

**Using GIS Data Technologies for the (Re)Visualization of the Historical and Religious
Figure of Emma Hale Smith**

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January 2019

Masters Thesis

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Acknowledgments

I am deeply thankful to multiple people regarding the formation of this project. I would like to thank Patrick Mason for his astute insights and seemingly endless patience with my attempts to study and engage Mormon history fairly yet critically from an ‘outsider’ position. I would like to thank Brian Hilton for extending his expertise in GIS concepts which has taught me to be a better GIS practitioner. I would like to thank Lillian Larsen for initially provoking my interest in the power of maps, and for the opportunity to co-teach a course with her at the University of Redlands in the fall of 2017 entitled *Redrawing the Map of Religious Studies*, in which our students generated fantastic questions and provided rich food for thought. I would also like to thank Rachel Killebrew at the Community of Christ Church Archives for granting me personal access to resources despite my inability to tour them in person. Finally I would like to thank my partner David for being not only a stimulating and lively conversation-partner but also a bedrock support through each draft and iteration of this process for which words fall short of being able to express my true gratitude.

1 Introduction

What follows is a study of the historical figure of Emma Hale Smith, as inhabiting a unique location caught between the nexus of both reverent and condemning legacies--legacies shared by and central to both the Church of the Latter Day Saints (LDS) and the Community of Christ (CC)¹ traditions, though in strikingly different modes. A certain methodology which utilizes geographic information systems (GIS) technologies and other data visualization tools will be employed, which I argue are particularly poignant for (re)engaging Emma from renewed vantage points as center rather than periphery. There is clearly a present need in both scholarship and collective consciousness for a resurgence in models of women’s subversion and civil disobedience, which have been procedurally erased ‘off of the map of history,’ particularly in religious contexts. With this case study I seek to illustrate how data and GIS visualization driven approaches might afford unique potential for reclaiming these narratives in powerful ways. To do

¹ Formally known as the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints until 2001.

so, it is imperative to first locate this distinct method and the ‘knowledges’ which ground it from interdisciplinary realms. Secondly, Emma’s contested legacy must also be situated so that the usage of data methods might be brought into meaningful conversation with the constructs which have framed the present landscape. Once these foundations have been laid we may apply our ‘situated method’ to our ‘situated subject’ for a responsible usage of data and GIS analysis which deconstructs fixed portraits of Emma Smith by (re)envisioning and (re)encountering her figure as three-dimensional subject.

2 ‘Situating’ Method

The project which has been carried out in this study did not materialize on its own accord from a totally objective, disembodied ‘god’s-eye view’ which fell from the sky. It is very much ‘situated’ in the Haraway-ian² sense, and because it is a rather interdisciplinary project in nature, it is therefore situated at the intersection of multiple layers and lineages of discourse. Though not exclusively, scholars from history, women’s studies, and religious studies have begun to both apply GIS to their areas of inquiry, as well as to apply their areas of inquiry to GIS. This has generated a range of niche discussions, each with their own unique set of challenges and insights, which has provided a ‘climate of knowledges’ with which the present work has had to interact. It is therefore useful to attempt to chart the overlaps in these bodies of discourse, and to then ‘place’ this study as both product of, and response to, those terrains. In this section I would like to survey three pertinent conversations: firstly, the somewhat recent development of HGIS (historical GIS) will be inspected; secondly, the crucial contributions of feminist geography will be explored; and lastly, spatial constructs in the field of religious studies, a site which I believe

² See Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, 1991, particularly Chapter 9: “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.”

might provide a particularly rich bedrock for GIS analysis that has yet to be thoroughly realized, will be traversed.

2.1 HGIS, or, Spatial History

Though it may still remain a somewhat niche field within the larger GIS ‘industry,’ there has undoubtedly been an increase in spatial engagement from scholars in the digital humanities with geospatial technologies in recent years. Here I would specifically like to highlight a few selected authors, comment on the collaborative nature of this subfield, and examine one case-in-point in particular.

Two notable authors in print who have considered ‘HGIS as method’ that I would like to mention here are Anne Kelley Knowles, Professor of History at University of Maine, and Ian Gregory, Professor of Digital Humanities at Lancaster University. Knowles has edited two anthologies of various HGIS applied case studies, *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History* [2002]³ and *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship* [2008]⁴, showcasing use-cases from multiple scholars with topics ranging from “Teaching the Salem Witch Trials” (Benjamin C. Ray) and “Creating a GIS for the History of China” (Peter K. Bol), respectively. More recently, she has also edited the important collection *Geographies of the Holocaust*[2014]⁵ which constitutes a poignant example of why applying GIS to history matters. Knowles has been an early advocate for the garnering of more popular excitement for the range of inquiries to which GIS might add new perspective. Gregory has also been a resource for historians interested in GIS, providing more ‘theory-based’ monographs, such as *Historical GIS*:

³ See Anne Kelley Knowles, *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History*, Redlands CA: Esri Press, 2002.

⁴ See Anne Kelley Knowles, *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship*, Redlands CA.: Esri Press, 2008.

⁵ See Anne Kelley Knowles, et. al., eds. *Geographies of the Holocaust*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Technologies, Methodologies, and Scholarship [2007]⁶, as well as more specifically ‘application-based’ studies, such as *Troubled Geographies: A Spatial History of Religion and Society in Ireland* [2013]⁷. These scholars and many more over the last decade have begun laying the groundwork for spatial history, in both theory and praxis.

As the highly collective, communal nature of the legwork implicit to this endeavor has become increasingly evident, multiple collaborative efforts for HGIS have emerged in addition to the operation of ‘solo scholars,’ mostly operating via online interface/web service rather than via publication. These co-ops seem to be often maintained at the university level, and there are few notable enterprises I would like to highlight here, though this is by no means a definitive list, those being: UC Berkeley | The Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI)⁸; Stanford University | The Stanford Geospatial Network of the Roman World (ORBIS)⁹; Harvard University | The China Historical Geographic Information System (CHGIS)¹⁰; University of Minnesota | The National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGGS)¹¹; and University of Portsmouth | Great Britain Historical GIS (GBHGIS)¹². Clearly there is a growing number of scholars of history and digital humanities who have begun to work cooperatively within the realm of GIS on a diverse range of compelling sites.

⁶ See Ian Gregory, *Historical GIS: Technologies, Methodologies, and Scholarship*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

⁷ See Ian Gregory, et.al. eds., *Troubled Geographies: A Spatial History of Religion and Society in Ireland*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013.

⁸ UC Berkeley. “The Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI).” <http://www.ecai.org/>

⁹ Stanford University. “The Stanford Geospatial Network of the Roman World (ORBIS).” <http://orbis.stanford.edu/>

¹⁰ Harvard University. “The China Historical Geographic Information System (CHGIS).”

<http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chgis/>

¹¹ University of Minnesota. “The National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGGS).”

<https://www.nhggs.org/>

¹² University of Portsmouth. “Great Britain Historical GIS (GBHGIS).” <http://www2.port.ac.uk/research/gbhgis/>

The explosion of projects which HGIS has ushered in has been exciting, interdisciplinary and collaborative, and the present project could certainly be considered as in the lineage of historical GIS or spatial history. However, I would assert its drive to take this infrastructure a deliberate step further, in that I advocate for a GIS usage that is targeted at *reconstructionist* history in particular, for *uncovering and (re)discovering* more fully those historical subjects who have ‘fallen off the map of history,’ as *subversion* to authoritative narratives. As case-in-point, I would like to examine one project in particular (also the only other historical GIS project I could readily find also based in letter correspondence as primary source data) and that is namely the Stanford University “Mapping the Republic of Letters” project¹³.

In what was surely a mammoth undertaking, the project quite extensively provides multiple applications with a variety of visualization techniques, of which the only subset that will be considered here will be the group of case studies labeled as “Correspondence,” in which 8 named individuals’ letters are ‘mapped’: Algarotti, Condorcet, D'Alembert, Voltaire, Locke, Galileo, Kircher, and Franklin. My assumption is that at least part of the decision-making process for choosing these figures likely came down to whether there existed a large and delineated-enough quantity of attributed letters, and whether they were readily available, and therefore understandably made good candidates from a data perspective. However, though it may be tempting to reach first for the most easily accessible ‘historic data,’ this might be telling of something in itself. The ‘easiest’ history data-sets to work with for GIS researchers--i.e. the most robust and least scant datasets, the already most compiled and organized, etc.--are very well likely to be those very narratives which have benefited most both collection and

¹³ Stanford University. “Mapping the Republic of Letters.” <http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/>

preservation-wise as a direct result of their privileged status. Alternatively, we as GIS practitioners could shift our focus instead toward directing these powerful GIS tools at attempts at the (re)location of lost subjects, not toward the solidification of the same subjects over and again as the dominant faces of historic vision and collective impression of the past.

All of this might sound like a larger critique of the field of history in general and not exclusively HGIS, for continuing to solidify with its representations that there is ‘one narrative’ of history which is seen and experienced through the eyes of elite, white men, and it certainly is that. However the addition of GIS to this paradigm only stands to accelerate and deepen long existent issues in the production of historical knowledge, and so we must be extra careful here. Despite the process being perhaps more labor-intensive in dealing with sparse data, unorganized source management situations, lineages of discord which may have affected the primary sources themselves, and any other challenges which a ‘side-lined’ historical record might pose, I assert that these types of projects are the very ones which garner for our attention and stand to be more the meaningful and far-reaching for HGIS investment.

2.2 GIS within the Scope of Feminist Geography Critique

Alongside the broader infrastructure of the feminist critique of the sciences writ large which was spearheaded by theorists such as Harding[1986]¹⁴ and Haraway[1991],¹⁵ scholars of critical and human geography who identified themselves as “feminist geographers” began to earnestly critique and re-purpose the geographical sciences in the 1980s and 90s. Here I would like to highlight a few key contributions and reflect on disconnects in bridging these theories into actual GIS practice, focusing on one scholar in particular.

¹⁴ See Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.

¹⁵ See Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, 1991.

Unlike the relatively ‘smaller’ and ‘younger’ subfield of HGIS, the subfield of feminist geography has by now garnered enough steam to be almost too large for an attempt at critical summary or concise introduce here. A small sampling of early ‘bedrock’ theorists who began relating the spatial sciences with critical feminist perspectives might include scholars such as Gillian Rose with her work *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* [1993]¹⁶; Doreen Massey with her work *Space, Place, Gender* [1994]¹⁷; and Linda McDowell with her work *Gender, Identity, and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* [1999]¹⁸; though by no means do Rose, Massey, and McDowell comprise the only ones who have charted this terrain. Since the ‘earlier days’ of fighting to be recognized, the field now seems solidified enough such that multiple compilations of these key theories are available for the pedagogical purposes of introducing this field of discourse to students and researchers, with notable entries such as Joni Seager and Lise Nelson, eds. *A Companion to Feminist Geography* [2005]¹⁹ and Pamela Moss and Karen Falconer Al-Hindi, eds. *Feminisms in Geography: Rethinking Space, Place, and Knowledges* [2008]²⁰ for reference.

As rich as this lineage of discourse has been, the contributions made by feminist geographers have been chiefly theory-building in nature and less based in practical engagements with the technology, namely GIS and the physical process of map-making; in essence these works have been largely about ‘geography’ and not specifically ‘GIS.’ In her short article,

¹⁶ See Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*, Minneapolis, MN.: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

¹⁷ See Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, Gender*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

¹⁸ See Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity, and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

¹⁹ See Joni Seager and Lise Nelson, eds. *A Companion to Feminist Geography*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

²⁰ Pamela Moss and Karen Falconer Al-Hindi, eds. *Feminisms in Geography: Rethinking Space, Place, and Knowledges*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008.

“Feminist Geography and GIS” [2002]²¹, Mei-Po Kwan, Professor of Geography at Ohio State University, points to the need for further integration between the two, stating that, “Despite the contributions by feminist geographers to methodological debates in geography in the 1990s, feminist geography and GIS have remained two separate worlds to date. While critical reflections on feminist methodologies have addressed significant issues pertinent to both qualitative and quantitative methods, debate on the role of GIS in feminist geographic research has been absent” (261). In a later work “Affecting Geospatial Technologies: Toward a Feminist Politics of Emotion” [2007]²², in which she goes on to supply her own approaches toward an integrated feminist GIS research method, Kwan “aims to bring bodies and emotions back in GT [geospatial technologies] practices” (24) in a process that “not only involves reintroducing long-lost subjectivities of the researcher, the researched, and those affected by GT back to geospatial practices, but also involves making emotions, feelings, values, and ethics an integral aspect of geospatial practices,” in order for “moral geospatial practices” to become possible (23). An increase in engagements with Kwan’s work stands to benefit GIS practitioners who wish to be in conversation with feminist concepts and more broadly constitutes a valuable asset in bridging gaps between the humanities and the sciences and likewise between geography and GIS practice.

Ultimately, Kwan expresses her overall ‘hopes’ for the work which she and her colleagues furnished in her introductory work which was originally cited above²³, that they would “serve as a helpful point of departure for examining other critical issues--especially GIS

²¹ See Mei-Po Kwan, “Feminist Geography and GIS,” *Gender, Place, and Culture*. Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 261-262, 2002.

²² See Mei-Po Kwan, “Affecting Geospatial Technologies: Toward a Feminist Politics of Emotion,” *The Professional Geographer*. Vol. 59, No. 1, pp. 22-34, 2007.

²³ Kwan, “Feminist Geography and GIS.”

and feminist activism, the implications of GIS for gender equality in geography, and the relationship between using GIS technology and the formation of particular subjectivities or identities” (262). Following Kwan, the hope of this work is to further this trajectory, though in this case, with a kind of feminist activism which is the use of GIS visualization for the (re)formation of (*past*) particular subjectivities and identities. Though these endeavors often pose the additional fraught terrain of navigating through layers of polemically-motivated agendas, distorted portrayals, and/or erasures which might have taken place over time from then to now, re-formation of these past subjects in (*past*) space stands to construct very real ramifications for the continuing negotiation of women today in their (*present*) space, and so in itself comprises a form of activism.

