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The Importance of the Temple in Understanding the Latter-Day Saint Nauvoo Experience: Then and Now

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPLE IN
UNDERSTANDING THE LATTER-DAY
SAINT NAUVOO EXPERIENCE
Then and Now

by
Kenneth W. Godfrey

October 25, 2000

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Introduction

F. Ross Peterson

The establishment of a lecture series honoring a library's special collection and a donor to that collection is unique. Utah State University's Merrill Library houses the personal and historical collection of Leonard J. Arrington, a renowned scholar of the American West. As part of Arrington's gift to the university, he requested that the university's historical collection become the focus for an annual lecture on an aspect of Mormon history. Utah State agreed to the request and in 1995 inaugurated the annual Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture Series.

Utah State's Special Collections and Archives is ideally suited as the host for the lecture series. The state's land grant institution began collecting agricultural and economic records very early, but in the 1960s became a major depository for Mormonabilia. Utah is unique in that one religion dominated the historical evolution of the state. Leonard Arrington, accompanied by his wife Grace Fort, joined the USU faculty in 1946 and, along with S. George Ellsworth, Joel Ricks, and Milton C. Abrams, focused on gathering original Mormon diaries, journals, and letters for the library. Professional archivists were hired and the concept of "special collections" blossomed at Utah State University.

In many ways, Leonard Arrington profited from this vision. Trained as an economist at the University of North Carolina, Arrington became an economic historian of international repute. Each month, Arrington and Ellsworth met with Eugene Campbell and Wendell Rich and presented their ideas on specific historical topics. Arrington, a native of Twin Falls, Idaho, published *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints* in 1958. Utilizing the available collections and always seeking additional material, Arrington and his associates made Utah State University their base as they embarked on numerous publishing and editorial ventures.

They helped organize both the Western History Association and the Mormon History Association. They followed the professional organizations with the creation of journals such as the *Journal of Mormon History*, *Dialogue*, and the *Western Historical Quarterly*. The *Quarterly* has been edited at Utah State University since its inception twenty-five years ago. In fact, Arrington and Ellsworth were the first editors. Their idea was to provide new alternatives and opportunities for young scholars of the West in general and the Mormon West in particular.

Arrington began writing biographies and institutional histories during the 1960s. He fostered careers, encouraged students, and employed many as researchers. His studies of Charles C. Rich, William Spry, and David Eccles illustrate this phase of his endeavors. At the same time, he also finished histories of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company and of Kennecott Copper. Arrington's role as researcher, writer, founder, editor, nourisher, and friend continued to blossom.

His reward was an appointment as LDS church historian in 1973, a position he held for ten years. Simultaneously, Arrington assumed the newly created Lemuel Redd Chair of Western History at Brigham Young University. Arrington's focus became exclusively Mormon history and he attempted to create an atmosphere of open professional research. The church allowed him to hire a number of historians to work on special projects and assignments. Mormon history flourished during his tenure as historian and his own career was enhanced by the publication of *The Mormon Experience*, co-authored with Davis Bitton, and *American Moses: A Biography of Brigham Young*.

In 1981, Arrington and his staff moved to BYU full-time and established the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of History. He continued to publish and mentor other prospective historians. Since retirement, he has published the monumental two-volume *History of Idaho* as well as numerous biographies of such western figures as Harold Silver and Charlie Redd. Widowed, he married Harriet Horne during this period, and she became his travel companion as well as an active partner in his research and writings. They chose to deposit their vast collection of primary material as well as their library at Utah State University. Thus the Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives in Special Collections and Archives was established.

A Note on the Author

Kenneth W. Godfrey is a Cache Valley native and grew up in Cornish, Utah. His parents, Wendel and Mabel Godfrey, taught him the value of hard work on the family farm and encouraged him to get an education. He received a bachelor's and a master's degree from Utah State Agricultural College and went on to study at the University of Southern California and the University of Utah. He finished his Ph.D. degree at Brigham Young University in the history of religion. His dissertation was on the causes of Mormon and non-Mormon conflict in Nauvoo, Illinois. He is well known as an eminent Latter-day Saint (LDS) historian.

He retired several years ago from the LDS Church Education System after serving as a teacher, supervisor, and institute director. Since then he has spent his time writing and has produced a history of Sunshine Terrace, a rest home in Logan, for their fiftieth anniversary. He has also written a biography of Charles Penrose, an early LDS apostle, and edited a collection of his speeches. He writes a weekly column for *The Herald Journal*, a newspaper in Logan, Utah, and has had over six hundred articles published in various journals and newspapers.

At the present time he is a missionary in the Illinois Nauvoo Mission, where he teaches at the Joseph Smith Academy (a semester abroad program of Brigham Young University). He is married to Audrey M. Godfrey and they have five children and eleven grandchildren.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEMPLE IN UNDERSTANDING THE LATTER-DAY SAINT NAUVOO EXPERIENCE THEN AND NOW

Introduction

*B*etween the years 1830 and 1844, more than thirty books were written detailing the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints¹ and attempting to explain this new religious movement founded by the New York farm boy Joseph Smith. Some, it appears, wrote about what they knew and had experienced, as most of these histories were authored by disciples of the Prophet² (Latter-day Saints commonly refer to Joseph Smith as the Prophet, and I will follow their lead in this paper). Others, some of whom were openly hostile to Mormonism, wrote “in order to know”³ or expose the Mormon leader as a fraud. Few of these early historians seem to have grasped the appeal of Mormonism nor did they understand the joy new converts experienced as they were baptized into the church. Since the publication of those early deficient histories, hundreds of books have been written regarding the Latter-day Saints. Each one, some more successful than others, has sought to explain the Prophet and the church he established. Joseph Smith himself once remarked that no one knew his history: he had experienced so many remarkable things that he could understand why some people would not believe his story. Nevertheless, he said, it was true.

Even in the last few years, conflicting works continue to provide various opinions on Mormonism. Recently Robert N. Hullinger, after fifteen years of research on Mormon origins, published a book using, as do many other historians, naturalistic explanations for the Prophet and the religion he founded. Hullinger argues that Joseph Smith’s teachings, the Book of Mormon, and Latter-day Saint doctrines were an “answer to the skepticism which permeated Smith’s environment.”⁴ Kenneth H. Winn,

NAUVOO MORMON TEMPLE. NAUVOO. ILL.



3 *Importance of the Temple in the Nauvoo Experience*

in contrast, contended that Mormonism was not an exceptional phenomenon representing a countercultural ideology but instead affirmed republican principles. It was the way that the Latter-day Saints applied them that roused their neighbors to persecution.⁵

Marvin S. Hill, whose entire academic life has been devoted to studying Joseph and the church he founded, explained Mormon religious and political developments in terms of class struggle and a rejection of American pluralism in a world becoming increasingly secular. In his book *Quest For Refuge*, Hill argued that the first Mormons were of modest means, had little education, felt uneasy in established churches, and thus became Latter-day Saints because they felt comfortable in an authoritative religion which settled religious controversy once and for all and excluded pluralism.⁶

To cite another example, Dan Erickson attempted to come to grips with the history of Mormonism by finding as the summum bonum of the movement a quest for millennial deliverance. He also concluded that the church was founded on the belief that the world would soon end.⁷ Latter-day Saint history, Erickson argued, is best explained against this millennial backdrop.

Because Mormonism has now been around for more than 170 years and continues to experience phenomenal growth, most wise historians would probably agree that it requires more than one thesis to adequately explain Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the church he organized on April 6, 1830. However, in this lecture I will focus on the Nauvoo Temple and its importance in understanding the Latter-day Saint experience in the city historian Robert Bruce Flanders called the “Kingdom on the Mississippi.” I am not arguing that the temple is the only way to comprehend the history of Nauvoo; rather I am suggesting that emphasizing the importance of the temple, the endowment, sealings, and vicarious work for the dead helps to flesh out the complexity of the Mormon movement and the hold it had, and has, on its members. It helps to explain why it causes them to sacrifice their lives on the altar of their faith. They, to use the words of Joseph Smith, were and are confident that “no unhallowed hand [could] stop the work from progressing . . . till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country and sounded in every ear. . . .”⁸ The Nauvoo

Temple's place in Latter-day Saint history, at least in part, helps to illuminate the source of members' devotion and optimism.

The First Structure Emigrants and Visitors Saw

Church members on October 6, 1840, voted to commence building a temple so that God would have a place to come, "and restore again that which was lost . . . or had been taken away, even the fullness of the Priesthood."⁹ Only a few years after construction began, the temple dominated the Nauvoo landscape. For example, one writer, John Francis McDermott, described the visit the artist John Banvard made to Nauvoo. Banvard arrived just as "the setting sun was casting its mellow light over the ever beautiful autumnal foliage," and declared that "the great Mormon temple stands out conspicuous . . . it is the finest building in the west, and if paid for would have cost over half a million dollars."¹⁰ Artists Samuel B. Stockwell, Henry Lewis, and Leon B. Pomarede, as well as photographers L. R. Foster and Elvira Stephens Barney, left behind pictures of the Nauvoo Temple as the most imposing feature of the Nauvoo landscape.

Many Latter-day Saints pushed from the "City Beautiful" by angry Hancock County citizens in 1846 paused on the brow of a hill west of Nauvoo and gazed on the temple for the last time. Lewis Barney wrote, "On reaching the summit between the Mississippi and Des Moines Rivers the company made a halt for the purpose of taking a last piercing look at the Nauvoo temple, the spire of which was then glittering in the bright shining sun. The last view of the temple was witnessed in the midst of sighs and lamentations, all faces in gloom and sorrow bathed in tears, [from] being forced from our homes and temple that had cost so much toil and suffering to complete its erection."¹¹

Likewise, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his diary on May 26, 1846, "I was in Nauvoo . . . for the last time, and left the city of the Saints feeling that most likely I was taking a final farewell of Nauvoo for this life. I looked on the temple and city as they receded from view and asked the Lord to remember the sacrifices of his Saints."¹²

Priddy Meeks perhaps best captured the pathos many Latter-day Saints experienced when they saw the temple for the last time. He wrote, "I have no words with which to convey a proper conception of my feelings when

taking a last look at this sacred monument of the living faith of the Saints, and which was associated in their minds with the heavenly and holy.”¹³ For many Latter-day Saints leaving Nauvoo for the last time, the temple represented sacrifice. For others, it symbolized that which was holy, proof that God spoke to a prophet and restored priesthood power which sealed that which was heavenly to that which was of this earth in a bond that suffering and persecution only strengthened.

The Nauvoo Temple, the first structure that Mormon emigrants and visitors saw when they approached the city and the last to fade from view as they departed, represented the crown jewel in Latter-day Saint theology. But why was the temple so important to Latter-day Saints and how does it illuminate much of Mormon history? Let us now turn our attention to answering these questions.

