Brigham
Young
University
Studies
J. LeRoy Kimball, Nauvoo Restoration Pioneer: A Tribute
James L. Kimball, Jr., 5

Guest Editors' Introduction
William G. Hartley and Larry C. Porter, 13

Nauvoo—Sunrise and Sunset on the Mississippi
President Gordon B. Hinckley, 19

Introduction to Historic Nauvoo
Elder Loren C. Dunn, 23

The Development of the Joseph Smith Historic Center
Kenneth E. Stobaugh, 33

Doctrine and the Temple in Nauvoo
Larry C. Porter and Milton V. Backman, Jr., 41

Nauvoo Stake, Priesthood Quorums, and the Church's First Wards
William G. Hartley, 57

William W. Phelps's Service in Nauvoo as Joseph Smith's Political Clerk
Bruce A. Van Orden, 81

Nauvoo Observed
William Mulder, 95

The Mormon Experience in the Wisconsin Pineries, 1841–1845
Dennis Rowley, 119

Conflict in the Countryside:
The Mormon Settlement at Macedonia, Illinois
Susan Sessions Rugh, 149

Benjamin Franklin Johnson in Nauvoo:
Friend, Confidant, and Defender of the Prophet
E. Dale LeBaron, 175

Crime and Punishment in Mormon Nauvoo, 1839–1846
Kenneth W. Godfrey, 195
From Assassination to Expulsion:
Two Years of Distrust, Hostility, and Violence
*Marshall Hamilton*, 229

The City of Joseph in Focus:
The Use and Abuse of Historic Photographs
*Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle*, 249

Mapping Historic Nauvoo
*Melinda Evans Jeffress*, 269

Profiling Women in Nauvoo: An Essay in Black on White
*Frank W. Jackson*, 314

A View of Nauvoo
*Richard G. Oman*, 319

THE HISTORIANS’ CORNER
Lucy Mack Smith Speaks to the Nauvoo Saints
*Ronald W. Walker*, 276

BOOK REVIEWS

Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds.,
*The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective*
REVIEWED BY *Noel B. Reynolds*, 285

Richard S. Van Wagoner,
*Mormon Polygamy: A History*
REVIEWED BY *Thomas G. Alexander*, 295

David L. Bigler, ed.,
*The Gold Discovery Journal of Azariah Smith*
REVIEWED BY *Susan Easton Black*, 299

Malise Ruthven,
*The Divine Supermarket: Shopping for God in America*
REVIEWED BY *Louis Midgley*, 303

MAPS
Mormon Sawmills and Logging Camps, Wisconsin Pineries, 1841–45, 124
The Nauvoo Area, Including Ramus and Fountain Green, 150
City of Nauvoo: 1844–46 Sites of Historical Buildings and Streets, 274
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J. LeRoy Kimball,  
Nauvoo Restoration Pioneer: A Tribute

James L. Kimball, Jr.

My dad, James LeRoy Kimball, was born December 8, 1901, in Cardston, Alberta, Canada, in the log-cabin home of Charles O. Card. Despite being named after cherished family members, from the outset he was always called Roy. The family moved to Raymond in 1909, where Roy attended the Knight Academy. As a boy, he astonished family and neighbors with his physical endurance and capacity for work. More than once, he outdistanced mature men in the number of acres of new Alberta soil he could clear, plant, or harvest in a single day. From 1921 to 1923, he used this capacity for work to serve as a missionary in the southern states under the redoubtable Charles A. Callis.

He elected to become a physician after a chance talk with a friend. To finance his medical studies at the University of Utah (then offering only a two-year medical course) and Northwestern University at Chicago, he sold woolen goods to the farmers and townspeople of Nebraska and South Dakota for several summers. These years, he often told his family, were choice years and implanted in him a greater feeling for his American heritage. Little did he dream at the time that he would return to leave a lasting monument himself on the landscape of Illinois.

He settled in Salt Lake City, where he practiced general medicine for thirteen years. He and his family then moved to New Orleans for two years so he could prepare for specialty boards in internal medicine and cardiology. When he returned to Salt Lake City, he pioneered the use of the electrocardiograph machine in the area.

During his forty-three successful years in medicine, Dad's church responsibilities were not neglected. He usually attended

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James LeRoy (Roy) Kimball (1901– )

Photograph taken 1971, when Roy was president of both the Nauvoo Mission and Nauvoo Restoration Inc.
priesthood meetings with his sons, and with his whole family, he attended sacrament meeting. Dad served as a president in two seventies quorums and later served for over twenty-five years as a sealer in the Salt Lake Temple.

While a successful medical career would have been enough to crown his life, his destiny included yet another major contribution: the restoration of historic Mormon Nauvoo. At a time of life when most people at least think about retirement, he added a new venture that would last for another twenty years.

Every one of my father and mother's six children carries childhood memories of the special significance of the terms Nauvoo and Heber C. Kimball (my father's great-grandfather and an Apostle in Nauvoo and Utah). Those words were as common to us as breakfast and cod liver oil. We never tired of hearing the story of how our parents visited Nauvoo in the early 1930s and first saw the Heber Kimball residence and how Dad wanted to purchase it as a summer home. He felt a need for a quiet place where he could rest without being summoned by telephone and house calls.

In 1954, after twenty years of negotiations, my parents bought the Heber C. Kimball home. One of my father's patients and a family friend, the late Christine Hinckley Robinson (a sister to President Gordon B. Hinckley), who was schooled in interior design, accepted the offer to guide the remodeling of the home. The intent was not a total historic restoration, for the home was to be lived in as well.

The house was slowly remodeled and restored. In 1960, during a Kimball family reunion, the house was dedicated by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, who was Heber's grandson. When Dad saw how interested both Church members and nonmembers were in touring the house during the reunion, he started mulling over the idea of opening the house to the public. Ironically, such a demand to see the house developed that not one of our family ever spent a night in it.

Further musings led Dad to wonder if with the aid of others a whole block could be restored for visitors. As there were two other historic brick houses on the four-acre block where the Kimball house stood—the Wilford Woodruff and the Winslow Farr houses—Dad considered purchasing these houses as they became available; meanwhile, because the opportunity arose, he bought the Brigham Young house in 1961.

At about that time, however, through the kind auspices of J. Reuben Clark, a member of the First Presidency and a long-time friend and medical patient, the potential of Nauvoo officially came

Standing left to right: A. Hamer Reiser, Harold P. Fabian, and J. Willard Marriott.
to the attention of the First Presidency. After much discussion, during which my father shared his now enlarged vision of completely restoring Nauvoo and telling its story through its culture, crafts, and institutions, the Church organized Nauvoo Restoration Inc. (NRI) on July 27, 1962. My father was asked to be the first president. In the articles of incorporation, the nonprofit organization was charged with this mission:

To acquire, restore, protect, and preserve, for the education and benefit of its members and the public, all or a part of the old city of Nauvoo in Illinois and the surrounding area, in order to provide an historically authentic physical environment for awakening a public interest in, and an understanding and appreciation of, the story of Nauvoo and the mass migration of its people to the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

The task seemed daunting. From the outset, the project was to be professionally researched and built. No completion time was set, for time was not to be a predominating factor. Historical accuracy was to be the most important consideration. At the suggestion of the First Presidency, a board of trustees containing non–Latter-day Saint as well as Latter-day Saint experts was formed to oversee the whole process. The first board members were Harold P. Fabian, a member of the Citizens’ Advisory Council to the National Park Service; A. Hamer Reiser, a retired businessman and a secretary to the First Presidency; David M. Kennedy, secretary of the treasury of the United States; and J. Willard Marriott, chairman of the board of Marriott Corporation, of Washington, D.C. (see the facing photograph). Added to the board at various later times were A. Edwin Kendrew, senior vice-president of Colonial Williamsburg Corporation of Virginia, and Elders Delbert L. Stapley, Mark E. Petersen, and L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve. Other General Authorities who joined the board were Thorpe B. Isaacson, Derek A. Cuthbert, and John H. Vandenberg.

Contact was made with many Illinois State officials, who were pleased with the approach and direction of the huge effort. Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, as well as state and national park officials, came to watch the restoration and to marvel at its progress. Over the years, Dad cultivated friendships with various Nauvoo merchants and town leaders, keeping them informed about NRI activities. He felt that “warming people” was more important than warning them. Making friends was more important than conversion to the Church, for the second could result if the first were sincere. NRI spruced up
town property and helped pay for a town sewage treatment plant and street signs. Dad was well aware that many feared a big corporate takeover by the LDS church, and he did not wish to tread heavily on the toes of the townspeople. No one was to think that NRI was a western carpetbagger coming in to impose its will on the community. Moreover, because of Dad's business acumen and his personal wisdom, he was consulted by many people about their future ventures, both public and private. People on all levels sought him out for counsel.

He also helped mend fences by encouraging the young guides to meet their RLDS counterparts, and Dad himself treasured amicable relations with other church leaders in the area. My father's personal charisma on a one-to-one basis was amazing and is difficult to describe. Perhaps it was, in part, because of his professional competence that people respected him as if he were their family doctor.

One of my father's favorite sayings was that NRI "is no crash program." Allied with that statement was "don't rush, don't rush." I can still hear him say, "Rome wasn't built in a day." Dad often quoted the couplet

Do what you do, do with your might
Things done by halves are never done right.

This belief was a part of his basic philosophy and was a key factor in making the restoration of homes more accurate and authentic. Dad felt it would have been inappropriate to rebuild Nauvoo with what he called a Disneyland approach; proper historical, architectural, and archaeological research was needed to drive the final results. This concern was typical of his life; my father had a great reputation as an uncanny and astute diagnostician among the Salt Lake medical community. Coupled with that reputation was the fact that he was not afraid to call in a second opinion.

During the twenty-three years of Dad's service, under the direction of the First Presidency, Nauvoo Restoration Inc. purchased approximately one thousand acres of property, including part of the original platted city. Except for a few pieces (including the Nauvoo Temple block) on what is known as the Bluff, the chief concentration of purchases is located on the Flat, next or closer to the Mississippi River. Over forty structures were identified as either partial or complete Mormon homes or buildings. With the vast knowledge and expertise of Preston W. Kimball, whose ancestors had lived in the Nauvoo area before the arrival of the Mormons, my
father set out to buy land. Many owners were eager to sell in order to obtain better residences either in town or elsewhere. Others were willing to sell because they were aware of the historical significance of the project and the economic impact it would have on the community. A few sellers were allowed to remain on their property for their lifetime. Today the Church owns more Nauvoo land than it owned in the 1840s.

During the period of my father’s active involvement with Nauvoo, twenty-four LDS structures were historically restored totally or in part. Of this number, seven were totally reconstructed on their sites and seven were restored only on their exterior and are currently in use as missionary residences. In addition, a large visitors center was constructed complete with theaters and display areas to orient visitors to historic Nauvoo, and a monument entitled “Exodus to Greatness” was erected at what was the Parley Street ferry site. Complementing these structures was the placement of the Relief Society Nauvoo Monument to Women near the Visitors Center.

Dad always preached (and that is the right word to describe it) that Nauvoo should provide both a historic and a spiritual context for learning. He proclaimed to all who would listen that the Temple Block was the “great centerpiece” of the project: “People will come to the frosting of Nauvoo but will return home full of the cake of the gospel.” None of his missionaries were permitted to apply high-pressure conversion tactics. He felt assured that as tourists visited Nauvoo for its history they would grasp in a way that was “better than scripture or verse” the faith and commitment of those who built there; then they would want to learn more of the doctrine that impelled the Saints. Dad’s approach was low key, and he intuitively met people on their own terms. His testimony of the gospel was strong and practical, built more on a lifetime of experience than study. “Things should take as long as needed,” he continually said. His family got the idea that Dad felt the gospel was no crash program either.

No matter how costly or correct the restoration would be, Nauvoo needed real people to interpret it and give it meaning. At the start, Dad was authorized to call individuals on his own to serve as guides. A plan was devised to recruit returned missionaries who were seeking university degrees to serve as guides or “interpreters.” They paid for their own transportation, but while in Nauvoo, they were given bed and board and put to work. Some acted as guides on a daily basis, riding with visitors in their cars to show them the town. Another group would help the professional archaeologists,
J. C. and Virginia Harrington, as diggers for Monday through Saturday and act as guides on Sunday. Three mornings a week before work, college classes were held on Church and U.S. history. Examinations and papers were required, and Brigham Young University credit was awarded to the guides upon completion of each course. Several wonderful older couples, many of whom were patients, neighbors, and friends of my father, accepted his call to supplement at their own expense the young people for several summers.

From 1971 to 1973, my parents were called to lead the newly created Nauvoo Mission. My father still served as president of NRI. Even at that, Elder Spencer W. Kimball sincerely suggested that Dad practice medicine one week in Salt Lake City and return the next to Nauvoo. But it was not to be! The work in Nauvoo became his full-time preoccupation. From that time on, missionaries, usually older couples, were called by the Church and were duly set apart. For a period of time, these senior missionaries were supplemented by regular missionaries who were transferred to Nauvoo during the summer.

As he had served his patients without regard for his own comfort, Dad spent hours and hours, years and years, to make friends, mend enemies, and enrich and rekindle Mormons and non-Mormons alike to the value of their temporal and spiritual heritage. I, along with his family and friends, am grateful for his love of the gospel, his legacy of work, and his strength of character.
Guest Editors’ Introduction

William G. Hartley and Larry C. Porter

Nauvoo today is a city of ghosts. On serene river-bottom flatlands and atop the gentle bluffs, restored and re-created homes and shops and halls intermix with historical markers and a temple replica to tell visitors that here once stood a vigorous river city. Volunteer guides seek to inform the curious about the sites and people of Old Nauvoo. Stately visitors centers operated by both The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints use hosts and media to explain Nauvoo’s origin, demise, and modern restoration. Yet, despite presentations and films, a walk through Nauvoo haunts the visitor’s sense of time and place, causing reflection about God and his kingdom and humanity. For those with a sense of Nauvoo’s history and religious significance, it produces reverence, worship, and wonder. Nauvoo resides as much in the visitor’s mind and feelings as it does in sights or sounds. “Nauvoo of the Imagination” is the way one historian describes this phenomenon.¹

Because it carries strong, relevant meaning and even nostalgia for LDS and RLDS members, Nauvoo has received an abundance of scholarly attention. Bibliographic essays list scores of solid studies that have appeared as theses, articles, or books.² Thematic compilations in such publications as BYU Studies, Dialogue, the Journal of Mormon History, and the Ensign have presented rich offerings about many aspects of Old Nauvoo.³

Nauvoo’s story contains recognizable basics. Some are well known by now and others need more research and understanding. The Nauvoo Temple, Nauvoo Legion, Nauvoo Charter, days of sickness and healing, the apostolic mission to England, plural marriage, the founding of the Relief Society, Council of Fifty, the

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Martyrdom, the succession crisis, and the exodus—all basics of the history of Nauvoo—have been studied in detail and are common components of books and lectures regarding Nauvoo's intriguing past. Despite Nauvoo's lengthy bibliography, much about the past remains to be found and told, especially in the realm of responsible social history. Nauvoo's 150th birthday provided scholars with an opportunity to disclose new research, try some new thinking, and produce new publications placing Nauvoo in historical perspective.

In 1988 Brigham Young University formed a steering committee to plan the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Nauvoo. This committee brainstormed the question of not just one year's commemoration but a celebration that would extend from 1989 to 1996 to correspond with the seven-year period of Nauvoo's existence. One priority event would be a scholarly symposium to be held on campus in 1989. Calls for papers brought good responses. Three dozen papers were selected, sessions created, and chairpersons and commentators recruited.

Meanwhile, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was also planning for the commemoration of Nauvoo's sesquicentennial. Its committee felt that Brigham Young University's effort should become part of a spectrum of activities that would include Church-sponsored projects in Nauvoo and Carthage. So a history symposium was planned, cosponsored by the Church and BYU's administration; the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences; the College of Religious Education; the Department of History; the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History; and the Department of Church History and Doctrine. President Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency and Elder Loren C. Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy (then serving as president of the North America Central Area and president of Nauvoo Restoration Inc.) were invited to address the symposium.

On September 21, 1989, BYU hosted a one-day symposium of Nauvoo history, which drew nearly one thousand attenders. All major essays selected for inclusion in this issue were symposium papers except that of Dennis Rowley, which was solicited because of its unique content.

We open this special double issue with President Gordon B. Hinckley's eloquent tribute to Nauvoo, which he delivered at the symposium's banquet.

The purposes and functions of historic sites are themes next examined in two essays that focus on how and why Nauvoo has been
restored. Elder Loren Dunn discusses and illustrates recent LDS restoration projects. Kenneth E. Stobaugh, former director of RLDS Sites in Nauvoo, explains RLDS restoration efforts on the Joseph Smith Historic Center properties in Nauvoo, including the Smith homes.

Then Larry C. Porter and Milton V. Backman of BYU’s Department of Church History and Doctrine look anew at Joseph Smith’s contributions in Nauvoo as teacher and theologian. They examine several of the Prophet’s distinct teachings unfolded in Nauvoo and show how these were part of a comprehensive, harmonious theology centering on the temple.

Providing a view of Joseph Smith’s labors and insights into Nauvoo’s religious and political affairs is Bruce Van Orden’s biographical look at W. W. Phelps. Van Orden, a member of BYU’s Department of Church History and Doctrine, focuses on Phelps’s labors as one of Joseph Smith’s main clerks in Nauvoo.

Next we examine the local activities of Nauvoo priesthood bearers and quorums. William G. Hartley, research historian at BYU’s Smith Institute for Church History, gives attention to the beginnings of wards as basic local Church units and to the Nauvoo Stake, its bishops, and its quorums and their members. He shows which priesthood practices were continuations from the past and which were innovations of long-term significance.

Nauvoo attracted many curious visitors. William Mulder, highly regarded professor emeritus of English at the University of Utah, presents a broad selection of observations, pro and con, which travelers in the last century recorded about Nauvoo during and after their visits.

Several LDS settlements and clusters of Saints, like spokes radiating out from the hub of a wheel, sprang up beyond Nauvoo. Dennis Rowley, an archivist at BYU’s Harold B. Lee Library, gives an in-depth history of LDS timber harvesting and milling in the Wisconsin pineries between 1841 and 1845, an enterprise that fed enough lumber to Nauvoo to build today more than 200 three-bedroom houses. He explains finances, equipment, food and clothing needs, communal living arrangements, personalities, and results.

Susan Sessions Rugh, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Chicago, looks at another of these settlements—Ramus, or Macedonia—located southeast of Nauvoo near Carthage. Ramus (Macedonia) was the site of an early stake of the Church, often visited by Joseph, Hyrum, and members of the Twelve. There Joseph gave important explanations about the book of Revelation and other doctrines.
The Prophet considered Ramus the "first spoke" in a Church property
distribution system with Nauvoo as its hub, and its members made
significant contributions toward the construction of the Nauvoo
Temple. Rugh shows how this community grew to more than four
hundred Saints built up around the Joel Hills Johnson and Ute Perkins
families. She follows its deteriorating relationship with neighboring
non-LDS Fountain Green until Macedonia's demise in 1846.

One of the Saints living in Ramus was Benjamin F. Johnson,
about whom E. Dale LeBaron of BYU's Department of Church
History and Doctrine writes. During visits to Macedonia, the Prophet
Joseph usually stayed with Brother Johnson, a close friend and
confidant and one of the earliest to whom Joseph Smith explained
the doctrine of plural marriage and eternal increase.

Turning in another direction, Kenneth W. Godfrey, director of
the Institute of Religion at Utah State University, looks at that
underside of Nauvoo associated with crime and punishment. He
identifies stereotypes that have claimed that the Church fostered
criminal activities, and he seeks to show the realities of law and order
in that place and time. Finally, Marshall Hamilton takes Hancock
County as his lens for viewing local lawlessness and civility. He
examines Mormon and anti-Mormon interactions and counter-
actions that took place after the Martyrdom up to the Saints' forced
departure from Nauvoo.

Our Nauvoo studies conclude with two methodological dis-
cussions showing problems we face when properly identifying
photographs and visual records and when mapping Nauvoo. Orem,
Utah, attorney T. Jeffery Cottle and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel of the
LDS Institute of Religion at the University of California at Irvine
analyze what survives of photographs and other visual records of
Nauvoo. They explain how difficult it is to verify the accuracy of
some traditional identifications of visuals, many of which they found
to be mislabeled. This paper was drawn in part from a larger study
that has since appeared as Old Mormon Nauvoo, 1839-1846:
Historic Photographs and Guide. Then, we present the readers with
a carefully created map of Nauvoo in 1844-46, which is accompa-
nied by BYU graduate student Melinda Evans Jeffress's brief discus-
sion about discrepancies and site location problems which have
plagued recent maps of Old Nauvoo.

Ronald W. Walker, senior research historian at the Smith
Institute for Church History at BYU, provides the concluding essay.
As a fitting Historians' Corner document, he offers us an edited and
documented text of Mother Lucy Mack Smith's general conference talk in the Nauvoo Temple on October 8, 1845.

Like mosaic pieces, these essays provide new details and color that sharpen and enrich our perceptions of Old Nauvoo. The Saints' once-bustling city had a vital impact on the course of LDS and RLDS history far disproportionate to its short seven-year life span. That is why believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ restored by Joseph Smith have given to Nauvoo's sesquicentennial celebration major attention and reverence. Old Nauvoo overwhelmingly haunts Restored Nauvoo, so much so that historians, descendants of Saints who once lived there, converts to the faith Joseph Smith promulgated, and curious travelers feel attracted, charmed, inspired, and puzzled by Nauvoo's intense history. Collective memory, history writing, nostalgia, and restoration projects insure that Nauvoo, once deserted by its persecuted builders, will continue to be a place of reflection and introspection, as well as the subject of research, writing, and works of art for decades to come.

NOTES


3For the main issues of these periodicals dealing with Nauvoo, see *BYU Studies* 15 (Summer 1975); *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978); *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979); *BYU Studies* 31 (Winter 1991); *Dialogue* 5 (Spring 1970); *Ensign* 9 (September 1979); and *Journal of Mormon History* 16 (1990). Most of the essays in *Journal of Mormon History* (1990) deal with Nauvoo and were papers presented at the Mormon History Association's 1989 convention at Quincy, Illinois, which commemorated Nauvoo's sesquicentennial.

5 William G. Hartley and Larry Porter were co-chairs. Others on the committee were faculty members Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Donald Q. Cannon, Ronald K. Esplin, Richard H. Jackson, G. Wesley Johnson, and David J. Whittaker; James L. Kimball of the LDS Church Historical Department; and Glen M. Leonard of the LDS Museum of Church History and Art.

Nauvoo—Sunrise and Sunset on the Mississippi

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Nauvoo did not grow in ragtail fashion as did so many cities in early America. It rose like the sunrise, planned from the beginning; then it faded like the sunset after a short day. The season of its glory lasted only from 1839 to 1846. In February 1839, while the Saints were refugees in Quincy and their prophet was a prisoner in Liberty Jail, they first received the friendly attention of Dr. Isaac Galland, who owned considerable property at Commerce and from whom they later made significant land purchases. Seven years from that February, the first group of their people abandoned Nauvoo and began the long journey that would bring them to the mountain valleys of the West.

I have been to Nauvoo a number of times. I have walked its streets, explored its beautifully restored homes, and contemplated the magnificent temple that once crowned the summit of the hill that rises from the river. I have thought much of my own grandfather, who as a young man lived there and left with the Saints.

Ever since the Prophet named the place Nauvoo, we have spoken of it as Nauvoo the Beautiful. It is beautiful. May I mention several aspects of that beauty.

First, Nauvoo is beautiful in its location. One day in June we drove from St. Louis to Carthage. We then took the River Road to Nauvoo. We noted again the great sweeping bend of the Mississippi with the city standing as it were on a peninsula eagerly reaching out, pointing to the West, where the people who lived there would go. It was swampy in 1839, but the Prophet had a vision that the swamplands could be drained and a city created reaching from the waterfront up to the higher ground to the east.

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There is something majestic and tremendous about the great river that flows around the Nauvoo point. "Ole Man River" is beautiful and awesome. "He don't plant taters, / He don't plant cotton / An dem dat plants 'em / Is soon forgotten, / But Ol' Man River, / He jes keeps rollin' along."32 There is something magnificent about the water as it rolls south to New Orleans and the Gulf. There is something inspiring about the great farmlands that reach from the river to the east and to the west, where "the corn is as high as an elephant's eye" and soybeans and other crops are cultivated for the markets of the world. Nauvoo is beautiful in its setting.

Second, for me Nauvoo is beautiful in its beginnings. It was a place of asylum, a refuge, a safe harbor in a terrible storm. Jackson County, Missouri, was to have been Zion, the home of the Saints of God. It became a place of bitterness and hatred. Clay, Daviess, and Caldwell counties provided peace for only a short season. Far West became a place of dreams and hopes: Adam-ondi-Ahman, a place of prophecy. Then came the terrible extermination order.

Missouri is wide to drive across even in a comfortable automobile; it was a very long distance from Far West to Quincy for the fleeing Mormon exiles. Eternal will be our gratitude for the people of Quincy who provided shelter to the homeless. But these thousands could not stay there. They had to find a place of their own. Commerce became the site and Nauvoo became the city. Commerce may have seemed a dismal prospect when, as Joseph described it, a man had difficulty walking across the boggy ground, and it was impossible for a team. But something could be done about this, and something was done about it. Again there were dreams and the peace to pursue them. How inviting is the port, any port that is reached in a storm. How lovely is a place of refuge when there has been oppression and pursuit. How beautiful to the homeless is a home. Nauvoo was beautiful in its beginnings as a place of refuge.

Third, Nauvoo was beautiful in its creation. There is no music like the music of industry. This place fairly rang with the cutting and shaping of lumber, with the chiseling of stone, with the hammering of hot iron on the anvil, with the surveying and building of streets, the plowing of farmland, the planting and tilling of the soil, the gathering of the harvest. Many of the homes of Nauvoo were beautiful with their salmon-colored brick and their interesting, stepped walls. The Seventies Hall was a structure of graceful lines and a place of learning. The printing plant was an expression of a desire to know what was going on, the Temple an expression of
faith, of conviction, concerning the eternity of life and the power of
the priesthood of God to reach beyond the veil of death.

I marvel at what those people built during those few short
years. There was nothing temporary about it. They built as if they
were going to live there for generations. Nauvoo was beautiful in
its creation.

Fourth, Nauvoo was even beautiful in its suffering. There can
be beauty in suffering when there is faith. There is tragedy, yes; there
is sorrow, of course. But there is something sublime in suffering for
a great cause. I am not saying that the Saints enjoyed it. It was
terrible. But there was something magnificent about the way they
held up their heads and kept on going notwithstanding the travail
through which they passed, much of that suffering painful and
personal. Some of it was similar to the suffering of other peoples on
the frontier. I have read the lists of names of those buried in the old
Nauvoo cemetery. Many of them were children who died of illnesses
now quickly cured through the miracles of modern medicine. Such
diseases as whooping cough took a terrible toll. One can sense only
in some small degree the sorrow in the loss of a beautiful child after
there had already been so many other painful losses. A bronze
monument has been erected in the old cemetery. It represents a
father and a mother who have buried a child. The monument is
beautiful in the pathos it represents.

Finally, from our viewpoint of almost a century and a half,
Nauvoo is beautiful in its death. Notwithstanding tragedy, there is
beauty in heroism, there is beauty in faith, there is beauty in devotion
to an ideal and a principle. All of these are exemplified in the exodus
from Nauvoo. The suffering was indescribable, the disillusionment
difficult to bear, the hopelessness overpowering. It is difficult to
imagine the emotions that must have been felt when for the last time
men, women, and children walked out of those beautiful homes,
closed the doors, looked upon the fields they had cultivated and the
stature of the trees they had planted, climbed aboard their wagons,
and drove down to the river, there to cross and move slowly over
the soil of Iowa, looking back now and again at what they were
leaving and would never see again.

Most desperate were the circumstances of the sick, the aged,
and the poor who were late in leaving. All of you know of the miracle
of the quails that came as food when there was no other food. But
with all of this suffering, there was a certain beauty in the solemnity
of it, in the sublimity of the faith of the Saints, in their resolution to
leave Nauvoo behind and re-create it on a grander scale somewhere in the West.

Sunrise and sunset on the Mississippi, with a brief day between—such is the capsulated story of Nauvoo the Beautiful.

I am happy for all that has been done to rebuild a portion of it as a tremendous reminder that a century and a half ago a homeless people came to that ground and found a refuge even if for only a short season. I am grateful that they built not shacks for temporary shelter, but homes and other structures of beauty and permanence, and that as the crowning flower of their creation they constructed a temple as a witness of their faith in the eternal purposes of God. I am grateful that Nauvoo today stands remembered and restored, reaching up from the Mississippi with planned streets, with homes that are as beautiful now as they were then, with the place of the Temple properly fenced and protected, deserving of our gazing upon it and meditating on its purposes. I am grateful for what Nauvoo does for me, in giving to me a sense of gratitude, a sense of respect, a sense of worship, a sense of love for those who loved the Lord and served him through sunshine and storm. I am grateful for the city by the river—the city which was known as Nauvoo the Beautiful.

NOTES

1 Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, Showboat, vocal score (New York: T. B. Harms, ca. 1928), 20.
2 Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein, Oklahoma! vocal score (New York: Williamson Music, ca. 1943), 17.
Introduction to Historic Nauvoo

Elder Loren C. Dunn

Commerce was a near-wilderness when Joseph Smith brought his followers there in 1839. They had been driven from their prosperous settlements in Missouri by violent frontier mobs suspicious of the Saints’ religion and New England antislavery background and fearful of their sympathy for the Indians, their rapid growth, and their unified voting power. Appeals by the Saints to the Missouri governor had brought an order to leave the state or face extermination.

Here they hoped to find peace. Joseph named the land they had purchased “Nauvoo,” which he said was from the Hebrew meaning “a beautiful place, connoting rest.” In spite of poverty and recurring bouts of malaria, they drained the swampy land, planted crops, and began to build a city. In six years, Nauvoo became one of the two largest cities in Illinois, a close rival of Chicago.

The state legislature granted the Saints a city charter. (A young legislator named Abraham Lincoln voted for it.) It gave Nauvoo the right to have a university, an independent judiciary, and a unit of the state militia. Soon it had all three, and the people felt safe in their rapidly growing city. Converts came from the East and the South, from England and Canada. No one thought about the comment Heber C. Kimball had made when he first saw the town site: “It’s a very pretty place, but not long abiding home for the saints” (quoted in Helen Mar Whitney, “Life Incidents,” Woman’s Exponent 9 [July 1, 1880]: 18).

Heber C. Kimball was right. Rivalry among frontier towns was strong, and neighboring towns, dwarfed by the growing giant and fearful of its political power, became hostile. (Nauvoo’s population was around 12,000; the other towns had only a few hundred each.) Jailed on a charge of treason, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were killed by a mob in 1844. Mobs began burning and plundering the Saints’ farms around Nauvoo. Advised by their leaders not to precipitate a civil war

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by retaliating, the Latter-day Saints agreed to leave in the spring of 1846, to build again in the West. Governor Thomas Ford estimated that 20,000 left. As their wagons moved west, they left behind some 2,000 homes, a theater and concert hall, many businesses, and a barely completed temple. In less than a decade, the Temple was destroyed. Most of the City of Joseph decayed and disappeared.

Joseph Smith's widow, Emma, stayed with her family. Fourteen years later, her son became president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which now maintains the graves of Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma, as well as the original homestead, the Mansion House, and Joseph Smith's reconstructed Red Brick Store.

The small town attracted new immigrants. A French Icarian commune came and went; a few of the some three hundred members stayed. Germans and Swiss came. For a while, Nauvoo was a German-speaking town, known for its grape industry.

Meanwhile, most of the Latter-day Saints who had founded Nauvoo were successfully building their new Zion in the West. To their twentieth-century descendants, Nauvoo is an important way station in their ancestors' saga. Since 1937 some of those descendants have been buying back their ancestors' properties. Among these were Wilford Wood from Bountiful, Utah, and Dr. J. LeRoy Kimball, a Salt Lake City physician. Wood bought the first pieces of the temple site and several buildings on the Flat. Dr. Kimball bought the home built by his great-grandfather Heber C. Kimball.

The Church organized Nauvoo Restoration Inc. in 1962, and J. LeRoy Kimball was named its first president. Since 1962 Nauvoo Restoration Inc. has acquired about one thousand acres of land and restored or reconstructed seventeen buildings. Historical research and careful archaeological exploration precede each restoration, much of it contributed by volunteers. Volunteer missionary guides in each showplace give their services and pay their own living expenses. At present, volunteers run the farm.

In Carthage, a town closely related to the history of Nauvoo, Nauvoo Restoration Inc. has restored the jail as much as possible to 1844 standards. A statue of Joseph and Hyrum Smith by Dee Jay Bawden was placed in the center of the block, and the block itself landscaped. The renovated Carthage block was dedicated during the Nauvoo Sesquicentennial.

On the following pages are recent (1991) photographs and brief descriptions of some of the restored public buildings, business buildings, and homes in Nauvoo. (For the location of these buildings, see the map of Nauvoo on p. 274.)
One of the most significant buildings in Nauvoo is the Printing Office, where books and newspapers were printed. Equipment left here by the departing Mormons was used to print the post-Mormon Hancock Eagle, the Nauvoo New Citizen, and the Hancock Patriot. In the Printing Office as they watch a printer at work, visitors can see how the early editions of the Book of Mormon were printed.

The Seventies Hall is where visitors learn about the missionary system of the Church and the important part it played in building Nauvoo. As it stands today, the hall is as similar to its predecessor as it is possible to make it with the information presently available. (Cf. the photograph on p. 32 showing the Seventies Hall before it was restored.)
On Main Street is the three-story Cultural Hall. It was a center of social activity in the fast-growing town and had some twenty-six different uses, from court sessions and funerals to grain storage and meetings of the Masonic lodge.

Next door to the Cultural Hall is the Scovil Bakery, which was operated by Lucius Scovil and his wife Lucy. The Scovils also catered for socials in the Cultural Hall, which Lucius helped to build.
One block east of the bakery is the Lyon Drugstore. Windsor Lyon lived there with his family while he operated the store. He had a good knowledge of botanical medicine for that day and grew his own herbs. He sold a variety of goods in his store, and later, due to the increase in trade and accompanying expansion in his business, he renamed his establishment the Lyon Variety Store.

Also on Main Street is the restored home and reconstructed gun shop of Jonathan Browning, the man who invented the repeating rifle. Jonathan joined the Church in Quincy, moved to Nauvoo in 1843, and started west in 1846. The first room of the north extension has the original brick walls, and the kitchen and gunsmith-forge workshop are all reconstructed on the original foundations.
Sylvester B. Stoddard and his family joined the Church during the Kirtland period and moved to Nauvoo at an early date. There he plied his trade as a tinsmith, finally locating his home and shop on Main Street in this building. Although the shop was plain, the house section was well constructed. It had decorative tooled limestone at the top and bottom of the structure and fine woodwork inside and around the front entry.

Although the original shop perished long ago, diligent research has enabled reconstruction of the Riser Boot and Shoemaker Shop on its original site. George C. Riser and his wife learned of Mormonism from an employee in George's shoe shop in Ohio. Struck by what they heard, the young couple immediately sold their business and came to Nauvoo to investigate the Prophet in December 1842. They were baptized the next May.
Brigham Young's home is a good example of his skill as a builder and carpenter. He built this house in 1843 and added the two wings in 1844. After the death of Joseph Smith, the presiding councils of the Church often met in the east wing office. There, in 1845, they planned the great migration to the West.

Joseph Coolidge built this house in 1843. It is one of the few frame buildings that has survived from that period. Coolidge was a trusted friend of Joseph and Emma Smith's and became the administrator of their estate after Joseph's death. When the Coolidges left Nauvoo, a German immigrant bought this house and turned it into a hotel. Today it features demonstrations of the early frontier crafts of making candles, pottery, and barrels.
North of the Coolidge House is the brick house built by Joseph Noble in 1843. He was converted by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball and went west with them in 1846. Brigham Young and other Church leaders bought his house for Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, whose age and poor health kept her from going with them. A carriage also provided for Mother Smith was probably kept in the brick building behind the house.

The home of Wilford Woodruff was the first Old Nauvoo building to be given an authentic architectural restoration (completed in 1969). Wilford Woodruff did much of the original work himself, in between absences on missions for the Church. He took pride in his work and recorded that he sorted through his entire supply of bricks—14,574 of them—to find the best ones for the front wall. Every room has a working fireplace.
Another house that survived in fair condition is the Heber C. Kimball home, just a block from Wilford Woodruff's. It was completed in 1845, but Heber and his wife Vilate enjoyed it for only five months before they went west in 1846. The east wing and porches were likely added by John Heinrich Lienhard, a Swiss immigrant who lived in Nauvoo for sixty years.

Built in 1843, this log cabin served as the home of Dr. Calvin Pendleton and his wife Sally Ann. Dr. Pendleton was an herbal doctor and was skillful in setting broken bones. He was also a gunsmith and a schoolteacher. In this home, the doctor taught reading, writing, and arithmetic to youth and penmanship to adults. (Of the approximately twenty-five hundred homes in Nauvoo, more than fourteen hundred were log structures.)
The Seventies Hall when it was being used as a schoolhouse after the second story was removed. This 1885 scene is printed from one of B. H. Roberts's glass negatives (Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Compare this scene with the restored Seventies Hall pictured on p. 25.
The Development of the
Joseph Smith Historic Center
in Nauvoo

Kenneth E. Stobaugh

In an 1893 letter, Alexander Hale Smith, a son of Joseph and Emma Smith, informed E. L. Kelley, the Presiding Bishop of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, that the Nauvoo House was to be auctioned at an administrator’s sale. Alexander wrote, “I haven’t for years felt a particle of interest in the old place until of late. I feel we ought to take advantage of every opportunity to get a foot hold there again.”¹ This letter is the earliest known indication of interest by leaders of the Reorganized Church in returning to Nauvoo.

Interest began to build, but not without problems. The RLDS church purchased the Nauvoo House and the city block where it is located from Charles Bidamon in 1909,² but later that year a Nauvoo bishop’s representative wrote that he was having difficulty getting Charles Bidamon to vacate the premises.³ Soon thereafter the Nauvoo House was empty. In 1915 the Homestead was deeded to the church, and two years later the Mansion House was acquired from Alexander H. Smith’s family.

These purchases were the beginning of what is known today as the Joseph Smith Historic Center. This historic center consists of the Homestead, Mansion House, Nauvoo House, Red Brick Store, and Visitor’s Center. Additional historic structures owned by the RLDS church include the homes of Sidney Rigdon, William Marks, Aaron Johnson, Hiram Clark, the remaining south wing of the Masonic Hotel, and on Water Street an additional brick home whose builder and original owner are yet to be determined.

The first steps toward preserving the Mansion House, Homestead, and Nauvoo House came in 1918 at a cost of $3,900. Bishop

¹ Kenneth E. Stobaugh is the former director of RLDS Sites in Nauvoo.

² BYU Studies 32, nos. 1, 2 (1992)
From left to right: the Joseph Smith Stable, the remaining section of the Nauvoo House, and the Joseph Smith Homestead as they appeared ca. 1900, when G. F. Goulty photographed them. The Homestead and Nauvoo House have since been restored by the RLDS church (Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints).
Benjamin McGuire of the Presiding Bishopric outlined the work in a May 1918 letter to Nauvoo District Bishop George Lambert:

**MANSION HOUSE:** Chimneys to be rebuilt above roof. Fireplaces to be opened on ground floor. Roof to be reshingled, and gutters and spouting repaired where necessary. Sills, cornice, siding, window frames, sash, blinds and doors to be replaced where needed, and screens supplied. Clean up yard, fill in old cellar, and repair well. Raze and rebuild barn. Fence around premises not to be built at present. House to be painted white. New floor to be laid in all rooms first floor except dining room, to be decorated throughout, shades hung, electric lights and telephone installed.

**HOMESTEAD:** Place as now constructed to be rehabilitated, interior and exterior, using new material wherever necessary. South side of that part formerly a log building, which faces river, for the present to have clapboards removed so as to show logs and chinked up. If this is found to be impracticable it can later be finished the same as the other part of the exterior of the building. Building to be jacked up, leveled and plumbed, foundation repaired. Exterior painted white. Interior walls kalsomined.

**NAUVOO HOUSE:** Basement to be filled in. Wall extending to stone building formerly occupied as office of Judge Bidamon to be repaired, pointed and capped. This small stone building to remain and be repaired. Ground behind wall to be filled in, block graded and wall built along river front, or riprapped as may be found to be most practicable. Interior to be finished as suggested, floors laid and walls plastered where necessary and painted and kalsomined. Attic to be cleaned up. Wall in Northeast upper room not to be plastered but to remain as suggested.

The letter also requested that a suitable fence be erected around the Smith family cemetery.4

In 1939, the centennial year of the founding of Nauvoo, RLDS church leaders began making plans for further work on these properties. The objective was to “preserve the cultural, spiritual and religious atmosphere of Nauvoo,” by preserving the presently owned property, restoring the Homestead and Mansion House interiors to reflect the period, landscaping the grounds and placing a suitable memorial at the graves of the Martyrs. Church leaders also considered using the Nauvoo House as a visitors’ center.5

Public interest in Nauvoo was developing as well. In 1937 the state of Iowa completed marking the “Mormon Trail” from Montrose to Council Bluffs. By 1939 Illinois completed a twelve-mile scenic highway from Nauvoo south to Hamilton.6 Many advocated the development of a state park at Nauvoo. The Mormon Trail across Iowa is now part of a national historic trails system, the scenic
highway is a section of the National Great River Road stretching from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and the 147-acre state park is used by over two hundred thousand people each year.

In 1940 the Homestead was wired for electricity. Eight blocks of hedge were planted, new sidewalks poured, and other landscaping done. Property contiguous to the Homestead and Mansion House was purchased, including the home of William Marks. The church leaders' hopes are expressed in a May 20, 1941, letter from Bishop C. A. Skinner to the Presiding Bishopric: "Every time I visit Nauvoo it gives me a broader vision of the possibilities there. No doubt, it will pay to work out a long time program for that place." Although some church leaders had an idea of what should be done at Nauvoo, additional preservation and restoration work on the buildings was effectively stopped by the outbreak of World War II. However, the efforts to "periodize" the Homestead and Mansion House through appropriate antique furnishings continued. A request made through the church publication, the Saints' Herald, invited members to donate furnishings that would fit into the period plan. Several responded by offering various items of furniture, some of which may be seen in the homes today. 

The work that brought the Homestead and Mansion House to their present condition began in 1953. The Homestead was raised and a new foundation built under it. The exterior logs were replaced, in order to restore "it as it was." By June 1956, the Homestead was ready to show, even though the furnishings were sparse in some rooms. In the log portion, the only piece of furniture was an old wing chair.

Work on restoring the Mansion House started in 1956. A wall next to the stairway on the first floor was removed. A doorway, evidently closed many years earlier, was opened from the hallway into the ladies' parlor. The current color scheme—white trim, beige siding, and slate grey shutters—was put into effect. In 1957 the building was reopened to the public.

By this time the family supervising the restoration had purchased many valuable antiques for both the Homestead and Mansion House. Few antiques have been added in the years since. In addition, the small stone building on the north end of the Nauvoo House foundation was refurbished as an office and information center. The building was used for this purpose for over twenty years. During the 1950s, the RLDS church spent just over $50,000 on Nauvoo historic properties.
Less was done to the RLDS historic sites during the 1960s. This was the decade of the founding of Nauvoo Restoration Inc.—sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—and the beginning of its tremendous work to preserve a large area of old Nauvoo.

Interest in developing RLDS historic properties more professionally emerged in 1970. Dr. F. Mark McKieman was employed to do historic research as well as to develop a master plan. Archaeological research began in 1970 with the excavation of the Joseph Smith livery stable at Hyde and Water streets. This research revealed that, as is sometimes the case, written documents must be understood in conjunction with archaeological evidence: Joseph Smith stated that the facility would accommodate seventy-five horses, while the archaeological evidence indicates that the building (which may have had connected corrals) would hold about twenty-five.13

Under the direction of Robert Bray of the University of Missouri-Columbia, archaeological work continued in 1971 near the Homestead.14 The objectives were to locate the remains of the log cabin known as the Summer Kitchen, which was also the first Nauvoo home of Joseph Smith, Sr., and Lucy Mack Smith, and to verify the location of the “secret” graves of Joseph and Hyrum. A 15' x 15' foundation was found a few feet northwest of the original block house. Artifacts on the grade of the foundation indicated that this was the foundation of the Summer Kitchen. The graves of the Martyrs had been discovered after a lengthy 1928 search; the purpose for the 1971 search was to rediscover the remains of the building described in the 1928 report. A standing brick wall was unearthed with a corner at each end.15 This discovery gave the location, size, and material of the basement where Joseph and Hyrum had been buried in 1844.

Archaeological work continued for several years. The “dig” in 1972 was at the site of the Red Brick Store. The next year’s excavations were at the site where Theodore Turley built his first log home and later a brick brewery. In 1974, the excavation was at the site of the home of Hyrum Smith. The crew moved to the northeast corner of Water and Bain streets in 1975 to determine if that was the location of the Times and Seasons building. That site proved to be the location not only of a frame 16' x 32' building where the Times and Seasons was published but also of the original brick building where the paper was printed beginning in 1839.16 Three summers were spent at the Mansion House, another at the site of the William Law house, and an additional one at the Homestead.
Three buildings have been built based on the resulting information. The first to be completed was the Homestead Summer Kitchen. Work on the kitchen started in 1973 and was carried out primarily by students in a historic sites intern program at the Joseph Smith Historic Center. They used nineteenth-century tools and methods as much as possible. By the end of that summer, they had the walls up and half the shingles nailed down. That fall a drawing by David Smith (son of Joseph Smith) came to light showing that the ridge pole of the new building had been constructed the wrong direction. The next summer students removed the top of the building and rebuilt it on its proper line. Chinking applied between the logs was a specially developed mixture of warmtone cement and Nauvoo clay; the mixture looks authentic and has lasted until this day.

As a gift in contemplation of the sesquicentennial of the church, eleven families contributed $30,000 each so that the Joseph Smith General Store could be rebuilt. This building, known historically as the Red Brick Store, was reconstructed on archaeological information giving the size and the location of rooms as well as the location of stairways and supporting pillars. Pieces of plaster revealed the color of the various walls. Incidentally, it was known as the Red Brick Store because the inside of the first-floor merchandise room was painted a rich red color. The building was dedicated and opened to the public the spring of 1980.

The third building reconstructed was the martyry. This eight-foot-square log building is built on top of a reproduced brick cellar. The building, completed in 1988, helps visitors visualize the events connected with the burial of Joseph and Hyrum.

The last major construction project was a visitor's center. Opened in 1980, it contains two theaters, a museum shop, and a small museum area.

Concurrent with the physical development of RLDS historic Nauvoo was the development of the interpretive program. In the 1920s and 1930s, the guide staff was largely oriented to a missionary-selling, anti-Mormon stance. I have said, on reflection, that it seemed to me that when I was first assigned to Nauvoo in 1959 the purpose of the guide program was "to spoil some Mormons’ vacations." For instance, a guide at the site of the graves of Emma, Joseph, and Hyrum would say something like, "We are now standing at the graves of Joseph and Hyrum and of Joseph’s only wife, Emma." Now, however, both LDS and RLDS churches are more kindly toward each
other and strive to present historical information that is as accurate as possible.

A big step for the RLDS church toward the goal of eliminating the apologetic curtain that divided Nauvoo was the creation in 1973 of an intern program in historic interpretation. The program emphasizes Jacksonian America and church history. Interpreters are taught to be professionals. All instructional activities are designed to give students a better understanding of life in early Nauvoo. For example, students make soap, candles, and food items at the Summer Kitchen.

Good historic interpretation should create understanding.17 A restored historic interpretation must be more than repaired plaster and paint. A restoration should also include the living image of the material culture and the spiritual lives of its former occupants, or the historic house is no more than a mausoleum. Thus there is an obligation on the part of historic site personnel to combine artifact and narrative. A good reflection of how the RLDS church understands these historic sites and intends to continue developing them is this concluding statement made in 1975 by then Apostle Reed Holmes:

Historic sites are a very tangible evidence of our history and a remarkable means for conveying the values and heartbeat of yesterday. We are concerned that those historic sites in our custody shall be cared for with an appropriate stewardship. We have come to understand . . . that these historic sites must not be considered as an opportunity to have a captive audience—as an opportunity to simply do our thing in apologetics for our faith, nor to consider them primarily evangelistic tools. Rather, we have come to feel that it is absolutely imperative that we provide there an authentic, genuine experience of the times, the people, and the values represented.18

NOTES

1 Alexander H. Smith to Bishop E. L. Kelley, May 31, 1893, Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f47, RLDS Library-Archives, the Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.
3 Kenneth Stobaugh notes from RLDS Presiding Bishopric Historic Properties Correspondence Files, copy of notes on file at the Joseph Smith Historic Center, Nauvoo, Illinois; hereafter cited as Stobaugh notes.
4 Bishop Benjamin McGuire to Bishop George Lambert, May 1918, Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f207, RLDS Library-Archives (original paragraphing modified).
5 "Progress and Development of General Church Property at Nauvoo," Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f214, RLDS Library-Archives.
6 Mormon Trail, 1939, Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f213, RLDS Library-Archives; also Ward Christy to Presiding Bishopric, October 15, 1937, Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f213, RLDS Library-Archives.
7 James Page to Bishop Clarence A. Skinner, July 16, 1940, Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f213, RLDS Library-Archives; John Fitzsimmons to Bishop Clarence A. Skinner, August 19, 1940, Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f216, RLDS Library-Archives; and G. Leslie Delapp to Bishop Clarence A. Skinner, October 10, 1940, Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f216, RLDS Library-Archives.
8 Bishop C. A. Skinner to the Presiding Bishopric, May 20, 1941, Nauvoo, Presiding Bishopric Papers, P54, f217, RLDS Library-Archives.
10 Robert Fishburn to the Presiding Bishopric, 1954, in Stobaugh notes.
16 Bray, Archaeology at the Joseph Smith Homestead, 69–70.
Doctrine and the Temple in Nauvoo

Larry C. Porter and Milton V. Backman, Jr.

Newly appointed *Millennial Star* editor Parley P. Pratt proclaimed in 1840 from Manchester, England: "God is again saying to men, Build me places as I shall direct you, where I can manifest myself to you, and send my angels to minister to you as in days of old." Anticipating that promised visitation and divine instruction, the Saints established Nauvoo. On January 8, 1841, Joseph Smith announced that a temple would be built in Nauvoo, "constructed as to enable all the functions of the Priesthood to be duly exercised, and where instructions from the Most High will be received, and from this place go forth to distant lands." Prophetically, he described the community of Nauvoo and its temple as the place where the Lord would reveal to his Church ordinances and other crucial matters, "things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fullness of times" (D&C 124:40–41).

In Nauvoo Joseph introduced many uniquely Latter-day Saint teachings, doctrines not only new to the Prophet's Christian contemporaries outside the Church, but mostly not taught to the Latter-day Saints prior to 1839. Innovative theological precepts revealed in Nauvoo include some of Mormonism's most central doctrines and practices: celestial marriage, the familial relationship of God the Father and of his Son Jesus Christ to humanity, the character of God, the materiality of spirit, a more comprehensive understanding of the keys of the priesthood, premortal existence, the plurality of gods, ordinances for the dead, and the endowment. These precepts represent Joseph Smith's key Nauvoo teachings, the list of which reads like a summary of the most distinctive aspects of Latter-day Saint religion.

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*BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1, 2 (1992)
The precise date Joseph Smith learned these further truths is difficult to determine. He was not always able to disclose revealed principles immediately. They may have been made known to Joseph prior to 1839. Sometimes he received revelations years in advance of recording them, as was the case with portions of Doctrine and Covenants 132. It is possible that his six-month incarceration in Liberty Jail helped galvanize these ideas for him into one great whole.

It is almost as difficult to determine exactly when Joseph first disclosed these principles. Sometimes members of the Church first learned these precepts as they read the writings of the Prophet. Other times they were introduced to advanced theological concepts by Joseph Smith's public sermons or in private discussions. The process was line upon line, precept upon precept. Joseph Smith learned gradually; members learned even more gradually. Perhaps certain of the distinctive Nauvoo teachings were understood in part by some members before the settlement of Nauvoo, but in general these teachings remained unknown until after the Prophet located his home within the great horseshoe bend of the Mississippi.

Few records exist prior to 1839 of Joseph Smith's public discourses, let alone his personal conversations. During the Nauvoo years, his contemporaries improved at keeping such records, taking extensive notes and multiple minutes of Joseph's words in the last two years of his life. Recorded in the diaries, journals, and records of the Saints are significant portions of the sermons and doctrinal discourses delivered by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. Nevertheless, we do not know all that he taught during those years. Many of his approximately 200 Nauvoo discourses were not even mentioned in the records of his contemporaries, and others were only briefly summarized. Records contain information concerning 78 discourses given in 1843 and 1844 during Joseph's last eighteen months, but only 35 of those were recorded "in some detail." And we can be sure that he never unfolded everything he knew. In Kirtland, Joseph Smith informed the Saints that he could have taught them a hundred times more about life after death if the Lord would have permitted it and if the people had been prepared to receive it. This restraint can be felt in his musing that "the Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it."

The Prophet often lamented the failure of some Saints to prepare themselves to accept doctrines imparted by the Lord for their growth and benefit. In the closing months of his life, Joseph
regretted his "great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all." That chronic unreadiness to learn suggests why it was not until the last five years of his life that Joseph taught so many new principles to the Saints.

Joseph's topics in Nauvoo included the principles he outlined in 1842 in the now-familiar Articles of Faith, doctrines he had taught in New York, Missouri, and Kirtland: he spoke often about faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the first principles of the gospel; about the Bible and the Book of Mormon, the gathering of Israel, the glorification of this earth upon the second coming of Jesus Christ, being subject to rulers and magistrates, and so on. But the principles taught by the Prophet distinctively in Nauvoo were intended to complete the preparation of the Saints for exaltation in the celestial kingdom. He explained in April 1843 that "the place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim" (D&C 130:8). "The angels," he added, "reside in the presence of God, on a globe like a sea of glass and fire, where all things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord" (D&C 130:6–7). "This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon" (D&C 130:9). To this end, Joseph's instructions culminated in the doctrines of the temple, its ordinances and ceremonies.

As remarkable as the scope of the Nauvoo doctrines is their pattern. Where one might have expected disjointed results (given the press of time, leadership responsibilities, and persecution), there appears a pattern of profound consistency. Temple-related concepts dominate and unify the Nauvoo doctrines as dramatically as the Temple dominated the Nauvoo landscape. That temple focus seems thoroughly appropriate. One of Joseph Smith's paramount concerns during the Nauvoo years was the restoring of principles relating to temples and temple blessings. Although the Saints had built a temple in Kirtland, they did not receive there all the truths associated with modern temples. The Kirtland endowment of power from on high, featuring preparatory ordinances of washing and anointing, did not include the ultimate ordinances performed in the Nauvoo Temple and subsequent Latter-day Saint temples. Thus the general membership
The Nauvoo Temple
Photographed by Thomas M. Easterly in 1845
(Easterly Collection, Missouri State Historical Society)
of the Church prior to 1839 had no experience with many doctrines associated with temple worship. Throughout the Nauvoo years, Joseph Smith taught a variety of beliefs that prepared members to receive and understand the blessings of the temple.

In a discourse delivered at the Nauvoo temple site on June 11, 1843, the Prophet explained:

In any age of the world... the main object was to build unto the Lord an house whereby he Could reveal unto his people the ordinance of his house and glories of his kingdom & teach the people the ways of salvation. For their [sic] are certain ordinances & principles that when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose. This was purposed in the mind of God before the world was;... it is for this same purpose that God gathers together the people in the last days to build unto the Lord an house to prepare them for the ordinances & endowments.12

Judging from such indications as the floor plan of the Nauvoo Temple13 and public statements made about its ordinances, one can conclude that this temple offered a model for understanding eternal human existence that taught and embraced, among other things, the following elements: the premortal existence of all humankind; the plan of salvation that was established before the creation of the world; a creation accomplished by organizing previously existing matter; Adam and Eve and the Fall; the importance of entering into covenants with God to build the kingdom of God on earth; an absolute prohibition of sexual relations outside of marriage; the need to seal husbands and wives to each other that they might receive the promises given to Abraham of eternal posterity, numerous as the sands of the sea; and a promise that all righteous men and women may become kings and priests, queens and priestesses, to rule eternally and become like God.

The pinnacle of the temple ordinances is celestial marriage. Temples provide a sacred place where husbands and wives may be married for time and all eternity. During the Kirtland period, Joseph had prepared the minds of a few Saints for the prospect of an eternal marriage covenant. In 1835 W. W. Phelps touched upon this principle in a letter to his wife: "A new idea, Sally, if you and I continue faithful to the end, we are certain to be one in the Lord throughout eternity; this is one of the most glorious consolations we can have in the flesh."14 Similarly taught when he met Joseph Smith in Philadelphia in 1839, Parley P. Pratt summarized his conversations with the Prophet several years later in his Autobiography:
It was at this time [1839] that I received from him the first idea of eternal family organization, and the eternal union of the sexes. . . .

It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore.

It was from him that I learned the true dignity and destiny of a son of God, clothed with an eternal priesthood, as the patriarch and sovereign of his countless offspring. It was from him that I learned that the highest dignity of womanhood was, to stand as a queen and priestess to her husband, and to reign for ever and ever as the queen mother of her numerous and still increasing offspring.15

From the vantage point provided by this insight, Parley gained a profound understanding of eternal family relations. Pratt learned from the Prophet that the relationship of humankind to the Father and to the Father's beloved son, Jesus Christ, is familial: "I felt that God was my heavenly Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion." Thus illuminated, Parley "could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also." Enthralled as he was with these new truths, Pratt was more excited about what was yet to be learned: "My dearly beloved brother, Joseph Smith, had barely touched a single key"; Joseph "had merely lifted a corner of the veil and given me a single glance into eternity."16

The Prophet never published specific information concerning plural marriage, but in private conversations he explained God's instructions concerning that practice, and in public discourse he taught the eternal nature of marriage. On April 16, 1843, he alluded to this doctrine in a sermon, indicating that Marcellus Bates would "soon have the company of [his] companion (his deceased wife) in a world of glory."17 On May 16, 1843, in Ramus, Illinois, Joseph confided to a group of close friends, "Those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory."18 Two months later, on July 16, the Prophet more specifically taught principles relating to the essential nature of covenants, especially the eternal marriage covenant; to plural marriage; and to the creation of worlds
“by the multiplication of Lives.” 19 Franklin D. Richards deduced from this latter discourse “that we may make an eternal covenant with our wives and in the resurrection claim that which is our own and enjoy blessings & glories peculiar to those in that condition even the multiplication of spirits in the eternal world.” 20

The doctrines of celestial marriage coupled with Joseph Smith’s resurrection teachings enabled some Latter-day Saints to understand more completely the characteristics of the Godhead, notably the Father’s physical form. The writings of Joseph Smith do not disclose how early the Prophet learned that the Father has a body of flesh and bones. Before the 1840s, he emphasized that God is a material being and that the Father and Son are separate personages, but there are no references in the writings of Joseph or other Latter-day Saints at that time to the precise nature of the Father’s glorified body. To the contrary, Parley P. Pratt disclosed an incomplete understanding of this principle when he wrote in a missionary pamphlet in 1840:

Whoever reads our books, or hears us preach, knows that we believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as one God. That the Son has flesh and bones, and that the Father is a spirit. But we would inform Mr. H. (William Hewitt) that a personage of spirit has its organized formation, its body and parts, its individual identity, its eyes, mouth, ears, &c., and that it is in the image or likeness of the temporal body, although not composed of such gross materials as flesh and bones; hence it is said that Jesus is “the express image of his (the Father’s) person.” 21

It was not until the Nauvoo years that Parley attained a more precise view of the Father’s attributes. January 5, 1841, is the first known date when Joseph taught others that “God the father took life unto himself precisely as Jesus did” and has a body of “flesh and bones” (implying that the Father is a resurrected personage). 22 This concept harmonized with other teachings of Joseph Smith that referred to the resurrected body as a spiritual body with flesh and bones but without blood. 23 The Prophet noted how the bodies of the Father and the Son differ from that of the Holy Ghost as he instructed the Saints on April 2, 1843, at Ramus, Illinois, and in June 1844 at Nauvoo, he again emphasized that the Father has a body of flesh and bones. 24 Unlike other religious leaders of the time, Joseph Smith declared the Holy Ghost to be separate and distinct from the Father and the Son as a personage of spirit— “Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us” (D&C 130:22).

In his desire to convey to the Saints new understandings, the Prophet spent over two hours unburdening himself of essential
doctrinal insights in his King Follett discourse, April 7, 1844. To lift
the minds of the thousands present “into a more lofty sphere and
[a more] exalted [under]standing than what the human mind generally
understands,” he laid the groundwork for a new understanding of
the actual association that exists between God and humankind:
“There are but very few beings in the world who understand rightly
the character of God. If men do not comprehend the character of
God, they do not comprehend their own character.”

Joseph explained to the congregation, “I want you all to know
God and to be familiar with Him. If I can get you to know Him, I can
bring you to Him. And if so, all persecution against me will cease.”

To help the Saints know God, the Prophet imparted a strikingly new
perspective on the Supreme Being:

First, God Himself who sits enthroned in yonder heavens is a Man like
unto one of yourselves—that is the great secret! If the veil were rent
today and the great God that holds this world in its sphere and the
planets in their orbit and who upholds all things by His power—if you
were to see Him today, you would see Him in all the person, image,
fashion, and very form of a man, like yourselves. For Adam was a man
formed in His likeness and created in the very fashion and image of
God. Adam received instruction, walked, talked, and conversed with
Him as one man talks and communicates with another. . . . The first
principle of truth and of the Gospel is to know for a certainty the
character of God, and that we may converse with Him the same as one
man with another, and that He once was a man like one of us and that
God Himself, the Father of us all, once dwelled on an earth the same
as Jesus Christ himself did in the flesh and like us.

That understanding of the relationship between human beings
and God illuminated new understandings of mortal experience,
particularly the exalted and eternal attributes of matter and the
resulting importance of the physical body. During the Nauvoo
period, Joseph Smith spoke plainly about the principles of creation
and matter. In 1841 he explained how unorganized matter was
organized to form this world: “This earth was organized or formed
out of other planets which were broke up and remodelled and made
into the one on which we live.” An extensive treatment of creation
was given in 1844, when he declared that “God had materials to
organize the world out of chaos . . . [which] may be organized and
re-organized, but not destroyed.” He stated that a major reason we
come to earth is to obtain a physical “body and present it pure before
God in the Celestial Kingdom.” He also taught the Saints in 1843
that “all spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be
discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter” (D&C 131:7–8).

The priesthood, too, is an eternal principle. In 1839 the Prophet instructed the Saints that the priesthood was first given to Adam and that Adam held this authority before the creation of the world. Joseph instructed the Saints that “[Adam] is Michael, the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel; he stands next in authority to Adam in the Priesthood.” The Prophet then stated, “These men held keys first on earth, and then in heaven. The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from heaven, it is by Adam’s authority.” Priesthood keys were first given to Adam, who passed them on to successors. In time, Joseph explained, the Savior, Moses, and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration gave the keys of the priesthood to Peter, James, and John, who passed them on to this dispensation: “How have we come at the Priesthood in the last days? It came down, down, in regular succession. Peter, James, and John had it given to them and they gave it to others [i.e., Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery].”

Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo doctrines projected eternal perspectives not only into the future but also into the past. Although there are brief references in pre-1839 revelations to premortal life (see D&C 93:23) and in revelations given earlier but not published until after the founding of Nauvoo (for example Moses 3:5), many members did not understand this concept until the Nauvoo years. In Washington, D.C., on February 5, 1840, Joseph declared that “the soul of man, the spirit, had existed from eternity in the bosom of Divinity.” In Nauvoo on January 5, 1841, Joseph instructed, “Spirits are eternal. At the first organization in heaven we were all present and saw the Savior chosen and appointed, and the plan of salvation made and we sanctioned it.” No major Christian faith taught a belief in a premortal experience of all human spirits; this doctrine restored by Joseph Smith was so different from the prior religious heritage of most converts that many failed to understand at first the meaning of several passages in modern scripture (for example, Alma 13:3 and D&C 93:29). Clearer understanding of premortal life came through the Book of Abraham when it was initially published in the Times and Seasons, March 1842. Passages in the Book of Abraham taught that intelligences were organized before the world was and that
Abraham was chosen before he was born. This knowledge became most meaningful to Latter-day Saints when they associated it with the idea of celestial marriage and the relationship of human spirits to God, as taught in the King Follett discourse: "The mind of man is as immortal as God himself . . . their Spirits coexisted with God."\textsuperscript{36} The birth of those spirits from eternal elements to a Heavenly Father and Mother had been explained as early as 1839.\textsuperscript{37}

Joseph Smith's teachings on premortal life stand in harmonious relation with the doctrines he introduced concerning eternal increase, plural marriage, and the plurality of gods. Like other contributions of Joseph Smith, these doctrines can be best understood in relation to the doctrine of the new and everlasting covenant of marriage.\textsuperscript{38} These principles, so much at variance with those taught by his American contemporaries, were not included in any published writings of the Prophet prior to his martyrdom, but they had been unfolded to individuals. Benjamin F. Johnson testified that Joseph Smith had explained the principle of "celestial or plural marriage" to him, Sunday, April 2, 1843. In an ensuing discourse, Johnson was able more fully to understand the principle, though others did not comprehend that meaning. According to Johnson, Joseph spoke about the parable of the ten talents, "plainly giving me to understand that the talents represented wives and children as the principle of enlargement throughout the great future, to those who were heirs of [such] Salvation."\textsuperscript{39}

The doctrines of the new and everlasting covenant of marriage also added new insights concerning earlier revelations that described the celestial kingdom and the gods who inhabited that exalted sphere (D&C 76:58; 121:32). While instructing certain Church members in Ramus, Illinois, in May 1843, the Prophet taught that "in the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]" (D&C 131:1–2).

