
- Interested in Mormon / RLDS / CofC / etc. history that includes groups outside of Utah Mormonism, and it not necessarily faith promoting.
- My husband presented years ago and then again after his book was published and we were living in Lamoni. That experience and family and friends persuaded us to join and we have been avid fans ever since.
- Interested in Restoration history.
- Employment
- Journal, conferences visit historical sites
- Good fella said since ya like history & enjoy people this is da place
- I love Mormon history.
- Interest in Mormon Church and Joseph Smith history
- My interest in Mormon history.
- Fine association; wonderful colleagues with similar, if contrasting, viewpoints; good journal and excellent conferences
- Subject/topics
- Association with folks who share an interest in restoration history.
- I was invited to join by a new friend.
- For the journal
- I was doing research on my female Mormon ancestors.
- Interested in the history of the church- I am a 5th generation member, with relatives dating back to England...who came over as LDS members, went to Provost, and came back and settled in SW Iowa - and have been very involved church members since the time of the Civil War. Also want the history of the church to be well-researched and well-grounded - and to be inspiring to future generations.
- Originally because of the discount for joining both MHA and JWHA. But I like the journal and I like the conference I attended.
- Interest in history and in the many personalities that make JWHA so legendary
- I like church history.
- I like to read Church history.
- I feel and felt that the JWHA journal is the best of the Restoration scholarship
- Interested in the history
- Interest in “Mormon” history. Began as LDS, ended up Episcopalian.
- First meeting in 1994 at Nauvoo. To fellowship with others who loved Mormon history.
- Bill Russell and Alma Blair suggested that I should present a paper at the conference.
- Wanted to keep up with a scholarly understanding of church history.

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- Network with scholars and present findings.
- I have always loved history, and Mormon history fascinated me.
- Interest in church history and to have contact with teachers and friends from Graceland
- To explore Community of Christ history in its full scope; not to stare at the 14 years that are common with Mormons, or to focus on Mormon topics, or to now tow to Mormons who are institutionally supported.
- I like history
- In all thy getting, get understanding
- Interest in Mormon History and desire for a more candid discussion of controversial issues than sometimes happens in other Mormon historical groups.

JWHA Benefits

Please rate the following membership benefits:

	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Somewhat Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>
<i>JWHA Journal</i> (currently published twice a year)	54	10	0
Annual Conference	44	17	3
Discount registration for annual conference	21	27	16
<i>JWHA E-Newsletter</i> (currently published three times a year)	21	38	5
JWHA Website	31	29	4
Membership E-directory	19	35	10
Full voting privileges at membership meetings	28	22	14

Are you generally pleased with *JWHA Journal*?

Yes	No
63	1

If no, where do we need to improve?

- I am not very techy - so not so concerned about online supports. BUT know they are important to some...and perhaps especially to younger people.
- I have no recommendations for improvement. Membership in JWHA has been VERY beneficial for me. I regard the yearly conferences as pilgrimages.
- I love the journal.
- Some of the scholarship is not as strong as it can be. Some articles I've read over the past few years was poorly documented and seemed to be more reflective and less analytical.
- Still the best of the journals, IMO
- Test data

Restoration Studies examines the theology and culture of Community of Christ and the Latter Day Saint Movement. At the present time, Restoration Studies is published in the

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back half of the *JWHA Journal*; and topics related to Restoration Studies are covered at John Whitmer Conferences, rather than at a separate conference.

Are you satisfied with the relationship between JWHA and Restoration Studies?

Yes	No
59	5

If no, where do we need to improve?

- No improvement. This is one of the great strengths of the organization.
- It seems like the theological is encroaching on the space for the historical topics. While they are tied together in this society to some degree, we are not all here for both. I don't mind restoration study topics at conferences, but I'm not sure I'm a fan of them in the journal.
- I love Mormon history and prefer to see journal dedicated to history - not theology of philosophy
- Not a no but really question why.
- There really isn't another place for Restoration theology to be critiqued, constructed, and otherwise discussed. With LDS and Latter-Day seekers coming more, I think more discussion about Restoration theology and theology to emerge. I'd like to see the seminary more involved and RS portion of JWHA more developed. Maybe a few members who are interested in that can work on it.
- Don't know how they became a part of JWHA.
- Tradition is needed. Personally, I think JWHA conference is an important place for the future CofC
- Please separate tale telling from comprehensive history. This does not a criticism of our editor.

50th Anniversary

In 2020 JWHA will celebrate our 50th anniversary at the annual conference in Independence.