2.3 ‘Space as Text’, ‘Map as Text’, and GIS in Religious Studies

Over the years there have been multiple ‘overhauls’ in the field of religious studies, consisting of, among others, the ‘postmodernist/poststructuralist’ shift which has ushered in renewed focus on deconstructions of authority and power, as well as the so-called ‘spatial turn’ in philosophy, the reverberated effects of which have spread across multiple area of discourse including the study of religion. Here I would like to consider two scholars of religion along these lines who are critically engaging with spatial lenses in their work, though in decidedly different modes, who are namely Kim Knott, professor of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University and Lillian Larsen professor of Religious Studies at the University of Redlands.

In her article “Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion” [2005]²⁴, Knott mentions a conversation she had with feminist geographer Doreen Massey differentiating ‘place’

²⁴ See Kim Knott, “Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion,” *The Finnish Society for the Study of Religion*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 153-184, 2005.

and space,’ which triggered for her a progression through various influences, saying that, “Experimentally, I followed her (Massey’s) move from place to space, reading her work and that of several other postmodern geographers (David Harvey, Rob Shields, Ed Soja) before turning to their sources of inspiration, Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault” (156). Throughout her paper Knott proceeds to indeed draw heavily upon these scholars to develop “the elements of a spatial approach that could be applied to the problem of locating religion,” which she numerates as, “the body as the source of ‘space’; the dimensions of space; the properties of space; the aspects of space and; the dynamics of space” (156). I am immensely thankful for the infrastructure Knott provides for a better reading of ‘space as text’ for the study of religion, particularly with her focus on the body as the source of space and her refocusing of the spatial in religious studies out of old paradigms based in Eliade²⁵ into ones that are interdisciplinary, postmodern and not problematically-gendered. However here I would like to treat Larsen’s work, which closely interrogates map-making as site for authority-production, in a bit more depth as it provides concepts and techniques that are perhaps more readily applicable for GIS practitioners in religious contexts and more apropos to the project at hand.

In her work “Mapping Religiously, or Religiously Minding the Map?”[2014]²⁶, Larsen closely follows the trajectories of Harvey²⁷ by taking a more historical, pragmatic approach in specifically interrogating the “authority implicit” in both “religious truth as map” and “maps of religious truth” in both current and historical examples (324). Among multiple cases-in-point,

²⁵ See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, Translated from the French by Willard Trask, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 1957. For an effective feminist critique of Eliade’s frameworks, please see also: Carol P. Christ, “Mircea Eliade and the Feminist Paradigm Shift,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 75–94, 1991.

²⁶ See Lillian Larsen, “Mapping Religiously, or Religiously Minding the Map?” in *Mapping Across Academica*, Stanley D. Brunn and Martin Dodge, eds., Springer Publishing, 2017.

²⁷ See J.B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” *Cartographica*, Vol. 26, No. 2, pp.1-20, 1989.

Larsen highlights the work of Delano-Smith²⁸ on “Maps in Bibles” in which it is effectively illustrated that Reformation-era maps in Bibles have historically had a deliberately prescriptive dual-purpose, noting that “To introduce ‘uninstructed’ readers to the bible *sans* ecclesiastical intermediaries, primary representation was reduced to an essential core of five maps” (329) and that these core maps were “Mapped, and re-mapped, each surface affirmed, and re-affirmed, ‘a cardinal feature’ of Reformation theology,” (330) so many times and to such a degree that they affect today’s present landscape even-still, stating, “The effectiveness of the Protestant’s pedagogical strategy is confirmed by the number of contemporary Bibles that carry some permutation of the same five maps that have appeared in print editions since the 16th century” (331).

In light of fraught and far-reaching cases like this one, Larsen suggests the usage of mindfulness techniques, i.e.“mindfully mapping,” for subverting authority structures in historical maps, and indeed supplies her own ‘deconstruction/reconstruction’ in that vein with her (re)drawing of one of these aforementioned maps, namely the “Journeys of Paul,” using GIS. The mapping excursions provided are mindful to the quite “piecemeal” nature of the extant data-set as opposed to portrayals which seem exhaustive (334), as well as mindful of the reality that among critical scholars, six of the thirteen canonical Pauline letters are of disputed authorship and generally held to be pseudonymous, and furthermore it also remains debated whether the author of Acts had access to Paul’s ‘undisputed letters,’ as opposed to the representations of total cohesion which mask any possible signs of discontinuity (335). However in the ‘reconstructed maps’ a different picture arises, one which “Re-presents instead, the

²⁸ See Catherine Delano-Smith, *Maps in Bibles 1500-1600: An Illustrated Catalogue*, Geneva: Librairie Droz. S. A, 1991.

inexact and fragmentary character of extant historical data,” that is “strikingly sparse, and decidedly non-linear” in nature (336). Larsen uses basic GIS visualization techniques such as manipulating colors and sizes, along with the usage of a certain line symbolization in the style of a deliberately “sketchy” hand-drawn ink-pen, which works to keep the boundary between map-author/map-viewer “impressionistic” (338), all with a redirected goal in mind, which is “no longer doctrinal certainty, but instead, engaging viewers in ‘thinking about’ Paul--and religious reification, more generally--in complex ways” (338).

The present project does not provide a clearly delineated ‘counter-map-text’ to an already existent ‘dominant-narrative-map-text’ as Larsen has so cogently done; indeed, what LDS historical maps which have spatialized Emma Smith in any way would there even be to work with? This points again to the notion that many times, erased subjects never make it onto the ‘map of their histories’ to begin with (whether in the ‘physical’ maps as narrative or the ‘mental’ maps of what gets to be ‘agreed upon history’ as narrative) and therefore *drawing them back onto the map* is in itself, like Larsen’s work but in a different manner, an act of subversion to an authoritative historical representation; in this case an authoritative *absence* of historical representation. Especially in a religious context, in which historical narratives and figures come to hold a certain authority which only religion seems to bestow, maps have been used to solidify certain, prescriptive representations as almost canonical in nature--though, conversely, maps, and therefore GIS, might also be used poignantly in order to deconstruct those very narratives which need to be destabilized, as well as reconstruct and reclaim those narratives which have been procedurally erased.

2.4 Synopsis

We have seen the roles of GIS visualization technologies engaged from a diverse range of reference points. They have offered exciting platforms for spatial history through collaborative HGIS efforts, though have often been used in ‘presentative’ rather than more purposefully ‘(re)presentative’ modes. After having been somewhat polarized from the rich bedrock of feminist geography theory, they are now becoming more integrated and applicable for feminist projects. Finally they have begun to be more fully appropriated by religion scholars in subverting religiously authoritative narratives. Clearly, this work can then be located at a particular nexus within these nested conversations, with a certain indebtedness to each, but also with a need to always be forwarding the present landscape toward more and more beneficial places. This work seeks to take these foundations and build upon them positively from within the area of my own expertise, namely that of religious studies, in the following case study.

3 ‘Situating’ Portrayals of Emma Smith

The present project is centered upon a subject both historical and religious, who is also a woman; so consequently each of the lenses discussed in the above section must necessarily be brought to bare here. Emma Hale Smith (later Bidamon) [July 10, 1804–April 30, 1879] was first wife to Joseph Smith Jr., prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints²⁹, as well as mother to Joseph Smith III, leader of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints³⁰, though she was not just auxiliary to the controversial men around her but rather, in the

²⁹ In this paper the terms Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, LDS, Saints, and Mormons are used interchangeably.

³⁰ The church originally known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints / RLDS changed its name to Community of Christ / CC in 2001 and the terms are used interchangeably in this paper.

words of bell hooks, her own ‘center rather than periphery.’³¹ She makes a particularly good candidate for this feminist-historical GIS methodology because not only has her legacy often been considered as only in light of her husband and not in her own right, it has also been fraught with controversy due to her subversive actions regarding the concept of plural marriage³² as well as in relation to one-time friend and Joseph Smith’s eventual successor Brigham Young³³. Due to her significant status within both traditions, she is also a good choice due to the weight her figure carries for precedent and as role-model for believing LDS and RLDS/CC women today.

Due to the chief importance of paying close attention to the ways in which portrayals have functioned to shape overall ‘portraits’ of religious and historical figures in collective consciousness, it is imperative that we get a sense of the climates which have fostered those portrayals if we ever wish to interrogate or move beyond them. Consequently, in the following section I aim to provide a brief cataloging of the diverse range of often loaded ‘secondary’ portrayals of Emma as figure before moving on to a direct engagement with her extant ‘primary’ sources (as ‘primary-source-data’) for ourselves. It should be noted that although there have been of course multiple biographies of Joseph Smith throughout the various phases of the 20th century with agendas ranging from reverent to condemning³⁴, and it would be possible to mine those

³¹ See bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Cambridge, MA: South End Press, first edition 1984, second edition 2000.

³² For two insightful treatments of plural marriage in LDS history, please see the extensive social study by Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System 1840-1910*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008, and the more recent survey by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women’s Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835-1870*, New York: Vintage Books, 2017.

³³ See Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, second edition, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994, particularly the following chapters: Chapter 11: “The Poisoning,” Chapter 14: “The Lady and the Lion,” Chapter 19: “Change in Nauvoo,” and Chapter 21: “Josephites and Brighamites.”

³⁴ Here we might think of works such as John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith: An American Prophet*, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1933 ; Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1945, ; and Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith, the First Mormon*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977, just to name a wide spread.

biographies for their portrayals of Emma, I have chosen not to do so here³⁵, as this is not another study of Joseph Smith's many biographers. Rather, here I will narrow my listing to just those works which have at least attempted to treat Emma as subject, as grouped into three phases: firstly, early portrayals starting in the 70s and early 80s which began sowing the seeds for conversations which would later come to fruition will be considered; secondly, the somewhat controversial emergence of a feminist full treatment (and also the major work which this study draws upon) and its subsequent effects on the rest of the 80s and 90s will be highlighted; and lastly the first two decades of the 21 century will be examined in the light of both portraits in 'print' as well as depictions in film media.

3.1 Early Portrayals

Prior to the 1970s, I have not been able to find any works treating Emma in a named, at least somewhat direct fashion and so this will provide our entry-point. Here I would like to provide a sense of both the RLDS and LDS climates by highlighting one significant RLDS vantage point and a juxtaposition of two works aimed at LDS popular audiences (one much more problematic than the other), as well as highlight the seedlings of a fruitful scholarly debate which was beginning on the horizon and one unique effort toward reconciliation.

The earliest author to my knowledge to treat Emma more prominently was Roy Arthur Cheville, trained scholar of religion in his own right and also Presiding Patriarch of the RLDS Church from 1958 to 1974.³⁶ It should be noted that the RLDS tradition has been considerably more favorable in their depictions of Emma through history to the present than the LDS tradition,

³⁵ For a piece that attempts to do this in at least a confined manner, see Max Perry Mueller, "Changing Portraits of the Elect Lady: Emma Smith in Non-Mormon, RLDS, and LDS Historiography, 1933-2005," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 183-214, 2011.

³⁶ Cheville was appointed by President W. Wallace Smith and was also the first person to serve in that office who was not a direct descendant of Joseph Smith.

in fact quite starkly; indeed it could be stated that her son's church largely *followed her suit* in the broader sense that much of the reason for the branching away from the LDS church was due in part by, among others, the very issues to which Emma herself was personally subversive, namely concepts of plural marriage and questionings of Brigham Young's power. Therefore it is not surprising that in his monograph *Joseph and Emma Smith, Companions for Seventeen and a Half Years, 1827-1844* [1977]³⁷, Cheville does not polemically portray or 'side-line' Emma and also characterizes Emma and Joseph as a coupe in quite egalitarian terms, as exemplified by statements such as "Emma Smith supported Joseph but did not surrender to him" (174). Ultimately however Cheville's work is weakened overall in that it takes the opinion which was popular at the time but which RLDS scholars would begin to move away from in the 80s and eventually discard, which was that Joseph never truly practiced polygamy and that the Utah Mormons were solely the 'ones to blame' for the concept of plural marriage, which is just not historically sound. Though interestingly, Emma herself played a complex role, at least in part, in this long-held belief for RLDS members due to Emma's own denial to her children in her later life that Joseph sought plural wives (for whatever personal reasons we likely will never know) which members of the church sought to honor. Despite that it was certainly flawed and did not *quite* consider Emma fully in her own right, Cheville's work remains an important portrayal which was likely much kinder at the time than the majority of LDS popular opinions.

While there was a generally positive if not still flawed representation of Emma from the RLDS side of the aisle, the LDS side was meanwhile beginning to cautiously tread these waters with the release of a few popular works as well as the simultaneous burgeoning of a more

³⁷See Roy Arthur Cheville, *Joseph and Emma Smith, Companions for Seventeen and a Half Years, 1827-1844*, Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1977.

beneficial scholarly discourse in the last years of the 70s and beginning of the 80s. To gain a sense of their reception and of the overall climate, we might turn to a book review [1981]³⁸ written by Donald Q. Cannon, then-Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. In it Cannon discloses a sense of Emma's troubled lineage for Latter-day Saints from an 'insider' perspective, as well as what he found to be a reclamative process underway, stating that, "For more than a century after the death of Joseph Smith, Mormons looked upon Emma with disfavor. Then, in recent years, her reputation has been restored. Indeed several LDS authors have suggested that Emma deserves our sympathy and understanding" (381). Though it was likely an overstatement to claim that her reputation was at that point fully 'restored,' Cannon specifically highlights the work of Erwin Wirkus in his book *Judge Me Dear Reader* [1978]³⁹, saying that "Foremost among those who have administered historical artificial respiration to her character is Erwin Wirkus" (381). Cannon praises Wirkus' book for bee searching his readers to "understand Emma, to realize how truly difficult her life was, and to forgive her for her shortcomings" and cites the work's favorable view of Emma as having caused changes in official church teaching materials, specifically, "the lesson on Emma Smith and section twenty-five of the Doctrine and Covenants in the Gospel Doctrine Sunday School Manual for 1978-79" (381-82). Clearly, even if by 'baby-steps,' some sort of progress was being made for loosening the ties around Emma's guarded portrayal among the Saints.