Several of the concepts Joseph Smith had learned regarding plural and eternal marriage between 1831 and 1843 were recorded at Nauvoo on July 12, 1843, in the revelation now known as section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This revelation describes the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, indicates the eternality of the temple marriage covenant, relates laws governing the plurality of wives, and points out that the continuation of the family enables some to become gods, resulting in a plurality of gods. The last was
the main topic of Joseph's final sermon, delivered June 16, 1844.\textsuperscript{40} While some members who obtained temple blessings in Nauvoo were taught all these principles, the revelation on celestial marriage was not published until September 14, 1852.\textsuperscript{41} Many outside the Church and some within it were kept by that official silence from comprehending the full significance of several discourses delivered by the Prophet between 1842 and 1844.

During the Nauvoo years, Joseph Smith introduced other principles and ordinances connected with temple work. As early as July 2, 1839, Joseph taught that people in this generation cannot be made perfect without those who have gone before.\textsuperscript{42} One year later, while preaching the funeral sermon of Brother Seymour Brunson on August 15, 1840, Joseph announced another major doctrinal theme related to the temple: baptism for the dead. In reporting his actions to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who were then in England, the Prophet explained the magnitude of this all-encompassing law:

The Saints have the privilege of being baptized for those of their relatives who are dead, whom they believe would have embraced the Gospel, if they had been privileged with hearing it, and who have received the Gospel in the spirit, through the instrumentality of those who have been commissioned to preach to them while in prison.\textsuperscript{43}

Shortly after this instruction to the Saints on the subject of baptism for the dead, Joseph introduced the practice.\textsuperscript{44} Although the initial baptisms for the deceased were performed in the Mississippi River, Joseph learned by a revelation recorded in January 1841 that this ordinance, as well as the ordinances of washing and anointing, should be performed in a temple (D&C 123:29–33, 37–39). Illustrative of this development is the proxy baptism of Alvin Smith by his brother Hyrum Smith. Hyrum was first baptized for Alvin in the Mississippi River during 1840; the ordinance was repeated by the same proxy in 1841 in the Nauvoo temple font.\textsuperscript{45}

The following year another phase of temple work was unfolded. On May 4, 1842, under the direction of Joseph Smith, at least seven men received their endowments in the rooms prepared for that purpose in Joseph's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo. The Prophet described the events of that day in sublime terms:

I spent the day in the upper part of the store, (i.e.) in my private office . . . in council with General James Adams, of Springfield, Patriarch Hyrum Smith, Bishops Newel K. Whitney and George Miller, and President Brigham Young and Elders Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards, instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood,
attending to washings, anointings, endowments, and communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days. 46

Prior to the death of Joseph Smith, others received the same instruction, keys, and blessings. While Joseph never explained in public the specifics of this sacred ceremony, those who received this endowment could better understand many of the teachings Joseph unfolded during the last years of his life. Like other Nauvoo teachings, the endowment was an integral part of the temple ceremony and a necessary preparation for the sealing ordinances. After receiving his endowment in Nauvoo, Brigham Young recorded that as Joseph Smith administered the first ordinance of endowment he gave instructions on the priesthood and the new and everlasting covenant. 47 Just prior to the conferral of the endowment upon those original seven men, the Prophet had told the sisters in the newly organized Relief Society that faithful members of that society would receive special blessings with their husbands. 48

Women had the opportunity of receiving the endowment during the following year, 1843. Joseph and Emma Smith were sealed May 28, 1843. 49 Bathsheba W. Smith, wife of George A. Smith, was also among the first. She recalled that her endowment was accompanied by special instruction on key matters: "Once when speaking in one of our general fast meetings, [Joseph Smith] said that we did not know how to pray to have our prayers answered. But when I and my husband had our endowments in [December 1843], Joseph Smith presiding, he taught us the order of prayer." 50

These ordinances gave members fuller understanding of the keys that were restored by Elias and Elijah in the Kirtland Temple. Although Joseph referred to these keys in public discourses during the early 1840s, only those who received the temple ordinances comprehended what he was disclosing. Joseph taught that the spirit of Elias was to prepare the way, and that Elijah held the sealing power for both the living and the dead. 51 On January 21, 1844, Joseph Smith quoted Malachi 4:6 and emphasized that the "word turn here should be translated bind or seal." The Prophet explained that this sealing could be accomplished by the Latter-day Saints serving as
saviors on Mount Zion. By building temples, erecting baptismal fonts, and performing “all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead,” Latter-day Saints could redeem others, thereby enabling them to come forth during the first resurrection.\textsuperscript{52} Elijah, he further taught, holds the “keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the Priesthood; and without [this] authority . . . the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness.”\textsuperscript{53}

Integral to the temple endowment is the making of sacred promises. Anyone who heard Joseph Smith preach often in Nauvoo would have been prepared to recognize the obligations assumed in the endowment by those making temple covenants. Joseph recorded on April 10, 1842, “I preached in the grove, and pronounced a curse [upon all adulterers and Fornicators, and unvirtuous persons]”\textsuperscript{54}; unequivocal statements were similarly made against adultery in his recorded revelations (D&C 132:41–43). Likewise, at the Nauvoo Temple grove on August 27, 1843, Joseph made it clear to all that “if a man would attain—he must sacrifice all to attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life.”\textsuperscript{55}

But not all members were prepared to make such commitments. Nauvoo was a cleavage point for those who could no longer walk with Joseph because of the doctrines he taught. It was a time of sifting and sorting. Just as its walls separated the outside world from its interior sacred space, the doctrines of the temple soon separated the faithful from those who would fall away. Sidney Rigdon, William Law, William Marks, and others found themselves at odds with the Prophet. Still others, such as Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards, committed themselves completely to continue the practices he had inaugurated, because the precepts he taught had elevated their thoughts and practices.

The keys that Joseph Smith received in the Kirtland Temple enabled Saints to secure various priesthood blessings and the knowledge essential to perform temple ordinances. These keys were conferred by Joseph Smith upon nine of the Twelve Apostles shortly before his death. Consequently the knowledge and power to continue the work restored by Joseph Smith resided with the Council of the Twelve Apostles.\textsuperscript{56} When members accepted the leadership of Brigham Young and the Twelve, they were expressing faith in and acceptance of the teachings of the Prophet that had been unfolded in Nauvoo, displaying a conviction of celestial marriage
and their desire to enter the temple to make covenants to receive those priesthood blessings.\textsuperscript{57} They joined with the Prophet in his feeling about the mysteries of the kingdom revealed in Nauvoo: "This is good doctrine. It tastes good. You say honey is sweet and so do I. I can also taste the spirit and principles of eternal life, and so can you. I know it is good and that when I tell you of these words of eternal life that are given to me by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the revelations of Jesus Christ, you are bound to receive them as sweet. You taste them and I know you believe them."\textsuperscript{58}

The Nauvoo doctrine of Joseph Smith presents a clear and distinctive pattern, harmoniously drawing together perspectives on God, humankind, and the eternal elements and purposes of life. The illumination of this new knowledge enabled the Nauvoo Saints to gain an increased understanding of the things of God, to recognize that they were literally the children of God, with the potential of becoming as God. All these teachings were related to each other, particularly through the temple. They stand as solidly at the core of the Prophet’s revelations as the temple itself stood in Nauvoo.

NOTES

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Millennial Star} 1 (June 1840): 55.
\textsuperscript{2} Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. and ed., \textit{Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith} (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 18.
\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Journal of Discourses}, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1855–86), 13:193. Orson Pratt related that the Prophet had discussed the matter of plurality of wives with some individual members of the Church in 1831 and 1832. Orson stated that Joseph “had inquired of the Lord concerning the principle of plurality of wives, and he received for answer that the principles of taking more wives than one is a true principle, but the time had not yet come for it to be practiced.”
\textsuperscript{5} Based on Dean C. Jesssee’s estimate of 30 discourses a year through 1842 and his count of 78 discourses from the beginning of 1843 to the Prophet’s death in June 1844. See “Priceless Words and Fallible Memories: Joseph Smith as Seen in the Effort to Preserve His Discourses,” \textit{BYU Studies} 31 (Spring 1991): 23.
\textsuperscript{6} Jesse, “Priceless Words,” 23.
\textsuperscript{8} \textit{HC} 6:184–85.
See, for example, Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., The Words of Joseph Smith (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 72, 256.


W. W. Phelps in Journal History of the Church, May 26, 1835, on file in the Archives Division, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.


Pratt, Autobiography, 260.

Ehat and Cook, Words, 197; and Brown, "The Sacred Departments for Temple Work in Nauvoo, 361–74.

Smith, Teachings, 301.

Ehat and Cook, Words, 232–33, 279.

Ehat and Cook, Words, 293. The doctrine of celestial marriage was initially published by apostates. In the first and only issue of the Nauvoo Expositor, June 7, 1844, critics wrote that Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, and others taught the doctrines of "plurality of wives for time and eternity" and "plurality of Gods" (Ehat and Cook, Words, 408). Eventually Latter-day Saints learned that all ordinances for the living could also be applied to the dead.


A summary of Joseph Smith's instructions to the Saints was recorded by William Clayton (Ehat and Cook, Words, 60, 83).

Ehat and Cook, Words, 109.

D&C 130:22; and Ehat and Cook, Words, 382.


Cannon and Dahl, King Follett Discourse, 19.

Cannon and Dahl, King Follett Discourse, 25.

Cannon and Dahl, King Follett Discourse, 27, 29.

Ehat and Cook, Words, 60.
34 Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 60.
35 *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1842): 720.
42 Smith, *Teachings*, 159.
43 *HC* 4:231.
45 Nauvoo Temple Records (LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City), Book A, 145, 149.
46 On May 4, 1842, Willard Richards originally made a brief notation concerning this event. Additional details were later entered under this same date, *HC* 5:1–2.
50 *Juvenile Instructor* 27 (June 1, 1892): 345.
52 *HC* 6:183–85; see also Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 303, 318.
53 *HC* 4:211.
54 Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 114.
55 Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 244.
Nauvoo Stake, Priesthood Quorums, and the Church’s First Wards

William G. Hartley

A restored Seventies Hall stands on the north side of Parley Street in Nauvoo, a memorial to one office and quorum of the priesthood. Today, Latter-day Saint guides use the building, originally built in 1844, as an appropriate site for telling about the Church’s proselyting efforts, a labor assigned by revelation to ordained seventies. But the hall is also a fitting site for explaining stake and local priesthood work in Old Nauvoo: here, the Nauvoo Stake held many presidency and high council meetings; here, men in Nauvoo’s thirty-three seventies quorums, the high priests quorum, and other priesthood groups met, prayed, discussed the gospel, and received and reported on priesthood assignments.

No comparable priesthood hall is found in today’s Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Likewise, seventies quorums no longer exist as they once did in nearly every Latter-day Saint stake. Therefore the restored walls of the Nauvoo Seventies Hall bear mute but sturdy witness that priesthood organization in Old Nauvoo differed in practice and policy from what today’s Latter-day Saints see. With the hall as a visual symbol, this article presents a history of Nauvoo priesthood groups and how they operated in the days before fully functional wards and even ward meetinghouses existed. To date, there is no history of priesthood work in Nauvoo or of the Nauvoo Stake, a surprising lack given the fact that Nauvoo was a religious capital. The article also evaluates what differences seven years of priesthood work in Nauvoo made in terms of the historical development of latter-day priesthood work, differences that include the introduction into the Church of wards and ward bishops.

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To examine Nauvoo's priesthood work is, as the phrase says, to enter a foreign country. Present understandings of stakes, wards, and quorums enlighten but also confuse the study of Nauvoo's priesthood work. Four factors must be understood by all readers of Church history to interpret Nauvoo source materials correctly.

First, the terms *ward, branch, stake,* and *district* had meanings looser than do today's definitions. For example, Nauvoo High Council minutes mention a decision that the Pleasant Vale "stake" outside Nauvoo should be dissolved and "members of that branch" joined to the Church in Nauvoo—the terms *branch* and *stake* being used interchangeably. For that generation, a branch was a stake, albeit a stake in embryo. (Branches were called stakes in early Utah as well.) A branch first received a president and then, when needed, a high council and a bishop, and at that point it was considered an operational stake. As membership numbers or geography made them necessary, a second, a third, and more bishops were added. An elders quorum and at least one Aaronic Priesthood unit completed a stake's organization.

An example of a one-bishop stake sprouted across the river from Nauvoo. In August 1841, the Zarahemla Stake held a conference at which its presidency, high council, and a single bishop were sustained along with an elders quorum presidency. Bishop Elias Smith reported that the stake had in its lesser priesthood nine priests, thirteen teachers, and four deacons. Elder Lewis Zabriskie reported his elders quorum had "20 members generally in good standing."

For the population of Old Nauvoo, the term *ward* had a different meaning than it does today. In the eastern United States then and now, a ward is a political subdivision of a city. Wards in Nauvoo were civil divisions for police, tax, election, school, and other municipal purposes. When Church leaders needed to collect funds or to aid the poor, for convenience they let the city's political ward boundaries serve as assignment districts. They placed a bishop in charge of each. Those ward units, however, were not Latter-day Saint entities conducting their own sacrament meetings or having their own quorums. Nauvoo quorums for deacons, teachers, priests, and elders were stake entities, not ward ones, as was the case in stakes before and after Nauvoo.

Second, because Nauvoo was the Church's headquarters, Church general conferences were held in Nauvoo. These conferences served as Nauvoo Stake's stake conferences as well; the stake had no stake conferences of its own. Nauvoo Stake's presidency,
high council, and quorum presidents were sustained during general conference sustainings. This practice was found in the Kirtland Stake earlier and in the Salt Lake Stake in early Utah.

Third, Aaronic Priesthood offices were held by men, although some older boys were ordained. No priesthood office then correlated with an age group: “Men of all ages seem to have been ordained to any of the offices in the priesthood up to and including elder to start their priesthood career.” Likewise, there was no set time period for holding any priesthood office.

Fourth, men generally were ordained to fill specific needs, not just to receive an ordination. From 1830 to 1846, most male converts were not ordained until several months after being baptized. Roger Launius studied a sample of 123 men for whom he could pinpoint baptism and ordination information for this period. Only 10 percent were ordained within a week of baptism, and about 53 percent were ordained at least one year after baptism. He also found that “some men never held the priesthood in spite of seemingly apparent abilities and commitments.” By the 1840s, most first ordinations were to the office of elder.

**Precedents**

Men pouring into Nauvoo in 1839 and 1840 included ordained elders, priests, teachers, and deacons, and a few former stake high councilmen. They brought to Nauvoo relatively little practical priesthood experience, some of it trial and error, from labors in Kirtland, in Missouri, and in mission areas. Nauvoo became a restarting point for priesthood quorums and labors interrupted elsewhere.

The Church’s first two stakes, created at Kirtland and in Missouri in 1834, were each headed by a stake presidency (which was the First Presidency in Kirtland), a high council that handled administrative and judicial matters, and a quorum presidency (irregularly organized) for deacons, teachers, priests, and elders. Each stake had one bishop: Newel K. Whitney for Kirtland and Edward Partridge for Missouri. The bishops’ tasks were mainly judicial and financial—collecting and expending Church funds and assisting the worthy poor. Both stakes had high priests quorums. Above the stake level but below the Apostles, the Church by 1840 had three quorums of seventies, sometimes termed “Seventy Apostles.”

Studies of the earliest Aaronic Priesthood activities indicate that leaders believed in, but quorums rarely reached, the quorum sizes set by scripture—twelve deacons, twenty-four teachers, and
forty-eight priests. By 1839 the Church's main local officers were the ordained teachers, who, under the direction of the stake (usually the stake bishop), visited house to house. They also served as local arbitrators and peacemakers among the Saints. Teachers and priests sometimes were the local presiding officers because high priests and elders were expected to forsake the "standing ministry" in order to proselyte and travel. Deacons, when they did anything, held quorum meetings and assisted priests and teachers.

Nauvoo Stake

Nauvoo was but a few months old when leaders at the October 1839 general conference created the Nauvoo Stake. Its initial organization consisted of Stake President William Marks, a high council, and three bishops—one for each of Nauvoo's municipal wards. To handle tithes and aid the poor, Bishop Partridge was assigned to the Upper Ward, Bishop Whitney the Middle Ward, and Bishop Vinson Knight the Lower Ward. Conference attenders also sustained Don Carlos Smith "as President of the High Priesthood" and created an elders quorum by appointing thirty-five elders "who all accepted of their appointments" except one. Of these, ten needed ordaining and were ordained by four high councilmen. One conference speaker discussed the "duties of Priests, Teachers, etc." Nauvoo now had a stake organization. That same conference approved the creation of a branch or stake across the Mississippi in Iowa, with John Smith as president, a high council, and Alanson Ripley as bishop. Nauvoo Stake exercised jurisdiction over Nauvoo's bishops, Aaronic priesthood quorums, and elders, but not over seventies or high priests.

When priesthood authorities laid the cornerstones for the Nauvoo Temple during the April 1841 conference, the ceremony involved Nauvoo's quorums. Men sat together by priesthood office so they could vote by office for the Church officers. Bishop Whitney, acting as Aaronic Priesthood president, presented the First Presidency for a sustaining vote to the seated Aaronic Priesthood; Elders President John A. Hicks presented the matter to the elders; Senior Seventies President Joseph Young to the seventies; High Priests President Don Carlos Smith to the high priests; and Elias Higbee to the High Council. Then the presidents of the quorums were presented for sustaining votes.

At the October 1841 conference, a notable priesthood development was George Miller's replacing deceased Don Carlos
Smith as high priests president. William Marks served as Nauvoo Stake’s president until the October 1844 conference, when he was dropped and replaced by John Smith, who had presided over the Zarahemla Stake.

**Nauvoo Bishops**

The Nauvoo Stake High Council exercised authority over the ward bishops. Limited records provide only a sketchy history of the interaction between stake and bishop. Of Nauvoo’s first three ward bishops, Bishops Partridge and Whitney continued to serve as general bishops with churchwide or regional jurisdictions at times, so their integration within the Nauvoo Stake’s structure was ambiguous. The bishops’ primary task was “to care for the incoming Saints, many of whom were sick or destitute.” On August 16, 1841, as part of business at a special Church conference, Bishops Vinson Knight and George Miller presented “the situation of the poor of Nauvoo” and then spearheaded a collection to benefit the needy.

Nauvoo’s original three wards rapidly became too crowded, so the High Council regrouped them into four wards in early 1842. The Nauvoo High Council minutes for August 20, 1842, record that the council divided Nauvoo into ten wards, matching the new divisions made by the Temple Committee for raising donations and labor, and appointed a bishop for each ward. They voted too that other bishops be appointed over “districts” adjoining Nauvoo “as shall be considered necessary.” The council resolved that Samuel H. Smith be appointed as bishop in place of deceased Vinson Knight and that Tarleton Lewis be bishop of the Fourth Ward; John Murdock of the Fifth; Daniel Carn, Sixth; Newel K. Whitney, Seventh; Jacob Foutz, Eighth; Jonathan H. Hale, Ninth; and Hezekiah Peck, Tenth. David Evans was called as bishop of the district south of the city, the Eleventh Ward; Israel Calkins of the district east of the city and south of Young Street; and William W. Spencer of the district east of the city and north of Young Street. Samuel Smith could not accept the appointment, but Lewis, Murdock, Foutz, Hale, Peck, Evans, and Calkins were ordained.

Nauvoo High Council minutes for 1842 show that the council called for and received reports from the ward bishops. On October 1, for example, Bishop Lewis of the Fourth Ward reported “according to the instructions of the Council.” On October 15, Bishop Murdock of the Fifth Ward reported he had picked high priests Joseph Fielding
and John Lowry for his counselors, which actions the council approved. On October 29, John Hammond reported for the Eleventh Ward, announcing that he and Phillip Ballard had been chosen by Bishop Evans as his counselors. Isaac Higbee reported to the council on the First, Second, and Third wards, after which Hammond introduced a petition from a part of his ward who wanted to be a new “branch.” On November 19, the High Council authorized the action after consulting with Joseph and Hyrum Smith, who approved the request. On November 26, the council instructed Hosea Stout to ascertain the exact boundaries of the ten city wards “that the Bishopric may be more perfectly set in order.” Stout reported a week later. On December 4, the council voted that Bishop Newel K. Whitney be assigned to preside over the Seventh Ward. On December 11, Bishop Hale of the Ninth Ward appeared before the High Council and “made a very large and elegant report of the situation and standing of his ward, which was accepted.”

Sacrament meetings were generally Nauvoo-wide meetings held in the open, in groves, or at the temple site. General Authorities conducted these meetings.21 No evidence exists that any sacrament meetings were held for a particular ward’s membership; other ward meetings, although not common, did occur. For example, Bishop John S. Higbee early in 1845 appointed prayer meetings in his ward, or for part of his ward, “at Bro McKinseys on Thursdays at 4 o’clock.” He “appointed Bro. Ormon Butler to take the charge of the meetings.” These started on May 1, 1845. At the first meeting, Bishop Higbee gave attenders instructions regarding their children and also appealed for donations so he could help the poor. At the next two ward prayer meetings, he presided. The May 15 meeting was a fast meeting.22 Bishop Higbee’s little diary indicates other duties he performed. He settled disputes and performed weddings. On Sunday, May 4, 1845, he helped administer the sacrament at the general Nauvoo Sunday meeting to between six hundred and eight hundred people.23

But a bishop’s main responsibility continued to be caring for the poor. Wealthy convert Edward Hunter, from Pennsylvania, was ordained a bishop soon after the Martyrdom. During his labors as a bishop, he recalled, the “brethren were liberal in their offerings to the poor. Poor were looked after and made comfortable.” He also solicited funds, labor, and materials for the Temple.24 At the October 1845 conference, Stake President “John Smith . . . appointed
four bishops to stand at the [temple] door, to take a collection for the benefit of the poor.”25

An example of how that generation used the terms ward, branch, district, and stake interchangeably is the Twelve’s plan, after Joseph Smith’s death, for organizing the Church in the eastern United States. On August 15, 1844, the Twelve proposed dividing that area into districts and branches, each presided over by a high priest. They announced that “bishops will also be appointed in the larger branches, to attend to the management of the temporal funds, such as tithings and funds for the poor, according to the revelations of God and to be judges in Israel.”26

Aarionic Priesthood

Lesser priesthood quorums in Nauvoo were stake, not ward, units. Their history of activity is documented in several surviving minute books.27 Doctrine and Covenants 107:87–88 makes it clear that bishops should be presidents of the Aarionic Priesthood and should preside over priests quorums. In practice, the ideal was not followed. During the Joseph Smith period, in between the uprootings and movings of the members, bishops presided over all of the Aarionic Priesthood, including the quorum presidents,28 but a priest presided over the priests quorum, not a bishop. In Doctrine and Covenants 124, Vinson Knight was called to be a presiding or general bishop, and Samuel Rolfe, who was not a bishop, to be president of the priests.29 Also, when a resurrected Kirtland Stake was created in 1841, the stake council called Nehemiah Greenhalgh, who was not a bishop, as president of the Aarionic Priesthood but left it to the stake bishop to reorganize the deacons and teachers quorums at a later date.30

Various Aarionic Priesthood quorums were organized and re-organized in Nauvoo before the death of Joseph Smith. On March 21, 1841, Bishops Newel Whitney, George Miller, John Higbee, and Vinson Knight organized Nauvoo’s Aarionic Priesthood. For a priests quorum presidency, they picked Samuel Rolf, Stephen Markham, and Hezekiah Peck. Elisha Everett, James W. Huntsman, and James Hendricks became the teachers quorum presidency; Phinehas R. Bird, David Wood, and William W. Lane presided over the deacons.31 Deacons met together that June.32 Teachers quorum minutes show that the quorum met weekly in 1841, but by fall, the meetings were sporadic. In May 1841, they discussed the possibility
of visiting each member of the Church, but discussion was laid over until more information on the subject became available.

At a January 18, 1842, Nauvoo Stake High Council meeting, Stake President William Marks said the purpose of meeting was to consider the affairs of the Church, to set in order all things relative to their duty,

to call on the Bishops and see if they call the Lesser Priesthood together if they do their duty if the Priests visit from house to house if there was no malice no hardness no difficulty in the Church that he wished to have them make a record of all who do their duty who keep the word of wisdom &c. He recommended that the Bishops adopt such measures as would be most practicable and useful to bring about such an order of things that their reports be brought before the High Council that they may have a knowledge of their proceedings and the situation of the Church.33

Hyrum Smith, representing the First Presidency,34 explained that bishops were subject to the High Council and that the council should call on the Presidents of the Lesser priesthood to attend the Council & receive instruction, and that he would meet with them if they would notify him of their meetings. That it was necessary for them to go from house to house, to his house, and to every house and see that every family done their duty, that he knew that there were more than one hundred families in town who did not attend to family prayer . . . that every ordained member was a watchman on the wall.35

Hyrum also said "a record should be kept, by the Lesser Priesthood." He called for a record of members moving in and out, of the excommunicated, and of deaths. The High Council then voted that quorum presidents should meet with them and the First Presidency the next Friday. Bishop Knight reported that the lesser priesthood holders in his ward were doing their duty.

Stake President Marks spoke about helping the poor, so Bishop Knight gave an account of the situation of the poor, reporting that means had become exhausted for their relief. Hyrum Smith said that "there was a general want of action in the Church, that he wanted every one to start anew he knew not of a resolution in all the quorums to stop iniquity."36

During the Nauvoo years, some priesthood teaching in homes was done, but how much is not known. One study of Nauvoo priesthood home visiting notes that "their home teaching program did not keep pace with their developments."37 An oft-repeated story about Nauvoo home teaching concerns seventeen-year-old William F.
Cahoon, who visited Joseph Smith—but facts indicate this incident happened well before the Nauvoo period. During a February 4, 1844, meeting, the Nauvoo teachers heard "some very appropriate remark[s] on the subjects [of] visiting the brethren and settling difficulties amongst the brethren." Apparently their next meeting was held almost a year later when the teachers met with the bishops to "reorganize the quorum of teachers, it being previously disorganized by a great number of said quorum joining the seventies and high priests quorums." Samuel K. Gifford recorded that in 1844 he was ordained a teacher "and acted as such to the best of my ability." A year later, by February 1845, the quorum again became organized and teachers again visited members, "generally finding them in good standing." At the next meeting a week later, one teacher reported he had visited in several wards and found the members generally in good standing. He exhorted the others to faithfully perform their duties.

Minutes of the Nauvoo Aaronic Priesthood covering the period from January 1844 to June 1845 provide a detailed look at Aaronic Priesthood operations. Stephen Farnsworth was ordained president of the priests quorum on January 13, 1844, and chose two counselors. But the quorum had barely started when nearly all the priests were ordained as seventies at the April conference. Meanwhile, the teachers quorum began meeting as a separate group and undertook visiting assignments. At the October 1844 conference, presidencies were sustained for priests and teachers quorums. The following January 1845, the Nauvoo bishops met to reorganize the quorum of teachers. Minutes for the January 13 meeting list the new presidency, ordained that day, and thirty-one teachers. After that, both the priests and teachers met in a combined Aaronic Priesthood meeting conducted jointly by the two quorums' presidents. The weekly meetings involved testimony bearing, instruction, assignments, and reports concerning "visiting the Church." Joint meetings were held fairly regularly until at least June 1845, when the minute book ends. Stephen M. Farnsworth continued as priests quorum president in the fall of 1845. During 1845 the priests visited Saints throughout the city, assisted by teachers and deacons.

Church leaders turned to the Aaronic Priesthood quorums when the state dissolved Nauvoo's city government. In early 1845, the state cancelled Nauvoo's city charter, thereby dissolving the city's police system. Policeman Hosea Stout said the police decided
to subdivide Nauvoo and the "County into Quorums of twelve deacons and have a Bishop at their head and they could thus administer in the lesser offices of the Church and preserve order." On March 24, 1845, President Smith and the Twelve ordained new bishops and instructed them to call deacons to be watchmen to "insure peace and good order." Newly ordained Bishop John S. Higbee organized his First Ward into five "districts or wards" each with a bishop (apparently not ordained) "for the purpose of guarding the city from marauders and evil doers." Higbee noted that he ordained Elam Ludington and Jesse D. Hunter as his counselors on March 30 of that year.

David Moore said that after the Nauvoo Charter was repealed authorities organized the cities into districts and appointed officers over every ten men. "They were called Bishops and Deacons," he said, and guarded the city at night. The organization was kept up during the summer of 1845. Moore was appointed (apparently not ordained) a bishop and assigned to keep watch of his district one night a week. To guard his very large district on the north side of Nauvoo, which included a steamboat landing, he had a company of thirteen men. "Our weapons was a large hickory cane and a toothpick [a huge knife] the object of the knife to whistle Rascals out of town." These priesthood guards have been romanticized and popularized by being called "whistling and whittling brigades."

In 1845 leaders proposed that deacons should take care of the poor. At the October 1845 conference, held inside the Temple, the usual officers were sustained for all quorums but the deacons. Brigham Young therefore announced "that there be a quorum of deacons selected, and a president over them, and that the presiding Bishops see to it, as soon as possible, and make report to this conference, before its close." Leaders periodically wanted "to fill up" the quorums. By that they meant they wanted enough men in the quorums so quorum meetings and assignments happened, not that quorums must have the twelve, twenty-four, and forty-eight members set for the deacons, teachers, and priests quorums. In October 1842, for example, the Nauvoo teachers quorum numbered only fifteen members. In January 1845, Bishop Newel K. Whitney called a meeting "to fill up the quorums in order that saints might be visited by the lesser priesthood." Records note that "four priests and ten teachers were ordained" at the meeting.
Boys and the Priesthood

Aaronic Priesthood offices at Nauvoo were filled almost entirely by adults. Because of the duties assigneddeacons, teachers, and priests in the revelations, leaders felt that maturity, not age, was the prerequisite for ordination. Nevertheless, in the pre-1846 period, many young men served the Church well in official callings. Orson Pratt became a missionary at age nineteen. Lyman Johnson, later a young member of the Twelve, served a mission when he was twenty. George A. Smith, baptized at fifteen, marched in Zion's Camp and later was ordained a member of the First Quorum of Seventy at eighteen. Peter Whitmer, Jr., became one of the Eight Witnesses at nineteen. Daniel Tyler, not quite eighteen, filled a mission by himself when his older companion failed to show up. Joseph's younger brother Don Carlos received the priesthood at age fourteen, filled a mission that year, and at nineteen became the Nauvoo high priests quorum president. Erastus Snow, baptized at fourteen, preached extensively in Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania before he was nineteen. At nineteen he preached with Joseph Smith at a Far West meeting. Harrison Burgess, eighteen, filled a mission to Vermont. William F. Cahoon says he was seventeen when he was a home teacher. Admittedly these cases are few and most involve older boys or young men, but they do show a willingness at that time to call youths to priesthood service. Later in the century, the Church in Utah increasingly used this precedent for ordaining faithful and capable youths.

Elders

An elders quorum formally existed during most of the Nauvoo years. Lack of records means that the quorums' history can be told only in outline, based mainly on newspaper reports. By 1841 John A. Hicks was elders quorum president. The quorum presidency sometimes was sustained at general conferences. The last presidency mentioned in the records was sustained on April 7, 1845, when members "continued and sustained" Samuel Williams as president, with Jesse Baker and Joshua Smith remaining as counselors. While no quorum roll book survives to show enrollments year by year, membership numbers probably varied. They rose when new elders moved in and when large groups of missionaries, sent out as elders, returned. They fell when elders were called to be seventies or high priests.
Men called on missions during Joseph Smith's presidency were sent out as elders or seventies, a practice which required that some men be ordained before leaving. At general conference in April 1840, "the committee on ordination" (apparently not a stake committee) "reported that they had ordained thirty one persons to be elders." Another fifty men, some of whom undoubtedly had been elders, "had been received into the quorum of the seventies." At the 1840 October conference, "the committee on ordinations reported that they had ordained thirty nine to the ministry." During 1842 and 1843, large numbers of men were called into the elders' ranks. Apostle Brigham Young presided at a special conference in August 1841, held to select experienced men to go into the vineyard. The Twelve sent six elders to various cities and received conference approval to call many others.

A special elders conference convened between April 6 and 12, 1843, conducted by the Twelve. The purpose "was to ordain elders, and send them forth into the vineyard to build up churches." Dozens of names of men were enrolled, and twenty-two men were ordained. Then the April conference saw a mass recruitment for missionary service. One conference purpose, Joseph Smith announced, "was to chose young men, and ordain them, and send them out to preach, that they may have an opportunity of proving themselves, and of enduring the tarrying and feathering and such things as those of us who have gone before them, have had to endure." Elder Lyman Wight asked "if there were any present of the rough and weak things, who wished to be ordained, and go and preach, who have not been before ordained." He then spoke to these men "on the subject of their duty and requirements to go to preach." As a result, under the hands of the Twelve, 275 men were ordained as elders during the conference.

A year later, during the April 1843 conference, the same thing happened. Under the direction of the Twelve, dozens of men were called on missions, twenty-two of whom needed to be ordained as elders first. Three months later, at a special conference of elders held July 3 and 5, several dozen elders were sent on missions.

Again, at the April 1844 general conference, an army of elders was called and sent to most states of the Union. Names of 339 men are listed in the *Times and Seasons*, many of them "experienced and able elders." Their assignment was to preach, to hold conferences,
and to expound Joseph Smith's "Views of the Power and Policy of the General Government" in order to find electors who would vote for him for president of the United States.64

Other than these mass ordinations for missionary purposes, the Nauvoo High Council sometimes approved of elder ordinations. For example, council minutes note on September 10, 1842, that "Lewis Muedze was also ordained an Elder as he desired to return to Germany to preach the Gospel." On September 17 that year, the council record notes that "Truman Gilbert presented a Recommend from the Kirtland Branch Ohio and was ordained an Elder according to his request." Similarly, "Charles Greenwood requested an ordination, he was recommended by L. Soby, he was ordained."

Quorum presidents sometimes posted notices in the newspaper inviting newly arrived men holding a particular office to meet with that quorum. In July 1840, the Times and Seasons carried a notice issued by Iowa Elders Quorum President Daniel Avery calling for elders in Iowa to enroll their names in his quorum by early August "or they will not be considered in fellowship with said quorum." His quorum met, the notice said, on the fourth Saturday of each month at Ambrosia, Lee County.65

In March 1841, President John A. Hicks of the Nauvoo elders quorum published a notice "to the Elders Scattered Abroad." He requested that all those who held the office of elder should notify the clerk of the quorum of elders of their place of residence "by letter post piad [sic], that we may know where to find them." The time had come, he said, "when it is necessary that every one should render an account of his stewardship if he wishes to continue any longer steward." He was reacting to a problem of men out "in the world calling themselves elders" who had neither license nor recommend from the quorum. Some out in the world claiming to be elders were in fact "unclean persons, some of whom have fled from justice" and "keep not the commandments neither the word of wisdom." Then, as a postscript, quorum clerk Samuel Henderson asked men who formerly belonged to the elders but who had "joined the quorum of Seventies since last spring Conference" to notify him.66

John S. Higbee was ordained an elder on July 3, 1839, and although his small journal says nothing about his quorum, it does record that in July of 1840 he assisted with the baptisms for the dead, performing about one hundred immersions of people "most of them for their dead relatives."67
High Priests

High priests had a quorum in Nauvoo, presided over first by Don Carlos Smith and then by Bishop George Miller. They held quorum meetings, but how often or regularly is not known. Quorum records are scarce, so only a thumbnail history is possible. Like the elders presidency, the high priests presidency struggled to find out who should be in their quorum. President Miller late in 1842 announced that all high priests who had not become members of "the Quorum of High Priests" should enroll in the quorum "upon their arrival in this place." It was their duty, he said, "to apply to the Quorum for admission." 69

During the October 1844 conference, President Brigham Young gave the high priests a major task. First he had the quorum members come up from the congregation and join together on the right of the stand. He then announced that he wanted to select a number of high priests to preside in each congressional district in the United States. He picked eighty-five high priests to do the job. For this mission, or to replace those called, forty-nine elders were ordained as high priests during the conference. The plan, President Young said, was not for the high priests to tarry six months, but to take their families along and to settle down in those districts. They could return when the Temple was finished and receive their endowments, but then they were to return to their districts and turn them into stakes as large as the Nauvoo Stake.70

Departures apparently waited for good weather to come early in 1845. John S. Higbee's diary notes that on January 12, 1845, he attended his high priests quorum meeting and while there he and fifty other high priests were chosen for a special mission by the Twelve and told to hold themselves in readiness to be sent to the various states.71 Calls were issued, but for some reason the plan to send high priests eastward was not carried out.

At their January 26, 1845, meeting, the high priests quorum discussed a proposal that they build a high priests hall, 120' long, 80' wide, and 33' high. But Brigham Young convinced them to put the labor and money into finishing the upper room of the Temple so "you can get your endowment, and your priesthood."72 As a result, no high priests hall was started.

At general conference on October 6, 1845, Bishop Miller, William Snow, and Noah Packard were sustained as the quorum's presidency.
Seventies

Nauvoo had a greater influence on the priesthood office of seventy than on any other office, because both the number of men ordained to be seventies and the number of quorums mushroomed. A question that continues to disturb because it is not clearly answered is why President Brigham Young so vastly expanded the seventies' ranks. On February 28, 1835, Joseph Smith, based on an unrecorded revelation "showing the order of the Seventy," commenced to organize the first seventies unit in the Church. Its seven-member presidency presided over one quorum of seventy men and then over other units of seventy as needed—"until . . . seven times seventy, if the labor in the vineyard of necessity requires it." Seventies were not local ministers but were considered General Authorities, traveling ministers, witnesses unto the Gentiles and in all the world, and "seventy apostles." Seventies were called from among the experienced elders.73

Records indicate that from one-third to one-half of all missionaries set apart between 1837 and 1843 were seventies.74 By 1839 a second and third quorum of seventies had been organized. Their work was directed by the seven presidents of the first quorum, who together formed what is termed the First Council of the Seventy. Brigham Young's brother, Joseph Young, served as senior president of the First Quorum and therefore as president of all of the seventies.

In Nauvoo the seventies quorums met for edification, instruction, and worship. The meetings also helped the presidencies keep track of their members. Until the fall of 1844, only a few new quorums were added. Andrew Moore, for example, was ordained a president in the Fifth Quorum of Seventy in August 1844. He noted in January 1846 that "I continued to meet with my Quorum once every week to tranceact [sic] business and to see that the Quorum was in union . . . and to give instructions."75 To keep their seventy-member quorums reasonably filled, quorums recruited new members from among the elders, Aaronic Priesthood bearers, and the unordained. Individually, many seventies received and filled mission calls during the Nauvoo period. Some were already in seventies quorums when called, and others became seventies because of their mission calls.

At the October 1844 conference, President Brigham Young, in addition to calling high priests "to go abroad and preside" in the eastern states, called for a major expansion of seventies quorums.
He wanted at least ten quorums of seventy, so one purpose of the conference was “to ordain the presidents of the seventies and then fill the quorums of seventies from the elders quorum.” The next day, October 8, Heber C. Kimball of the First Presidency “recommended all those elders who are under the age of thirty-five, and also all the priests, teachers, deacons and members, who are recommended to be ordained, to withdraw and receive an ordination into the seventies, which was done.”

This expansion of seventies quorums was a major priesthood development during the Nauvoo years. Before the conference concluded, the seventies presidents had ordained approximately four hundred men into seventies quorums. They filled eleven quorums and put forty men into a twelfth quorum. After the conference and for the next several months, more quorums were created and more seventies ordained. Thomas Steed recalled that on April 7, 1845, he “was ordained a seventy with about five hundred others ... sol joined the 21st Quorum.” In December 1845, the thirty-second quorum was organized. By early 1846, seventies units numbered thirty-four.

Why the Twelve called for this build-up of seventies is not explained. Apparently the Twelve had in mind a massive missionary labor in the near future, perhaps to implement what President Joseph Smith had wanted done—Norton Jacob recalled that in 1844 President Smith “directed that all the Elders of Israel should go into the vineyard.” President Young told the conference “that the elders young men who are capable of preaching, will be ordained” and that “if an elder wants to go preaching let him go into the seventies. You are all apostles to the nations to carry the gospel; and when we send you to build up the kingdom, we will give you the keys, and power and authority.”

This seventies recruitment apparently was part of a two-pronged expansion the Twelve wanted for the kingdom: sending out a large missionary force to convert and baptize new members and sending out high priests to preside over areas where these converts lived. Counselor Heber C. Kimball noted that Brigham Young, when challenged about whether a high priest was higher than a seventy, answered that “the Seventies are ordained Apostles and when they go forth into the ministry, they are sent with power to build up the kingdom in all the world and consequently they have power to ordain High Priests, and also to ordain and organize a High Council.” The goal seemed to be the creation of stakes throughout
the United States, converted and organized by seventies, who would install the selected high priests as stake presidents. However, for reasons not explained, perhaps because of priorities given to finishing the Temple, neither prong of the plan was pushed. Nevertheless, Nauvoo quickly had more seventies than any other Melchizedek Priesthood office. By late 1845, most of the men in Nauvoo who held the priesthood were seventies.

To house the meetings for the many quorums, the seventies constructed their own Seventies Hall, which was completed that winter. On December 26, 1844, the Twelve presided over the first of several days of dedicating the new Seventies Hall as a home for fifteen quorums. That day many of the Twelve and the Seven Presidents sat on the stand. Senior presidents of each of the seventies quorums sat on the right, a choir on the left, and a brass band in front. The congregation was comprised of members of the second and third quorums of Seventy with their families. At a rate of two quorums per day, “each day afforded a new congregation, that all the seventies, with their families, might in turn, participate.” At the dedication services, prayers and preachings made clear that seventies “were designed to be messengers to every land and kingdom under heaven” and “to administer salvation.” Senior President of the Seventies Joseph Young, on the fourth day, prayed that God would “bless them and their families when they shall go to the Islands of the sea.”

The seventies’ final notable activity in Nauvoo came during the winter of 1845–46 when “the Twelve delegated to them [the Presidents of the Seventies] the government of the Temple, while the ordinances were being administered to their quorums.” The Twelve’s action firmly placed the “responsibility for giving the endowment” to the seventies on the shoulders of the First Presidency of the Seventy.

**Nauvoo’s Priesthood Legacy**

An assessment of local priesthood work during the Nauvoo period shows continuity in terms of what priesthood bearers and quorums had done before in Missouri, in Ohio, and in mission areas, and it identifies several adaptations and changes. What was Nauvoo’s priesthood legacy? What started or continued at Nauvoo that became part of priesthood practices in the future? What was enduring and what was temporary?
On December 15, 1844, the Nauvoo City Council passed an ordinance allowing the creation of the Seventies Library and Institute Association. Two weeks later, stockholders met and elected a board of trustees, which included Apostle George A. Smith (Journal History, December 15 and 24, 1844). Donors of money or books received stock certificates enabling them to use the library. On January 1, 1845, Times and Seasons praised the newly-formed library for intending to embrace the arts and sciences from "every where," because seventies "while travelling over the face of the globe" would gather important books for it (Times and Seasons 5 [January 1, 1845]: 762). Books were kept in a room over James Ivins's store and then in the Seventies Hall. One inventory lists 675 books (Seventies Library Inventory, Nauvoo Restoration Inc.).
Nauvoo Stake

Nauvoo continued a barely established precedent that stakes were the basic local Church unit. Ideally, a new clustering or settlement of Saints would begin with a presiding officer, who might be called a branch, district, stake, or settlement president or presiding elder. Then the clustering needed a bishop to handle court cases, moneys, and the poor. Finally, a high council was needed to handle discipline cases and disputes and to make decisions for the settlement. If population grew, more bishops would be added, the settlement subdivided into wards—sometimes called districts or branches—and satellite settlements recognized as being part of the stake. This pattern continued to be followed in Utah for decades.

Local priesthood quorums continued to be stake entities as they had been in Missouri and Kirtland. These included deacons, teachers, priests, and elders quorums. This pattern continued in Utah. Salt Lake Stake, for example, had stake deacons, teachers, and priests quorums until the 1870s. Sanpete Stake during the 1870s had a stake quorum of each, and half of each quorums’ members came from one city (Manti), half from another (Ephraim).  

Visiting priesthood teachers continued to be the most important local priesthood officers in contact with the members. Before, during the Nauvoo years, and after, visits to the homes were standard priesthood work. Visiting was considered lesser priesthood work, a view that continued through that century. Since Nauvoo, the main activity carried out by local priesthood bearers continues to be visiting members in their homes.

Quorum meetings before, during, and after Nauvoo were the most important self-learning sessions that male Latter-day Saint members attended. When ward Sunday Schools first started in the 1860s, they were for children and youths. Not until the late 1800s was Sunday School generally attended by adults.

A concern before, during, or immediately after Nauvoo was that priesthood quorums have enough manpower to be viable, but not that there be multiple quorums for each office so that all men could be priesthood bearers. The assumption was that a stake should have one quorum each of elders, priests, teachers, and deacons. In time Utah wards came to have their own groups of teachers and deacons and finally of priests. Until well into this century, stake elders quorums continued to include more than one ward’s elders.

However, the Nauvoo years brought three priesthood changes that, as subsequent years proved, were of paramount importance.
Of greatest significance was the creation of subunits called wards, each of which had a bishop assigned to it. Like a very fertile seed, wards headed by bishops became within the decade following the exodus from Nauvoo the essential church unit that cared for, trained, provided ordinances and worship services for, and otherwise served Saints at the local level. The practice of having wards and ward bishops that started in Nauvoo has become a fixture of Church government.

A second important change was caused by the general introduction of the temple endowment and celestial marriages late in 1845. After that, the endowment became required of all men going on missions or receiving temple marriages. Henceforth, men going on missions or marrying had to bear the Melchizedek Priesthood. This policy increased the numbers of elders and seventies by siphoning off practically all men who had staffed the deacons, teachers, and priests quorums. By the earliest days in Utah, Church leaders, lacking non-Melchizedek Priesthood men, had to call elders, seventies, and high priests to be acting deacons, acting teachers, and acting priests in order to keep Aaronic Priesthood work going.88

A third major change during the Nauvoo era was the unusual and massive expansion of seventies quorums. After the expansion, most Nauvoo men held some priesthood office. Assuming that Nauvoo’s peak population was about 12,000 and that the average household was a family of two parents and three children, then it seems that one-fifth of Nauvoo’s 12,000 residents, about 2,400, were men. Of those 2,400, there were 1,823 men by late 1845 who were seventies (making up thirty-four quorums).89 Add to this number about 300 high priests, including bishops and Apostles,90 and a score or more of Aaronic Priesthood bearers, and the number of priesthood holders exceeds 2,000. A reasonable estimate, then, is that by late 1846 three-fourths or more of Nauvoo’s males held some priesthood office. About 80 percent of these were seventies, making seventies the largest priesthood group in the Church, a distinction they held for the next decade.91 In the 1847 select pioneer party, for example, there were eight Apostles, four bishops, fifteen high priests, eight elders, and seventy-eight seventies.92 During the nineteenth century, seventies provided two-thirds of all missionaries called.93

Nauvoo’s main personalities, location, and dramatic happenings are well known and documented. Even Nauvoo’s common people have received scholarly attention in recent years. For the
women, the Female Relief Society served briefly to help bond many to the Church organization. Less known but equally important, priesthood quorums in Nauvoo similarly connected men to the Church organization. In those days before wards and therefore before ward sacrament, before priesthood and auxiliary meetings, quorums—during their off-and-on existences—gave priesthood bearers a sense of belonging and comraderie, a place to discuss, learn, and share experiences, and a range of religious assignments to perform. Priesthood office and quorum membership were ingredients in a glue-mix that by 1845 helped bond most of the Latter-day Saint men in Nauvoo to the Church.

NOTES


2 Nauvoo Stake High Council Minutes, May 8, 1842, Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.


4 *Times and Seasons* 2 (September 15, 1841): 547.


Meeting of High Council and Bishopric, February 24, 1838, Minutes in Far West Record, 142; for teachers’ activities see also the Far West, Kirtland, and Nauvoo Teachers Quorum Minutes, December 1834–December 1845, film of manuscript, LDS Church Archives.

John Somers Higbee, Reminiscences and Diaries, 1845–66, LDS Church Archives.


Times and Seasons 2 (October 15, 1841): 577.


Beacher, “The Office of Bishop,” 104.

Times and Seasons 2 (September 1, 1841): 521.

Higbee Diaries.

Nauvoo Stake High Council Minutes, August 20 and 21, 1842; and HC 5:119–20; a note on page 120 explains the evolution from three wards in 1839 to four wards and then on March 1, 1842, to thirteen wards. Ward boundaries were readjusted on December 4, 1842 (see HC 5:199).


Higbee Diaries.


Times and Seasons 6 (November 1, 1845): 1013.


Marrott, “The Aaronic Priesthood”; Teachers Quorum Minutes for Kirtland, Far West, and Nauvoo, 1838–42; and Nauvoo Aaronic Priesthood Minutes and Biographical Sketches, January 13, 1844, to June 15, 1845, LDS Church Archives.


HC 4:312; and Doctrine and Covenants 124:141–42.

Times and Seasons 2 (July 1, 1841): 459.

H.C 4:312.

Teachers Quorum Minutes for Kirtland, Far West, and Nauvoo, 1838–42, LDS Church Archives.

Nauvoo Stake High Council Minutes, January 18, 1842, 34.


Nauvoo Stake High Council Minutes, January 18, 1842, 43–35.

Nauvoo Stake High Council Minutes, January 18, 1842, 35.

Gary L. Phelps, “Home Teaching—Attempts by the Latter-day Saints to Establish an Effective Program during the Nineteenth Century” (Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1975), 29.

William Farrington Cahoon, “Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” Juvenile Instructor 28 (August 15, 1892): 492–93. It is generally accepted that this story happened at Nauvoo (Phelps, “Home Teaching,” 35), but if so, Cahoon could not have been seventeen as he claims: he was born on November 7, 1813, so if he
were "about seventeen years of age," that age would put the story near 1830 and before he was baptized.

39Teachers Quorum Minutes, January 13, 1845.
40Samuel Kendall Gifford, Reminiscences, typescript, LDS Church Archives, 5.
41Teachers Quorum Minutes, February 12 and 19, 1845.
42Nauvoo Aaronic Priesthood Minutes and Biographical Sketches.
43Nauvoo Aaronic Priesthood Minutes and Biographical Sketches.
45HC 7:388; and Higbee Diaries.
48HC 7:381.
49Times and Seasons 6 (November 1, 1845): 1010.
51HC 5:169.
52HC 7:351.
55HC 4:341.
56HC 7:392.
57Times and Seasons 2 (April 1840): 94–95.
58Times and Seasons 1 (October 1840): 187.
59Times and Seasons 2 (September 1, 1841): 521.
60Times and Seasons 4 (April 1, 1843): 157–58.
61Times and Seasons 3 (April 15, 1842): 761–63.
62Times and Seasons 4 (April 1, 1843): 158.
63Times and Seasons 4 (June 15, 1843): 240. Although the issue is dated June 15, it carries news of the July 3 and 5 special conference.
64Times and Seasons 5 (April 15, 1844): 504–6.
65Times and Seasons 1 (July 1840): 143.
66Times and Seasons 2 (March 1, 1841): 340.
67Higbee Diaries.
68HC 2:370, 4:12, and 4:424.
69Times and Seasons 3 (August 15, 1842): 894.
70Times and Seasons 5 (November 1, 1844): 695–96.
71Higbee Diaries.
72Nauvoo High Priests Quorum Minutes, Miscellaneous Minutes File, LDS Church Archives, January 26, 1845. See also HC 7:34.
73HC 2:201–4, 221, 346, and 7:307; and Doctrine and Covenants 107:25. The standard history of seventies work is Baumgarten's thesis, "The Role and Function of the Seventies in L.D.S. Church History" (see n. 9 in this article).
74First Council of Seventy, Minutes and Genealogy Book B, microfilm, LDS Church Archives; statistics compiled by the author.
75Andrew Moore, Reminiscenses, LDS Church Archives.
76 HC 7:305.

77 The Life of Thomas Steed from His Own Diary, 1826-1910, typescript (n.p., n.d.), 11. Copy in Church Library, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

78 HC 7:549; Seventies Record Book B, LDS Church Archives, December 21, 1845; Baumgarten, “The Role and Function of the Seventies,” 32; and 34th Quorum of Seventies, Seventies and Quorums, Records, 1844–1975, December 21, 1845.


80 HC 7:307–8.


82 Times and Seasons 6 (February 1, 1845): 794.

83 Times and Seasons 6 (February 1, 1845): 797–98.

84 HC 7:566; and Seventies Record Book B, January 7 and 8, 1846.


89 Author’s tally is based on individual quorum records in Seventies Record Book B.

90 There were 286 high priests who received temple endowments late in 1845 (see HC7:552).


92 Journal History, April 18, 1847, 2.

William W. Phelps’s Service in Nauvoo as Joseph Smith’s Political Clerk

Bruce A. Van Orden

Praise to the man who commun’d with Jebovah,
Jesus anointed “that Prophet and Seer,”
Blessed to open the last dispensation;
Kings shall extol him, and nations revere.¹

William W. Phelps, one of Joseph Smith’s most intimate associates, wrote this stanza a month following the Prophet’s martyrdom. Phelps worked very closely with Joseph Smith during the Nauvoo period. He labored in several Church positions but served primarily as the Prophet’s political clerk during the apex of Joseph’s career. In this position, he was the Prophet’s second most important clerk.²

Background

William Wines Phelps, usually referred to as W. W. Phelps by himself and others, was born February 17, 1792, in Dover, Hanover Township, Morris County, New Jersey.³ In 1800 he moved with his parents to Homer Township, Onandaga County (Cortland County in 1808), New York, which had recently opened for settlement. After marrying Sally Waterman in 1815, W. W. began learning the printing and newspaper business. Virtually all newspapers of this period were essentially rooted in political partisanship and were the main campaigning vehicles for the various factions. His newspaper work trained him as both a political writer and participant.

In 1827 and 1828, he became a founding member of the Anti-Masonic movement in New York and served as the initial editor of the Anti-Masonic newspaper, the Lake Light, in Trumansburgh. In April 1828, God-fearing and zealous Phelps went to Canandaigua,

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William W. Phelps, Joseph Smith’s political clerk

c.a. 1853, image reversed, Daguerreotype Collection, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
the most prominent village in western New York at the time, to start
the Anti-Masonic paper, the Ontario Phoenix. He moved his young
family to Canandaigua and established himself in what he hoped
would be a long, productive political and editing career.

Anti-Masonry erupted as a religious and quasi-political move-
ment in upstate New York in 1827 in immediate reaction to the
abduction of erstwhile Freemason William Morgan the previous year
for writing an exposé of Masonry. However, anti-Masonic senti-
ment had been smoldering in the northeastern United States for
years because of the widely perceived notion that Masons, who
belonged to an elitist and secret fraternity, controlled virtually all
political and law enforcement positions and that Masonry was a
counterfeit religion. The Anti-Masonic movement also received
much of its force from antislavery and temperance advocates. One
of its chief objectives was to inject the common people and
workmen into the state and national political system. To this end, the
Anti-Masons conducted local political conventions throughout New
York to select legislature candidates in order “to root out the
privileged class.” Their principal opponents were the national
Democratic party, headed by presidential candidate Andrew Jack-
son, and the New York political clique, the Albany Regency, headed
by Governor Martin Van Buren.

The new Anti-Masonic party met with immediate success in the
legislative elections. Two experienced political professionals,
Thurlow Weed and William Seward, seized control of the party in
1828 and undermined the evangelical zealots of the movement. By
1830 the Anti-Masonic party had spread to several states. In 1831 the
fledgling party experimented with the nation’s first presidential
nominating convention in Baltimore. New York’s Weed and Seward
built on their Anti-Masonic constituency and formed the Whig party
in 1834. Soon the national Whig party emerged, consisting of an
unstable coalition of old-time Federalists, opportunistic Anti-Masons,
staunch National Republicans, eastern capitalists and labor, conser-

vative midwestern farmers, and southern merchants and planters.
Henry Clay and Daniel Webster were their most prominent leaders
and presidential candidates. Both Anti-Masonry and Whiggery con-
tributed numerous ideas and precedents to the American political
scene, but both also faded after a relatively short existence.

Because of his prominence in the Anti-Masonic movement,
W. W. Phelps sought nomination as New York’s lieutenant govern-
orn on the Anti-Masonic ticket in 1828 and 1830. His political career failed
to materialize, however, for he became acquainted with a new religious movement in his vicinity, a religion that soon claimed his loyalty.

As a newspaper editor in New York's "Mormon Country," Phelps was aware of most major events surrounding the rise of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He read the Book of Mormon as it came off E. B. Grandin's press in March 1830 and became convinced that it contained the word of God. He sought out Joseph Smith in Fayette and was moved by the Prophet's "godly account" of his heavenly experiences but not yet enough to give up his attachment to the Anti-Masonic movement.

Phelps's Anti-Masonic colleagues became increasingly unsettled by his attraction to Mormonism. In April 1831, after most New York Saints had migrated to Ohio, two Canandaigua businessmen brought trumped-up charges of indebtedness against Phelps to keep him "from joining the Mormons." After he was released from jail, Phelps resigned his editorship and prepared his family to move to Kirtland, Ohio, the new Church headquarters.

He arrived in Kirtland in mid-June, located Joseph Smith, and announced to the Prophet that he was ready to join the Church and "do the will of the Lord." Accordingly, Joseph sought the Lord's will concerning Phelps and learned that W. W. was "called and chosen" to the ministry. This call included an assignment to assist Oliver Cowdery with "the work of printing, and of selecting and writing books for schools in this church" (D&C 55:1, 4–5). The Prophet was pleased to find someone qualified to print the Church's scriptures and other writings.

In the same revelation, the Lord commanded W. W. Phelps, though a new member, to be one of seven select brethren to accompany Joseph Smith to Missouri to locate the land of Zion—the assignment most occupying the Prophet's attention that spring. As a member of that party, Phelps enthusiastically witnessed the dedication of the sacred temple lot in Independence, Missouri. He was assigned by revelation to "be planted in this place, and be established as a printer unto the church" (D&C 57:11). He would now be the Church's chief printer and editor, and Oliver would assist him (D&C 57:13).

As soon as W. W. was able to move his family to Independence, he established the Church's first printing office. Just as virtually all American political and religious movements in that day relied on newspapers to identify and promote their causes, the young Church of Christ, as it was first called, needed a forum to communicate and
establish its positions. Phelps met this need by starting two newspapers: the religious monthly, *The Evening and the Morning Star*, and the secular weekly, *Upper Missouri Advertiser*. His editorship of these papers made him one of the Church's primary spokespersons.

Over the next few years, a period of overwhelming turmoil for the Saints in Missouri, Phelps served in many trusted capacities: member of the Missouri Stake presidency, writer of key doctrinal essays, and co-compiler of Joseph Smith's revelations into the Doctrine and Covenants. Following the Saints' expulsion from Jackson County, he also began to represent the Church in political and legal matters by writing letters, compiling petitions, and personally lobbying state officials in the Missouri state capital.

In 1836 Phelps helped arrange for the Saints to remove from Clay County to the "Mormon county" of Caldwell. Along with John Whitmer, he founded and laid out the settlement of Far West. Since Phelps and Whitmer used considerable Church funds in setting up Far West and acted independently of the Missouri High Council, Church leaders felt these men abused their power, so the council released them from their leadership posts in the Church in 1838. Consequently, Phelps joined a growing group of dissidents who tried throughout the remainder of the year to undercut the work of Joseph Smith and the First Presidency in northern Missouri. In the Richmond preliminary hearing in November 1838, Phelps's testimony against Joseph Smith contributed to the Prophet's lengthy incarceration in Liberty Jail. Phelps was officially excommunicated from the Church in March 1839.

Phelps moved his family to the Dayton, Ohio, area in 1839, just as Joseph Smith escaped his Missouri persecutors and founded the Saints' new gathering place in Nauvoo, Illinois. Phelps lost complete contact with the Church until Elders Orson Hyde and John E. Page of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles came to the Dayton area to proselyte. After seeing Phelps's changed heart and impoverished conditions, these brethren wrote a letter to the First Presidency in Nauvoo pleading for clemency in behalf of Phelps: "He tells us verbally that he is willing to make any sacrifice to procure your fellowship, life not excepted."9 W. W. Phelps wrote a pathetic letter to accompany the one from Elders Hyde and Page. "I am alive, and with the help of God I mean to live still," he began. "I am as the prodigal son, though I never doubt[ed] or disbelieve[d] the fulness of the Gospel. I have been greatly abused and humbled."10 After receiving the petitions and consulting with Sidney Rigdon and
Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith wrote back to Phelps on July 22, 1840: “Believing your confession to be real and your repentance genuine, I shall be happy once again to give you the right hand of fellowship, and rejoice over the returning prodigal.”

Because of his impoverished circumstances, Phelps and his family were unable to move to Nauvoo immediately. But as soon as he arrived, he was put to work. Joseph Smith was pleased to recover his valued friend and advisor; the Nauvoo Saints also revived their respect for him as a prominent Church member. Due to Joseph Smith's frank forgiveness of an erring, yet repentant brother, the Church reclaimed one of its most talented servants.

**Nauvoo Service**

The arrival of Phelps in Nauvoo was a godsend to Joseph Smith. Few projects in Nauvoo were more important to the Prophet than writing his and the Church's official history. The project was proceeding slowly because two of Joseph's trusted clerks who had started the project, James Mulholland and Robert B. Thompson, had died. Phelps's journalistic and Church experience made him one of the most qualified persons to compile the Church's history. "He was quite a singular man," young Joseph Smith III wrote of Phelps. He was "spare of flesh, already sufficiently aged to wear spectacles, was methodical and studious in his habits, and not very prepossessing in appearance though of good brain and judgment. He was quite a voluminous writer." Sometime in the forepart of 1842, Phelps commenced writing the history of the Church under Joseph Smith's direction. But as the year unfolded, the Prophet spent much of his time evading government authorities who sought him on old Missouri charges. Apparently Phelps was essentially left to himself to compile and write the official history. Working through December of that year as an employee of the Church (as he had been before his disaffection), he recorded in the *History of the Church* the significant events that had occurred between October 31, 1830, and November 1, 1831. Phelps himself had been a key player in the historical events of that same period, a fact that naturally does not go unnoticed in the official history.

A new phase in the clerking career of W. W. Phelps began on December 21, 1842, when Willard Richards, trusted and loyal Apostle, was appointed Joseph Smith's private secretary and historian. Until his death in 1854, Willard Richards superintended historical
compiling and writing in the Church. Phelps's subsequent work on the history was as Richards's assistant. Under Richards's direction, the history progressed rapidly during 1843 and 1844.\footnote{87}

While Phelps continued to assist Richards from time to time on the history, Joseph Smith gradually assigned Phelps other clerking duties. One of these was to aid Joseph Smith in editing, printing, and publishing a new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, which appeared in 1844. Soon, however, many of Phelps's assignments became political in nature.

Along with several other close associates of the Prophet, W. W. Phelps filled various positions in the Nauvoo city government, under Joseph Smith as mayor. Following the municipal elections in February 1843, Mayor Smith and the new city council appointed numerous city officials, including W. W. Phelps as the mayor's clerk and fire warden.\footnote{87} He signed numerous documents in behalf of Mayor Joseph Smith and supervised the work of the fire department. In addition to helping Joseph with the executive branch of city government, Phelps also was designated "Clerk of the Mayor's Court," a court in which the mayor, Joseph Smith, also served as judge according to powers granted him by the liberal Nauvoo Charter.

Now that Phelps was closely connected with Nauvoo city affairs, Joseph Smith repeatedly drew upon his counsel when making city-related decisions.\footnote{87} The Church and the city were constantly running into legal entanglements, and Joseph Smith was forced to study principles of the law, often doing so with Willard Richards and Phelps. On one occasion, the Prophet, exasperated at having to spend so much time with legal problems, declared to W. W. "that he should be a lawyer and understand law, and the time will come when I shall not need say to you, Thus and thus is the law, for you shall know it."\footnote{87} Several months after this conversation, Wilford Woodruff reported in his journal that in a special meeting Elder Phelps was called upon to speak concerning his "appointment" as a "lawgiver in Israel."\footnote{87} Phelps spent some of his time as Joseph Smith's clerk studying the law and in subsequent official correspondence to government officials signed his name "W. W. Phelps, esq." Joseph Smith also referred to him often as "Judge Phelps" or "Esquire Phelps." Even many years later in Utah, Phelps continued to serve as a lawyer and a justice of the peace.

Phelps's position as legal advisor soon evolved into full-time service as Joseph Smith's political clerk—his most valuable service
in Nauvoo to the Prophet. During the congressional campaign in the summer of 1843, Joseph became considerably interested in state and national politics. He knew that friends in high places could make a substantial difference regarding his own personal safety, the fortunes of the Saints in Illinois, and their quest for redress of the Missouri grievances. Joseph drew on Phelps's political and journalistic experience to compose political documents and letters to government officials.

Communicating in behalf of Joseph Smith with Governor Thomas Ford of Illinois became one of Phelps's primary duties. From the fall of 1843 through Joseph's death in June 1844, Phelps frequently visited the governor in Springfield or wrote him on such topics as procuring public arms for the Nauvoo Legion and answering charges against the Mormons from Illinois citizens.  

As the 1844 presidential campaign approached, Joseph Smith sent letters that Phelps had composed for him to each of the likely candidates: Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Lewis Cass, Richard M. Johnson, and Martin Van Buren. The letters asked each candidate what he would do regarding the treatment of the Mormons. When Clay and Calhoun separately responded, Joseph immediately asked Phelps to write further letters to the candidates in his behalf. Phelps also wrote many other letters under the name of the Prophet to individuals regarding the 1844 presidential election.  