What would you like to see at the 50th anniversary conference?

- A celebration of the accomplishments of the association and a thank you to the original founders.
- As many of the founders still up for the stress of the weekend.
- A book come from it that includes a brief history of JWHA and collection of the most important articles or presentations of the last 50 years. It should include both history and restoration studies.
- I would like to see my friends and acquaintances from JWHA.
- Representatives from the various Restoration churches
- Older, historic leaders/persons honored in some way? Review/highlighting of historic moments in the life of the Restoration movement?
- In addition to the regular format:
 - 1) A highlights review of articles/publications that have garnered the most interest and attention;

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2) Honoring of past presidents still alive.

- A brief highly-deserved veneration of the past, but mostly a preview of future scholarship.
- Just spit-balling, but I think it would be interesting to have a panel doing comparative analysis of Joseph Smith and his legacy. Perhaps LDS, CofC and other Restoration religions can examine his teachings and explain the differences among the various Rest. religions.
- Maybe a special invitation to all the original members and organizers who are still a live
- Celebration
- Don't care
- A panel of different ways the Community of Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints working together on historical matters (i.e. scholarship, historic sites, etc.), or other ways.
 - A panel on how the role JWHA has played in the above relationships
- Have not attended a JWHA conference
- People enjoying a common heritage. I really don't care what that looks like.
- More information on early members journals
- I would hold it somewhere else, actually--Vermont or Iowa, for instance--if you're looking for ways to make it more memorable.
- Independence or Nauvoo
- Cake!
- I realize that the JWHA was organized principally by members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, but I would enjoy a few sessions in which Utah Latter-day Saints and Community of Christ members could speak on (1) differing perspectives on significant historical moments; (2) differing perspectives on significant doctrinal matters; and (3) similarities that might be celebrated.
- Excellent presentations
- I don't have a preference.
- Women experience in early RLDS
 - 1) Emma Smith testimony of RLDS beliefs
 - 2) Background history of Palmyra spiritual experience in 1820
- PowerPoint of history of organization
- Paragraph by each charter members with their reflections on history support by world
- An event that is good enough leadership from our various groups want to attend so we have a sense of their support
- Surprise me.
- 2020 is the 200th anniversary of Joseph Smith's First Vision. It only comes around once in a century.
- I think a retrospective on the JWHA Journal might be interesting. It would be nice to honor all of the folks who have been part of the founding generation of JWHA.
- No preferences
- A panel discussion with as many as possible how the current organization views Joseph Smith and where the restoration movement has taken there organization Also how each organization views their role at the second coming
- A very special Annual Conference and a group of top-notch tours.
- I think the conference should not only celebrate what JWHA is now but what it has been. We should celebrate how it has developed in 50 years.

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- No particular suggestions
- Printed copies of papers
- Don't have anything in particular to recommend.
- Don't know
- Live broadcasted to Facebook or YouTube some of the lectures or a walking tour of Independence. This would allow those who cannot physically attend to see what they're missing and may convince them to attend subsequent years.
- A profile and discussion of the founding members
- Tours of important Mormon and CofC historical sites within 100 miles.
- Slideshow of the greats of JWHA
- Surprise guests and "roast" of past presidents of the organization
- Sites in Independence, all faith groups. Tour of Temple site. As always a great conference
- Retrospectives on topics popular since the inception of JWHA
- More books, and maybe a book exchange or lending library.
- A gathering of any original members from 50 years ago that are still alive.
- Along with the usual papers, a few that look back and forward to give us a memoir of JWHA's history.
- A reassertion of the primary purpose of JWHA
- Fireworks. Also, confetti. A reenactment of the founding of the organization. I'd like to see 50 young adults sponsored for the conference. A session called "The test of time" where journal articles from the last 50 years are reviewed to see which have stood the test of time and those that have not.
- Celebration of restoration history presentations on theological issues key to the "Restoration movement"
- Honoring the oldest members - Free dinner for them? Have them sit next to the newest members - Free dinner for them?
- A party celebration
- A draw for a free visit to one of the historic sites
- Something that encourages more scholarship from a new generation of historians.
- Recognition of major contributors to the programs and the journal.
- It will have to be at Independence (or Lamoni)--there are no other reasonable choices.
- Formal recognition of all past board members
- Good sessions and some kind of celebratory event.
- I am comfortable with what the Board will arrange for it.
- All my long-time friends, as well as newer members.
- It would be fun to see who was persuaded by the founders to join them in 1973, 74, 75, etc.
- Who has published the most in the JWHA Journal? Who has presented the most even if they have not published everything.
- Who has attended the most conferences.
- Favorite topic? Era?
- 3 days instead of two or 4 instead of 3 depending how you look at it. Try to get some of our more senior members or former members to attend. Photo ops of any and all founders, past presidents, etc.