However, there were still those who added fraught portrayals to the landscape. As contrasted with that of Wirkus, Cannon cites a book from a year later by Ann and Keith Terry

³⁸ See Donald Q. Cannon, "Emma: The Dramatic Biography of Emma Smith by Keith and Ann Terry" (Book Review), *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Volume 21, Issue 3, Article 13, 7-1-1981.

³⁹ See Erwin Wirkus, *Judge Me Dear Reader*, Orem, UT: Randall Publishers, 1978.

entitled *Emma: Dramatic Biography of Emma Smith* [1979]⁴⁰ as “neither definitive nor historically accurate biography as claimed on the dust jacket” and as failing “to use the best and most authoritative sources, faulty organization, poor writing style, exaggerations, and confusion of places, events, and people” (382). Clarifying what he means by ‘not using the best sources,’ he critiques that, “While discussing the Emma-Brigham controversy and Major Lewis C. Bidamon (Emma’s second husband after the death of Joseph), they fail to incorporate, or even call attention to, the insightful and precise work done by Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts. This team of LDS authors has been working for several years preparing a major biography of Emma Smith which is to be published by a national publisher during 1982. Along the way these two fine scholars have given numerous lectures and have published several articles which should be included in any biography of Emma” (382, parenthetical, mine). This nicely transitions us toward the work which Avery/Newell were beginning to bring to the fore in the late 70s and early 80s, which the passage above highlights as becoming the scholarly ‘standard’ to consult early-on.

The two authors had written a piece entitled “The Elect Lady: Emma Hale Smith”[1979]⁴¹ for *Ensign*, an official LDS journal publication. Commenting from a much later article, “The Mormon Reinvention of Emma Smith” [2013]⁴², in which online editorial author Jana Riess was able to attend a meeting led by Avery/Newell who reflected on that first endeavor for *Ensign*, Riess recounts that, “Emma’s disappearance from LDS history was so total that Linda [said]

⁴⁰ See Ann and Keith Terry, *Emma: Dramatic Biography of Emma Smith*, Santa Barbara, CA.: Butterfly Publishing, 1979.

⁴¹ See Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, “The Elect Lady: Emma Hale Smith,” *Ensign*, September, 1979.

⁴² See Jana Riess, “The Mormon Reinvention of Emma Smith,” *Religious News Service* (Online editorial), April 23, 2013, <https://religionnews.com/2013/04/23/the-reinvention-of-mormon-emma-smith/>

when she and Valeen co-authored an article about her for *Ensign* in 1979, it was the first writing about her to appear in any official church publication in 113 years” (webpage not paginated). In the same year, Avery and Newell would publish more articles centering on Emma’s life in prominent publications for LDS scholarly readership, such as the *Journal of Mormon History* and *Brigham Young University Studies* with titles such as “New Light on the Sun: Emma Smith and the New York Sun Letter”[1979]⁴³ and “Lewis C. Bidamon, Stepchild of Mormondom”[1979]⁴⁴, respectively. During this early phase, the authors’ works for the most part tended to skirt more controversial topics, such as plural marriage. However, with the turn of the 1980s Avery/Newell began to broach more ‘sensitive’ subjects pertaining to Emma’s legacy, with articles such as “The Lion and the Lady: Brigham Young and Emma Smith” [1980]⁴⁵ and “Emma and Eliza and the Stairs” [1982]⁴⁶, co-authored with Maureen Ursenbach Beecher. Clearly, the tides were showing the winds of change regarding overturning long-standing depictions of Emma for Latter-day Saints, on a popular level to some extent, and on a scholarly level to a growing extent.

Finally, I would be remiss to exclude one unique contribution in particular during this phase of early portrayals. Perhaps in part due to the stimulation brought about by the work of Avery/Newell and their subsequent availability as resource, another ‘popular’ work on Emma added itself to the roster of the ones aforementioned above, entitled *Reflections of Emma, Joseph*

⁴³ See Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, “New Light on the Sun: Emma Smith and the New York Sun Letter,” *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 6, pp. 23–35, 1979.

⁴⁴ See Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, “Lewis C. Bidamon, Stepchild of Mormondom,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 375–388, 1979.

⁴⁵ See Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, “The Lion and the Lady : Brigham Young and Emma Smith,” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 48, Winter, 1980.

⁴⁶ See Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, et al., “Emma and Eliza and the Stairs,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, Vol. 22, No.1, pp. 87–96, 1982.

Smith's Wife [1982]⁴⁷ by Buddy Youngreen. It is not solely this work which the now quite well-known actor, producer, director, and playwright contributed, but also his spearheading of the physical reconciling of Emma and Joseph's actual descendants, despite the shadow which Emma's lineage had previously cast on that endeavor, which instigated a change in this landscape. Youngreen became a sort of unofficial 'ceo' of the Smiths' descendants due to his personal involvement with the family and his fostering of family reunions, starting in the 70s. The tradition of these family reunions appears to still be in full force as the "Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family Reunion" is held biennially in various locations around the country, with former reunions having been held in Nauvoo, IL, Independence, MO, Kirtland, OH, and Salt Lake City, UT."⁴⁸ Clearly, though the RLDS and LDS traditions have had vastly different lineages of representation regarding Emma, there have also been efforts to toss aside these 'splits in the first family of Mormonism,' in which most of the children and family of Joseph Smith remained with Emma after his death and largely went forward in the RLDS trajectory rather than the official LDS direction, toward the possibility of reconciliation.

3.2 A Turning Point

Though there were clearly positive steps being made, the emergence of a full treatment of Emma Smith's life, in which she was fully centered rather than considered in any form of periphery to her husband and in which her subversions were depicted as fairly and unapologetically as possible, prompted underpinnings of entrenched authority structures, which were clearly still in effect, to be laid bare. Here, I would like to take a brief moment to highlight the initially tense release of the full biography of Emma (which is also the primary source used

⁴⁷ See Buddy Youngreen, *Reflections of Emma, Joseph Smith's Wife*, Orem, UT: Grandin Book, 1982.

⁴⁸ See the Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family Organization, taken from their blog site <https://josephsmithsr.org/reunion/>

in this case study), as well as the subsequent waves it generated in the immediate decades that followed.

In 1984, Avery/Newell published the first edition of their landmark work *Mormon Enigma*, originally with the subtitle of :*Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804-1879*, a subtitle that would change with the second 1994 edition to simply *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*⁴⁹. In this work the authors were markedly less shy in addressing the polygamy question and other more controversial topics as they played a role in Emma's life than they had been in their earlier journal publications. As if to solidify this further, Newell wrote an article the same year which addressed the question straight-out, "Emma Hale Smith and the Polygamy Question"[1984]⁵⁰, though not in an LDS journal but rather for the RLDS-affiliated *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*. It was all now at the forefront and being addressed head-on.

The initial publication had an interesting range of receptions. The critical reception was positive--the book won the Evans Award for Western Biography in the spring of 1985, followed by the Best Book Awards from both the Mormon History Association and the John Whitmer Historical Association. The same year there came an article praising *Enigma* by RLDS scholar Paul M. Edwards in his piece "An Enigma Resolved: The Emma Smith of Newell and Avery" [1984]⁵¹. While it could undoubtedly be said that the 'official' RLDS church reaction to the work was overarchingly positive, the 'official' LDS church reaction was not as uniformly supportive.

⁴⁹ See Avery/Newell, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*.

⁵⁰ See Linda King Newell, "Emma Hale Smith and the Polygamy Question," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Vol. 4, pp. 3–15, 1984.

⁵¹ See Paul M. Edwards, "An Enigma Resolved: The Emma Smith of Newell and Avery," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 11, pp. 119–124, 1984.

The authors recall in the preface of their second edition that the book's publication had seemingly "offended" the leadership of the LDS Church, stating:

"In June, a month after it received the Evans award, newspaper headlines of the *Los Angeles Times* announced, 'Mormons Forbid Female Biographers of Smith's Wife to Address Church.' We were prohibited from speaking about any aspect of religious or church history in any LDS Church--related meeting or institution. Church leaders took this action without reading

the book in its entirety or informing us of their decision, and it remained in effect over 10 months. In the wake of the national publicity caused by the ban, the sales of the book tripled, but the church's speaking ban was detrimental to all concerned--it took its toll on us, our families, and on the public perception of the church itself. After a 10-month stalemate, Linda Newell successfully petitioned church leaders to reconsider the prohibition. On April 24, 1986, she was informed that the restrictions the church had placed on us were no longer in effect. A little over a week later, the Mormon History Association named Val Avery its president-elect" (xii).

Clearly Emma's contested legacy, and feminist engagements with that legacy, still paved tense territory that had yet to become fully 'restored.' Despite the initial 'waves' caused by their work, the subsequent 'new-wave' that Avery/Newell ushered in could not be undone. The authors noted with positivism the "marked increase in accounts of Emma Smith [which] began to appear in church instructional materials and other church publications. Emma Smith had finally become a three-dimensional historical figure" (xii).

Since Avery/Newell's full-length biographical source became available, the trajectory for works on Emma has jumped onward and upward. The rest of the 80s and 90s had multiple developments, from both the RLDS and LDS sides of the aisle. In 1986, RLDS scholar Don H. Compier released "The Faith of Emma Smith"[1986]⁵² with *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*. In 1992, a new dimension to the discussion emerged with the public addition of one of Joseph and Emma's descendants' voices, put forward by the article by Gracia

⁵² See Don H. Compier, "The Faith of Emma Smith," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Vol. 6, pp. 64–72, 1986.

N. Jones “My Great-Great-Grandmother, Emma Hale Smith”[1992]⁵³ for *Ensign*. In 1994, Avery/Newell would put out the second edition of *Mormon Enigma*, shortening the subtitle and adding improvements. Still more articles emerged, ranging from Mary D. Poulter’s study on Emma’s hymnbook “Doctrines of Faith and Hope Found in Emma Smith’s 1835 Hymnbook” [1997]⁵⁴ for *BYU Studies Quarterly* to yet another article from the *John Whitmer Historical Journal* by Joni Wilson entitled “Emma’s Enduring Compassion: A Personal Reflection” [1999].

⁵⁵ Clearly the landscape had changed considerably since the previous decade, owing largely to the work of Avery/Newell, which remains the definitive study on her life.

3.3 Depictions in the 21st Century

The present landscape of historical representation and current engagement with the subject formation of Emma is still being actively shaped. Here, I will briefly look at the apparent explosion of popular works in the 2000s as well as at the explosion of scholarly works in the 2010s, and finish with a short consideration of two current portrayals in film media.

Since before the publication of *Enigma* there had only been a select few popular works on Emma, and directly after its publication there had seemed to be more stimulation from scholarly works for the most part. However, the first decade of the 21st century saw an unprecedented explosion largely in the realm of popular works on Emma aimed at lay LDS audiences and in 2009, Newell selected a sizable group of them and reviewed them all in one book review article.⁵⁶ A selection of entries to illustrate the extent of this boom could include

⁵³ See Gracia N. Jones, “My Great-Great-Grandmother, Emma Hale Smith,” *Ensign*, August 1992.

⁵⁴ See Mary D. Poulter, “Doctrines of Faith and Hope Found in Emma Smith’s 1835 Hymnbook,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 32–56, 1997.

⁵⁵ See Joni Wilson, “Emma’s Enduring Compassion: A Personal Reflection,” *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Vol. 19, pp. 43–61, 1999.

⁵⁶ See Linda King Newell, “Book Review,” *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Vol. 29, pp. 171–179, 2009.

works such as Ronald E. Romig, *Emma's Nauvoo*[2007]⁵⁷; Susan Easton Black, *Emma Smith: An Elect Lady, (Setting the Record Straight series)*[2007]⁵⁸; Darcy Kennedy, et.al., *The Emma Smith We Know: A Collection of Memories and Recipes from Emma as Recalled by Her Posterity*[2008]⁵⁹; Angela Eschler and Liz Lemon Swindle, *Love Letters of Joseph and Emma*[2008]⁶⁰; and Lori E. Woodland, Liz Lemon Swindle, *Beloved Emma: The Illustrated Life Story of Emma Smith*[2008].⁶¹ Clearly the historical figure of Emma was becoming more of a ‘household name,’ though perhaps still in a wide variety of portrayals.

This brings us to the present decade of the 2010s, which seems to have seen a relaxation in popular works and a vacillation with a new crop of scholarly works asking increasingly nuanced questions. In 2011 Max Perry Mueller provided the survey “Changing Portraits of the Elect Lady: Emma Smith in Non-Mormon, RLDS, and LDS Historiography, 1933-2005”[2011]⁶² for *Journal of Mormon History*. Reaffirming the *John Whitmer* journal as still a site for continual RLDS developments on Emma, it published Kyle R. Walker’s article, “Looking After the First Family of Mormonism: LDS Church Leaders’ Support of the Smiths after the Murders of Joseph and Hyrum”[2012].⁶³ Also in 2012, we had more development in the form of ‘descendants’ voices’ in the more popular work by Kimberly Jo Smith, *Rising Hills and Sinking Valleys: A*

⁵⁷ See Ronald E. Romig, *Emma's Nauvoo*, John Whitmer Books, 2007.

⁵⁸ See Susan Easton Black, *Emma Smith: An Elect Lady (Setting the Record Straight series)*, Orem, UT.: Millennial Press, 2007.

⁵⁹ See Darcy Kennedy and Angeline Kennedy Washburn, *The Emma Smith We Know: A Collection of Memories and Recipes from Emma as Recalled by Her Posterity*, Candlelight Media Group, 2008.

⁶⁰ See Angela Eschler and Liz Lemon Swindle, *Love Letters of Joseph and Emma*, American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, Inc., 2008.

⁶¹ See Lori E. Woodland and Liz Lemon Swindle, *Beloved Emma: The Illustrated Life Story of Emma Smith*, Salt Lake City, UT.: Deseret Books, 2008.

⁶² See Mueller, “Changing Portraits of the Elect Lady: Emma Smith in Non-Mormon, RLDS, and LDS Historiography, 1933-2005,” *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 183–214, 2011.