The Beginnings of the Mormon Temple Ritual

When Joseph Smith recounted his experience with Moroni on September 21, 1823, he said that the angel quoted differently a passage of scripture taken from Malachi, chapter four, which called attention to the fact that in part the purpose of the priesthood was “to plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. “If it were not so,” Joseph Smith was told “the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his [Jesus’s] coming.”¹⁴ The Prophet learned from this experience that parents and children had made important promises, the nature of which (he may not have fully understood at that moment in his life) were somehow linked to the anticipated return of the Messiah.

Later, while translating the Book of Mormon, according to diarist Charles Walker, Joseph Smith “had a revelation that the order of Patriarchal Marriage and the sealing was right.”¹⁵ As early as 1835, W. W. Phelps, in a letter to his wife Sally, wrote about a “new idea” preached by the Prophet: marriage, if the husband and wife were faithful, could last throughout eternity.¹⁶ A week later Phelps addressed the same topic in a periodical he edited.¹⁷

This concern for linking families together also appeared in revelations¹⁸ Joseph Smith received in 1836 alluding to vicarious ordinance work for the dead. These same revelations declared that the Saints

should gather together so that a temple, or house of the Lord, could be constructed and certain ordinances necessary for salvation could be performed therein.¹⁹ To emphasize the importance of ordinances, Smith told his followers that the greatest temporal and spiritual blessings came “from faithfulness and concerted effort, rather than through individual exertion or enterprise.”²⁰ Furthermore, he believed that the power and authority to properly perform temple ordinances was given to him on April 3, 1836, by Moses, Elias, and Elijah.²¹

Parley P. Pratt wrote that while he was with Joseph Smith in Philadelphia in 1839, he learned “of eternal family organizations, and the eternal union of the sexes in those inexpressible endearing relationships which none but the highly intelligent, the refined and pure in heart, know how to prize, and which are the very foundation of everything worthy to be called happiness.”²² Even some students of Latter-day Saint history who prefer naturalistic explanations for Mormon origins believe that Joseph Smith’s home life was so good that his belief in the eternal family arose naturally from the feelings he cherished for his own family.²³

Also important to the purpose of temple work was the Law of Consecration and Stewardship which became a part of Mormonism in the 1830s. Latter-day Saints through temple covenants pledge to devote their means, their energy, and their time to the church. “One of the central doctrines relating to the establishment of Zion,” the Law of Consecration and Stewardship has been the subject of numerous books and articles but is sometimes overlooked as “an integral theme” of temple worship.²⁴ Thus, even before the Latter-day Saints were driven from Missouri in 1838 to the shores of the Mississippi River, doctrines were in place that foreshadowed the erection of a “House of the Lord.”

Plans for a Temple in Nauvoo

While Joseph Smith and other Mormons remained incarcerated in Missouri’s Liberty Jail the winter of 1838–39, some church leaders, including Sidney Rigdon, who served as first counselor in the church’s First Presidency, and Edward Partridge, a bishop, questioned the wisdom of gathering in one place again, believing that too many Mormons in a particular location had been a major cause of their difficulties in Ohio and Missouri.²⁵ That Latter-day Saints belonged to a new religion,

came from different backgrounds, held different political views than did the old settlers in Ohio and Missouri, and were grouped together in large numbers may have caused the persecution that seemed to follow the disciples of Joseph Smith.

While the Prophet was aware of the problems gathering together presented, he still sent a letter to Bishop Partridge instructing him to purchase land in Hancock County, Illinois, offered to the Latter-day Saints by Isaac Galland and others.²⁶ Joseph Smith, as alluded to earlier, believed that one of the reasons for the Mormons living in close proximity to one another was so they could build unto the Lord a house whereby He would reveal unto his people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach them the way of salvation, for there are, the Prophet said, “certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be in a place or a house built for that purpose.”²⁷ “God gathers together,” the Prophet continued, “his people . . . to build unto the Lord a house to prepare for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc.”²⁸

According to historian Ronald K. Esplin, another church leader, Brigham Young, said, “Without the gathering we cannot have the temple.”²⁹ Young also taught that church members needed the power of the temple before they could go preach the gospel to all the world and perfect the Saints. He believed that temple ordinances were absolutely necessary for the church to carry out its mission³⁰ because the ritual in which worthy members participated taught the plan of salvation and allowed them to make binding covenants and receive ordinances without which they could not be perfected and saved. The teachings of both Young and Smith, then, show that one of the fundamental principles of early Mormonism, the gathering, was intrinsically bound to the temple experience.

In a similar way, Joseph Smith believed that the temple would, when built, be a place of refuge and divine protection for the Saints from the evils, dangers, and cares of the world. Moreover, it would be the edifice where, through divine oracles, God would reveal his wisdom to his people. Holy ordinances performed therein would help prepare the Latter-day Saints to meet their Savior and receive eternal life in the Celestial Kingdom of God. Within the walls of the temple, they would become a holy people. Thus the house they constructed must be a place of beauty, a

place expressive of the glory of God.³¹ It should also be a structure where “the Great Jehovah would have a resting place on earth.³² The temples, especially the Nauvoo Temple, were “viewed as the standing witness[es] of the gathering of Israel.” Located on a hill, the Nauvoo Temple would be an ensign to the nations.³³

Another important concept in early Latter-day Saint history, as historian Thomas G. Alexander has written, was the idea that the old covenant (the one God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with members of the primitive church) had been broken and a new covenant was necessary.³⁴ This belief in the necessity of a new contract with God is helpful, Alexander asserts, in assisting our understanding of the temple in Mormonism. “While it may be interesting to speculate on the relationship between the Masonic ritual and the Latter-day Saint temple,” Alexander writes, “such speculation ignores the central purpose of the temple.” The core of temple worship is not found in those things that may have similarities to Masonic ritual. Instead, the “temple is an expression of the new covenant theology revealed early in the Church’s history. The covenants made in the temple [provide] a basis for sanctification through the atonement of Jesus Christ and for entrance into the presence of God as heirs of his kingdom with the potential of becoming gods and goddesses.”³⁵

Those who see the temple as simply a building where Mormons participate in strange rituals fail to comprehend the essential core of the endowment which combines “the uniquely Mormon ideas of eternal progression, the potential of future godhood for the most faithful [and] priesthood sealing of marital relationships,” as well as turning the attention of Latter-day Saints to their forefathers as they perform vicarious work for the dead.³⁶

Brigham Young in 1853 stated that the endowment was to “receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs, and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.”³⁷

While the Nauvoo Temple was under construction, Joseph Smith declared on July 12, 1843, that “the expectation of exaltation must be

sealed unto you by the holy spirit of promise—that most holy ordinance . . .” and that this “anointing and sealing is to be called, elected and made sure.”³⁸ Again on April 8, 1844 he said, “The declaraton this morning is that as soon as the temple and baptismal font are prepared, we calculate to give the Elders of Israel their washing and anointing, without which we cannot obtain Celestial thrones.”³⁹ Orson Pratt in 1845 also spoke of the importance of temple ordinances. He said, “No person will be crowned with power in the eternal world, [we are to be kings and priests unto God through all eternity] unless they have been ordained thereto in this life, prior to their death, or by some friend acting as proxy for them afterward and receiving it for them.”⁴⁰ Latter-day Saints throughout the Nauvoo period of church history believed that without participating in temple ordinances and the covenants entered into therein they would not inherit the Celestial Kingdom or dwell with God in the hereafter, nor would they, to use Orson Pratt’s words, “be crowned with power” and become kings and queens, priests and priestesses, and “have honor, authority, and dominion, and kingdoms to preside over.”⁴¹ Thus it is difficult to overemphasize the importance of the temple as a theological construct and the role it played and still plays in Latter-day Saint thought.

Indeed, even before the Saints began construction on the Nauvoo Temple, temples had played an important if somewhat different role in their theology. The Kirtland Temple was primarily a place for church members to gather together and hold meetings, but there were some cleansing rituals performed in that structure that involved water and perfumes that bore little resemblance to the ordinances performed in the Nauvoo Temple.⁴² While Church leaders had dedicated sites for temples in Independence and Far West, Missouri, they had not, before coming to Illinois, received the full temple ritual. Therefore, the Nauvoo Temple stands as the Holy Place where “the fulness of the Priesthood” (the full endowment) was given to worthy Latter-day Saints.

The first reference to a temple in Nauvoo comes from a letter sent to the “Saints Scattered Abroad” on August 1, 1840, authorized by the First Presidency of the church. The Latter-day Saints had been driven from Missouri only a year earlier and had lost land, homes, and most of their possessions. They were, moreover, engaged in draining a swamp, and only beginning to erect their “City Beautiful.” Still, church leaders declared in

this missive that “the time has now come, when it is necessary to erect a house of prayer, a house of order, a house for the worship of our God. . . .”⁴³ Only a few days after sending this letter, Joseph Smith spoke at the funeral of Seymour Brunson. In that sermon the Prophet “made the first public mention of the doctrine of vicarious baptism,” (baptism for the dead).⁴⁴ Believing that everyone except little children must be baptized for admittance into the Celestial Kingdom, Smith declared that living people could stand as proxies for dead ancestors and receive baptism on their behalf. Only a few weeks passed before church members acted on the Prophet’s sermon and began performing baptisms for the dead in the Mississippi River. According to one scholar, “During the first two years of its practice this ordinance was not closely circumscribed. Faithful Saints simply identified their deceased relatives for whom they wished to be baptized and then performed the rite.”⁴⁵ Males were immersed for females and females for males. Before the Saints completed the baptismal font in the temple, as many as 6,818 of these river baptisms were performed.⁴⁶ The Latter-day Saints were not content to be baptized only for their progenitors but also performed this ordinance on behalf of such luminaries as Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, Martha Washington and her mother, and William Henry Harrison. Proxy baptisms were done for George Washington a number of times in the Nauvoo Temple and again in the St. George Temple.⁴⁷ According to at least one source, Joseph Smith himself officiated in the baptism of more than a hundred deceased persons.⁴⁸

Yet even though Smith had emphasized the importance of baptism for the dead, he also declared that the proper place for them was not in the Mississippi River but in a consecrated temple. At the October 1841 general conference, for example, he told the Saints in the name of the Lord that “there shall be no more baptisms for the dead until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord’s house.”⁴⁹ The Prophet “may have suspended” baptisms in the river in an effort to motivate the Saints “to press forward with building the temple.”⁵⁰

During the summer and fall of 1841, workers constructed in the temple’s cellar a wooden baptismal font which rested on the backs of twelve oxen, patterned after the most beautiful ox that could be found in Hancock County.⁵¹ Brigham Young dedicated this structure on November 8, and the first baptisms for the dead in the still unfinished

temple began on November 21, 1841.⁵² Joseph Smith III recalled “witnessing some of these baptisms” and “seeing the candidates march up one side of the stairs east to the font.”⁵³ Before the Latter-day Saints left Nauvoo they had performed 15,626 baptisms for the dead.⁵⁴