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- I haven't given it much thought. I really enjoy the regular conferences. Maybe a slideshow of past members, presidents, etc.
- Whatever ya have will be ever so good
- Memories.
- I enjoy the conference as is.

Would you support an appeal for donations to a 50th Anniversary endowment, whereby the earnings could be used for an annual source of revenue for future years?

Yes	No
52	12

John Whitmer Books

Should JWHA continue to maintain an imprint and book publishing division?

Yes	No
57	7

JW Books should publish:

Volumes dealing with the RLDS/Community of Christ tradition	Any restoration topic	A monograph series on scholarly Restoration history topics	Other
11	41	12	0

- I'm not sure why JWHA publishes books. I doubt they're real revenue generators. And there are other publishers out there that might be interested in publishing the same titles. On the other hand, if the books really make money for JWHA, then maybe it's worth continuing to do so.
- I enjoy the Restoration history topics, but a monograph series sounds very interesting.
- A monograph series sound like a good idea
- Fiction, children's material, reflecting the whole restoration world
- All of the above.
- The book arm seems dead. Not sure how you resuscitate it with credibility.
- If the publishing division can financially be maintained, I think priority should be especially historic topics of the restoration/LDSaint and CofC movement: beliefs, policies, events, groups, research...??
- For person of C of C this is just about the only place left to get a book published. If someone else would do this like Herald House or GU I would vote to get out of publishing
- I am not sure John Whitmer Books is helping membership grow, maybe the effort it takes to publish books could be used in recruitment?
- I have mixed feelings about the scholarly imprint. It is very nice to have another print option. However, if it bleeds funds from the journal and impacts membership fees, then I would let it go. There are a ton of printing houses out there.

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- Thank you for your hard work in preparing enlightening and fascinating conferences. They are extremely informative and motivational.
- All other minority traditions that stem from JS Jr's initial work.
- Some of the JWHA books have not been carefully edited

Organization

According to the JWHA Policy Manual, the Objective of the John Whitmer Historical Association is to

- Create and encourage interest in Latter Day Saint history, Restoration Studies, especially the history of the Community of Christ.
- Stimulate scholarly research and publication in the field of Latter Day Saint history Restoration Studies.
- Promote communication among scholars of Latter Day Saint history Restoration Studies.
- Provide an institutional vehicle for the dissemination of the fruits of scholarly research to members of the Latter Day Saint Restoration churches and other interested persons.

Are we meeting our objective?

Yes	No
59	5

If no, where do we need to improve?

- More could be done with RS as noted above. I think the seminary can help with this. They teach classes on CofC and the work done there is good. I think they could present more.
- I have seen a tendency to move into areas of International, Minority, and Women Studies vs History of the Restoration, where ever, whoever, etc. I also see this happening with MHA, and that is not where I want to go. Stick with history regardless what expression of the Restoration it happens to be. If not we will lose membership I believe.
- Be careful that all parts of the restoration are given voice and covered and not just LDS and Community of Christ
- Be sure the Mormons don't take over.
- The better answer for me would have been "somewhat". See above comments.
- I would like to see more interest in good historical fiction, since much of it is based on scholarly works.
- This will sound very Brighamite, but there is still a strong anti LDS bias amongst many of the JWHA members. Maybe it's because most of the members are aging CofC or former CofC believers. But 10 years from now most of the gray heads will be moving on. What will JWHA look like at that point? A few former LDS members running the program? (See box below for improvement suggestions)
- You need to provide less binary answers for complex questions.
- NOT an area needing improvement, but a strength: I have been very impressed with the coming together of the various groups of churches of the Latter Day Saints over time: the sharing, fellowship, and dialogue.

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- Demand more focus on other than the first 14 years of JS Jr.
- A few have complained lately that we are too much concentrated on RLDS/CofC history and we should get back to Mormon’s origins. I would keep in mind that we are a CofC-based organization AND that we welcome all our friends in the Restoration Studies field. Balance the effort to stay focused AND diversify. Can that be done?
- We are trying but need new members of C of C that are willing to get involved
- I think JWHA is doing an excellent job in trying to meeting these objectives.
- Scholarly has become elitist

Is JWHA as an organization meeting your needs as a member?