By the end of January 1844, Joseph Smith and his close advisors, who included Phelps, had concluded from the unfavorable responses to these letters that the best political course was for Joseph to run as an independent candidate for the presidency of the United States. From this time on, Joseph Smith and W. W. Phelps often consulted about campaign strategy. Campaigning in those years was primarily accomplished by circulating large volumes of printed documents. Joseph assigned Phelps to write these key documents and then to present them to the group of advisors for discussion, necessary rewording, and approval. By March 1844, this group of advisors was formed into the Council of Fifty. Phelps was one its leaders.

As political advisor and clerk, W. W. Phelps, in behalf of Joseph Smith, penned such significant documents as "General Joseph Smith's Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys," "General Smith's Views on the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States," "Pacific Innuendo," and "A Friendly Hint to Missouri." He also
assisted Willard Richards, Orson Hyde, and John Taylor in writing a “Proclamation to the Kings of the Earth.”

Although Phelps’s service as a political writer was immense and often valuable, his writings were not flawless and might not have always been well received by the audiences they were meant to impress. Phelps’s often ponderous composition, with sentences that seem to go on forever, is evident in the political documents he wrote for Joseph Smith. Like other verbose politicians and political journalists of the day, Phelps often employed unnecessarily obscure vocabulary and foreign phrases. His frequent use of sarcasm was a typical political device in that day. The following example, taken from Joseph Smith’s political platform, entitled “General Smith’s Views,” demonstrates Phelps’s stylistic devices:

Mr. Van Buren [one of the 1844 presidential candidates] said, in his inaugural address, that he went “into the presidential chair the inflexible and uncompromising opponent of every attempt, on the part of Congress, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, against the wishes of the slave holding states; and also with a determination equally decided to resist the slightest interference with it in the states where it exists.” Poor little Matty made his rhapsodical sweep with the fact before his eyes, that the state of New-York, his native state, had abolished slavery, without a struggle or a groan. Great God, how independent! From henceforth slavery is tolerated where it exists: constitution or no constitution; people or no people; right or wrong; vox Matti; vox Diaboli: “the voice of Matty”—“the voice of the devil;” and peradventure, his great “Sub-Treasury” scheme was a piece of the same mind: but the man and his measures have such a striking resemblance to the anecdote of the Welchman and his cart-tongue, that, when the constitution was so long that it allowed slavery at the capitol of a free people, it could not be cut off; but when it was short that it needed a Sub-Treasury, to save the fund of the nation it could be spliced! Oh, granny what a long tail our puss has got! As a Greek might say, *hysteron proteron*: the cart before the horse, but his mighty whisk through the great national fire, for the presidential chestnuts, *burnt the locks of his glory with the blaze of his folly*.

A later Mormon historian, B. H. Roberts was not amused by Phelps’s verbal antics: “The display of foreign phrases was doubtless the work of W. W. Phelps, who had some smattering knowledge of languages, which he was ever fond of displaying. . . . These displays of pedantry mar these documents, and are in no way germane to the subjects of which they treat, and are not really the work of President Smith.”

This political platform also reflects Phelps’s entrenched political views he had gained from Anti-Masonry and Whiggery. It
advocated freeing the slaves, reforming the prison system, throwing out elitist politicians, giving the federal government power to protect minorities in their rights, and empowering the governments to promote trade and commerce. The document also mercilessly attacked Anti-Masonry's favorite nemesis, Martin Van Buren.28

Even though Phelps knew considerably more about national political issues than did Joseph Smith, in retrospect we may naturally wonder whether the Prophet was best served by having such a partisan as Phelps doing his political writing. Contemporary comments about these documents are sparse, so we may have no way of knowing.

In any event, this noteworthy, though certainly ponderous, platform was issued from the press on February 24, 1844. On the ensuing Sabbath day, a special prayer meeting was conducted in the Prophet's office, at which time petitions were offered to the Almighty that Joseph Smith's political views might be spread throughout the country. Later that week, copies were mailed to principal newspapers, the president, cabinet members, supreme court judges, senators, representatives, and numerous other important individuals.

However, not all of Phelps's associations with Joseph Smith in the last two years of the Prophet's life involved business or politics. The two, who had always cared about each other despite occasional differences, also enjoyed both friendly and religious experiences together. Phelps was so used to representing Joseph that he employed his favorite literary device, poetry, to promote the Prophet's image and doctrinal teachings. In early 1843, for example, Phelps dedicated a piece of verse to Joseph Smith and his glorious doctrines of the hereafter. This he entitled "Vade Mecum" or "Go with Me":

Go with me, will you go to the saints that have died,—
To the next, better world, where the righteous reside;
Where the angels and spirits in harmony be
In the joys of a vast paradise? Go with me.29

These words point to the Prophet's martyrdom that would occur a little over a year later. But in the meantime, Phelps would be directly involved with the events that lead to Joseph Smith's death.

On April 29, 1844, after some members of the Nauvoo City Council left the city to campaign for Joseph Smith in the East, Phelps and others were appointed to the council. As a council member, he played a key role in arranging for the destruction of the press of the
slanderous *Nauvoo Expositor* in June of that year. As a result, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Phelps as well as other city council members and Joseph Smith. Phelps accompanied the Prophet to Carthage. He listened to the recital of Joseph's last dream and recorded it for posterity and even offered to die for Joseph Smith.

When the Prophet was slain, W. W. Phelps gave the funeral address. He aided Willard Richards in keeping calm in Nauvoo and refused to support Sidney Rigdon's quest to become "Guardian of the Church." Instead, on August 8, 1844, he eloquently pleaded with the Nauvoo Saints to support the Twelve Apostles, who he felt held the keys of the kingdom upon the earth. He continued to represent Joseph Smith by doing what he knew would be the Prophet's will regarding the Church's administration.

William W. Phelps labored diligently under the direction of the Twelve in Nauvoo and retained his status as one of the Church's political advisors. He continued to assist with the writing of the official history and to write letters to political figures. When Brigham Young and the Council of the Twelve headed west with the "Camp of Israel," Phelps stayed for several months in Nauvoo to help complete necessary business matters in behalf of the Church. In Salt Lake City, he remained on the Council of Fifty, helped draft the Constitution for the State of Deseret, and served on the Utah Territorial Legislature. He practiced law and served as a justice of the peace. He remained faithful to the Church and died in full fellowship in Salt Lake City in 1872.

William W. Phelps was one of the most important associates of the Prophet Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. He did not always please everybody, including Joseph, with all that he wrote or did. He made numerous mistakes. But he humbled himself when necessary and did much to build the kingdom. As long as Church members sing the hymn "Praise to the Man," its author, W. W. Phelps, devoted assistant to that Prophet and Seer, should not be forgotten.
This version of the verses of "Praise to the Man," known earlier as "Martyr," is from The Latter-Day Saints' Psalmody (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1889). The congregation would find the chorus on the next page.

The description on the book's title page indicates that the music was one of the "old and familiar tunes specially arranged for this work" by a committee consisting of G. Careless, E. Beesley, J. J. Daynes, E. Stephens, and T. C. Griggs. The psalmody was "gotten up under the approval of the late President John Taylor, and accepted by President Wilford Woodruff and Council."
NOTES


2. Joseph Smith’s most important clerk during the last two years of his life was Willard Richards, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The other two were William Clayton and Thomas Bullock. Joseph Smith employed other clerks as well. See Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1344.

3. I am writing a biography of William W. Phelps. Much of this paper is derived from this research.


15. Whereas the previous three writers of the “history”—James Mulholland, Robert B. Thompson, and William W. Phelps—had compiled 157 pages of manuscript among them (Phelps from page 75 to 157), Willard Richards wrote 655 pages of manuscript (covering the period of November 1, 1831, to August 5, 1838) from December 1842 to Joseph Smith’s death in June 1844. See Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith’s History," 441, 454–56.


17. See, for example, *HC* 5:290.


"General Smith's Views," which contains his political platform, to Joseph Smith himself and either credit or discredit him for the various views contained therein. Two recent examples are Marvin S. Hill, "Counter-revolution: The Mormon Reaction to the Coming of American Democracy," Sunstone 13 (June 1989): 27, 30–31, and Senator Harry Reid of Nevada in "Public Service Began Early in LDS History," Church News, August 5, 1989, 5. In reality, Joseph Smith relied heavily upon W. W. Phelps and his political knowledge and expertise in composing these documents. Of course, Joseph would have given input into these publications and, because he signed them, is ultimately responsible for what is contained in them.

25 HC 6:80. Since January 1841, Joseph Smith had wanted such a proclamation. By revelation Robert B. Thompson and John C. Bennett had been assigned to help write the proclamation (D&C 124:2–16). But Thompson died and Bennett apostatized. Apparently numerous attempts were made at writing this proclamation. A handwritten "proclamation" even exists in the Joseph Smith Collection in the Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, to which the date 1842 has been affixed. I do not know if a proclamation written by Richards, Hyde, Taylor, and Phelps exists. Eventually a proclamation written by Parley P. Pratt was issued in 1845.


27 HC 6:75n.


29 Times and Seasons 4 (February 1, 1843): 81. "Go with Me" elicited in the same newspaper "The Answer," which is a poetic rendition of "The Vision," or Doctrine and Covenants 76. Even though Joseph Smith is credited with this latter poetic effort, I strongly suspect that it was Phelps who wrote "The Answer" himself. After Joseph Smith's death, Phelps altered and expanded "Go with Me," made it into a rhyme, and gave it the new title "Come with Me." See Times and Seasons 6 (January 15, 1845): 783.

Nauvoo Observed

William Mulder

Nauvoo was a city of Saints and strangers, a coexistence, we may remember, that marked the holy commonwealths of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay as well. The Prophet, confident that even those who came to scoff might stay to pray, welcomed all the world to Nauvoo. For the Saints, Nauvoo was to be a refuge; for strangers, a retreat. The twin symbols of its sacred and secular character were the temple and a hostelry, the Nauvoo House, which were conceived, planned, and constructed in tandem. James Sloan, a lawyer and immigrant convert from Ireland, who served for a time as city recorder (despite his uncertain spelling ability), speaks of the Temple and the Nauvoo House in the same breath in an 1842 letter to a cousin in Detroit: “There is a Nauvoo House now erecting, for the reception of Strangers. It is Cellar high of Stone, the rem[aining]g 3 or 4 Stories will be Brick, roofed as the temple [will be].” The Prophet made completion of the Nauvoo House particularly urgent and, in his usual combination of the visionary and the practical, gave the enterprise the twin force of revelation and incorporation as the Nauvoo House Association, with stock to be sold at fifty dollars a share. More than one traveler took humorous satisfaction in observing that Joseph Smith was not only President of the Church and mayor of the town, but also its hotel keeper!

Meanwhile, the Prophet and Emma played host at the Mansion House, by all accounts a grand establishment, which was claimed to have the largest stable in Illinois, large enough to accommodate seventy-five horses. By the beginning of 1844, putting up all and sundry—paying guests as well as indigent Saints—proved too great a burden; consequently, the Prophet, pressed by debt and harassed by lawsuits, rented the Mansion and stables to Ebenezer Robinson, who planned to run them as a public house, with three rooms.

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reserved for the Prophet and with board provided for his family and his horses.³

Through all Nauvoo’s vicissitudes, the hospitable intent persisted until the death of the Prophet, the revocation of the city charter, and the movement to drive the Mormons from the city. These events made strangers objects of suspicion and targets of the “Whistling and Whittling Brigade,”⁴ a group of Nauvoo men and boys who followed outsiders around like bird dogs until the strangers left town. Hospitality, perforce, had turned to hatred, a sorry decline from the city’s original vision as a gathering place where Saints and strangers alike could engage in productive labors while awaiting the Millennium.

In the initial euphoria of that vision, Nauvoo found itself ideally situated. Nauvoo was a frontier town, a river town, enjoying—and risking—all the social and economic implications associated with such an area. In a decade of rapidly expanding traffic up and down the Mississippi River and accelerated change in the West, the river was both a dividing line and a mediator between wilderness and civilization. Nauvoo on the east bank and Montrose in the “Half-Breed Tract” on the west bank epitomize the connection. It is no surprise that Indian chiefs and tribal dignitaries were among the visitors to Nauvoo; at one time forty Sac and Fox Indians crowded into the council room where they encamped for the night.⁵ Another time Chief Keokuk and about one hundred chiefs and braves of the Sac and Fox Indian Tribes called on the Prophet, who escorted them with the band playing to the grove, where he preached about the Book of Mormon and its promises to them. Keokuk said “he had a Book of Mormon at his wigwam.” Then he continued, “I believe you are a great and good man; I look rough, but I also am a son of the Great Spirit.” “Good food” and “a specimen of their dancing” followed this exchange.⁶

As Robert Flanders has said, “Nauvoo in the early and mid-fourties was a prime attraction to the Mississippi River tourist traffic, and the Prophet and the Nauvoo Temple were objects of particular interest.”⁷ Dennis Rowley, who has given the fullest economic picture of Nauvoo as a river town, indicates the extent of that traffic: “[In the lead trade] an average of ten steamers a week passed by or stopped at Nauvoo during the spring, summer, and fall months,” besides smaller craft and “other steamers carrying furs, Indians, lumber, . . . military supplies, and soldiers. . . . By mid-1843, four or five steamboats a day stopped at Nauvoo.”⁸ The daily entries
in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* frequently record river arrivals—official delegations, unnamed but notable persons, whole companies of Saints from England who had come by way of New Orleans and St. Louis, and excursion parties. The entry for July 4, 1843, notes the arrival of three steamers with eight hundred to a thousand "visitors and Saints" who had come from downriver—St. Louis, Quincy, and Burlington—for the holiday celebrations.9

"On my way up the Mississippi"—so begins many a travel narrative, sometimes with Nauvoo as a passing attraction on the itinerary, but just as often with the "City of the Mormons," a reference much used in the press, as destination. Throughout its brief life, Nauvoo in its splendid setting on a great bend in the river, rising from the flats to a "city set upon a hill," enjoying all that this phrase connotes in biblical and American history, drew instant admiration. Even the dour Rev. Henry Caswell exclaimed that the view of the winding Mississippi from temple hill was "truly grand."10 In 1844 Josiah Quincy from Boston rhapsodized that "the curve in the river enclosed a position lovely enough to furnish a site for the Utopian communities of Plato or Sir Thomas More."11 It is a pity that Charles Dickens traveled down the Ohio in 1842 to where it joined the Mississippi only to turn back at St. Louis. Had he seen Nauvoo as his contemporaries were seeing it, he might have changed the tone of his caustic *American Notes* in which he calls the Mississippi "an enormous ditch ... choked and obstructed everywhere by huge logs and whole forest trees." He was glad to leave the Father of Waters, "dragging its slimy length and ugly freight toward New Orleans."12

The popular Mississippi panoramas painted on endless rolls of canvas which toured the country in the 1840s invariably included a prospect of Nauvoo. Henry Lewis, for example, an English carpenter and self-made artist who came to St. Louis in 1836, undertook "a gigantic and continuous painting" (italics in the original) of the river, which was called "a great national work."13 In 1848 he built a "floating studio," a platform about 8' by 11' laid on two fifty-foot canoes fastened by beams, rigged with a square sail and a jib, and equipped with oars. From the top of his cabin he had a vantage point for sketching. For our purposes, his journal entries for 1848 are as interesting as his paintings. As John Frances McDermott recounts in *The Lost Panoramas of the Mississippi*,

At sunset on the twenty-ninth of July the sketching party stopped at the "celebrated city" of Nauvoo. Lewis immediately "hurried to take a look at the temple and see it by sun set." He was much
impressed: "Taking into consideration the circumstances under which it was built, it is a wonderful building and considering too that it is of no particular style it does not in the least offend the eye by its uniqueness. . . . It bears a nearer resemblance to the Bysantium or Roman Grecian style than any other altho' the capitals and bases are entirely unique still the cornices are grecian in part."14

On the following day, Lewis explored the interior of the Temple and called on Joseph Smith's widow, who, though married to "a man by the name of Bideman . . . is always call'd the widow Smith." Lewis describes her as "a remarkably fine looking woman I should judge of some 35 or 40 years of age with a strongly mark'd tho' kind and intelligent face on whose surface are the marks of much care and suffering." Lewis adds that she "supports herself and family by keeping one of the largest and best hotels in the place and seems to be doing a thriving business." Lewis sketched "Nauvoo from Above" and drew the detail of the molding and cornice of the Temple as well as a view of the baptismal font in the basement. "Nauvoo and the Mormons," says McDermott, "were still 'news.'"15

In 1849 Graham's Magazine reproduced an engraving of "The Mormon Temple at Nauvoo" from yet another Mississippi panorama, John Rowson Smith's depiction of "nearly four thousand miles of American scenery" extending over four miles of canvas.16 An 1848 pamphlet describing his leviathan panorama says the artist passed over "many small towns, as Bloomington, Oquawka, Clarksville, Quincy, Warsaw, &c. as they would prove uninteresting to the mass, and present no peculiarities," but he made the most of Nauvoo, "a Mormon City, and settlement, now deserted," which he regarded as "one of the finest locations for a town upon the river. . . . The great Mormon Temple stands out conspicuous. [Or 'stood,' for a footnote adds that 'on the 9th of October (since this pamphlet was prepared for the press) this splendid edifice was entirely destroyed by fire.']" Smith took his pictorial travelog to England and the Continent and showed it by invitation at Balmoral, where Queen Victoria herself got a glimpse of the Mormon city and the Temple, which Smith called "the finest Building in the west."17

Nauvoo was one of those towns suiting Smith's educational and scientific purposes: he intended his panorama to be a document of historical value. "In America," he wrote, "the country itself is ever on the change. . . . Where the forest now overshadows the earth, and affords shelter to the wild beast, corn fields, orchards, towns, and villages will give a new face to the scene, and tell of industry
and enterprise... There will be... mansions in the place of huts, and streets where the foot path and deer tracks are now only visible." In its prime, Nauvoo epitomized the promise. An early visitor writing to the Alexandria Gazette, an account reprinted in the Quincy Whig on October 17, 1840, described Nauvoo's beginnings: "No sect, with equal means, has probably ever suffered and achieved more in so short a time... Around this place as their centre, they are daily gathering from almost every quarter; and several hundred new houses, erected within the last few months, attest to the passing traveller the energy, industry, and self-denial with which the community is imbued." The correspondent found the Prophet indignant that President Van Buren could do nothing for the redress of Mormon grievances "lest it should interfere with his political prospects in Missouri. He is not as fit," said the Prophet, "as my dog, for the chair of state; for my dog will make an effort to protect his abused and insulted master, while the present chief magistrate will not so much as lift his finger to relieve an oppressed and persecuted community of freemen, whose glory it has been that they were citizens of the United States.'

"You hold in your hands," the visitor ventured, "a large amount of political power, and your society must exert a tremendous influence, for weal or woe, in the coming elections.'

"Yes," said the Prophet, "I know it; and our influence, as far as it goes, we intend to use." That determination would cast a long shadow over Mormon relations with their neighbors.

What was happening at Nauvoo aroused the curiosity of many, whose opinions, formed through hearsay and the press, were as various as their dispositions to believe or disbelieve. The Saints' reputation ran a twofold hazard—disrepute in Missouri as troublemakers and the disrepute by association of the early settlers of Hancock County, Illinois, who were "in popular language hard cases." Said Governor Thomas Ford, on whom no love is lost in Mormon memory: "Rogues will find each other out, and so will honest men." It was the governor's view that the Mormons also were "hard cases." But as the Mormon refugees began to arrive from Missouri, the citizens of Quincy kept an open mind and were initially sympathetic. As early as February 27, 1839, the Democratic Association of Quincy resolved "that the strangers recently arrived here from the state of Missouri, known by the name of the 'Latter-day Saints,' are entitled to our sympathy and kindest regard, and that we recommend to the citizens of Quincy to extend all the kindness in
their power to bestow on the persons who are in affliction." The association further resolved "to explain to our misguided fellow citizens, if any such there be, who are disposed to excite prejudices and circulate unfounded rumors; and particularly to explain to them that these people have no design to lower the wages of the laboring class, but to procure something to save them from starving."\(^21\)

The town of Warsaw was a different matter; its citizens harbored prejudice motivated by jealousy of Nauvoo's rising eminence. Thomas Sharp of the \textit{Warsaw Signal} (scorned as Tom-ass in the \textit{Nauvoo Neighbor}) baited the Mormons from the beginning, even after he sat at the Prophet's table. Some outsiders, on the other hand, like landholder Horace R. Hotchkiss, tied their fortunes to Mormon success and out of a concern for their own investments wished them well. "Of course I feel an interest in the prosperity of Nauvoo," Hotchkiss once wrote the Prophet, "the more so, certainly, as their pecuniary interest is identified with my own."\(^22\)

Within a year of the \textit{Gazette} correspondent's optimistic account, the Honorable Stephen A. Douglas, then justice of the Supreme Court of Illinois and judge of the Fifth Judicial Court, visited Nauvoo with Cyrus Walker of Macomb. They were astonished at the improvements that had been made. At the meeting ground, Judge Douglas thanked the citizens of Nauvoo "for conferring upon him the freedom of the city" and praised their location, their improvements, their enterprise, and their industry. Nauvoo found these officials a refreshing change from those in Missouri.\(^23\)

Ambiguities abound in the accounts about Nauvoo, particularly in descriptions of the Prophet, the city's chief attraction. Visitors were not prepared for a populist prophet whose vernacular speech differed strikingly from the formal eloquence of his published revelations. To assess such a religious leader was difficult. He was minister and magistrate, storekeeper, innkeeper, and landlord, as well as a man who worked his farm, who wrestled with members of his congregation, who could take an assailant by the throat, and who could never eat, his wife said, without his friends. Memorable glimpses abound in the accounts of those who came to see and judge the Prophet for themselves.

On March 22, 1842, the \textit{Advocate} of Columbus, Ohio, published a Mason's estimate of Nauvoo and the Prophet. The correspondent, who signed himself simply "An Observer, Adams County," wrote, "I had supposed, from what I had previously heard, that I should witness an impoverished, ignorant and bigoted
population, completely priest-ridden, and tyrannized over by Joseph Smith, the great prophet of these people. . . . On the contrary, I saw no idleness, no intemperance, no noise, no riot. . . . With the religion of these people I have nothing to do; if they can be satisfied with the doctrines of their new revelation, they have a right to be so. . . . I protest against the slanders." This observer attended the installation of the officers of Nauvoo's new Masonic lodge and commented, that "never in my life did I witness a better-dressed or a more orderly and well-behaved assemblage," which he estimated at over five thousand. He stayed three days and enjoyed the hospitality of "the celebrated Old Joe Smith," whom to his surprise he found "instead of the ignorant and tyrannical upstart . . . a sensible, intelligent, companionable and gentlemanly man. . . . He is a fine-looking man about thirty-six years of age, and has an interesting family." "The temple and Nauvoo House, now building," he wrote, "will probably in beauty of design, extent and durability, excel any public building in the state, and will both be [en]closed before winter"—again, temple and hostelry symbols of Nauvoo sacred and secular.

The following July, a phrenologist, a Mr. A. Crane, informed the editor of the Nauvoo Wasp "that a large number of persons in different places [had] manifested a desire to know the phrenological development of Joseph Smith's head. I have examined the Prophet's head," wrote Crane, "and he is perfectly willing to have the chart published." Crane marked the chart to show the development of the Prophet's "much-talked-of brain, and let the public judge for themselves," he said, "whether phrenology proves the reports against him true or false." Amused, the Prophet allowed the Wasp to reproduce Crane's analysis of his "Propensities," "Feelings," "Sentiments," "Perceptives," and "Reflectives"—to use the language of the popular science of the day. "Amativeness," under "Propensities" on the chart, judged the Prophet to have "extreme susceptibility" and to be "passionately fond of the company of the other sex." "Mirthfulness" under "Reflectives," rated high: "wit, fun, mirth, perception and love of the ludicrous." "I give the foregoing a place in my history," wrote the Prophet, "for the gratification of the curious, and not for [any] respect I entertain for] phrenology."25

In the fall of that year, 1842, the New York Herald published a letter from James Arlington Bennett, a "counselor at law" (not to be confused with the renegade John C. Bennett), who defended Joseph against accusations of having plotted the assassination of ex-Governor Boggs of Missouri. James, calling himself a friend of
Joseph Smith and "the friend of all good Mormons, as well as other good men," expressed regret that the quarrel between the Prophet and John C. Bennett had "found its way to the public eye." James looked "at the history of past ages [to] see the force of fanaticism and bigotry in bringing to the stake some of the best men. . . . Smith, I conceive, has just as good a right to establish a church, if he can do it, as Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Fox, or even King Henry the Eighth. . . . From what I know of the people," he wrote, "I fully believe that all the real, sincere Mormons would die sooner than abandon their faith and their religion. . . . It is the best policy, both of Missouri and Illinois," he concluded, "to let them alone," and he hoped ex-Governor Boggs would withdraw his demand for the Prophet.26

But with curiosity and concern by now on a national as well as local level, such advice could not be heeded, and the affairs at Nauvoo generated a crescendo of news and opinion. Some thirty-eight papers in the region alone, according to Cecil Snider's study of the press in Illinois and contiguous states,27 devoted thousands of columns to notices, correspondence, editorials, charges and countercharges, and memorials and proclamations expressing extremes of feeling and opinion before the showdown between Mormons and anti-Mormons in 1846. As lawyer Sloan put it in the days of the Missouri troubles, "This driving and Mobbing business you must have got some knowledge of through the public Papers, if not otherwise."28

Meanwhile all kinds of travelers continued to visit Nauvoo—tourists, journalists, ministers, officials, artists, merchants, and foreigners. Among the visitors from abroad was Mr. W. Aitken, from Ashton-under-Lyne in England, a schoolteacher who dedicated his book Journey up the Mississippi River, from Its Mouth to Nauvoo, the City of the Latter Day Saints29 to "the Working Classes of England" so that any "who [had] embraced the new doctrine of Mormonism should know the real condition of their friends in the city of Nauvoo." He was sure they would "repent if they ever [tried] the experiment of going to Nauvoo." Aitken, to begin with, declared himself to be "no friend to emigration" generally and found the lure of Mormonism only a particular instance of the evil. His slender narrative, published in 1845, describes his misadventures, which began when he reached the mouth of the Mississippi on November 5, 1842, after six weeks on the Atlantic. By then several companies of Saints from England had arrived in Nauvoo—two hundred in 1840, twelve hundred in 1841, and sixteen hundred in 1842, a substantial three thousand for Mr. Aitken to worry about. Aitken,
who tarried in St. Louis to teach school, noted that St. Louis had sent aid to a company of suffering Saints on their way from Illinois. Nauvoo's coming troubles can be understood in broader context in the light of his remark about American politics in general: "The demon of party spirit rules with the bitterest rancour; that the dearest interests of the nation are sacrificed among its ravings; and its pestilential influence is seen and felt from one end of the land to the other." Further, addressing Americans at large, he charged that "the spirit of speculation, the demoniac ravings of party, intolerance and schism, have broken up your banks, depreciated your money, destroyed confidence, ruined the opulent, beggared the labourer, and manacled your commerce." Shades of Mrs. Trollope! But the material history of the Mormons assumes, in Aitken's vitriolic diagnosis, the significance of paradigm.

After six months as a teacher in St. Louis, Aitken proceeded to Nauvoo. His account is full of vivid details about the steamboat passage and life along the river, from mosquitoes to flatboats. He pores over a map and, in the tradition of intrepid British travelers, soaks up all the information he can about the river. I emphasize his detailed and concrete reporting because, with allowance for his native bias, it compels credibility when he makes his findings at Nauvoo, which, to be sure, he does not see with the eye of faith. His observations serve his anti-emigration prejudice and his desire to bring his countrymen and women to their senses.

In a walk about the city, he observed the progress on the Temple and the Nauvoo House, those inseparables, both being built by labor tithes. Aitken had no respect for the Prophet, "a tall stout muscular man with large features" who in conversation "swore like a fishwife," and no patience with the Prophet's mother and her Egyptian mummies; however, he found Joseph's wife "a fine-looking woman." Aitken saw "wretched cabins everywhere" and, searching for "the English portion of the city," found the immigrant converts living in "huts of the meanest description." Encountering a young couple from Bolton on the verge of despair, he encouraged them to seek a job and a new life in St. Louis. At the printing office, he bought Joseph Smith's Story and a Book of Mormon and on the way back to his lodgings visited "Looking Glass Prairie." "Alas!" he exclaimed, "that the beauties of nature should be sullied by superstition. . . . I left the 'holy city' with most unholy thoughts."

A Mr. Cowan from Shokoquon, twenty miles upriver from Nauvoo, was of a different mind. On February 10, 1843, the inhabitants
of the town delegated him to go to Nauvoo and petition that "a
talented Mormon preacher take up his residence with them." They
would find him a good house and give him support, "with liberty
for him to invite as many 'Mormons' to settle [there] as may please
to do so."\(^{30}\)

Within a month of Cowan's mission, the Rev. Samuel A. Prior,
a Methodist minister, gave an account of his visit positive enough to
be circulated in *Times and Seasons*. Prior confessed that he had "left
home with no very favorable opinions of the Latter-day Saints." He
had expected to "witness many scenes detrimental to the Christian
carder, if not offensive to society." In Nauvoo he heard the
Prophet, "that truly singular personage," preach to a congregation
that had waited "in breathless silence" for his appearance. Prior was
disappointed to find in Joseph Smith "only the appearance of a
common man, of tolerably large proportions." In explicating a
biblical text, the Prophet "glided along through a very interesting
and elaborate discourse." He was, Prior concluded, "a workman
rightly dividing the word of truth." Prior himself was invited to speak
in the evening and found the "large and respectable congregation
paying the utmost attention. Afterwards, Elder Smith arose and
begged leave to differ from me in some few points of doctrine, and
this he did mildly, politely, and effectively; like one who was more
desirous to disseminate the truth and expose error, than to love the
malicious triumph of debate over me."

When the reverend made his rounds of Nauvoo, he looked for
evidence of the city as "the very sink of iniquity . . . the refuse of
society" and for traces "of that low prostitution which I had so often
heard charged upon them." But he found Nauvoo "one of the most
romantic places" he had visited in the West. "The buildings, though
many of them were small and made of wood, yet bore the marks of
neatness which I had not seen equalled in this country." He could
imagine himself, he said, in Italy at the city of Leithorn, which the
location of Nauvoo resembled. He found the place "alive with
business." Here and there "a tall, majestic brick house" gave
testimony to the "genius and untiring labor of the inhabitants . . .
who in two or three short years [had] rescued it from a dreary waste
to transform it into one of the first cities in the West."\(^{31}\)

Such admiration and astonishment, bordering on cant, but
heightened by the sharp contrast between what they saw and what
they had expected to see, runs like a refrain through the travelers'
accounts in the early 1840s.
An inside outsider tarrying in Nauvoo at the time Reverend Prior exuded his encomiums was Charlotte Haven of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, who arrived in the city by stage from Quincy on December 23, 1842, wrapped in a buffalo robe and buffalo moccasins. She stayed a year, living with a brother and his wife Elizabeth and becoming a lively member of the city's gentile minority, which she called "our little society." She must have been an attractive young woman, for in a series of letters to her family she describes many balls and socials to which she was invited. When she passed by the Temple on her first walk through the city, she said, "I verily believe every man at work cutting stone laid down his tools and gazed at me as I passed."32

Charlotte's first impression of the city was that it was "a collection of houses and hovels," but she was "enchanted with the delightful western view" from her brother's "little five-room cottage," which she set to work furnishing with some rag carpets from Quincy and a "hit and miss" carpet in "every shade of fade" from a "sad-faced" woman weaver. Charlotte's descriptions of Mormon material culture were usually either pejorative or satirical, expressing the bias of a genteel Gentile not used to frontier hardships. She wrote that she imagined herself enduring "the experiences of Western life... so vividly portrayed in Mrs. [Caroline] Kirkland's New Home, Who'll Follow?" which she had read the summer before. She had Christmas dinner with a Dr. Wild, a bachelor also from New Hampshire, with a practice at LaHarpe, some twenty miles east of Nauvoo, and Judge Emmett, another non-Mormon who had become a fixture in her brother's house and a constant companion when she ventured out, because the Mormon men in the community "look so rough and strange, dress so queerly and stare so." Some followed and asked her when she had come from the Old Country—"meaning England, for at least a third of the Mormons," she reported, "are English." A young English girl did, in fact, join the household as a domestic after Charlotte's sister-in-law had tried out a local girl, who told her, "I ain't used to living only in one family and eating with them, and I would just as lives you would get another girl."

Charlotte's spirited letters overflow with descriptive details of the city, its surroundings, and its inhabitants, now numbering fourteen thousand and scattered over a wide area. She describes the architecture of "the celebrated Mormon temple"—which had reached the first tier—in minute detail, with special praise for the
baptismal font "supported upon the backs of twelve oxen beautifully carved in wood . . . to be overlaid with pure gold."

One wintry Sabbath, accompanied by the judge, she attended a preaching at the Prophet's house, having been given a ride in a large horse-sled with a little straw on the bottom and crowded with men and women "eager to hear their beloved leader." "Such hurrying!" she wrote. "One would have thought it was the last opportunity to hear him." The house was so full the windows were opened "for the benefit of those without who were as numerous as those within." She found Joseph Smith "a large, stout man, youthful in his appearance, with light complexion and hair, and blue eyes set far back in the head, and expressing great shrewdness, or I should say, cunning. He has a large head and phrenologists would unhesitatingly pronounce it a bad one, for the organs situated in the back part are decidedly the most prominent. He is also very round-shouldered." Charlotte expected to be "overwhelmed by his eloquence" but was disappointed in his "loud" and "coarse" discourse relating all the incidents of his journey from Springfield, where he had been on trial for one of the Missouri charges. Now, released on habeas corpus, he amused his audience and "excited them to laughter." "He is evidently a great egotist and boaster," Charlotte reported, "for he frequently remarked that at every place he stopped going to and from Springfield people crowded around him, and expressed surprise that he was so 'handsome and good looking.' He also exclaimed at the close of almost every sentence, 'That's the idea!'

Charlotte heard that Mrs. Joseph Smith "wished to become acquainted with us and had been expecting to honor her with a call." (It was etiquette for newcomers to make the first call on old residents.) Accordingly, Charlotte and the judge called on the Smith family, who lived in the "Old Town by the river," a mile walk from the Haven cottage. "They seemed pleased to see us and urged us to pass the afternoon." Charlotte thought Sister Emma "very plain in her personal appearance, though we hear she is very intelligent and benevolent, has great influence with her husband and is generally beloved." Emma said very little, "her whole attention being absorbed in what Joseph was saying. He talked incessantly about himself. . . . I did not change my opinion about him, but suppose he has good traits."

Some weeks later, the Smiths returned the call. The Prophet and Lady and youngest son drove up in a "handsome carriage drawn by two fine dripping bays [it had been raining]. . . . Mrs. Smith was pleasant and social, more so than we had ever seen her before, and
we were quite pleased with her," but Charlotte still considered Emma's husband "the greatest egotist I ever met." The afternoon passed pleasantly, and "by uniting parlor and kitchen tables we contrived to seat all at supper and to find room for the good things we had prepared. When Mrs. Smith proposed returning home, her lord was disposed to remain longer, and remarked that it was 'like leaving Paradise.'" "I thought," wrote Charlotte, "his idea of Paradise was very different from mine."

Charlotte's year in Nauvoo proved to be an eventful one, and her letters are filled, at one end of the spectrum, with the happenings of daily life, "significant trifles" Willa Cather would call them, and at the other end, with news of great portent.

Her reports of daily life include the birth of a "fine healthy little boy" to Elizabeth, her sister-in-law, who had "two experienced Mormon women with her all day [who] kept up one continual stream of talk about their peculiar religion, quoting scripture from Genesis to Revelations. I never," wrote Charlotte, "heard so much Bible talk in all my life before. . . . 'From all such, good Lord, deliver us.'" Among the Gentiles, Dr. Higbee, she wrote, was "the most at leisure, not having a single patient and not likely to have, as the Mormons perform wonderful cures by 'the laying on of hands.'" She relented in her judgment of the rude shelters that dotted the new farms on the prairie when she remembered Mormon destitution after the flight from Missouri: "We cannot wonder that they have no fitter dwelling-place and so few of the comforts of life." She acknowledged that "better and more substantial buildings are fast being erected in city and country. . . . If let alone and persecution ceases," she felt sure, "this absurd religious doctrine will surely die a natural death."

Mail in Nauvoo came twice a week, and Charlotte's letter and papers from home were "smilingly" handed to her by Sidney Rigdon, postmaster, with whose family of five daughters she spent some pleasant evenings and at whose home she attended "the only party in this Holy City," a party that began at three in the afternoon. She found Mrs. Rigdon peeling potatoes near the stove and the "venerable Elder behind it, dressed in his Sunday best suit, the highest and stiffest shirt collar and a white neckerchief with ends flowing over his shoulders." The party turned out to be a quilting bee, and Charlotte joined "eight belles of Nauvoo" around the frame with "needle, thread, and thimble," unable to get a word out of her sister quilters except "Yes, Marm . . . no, Marm" until one of them timidly whispered to her, "We talk in the evening." They quilted until six,
when the door to the living room was thrown open, and they sat down around a table extending the length of the room and ate a "substantial supper [of] turkey, chicken, beef, vegetables, pies, and cake." After supper the girls retired to the other room and placed themselves like wallflowers until the gentlemen came in to be formally introduced. Then all seemed "more joyous," Charlotte wrote, with singing, dancing, and merry games, to which Charlotte contributed fox and geese ("which was in vogue with us ten years ago"). At nine o'clock, they went into "a second edition of supper," after which the games were "renewed with vigor." Charlotte and the judge left at ten, but the party did not break up until midnight.

Charlotte had the five Rigdon daughters to tea. "They seem kind-hearted, sincere girls, but so hard to entertain,—with no ideas! We had a candy-pull to get some life in them."

Besides their interest in her social life, the Saints, Charlotte assured her family, also took an interest in her spiritual welfare: they sent her a Book of Mormon, the Book of Covenants, and Parley P. Pratt's *The Voice of Warning* and invited her to attend prayer meetings, which she discovered were conducted like the Methodist ones she had attended in New England. She described the Book of Mormon as ending in "a sort of Kilkenny Cat battle" and found the Book of Covenants "a jargon of nonsense, mingled with directions for church government." When she learned about baptism for the dead, she felt sympathy for "these poor Mormons [who] are constantly being baptized as a duty to release their ancestors or friends from the tortures of purgatory."

Charlotte considered Sidney Rigdon "the most learned man among the Latter Day Saints." He had intelligence and a courteous manner. And he spoke grammatically. She found him so far above the Prophet in intellect and education that she had no doubt that Rigdon was the "chief aid in getting up the Book of Mormon and creed." She admired Rigdon's library—"a good student's collection," she called it—with "Hebrew, Greek, and Latin lexicons and readers, stray volumes of Shakespeare, Scott, and the works of Irving."

One night in March, Charlotte observed a bright comet streaking from east to west. The Patriarch interpreted it as a "sword pointing to Missouri" and predicted a war in which the Missourians would be exterminated. With better weather, she watched the Nauvoo Legion parade on the plain between her house and the river and, in May, witnessed the installation of the new Masonic Lodge, at which Sidney Rigdon gave a "brief but very fine address."
Charlotte missed none of the curiosities Nauvoo afforded, such as the Egyptian mummies kept by the Prophet's mother. She also saw a half dozen thin pieces of bell-shaped brass that had been dug up from a mound a few miles south of Quincy. The Prophet found the engraved figures on them similar to Book of Mormon characters and evidently thought that by the help of revelation he would be able to translate them. "So," Charlotte quipped, "a sequel to that holy book may soon be expected." And she heard about the peep stone, which the Prophet now discounted, although, she was told, "many of the English and Scotch, when becoming anxious about their friends across the ocean, with implicit faith consult the Peep Stone."

In May and June, Charlotte could rejoice in the blossoming prairie: "The prairie flowers are to me an object of untiring interest, their beauty and variety a constant surprise." She found even the sod fences surrounding some farms looking "far more beautiful and rural than the New England stone walls or zig-zag rail fences." In June she received a proposal from a Mr. Heringshaw, who would make her his wife "as soon as I am a Saint," a proposal she mocked with "What stronger inducement could I have?"

Charlotte's letter of July 2 moved dramatically from the beauties and pleasures of the Nauvoo countryside in summer to a startling announcement that "great events have . . . transpired, throwing our little City of the Saints into the greatest commotion and excitement." The Prophet, who had been visiting friends in Rock Island, had been arrested "by a band of Missourians." Hyrum Smith, whose preaching, wrote Charlotte, "consisted mostly of low anecdotes and boasting of the strength of the church," read the dispatch aloud to an assembly meeting in the grove, and "every man, woman, and child were on their feet in an instant, pressing toward the platform, and it was with difficulty that he could quiet them." Charlotte related that "the whole city seemed to be in arms, guns and pistols firing, swords glistening in every direction like a sudden outburst of 4th of July, men, women, and children, gathering in groups talking loud and warlike." On her return from her brother's store in the evening, Charlotte was halted three times by armed sentinels. The following day, however, she saw Joseph brought home in triumphal procession, with Emma in the van wearing "white nodding plumes, followed by a half mile of the populace in every wheeled vehicle that could be mustered, drawn by horses and oxen." Charlotte and her gentle brethren themselves joined the procession, she in a buggy, the men in a large wagon with "Peace and Harmony" displayed on
one side. "The Prophet," she reported, "was quite overcome with emotion, even to shedding tears at this unexpected show of sympathy from his non-followers."

The harmony was too good to last. In September, Charlotte wrote her "dear friends at home" that "a few of the elders put their heads together and whisper what they dare not speak aloud." A missionary returned from England "bringing with him a wife and child, although he had left a wife and family here when he went away. I am told that his first wife is reconciled to this at first unwelcome guest to her home, for her husband and some others have reasoned with her that plurality of wives is taught in the Bible, that Abraham, Jacob, Solomon, David, and indeed all the old prophets and good men had several wives, and if right for them, it is right for the Latter Day Saints. Furthermore, the first wife will always be first in her husband's affection and the head of the household, where she will have a larger influence. Poor, weak woman!" Charlotte could not believe that Joseph (she was by now calling him by his first name) would ever sanction such a doctrine. She predicted that should the Mormons "engraft such an article on their religion, the sect would surely fall to pieces, for what community or State could harbor such outrageous immorality? I cannot think as meanly of my sex as that they could submit to any such degradation."

In politics, Charlotte and her gentile friends feared that Joseph had staged a ruse in declaring that the prophetic mantle had fallen on Hyrum. When Joseph was "in the meshes of the law some Whig politicians had come to his aid and he had pledged to support them in the coming state elections. . . . Now," wrote Charlotte, "he wants the Democratic party to win, so Hyrum is of that party, and as it is revealed for him to vote, so go over all the Mormons like sheep following the bell sheep over a wall." "Nauvoo," she wrote, "with 15,000 inhabitants, has a vote that tells in the State elections, and all summer politicians, able men of both parties, have been here making speeches, caressing, and flattering."

Amid all this excitement Charlotte had further news: with her brother's family she was moving from "our little cottage" to "our new brick house, a block beyond the Temple. Business is coming up that way." In her last surviving letter, dated October 15, 1843, Charlotte reported that "brother Joseph Smith had recently opened a house called the Nauvoo Mansion, and to celebrate the occasion gave a public dinner—one dollar per couple." Charlotte attended, and she
attended a Mormon wedding "for time only" and a dance at the Masonic Hall. But despite the good times, often occasions for her mockery, she longed for home, especially since Judge Emmett had gone East. "You can't think how I miss him, and it is uncertain whether he returns—indeed," she concluded, "Nauvoo is no place for rational people, and you must not be surprised if we should go also." She left Nauvoo unshaken in her determination that "in no way" could she become a Mormon. But her letters testify that she had the time of her life in Nauvoo, and I suspect the Mormons missed their saucy gentle neighbor.

Chance brought two Boston Brahmins to Nauvoo in the summer following Charlotte Haven's departure. Josiah Quincy, son of a former mayor of Boston and soon-to-be mayor himself, stopped over on May 14, 1844, along with his cousin Charles Francis Adams at the urging of a Dr. Goforth. Dr. Goforth, a fellow steamboat passenger headed for Nauvoo to promote the election of Henry Clay, persuaded them to see for themselves "the result of the singular political system which had been fastened upon Christianity, and to make the acquaintance of his friend, General Smith, the religious and civil autocrat of the community." Assured they could get a good bed for the night at Nauvoo, Quincy, forty-two years old, and Adams, thirty-seven, went ashore.33

The "good bed" proved to be in "an old mill which had been converted into an Irish shanty." They made the best of it, and, as Quincy recorded in his journal, "having dispossessed a cat and a small army of cockroaches of their quarters on the coverlet, we lay down in our dressing-gowns and were soon asleep." The next morning, with "the rain descending in torrents and the roads knee-deep in mud," the Prophet's own carryall, drawn by two horses, called for the visitors. Quincy decided later that they owed "the alacrity with which [they] were served to an odd blunder which had combined [their] names and personalities and set forth that no less a man than ex-President John Quincy Adams had arrived." At the tavern, as Quincy called the Mansion House, they were met by "a man of commanding appearance, clad in the costume of a journeyman carpenter when about his work. He was a hearty, athletic fellow, with blue eyes standing prominently out upon his light complexion, a long nose, and a retreating forehead. He wore striped pantaloons, a linen jacket, which had not lately seen the washtub, and a beard of some three days' growth. This," Quincy guessed, "was the founder of the religion which had been preached in every
quarter of the earth. . . A fine-looking man” was Quincy’s instinctive reaction. But in his opinion, “Smith was more than this, and one could not resist the impression that capacity and resource were natural to his stalwart person. . . . [He] seemed endowed with that kingly faculty which directs, as by intrinsic right, the feeble or confused souls who are looking for guidance.”

Quincy and Adams spent the day in the constant company of the Prophet, who after breakfast changed into a broadcloth suit and gave them a personal tour of the city, including a visit to the temple site and to Mother Smith’s “curiosities,” a demonstration sermon, a debate with a Methodist minister, and a running dialogue about religion and politics. In his journal, Quincy recorded his impressions in “ten closely written pages” which years later formed the basis of his chapter on Joseph Smith in Figures of the Past (1883), a chapter that seeks to strike a balance between so much that Quincy found “puerile and even shocking” in the Prophet’s conversation during the course of the day and “the impression of rugged power that he gave.” To Quincy, “the Prophet’s hold upon you seemed to come from the balance and harmony of temperament which reposes upon a large physical basis. No association with the sacred phrases of Scripture could keep the inspirations of this man from getting down upon the hard pan of practical affairs. . . . Joseph Smith was accustomed to make his revelations point to those sturdy business habits which lead to prosperity in this present life.”

In their political discussions, the Prophet “talked as from a strong mind utterly unenlightened by the teachings of history.” He “recognized the curse and iniquity of slavery, though he opposed the methods of the Abolitionists.” Quincy found Joseph’s plan for the nation to pay for the slaves from the sale of public lands “farsighted and statesmanlike.” The Prophet denounced the Missouri Compromise and held that the number in the Lower House of Congress should be reduced because “a crowd only darkened counsel and impeded business.” Thinking of the Missouri persecutions, the Prophet argued that the power of the president should be increased to “have authority to put down rebellion in a state without waiting for the request of any governor, for it might happen that the governor himself would be the leader of the rebels.” “The man,” concluded Quincy, “mingled Utopian fallacies with his shrewd suggestions.”

Quincy discovered that the Prophet had “a keen sense of the humorous aspects of his position” in holding high office in both church and state. “‘It seems to me, General,’ I said, ‘that you have
too much power to be safely trusted to one man.' 'In your hands or that of any other person,' was the reply, 'so much power would no doubt be dangerous. I am the only man in the world whom it would be safe to trust with it. Remember, I am a prophet.' The last five words were spoken in a rich, comical aside, as if in hearty recognition of the ridiculous sound they might have in the ears of a Gentile."

Quincy found the Prophet equally shrewd and humorous in explaining his commission as Lieutenant General of the Nauvoo Legion and of the state militia: "'Now, on examining the Constitution of the United States, I find that an officer must be tried by a court-martial composed of his equals in rank; and as I am the only lieutenant-general in the country, I think they will find it pretty hard to try me.'"

Quincy found the Prophet "well-versed in the letter of the Scriptures, though he had little comprehension of their spirit." He seemed to know Hebrew better than Greek and could recite texts glibly. The Prophet delivered an impromptu sermon at Dr. Goforth's urging, a performance having "the fluency and fervor of a camp-meeting orator." His discourse was "besprinkled with cant phrases or homely proverbs. 'There, I have proved the point as straight as a loon's leg, 'The curses of my enemies run off from me like water from a duck's back,'" and, wrote Quincy, "forcible vulgarisms of a similar sort."

Quincy found the Temple a "grotesque structure . . . with all its queer carvings of moons and suns." He found "the city of Nauvoo, with its wide streets sloping gracefully to the farms enclosed on the prairie . . . a better temple to Him who prospers the work of industrious hands."

Josiah Quincy could not know it, but in another month his visionary, self-confident host would be dead. Forty years later, looking back on his visit to Nauvoo, Quincy began his portrait of the Prophet with a speculation and ended with a confession. "It is by no means improbable that some future text-book, for the use of generations yet unborn, will contain a question something like this: What historical American of the nineteenth century has exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen? And it is by no means impossible that the answer to that interrogatory may be thus written: Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet. And the reply, absurd as it doubtless seems to most men now living, may be an obvious commonplace of their descendants. . . . If the reader does not know just what to make of Joseph Smith, I cannot help him out of the difficulty. I myself stand helpless before the puzzle."
Josiah Quincy was not on the scene when, on June 7, three weeks after he and Adams had left Nauvoo to continue their western journey, the first and only number of the Nauvoo *Expositor* appeared, and the City Council ordered it destroyed as a nuisance—the copies seized, the type pied, and the press broken up, an act which, however lawful under the provisions of the Nauvoo Charter as Joseph Smith the mayor interpreted it, ran counter to profound American convictions about the right to dissent. The dissenting editors had denounced the Prophet's high-handedness and alleged immorality, demanded the unconditional repeal of the city charter "to correct the abuses of the unit power," and announced the organization of a reformed church.\(^\text{34}\) They fled to Carthage, the county seat, breathing vengeance. They swore out a warrant for the Prophet's arrest, listing the grievances which pitted not only Mormons against anti-Mormons but also Mormons against Mormons: freedom of the press, polygamy, and political dictatorship. Feelings ran high and another war of extermination seemed imminent, with Carthage and Nauvoo poised and fearful of marches on each other. It was no time for visitors or leisurely reporting. The county and state newspapers, filled with charges and counter-charges and rampant speculation, carried on a war of words. Letters from Nauvoo were full of alarm. On June 16, 1844, Isaac Scott, already uneasy in his faith, wrote to his wife's parents, Calvin and Abigail Hall of Sutton, Massachusetts, the startling news that Joseph Smith had taught a strange doctrine that now was breaking the Church and the community wide open: "Because of the things that are and have been taught in the Church of Latter Day Saints for two years past which now assume a portentous aspect, I say because of these things we are in trouble. . . . There is a report that a mob is coming to Nauvoo."\(^\text{35}\)

The "portentous aspect" became grim reality with the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Prophet and Patriarch, and the pressure was on to drive the Mormons from Illinois as they had been driven from Missouri. With the death of the Prophet, Nauvoo, now a city divided against itself, lost its chief attraction for travelers. But the inhabitants went on, amid anxieties about the future, impelled by the need to finish the Temple and prepare for yet another move, another start somewhere in the West. By the time grass grew and water ran, Nauvoo had become a vast wagon-making shop. Visitors like as not were bargain hunters, for Nauvoo was a city for sale, and gentile creditors and Mormon-haters were ready to foreclose. The
Warsaw Signal wanted to erase all Mormon memories, to "change all the names introduced among us by the Mormons."36

In the aftermath, a Philadelphian wrote Nauvoo's most moving epitaph. Thomas Leiper Kane, the son of federal judge John Kintzing Kane and brother of Elisha Kent Kane, the Arctic explorer, was only twenty-four when a Mormon elder, Jesse Little, called on Kane's father. Little was en route to Washington to acquaint the government with the plight of the Mormons and to seek permission to raise a Mormon battalion for the expedition against Mexico. Young Kane, already something of a humanitarian, immediately dropped his law clerkship and headed west to give what help he could. He carried with him President Polk's orders to General Stephen W. Kearney at Ft. Leavenworth to raise the requested battalion. On his return east in the fall of 1846, Kane visited the temporary settlements in Iowa, and on the banks of the Mississippi, he came upon the camps of the refugees most recently expelled from Nauvoo. Crossing the river, he walked about the deserted Mormon capital, an experience he drew on when he gave a lecture before the Pennsylvania Historical Society in 1850 on "The Mormons," a classic in the literature of western travel.

He first saw the city from a distance "glittering in the fresh morning sun." We follow him from the landing at the wharf:

No one met me there. I looked and saw no one. I could hear no one move; though the quiet everywhere was such that I heard the flies buzz, and the water-ripples break against the shallow of the beach. I walked through solitary streets. The town lay as in a dream, under some deadening spell of loneliness, from which I almost feared to wake it; for plainly it had not slept long. There was no grass growing up in the paved ways; rains had not entirely washed away the prints of dusty footsteps.

Yet I went about unchecked. I went into empty workshops, rope-walks, and smithies. The spinner's wheel was idle; the carpenter had gone from his workbench and shavings, his unfinished sash and casing. Fresh bark was in the tanner's vat, and the fresh-chopped lightwood stood piled against the baker's oven. The blacksmith's shop was cold; but his coal heap and ladling pool, and crooked waterhorn were all there, as if he had just gone off for a holiday. No work-people anywhere looked to know my errand. If I went into the gardens, clinking the wicket-latch loudly after me, to pull the marigolds, heartsease, and ladyslippers, and draw a drink with the water-sodden well-bucket and its noisy chain; or, knocking off with my stick the tall, heavy-headed dahlias and sunflowers, hunted over the beds for cucumbers and love-apples—no one called out to me from any opened window, or dog sprang forward to bark an alarm. I could have supposed the people hidden in the houses, but the doors were
unfastened; and when at last I timidly entered them, I found dead ashes white upon the hearths, and had to tread a-tiptoe, as if walking down the aisle of a country church, to avoid arousing irreverent echoes from the naked floors.

On the outskirts of the town was the city graveyard; but there was no record of plague there, nor did it anywise differ much from other Protestant American cemeteries. Some of the mounds were not long sodded; some of the stones were newly set, their dates recent, and their black inscriptions glossy in the mason’s hardly-dried lettering ink. Beyond the graveyard, out in the fields, I saw, in one spot hard by where the fruited boughs of a young orchard had been roughly torn down, the still smouldering embers of a barbecue fire, that had been constructed of rails from the fencing round it. It was the latest sign of life there. Fields upon fields of heavy-headed yellow grain lay rotting ungathered upon the ground. No one was at hand to take in their rich harvest. As far as the eye could reach, they stretched away—they sleeping too in the hazy air of autumn.37

Like Gray’s “Elegy in a Country Churchyard,” Kane’s tone, language, and imagery befit his mournful subject. We can hear the last toll of the bell in one other western traveler who spent a “Summer in the Wilderness” and stopped in Nauvoo that same year. Charles Lanman, after taking in the desolation of the deserted city, climbed the belfry of the Temple, not yet destroyed, and, looking westward beyond the river, “could just distinguish a caravan of exiled ‘Mormons’ on their line of march to Oregon and California. . . . When I went forth from out the massy porches of the . . . Temple, to journey deeper into the wilderness, I felt like one awakened from a dream.”38

As we read, we dream again of the Nauvoo that was and always will be in these remembered views and in our imagination.39

NOTES


3 HC 6:185. The ruins of the stable building itself, when excavated during the work of restoration, suggest it could accommodate closer to twenty-five horses; possibly there was additional room in corrals or wooden structures that left no remains.
Nauvoo Observed


5 HC 6:402.

6 HC 4:401–2.


9 HC 5:490.


15 McDermott, "Henry Lewis 'Great National Work,'" 114. A lithograph after Lewis's painting "Nauvoo from Above," the perspective, as in Lynn Fausett's mural, as seen from across the river, was included in Das illustrierte Mississippithal, which appeared in Dusseldorf in 1854 and in a new edition printed in Leipzig and Florence in 1923. In 1967 the Minnesota Historical Society published a translation, handsomely produced, as The Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated.

16 McDermott, "John Rowson Smith's 'Four-Mile Painting,'" in The Lost Panoramas, 50.


18 McDermott, "John Rowson Smith's 'Four-Mile Painting,'" 55-56.

19 "Beginnings in Illinois," in Mulder and Mortensen, Among the Mormons, 113.

20 Thomas Ford, History of Illinois, cited in Flanders, Nauvoo, 22.


22 The Hackstaff letter, dated September 27, 1843, cited in HC 6:55.

23 "Visit of Notable Persons to Nauvoo," HC 4:356–58, reproducing a letter from the Prophet to the Times and Seasons.

24 HC 4:565–60.


26 HC 5:170–72.


28 Sloan to McReynolds, 314.

29 W. Aitken, Journey up the Mississippi River from Its Mouth to Nauvoo, the City of the Latter Day Saints (Ashton-under-Lynne, Enland.: John Williamson, 1845), 1–56.

30 HC 5:268–89.

31 Cited in Elmer Cecil McGavin, Nauvoo, the Beautiful (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1946), 84–85.
“A Girl’s Letters from Nauvoo,” Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine (San Francisco) 16 (December 1890): 616–38. Several of these nine letters are excerpted in Mulder and Mortensen, Among the Mormons. The quotations that follow are taken passim from the Overland Monthly.

Josiah Quincy, excerpted in Mulder and Mortensen, Among the Mormons, 131–42, from which quotations for the next few paragraphs are taken.

The Nauvoo Expositor 1 (7 June 1844).


“Honor the Dead,” Warsaw Signal, January 16, 1842.

Thomas L. Kane, The Mormons (Pennsylvania Historical Society, 1850), excerpted in Mulder and Mortensen, Among the Mormons, as “Epitaph for Nauvoo,” 195–201.


By design, my account closes on an elegiac literary note. The account rightly calls for a summary observation or two. Most observers seemed to be middle class and Victorian in their outlook, inclined to be condescending toward a community considered fanatical, radical, superstitious, ignorant, and lowly. Without question, the reporting of both fact and opinion was governed by particular sensibilities. Personal impressions are as much an index of the reporters’ assumptions as of what is actually inherent in the scene. The accounts gain credibility when they corroborate each other, whatever color a predilection or prejudice may give their otherwise factual descriptions. For instance, accounts universally describe Joseph Smith as physically impressive, though the adjectives may vary (“handsome,” “stout,” “large,” “athletic”), but the phrenological interpretations or the conclusions about a “cunning” or “shrewd” look are entirely subjective. Similarly, the accounts agree that the Prophet’s public address and conversations were a mixture of biblical eloquence and frontier vernacular—vulgarism for some ears, charisma for others. Accounts agree that the Temple, for its time and place, was, in its physical dimensions, a “remarkable” or “splendid” building, although the aesthetic responses differ (some finding the symbolism strange, the carvings grotesque) as do speculations about the Temple’s uses (a place of mysterious rites, a seraglio, a fortress). Again, descriptions of the city as a whole, whether approached from the prairie or the river, range from the romantic (its pictorial setting) to the realistic (its muddy streets and numerous small wooden dwellings). Desire and distaste slant the reports. Finally, Mormon theology in some accounts is given neutral exposition, the doctrines plainly stated, and in others given the colors of the observer’s own aversions and animosities. Contemporaneous travellers’ accounts are only one source of information about historic Nauvoo, but they are valuable as long as they are read with attention to both the particulars of the tale and the peculiarities of the teller.
The Mormon Experience in the Wisconsin Pineries, 1841–1845

Dennis Rowley

The genesis and rapid growth of Nauvoo, Illinois, between 1839 and 1846 is a vital and intriguing part of early Mormon history. When Joseph Smith first visited the future site of Nauvoo in the spring of 1839, he saw only a few poorly built log cabins and shanties and only one stone house.¹ By the time of the exodus west seven years later, Nauvoo was a city with an estimated population of about 12,000 people.² They had built or were building over 2,500 homes, many business establishments such as stores and mills, and numerous Church and public buildings.³ The latter included the magnificent Nauvoo Temple, a hotel, an armory, and a masonic hall. Such rapid growth required enormous amounts of labor and building materials. The steady influx of immigrant converts filled the need for labor. In 1841 it was reported that “a small cottage could be built in four to six weeks,”⁴ and four years later two hundred builders were working on the Temple, requiring six hundred support workers to supply them with lumber and stone.⁵

The need for materials, particularly lumber, was not as easily met. Lead was readily available in nearby Galena, and nails, paint, glass, bricks, and hardware could be purchased in St. Louis and Chicago. Lumber products could also be purchased, but they were scarce and expensive.⁶ Because Nauvoo was situated on the western edge of “the treeless prairies of Illinois . . . [which] did not furnish . . . the wood . . . needed for . . . buildings” and because “the limited stands of timber . . . [which had been there] had virtually disappeared before 1840,”⁷ the early settlers of Nauvoo had to make do with

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scarce, locally harvested timber or to purchase eastern lumber. The first cabins and shanties in Nauvoo were built almost entirely of logs and poles, and as late as June 1840 only a small segment of the 250 houses were of frame construction. \(^8\) Demand for lumber continued to outstrip local supply, and the Latter-day Saints and others continued to purchase eastern lumber until the broader opening of the Wisconsin pine forests in the early 1840s.

Lumber supplies were also inadequate in some parts of southern Wisconsin. For example, in 1836 settlers in Belmont who needed lumber for the construction of the territorial capitol had to transport it “from a tributary of the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania down the Ohio and up the Mississippi to Galena, and from there by ox team.” \(^9\) This action was necessary because logging in Wisconsin in the 1830s and earlier was a local, small-scale enterprise, pursued with inadequate equipment and mostly inexperienced labor. The small amounts of timber sold at various points down the Mississippi were harvested by enterprising fur traders and farmers in need of an extra cash crop. These nascent lumbermen were able to move their harvest with relative ease because of their proximity to several large rivers with abundant tributaries. Those rivers in turn were tributaries of the upper Mississippi. Once the logs were afloat, they found a ready market in such riverfront settlements as Prairie du Chien and Fort Madison, where the need for lumber was constant and increasing. Some early lumbermen originated from such settlements. Joseph Rolette, a French trader living in Prairie du Chien, was such a man. In 1818 he established a mill at the falls of the Black River in order to acquire lumber for construction in the settlement. All of the earliest mills on the Wisconsin and the Black rivers, like Rolette’s, were established for the express purpose of supplying Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien) and Fort Madison with lumber. Not until 1853, however, was the annual output of Wisconsin pine sufficient to eliminate the need for eastern-grown lumber in the Mississippi Valley. \(^10\)

As a result of the decision to build the Temple and the Nauvoo House simultaneously, the need for lumber in Nauvoo increased markedly early in 1841. Because of the large amounts of lumber required for these and other public buildings, the relative lack of currency in Nauvoo’s barter economy with which to purchase eastern lumber, the prospects of financing part of the cost of both structures through the sale of surplus lumber in Nauvoo to individuals for personal use, \(^11\) the ready supply of excess labor from newly arrived
immigrants (some with logging and milling skills), and the reports of Wisconsin lumber available virtually for the taking in the relative wilderness of the pineries, the Church decided to establish sawmills there and harvest the lumber directly.

Church leaders believed mills could be established at virtually no cost other than for mill equipment. They formed a committee to handle the fundraising and the construction of the Temple and another committee for the hotel. Lyman Wight, a convert from Ohio, and George Miller, a convert from Illinois, were principal members of both the Temple Committee and the Nauvoo House Association. Appointed to serve with them were Alpheus Cutler and Peter Haws. The costs of the pinery enterprise were to be shared equally by the two committees, which were entitled to equal shares of the harvested lumber.

For four winters, commencing in the fall of 1841 and ending in the spring of 1845, the Latter-day Saints worked the pineries, harvesting an estimated one-and-a-half million board feet of milled lumber, over two hundred thousand shingles, and an undeterminable number of loose logs, hewed timbers, and barn boards. This was enough lumber to build about 215 three-bedroom houses of our day. The harvest from the pineries was floated to Nauvoo on at least a dozen rafts beginning in the spring of 1842.

To accomplish these feats, the committees operated four different mills and maintained about six logging camps to supply the mills. Their first mill was at the confluence of the Black River and Roaring Creek, about twelve miles south of the falls. Several camps supplied it. They operated three mills at the falls, two they purchased from Jacob Spaulding and one they constructed on a foundation begun by another party. Four known camps supplied these mills. Three were near the present city of Neilsville and one was southwest of Greenwood. A fourth may have been at McCleans Falls about ten miles north of the three mills, but the present name and exact location are unknown. All of the lumber harvested for Nauvoo was logged within approximately a forty-mile section of the Black River, stretching from the Roaring Creek confluence twelve miles south of the Black River Falls to a spot two miles southwest of Greenwood, approximately thirty miles north of the falls. The four main camps that supplied the bulk of the logs to the three mills during the two most successful seasons of 1843 and 1844 were located within a fifteen-mile stretch of river beginning about ten to twelve miles above the falls.
The two key figures in both the initial involvement of the Saints in the pineries and their subsequent success as lumbermen were Jacob Spaulding and George Miller, both of Adams County, Illinois. Spaulding’s role as the principal founding father of Black River Falls, Wisconsin, has long been known; the details of his early involvement there as carpenter, millwright, promoter, entrepreneur, and wheeler-dealer make him an interesting contributor to early Wisconsin history. However, Miller’s contribution to both Wisconsin and Mormon history has not been fully appreciated, especially his role as a prime moving force behind the success of the pinery experiment.