While the temple was being constructed, Joseph Smith “did not leave salvation for the dead in the realm of theory.” He told his followers that there was not “too much time to save and redeem the dead . . . before the earth will be smitten and the consumption decreed fall upon the world.”⁵⁵ Church members responded to his message and began “to search for the genealogical records of their dead ancestors.” Some Mormons wrote letters to relatives in Europe asking for the names of grandparents and other close kin for whom they could do temple work.⁵⁶ Patriarch William Smith, in the summer of 1845, blessed some church members that they would have a burning desire to save their dead.⁵⁷ He told another Latter-day Saint that his “name would be written in the temple of God and that he would be a recorder of sacred histories.”⁵⁸

An 1841 letter from the Twelve Apostles to the Latter-day Saints who had not gathered to Nauvoo further stressed the importance of baptism for the dead. It declared that “those who failed to relocate to Nauvoo,” among other things, were missing “the chance to redeem their dead.” Implicit in this remark was that those reluctant to gather must now do so as quickly as possible. As historian Guy Bishop noted, “baptism for the dead not only offered the Saints a means to save their worthy dead, but gave the Church a way to motivate those who were slow to do their duty.”⁵⁹

Yet even though the First Presidency letter and these baptism lectures made church members aware as early as August 1840 that a temple was planned, it was not until the October semi-annual conference of that year that Joseph Smith “spoke of the necessity of building a ‘House of the Lord’” in Nauvoo.⁶⁰ In that same meeting three men, Reynolds Cahoon, Elias Higbee, and Alpheus Cutler, were appointed and approved as the building committee.⁶¹ William Weeks, a twenty-seven year old New Englander who had converted to Mormonism in the southern states, drew the plans for the temple.⁶² However, most Latter-day Saints then and now give Joseph Smith credit for the design of this new House of the Lord. Charlotte Haven, Josiah Quincy, Edward Stiff, and the editor of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* left Nauvoo with the impression that the Prophet had seen the temple in vision, and Major J. B. Newhall

wrote “that the Nauvoo Temple was Jo Smith’s order of architecture.”⁶³ Some reporters who either saw the temple in person or in drawings thought that the building showed a mixture of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Greek architecture.⁶⁴ However, a contemporary article that appeared in *The American Architect and Building News* said that “the temple was much like an ordinary congregational church.”⁶⁵

To further help the temple design, the Latter-day Saints had the publications of Asher Benjamin whose architectural plans were the basis for building the Kirtland Temple. When Weeks drew his plans for the Nauvoo Temple “he followed the basic Benjamin design for a Federalist church, with a classical, pilastered front and a tiered, segmented bell tower ornamented with classical orders.”⁶⁶ Based on revelation, “Joseph Smith made unique alterations to what would have been a typical New England church style.” He, for example, “replaced the triangular pediment of Protestant churches with a squared block between the facade and the tower.” The moon stones, sun stones, and small star stones which decorated the exterior were Joseph’s design and symbolized “variations of the classical order based on Mormon theology.”⁶⁷ The semi-circular windows on the “top block of the temple were changed to rectangular shape, and the round windows were placed between floors. The two curved staircases leading from the first to the second floors and from the second floor to the attic, designed by Weeks, followed the pattern found in one of Benjamin’s books.”⁶⁸

Weeks, in the fall of 1840 and the winter of 1841,⁶⁹ made the first drawing of the new temple, which was used to inspire the Saints and cause them to want to hasten its completion.⁷⁰ For some the strategy worked. When Joseph Fielding saw the caricature he exclaimed, “The temple is indeed a noble structure, and I suppose the architects of our day know not what order to call it, Gothic, Doric, Corinthian, or what. I call it heavenly.”⁷¹ Others expressed similar views and greatly anticipated the day when the structure would be complete.

Wards

As motivational techniques pushed the Saints along, construction on the temple commenced early in the winter of 1841. Not many weeks after construction began, church leaders realized that a building of such

magnitude required a community-wide organizational effort if it was to be completed. Subsequently the temple committee divided Nauvoo into ten districts to raise donations and labor. Later, on August 20, 1842, the high council (twelve men who served under the direction of the First Presidency) split Nauvoo into ten wards which matched the temple divisions and appointed a bishop for each ward.⁷² This move insured an “increased number of laborers day by day [and] week by week.” These were the first wards in the history of the church. Working together the temple committee and the bishops took steps to regularize the hours of labor for each day. They arranged to have a bell ring at 7:00 A.M., 12:00 noon, 1:00 P.M., and 6:00 P.M.⁷³ No matter how much efficiency this brought to the temple’s construction, however, these divisions were more important because they show that wards were initially created, in part at least, to meet the needs that directly related to building the temple. Thus, to a certain extent the Nauvoo Temple created a way to order and divide the Saints that still exists today.

Tithing

*E*ven though the law of tithing was revealed in 1838 while the Latter-day Saints resided in northern Missouri, the Mormon War and the persecution that commenced soon after its inception insured that it would not be implemented. However, on October 12, 1840, just ten days after a church conference voted to accept it, temple workers put this law into operation, beginning in the rock quarries. Many of the stone cutters donated a tenth of their time in quarry work with Albert P. Rockwood, foreman, and Charles Drury, assistant foreman, coordinating this operation.⁷⁴ After the city was divided into wards, the males of the ward spent every tenth day laboring on the temple. As the work load of the foreman and assistant foreman increased, William Felshaw was asked to coordinate all such tithing labor.⁷⁵ Other groups in the Nauvoo populace were not forgotten. The aged, the children, and the women were also integrated into the tithing system.⁷⁶ Women made surprise dinners, sewed clothing, and carried water for the masons, sometimes assisted by older children. One woman gave every tenth round of flax to the church and the temple.⁷⁷ The law of tithing, then, was adopted and used to supply the man (and woman) power to build the temple.

Tithing also provided the capital necessary for its construction. A letter of the Twelve Apostles to the Saints dated December 13, 1841, declared “that the temple is to be built by tithing and consecration.” The Saints were required to give one tenth of all they possessed at the commencement of the temple’s erection and one tenth of their increase each year after that.⁷⁸ Those who performed baptisms for the dead were required to produce evidence that they had paid their tithing promptly. Franklin D. Richards declared that not until he received his tithing receipt was he informed that he could now claim the benefits of the baptismal font.⁷⁹ Leaders also told the Saints that only tithe payers would be permitted to participate in the endowment ceremonies.⁸⁰

After the holdings of the church were centralized in 1841 and Joseph Smith was elected trustee-in-trust, the Saints appointed a tithing appraiser to “put a value on the tithing the church received.” Sometimes Joseph Smith did this himself.⁸¹ The *Times and Seasons* reported in the fall of 1842 that the tithing office had adequate pumpkins, squash, and potatoes but needed corn meal, flour, butter, and pork. Thus the tithing committee was required to advertise for certain commodities.⁸² Once the tithing committee complained that they were receiving too many guns and watches which did not “help much in the completion of the temple.”⁸³ They had enough nose rings, finger rings, brass kettles, old rags, and bank notes, the committee claimed, but they really needed gold and silver.⁸⁴ Indeed, so many animals were donated that tithing cattle had bells attached to their necks when they were herded on the prairie to distinguish them from regular animals. Unfortunately not all the residents of Nauvoo were saints and on at least one occasion a mare, a saddle, and three harnesses were stolen from the tithing office.⁸⁵

The tithes were sufficient to feed and cloth temple workers and furnish their homes. Women, for example, donated carpets, bedspreads, quilts, clothing, and hosiery as their tithing. Leaders called special tithing missionaries to go among the people of America, especially Latter-day Saints residing outside of Nauvoo, and collect tithing.⁸⁶ Non-Mormons were sometimes asked to contribute their means to help build the temple.

Because of these missionaries, as O. H. Olney wrote in his book *Absurdities of Mormonism*, by 1843 “the tithing movement had spread rapidly throughout the church and tithing agents traveled through

America as far as the name of Mormon is known.”⁸⁷ Yet some Saints charged that tithing agents appropriated the tithing they collected for their own use. To stop such abuses church members voted to bond all agents, beginning with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.⁸⁸ The bond was set at \$2,000.⁸⁹ Political missionaries dispatched in the spring of 1844 to campaign on behalf of Joseph Smith, who was running for president of the United States, were also authorized to collect tithing monies. After the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young called forty-six agents to raise and receive money for the temple.⁹⁰ Eventually the number of tithing missionaries increased to ninety-three. John Snyder was the first authorized tithing agent in Great Britain, and when he came to America he brought \$1,000 with him.⁹¹ The church’s periodical published in New York, *The Prophet*, began in January of 1845 to publish the tithing receipts. A perusal of those records discloses that most Mormons were only able to pay small amounts of tithing, \$5 or less.⁹² Still church leaders believed that every little bit helped, and Joseph Smith claimed that tithing would accelerate the construction of the house of the Lord.⁹³

Responding to the declarations of Smith and others regarding the necessity of tithing, ecclesiastical leaders sometimes passed a collection plate following meetings or used old tobacco boxes as “the temple box” to increase contributions.⁹⁴ Hyrum Smith asked the women of Nauvoo to establish a penny fund. Each sister was encouraged to donate one penny per week to the temple fund. Mormon women in the New England States sponsored sewing, quilting, and knitting bees, and donated the things they made for building the temple. Other women made shirts, dummies, and collars for temple workers. The Latter-day Saint women who resided in Boston organized the “Boston Female Penny Society,” “and raised \$21.27. Latter-day Saint women who lived in Great Britain also donated small amounts of money. The penny societies raised more than \$2,000 which was enough to purchase the glass for the temple.”⁹⁵

The non-Mormon populace of Hancock County, however, believed that temple construction impoverished the people, creating hardships and much sickness. Church leaders, in contrast, realized that “the poor people of Nauvoo and in the vicinity around the city found their best relief by working on the temple.” Building the temple furnished temporary jobs

and helped Latter-day Saints make the transition from direct relief to more permanent employment.⁹⁶ In August of 1844, Brigham Young told the building committee to “employ every man you can. I would rather pay out every cent I have to build up this place,” he continued, “even if I were driven out the next minute.”⁹⁷ But Young also admitted that he knew malnourished men who worked on the temple having nothing more to eat than a half ration of corn meal.⁹⁸ On one occasion, Young examined the tithing store and found spoiled butter, rotten potatoes, and barrels of spoiled pork. He ordered those in charge to empty the barrels and to dispense food and other supplies more liberally.⁹⁹

Regardless of whether or not tithing funds were always put to good use, the temple tithing ledger shows that 5,742 church members made contributions. Thus, the construction of the Nauvoo Temple solidified tithing as the principal means of funding the needs of the church, a practice which has persisted ever since.

