

# The Liahona

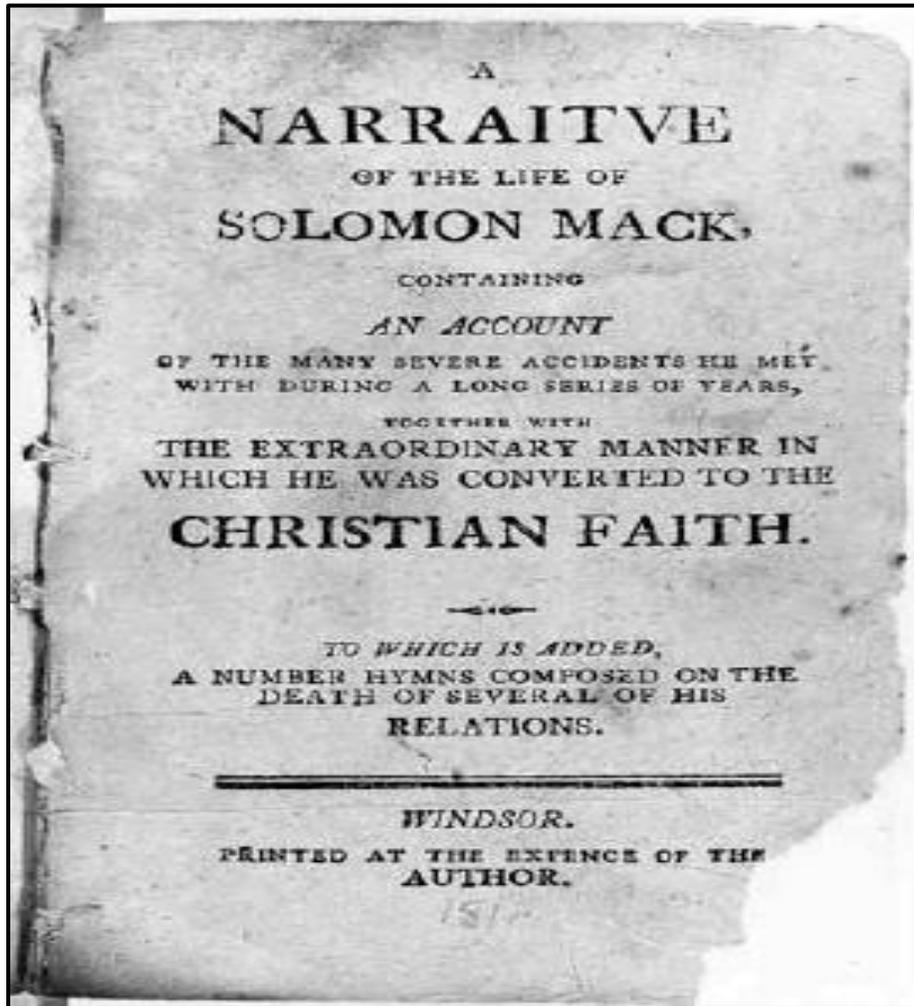
## Miracles by Small Means

### Chapter 12

## CHAPTER 12

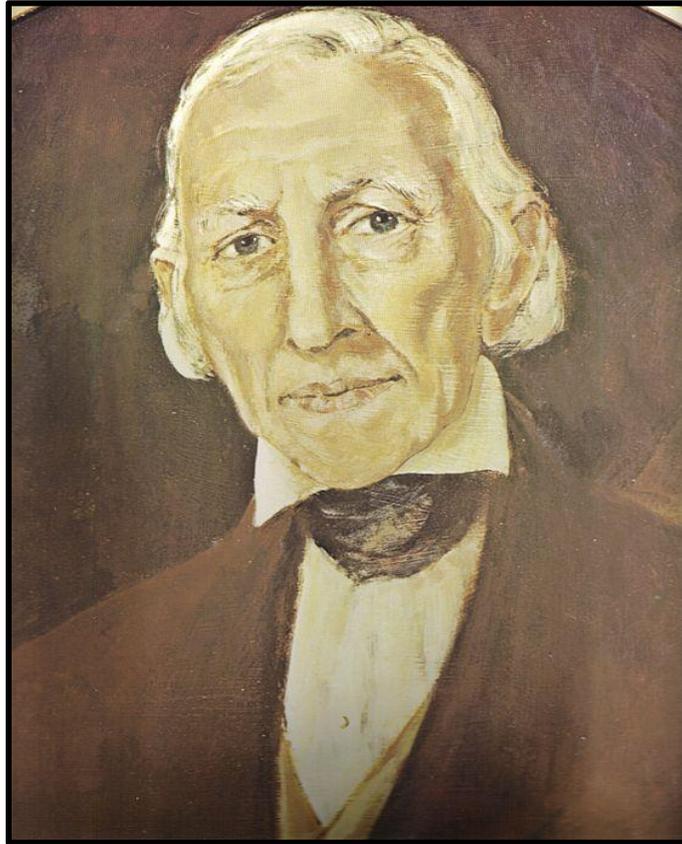
# Did Joseph Smith's Personal Experience with the Maritime Compass Help Define the Term "Compass"?