⁶³ See Kyle R. Walker, “Looking After the First Family of Mormonism: LDS Church Leaders’ Support of the Smiths after the Murders of Joseph and Hyrum,” *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 17–32, 2012.

Descendant of Joseph and Emma Shares Her Story[2012].⁶⁴ In 2013 we saw Lee Wiles' "Monogamy Underground: The Burial of Mormon Plural Marriage in the Graves of Joseph and Emma Smith"[2013]⁶⁵ in *Journal of Mormon History*. This journal put out another article that year, Cheryl L Bruno's "Keeping a Secret: Freemasonry, Polygamy, and the Nauvoo Relief Society, 1842–44,"[2013]⁶⁶ for which the exact timeline used was contested the next year in the same journal by Brian C. Hales in "Emma's Awareness"[2014].⁶⁷ It is clear that centuries-old debates are still lively and that these fruitful debates now being brought to bear are considerably due to the influence of Avery/Newell's works.

Popular discourse is now, as we know, heavily shaped by sources additional to solely those 'in print,' namely by film and other visual media, so in order to help gather the 'zeitgeist' of public feelings it is helpful to bring 'film as text' into the fold of analysis. There have thus far been two dramatic renderings of Emma's life, *Emma Smith: My Story* [2008]⁶⁸ directed by Gary Cook and T.C. Christensen and *In Emma's Footsteps* [2018]⁶⁹ written and directed by Brittany Wiscombe which will both be briefly treated here.⁷⁰

The 2008 *Emma Smith: My Story* was largely well-received by both RLDS and LDS audiences, though this is likely because it was also very 'safe' in its choices of topics broached. The film is structured around a dialogue between Emma in later-life and her adopted daughter

⁶⁴ See Kimberly Jo Smith, *Rising Hills and Sinking Valleys: A Descendant of Joseph and Emma Shares Her Story*, Salt Lake City, UT.: Latter Day Legends, an imprint of Digital Legend Press and Publishing, 2012.

⁶⁵ See Lee Wiles, "Monogamy Underground: The Burial of Mormon Plural Marriage in the Graves of Joseph and Emma Smith," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. Vi-59, 2013.

⁶⁶ See Cheryl L. Bruno, "Keeping a Secret: Freemasonry, Polygamy, and the Nauvoo Relief Society, 1842–44," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 158–181, 2013.

⁶⁷ Brian C. Hales, "Emma's Awareness," *Journal of Mormon History*, Vol. 40, No. 3, pp. Vii-viii, 2014.

⁶⁸ See Gary Cook and T.C. Christensen, directors, *Emma Smith: My Story*, Produced by Morning Dew Entertainment, Distributed by Candlelight Media Group, 2008.

⁶⁹ See Brittany Wiscombe, director, *In Emma's Footsteps*, Distributed by Candlelight Media Group, 2018.

⁷⁰ There has also been a more documentary-style film consisting of collected interviews with Emma's descendants in the film *Discovering Emma* (2011), but due to time and scope will not be treated here.

Julia which prompts the memories which chain together the film's plot. Though the movie does begin with Joseph as having already passed and with Emma already married to Lewis Bidamon, Bidamon is never shown on screen, although Bidamon's young love-child from an extramarital affair is. Beside this bookending, the entirety of the film is majorly focused on Emma's lifetime as spent with Joseph, with the movie ending at his death, and not showing any of the difficult times which took place after his death in detail. Joseph's plural wives revelation is mentioned, but very minimally, and no other plural wives are depicted or named at all. Neither is the anecdote from William Clayton's journal of Emma burning the celestial marriage revelation paper⁷¹ included, or any other anecdotes of her more strong-willed reactions to the concept. Emma's conflicts with Brigham Young are also excluded completely; in fact Brigham is scarcely in the movie at all. This film was successful in continuing the reconciliation project of LDS audiences to Emma as figure and with bringing her to life in a humanist rather than devilish form, but it also skirted most if not all of the controversial issues surrounding her legacy and neglected to show her in the context of dissent.

In Emma's Footsteps (2108), which like *My Story* was affiliated with Candlelight Media Group as well as with the Joseph Smith Jr. and Emma Hale Smith Society, plural marriage is not addressed at all, not even slightly as in *My Story*. However the film does address a number of the more difficult issues which arose after Joseph's death such as continued mob threats, overwhelming debt problems, questions as to why Emma decided not to join the trek west, questions of whether her second marriage to Bidamon was appropriate, and to an extent, the issues with Brigham Young (particularly in their feuds over Joseph's items, though not much

⁷¹ See Avery/Newell, *Mormon Enigma*, pages 151-154.

beyond that). The way in which the film attempts to address more of these ‘troublesome’ questions of Emma’s lineage is through the avatar of her son Alexander, who personifies the audience’s potential questions, innocently asking his grandmother Lucy Mack questions like “Why did people talk so badly about mother and not you,’ though never so much as to ask his grandmother about his mother’s opposition to plural marriage. In all, the film does a better job of portraying Emma in her own terms than the more Joseph-centered *My Story*, though both films are inadequate in portraying her dissent, particularly to plural marriage, and keep to ‘safer’ renderings of her.

3.4 Synopsis

We have seen multiple ways in which Emma has been portrayed, from vantage points both RLDS and LDS, popular and scholarly, and as well as in print and film modes. Clearly Emma’s legacy has been characterized by controversy and polemics, though also has by no means been static. Now that we have established some sort of footing regarding the varied ‘playing field’ traversed regarding depictions of Emma as historical figure, we may now begin to push the envelope in new ways and with new methods by now delving into our own engagement with the primary sources for ourselves.

4 Case Study

GIS and any other means of data visualization are only as strong as their underlying data, as they are essentially just different manifestations of that data. However, the ‘data’ used in the humanities, particularly in historical contexts, is often considerably different than the sorts of data for ‘usual’ GIS projects. This sort of data has holes and gaps, inconsistencies that break notions of consistent types and schema--but all of these are not merely obstacles to work around

as quickly as possible, as they themselves in their breakages tell important parts of the story, and consequently must be considered mindfully and critically as part of the unique set of challenges posed by ‘humanities’ data. Working with the data in a responsible manner is aiming to be mindful and deliberate about each ‘move’ one takes as each of the moves the author takes with the data in itself constructs a ‘power move.’ In this section I seek to carry out an application via the medium of GIS data analysis in three progressions: firstly, the ‘meta-data’ landscape and the need for a compilation of Emma’s letters into a sourcebook/letterbook as a unified data-set will be delineated; secondly, a ‘first glance’ at some instinctive questions about the data which might work fruitfully in tandem with spatial visualization will be carried out; and lastly analysis will be ‘brought to the map,’ starting with a brief foray in georeferencing the counties which comprise Emma’s writing location hubs (Kirtland, Far West, Quincy, and Nauvoo) before a more in-depth engagement with her correspondence ‘cluster maps’ will be charted.

4.1 Meta-Data

Though unfortunately she left no journal, among the genres of primary sources for Emma’s life we seem to have multiple deeds/land or legal documents, her hymn books of course, a few blessings--however easily the largest body of works which we have at our disposal to consult on her life and actions are through the medium of written letter correspondence and so this was the data chosen to ground this study.⁷² Here I will briefly ‘take stock’ of the accessibility situation for the primary sources of letters-data, starting with Avery/Newell as entry point, and subsequently reflecting on the distributions of the letters sources, including a short examination of the outliers which exist outside the primary groupings (as exceptions can often be particularly

⁷² We could also mine other party’s correspondence, for example there are many letters from or to Brigham Young with other parties which talk about Emma or reference her, but here I am talking about letters whereby Emma is either the author or a recipient of the exchange.

telling) and end with describing the process of going from the disjoint situation to a working dataset.

Perhaps as testament to her disunified legacy, the extant letters that we have from Emma's life are neither consolidated in one place physically at the manuscript level nor have they either been compiled into any available sourcebook/letterbook for researchers to utilize. Though Newell/Avery construct their narrative by weaving together multiple sources such as journal entries, letters, etc. from other people in addition to Emma herself for added context-building, the correspondences in which Emma took part comprise the bulk of the personal accounts treated in the book, and so provides a good starting point. Going through the footnotes, I counted the number of distinct correspondence exchanges referenced to be 75 letters.

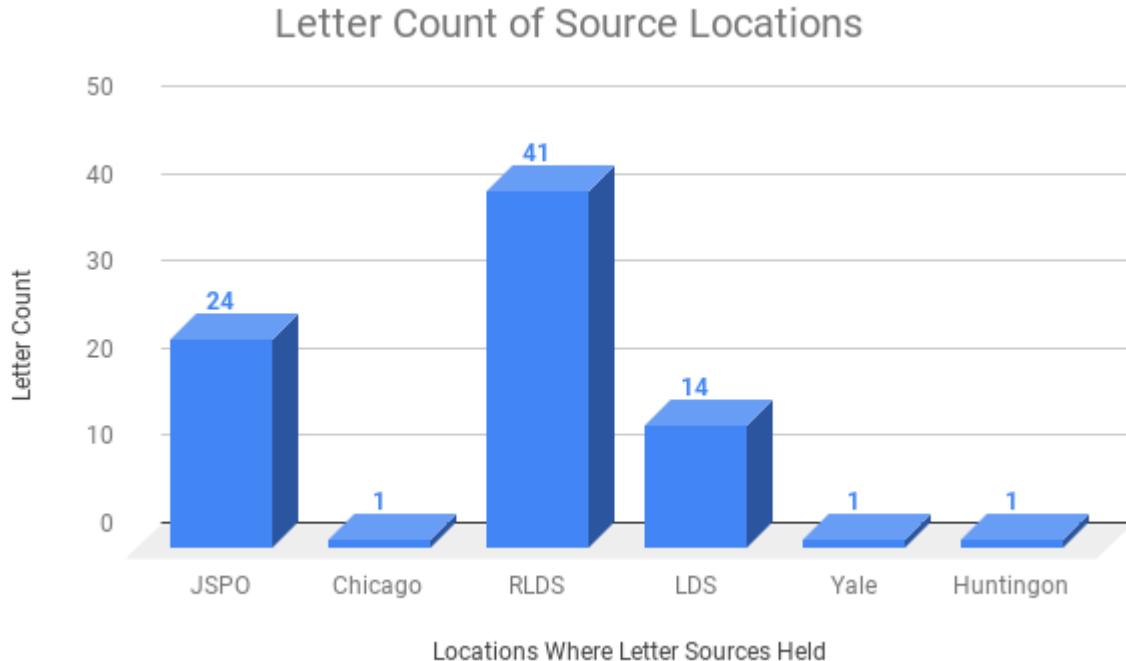
⁷³ Throughout the steps of the research process I have since found additional letters existent than those referenced in Avery/Newell⁷⁴, but this is understandable because their intent was to weave together a thematic, narrative telling and not a sourcebook. Nevertheless, they did consult a very good deal of Emma's correspondence and are likely the most extensive compiling of her letters currently available to researchers. Avery/Newell cite a range of sources which they consulted for the letters treated in their study, with the majority being split between the RLDS/CC Church-Library Archives and multiple collections from the LDS Church Archives.⁷⁵ However there were a few outlier letters which were not divided between the two church archives but

⁷³ Please note that in doing so I counted same-day exchanges as two unique instances even when written on both sides of the same manuscript.

⁷⁴ The list of eight letters identified during this study which are not cited in Avery/Newell *Mormon Enigma* can be found in Appendix 2 and are as follows: [4/4/1839] ; [3/10/1843] ; [1/(no day)/1847] ; [5/21/1849] ; [2/10/1867] ; [(no month)/30/1867] ; [12/5/1871] ; [12/29/1877].

⁷⁵ This includes the Joseph Smith Letterbooks, Joseph Smith Collection, Kalk-Boes Collection, Marcia Vogel, and Buddy Younggreen Collections of the LDS Archives.

rather at religiously-unaffiliated groups (each of these only holding one outlying letter rather than a whole ‘collection’) which I would like to briefly discuss here.



The first outlier [1/20/1840]⁷⁶ is maintained by the Chicago Historical Society, housed at the Chicago History Museum, and is also the only letter we have from Emma in the year 1840, written by her husband Joseph to her (this letter was the only one of the outliers that was also in Joseph’s lifetime). From the online resource Joseph Smith Papers Online (JSPO)⁷⁷ which I drew heavily upon while constructing my own data tables, they currently provide access to 21 letters between Emma and Joseph while Avery/Newell cite the number of known letter correspondence

⁷⁶ This formatting is how I will henceforth refer to specific letters in this study, by the unique identifier of date, which can be referenced in Appendix 2.

⁷⁷ Joseph Smith Papers Online (JSPO) is an online resource which aims to make digitized and available a myriad of primary texts from Mormon History to researchers. They are affiliated with the LDS church and so I see their holdings as an extension of the LDS Archives. I have chosen to place this source in the chart even though it did not exist while Avery/Newell did their study because it is now an important entry-point for researchers and often more easily accessible the LDS Archives outright. I assume that each of the letters in JSPO are also in LDS Archives and so that number may be added to the LDS Archives total. Henceforth it will be referred to by its abbreviation JSPO.

between the couple to be 22. This leads me to believe that this Chicago letter is the only letter JSPO is missing/does not have access to, and additionally it seems inaccessible via the LDS or RLDS Archives.

The second letter with accessibility independent of the two churches [2/22/1846] is cited by Avery/Newell as having the original in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut and is also the only letter extant for Emma with the party James J. Strang, written from him to her. Interestingly though, there is one other letter [6/6/1832], which is in fact the earliest letter we have of Emma's with Joseph and subsequently the earliest we have for the couple, which is also cited as having the original in the Beinecke Library, but this letter is indeed available on JSPO. Therefore it seems that JSPO has been able to receive access from that library for a letter in the past which hints that it could perhaps be possible to negotiate again regarding this one of Emma's body of letters with Strang. (Note: The reason that Yale only shows '1' on the graph is because while the other is also originally there, it is also available on JSPO, and for this graph I prioritized showing access and grouped that one with the JSPO).