The foundation for the first meeting of the two men, establishing the nature of the initial Mormon experience in the Wisconsin pineries, was laid in 1837 in Hancock and Adams counties, Illinois, a full year before Miller, then a prosperous farmer in Adams County, converted to Mormonism; nearly a year before Joseph Smith’s final departure from Kirtland, Ohio; and two years and two months before his first set eyes upon the future site of Nauvoo. In February 1837, Daniel S. Witter and John D. Mellon, business partners in Warsaw, Hancock County, Illinois, contracted with Spaulding to build a combination flour- and sawmill and to place it into successful operation in Warsaw. If the mill failed to work, Spaulding was to repair it until it did or pay the damages. On September 1, 1838, Spaulding finished work on the mill. However, Witter and Mellon filed suit in Hancock County Circuit Court in Carthage. Spaulding was arrested and judged to be in breach of contract, since the mill apparently had failed to function “by reason of his want of skill.” Witter and Mellon felt that Spaulding had been neither consistently industrious nor attentive to his duties. They claimed $4,000 damages in lost customers and added expense. When Spaulding agreed to repair the mill by March 1839, yet failed to perform to Witter’s satisfaction a second time, he was found liable by a jury in October 1840 and ordered to pay $2,500 damages plus court costs and interest. When the Adams County sheriff attempted to collect the fine, however, he was unable to find Spaulding or any of his property to attach.

Apparently undaunted by his experience with Daniel Witter, Spaulding formed a partnership with Andrew and Robert S. Wood of Adams County, Illinois, in July 1839. They agreed to establish a sawmill at the falls of the Black River in Wisconsin with the Woods putting up $500 each to buy mill irons and provisions and Spaulding contributing labor worth $500 to build the mill at the rate of $5 a day. Each was to own a one-third interest in the mill, and once it was
operational, Spaulding was to receive $75 a month to manage and run it. By January 1840, Spaulding had built only a house and had returned to Illinois. In his absence, men hired independently by the Woods built a sawmill but had little success with it, later giving the cause as Spaulding's negligence, bad management, and ill-treatment of the men. In the spring, the Woods hired a new millwright and men and built a second, smaller mill near the first one. Because of dissatisfaction with Spaulding, they dissolved and disavowed the partnership. Spaulding brought suit in Prairie du Chien and charged that on June 22 they had forcibly ejected him from the larger mill, taking possession of the premises and all the books. Spaulding was reinstated by Judge James H. Lockwood.

With this litigation began nearly twenty years of suits and countersuits in which Spaulding and the Woods contended for the ownership of the mills. 18 Ultimately, Spaulding won and became one of the revered founding fathers of Black River Falls, but not without successes and failures and fits and starts on both sides. In the winter of 1840–41, for example, both the Woods and Spaulding operated their mills and floated a raft of lumber downriver to Prairie du Chien, only to have the sheriff attach both rafts to satisfy suits filed by the opposite party and by some of Spaulding's numerous creditors. 19 Such legal embroilment seems to have been characteristic of the way Spaulding did business. He appears to have been a man "of enterprise but generally without money," as were so many other pioneer lumbermen in Wisconsin in the 1830s. 20 He borrowed freely, paid back slowly, and used promissory notes as currency. 21 From 1839 to 1850, he was involved in over thirty lawsuits in Prairie du Chien, most of the time as the defendant. He was sued by his employees, his partners, his competitors, his suppliers, and even his attorney. In Spaulding's defense, however, it must be noted that his modus operandi was not substantially different from that of most other pioneer lumbermen. Their employees, the individual loggers, were willing to work for food, clothing, and tools with the understanding their wages would be paid along with the operating debts when the rafts were sold in the spring. Given the conflicts with Indians and other lumbermen over timber claims, the ever-present risk of a dry year making it impossible to market the lumber, the inefficiency and breakage rate of poorly constructed early mills, the dangers of the actual river run with the raft, and buyers who did not always pay, it is a wonder any of the early lumbermen survived to enjoy more prosperous times. 22
MORMON SAWMILLS & LOGGING CAMPS
WISCONSIN PINERIES, 1841-45

- Roaring Creek 1 Mill
- Black River Falls 3 Mills
- Neillsville 3 Camps
- Greenwood 1 Camp
The Woods-Spaulding mills of 1840 were not the first built on the Black River. Joseph Rolette, a French trader of Prairie du Chien, built the first mill on the Black in 1818, and he and James Lockwood constructed a second in 1822. Colonel John Shaw also built a mill in 1819. All three were located at the falls and were burned within a year by Indians, who had not yet ceded away their timber land by treaty as they did later in 1834 and 1838. Between August 1839, when Spaulding first arrived on the river, and the spring of 1845, when the Saints left the Black, at least eleven mills were built by various people at all of the sites available below and above the falls. The Black was a popular stream very early because it was shorter and straighter than its southern neighbor, the Wisconsin. Because its mouth was eighty miles further north, the distance to the best pine country was significantly less. The Black also had fewer rapids and falls, making it a safer and easier stream for rafting. In retrospect, given the extreme difficulty of logging on the Chippewa and the Wisconsin and the greater distance to the Chippewa and the St. Croix, the Black was the near-perfect location for the Latter-day Saints to obtain lumber in a timely and efficient manner, given their experience and background.

Beginning with a small work party of thirty-two in September 1841, the Latter-day Saint crews working the mills and camps ranged from one hundred to possibly as high as two hundred during each of the two seasons of 1843 and 1844. For the first group that went upriver in 1841, provisions and equipment were issued in Nauvoo. The two committees paid the bills, and Peter Haws kept the books. Both in Nauvoo and in the pineries, Haws’s ledgers—simple day books with summary accounts largely missing—read like the accounts of a company store. Workers drew provisions, supplies, equipment, and occasionally cash as needed, all of which were charged against their account. At the end of the season or whenever workers left the pineries, they were usually paid in tithing credit, temple credit, and Nauvoo House stock certificates. On rare occasions, a worker was paid in cash.

Three types of workers were employed in the pineries: semipermanent settlers (those who stayed more than one season, such as George Miller and Allen Stout), seasonal workers, and single-trippers. Joseph Holbrook was one of the latter. On May 25, 1843, he left Nauvoo with George Miller for the Black River to help bring down lumber. The day he arrived he started down the Black with Henry W. Miller on a raft. On the lake near LaCrosse, they met
Elijah Cunningham bringing a boatload of provisions upstream. Holbrook took an empty keel boat attached to the raft and transferred to Cunningham's party to help them. He returned to Nauvoo on a raft with George Miller on July 8. Hiram W. Mikesell and his wife were examples of seasonal workers. They were employed in the pineries from October 25, 1842, to July 8, 1843, meaning that they probably returned to Nauvoo on the same raft as Joseph Holbrook. At the end of the season, they owed $44.84 for goods drawn from the committee store. They settled their bill on March 26, 1844, and the balance due them was credited to Hiram's tithing in the amount of $205.16 and to his wife's in the amount of $62.50. Among the supplies they used during the eight months were three shirts; one and a quarter buckskins; sixty yards of fabric including calico, cotton flannel, and lindsey; two pairs of boots; six pairs of shoes; two pairs of mocassins; one cap; one almanac; and one dollar cash. All of the workers drew clothing in similar amounts. In addition, many of the men were issued lead, powder, and axes.

By the time the first group from Nauvoo arrived on the river in September 1841, much had been accomplished that would contribute to the success of their four-year experience in the pineries. As a whole the Saints could draw upon their considerable logging and milling experience in New England and Ohio. Individual members of the expedition were highly skilled. Alpheus Cutler and George Miller, for example, were accomplished carpenters, Miller having worked on the construction of the University of Virginia as a young man. Henry W. Miller had owned a mill in Adams County, Illinois. The Saints also had some familiarity with Wisconsin. Prior to his conversion to Mormonism in Kirtland, for example, Newel K. Whitney had worked as a trader in Green Bay with the resident trader, Daniel Whitney (relationship unknown), who dealt in furs and ran a sawmill. What they did not know from firsthand experience could be read in the newspapers of the region or could be learned at least sketchily by word-of-mouth from other settlers in the area who had been to Wisconsin.

Two such men were Horatio Curts and George Crane, who lived about twenty miles from Nauvoo in Warren County, Illinois. On August 11, 1840, they struck an agreement with Jonathan and Hudson Nichols of Black River, Wisconsin Territory, to erect, operate, and improve a mill on the Black at the mouth of Roaring Creek. Each of the two parties was to put up $100 and to share
further expenses and profits on a fifty-fifty basis. Their site was one of the best in the lower pineries (below the falls), and their mill, though in poor condition, was a general success, still operating in 1845. In November 1841, Nathan Myrick, the trader at LaCrosse who was then on his maiden voyage to establish his trading post, met and shared a boat with a "Mr. Kurtz, a Mormon from Nauvoo" going upriver with supplies. There is no other evidence that Curts was a Mormon, and, given Myrick's advanced age when he wrote his reminiscences and the absence of any reference to Curts's being a Mormon in Myrick's account books and other records kept at the time, it is possible that he confused Curts with members of later groups or assumed Curts was a Mormon because he lived near Nauvoo and was most likely selling lumber there.

Both the Nauvoo House Association and the Temple Committee became officially involved in the pineries sometime during the late spring or early summer of 1841 when the decision was made to buy the Crane-Curts mill. On September 9, 1841, Alpheus Cutler, Reynolds Cahoon, Elias Higbee, George Miller, Lyman Wight, and Peter Haws signed three promissory notes, promising to pay $1,400 by April 14, 1843, in three equal installments plus interest to John Curts and Michael Crane (who apparently had inherited the half-interest in the mill belonging to Horatio and George) in exchange for part-interest in the Roaring Creek mill, which was only twelve miles below Black River Falls. The Saints, along with Jonathan Nichols, worked the mill during the 1841–42 season with limited success. They established several logging camps with "shanties" five miles "above" (with "above" meaning either up the creek or up the river or both) and apparently scouted both Spaulding's and Woods' mills and a mill site above them at McCleans Falls. They cut and milled enough timber to send down a small raft at the close of navigation in 1841 and a larger one in October 1842, but they ended the season $3,000 in debt.

They failed to pay the amount due on the promissory notes in April 1843 as scheduled, paying a total of only $280 in 1842. As a result, Curts and Crane brought suit in Prairie du Chien on May 11, 1844, petitioning for the return of the mill. Judge Charles Dunn so ordered, but by that time, as we shall see, the Saints had traded their interest to Jacob Spaulding and had been logging above the falls in the upper pineries for two winters. They were within a year of departing from the pineries—and for some of them, from Wisconsin—for good. The experience with the Roaring Creek mill left the Saints
George Miller,
supervisor of the LDS lumbering operations in Wisconsin
(Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
much wiser about the realities of lumbering on the Black. They had learned that the best and most efficiently harvested pine was above the falls, that the Roaring Creek mill was in poor condition (and, of course, they were entitled to only half the mill time, or, if they logged together with Nichols, half the production), and that better mill sites were available farther upstream.

While the group at the Roaring Creek mill had “made but little or no lumber” during 1841 and 1842, another year had passed and with it the need for lumber in Nauvoo had increased. In addition, their debt had to be paid. Because of his leadership abilities and his business expertise, George Miller was assigned to go to the pineries and personally oversee the operation of the mill and logging camps. Accordingly, on August 6, 1842, Daniel S. Witter gave George Miller power of attorney to collect the $2,912 due him from Jacob Spaulding as a result of the 1840 court case in Warsaw, Illinois. Detailed sources do not exist, but apparently Miller and Witter had known one another earlier in Adams County, and perhaps Spaulding’s reputation was also known to Miller, so when the discouraging report came in from the Roaring Creek mill, it was reasonable to look for a way to strike a better deal with Spaulding. In any case, armed with this claim and with the power of attorney, Miller organized and outfitted a large group of workers for the pineries. Apparently, the plan was to proceed to the Roaring Creek mill and then move provisions and equipment to Black River Falls, where they would present their claim to Spaulding and strike a deal for his mill or establish a new mill, while, at the same time, retaining possession and legal control of half-interest in the Roaring Creek mill as a backup. While the expedition was being outfitted, Miller proceeded upriver on a steamer in advance of the company. He stopped at Prairie du Chien to confirm his claim on Spaulding in the October term of the circuit court. After reaching an agreement with Spaulding for the sale or trade of his mills, Miller settled in to await the arrival of the main group from Nauvoo, who were coming up the Mississippi under the leadership of Henry W. Miller. Two weeks later the company had not arrived, so Miller left his wife in Prairie du Chien and caught a ride downriver on a large lumber raft from the St. Croix mills.

After meeting the company at Fulton, Illinois, on the Mississippi River, George Miller took from November 2 until December 5 to move them and most of the gear and provisions from Fulton to the mill at Roaring Creek. They proceeded first by keelboat and later
by foot and sled when the river froze. Not until December 12 was
the balance of the provisions moved to the mill. The move was a
bitterly cold experience with two feet of snow to walk through most
of the way. Miller made two round trips on foot and despite the
hardships was so deeply impressed by the beauty of the country that
he wrote in his diary:

Monday, November 21: We started early—in many places, where the
snow had drifted, it was almost too much for our strength to breast [sic]
our way through it. We crossed this day a range of mountains, or rather
knobs, from which, when the snow, which was occasionally falling,
would permit, we could see the course of the Black River meandering
its way through the hills. We fell on a beautiful valley of Prairie and
dwarf timber, interspersed with occasional quaking Asp groves
towering high, having conical tops and white trunks, imparting to the
beautiful scenery which surrounded us that imposing grandeur so
peculiarly calculated to captivate and lead the mind of the beholder to
the author of our existence, and Great Architect of the universe. We
made our way down this valley near the margin of a beautiful, clear,
running brook, until we reached a spot near its junction with a larger
stream, which stream, with its numerous tributaries which we could
behold from the hills, presented one of the most beautiful prospects
I ever beheld. It was the prospect of a country well suited in all respects
for the various pursuits of the husbandman and also of the manufact-
turer, combining as it did much waterpower such as will not freeze.
We took up camp on the bank of the former brook in a thick wood.46

On December 19, Miller and eight other men journeyed upriver
from Roaring Creek to Black River Falls to make "a bargain with
Mr. Spaulding for half of his mills, as before agreed upon."47 After
some hesitation on Spaulding's part and the necessity of showing
him, as Miller put it, that they "would not be trifled with" by making
plain their intent to build a mill at McCleans Falls if Spaulding failed
to sell, the bargain was struck on December 22 for sole ownership
of both mills. Seven days later they had moved some families to the
falls and were repairing and building shanties to house them. On
December 31, 1842, they began preparing logs for the mills. The next
day they started the new year by formally taking possession of the
mills and the premises. Twelve days later they sent men and teams
to move Spaulding to their old site, having sold (or traded) their half-
interest in the Roaring Creek mill to him.48

Such a rapid and relatively smooth transfer of ownership raises
the question of why Spaulding, who apparently battled so fiercely
with the Woods for possession of the mills, so readily sold out to the
Mormons and seemingly allowed himself to be out-maneuvered.
Actually, he did not own the Black River Falls mills outright, so he could not legally convey a clear title. Since May 1841, by order of the circuit court, the Wood brothers had held a lien against the mills. Spaulding was to pay off the lien at the rate of 40,000 feet of lumber every May first. He had made the first payment and was due to pay the second one four months after Miller and the others took possession. Spaulding also gained because, as a part of the sale, Miller signed a statement that he had received full satisfaction for the Witter debt and the Mormons agreed to pay Spaulding $20,000 in addition, payable in lumber, which he could use to pay off his debt to the Wood brothers. Spaulding also got rid of two poorly built, poorly functioning mills, which had apparently never paid the expense of operating them. He lacked the Saints' sense of mission, and had he refused to sell, he would have had to face the additional difficulty of upstream competition from these intense, purposeful people. Moreover, he received their interest in the Roaring Creek mill, almost in exchange, so he was still in business. This mill was also under a cloud because the Mormons did not own their share outright, owing Crane and Curts a balance of $1,118 plus interest to remove their lien. Given such conditions, it is not surprising that apparently neither party to these two transactions registered the sale and exchange in Prairie du Chien. And finally, given his experience, Spaulding was probably more aware of the legal status of the land in the pineries than were the Mormons, who believed the Indians when they said the timber still belonged to them.

On balance, it would appear that Spaulding was not outmaneuvered and that he may have succeeded in "trifling" with the Saints after all. They obtained the lumber needed in Nauvoo, but as with all other lumber harvested in large amounts at that time, it was acquired under questionable legal circumstances. The land in the pineries had not been surveyed and offered for sale. Hence it was illegal to cut and mill large amounts of timber unless, under the 1820 preemption law, one intended to settle permanently on the land. Both the Mormons (by at least the fall of 1843) and Spaulding had such intentions. But they undoubtedly cut lumber on more acreage than was legal under the law. In this infraction they were no different in their attitude and actions than most other Americans of the time who believed they had a right to timber on public land. Robert Fries wrote, "No westerner regarded trespass as a serious crime. To take trees from the public domain was no more immoral than it was to float a canoe on a public river. Agricultural settlers and lumbermen
of undoubted integrity had no scruples whatever about ‘visiting Uncle Sam’ to get some wood.”

The first concern of the Latter-day Saints after arriving at Black River Falls was to sustain life of both man and beast. Oxen and horses were vital to successful lumbering. They were used to drag logs to the streams on which the logs could be floated to the mills. It was imperative that the animals be properly fed and sheltered, especially in the winter months. The Saints had no oats, but hay was plentiful in meadows to the north and south, although it had to be cut and hauled, placing additional strain on the stock. If frequent trips were to be avoided, the hay had to be stockpiled in stacks. A crude barn was available, which the men repaired and expanded to protect the stock from the freezing temperatures. The winters of 1842–43 and 1843–44 were severe, and three oxen died from exposure the first winter.

The people also required substantial amounts of nourishing food in order to live and work in such severe conditions. Because they were a great distance from their main source of supply and the winter snows were heavy, according to Miller, they had to “draw on sleds, and carry by back loads the principal supplies for men and animals.” This need increased the value of the animals, without which it would have been impossible to transport sufficient provisions and equipment to sustain the operation. Even with the help of the stock, the Saints were barely able to sustain life through the winter. Miller wrote that “it was all we could do to keep our families and cattle from perishing for want of food.” When the Saints could get through the snow, they could purchase some supplies in LaCrosse from trader Nathan Myrick in exchange for lumber, but even with Myrick’s help they experienced difficult times. Elmira Pond Miller, wife of Henry W. Miller, who was there through the winter of 1842–43 with her five children, remembered those times:

Before spring opened our provisions gave out and we had only potatoes and salt for several weeks. It would have been a great trial to me to hear my children cry for bread and have none to give them, but I was spared that, for the Lord over-ruled their minds insomuch that when told we had no bread and no flour to make any they did not even ask for it. The baby was only fourteen months old, but when the flour came he could not wait for it to be baked, but wanted a piece of dough. One of our daughters never ate a potato before in her life, and when she came to the table, she would look so sorrowful but never uttered a word of complaint.
Allen Joseph Stout, a carpenter, remembered similar experiences from the 1843–44 season: “About the last of Mar. [1844] our provisions gave out, so as to leave us quite hungry. Some ate an ox after he had been dead three weeks, and I cut of [sic] a piece and salted it and set it away but it stank so that it made me sick, and just as I was done fixing my stinking meat, two sled loads of flour hove in sight, so I did not eat any of that old carcass [sic].”

The common fare and mainstays in their diet were salt pork, flour, and potatoes. They augmented that diet with game and fish whenever possible and with fruits, nuts, berries, and maple syrup in season. Life improved after the first season, when those who stayed planted gardens. They sowed winter wheat in 1843 and harvested 500 bushels the next summer.

If Miller and that first crew were going to survive and be able to work, shelter and adequate clothing were as essential as food. Several crude shanties constructed of logs, mud, and rocks were standing when they arrived. These they immediately and steadily improved, adding lumber floors and partitions. They also built additional shanties and cabins, some of them two stories with relatively large amounts of milled lumber used in their construction. By the 1843–44 season, Allen Stout’s main job was “building houses for the company to winter in.” Some clothing was issued before the group left Nauvoo, but some of the men were not prepared to work in the snow and cold. Along with his frequent diary entries about the subzero temperatures, Miller makes frequent reference to the need for shoes. Beginning on December 6, 1842, and for many nights thereafter, Miller was up all night making shoes for the men, presumably using some of the hide from those oxen that had died. By the end of the first season at the falls, he had constructed a shoe factory next to his living quarters. He worked regularly to keep the men supplied with footwear and also did some sewing (a common practice among lumberjacks of that time and later). The women joined him in sewing, mending, and washing.

In some aspects, the pineries settlement was an early example of Mormon communal living. Provisions and equipment were issued in Nauvoo, with Peter Haws keeping the books. After arrival in the pineries, Haws continued to run a type of “company store” from which the members of the company could draw as needed. Allen Stout described the communal aspects in a letter to his brother Hosea on September 13, 1843:
We hav gon in to the whole law of God on Black river that is every man has given a schedule of his property to the bishop and we have all things common according to the law in the book of covenants every man has his own goods to do what he pleasures with the thing is we are all on an equality eve man fars alike labours alike eats wares alike but at the same time he lives to himself and what he has he has to himself and at his own controll I have bin thus particular because of the many falce reports gon out.

Hosea when you transcribe the above give my respects to our connexion in general and make out a full letter with such teachings as will be beneficial and sign my name to it time and paper fails see brother Hawley for further information send me some sage if you can and garden seeds.55

Practically as soon as the first group from Nauvoo arrived at the falls, and even concurrent with efforts to sustain life, men were put to work cutting trees, hauling logs, and repairing the mills. The condition of the buildings and equipment at the falls supported the opinion of Spaulding's ability as a millwright held by Witter and Mellon in 1838. Excerpts from Miller's diary tell a story of hard work and hardship:

Jan. 3, 1843. This morning the mercury is at 22 degrees below zero. All of us were engaged as before. The pitman of our saw mill broke today.

Jan. 4, 1843. I proposed to make a move to get all the logs that we could with part of the hands to stock the mills, and four or five of us set to work and put the two mills that have been sawing in thorough repair, they having been so badly constructed, in the application of water, that they had never paid the expense of running them. We also proposed to complete the third mill, which was already in a state of forwardness, but Brother Henry Miller opposed me so arbitrarily that I gave way. Nevertheless, Brother Pawkit and I began to get timber to complete the mill partly erected. The others were engaged as yesterday, except one man, who started on a new pitman for the mill. Weather moderating.

Jan. 5, 1843. This day we were severally engaged as yesterday. Two men, however, worked on the pitman and got it in, but the mill would scarcely saw at all. We had Mr. Avery commence work with us today. Brother Abraham Monseer and myself are engaged of evening tailoring and shoemaking.

Jan. 6, 1843. We were engaged as before, except four of us, who are at work in putting all three mills in thorough repair. We also keep one man sawing.

Jan. 21, 1843. We all worked on the tail race, which had become filled with stones falling in by the abrasion of the water, and also put the flutter wheel of our new mill into its place.
Jan. 23, 1843. Yesterday the head-gate gave way, letting the water in on the works of our new mill, the river having risen over two feet. We fixed in a temporary head-gate and partially repaired the water-gate, which was badly made and out of repair. We put one team and sled to hauling logs, and started the small mill to sawing. This has been frozen up ever since we bought the mills. We find it a poor concern, but will, however, run it until we get time to overhaul it. Two hands are engaged in piling lumber and working on the railroad.64

Feb. 2, 1843. Part of the men began repairing the dam of the small mill, which was erected over a brook and was so injured by the winter frost that it became necessary to make many repairs on it before letting the water in from the river, which we are nearly ready to do, it being necessary to keep up a head, the brook not being sufficient.65

These early mills were mostly opened-sided shanties, with a long up-and-down saw blade called a gate or mulay saw.66 Circular saws, which had ten percent more output, did not come into general use in Wisconsin until the 1850s.67 The wheel, rotated by the moving water, turned an offset shaft (much like those which cause merry-go-round horses to rise and fall), which alternately lifted and dropped the long, half-inch thick saw blade. The blade, held straight and rigid in a ponderous and heavy frame, cut only on the downstroke. Nonetheless, such a mill had a capacity of 4,000 to 5,000 feet of lumber a day. Since the Saints had four saws going at one time, they were capable, despite the primitive conditions and their relative inexperience, of turning out large amounts of lumber in a short time. Their daily output in the spring of 1843 was over 12,000 feet.68 They supplied the mills by working four known logging camps, three near the present city of Neilsville and one southwest of Greenwood. Because they were among the earliest loggers on the river, they could easily fill their needs by cutting only the largest and choicest pines growing closest to the streams, some of which "were large enough to produce from four to five thousand board feet of lumber." Compare this size to that of trees harvested thirty years later when "three hundred board feet was considered average."69 They were proud of their productivity. When George Miller arrived in Nauvoo on July 18, 1843, with a raft of 157,000 feet of lumber and 13,000 feet in shingles, Willard Richards reported the event in a letter to Brigham Young:

He says it was all sawed in two weeks and brought down in two more; says he has bought all the claims on those mills for $12,000 payable in lumber at the mills in three years, one third already paid for. Two saws did this job. Chance for as many mills as they may have a mind
to build, and every saw can run five thousand feet per day, year round. Two saws now running, can deliver 157,000 every fortnight.\textsuperscript{70}

Such success was not without its price in frustration, mishap, injury, and death. On January 24, 1843, Miller recorded some typical difficulties in his diary:

Brother Pawkit came down from McClean's Falls, having injured a cross-cut saw by falling a tree on it. He came down to have it repaired. He informed us that the team at McClean's Falls had run out of hay, and that the ice on the river, where it has not broken up, is not sufficient to bear the oxen, they being on the opposite side from, and 10 miles above, our house, and that there was no road by which we might haul hay to them at the falls. We shall, therefore, have to bring them down and swim them across at the falls to the side of the hay, until we can do better.\textsuperscript{71}

Later that spring, while driving logs in preparation for rafting on the creek that would ever after bear his name, Elder Elijah Cunningham "got in a whirl in the river and was seen no more."\textsuperscript{72} Such a drowning was typical of the dangers encountered by early loggers: "Even the most skillful riverman fell from his perch occasionally, and if he was caught under a mass of logs or in a whirlpool, his comrades were helpless to save him; he drowned before their very eyes."\textsuperscript{73}

In addition to such tragedies and in spite of success, the pinery Saints were frustrated by Nauvoo's rapid growth. At the end of the second season, they were not keeping up with the demand for lumber. On April 27, 1843, Miller wrote to Newel K. Whitney that a Mr. Thomas Weston had 55,000 feet of lumber that they could purchase for $12 per thousand.\textsuperscript{74} Later, in the summer of 1843 and the spring of 1844, the company had produced so much lumber there seemed to be a temporary surplus; their frustrations took on a different note when they learned that the lumber they had sacrificed to produce as virtual building-missionaries for the Temple and the Nauvoo House was being used to build houses in Nauvoo. Despite their own use of lumber to build houses in the pineries, they perceived the private use of the lumber in Nauvoo as misuse. In the spring of 1844, they expressed their dissatisfaction in person and in several letters to the leading authorities of the Church.\textsuperscript{75}

The hard work of the pineries was not limited to logging and milling. Once harvested, the lumber had to be transported to Nauvoo. Transport was accomplished by constructing large rafts, made entirely of milled lumber or timber or, in some cases, of logs and floating the rafts down the Black and Mississippi to Nauvoo.
Although rafting had been a common practice in New England for years, it was a relatively new experience for the Latter-day Saints and for most Wisconsin lumbermen. According to Robert Fries, "Several methods of constructing log rafts were devised. In the early days a raft that was to travel only a short distance was held together by a rope fastened with half hitches to plugs driven into holes in the logs. If the trip was a longer one, the raft was locked together by poles laid across its width and wedged into holes in the logs."76

Steering oars or rudders were fastened to both ends of the raft, enabling the crew to maneuver it in the current. To steer the raft one direction or the other, the operator dipped the oar by swinging it over his head and then, "as he walked in a short arc, surged upon it at every step until the stroke was completed. The raft was brought to a stop by means of a heavy rope, one end of which was secured to a tree on the riverbank. With the aid of a snubbing device set up on the deck, the rope was gradually paid out at diminishing speed until the raft had been carried to the shore."77

Temporary lumber shanties were built on board the rafts to shelter the crew from the weather. There was also a cook shack. The larger rafts, usually several hundred feet in length, a hundred or more feet in width, and an acre or more in area, were not easy to get downstream and were potentially hazardous to those on the raft and the shore alike, not to mention other river travelers in small crafts such as skiffs and keelboats. "Every rapids, every dam, every pier and boom below a mill was a potential danger to . . . [the raft] on the way to market."78 Depending on the weather conditions, the trip to Nauvoo took a week or two with stops at night to snub the raft to a tree or two. Even though Lyman Wight described the Black as "rapid and unnavigable" in an 1844 letter to Joseph Smith, there is no record of any loss of life, lumber, or rafts by the the Saints while engaged in rafting.79

Once the mills were running smoothly and life's necessities were provided, the pinery Saints directed their attention to the permanence of their settlement and the finer things of life. From the first Sunday of their arrival in the pineries, they began holding Church services and fast days, inviting the Indians and other loggers to attend, and doing missionary work whenever possible. Creature comforts were also important. Upon arrival at the Roaring Creek mill in December 1842, Henry W. Miller, who had a wife and five children to worry about, immediately went to work constructing bedsteads.80 After a good season, while he was returning to the
pineries the following July, George Miller traded sixty-two dollars' worth of pine lumber to Mr. H. McNeal of Prairie de Chien for "a lot of feathers . . . to make beds for our lumbermen."81 By the fall of 1843, Joseph Smith had decided to make the mills a permanent establishment. Accordingly, Miller procured a herd of cattle, including oxen, milk cows, and calves, and drove them up the river from Nauvoo. The following spring, Lyman Wight sent a man to Nauvoo to get a herd of sheep.82 Partly as a result of the new spirit of permanence, people at the pineries began living more normal, fuller lives, including getting married and having children. One pair of honey-mooners, Allen and Elizabeth Stout were in the 1843–44 company,83 and three of Lyman Wight's children, a son and two daughters, were married in a triple wedding on February 6, 1844, one of the daughters marrying George Miller's son.84 The following letter, written by Allen Stout to his brother Hosea in Nauvoo on September 10, 1843, is reproduced here in full because it gives remarkable insight into the full breadth of the pinery experience, including social life. It is a common man's uncommon view of a distant time and place.

Wisconsin Territory Black River
Sept. 10, 1843

Dear brothers, sisters, and friends:

We are all well and in the best country between the Alegany and Rockemountains or Atlantic and Pacific oceans this country is extremely varied with rich and poor land some sandy planes with all most no vegetation some covered with pine popler huckel and crambury oak dogwood &c. Some high mountains with immense quantities of stonne scrub pine hemlock seeder and some rich planes as any in Handcock or Adams counties with scatener pine oak &c. Some bottom land with immense quantities of large pine hard mapel white and black walnut cherry oak elm ash goosbury plums choak cherry grapevine prickly ash alder and shewmake some good oak barren land. Black river runs a west course and some places is very raped others exceedingly deep the water black but pure her tributaries dcre as crystal this is the greatest water privilege I ever saw the rive has the rapidest kind of a fall and the dam is at the head of the falls and there is a natchrel race cut a round rock that forms the foar bay at the loer end of which the mill stands from thence there is a race cut ryart on down to the foot of the rapids there is a small creek empties in rite opesite the race of the big mil on which there is a small saw and grist mill turning lathe and grinstone this creek is as good and as cold water as any spring and soft to wash in the big mill runs 2 saws and there is water pour anuff to run all creation the river being navigable
for keals at low water we have 2 or 3 acres of good potatoes some turnips capbages tomatos pumpkins squashes and are now sowing wheat and are like to get in 30 or 40 acres.

I have bin at carpenter work all the time and expect to continue every man lives to himself we have one boarder I have got me a frame house one story and a half high sixteen feet square with two loos floors and a petition and a most half sealed I work every od moment on my house I live rite by the railroad which runs from the mill to the foot of the rapids on both sides of which the slabs are piled up as high as a house I have lengthned the railrodd 2 bents since I came and expects to put 2 more on soon

Hezekiah and me are on one lot Sires Daniels and me are the principle carpenters so far I will make room for any of you if you wil come I have lots of house room and I can make more in 3 days any time lumber is plenty timber is no object here brother Hawley and Bird are bishop Millers council they have taken a schedule of every mans property to make a general distribution brother Liman works like a slave as fat as he is he has ritten an epistel which you wil likely see and you may see a letter from Siras Daniels to Turley for furthe instruction if Benj Hoseas or uncle Jim Pace thinks they can go the caper of consecration and equality we wish you to come by all means and bring all the tools you can the law of black river is he that will not work shal not eat I and Siras are a going to build us a shop to work in we live on joining lots.

the 2 saws will cut out 10000 feet in 24 hours we are a going to put up 2 more mills Bare are plenty and deer elk and buffalow are to be found and no end to fish you may think that I exgerate but just ask brother Geor Miller Elizabeth sends her respects to uncle jim aunt Loucinda and all the rst of her friends She is well satisfied tel newberries girl and Elizabeth Meeks that we would like to see them here tel them to write to us and tel us if they are married tel David and Eliza and Sarah Taylor and Joseph that there is a good chance to get married here Hosea I want you to copy of the foregoing togerther with the description of this country and of the mills and as much doctrinal pints as you can get in a letter and direct it to Louis Kirkpatrick Cerce Post., White Co Ack (immediately.

I need some tools the worst way I wish you would spare me a smoothing plane if you have 2 as there is not one her we have no match plains nor rasp tools but I think you wil come and bring them for this wil surely be a general place of gethren for it is an easy place to get to from europe being only 100 miles to green bay.85

Most of the Saints left the pineries at the death of Joseph Smith, but the mills were retained and operated during the 1844–45 season. At the end of that season, Spaulding purchased the mills for “a few hundred thousand feet of pine lumber,” a “mere trifle” according to George Miller.86 A group of pinery Saints under Lyman Wight's
leadership settled temporarily south of LaCrosse in 1845 and did some lumbering for Nathan Myrick, but as indicated earlier, their story is more a part of Wight's apostasy from Mormonism under Brigham Young than it is of the pinery experience. Various members of the pinery expedition formed such strong attachments to either Wisconsin or to their leaders—George Miller, Alpheus Cutler, Lyman Wight—that they later severed their ties with the main body of the Church and settled in Wisconsin or Texas. This additional product of the pineries—apostasy—was also important. But its overall development and outcome as a story lie outside the limits of this study of how the Saints became involved in the pineries and the kinds of experiences they had there.

Viewed in retrospect, the pinery expedition fulfilled its purposes. The lumber needed by the Church was harvested at a fraction of what it would have cost in Illinois. The pinery Saints contributed to the upbuilding of Nauvoo and established relatively congenial relations with residents of Wisconsin. To be sure, there were some mild confrontations with the Indians, with Indian traders selling whiskey, and with speculators attempting to preempt and sell timber claims. George Miller was summoned to court in Prairie du Chien in 1843 and 1844 as a codefendant with Spaulding in the Woods' continuing effort to wrest the mill site at Black River Falls from Spaulding's—and during 1843–45, the Saints'—control. But the Saints were gone long before this twenty-year lawsuit was finally laid to rest. Given all of the above, no contemporaneous source supports the story of armed conflict in a so-called "Mormon War" which exists most prominently in the folklore of Black River Falls and Jackson and Clark counties. It is likely a tale that Spaulding told and retold in his old age (and that others augmented) in order to aggrandize himself and his role in the origin and development of Black River Falls. That way he could sweeten the sometimes bitter memory of the three seasons when those Mormon "sharpies" did him out of so much prime timber that he could have sold at a profit, especially if he could have devised a way to convince hundreds of people to log and mill and raft for a "holy cause" with little more to show for their efforts than the assurance that they were stockholders in the Nauvoo House Association or the satisfaction of having tithing and temple credit in a ledger book in Nauvoo.
APPENDIX

This list of names of known pinery workers and their families was compiled from various sources, including a manuscript history of the Nauvoo Temple by Earl Arrington in the LDS Church Archives and in the Arrington Papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library; records compiled by the Jackson County Historical Society in Black River Falls, Wisconsin; the Peter Haws Pinery Account Books in the LDS Church Archives; The Historical Record; and various other manuscript sources. The list is not complete and the spelling of some of the names is uncertain. It has not yet been possible to determine with any precision the period each person worked in the pineries.

Adams, Henry  
Adams, John  
Allaby, John  
Allen, O. M.  
Allred, Preserved  
Alred, Riley  
Anderson, Blakely  
Avery, Mr.  
Baly, Amos  
Bird, Charles  
Bird, George  
Bird, Phineas R.  
Black, James M.  
Brown, James  
Brown, William  
Cankins, Truman W.  
Carter, Matilda  
Chase, Ezra  
Chase, George W.  
Child, Mrs. N.  
Child, Nathaniel  
Childs, Miss  
Clarks, Bohan  
Clayton, David  
Clyde, George W.  
Cockings, Numan H.  
Coltrin, P.  
Conover, Peter W.  
Coray, George  
Culett, Sylvester  
Cunningham, Elijah H.  
Curtis, Eliza  
Curtis, Marcham  
Curtis, Mitchell  
Curtis, Stephen  
Curtis, William  
Cutler, Alpheus  
Cutter, William S.  
Dale, Timothy  
Daniels, Cyrus  
Davis, David  
Davis, Mr.  
Dunlap, Joseph  
Durfee, Jabez  
Egbert, Robert  
Evans, Horace  
Everett (Everts), Milo  
Fife, John  
Flack, J. M.  
Flack, James M.  
Flemm, B.  
Follet, William A.  
Franklin, William  
Gaylord, Mr.  
Gaylord, Mrs.  
Gibbs, D. S.  
Goodale, Joseph D.  
Goodelle, Joseph  
Hawley, Grover  
Hawley, Pierce  
Haws, Alpheus  
Haws, Peter  
Head, William  
Heath, R. F.  
Hicks, Robert T.  
Higbee, E.
Hoffman
Houston, James
Hufman, Andrew
Hulett, Sylvester
Jenkins, Ralph
Jenkins, Samuel
Jenkins, Thomas
Jenkins, William Johnson
Jones, David
Jones, M. A.
Kite, John
Lake, Elisha
Larkins, Luman H.
Lent, Henry H.
Lewis, James
Lewis, Tarleton
Menelds
Mikesell, Mrs. H.,
Mikesell, Hiram W.
Miles, Ira T.
Miller, Alma
Miller, Elizabeth
Miller, Mrs. Elmire P.
Miller, George
Miller, Henry William
Miller, John
Miller, Joshua
Miller, Lucy
Miller, Mary
Miller, Mrs. Mary Catherine
Miller, Rosina Minerva
Miller, Ruth Ann
Miller, William Henry
Monroe, David
Monseer, Abraham
Moor, Esther A.
More, Ethen A.
Morris, Jacob
Names, John
Oaks, Reuben
Olmstead, Asa
Outhouse, John
Outhouse, Joseph
Owens, Horace B.
Pawkett, Octavus
Pern, Albert
Pew, Albert
Pew, Alfred
Plumb, Aaron
Potter, Martin
Ralph, Ianthus
Ralph, James
Rockwell, Horace
Rogers, Noah
Rogers, Prussel
Rogers, Russell
Shotwell, James
Sloan, Albert
Smith, Anna C.
Smith, Moses
Smith, Spencer
Southwick, Noah
Spaldin, David
Sprague, Harry
Standing, John
Steward, A. F.
Steward, L. L.
Stewart, R. R.
Stuard, Bard
Stuart, Franklin
Taylor, John
Teasdale, Joseph A.
Thompson, Henry
Thorn, Richard (Jr.)
Umstead, Asa Olmsted
Walker, Hugh
Wight, Anna Christina
Wight, Mrs. Harriet
Wight, Laomi Lemi
Wight, Levi Lamon
Wight, Lyman
Wight, Lyman Lehi
Wight, Matilda Darter
Wight, Orange Lamer
Wilcox, S. A. (Silas)
Willings, Edwin
Willson, Henry H.
Wilson, Hardin
Woodworth, Lucian
Young, John
NOTES


2 This figure is based on census information of the state of Illinois and the Church's as well as Joseph Smith's personal estimate in January 1843, as cited and developed in Susan Easton Black, "New Insights Replace Old Traditions: Membership of the Church in Nauvoo, 1839–1846" (Paper delivered at the Nauvoo Symposium, Provo, Utah, 1989).


5 McGavin, Nauvoo the Beautiful, 43. See also MSS. 1374, Archives and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, for original Ann Pitchforth letter of April 23, 1845.

6 An indication of the scarcity of fence rails as well as lumber can be seen in the five cases of wood and timber theft that were tried before the Nauvoo High Council between April 1840 and July 1841; Theodore Turley was convicted for "taking the lumber from the boat without leave" (Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City [hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives], April 12, May 2, and August 8, 1840, and February 6 and July 4, 1841). See also Joseph Smith to Edward Hunter, Nauvoo, December 21, 1841, in which he states that lumber had to be "brought twenty miles" and that many more new buildings "would have arisen, if brick and lumber could have been obtained" (HC 4:481–82).


8 Flanders, Nauvoo, 50–51.

9 Fries, Empire in Pine, 8.

10 Fries, Empire in Pine, 22. See also n. 12 below.

11 Flanders, Nauvoo, 152–55, is the only source I have found to hold that the surplus lumber was intended for sale to individuals in the Nauvoo trade. Compare the strong negative reaction of George Miller and Lyman Wight in 1843 and the spring of 1844 over the diversion of lumber to private construction (HC 6:255–60; and Correspondence of Bishop George Miller with the Northern Islander, comp. Wingfield Watson [Burlington, Wis., 1916], June 27, 1855, 15 [hereafter cited as Miller Correspondence]; originally contributed to the Northern Islander, August 9–October 18, 1855). If private use of lumber was part of the original plan, apparently Miller and Wight were not so informed. But, in a seeming paradox, they used milled lumber in the pineries to build private dwellings. Admittedly, they took this action in part to keep from freezing to death, but log cabins probably would have been warmer. Allen Stout's description of two-story framed lumber dwellings suggests plans for a permanent settlement and a "free enterprise" attitude, at least partially incongruous with Miller's and Wight's status as building missionaries for the Temple (Allen Stout letters to Hosea Stout, July 25, September 10 and 13, 1843, in Hosea Stout Diary, Supplement, typescript, MOR/M270.1/St76/V.5, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; hereafter
cited as Allen Stout letters). Stout’s references to framed lumber dwellings are in the September 10 letter.

12 These figures are based upon a conglomeration of sources including diaries, letters, and various Church publications. At best, the figure is an educated guess.

13 Estimates from Al Jenkins, carpenter, Utah Timber and Coal Co., and Steve Soderquist, carpenter, both of Provo, Utah.

14 According to several early sources, there is general agreement on the existence of the following thirteen mills during the time period the Saints were in the pinnies. Many others are not listed here because their existence was not certain, their location is not known, their date of establishment is not clear, or they lasted only a short time (such as those built by Joseph Rollette, James Lockwood, and Colonel John Shaw in 1818, 1822, and 1819 respectively and burned by Indians within a year). All dates are drawn from Hotchkiss, 445 (see below), and Amos Elliott to Ellis Usher (see below), or from the Diary of George Miller in H. W. Mills, “De Tal Palo Tal Astilla,” in Annual Publications, vol. 10 (Historical Society of Southern California, 1917); hereafter cited as Miller Diary, and Records of the Circuit Court, Crawford County Court House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, various cases, as noted later. The mills are listed as they appear going up the Black starting from its confluence with the Mississippi at La Crosse.

1. William and Thomas Douglas, twenty-five or thirty miles upstream on the west side.

2. Jonathan and Hudson Nichols, twelve miles below the falls on the west side on Nichols Creek, also called Roaring Creek, 1840. The Nichols may have been former employees of Spaulding or the Woods brothers. They established the mill on Roaring Creek in partnership with Horatio Curts and George Crane of Warren County, Illinois. The Church purchased half-interest in this mill in September 1841 from a John Curts and Michael Crane (relationship to former partners of same surname unknown) and worked it in partnership with Jonathan Nichols during 1841 and 1842. They traded their half-interest in this mill to Jacob Spaulding in December 1842.

3. Andrew Shepard and John Valentine, three miles below the falls, 1841.


5. Jacob Spaulding, at the falls, two mills, 1840 and 1841. Ownership contested by Andrew and Robert S. Wood until 1861. Spaulding sold his interest in these mills to the Church in December 1842 and bought them back in late 1845.

6. George Miller and company, at the falls, January 1843. They completed this mill, which had been started by someone else—probably Spaulding or the Woods brothers—and sold it to Spaulding in late 1845.

7. John Levy, on Levy’s Creek just above the falls, 1845.

8. Thomas and Peter Hall, on Hall’s Creek, 1842.

9. John Morrison, on Morrison’s Creek, 1845(?).

10. Myrick and Miller, on the West Fork of the Black, a mile above the fork itself, 1846.
11. H. McCollins, Cunningham Creek, 1845(?).

12. James O'Neil, O'Neil Creek (Perry Creek); 1839–40.

See Nathan Myrick, Reminiscences written in a letter to F. A. Copeland, January 28, 1892, MS/F902L14/MY, SHSW; George W. Hotchkiss, History of the Lumber and Forest Industry of the Northwest (Chicago: George W. Hotchkiss, 1898); Minnie Jones Taylor, "History of Black River Falls to 1940," typescript, River Falls SC82, 6; and Amos Elliott to Ellis Usher, May 1913, MS/F902B62/El. All of these sources are located in the Division of Archives and Manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; hereafter cited as SHSW. For the locations of the Mormon mills and camps, see the map accompanying this article.

Records of the Circuit Court, Crawford County Court House, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Case S-16. The details of the Witter v. Spaulding case in Hancock County discussed in this and the following paragraph are taken from depositions found in this case file; hereafter cited as Circuit Court Records. Photocopies of the circuit court records consulted for this article are available in the Wisconsin Pineries Manuscript Collection, MSS. 1602, Archives and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. The originals are housed in the SHSW.

At Spaulding's second trial, his attorney claimed that the plaintiffs failed to provide a house for Spaulding and an 18-cents-a-day tool allowance as promised in the September 1838 revised contract and, therefore, he was justified in not keeping his end of the bargain. He also charged that the court lacked jurisdiction since the agreement was made in Adams County. The site of the mill is not given, although the context suggests Warsaw, where Witter had an operating steam mill in the fall of 1839 (see HC 4:470–71).

The details of the Woods–Spaulding partnership and legal suits are drawn primarily from Circuit Court Records, cases S.29 and W.64, MSS. 1602.

Circuit Court Records, the 1848 depositions in case S.29; and George Gale, "When the Mormons Settled in Jackson County," Black River Falls Banner Journal, June 21, 1939, both in MSS. 1602.

Circuit Court Records, cases W.17, S.24, W.16, and W.56, MSS. 1602. These rafts are sufficient evidence to invalidate the loose claims made by some that the Latter-day Saints pioneered rafting on the Black River—at least not if pioneered means they were the first to use rafts to move logs and lumber to market. The Saints clearly were members of the pioneering generation of rafters on the Black, but they were not the first. See Fries, Empire in Pine, 55; and Malcolm J. Rohrbough, The Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775–1850 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 339–40. John Shaw also rafted lumber on the Black in 1820. See John Shaw, Manuscript Biography, Wis/MSS/M, p. 4, SHSW; see also a primary source for this biography, Col. John Shaw, "Shaw's Narrative," in Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, ed. Lyman Copeland Draper, vol. 2 (Madison, Wis., 1903), 197–232; hereafter cited as John Shaw biography.

Fries, Empire in Pine, 11.

Circuit Court Records, cases W.64 and C.23, MSS. 1602. For example, in the October 1841 term, Spaulding was sued for failure to pay a $679 bill for provisions and equipment he had purchased in Quincy, Illinois, prior to leaving on his first trip to the pineries.

Fries, Empire in Pine, 13–16.

Peter L. Scanlan Papers, Platteville MSS. D, box 7, folder 5, SHSW; John Shaw biography; and Taylor, "History of Black River Falls to 1940," 6. See also n. 14.
24 See n. 14.
25 Taylor, "History of Black River Falls to 1940," 22; and Fries, Empire in Pine, 17–18.
26 I have found no record of how many people left Nauvoo in September. The Wisconsin Territorial Census of 1842, taken in June and July, lists forty-one people at Roaring Creek. Family head Jonathan Nichols accounted for eight white males and one white female. The Nauvoo party, listing N. Childs as their family head and specifically listing Cutler, Haws, and Miller as members, accounted for thirty white males and two white females. 
27 A list of names of some of the people who went to the pineries is in the appendix to this article.
28 For the Haws Account Books, see LDS Church Archives, MS/d/781/6, C4989/L.C. and C4743. From an analysis of the Haws accounts, one could almost make a case that the pineries settlement was a company town with the company or firm being the combined committees. The nature of the pineries community as a type of Mormon communitarianism is a topic for a separate essay. For information on company towns, see James B. Allen, The Company Town in the American West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966).
29 See The Life of Joseph Holbrook 1806–1871, typescript, 1942, 56–59, Mor/M270.1/H694, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library. 
31 For example, Stephen Mack owned part interest in a sawmill at Rochester (Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith, ed. Preston Nibley [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954], 23–25); Josiah Stowell operated sawmills on the Susquehanna River and employed Joseph Smith (Larry Porter, "The Colesville Branch and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," BYU Studies 10 [Spring 1970]: 367–69); and Frederick G. Williams worked his father’s sawmills in the Cleveland area. The Williams farm and sawmills became a stronghold for the Church in Kirtland (Frederick G. Williams, "Frederick Granger Williams of the First Presidency of the Church," BYU Studies 12 [Spring 1972]: 243–61). Contrast to Flanders, Nauvoo, 183, who maintains the Saints had “but small knowledge of lumbering.” 
32 Biography of Henry W. Miller, typescript, in possession of Dean K. Fuhriman, a descendant, of Provo, Utah.
34 Fries, Empire in Pine, 12–14; and John Plumbe, Diary, SHSW. Plumbe was a sometime lumberman and raft scavenger in Siniipee, Wisconsin (near Dubuque, Iowa), who recorded the following in his diary for March 12, 1839: “This p.m. I walked down to Burn’s cabin to borrow a Peoria paper, containing an account of pine land in Wisconsin.”
35 See this agreement, dated August 11, 1840, labeled “Copy of Articles of Agreement Mill,” in Newel K. Whitney Papers, box 5, folder 24.
36 Myrick, Reminiscences, 7.
37 Additional evidence against Curt’s being a Mormon is the suit Crane and he filed against the Saints in Prairie du Chien, May 1844.
38 Miller Correspondence, June 26, 1855, 8–9.

39 For the details of this agreement and a copy of the notes, see Circuit Court Records, Case C-12, MSS. 1602.

40 Miller Diary, December 8, 1842, 99.

41 HC 5:169–70. The 1842 raft was about 90,000 feet of lumber and 24,000 feet of timber—the result of a winter and summer of work—and "covered an acre" according to Flanders, Nauvoo, 156. Compare the May 1, 1843, raft of 50,000 feet harvested and milled in less than four months.

42 Miller Correspondence, June 26, 1855, 9.

43 Miller Correspondence, June 26, 1855, 9. This comment seems an exaggeration in light of the October 1842 raft.

44 Circuit Court Records, Case S.16, MSS. 1602.

45 Miller Diary, October 13–25, 1842, 92–93. Apparently, Miller's wife was with him at Prairie du Chien. See also Circuit Court Records, Case S.16, MSS. 1602. The suit in Witter's behalf was presented by A. Brunson, attorney—and at one time Spaulding's attorney—of Prairie du Chien. Spaulding moved to quash the writ of attachment on his mills on the grounds that the affidavit was insufficient, the writ was insufficient and void, and the service was insufficient, irregular, and void. Also presented was an affidavit from H. G. Sherwood, who held the power of attorney from Witter jointly with Miller, stating that Spaulding had property on Black River and that it ought to be attached for the debt. See also Miller Correspondence, June 26, 1855, 10, in which he describes reaching an agreement with Spaulding.

46 Miller Diary, November 21, 1842, 96.

47 Miller Diary, December 19, 1842, 100. The phrase "as before agreed upon" is an obvious reference to the oral agreement reached in Prairie du Chien a few weeks earlier.

48 Miller Diary, January 1–13, 1843, 102–3.

49 See Circuit Court Records, Case S.29, MSS. 1602.

50 "Jacob Spaulding," WPA Biography File, Wis/MSS/MM, p. 3, SHSW. Compare to HC 5:512, where Miller says $12,000.

51 Miller Correspondence, June 27, 1855, 18–19. The timberland had been ceded to the U.S. government by treaty in 1838.


53 For the Mormon attitude, see Miller Correspondence, June 27, 1855, 14. See also Allen Stout letters, September 10, 1843, wherein Stout refers to the pineries as "a place of general gathren." The presence of women and children, the construction of framed two-story dwellings, and the planting of crops all confirm that the Saints planned to stay awhile rather than just quickly rape the woods for available timber and then leave.

54 Fries, Empire in Pine, 187.

55 Miller Correspondence, June 26, 1855, 12–13. See also Autobiography of Hannibal Lugg, Parkside SG11, 7, SHSW; and Historical Atlas of Wisconsin (Milwaukee, Wis.: Snyder and Van Vechten, 1878), 18.

56 Miller Correspondence, June 26, 1855, 11.

57 Miller Correspondence, June 26, 1855, 11.

58 Myrick, Reminiscences, 16.

62 See Peter Haws, Financial Account Book, 1841, and Day Book, MS/d/781/6, LDS Church Archives.
63 Allen Stout letters, September 13, 1843.
64 The term railroad apparently refers to some sort of track, trough, or frame for feeding the logs to the saw or for getting logs or sleds loaded with logs to the mill. If the latter, such a track (railroad) could have been constructed of packed snow and ice, as in later years.
65 Miller Diary, January 3–6, 21, 23, and February 2, 1843, 102–5.
66 Hotchkiss, History of the Lumber and Forest Industry, 445; Amos Elliott to Ellis Usher; and Fries, Empire in Pine, 38, 60–61.
67 Fries, Empire in Pine, 61.
68 Miller Correspondence, June 26, 1855, 13. “In 1848 a mill capable of cutting from nine to twenty thousand board feet a day was considered a large establishment” (Fries, Empire in Pine, 122).
69 Fries, Empire in Pine, 29.
70 HC 5:512.
71 Miller Diary, January 24, 1843, 104.
72 The Life of Joseph Holbrook, 63.
73 Fries, Empire in Pine, 44.
74 Whitney Papers, box 1, folder 29. The letter is badly deteriorated. The man’s name appears to be Weston. If so, Weston’s Rapids on the Black River may have been named by or for him.
75 Miller Correspondence, June 27, 1855, 15; and HC 6:255–60.
76 Fries, Empire in Pine, 56.
77 Fries, Empire in Pine, 65.
78 Fries, Empire in Pine, 16.
79 HC 6:257.
80 Miller Diary, December 13, 1842.
81 Authorization to Pay: George Miller to Joseph Smith, Whitney Papers, box 3, folder 17.
82 Miller Correspondence, June 27, 1855, 14; and HC 6:230.
85 Allen Stout letters, September 10, 1843.
86 Miller Correspondence, June 28, 1855, 23.
87 For information on the group of people who followed Lyman Wight, see Davis Bitton, “Mormons in Texas: The Ill-fated Lyman Wight Colony, 1844–1858,” Arizona and the West 11 (Spring 1969): 5–26.
88 See Circuit Court Records, Case S.29, MSS. 1602.
89 See especially Judge Gales’s account, “When the Mormons Settled in Jackson County,” which is the most exaggerated. See also Hotchkiss, History of the Lumber and Forest Industry, 445. Contrast these with the cooperative spirit reflected in George Miller’s diary.
Conflict in the Countryside: The Mormon Settlement at Macedonia, Illinois

Susan Sessions Rugh

Less than a fifteen-minute drive northeast of Carthage, Illinois, a sign announces, “Webster, Population 46.” A boarded-up store, a tiny cafe, and a small white church with a bell tower mark the spot. Situated in a wide bend of Crooked Creek, Webster received its name in 1847, less than a year after the departure of Latter-day Saint settlers who had founded the town as Ramus in 1840 and who renamed it Macedonia in 1843. In 1845 it was reputed to be the third largest town in Hancock County, and its population peaked at somewhere between five and six hundred before the Macedonian Saints left in the spring of 1846. Macedonia, like other rural Mormon settlements in Hancock County, was a casualty of the Mormon conflict centered in Nauvoo. The renaming of the town for the prominent American statesman Daniel Webster was surely an attempt to forge a new identity and forget the past.¹

Historical treatment of the events leading up to the expulsion of the Saints in 1846 has focused on Nauvoo and the Church leadership there. Scholars have argued that the insularity of Nauvoo was a key factor in generating regional hostility towards the Church. Unwilling to integrate politically or economically, the Saints presented a theopolitical monolith that aroused hostility.²

The smaller settlements in Hancock County, however, presumably offered more opportunities for Mormons and their neighbors to deal with one another. Such was the case with Macedonia and its neighbor Fountain Green. Ordinary interaction between residents of

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(From *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 3:99)
these towns, which were only two miles apart, engendered acquaintances, friendships, and even kinship ties that may have mitigated impulses toward aggression.\textsuperscript{3} Until we understand the ties between rural Mormons and the old settlers, we cannot fully understand the persecution of the Mormons and their expulsion in 1846.

**Settlement of the Crooked Creek Area**

The triangular Illinois Military Tract, bounded by the Mississippi River on the west and the Illinois River on the east, was set aside as bounty lands for veterans of the War of 1812. Because the federal lands were not available for sale until the mid-1830s, squatting was common and title was uncertain.\textsuperscript{4} By 1826 when Ute Perkins, a Revolutionary War veteran from Tennessee, settled his family along Crooked Creek, the Indians were not much of a threat. Ute and his wife Sarah were nearly seventy years old, and with their grown children and grandchildren the family was a large clan.\textsuperscript{5} The Perkins were soon joined by other families from Kentucky; where they farmed became known as Perkins Settlement. Shortly thereafter a group of Catholic families migrated from Hardin County, Kentucky. Among them were Mordecai Lincoln, uncle to the future president, and his son, also named Abraham.\textsuperscript{6}

Settlement of the southern portion of what became Fountain Green township by families from the South was augmented by an influx of Yankees who settled the northern portion. In 1831 Jabez and Sophia Beebe arrived from western New York with two young children; they were joined a year later by Jabez's sister Eunice, her husband Stephen Ferris, and their six children. Seizing the entrepreneurial opportunities offered by the frontier, Beebe and Ferris founded the town of Fountain Green in 1835. In the mid-1830s they were joined by families from Pennsylvania's Cumberland Valley, who brought a wheat-growing tradition into the township. The Pennsylvanians were Scotch-Irish, with names like Geddes, McConnell, and Walker. Thus families from the South, the Northeast, and the mid-Atlantic regions founded the rural farming community in the township on the eastern edge of Hancock County.\textsuperscript{7}

The families created community institutions as the township's population grew. School lessons were taught in log cabin homes until a proper schoolhouse was built in Fountain Green. New York Yankee Martin Hopkins opened a store after his arrival in 1836, and the next year Stephen Tyler joined him to establish the firm of
Hopkins and Tyler. The firm sold supplies to farm families in exchange for produce such as grain or pork, which was hauled overland to Warsaw on the Mississippi and shipped down to St. Louis.⁸

With the rudiments of a commercial network in place, the settlers hastened to formally establish churches for worship on the frontier. In 1838 Mordecai Lincoln and his son Abraham helped build the small chapel of St. Simon the Apostle, located east of Perkins Settlement. The Catholic congregation of about thirty families, one of three on the western Illinois frontier, was attended by priests assigned by the diocese in St. Louis. Pennsylvanians Thomas Geddes and James McConnell founded a Presbyterian church in Fountain Green in November 1840. The church attracted Scotch-Irish from New York and the upland South who augmented the core of families who had migrated from Pennsylvania.⁹

Along with the Catholics and Presbyterians, the Latter-day Saints became a part of the religious community along Crooked Creek. Founding settler Ute Perkins and some of his family were baptized in April 1839 by Joel Hills Johnson, who lived in nearby Carthage. Born in Massachusetts in 1802, Johnson was raised on the frontier of western New York. In 1826 Joel married Anna Pixley Johnson, and by 1831 he and Anna had moved to Amherst, Ohio, where he pursued his trade of shingle cutter. There, two Mormon elders preached the gospel to him, and Johnson was baptized in June 1831. Not long afterward he journeyed to New York to preach the gospel to his family, who joined him when he moved to Kirtland.¹⁰

When the body of the Saints moved from Kirtland to Missouri in 1838, Joel was entrusted with the care of those too ill to make the journey. He spent the winter of 1838–39 in Springfield, Illinois, presiding over the detachment of the sick. As he recalled in his memoirs, on January 8, 1839, "the Lord showed me by revelation that I must immediately go to Carthage in Hancock County."¹¹ Johnson rented a vacant storehouse in Carthage for his family, where the couple's fifth child was born in early March. Johnson commenced preaching in the area and "rooted out much of the prejudice existing in the minds of the people in reference to the difficulties at Far West, Missouri, and gained many warm friends to the Saints in and about the vicinity of Carthage."¹²

Among them were members of the Perkins family. Johnson organized the embryonic group of Saints into the Crooked Creek Branch on April 17, 1839.¹³ In late June, Joseph Smith visited the
Perkins home, and the next day he spoke “with considerable liberty to a large congregation.”  In mid-February 1840, the Johnsons moved from Carthage to the west branch of Crooked Creek, where Joel had purchased a sawmill and piece of land. He reported in the *Times and Seasons* in March 1840 that he and two other elders had baptized about twenty persons and that the branch numbered about fifty members.  He recalled in his reminiscences that he “labored during the spring and summer for the support of my family and preached on the Sabbath to the brethren.”  On July 9, 1840, the branch was enlarged to the status of a stake, organized near Johnson’s sawmill. Johnson was made stake president and Ebenezer Page was chosen as bishop, with Elijah B. Gaylord and William G. Perkins as counselors. Twelve men were selected to sit on the stake high council, casting lots to devise a ranking of seniority.

One of the stake’s first efforts was to create a town for its members. After investigating the surrounding areas, a high council committee purchased land from Ute Perkins, two of his sons, and William Miller for what became the town of Ramus. The Perkins were to be paid $9 per acre for 285 acres, and town lots were to be sold for $25 each.  Ramus was surveyed into twenty-four blocks of four lots each by old citizen William Donoho and Mormon William Perkins in August. The street names were traditional for American towns: First through Fourth streets running east to west, and crosswise Oak, Elm, Ash, and Cherry streets. In November tax title to an additional quarter section of land was purchased from Dr. John Charles of Carthage for $300.

Stake President Johnson promoted the expanding town in a letter to the *Times and Seasons* in November 1840, declaring that Ramus was “in the midst of a beautiful and fertile country” and that agricultural or town land could be purchased on “very reasonable terms.”  Johnson noted that already “quite a number of buildings, mechanical shops &c., have been erected, and many more in progress.”  Saw- and gristmills were situated nearby, and more sites were available on the many streams. For those who preferred to farm, Johnson boasted that the soil was “rich and productive.”  The location was also propitious for Saints migrating to Illinois from the East, just fifty miles west of Beardstown on the road from Springfield to Nauvoo. Johnson’s letter must have drawn a positive response, because the following February an addition was made to Ramus of nine full blocks and nine half blocks, with the new streets being named Maple and Sumac.
Latter-day Saints bought their lands from the bishop of the stake, who in turn paid the Perkins for the property as he received funds from the settlers. The bishop was authorized to take payment in the form of property "of such as had no cash," but he was not allowed to transfer lots without the notes being paid up.21 By April 1841, the stake clerk reported that the bishop had sold seventy-five lots and had received only $501.48, with $1,885.56 still due to the Church. Notwithstanding the shortage of payments, in June the stake appropriated $500 of its fund to build a schoolhouse. The proposed building was not large enough, and three weeks later a request was made for an addition to the building. In November the final moneys for the building were raised by subscription.22

Reading of this prosperous country town on the Illinois frontier, one wonders about the inhabitants of Ramus/Macedonia. Who lived there, and from where had they come? Why did they go to Macedonia instead of to Nauvoo? How did they make a living? How many of them were local residents converted by Joel Johnson, and how many had emigrated to Crooked Creek from Missouri?

The primary source of information about the residents is a list of branch members dating from before the spring of 1842.23 There are 426 persons on the list—208 men and 218 women. The list apparently includes only Church members of record, that is, baptized members over the age of eight. So with the addition of small children, the branch must have numbered five hundred and possibly nearly six hundred people, as at least one account claims.24

Not surprisingly, the Perkins and Johnson families were the backbone of the branch. Members of the Perkins family were already spread out on the Crooked Creek lands before the Saints entered the county, and Joel Johnson's mother and seven of his siblings joined him in Ramus.25 Most of Macedonia's Saints had joined the Church in Ohio and had migrated from Missouri. Other Latter-day Saint settlers were predominantly from New England and New York, with a minority from the southern states. Another group of settlers were Latter-day Saint immigrants from Britain who had spilled over from Nauvoo to settle in Macedonia. They were less apt to farm, and their reminiscences reflect a lonelier existence than that of the larger families enmeshed in kinship networks of political influence, religious status, and economic power.26 When the Mormons came, some local settlers converted. Among them were William Miller and William Wightman, who were selling land in the area as early as the mid-1830s. Many branch members had surnames common
to the area: Duff, Eaton, McConnell, Saylors, Shipley, Walker, White, and Yager. These family names reflect conversions among old settlers who were from the South, New England, and Pennsylvania.  