Public Events Pertaining to the Temple

Even as the Latter-day Saints struggled against sickness, poverty and persecution, pivotal moments in the construction of the temple provided relief.¹⁰⁰ Joseph Smith used occasions such as laying the cornerstones of the temple as a way to involve not only Mormons but also non-Mormons in southwestern Illinois in grand public celebrations. He also linked such ceremonies to priesthood power which reminded his followers that they were a special covenant people engaged in a work that transcended their sufferings and sorrows.

For example, early on the morning of April 6, 1841, the eleventh anniversary of the organization of the church, the Nauvoo Legion, the city militia, assembled.¹⁰¹ The Legion fired a cannon, and the troops were inspected by the officers, including Lieutenant General Joseph Smith. The Legion then marched to the temple site, surrounded it, and stood at attention as crowds numbering in the thousands gathered to watch the cornerstone laying ceremonies. The generals, their staffs, and church authorities sat on platforms inside the center of the temple foundation. Those assembled sang hymns, Sidney Rigdon spoke for an hour, and the First Presidency laid the southeast cornerstone. Joseph Smith then asked God to speed the work of construction so “that the saints

may have a place to worship God and the Son of Man have where to lay his head.”¹⁰² After a noon hour recess, the southwest cornerstone was laid under the “direction of the High Priesthood [the Nauvoo Stake president and high council].” William Marks, president of the Nauvoo Stake, pronounced a benediction, after which the northwest cornerstone “superintended by the High Council,” was laid. The closing prayer was given by Elias Higbee. Bishop Newell K. Whitney, representing the bishops of Nauvoo, put the fourth and last cornerstone in place. This aspect of the service was declared closed, and the military marching band led by Captain Duzette “made a conspicuous and dignified appearance” and performed “soul-stirring strains” that “met harmoniously the rising emotions that swelled each bosom.” B. S. Wilber then directed the choir as they sang a hymn. The author of the history of the church wrote, “We never witnessed a more imposing spectacle than was presented on this occasion.”¹⁰³

Thomas Sharp, editor of the only non-Mormon newspaper in Hancock County at the time, attended the ceremonies. Seated on the reviewing stand, he saw the Nauvoo Legion and the thousands who had gathered to watch the proceedings. After eating a turkey dinner in Joseph Smith’s home, he returned to Warsaw and wrote an article favorable to the church and its prophet. Later he recalled that the cornerstone laying ceremony deeply troubled him, causing him to believe that Mormonism was essentially a political and military movement aimed at domination of a vast empire by an independent hierarchy. Eventually Sharp and others founded the Anti-Mormon Party which will be discussed in more detail later in this paper and was instrumental in the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and the expulsion of the Latter-day Saints from Illinois.¹⁰⁴

Lumber for the Temple

Aside from the temple’s effects on outsiders, it also stimulated Mormon settlement efforts elsewhere. Due to the shortage of low-cost lumber needed to construct the temple and other buildings in Nauvoo, the temple committee in 1841 sent George A. Miller and Lyman Wight about five hundred miles north of Nauvoo to the Black River country in Wisconsin. There they and others procured forest land and established saw mills.

Miller especially is generally credited “with taking the initiative and playing a leading roll in securing sufficient lumber for building the temple.”¹⁰⁵

In February of 1841 he told Joseph Smith that he could deliver 1,200,000 feet of lumber by the summer’s end. By the spring of 1842 Church leaders had raised money to purchase other saw mills, and rafts as large as an acre arrived in Nauvoo. Sometimes shelters were constructed on these rafts which also had stone fireplaces so that those who rode them downstream could cook their food.¹⁰⁶ The journey from Wisconsin to Nauvoo usually took two weeks. These huge rafts were difficult to maneuver in the currents of the river, and the journey was made more hazardous by the rapids, dams, and snags.¹⁰⁷ When these “wooden islands” arrived in the “City Beautiful,” they were a wonder to behold.¹⁰⁸ Surplus wood was used in the construction of private homes and public buildings throughout the city. In addition, the “pineries,” as they were called, furnished needed employment for some of Nauvoo’s citizens. Historians estimate that the camps had as many as 150 lumberjacks, while others grew food for the colony and still others tended the cattle and performed other necessary tasks. The wives and children of these workers cooked, sewed, and cleaned up around the camp.

In addition to supplying necessary lumber for the construction of the temple, the Mormons in Wisconsin made friends with the Indians there, did some missionary work, and established a Mormon presence that has persisted to the present time.¹⁰⁹ The Nauvoo Temple, then, stimulated Mormon settlement outside of the city, foreshadowing later Mormon colonization efforts in the Great Basin.

The Endowment

While the endowment was briefly discussed earlier in this paper, a more detailed treatment of this aspect of temple worship follows. In the revelation calling for the erection of a temple in Nauvoo, mention is made of an endowment.¹¹⁰ Scholars have shown that in the Kirtland Temple, washings, including the cleansing of the feet, and anointings were performed that were sometimes referred to as an endowment.¹¹¹ However, it was not until the Prophet resided in Nauvoo that he administered the full endowment to his faithful followers. When this ritual was first revealed to the Mormon leader is the subject of some debate, as is

the source or sources of the endowment. Latter-day Saints believe that the endowment existed in the ancient world and that Joseph Smith merely restored these sacred ceremonies just as he restored the church first founded by Jesus Christ.¹¹² For example, John A. Widtsoe wrote that the temple endowment “relates the story of man’s eternal journey; sets forth the conditions upon which progress in the eternal journey depends; requires covenants or agreements of those participating to accept and use the laws of progress; gives tests by which our willingness and fitness for righteousness may be known; and finally points out the ultimate destiny of those who love truth and live by it.”¹¹³

While no one, as yet, has discovered a direct statement from the Prophet as to “how the endowment ceremony came to be,” some say that the “instructional material” was “drawn directly from scriptures introduced by Smith in his revision of the Bible and from pertinent sections that were published in the books of Moses and Abraham.”¹¹⁴ Heber C. Kimball, however, in a June 17, 1842, letter to Parley P. Pratt, wrote of a “similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,” remarking that “Bro Joses ses (sic) Masonry was taken from Priesthood.”¹¹⁵

Regardless of how Joseph Smith received the endowment, it is clear that following two days of preparation, he “in the upper story of the Red Brick Store, on May 4, 1842, gave nine men new theological instruction and a new ritual as well.”¹¹⁶ This ritual and instruction occupied the entire day. The *History of The Church* declares that Smith “instructed them [James Adams, Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney, William Marks, William Law, George Miller, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards] in the principles and order of the priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments, and the communication of keys to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on, to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood.”¹¹⁷ This endowment, Joseph Smith said, was “governed by the principle of revelation.” Indeed Latter-day Saints believe that the sacred ceremonies first administered in the Prophet’s store were the keystone of their religious faith. By worthily participating in temple rituals, Mormons were confident that they would dwell with God and Christ in the life after this one. Joseph Smith assured them that once the temple was completed, every worthy Latter-day Saint would have the opportunity to participate in the sacred ceremonies that had been revealed to him. The temple ceremonies thus became the central part of Latter-day Saint theology.

In 1843, even as the Mormons labored to complete the temple, Joseph Smith introduced other sacred ceremonies, which came after the endowment, called the fullness of the priesthood and celestial marriage. At this time, too, women first participated in the endowment and other rituals.¹¹⁸

The Temple and the Masons

As mentioned before, some Latter-day Saints saw similarities between the endowment and Masonic rituals. Many non-Mormons in Hancock County confused the Mormon endowment with Masonic ceremonies which more than fifteen hundred Mormon males, including Joseph Smith, had received.¹¹⁹ Masons themselves became concerned when rumors circulated that Mormon women who had received the endowment were becoming Masons. In reality no Latter-day Saint females were ever initiated into the Masonic Order. Still, the rumors were enough to cause some Masons to join with the anti-Mormons. The fire of their hatred by 1843 was coming dangerously close to burning out of control. Furthermore, Masons accused the Prophet of stealing the endowment from them, and of breaking the oath of secrecy he had taken.¹²⁰ Thus they believed themselves justified in withdrawing support from the Mormon lodges, and the Masons in the mob which took Smith's life ignored the Masonic distress cry that the Mormon leader uttered just moments before he was shot on June 27, 1844.

Joseph Smith and other Latter-day Saints believed that the origins of Masonry and of temple ceremonies came from the same spring and thus there were bound to be similarities between the two rituals. The linking of the endowment to Masonry continues to this day, however, showing another way that the Nauvoo Temple contributed to anti-Mormon feeling.

The Temple, the Fullness of the Priesthood, and the Savior's Second Coming

Historian Richard Lloyd Anderson has argued that Joseph Smith in 1842 expected to be killed and thus wanted to confer on other church leaders the keys and authority that messengers from God had given

him.¹²¹ This is the reason why several faithful followers received the endowment even before the temple was completed.

Orson Hyde, for example, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, declared that Joseph Smith told the apostles that “the Lord bids me to hasten and give you your endowments before the temple is finished.” “He,” Hyde wrote, “conducted us through every ordinance of the holy priesthood and . . . rejoiced very much, and says, now if they kill me you have got all the keys and all the ordinances, and you can confer them on others, and the hosts of Satan will not be able to tear down the kingdom as fast as you will be able to build it up.”¹²² The Prophet, before his death, also continued to promote the building of the temple, telling the Saints that the ordinances administered there were “essential to exaltation in the Celestial Degree of Glory.”¹²³

But some Latter-day Saints believed that the Nauvoo Temple and others that would follow were all merely temples that were to prepare the Saints for the time when a temple would be built in Jackson County, Missouri, to which the Savior would come. The Nauvoo Temple, they said, was the most important preparatory temple in the lifetime of Joseph Smith because in it the full endowment would be administered.¹²⁴ Other church members were confident that temple ordinances, which ritualized man’s contact with the divine, were so important that they considered Nauvoo and its temple to be the center of the world for spiritual things and everything else preparatory to the coming of the Son of Man.¹²⁵

The Temple and the Council of Fifty

On March 11, 1844, Joseph Smith established in Nauvoo what has been called by historians “The Council of Fifty.” “The primary role” of this council “was to symbolize the otherworldly world order that would be established during the millennial reign of Christ on earth.”¹²⁶ Mormon documents reveal that Joseph Smith received the revelation to organize this council on April 7, 1842, but, according to historian Andrew F. Ehat, Smith delayed in organizing the council until March of 1844 so that “he could unfold all the temple ordinances.”¹²⁷ These ordinances, Smith claimed, “conferred ultimate priesthood authority upon men.” Only after men “were ordained kings and priests and thereby

received the fulness of the priesthood” could the Kingdom of God be reestablished. Then and only then would the political order be in place which would govern the earth when Christ returned. Without the temple rites, “worldly kings anointed by priests who had no priesthood power did not have legitimate right to reign.”¹²⁸ The Council of Fifty, then, rested on a foundation of sacred ordinances which the Prophet administered before the temple was completed but which were intended to be given only in the temple following its dedication.¹²⁹

The Council of Fifty would govern the political kingdom of God, from which all laws would emanate for the rule, government, and control of all nations.¹³⁰ “The governmental powers and duties of the Council,” historian Klaus J. Hansen has written, “were to be executive, legislative, and judicial.”¹³¹ The president of the church also served as president of the Council. As such he presumably would be the head of state of the political kingdom of God after it had achieved independence until Christ would come and assume that position.¹³²

Joseph Smith explained the role of the Council of Fifty to its members in meetings during the spring of 1844. But it was only after important leaders in Nauvoo had received “the fullness of the Priesthood,” an ordinance intended for the temple, that this council was organized and began to function. Again, the Nauvoo temple played an important role in the creation of a significant organization in Latter-day Saint history.