Thirdly, the last outlying letter [3/18/1853] is between Emma and her adopted daughter Julia Dixon (originally Julia Murdock who at that time carried the married name Dixon) of which there are a total of two with the other being housed in the RLDS Archives and is cited by Avery/Newell as being housed by in the Bidamon Collection at Huntington Library in San Marino, California. It is unclear why the RLDS Archives have retained access to one of the pair not the other. It is evident that it will undoubtedly require inter-dialogue and cooperation among

both church archives and third parties in order to make a clear listing of this body of letters possible.

In order to conduct any data-driven analysis, a dataset that is as complete as possible is needed, but it soon became clear that there were no definitive edges confining the ‘dataset’ that is the body of Emma’s correspondence and that I would need to construct my own dataset to the best of my ability. In that endeavor, I do not, as of now, have access to all of Emma’s letters, but what I do have is a listing of all of the ones I have found any mention of (my full cataloguing is provided in Appendix 2 for reference) which has been a process of starting within Avery/Newell and cross-listing with several other sources, which in my case were namely: Joseph Smith Papers Online (JSPO), the LDS Church Library Archives⁷⁸, as well as a document that I was sent with permission from the RLDS Archives⁷⁹. Ultimately, I know that according to Avery/Newell I am still missing letters from both the RLDS and LDS Archives. Of all the letters I know of, the original Avery/Newell list with my few additions, I only have current access to about 70% of them, and not all of them have spatial data. I plan to continue iterating my analysis as I get more and more up-to-date information, toward making this study as accurate as possible, but please let the reader be advised that the current iteration of this study is only at this accuracy level at this time.

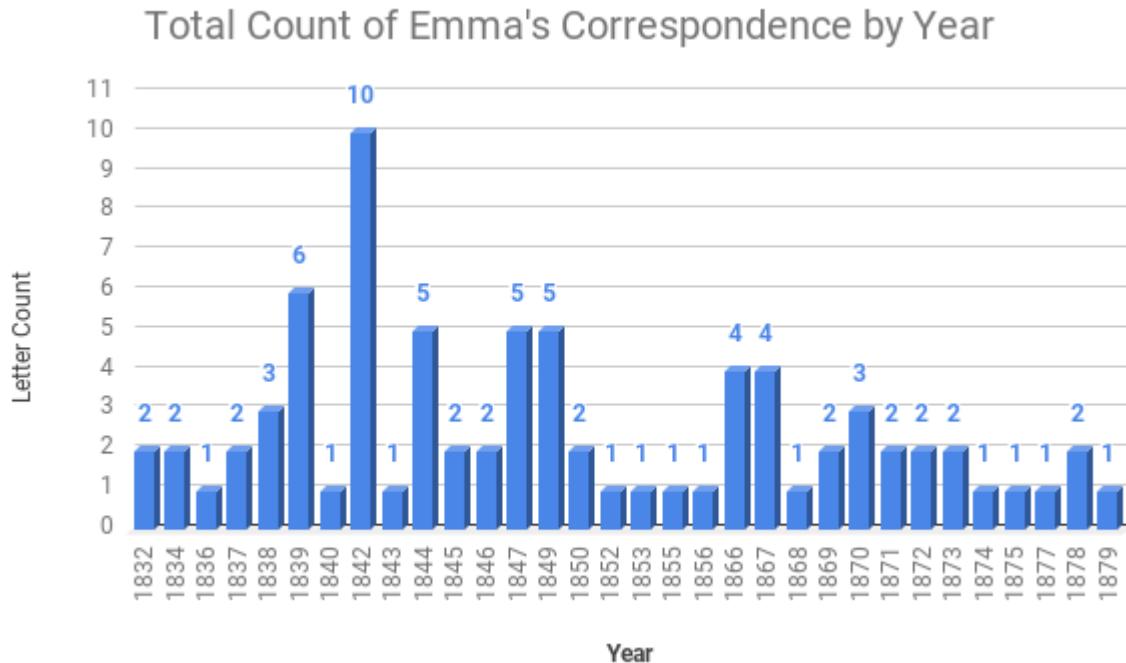
4.2 Data Analysis

Now that the data which bedrocks this analysis has been interrogated, we may now start encountering it with technological tool-sets, starting with some basic data inquiries.

⁷⁸ Public access for now, private permission pending.

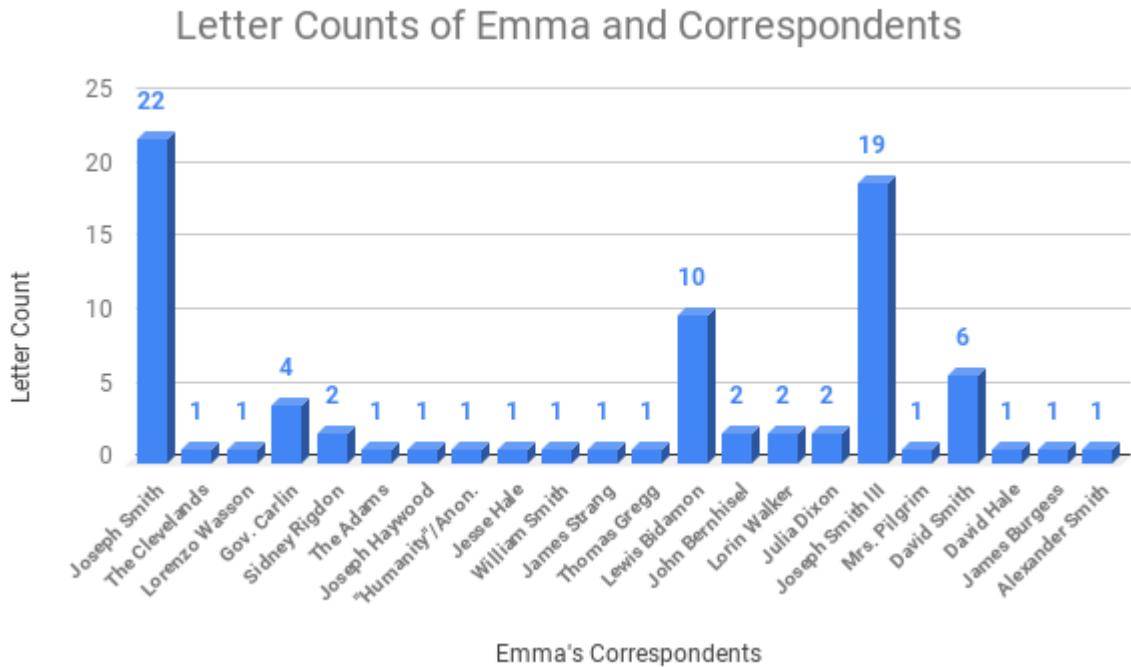
⁷⁹ Though I originally thought this document would contain all of the Emma materials they had since it was such a vast document, I have since discovered that it must not be their whole collection, as there are many letters Avery/Newell cite as having accessed from the RLDS Archives that were not in my received document.

Here the data can be brought to bare with some preliminary questions which might serve as fruitful counterpart to a visual GIS engagement, such as What years do we have the most/least correspondence for Emma? Who was in the network of her correspondents? and How many letters do we have authored directly by her?



Considering the chart “Total Count of Emma’s Correspondence by Year,” we can see which years are most resource-rich, and therefore supposedly which years Emma wrote most. However it should be noted that Avery/Newell point to multiple references of Emma’s correspondence that have been known to have existed because it was referenced in another source, but in which case the original letter manuscript is cited as having been lost to history. So even though we may see ‘empty years’ of no correspondence, that does not necessarily mean there was none; they just might be lost. Nevertheless it remains a valuable exercise to take stock of the times/places in which we have the heaviest source-amounts from her life in the data as it

stands, which here we can see peaks at 1842, during the Nauvoo period. In that year, the Female Relief Society was formed and Emma unanimously chosen as president, regarding which we have one letter (from Joseph, addressed to ‘Emma and the Relief Society’)⁸⁰; that year also saw Joseph in-and-out of hiding (2 letters, same day)⁸¹, a letter from Lorenzo to both Joseph and Emma addressed to ‘Uncle and Aunt,’⁸² the entire back-and-forth between Emma and Governor Carlin on Joseph’s behalf (4 letters, 1 no access)⁸³, and a terse exchange with Sidney Rigdon (2 letters, same day)⁸⁴.



⁸⁰ [3/30/1842]

⁸¹ [8/16/1842]

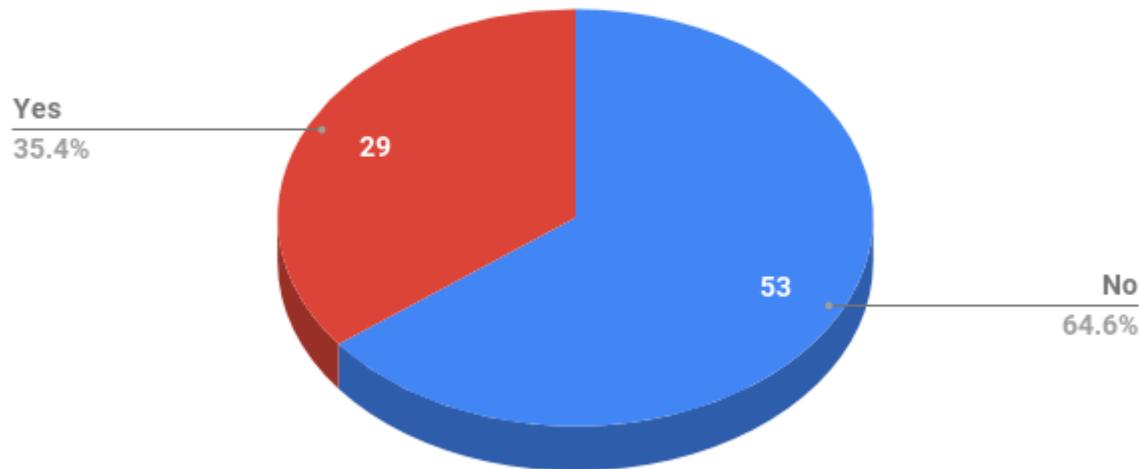
⁸² [7/30/1842]

⁸³ [8/17/1842] ; [8/24/1842] ; [8/27/1842] ; [9/7/1842]

⁸⁴ [9/12/1842]

Though the variety and volume of Joseph's many correspondents have been numerated⁸⁵, Emma's correspondence has often been presented monolithically as 'the love letters of Joseph and Emma' or depicted as just her letters with Joseph as (mis)representative of her entire correspondence. And though it is clear that the majority of Emma's letters were indeed between she and Joseph while in his lifetime, it is plainly not the whole story. Emma was evidently in conversation with an array of people, both inside her family unit with her two husbands and adult children, as well as outside it with the likes of friends⁸⁶, government officials⁸⁷, interlopers⁸⁸, and strangers⁸⁹ throughout her lifetime.

How Many Letters are Authored by Emma?



⁸⁵ See JSPO listing for "Joseph Smith's Correspondence"

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/joseph-smiths-correspondence>

⁸⁶ [5/24/1839] Letter to the Clevelands

⁸⁷ [8/17/1842] Letter to the Governor of Illinois Thomas Carlin (there are four)

⁸⁸ [2/22/1846] Letter with James Strang who embroiled Emma in a false letter impersonation regarding the *New York Sun*; please see Avery/Newell pages 231-232.

⁸⁹ [8/19/1844] Anonymous letter addressed from "Humanity" Emma received shortly after Joseph's death.

We catch glimpses of Emma's own voice in the letters she authored herself, which are often styled with directness, astuteness, and civility, though that is not to say that the letters in which she is correspondent are not then 'null and void' of meaning; they still allow for glimpses into the overall relational dynamics cultivated with the variety of parties she interacted with at differing levels. Nevertheless it is important to note the 29 total authored letters with Emma's first-person voice. Of these, only five were with Joseph in his lifetime--two⁹⁰ were from the Kirtland phase in 1837 in quick succession to Joseph while in Palmyra, one⁹¹ was from the time Joseph was in Missouri/Liberty Jail in the winter of 1839, and the other two were in the Nauvoo era, one from the end of 1839 when Joseph traveled to Washington DC⁹² to appeal to the President Martin Van Buren for justice of Mormon persecutions in Missouri, and the other from 1842 when things were getting more tense and Joseph was in hiding on the outskirts of Nauvoo.

⁹³ Apart from these 5, the rest of the letters we have between Emma and Joseph are all then of course in Joseph's first person voice, which is 17 of the total 22. Of the total 10 correspondence we have between Emma and her second husband Lewis Bidamon, 3 are authored by Emma, though one of these which Avery/Newell cite as in the RLDS archives but of which I do not have access, has no date at all⁹⁴, and one other is missing the day.⁹⁵ However we have a significantly larger number of letters authored by Emma herself from the pool of the 19 correspondences between her and her son Joseph Smith III, with 13 in first person voice, which is the only majority percentage in comparison with her other main two correspondents, her two husbands.

⁹⁰ [4/25/1837] and [5/3/1837]

⁹¹ [3/9/1839]

⁹² [12/6/1839]

⁹³ [8/16/1842]

⁹⁴ Please see the last three entries in Appendix 2 which are each known to be letter manuscripts but which contain no date information.

⁹⁵ [1/(no day)/1847]

From these brief excursions it is apparent that a data approach stands to generate new questions and to shed new light on historical subjects, and a GIS approach will only add new layers to this dynamic.