The group of three hundred Latter-day Saints who suddenly settled in Fountain Green Township in 1839 and 1840 doubled in size by 1842. The forty-three inhabitants of the little town of Fountain Green must have felt overwhelmed by the large number of new residents in the township. The religious refugees might have also been seen as an economic boon by the residents of frontier Fountain Green. By 1845, the number of Macedonians had decreased to 380. Of course, the townspeople were only a fraction of the populace of the larger township.  

Macedonia was predominantly an agricultural community, with its town businesses servicing the local farm economy. Many of the residents practiced trades, and Macedonia had its share of millers, blacksmiths, tailors, and shopkeepers. Presumably, many Saints settled there on farms, but because land titles were held through the Church corporation, there is scant record of Mormon land ownership in county records. The inventory of Francis Beckstead, who died in the spring of 1842, portrays what may have been a typical farm household. Beckstead owned a modest amount of livestock, with two steers, three heifers, a bull, and several head of sheep. He left behind a horse and mare, complete with saddle and bridle. Typical of the com-hog agricultural economy, he owned about a dozen hogs. The quantity of corn, oats, potatoes, and wool show a productive year. His wife, Catherine, probably cared for the half-dozen geese, eighteen chickens, and five cows with their new calves. With the spinning wheel, she would have spun wool into yarn, and with the gun, Francis would have hunted wild game to supplement the family diet. Household furniture and farm equipment, including a wagon, harrow, and plow brought the estate's value to $322. The value of the estate was offset by debts, probably incurred to set up the farm. Beckstead owed $34.50 worth of notes to fellow Saints and $40 to storekeepers in Warsaw. Beckstead's farm household reflects how most Mormon farmers made a living, which was probably not much different from how their non-Mormon neighbors farmed nearby.  

The town known as Ramus was formally incorporated by action of the Illinois legislature and named Macedonia in March 1843. Town government now supplemented the ecclesiastical body of governance. A seven-member board of trustees assumed
responsibility for keeping the streets clean, licensing taverns, and keeping the peace. The town was large enough to be divided into four wards. The trustees appointed officers, including a constable, assessor, collector, and treasurer.\textsuperscript{32} Although the growth of Macedonia was hampered by the Church's emphasis on gathering to Nauvoo, the town did prosper.\textsuperscript{33} A visitor to Macedonia in the summer of 1843 praised the thriving agricultural town:

The buildings, (which seemed mostly new) yards, gardens, barns, &c. seemed well constructed, neatly and tastefully arranged. Macedonia is situated in the great bend of crooked creek, surrounded with numerous mills and good farming lands, &c. I was informed the town had been laid out only about three years; that the population is now near 500 and increasing rapidly. . . . Mechanics of most kinds seemed plenty and busily employed. Every house seemed occupied. A beautiful square lay near the centre of town, on which we were informed a house for literary and religious purposes was to be erected.\textsuperscript{34}

**Interaction between Macedonia and Fountain Green**

Given the close proximity of Macedonia to largely non-Mormon Fountain Green, how often did these two sets of townspeople have occasion to interact personally, and what was the nature of their interaction? The inhabitants of the two towns were tied by some kinship relations, by commercial transactions, and by competing political interests.

Kinship ties were extremely important in a frontier setting, where families were dependent upon one another to raise cabins, plant and harvest the crops, care for children, and nurse the sick. Several family relationships crossed community lines. So many of the Crooked Creek settlers, Mormons and non-Mormons alike, were from western New York that it is not surprising that some family relationships existed. For example, the daughter of Mormons Lucinda and Frasier Eaton from New York was married to early non-Mormon settler Jary White. White and his brothers were active in the Mormon War of September 1846, so in this case family ties did not lead to an avoidance of hostilities.\textsuperscript{35}

A better grasp of the tenor of these family relationships is found in the case of Martha McConnell, a twenty-four-year-old Pennsylvanian migrant to Fountain Green. In a letter to her aunt in Pennsylvania, Martha recounted her visit to Macedonia in 1840 to help sew burial clothing for the young child of her Mormon uncle. Although the family did not mention their religion to her, she wrote "how strange I felt to be surrounded by such people." She felt threatened:
Not one could I speak my mind to at such a time. I never was more rejoiced than when I saw Alex [her brother] coming for me as I was really afraid of them beginning their Mormon ceremony. I could not have seen them laying hands on the little boy, praying for him when he was at rest, and kept quiet.

She remarked that Mormons believed in baptism for the dead, and misunderstanding the doctrine, she seemed afraid that they would perform “their Mormon ceremony” on the helpless dead child whose body she would have felt compelled to protect. McConnell’s letter displays a fear of Mormons, even of her Mormon kin. She was suspicious of their doctrine and disapproved of it. For McConnell, kin ties could not bridge the gap opened by religious differences. While there was cooperation among family members and aid in time of need, fear blocked understanding or respect.36

Regarding commercial interaction between the two communities, the records of Hopkins and Tyler, the general store in Fountain Green, are helpful. The residents of Macedonia made frequent purchases at this store, ranging from whiskey and salt by the men to yard goods and buttons by the women. Sometimes Saints paid off their accounts with cash, other times with domestic products such as woven cloth. Andrew H. Perkins, Ute Perkins’s grandson and county commissioner, stopped by occasionally for some tobacco and no doubt to catch up on local doings. The store ledger contains accounts for lawyer Almon W. Babbit, missionary Mathias Cowley, Scotsman James Fife, and even Benjamin F. Johnson, who perhaps was after items he did not stock in his own store in Macedonia. Ute Perkins stopped by four or five times a month, maybe to pass the time with old friends.37

These ledger accounts show that many Saints shopped regularly in Fountain Green and that the proprietors were willing to trust them with long-term credit. Saints were good customers and made a significant contribution to the prosperity of the firm. It is difficult to know if the commercial relationships went beyond mercantile pleasantries to a deeper level of friendship, but clearly a measure of cordiality existed that allowed Mormons to mingle with the store’s Fountain Green customers.38

Beyond family relationships and economic connections, a third arena of interaction between the Saints and their Fountain Green neighbors was politics. In contrast to the apparent cooperation that existed in the commercial sphere at the store, the political interaction produced increasing alienation. Both Fountain Green and Macedonia
were situated within the thirty-six-square-mile township designated as the Fountain Green election precinct. There were no other towns in the precinct, but the votes of rural farmers who were not residents of either town would have been included. Voting probably took place in Fountain Green. An analysis of the political behavior of this period shows that non-Mormon local leaders gained positions of prominence in the county-wide effort to eject the Mormons. Precinct-level voting statistics reveal a political split along religious lines in Fountain Green Township.

From the time of the initial settlement of Latter-day Saints in Hancock County, there were opportunities for conflict. An incident in the 1840 election involved a prominent citizen of Fountain Green, Martin Hopkins, coproprietor of the general store. At a mass meeting held at Carthage in March 1840, Hopkins was selected as the Whig candidate for the office of state representative. Under pressure from party leaders, by July 22 he had withdrawn his candidacy and was replaced by Dr. John F. Charles of Carthage. County historian Thomas Gregg could find no motive for this substitution, other than that "the autocrat of Nauvoo [Joseph Smith] signified that he would not support Mr. Hopkins." One does not have to guess how Hopkins's townspeople felt about Joseph's control of the local political scene. To add insult to local injury, in the presidential election that year the Saints in Nauvoo crossed out the name of elector Abraham Lincoln (Whig justice of the peace in Fountain Green—not the Abraham Lincoln) on several hundred ballots and substituted Democrat James H. Ralston, a Mormon sympathizer.

Hancock County's "old citizens" banded together to form the Anti-Mormon party in June 1841, determined not to let party differences keep them from countering the Mormon bloc vote. Although no native sons were running for office, it is revealing to examine the 1841 election returns for the Fountain Green precinct. The balloting process was not secret and most likely was viva voce, adding to the pressure to vote in a bloc. The precinct voted with the Mormons for the congressional slot, but for the Anti-Mormon ticket in the races for school commissioner and county commissioner. Yet as Table 1 shows, the votes were close, probably indicating a voting population split along religious lines. Fountain Green precinct's Anti-Mormon victory for local offices was gained by a sizeable margin. Similarly, LaHarpe precinct to the north, home to a sizeable Mormon population, voted with the Mormons on the congressional candidate but against them for the local offices.
Carthage, the county seat, with only a small Mormon minority, might have seen a moderately partisan political contest. For all offices that election, the Mormon bloc vote determined the victors.

| TABLE 1. Selected Precinct Results  
<p>| August 1841 Election, Hancock County |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Race</th>
<th>Fountain Green</th>
<th>Nauvoo</th>
<th>LaHarpe</th>
<th>Carthage</th>
<th>County Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James H. Ralston* D</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John T. Stuart W</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Commissioner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Wilton* D</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Bagby</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Commissioner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Miller* W</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John T. Barnett</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Anti-Mormon Party candidate D=Democrat W=Whig

Source: "Hancock County Elections, Unofficial Returns," Warsaw Signal, August 4, 1841. Party affiliation from Gregg, History of Hancock County, 276–77. Tables 1 and 2 provide precinct-level voting figures for selected precincts only. The county totals include precincts not displayed here.

An event in Macedonia late in 1841 may have caused the citizens of Fountain Green some concern about their nearby neighbors. At a meeting of the stake high council on November 4, 1841, a dispute arose over the procedures for collecting payment for lots. The dispute degenerated into a heated argument. The next day word was received that four of the disputants had been jailed in a nearby county on charges of stealing. In a spontaneous reaction, the Macedonians gathered in a town meeting to take “measures to restrain and find out (if there be any among us) all dishonest persons thieves, roges, etc.” Church authorities in Nauvoo acted quickly to expel the accused offenders from the Church. Joseph Smith and the Quorum of the Twelve in Nauvoo issued epistles that condemned stealing and disowned any Saints who were guilty of such crimes. They also repudiated any notion that the Church condoned stealing. Three days later, Church leaders journeyed to Macedonia to patch the rift in the stake leadership. Their solution was to dissolve the stake because “some had come so disaffected towards the remainder there seemed no possible chance of a union if no officers not strife for office etc.” Like a pebble dropped in a pond, such
internal dissensions spread in widening rings to affect the reputation of Mormons in the county.48

Their reputation was further sullied in the summer of 1842 by John C. Bennett’s accusations of polygamy, which appeared in the *Sangamo Journal* and were reprinted in the anti-Mormon *Warsaw Signal*. It is not clear if the townspeople of Fountain Green were aware of the practice of polygamy in nearby Macedonia.49 The Presbyterians and Catholics in Fountain Green would have been shocked and dismayed to discover such behavior in their midst. Bennett’s exposé was crucial in the Anti-Mormon campaign, and Gregg remembers that the letters were “widely read and commented on.”50 The accusations must have galvanized the coalition of Whig and Democrat interests that formed an Anti-Mormon ticket.51 Yet because of Mormon bloc voting, the Anti-Mormon interests were again thwarted in 1842.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Race</th>
<th>Fountain Green</th>
<th>Nauvoo</th>
<th>LaHarpe</th>
<th>Carthage</th>
<th>County Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Roosevelt* D</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>620</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacob C. Davis D</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1530</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley Williams* W</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edson Whitney* W</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas H. Owen D</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Smith D</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Tyler* D</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Backenstos D</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John J. Brent* W</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John T. Barnett D</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Anti-Mormon Party candidate

Just as in 1841, the Mormons had their way in every race, giving Democratic candidates the victory they sought. The vote in Fountain Green precinct was nearly evenly split, with the Anti-Mormon candidates having a slight edge. The only exception was a larger lead for local son Stephen Tyler, owner of the general store the Saints
patronized. Given the growing size of Macedonia, the vote shows significant support for the Anti-Mormon ticket. Probably nearly all voters in the precinct who were not Mormon voted the Whig/Democrat coalition against the Saints. By contrast, LaHarpe precinct voted with the Mormons, except, again, in the case of Tyler. The voting in Carthage was more clearly Anti-Mormon; only in the race for sheriff did they vote with the Mormons for William Backenstos. The large number of Nauvoo voters were responsible for the massive defeat of Tyler by Democrat Backenstos. The unmistakable conclusion from electoral analysis was the invincible power of Mormon bloc voting, anchored by the lopsided races in Nauvoo.52

The next election, in 1843, was complicated by events in June, when Joseph Smith was arrested in Dixon on extradition charges related to the attempted murder of Governor Lilburn W. Boggs of Missouri. Joseph Smith promised Whig lawyer Cyrus Walker of Macomb his vote in return for freeing him from the grasp of the deputies; Walker believed President Smith had promised him the coveted Mormon vote. With the Whig party thus brought into the arena, both Walker and Democratic candidate Joseph P. Hoge visited Nauvoo to campaign. The day before the election Hyrum Smith urged the Saints to vote for Democrat Hoge. Without specifically repudiating Walker, Joseph Smith told the crowd that Hyrum had a testimony of Hoge and that he had never known Hyrum to have received a false revelation. The Saints caught on, and Hoge carried the county by over 1,300 votes.53 These events overshadowed the local race for county commissioner. Andrew H. Perkins from Macedonia was the Mormon candidate, and he received 1,641 votes, compared to 530 for Carthage tavern keeper Artois Hamilton.54

Historians have marked Joseph Smith's escape and the subsequent election maneuvering as a turning point in relations between Mormons and old citizens.55 Citizens of the county were outraged by what they saw as the manipulation of the Mormon vote. With virtually no opportunity to wield political power within the two-party system, citizens revived the Anti-Mormon party in Carthage in early September. Not surprisingly, Democrat Stephen H. Tyler was on the newly formed correspondence committee representing Fountain Green. So was Whig Thomas Geddes, cofounder of the Presbyterian church in Fountain Green and commander of the 87th Illinois Militia.56 Local interests had been thwarted by the force of the larger Mormon voting population. The men of prominence in
Fountain Green must have felt frustrated about being blocked from political advancement by the Mormon voting population, a situation that may have exacerbated their distrust of their Mormon neighbors in nearby Macedonia.

The Campaign to Expel the Latter-day Saints

By the time tensions escalated in Nauvoo in June 1844, the two communities along Crooked Creek were completely polarized. The events of that June are common historical knowledge: the publication of the *Expositor* in Nauvoo by dissenters from the Church on June 7, its immediate destruction at the order of Mayor Joseph Smith and the Nauvoo City Council, and the arrest of Joseph and Hyrum Smith on charges of riot.57 Old citizens of Hancock County immediately met in Carthage on June 13 to draft resolutions in response to the destruction of the press. Three men from Fountain Green were active in carrying out the purposes of the meeting, among them Stephen H. Tyler. The group designated places of encampment "to arm and equip ourselves." Fountain Green was not among them, but nearby LaHarpe and Carthage were. Probably Fountain Green was thought to be too close to the large Latter-day Saint population in Macedonia.58

Ironically, the Latter-day Saints were responding to the *Expositor* incident in a similar manner. Delegates were appointed to travel to each precinct "to lay a true statement of facts" before the public.59 The Macedonia companies of the Nauvoo Legion were called in to defend Nauvoo. Benjamin F. Johnson remembered that "to avoid attack [the men] traveled all night across the prairie through mud, rain and darkness, terrible to those who were there." Because of the heavy rains, they had to make their way across twenty miles of prairie "half a leg deep in water."60 Many of the men did not have shoes, but some were armed.

According to a report given to Joseph Smith by commanding officer Uriah Yager, the company miraculously passed through an attack by a mob five miles out of Macedonia. As Joseph retold it, "The company from Macedonia opened fire about ten feet apart and marched past them within rifle shot, while the mob fired several guns at them, the balls whizzing past their heads." When they arrived safely at daybreak, Joseph directed the Legion's quartermaster to issue shoes to those who had walked barefoot. He was "glad to see them, and to hear that you were all alive in the midst of the ragings
of an infatuated and blood thirsty mob.” He advised them to retreat to Nauvoo if attacked by a superior force, “but never give up your arms, but die first.” The men from Macedonia rested a few days before they were sent home to keep up a guard there.61

In nearby Fountain Green, Martha McConnell Walker described in a letter written June 18 how the local populace wanted the governor to give orders to arrest Joseph Smith:

And if he don't give them leave they are determined to take the law into their own hands and bring them justice or clear them out which would be better. And now the drums are beating on every side, guns firing and Alan [her husband] and brother A have just left this day with provisions ammunition and all for Carthage. They are to try which, them or the Mormons are the strongest.

Martha was left alone, “sitting here with my babe in my lap, and not a creature only a Mormon family nearer than a mile.” She planned to leave soon for her parents’ home in town, where some men were on guard, because “I think we are not safe as the Mormons in Ramus [Macedonia] have refused to go and may do some mischief.”62

Seventeen hundred men were encamped around Carthage, members of militia companies from all around the county and a few neighboring counties.63 The men from Fountain Green were commanded by Thomas Geddes, who later recalled the events leading up to the murder of the Prophet and his brother:

While the Smiths were in jail, I went to the jail in company with Gov. Ford, and there we conversed with them for some time, the burden of Smith’s talk being that they were only acting in self-defense, and only wanted to be let alone. After leaving the jail, and while returning from it, the Governor and I had still further conversation about the subject matter. After some time the Governor exclaimed, “O, it’s all nonsense; you will have to drive these Mormons out yet!” I then said, “If we undertake that, Governor, when the proper time comes, will you interfere?” “No, I will not,” said he; then, after a pause, adding, “until you are through.”64

This statement by Geddes is as close as the historical record comes to revealing Governor Ford’s motives. In a fatal move, Ford disbanded the militia at about five o’clock in the afternoon on Saturday. Geddes’s men then headed east across the prairie toward Fountain Green. The governor struck out for Nauvoo with a small guard company to admonish the Saints to surrender their arms.65 The Carthage Grays were left to guard the jail, but it was understood that “they were guards that did not guard.”66 The mob from the Warsaw Militia who attacked the jail had no trouble in shooting Joseph and
Hyrum Smith. Fearing Mormon retaliation for the murders, residents of Carthage hastily left town.67

When the Saints in Macedonia learned of the death of the prophets one witness remembered, "The people wept aloud. One could hear their sobs and crying from every quarter. They felt as though the hosts of hell were let loose to do their murderers work of extermination."68 While the Saints in Macedonia mourned, the residents of Fountain Green prepared to defend themselves from expected Mormon revenge. Martha Walker's interrupted letter picks up again July 1 with a reaction to the deaths of the Mormon leaders:

You will hear of the death of the prophet and his brother before this reaches you. Much as I thought before that he ought to be killed, when it was done I felt that it was wrong, at least, the time and manner it was done appeared barbarous. Our men were discharged that evening but were not home till they were killed. They were shot at five o'clock. . . . The word come to the Green. None went to bed that night. There they lay on the floor on their guns. Our men loaded theirs and set them in reach. You may guess there was two eyes unclosed that night.

Her words convey the suspense and terror of the situation. Once held politically hostage, residents now feared that their lives were in danger from Mormon neighbors two miles away in Macedonia. Martha assured her aunt they were prepared to defend themselves with "a cannon in the Green and ammunition plenty."69

Because of intervention by state authorities and by Latter-day Saint leaders, hostilities were avoided. In the aftermath of the murders, Martha felt "calm and resigned to the will of an all-wise Providence. He will order all for the best."70 Fountain Green recovered enough to celebrate July Fourth with a double wedding of two daughters of Jabez Beebe.71 Several weeks after the assassination, Governor Thomas Ford cautioned county residents that although Mormons in Lima and Macedonia had been warned to leave, they had "a right to remain and enjoy their property."72

The August 1844 elections were somber, given the events and uncertainties of the summer. The county vote, true to the earlier election pattern, reflected the predominant Mormon population and the bloc voting practices of the Saints. With the election of George Coulson, who joined Mormon Andrew Perkins, two of the three county commissioners were Mormon. The third, John Barnett, was a resident of Nauvoo and sympathetic to the Mormons.73 Precinct results show that Fountain Green was still fairly evenly split between the Mormon and the Anti-Mormon vote. Just over one hundred
persons voted for the Anti-Mormon candidate for county commis-
sioner, and Coulson got eighty of the Fountain Green precinct votes. The spread was similar in the other races; the old settlers retained an edge over the Macedonia voters.74

The rationale behind local voting behavior is partially ex-
plained in a statement signed by county Democrats, among them eleven men from Fountain Green. Addressed to fellow Democrats in Illinois, its purpose was to refute the popular notion that only Whigs were opposing Mormons in the county. They declared that "party considerations have had nothing to do with the actions of the old citizens" and that the opposition to the Mormons was simply "in the necessary defence of their own constitutional rights, and without which opposition and defence, the people of Hancock would be unworthy [of] the name of American citizens."75 Patriotism and adher-
ence to constitutional ideals, and not partisan politics, were the stated motivation of Democratic opposition to Mormonism in the county.

The earlier resistance to Mormons by Fountain Green Town-
ship residents was led by community leaders from New York and Pennsylvania. The Democrat document, the first public statement by old settlers from Kentucky and Tennessee, suggests a north/south coalition of interests in the township in the campaign to remove the Mormons. Most of the Fountain Green signers were former South-
erners who owned farms adjacent to Macedonia. Of all local residents, they probably felt most keenly that their property was threatened by the nearby Mormons.76 We can only speculate that loyalty to the Mormons as neighbors and relatives had kept them from actively participating earlier in the anti-Mormon effort.

At the May 1845 trial of the accused murderers of Joseph Smith, public attention focused on the courtroom, not on hostilities outside. The foreman of the jury was Jabez Beebe, cofounder of Fountain Green and early settler.77 The Mormons won the August 1845 elections handily, with nearly two thousand voters in Nauvoo alone. Anti-Mormons had apparently given up on the electoral process; they did not even try to oppose the Mormon slate.78 Then when Sheriff Deming died of fever in September, Mormons elected Jacob Backenstos to replace him.79

Stung again by the bloc voting, anti-Mormon forces in the county turned to illegal means to reclaim the county from the Mor-
mons. This time, in a vigilante campaign against outlying Mormon settlements, they succeeded in accomplishing their aims. The conflict in the countryside became the turning point in the struggle
to oust the Mormons. The attack started near Green Plains, southeast of Warsaw, the anti-Mormon stronghold. While the local citizens held an anti-Mormon meeting at the schoolhouse, they heard shots outside. They presumed the shots to be an attack on them, and in retaliation they set fire to the cabins of Mormons at Morley’s Settlement nearby. Before they were finished, the whole village—over one hundred houses—lay in ashes. Although the inhabitants of the cabins had received prior warning, the destruction was still devastating. The anti-Mormons had found a winning strategy, because the rural Mormon towns were vulnerable to attack in a way that Nauvoo was not.80

Frightened by the burning of Morley’s Settlement, the residents of Macedonia prepared to defend themselves. Thomas Callister, a British convert who arrived in Macedonia in spring 1842, kept a day-by-day account of events in September 1845. His eyewitness reports reflect their fears. News of the “wolf hunt” arrived in Macedonia on September 5, and on the next day the brethren met “to consult what was best to be done for the mob was burning houses in the other branches turning sick women and child out to doors in a most shameful manner.” They decided to post a guard at night. When word came the next day to organize their company of the Nauvoo Legion, Callister was chosen for first guard duty. He was out on guard at night on September 10 when “news came that the mob was rageing and burning houses in all directions.”81 In a September 11 letter to all the outlying settlements, Latter-day Saint leader Brigham Young advised them to “give them the cold lead, or obey the sheriff’s counsel” if they were disturbed by mobs. He directed them to evacuate if necessary but planned “to sustain you where you are.”82 On September 13, Callister secretly attended a mob-meeting in nearby McDonough County, realizing that “they were all very hard agins our people.” He returned to guard duty, and at 10 P.M. on September 14 “all the men meet at Bp [Bishop] Perkins and continued to stay to gather all night and be ready in the case of an attack [sic].”83

The shooting of anti-Mormon Franklin Worrell of the Carthage Grays by Sheriff Backenstos on September 16 intensified the hostility against the Mormons.84 The Warsaw Signal announced the murder of Worrell with a blazing headline, “Call to arms!” The story warned that “there is no longer peace for Hancock. Blood will and must flow if necessary to rid the county of the cursed authors of our troubles.”85 The men of Fountain Green rallied to editor Thomas Sharp’s call to
arms. On September 20, Callister infiltrated a gathering at Fountain Green: "I whent and fount about 50 men Arnold . . . Maclery . . . swerying he would drive the Mormons out with some difficulty I got home unhurt."86 Saying there was "some little stir about our borders and the mob are training today at Fountain Green," on September 22, Bishop William G. Perkins hastily penned a request to Brigham Young for fifty to one hundred troops to arrive by evening. By midnight the next night, the posse arrived from Nauvoo, fewer than half the amount requested.87 To defuse the situation, Governor Ford appointed John J. Hardin to take military control of the area at the end of September. The vigilantes dispersed.88

There had been some anxious moments and saber rattling, but no one attacked Macedonia. Perhaps the town was seen as too formidable in size for their smaller Fountain Green force. Or maybe cooler heads prevailed at Fountain Green, those who may have realized that the communal ties made the violence pointless.

But the September hostilities sent a clear message to both sides. Estimates vary, but anywhere from 150 to 200 Latter-day Saint homes had been burned, and several men had been killed.89 Both sides realized that decisive action was required. Citizens from several nearby counties converged in Carthage on October 1 to demand Mormon removal. Brigham Young, warned by Stephen A. Douglas and John J. Hardin that the Mormons could no longer be protected because of the popular feeling against them, pledged that the Saints would leave.90 Latter-day Saint committees were appointed in the outlying settlements to prepare for removal. Most of Macedonia's Saints left to join the main exodus from Nauvoo in early spring 1846.91

By April 1846, Macedonia, a once thriving agricultural town, was described in the *Hancock Eagle* as "The Deserted Village": "It owes its existence to that trait in the Mormon character, which enables them to concentrate their energies and form communities of their own. In a locality of this kind, they mingle but little with the world, and gain an humble subsistence by cultivating small tracts of land. Such were the people of Macedonia."92

In a certain sense, the *Hancock Eagle* was right. Although just a few miles from Fountain Green, the small town of Macedonia was insulated from the wider Hancock County community in much the same way that Nauvoo was. However, social integration did make a difference. The inhabitants of the two towns were related to each other, they traded at the same store, and they participated together in the functions of local government. They fought their battles on
political turf, at the ballot box, and in county-wide organizations. At a turning point in 1843, when the citizens of Fountain Green began to feel that Mormon political control menaced republican ideals, community leaders became active in organizing for the intimidation and removal of the Mormons from the county. Yet, in spite of their fears and animosities, they confined their efforts to legitimate political processes and stopped short of the violence that occurred in other rural areas in the county.

In early 1846, Macedonian Saints moved en masse with the general Latter-day Saint exodus across Iowa. They retained their branch organization while in Winter Quarters, Nebraska, but migrations to Utah dispersed the Macedonian camp. In an ironic sequel, George Washington Johnson, who had left Macedonia when he was a young man of twenty-three, was called by Brigham Young in the summer of 1859 to pioneer on Uintah Springs in Sanpete County, Utah. Perhaps in hopes of re-creating the verdant Illinois town of distant memory, Johnson named his new settlement Fountain Green.93

NOTES

1 The origin of the name Macedonia is uncertain, but Macedon, New York, was partitioned from Palmyra, Joseph Smith's home, in 1823. See John H. French, ed., Historical and Statistical Gazetteer of New York State (Syracuse, N.Y.: R. P. Smith, 1860), 692. Originally named Ramus (Latin for branch), the town was incorporated in March 1843 as Macedonia. See Laws of the State of Illinois, 13th General Assembly, 1842–1843 (Springfield: 1843), 304–7; and Illinois Journal of the Senate, February 16, 1843, 369, 450, 454–55.


5 Information about the Perkins family was obtained from genealogical records in possession of Eugene Perkins, Provo, Utah; and from Lucinda Call Perkins and Elizabeth Belcher Bartholomew, “History of the Perkins Family, 1720–1930,” Church Library, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.


8 Robert M. Cochran and others, *History of Hancock County, Illinois* (Carthage, Ill.: Board of Supervisors, Hancock County, 1968), 302; and Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 821.


15 *Times and Seasons* 1 (March 1840): 77.


17 Macedonia Branch Minute Book, 1839–1850, Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives), July 9, 15, 23, 31, 1840, 8–10. A stake in those days could be a branch that had a president, a bishop, and a high council (see William G. Hartley’s article in this issue).

Macedonia Branch Minute Book, November 15, 1840, 14; and HC5:477.
20 *Times and Seasons* 2 (November 15, 1840): 222–23; and Hancock County Plat Book, 45–46. The lots in Ramus were the same size as those in Nauvoo; the streets were similarly three rods wide. The center block was reserved for public buildings (Flanders, *Nauvo*, 138).
21 Macedonia Branch Minute Book, July 29, 1840, 13.
22 Macedonia Branch Minute Book, May 15, June 12, July 31, 1841, 17–18. For the subscription, see Macedonia, Illinois, Minutes in the Joseph Ellis Johnson Papers, University of Utah Library, Salt Lake City. I thank Jean Bickmore White for calling this source to my attention.
23 Macedonia Branch Minute Book, 65–71 (n.d.). The dating of the list is uncertain, but it includes the name of Francis Beckstead, who died in April 1842 (see Hancock County, Will Book A, 1833–43, 382).
24 An indication of the omission of small children is derived from the fact that children born to the Perkins (for whom genealogical information is available) after 1836 are not on the list. Because ages are not listed, it is impossible to calculate the number of children under eight. A rough guess suggests that at least an additional seventy-five children are not listed (genealogical records of Perkins family supplied by Eugene H. Perkins, copies in possession of the author). The six hundred figure is from Scofield, *History of Hancock County* 2:1077. Compared to the county as a whole (using the 1840 Federal Census), the gender ratio differs significantly. The county population was 47 percent female, while that of Macedonia was 52 percent.
25 There were twenty-four persons with the surname Perkins, and nineteen persons with the surname Johnson. Together these two families made up 10 percent of the branch population. If one includes in-laws to the Johnsons and the Perkins, the total belonging to these two families rises significantly. Two of Joel’s brothers, Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Ellis, served as town trustees. His sisters also lived in Macedonia. Julia married Almon W. Babbitt, a Latter-day Saint lawyer who was elected to the Illinois legislature in 1843; Almera became a plural wife of Joseph Smith; and Mary Johnson and her husband George Wilson also lived in Macedonia. An adopted sister, orphan Mary Hale, later became the plural wife of Benjamin. Delcena Johnson Sherman was widowed with six children, and the Church built her a house in town. Information about the Johnson family comes from “Life of Joel H. Johnson.”
26 The assessment of regional origin is based on a sample of Macedonians’ life sketches found in Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson, 1908), and Esshom, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah*. For the experiences of two British immigrants, see Thomas Callister, Autobiographical Notes, and Robert Crookston, “Autobiography of Robert Crookston Senior,” LDS Church Archives. Callister, a tailor from the Isle of Mann, disliked farming and was very lonely in Macedonia. Crookston arrived from Scotland with his parents and escaped destitution by mining coal from a bed he discovered east of town.
28 Fifty-two Mormon household heads on the branch list can be located in the 1840 census; their households totalled three hundred persons. Unfortunately, the manuscript copy of the 1845 Illinois State Census for Hancock County has not survived. The 1845 census figures are cited in Thomas Gregg’s newspaper, *Hamilton Representative*, July 17, 1858. If Gregg’s figures are accurate, in 1845 LaHarpe numbered 327 and Carthage 281 persons.
Conflict in the Countryside

29 Only a handful of Mormon names can be located in the county deed records. Among them are John Quayle and Mathias Cowley, who jointly owned a parcel on Section 31; Franklin Taylor on Section 30; and the aforementioned Miller, Perkins, and Wightman parcels of land (Hancock County Deeds, Book K, 170, and Book O, 456). This analysis does not include town records.

30 Hancock County, Will Book A (1833–1843), 382.

31 Laws of the State of Illinois, 304–7; and Journal of the Senate (February 16, 1843), 369, 450, 454–55.

32 Macedonia, Illinois, Minutes, Joseph Ellis Johnson Papers.

33 Flanders, Nauvoo, 139.

34 Nauvoo Neighbor, September 20, 1843, 3.

35 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 838–39.

36 Martha McConnell to Martha Walker [ca. November 1840], Hancock County Historical Society Newsletter 1 (May 1972); and Patricia Jewell Ballowe and others, The 1850 Census of Illinois, Hancock County (Richland, Wash., 1977), 130.

37 Scattered throughout the store's ledgers and day books, these accounts are representative samplings of the Latter-day Saint dealings at the store. For these specific accounts, see Ledger [B] (1843–45), 25–28, 53, 274, and Daybook B (1838–40), 259, Records of C. C. Tyler, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois (microfilm copy at Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois). Perkins maintained friendships after becoming a Latter-day Saint, but when he died early in the spring of 1844, a primary social tie between Macedonia and Fountain Green snapped. Ute Perkins's will was probated on April 19, 1844 (Hancock County, Probate Record C [1844–45], 2–21).

38 C. C. Tyler, Ledger [B], 331.

39 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 272, 449.

40 Western World (Warsaw), July 22, 1840. This was the same Dr. Charles who sold his land for the expansion of Macedonia in November (see above). He was instrumental in shepherding the Nauvoo Charter through the legislature the following winter (see Thomas Gregg, The Prophet of Palmyra [New York: John B. Alden, 1890], 168).

41 Gregg, Prophet of Palmyra, 166–68.

42 Flanders, Nauvoo, 223; and Gregg, History of Hancock County, 272, 449.

43 Warsaw Signal, June 9, 1841.


45 Macedonia Branch Minute Book, November 4, 1841, 20–22. The accused were Alanson Brown, Joseph Holbrook, John Telford, James B. T. Page, and William H. Edwards (Times and Seasons 3 [December 1, 1841]: 616). Brown had been accused of stealing a year earlier (probably in Nauvoo) but was acquitted by the High Council because of insufficient evidence (Times and Seasons 2 [December 15, 1840]: 256, and [August 2, 1841]: 497). Holbrook, an officer of the Nauvoo Legion, was court-martialed and stricken from the rolls (Times and Seasons 3 [December 1, 1841]: 618).

46 Macedonia Branch Minute Book, November 12, 1841, 22–23. The crowd was so large that the minutes had to be read at the door.

47 Times and Seasons 3 (December 1, 1841): 616–18.

48 Macedonia Branch Minute Book, November 12 and December 4, 1841; and HC4:453–54, 462–63, 467–68. The leaders from Nauvoo also directed local officers to transfer title to the Macedonian lands to Joseph Smith as Trustee-in-Trust for the
Church (HC 4:477, and Hancock County Deed Book K, 19). John Lawson became the branch's presiding elder (HC 4:468).

49 *Warsaw Signal*, July 9 and 23, 1842. For the Bennett affair, see Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 284–87; and Hampshire, *Mormonism in Conflict*, 137–43. The practice of polygamy in Macedonia was probably fairly common by mid-1843 (see HC 5:391–93; 6:59). Benjamin Franklin Johnson, Joel's brother and a shopkeeper in Macedonia, was a close friend of the Prophet Joseph Smith and persuaded his sister Almera Johnson to become a plural wife of the Prophet in the spring of 1843. Not long afterward, Benjamin also took a plural wife. Joseph's uncle, Father John Smith, performed many of these polygamous marriages (see Justus Morse, Affidavit; Benjamin Franklin Johnson, "A Life Review," 90–93; and Crookston, "Autobiography of Robert Crookston Senior"; all are in the LDS Church Archives).


51 *Warsaw Signal*, April 13, 1842.

52 The surrounding counties, Adams, McDonough, and Madison, all voted Whig (*Warsaw Signal*, August 6, 1842).


54 Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 449.


56 HC 6:8. Correspondence committees covertly circulated information about anti-Mormon activities in Hancock County. Their formation echoed patriot resistance to the resident British enemy during the American Revolutionary War.


58 *Warsaw Signal*, June 13, 1844.

59 HC 6:483; and *Warsaw Signal*, June 19, 1844.

60 Johnson, "A Life Review," 98; Crookston, "Autobiography," 8–9. I am convinced the wet weather played a part in the hysteria of the summer. Crops were failing, bridges were out, and roads were under water. As Bathsheba W. Smith of Nauvoo wrote on June 15, 1844: "The roads have been so bad, the bridges are most all washed away that it is all most impossible [sic] to go to or come from Messedonia [Macedonia] here" (*Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900*, ed. Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 129). Wesley Williams of Carthage wrote to his son in Kentucky about mills being damaged and bridges swept away by floods. The prospects of a corn crop were "gloomy," but he hoped the wheat crop would survive. "We had last night one of the most gloomy storms I ever witnessed. There was all night a continuous stream of electricity and continual roaring of thunder. Scarcely a single moment of cessation attended with heavy falls of rain mixed with hail" (Wesley Williams to John W. Williams, Carthage, June 5, 1844, typescript copy, Archives, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill.).

61 HC 6:515, 485, 486. Joseph Smith must have been referring to mobs in the county as a whole, not this small band who deliberately shot over the heads of the Latter-day Saints, who fired first.


64 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 372.
65 Thomas Ford, “Message of the Governor of Illinois in Relation to the Disturbances in Hancock County,” Reports Made to the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Illinois (Springfield, 1845), 78.
67 Marsh, “Mormons in Hancock County,” 53.
69 Martha McConnell Walker to Martha Walker, June 18, 1844.
70 Martha McConnell Walker to Martha Walker, June 18, 1844.
71 Warsaw Signal, July 31, 1844.
72 Warsaw Signal Extra, August 7, 1844.
73 Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1975), 46; and Gregg, History of Hancock County, 450.
74 Warsaw Signal, August 21, 1844.
75 “To the Democrats of the State of Illinois,” Warsaw Signal, May 14, 1845.
76 Warsaw Signal, May 14, 1845.
77 Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, 107, 111.
78 Warsaw Signal, August 13, 1845.
79 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 450. Violence spoiled the summer. For an account of hostilities between the Mormons and other settlers in the county during the summer of 1845, see Marshall Hamilton, “From Assassination to Expulsion” in this issue. For two versions of the shooting of a prominent anti-Mormon by Sheriff Miner Deming, see Kenneth W. Godfrey, “Crime and Punishment in Mormon Nauvoo,” also in this issue. The Mormons in Nauvoo and Macedonia entered bail for Deming after his arrest (Warsaw Signal, June 25, July 2, 1845).
80 Gregg, Prophet of Palmyra, 327–28; Warsaw Signal, September 3, 1845. Hon. George Edmunds, an old settler, later recalled, “I have never had a doubt that these matters were instigated of the purpose of forcing the Mormon population to consent to leave this county and go west” (Berry, “The Mormon Settlement in Illinois,” 89). A key element in the Warsaw Signal's anti-Mormon campaign was accusing Latter-day Saints of stealing, which was evidenced by publication of lists of property (typically livestock, grain, bee stands) reported missing from widespread areas of the county (see Warsaw Signal, October 30, November 17 and 20, December 18 and 25, 1844). Only once was an incident in the Fountain Green area listed (see Warsaw Signal, December 25, 1844). Similar allegations of theft can be found in the letters of Milton Kimball and William M. King in the American Home Missionary Society, Correspondence (Illinois, 1840–45), Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, microfilm copy at Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois. These accusations bear further research in the county court records.
81 Callister, Autobiographical Notes, September 13, 1845.
82 Journal History of the Church, September 16, 1845, 2, and September 17, 1845, 1.
83 Callister, Autobiographical Notes.
84 Hill, Quest for Refuge, 175.
85 Warsaw Signal, September 17, 1845.
Callister, Autobiographical Notes. I cannot find anyone by the name of Arnold McCleary in the public records. He was probably referring to prominent Fountain Green citizen Matthew McLaughry.

Journal History of the Church, September 22, 1834, 1–2.

Hill, Quest for Refuge, 177.

Ford estimated 150–175 houses were burned (Reports, 1844, 1–2); Flanders estimated 20 (Nauvoo, 328).

Brigham Young to General John H. Hardin, October 1, 1845, John H. Hardin Collection, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois; “To the Anti-Mormon Citizens of Hancock and the Surrounding Counties,” Camp Carthage, October 4, 1845, Mormon Broadsides Collection, Chicago Historical Society. For the warning to Brigham Young, see Hill, Quest for Refuge, 176.

Macedonia Branch Minute Book, April 5, 1846, 50.

Hancock Eagle (Nauvoo), April 17, 1846.

Benjamin Franklin Johnson in Nauvoo: Friend, Confidant, and Defender of the Prophet

E. Dale LeBaron

Benjamin Franklin Johnson, the tenth of sixteen children of Ezekiel and Julia Hills Johnson, was born on July 28, 1818, at Pomfret, Chataqua County, in New York's western tip. The Johnson family was God-fearing due to the deep faith of their mother. Even as a young boy, Benjamin had faith in God and realized the necessity of prayer. He learned to read and write from studying the Bible at Presbyterian meetings. As an eleven-year-old boy, in 1829, Benjamin read in the Pomfret newspaper about "some young man professing to have seen an angel, who had shown and delivered to him golden plates . . . from which he had translated a new Bible. . . . [Benjamin] could hardly refrain from wishing or hoping it might be so."

Benjamin first learned of the Church about the time of its organization in 1830 and, after studying its teachings, accepted the gospel the following year. He spent his impressionable teenage years experiencing the glorious and trying days of the Church in Ohio and Missouri. On August 1, 1839, Benjamin arrived in Commerce, Illinois, soon to become Nauvoo. There he observed and participated in many significant events: he rendered selfless service in times of sickness, served a mission to Canada, received important instructions from the Prophet Joseph Smith including the law of plural marriage, was called by Joseph as an original member of the Council of Fifty, and enjoyed a special witness of the mantle of Joseph falling upon Brigham Young. Benjamin was a loyal follower and defender of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and the next four Presidents of the Church.

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Benjamin F. Johnson (1818–1905),
resident of Macedonia and confidant of Joseph Smith
(March 1887, Portrait Collection, Church Archives,
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
Service in Time of Sickness

Benjamin was ordained an elder by Apostle Heber C. Kimball on March 10, 1839, and was called to accompany the Twelve on their mission to England. Living in Springfield, Illinois, following the forced exodus from Missouri, Benjamin immediately began to save money for the mission. He left for Commerce on his twenty-first birthday, July 28, 1839. He arrived at a time of general sickness and death among the Saints. Sickness and typhoid malarial fever were rampant. Every house served as a hospital but lacked nurses for the sick. Hardly enough healthy people were left to bury the dead. Benjamin had gained nursing experience during the march of the Kirtland Camp in 1838, so Joseph Smith immediately enlisted Benjamin’s help. Benjamin later wrote:

I had come to Nauvoo, which it was then beginning to be called, on horse back and as houses of the Brethren were scattered for some distance up and down the river I kept my horses under the saddle and rode from house to house giving medicines [sic] . . . caring for and nursing the sick and for six weeks did not take off my boots or coat for one nights sleep.

About this time the Prophet “had a violent attack of the prevailing sickness, and as Emma was in no degree able to care for him,” he chose Benjamin as his constant nurse and companion. Regarding his care of the Prophet, Benjamin wrote: “It wholly devolved upon me & both day & night through a period of little less than two weeks, I was hardly absent from his room . . . and if any sleep came to me it was while lying upon his bed or while sitting in my chair.”

Concerning Benjamin Johnson’s service and the accounts of this time of general sickness in Nauvoo, Charles S. Sellers observed:

The Saints are generally well informed . . . but of the part which Brother Johnson took, none are apprised, a fact undoubtedly arising through Brother Johnson’s modesty, and perhaps lack of friends, among those who write history. A more loyal man to duty than Elder Johnson was never known. Whenever duty called he never hesitated. He gave his time, all his life, and worked unceasingly for the good of his fellows. He was among the greatest men that our Church has known.

Soon after the Prophet’s recovery, Benjamin “came apparently nigh unto death through violent attack of the fever,” and his “comfort was kindly looked after by the Prophet.” Near the first of October 1839, Benjamin received a letter from his family informing him that
his mother was very sick and advising him to come as soon as possible because it was doubtful that she would recover. Concerned for Benjamin's weakened condition, Joseph gave him a blessing prior to his departure from Nauvoo. Benjamin recalled the blessing in these words:

Placing his hands upon my head he seemed to pour out his Soul in Blessing me. He told the Lord I had been Faithful to care for others that I was now worn & Sick & that on my journey I would need his care and he asked that a Special Guardian might go with me from that day & Stay with me through all my Life.\(^9\)

This incident strengthened the bond of love and friendship between the Prophet and Benjamin. Throughout his life Benjamin cherished this close association and friendship with Joseph Smith.

**Missionary Service**

Despite great suffering, Benjamin arrived in Springfield, where his sickness continued for some weeks. On October 5, 1839, Apostles Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball came to Springfield on their way to England. Benjamin wrestled with the decision to join them on this mission. He later wrote:

When they saw how sick I was, and without money or suitable clothing they did not urge me to go but left it to my faith and desire. I much wished to go but was so diffident, had no missionary experience, and fearing they would feel me a burden I had not faith enough to start. They told me to take a mission east as soon as I was able and this I felt determined to do.\(^{10}\)

From February 1840 to December 1841, Benjamin served alone as a missionary. Walking most of the way, he preached in Indiana, Ohio, Canada, and Pennsylvania. He experienced sickness, hardships, persecution, and some limited success—including seven baptisms and speaking in tongues to an Indian tribe. En route to Nauvoo at the end of his mission, Benjamin stayed with his brother-in-law, Almon W. Babbitt, in Kirtland, Ohio. Because Almon had remained in Kirtland to continue his business endeavors contrary to the counsel of the Church leaders, he was severely reprimanded in a revelation the Prophet received on January 19, 1841.\(^{11}\) On October 2, 1841, Almon was disfellowshipped;\(^{12}\) the rebuke upset him. Benjamin stayed in Kirtland temporarily to try to help his brother-in-law work through his problems. While there,
Benjamin Franklin Johnson

Benjamin met and courted Melissa Bloomfield, whom he married on December 25, 1841.

Return to Nauvoo

On July 1, 1842, Benjamin and Melissa arrived at Nauvoo, where the Prophet warmly welcomed them. Benjamin discussed with him the business matters between Almon Babbitt and Joseph and expressed confidence that with the Prophet’s arm around him Almon would remain true to the cause. This was the first time Benjamin had spoken to the Prophet about personal feelings and concerns of his own. Benjamin felt an increase of love from Joseph after Joseph expressed his love for and desire to help Almon. Joseph told Benjamin to bring Elder Babbitt to see him as soon as Almon arrived in Nauvoo.

Because of his integrity and respect for both men, Benjamin was able to be an intercessor in this problem: “When business matters were brought forward relating to notes bought from outsiders against him or the Church, Brother Joseph said to him, ‘Now, Brother Almon, we will not disagree, for here is Brother Benjamin; you have all confidence in him and so have I; and now let us leave all our differences to him and stand by it, and be good friends forevermore,’ to which Brother Babbitt agreed.”

Benjamin came to know Joseph Smith’s personality quite well. Though the Prophet was “social and convivial at times,” Benjamin recalled, “he would allow no arrogance or undue liberties and criticism. Even by his associates was Rarely Acceptable & Contradiction would Rouse in him the Lion at once For by no one of his Fellows would he be Superseded or disputed.”

Joseph trusted Benjamin enough to give him custody of legal documents, including those pertaining to Church properties in Kirtland. He asked Benjamin to remain in Ramus, Illinois, to serve as the agent for the Church there. Joseph gave Benjamin power of attorney, which he used until Joseph’s death. Benjamin’s work in Ramus involved selling goods, keeping a boardinghouse, and supervising all the Church business for that town, which was second only to Nauvoo in size. While Benjamin lived there, the friendship between him and the Prophet Joseph Smith became even more intimate, as Benjamin later explained:

The Prophet often came to our town, but after my arrival, he lodged in no house but mine, and I was proud of his partiality and took great
delight in his society and friendship. When with us, there was no lack of amusement; . . . and his fraternal feeling, in great degree did away with the disparity of age or greatness of his calling.

I can now see, as President George A. Smith afterwards said, that I was then really "the bosom friend and companion of the Prophet Joseph." I was as welcome at the Mansion as at my own house, and on one occasion when at a full table of his family and chosen friends, he placed me at his right hand and introduced me as his "friend, Brother B. F. Johnson, at whose house he sat at a better table than his own."17

Such favoritism aroused some jealousy among the local residents; the Johnsons were referred to as the "Royal family." When Joseph learned of this epithet, he assured Benjamin that the title was appropriate; they were a royal family, as is every faithful family. Previously, Joseph had given a blessing to Benjamin's mother, Julia, in which she was told "that not one of her children should ever leave the Church."18

Instructions at the Hand of the Prophet

Besides staying frequently in Benjamin's home, the Prophet counseled and instructed him about many doctrines. In May 1843, Joseph Smith recorded in his journal: "Tuesday, 16 . . . went to Benjamin F. Johnson's with William Clayton to sleep. Before retiring, I gave Brother and Sister Johnson some instructions on the priesthood."19 Included in these instructions were the teachings now contained in Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–6. Of these experiences, Benjamin wrote:

On April 2nd and May 16, 1843 the Prophet was at my house with Wm. Clayton as Scribe, at which time was written, in answer to questions asked, all of Sections 130 & 131 Doc. & Cov., and he then gave to us all keys of knowledge contained in Sec. 129 & 132 . . . before [they were] written.20

After visiting the Johnson home on Friday, October 20, 1843, Joseph wrote: "In the evening I gave instructions to Benjamin F. Johnson and others in relation to the blessings of the everlasting covenant and the sealings of the Priesthood."21 Benjamin later testified in an affidavit that on this date the Prophet "sealed my first wife to me for time and all eternity."22

On another occasion, while Benjamin was "lighting him to bed one night," Joseph showed Benjamin his holy garments and explained their meaning. He further gave some information regarding the
endowment and said that "Freemasonry, as at present, was the apostate endowments, as sectarian religion was the apostate religion."23

A New Commandment

In April 1843, the Prophet privately taught Benjamin a new doctrine that would greatly affect the rest of Benjamin's life. After Joseph had stayed with the Johnsons overnight, he took his friend for a walk early Sunday morning. They stopped in an isolated wooded area. Benjamin recalled:

Here, as we sat down upon a log he began to tell me that the Lord had revealed to him that plural or patriarchal marriage was according to His law; and that the Lord had not only revealed it to him but had commanded him to obey it; that he was required to take other wives; and that he wanted my sister Almira for one of them, and wished me to see and talk to her upon the subject.24

Benjamin struggled between the shock of what he was hearing and his loyalty and faith in Joseph as a prophet. In describing his reaction to the Prophet's message, Benjamin said:

If a thunderbolt had fallen at my feet I could hardly have been more shocked or amazed. He saw the struggle in my mind and went on to explain. But the shock was too great for me to comprehend anything, and in almost an agony of feeling I looked him squarely in the eye, and said, while my heart gushed up before him, "Brother Joseph, this is all new to me; it may all be true—you know, but I do not. To my education it is all wrong, but I am going, with the help of the Lord to do just what you say, with this promise to you—that if ever I know you do this to degrade my sister I will kill you, as the Lord lives."25

Joseph smiled. He looked into Benjamin's eyes and told him softly that he would never see that day. He promised that Benjamin would not only know of its truth, but would also fulfill the law and greatly rejoice in it. Benjamin then asked how he could teach his sister something he himself did not understand. Joseph told him that when he opened his mouth to talk to his sister, he would understand, light would come to him, and his mouth would be full and his tongue loosed.26 In Benjamin's words:

He also told me that he would preach a sermon that day for me which I would understand, while the rest of the congregation would not comprehend its meaning. His subject was the ten talents, "Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundantly, but from him that hath not (or will not receive), shall be taken away that which he hath (or might have had)." Plainly giving me to understand that the talents
represented wives and children, as the principle of enlargement throughout the great future to those who were heirs of salvation.27

In light of Benjamin’s account of this instruction, it is interesting to note that the Prophet’s history says that on Saturday, April 1, 1843, he traveled to Macedonia28 and was “very joyfully received by Bro[ther] Benjamin F. Johnson.”29 Under the date of Sunday, April 2, 1843, Joseph “supped at Brother Johnson’s” and later instructed the Saints. Among the subjects about which the Prophet preached, he discussed:

What is the meaning of the Parable of the scripture, “He that is faithful over a few things shall be made ruler over many? And he that is faithful over many [things] shall be made ruler over many more?”

What is the meaning of the Parable of the 10 talents?30

In contemplating speaking to his sister about this principle, Benjamin felt sick and filled with horror. However, to be true to his word, he arranged to speak to Almira privately:

I stood before her trembling, my knees shaking, but I opened my mouth and my heart opened to the light of the Lord, my tongue was loosened and I was filled with the Holy Ghost. I preached a sermon that forever converted me and her also to the principle, even though her heart was not yet won by the Prophet. And so I had great joy after my tribulation.31

That Benjamin and his sister could accept this doctrine, which so radically conflicted with their background, is evidence of the strong faith and confidence they had in their prophet. Joseph opened the scriptures to Benjamin so he understood that many of the great prophets of the Old Testament—including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses—lived the law of plural marriage. Benjamin testified: “With these teachings, accompanied by the spirit in which they were given, I was able to overcome my Puritanical ideas of Monogamic Marriage.”32 With Joseph’s teachings, the subject that had seemed so dark to Benjamin now seemed most lucid and plain. Never again did he need evidence or argument to sustain this high and holy principle.33

Within a few days, Almira, at the request of the Prophet, accompanied Benjamin to their sister Delcena’s home in Nauvoo. Delcena “had already been sealed to him [Joseph] by proxy.”34 Here they were met by the Prophet Joseph, Hyrum, and William Clayton. Of this meeting, Benjamin wrote:

Brother Hyrum at once took me in hand, apparently in fear I was not fully converted, and this was the manner of his talk to me: “Now
Benjamin, you must not be afraid of this new doctrine, for it is all right. You know Brother Hryum don't get carried away by worldly things, and he fought this principle until the Lord showed him it was true. I know that Joseph was commanded to take more wives, and he waited until an angel with a drawn sword stood before him and declared that if he longer delayed fulfilling that command that he would slay him." This was the manner of Brother Hryum's teaching to me, which I then did not need, as I was fully converted.35

After a little instruction, Almira stood by the Prophet's side and was sealed to him by Brother Clayton.

In seeking to provide a home for Almira, the Prophet entered into a business arrangement with Benjamin. As the legal business agent for Joseph, Benjamin was authorized to construct a large brick residence at Macedonia to be a mutual joint residence for Almira and for Benjamin's own family.36

Joseph also asked Benjamin for permission to marry his youngest sister, Esther, but when he was told that she was already promised in marriage, he dropped the matter. Benjamin suggested to the Prophet that Joseph might marry Mary Ann Hale, an orphan whom Benjamin's mother had raised and who was then living with the Johnson family. However, the Prophet replied, "'No, but she is for you. You keep her and take her for your wife and you will be blessed.'"37 Before leaving Nauvoo, Benjamin took Mary Ann Hale and Clarinda Gleason as plural wives. Throughout his life he was proud of having a wife who had been "given" to him by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Benjamin's faith was firm in following his Church leaders. One long-time associate observed, "I never heard B. F. Johnson say anything that was contrary to the teachings of the authorities of the Church. He told me many times that if I always followed the leaders of the Church I would never go wrong."38 Just prior to his death, Benjamin bore his final testimony to his family:

Children, listen to my last testimony. Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, faithful and true to the end of his days. I know, I traveled with him, slept with him, lived with him. I was his Bodyguard, Private Secretary, and Business Manager for years. I have always loved and revered him and all his successors, as I know them all to be Prophets, Seers and Revelators. I was one of the first persons he mentioned plural marriages to and he asked for my sister, Almira. The Manifesto has been given by a Prophet, Seer and Revelator. It is just as binding on us as the first, for all the keys of the Priesthood are held by the President of this Church. May God bless you and help you to follow the leaders of the Church.39
Benjamin’s testimony of the Manifesto in 1890, therefore, was as firm as his testimony of plural marriage in 1843. Aware of what the public reaction would be if the doctrine of plural marriage were taught openly, Joseph sought to keep these teachings and practices secret and divulged them only to his most trusted friends. Benjamin later recalled that

“the Lord had Required him [Joseph] to take plural wives and that he had then thought to ask for some of my Sisters,”—The past with its conditions & influences began more fully to unfold to my mind the causes that must at least in part have led to the great Apostasy & disruption in Kirtland—Without doubt in my mind Fanny Alger was at Kirtland the Prophet’s first plural wife, In which by Right of his Calling he was justified of the Lord see D. C. 132-59-60 While Oliver Cowdery, J. Carter, W. Parish or others were not justified of the Lord Either in their criticisms upon the doings of the Prophet or in their becoming a “Law unto themselves” through which they lost the Light of their calling & were left in Darkness.

Further, Benjamin reflected:

And we began now in a degree to understand the meaning of what he had so often publickly Said, “that Should he teach & Practice the principles that the Lord had Revealed to him and now Required of him. “That those then nearest him in the Stands would become his Enemies & the first to Seek his life—” Which they Soon did just as he had foretold.

As betrayal and persecution increased, Joseph manifested depression and weariness. On the Prophet’s last visit to Macedonia, after a long day of preaching, he returned to Benjamin’s home very tired. After blessing Benjamin’s eldest child, Joseph collapsed into a chair and exclaimed:

“Oh! I am so tired—so tired that I often feel to long for my day of rest. For what has there been in this life but tribulation for me? From a boy I have been persecuted by my enemies, and now even my friends are beginning to join with them, to hate and persecute me! Why should I not wish for my time of rest?”

His words to me were ominous, and they brought a shadow as of death over my spirit, and I said, “Oh, Joseph! how could you think of leaving us? How as a people could we do without you?” He saw my feelings were sorrowful and said kindly, “Bennie, if I was on the other side of the veil I could do many times more for my friends than I can do while I am with them here.”

[The Prophet continued.] “Benjamin I Should not be far away from you. And if on the other Side of the veil I Should Still be working with you and with a power greatly increased to Roll on this Kingdom.” And
Such was the tone Earnestness & Pathos of his words to me then that they can never be fully Recalled but with Emotion.\(^4^3\)

As the Prophet feared, some of those who associated intimately with him in the leading councils of the Church could not accept the teaching of plural marriage and looked upon it as a corrupt doctrine of a fallen prophet. Having lost confidence in their leader, these men set out secretly to remove the Prophet and establish their own leadership. Benjamin observed that the "apostate spirits within were now joining with our enemies outside" and "the days of tribulation were now fast approaching." Joseph could foresee this great danger, for Benjamin recalled, "as the Prophet so often told us, so it came to pass; and those he had called around him as a cordon of safety and strength were worse than a rope of sand, and were now forging his fetters."\(^4^4\)

I will Relate a Dream told to us in Council by the Prophet but a Short time before his death, which was as follows—"I dreamed that by the Laws, Marks, Higbys & Fosters, I was bound both hand & foot and Cast into a deep well. Soon after which I heard Screams of Terror and Cries of "Oh! Brother Joseph Save Save us." This Cry Continued untill with my Elbows & Toes I had worked my way to the top. and looking out I Saw all of those who had bound me within the folds of a Terrible Serpent that was preparing to Swallow them. and I told them that as they had bound me I could render them no assistance.\(^4^5\)

Reflecting upon the clarity with which the Prophet saw many things, Benjamin observed, "These, and many more great things were given by him, some of which, as with the ancient disciples, we could not comprehend until fulfilled."\(^4^6\) Benjamin had believed the Second Coming was near. Years later, in 1903, he explained that "over Seventy years ago [we] were taught by our leaders to believe that the coming of Christ & the Milinial rein was never nearer ther than we believe it to be now."\(^4^7\)

**Called to the Council of Fifty**

During one of his visits to the Johnson home, Joseph stated to those present: "The way I know in whom to confide [is]—God tells me in whom I may place confidence."\(^4^8\) Joseph confided in Benjamin on many occasions and found in him a trustworthy friend. As time passed, the Prophet's confidence in Benjamin increased until, as Benjamin said, "it did seem to me that he had few secrets to keep from me."\(^4^9\) One of the greatest evidences of trust occurred when
Joseph called Benjamin to serve on the select Council of Fifty in March 1844.\textsuperscript{50} Benjamin described the council as

the embryo kingdom of God upon the earth—an organization distinct from the Church, a nucleus of popular government which will exist for all people, “When the heathen are given for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth as a possession to him whose right it is to reign,” a government formed of representatives from every nation, principality or tribe upon the earth; a government of God for the people and by the people, in which man will be taught to know his origin and to govern himself which will continue through the millennial period as the outer wall or government around the inner temple of priesthood, until all are come to the knowledge of God.\textsuperscript{51}

Its Sittings were always Strictly Private, and all its Rules were carefully & promptly observed, and altho its meetings at times were oftener than monthly, and my home at Ramus over 20 miles distant—I was present at Every Session and being about the youngest member of that Council I was deeply impressed with all that transpired. or was Taught by the Prophet.\textsuperscript{52}

In referring to those who made up the Council, Benjamin explained that it was a “select Circle of the Prophet’s most trusted friends including all the Twelve. But not all of the Constituted authorities of the Church.”\textsuperscript{53}

Because of his membership in the Council of Fifty when it was first organized, Benjamin often sat in council with the presiding officers of the Church. Benjamin cherished this opportunity. Nearly forty years after the organization of this council, one member said, “Being called into the Council appears to me to be one of the greatest steps in my life.”\textsuperscript{54} A short time before the Prophet’s death, Joseph made an unusual presentation to the Quorum of the Twelve and some of the Council of Fifty. It was one of Joseph’s last meetings with this council. Benjamin recorded that after “all had been completed and the keys of power committed” to the Twelve Apostles as a quorum, the Prophet rose,

and with great Feeling & animation he graphically Reviewed his Life of Persecution Labor & Sacrifice For the Church & Kingdom of God—\textbf{Both} of which he declared were now organized upon the Earth. The burden of which had become too great for him longer to carry. That he was weary & Tired with the weight he So long had borne and he then Said with great vehemence “And in the name of the Lord I now Shake from my Shoulders the Responsibilities of bearing off the Kingdom of God to all the world—and \textbf{here & now} I place that Responsibility with all the Keys Powers & privilege pertaining thereto upon the Shoulders of you the Twelve Apostles in Connection with this
Council. And if you will accept this to do it God Shall bless you mightily and Shall open your way And if you do it not you will be Damned— I am henceforth free from this Responsibility and I now Shake my garments clear & Free from the Blood of this generation and of all men, and Shaking his Skirt with great vehemence he Raised himself from the floor While the Spirit that accompanied his words Thrilled Every heart as with a feeling that Boded bereavement & sorrow.55

By this time, those who had been secretly conspiring against the Prophet openly opposed him and “the full break had now come in Nauvoo... All hell now seemed in commotion... All conspired for the destruction of the Prophet, with his beautiful city and massive temple so fast nearing completion.”56 On June 16, 1844, Benjamin and several other able-bodied men “travelled all night across the prairie through mud, rain and darkness” to be in Nauvoo, where they could help defend the Prophet.57

This was the last time that Benjamin saw Joseph alive. Eleven days later the news of the tragic murder of Joseph and Hyrum struck Benjamin with shock and grief. He wrote of his reactions to the terrible event as follows:

To attempt to delineate the feelings of woe and unutterable sorrow that swelled every heart too full for tears, I need not attempt. I stood up, dazed with grief, could groan but could not weep. The fountain of tears was dry! “Oh God! what will thy orphan church and people now do!” was the only feeling or thought, that now burst out in groans.

... the words of Brother Joseph began to come back to me, “I could do so much more for my friends if I were on the other side of the veil.” These words, “my friends”—oh, how glad that he was my friend. These thoughts gradually gained the empire of my heart, and I began to realize that in his martyrdom there was a great eternal purpose in the heavens. But we were not able, as yet, to comprehend such a necessity. I could begin now to feel just what he meant, and his words, “do for his friends,” to me, were like the promise of Jesus to provide mansions for his disciples that they might be with him always. These things now were my consolation, and when I could begin to rejoice in them, the fountains of my tears began to flow, and I grew in consolation from day to day.58

Soon after the Martyrdom, Benjamin realized that his own life was in danger:

Our enemies, who, on accomplishing the murder fled in fear of Mormon vengeance, now began to return in boldness, and a mob came and searched my new building for arms, and to take me on a writ, as they had obtained evidence that I was a refugee from Missouri justice and was one of the incendiaries in Daviess County. For days I was
hidden in the woods, where trusted friends brought me food and at all times bore me company.\textsuperscript{59}

Gradually the "excitement and feeling for persecution" seemed to diminish, and the Saints began to hope for a brief period of peace. However, Benjamin "had no confidence now in anything here as a future home," and although the house he was building was enclosed and material was ready for its completion, he had neither energy nor faith to invest more in it.

