

ARTWORK IN THE LOBBY OF THE CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY

The Norwegian-born sculptor, **Torleif S. Knaphus** (1881-1965), a convert to the LDS Church, demonstrated his testimony through his artwork. This is particularly the case with the events pertaining to the Restoration of the Gospel and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

The bas-reliefs displayed in the lobby of the Church History Library are bronze replicas recovered from the original Santaquin Ward in central Utah dedicated in the early 1930s.



The middle and largest relief is of **Joseph Smith Receiving the Gold Plates from Angel Moroni**. This is the key event in the presentation of the Book of Mormon in this dispensation. On either side are duplicate reliefs that are on the granite base of Brother Knaphus' **Hill Cumorah Monument**, dedicated in 1935.

The left relief depicts the vision of the Angel Moroni showing the Gold Plates to the **three witnesses**. On the right, the **eight witnesses** are depicted being permitted to see and handle the Gold Plates. Both sets of men signed their names to written testimonies regarding the validity of the sacred record, which are now at the beginning of the Book of Mormon.

*THE SCULPTOR WITH THE
EIGHT WITNESSES RELIEF, CA. 1935*

Also displayed in the lobby of the Church History Library is a section of the bas-reliefs from the Laie (Hawaii) Temple. Torleif S. Knaphus worked on the temple with the Fairbanks brothers almost two years between 1916 and 1918 and by himself in 1939 for some restorative work.



Torleif S. Knaphus was born in Øvre Vats in Rogaland, Norway. At an early age, he showed interest in art by sketching birds, animals, and people while tending his mother's goats and sheep on a nearby mountainside. At 15 years old, young Torleif began an apprenticeship to follow the trade of his father as a house painter. At age 19, Torleif pursued his dream as an artist. He left home and became a student at Oslo's *King's Art and Handicraft School*.

For 2½ years, he was trained by celebrated Norwegian artists and was even given permission to copy the masters' work in the National Museum of Art. Due to his skills and promise in his field, Torleif was offered a full-ride scholarship to an art school in Italy.

While studying art in Oslo, his roommates encouraged him to attend a Christmas concert performed by some of the members of The *CIRCA 1902, AGE 21* Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He was subsequently taught by the missionaries, read the Book of Mormon, attended Church services, and prayed to know the truth.



Soon after, the missionaries took Torleif and others out on a frozen fjord, broke through three inches of ice, and they were baptized by the missionaries. The teachings of the Gospel influenced him more than anything had before.

At age 24, he turned down the Italian art scholarship and decided to immigrate to Utah in 1905 to be with others of his faith. On Torleif's journey to America, he held close to the information of 350 of his Norwegian ancestors. Family history research became his life-long passion. He later identified over 10,000 more names in his Norwegian pedigree.

When he was 31, after he had started his family, he studied art in Paris for 1½ years at the prestigious *Julian Academy of Art*. While there he was awarded first mention for his sculpture work. On his return to Utah, he studied with master sculptors at the *Students' Art League* in New York City and in Chicago for an additional six months. Throughout his career, he became a prominent sculptor with his work being displayed throughout seven of the United States, in Canada, and now in Norway.



Recently, a copy of his **Handcart Pioneers statue** was donated to the Norwegian Emigrant Museum in Ottestad, Norway along with a monument on his family farm with a bas-relief of the **Handcart Pioneers**.

Brother Knaphus and his first wife had eight children. After she unexpectedly died, he was father and mother for his large family for eight years. He eventually remarried and together they raised another six children. Despite being at his studio much of the time, he was a devoted, kind, and caring father.

Although mostly known for his sculpture work, Brother Knaphus was also an avid oil painter – enjoying landscapes of the southern mountains of Utah's red-rock country.

CIRCA 1948, AGE 67

These next two pages list some of the sculpture pieces that Brother Knaphus created both for the LDS Church and for the community throughout his career.