4.3 Spatial Analysis

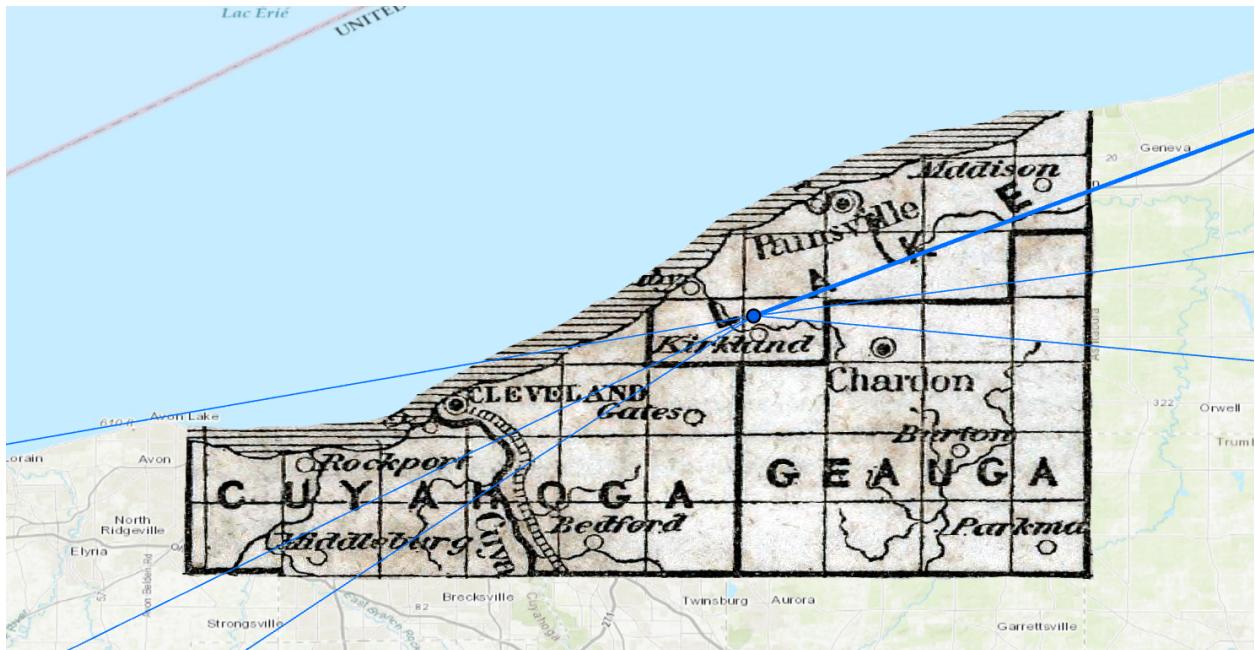
The placement of Emma onto the map of religious history is in itself subversive act of (re)presentation, though in doing so we might also look with ‘new eyes’ at the history of her life as well as LDS and RLDS histories. Here I would like to start by providing a georeferencing application, at the county level, of the locations from which Emma wrote in the vein of reorienting the map from today’s landscape toward one that might be closer to how Emma saw and interacted with ‘her worlds,’ and then transition into a more in-depth focus on the clusterings of her letter correspondence as shifting through the phases of her life.⁹⁶

Georeferencing is perhaps the method most heavily associated and readily brought to mind when one thinks of people doing historical GIS projects, perhaps due to the sheer volume of their presence in the field. Though it is not the only element the field has to offer, it remains a valuable asset in one’s toolbox. For this project, I used the David Rumsey Map Collection⁹⁷ to access scans/digitizations of historical maps for downloads. The higher the resolution the better quality the georeference, but this made for heavier and heavier image files and consequently working with an entire state map ran into performance issues in ArcGIS Pro and crashed the

⁹⁶ArcGIS Pro version 2.2.0, from Esri, Inc. was used for the duration of this study.

⁹⁷ David Rumsey Map Collection, Cartography Associates, <https://www.davidrumsey.com/>. Though Rumsey offers the ability to georeference while still in web browser on his site, I did not use these in-browser tools and instead did all my georeferencing in ArcGIS Pro so that I could save them alongside what I was already working with easily. However this may be valuable tool to students and researchers as an easily accessible entry-point for practicing georeferencing techniques with no software download needed.

program often and so I therefore had to scale down to a county level rather than state level and strategically choose which counties to include while weighing page performance. I chose to georeference the following counties: Geauga/Lake (Kirtland, OH), Caldwell (Far West, MO), Adams (Quincy, IL), and Hancock (Nauvoo, IL), tracing Emma's four main living situations during the time spanned by the dataset of her letters.



For Kirtland, I settled on the *Morse/Breese Cerographic Atlas*[1842]⁹⁸ map of Ohio which actually includes the three counties of Geauga, Lake, and Cuyahoga. I chose this over a fairly contemporaneous and perhaps more visually pleasing candidates because it's placement of Kirtland was on the appropriate river inlet whereas the other map was not. Emma and her family were in Kirtland (referred to as a "township" at that time) for the period of 1831-1838 and so this map is dated slightly after they left the area, but it is contemporaneous enough to provide an

⁹⁸ See Sidney E. Morse and S. Breese, *Ohio*, Scale 1:1,490,000, "David Rumsey Map Collection," 1842. https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~261552~5523492:Ohio?sort=Pub_List_No_Initia_lSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No&qvq=w4s:/where%2FUnited%2BStates%2FOhio;sort=Pub_Li_st_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No:lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=28&trs=45

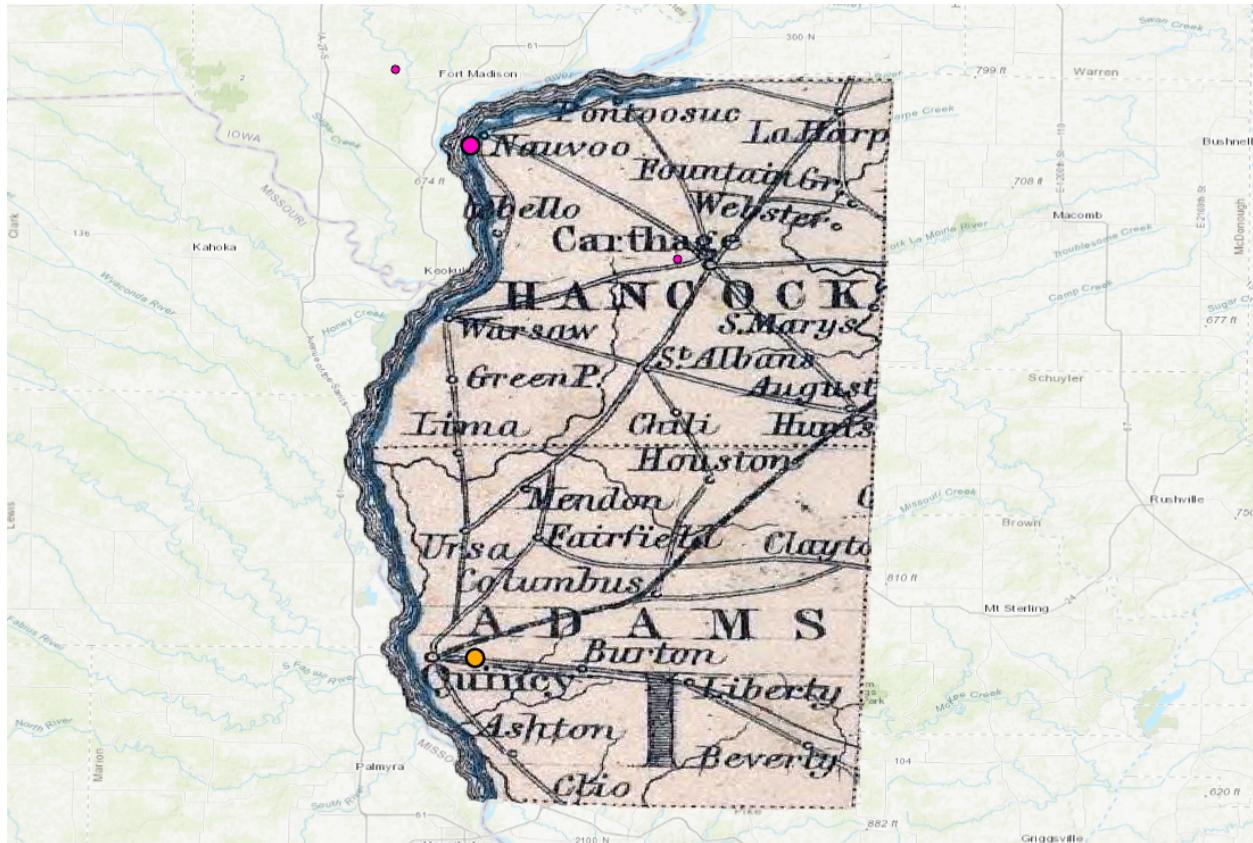
estimate of how the general population traversed this area. While in Kirtland the two largest hubs in close proximity were Cleveland and Painesville, of which the Mormon community was undoubtedly aware and made use of. In this map Kirtland is located within Lake County, but according to the letters contained in JSPO from this period, Kirtland was placed in Geauga county, so it is likely that Kirtland was at the intersection of shifting boundaries between the two counties and placed differently at different times.



For Caldwell county, I again decided on the *Morse/Breese Cerographic Atlas* [1845]⁹⁹ map of Missouri because of its placement of Far West as slightly more accurate than each of the other candidates considered, though ultimately this was the ‘most off’ point in all of the georeferenced counties surveyed despite my manipulation efforts. The inaccuracy of the point (or perhaps the extent of its shift from then to now) may be evidence that atlases from this era were

⁹⁹ See Sidney E. Morse and S. Breese, *Missouri*, Scale 1:1,800,000, "David Rumsey Map Collection," 1845. https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~261583~5523508:Missouri?sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No&qvq=w4s;/where%2FUnited%2BStates%2FMissouri;sort:Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No:c:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=18&trs=34

less accurate for more western provinces as these areas were still being pioneered and less established than more eastward sites. Nevertheless, Far West seemed to be the most developed settlement in its area with few proximal hubs (the closest of which probably being in neighboring Daviess county to the north), and the isolation of which likely only worsened the chances that there would be accountability for the actions of the Missourians toward the Mormons there.



Due to the fact that the two counties for Quincy and Nauvoo are adjacent, I used the same historical atlas for both Adams and Hancock counties, settling on a combined map of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois from *Black's Atlas Of North America [1856]*.¹⁰⁰ It is clear that Quincy was

¹⁰⁰ See John Bartholomew and Adam & Charles Black, *Ohio, Indiana & Illinois*, Scale 1:2,400,000, "David Rumsey Map Collection," 1856.

https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~37006~1210008:Ohio,-Indiana-&-Illinois?-sort=Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No&qvq=w4s:/where%2FUnited%2BStates%2FIllinois;sort:Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No;lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=0&trs=41

likely the largest hub in Adams county, and that Carthage, where Joseph would eventually be murdered, was the largest hub in Hancock county (St. Louis was also a larger hub that was somewhat proximal and farther down the Mississippi River in St. Clair county). From this scale it can be noted that there was a letters location in Carthage as well as one across the river close to Nauvoo, which are the locations from which Joseph wrote his last three letters to Emma before his death, each just two days apart.¹⁰¹ The last two were addressed as from Carthage (while in custody there), but the first of these three was addressed from simply “Safety,” while Joseph was in hiding and invariably did not want to risk divulging his location in case the letter was intercepted. According to JSPO, while Joseph was writing from ‘safety’ he was in the ‘Iowa Territory.’¹⁰² Because there were instances of Joseph hiding just across the Mississippi river from Nauvoo on the Iowa side in the past and the county directly across the river from Nauvoo was Lee county, I used a centroid for that county as a best estimate for his location for this letter, so please let the reader be advised of this uncertainty here.

It is clear from the imperfect overlaps seen in the above examples that georeferencing is far from a perfect science, and indeed that historical map-makers used far from a perfect science in their endeavors. However it is still valuable to attempt a reorienting of historic imagination toward the different set of reference points which shaped the realities of past subjects to better envision the ways they negotiated the spaces around them. A particularly fascinating application of this might be a project of overlaying travel itineraries/journeys onto pertaining georeferenced maps (if there are existent candidates) because the routes and navigation available to them were likely different than the ones currently; and there are certainly plenty of instances of Emma

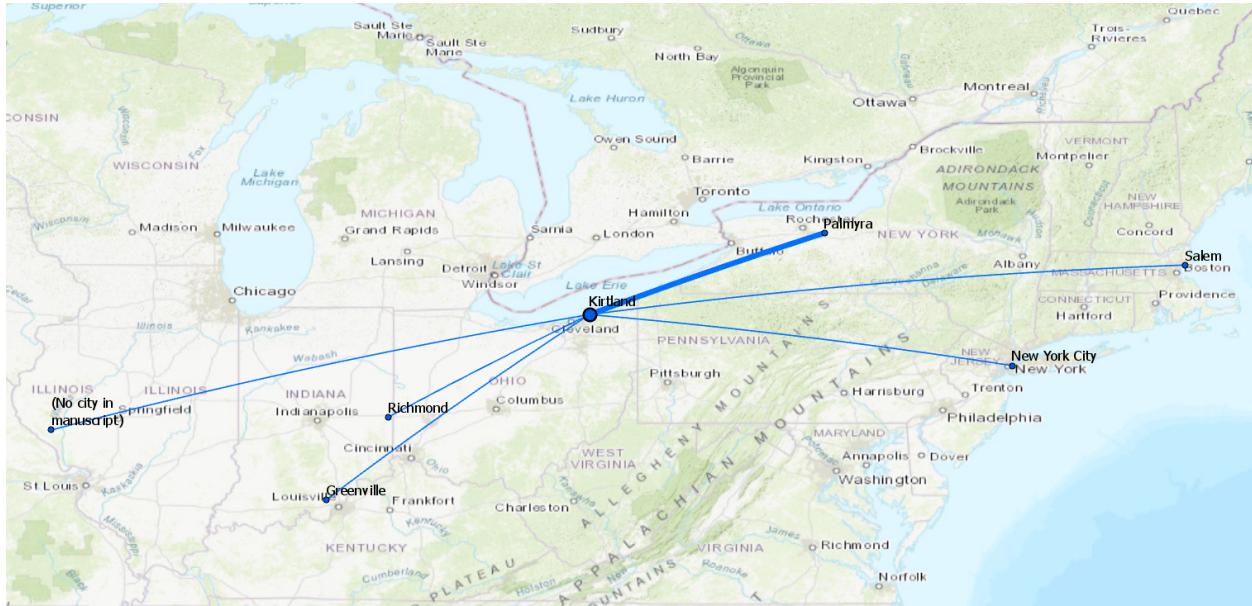
¹⁰¹ [6/23/1844] ; [6/25/1844] ; [6/27/1844]

¹⁰² See JSPO “Letter to Emma Smith, 23 June 1844” Source Note,

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-emma-smith-23-june-1844/1#foot-notes>

travelling to make this a possibility. Though this was simply not feasible to carry out in addition to the letter webs in this study, this might provide an interesting site for future research applications with these tools.