**A Special Witness Is Given**

Immediately after the death of the Prophet, the question of the future leadership of the Church arose. This problem caused such dissension it appeared to threaten the future of the organization. On August 8, 1844, a conference was held in Nauvoo to settle the issue. Sidney Rigdon, the first to speak, presented his claims at length, but Benjamin felt that Sidney's remarks were "void of all power or influence." Brigham Young, President of the Twelve Apostles, then addressed the Saints. In describing President Young's presentation, Benjamin wrote:

I was perhaps to a degree forgetful of what I knew to be the Rights & duties of the Apostleship and as he [Rigdon] Closed his address & sat down my Back was partly turned to the Seat occupied by Apostle Brigham Young & other Apostles. When Suddenly and as from Heaven I heard the Voice of the prophet Joseph that thrilled my whole being and quickly turning around I Saw in the Transfiguration of Brigham Young the Tall Straight & portly Form of the Prophet Joseph Smith Clothed in a Sheen of Light Covering him to his feet, and I heard the Real & perfect Voice of the Prophet Even to the whistle as in years past caused by the loss of a Tooth, Said to have been broken out by the mob at Hyrum—This view or vision altho but for seconds was to me as vivid & Real as the glare of Lightning or the voice of Thunder from the Heavens and So deeply was I impressed with what I saw & heard in this Transfiguration. That for years I dare not Publicly tell what was given me of the Lord to See=But when in later years I did publickly bear this Testimony I found that others Could testify to having Seen & heard the Same. But to what proportion of the Congregation who were present I could never know. But I do know that this my testi-

With his conviction strengthened by this spiritual manifestation, Benjamin became one of the foremost in testifying that Brigham Young was the true successor of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Benjamin declared:
I will again bear this as a Faithful Testimony that I do know and bear Record that upon the head of Brigham Young as Chief with the Apostleship in full was by the voice of the prophet Joseph in in [sic] my hearing Laid the full Responsibility of bearing off the Kingdom of God to all the world.61

Knowing that President Brigham Young was now the Lord's prophet, Benjamin found that “new confidence and joy continued to spring up within me, and the subject of our finding a new home in the wilderness of the great West was one that occupied much of my thoughts.”62

Conflict and Exodus

In the brief period of peace that followed the Martyrdom, great emphasis was placed on finishing the Temple and preparing to move from Nauvoo. Benjamin was called by the Council of Fifty to rent and keep open the Nauvoo Mansion, so he began making arrangements to leave Macedonia. He did not move to Nauvoo, however, until after February 1845.63 By following the instructions of the Church leaders to move into Nauvoo and care for the Nauvoo Mansion, Benjamin suffered considerable financial loss.

The spirit of unrest had even caused financial problems for the Mansion House. In explaining, Benjamin said:

Public travel was now cut off and all business profits with it; yet our expenses were nearly the same, as the place must be kept open to receive county and state officials; as also people who came to inquire into the cause of our troubles.

Among these were Judge Stephen A. Douglas, James Arlington Bennett of New York, and others, together with military officers sent by the Governor from time to time. So, instead of being profitable we were at great expense with small returns.64

In the midst of these pressures, Benjamin was invited to bring his wives to the Nauvoo Temple to receive their fulness of the priesthood blessing. He recorded that he could not accept that invitation, however, because at the time General Arlington Bennett and his associates were guests of the city and were staying at the Mansion House and Benjamin felt it was his responsibility to see that they were properly entertained.65

As anti-Mormon agitation spread, the Saints hastened their preparations to leave Nauvoo. On October 11, 1845, President Young announced the captains of twenty-five companies. Benjamin was appointed one of the captains of hundreds.66
The exodus commenced from Nauvoo in February 1846. Because of threats of mob violence and because the Mansion House was suspected as being the scene of Mormon atrocities, Benjamin felt that for his family's protection he should immediately accompany the Church leaders in their departure from Nauvoo.67

At a meeting of the Council of Fifty, just prior to his leaving Nauvoo, Benjamin was assigned to visit with Emma Smith. Emma had turned down previous invitations to go West with the Saints, and now Benjamin and Bishop Newel K. Whitney were to try once more to persuade her to change her mind. That he was selected for this diplomatic mission is evidence of the confidence the leaders had in him as well as of the friendship that existed between him and the Prophet's family. Benjamin and Bishop Whitney labored with Emma all night, but she agreed to go only if "she could be the leading Spirit." Being unable to change her decision, they left without her.68 This must have been a sad moment for Benjamin, who knew firsthand how much the Prophet had loved her. Almost sixty years later, Benjamin recalled Joseph's affection for Emma. The Sunday morning scene he had witnessed at the Smith home is reported in I Knew the Prophets:

"Two of Emmas childr(en) Came to him as just from there Mother—all So nice bright & Sweet." Joseph turned to his guest. "Benjamin, look at these Children. How Could I help loving thire mother; If Necessary I would go to Hell for Such a woman." Johnson added, "...altho at the time he had in the Mansion other wives younger & apparently more Brilliant—Yet Emma the wife of his youth—to me apeared the Queen of his heart & of his home."69

In order to avoid arrest, Benjamin departed Nauvoo early in February with his family and little else:

One afternoon, I think the 6th of February, 1846, I learned of a posse being sent from Carthage to search the manure piles around the Mansion stables for dead bodies, with a warrant for my arrest and others employed about the premises. Tales of great horror had gone about the country, of murders committed at the Mansion. But I left before the arrival of the posse, and with Mary Ann and Clarinda, went to a friend's house near the river and crossed about midnight in a bitter-cold storm. The next day the river was closed with ice from bank to bank. The camp of the Presidency and many others was on Sugar Creek, and on our arrival there we were without even a bit of canvas to cover our heads, but were kindly received by those who had shelter.70
Later Life

Benjamin's experiences in Nauvoo, combined with his abilities, integrity, and courage, earned him the respect and admiration of Church leaders. In a meeting of the First Presidency and Council of Twelve Apostles on October 23, 1859, President Brigham Young asked the brethren for recommendations of men to fill a vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Erastus Snow recommended Benjamin F. Johnson, emphasizing that Benjamin had been well acquainted with Joseph. However, George Q. Cannon was the Apostle chosen to fill that vacancy.\(^1\)

Benjamin lived to be eighty-seven years of age and throughout his life was frequently called on to share his experiences with and testimony of the Prophet Joseph. In the general conference on October 6, 1900, Benjamin was asked to be the concluding speaker of the afternoon session.\(^2\) He testified of Joseph as God's prophet and of the restoration of the gospel. When General Authorities visited Mesa, Arizona, where Benjamin Johnson settled after coming West, they usually met with Benjamin, and he was often one of the main speakers at each stake conference.\(^3\) Benjamin took every opportunity to tell of his association with the Prophet Joseph Smith and his successors and to testify of their divine appointment and of the validity of plural marriage. He felt that he fulfilled the prophetic promise given to him by the Prophet Joseph Smith that Benjamin would bear testimony, after he became hoary with age, of things Joseph had taught to his close associates.\(^4\)

NOTES

1 Benjamin Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1947), 9. The original and a typescript copy of Johnson's four-volume diary are located at the Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives. Because *My Life's Review* is a more accessible version of these materials, it is cited throughout this essay.


Benjamin Franklin Johnson, letter to the editor, Deseret News, January 15, 1893.

Johnson, A Life’s Sketch.

Benjamin Franklin Johnson to George S. Gibbs, Salt Lake City, 1903, LDS Church Archives, 9. This important letter is printed and discussed in Dean R. Zimmerman, I Knew the Prophets, An Analysis of the Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs, Reporting Doctrinal Views of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young (Bountiful, Utah: Horison, 1976).


Deseret Evening News, October 16, 1897.

Johnson to Gibbs, 12.

Johnson, My Life’s Review, 64.


HC 4:424.

Johnson, My Life’s Review, 91.


Johnson, My Life’s Review, 92.

See Susan Sessions Rugh’s article in this issue for more information about Ramus/Macedonia.


Johnson, My Life’s Review, 93–94.

HC 5:391.

Benjamin F. Johnson to President Anthon H. Lund, LDS Church Archives, May 12, 1903.

HC 6:60.


Johnson, My Life’s Review, 96.

Johnson, My Life’s Review, 94.

Johnson, My Life’s Review, 94–95.

Johnson to Gibbs, 29–30.

Historical Record 6:221–22.

The name Ramus was changed to Macedonia on March 1, 1843. See HC 5:318.

HC 5:318.


Johnson, My Life’s Review, 95.

Benjamin F. Johnson, “An Open Letter from Benjamin F. Johnson to Grover Cleveland, the President of the United States in Defense of Plural Marriage,” LDS Church Archives, January 15, 1886. Written to Grover Cleveland while Johnson was in hiding in St. George, Utah, because of polygamy. Reprinted in E. Dale LeBaron, “Benjamin Franklin Johnson: Colonizer, Public Servant and Church Leader” (Master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1967), 323.
Benjamin Franklin Johnson

(Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1967), 323.

33 Johnson to Gibbs, 30–31.
34 Johnson, My Life's Review, 95.
36 Benjamin F. Johnson, letter to the editor, Deseret News, June 25, 1902.
37 Johnson, My Life's Review, 96.
38 John F. Horne, affidavit sworn at Mesa, Arizona, on September 23, 1962, LDS Church Archives; photocopy in possession of the author.
39 Samuel Joseph Johnson, affidavit sworn at Mesa, Arizona, on October 8, 1960, LDS Church Archives.
40 Johnson to Gibbs, 32–33.
41 Johnson to Gibbs, 20.
42 Johnson, My Life's Review, 97.
43 Johnson to Gibbs, 22.
45 Johnson to Gibbs, 22.
47 Johnson to Gibbs, 52.
48 HC 5:392.
49 Johnson, letter to the editor, June 25, 1902. See also HC 6:60.
50 D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," BYU Studies 20 (Winter 1980): 165; 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), 19, 64; and Flanders, Nauvoo, 278–305. In his later life, Benjamin F. Johnson stated that the Council of Fifty was organized on April 3, 1843, but his recollection seems to have been inaccurate.
51 Benjamin Franklin Johnson, original manuscript of "My Life's Review," LDS Church Archives. This portion was deleted from the printed book. The author has a copy on file.
52 Johnson to Gibbs, 20.
53 Johnson to Gibbs, 19.
54 Minutes of Council of Fifty, Saturday, April 10, 1880. Located in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
55 Johnson to Gibbs, 23–24.
59 Johnson, My Life's Review, 103.
60 Johnson to Gibbs, 53–54.
61 Johnson to Gibbs, 53.
62 Johnson, My Life's Review, 104.
63 Johnson, My Life's Review, 104.
64 Johnson, My Life's Review, 105.
66 HC 7:481–82.
67 Johnson, My Life's Review, 106.

71 Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, LDS Church Archives, October 23, 1859.

72 Conference Report of the Seventy-first Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 6, 1900, 41.


74 Because of Benjamin Johnson's reputation as close confidant of Joseph Smith and as a defender of plural marriage, twentieth-century fundamentalists adopted him after his death as a source of their supposed authority. They claim Joseph Smith secretly passed to him the presidency of the High Priesthood and other rights, which they say he conferred on a LeBaron grandson. See Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 203.
Crime and Punishment in Mormon Nauvoo, 1839–1846

Kenneth W. Godfrey

Nauvoo has had a good share of critics who accused it of being crime ridden. In an October 1988 article that appeared in Restoration Trail Forum, Samuel W. Taylor wrote that Mormon Nauvoo had an "organized underworld of the type found ordinarily only in great metropolitan centers such as New York or London."¹ He argued that the "City Beautiful" and the Mississippi bottomland had their "brothels, barrooms, saloons" and "notorious gangs of banditti—knives, cutthroats, horse thieves, counterfeiters, outlaws—organized and so powerful that some frontier settlements and even counties came under their control."² More than a decade earlier, in his historical novel Nightfall at Nauvoo, Taylor had stated that many of the notorious banditti realized "that the solidarity of the Mormons, the fierce defense by the entire colony of any member, provided a perfect cover for outlaw operations." Pretending to believe in the teachings and doctrines of the Church, many of these rogues were baptized, according to Taylor, while at the same time continuing their illegal activities, thus bringing shame on the entire community.³

Governor Thomas Ford wrote in 1854 that the Illinois territory "was overrun with horsethieves and counterfeiters."⁴ They were so numerous and so powerful and could count so many sheriffs, justices of the peace, and constables in their number that the populace "formed themselves into revolutionary tribunals . . . under the name of regulators," took the law into their own hands, "arrested, tried, and punished [the banditti], . . . by severe whipping and banishment from the territory."⁵ Nevertheless, bands of these ruffians, Ford claimed, continued to exist even as late as 1840, when the Latter-day Saints were building Nauvoo.⁶ J. W. Gunnison argued

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that "horse-thieves and house-breakers,—robbers and villains gathered there [Nauvoo] to cloak their deeds in mystery." Hancock County's historian, Thomas Gregg, wrote that Nauvoo was infected "with a set of blacklegs, counterfeiter and debauchees." An early doctoral study of Nauvoo states, "It is known that fugitives from justice from other portions of the union fled to Nauvoo, were received by Joe into the church, and were screened from arrest when the officers of the law sought them." The author cites the case of one Jeremiah Smith to prove her point. Indicted in the District of Columbia for swindling the government out of three thousand dollars, Jeremiah Smith found his way to Nauvoo, where he was arrested by the deputy district marshall but discharged by the municipal court presided over by Joseph Smith. Presbyterinan Reverend W. M. King stated, "I presume Nauvoo is a perfect sink of debauchery and every species of abomination as ever were Sodom and Ninevah." Historian George Gayler made this assessment: "Stories of theft became so frequent and unpleasant incidents involving thefts so common place, that charges against the occupants of Nauvoo could not be disregarded entirely."

Even Latter-day Saint writer Truman G. Madsen made similar claims: "At this time [1844] Nauvoo was the largest city in Illinois; hence, counterfeiter, blackleg, bootleggers, slave traders [Madsen is the only one to list slave traders], gamblers, and every other disreputable type of person found their way there, trying to exploit the possibilities for dishonest profits, trying to gull recent and sometimes naive converts who had come from far and near."

With all of these accusations of disregard for law and property in Nauvoo, it seems appropriate to examine the evidence and to ascertain just what the truth was relative to crime and punishment among the Latter-day Saints as they sojourned in Illinois and Iowa during the years 1839-46.

**The Legacy of Lawlessness**

John L. Harr and other students of "Law and the Lawless" conclude that the Mississippi Valley passed through an "era of lawlessness that has distinguished all frontiers or wests in America." At times this disregard for the law and the rights of others became so prevalent that vigilance committees were organized that took the law into their own hands and punished the offenders. These groups often functioned "more as an accepted part of the political
structure than an attack upon it." In 1837 in Alton, Illinois, for example, Elijah Lovejoy, publisher of an abolitionist newspaper that offended community values, was killed by just such a group. Mobs instigated more than thirty-seven "riots" in various American cities during the 1830s, justifying their actions as a mere "enforcement of justice within the bonds of society" to remove social dangers that "for various reasons could not be handled by ordinary legal means." Thus, it was very dangerous for a community to acquire the reputation of harboring criminals or to circumvent the law in pursuit of their own aims, especially if those goals were not believed to be congruent with the mores of the surrounding society. In fact, Kenneth H. Winn, in his book *Exiles in a Land of Liberty*, argues that anti-Mormons thought they were fighting a mixture of swindlers, fools, aggressive frauds, fast dealers, and generally lawless people. As early as 1835, Simeon Carter, while serving a mission in Illinois, had his life threatened by a mob of twenty men who believed that Mormonism threatened the social stability of the region. Given the geography of the country in which the Latter-day Saints settled, the generally held belief that they frequently took things from their gentile neighbors, and the fact that some outlaws gravitated to the city on the Mississippi, it would be very unusual indeed if there were no significant crime in Nauvoo and its environs.

David J. Bodenhamer, in contrast to Harr, Joe B. Frantz, Hugh Davis, and other writers on crime and violence in America, shows through an examination of court records that even with its large influx of immigrants Marion County, Indiana, was "part of a remarkably peaceful frontier" during 1825–50. Except in 1840 and 1842, yearly prosecutions numbered over 90 cases. The year 1843 had the high of about 250. Still the rate of prosecutions in 1840 stood at only 8.6 per 1000 people (when Marion County had a population of 16,080). Moral crimes, particularly violations of the gambling and liquor laws, represented the highest number of prosecutions.

Similar court records so far are unavailable for Mormon Nauvoo. However, the minutes of the Nauvoo High Council, which operated much like a civic court, do exist. During the years 1841–45, this council tried more than 80 cases. Of these cases, 4 were for Church members teaching false doctrine, 3 for drunkenness, 16 for nonpayment of debts, 16 for theft, 3 for teaching spiritual wifery, 21 for moral misconduct, and 18 for lying and slander. Whereas 21 of the accused Saints had the charges against them dismissed, the rest were convicted. Thus, the Nauvoo High Council tried an average of
20 cases per year, while convictions averaged approximately 10 per year. The indictment rate is no lower than that of Marion County, Indiana, whose population was greater than Nauvoo's. These statistics indicate that the crime rate was low in Nauvoo, as the Saints claimed. The researcher can read through diaries of the Nauvoo citizenry and find no mention of a crime having been committed. The people themselves seem to have perceived that the City of Joseph was a safe place to live.

With that much having been said, let us turn to some specifics regarding crime and punishment in Nauvoo. When the homeless Saints arrived in Illinois, they brought with them a legacy of the Judeo-Christian code, which they believed had been revealed anew through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Doctrine and Covenants 42 prohibited the Saints from killing, stealing, lying, or committing adultery. The Saints were also admonished by the Prophet to obey, honor, and sustain the laws of the land. Furthermore, they were subject to the rulings of bishops' courts, high council courts, and the Nauvoo municipal court, as well as to the county and federal judicial system. Such a multilayered ecclesiastical and legal structure may not have deterred all Nauvoo crime, but it was certainly efficient in bringing Latter-day Saint offenders to justice. Nauvoo, then, with its large police force, its ecclesiastical courts, and its municipal court, was equipped to handle crime and maintain law and order. That Nauvoo was perceived otherwise was unfortunate.

**Crime and Punishment: The Early Years**

As the destitute, beleaguered, suffering, exiled Saints made their way to Quincy, Illinois, and the hospitality of that community, the local politicians seemed pleased. But so did lawless souls. What Edward Bonney called the "Banditti of the Prairie" were aware that if they became a part of the Mormon community their foul deeds could be blamed on the Latter-day Saints. As early as May 1839, in a Church general conference, John Taylor of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was requested to publish a letter in the Quincy Argus, which he did, wherein he stated: "There are many individuals amongst the number who have already arrived . . . who never did belong to our Church . . . who have contracted habits which are at variance with the principles of moral rectitude, (such as swearing, dram-drinking, etc.)." He declared that the Church and its leaders disapproved of any dishonesty and concluded by warning the
citizens of Quincy that anyone who engaged in such activities was not in fellowship with the Latter-day Saints; thus he plainly stated the attitude of the Church with regard to lawbreaking.26

Unfortunately, those Church members who moved to Montrose, Iowa, after acquiring land on what was known as the "half-breed tract," resided among a group of outlaws.27 On May 20, 1839, Wilford Woodruff wrote that a desperado named "Camel" lived in Montrose and "makes much trouble in the place."28 Two days later Woodruff recorded that a "mob man by the name of Rocky Mountain commenced pulling down a long barn in Montrose." A Mr. Boothe (or the people) issued a warrant against him, but he drew a pistol on the officer and refused to submit to arrest. Having been deputized by Boothe, Wilford Woodruff and Bishop Ripley (probably Alanson Ripley) "followed the criminal into the woods. We overtook him in a thicket of bushes," Wilford Woodruff wrote, "& compelled him to Surrender. He was taken to court & fined."29 Again, on May 28, aided by another outlaw, Rocky Mountain commenced pulling down another barn and did two hundred dollars' worth of damage before leaving. He was never punished for this crime, although a warrant was issued for his arrest.30 A week earlier, while Joseph Bates Noble prepared to plant his garden, a group of ruffians "took his horse by the bits & ordered him off from the ground. . . . Br Nobles left the ground to keep the peace."31

On May 30, 1839, Wilford Woodruff wrote of an increased spirit of mobocracy in Montrose.32 As crimes were frequently being committed in Montrose, an event that occurred on the Mississippi River below Warsaw created great excitement and a virtual flood of publicity. A citizen of that city found a cache of goods taken from a store in Tully, Missouri. He reported his find to the citizens of Tully, who soon arrived to retrieve their property. As they were led to the "depot of stolen goods," they chanced upon some Mormons in the river bottom looking for horses that had been stolen from them. The men from Tully, led by William Allensworth, H. M. Woodyard, William Martin, J. H. Owseley, John Bain, Light T. Lail, and Halsey White, kidnapped the Mormons, "Alanson Brown, James Allred, Benjamin Boyce and Noah Rogers, and without any writ or warrant of any character whatever, they dragged them over into Missouri." There they "were imprisoned for a day or two in an old log cabin."33 "At one point, Brown was taken out, a rope placed around his neck, and he was hung up to a tree until he was nearly strangled to death. At the same time, Boyce was tied to
a tree, stripped of his clothing and inhumanely beaten. Rogers was also beaten, and Allred was stripped of every particle of clothing and tied up to a tree for the greater part of the night, and threatened frequently." Then they were given a "note of acquittal" indicating their innocence. Such actions on the part of Missourians, especially coming after the Boggs extermination order and the Mormon expulsion from that state, outraged Nauvoo's citizenry. At a large public meeting, strong resolutions were passed denouncing the whole affair. Shortly after, five citizens of Tully found on the Illinois side of the river were arrested and tried before a Nauvoo justice of the peace, non-Mormon Daniel H. Wells. He found them innocent and discharged them. An envoy was then sent by Illinois Governor Thomas Carlin to Jefferson City, Missouri, who demanded the delivery of the Tully culprits who had abused the Saints. After receiving assurances that they would be given up, he returned to Quincy and reported his findings to Governor Carlin. Only two days later, in retaliation, two officers arrived in Quincy with a writ signed by Missouri Governor Boggs, demanding that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon be returned to that state inasmuch as they were "fugitives from justice." When Carlin refused to extradite the Prophet and his first counselor, the Tully culprits' feet never touched Illinois soil.

By July 1839, a number of Hancock County citizens had "embraced the Mormon faith." These new Saints, while pursuing their ordinary avocations, were one day assaulted by a mob of Shelby citizens. Following the incident, these Latter-day Saints appeared before a Judge Bruce and demanded the arrest of the members of the mob. Warrants were issued against fifteen men, but when Colonel James W. Vaughan attempted to arrest those indicted, his men refused to obey his orders. A large mob gathered, forcing the colonel to retreat. Once more the offenders never had to account for their actions. The Alton Commercial Gazetter published an article which argued that the incident described above never occurred, and the Sangamo Journal ran a similar article. Both newspapers saw the report as an attempt to arouse sympathy for the Saints.

While the heads of the evenly matched political parties in Illinois vied with each other for the Mormon vote, the general populace (and especially the Illinois ministry) grew alarmed at the number of Latter-day Saints arriving in the state and at their vigorous proselyting efforts. When the "Mormons began to preach in Springfield in 1839, the Christian church officials became so alarmed that
they signed a petition stating that all churches could conduct services in the publicly financed building except the Mormons.”

Soon thereafter, rumors surfaced charging Joseph Smith with teaching that there was no sin in stealing from the enemies of the Church. Both Thomas Gregg and George W. Smith later contended that Latter-day Saints were “prone to stealing liberally from the Gentiles.” David Miller, a Latter-day Saint historian, argues that such thefts were committed by “gangsters” who then boasted that they were Mormons and that the Church sanctioned their actions, “knowing that church leaders would be blamed for their lawless acts.” Church leader Jacob Hamblin wrote, “I soon learned to discriminate between the different kinds of people who had gathered at Nauvoo. Some were living the lives of Saints; others were full of deceit and were stumbling blocks in the way of those who were striving to do right.”

To counteract the charges that his people were thieves who disregarded the law, Joseph Smith prevailed upon the governor to issue a proclamation declaring that the Latter-day Saints were “a law abiding people.” The governor’s proclamation seemed to do little good, and soon other rumors were afloat that the Prophet had installed “a counterfeitors outfit in Nauvoo,” “that spurious coins were turned out in large numbers,” and “that certain outlaws were authorized to see that these coins were put into circulation.” Then the Saints and their city were criticized because there “was a lack of a jail in Nauvoo.” However, many American cities in the 1840s did not have prisons. Usually during this time period, convicted criminals worked on the roads rather than being incarcerated. There were plans to build a jail, but those plans were never carried out. The plans were probably part of an effort to petition the legislature to incorporate Nauvoo. It should be noted, however, that Theodore Turley made some chains to bind prisoners. Another rumor stated that “thefts were committed in broad daylight” and that farmers “were powerless to prevent depredation.” Things became so serious that in an effort to curb further crime “the towns people of Montebello, Illinois, published an itemized list of things stolen, the names of people sustaining the losses, and the estimated value of the stolen property.” Residents of Hancock County watched the growth of Nauvoo, as theft increased in their own cities, with a growing awareness that the offenders were frequently tracked in the direction of that city but rarely brought to justice. Franklin D. Richards, who would later become an Apostle, stated that “the mob
would steal horses and run off with them and lay it to our people. Put up jobs in order to find something against us . . . to drive us away."49

Meanwhile, Church members were sometimes intimidated by these "lawless banditti." For example, Wilford Woodruff reported that one morning they walked or rode loudly in front of the Saints' Montrose houses with swords drawn and flags strung upon poles, threatening the lives of the Latter-day Saints.50

Church leaders, as well as the general populace, were concerned about violations of the law, of community standards, and of Christian ideals. D. W. Rogers was charged with compiling a hymnbook and selling it as the one selected and published by Emma Smith, but after giving suitable explanations, he was forgiven and extended the hand of fellowship once more.51 Hyrum Smith admonished Church members moving to Nauvoo to "settle with their creditors before coming to the 'city beautiful,'" counsel which indicates that some Latter-day Saints must have left behind unpaid debts. In fact, a notice appeared in the Times and Seasons stating that George W. Davison had moved from Mount Hope, Illinois, "leaving his business unsettled, and his debts unpaid, and for so doing the fellowship of the church was withdrawn from him."52

A careful reading of Nauvoo's city ordinances reveals additional problems that confronted its inhabitants and the degree to which the government in Nauvoo was exercised to establish a law-abiding community. As in other American cities, the problem of dead animals challenged the city fathers. By late 1842, the city council had passed an ordinance that required dead animals either be taken out of the city limits and disposed of or be buried at least three feet deep.53 As the Saints continued their sojourn in Illinois, other ordinances were added. There was a statute that forbade nude swimming within the city limits.54 Another required all "new comers" to register with the city constable; this ordinance was passed to keep thieves and rogues from settling in Nauvoo.55 An additional law required people to be in their homes after 9:00 P.M. and to remain there until after sunrise. Furthermore, people were not allowed to spread contagious disease. Nor were they to keep any animals for exhibition or for any purpose that might excite passions or affect decency, virtue, or modesty. Still another ordinance forbade the residents to allow cows, calves, sheep, goats, or dogs to run at large in the city.

In spite of these ordinances (or perhaps partly because of these ordinances), violations of the law continued. J. M. Henderson's horse
was “shamefully disfigured,” and a ten dollar reward was posted for information that would lead to “the arrest of those engaged in the naggardly act.” In April 1841, the store of Cyrus Peck of Montrose was burglarized, and 75 yards of fancy colored silk were taken, along with 30 yards of black Levantine silk, 125 yards of mosquito lace, and some remnants of calico.

In a letter published in the *Times and Seasons*, a concerned citizen lamented that crime was widespread in the region. He claimed that dirks, pistols, and bowie knives were worn by thousands, even by farmers as they plowed. Concluding his epistle, he called for the clergy of all faiths to unite in preaching against such a state of affairs. In a further effort to curb crime, the city council passed an ordinance prohibiting the sale of ardent spirits in Nauvoo. Notice was also given that “elders who go to borrowing horses or money, and running away with it, will be cut off from the church without any ceremony.”

While residents of Hancock County continued to circulate stories about Nauvoo’s lawlessness and iniquity, the Nauvoo High Council handed down judgments. On April 12, 1840, Alva Keller charged Alanson Ripley with taking rails from his lot without permission. After both men had been given a chance to discuss the issue, reconciliation was made and the charge withdrawn. In another case, John A. Hicks accused John P. Greene of lying “without any cause or provocation”; the court heard the charge, and the case was subsequently resolved. In May authorities requested the return of rails which formerly belonged to the city plot and which were taken from the yard of Bishop Ripley. On June 20, 1840, “Henry G. Sherwood ... preferred a charge against Ebenezer A. Black” for misconduct relative to selling lots in Nauvoo. Black was convicted and “expelled from the society of the Church until he make a satisfactory confession and restored all the damages.” In August, Moses Martin, a stalwart in the march of Zion’s Camp, was charged with slandering “Elders S. Brunson, and Lyman and others stating that a gang of Gadianton robbers were in the church.” He, too, was corrected, convicted, and “expelled from the Church until he should make a satisfactory confession.” Elijah Fordham, charged in an August court with slandering John Patten’s character, embezzling some property from Noah Rogers, and playing “the violin at a negro ball,” made reconciliation; the case was dismissed and the court adjourned. In October, Henry G. Sherwood preferred a charge against William Gregory for having “spread abroad certain slanderous
reports and insinuations that go to carry an idea that much pillering, pilliging, plundering, stealing &c is practiced by members of said church and that such practice is known to and tolerated by the heads and leaders of the church." Gregory was convicted. However, following "a humble confession," the council was satisfied and allowed Gregory to remain in the Church.67

These cases indicate that Latter-day Saint leaders were trying to weed out iniquity among the membership and were not permissive when it came to infractions of the law. In fact, by 1840, conditions had reached such a point that in the October general conference the Prophet urged that a committee be appointed to search out the lawbreakers and see that they were brought to justice.68 A few weeks later the Prophet called the attention of the public to the fact that Nauvoo "had been infested . . . with a gang of thieves, insomuch that property of almost all kinds has been unsafe unless secured with bolts and bars; cattle and hogs have been made a free booty. The community are awake to ferret them out, and have already made some inroads among them; the measures that are taken have created a general alarm among the midnight pilagers, and they are making tracks as fast as possible."69 Nevertheless, two weeks later, the Prophet wrote, "Nauvooans to the rescue! Your liberty is in danger! Thieves are in your midst! By day and by night are they prowling through your streets! Your property is in peril, and life, and limb, in jeopardy! Your love of justice, your personal honor, your attachment to your country, and your holy religion, all, all, loudly call upon you to assist in bringing the culprits to condign unpunishment."70 Thus the Prophet was doing what he could to eradicate the thieves from Nauvoo and its environs.

**Crimes Continue**

Still the crimes continued. In January 1841, a group of men entered the stable of Levi Moffitt and cut off the tails and ears of a span of dapple grey horses belonging to Joseph Smith and valued at $250 each. They also tried to stab one of the horses.71 The culprits were never apprehended.72 The February 6, 1841, meeting of the Nauvoo High Council saw a charge preferred against a well-known Saint for dancing, kissing females, and "sleeping with two females coming up the Lakes and on the road to Dixons ferry." After making confession, asking forgiveness and promising never to repeat the offense, he was allowed to remain in the Church.73 Alanson Brown
admitted before a March meeting of the High Council that he had told people that he committed his robberies for the Church. After admitting he had lied and after humbly confessing, he, too, was forgiven.74 Both David Smith and Joseph Holbrook, officers in the Nauvoo Legion when convicted of theft on November 30, 1841, were given dishonorable discharges and expelled from that body.75 During this same time, the Latter-day Saints were accused of poisoning the horses of a Mr. Kilbourne.76

Church leaders continued to deny that they countenanced lawlessness of any kind, so it was a shock when a “nest of thieves” claiming to be Mormons was uncovered at Ramus in Hancock County. Worse, “when discovered in their nefarious practice,” they boldly asserted that the Church leaders sustained “their conduct . . . so long as the stealing was practiced upon the ‘Gentiles.’”77 In an effort to counteract their testimony, Hyrum Smith, a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, published an affidavit that was printed in the nation’s newspapers; it disavowed crime, theft, or any other evil practice and clearly stated that the Church and its leaders did not condone criminal activity of any sort. The Quorum of the Twelve, too, signed this document, adding their support to its contents.78 On December 1, 1841, the Times and Seasons also printed an article in which Church leaders denounced thievery of any sort.79 In an effort to diffuse the volatile situation, leaders advised Latter-day Saints to stay out of anti-Mormon towns such as Warsaw. The Warsaw Signal printed that the people were glad that the Mormons were going to have nothing more to do with their town.80

Perhaps one of the reasons leaders publicly delineated the Church’s stand regarding theft involved the trouble that erupted in the Ramus Stake. Late in 1841, a severe fissure developed among the stake leadership. President Joel H. Johnson wrote in his diary that a “secret clan” had developed among stake members, including his counselor and four members of the high council, as well as the bishop. These six men began to teach “that it was no harm for Mormons to steal from their enemies.” In a bitter November 1841 high council meeting, Joseph Holbrook (the first counselor) and the four high counselors left the meeting and the town in disgust. Five days later they were incarcerated in the Monmouth Jail on charges of theft.81 On November 18, 1841, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards arrived in Ramus, conducted a stake conference, dissolved the stake, and strongly reiterated the
position of the Church that it was not right for Church members to steal from anyone.\textsuperscript{82} Governor Thomas Ford remembered that by 1842 the Mormons were becoming increasingly unpopular and were charged with numerous thefts, robberies, and rogueries of all sorts.\textsuperscript{83} The abundance of threats leveled against the Latter-day Saints caused Church leaders in 1842 to advise those living in isolated areas to move into larger population centers, where they could protect each other. In the meantime, the Nauvoo High Council heard a charge “prefered against Jane Price by Mercy R. Thompson for taking certain articles of property” that did not belong to her from the Thompsons’ house. Price countered with an accusation that Thompson had lied and that she had claimed she had never taken such articles. The charges were not sustained, and Jane Price was acquitted.\textsuperscript{84} In April, \textit{The Wasp} publicly lamented the fact that shafts of slander and missiles of the wicked were being hurled against the Saints. Every effort was being made, the editor declared, “to turn the tide of popular opinion against us.”\textsuperscript{85}

Shortly after the Church’s general conference in 1842, the Nauvoo High Council met to hear a charge of horse thievery preferred against Elihu Allen. The case was held over because Allen was sick, and when it was heard in May, the defendant was acquitted of all charges.\textsuperscript{86} An assault on ex-Governor Boggs of Missouri was generally believed to be another example of Mormon disregard for law. Porter Rockwell was accused of performing the deed and Joseph Smith of instigating the entire affair. In February 1842, Porter Rockwell left Nauvoo with his family and traveled under an assumed name to Independence, Missouri. While waiting for his wife to give birth to their fourth child, he secured employment under the pseudonym of “Brown.” Living in that same city just a few blocks from the downtown square was Lilburn W. Boggs. About nine o’clock on the evening of May 6, 1842, while Boggs was sitting in his South Pleasant Street home, someone attempted to take his life. Boggs’s brother, a medical doctor, was summoned by the grief-stricken family. After a careful examination, he announced that the ex-governor would probably not survive. The next morning, citizens of Independence held a meeting at the courthouse and adopted measures for securing the capture of the assassin. They offered a reward of $500 for his apprehension. The evening newspapers confidently projected an early seizure of the killer, because many people had seen him leave
town. The next morning, upon hearing of the assassination attempt, Porter Rockwell left Independence and traveled to Nauvoo. Shortly after arriving there, he, together with Joseph Smith, was implicated in the attack. Soon the nation's newspapers published articles accusing the Mormon Prophet of instigating the affair. Subsequently, Rockwell was arrested, incarcerated, and tried for the crime of attempted murder. In spite of the fact that a Missouri court failed to convict Porter of the deed, in the public mind he and Joseph were guilty of attempting to kill an ex-governor of a sovereign state.

Back in Nauvoo, on May 20, 1842, George Miller appeared before the High Council and charged Chauncey L. Higbee with “unchaste and unvirtuous conduct with the widow Miller and others.” Higbee wanted the trial carried over, but the council denied his motion. Three unnamed witnesses testified that he had seduced them and at different times been guilty of unchaste and unvirtuous conduct with them. They said he “taught the doctrine that it was right to have free intercourse with women if it was kept secret,” because “Joseph Smith authorized him to practice these things.” The charge of immorality being sustained, Higbee was severed from the Church and became a bitter enemy of Joseph Smith. Catherine Warren then appeared before the court and admitted to unvirtuous conduct with John C. Bennett, a recently excommunicated Church member and former quartermaster of the Nauvoo Legion. Having declared that she had repented, and after asking for forgiveness, she was restored to fellowship in the Church. Only eight days later the court disfellowshipped another Church member, a man, after a charge that he had been unchaste was sustained. In June, Amanda Smith stated that a female Saint had frequently been immoral in the absence of her husband. The charge was investigated and sustained, but the woman was allowed to retain her Church membership. Amanda, however, was reprimanded for not going to the woman first before spreading the story “amongst her acquaintances.”

As spring turned to summer, the Church and Nauvoo continued to suffer from unfavorable publicity and false charges. On July 1, 1842, the *Times and Seasons* published an article written by William Law, titled “Much Ado about Nothing.” Law, the Second Counselor in the Church’s First Presidency, argued that there were fewer crimes committed on the part of the Saints in Illinois than any other group. He also said that few, if any, Saints resided in prisons, no court in the state having recorded the convictions of Latter-day Saints for any crime during the past three years. This denial did little to quell public
fears. Most non-Mormons in Hancock County already believed that Mormons guilty of crimes were able to somehow circumvent the law.91 Only eight days later, the Illinois Republican charged that a Latter-day Saint, Manon Demter, had stolen three dollars and a gun from a harmless old gentleman named John Stevensen before murdering him. No proof confirmed this charge.92

After a public meeting of some anti-Mormons in a Green Plains schoolhouse was fired upon by parties in the bush, Church members were blamed, and the anti-Mormons resolved to begin the expulsion of the “Morley-town” Mormons.93 Only a few days later, Latter-day Saints working on a Missouri hemp farm owned by H. Pinchbank were given notice by a mob to quit work and never again return to Missouri.94 As the Saints in areas outside of Nauvoo worried about fire, threats on their lives, and expulsion, the Nauvoo High Council continued to try cases of Saints accused of immoral acts. On September 4, 1842, Gustavious Hills was disfellowshipped from the Church for teaching that Mormon males could have more wives than one.95

However, while Church leaders denied the practice of plural marriage, certain select men were taking additional wives. Joseph Smith told William Clayton that he was to keep his now pregnant plural wife at home “and brook it and if they [other saints] raise trouble about it and bring you before me I will give you an awful scourging and probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptize you and set you ahead as good as ever.”96 At a meeting of the Nauvoo City Council in January 1844, Joseph Smith, it was said, had given instructions to Daniel Carn that “if a man could not keep a secret he was not worthy of a place in the church.” A month later he and Hyrum Smith publicly announced that they had excommunicated an elder for preaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines.97

On October 22, 1842, the High Council heard the case against Benjamin Boydston, who was charged with five violations of Church law—one, imprudent conduct towards John Tarpin’s wife; two, insulting, abusing, and striking L. T. Coons in his own house; three, being of a contentious nature; four, misrepresenting and telling falsehoods; and five, wanting D. M. Gamset to carry a challenge to L. T. Coons to meet him at his own time or place with sticks, swords, guns, or fist, and knock it out. Boydston pled guilty to all charges, repented, and made reconciliation. He was allowed to remain in the Church.98
As the year drew to a close, instances of lawbreaking continued. In November 1842, the Prophet investigated "frauds and irregularities" in the Nauvoo Post Office. Calvin Warren sent a petition signed by some Nauvoo citizens to "Judge Young [U.S. senator from Illinois], with a request that the latter should present the same to the postmaster general, and use his influence to have the present postmaster [Sidney Rigdon] removed, and a new one appointed."

However, the non-Mormon populace of Illinois came to believe that everything that was stolen in or near Hancock County had been taken by Mormons and that all Mormons were thieves. In response to the continued accusations that the Church condoned theft and harbored thieves, the Prophet published a strong statement in the *Times and Seasons* in which he asserted, "I wish it to be distinctly understood in all coming time, that the Church over which I have the honor of presiding will ever set its brows like brass, and its face like steel, against all . . . abominable acts of villainy and crime." Still Joseph Smith publicly admitted that as the minutes of the municipal court fully testified Nauvoo was "infested with a set of blacklegs, counterfeitors and debauchees."

In the new year the High Council continued to convict Latter-day Saints for not paying their debts, cheating people out of land, teaching spiritual wifery, stealing oxen, and saying bad things about others; these convictions indicate that indeed the Church did not condone misconduct on the part of its members. The February 11, 1843, meeting of the High Council heard a rather unique and unusual case. A charge against a Brother Hoyt was preferred for accusing certain persons of being wizards or witches, working with the divining rod, and bringing toads to heal the sick. He was convicted of all charges. Another extraordinary case involved Henry Cook, who was accused of attempting to sell his wife. Cook testified that shortly after his first wife had died, "upon a short acquaintance [sic]" he had married a lady named Mary. He then discovered "that she was in the habit of traveling about at night" and had "misuse[d] his children." Furthermore, she insulted him, boasted "that she would be governed by no man and threatened to use violence on him and his children," and often left him, vowing not to return but later returning anyway. Cook "whipped her pretty severely" and did say something about selling her, but meant it to be a joke. Hyrum Smith reprimanded Cook for whipping his wife, and the court rendered a decision of acquittal.
About this time, a “respected old settler” near Fountain Green made an affidavit that residents accused the Mormons of stealing “a yoke of cattle or a horse over there and then fled to Nauvoo, then they were safe. I never could find the man that lost the horse or cattle. . . . I tried several times to locate one man that would say he had cattle or horses stolen.”106 When the Quincy Whig accused the Mormons of harboring horse thieves, the Nauvoo Neighbor challenged the Whig to name the culprits and said the culprits would be punished.107 The Prophet also told Peter Haws to correct his boys of their wickedness, or they would eventually go to prison.108 Joseph published an affidavit in the Wasp again condemning crime and lawlessness of any sort.109 He also stated that “there is no city either in this state or in the United States that can compare with Nauvoo. You may live in our city for a month and not hear an oath sworn, you may be here so long and not see one person intoxicated.”110 In April 1843, the Prophet, in his capacity as mayor of Nauvoo, challenged the populace “to ferret out a band of thievish outlaws from our midst.”111

Patriarch Hyrum Smith told the Saints that a group of men in Nauvoo held that it was “right to steal from any one who does not belong to the Church, provided they consecrate one-third of it to the building of the Temple.” These men, led by David Holman and James Dunn, were also making bogus money. Hyrum denounced the men and their teachings and admonished Church members to give no heed to their doctrines.112 When it was reported that a gang of thieves were about to move to Nauvoo, the Twelve Apostles warned them not to set foot in the kingdom on the Mississippi.113 At the same time, Oliver Olney, Alanson Brown, Joseph Holbrook, John Telford, James B. T. Page, and William Edwards were all “expelled from the church” for having committed larceny.114

As 1844 dawned, it was commonly believed that the Nauvoo city court always set the Church members free and convicted Gentiles brought before it. This notion, while false, increased the hatred against the Saints. Non-Mormon authors told wild stories about the Danite band’s operations and claimed that night after night the band rode among the residents of Hancock County. Writing three decades after the fact, the writers claimed the Mormon riders resembled the South’s “Ku Klux Klan [which developed after Nauvoo was abandoned], clothed for the occasion in the disguise of white gown and wearing red girdles. Their faces were covered with masks to conceal their identity.” Bill Hickman, accused of being their
leader, rode, it was said, "a fast and blooded stallion" and was seldom seen. Colonel J. M. Reid stated that "a county man surrounded by Mormon neighbors had a large lot of wood hauled and corded up; the Danites coveted it and came with wagons to haul it off. He [the non-Mormon] shot one of them and fled; they took the wood nevertheless, and he never dared to return as they threatened his life. This was just what they wanted; they then appropriated his house, goods and possessions, and kept them till they were driven from the country."116

John Bowes reported that both Michael Yeoman, a Mormon, and John Smith, a non-Mormon, had lost an ox. While searching for the oxen, they found two Mormons skinning the dead animals, while Sherwood, another Church member, waited on the river with a boat to carry the beef away.117

In January two Church members, a father and a son, were kidnapped and taken to Missouri and imprisoned.118 Enraged at such lawlessness, the Saints demanded their extradition, but nothing was done. A January 21, 1844, article in the Warsaw Message stated that one-half of the adult population of Nauvoo were either knaves or robbers and thus deserved punishment.119 The Warsaw Signal editorialized that if the Mormons wanted to live in peace, they "must cease from screening each other from the just operations of the law—cease from sham trials . . . cease from releasing prisoners in custody of state officers . . . cease from insulting the laws."120 Most of these accusations had their roots in the numerous attempts on the part of Missouri officials to capture Joseph Smith and take him back to that state to stand trial. The Prophet knew that if he set foot on Missouri soil he was a dead man, so he resisted arrest by hiding out or by having friendly judges declare the papers null and void on technicalities. Thus, in the public's eyes, he was viewed as circumventing the law.

Again, in April the Warsaw Signal warned the public, "There is a species of counterfeit, extensively circulated in this community called Nauvoo Bogus. They are half dollars dated 1828. They are pretty good imitations of the genuine coin." These coins, the reporter asserted, were manufactured in "the city of the saints."121

Just prior to the Prophet's martyrdom, a young Church member named Theron Terrell had been arrested for having in his possession a counterfeit Spanish half dollar, which had been given to him by George Reeder, a Latter-day Saint, with whom he had been living.122 This coin indicates that some sort of counterfeiting was being done in Nauvoo, but not necessarily by one of the Saints.
On March 29, 1844, the Nauvoo store of Rollison and Finch was burglarized. A man named Caesam was captured with some of the stolen goods in his possession and was taken into the woods and severely beaten.\textsuperscript{123} Although this incident created considerable excitement in the city, Caesam's assailant was never apprehended. The \textit{Warsaw Signal} charged that no one had been tried for any crime in Nauvoo for a long time\textsuperscript{124} when in fact Jacob Shoemaker was at that time convicted of breaking George Morris's ax, using abusive language, and threatening to whip him.\textsuperscript{125}

**The Martyrdom and Its Aftermath**

As the spring turned to summer, Nauvoo citizens were accused of hiding known criminals such as Joseph Jackson and Jeremiah Smith, while the Prophet himself was more and more being seen as a man who could circumvent the law and escape justice. The closing down of the \textit{Nauvoo Expositor} became the catalyst that led to the murder of Joseph and his brother Hyrum by a mob which believed that the normal course of justice would fail to convict the Mormon leader. Thus, like so many others before them, they took the law into their own hands and assassinated Joseph and Hyrum. That this action reflected the will of the community is attested to by the fact that the perpetrators were never convicted of their crimes, even though the entire region knew their identity.\textsuperscript{126} In contrast, the Latter-day Saints saw the murder of their two leaders as an example of mob rule, religious persecution, and total disregard for the law.\textsuperscript{127}

With the Prophet dead and the threat of mob violence increasing, the Saints attempted to cast undesirables out of the city. A group of ladies banded together and threatened to tar and feather villains who came into Nauvoo.\textsuperscript{128} The famous "Whistling and Whittling Brigade" continued to function. And through all of this turmoil, the Nauvoo High Council ruled on incidents of misconduct on the part of Church members, including adultery, theft, and apostasy.\textsuperscript{129}

In December 1844, the \textit{Daily National Intelligencer} reported that a party of Mormons led by Lyman Wight had robbed a trading station ninety miles from Prairie du Chien and that four people had been killed. Although this report was untrue, many non-Mormons believed it. That fall two men pretending to be Mormon preachers, stayed with a Latter-day Saint who lived near Pekin on the Illinois River. They told him that Brigham Young wanted gold to finish the temple in Nauvoo. In this way they learned where the old man kept
his money. Later they returned and took it from him, and the Saints were blamed for the deed.\textsuperscript{130}

After assuming leadership of the Church, Senior Apostle Brigham Young publicly exhorted "the brethren to rise up en masse and put down the thieving, bad-houses, swearing disorderly conduct of the boys, gambling, retailing spiritous Liquors, bogus making, and such like abominations which was practiced in our midst by our enemies."\textsuperscript{131} Guards were placed around the Nauvoo Temple, and on the night of April 3, 1845, a trespasser was beaten almost to death, a deed which "created considerable warmth of feelings" among the citizenry. Chief of Police Hosea Stout defended his men, declaring they had only done their duty.\textsuperscript{132}

In an April morning meeting, Apostle John Taylor told several U.S. marshals that if they attempted to serve the writs they had in their possession "it would cost them their lives" because they had murdered two of the best men in the nation and no more would the Saints submit to such outrages.\textsuperscript{133}

In responding to the repeated charge that Nauvoo was a city of sin, iniquity, and crime, the Church leaders and the new mayor of the "City of Joseph," Daniel Spencer, published an explanation of what was transpiring in Hancock County. The mayor argued that a "greater part of the thefts which have been complained of, are not in our opinion, true in fact, but have been trumped up by inimical persons, in order to cover their aggressive doings, with plausibility, and entice honest and unwary citizens to unite with them" against the Latter-day Saints.\textsuperscript{134} Spencer then challenged "the world to substantiate a single instance, where we [the Mormons] have concealed criminals, or screened them from justice; but, on the contrary, always have been, and now are, extremely anxious that they should be ferreted out and brought to justice."\textsuperscript{135} The mayor also declared that it was his "opinion that very many scoundrels, such as thieves, robbers, bogus makers, counterfeiters and murderers, have been induced from reports published in the Warsaw Signal to flock into this county in order to carry on their evil practices, knowing that it would be immediately charged upon the Mormons, and thereby they escape—and although we think that the reports of thefts have been very much exaggerated, yet we know from dear bought experience that such things do exist."\textsuperscript{136} In concluding, the mayor expressed an anxiousness "to ferret out and bring to justice" all evildoers within the limits of the city and announced that the police force had been massively increased to five hundred men in
an effort to rid the city and the country of infamous characters.\textsuperscript{137}

In another public statement Mayor Spencer stated the bee yards had "been robbed, and the hives left at Mormon doors, to palm the theft upon us, when the honey has been found in the houses of our enemies." He went on to declare that innumerable tricks had been played by the enemies of the Church upon good, honest men. Runners had been employed, Spencer said, to steal saddles and bridles from the horses of evil men while they were in Nauvoo so that the Mormons would be blamed for the crimes. In spite of all that was going on, Spencer was certain that the charge of promiscuous stealing was greatly exaggerated, and he argued that Nauvoo had fewer crimes than St. Louis, a western city of comparable size.\textsuperscript{138}

The Murder of John Miller and Henry Leisi

John Miller, a Mennonite preacher, lived in a single-room cabin near West Point, Lee county, Iowa. On May 10, 1845, three men broke into the cabin where Miller, his wife, his daughters, and their husbands—Henry Leisi and Jacob Risser—slept. Mrs. Miller awoke to the sound and sight of the "break-in men" carrying guns and clubs, their faces blackened in disguise, a single lantern held high. She shook her husband, and one of the men clubbed him. Another lashed out at Leisi.

The third stood at Risser's bed, holding his gun on its occupants. Miller leaped from his bed and went for his own gun. He and his attackers fought and Leisi came to his aid. A revolver went off. Shot, savagely cut and beaten, Leisi crumpled to the floor. The three assailants fled, and Miller chased after them, gun in hand. Jacob Risser, out of the bed now, followed close on his father-in-law's heels until he reached the cabin door, where he was shot at and missed by one of the intruders. When he got outside, the three men were gone, leaving Miller in their wake bleeding—dying—from a stab wound in the chest.\textsuperscript{139}

By early the next morning, the sheriff and a doctor reached the cabin and found Miller dead and Leisi critically wounded. Three weeks later Leisi died. The survivors identified William and Stephen Hodges, believed to be Mormons, as the killers—their motive, robbery.

The Hodgeses were also linked to the scene of the crime by three bludgeons and a cap they left behind. The brothers were captured at the home of another brother, Amos Hodges, on May 13, 1845. The third man accused of the crime, Thomas Brown, escaped the officers. Nauvoo's newspapers denied that the Hodgeses were Church members, except for their brother, Stephen, who was not
involved in the crime.\textsuperscript{140} While the Hodgeses awaited trial in an Iowa jail, another brother, Irwin, attempted to raise money to defend his siblings. He tried to induce Brigham Young to send men to break open the jail and allow the prisoners to escape. When Brigham did not take action, Irwin Hodges publicly denounced and threatened Brigham Young. Irwin was later accosted by two men in Nauvoo and killed with his own knife. Allen J. Stout, Hosea's younger brother, was standing guard with John Scott at the home of Brigham Young the night Irwin was murdered. He reported that just before the time for the changing of the guard, he heard the sound of dull blows, followed by screeches as if someone were beating an ox. The two men ran toward the place and met Irwin, staggering, wounded in the back with a knife. It was so dark that they did not see the assailant, who was never apprehended. However, Brigham Young was accused of having ordered Irwin's death. Most of Hancock County's non-Mormon populace eagerly believed the accusations.\textsuperscript{141}

After a trial before Judge Charles Mason, the Hodges brothers were sentenced to death by hanging and were executed on July 15, 1845.\textsuperscript{142} The Hodges brothers maintained their innocence to the last but were hanged anyway. James Monroe, a Nauvoo schoolteacher, recorded in his diary, "I have heard today that two men have been murdered by our people a short distance from here and whether it is the fact or not it will be so reported and we shall have to suffer for it."\textsuperscript{143} Hosea Stout reported that "our enemies" are endeavoring "to lay this thing to the Mormons and are raising a hue & cry that we [Nauvoo citizens] were harboring the murderers."\textsuperscript{144}

\textbf{Continued Confrontations}

Evidence of lawbreaking continued. In June, William Smith demanded the release of a prisoner being held in Nauvoo, and when his request was refused, he attacked the officer, Elbridge Tufts.\textsuperscript{145} Then, in the fall of 1845, mobs burned Mormon homes in Lima, and Brigham Young sent four hundred teams to move the Saints from that area into Nauvoo.

On Tuesday, June 24, 1845, an altercation occurred between Dr. Samuel Marshall, the Hancock County clerk, and General Deming, the sheriff of the county. Marshall was a very exact and punctual man in his affairs, and he expected others to be equally so. The sheriff was not so punctual nor exact, a problem which apparently irritated Marshall. A scuffle ensued in the midst of which
Deming drew a pistol and shot his antagonist. Marshall was strongly anti-Mormon in his feelings and principles, and some believed that Deming, who was friendly to the Church, perhaps killed him because he was ordered to do so by the Mormons. Deming was indicted for the murder but never brought to trial since he contracted congestive fever and died September 10, 1845. Another version of this shooting of Marshall has it that Deming confronted a mob bent on doing harm to the Saints, and he shot and killed the mob’s leader, who was none other than the doctor.146

Regardless of what happened, the death of Deming necessitated a replacement, and J. B. Backenstos emerged as the sheriff. While Backenstos was investigating the expulsion of the Saints from Morley-town, Frank Worrell and a group of men pursued the sheriff, intending to kill him because of the strong stand he had taken in defense of the Saints. Instead, Worrell was fatally killed by the deputized Porter Rockwell, who thereby increased the hatred on the part of Hancock County’s citizenry against the Mormons.147 In his history of Hancock County, Thomas Gregg told a different story of Worrell’s death. He says that Worrell, “in company with eight other men . . . was passing on the road from Carthage to Warsaw, with the view of ascertaining the facts” regarding “disturbances at Green Plains. Three of these men, Worrell and two others, were on horseback; the others were in a buggy and a two-horse wagon,” which also contained the arms of the company. “As they came in sight of the road leading toward Nauvoo, and which they would cross at right angles, they discovered a man riding up that road. Not knowing him, and seeing he was coming from the direction of the burning, they hurried on to intercept him at the crossing, hoping to gain information. He then drove more rapidly, apparently to cross before they [the group] could come up. They hurried on, the three horsemen in the lead. As they neared the brow of a ravine . . . he was seen standing near his buggy, and at the same moment a shot fired” from nearby struck him. Neither “he [Worrell] nor his associates had made any demonstration of violence; but now seeing or believing it to be Backenstos and his posse, [the survivor] immediately wheeled their horses and rode toward the wagon and buggy which were approaching. Mr. Worrell soon fell from his horse, was picked up, placed in the wagon and driven to Warsaw; but died on the way.”148

With Church members being attacked in outlying settlements, security in Nauvoo increased. Guards were stationed near the Mansion
House, and many of the males were told that at the “tolling of the Temple Bell every man know it as an alarm & repair forthwith armed & equiped to the parade ground.” A group of Saints had to be sent out to rescue the wife of the late Sheriff Deming because a mob had gathered and attempted to burn her home. While on this rescue excursion, Chief of Police Hosea Stout instructed his men that they were authorized to take enough property to sustain life, in spite of the fact that Sheriff Backenstos had told them not to “meddle with anyone’s property.”

On September 18, 1845, mail carrier Hiram Kimball and his guard “were assaulted in the most inhuman manner” and their lives threatened. Only after submitting to a “sound whipping” were they permitted to return to Nauvoo. Four days later, Mormon Cyrus Daniels was ambushed and shot through the right arm just above the elbow. Again in October, Phineas Wilcox came to Nauvoo to have some grain ground into flour. On his return home, he was shot and killed. It was said that a mob killed him because they believed him to be a Mormon spy. On October 8, 1845, another man, named Debanair, was found buried in the bottom of a ditch and the Mormons were again blamed for his murder.

On July 4, 1845, a Colonel Davenport, at home alone in Rock Island, Illinois, was attacked in broad daylight. While all the family except the old colonel were absent at a celebration, three men entered his home. One of them discharged a pistol at him, “the ball entering his thigh. He was then dragged through a hall, and up the stairs, to a closet containing his safe, which they compelled him to open. After obtaining the contents, and the money from his bureau drawers, they left him, still tied upon his bed, in which condition he was afterward found by persons passing by. Surgical aid was procured, and he was revived sufficiently to describe the assassins and the circumstances, but he died about ten o’clock that night.” The villains belonged to a gang which was said to be head-quartered in Nauvoo.

Even as burnings, murders, beatings, and other atrocities were taking place in Hancock County, the Nauvoo High Council sat as a court hearing cases for stealing, striking a brother with a sword, watermelon stealing, and brickbatting a house—all of which seem rather insignificant when compared with what was going on in the surrounding countryside. Still, the fact that such cases were being tried is evidence that the council was not ignoring wrong-doing.

However, matters did not improve when six Mormons were accused of stealing corn from a Mr. B. Clark of Carthage and when
Charles Crisman, a Church member, was arrested for stealing three wagon loads of iron from the railroad that ran to Jacksonville. When the sheriff of Rock County, Illinois, arrested a man named Riding and attempted to take him back to the county seat on the boat Sara Ann, it was reported that a body of Mormons armed with pistols and stones attacked the boat and rescued the prisoner. A hundred of the governor's troops were required to quell the ensuing riot.

Thomas Bullock reported that on September 19, 1845, Emma Smith told him that a man was shot at the Temple the previous night through the carelessness of the guard.

Mormon Benjamin Brackenbury was arrested in a bar room and charged with perjury by virtue of a writ issued in Augusta, situated in the southeastern part of Hancock County. The real reason for his arrest, however, was to enable his enemies to destroy his testimony in relation to the trial of the murderers of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. At one point, the constable's attention was drawn away from the defendant by the clamor of the crowd. While the sheriff was distracted, Oliver Huntington slipped Brackenbury into the back room and out the back door, and the two men escaped.

As the Saints prepared to leave Nauvoo and move west, gentile spies entered the city. Hosea Stout reports that when he came to the Temple on the night of January 9, 1846, "a considerable number of the guard were assembled and among them was William Hibbard son of the old man Hibbard. He was evidently come as a spy. When I saw him," Stout reported, "I told Scott that we must 'bounce a stone off of his head.' to which he agreed we prepared accordingly & I got an opportunity & hit him on the back of his head which came very near taking his life. But few knew any thing about what was the matter he left the ground out of his senses when he came to himself he could not tell what had happened to him &c." On the evening of January 11, 1846, a number of "scoundrels" disguised as government troops entered Nauvoo and went to the house of Andrew Calton. They roused him from his bed, charged him with horse stealing, and took him to Carthage. This action led Hosea Stout to instruct his police force to shoot the next set of armed men who came into Nauvoo.

The grand jury of the United States district court of Springfield, Illinois, in January 1846, issued twelve indictments against prominent Church leaders for counterfeiting United States coin. This action was generally thought to be a ploy on the part of the government to make certain that the Saints would keep their promise to
leave Nauvoo in the spring. Church leaders issued a circular in which they denied the charge of counterfeiting. They reiterated that they expected the migration to begin early in March.\textsuperscript{165} They then went into hiding and refused to give themselves up for trial.

On February 9, 1846, Thomas Bullock recorded in his diary that the governor’s troops came into the city in search of thieves. At 3 p.m., the Temple caught fire, and the troops attempted to force their passage into that structure but were prevented by the guards from doing so.\textsuperscript{166} Some difficulties continued to persist, and additional crimes were committed as mobs invaded Nauvoo. Not until the Church and most of its members had left the city or had put their religion in abeyance did peace come to that area.

Even as late as 1849, with the Saints safely residing in the Great Basin, they were still an interesting topic of discussion in areas surrounding Nauvoo. For example, on March 3, 1849, William Arrowsmith called on John Bowes and told him that while he was not a Mormon he was married to the sister of Apostle John Taylor. Arrowsmith also stated that the Mormons had persuaded his wife to leave him and that they had robbed him of three hundred dollars’ worth of property. He then told Bowes that Joseph Smith was a drunken man and that he, William Arrowsmith, had slept at his mother-in-law’s when Joseph Smith slept with Orson Hyde’s wife under the same roof.\textsuperscript{167}

**Conclusion**

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the available data about crime and punishment in and around Nauvoo 1839–46. Besides the fact that legal records are scanty, interpreting these materials is extremely problematic. Many of the alleged crimes were merely unsubstantiated rumors that never came to trial, let alone conviction; reports were indelibly colored by the strong biases and deep emotions involved in even the slightest alleged irregularity; and it is often impossible to determine where the alleged crimes took place and whether the purported criminals were actually Mormons or not.

Within the city of Nauvoo, the picture appears to be one of relative calm and lawfulness. Although municipal court records are lacking, diligent searching of other documents for the seven years from 1839 to 1846 has discovered only a few more than the sixty-four “crimes” discussed in this article. Over half of those “crimes” were cases brought before the Nauvoo High Council, and most of
them involved relatively minor offenses: swearing, drinking, a hymnbook copyright violation, taking fence rails, lying, real estate deceptions, slander, playing the violin, dancing, widow abuse, delinquency of debt, misappropriation of an axe, striking with a sword, "brickbatting" a house, and watermelon stealing, in addition to a few cases involving adultery and the unauthorized teaching of polygamy. In the context of the rugged frontier environment that surrounded Nauvoo, most of these cases are insignificant misdemeanors. Little wonder that the ecclesiastical High Council acquitted or mediated a reconciliation between the parties in as many cases as it could.

Most of the serious criminal activity in this period occurred outside the city of Nauvoo, and often the evidence is lacking to implicate Mormons in these events. Camel and Rocky Mountain were non-Mormon ruffians. Mormons were implicated in the Tully theft in Montrose only on suspicion. The 1839 burglars in Montrose were never detected. In the 1842 Boggs incident in Missouri, no evidence was ever presented against the alleged assailant. The Demter murder and the shots at Green Plains likewise remained lacking in proof. Alleged irregularities in the post office of Nauvoo never resulted in a conviction either. In 1843, the alleged stealing of oxen in Fountain Green was never proved, and the reoccurring allegations of counterfeiting were never substantiated. The 1844 robbery at Prairie du Chien was erroneously attributed to the Saints, and the robbery at Pekin did not involve Mormons. Matters became tense in 1845, resulting in a trespasser's being beaten in Nauvoo, a negligent homicide occurring in guarding the Nauvoo Temple, and an officer was attacked in Nauvoo, but the more violent crimes took place in the outlying surrounding regions. The Hodgeses' murders in West Point, Iowa, were perpetrated by non-Mormons. The attack of the postman, the shooting of the alleged Mormon spy, the shooting of Marshall by Deming, the Debonair incident, the assault on Davenport, the corn theft, the iron theft, and apparently Carlton's horse thievery all took place outside of Nauvoo. As often as not, non-Mormons were instigators.

The documentary history thus allows for several conclusions about Nauvoo's alleged crime "problem":

1. Some Mormons committed crimes—of varying degrees of seriousness.

2. LDS leaders publicly and privately spoke out strongly and repeatedly against criminal activity.
3. The Nauvoo High Council tried many cases and had a respectably high conviction rate but tried to reconcile the parties or obtain a repentant confession whenever possible.

4. Non-Mormons occasionally used Nauvoo as a base from which to commit crimes in Nauvoo and in other areas.

5. Often perpetrators tried to make it appear that they were LDS or that they were acting for the LDS church.

6. Many neighboring nonmembers, unable to discriminate between good and bad Saints or to know if lawbreakers from Nauvoo were in fact Mormons, came to believe Nauvoo was a hotbed of criminal activity.

7. LDS control of Nauvoo courts gave the justice dispensed there a pro-Mormon edge.

8. The destruction of the *Expositor* seemed to many to be irrefutable proof that LDS officials encouraged lawbreaking.

9. Some Saints before, during, and after the Nauvoo sojourn believed that under some circumstances the taking of gentile goods was justifiable, thus arousing anger among their neighbors and public reprimand from Church officials.

10. Some Saints practiced plural marriage while at the same time acknowledging it only in private and denying it in public, and enough "reliable" rumors leaked around to this effect that Mormon neighbors became infuriated.

11. Anti-Mormon crusaders exploited crime cases, with or without strong Mormon ties, to arouse public sentiment against the Saints.

12. To outsiders bothered by why the Saints created the massive Nauvoo Legion, it made sense that the army might be there to protect Saints against state and local officials and hence to defend wrong-doing, especially when indictments and warrants were rejected by Nauvoo partisans.

Very likely the public then as now expected religious communities and followers to be above reproach. When adherents faltered, more attention was paid to their crimes than would be directed
at nonreligious communities or individuals. In such settings, one provable case or two very easily can create a stereotype.

More research, similar to what is provided here about Nauvoo, is needed in order to identify how extensive crime was elsewhere at the time and how it was handled. Nauvoo should be compared with contemporary cities similar in size, location, and stage of development. Until then, available records regarding Nauvoo’s crime and punishment indicate that images of Nauvoo as a crime haven contain elements of truth but are exaggerations.

