

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MORMON RELIGION

- History
- The church was founded by Joseph Smith in 1830 in upstate New York. It was probably due to the Book of Mormon, which Smith had translated from gold plates that were buried in a nearby hill. Smith's followers first went to Kirtland, Ohio in 1831. The first Mormon temple was built in Kirtland, and by the mid-1830s, there were over 17,000 Mormons. In 1838, the Mormons settled in Independence and Far West, Missouri. Near here, Smith wanted to build a utopian (ideal) community. The Mormons were driven out because people in Missouri did not trust Mormons. This was called the Mormon War. The Mormons then moved to Nauvoo, Illinois. There, Smith started to practice polygamy and tried to start a "theodemocracy," which combined Mormon rule with American democracy. In 1844, an attempt by Smith to shut down the Nauvoo newspaper led to Smith being accused of treason, followed by him being killed by a mob.
- After Smith's death, there was a controversy over who should replace Smith. Brigham Young led most of the Mormons to Utah in 1847. When Utah became a territory in 1850, it was somewhat of a theocracy. Later in the 1850s, there was conflict between the Mormons and the U.S. government over control of the territory. This was called the Utah War.