The Temple and Church Museums

*I*n a recent provocative article, historian Glen M. Leonard argued that a revelation given to Joseph Smith in January 1841, which called upon the Saints to construct a temple, also lent divine sanction to a third¹³³ project, that of a museum. John Taylor, Leonard claims, instructed the Saints that it was their duty “to bring to Nauvoo, their precious things, such as antiquities, and we may say, curiosities, whether animal, vegetable, or metal, ie., for the purpose of establishing a museum of the great things of God, and the inventions of men, at Nauvoo.”¹³⁴

Leonard argues that the building materials “specified by the Nauvoo Temple revelation” included gold, silver, and precious stones; wood from box, fir, and pine trees; and iron, copper, brass, zinc, and other precious things of the earth.” Swift messengers were to instruct the saints to gather

to Nauvoo with these materials for the temple and “with all [their] antiquities” as “offerings for use in beautifying the Lord’s dwelling place.”¹³⁵ Persons with a knowledge of antiquities, that is, skills in fashioning precious woods and metals using ancient methods, were urged to come to Nauvoo and help build the temple.¹³⁶ Leonard also declared that the scriptural language used in the call for a Nauvoo museum, including references to “precious things” and “antiquities,” and the use of “swift messengers,” implied a relationship between the museum notice and the temple revelation.¹³⁷ Following the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, Leonard asserted, John Taylor went ahead with plans for a museum in Nauvoo and published in the *Times and Seasons* a detailed “list of things to collect for the proposed museum in Nauvoo.”¹³⁸ Thus, according to Leonard, the church’s interest in preserving the past, and constructing museums through which members can visit and develop close ties with that past, resulted from the revelation that commanded that a temple be constructed in Nauvoo.¹³⁹

Finishing the Nauvoo Temple

After Joseph and Hyrum Smith died in Carthage Jail in 1844, finishing the temple became the single most important task confronting church members.¹⁴⁰ They wanted to do this not only as a symbol of their love for the Prophet and his brother but also so that they could obtain the saving ordinances that would be administered there. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles sent letters to the Saints encouraging them to contribute even more to the construction of the temple and to prepare themselves for the sacred ordinances that would be performed therein.

While Brother Brigham, as the Saints affectionately called him, saw that the entire temple was completed, he was particularly devoted to finishing the attic. After the rooms had been painted and carpeted, the large council room was divided by canvas partitions. “Six rooms were separated off for the convenience of the holy priesthood, two large ones and four smaller ones and a hall passing through between the smaller ones,” Heber C. Kimball wrote.¹⁴¹ One room, called the garden room, was furnished with pots of evergreens donated by Hiram Kimball. Other rooms were neatly furnished, and, as mentioned before, the Saints received their washings, endowments, and sealing ordinances, and participated in prayer circles in the attic.

As each section of the temple was finished, the “saints dedicated that portion to the Lord and then put it to use.”¹⁴² As discussed earlier, the baptismal font was consecrated to the Lord in 1841. Then on October 5, 1845, as the building was enclosed, the entire structure was given to the Lord in a prayer offered by Brigham Young.¹⁴³ The attic, we have learned, was dedicated on November 30, 1845, and the sealing altar located in the southeast corner room on January 7, 1846. Brigham Young and other apostles met together on February 8, 1846, and in a private ceremony presented the whole temple to the Lord.¹⁴⁴

After many of the Saints had departed for the West and while others were getting ready to depart, the temple trustees announced in the *Hancock Eagle* on April 10 that the temple, now completed, would be dedicated to the Most High God on Friday, May 1, 1846. Tickets were required at a cost of \$1 each.¹⁴⁵ After spending most of April 30 sweeping out the rooms and making preparations for the next day’s ceremony thirty men gathered in the lower room dressed in priestly robes. After singing they formed a prayer circle, offered prayer, then sat by priesthood quorums while Joseph Young pronounced a prayer. Next they gave the “Hosanna Shout” and the group “partook of refreshments.”¹⁴⁶

On May 1, as announced, the public assembled and Apostle Orson Hyde dedicated the temple. In his prayer, Hyde asked the Lord to accept the offering of his people and requested that those who had contributed and labored on the temple “come forth to receive kingdoms and dominions and glory and immortal power.”¹⁴⁷ The *Hancock Eagle* reported that five thousand people attended the ceremony.¹⁴⁸ Before many of the Saints left Nauvoo for the West, someone carved the words on one of the pulpits in the temple, “The Lord Has Beheld Our Sacrifice, Come After Us.” Though building the temple had been a great sacrifice, the Saints took satisfaction in knowing that they had not left behind an unfinished building but, instead, were leaving a monument to their God and His dead prophet Joseph Smith.

Uses of the Temple

By late fall of 1845, the attic story was ready for use.¹⁴⁹ On December 10, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball began “administering the ordinance of the endowment.”¹⁵⁰ Young organized the work, “established rules

for the preservation of order,” and called clerks to keep a record of who received which ordinances. Every person who came to the temple was instructed to come only after “washing themselves from head to foot,” and those who officiated in the temple were required to bring with them a generous supply of food of the best quality.”¹⁵¹ The earliest temple officiators sometimes performed their duties for twelve or more hours at a time. No one was allowed in the temple “without an invitation,” and strict order and decorum were maintained.

The temple remained open day and night to accommodate the large number of Latter-day Saints who were deemed worthy and who wanted to receive the ordinances administered there. More than five thousand endowments were performed in the Nauvoo Temple before the Saints vacated the city.

On February 3, 1846, Brigham Young announced the closing of the temple because he and the Saints were leaving Nauvoo to find a new home somewhere in the American West. He walked out of the temple “informing the brethren” that he “was going to get [his] wagon started and be off.” After walking some distance, “supposing the crowd would dispel,” he discovered no one but himself had left the temple. He returned, and the temple remained open for another few days.¹⁵² All of the worthy Latter-day Saints, it appears, did not wish to leave Nauvoo without receiving their endowments and without being sealed as husband to wife and children to parents. The endowment and sealings would help fortify them for the arduous journey they faced.

Before the Mormons left for the West, the temple was used for many purposes. Celestial or eternal marriages were performed there. In addition, families were sealed together, which Latter-day Saints believed would form an eternal union extending beyond the grave.¹⁵³ Leaders performed 2,490 sealings of living husbands and wives, 369 sealings to spouses already passed away, and 71 sealings of living children to deceased parents.¹⁵⁴

Because there were no chapels in Nauvoo, the temple was sometimes used as a meeting place. Sunday services, general conferences, and other gatherings convened there as early as 1843.¹⁵⁵ The building also provided office space for various church officials. The leaders of the seventies, the high priests, the apostles, the high council, the stake presidency, the presiding bishop, and others were all assigned accommodations in

the temple. In this edifice leaders finalized plans for the exodus and organized companies for the journey.¹⁵⁶

Several of the chief church officers, including Brigham Young, resided in the temple during the months of January and February 1846.¹⁵⁷ Not only were they thus easily available to administer the ordinances and conduct the ceremonies, but they were also protected from their enemies. Guards were posted at the entrances, and no one was permitted inside who was not authorized. Four large lanterns were placed at the four corners of the temple which were lighted at night so that intruders could more easily be discovered. In this way the lives of the twelve apostles were secured.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, after a court issued an indictment against Brigham Young and eight other apostles accusing them of counterfeiting, it was even more imperative for them to remain inside the temple. Apostle Orson Pratt, one of the eight indicted, constructed an astronomical observatory “in a little nook there” and at night made astronomical measurements which helped the Saints navigate their way to the Great Basin. Breck England, Pratt’s biographer, asserts that the apostle ascertained the latitude of Nauvoo at 40 degrees, 35 minutes, 48 seconds north on December 27, 1845. Using this as a base, Pratt later calculated the position of the pioneer wagons on the prairies.¹⁵⁹

Following one long grueling day, those who remained in the Celestial room danced as Brother Hanson played the violin and Elisha Averett the flute. After dancing for more than an hour, the group sang together before closing the day with prayer. This use of the Celestial room seemed to give dancing divine approval. During the month of January 1846, several other dances were held inside the temple. On January 2, 1846, Brigham Young told the Latter-day Saints that “they could worship God in the dance.”¹⁶⁰ “We will praise the Lord as we please,” Young said. “Now as to dancing in this house—there are thousands of brethren and sisters that have labored to build these walls and put on this roof, and they are shut out from any opportunity of enjoying any amusement among the wicked or in this world. Shall they have any recreation? Yes! and this is the very place where they can have liberty.”¹⁶¹ The dancing helped unite the community at a time when they needed cohesion as they prepared for their removal. However, only a few weeks after he had initiated dancing in the temple, Young told his followers they had been carried away by vanity and ordered that the dancing cease.¹⁶² Still, after

the migration west had begun, there was, at times, dancing in the house of the Lord.

Other activities included feasts of cakes, cheeses, and raisins. On April 28, 1846, and into the next afternoon, members of prayer circles dined on cakes and pies and drank wine. They then prayed, administered to the sick, blessed some children, and danced until midnight. While some Saints celebrated, workers finished painting the large room on the second floor.¹⁶³

After most of the Saints departed Nauvoo, those remaining used the temple for public balls and citizens' meetings. Temple tours led by Lorin Walker, Joseph Smith III, and an unnamed seventeen-year-old girl were also common for a fee of twenty-five cents. Norman C. Salisbury, grandson of Lucy Mack Smith, carried the Prophet's mother, who suffered from arthritis, to the top of the temple on one of these tours. There on the observation deck, she viewed the countryside and the city her son had founded.

While the Mormon community utilized the Nauvoo Temple in a number of ways, still, the ordinances deemed most sacred by the Mormon people, which were administered in the attic, played a pivotal role in cementing within church members a willingness to sacrifice all they possessed to assist the church, and to consecrate their time and abilities in furthering the Mormon cause. The rituals also helped in developing loyalty to God and church leaders and gave the members assurance that whatever happened to them in the future, they would rise in the resurrection, sealed together as families.