Yes	No
62	2

If no, where do we need to improve?

- Rethink the current policy if not reviewing historical fiction!
- I do sometimes worry about a possible “take over” by BYU/LDS Church History Library
- One of the most important things about the annual conference is the mingling with friends and meeting new ones. I have had several individuals tell me that they like JWHA more than MHA because of that. We can always improve. Locations should be relevant and we must keep the cost of travel and related expenses in mind. Many of our retired members cannot afford to travel to distant locals nor can the younger members. I am concerned about this year for example.
- You need to provide less binary answers for complex questions.
- Here are some suggestions: Keep trying to get a balance of Brighamite and Josephite members/scholars on all of your boards. Vigilantly guard against those who take swipes at the other group in presentations, etc. This will mean strict public guidelines mentioning these taboos for everyone . It also will mean approaching those who are frequent offenders. It will mean trying to balance plenary speakers and avoiding apologetic ones. To continue see suggestions below
- Be sure the Mormons don’t take over.

How can we promote/increase JWHA membership?

- Advertising at other restoration sites and events
- Aggressively recruit at MHA, Sunstone, and other “Mormon” gatherings.
- Be more proactive on Facebook LDS history groups. Reopen the JWHA Facebook group and allow dialogue.
- By repeating conferences at Independence, Lamoni, Kirtland, and Nauvoo with new locations (such as Rochester, NY; Milwaukee, WI; Fredericksburg, TX) to broaden the field of CofC history.
- By teaching more history in our church school classes, and possibly publishing books about history which will appeal to younger readers. The youth are our future.
- Do lectures/talks at Graceland, Temple school
- “Lunch time” lectures at Temple/Liberty Hall/Nauvoo/Kirtland

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- Each of us as current members can share our experiences and learnings with our friends, inviting them to join JWHA.
- Get the board and others involved in publicizing it. Emphasize your Facebook, etc., presence (encourage board members to promote on Facebook, etc., as well).
- Have a presence at Mission Center conferences and reunions. I'm amazed at how many people have not heard of the organization.
- I don't think I have *ever* heard anyone mention JWHA in my CofC congregation.
- I have no clue, but we need to do this.
- I like the name, but it can be obscure. While most people in the Restoration know who John Whitmer was, he is not well known other than a witness of the Book of Mormon plates. I might suggest a name that updates and broadens the message....such as Restoration Historical Society.
- I personally have encouraged a considerable number to attend and they now regularly attend. We need to have each individual member bring guests and potential new member.
- I've shared this with the organizers on a few occasions, but diversifying outreach via livestreaming events and podcasting might be a good way to increase access to people whose schedules otherwise wouldn't allow.
- Interact more with MHA
- Invite our friends.
- Make discounts or scholarships available for younger folks to attend. Cost is often prohibitive to attend if you are in school. And especially traveling to far distant locations like the one this year.
- I wish we could get more young students from Graceland.
- Perhaps advertise at Utah State, BYU Idaho, U of U and BYU and elsewhere about our conference. Also the staff at the LDS Church History Library.
- More support at Graceland
- More meetings out of Midwest (Calif, Texas Pa)
- Need those nights Nice members to promote, few more incentives 4 younger folks
- Occasionally we have made an effort to get our materials into congregations and educational institutions, and then that effort lapses. I would submit that we need an on-going process and procedure to make this on-going. This also means using all means at hand--printed materials and technology. It probably also means a dedicated budget.
- The other thing is to remind members to encourage students to present and publish. Attending a conference is the best!
- Reach out individually to JMHS subscribers.
- Send flyers to universities with Mormon Studies programs and /or Theology schools in US and Europe.
- Seek younger audience from history studies majors and conference goers
- Promote committee participation and input
- Social media, social media, and social media.
- Somehow increase awareness/visibility at the congregational level?

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- Spreading your name through Utah based LDS publications such as MHA journal, Sunstone, Dialog and others would increase exposure to people who have an interest in Mormon studies generally. Perhaps more of that could be done.
- That is always a challenge. It's crucial to reach out to and welcome younger members or the organization will die.
- Use our 50th Anniversary as a super Big event to try to measure future interest in our group for the next 50 years
- Working towards reaching young scholars. This is the future of JWHA. Maybe with podcasts, such as Project Zion with the Mangelson's. But even reaching beyond this, it would be wonderful to do a podcast with John Dehlin at Mormon Stories.
- You are going to have to broaden your reach and your appeal to different constituencies. Otherwise you are going to blow away. Continue to reach out to younger academics. Your tag on the name tags was an excellent idea this past September. Maybe you should even reward/reinforce senior JWHA members who sponsor or invite new younger members. Lots of possibilities, right?