NOTES

2 Taylor, “Nauvoo Everyone Should Know,” 4. Actually there is no record of a brothel in Nauvoo even though Palaskie Cahoon was accused of operating one. There were bars and some women sold sexual favors.
5 Ford, History of Illinois 2:11.
6 Ford, History of Illinois 2:11.
8 Thomas Gregg, History of Hancock County, Illinois (Chicago: C. C. Chapman, 1880), 318.
9 Ellen Olivia Carlson, “The Latter-day Saints as a Factor in Illinois History” (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1925), 77.
12 Truman G. Madsen, Joseph Smith the Prophet (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, 1989), 112.
Crime and Punishment

21 Bodenhamer, "Law and Disorder on the Early Frontier," 331–33. Moral crimes are defined by Bodenhamer as "gambling, retailing liquor, fornication, adultery, betting, public indecency, keeping bawdy houses, enticing a female into prostitution" (331n).
22 Moral crimes also represented the highest number of prosecutions in Marion County, Indiana.
25 Articles of Faith 12.
33 CHC 2:50–51.
34 CHC 2:51; see also Gregg, History of Hancock County, 272–73.
35 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 272–73.
37 Alton Commercial Gazette, June 18, 1839; and Sangamo Journal, June 21, 1839.
40 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 326; and George W. Smith, History of Illinois and Her People (Chicago: American History Society, 1921), 274.
41 David E. Miller, Westward Migration of the Mormons with Special Emphasis on the History of Nauvoo, report submitted to the National Park Service (1963), 167.
42 Quoted in George R. Gayler, "Economic and Political Study of the Mormons in Western Illinois" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1955), 132; Gayler also published

43 Diary of William Huntington, 17, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.


49 Narrative of Franklin D. Richards, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

50 Wilford Woodruff’s *Journal*, June 2, 1839, 1:338.

51 *Times and Seasons* 1 (April, 1840): 92.

52 *Times and Seasons* 1 (March 15, 1841): 358.

53 *Wasp*, October 1, 1842.


55 *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 5, 1843.

56 *Times and Seasons* 1 (March 1, 1841): 342.

57 *Times and Seasons* 2 (April 1, 1841): 368.


59 *Times and Seasons* 2 (July 1, 1841): 464.

60 *Times and Seasons* 5 (November 1, 1844): 696.

61 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 12, 1840, 25; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.

62 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, April 19, 1840, 26.

63 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, May 2, 1840, 27.

64 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, June 20, 1840, 9–10.

65 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, August 8, 1840, 13.

66 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, August 17, 1840, 14–16.

67 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, October 17 and 24, 1840, 21–22.

68 *Times and Seasons* 1 (October 1840): 185.

69 *Times and Seasons* 2 (November 1, 1840): 204.

70 *Times and Seasons* 2 (November 15, 1840): 221–22.

71 *Hawkeye and Iowa Patriot*, January 21, 1841.


74 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, March 31, 1841, 26–27.

75 *Wasp*, March 29, 1843; see also Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 282.

76 *Daily Missouri Republican*, September 2, 1841.

77 CHC 2:114.

78 Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 278, 281.
Crime and Punishment

79 Times and Seasons 3 (December 1, 1841): 615; see also Gregg, History of Hancock County, 178.
80 Warsaw Signal, December 29, 1841.
81 Joel Hills Johnson, Reminiscences and Journals, 1835–1882, 1:35–37, LDS Church Archives. In another account of this incident appearing in the Macedonia Branch Minute Book, the Monmouth Jail is spelled as Monmont, but the other details are the same as reported by Johnson.
82 Bruce A. Van Orden, “Items of Instruction: Sections 130 and 131,” in Hearken, O Ye People: Discourses on the Doctrine and Covenants, ed. Bruce R. McConkie and others (Sandy, Utah: Randall, 1984), 234.
83 Ford, History of Illinois 2:168–70.
84 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, March 25, 1842, 41.
85 Wasp, April 16, 1842.
86 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, April 6, 1841, 27–28, and May 9, 1842, 44.
88 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, May 20, 1842, 1–2.
89 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, May 28, 1842, 4.
90 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, June 10, 1842, 5.
91 Times and Seasons 3 (July 1, 1842): 831–32.
92 Illinois Republican, July 9, 1842.
93 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 340.
94 Quincy Whig, September 10, 1842, 2.
95 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, September 3 and 4, 1842, 8–9.
98 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, October 22, 1842, 13.
99 HC 5:184.
101 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 281.
102 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 318.
104 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 3, February 11, 1843, 6; March 9, 1843, 7.
105 Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 3, January 17, 1843, 22–23.
Nauvoo Neighbor, September 27, 1843.

HC 5:305.

Wasp, March 29, 1843.

HC 5:34.

Times and Seasons 4 (May 1, 1843): 184; and Wasp, April 19, 1843.

HC 5:332–33.

Wasp, March 29, 1843.

Wasp, March 29, 1843.

J. M. Reid, Sketches and Anecdotes of the Old Settlers and New Comers, the Mormon Bandits and Dandie Band (Keokuk, Ill.: R. B. Ogden, 1876), 34.

Reid, Sketches and Anecdotes, 35.


Illinois Statesman, January 15, 1844.

Warsaw Message, January 31, 1844.

Warsaw Signal, February 28, 1844.

Warsaw Signal, April 25, 1844.

Warsaw Signal, June 5, 1844.

Warsaw Signal, April 10, 1844.

Warsaw Signal, April 10, 1844.


See letter of General W. Douglas Knox to Willard Richards, July 25, 1844; copy in possession of author.

Thurmon Dean Moody, “Nauvoo’s Whistling and Whittling Brigade,” BYU Studies 15 (Fall 1975): 480–90; and Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 4, September 21, 1844, 1; November 30, 1844, 1–6.

Bonney, Banditti of the Prairies, 15.


Diary of Hosea Stout, April 3, 1845, 1:32.

Diary of Hosea Stout, April 13, 1845, 1:34.

Times and Seasons 6 (January 15, 1845): 774.

Times and Seasons 6 (January 15, 1845): 774.

Times and Seasons 6 (January 15, 1845): 774.

Times and Seasons 6 (January 15, 1845): 774–75.


Susan Easton Black, comp., Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1830–1848, 50 vols. (Religious Studies Center, Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1989), 23:346, identifies Stephen Hodges as a Church member as early as the Church’s sojourn in Missouri.
141 Stout, Reminiscence, 16, 24.
143 James M. Monroe Diary, 123.
144 Diary of Hosea Stout, May 15, 1845, 1:43–44.
145 Diary of Hosea Stout, 1:49, n. 10.
146 HC 7:428, 439; Warsaw Signal, June 25 and July 2, 1845; and Nauvoo Neighbor, July 9, 1845.
147 HC 7:439; and Diary of Hosea Stout, September 16, 1845, 1:64.
148 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 340–41.
149 Diary of Hosea Stout, September 17, 1845, 1:66.
150 Diary of Hosea Stout, September 19, 1845, 1:66.
151 Diary of Hosea Stout, September 19, 1845, 1:69.
152 Diary of Hosea Stout, September 22, 1845, 1:71.
153 Ford, History of Illinois, 299.
154 Diary of Hosea Stout, October 8, 1845, 1:81.
155 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 338.
156 High Council Minutes, Book 5, January 18, 1845, 1; August 23, 1845, 15.
157 Warsaw Signal, October 22, 1845; and Missouri Reporter, June 23, 1845.
158 Missouri Reporter, October 31, 1845.
160 Diary of Hosea Stout, March 13, 1845, 1:26, n. 53.
161 Diary of Hosea Stout, January 9, 1846, 1:103.
162 Diary of Hosea Stout, January 11, 1846, 1:104–5, n. 60.
164 Niles’ National Register, January 3, 1846.
165 Missouri Reporter, February 5, 1846.
166 Bullock, “Journal,” 47–49 (February 9, 1846).
167 Bowes, Mormonism Exposed, 63.
A 1936 (ca.) view of Main Street in Warsaw, Illinois (Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress, courtesy of Library of Congress). The *Warsaw Signal* office was located in the large building on the right. In this newspaper, editor Thomas Sharp reported several crimes supposedly perpetrated by Mormons and eventually called for the expulsion of the Mormons.
From Assassination to Expulsion: Two Years of Distrust, Hostility, and Violence

Marshall Hamilton

The murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith on June 27, 1844, marked the beginning of the end of the presence of the Latter-day Saints in Illinois. Conflict with their neighbors had begun three years before, but even after the murders of the Church leaders, it was by no means a foregone conclusion on all sides that the Smiths’ deaths would mean the departure of their followers. As one scholar puts it, “One should avoid viewing the final expulsion of the Mormons from Hancock County as the inexorable effect of the killings,” although in some minds no other alternative ever became acceptable.

This article deals with the movements and countermovements undertaken by the Latter-day Saints and by their neighbors from the time of the Smiths’ assassination until the day, a little over two years later, when the last party of Church members left Nauvoo, Illinois. Those movements are chronicled in the media and public records of the day—especially in the pro-Mormon newspapers published at Nauvoo and in the anti-Mormon press at Warsaw, Illinois, twelve miles downriver from Nauvoo. One wonders whether the eventual outcome of the conflict between the Latter-day Saints and their neighbors might have been different if the Saints had been more successful at what we now call external communications. Although the Saints might have left Nauvoo eventually of their own choice, could the expulsion of the Church as a body have been avoided? Seeking answers to these questions suggests lessons that members of modern, belief-driven organizations might learn from the experiences of Nauvoo Mormons about dealing with outsiders or opponents.

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Within days after the assassinations of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, both the Mormons and the anti-Mormons had published extra newspaper issues describing the killings and offering opinions on what the future held. In Warsaw, two days after the assassinations, Thomas Sharp's *War saw Signal* issued an extra that included the following editorial: "Our opinion is, that either the old citizens or the Mormons must leave. The county cannot be quieted, until the expulsion of one or the other is effected."3 One day later, a crew at John Taylor's *Nauvoo Neighbor* got out an extra edition, which included the following advice attributed to Willard Richards: "The people of the county are greatly excited and fear the Mormons will come out and take vengeance—I have pledged my word the Mormons will stay at home as soon as they can be informed, and no violence will be on their part, and say to my brethren in Nauvoo, in the name of the Lord—be still—be patient."4

In the days just after the Smiths' deaths, non-Mormons in Hancock County expected a "general attack all over the country" in retaliation for the killings.5 Thomas Ford, the governor of Illinois, had been in Nauvoo at the time of the attack on the jail. Rumors flew that he was besieged in a house in Nauvoo, so a force of over two hundred men set out by steamboat from Quincy to Nauvoo to rescue him. However, Governor Ford, while initially fearful himself—especially since the Mormons had been represented to him as a "lawless, infatuated, and fanatical people, not governed by the ordinary motives which influence the rest of mankind"—soon tried to maintain order. He countermanded the march to Hancock of at least two overly eager state militia units in the neighborhood, and he tried to keep informed about events in Hancock from a listening post in Quincy.6

In Nauvoo the Saints' initial reaction was grief. In the extra published three days after the assassinations, along with the plea from Willard Richards, the editorial staff included a reassurance to the governor that intentions were peaceful: "We assure the governor, if he can manage human butchers, he has nothing to fear from armless, timid, and law abiding Latter day Saints."7 The following day the Nauvoo City Council met and resolved to discourage "private revenge" by Nauvoo residents.8 Later, in a Sunday church meeting held a week and a half after the killings, W. W. Phelps read with approval to the congregation an angry letter written by Governor Ford to a group of avowed anti-Mormons.9 Church leaders seemed intent on controlling the anger of individual members
and on ensuring that the Saints' reaction would not be violent. They tried to assure Church members that state power would protect their interests.

Among the anti-Mormons, however, no effort to control anger or thwart violence was exerted. Calls for expulsion of the Church had been heard before. The Anti-Mormon Party, a political group, had been running candidates for public office since 1841. When Nauvoo's population grew to the point that the Saints controlled local elections, the Anti-Mormons had begun to call for their expulsion. One of the leaders of the Anti-Mormons was Thomas Sharp, the publisher and editor of the Warsaw Signal.

The Signal missed its usual publication date the day before the killings, most likely because its editor was busy with the intrigues at Carthage. But a special issue was published on June 29. It includes a useful compilation of documents issued in the days leading up to the assassinations—letters and agreements between Governor Ford and Church leaders. Sharp also provided a chronology of the events of the week. After giving his editorial opinion that the Saints must leave, he recorded that the Nauvoo Legion's small arms and cannon had been taken from them, thereby pointing out to his readers the vulnerability of Nauvoo.

A public meeting, whose attendees called themselves the "Warsaw Committee of Safety," was called in Warsaw. Sharp was designated to draft a letter to Governor Ford urging the Mormons' expulsion. The letter, which was hand-carried to Ford in Quincy, reviewed with approval the Mormons' previous expulsion from Missouri and says that expulsion from Illinois would be not only a "measure of wise expediency but one of absolute necessity." The Saints in Nauvoo were charged with murder, arson, and theft against non-Mormon neighbors; with abusing the forms of justice in order to free Mormon criminals; with building an unwarranted military force that had no legitimate defensive purpose; and with using Mormon votes to bargain shamelessly for favors from corrupt politicians. These four themes were elaborated by Anti-Mormons over the next two years.

Pervasive accusations against the Latter-day Saints of criminal behavior, particularly theft, characterize the Anti-Mormon press throughout the Illinois period of Church history. Such accusations were a major tool of the Anti-Mormons to justify the repression or expulsion of the Church. In fact, the charges of theft were used explicitly to persuade the public who were at a distance from Hancock
County that expulsion was merely the last resort of a long-suffering group of victims of Mormon thievery.  

The accusations of theft suggest a fertile area for further research into the Nauvoo era—the Church generally either denied the accusations or minimized the presence of thieves among the Saints, while anti-Mormons continue to accept the accusations as true. During the period following the assassinations of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, those accusations were redoubled. The *Warsaw Signal* included articles headed “Mormon Thieves” in eight of the fourteen issues published from September 18, 1844, until the end of the year. Beginning on Christmas Day 1844 and running for several weeks into 1845, Sharp included a special column heading with the words “Mormon Stealings” rendered in ornate block lettering, followed by a quotation from the “Mormon Book of Doctrine and Covenants,” which purported to justify thefts from non-Mormons.

Accusations of theft by the Mormons were one reason Governor Ford left Carthage for Nauvoo on the day the Prophet and his brother were murdered. The purported thefts were also used to justify a proposed encampment of independent companies of militia near Warsaw to be held on October 26, 1844. This encampment was quickly dubbed a “wolf hunt” by its organizers; it was understood by Mormons and non-Mormons alike that the “wolves” to be sought were alleged Mormon thieves.

Church members were, of course, extremely worried about the “wolf hunt.” For his part, Governor Ford was convinced the only purpose of the proposed encampment was to expel or to murder Mormons. The governor called out the state militia to assist him in suppressing the encampment. The militia then marched with a force under General Hardin to Hancock County. Ford’s posse proved to be too much for the anti-Mormons. Although Ford could round up a force of only about two hundred men, the anti-Mormons thought better of their plans and cancelled the “wolf hunt.”

The validity of the accusations of theft by Church members is open to some doubt, but there is no question that the period from the death of Joseph and Hyrum to the departure of the Latter-day Saints was a time of considerable lawlessness in the environs of Hancock County. Five Church members in an outlying community were arrested for larceny in February 1845, and two men were murdered in Lee County, Iowa, in May 1845. In June the father of the two suspects in the Iowa murders was killed in Nauvoo, and
on July 4 another murder took place on an island in the Mississippi. Later, a man was accidentally shot and killed near the Temple, apparently through careless gunfire in the city itself.

With the increase in lawlessness, the year 1845 was a difficult one for Hancock County sheriffs. In June, Minor Deming, a Church member who was elected to the office in August 1844 just after the Martyrdom, shot and killed Samuel Marshall, an Anti-Mormon county court clerk. Deming claimed self-defense, but he was indicted for murder, and he resigned the office. Before he could come to trial, Deming died of fever.

Deming's replacement as sheriff, Jacob Backenstos, was also involved in a killing. Only weeks after taking office, Backenstos, a non-Mormon who was known as a friend of the Saints, was present at the killing of Frank Worrell, who had commanded the guard on duty at Carthage Jail when Joseph and Hyrum were murdered. Backenstos was among those indicted for this murder but was acquitted in a trial held at Peoria. Curiously, even while under indictment, Backenstos continued to act as sheriff. His alleged part in the killing of Worrell earned Backenstos the anti-Mormons' hatred, which continued even after he left the county to serve in the Mexican War.

The only topic sure to stir up more heated discussion than lawlessness in Hancock County was local politics. As previously mentioned, non-Mormons were so frustrated with the growing number of Mormon voters that they formed a political party to try to elect non-Mormon county officers. One problem the "old citizens" faced was alien franchise, allowed by the 1818 Illinois Constitution, section 27. The Latter-day Saints were quite successful in encouraging British converts to immigrate to Nauvoo, and the law allowed new residents to vote immediately upon arrival. One scholar, in analyzing the political status of Nauvoo, notes that "the exercise of their franchise brought the Mormons many enemies but few friends."

The first local election after the Martyrdom was scheduled for just forty days after the assassination. Initially, the Saints planned not to participate in the election, but eventually a political meeting was held in Nauvoo, and in the election all the Mormon-backed candidates won. As the Signal glumly put it, "Though [the winning candidates] are not all Mormons in name [all] are yet so in heart. One of the representatives, Babbit, is a Mormon. The Coroner is a Mormon, but has not the courage to say so, and as for the ballance [sic] we
would sooner trust Mormons than either of them.”

Despite the presence of Representative Almon Babbitt in the 1844–45 session of the Illinois State Legislature, the House and Senate took up the repeal of the Nauvoo City Charter. The Anti-Mormons believed that the charter repeal would help to solve two problems: (1) Mormon use of the Nauvoo city court system to defeat writs and warrants issued by courts outside of Nauvoo and (2) the existence of the Nauvoo Legion, a militia force reported to number about three thousand men.

The bill for repeal of the Nauvoo Charter was introduced in early December 1844 by Senator John Henry. As debate proceeded on the repeal motion, Hancock Sheriff Deming committed a serious blunder. One of the senators, Jacob Cunningham Davis, was among those indicted for the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. At the time of the indictment, the defendants and prosecution had made an agreement that no attempt would be made to arrest the defendants prior to the May 1845 term of the circuit court. Notwithstanding that agreement, arrest warrants were issued in November for all nine defendants. Sheriff Deming, acting on one of the warrants, went to Springfield and tried to arrest Davis on the floor of the State Senate. Deming’s action, which violated Davis’s legislative immunity, infuriated the state assembly and undoubtedly hurt the prospects for retaining the Nauvoo Charter in force. The charter was in fact repealed on January 29, 1845.

The next local election, in August 1845, also saw the Mormon vote carry every office. The Anti-Mormons made little effort to affect the result, and the Nauvoo Neighbor commented, “The people knew how to act, and acted.”

By the election of August 1846, the prospect that there would be any Mormon votes at all in Hancock County prompted a near outbreak of civil war. In early June, a meeting of Anti-Mormons was held in Carthage calling for the remaining Church members to leave Nauvoo. By that time, thousands of Saints were on the march in Iowa, and one observer found Nauvoo “desolate, houses empty, and inhabitants gone. Prairies deserted of cattle & people.” The Anti-Mormons sent a delegation to Nauvoo, and many of the remaining Saints fled in the face of these threats.

By this time, a new group of people was involved in Nauvoo civic affairs: the “new citizens.” These non-Mormons bought property
from the exiled Saints and were living in Nauvoo. The "old citizens" of the Anti-Mormon camp reportedly whipped some new citizens who refused to join in driving the remaining Latter-day Saints out of town. The Anti-Mormons gathered nearly six hundred men in an encampment about six miles from Nauvoo. Sheriff Backenstos came to Nauvoo to organize the residents for a defense of the city. The Anti-Mormons, not anticipating resistance, lost their taste for attack, and the encampment, with its threat of violence and civil war, dissolved.

Still, the Anti-Mormons did not want any of the Saints to vote in the August election, and they continued to harass those remaining. In July a few Church members were whipped by a group of thirty men for being troublemakers. Very few Mormons were left to vote in the election, and the outcome was much more to the Anti-Mormons' liking.

It seems clear, however, that despite the non-Mormons' resentment of what they considered to be crime perpetrated by Church members and despite frustration at the inability to win elective office, some catalyst was required—some call to action—to cause the actual expulsion of the Saints. That call was provided by Thomas Sharp through his newspaper, the *Warsaw Signal*.

Sharp had provided a similar call to action before. He is perhaps best known among Latter-day Saints for his stirring call to arms after the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* in June 1844. In the immediate aftermath of the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum, Sharp continued his extremist rhetoric, as evidenced by the call for the expulsion of the Saints and his role as spokesman for the Warsaw Committee of Safety.

During the summer of 1844, it had become increasingly evident that Sharp would himself be indicted for the murder of the Smiths—not because evidence placed him at Carthage Jail, but because he had incited others, in his newspaper and especially in his speeches, to go there. As that prospect loomed, Sharp let up on his claim that the killings were completely justified. That claim was based on a theory of "community self-defense," which Sharp elaborated at length in the *Signal*, and on his claim that the execution of the Smiths was actually the fulfillment of the verdict of thousands, superior even to the verdict of a panel of only twelve peers.

Instead of pursuing those claims, Sharp took increased pains to describe the thievery of Church members and the uncertain nature
of the Saints' voting to make the case that the Saints were undesirable neighbors. The level of his vehemence did not change, but the topics of discussion did.\textsuperscript{50}

Although Sharp was the principal catalyst inciting non-Mormons to urge expulsion of the Church, it should be noted that he was not guilty of everything attributed to him by Latter-day Saints then or by some current scholars. For example, the \textit{Nauvoo Neighbor} of November 13, 1844, reprinted a letter that had originally appeared in the \textit{Illinois State Register}, claiming that Sharp had published an anti-Masonic paper in upstate New York, that he had invented the terms \textit{jack-mason} and \textit{jack-Mormon} to describe nonadherents who nevertheless advanced the goals of the organization, and that he was the mouthpiece for a group of Warsaw real-estate speculators. None of these statements about Sharp is true, although they still occasionally find their way into otherwise careful studies.

How did Church leaders react to charges of lawlessness and political chicanery and to Sharp's drumbeat of expulsion? The first order of business for the remaining leaders was to assure succession in the Church to keep the organization alive. Just fifteen days after the Martyrdom, a council was held among Church leaders in Nauvoo—most of the Quorum of Twelve had not yet returned to Nauvoo—to discuss the establishment of a new trustee-in-trust for the Church to replace Joseph Smith.\textsuperscript{51} Such concerns for the very survival of the organization help explain Church leaders' reluctance, mentioned previously, to hold a political meeting that summer.

On August 8, the famous conference on succession was held which finally settled leadership of the Church on the Quorum of the Twelve. The next day, the Twelve met to appoint trustees for the Church.\textsuperscript{52} With those details cleared up, there remained challenges by Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, and James Strang to be dealt with, although time became available to consider how the Church should interact with their neighbors and with civil authorities.

Church leaders decided early on to rely on their own forces, rather than legal authority, to protect the interests of Church members. Reports of the planned "wolf hunt" were received in Nauvoo on Friday, September 13, 1844; on the following Monday, the Church publicly dedicated ground for an arsenal.\textsuperscript{53} When the governor's forces came to Nauvoo seeking volunteers for a posse to visit Warsaw to prevent the "wolf hunt," the Saints declined to participate. At the same time, Church leaders continued to fill vacancies in the organization of the Nauvoo Legion.\textsuperscript{54}
By spring 1845, Church leaders had decided to ignore, as much as possible, the civil court system. Since the repeal of the Nauvoo Charter, there was no police force authorized in Nauvoo. By the April 1845 general conference, the Saints had begun to employ a "whistling and whittling brigade" to unnerve outsiders and discourage non-Mormons from coming to Nauvoo.55

John Taylor, speaking at a Sunday church meeting, announced that the Saints should resist "gentile" [non-Mormon] processes.56 About the same time, the leaders decreed that men for whom writs had been issued should go on missions to avoid service. Church leaders actually wanted to align themselves with the legal government, but they saw the issuance of warrants as an attempt by Anti-Mormons to drive a wedge between the Saints and the state. By not allowing Church leaders to stand trial or be imprisoned, they hoped to avoid the appearance that the state and the Church were on opposite sides of the issue.57 Unfortunately, this policy, intended to promote Church interests, produced the opposite effect—it convinced some uncommitted non-Mormons, including the editor of the State Register in Springfield, that the Church was lawless.58

In May, Church members, except those required to go to court as witnesses or jurors, avoided going to the trial of Joseph Smith's accused assassins. The verdict of innocent, reached after two-and-a-half hours of jury deliberations, was met with a shrug in Nauvoo. John Taylor's Neighbor commented that the Saints would refer the case to God for a righteous judgment.59 Four weeks later, when the trial for Hyrum Smith's murder was dismissed for want of prosecution, the Neighbor ignored the proceedings entirely. As the Saints completed work on their temple, they seemed to ignore earthly institutions; their expected endowment from on high caused them to assume an other-worldly perspective. The last shingles were nailed on the temple roof on August 13, 1845.60

As the year 1845 wore on, the Saints' temporal situation became more and more tenuous. On August 11, with the endorsement of the Nauvoo Neighbor, Jacob Backenstos became county sheriff in a special election. Within a month of his election, the Anti-Mormons met in a schoolhouse near the southern border of the county to discuss problems some had experienced in executing civil judgments against Church members. During the meeting, shots were fired into the school building by persons unknown.61 Although no one was injured, the Anti-Mormons resolved to take revenge on the Saints for the shooting, a move that led to near civil war conditions
MOBBING AGAIN IN HANCOCK!

Friday morning, 10 o'clock.

We are informed that a meeting of a number of the mob, was held on Tuesday evening last, at a school house, near Baker's, in Green Plains precinct. We have not been apprized of the nature of the proceedings of that meeting, or what their deliberations were, farther than we can judge from their subsequent conduct.

A pre-concerted plan, it would seem, had been entered into; several shots were fired, by their own party, through the windows and doors of said school house.

Nothing was known by our people until the next day, when some of the same party commenced firing houses in the Motley Settlement.

We have heard that eleven buildings have been burned by the mob, viz: eight houses and three out-houses.

_Nauvoo Neighbor_, September 12, 1845. Courtesy LDS Church Archives
in Hancock County. A small Latter-day Saint settlement called Morley's Settlement, or Yelrome (from Morley spelled backwards), was nearby at Lima, in Adams County. The day after the shooting incident at the schoolhouse, the anti-Mormons collected en masse at Morley's and burned houses to the ground, apparently after residents were warned to vacate. Estimates of the number of houses burned vary widely. Sharp admits "two or three houses burned."62 Thomas Gregg says that "two Mormon cabins" were burned the first night and that within a week "the whole of Morley-Town was in ashes."63 The Nauvoo Neighbor states eight houses and three outbuildings were destroyed the first day and forty-four buildings within the first three days. The Neighbor also claims that the provocative shots had been a ruse, actually fired by anti-Mormons to provide a pretext for future violence.64

Newly elected Sheriff Backenstos responded by issuing a proclamation reciting the Illinois law against arson and commanding "rioters and other peace-breakers to desist forthwith, disperse, and go to their homes."65 Opponents dismissed the proclamation as "very exaggerated."66 Backenstos called all law-abiding citizens to serve as a posse comitatus, but he was unable to stop the burning. It was at this time that Frank Worrell was shot outside of Warsaw, further elevating the almost fever pitch of emotion in the county.

Anti-Mormons turned their attention briefly from Mormons to those they considered jack-Mormons—non-Mormons who advanced the interests of the Saints. Warsaw postmaster E. A. Bedell was threatened by a group outside his home; he left through a back door and paddled across the river to Iowa in a canoe. In Carthage, the county treasurer and county recorder, who had been elected to office with Mormon support, received warnings to leave town.

The next day, September 16, Sheriff Backenstos rode into Carthage with an armed force to remove his family from their home, as they had also been subjected to threats.67 On September 17, the Warsaw Signal featured a call to arms in the wake of Worrell's killing, including the observation that Worrell had been "one of our best men."68 The call to arms must have been eerily reminiscent of the similar call in an issue of the Signal fifteen months before, when the call to arms inflamed emotion throughout the county and helped lead to the killing of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.69

After Sharp's call to fight, the civil war heated up. On Friday, September 19, Backenstos went to Carthage with an armed force and occupied the courthouse. Many of the reported four hundred armed
men accompanying the sheriff were Latter-day Saints.70 Rumors spread that the Saints had taken four prisoners away to Nauvoo.71 Backenstos led a search through Carthage for weapons, seizing them from anti-Mormons and requiring passes for anyone trying to enter or leave Carthage.72

Naturally, such activity in Hancock County caused consternation throughout the region and the state. On Monday, September 22, a public meeting was held in Quincy at which many of Adams County's leading citizens gathered to search for an end to the hostilities.73 The meeting became known as the Quincy Committee and eventually played a leading role in producing a cease-fire. Governor Ford, in Springfield, worked on assembling a force of militiamen to restore order, and he issued a proclamation warning all other outsiders to stay out of Hancock County.74

The Quincy Committee wrote the Church asking about its intentions. Brigham Young responded with a conciliatory letter, explaining that the Latter-day Saints wished only for peace and that they planned to leave Nauvoo as soon as proper arrangements could be made.75

It took until Sunday, September 28, nine days after Carthage was commandeered by Backenstos's posse, for Ford's army under General Hardin to reach Carthage and dismiss the occupying posse.76 Governor Ford himself and other political leaders, including Congressman Stephen A. Douglas, accompanied the state force.

Although the constitutional forces of law and order were nearby, Brigham Young decided to communicate with the ad hoc Quincy Committee to defuse the situation. The committee asked for a written guarantee the Mormons would leave, which the Apostles provided on October 1, 1845, in a famous letter promising to leave "when grass grows and water runs" the next spring.77 The Quincy Committee wrote back to the Church the next day accepting the Church's offer to leave.78

Although General Hardin accepted the offer on October 3, placating the Anti-Mormons took a little more time. Hardin wrote them on October 6. One of the terms of the agreement was that General Hardin would designate a force to remain in Hancock County through the winter to enforce the peace.79

At regular October general conference sessions, Church leaders apprised the membership of the coming move. At that conference, committees were created to dispose of property left in Nauvoo.80 An uneasy peace settled over the county, with three
MURDER AND ARSON.
EDMUND DURFEED SHOT—TWO HOUSES BURNT.

As may be seen by the affidavits below, it falls to our painful lot, to chronicle two more outrages upon the lives and property of the Latter Day Saints, since they have been using all diligence to secure their crops, build wagons, and leave next Spring.

Mr. Durfee was one of the most industrious, inoffensive and good men that could be found, and, having his house burnt in September last, moved to Nauvoo, and went on Saturday last for a load of grain, was shot dead in cold blood, at midnight, while striving, with others, to save his own property from the flames, by an armed mob.

As to the destruction of the houses and property, and the treatment on that occasion, let the affidavit speak for itself.

We have nearly two thousand five hundred wagons commenced for our Pacific journey next Spring, but such outrages certainly are not calculated to aid us in getting ready. We have borne the Mis-

Part of a story from the Nauvoo Neighbor, November 19, 1845, illustrating how uneasy the negotiated peace was. (Courtesy LDS Church Archives)
groups trying to coexist: an armed force of occupation, a group preparing to move the next spring, and another group unwilling to believe the agreements reached between the other two.

Long before the agreement was reached, the Saints had been investigating the possibility of at least partially leaving. Before his death, Joseph sent Lyman Wight to investigate the possibility of moving members to Texas, then a part of Mexico. In 1844, shortly after the Prophet’s death, Wight established a colony in Texas with about 150 Saints. But the rest of the Church never joined this group, and the colony lasted only through 1857.\(^1\) As early as January 7, 1845, the Quorum of the Twelve had discussed sending scouts west to California.\(^2\) In April 1845, letters were sent to the president of the United States and governors of all the states except Illinois and Missouri asking their advice as to where to relocate the Church.\(^3\) There is no evidence any useful advice was received in return. Reports suggest that in September 1845 the Council of Fifty called for fifteen hundred pioneers to go to the Salt Lake Valley.\(^4\) So the decision to depart Nauvoo for a location west of the Rockies did not occur in a vacuum.

As the winter of 1845–46 proceeded, the Church began organizing their emigration companies. At the same time, warrants were issued for Brigham Young and other Church leaders on charges of counterfeiting. In December a federal marshal spent over a week in Nauvoo but was unable to find Brigham.\(^5\)

When reports surfaced in Nauvoo that federal and state agents might try to prevent the exodus, the Church decided to begin the migration ahead of schedule. The first wagons headed west on February 4, 1846. Brigham Young himself left on the fifteenth.\(^6\) By February 11, the *Warsaw Signal* reported that one thousand Mormons had left.

By June 2, Thomas Bullock, secretary to the Twelve, described the country as “desolate,” with nothing but empty houses.\(^7\) On the second anniversary of the Martyrdom, Bullock lamented that the empty city contained little more than “whorehouses” and “lawyers.”\(^8\) Notwithstanding the efforts thousands had made to depart Nauvoo, some Latter-day Saints still remained in Nauvoo. As described previously, the Anti-Mormons stepped up their harassment of the remaining Church members in advance of the August election, with civil war being only narrowly averted.

In early July, a group of three or four Church members hired themselves out to work on a farm north of Nauvoo. They behaved
obnoxiously and were accused of petty theft. Anti-Mormons whipped them and sent them back to Nauvoo.\textsuperscript{89} Sharp later described this act as “tickling with the hickory.”\textsuperscript{90} The Saints and the new citizens raised a posse and arrested two Anti-Mormons who had participated in the vigilantism. The Anti-Mormons responded by taking five Saints hostage. Finally an Anti-Mormon deputy sheriff called out a posse to go to Nauvoo to arrest one figure in the incident, and the crisis seemed destined to escalate out of control.\textsuperscript{91}

The citizens of Nauvoo appealed to Governor Ford for military force to restore order. Ford complied but withheld funds; only volunteers were sent to Hancock. Finally, on September 10, 1846, a force of about seven hundred Anti-Mormons faced off against a group of about three hundred Saints, new citizens, and state militia volunteers.\textsuperscript{92} There followed a few days of skirmishing, with the Battle of Nauvoo, a seventy-five-minute barrage of rifle and cannon fire, occurring on Saturday, September 12, 1846.\textsuperscript{93} As they had done the previous year, the citizens of Quincy, acting once again as the Quincy Committee, agreed to mediate a solution. A treaty was negotiated with seven points. Paragraph five reads, “The Mormon population of the city to leave the State, or disperse, as soon as they can cross the river.”\textsuperscript{94}

The anti-Mormons had at last achieved the goal they had set in early June 1844—they had expelled the Mormons. Those Saints who left under the September 1846 treaty were among the poorest residents of Nauvoo. Their suffering as the “poor camp” at Montrose, Iowa, has taken on mythic proportions among their descendants.\textsuperscript{95}

In my examination of the records of this two-year period, it seems clear to me that the Saints could not have prevented their forcible expulsion by responding in more favorable ways to the circumstances after the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum.

This is not to say that the Saints were blameless. It is clear that the decision announced in the spring of 1845 not to honor “gentile process” alienated some previously sympathetic non-Mormons. Since one of the principal charges against the Saints during Joseph Smith’s tenure as mayor of Nauvoo was lack of respect for laws and judicial proceedings from outside Nauvoo, it seems particularly naïve for the Saints to have announced their intentions not to honor future writs.

It could also be argued that the Apostles should have responded more effectively to the charges of thievery and political chicanery. Because the anti-Mormon charges went unrefuted outside of Nauvoo, those charges came to be widely accepted as true, and as
result, the Saints’ claims of persecution were vitiated to a considerable extent in the minds of political leaders and the general public.

There were also some among the Mormons who were widely believed to be guilty of many crimes, whether or not they actually were. The Hodges brothers, for example, who were hanged for a double murder in Lee County, Iowa, in 1845, claimed to be Mormons. Another such Church member was Porter Rockwell, who was widely thought to have pulled the trigger firing the shot that killed Frank Worrell. Although Sheriff Backenstos was present and took the responsibility and political heat, Rockwell’s antics were well known in Hancock County, and he was greatly feared.

On the other hand, not everyone seems to have been willing to accept anti-Mormon charges at face value. Governor Ford, for example, mocked the charges of Mormon theft as groundless, at a time when he himself was concerned about his political standing.96

The Saints’ responses to the murder of their leaders, to the revocation of their city charter, to the acquittal of the alleged assassins of the Smiths, and to the burnings at Morley’s Settlement appear to be exemplary—the sort of “turning the other cheek” that might be expected of a group calling themselves “Saints.”

However, no matter how peaceful the Mormons might have been, the Anti-Mormons would not be mollified. Thomas Sharp appears to have been correct in saying that the Anti-Mormons resolved even before the killings to expel the Saints and that nothing changed that determination. No population of Church members would be tolerated in the county, even if it took a military force with cannons to besiege the city and drive out the last thousand poorest Saints.

What can the members of modern organizations who are under attack learn from the expulsion of the Saints from Illinois? It seems clear that simply ignoring charges or addressing refutations only to the organization’s members will not be enough to defuse a threat from a determined group of opponents. Such charges must be refuted, and the refutations must be disseminated beyond the organization’s boundaries. The Anti-Mormons developed their arguments along four themes: Mormon lawlessness, Mormon disrespect for legal proceedings, Mormon militarism, and corrupt political dealing by Mormons. These themes were repeated again and again but were never effectively challenged.

In addition, the Latter-day Saints did not use established channels to obtain redress of their grievances. The letters of the
Twelve Apostles to the U.S. president and state governors betray a breathless kind of naivete—the same naivete shown time and again by the Saints throughout their early years in dealing with governments. This is not to say that they would have been more successful had they used more orthodox lobbying methods, but a modern organization might conclude from the Nauvoo Saints' experience that making up new ways of approaching civil authorities has a low probability of success.  

Among modern members of the Church, many believe that the departure from Nauvoo followed immediately upon the assassination of Joseph Smith, when actually more than two years elapsed before the departure was complete. Even in historical studies, there often seems to be confusion over the sequence of events—perhaps because terms are often confusing. For example, several different events are sometimes called the "Battle of Nauvoo," and a group named the Quincy Committee played a role in settling potential civil wars in two different years. I hope this article will help dispel the confusion and increase our understanding of and interest in those turbulent times.

NOTES

3 *Warsaw Signal*, June 29, 1844.
4 *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 30, 1844.
7 *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 30, 1844.
8 *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 2, 1844.
9 HC 7:169; for the text of the letter see HC 7:160–62; Nauvoo Neighbor, July 10, 1844; and Warsaw Signal, July 10, 1844.


11 Warsaw Signal, July 10, 1844.

12 See, for example, “Messrs. Kilbourn’s Letter, No. II,” Warsaw Signal, October 27, 1841, and September 18, 1844; and Warsaw Message, September 13, 1843.

13 Nauvoo Neighbor, August 6, 1845; and HC 7:56.


15 William Wise, Massacre at Mountain Meadows (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976), 49; and Clark Rowland, telephone interview by Marshall Hamilton, September 1988. Rowland is a great-grandson of Thomas Sharp. See also Kenneth Godfrey’s article in this issue, which addresses this controversy.

16 Warsaw Signal, September 18; October 16 and 20; November 13, 20, and 27; December 4 and 18, 1844.

17 Warsaw Signal, December 25, 1844; January 1 and 22, 1845.

18 D&C 64:27–28 states: “Behold, it is said in my laws, or forbidden, to get in debt to thine enemies; But behold, it is not said at any time that the Lord should not take when he please, and pay as seemeth him good.”


20 HC 7:270.

21 Ford, History, 365; and Hampshire, Mormonism in Conflict, 231.

22 HC 7:373.

23 Nauvoo Neighbor, May 5, 1845.

24 Nauvoo Neighbor, June 25, 1845.

25 Nauvoo Neighbor, July 16, 1845.


27 Nauvoo Neighbor, June 26, 1845.

28 HC 7:439.


30 Gregg, History of Hancock County, 341.

31 Warsaw Signal, January 16, 1847.

32 Robert Bruce Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 221.

33 Warsaw Signal, August 7, 1844.

34 For example, see Frank Worrell to Thomas Gregg, 1884, Thomas C. Sharp and Allied Anti-Mormon Papers, Yale University; reprinted in Hampshire, Mormonism in Conflict.

35 Warsaw Signal, July 17, 1844; and Flanders, Nauvoo, 153, 232, and 324.

Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 329; and Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 51.


*Nauvoo Neighbor*, August 6, 1845.

*Warsaw Signal*, June 17, 1846.

Bullock, “Journal,” 64, June 2, 1846.


*Warsaw Signal*, June 14, 1846.

*Warsaw Signal*, November 14, 1844.

*Warsaw Signal*, August 4 and 11, 1846.

*Warsaw Signal*, June 12, 1844.

*Warsaw Signal*, July 10, 17, and 31, 1844.

*Warsaw Signal*, July 10, 1844.

*Warsaw Signal*, July 17, 1844.

Because of Sharp’s importance and his role in defining the debate during this crucial period, I believe there is a need for further research into the evolution of his arguments, but such research is beyond the scope of this paper.

*HC* 7:183.

*HC* 7:247.

*HC* 7:270–71.

*HC* 7:274, 271.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 16, 1845.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, April 23, 1845.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 4, 1845.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, August 13, 1845.


Sharp, *Manuscript History*.

Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 340.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 10, 1845. Note that this issue was evidently published several days late; it includes the text of documents dated as late as September 13.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 10, 1845; and *Warsaw Signal*, September 24, 1845. Note that this and four other proclamations from Backenstos have been gathered and published in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Church Deseret News Press, 1930), 2:490–503.

Sharp, *Manuscript History*.

Sharp, *Manuscript History*.

*Warsaw Signal*, September 17, 1845.

*Warsaw Signal*, June 12, 1844.

Sharp, *Manuscript History*.


Sharp, *Manuscript History*.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 24, 1845.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, October 1, 1845.

*Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 24, 1845.
Sharp, *Manuscript History*.
77 *Nauvoo Neighbor*, October 1, 1845.
79 *HC* 7:450–51.
79 *Nauvoo Neighbor*, October 29, 1845.
80 *Nauvoo Neighbor*, October 8, 1845.
82 *HC* 7:350.
84 *HC* 7:439.
86 *HC* 7:585; and Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 205.
87 Bullock, "Journal," 64, June 2, 1846.
88 Bullock, "Journal," 72, June 27, 1846.
89 *Warsaw Signal*, July 16, 1846.
90 *Warsaw Signal*, November 14, 1846.
91 *Warsaw Signal*, July 16, 1846.
92 *Warsaw Signal*, November 14, 1846.
93 Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 350.
94 *Warsaw Signal*, November 14, 1846; and Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 553.
95 For a recapitulation of the Latter-day Saints' sufferings in Montrose, see Carol Lynn Pearson, "Nine Children Were Born": A Historical Problem from the Sugar Creek Episode," *BYU Studies* 21 (Fall 1981): 441–44.
97 I have already suggested a couple of avenues of further study on the period from the assassination to the expulsion. In addition, much work remains to be done on the topics I have discussed in this essay. For example, numerous extant Mormon journals date back to the last years of Nauvoo; many shed new light on these topics. For this article, I have only glanced at these resources. In addition, there is a need for detective work to locate papers or journals from non-Mormons. For example, no journal has been located for Thomas Sharp, and only a few of his letters have been located. There may also be primary documents still to be found and studied from Jacob Backenstos, members of the Quincy Committee, or other non-Mormons.
The City of Joseph in Focus: The Use and Abuse of Historic Photographs

Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle

Careful documentation and publication of Nauvoo photographs will enhance Latter-day Saint historical scholarship by permitting researchers and authors to use these materials accurately as primary sources for studies of old Mormon Nauvoo.

Just over one hundred and fifty years ago, in September 1839, the first American photographers made the earliest images on metal plates called daguerreotypes. Within a short time of its introduction in the United States, the daguerreotype was brought to Nauvoo by Lucian Foster, a New York convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He set up his daguerrean gallery at the corner of Parley and Hyde streets and produced the first photographic images of Nauvoo and its citizens (1844–46).

His work began a process that eventually created thousands of photographic views of Nauvoo. Only a few of Foster’s views exist today, among them the famous “Temple on the Hill,” sometimes known as the “Temple over the Outhouse.”

Besides Foster, other photographers to capture the city include Thomas Easterly, a St. Louis photographer (1846–47); B. H. Roberts, Church leader and historian (1885); F. Goult, a local photographer and businessman (1890–1900); James Ricalton, a professional photographer from the firm of Underwood & Underwood (1904); George Edward Anderson, a Utah portrait and landscape photographer (1907); and Harold Allen, an architectural photographer at the Chicago Art Institute (1940–60). The early views of Nauvoo produced by these photographers, along with many other photographs housed in private and public repositories throughout the

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United States, make up part of the documentary sources upon which modern historical research and publication are based.

Photographs as Primary Sources

As historical sources, photographs have a twofold nature. First, a photograph depicts past events or important personages and gives valuable and even unique information that one must learn to "read" properly. Second, a historic photograph is also an artifact, a part of the fabric of the past. Be it a stereograph or family portrait, the image had a social function. Public and private photographs are artifacts of material culture, representing far more than the pictorial image seen on their scratched or discolored surfaces.

Several recent publications have shown how such nonprint material can be utilized. John Demos's now famous study of the Puritans' material culture, A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony, is a model for using sources that historians have by and large neglected. Similar possibilities exist for the photographic record. Instead of remaining solely in the hands of architectural historians, architectural photographs can be used by all historians as primary sources.

Clifton C. Edom's Photojournalism: Principles and Practice and Jefferson Hunter's Image and Word: The Interaction of Twentieth-Century Photographs and Text suggest that photographs are a rich source of meaning and information for the scholar who learns how to read them. For example, much can be learned about economics by examining dress and exterior and interior views of buildings. A great deal about social relationships can be ascertained by considering who stands where and in what position, and religious values are sometimes revealed by architectural photographs. Historians interested in the Latter-day Saint past should not ignore the value of photographs as primary source material.

Problems with Using Historic Photographs

Too often photographs, in spite of their value as "artifacts," are used carelessly to illustrate an otherwise well-researched and documented history. Many historians leave the tasks of selecting and identifying photographs to the designer or publisher of their articles and books. This "abdication" mars their work if the wrong photograph is used or if an illustration is misidentified. Some scholars who do select and identify the illustrations themselves leave these tasks
to the last minute and then devote far less care to them than to the other primary source materials of their study.

The scholar who chooses to use historic photographs not only to illustrate the text but also to inform the reader in ways not possible by the text alone faces significant problems. Finding out exactly what a photograph is can be difficult. Frequently, old photographs have been mislabeled by the photographer, the housing archival institution, or the researcher. After obtaining the correct data, the scholar needs to write a caption that will give the reader sufficient information as well as appropriate source documentation.

Problems with Captions for Nauvoo Photographs

Numerous historic Nauvoo photographs have been printed in popular and academic publications since the early twentieth century. In many instances, however, the use of photographic material has been problematic.

One problem involves mislabeling. When B. H. Roberts visited Nauvoo in 1885, for example, he relied on local residents to identify historical sites for him since he had never lived there. His tour of the city was conducted by M. M. Morrill, the mayor. Apparently, Morrill and others simply provided building identification based on long-standing traditions. The story of Mr. W. C. Reimbold, former owner of the Oriental Hotel (Hotel Nauvoo), illustrates how Nauvoo tradition is not always steeped in fact. Reimbold collected antiques and sold them to visitors to Nauvoo. His specialties were old keys and beds he claimed had originally belonged to Joseph Smith, and he sold them in great number. Photographs and site identifications for many homes in Nauvoo are no more reliable than the keys and beds Mr. Reimbold sold to unsuspecting tourists. Over the years, it has been claimed that so-and-so lived at a particular site or that this old Nauvoo photograph depicts the home of so-and-so. In some cases, it has been difficult to discover which, if any, of the traditions are true.

Site identification is complicated by the fact that most Church leaders lived in several locations during their stay in Nauvoo. For example, Heber and Vilate Kimball first had a home on the bluff before building a log structure and later a brick home which still stands on the northeast corner of Munson and Partridge streets.

Mr. F. Goulty, a local photographer and businessman living in Nauvoo at the turn of the century, published “cabinet cards” with the
site identification written on the photograph itself. Many of his photographs were later reproduced as postcards. These photographs, which include images of nonextant buildings, must be handled with caution. For example, the photograph labeled “Residency of George Q. Cannon, Nauvoo, Ill.” appears in several institutional collections. The original shows the site identification written across the fence on the photograph itself. Investigation has revealed that this home belonged to Lorin Farr, not George Q. Cannon. Several decades after the Saints’ departure, Lorin Farr returned to Nauvoo to visit his former residence; a photograph was taken of Farr standing in front of this home. Supporting evidence comes from several photographs of the Woodruff home that also show the supposed Cannon home, a single-story brick structure in the background to the south. The unique brickwork and chimney of this home match that of the structure in the Farr photograph (see fig. 1).

The discovery that the “George Q. Cannon Residency” was really Lorin Farr’s home led to the reexamination of the photograph identified and widely published as the “Lorin Farr Residence, Nauvoo, Ill.” The improper identification may have resulted from the fact that both of Winslow Farr’s sons, Lorin and Aaron, may have lived at this site. Through research, using tax records as well as maps provided by Rowena Miller, a former employee of Nauvoo Restoration Inc., we verified that the residence was that of Winslow instead of Lorin Farr.

These examples show that researchers must look beyond the identification printed on the front or back of the photograph and ask, Who took the photograph? Who identified it? Does the information match other written records?

A second problem concerns the mislabeling of photographs in archival collections. Seven of the eight Nauvoo photographs by George Edward Anderson listed in the register of the Photographic Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, illustrate this problem and are representative of the challenges one faces when working in almost all photographic archives. Anderson numbered the glass plates himself, and library personnel later mislabeled them. The first photograph (#70) is labeled “cornerstone of the Nauvoo Temple.” It in fact depicts the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House. As shown in the following table, other labels give inaccurate information about the site photographed (see fig. 2).
FIGURE 1. Lorin Farr home, ca. 1900, misidentified as the George Q. Cannon home (Nauvoo Photograph Collection, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter cited as LDS Historical Department). The home was correctly identified after it was compared with a much later photograph of Farr in front of his Nauvoo home. The brickwork and chimney also helped with its identification.
FIGURE 2. Nauvoo Temple lot after the destruction of the Temple, photographed in 1907 by George Edward Anderson (George E. Anderson Collection, Archives and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University). This photograph was originally labelled “wine cellar and casks.”
### George Edward Anderson Nauvoo Photographs in the Harold B. Lee Library Archives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID #1</th>
<th>ID #2</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Actual Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>14363b</td>
<td>Cornerstone of the Nauvoo Temple</td>
<td>Cornerstone of the Nauvoo House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>14363h</td>
<td>Brick building, street, sidewalk</td>
<td>The nonextant Nauvoo Expositor building on Mulholland Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>14363f</td>
<td>Children in yard of large brick home</td>
<td>Extant Wilford and Phebe Woodruff home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>14363d</td>
<td>Brick house along tree lined road</td>
<td>Nonextant Bishop Edward Hunter residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>14363g</td>
<td>Two brick houses</td>
<td>The prominent home is the nonextant John D. Lee residence on Hyde Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>14363e</td>
<td>Wine cellar and casks</td>
<td>Temple lot after the Temple was razed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>14363a</td>
<td>Five people by two brick homes</td>
<td>Nonextant Joseph Young home and extant Chauncey Webb home, both on Granger Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1ID numbers assigned by Anderson  2ID numbers assigned by the archive

Uncatalogued photographic sources in photo archives present another obstacle. In their research, historians depend upon registers of photographic collections, but, because of severe budget constraints, most institutions have poor indexing of some photographic collections and no registers for others. As a result, the researcher is forced to search through many files and folders in order to discover any items of interest. The part of the Anderson Collection now located in the Harold B. Lee Library, for example, is not fully catalogued. (This cataloguing occurred many years ago; Brigham Young University and most photographic archives of LDS historical materials have recently made significant strides in collecting, cataloguing, and indexing their photographs.) Another uncatalogued and unindexed collection at BYU is the Ida Blum Collection, a rich,
nonprint source for the study of Nauvoo. This collection contains some two hundred photographs of Nauvoo; most are relatively recent and have not yet been labeled\textsuperscript{10} (see fig. 3).

\textbf{Problems with Some Printed Nauvoo Photographs}

Mislabeling, lack of cataloguing of individual collections, and the tendency of many scholars and publishers to not consider photographs as primary sources have contributed to recurrent problems in publications. The following publications include minor problems relating to old Nauvoo photographs. While these problems should not detract from the overall value of these works, they do serve as examples of difficulties historians can encounter when using photographs of Nauvoo.

One of the earliest books to use historic Nauvoo photographs was \textit{The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt}.\textsuperscript{11} This book began a practice that persists to the present, namely printing the famous “Temple on the Hill” photograph of Nauvoo backwards—showing the Temple facing east instead of west.\textsuperscript{12} The unique characteristics of the daguerreotype create a dilemma here and with all other such images. The daguerreotype is a silver-plated sheet of copper that is placed in the camera. The exposure is made by removing the lens cap for several minutes or up to a half hour in some cases. The image is fixed with a “hypo” solution and usually mounted in a protective glass and metal frame. While the clarity of a daguerreotype image is limited only by the quality of the camera lens and while the brilliance of the likeness is unmatched by subsequent processes, a daguerreotype has several serious limitations. The most important limitation is that the image of the subject is reversed from left-to-right, a characteristic particularly bothersome in well-known sites or in scenes showing signs and printing. Since the Foster image of the “Temple on the Hill” was a daguerreotype, it was originally reversed.\textsuperscript{13} The question can thus be debated, whether a reproduction of this image should show it backwards as it originally was or should “correct” it by reversing it. One of the most productive Latter-day Saint photographic historians today, Nelson Wadsworth, has consistently published Foster’s view of the “Temple on the Hill” by printing the scene as it would appear to a visitor\textsuperscript{14}(see fig. 4). But some other publications have not followed Wadsworth’s lead.

The Latter-day Saint Church Educational System’s text \textit{Church History in the Fulness of Times: The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints} uses a variety of photographs to illustrate
FIGURE 4. Temple on the hill, a daguerreotype made about 1846 and attributed to Lucian Foster (Charles W. Carter Collection, LDS Historical Department). Because daguerreotypes present reversed images, this image has been flipped to make the Temple appear the way a visitor would have seen it.
Church history. The captions to these photographs offer substantial information but exclude dates or names of photographers; therefore the photographs are not situated in a historical context. This omission is a drawback to the richly illustrated text.\textsuperscript{15}

In Susan Arrington Madsen’s \textit{The Lord Needed a Prophet}, the George Edward Anderson photographs are misdated by five years, and the caption for the Lucian Foster’s “Temple on the Hill” indicates that the photographer is unknown.\textsuperscript{16}

Janath R. Cannon’s \textit{Nauvoo Panorama} misidentifies the photographer of the “Temple on the Hill” as Lucian Woodworth.\textsuperscript{17} A turn-of-the-century photograph by J. R. Tewksbury is printed with a caption correctly identifying the extant David D. Yearsley home in the background, but the two homes in the foreground are not identified as those of Elijah Malin and Jacob Weiler.\textsuperscript{18} As both of these homes are nonextant, the photograph is of great historic significance to those interested in the visual history of Nauvoo.

Another publication, the 1990 issue of the \textit{Journal of Mormon History}, includes images of Nauvoo on both the front and back covers. The images are identified, and the source of each is given, but other important data such as the date of the daguerreotype and the name of the photographer are omitted.

Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr’s \textit{Women’s Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1890} incorrectly states the date of a George Edward Anderson photograph as 1908.\textsuperscript{19} Roger Launius and F. Mark McKiernan’s \textit{Joseph Smith, Jr.’s Red Brick Store} includes a photograph identified as “Photograph of the Red Brick Store, ca. 1890, showing the store front and west side. Courtesy of Kenneth E. Stobaugh.”\textsuperscript{20} The label on the original photograph, however, indicates that the photograph was taken by B. H. Roberts in 1885.

To be fair, we will mention that in a review of our book \textit{Old Mormon Nauvoo, 1839–1846: Historic Photographs and Guide} Donald Q. Cannon correctly points out we did not clearly identify the repositories of the photographs we used.\textsuperscript{21} Also, in this work we did not include important contextual information such as the date and the name of the photographer. Our recent efforts to publish historic photographs with proper and consistent captions have corrected these problems. For example, the following caption belongs to the close-up of the Temple:

Nauvoo Temple, Nauvoo, Illinois
(The Nauvoo Temple was the focal point of the Church from 1841–46)
LDS Historical Department—Lucian Foster, 1846\textsuperscript{22}
Perhaps more disturbing than the lack of proper captions is the misidentification of Nauvoo photographs in publications. In Pearson H. Corbett’s *Hyrum Smith, Patriarch*, a Nauvoo photograph is identified as “Hyrum Smith’s home at Nauvoo, Illinois.” The photograph in fact shows the residence of Joseph Smith, Jr., known as the Homestead. No photograph of Hyrum’s Nauvoo residence is known to exist. Andrew Karl Larson’s *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* reproduces a photograph of the *Times and Seasons* building that is incorrectly identified as the “The brick store, owned by Parley P. Pratt.” The May 20, 1989, issue of the *Church News* includes an Underwood & Underwood stereo view identified in the caption as “View of Lorenzo Snow home prior to 1900 gives flavor of 19th Century Nauvoo.” The Underwood & Underwood views were part of the series of Latter-day Saint church historical sites published in 1904, not before 1900 as the *Church News* caption suggests. Furthermore, the home depicted in this photograph is that of Erastus Snow, not Lorenzo Snow (see fig. 5). Publication of this data by Nauvoo Restoration Inc. should end this misidentification.

A few of the problems are repeated in Douglas Tobler and Nelson Wadsworth’s *The History of the Mormons in Photographs and Text: 1830 to the Present*. This work, the most important and significant collection of Latter-day Saint historic photographs, is truly a visual feast of the history of the Saints. The book’s importance cannot be overestimated, although a few misidentifications are repeated in the captions. The home of Sylvester Stoddard is incorrectly identified as John Taylor’s home. The Aaron Johnson and Jonathan Wright homes are identified as belonging to William Law and Orson Pratt.

An additional problem concerns using images of Nauvoo to illustrate an idea or concept that the photograph in fact does not reflect. E. Cecil McGavin in *Nauvoo the Beautiful* relates the arrival of German settlers to the city after the Mormon exodus and uses a George Edward Anderson photograph to illustrate “People with other customs and languages.” A notation on the original photograph indicates that the home dates from the Latter-day Saint period and that it belonged to Thomas Pitt, an English convert. The old man sitting in the yard reading a newspaper is Thomas’s son Charles, an active member of the Church at the time of Anderson’s visit. This photograph therefore does not illustrate the people of other customs and languages who came to Nauvoo following the Saints’ exodus (see fig. 6).
FIGURE 5. The Erastus Snow–Nathaniel Ashby Duplex, a scene captured in 1904 by James Ricalton (Keystone Stereo View Collection, California Museum of Photography, Riverside, California). This scene was recently misidentified as a nineteenth-century view of Lorenzo Snow’s home.
FIGURE 6. Thomas Pitt home photographed in 1907 by George Edward Anderson (Joseph F. Smith Album, LDS Historical Department). Although Thomas was an English convert to Mormonism, his son Charles (pictured here) was an active member, and the home was built before 1846, this photograph has been used to illustrate non-Mormons who settled later.
Exemplary Use of Nauvoo Photographs

Some recent historical studies steer clear of captioning problems through an approach we do not advocate, namely the exclusion of important primary documents altogether. George W. Givens’s *In Old Nauvoo* provides only recent photographs of “restored” Nauvoo instead of using historical photographs to open an additional window to Nauvoo’s history. Another scholar, Marvin Hill, takes this option one step further by not including any photographs of Nauvoo in his book *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism*.

Other authors have used photographs to give increased insight into the study of Nauvoo. An early example is Robert Bruce Flanders’s *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, which includes a mixture of historic photographs, steel engravings, and modern photographs, as well as photographs taken by the author. For each illustration, Flanders provides descriptive captions and sources. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard’s *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* is another exemplary work. Glen Leonard spent a significant amount of time identifying more than a dozen illustrations, including important historic photographs, for the chapters dedicated to Nauvoo history. Roger Launius’s biography of Joseph Smith III incorporates several historic photographs to illustrate the text and avoids the problems that have plagued other studies. The photographs with their detailed captions, which include dates and source information, help tell his story.

In Ronald E. Romig and John L. Seibert’s “J. A. Koehler and the Stewardship Movement at Atherton,” captions are expanded to indicate call numbers as well as repository source information, as in this example: “Courtesy RLDS Archive Photographic Collection D907.12.” The use of call numbers can be problematic, however, since many institutions are forced to make changes in their call numbers as they move from manual to automated cataloging systems.

The majority of the twenty-two illustrations in Dean Jessee’s *Papers of Joseph Smith* are photographs. This book represents one of the best uses of photographs and captions in Mormon studies to date. For example, the Liberty Jail photograph caption states, “Liberty Jail, Liberty, Clay County, Missouri, c. 1878. Photograph by J. T. Hicks. Photograph was given to Joseph F. Smith by Josie Schweich, granddaughter of David Whitmer. LDS Church Archives.” This
caption illustrates the rich information available through careful research. Many other publications have simply reproduced the Liberty Jail photograph without stating date, photographer, or background information. Jessee's commitment to proper documentation is also seen in his handling of the "Temple on the Hill" photograph. The image is printed as it would have appeared to the visitor to Nauvoo, and the caption reads, "Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, c. 1846. Daguerreotype. Charles W. Carter Collection. LDS Church Archives."36

While a few citation inconsistencies and site identification problems are found in the Tobler-Wadsworth book, The History of the Mormons, the authors have provided some exceptional captions. The "Temple on the Hill" photograph caption is one such example:

A seemingly deserted Nauvoo glimmers in the afternoon light in this 1846 daguerreotype believed to be taken by Lucian Foster. The completed temple sits atop the hill, overlooking the city. The photo was copied from the original daguerreotype by Charles William Carter in Salt Lake but it has since been lost. Only the copy negative remains. (Mormon Church Historical Department).37

Among the most recently published studies, the meticulously researched and well-written articles found in the Encyclopedia of Mormonism show that the editors conscientiously selected photographs to enrich the entries about Nauvoo history. The "Temple on the Hill" is printed in natural order, and its caption both explains the significance of the photograph as a historic artifact and offers valuable source information:

Looking northeast toward the Nauvoo Temple, 1846, at the time of the Latter-day Saint exodus (daguerreotype). Nauvoo grew rapidly between 1839 and 1846. Dugouts and simple log structures were soon replaced by traditional frame or brick homes. Charles W. Carter collection.38

The Glen M. Leonard entry on "Nauvoo" includes several important Nauvoo photographs. The text properly identifies the modern photograph of the Seventies Hall as a reconstructed building: "It was reconstructed on its original foundation in 1971–1972."39 The illustration editors, assisted by researchers in the Church Historical Department, avoided another problem by indicating that the Brigham Young residence photograph shows the home "as it appeared around 1900."40 This note is an important contextual reference since the home was remodeled after Brigham Young's departure.
Guidelines for Captioning

Based on the preceding examples, a minimum standard for identifying photographs can be set. The authors have placed each photograph in context by supplying carefully researched data and proper identification of source information. Recently, staff members of the LDS Church Archives have proposed guidelines calling for a credit line that includes the “title” of the photograph (if properly identified in the photo archive itself), the date of the photograph, the photographer’s name, the collection name, and the identification of the repository. Thus a suitable credit citation for the “Temple on the Hill” would be “Nauvoo and Nauvoo Temple (Daguerreotype), ca. 1846, attributed to Lucian Foster, Charles W. Carter Collection, LDS Church Archives.” In the past, where source information was unavailable for photographs, we used the notation unknown. Current recommendations by photo-archivists suggest that this approach may be too cumbersome. A researcher can simply provide whatever information is known. Order and consistency are essential, however. While these guidelines do not necessarily match those of other institutions, they are a positive step toward clarity and accuracy within the Latter-day Saint history community.

Conclusion

Many historians interested in photographs have suggested ways to improve the use of photographs and captions in Nauvoo and other Latter-day Saint historical studies. Photographs should be viewed as primary documents and should be used as carefully as one would use a diary or letter. Thus scholars should devote more interest and care to the documentation and use of photographs in their articles and books, instead of leaving this task largely to editors and publishers. Research efforts should be devoted to nonprint material, including photographs, from the inception of the research project so that these materials constitute more than a last-minute attempt to add visual interest to the text. Documentation of photographs should be as complete as that of any other historical source and should include information about the context, such as the date, the photographer, and the repository location.

Photo-archivists must become thoroughly familiar with the collections in their repositories and share their knowledge in an appropriate, effective, and supportive manner. A recent noteworthy attempt to resolve the cataloguing problem has been made by the
LDS Church Archives, which has introduced a computer index for its large repository of catalogued photographs.\(^4\)

The implementation of these suggestions requires considerable time on the part of historians and archivists. However, such effort will permit historians to use photographs as significant primary sources for studies of old Mormon Nauvoo.

**NOTES**


5 The first photographs used in Latter-day Saint publications are found in such Church magazines as the *Contributor, Young Woman’s Journal*, and the *Improvement Era*. Publication of the *Improvement Era* began in 1897 and within several months the first photograph appeared—“Wilford Woodruff from photograph taken August 1898” (see *Improvement Era* 1 [October 1898]: 865). Starting in April 1909, the magazine published a series of Nauvoo photographs (see *Improvement Era* 12 [April 1909]: 466–75, [May 1909]: 600–7, [July 1909]: 713–19, and [September 1909]: 858–66). The photographs in this important series included contemporary scenes and a few older photographs obtained from local residents. Soon thereafter, Church magazines and books began to use contemporary photographs on a regular basis to illustrate Church history articles and studies.