The Temple and Anti-Mormonism

Both Annette P. Hampshire and Marshall Hamilton have written about anti-Mormonism in Hancock County, Illinois.¹⁶⁴ In their treatment of the Anti-Mormon movement, no mention is made of the temple as a factor in raising fear and resentment against the Latter-day Saints. However, as early as January 23, 1845, a leader of those opposed to the Mormons told a large gathering that "they must drive the Mormons from Nauvoo before the temple was done or they never could."¹⁶⁵

News of this meeting and the content of the speaker's remarks reached Nauvoo and was of such concern to Brigham Young that he

“inquired of the Lord whether we should stay here and finish the temple.” Young’s prayer was answered in the affirmative.¹⁶⁶ With this assurance, work on the temple accelerated.

Still, many of those within the church who became unsatisfied with their leaders (including Joseph Smith) at times used the building of the temple as an excuse to chafe against them. These individuals believed the sacrifice required was taking too much of a toll on church members and that the resources of the church could be put to better use.¹⁶⁷ Such talk reached the ears of Joseph Smith, who, on March 7, 1844, called a mass meeting “to expose the opposition for saying the temple cannot be built; it costs too much,” and called upon the Saints to “double their diligence, promising them that they could do it.” Hyrum Smith in support of his brother “proclaimed we can do anything we undertake, we have power and we can do great things.”¹⁶⁸ Some of the Saints were so motivated by the words of their leaders that they believed that if they completed the temple they would “receive sufficient power to put down all the opposition against the Church.”¹⁶⁹ The *Warsaw Signal* published an editorial by Thomas Sharp who stated that if the Saints could be prevented from completing the temple it would be a great deterrent to the church.¹⁷⁰ Brigham Young, in contrast, told his followers that if the enemy prevented them from completing the temple in Nauvoo, “we will receive our endowments, if we have to go into the wilderness and build an altar of stones.”¹⁷¹

While Brigham Young assured Hancock County politicians and the leaders of the Anti-Mormon Party that the Saints were in fact going to abandon Nauvoo in the spring of 1846, their work on the temple seemed to indicate otherwise. Those opposed to Mormonism were fearful that once the temple was completed and the wall constructed around it, the Saints might gather inside and refuse to leave the county. Thus an argument can be made that the temple only increased the anti-Mormon sentiment already at epidemic proportions in western Illinois. The temple is a significant, if not an over-riding factor, in understanding the mobocracy in Hancock County in 1845–46.¹⁷² Brigham Young recognized this and told some of the Saints that for two years the enemies of the church “have threatened us all the time to prevent our finishing the temple and have made many prophecies against it,” but the Saints “have invincibly pressed a steady course of persistence.”¹⁷³ Believing that he was only doing the will of the Lord, Young encouraged the Saints to

complete the temple, in spite of the fact that there was no doubt in his mind that the future of the church would be somewhere in the West.

The Nauvoo Temple after Its Dedication

The Mormons hoped that with less than a thousand Saints still residing in Nauvoo, most of whom were the sick, the aged, or single mothers with small children, mob activity would dissipate. Instead, mobocracy increased, and, as the summer progressed, “church members were warned to remove from the state or face extermination.”¹⁷⁴ After the battle of Nauvoo in September of 1846, those opposed to the church took possession of the temple until October 20, 1846, when “the keys were returned to the trustees.”¹⁷⁵ While the mob faction controlled the temple, several cannons, heavily charged, were placed in front of the building “with their mouths pointed towards the setting sun.”¹⁷⁶

The mob defaced some of the temple before it was returned to the Latter-day Saints, but the damage was not extensive.¹⁷⁷ Tourists were allowed to visit the temple and several Mormons served as guides. The trustees, Almon W. Babbitt, Joseph L. Heyward, John S. Fullmer, Henry W. Miller, and John M. Bernhisel, remained in Nauvoo and attempted to sell the temple.¹⁷⁸ This task was made more difficult because of legal difficulties, including problems between the church and Emma Smith and her new husband, Lewis C. Bidaman,¹⁷⁹ who, shortly after their marriage, took action to acquire all church property in Nauvoo.¹⁸⁰ Finally the legal problems were worked out and the temple was rented to the Home Mission Society of New York.¹⁸¹

Even before most of the Saints had left Nauvoo, the temple was damaged. On February 9, 1846, as the Mormons were just beginning their exodus, a fire broke out in the roof. Quick action on the part of Willard Richards and others prevented too much damage from occurring. However, on September 6, 1846, lightning struck the steeple, again causing only slight damage.¹⁸²

The fact that a few faithful Latter-day Saints remained in Nauvoo the summer of 1846 “incensed the more rabid anti-Mormons” who seemed to believe rumors that all the Mormons were planning to come back in force. The temple still stood and “gentile fanatics feared that the building might serve as a magnet to draw back the faithful.”¹⁸³

By 1848, a few Latter-day Saints on their way to missions in the East and Europe stopped in Nauvoo to visit. As more Mormons were found in Nauvoo, “threats to destroy the temple increased.” At 3:00 A.M. on Monday morning, October 9, 1848, unidentified citizens discovered the Nauvoo Temple in flames. Inhabitants of the city rushed to the site, but the fire spread rapidly. A report in the *Keokuk Register* described the scene. “The fire presented a most sublime spectacle.” Flames “shot up to the sky,” throwing a “lurid glare into the surrounding darkness. The crack of windows breaking was heard, as well as timber falling, the sound of which carried across the river.”¹⁸⁴ The melting zinc and lead dropped “its large drops during the day.” Many of the nation’s newspapers reported the destruction of this monument.

The Mormons who remained in Nauvoo “were overwhelmed by the calamity.” The public, even the residents of Hancock County, condemned the act which everyone knew had been the work of some “nefarious incendiary.”¹⁸⁵ The *Keokuk Register* said “that the economic effects of the destruction of the temple were felt on the Iowa side of the river as well as in Nauvoo. “Some estimated that following the fire the number of tourists declined by 75 percent.”¹⁸⁶ Still, editor Thomas Gregg, in the *Warsaw Signal*, “lauded its destruction as a benevolent act.”¹⁸⁷ Many citizens in Hancock County did not share Gregg’s feelings, and forty-four citizens offered a reward which reached \$640 for information regarding the incendiary. Yet no one came forward with helpful information.¹⁸⁸ Latter-day Saints regarded the fire “as merely a new chapter of old horrors,” while the anti-Mormons “zealously denied their guilt.”¹⁸⁹

Investigators learned that when the fire was first discovered, a window was found open, and they concluded that someone had entered the building and set the fire. Some thought Joseph B. Agnew was the most likely culprit. Known as “an ardent Mormon hater” who had taken “an active part in many of the violent activities” which drove the Saints from Illinois, he supposedly confessed to starting the blaze. However, no one produced enough evidence to bring him to trial.

Lewis C. Bidaman, husband of Emma Smith, reported that a woman named Walker, who boarded at Agnew’s Dallas City home, told him that she saw Agnew and his brother go on horseback toward Nauvoo the night of the fire.¹⁹⁰ Bidaman also said that some residents of Warsaw, Carthage,

and Pontosecca had given Agnew \$500 to set the fire.¹⁹¹ There were other suspects, and historian Joseph Earl Arrington concluded that though Agnew still is the most likely candidate, more evidence is needed before he can conclusively be shown to be responsible for the fire.¹⁹²

However, author David R. Crockett in a recent article wrote that Agnew, many years later, confessed to the deed and explained that he and two others posing as traveling visitors asked the temple guard for a tour of the building. Agnew stole a key while on the tour and later that night went up into the temple attic and set the fire “where it would get a good start before it would shed any light to be seen from the outside (probably in the very spot which was used as the Celestial room). . . . I began to retrace my steps with joy and a light heart for I was sure that the temple was as good as burned.” Agnew then became lost in the dark building and trapped in the fire. He wrapped his coat around his head, ran through the flames and came out of the temple badly bruised and burned.¹⁹³

What was left of the structure, mainly the walls, was purchased in the spring of 1849 by the Icarians, a French communistic group, who began rebuilding the temple. Soon after work began, a violent wind struck the building with such force that the walls came crashing to the ground “in a cloud of dust, hail, rain, thunder and lightning.”¹⁹⁴ After the storm, stones continued to fall from the wall that remained standing.¹⁹⁵ Later in the 1860s, city officials had the remaining portions of the temple leveled so that nothing remained “to mark its site but heaps of broken stone and rubble.”¹⁹⁶ Some of the stones used in the temple became part of wine cellars and buildings within the city limits. Over the years the temple block was the site of a saloon, a slaughter house, a grocery and drug store, a pool hall, a telephone exchange, and private homes, according to Nauvoo Restoration historian, T. Edgar Lyon.¹⁹⁷

Many, perhaps most, Latter-day Saints who visit the city find time to stand on the ground where the temple once stood. In 1900 my own grandfather, Henry M. Godfrey, “stood over the well and sang” a number of hymns with his mission president and other missionaries, “then drew a bucket of water from the well and everyone had a drink.”¹⁹⁸ Richard W. Young, in 1883, walked to the temple site, found a few scattered pieces of rock, and heard the owner of the property describe in detail the architecture of the building and the history of its destruction, which he found very interesting.¹⁹⁹ In 1886 Apostle Franklin D.

Richards both described the temple site and brought a bottle of water from the well home to Salt Lake City.²⁰⁰ And visitors today look for souvenirs to remind them of this historic spot.

