By studying the worldview of Mormons living in the nineteenth century, we can better understand their interpretation of nature and their relationship to it. For Mormons of that era, the earth was alive and deeply affected by the attitudes and actions of the humans living upon it. Nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints spoke frequently of the earth, its nature, and its relationship to humanity. They referred to the earth in anthropomorphic terms. It was a living orb endowed with intelligence and feelings. The earth’s life paralleled that of the humans who lived on it. So entwined were the lives of the earth and its humanity that one could not act without affecting the other. From surviving nineteenth-century sermons and writings, it is possible to construct a biography or life story of the earth—a nineteenth-century biography from the Latter-day Saint perspective. "The Living Earth: A Nineteenth-Century Latter-day Saint Perspective" was presented by J. Michael Hunter as a paper at "Our Stewardship: Perspectives on Nature Symposium" held at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah on February 28, 2004.

The Living Earth: A Nineteenth-Century Latter-day Saint Perspective

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Keywords
Earth (Planet), Environment, Environmental History, Nature, Mormon Attitudes and Beliefs, Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, Heber C. Kimball, Sermons

Abstract
By studying the worldview of Mormons living in the nineteenth century, we can better understand their interpretation of nature and their relationship to it. For Mormons of that era, the earth was alive and deeply affected by the attitudes and actions of the humans living upon it. Nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints spoke frequently of the earth, its nature, and its relationship to humanity. They referred to the earth in anthropomorphic terms. It was a living orb endowed with intelligence and feelings. The earth’s life paralleled that of the humans who lived on it. So entwined were the lives of the earth and its humanity that one could not act without affecting the other. From surviving nineteenth-century sermons and writings, it is possible to construct a biography or life story of the earth—a nineteenth-century biography from the Latter-day Saint perspective. "The Living Earth: A Nineteenth-Century Latter-day Saint Perspective" was presented by J. Michael Hunter as a paper at "Our Stewardship: Perspectives on Nature Symposium" held at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah on February 28, 2004.