

Two Independent Witnesses of a Statement From Martin Harris Regarding the Nature of the Witnesses Experiences With the Gold Plates:

Stephen Burnett in a letter to Lyman Johnson April 15th 1838:

"I have reflected long and deliberately upon the history of this church & weighed the evidence for & against it loth (sic) to give it up, but when I came to hear Martin Harris state in public that he never saw the plates with his natural eyes only in vision or imagination, neither Oliver nor David & also that the eight witnesses never saw them & hesitated to sign that instrument for that reason, but were persuaded to do it, the last pedestal gave way, in my view our foundation was sapped & the entire superstructure fell in heap of ruins, I therefore three week since in the Stone Chapel...renounced the Book of Mormon...after we were done speaking M Harris arose & said he was sorry for any man who rejected the Book of Mormon for he knew it was true, he said he had hefted the plates repeatedly in a box with only a tablecloth or a handkerchief over them, but he never saw them only as he saw a city throught [sic] a mountain. And said that he never should have told that the testimony of the eight was false, if it had not been picked out of——[him/me?] but should have let it passed as it was..."¹

Warren Parrish in a March 13th, 1838 letter:

"Martin Harris... has come out at last, and says he never saw the plates, from which the book purports to have been translated, except in vision; and he further says that any man who says he has seen them in any other way is a liar, Joseph not excepted."²

¹ Stephen Burnett letter to Lyman E. Johnson dated April 15, 1838. Typed transcript from Joseph Smith Papers, Letter book, April 20, 1837 - February 9, 1843, microfilm reel 2, pp. 64-66, LDS archives.

² Evangelist (Carthage, Ohio), October 1, 1838, 226.