During the early years of the twentieth century, the temple site at times came up for sale. Wilford Wood made several attempts to purchase it and other historic sites in the East, often acting as an agent for the church. On February 19, 1937, Wood convinced officials of the Bank of Nauvoo that they should sell the property to the church. Bank officials agreed to sell the temple lot for \$900 and on February 20, 1937, the First Presidency announced the acquisition.²⁰¹

In an article which appeared in the church's official magazine, *The Improvement Era*, comments were made about the importance of the Nauvoo Temple as the initial "temple in which church ordinances in their fulness could be administered." The unnamed writer declared that among the residents of Nauvoo "it is a matter of traditional knowledge, that although in drought seasons other lower wells have failed in Nauvoo, the higher temple site well has never been without water."²⁰² In March 1940 and in 1942, the church purchased an old Icarian office building and other remaining Icarian buildings on temple hill.²⁰³

Twenty-five years after purchasing the temple site, church officials announced that Nauvoo Restoration Incorporated, a non-profit corporation sponsored by the church, was going to make a partial restoration of the site. The purpose of the restoration was to create a center where the story of the church and the temple could be told. Artifacts unearthed by those who excavated the temple site were displayed in a sort of museum and visitors center located on the temple block.²⁰⁴ The temple's footings and the well for the baptismal font were restored, and in 1977 a large nine-foot replica of the temple was in place. In 1994 one of the sunstones was put on exhibition as well.²⁰⁵

In 1935 Vern C. Thacker, laboring in the California mission, was assigned to work in the little town of Boron deep in the Mojave Desert. One day he felt inspired to stop at a small home where he met a man named Leslie M. Griffin. Griffin, who had no affiliation with Mormonism, told Thacker that he was a descendant of William Weeks, the architect of the Nauvoo Temple. On his last visit to Griffin's home, Thacker and his companion were given a roll "of what looked like poster

paper about three feet long, ten inches in diameter, and secured with a rubber band.” The “bundle” was the “original plans for the Nauvoo Temple.” A few weeks later, after being released from his mission, Thacker drove to Salt Lake City and gave the drawings to A. William Lund, Assistant Church Historian. These drawings were immediately taken to a photographer and negatives were made of each one. The drawings themselves were filed in a steel-locked safe.²⁰⁶

As the church continued to construct temples, rumors circulated from time to time that the temple would be restored in Nauvoo. Local church officials taught that only when there were sufficient church members in the area surrounding Nauvoo to warrant a temple would one be built there. However, while delivering his closing address in the April 1999 general conference, church President Gordon B. Hinckley said that he felt impressed to “announce that among all the temples we are constructing, we plan to rebuild the Nauvoo Temple.” He also said that “a member of the Church and his family have provided a very substantial contribution to make this possible.”²⁰⁷ Elder Hugh W. Pinnock, president of the church’s North American Central Area, when interviewed by a reporter for the *Church News*, said that the interior of the restored temple “would have to be much different than the original so that temple work could be accommodated as in other modern temples.”²⁰⁸ Ground was broken and construction begun on October 24, 1999. Speaking on that occasion, President Hinckley said, “There will grace this site a magnificent structure, a re-creation of that which existed here and served our people so briefly during that great epic period of the history of the Church.”²⁰⁹

On January 2, 1846, another church leader, Brigham Young, spoke to a small gathering of Latter-day Saints assembled in the attic of the Nauvoo Temple. “This Church,” he said, “has obtained already all they have labored for in building this temple, but after we leave here (I feel in my bones) there will be thousands of men that can go into any part of the world and build up the kingdom, and build temples.” In concluding his remarks he said, “We shall come back here [Nauvoo] and we shall go to Kirtland, and build houses all over the continent of North America.”²¹⁰ The rebuilding of the Nauvoo Temple, in part, fulfills the prophecy Young made as the Saints prepared to leave both Nauvoo and their temple.

Conclusions

Joseph Smith and his followers believed that temple worship was the pivot around which the Mormon movement revolved. The central purpose of missionary work, the gathering, and the quest for perfection was to prepare the Saints for the ordinances administered in temples. Those like Thomas Sharp who viewed Mormonism as a political movement intent on dominating and ruling the world failed to grasp the essential core of the church. Church members were primarily religious, and believed they were preparing a people worthy to dwell with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords who would come to his temple.

That women participated in not only building the temple but in administering and receiving temple ordinances establishes Mormonism as a far-sighted religious movement somewhat ahead of its time. Only together, after being sealed in temple ceremonies Joseph Smith taught, could men and women achieve perfection and the exaltation they so much desired. In the King Follett address, Joseph told the Saints that even Deity had once been a man, and temple worship reinforced what the Prophet taught. Latter-day Saints came to believe that one day, they too might be perfected and become like Christ, their Heavenly Father, and their Heavenly Mother.

Tithing, wards, the Relief Society, the Council of Fifty, and especially eternal marriage are best viewed as vehicles which pointed toward the temple on the hill and its purposes. Efforts were made to so unite a people that they would be willing to sacrifice everything to construct this house of the Lord in which to receive the fullness of the priesthood and the ratifying seal on their lives of consecrated and dedicated service.

While it is instructive to see Mormonism as a quest for refuge, or a movement reacting against skepticism, or affirming republican principles, it is also important to view it as a movement that united heaven and earth through temple ceremonies.

Thus, the temple captured the imagination of the Saints and, like a vault, held their hopes, their dreams, and their aspirations. It is thus essential in understanding the Latter-day Saint Nauvoo experience.

Endnotes

1. Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Some Writers of Mormon History and the History They Wrote, 1830–1844: A Chronological Study," (paper delivered at the Mormon History Association conference held in Logan, Utah, 1985), 2.
2. I have chosen in this paper to refer to Joseph Smith as do members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Thus, I will seldom use his last name only as do most historians, nor will I use such terms as "alleged revelations" or other qualifiers when writing of the experiences he said he had with divine personages and with the Holy Ghost. He will be accepted on his own terms because I believe that is the best way to understand Mormons and Mormonism.
3. See Susan Wise Bauer, "Christian Fiction Gets Real," *Christianity Today*, April 2000. Bauer cites Lewis B. Smede who wrote, "There are . . . two kinds of writers, smart and dumb ones. The smart kind write what they know. The dumb kind write in order to know. I am one of the dumb ones."
4. Robert N. Hullinger, *Mormon Answer to Skepticism* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1980).
5. Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty, Mormons in America, 1830–1846* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989).
6. Richard L. Bushman gave this analysis of Hill's book in a paper delivered at the thirty-fifth annual conference of the Mormon History Association in Aalborg, Denmark July 1, 2000. Marvin S. Hill, *Quest For Refuge* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).
7. Dan Erickson, "As A Thief In The Night:" *The Mormon Quest for Millennial Deliverance* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998).
8. Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 4: 540. Hereafter referred to as HC.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 124: 28. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981)
10. John Francis McDermott, *The Lost Panoramas of the Mississippi* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 18.
11. Life Sketch of Lewis Barney, Nauvoo Lands and Records Office, Nauvoo, Illinois.
12. Wilford Woodruff, Journal, May 26, 1846, copy in possession of Godfrey.
13. Diary of Priddy Meeks, Lands and Records Office, Nauvoo, Illinois.
14. "Joseph Smith History," *The Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987), 1: 39.
15. A. Karl Larson and Katharine Miles Larson, eds. *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols. (Logan Utah: Utah State University Press, 1980), 1: 349, quoted in Daniel W. Bachman, "The Eternity of The Marriage Relationship," in *Riches of Eternity*, ed. John K. Challis and John G. Scott (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1993), 198.
16. W. W. Phelps to Sally Phelps, May 26, 1835, quoted in Walter Dean Bowen, "The Versatile W.W. Phelps—Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University 1958), 68, quoted in Bachman, 205.
17. *The Latter-day Saint Messenger and Advocate*, June 1, 1835, 130, quoted in Bachman, 205.
18. See Doctrine and Covenants 137: 7.

19. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1967), 308, quoted in Bachman, 206. Hereafter referred to as TPJS.
20. *Ibid.*, 183; Bachman, 206.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 110.
22. Parley P. Pratt, Jr., ed., *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 297–8.
23. Godfrey, “Joseph Smith as Husband and Father: The Roots of the Mormon Family,” (paper delivered at the annual conference of the Mormon History Association, Palmyra, New York, 1980).
24. Bachman, 208.
25. *Church History in the Fullness of Times* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 215; Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965) 19; Godfrey, “Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois, 1839–1846,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Brigham Young University, August 1967), 199–201.
26. Godfrey, “Immigration To Nauvoo,” in *Historical Atlas of Mormonism*, ed. S. Kent Brown, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard H. Jackson (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 62.
27. TPJS, 307–8
28. *Ibid.*, 309; 311–2.
29. From notes taken at a devotional held in Copenhagen, Denmark on July 1, 2000, in which Ronald Esplin spoke.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Joseph Earl Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 4 vols., Leonard J. Arrington Collection, Utah State University Special Collections Library, Logan, Utah, 435.
32. CH 4: 437.
33. Arrington, 1388.
34. Thomas G. Alexander, “A New and Everlasting Covenant ‘: An Approach to the Theology of Joseph Smith,” in *New Views of Mormon History*, ed. Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1987), 43–44.
35. *Ibid.*, 57; see also James H. Anderson, “The Temple,” *The Improvement Era* 32 (October 1929): 969–971.
36. M. Guy Bishop, “‘What Has Become of Our Fathers?’ Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo,” *Dialogue* 23 (Summer 1990): 87.
37. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: Printed and Published by Joseph F. Smith, 1877), 2: 31.
38. TPJS, 323.
39. *Ibid.*, 323.
40. Orson Pratt, “Funeral Address,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (June 1, 1845): 920.
41. *Ibid.*
42. See Dean C. Jessee, “The Kirtland Diary of Wilford Woodruff,” *BYU Studies* 12 (Summer 1972): 365–400.
43. HC 4: 186.
44. Bishop, 86.
45. *Ibid.*, 87.
46. *Ibid.*, 89.
47. Brian H. Stuy, “Wilford Woodruff’s Vision of The Signers of The Declaration of Independence,” *Journal of Mormon History* 26 (Spring 2000): 66–67.
48. Bishop, 91.
49. HC 4: 426.
50. Bishop, 92.
51. Arrington, 80 and 80a.
52. Don F. Colvin, “The Nauvoo Temple: Story of Faith,” manuscript in possession of Colvin, 70.

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53. Thomas L. Kane, *The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered Before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania: March 26, 1850*, Ind Co. (Provo: David C. Martin, 1995 [1850]), 7–8.
54. Colvin, 70.
55. Christopher Layton, *Autobiography*, LDS Church Archives, 15.
56. Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1964), 229–30.
57. William Smith, *Patriarchal Blessing Book*, no. 55, 67–68, LDS Church Archives.
58. *Ibid.*, no 3, 11.
59. Bishop, 93.
60. HC 4: 205.
61. *Ibid.*; Joseph Earl Arrington, “William Weeks, Architect of the Nauvoo Temple,” *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 337.
62. Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 80 & 80a.
63. See *New York Weekly Tribune*, July 15, 1843; *Liberty Hall of Cincinnati Gazette*, October 19, 1843; Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, as quoted in Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 90a; *The Prophet*, June 1, 1842; *Southern Literary Messenger*, September 1840, 536; *Burlington Hawkeye*, February 12, 1846, 2.
64. Nauvoo Independent, May 30, 1890, 4, as quoted in Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 1327.
65. Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 1334.
66. Andrea G. Radke, “Beautiful Places: Federalist Architecture in Nauvoo and Galena, Illinois,” paper in possession of Godfrey, 23.
67. *Ibid.*, 24.
68. *Ibid.* In Latter-day Saint theology the Celestial Kingdom is symbolized by the sun, the Terrestrial by the moon and the Telesstial by the stars.
69. Arrington, “William Weeks,” 342.
70. Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple.”
71. Joseph Fielding, “The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,” transcribed and edited by Andrew F. Ehat, *BYU Studies* 19: 158, quoted in Colvin, 108.
72. William G. Hartley, “Nauvoo Stake, Priesthood Quorums and The Church’s First Wards,” *BYU Studies* 32 (Winter and Spring 1991): 61.
73. *Saints Herald*, 62 (March 24, 1915): 290.
74. CH 4: 305.
75. *Journal History of the Church*, December 31, 1844, p. 14, LDS Church Historical Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
76. *Times and Seasons* (July 1841) as quoted in Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 456.
77. Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 54.
78. HC 4: 205.
79. JD 26: 298.
80. Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 894.
81. HC 4: 501; Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 928.
82. *The Times and Seasons*, 2 (September 1, 1842): 909.
83. Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 930.
84. HC 5: 586.
85. Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 943.
86. HC 4: 422. There were more than sixty church units outside of Nauvoo in Illinois alone. See Godfrey, “Those Other Illinois Mormons: Latter-day Saints Who Did Not Reside In Nauvoo,” *Mormon Heritage Magazine*, 1 (December 1994): 36–41.
87. Oliver H. Olney, *Absurdities of Mormonism Portrayed* (Hancock County, Illinois: n.p., 1843), 20.
88. *The Times and Seasons*, 3 (May 1, 1843): 183.
89. Arrington, “Construction of the Nauvoo Temple,” 952.
90. *Ibid.*, 963.