Chapter 12: Did Joseph's personal experiences with the magnetic maritime compass help define the term "compass" used in the Book of Mormon with respect to the Liahona? There are at least three different perspectives that might apply here.



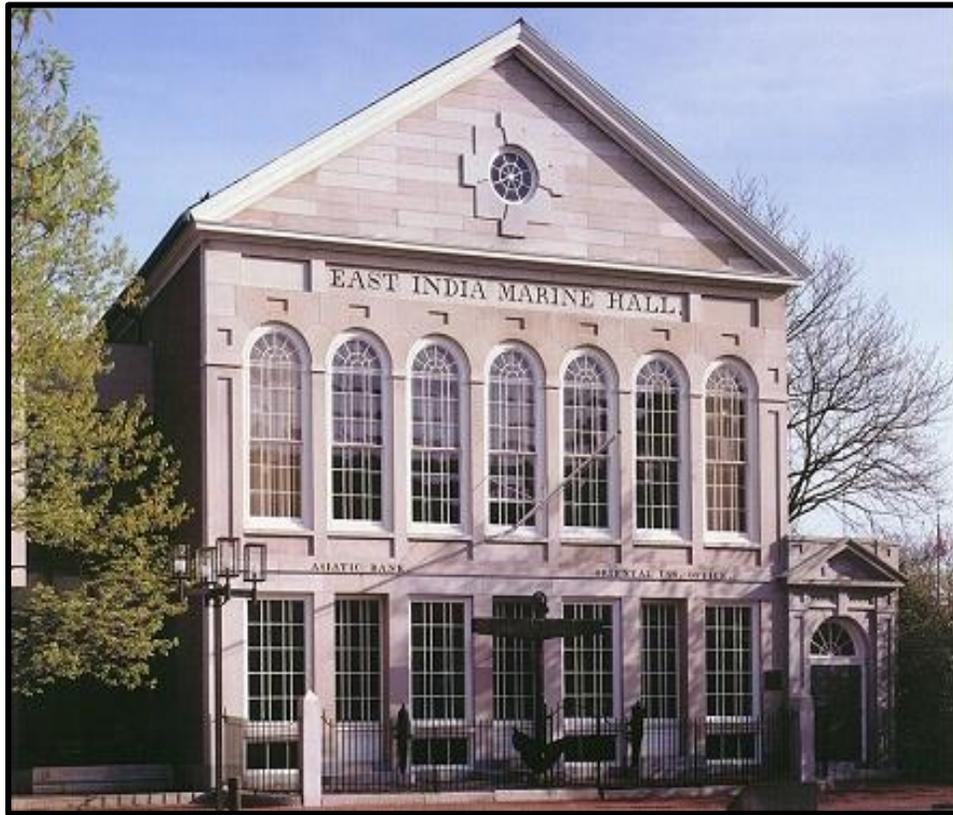
Solomon Mack's 1811 Pamphlet

Perspective #1: Joseph Smith's grandfather, Solomon Mack. Solomon Mack left his wife and children and spent four years sailing the coast of New England and Nova Scotia in hopes of earning some substantial money. He returned penniless to his family in 1788 and from then on he remained relatively close to his daughter Lucy, and her family until 1818. He wrote a pamphlet in 1811 in which he detailed not only his adventures at sea, but the lessons of life that he learned by sad experience. Joseph was close to his grandfather Mack, and would have been exposed to his sea lore until the age of 13. There is a good chance that a magnetic compass would have been mentioned.



Joseph Smith Sr.

Perspective #2: Joseph Smith Sr. Joseph Smith's father had invested in shipping ginseng to China. In doing so he would supposedly have had some knowledge of the capability of the ship and crew to navigate all the way to China and back. In any case, maritime adventures were part of the New England culture.



## Salem East India Marine Museum

Perspective #3: Salem. After his bout with typhus as a child, Joseph accompanied his uncle to Salem, Massachusetts for rest and relaxation. Salem was a mecca for ocean-going ships and maritime culture. The popular East India Marine Society Museum was founded there in 1799.



## The New England Coast

In summary, Joseph's association with the maritime culture of New England would have increased the probability that Joseph would have associated the term "compass" with a magnetic compass.