Now from the more ‘zoomed in’ lens of the georeferenced maps, I would now like to ‘zoom out’ to the crux of the project which is the visualization of the primary source data we have for Emma specifically in her ‘letter web’ maps. Following suit from my georeferencing structure, I decided to group her correspondence into four separate clusters according to her dwelling-places so as to keep her locations ‘centered’ as well as to preserve the toggle-ability of layers in order to avoid one monolith that could only be turned ‘all-on’ or ‘all-off.’ The layers of points were simple enough; it was the line layers, which represented the distinct letters, which carried the bulk of the information in them and required the most manipulating. For instance, between a distinct ‘path’ (say for example between Nauvoo and Quincy) there might have been five letters, therefore there were five lines stacked on top of each other/in the same exact location. I was eventually able to symbolize the lines so that their thickness was a function of how many of these ‘repeats’ stacked along the same path in order to get a sense of distribution and ‘loci of investment.’ When the user clicks these letter lines, a pop-up window displays information, a direct link to access the primary source if available, and a thumbnail sized image of the manuscript if available. I would now like to take a tour these letter web clusters.



Emma and her family resided in Kirtland from the period of 1831-1838 and there are a total of seven extant letters from this period, all with Joseph and through the phases of an early sprouting church and family. For the first letter from Greenville, Joseph traveled to a church conference in Missouri, only three days after the death of their adopted baby Joseph as a direct result of the violent encounter (which also injured Joseph and Sidney Rigdon) while lodging at the Johnson's home and which left Emma virtually homeless for that summer unbeknownst to Joseph.¹⁰³ The second letter was from Joseph in New York, from the Pearl Street Boarding House, which came while Emma was entering the last few weeks of her pregnancy (Joseph returned from this trip on the day young Joseph Smith III was born).¹⁰⁴ The third and fourth letters were from the period of 'Zion's Camp'¹⁰⁵ which would eventually fizzle out, and of these, it should be noted that the letter labeled as "No city in Manuscript"¹⁰⁶ did however include the county (Pike County, IL), and so a centroid for that county was used to estimate a location there.

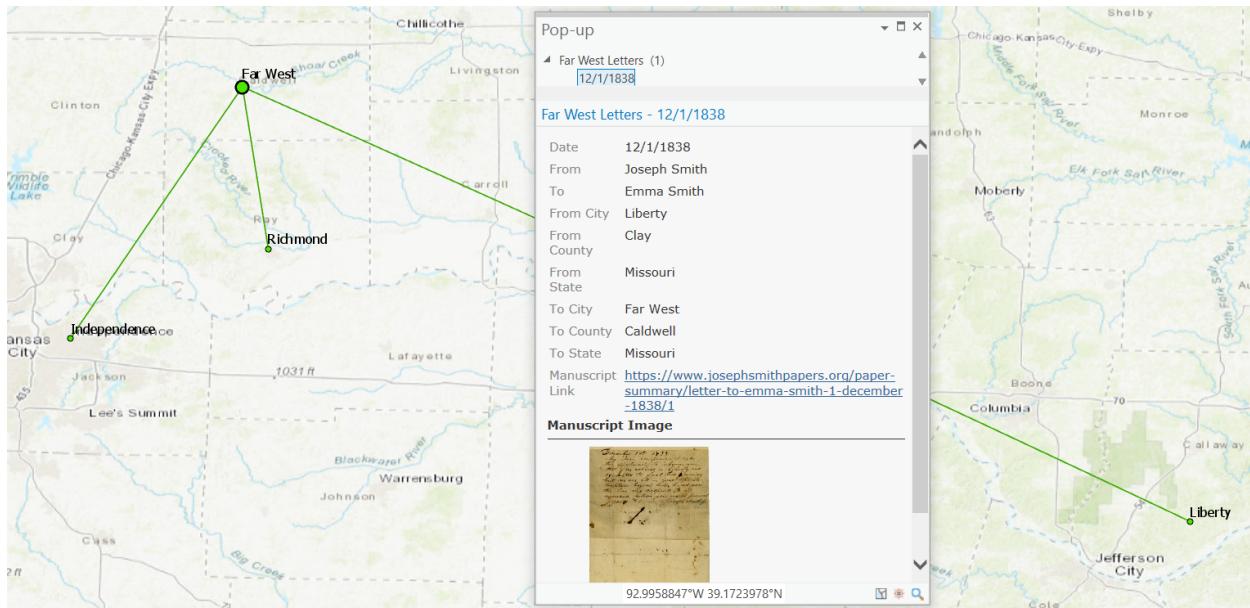
¹⁰³ See Avery/Newell, *Mormon Enigma*, pages 41-44.

¹⁰⁴ [10/13/1832], see *Mormon Enigma*, pages 45-46.

¹⁰⁵ [5/18/1834] and [6/4/1834]; see *Mormon Enigma*, pages 50-52.

¹⁰⁶ [6/4/1834]

The fourth letter from Joseph in Salem “brought a close to the money-digging chapter of Joseph’s life (60).¹⁰⁷ It is easily noticed that the only ‘thicker’ line in this cluster is from Kirtland to Palmyra, in which we have two letters,¹⁰⁸ and additionally these two letters are the only ones authored by Emma in this hub as well as the latest. At this time, things were getting more tense for the Kirtland Saints and Joseph was hiding out in his hometown of Palmyra with his parents for some reprieve when these letters were written. The Saints would leave Kirtland the following year.



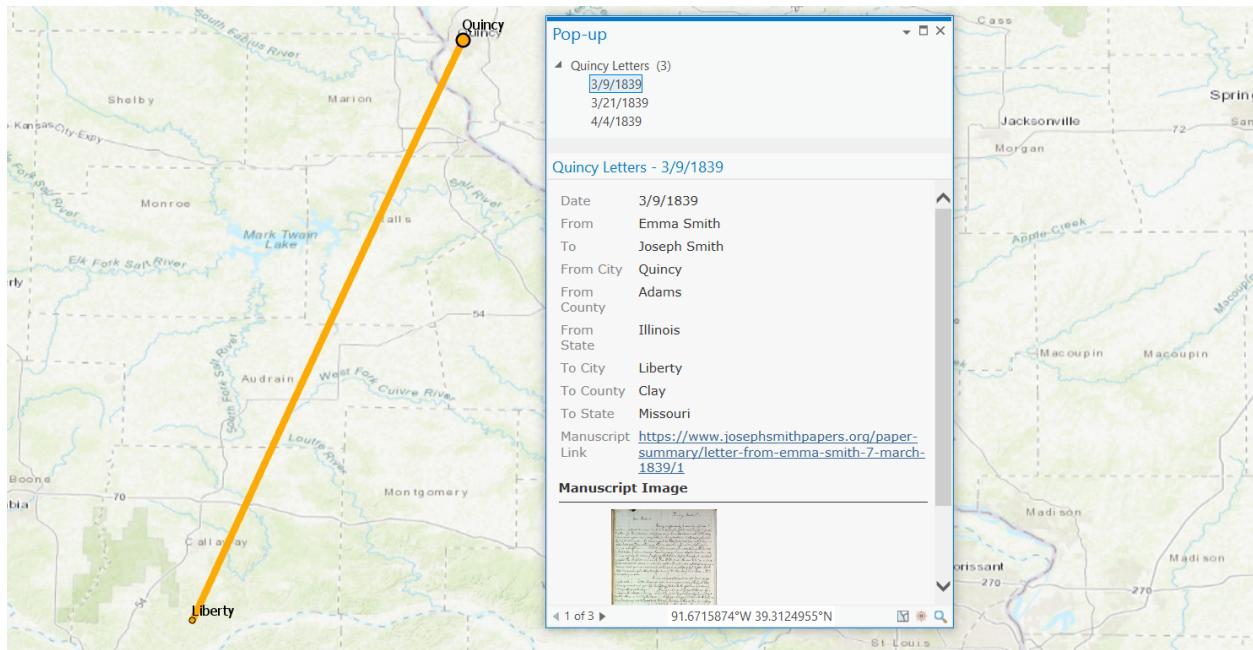
The Saints moved from Kirtland to Far West to find more stability, but instead they were unfortunately met with severe trials instead. Joseph and five others was arrested and the only three letters from this hub follow Joseph’s moves in jail locations, all from Joseph writing Emma who was still in Far West. However, Avery/Newell note that Emma wrote a letter to Joseph which he received in Richmond, but that letter is no longer extant, as Joseph commented on it

¹⁰⁷ [8/19/1836], see Avery/Newell *Mormon Enigma*, page 60.

¹⁰⁸ [4/25/1837] and [5/3/1837]

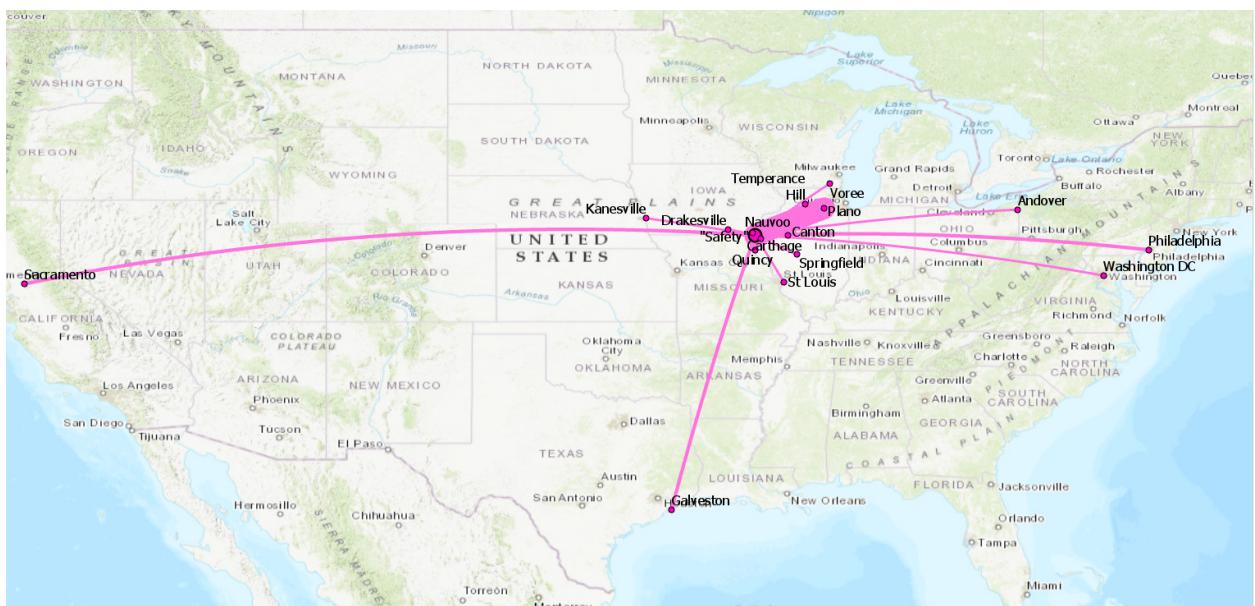
saying “I received your letter which I read over and over again, it was a Sweet morsal to me.”¹⁰⁹

Emma also took two trips to visit Joseph while in Liberty jail, once taking Phoebe Rigdon to visit her husband Sidney as well and secondly taking Mary Fielding to see her husband Hyrum, which was, as Avery/Newell point out, “twenty-five miles to the west of Richmond in Clay County” (77). After a decision to move out of Far West to Illinois, the Saints left February 7, 1839 in the cold of winter, in which Emma managed herself and her four children across the frozen Mississippi river, with Avery/Newell stating that she, “then walked apart with two-and-a-half-year-old Frederick, and eight-month-old Alexander in her arms. She had Julia hold tightly to her skirt on one side, positioned young Joseph on the other, and, with the heavy bags of Joseph’s papers fastened securely to her waist, Emma walked across the frozen river to safety” (79).



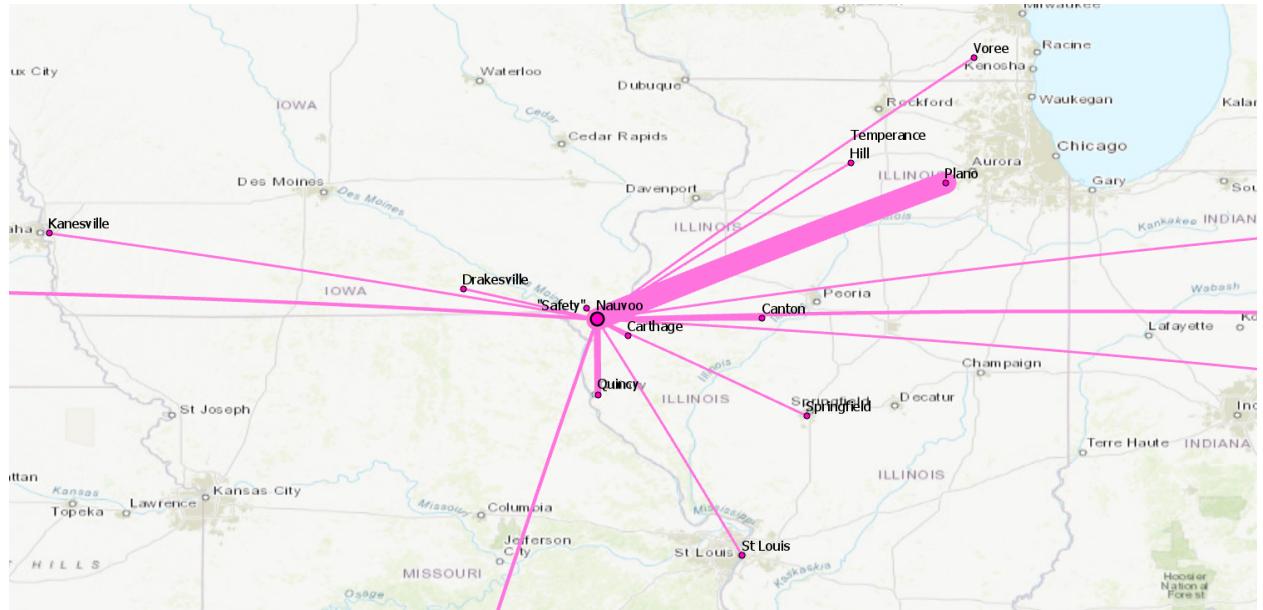
¹⁰⁹ [11/12/1838]

After having safely evacuated Missouri and arrived in Quincy, Illinois on February 15, 1839, Emma stayed with the Cleveland family, of whom she would keep in contact later with later correspondence.¹¹⁰ Though she had relocated, Joseph was still in the Liberty jail during the entirety of her short stint there, and here we can see that all of the total three letters from this hub are repeated along that same path, with two letters authored by Joseph and one extant by Emma. The total number of ‘jail letters’ from this period is six letters between Far West and Quincy, and subsequently all of the body of Emma’s letters from this turbulent time are jail letters. However in April of 1839 Joseph was released from prison and arrived at the Cleveland’s house to rejoin his family and subsequently moved the saints “from Quincy to Commerce, fifty miles north on the east bank of the Mississippi” (82)¹¹¹ to a more stable home which Joseph would later rename Nauvoo. Despite the movement of the majority of the Saints west to the Utah valley which would take place some years later, Emma would remain here for the rest of her life.