91. *Ibid.*, 973.
92. *The Prophet*, January 18, 1845.
93. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 973.
94. *The Millennial Star* 4 (October 1843): 83.
95. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 1017.
96. *The Contributor* 12 (April 1891): 207.
97. *Journal History of the Church*, August 18, 1844.
98. *The Millennial Star*, November 27, 1855.
99. *The Deseret News*, October 17, 1860, quoted in Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 939.
100. Readers interested in examples of sickness, poverty and persecution see B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930). Volume two is a history of the Mormons in Nauvoo. See also Godfrey, "Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois 1839–1846."
101. Information regarding the Nauvoo Legion is found in Glen M. Leonard, "Picturing the Nauvoo Legion," *BYU Studies* 35 (1995): 2: 95–137.
102. HC 4: 326–31.
103. *Ibid.*
104. For a discussion as to why Thomas Sharp turned against the Mormons, see Marshall Hamilton, "Thomas Sharp's Turning Point: Birth of an Anti-Mormon," *Sunstone* 13 (October 1989): 16–22; Annette P. Hampshire, "Thomas Sharp and Anti-Mormonism Sentiment In Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 72 (May 1979): 82–100.
105. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 187. The story of Mormonism in Wisconsin in the 1840s has been told by both Joseph Earl Arrington and David L. Clark. See David L. Clark, "'They Came Singing' Mormons in Wisconsin," draft copy, July 14, 1993, copy in possession of Kenneth W. Godfrey, beginning on page 60.
106. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 240.
107. Colvin, 53.
108. See Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 276; and Dennis Rowley, "The Mormon Experience in the Wisconsin Pinerias, 1841–1845," *BYU Studies* 32 (Winter and Spring 1992): 119–148.
109. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 220.
110. *Doctrine and Covenants* 124: 39.
111. See *Journal History of the Church*, January 5, 1836; and David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness, A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 36.
112. See Hugh Nibley, *The Message of The Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975); Hugh Nibley, "The Early Christian Prayer Circle," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 41–78.
113. John A. Widtsoe, *Priesthood and Church Government* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 351. The temple endowment is considered to be the most sacred of all Latter-day Saint rituals and details regarding this holy ordinance is not appropriately discussed in public. Therefore I will only use sources and present information that is found in the history of the church and in discourses of Latter-day Saint apostles. For those who want to know more see Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness*, and William Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journal of William Clayton*, ed. George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991).
114. Buerger, 40–41.
115. Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt June 17, 1842, LDS Archives, quoted in Buerger, 40.
116. Buerger, 36.
117. HC 5: 2, also quoted in Buerger, 37.
118. Buerger, 58–59. See also Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began On Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies*, 20 (Spring 1980): 256.

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119. Godfrey, "Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict," 73–90.
120. *Ibid.*
121. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Joseph Smith's Martyrdom" Prophecies and Submissions," paper in possession of Godfrey. Anderson argues that as early as 1828 Joseph Smith's violent death was foreshadowed and that throughout his life he told his followers that he would be killed. Anderson documents more than a dozen statements of the Prophet in which he declares that his life would be taken.
122. *The Millennial Star*, 5 (December 1844): 104.
123. HC 6: 319, quoted in Colvin, 73.
124. HC 4: 438. Mormons believe that a great temple will be constructed in the New Jerusalem, i.e., Jackson County, Missouri, and that Christ will come to this temple as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
125. *Times and Seasons*, 3 (January 1, 1842): 648–649.
126. D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members 1844–1945," *BYU Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 163.
127. Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," 256.
128. *Ibid.*, 257.
129. For further information regarding the Council of Fifty see Klaus J. Hansen, "Joseph Smith and the Political Kingdom of God," *American West*, 5 (September 1968): 20–24, 63; Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest For Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty In Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967); and Hyrum L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith and World Government* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1958).
130. Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest For Empire*, 65–66.
131. *Ibid.*, 66.
132. *Ibid.*
133. The revelation not only commands the Saints to construct a temple but the Nauvoo House as well. Doctrine and Covenants 124.
134. HC 5: 380, quoted in Glen M. Leonard, "Antiquities, Curiosities, and LDS Museums," *The Disciple As Witnesses, Essays On Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine In Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo: The Foundation of Ancient Research and Mormon Studies at Brigham Young University, 2000), 293.
135. Doctrine and Covenants 124: 27; Leonard, 294–95.
136. *Ibid.*, 295.
137. *Ibid.*, 296.
138. *Ibid.*, 297.
139. *Ibid.*, 299.
140. Colvin, 74.
141. Heber C. Kimball, *On The Potters Wheel, The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball*, ed. Stanley B. Kimball (Urbana: University of Illinois), 157.
142. Colvin, 230.
143. HC 4: 456–457.
144. HC 7: 580.
145. *Hancock Eagle*, April 10, 1846.
146. Colvin, 233; Samuel W. Richards, Diary, 18–19; Wilford Woodruff, *Journals*, ed. Scott G. Kenny, 3: 42–43.
147. Quoted in Colvin, 233.
148. *Hancock Eagle*, May 8, 1846.
149. *Ibid.*, 75.
150. *Ibid.*
151. *Ibid.* Those who worked in the temple often remained in that structure for days at a time, hence they needed to bring food with them.

152. Diary of Brigham Young, February 3, 1846, Leonard J. Arrington Collection, USU Special Collections Library, Logan, Utah.
153. Colvin, 78.
154. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 24.
155. *Ibid.*, 80.
156. *Ibid.*, 81.
157. Colvin, 81.
158. *Ibid.*, 82.
159. Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1984), 108–9, quoted in Colvin, 84.
160. *Ibid.*, 82.
161. *The Women's Exponent*, 12 (September 15, 1883): 57–58; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1930), 7: 561–562, quoted in Colvin, 82.
162. Colvin, 82.
163. *Ibid.*, 84; Samuel Whitney Richards, Diary, book 2, 1–2, in LDS Church Archives.
164. See Annette P. Hampshire, "The Triumph of Mobocracy In Hancock County, 1844–1846," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 5 (1982): 17–37; Marshall Hamilton, "From Assassination to Expulsion: Two Years of Distrust, Hostility and Violence," *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited*, ed. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 214–30.
165. Diary of Brigham Young, February 23, 1845.
166. *Ibid.*, January 24, 1845.
167. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 1135.
168. HC 6: 237–39.
169. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 1127.
170. Quoted in "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," at *ibid.*
171. E. Cecil McGavin, *Mormons and Masonry* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Publishers, 1956), 146.
172. Godfrey, "Causes of Mormon Non-Mormon Conflict," 73–90.
173. Diary of William Clayton, May 28, 1845, LDS Church Archives.
174. B. H. Roberts, *The Rise and Fall of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 357–58.
175. Journal History of the Church, November 4, 1846, quoted in Colvin 240.
176. *Warsaw Signal*, October 19, 1848.
177. Colvin, 241.
178. *Ibid.*, 242.
179. *Ibid.*, 242.
180. Journal History of the Church, January 27, 1848.
181. *Ibid.*, October 2, 1848.
182. Arrington, "Destruction of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo," *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (December 1947): 1–4.
183. *Ibid.* 1–4
184. *Keokuk Register*, October 12, 1848, as quoted in Arrington, "Destruction of the Mormon Temple," 5–6.
185. Arrington, "Destruction of the Mormon Temple," 6.
186. Arrington, "Construction of the Nauvoo Temple," 749–50.
187. *Warsaw Signal*, October 12, 1848.
188. Joseph Earl Arrington, "Destruction of the Mormon Temple," 7.
189. *Ibid.*, 8.
190. *Nauvoo Independent*, August 15, 1890.
191. History of Brigham Young, November 19, 1848, 80–81, as quoted in Arrington, "Destruction of the Mormon Temple," 9.
192. *Ibid.*, 10.

193. David R. Crockett, "The Nauvoo Temple: A Monument of the Saints," *Nauvoo Journal* 11 (Fall 1999): 25. Crockett's source for his conclusions is Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 251. All of the evidence pointing to Agnew comes from secondary sources that lead back to Lewis Bidaman. Therefore, I agree with Joseph Earl Arrington's more cautious approach, believing the evidence inconclusive as to who set fire to the temple.
194. Arrington, "Destruction of the Mormon Temple," 10.
195. Crockett, 20.
196. *The Carthage Republican*, February 2, 1865, quoted in Crockett, 21.
197. Edgar Lyon, "The Nauvoo Temple," *The Instructor* (March 1965).
198. Diary of Henry Morris Godfrey, May 12, 1900, in possession of Godfrey.
199. Richard W. Young, "In The Wake of the Church," *The Contributor* (January 1883), 151.
200. Franklin D. Richards, *The Contributor* (May 1886), quoted in Crockett, 22.
201. "Church Acquires Nauvoo Temple Site," *The Improvement Era* (March 1937), 226–7.
202. *Ibid.*, 227.
203. Crockett, 24.
204. Jay M. Todd, "Nauvoo Temple Restoration," *The Improvement Era* (October 1968), 11.
205. Crockett, 24.
206. Vern C. Thacker, "Nauvoo Temple Architect's Drawings Lost and Found," January 20, 2000, copy in possession of Godfrey. See also letter of A. William Lund to Mr. Griffin, September 28, 1948, copy in possession of Godfrey.
207. Conference Report (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999) April 1999.
208. R. Scott Lloyd, "Historic Nauvoo Temple to be Rebuilt," *Church News* (April 10, 1999), quoted in Crockett, 27.
209. Greg Hill, "Rebuilding of Magnificent Temple," *Church News* (October 30, 1999), quoted in Crockett, 27.
210. *A Woman's View: Helen Mar Whitney's Reminiscences of Early Church History*, introductory essay by Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel (Provo: Religious Studies Center and Brigham Young University, 1997), 313–14.