Sculpture Projects by Torleif S. Knaphus

FOR THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Est. Dates	Duration	Location – Item
1907-1910	2½ years	Salt Lake Temple and Tabernacle – decorative artwork
1916-1918	1¼ years	Laie, Hawaii Temple – decorative artwork (<i>with the Fairbanks</i>)
1918-1919	1 year	Salt Lake Temple - Celestial Room's big rosette and other molding; busts of Church presidents that were placed in niches in the Celestial Room (<i>Since then they've been removed from the temple and some were placed in the Conference Center's "Hall of the Prophets"</i>)
1920-1923	2¼ years	Cardston, Alberta Temple – oxen and baptismal font
1922-1923	1 year	Cardston, Alberta Temple – “Woman at the Well” frieze
1924-1926	2 years	Bureau of Information – “ Handcart Pioneers ” - ½-life size (<i>Now on permanent display in the Church History & Art Museum</i>)
1925-1927	2 years	Mesa, Arizona Temple – oxen and baptismal font; terra cotta friezes around top exterior
1929-1935	5¼ years	Palmyra, New York – “Hill Cumorah Monument”
1932-1933	¾ year	Washington, D.C. Meeting House – “Angel Moroni” on spire (<i>Now on permanent display in the Church History & Art Museum</i>)
1937-1939	2 years	Salt Lake Temple and Church Buildings – decorative artwork; Whittier Ward – frieze of Joseph Smith's First Vision
1939	½ year	Laie, Hawaii Temple – decorative work
1944-1945	1½ years	Idaho Falls Temple – oxen, baptismal font and the two big trees in the Garden Room
1944-1947	2¼ years	Salt Lake Temple Square – “ Handcart Pioneers ” - 1½-life size
1946-1947	¾ year	S.L.C. – “ This is the Place Monument ” (<i>with Mahonri Young</i>)
1949-1951	2 years	<i>Originally designed for the S.L. Temple Square</i> – life-size of “ Joseph Smith Receiving the Plates ” Monument (<i>It is now located in the Wood Museum in North Salt Lake, Utah</i>)
1955-1956	1¼ years	Los Angeles Temple – oxen, baptismal font, Angel Moroni on the spire and other decorative areas (<i>for M.F. Malin</i>)
1955-1957	2 years	Los Angeles Temple - large monument for grounds
1962-1964	2 years	Oakland, California Temple – oxen and baptismal font

Busts of Church Leaders:

Joseph Smith, Jr.; Brigham Young; John Taylor; Wilford Woodruff; Lorenzo Snow;
Joseph Fielding Smith; Heber J. Grant; George Albert Smith; apostle and close friend
John A. Widtsoe; and David O. McKay in the Waterloo-McKay ward house.

NOTE: The sculptor also donated several copies of his art work to various Church buildings throughout Utah and Nevada that are not documented.

Sculpture Projects by Torleif S. Knaphus

FOR THE COMMUNITY

Approximate

Date (if known)

Location – Item

Early 1910's	Salt Lake Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Rotunda – interior painting
Early 1920's	Utah Theatre and Capitol Theatre - decorative artwork and painting
	Kennecott Copper Mine Visitors Center – frieze about mining
	Bingham High School – frieze of miners
	Deseret Mortuary - “Visions”
	Forest Lawn in Glendale, California - “Asleep” Statue – 17” x 36” x 8” tall
1937	Salt Lake City & County Bldg. - “School Children’s Monument” at flagpole
1956	Utah State Capitol Building – bust of Brigham Young in the rotunda; a copy is also at the Son’s of Utah Pioneers Building and at the Brigham Young winter home in St. George, Utah.
Busts of Community Leaders including: Governor Simon Bamberger; Pres. Brimhall of BYU; Karl G. Maser; John Morgan; Evan Stevens; Patrick Paxman; Horace Sorensen; and as Torleif Knaphus stated “many other busts” besides those listed.	

Numerous other projects not documented

OTHER SCULPTURE PIECES

“Covered Wagon” plaque - 11” x 20”

“Fur Traders” plaque – 13” x 23”

“Handcart Pioneers” and “Covered Wagon” plaques - 26” x 39”

“Jeanne d’ Arc” (“Joan of Arc”) Statue after Henri Chapu who sculpted the original in marble; Knaphus was allowed to copy the original statue (1913) while studying art in Paris, France

“Joy to the Hills” statue - ½ life size

“Mormon Meteor III” Bonneville Salt Flats Speed Car Model - about 10” long

“Pioneer Man and Woman” statues - ½ life size

“Spirit of the Hills” statue - ½ life size

“Utah Girl” Statue – about 16” tall

“Woman at the Well” plaque - 12” x 41” – after his Cardston Temple frieze

Centennial Commemorative Plaques: Handcart Pioneers & Covered Wagon - 11” x 16” each

Large & small bas-reliefs of:

Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods

“Joseph Smith Receiving the Plates”

Busts and statues of a few friends including: Sybil Clark, Edith Engh, and son T.M. Knaphus

Numerous other statues and friezes not documented