¹¹⁰ [5/24/1839]

¹¹¹ See Avery/Newell, *Mormon Enigma*, page 82.



Clearly this is the hub which contains the most extant letters of Emma's body of correspondence, which is not surprising as she was also there the longest--for the forty years from 1839 until her death in 1879. In this hub 55 letters have been mapped, though there are multiple letters I did not gain access to in this study or did not have spatial information for, so what is shown here is a fraction of the total frequencies. The highest number of frequencies is easily seen as between Nauvoo and Plano, Illinois at 19 letters, which is where Emma's son Joseph Smith III resided as well as the early headquarters of the Reorganized Church which he began leading around the 1860s, and the two corresponded often. Quincy is another larger line, with five letters, one to the Cleveland family and the other four which Emma exchanged with Governor Thomas Carlin on Joseph's behalf. The city of Canton became a new 'loci of investment' as this is where Emma's second husband Lewis Bidamon hailed and in which they exchanged two letters¹¹² while courting each other in 1847 (they were married December 23,

¹¹² [1/11/1847] and [1/(no day)/1847]

1847)¹¹³ and in which Joseph III later wrote to Emma in 1855¹¹⁴, in which Avery/Newell wrote that, “With his stepfather’s encouragement, he prepared to go to the Lewis’s former home of Canton, Illinois to study law”(263).¹¹⁵ Lewis would impart on a long journey along with the wave of the California Gold Rush soon after their marriage, stopping at Drakesville¹¹⁶ and Kanesville¹¹⁷ along the way to Sacramento¹¹⁸ (there were three other extant letters¹¹⁹ from Lewis on this journey, but I could not map them as they were labelled as simply “Indian Territory” which I could not estimate).

It would likely be overkill to go through each location individually here, and indeed the tool is ultimately designed to eventually serve as an online interactive tool which user/readers can engage and click and turn layers on/off so as to ask their own questions and identify patterns for themselves. This can also be a pedagogical practice of ‘learning the letters,’ as well as getting a sense of ‘loci of investment’ and travel patterns for these early communities more broadly, in a fashion that is visually stimulating. The overall picture that emerges is fully dynamic and heterogeneous, characterized by the multiple shifts which took place throughout Emma’s life in Nauvoo; phases from the time while Joseph was alive and their church swelled, Joseph’s death and the exodus of the Brigham Young along with essentially most of Emma’s closest friends and community, her later marriage to Lewis Bidamon and this new influence on her life, to her son’s consolidating of another religious movement in which she was an active part. In essence, placing

¹¹³ See Avery/Newell, *Mormon Enigma*, page 246.

¹¹⁴ [6/15/1855]

¹¹⁵ See Avery/Newell, *Mormon Enigma*, page 263.

¹¹⁶ [5/4/1849]

¹¹⁷ [5/21/1849]

¹¹⁸ [1/7/1850] and [4/20/1850]

¹¹⁹ [7/5/1849] ; [7/16/1849] ; [8/16/1849]

Emma ‘back on the map’ via her letter correspondence causes us to see her more fully in her own light as complex, three-dimensional figure.

4.4 Synopsis

We have observed that the primary sources which comprise the body of Emma’s correspondence have been far from unified, but that even an avowedly imperfect first attempt at that compiling allowed for visual data engagement, both graphically and spatially, which prompted new insights for recovering Emma as full human figure. Though this case study was limited in scope, and indeed remains a ‘live’ dynamic work which is still in progress, it may still provide starting points for where we have been, and where we might go, regarding feminist scholarship on Emma Smith, and more largely serve as prototype for other works of feminist data scholarship toward a reconstructed women’s history, especially in religion.

5 Conclusions

We have trekked the contours of multiple terrains throughout this excursion. We have seen the multiple climates of which this study’s method is a product of, and the subsequent need to be grounded in feminist mindsets in order to apply mindful deconstructions of static narratives in both history writ large and religious history, by taking the example of scholars such as Knowles, Kwan and Larsen who are already reshaping the landscape with their work. We have seen the progression of shifting portrayals of Emma Smith as ‘sensitive subject’ within the LDS tradition which have been (and are often still) distorted and censored due to her disruptive and subversive stances, which are also the very reasons that make her such a potentially strong model for civil disobedience and of which have been straightforwardly brought to light in the work of Avery/Newell. We have seen the current state of the largest genre of extant primary sources for

Emma's life, her letters correspondence, as disunified and uncompiled, and the subsequent attempt at a cataloging of that dataset toward ultimately making it 'visual,' so that new patterns and insights might be drawn from both graphical and spatial oriented encounters, as well as so that the figure of Emma might 'have a place' alongside others from the 'map of her history.'

Going forward, these methods involving data and geospatial technologies, while often labor-intensive due to their interdisciplinary nature and requiring carefulness and mindfulness throughout, have been shown as having the potential to be utilized as powerful tools for further applications in feminist reconstructionist history, especially in religion. Due to the extensive and collaborative nature of these endeavors, it becomes clear that agency and cooperation among humanists and data scientists in the joint effort toward a more responsible and ultimately beneficial theory/praxis will be needed in order to chart new territories which might only be made tangible by their synthesis.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Steps for Basic Letter Web Lines with Symbolized Frequency in ArcGIS Pro¹²⁰

- 1) Display XY: Start by bringing in your letters/lines table with two lat/long components in it (one for author and one for correspondent), right click layer in table of contents > Display XY (it doesn't matter which lat/long you set this point to get it to display, we're going to make full lines out of it anyway)
- 2) XY to Line Tool: Then use the geoprocessing tool XY to Line, and put in both sets of points when prompted.
- 3) Add Join Tool: Now use tool Add Join onto the line layer from the original XY Display points which still have the full original dataset in them because the tool XY to Line chops off all other attributes in the new line entries, so all that information needs to be reattached back onto the lines.
- 4) Export Copy: Then Export a copy and use the copy and discard the other because the last one still has an in-memory join on it (which the exported copy won't have anymore); the primary reason for that being that the in-memory joins are not supported for the Sharing as Web Layer action to be used later if you'd like to publish to ArcGIS Online and other online hosted applications.
- 5) Symbolize by Repeats: Now that the lines are all drawn, we can symbolize them by frequency and go to the Symbology pane. It is okay to keep Single Symbol style, and then go to the other tab on that ribbon Vary by Symbol Attribute, and choose to vary by size and set the field to your "repeats" field. Can vary max/min thickness if needed. I hand-made the field for repeats myself in my data-table, but I would still like it if I could somehow discover a way for Pro to count the repeats for me.
- 6) Finishing Touches: Once points and letter lines are both in together and symbolized properly, you can do the finishing touches like pop-ups and labels. I have tried to attain as many manuscripts as possible for the letters to provide in the pop-ups whenever available.

¹²⁰ This is provided as potential pedagogical tool for students and practitioners who would like to practice with these sorts of tools and strategies in the hopes of empowering their own research questions.

Appendix 2: Compiled Sourcebook of Known Letters of Emma Smith¹²¹

Index	Date	Year	From	To	A/N Ref
1	6/6/1832	1832	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	316
2	10/13/1832	1832	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	316
3	5/18/1834	1834	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	317
4	6/4/1834	1834	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	317
5	8/19/1836	1836	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	318
6	4/25/1837	1837	Emma Smith	Joseph Smith	318
7	5/3/1837	1837	Emma Smith	Joseph Smith	318
8	11/4/1838	1838	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	320
9	11/12/1838	1838	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	320
10	12/1/1838	1838	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	321
11	3/9/1839	1839	Emma Smith	Joseph Smith	321
12	3/21/1839	1839	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	321
13	4/4/1839	1839	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	(None)
14	5/24/1839	1839	Joseph and Emma Smith	John and Sarah Cleveland	321
15	11/9/1839	1839	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	321

¹²¹ “A/N Ref” contains the page reference in Avery, Newell *Mormon Enigma*, 1994 edition. Due to space constraints, I could only provide the bare minimum of information/columns for this present format.

16	12/6/1839	1839	Emma Smith	Joseph Smith	321
17	1/20/1840	1840	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	323
18	3/30/1842	1842	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith and Relief Society	340
19	8/16/1842	1842	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	323
20	8/16/1842	1842	Emma Smith	Joseph Smith	323
21	7/30/1842	1842	Lorenzo Wasson	Joseph and Emma Smith	328
22	8/17/1842	1842	Emma Smith	Gov Thomas Carlin	329
23	8/24/1842	1842	Gov Thomas Carlin	Emma Smith	329
24	8/27/1842	1842	Emma Smith	Gov Thomas Carlin	329
25	9/7/1842	1842	Gov Thomas Carlin	Emma Smith	329
26	9/12/1842	1842	Emma Smith	Sidney Rigdon	330
27	9/12/1842	1842	Sidney Rigdon	Emma Smith	330
28	3/10/1843	1843	Hannah and James Adams	Emma Smith (None)	
29	6/23/1844	1844	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	343
30	6/25/1844	1844	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	344
31	6/27/1844	1844	Joseph Smith	Emma Smith	345
32	10/18/1844	1844	Emma Smith	Joseph L Haywood	348

33	8/19/1844	1844	"Humanity" / Anon.	Emma Smith	348
34	3/30/1845	1845	Jesse Hale	Emma Smith	354
35	11/21/1845	1845	William Smith	Emma Smith	351
36	2/22/1846	1846	James J Strang	Emma Smith	353
37	4/21/1846	1846	Emma Smith	Thomas Gregg	354
38	1/(no day)/1847	1847	Emma Smith	Lewis Bidamon	(None)
39	1/11/1847	1847	Lewis Bidamon	Emma Smith	355
40	10/9/1847	1847	John M Bernhisel	Emma Smith	355
41	12/21/1847	1847	Emma Smith	Lorin Walker	356
42	12/21/1847	1847	Lorin Walker	Emma Smith	356
43	5/4/1849	1849	Lewis Bidamon	Emma Smith Bidamon	356
44	5/21/1849	1849	Lewis Bidamon	Emma Smith Bidamon	(None)
45	7/5/1849	1849	Lewis Bidamon	Emma Smith Bidamon	356
46	7/16/1849	1849	Lewis Bidamon	Emma Smith Bidamon	356
47	8/16/1849	1849	Lewis Bidamon	Emma Smith Bidamon	356
48	1/7/1850	1850	Emma Smith Bidamon	Lewis Bidamon	356
49	4/20/1850	1850	Lewis Bidamon	Emma Smith Bidamon	357
50	3/25/1852	1852	Julia Dixon	Emma Smith Bidamon	358
51	3/18/1853	1853	Julia Dixon	Emma Smith Bidamon	358

52	6/15/1855	1855	Joseph Smith III	Emma Smith Bidamon	358
53	5/3/1856	1856	John M Bernhisel	Emma Smith Bidamon	358
54	2/2/1866	1866	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	364, 348
55	8/19/1866	1866	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	361
56	10/11/1866	1866	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	358, 352
57	10/22/1866	1866	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	361
58	1/20/1867	1867	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	361, 365
59	2/10/1867	1867	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	(None)
60	12/2/1867	1867	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	362
61	(no mon.)/30/1867	1867	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	(None)
62	12/27/1868	1868	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	361
63	8/1/1869	1869	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	361
64	(no mon.)/17/1869	1869	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	365
65	1/21/1870	1870	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	352
66	3/27/1870	1870	Emma Smith	Mrs. Pilgrim	364
67	12/5/1870	1870	David Smith	Emma Smith Bidamon	363
68	12/5/1871	1871	Emma Smith Bidamon	Joseph Smith III	(None)
69	12/29/1871	1871	Joseph Smith III	Emma Smith Bidamon	363
70	1/25/1872	1872	David Smith	Emma Smith Bidamon	363

71	11/2/1872	1872	David Smith	Emma Smith Bidamon	364
72	2/12/1873	1873	David Hale	Emma Smith Bidamon	364
73	3/8/1873	1873	Joseph Smith III	Emma Smith Bidamon	361
74	1/4/1874	1874	David Smith	Emma Smith Bidamon	364
75	11/13/1875	1875	Joseph Smith III	Emma Smith Bidamon	364
76	12/29/1877	1877	Joseph Smith III	Emma Smith Bidamon	(None)
77	1/30/1878	1878	James Burgess	Emma Smith Bidamon	365
78	5/15/1878	1878	Joseph Smith III	Emma Smith Bidamon	365
79	1/22/1879	1879	David Smith	Emma Smith Bidamon	365
80	(no date)	-	Emma Smith	Lewis Bidamon	355
81	(no date)	-	Alexander Smith	Emma Smith Bidamon	361
82	(no date)	-	David Smith	Emma Smith Bidamon	364

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