What should JWHA look like in 10 years?

- Not sure; an ecumenical forum for AAA scholarship on Mormonisms.
- A diverse group which includes all ages
- A new group of younger members who really want to keep our core principles going
- A user friendly organization in which polemics and support for any aspect of a Mormon organization is never seen
- Be web only
- Continuing ...with members of various ages...and members of the various Latter Day Saint churches/heritage. I really enjoyed the recent joint singing (hymn sing) at Stone Church sponsored by Historic Sites. Additional events bringing together the historic groups might be one way to increase our membership?
- Continuing the mission of expanding our understandings of forces that motivate us in our religious/spiritual journeys.
- Exactly as it looks, but hopefully with an influx of younger historians to be mentored by the current vanguard of historians running the show.
- Good question.
- Hopefully reaching younger people this will be reflected in 10 years with growth and young scholars
- Hopefully, not much will change.
- I do not feel the need for a huge association, but I do want a vibrant, intellectual, dedicated group of history buffs and professionals to continue sharing their research at JWHA. This means new, active members coming in and the old faithful members being able to retire from leadership positions and simply attend, always offering their wisdom and knowledge.
- I enjoy it as is very much.
- I hope we can involve more young people. MHA has a night/get together after one of the dinners just for that group. Otherwise there will be more and more grey hair.
- I'm a fan of paper books, but eBooks and pdfs etc. would certainly lower costs. I'm not sure how members would react to not having physical journals.

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- I'm sure there are pressures to increase membership. But one of the things I like about the conferences are their intimacy.
- Inclusive setting for various viewpoints
- It would be nice if people could attend the conferences virtually in the future.
- JWHA should have more members below 40 and have a better relationship between Graceland University and its undergraduates, whereby students will be interested in coming once more.
- More non-professional history presenters
- Perhaps some eBooks etc.
- Pretty much in line with the above.
- Renewed focus on Restorationism and American Christianity
- Same as now
- Selfishly, I would like to see more Salt Lake Latter-day Saint involvement.
- Similar organization and publications with an expanded membership base.
- Similar, but the faithful RLDS contingent will be shrinking considerably.
- We are on a fast track to rival the MHA and should continue to do so. That is as an alternative venue for conference papers and scholarly publications.

What suggestions do you have for the current board?

- All board members should agree, as a matter of membership on the board, to contribute annually to the Association.
- Appoint Daniel Stone, David Grua, and Melvin C. Johnson
- Be sure the Mormons don't take over.
- I always enjoy reading the journal and always find several articles that really interest me. So, more of the same?
- I love the way the board continues to be maintained by efficient officers of different persuasions.
- I think the work is defined for this board: plan annual conferences; plan the 50th anniversary conference; work on membership materials and dissemination procedures; build up JW Books to viability.
- Keep doing what you're doing. I love JWHA and look forward to attending every year possible until finances or personal circumstances render attendance impossible.
- Keep up the good work
- Keep up the good work!
- Keep up the good work. Make sure exchanges with MHA continue even though we no longer have the yearly membership discount if one belongs to both organizations.
- Let's make 2022 a super conference
- Need younger members if it will survive into the future. Put some millennial scholars on the Board of Directors.
- None. Keep up the good work
- Once again, I enjoy it as is.
- One of the great benefits of attending the conference is to see historical sites and hear experts explain (on a tour) the architecture and history of the Kirtland Temple, for

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instance. Would it be possible to broaden the range of sites from Independence and Nauvoo to other places--Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin?

- Pay very close attention to diversity, especially between the Josephites and the Brighamites.
- It will mean even scheduling at the annual conference the larger speaking venues with more variety rather than just for those of a certain stripe. (this happens all the time when venues don't have equal facilities.) Just some thoughts to consider
- Quit taking meetings to Mormon only sites. Stay within the focus area. Have all meetings fixed at Independence.
- See above. Keep up the good work. There was no question about "tours"; I think they are an important and meaningful part of the conference.
- I think it is critical that we meet in the Independence area at least every three years. Even if we have a back to back years.
- Think of ways to appeal to younger people and get them excited about history. Maybe we could have some sort of scholarship or competition for high school students.
- Too self-centered
- Vote to move the conference to SLC vs. St George, you'll get a bigger audience.
- Work with young scholars and be inclusive with these young people