6 Lillie McConkey, lifetime resident of Nauvoo, interview with the authors, Nauvoo, Illinois, June 29, 1989.


8 On his way to England, where he served a mission, George Edward Anderson visited and photographed many Church historical sites. For a brief review of this effort, see Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Palmyra and New England: Historic Photographs and Guide* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Fieldbrook Productions, 1991), 3–19. Shortly after Anderson’s death in 1928, his friends, John F. Bennett and Junius F. Wells, arranged to purchase from Anderson’s widow the bulk of his glass plates (some thirty thousand) and photographs for the Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives. Subsequent to this purchase the Anderson collection, like many other historic photograph collections, was divided into numerous parts so that the original collection no longer exists.
9 In addition to this mislabeling, the glass plates numbered 73 and 77 are missing from the numbering sequence.
10 Within the collection is a photograph identified in previously printed histories of Nauvoo as the “Store of Hiram Kimball.” James Kimball, long-time researcher with Nauvoo Restoration Inc., indicates that the building shown in this photograph may have been Hiram’s barn but not the store. In the Blum Collection, we also found what is apparently the only known photograph of the Charles C. Rich home.
12 Three of the publications that have followed this tradition are *Church History in the Fulness of Times: The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989); Susan Arrington Madsen, *The Lord Needed a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990); and Janath R. Cannon, *Nauvoo Panorama* (Nauvoo, Ill: Nauvoo Restoration Inc., 1991).
13 The original is lost, but Charles W. Carter made a copy of the image; the negative of his copy is located in the LDS Church Archives.
15 For an example, see *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 299; see also the recent publication of Susan Evans McCloud, *Joseph Smith: A Photobibliography* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1992), 150.
18 Cannon, *Nauvoo Panorama*, 70.
20 Roger D. Launius and F. Mark McKiernan, *Joseph Smith, Jr.’s Red Brick Store* (Macomb: Western Illinois University, 1985), 60.
22 Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Kirland and Missouri* (Santa Ana, Calif.: Fieldbrook Productions, 1991), 21. While this caption includes the main elements required, the order of source information and the separation of the “title” from the repository citation is problematic. See pages 18–21 for other Nauvoo photographs. We have also corrected this problem in our other historic photograph study, *Old Mormon Palmyra and New England: Historic Photographs and Guide*; by identifying the site, and, where known, the date of the photograph, the name of the photographer, and the repository.


41. See, for example, the caption for "East India Marine Society Museum, Salem, Massachusetts," in our *Old Mormon Palmyra and New England*, 30.

42. William Slaughter and Randall Dixon of the LDS Church Archives.

43. The Library of Congress has been working on trying to identify a useful cataloguing system that would take into account the fast-growing nonprint materials being housed in public and private archives.

44. Ronald E. Romig (RLDS Church Archives) and several individuals at LDS Church Archives have been helpful in supplying information and suggestions to us over the past two years. Ron sent us a copy of notes from a talk given by Krika Gottfried and Robert F. Wagner of the Labor Archives in October 1990. These notes were helpful in raising several important issues discussed in this paper.

45. Some private institutions have restrictions that prevent sharing certain types of information with the public, but at least those sources available to the public should be shared.

46. Public and university archives could reach out to history departments and other related academic fields by moving beyond their own settings and proposing topics at historical association meetings and other related symposiums. Archives could also sponsor their own symposiums and draw in as many students, researchers, and scholars as possible to share their insights and resources. New York University has offered a seminar entitled "The Historian and the Visual Record: Exploring Alternative Sources" as part of their public history program. Similar cooperation between university library and history departments may be the next step in authoritative Mormon history.
Mapping Historic Nauvoo

Melinda Evans Jeffress

Nauvoo the city beautiful could also be termed, by those trying to trace maps of the city’s homes and buildings, as Nauvoo the city enigma. The early platting map of 1839, which plots Commerce and the main area of Nauvoo, and the 1842 platting map by Gustavus Hills, which shows the town’s intended development, dividing the city into farm areas, blocks, lots, and streets, are a beginning aid to those working with historic Nauvoo. However, there appear to be no maps contemporaneous to the period from 1839 to 1846 that cite the placement and ownership of homes and businesses and trace divergences from the city’s early plans. This loss has been felt again and again by historians, archaeologists, and restorationists as they have worked to re-create the unique atmosphere and grasp the historic context of Nauvoo.

In the last thirty years as Nauvoo Restoration Inc. has restored, reconstructed, and refurbished many of the city’s streets, buildings, and homes, modern maps reflecting this work have been included in recent publications. Those maps have enhanced the mental imagery of Nauvoo the city and of the events which took place in its early years. However, in many of the recent maps, some place-names differ from map to map, coastlines move up and down, and of course the city seems to grow as sites are discovered and identified. In addition, Nauvoo presents a challenge to those tracking the multiple sites of businesses and homes.

The cartography of early Nauvoo also falls into difficulty when the nature of an American frontier town of the nineteenth century is taken into consideration. Americans moving west hoping for inexpensive land or income opportunities would cause surges of population in newly formed towns. Cities burgeoned with people long before the streets and sidewalks were constructed and land use

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*BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1, 2 (1992)
designated. This population pattern often meant the actual city differed from its intended design.

In many ways Nauvoo followed the same pattern: Joseph Smith and city planners used their plat maps in an effort to develop the perfect, beautiful city; however, as Donald Enders pointed out in his article "Platting the City Beautiful: A Historical and Archaeological Glimpse of Nauvoo Streets," "the actual laying out of streets never could keep pace with the city's expansion." Although the city was well designed much of it remained only a "paper town" and changes in the original widths of lots, streets, and sidewalks occurred without documentation beyond city council minutes and petitions. The 1846 plat map shows extensions of the city which were planned but never built and lots which were planned to hold one home or business now accommodating several buildings as the city attempted to meet the needs of the many new converts who poured into the area from Great Britain. Many of the early residents purchased several lots of land and became landlords to those who were incoming. Unless there is additional documentation, one cannot know on which piece of property the owner resided. Thus the population explosion between 1839 and 1844 changed much of the look and expectations of what Nauvoo was to become.

The burgeoning population of early Nauvoo holds several ramifications for today's attempts to map the city. The changes in lot distribution from sole ownership to subleasing or to sales of parcels within the lots often indicate simultaneous possibilities and further eliminate the use of plat maps as a source for an accurate portrayal of the property's distribution.

Along with the questions about property ownership and usage, one must consider the many immigrants as well as returning missionaries who rented property while waiting to build their own homes. Outside of letters and mentions in diaries, very little information is available concerning the renter in Nauvoo; this gap, also, complicates the full documentation of a city where there was so much activity and movement in a few short years.

Whether renting, building, or simply upgrading their life-style, many of Nauvoo's residents moved regularly. This activity can be seen when one traces the homes of many of the early settlers. Heber C. Kimball owned three homes; Brigham Young and John Taylor both owned two. Depending on the year under consideration—1839, 1841, or 1845—the location of these homes would be different, resulting in maps which are perfectly correct but appear inaccurate
because of their dating. Businesses also moved within the city; the *Times and Seasons* offices moved to three different locations and has been mapped in each of the different places, sometimes without mention of alternate sites.\(^8\)

Traditions have also made accurate reporting of place-names difficult. After the exodus in 1846, Nauvoo was almost deserted. Those who returned to visit the area would look down streets, remembering their lives in the former busy town, and comment on how things had changed, on where they had lived, and on whom they had known.\(^9\) These exchanges between the original settlers and the next generation of Nauvoo residents became accepted knowledge throughout the area regarding who lived in various homes, what businesses filled the falling-down remains of buildings, and what the conditions in Nauvoo were like during its earliest years.

However, memories, even though sincerely recalled, may still be in error. Traditions resulted which occasionally were wrong. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle in *Old Mormon Nauvoo and Southeastern Iowa* affirm this fact as they describe the difficulty in relying on early photos of Nauvoo taken and labeled by B. H. Roberts: “Much of Roberts’s site identification came from the town mayor, M. M. Morrill, a town resident of 1885. Some of his photographs are mislabeled because Roberts relied on local traditions concerning these sites instead of searching to verify the accuracy of the traditions.”\(^10\) The inaccuracy of some of these reports has haunted many historians and restorationists as they have tried to unravel fact from fiction.

Sometimes the very nature of mapping impedes a complete, definitive mapping record from becoming available. Maps are made for a purpose defined by the needs of those requesting them. Some of the maps of historic Nauvoo found in current publications show Nauvoo as it is today, complete with RLDS and LDS visitors centers and the local park.\(^11\) Sites yet unnamed, placement of plaques, and even the fast-food drive-through may be part of the mapped record of Nauvoo in its restored setting. Other maps show only the various plats which were the basis for the town in 1842 plus its planned extensions in 1846 with no individual homes or buildings marked.\(^12\) Some combine both past and present conditions, reviving early elevations that affect coastlines and placing the homes and buildings where they now sit in their restored condition.\(^13\)

The map presented in this issue of *BYU Studies* was also created with a specific purpose. Our map of Nauvoo is intended to acquaint
our readers with the locations of the specific sites mentioned throughout the articles in this issue. Thus we have added both the Joseph Smith stable and the Pendleton Cabin. We have used the 1844–46 time period in determining placement. For example, we list the 1845 location of John Taylor’s home and the *Times and Seasons* offices. These buildings were both purchased by Elder Taylor in 1844, and when the sale was final, he moved immediately into the home next to the printing office.14 These four locations have not appeared on many previously published maps.

The options and purposes for mapping are only as limited as the research and availability of the sites to be studied. Historic Nauvoo is still being re-created. The methodology and approach of the maps produced so far partake of the nature of beginning studies—they are meant more to familiarize readers with the city’s known relationships and events rather than serve as a directory of historic Nauvoo. Time and further research into the development of the city will enable a more complete approach to the accurate portrayal of the many homes, buildings, and city structures that once existed between 1839 and 1846.15

NOTES


2 Dean R. Zimmerman, “Historic Sites,” a map from *LDS Church History Atlas* (Salt Lake City: Church Educational System, 1975), 171; and Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 2:516. The two maps are a good comparison study of how additions in site identification and continued restoration change the mapping of Nauvoo.


5 Enders, “Platting the City Beautiful,” 411–12.

6 The Nauvoo Restoration Inc. computerized index of land titles shows that many land owners of early Nauvoo held title to more than one lot. These records do not always confirm whether the owner subleased a home, had a business, or lived on the property.

7 Nauvoo Restoration Inc. computerized index of land titles.

9 E. Cecil McGavin, *Nauvoo the Beautiful* (Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, 1946), 300-308.

10 Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Nauvoo and Southeastern Iowa* (Santa Ana: Fieldbrook Productions, 1990), 23. See also their article in this issue.


15 I would like to thank several people who have helped with our Nauvoo map. Jeffery Cottle shared his research and time, Mary Isom of Nauvoo Restoration Inc. kindly did some extra research in Nauvoo, and Jeffry Bird of the BYU Geography Department lent his expertise and computers to draft our final copy.
City of Nauvoo:
1844–46 Sites of Historical Buildings and Streets

1-Hiram Kimball Store  
2-Hiram Kimball Home  
3-Edward Hunter Site  
4-Charles C. Rich Home  
   (Knight and Robison Street)  
5-Nauvoo Temple  
6-Nauvoo Expositor Bldg.  
7-Masonic Hall/Cultural Hall  
8-Scovil Bakery and Confectionery Shop  
9-Orson Hyde Home  
10-William Clayton Site  
11-Lyon Home and Drug and Variety Store  
12-John D. Lee Site  
13-Heber C. Kimball Home  
14-Wilford Woodruff Home  
15-Lorin Farr Home  
16-Winslow Farr Home  
17-Stoddard Home and Tinsmith Shop  
18-Jonathan Browning Home  
   and Gunsmith Shop  
19-John Taylor Home  
20-Times and Seasons and  
   Nauvoo Neighbor Print Bldg.  
21-Pendleton Cabin  
22-Joseph Young Home  
23-Brigham Young Home  
24-Joseph Noble/Lucy M. Smith Home  
25-Chauncey Webb Home  
26-Seventies Hall  
27-Blacksmith Shop  
28-Daniel Butler Cobbler Shop  
   /General Store  
29-Snow/Ashby Home  
30-Joseph Coolidge Home  
31-Wilson Law Home  
32-Masonic Hotel  
33-Arron Johnson Home  
34-William Marks Home  
35-Sidney Rigdon Home and Post Office  
36-Mansion House  
37-Hiram Clark Home  
38-Theodore Turley Cabin  
39-Red Brick Store  
40-Joseph Smith Homestead  
41-Joseph Smith Stable  
42-Nauvoo Brick Brewery  
43-Nauvoo House
The Historians' Corner

Ronald W. Walker

From the moment Joseph Smith declared his revelation of a visiting angel and the existence of the golden plates, the character of the Smith family has been important. Were the Smiths the God-fearing and honest folk that they and most traditional Latter-day Saint accounts said they were? Or were family members the idle and unstable people that D. P. Hurlbut's Palmyra affidavits made them out to be? First appearing in Eber B. Howe's *Mormonism Unveiled*, these affidavits have since become a staple used to disparage the religion's first years.1

This issue's Historians' Corner adds another piece of evidence. A key personality in question is Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph Smith's mother. Like many nineteenth-century American women, she deeply influenced her children, nine of whom lived to adulthood. But her influence was stronger than that of many women because in the Smith household her husband, Joseph Smith, Sr., usually acceded to her domestic industry and initiation. What kind of woman was she? What values did she teach her children?

Fortunately she left behind several historical records that are biographically revealing, including an October 1845 Nauvoo general conference talk delivered in her seventieth year. In this sermon, Lucy speaks of her basic religious feelings. She encourages honesty, applauds youthful Bible study and obedience, and affirms general Christian beliefs. She is quick to teach, even moralize.

But there is more. The sermon shows Lucy's consistency. In her advanced years, Mother Smith, as she was called, continued to tell the same story about the origins of Mormonism that she had told earlier. For instance, in her Nauvoo speech she confirms Martin Harris's major role during the first years of the Restoration and speaks tellingly of the poverty of the Smith family, who despite their lack of means, struggled to get the Book of Mormon translated and published.

*BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1, 2 (1992)
The document, however, does more than help readers understand its author. It is important for history's sake, clarifying and giving texture to a variety of issues, including Mormonism's first missionary effort. Lucy's accounts of this preaching, performed by her son Samuel, places a woman, Rhoda Young Green, in an unfamiliar leading role in the chain of events that helped bring about the conversion and baptism of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball. Moreover, she gives important and often poignant detail about the Missouri turmoil of 1837–38. Here Lucy remembers herself busy with good works, ministering to twenty or thirty who were sick. She also speaks of the moment when she believed Missourians were carrying her son to his death (as she reached for his hand, he said, "God bless you my poor mother") and of her own terrible suffering during the Church's retreat from the state.

During her lifetime, the Nauvoo newspaper *Times and Seasons* provided a sketchy synopsis of her speech, and that account was later republished in the *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* These early reports drew on the original minutes of the conference, hastily penned by William Clayton, who without shorthand skills did his best to catch Lucy's words. These original minutes, now included in the General Church Minutes collection, are printed below for the first time. They have not been altered except for bracketed editorial insertions.

The Clayton transcript has been enlarged by references to two other sources of the speech, which were apparently made shortly after the general conference. Both of these—one written in an anonymous hand, the other by Curtis E. Bolton—likely relied on the Clayton manuscript but were more polished and complete. Where the anonymous and Bolton versions provide significant additional phrasing, these words are placed within braces {} and angle brackets <> respectively. The Nauvoo General Church Minutes and the two other transcripts of the Smith address are housed in the Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

The Lucy Mack Smith sermon was given in the Nauvoo Temple, which Church leaders had opened for congregational worship several days before the conference. Elder Joseph Young and President Brigham Young spoke at the morning session, after which Mother Smith requested the podium and began her remarks.
Lucy Mack Smith
Speaks to the Nauvoo Saints

Well[,] bro[thers] & Sis[ters] I have been looking round upon this con[gregation]. I have long been waiting for the time when the Lo[rd] would give me strength to look upon you & my children. [I] feel solemn. [I] Want every one to look into their hearts to see what they have come to this place for. Whether [they have come] to follow Ch[rist] through evil & good report or for any other cause. I want to have time to talk about my husband[,] [and my sons] Hyrum [and] Joseph and want to give you all my advice. Brigham]. Young]. has done the errand. He has fixed it completely. 4 For a long time I have [been] wanting to ask whether you were willing to receive stolen goods or not. <I want to know if you believe in such things> There is one thing I want to speak off—There is may be 2000, here that never was acquainted with Mr Smith or my family. I raised 11 children, 7 boys, we raised them in the fear of God. 5 When they were 2 or 3 year[s] old [I told them I wanted] that they may [would] love God with all their hearts <I told them to do good> Wants all you to do the same. 6 God gives us our children & we are accountable. In the fear of God I warn you I want you to take your little children & teach them in the fear of God. [I] Want you to teach them about Joseph in Egypt and such things and when they are 4 yr. old they will love to read their bible. I presume there never were a family that were so obedient as mine. <I did not have to speak to them only once—Set your children to work & try to bring them up to your comfort> dont let them play out of doors. 7 If I cant talk to a few 1000s how can I meet millions and talk in celestial glory [?]. 8 [I] Want the young men to remember that I love children, young folks and every body. [I] Want them to be obedient to their parents and do every thing just right. [I want them to] <be good & kind and do in secret as you would do in the presence of Millions> Brothers & sisters I can call you bro[ther]s sisters children If you consider me a mother in Israel I want you to say so <Presid[ent]. Brigham] Young arose & said—all who consider Mother Smith as a Mother in Israel signify it by saying yea (loud shouts of Yes)> my feelings has been hurt by hearing them say[,] ["]Tell mother Smith, there goes
old Mother Smith[""] had her feelings hurt a great deal. [I] Want to speak about the dead. 18 years ago last 2[2] September that J[oseph] took the plates out of the earth. 18 years last Monday since the J[oseph]. S[mith]. the prophet of the Lord got the plates from the earth.10 [It was in a morning my son] J[oseph], came to me and told me he had taken those plates out of the ground. <and he said ""]go> Tell all three of them11 [The] (Harris["s]) that I have got them I want Martin to assist me and [I want] [to] take some of the characters off to send them to N[ew]. Y[ork][""]12 I am in my 70[th] year—[it is] 18 years since J[oseph] began to receive this gospel [of Glad tidings to all people] and preach it. I have got [it] all in a history & I want this people to be so good [and so kind] as to get it printed before they go to C[alifornia].13 Martin Harris was the first person that helped Joseph about this work to get the book of Mormon printed[,] for the gospel could not be preached until this was done.14 <here was only my family and Martin Harris to do anything about it> Just as soon as they commenced the devil began to war {roar} <and attempt to destroy them>. But a little while before we were turned out of house & home.15 Joseph went to Plenmnslyvanila. Joseph, Hyrum and Samuel had to go and work in the woods <all day & then at night haul[ing] the wood> & they had to go to get means to help Joseph publish the book. 2 of them guarded the house. This was the way it commenced and now see what a congregation is here. You talk about going to Cal[ifornia]. how easy this can be done. My family could go to work and get means to print the B[ook] of M[ormon]. You need not be to work and get means to print the B[ook] of M[ormon]. You need not be discouraged you cant get wagons & every thing else. [As Brigham says you must be honest] But if you are not honest you wont get there and if you feel cross you will have trouble. My family made out to get the Book pr[inted]. the Angels <of the Lord> told them what to do. They began 18 years last Monday. [Thou- sands have come into the church since then] [I] Dont suppose that 1/3 of this people every saw or knew any thing of Joseph H[yrum] S[amuel]16 [William] or [the rest of] my family. Now they are all gone and none left but poor Wm. and he is gone I dont know where.17 I have 3 daughters18 at home they have never had any thing [from tithing] but worked for the church. After the Book was printed Samuel took some of them to sell. He went
into bro. Greens. <a Methodist preacher.>19 [Samuel] had been turned out of doors 3 times. Samuel asked him[,] ["wont you buy a book"] He20 asked[,] ["what it is"] Samuel said[,] ["it is a B[ook] of M[ormon]. that my brother has translated <from plates out of the ground.]"] She21 asked her husband but he would not buy. Sam[uel] left one till he returned. He had to sell them to buy us victuals. I want to speak of this that you may not complain of hard times. [He went into a [another] house [in the neighborhood] and asked to have a breakfast & he would give a book for it] [Later] He again went to Mr Greens22 he was not at home. She [Mrs. Green] said he must take the book again. Samuel took the book & looked & looked—said (She afterward told me) she never saw a man look so—she [knew he had the sp[irit]t of God. He said he could not take the book. <the Spirit forbids me taking this book> She fell on the floor & asked him to pray with her. She read & became a Mormon & thus the work began <& then it spread like a mustard seed>—After the church began to grow we were driven again we had to go from place to place to Kirtland <then> to Mo. W[illiam]m was taken sick—Sam[ue]ll[']s wife23 and others [too] and we had 20 or 30 sick to take care off during the mobbing. <I felt strong in health> [I] Could take care of 20 sick then better than sit on my chair now. Whilst W[illiam]m. was sick he had a vision & saw the mob come in. He said he saw them come thousands & thousands and says he <Mother> [You will be driven and says] ["if I die I want you to take care of my wife <I want you to carry my corp[se] wherever you go!"]—The first day William was able to Walk as far as the door> {the mob came} When the mob came in 10 of them into my house {room} after they had taken Joseph & Hyrum [into their camp] there was thousands of them hollowing & screeching in my hearing how do you think I feel [felt] ? Have you any feelings for me[?]. Whilst they were in the camp I could not go to see them {and now my children are in the grave} 10 men came in & said they wanted {we have come in} to kill the heads of the family. Says I[,] ["do you want to kill me."'] They said ["yes."] Then says I[,] ["do it quick like men for I would then be happy."] They then said ["]G-d damn it these Mormons would as soon die as live."] They then tried Joseph & Hyrum & sentenced them to be shot in 15 minutes. A man came in and said[,] ["]<Mother Smith> if you ever want to see Mr Smith again
you must go now for he is going to be shot in Jackson Co.["]
I went to the wagon they men lift up their swords and swore
I should not see them. (He took me by the hand & it was as much
as we could do to get thru the crowd to the waggon) I finally
got to the wagon & put up my hand & he [Joseph] took hold of
it & kissed it. Says I ["]now Joseph speak once more.["] Says he
now ["]God bless you my poor mother.["] They were taken away
They were in bands and irons. All this time my <my son> W[illiam]
& wife 24 were sick. Samuels wife was sick and some others &
I had them all to take care off. After that we had to move. Joseph
went to City of Washington 25 It rained 3 days as hard as it could
rain but we had to travel & nothing to shelter us We walked
6 miles <in the [river] bottom> my cloth[els] was wet [so high up
I could scarcely walk] and when we got to the quincy river 26 it
snow[d] [it rained] & haild and was cold. We laid down on the
<cold> snow <& a blanket over us> and took off our wet stockins
& did the best we could. In the morning <the cover [over us] was
frozen stiff> we could not make a fire for the snow. Joseph then
went to the City of W[ashington]. He had a rev[elation] to
importune at the Governors feet & the prest. feet for the
Lord said if they would not heed them he would vex the
nation. 27 After he returned he went to preaching down between
Mr. Durfees [and] the Mansion house He told the brethren &
sisters] that he had done all he could for them, says he ["]they
are determined we shall not have justice <while we stay in
Nauvoo>["] But says he ["]keep good courage You never shall
suffer for bread as you have done before.["] says he ["]all these
cases is a record on earth & what is recorded here is a record
in heaven.["] Now says he ["]I am a going to lay this case of their
taking away our property or I am a going to take it up to the
highest court in heaven.["] he said so 3 times—Never did I think
he was going to leave us so soon to take this case to heaven.
He never could get justice till he took it there. [The Lord has got
even the Marshall there] 28 I feel now just exactly that the Lord
has got even the Smiths there—They know all our sufferings
and dont you think our case is being tried? I think they will do
more for us there than they could if they were here. I feel if there
was no evil here [—] not talking [—] all would go right <I feel that
if every soul would stay at home they would be blessed> I feel
that the Lo[rd] is vexing the Nation a little here & there. And
I feel that the Lo[rd] will let brother Brigham take the people away.29 I don't know that I shall go [West] but if W[illia]m and the rest of the family go I shall go. I feel to bless you all <I pray that the Lord may bless the heads of the Church> Brother Brigham and all. <when I go to another world I want to meet you all> Here lays my dead my husband and children. I want to lay my bones so that in the rest[urection]. I can rise with my husband & children. If so be that my children go <And I would to God all my children would go> with you but they will not go without me and if I go I want to have my bones fetch[ed] back to be laid with my husband & children.30

NOTES


3 Curtis E. Bolton Journal, October 1845, Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives. Wrote Bolton: “At the October Conference Br. B. Young called upon me to take the minutes and prepare them for the press which I did.”

4 Lucy Smith uses this nineteenth-century idiom to applaud Brigham Young's earlier comments, which roundly denounced the dishonesty of a few Nauvoo Church members who had taken non-Mormon property. Such action, said Brigham, was “mortifying to him & every one who desire to be a true servant of God.” Brigham’s preaching struck an obvious resonance with Lucy and may have been one of the reasons prompting her to address the Saints during the conference session.

5 Of her eleven children, nine grew to adulthood; one was stillborn, and another died in infancy.

6 Occasionally the obviously rushed Clayton stops recording the speech in the first person to give an abbreviated summary of her sentiment.

7 Apparently Lucy Smith's censure relates to the Mormons who allowed their children to roam the Nauvoo neighborhood without supervision.

8 Lucy struggles to maintain her strength. Speaking to a congregation of two thousand without the aid of a microphone was physically taxing.

9 The General Church Minutes version of the speech has Lucy giving the date on which Joseph Smith received the plates as September 2, 1827; the two subsequent copies, however, say September 22, 1827, suggesting the former was a simply a recording error.
Lucy appears to have lost a week. September 22 was two weeks from the preceding Monday, October 6, 1845, which was just two days prior to her speech.

At the time, Martin and Lucy Harris had a daughter living with them.

This desire of course led Harris to take some transcribed Book of Mormon characters to leading specialists of the time. He visited Charles Anthon and Samuel L. Mitchell, both residents of New York City, and possibly also a third, Luther Bradish, whose residence at the time is uncertain (Pomeroy Tucker, Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism [New York: D. Appleton, 1867], 42). According to Joseph Smith, Moroni had so directed him when Joseph received the plates (Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, “Letter IV,” Messenger and Advocate [February 1835]: 80). For an overview of Harris’s experience, see Stanley B. Kimball, “The Anthon Transcript: People, Primary Sources, and Problems,” BYU Studies 10 (Spring 1970): 325–52.

Lucy Smith would be disappointed in her wish. Her memoir, the Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations (Liverpool: Orson Pratt, 1853), was not published until eight years later and then was met with the disapproval of Brigham Young, who believed it contained disturbing historical errors. A corrected edition of the book was later issued and has remained in print. At the time California was an imprecise term applying to lands west of the Rocky Mountain cordillera.

This refrain is contained in advice given to Hyrum Smith (D&C 11:15–22).

The family had lost their newly constructed home in a foreclosure of a mortgage.

The two later versions, probably mistaking Clayton’s letter S for a C, supply the name of another of Lucy’s sons, Don Carlos in the place of Samuel. With the versions in conflict, the reference is uncertain.

Two days before, at the beginning of the general conference, William Smith had been dropped both as a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles and as Patriarch to the Church. On the following Sunday, October 12, 1845, he was excommunicated. Smith, repeatedly at odds with Brigham Young, had left Nauvoo in the fall of 1845 and rumors swept the city that he had left to secure the assistance of U.S. troops to prevent the planned migration west. See Minutes of the General Conference, October 6, 1845, LDS Church Archives; HC 7:460, 483; and Andrew F. Ehat, ed., “They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet”—The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding,” BYU Studies 19 (Winter 1979): 161.

Joseph Smith, Sr., and Lucy Mack Smith had three daughters: Sophronia Smith Stoddard, Catherine Smith Salisbury, and Lucy Smith Milliken.

John Portineus Greene and his wife Rhoda Young Greene, a sister to Brigham, were residents of Mendon, New York. John was successively a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Reformed Church, serving the latter as an itinerant preacher.

The anonymous transcript has Mrs. Green asking the question.

Rhoda Young Greene.

The traditional account of this episode is told in Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 88–89: “Samuel was discouraged, but continued on his journey. That night he slept under an apple tree. In the morning he called at the home of Rev. John P. Greene, a Methodist minister. Mr. Greene was just leaving on a preaching tour and like the others who had been approached [earlier], he was not interested in the book. However, he manifested a friendly spirit and, at the earnest solicitation of Samuel, consented to take a subscription paper and try to sell copies of the book. Thereupon Samuel left him a copy of the Book of Mormon with the understanding that the missionary...
would call again in about two weeks. At the appointed time, Samuel returned and was disappointed to learn that there had been no sale. . . . He returned home after his labors were finished, feeling that his work had proved to be fruitless. More out of curiosity than desire, both Mr. Greene and his wife read the book and were deeply impressed. The copy Samuel left with John P. Greene was placed by the latter in the hands of members of the Young family, which was the first direct information to Brigham Young and his brother and some of their friends, including Heber C. Kimball, of the restoration of the Gospel."

On the other hand, both Brigham Young and his brother Phineas spoke of another copy of new scripture circulating in the family that may have been more influential in the family's conversion. See "History of Brigham Young," Deseret News, February 5, 1858, 377; Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses; 26 vols. (Liverpool: Albert Carrington and others, 1853–1886), 3:91, August 8, 1852; and "A Family Meeting in Nauvoo," Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine 11 (July 1920): 110.

23 Samuel Harrison Smith married Mary Bailey on August 13, 1834.
24 Caroline Grant, sister to Jedediah Grant, Salt Lake City's first mayor and a counselor to President Young in the First Presidency, married William Smith in 1834.  
25 Here Lucy's impressionist account departs from chronology. As she makes clear later in her remarks, Joseph Smith's trip to Washington, D.C., followed the Church's expulsion from Missouri. At the time of Lucy's exodus from Missouri, he remained incarcerated in the Liberty Jail in Clay County.
26 Perhaps on or near the Mississippi River bottom near Quincy, Illinois. The latter was a gathering area for many of the Mormons who fled from Missouri.
27 A delegation of Latter-day Saints, led by Joseph Smith himself, visited the nation's capital and secured an appointment with President Martin Van Buren in November 1839. An echo of Joseph Smith's belief that the nation's failure to respond to the Mormon entreaties for justice would bring God's punishment upon the country can be found in HC 3:332: "Is there no virtue in the body politic?" Joseph asked. "Will not the people rise up in their majesty, and with that promptitude and zeal which are so characteristic of them, discountenance such proceedings [the Missouri turmoil], by bringing the offenders to that punishment which they so richly deserve, and save the nation from that disgrace and ultimate ruin, which otherwise must inevitably fall upon it?"
28 No doubt Lucy speaks ironically here.
29 A central question weighing on Church leaders and members was whether government authorities would permit their departure west. As Brigham Young had commented earlier in the morning when speaking to the conference: "The government of the State has sent his force to hold the Mormons still while our enemies [in the immediate neighborhood] put the red hot Iron into us" (General Church Minutes Collection, October 8, 1845). Lucy Smith expresses her faith that the people would be allowed to go west.
30 At this point Lucy's voice apparently gave out, and after saying a few more words that the clerks found difficult to hear, she left the speaker's stand. After her remarks, President Young pledged his assistance should the Smith family decide to go west and, in harmony with Lucy's stated desire, promised: "I pledge myself if Mother Smith goes with us that I will do all in my power to bring her bones back here to her children and I want to know if this people are willing to enter into a covenant to do the same." The Saints in the congregation voted to do likewise (General Church Minutes Collection, October 8, 1845).
Book Reviews


Reviewed by Noel B. Reynolds, professor of political science at Brigham Young University and president of F.A.R.M.S., with appreciation to Tad Louis Cowley for research assistance.

This distinctive volume, which continues the Religious Studies Center's tradition of high production quality, may prove a landmark publication in three important senses. Most importantly, it provides a new edition of the text of the "Lectures on Faith" together with charts comparing the textual variations among the four major earlier editions (1835, 1876, 1891, and 1985) as well as the variations between the 1835 edition and this 1990 edition—useful resources for students of the lectures. Less significant for scholars, but probably of more value to most readers, are the excellent "discussions" of the seven lectures by Dennis F. Rasmussen, Joseph Fielding McConkie, Rodney Turner, Robert L. Millet, Robert J. Matthews, and Ardeth G. Kapp. Third, the book is nicely constructed for popular study of the lectures; it brings together in one place both the lectures and much of what has been thought and said about them and supplements them with an extensive bibliography of related materials. In addition to these contributions, the volume represents a vigorous and well-designed effort to rehabilitate the largely disregarded lectures.

In a helpful introduction, editor Charles Tate explains the guidelines governing changes made for the 1990 edition of the lectures. Scholars might object to the decision to modernize punctuation, spelling, format, and sentence structure rather than reproduce the original 1835 version. One criticism of this modernized edition is that it will not lend itself to authorship studies. But as I have used this edition, I have become more sympathetic to the
editors' approach and have detected little change in meaning. Eliminating the distracting imperfections in the 1835 text has rendered it more readable. Most helpfully, the editors have numbered the lists of questions and answers following each of the lectures. These improvements, combined with updated scripture references, make studying the lectures much easier. And for those who need to have the original, the editors have charted all the variations of their version from the 1835 version.

The editors' desire to promote the lectures explains the apologetic tone of the volume. The chapter on historical background by Larry Dahl summarizes previously published information\(^1\) in a way designed to reduce doubts about the value of the lectures or Joseph Smith's intimate involvement in preparing, delivering, and publishing them. Dahl cautiously reports the authorship studies which have all concluded that Sidney Rigdon was the main author. The essays on the lectures' topics are designed to promote the importance of certain ideas in the lectures, to advance our understanding and appreciation of those ideas, and to defend them where they might seem to contradict Latter-day Saint scriptures or teachings. These essays do not criticize or explain the lectures; rather, in most instances, they pick up the subject of the given lecture and elaborate on it, providing what many readers will find to be more inspiring and informative treatments of the topics than were the original Kirtland lectures.

The essay on Lecture 1 by philosopher Dennis Rasmussen is an excellent example of such a discussion. After showing briefly how one might make sense of the idea that faith is a principle of action and power in both men and God, he goes on to a longer discussion of some of the "latent ideas" that "seem to follow from the first lecture" (166). In particular, Rasmussen is interested in the apparent commitment to happiness as a standard of good and in Joseph Smith's statement that "happiness is the object and design of our existence."\(^2\) Recognizing the relativist implications of these kinds of teleological ethics, Rasmussen argues that "at its highest level faith as the principle of action . . . becomes the principle of duty to keep the commandments of God" (173). He justifies this move from an ethics of happiness to a Kantian ethic of duty by arguing that the highest happiness results from doing one's duty. In light of the debate between deontological ethics and utilitarianism in contemporary ethical theory, readers with a philosophical bent will be interested in how Rasmussen interprets this lecture.
Rasmussen was well chosen to write the lead essay both because of his natural familiarity with the pervasive philosophical character of the lectures and because of his ability to deal with complex philosophical issues in a gospel context without using technical jargon that would discourage general readers. In featuring Rasmussen, the editors make a courageous statement in a community where some ever-vigilant but overzealous critics interpret every resort to philosophical argument as evidence of “secular humanist” tendencies (205).

Lecture 2 makes the point that men and women can come to know God only as he chooses to reveal himself to them. The importance of this teaching is appropriately emphasized in the vigorous essay by Joseph Fielding McConkie. Using forceful language, McConkie develops the themes of Lecture 2 with a mastery of modern scriptures that does not characterize the authors of the original lectures. Like Rasmussen, he goes beyond the simple theme of the lecture to develop a rich complexity of possible implications. The lecture establishes that, down to the time of Abraham, people knew of God through traditions originating from the appearances and words of God to Adam and Cain. Encouraged by these traditions, all God’s children could seek their own witnesses of God’s existence.

McConkie goes beyond this idea to develop a somewhat different point—that God’s order consists of holy men who can be witnesses of God and declare his doctrines and scriptures and that this order is not limited to the President of the Church. These inspired men can write inspired doctrinal books, even though “not . . . by way of commandment” (195). Although McConkie is explicitly arguing to broaden the generally accepted view of who can write inspired doctrinal books, one senses that his concept of who can contribute to the knowledge of God may not be so broad as the lectures seem to suggest; they point twice to the conversations between God and Cain following Abel’s murder as important early sources of knowledge about God.

Because of their similar content, Lectures 3 and 4 were assigned by the editors to a single essayist. In reading these two lectures, most contemporary Latter-day Saints would have a strong sense that they were reading a sectarian Protestant document. As essayist Rodney Turner points out, these lectures employ thirty-nine verses from the Bible and two from the Doctrine and Covenants to “prove” or “extrapolate” God’s nature (199). In these lectures, the reader encounters the paradoxical thesis that in order to have faith in God,
one must first have knowledge of his nature. One of the main strengths of Turner's approach is the way he uses modern scriptures to discuss both this point and the following unfamiliar premises taken from the lectures:

1. "It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God" (200; italics omitted).³
2. "'God' is not one solitary being, but the sum total of all those men and women who achieve a fulness of exaltation" (201–2).
3. "We know of no identifiable personage who has always existed as God, yet God—at least in principle—has always existed" (202).
4. "If one of [the gods] were to modify or discard even a single attribute, the perfect unity that makes all gods one god would be violated" (210).
5. "Law did not create God; God created law" (214).

One does not know quite how to take Turner's adamant rejections of reason as a legitimate means for learning about God when he himself explicitly and implicitly turns to "purely theoretical argument" (210) to make many of his key points. His attack on "secular humanism" (205–6) makes sense with respect to humanism's disbelief in the divine, but one wonders if humanism's rationalistic methods are distinct from the strategies of proof used in the Lectures on Faith.

The most sensitive assignment, Lecture 5, was given to Robert L. Millet, dean of Religious Education at Brigham Young University. The doctrine of the Godhead expressed in this lecture seems in conflict with Latter-day Saint teaching—a problem that has often been associated with the 1921 decision to delete the lectures from the Doctrine and Covenants. Millet successfully puts the casual critic of this lecture off balance by quoting an extraordinary endorsement of the lectures by Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "It is without question the most excellent summary of revealed and eternal truth relative to the Godhead that is now extant in mortal language. . . . To spiritually illiterate persons, it may seem hard and confusing; to those whose souls are aflame with heavenly light, it is a nearly perfect summary of those things which must be believed to gain salvation" (221).⁴ In the same spirit, Millet suggests to the reader that the desired harmony between Lecture 5 and the scriptures will be found by
those who search prayerfully and "give solemn and ponderous thought" (222) to these insights, which he unequivocally attributes to Joseph Smith. For Millet, there is no authorship issue worth considering. Without qualification, he cites all passages from the lectures as Joseph Smith's words.

One of the first issues Millet addresses is the oft-remarked Protestantism of the lectures. Referring to this and the theory that they were early, experimental, and sectarian, he asserts that they "are neither primitive nor Protestant" (223). Millet's subsequent efforts to reconcile Lecture 5 with current Latter-day Saint teachings are admirable and well-written academic exercises—though they are puzzling. His first alternative explanation of the treatment of God the Father as a spirit being suggests that Joseph might not have grasped the Father's corporeality by 1835. But that explanation seems to play right into the primitivist thesis he rejects. The other alternatives offered by Millet feature interpretations by which the language is made to imply what the Church now expressly teaches.

The second troublesome issue in Lecture 5 is the character of the Holy Spirit, which, as Millet says, "seems to be relegated to some type of mystical connecting link between the other two members of the Godhead" (233). Millet acknowledges that there is little evidence before Nauvoo that Joseph understood the Holy Ghost as a distinct personage, except the statement just before his death to the effect that he had "always declared" it that way (234). Millet further hypothesizes that there may well have been "a significant chasm" between the Prophet's understanding and what he taught to the Saints (234). Few Latter-day Saints would question that Joseph knew more than he said, but it is harder to believe that what he taught was different from what he knew. The reader is left to wonder how it is that the awkwardness of composing such strained arguments never moves Millet to mention or consider the widely accepted and well-supported possibility that these lectures were largely authored by Sidney Rigdon, who clearly did not have all the understanding of Joseph Smith, and to acknowledge the doctrinal variations and Protestantism as consistent with that account of authorship.

Millet ignores the authorship issue and even makes his predicament more severe by insisting on the authoritative correctness of the lectures. He points out that the Saints in 1835 accepted them as the "doctrine of the Church" (238) and claims that they were "wholly approved" by the Prophet in their present form (238–39). These claims overstate the documented facts. The most that can be shown
is that Joseph may have been involved in preparing the lectures for publication. But even that belief depends on a statement written several years later. In contrast, the minutes of the Church conference that approved publication of the new Doctrine and Covenants report language identifying the revelations as Church doctrine and the lectures as "judiciously arranged and compiled, and . . . profitable for doctrine."

Millet establishes his unequivocal devotion to the lectures by quoting a 1972 statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "In my judgment [Lecture 5] is the most comprehensive, intelligent, inspired utterance that now exists . . . in one place defining, interpreting, expounding, announcing, and testifying what kind of being God is. It was written by the power of the Holy Ghost, by the spirit of inspiration. It is, in effect, eternal scripture; it is true (239)." Quotations like this help us understand why Elder McConkie might have urged including the lectures in the 1981 edition of the scriptures. And they may also partially explain the effort made in the present volume to rehabilitate the lectures among Latter-day Saints.

The dual topic of Lecture 6, as discussed by Robert J. Matthews, is the necessity of sacrifice and of knowing that one's life is acceptable to God. Matthews shares the view of the other writers that the lectures "are the greatest and most profound treatises on faith that we know of" (241). However, it is noteworthy that Matthews goes far beyond the text of Lecture 6 to demonstrate and develop these principles from modern scriptures and the teachings of modern prophets.

The final essay is distinctive in that it evidences little intention to promote the lectures themselves. Rather, Ardent G. Kapp offers a well-conceived and inspiring explanation of the fruits of faith in her response to Lecture 7. While her approach is not scholarly, the essay reveals her devout spirit and encourages the reader to be faithful.

The issue that continues to provoke the most interest relative to the "Lectures on Faith" is Who wrote them? To his credit, Larry E. Dahl, as one of the editors, discusses the available evidence, though this evidence tends to undermine the view that Joseph Smith was primarily responsible for the lectures.

Opinions on the authorship and status of the lectures in Latter-day Saint literature vary widely. Elder McConkie’s view is quoted above. Probably no other Church leader has supported this view so strongly. Obviously, it was not shared by the Church leadership that dropped the lectures from the canon in 1921, explicitly reiterating
the statement that the lectures were not scripture but merely "helps." Those leaders possibly were inclined to agree with Elder John A. Widtsoe, who believed the lectures were "written by Sidney Rigdon and others." Three independent authorship studies using different but reputable techniques conclude that Sidney Rigdon is the primary author of the lectures. Not a single lecture can conclusively be attributed to Joseph Smith. Dahl's brief survey of these studies tends to emphasize their limitations and gently downplay the significance of their conclusions, but he does distance himself from those who want to give Joseph Smith full responsibility for the lectures.

Furthermore, Dahl's discussion of historical evidence concerning authorship is incomplete and insufficiently critical. Dahl notes, for example, the contemporary journal entry by Zebedee Coltrin stating that Sidney Rigdon "presided over the school," but dismisses it with the ungrounded speculation that perhaps Rigdon was really only the teacher (11). Dahl also refers to an October 1834 entry in the History of the Church indicating that Joseph Smith was busy preparing for the School of the Elders. But only by conjecture can Dahl conclude that such evidence implies Joseph was personally working on the lectures (7–8). The only strong historical link between Joseph and the lectures is the January 1835 History of the Church entry indicating that he was working on the committee that was preparing them for publication. Such a statement is not sufficient historical evidence that Joseph was responsible for their content or method. Even if we acknowledge Rigdon as the main author, we have no way to determine how closely Joseph reviewed or edited the lectures.

Dahl's conclusions should also be more tentatively stated due to the character of the cited historical sources. The History of the Church was not begun until 1838. The entries mentioning the Lectures on Faith and the School of the Elders are, therefore, latter reconstructions done in the pen of Joseph's various scribes. As Dean C. Jessee points out in the introduction to The Papers of Joseph Smith, Joseph's dependence on scribes to keep his records may partially prevent the reader from knowing the mind of the Prophet. Joseph's original diaries and personal writings, which provided most of the source material from which the History of the Church was later compiled, make no mention of the lectures.

A major weakness of The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective is the failure to seriously consider alternative scenarios that might explain the available facts about the authorship and use
of the lectures. The volume is designed to promote a single view, rehabilitating the deconsecrated lectures, in spite of any awkwardness this view creates. Though the following is not an exhaustive study of this matter, it demonstrates that one can spin quite a different theory, one that would accommodate a broader range of facts and agree better with the positions taken currently by the presiding quorums of the Church.

The year 1835 was a time in which Joseph's leadership was under persistent attack; within a few years, all the key actors in the publication of the lectures turned against Joseph and left the Church. According to Brigham Young, Oliver Cowdery included the "Article on Marriage" in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in spite of Joseph's repeated requests that it not be included. Thus how can we conclude any particular level of enthusiasm for the lectures on Joseph's part merely from their inclusion and his signature on the prefatory letter? Perhaps Joseph merely felt bound by the vote of the 1835 conference, which was presided over by Rigdon and Cowdery in his absence.

The 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants included not only the Lectures on Faith, but also two items known to have been written by Oliver Cowdery (and possibly W. W. Phelps)—the statements on government and marriage. The preface to the 1835 edition explicitly acknowledges that all three of these nonrevelatory items are written in response to criticisms of the Church. Viewing the lectures as a response to criticism might help to explain their philosophical tone and atypical style. One possibility is that the Lectures on Faith were a response to criticism of those like Charles Finney. Finney's lecture on theological method began with the assertion that "Mormonism is ridiculous credulity, founded in utter ignorance or a disregard of the first principles of evidence in relation to the kind and degree of testimony demanded to establish any thing that claims to be a revelation from God." Contrary to the distinctive Mormon style with its emphasis on testimony, the Kirtland lectures frequently appeal to what Finney calls the "affirmations of reason." Assuming that the published version of Finney's lectures reflects what he had been saying about the Mormons in his years on the lecture circuit, one may infer from the similarities in format, philosophical tone, and principles of evidence between Finney's published lectures and the Kirtland lectures that the former may have influenced or even prompted the production of the latter. If the lectures are such a response, written to a critic of the Church rather
than written as a guide for the general membership, it may be inappropriate to view them as scripture, regardless of authorship—a question which remains unresolved.

These observations are not based on an exhaustive study of any of the materials mentioned. Much scholarly work on the lectures remains to be done. There needs to be extensive research into the writings and teachings of Rigdon, Cowdery, Phelps, and others. Also, someone needs to take a closer look at Finney and Campbell and the extent to which their widespread influence in frontier America might have touched the Latter-day Saints.

In spite of the incomplete nature of these conjectures, a significant question emerges: Why is it that several rather obvious alternative ways of understanding the Lectures on Faith are not mentioned in this work? Failure to deal with these obvious possibilities limits the volume's long-range value as a starting point for future spiritual and scholarly study.

NOTES

1See Leland H. Gentry, "What of the Lectures on Faith?" BYU Studies 19 (Fall 1978): 5–19. Dahl is the first to notice evidence that the lectures may have been delivered before December 22 (12); he also points out the absence of documentary evidence for the widely reported conclusion that Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith were the "primary teachers" for the school (10–11).


3Smith, Teachings, 343–45.

4Quoting Bruce R. McConkie, A New Witness for the Articles of Faith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 72.


6Joseph Smith, Jr., The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1958), 2:244; hereafter cited as HC.


8Gentry, "What of the Lectures on Faith?" 10–11.


11 HC 2:169–70.
12 HC 2:180.
14 Concerning the "Article on Marriage," Joseph F. Smith recorded a statement by Brigham Young: "Prest. Young spoke 12 minutes in relation to Sec. 109 [ook] of Doctrine and Covenants ["Article on Marriage"]. Saying Oliver Cowdery wrote it, and insisted on its being incerted in the Book of D. & C. contrary to the thrice expressed wish and refusal of the Prophet Jos. Smith" (Joseph F. Smith diary, October 9, 1869, on file in the Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City).
15 Bruce A. Van Orden has examined the common assumption that Oliver Cowdery wrote the 1835 statements on government and marriage and advances persuasive evidence that Cowdery and Phelps worked together on these and that Phelps's background for writing the government statement in particular was significantly stronger than Cowdery's. See his "W. W. Phelps: His Ohio Contributions, 1835–36," in Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Ohio, ed. Milton V. Backman, Jr. (Provo, Utah: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1990).
16 Charles G. Finney, Finney's Lectures on Theology (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1986), 19, 21.

Reviewed by Thomas G. Alexander, professor of history and director of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University.

Although the occasion of many of the sermons I have given in Church gatherings has faded into oblivion, the evening I reported my mission in the Ogden Twenty-ninth Ward is indelibly impressed on my mind. Immediately after I had finished my report, the bishop arose to announce that a ward member whom I had known for years and who had been serving in the French Mission while I was in Germany, had been excommunicated for entering polygamy. Memories flooded through my mind as I read Van Wagoner's mention of her name.

That personal memory aside, probably no topic in Mormon studies has held the fascination of the public—both Mormon and non-Mormon—as has the practice of plural marriage. Revulsion at the practice induced many in the United States during the nineteenth century, and not a few today, to identify the Latter-day Saints with gross immorality and deviant fanaticism. Public outrage promoted an anti-Mormon crusade that led eventually to the suppression of the practice and to the accommodation of the Latter-day Saints with their fellow citizens.


In general, Van Wagoner’s interpretations are quite moderate. He agrees with Joseph Smith’s own interpretation of the origins of plural marriage. Van Wagoner, like other authors before him, properly cites other groups and individuals who proposed, and in some cases instituted, forms of marriage other than monogamy. Finally, however, and following others, he concludes that the Latter-day Saint practice derived from Joseph’s attempt to effect the restoration of all things. Van Wagoner views polygamy as popular with some Mormons and abhorrent to others. He also recognizes that the practice continued in some circles well after 1890.

Even though Van Wagoner’s interpretations are rather well substantiated in other secondary literature and by readily available primary sources, a number of authors have continued to insist on outmoded and indefensible rationalizations. Some have argued that more women joined the Church than men and that polygamy was necessary to provide faithful husbands for the excess females. In fact, historians have known for years that a shortage of marriageable females occurred in some areas and that some Church leaders actually married wives of other living Saints. Other authors have begged the question, at the same time denying its pervasiveness, by arguing that plural marriage was limited to two or three percent of Latter-day Saint marriages. However, current statistical information provided by Lowell C. Bennion and others has shown that the incidence was much higher. On the average, perhaps 20 to 25 percent of adults were married polygamously. Some say that the Church considered the practice legal, justified by the First Amendment free exercise clause, which was true; but then they proceed to argue that Latter-day Saints gave up plural marriage as soon as the Supreme Court declared the practice illegal, an absolutely absurd statement contradicted by abundant factual information.

Nevertheless, there are some problems which Van Wagoner has not solved and which remain to be investigated. The beginning
of the practice of plural marriage remains a mystery. The first recorded polygamous marriage took place between Joseph Smith and Louisa Beaman in April 1841, but how long before that the Prophet had entered the practice is open to speculation.

Various people have tried to push the date of the beginning back to the 1830s with a marriage alleged to have taken place between the Prophet and Fanny Alger. Van Wagoner rightly concludes that "confusion over the exact nature and extent of Joseph Smith's involvement with Fanny Alger has remained to this day" (10). Well he should, since at least one piece of evidence that he presents on the question is spurious. He cites an alleged interview in the St. George Temple between an unnamed Saint and Heber C. Kimball, who is said to have introduced Fanny's brother John as the brother of Joseph Smith's first plural wife. This would have been an extraordinary feat since the St. George Temple was not dedicated until 1877 and Heber C. Kimball died in 1868.

Nevertheless, Van Wagoner's book is essentially a rather straightforward discussion of the institution, practice, and demise of polygamy among orthodox Latter-day Saints and its continuation under Fundamentalists. Van Wagoner documents the discord that plural marriage caused in Nauvoo, its subsequent practice and public acknowledgment in 1852, its effect on family life, the anti-polygamy crusade, and the Woodruff Manifesto. He also considers post-Manifesto polygamy, the Smoot hearings, and subsequent suppression of new polygamous marriages among orthodox Mormons. Finally he discusses the continued practice of plural marriage among generally inoffensive Fundamentalists such as the Colorado City–Hillsdale community, the Allred group, and Roysten Potter; the violent activities of the LeBaron family and their associates and of the Singer-Swapp clan; and the deviant sexual practices of John W. Bryant.

When the second edition of any book is issued, one often wonders what justification the author and publishers had for a new edition as opposed to a second printing of the old. In order to try to answer that question, this reviewer made a cursory comparison of the two editions. The results are mixed. Many of the changes are essentially cosmetic, such as adding titles to chapters, reformatting verbatim transcripts of interviews, and rephrasing or recasting information taken from the first edition. Some of the changes, however, have resulted from Van Wagoner's use of more recent research on the topics under consideration (see, for instance, pp. 82, 90, 96, 98, 119, 204, and 212 ff.).
Although Van Wagoner's book is a generally accurate summary of previously published studies together with an examination of some of the available primary data, we still need a full-scale, in-depth study of plural marriage. Sufficient confusion remains about such things as its date of origin, the details of its practice during Joseph Smith's lifetime, the practice of polyandry, the extent of the practice of plural marriage among orthodox Latter-day Saints between 1852 and 1904, the extent of its practice after 1904, and the patterns of practice among Fundamentalist groups today that a number of studies can and undoubtedly will be published in the future.

NOTE


Reviewed by Susan Easton Black, director of Church History, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University.

The Mormon Battalion trek from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to the Pacific Ocean helped shape the American West and the future of the Mormon pioneers. One of the few teenagers to join Stephen Kearny’s Army of the West was eighteen-year-old Azariah Smith, who stood 5'10" and weighed a slight 130 pounds. In his pocket diary, Smith chronicled some of the most decisive events in the history of the American West. From July 1846 through September 1848, he captured the deeds, travels, and sentiments of the battalion from their enlistment to their discharge. He also recorded the discovery of gold at Sutter’s mill and the opening of the Mormon Carson Pass Emigrant Trail over the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Young Smith seemed unaware of the monumental nature of the daily events he recorded. Historians have likewise seemed unaware that an account other than Henry W. Bigler’s journals could serve as a primary source for this phase of the Western pioneering movement. Fortunately, David L. Bigler, a distant relative of both Henry W. Bigler and Azariah Smith, recognized the worth of Smith’s firsthand account of some of the events that shaped the West. Bigler’s scholarly editing of *The Gold Discovery Journal of Azariah Smith* preserves its value for the reader of California and Western history. He has added copious notes, illustrations, and background information that enable the reader to place Smith’s diary accounts in a meaningful historical context. Bigler’s meticulous editing is commendable, and his contribution to the historic legacy of the Mormon Battalion is laudable.

Bigler divides Smith’s journal into five chapters, each differing in historic content and in Smith’s personal focus. The first chapter, “By the Cimarron to Santa Fe, August 1–October 16, 1846,” reflects the march’s physical hardships. “My eyes were so sore that I could not travai [sic] in the dust of the Battalion” (23) is a typical entry. Smith’s discomfort quickly escalates from mere mentions of physical duress to consuming entries of survival in the wilderness. His search for “Buffalo chips for fuel” and digging of “holes in the Sand for water” (26) describe the desperate condition of those who marched.
“Cooke’s Wagon Road West, October 18, 1846–January 21, 1847,” the second division, depicts the wagon route to the Pacific Ocean. Again, the necessity for survival is evident in Smith’s writing, but a new preoccupation with the distance traveled each day dominates his entries. However, Smith is not always serious; his youthful personality and teenage interest in “ladies, some of which looked very pretty, others looked like destruction” (41), is a welcome relief from the logged miles.

In the third division, “California Occupied, January 22–July 20, 1847,” Smith settles into garrison life. Here he spends more time on personal grooming, such as washing belts and preparing for general inspection. He seems to have an excess of free time to play ball, fish, race, jump, and sing. Yet amid this freedom, Smith pens, “I feel very lonesum and want to see home but comfort myself thinking that it is only a little more than three months more till our discharge” (82). Following his discharge, Smith expresses what was perhaps the feeling of many members of the battalion: “[We] are now our own men” (89).

The fourth division, “Gold at Sutter’s Mill, July 28, 1847–June 22, 1848,” contrasts Smith’s desire to return home with his disdain at the discovery of gold. His most enthusiastic entry is written regarding his mother: “In the evening there was a letter read from the Twelve to the Battalion which gave us much joy. I and Father received a letter from mother which gave us much more” (102). The Twelve counseled single men to work in California for one year before migrating to the Salt Lake Valley. Smith, obedient to counsel, remained in California but pined for his family: “I miss Father and feel very lonesum here in the mountains” (103). His emotional pain heightens as he suffers from a fever. His reaction to the discovery of gold, which he calls “the root of all evil” (110), is one of contempt. Nevertheless, Smith did temporarily join in the quest for nuggets when James Marshall promised him “half we find” (112).

As news of the gold rush spread, Smith penned the fifth division, “Trail to El Dorado, June 25–September 29, 1848.” He begins with his oft-repeated emotion, “I wanted to see my mother and I did not care whether there was gold in the locality or not” (122; quoted from San Francisco Examiner, January 24, 1898). In contrast, once on the trail to the Salt Lake Valley, he writes with enthusiasm and optimism. The complaints of a fever or sore eyes, which dominate his previous writings, are now absent; he even treats a personal injury with unusual nonchalance: “I fell on my shoulder,
Book Reviews 301

and hurt it pretty bad, but accidents will happen with the best of folks" (140). Finally, after two years of separation, twenty-year-old Smith "found Father, Mother, Sisters and brother; and they were all well" (146).

On the whole, Bigler's editing of Smith's journal is professional and helpful. His scholarly notes on the rich historical and literary heritage of the Mormon Battalion provide valuable background information for each division of the journal. Brief, clarifying introductions to each division strengthen the text. By separating journal entries from footnoted source material, Bigler helps maintain the integrity and flow of Smith's own words. The ample footnotes provide relevant biographical, historical, geographical, and interpretative analysis. The illustrations, maps, photographs, and samples of handwriting also significantly contribute to the text.

Unfortunately, due to the rather redundant nature of Azariah Smith's diary entries, it is often difficult to maintain interest in the book. The laborious entries, coupled with lengthy footnotes, make this text more a reference work than a book of intriguing reading. Yet when The Gold Discovery Journal of Azariah Smith is viewed solely as an objective reference text, problems arise. Bigler's explanatory references sometimes fail to be objective because of his interpretive editorial bias. For example, Bigler refers to the writings of David Pettegrew, the respected father-figure of the battalion, as "yarns," but credits his teenaged ancestor with writing an objective account (50 n. 30). When Smith mentions Adjutant Staff Commandant George P. Dykes but does not express any feelings, Bigler concludes that Dykes "was not hated or resented by either young Smith or his father [and that this] does credit to their good sense" (20 n. 23). Bigler also says Smith's entries show "irrepressible optimism . . . where others saw wasteland" (37). This conclusion seems gratuitous since it is not directly supported in the journal entries. Thus there is a modest but consistent pattern of lionizing an esteemed ancestor.

When Bigler is unable to develop a brief biographical sketch on a battalion member noted in Smith's journal, he often concludes that "little is known about" the man. He uses this apologetic phrase even for such well-documented battalion members as Colonel James Allen (21 n. 26) and William Barger (111 n. 46). Bigler's inclusion of an autobiographical sketch emphasizing Smith's Latter-day Saint affiliation and his life prior to enlistment is informative. However, at the end of his text, Bigler neglects fifty years of
Smith's later life. In the epilogue, Bigler briefly alludes to those fifty years by writing “for [the next] fifty years” and then leaps to “early in 1898” (147). This fifty-year hiatus is a startling contrast to his detailed attention to hundreds of daily entries. Another surprising omission is Bigler's failure to comment on the improvement in Smith's writing style, vocabulary, and grammar over the course of the journal.

Azariah Smith persisted in writing until 1912 and became a detailed, descriptive writer during his adult years. These later journals promise to reveal much of the first fifty years of Latter-day Saint settlement in Utah. They may become the basis for a further text. I applaud Bigler's informative editorial efforts and encourage him to continue his editing of Smith's journals to help us better understand America's pioneering years. His first endeavor, *The Gold Discovery Journal of Azariah Smith*, is a valuable resource to historians and to posterity.

Reviewed by Louis Midgley, professor of political science at Brigham Young University.

Books need not be written for professionals in order to be valuable. For example, when written by a gifted writer, a travel diary can be a source of pleasure and instruction, for a visitor may see things that go unnoticed by those who inhabit a land. Thus I confess a fondness for the genre for which Alexis de Tocqueville set the standard.¹ In the 1850s, the Latter-day Saints first became a focus for travel writers, and two of these writers, Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, borrowed somewhat from Tocqueville.² The most recent entry into this field is an English journalist, Malise Ruthven, author of *The Divine Supermarket*. Like Richard F. Burton a hundred and thirty years earlier, Ruthven has written at different times about both Islam and Mormonism.³

Having been raised in England in “mainstream, liberal Protestantism” (7), which he now disdains, and having come from a privileged background (6), Ruthven deals with religion in America in a charming, fashionably condescending manner. He writes as one mildly amused by the strange behavior he finds rampant among Americans. “I have,” he explains, “deliberately selected subjects like Mormonism and fundamentalism, that seemed exotic and alien to my own way of thinking, to seek out differences rather than explore common ground” between American and European (or British) religiosity. Thus in *The Divine Supermarket*, he exploits the seemingly bizarre manifestations of religion in the United States, which he insists are unlike religion in Britain (3).

A secular fundamentalism forms for Ruthven the natural horizon from which he assesses the religious world. He does not seem to question his own disbelieving dogmas, and he finds no need to defend his stance from skepticism. Hence he writes with charming and refreshingly boyish self-confidence, easily confessing his secular biases. For example, he confesses that the “mainstream, liberal Protestantism” of his youth “contains no mystery” and hence has “no appeal” to him (7). In spite of this admission, his views are closer to staid liberal churches whose intellectuals have reached an accommodation with secular modernity. He prefers manifestations
of incredulity about divine things, and he will have nothing to do with what he sees as the irrationality and hocus-pocus of the Latter-day Saints. Accordingly, he expresses a fondness for those Saints of a liberal bent who have jettisoned the Book of Mormon and the story of angels appearing to Joseph Smith.

Nevertheless, I found myself agreeing with some of Ruthven’s observations about American religiosity. For example, I am also annoyed when preachers in the Electronic Church refer to “Jeeeesesus” as they work their audiences. But one must guard against the urge to agree with his mocking of unpopular (and hence vulnerable) people and things. When tempted to brush aside the sincerity of others by seeing greed or incredulity at work, as does Ruthven, we Latter-day Saints might well search for more charitable explanations or withhold judgment, and we should keep in mind that only when one knows something about a journalist’s subject are the distortions apparent; otherwise they seem to hit the nail on the head.

These caveats clearly apply to The Divine Supermarket. In his search for why religions were the way he found them to be, Ruthven is, as might be expected, anxious to attribute much of the religiosity of Americans to the manipulation of gullibility by preachers driven by outright greed. Ruthven is not the first to attribute the motivation of greed to preachers. This approach has a long history. In 1861, Jules Remy, following suggestions made earlier by Tocqueville, claimed that the “thirst for gold . . . which is so powerful a spring in the commercial and industrial activity of the United States . . . was the first and fecundating inspiration of [Joseph] Smith’s religious schemes.”

Ruthven admits that he is not equipped to write a genuinely scholarly treatise (313), for even the most able scholars find it difficult to make sense out of the vast variety within American religiosity. Instead, he writes as one who has ventured out to the provinces to see what the natives are doing and returned with some interesting accounts of their strange beliefs and practices. Hence his book contains a series of impressions, buttressed by a bibliography and cleansed by scholarly authorities. Having traveled for a short time in the United States, Ruthven, all the while aligning himself with rationality against the forces of unreason, tells of his encounters with New Age religion (including channeling), snake handling, a Hopi corn dance, the remnants of the Bogwam Rajneeshpuram in Oregon, and the Aryan “Nazi” movement at Hayden Lake, Idaho. He probes the Electronic Church in the form of Jerry Falwell’s “ministry” (including
Liberty University), provides lurid accounts of the activities and eventual fall of Jimmy Swaggart’s “ministry,” and investigates Jim and Tammy Bakker and their notorious theme park. He examines partisan quarreling within the Southern Baptist Convention, the “creation-science” type of sectarian fundamentalism, and Robert Schuller’s unctuous “theology of self-esteem.” In dealing with two elements of Black religiosity, Ruthven is at his best: he provides a fine treatment of the Black Muslim movement, perhaps because of his previous work on Islam, and of the background and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. He quotes from interviews or conversations, on religious matters, with both the informed and the uninformed—academics, clergy, and otherwise. These conversations form the most fascinating portions of the book, for Ruthven was sufficiently knowledgeable, as well as sensitive to certain subtle nuances, to engage in intriguing and revealing conversations. In addition, the portions of the conversations he quotes seem to have been carefully reported, even though he has selected what he quotes from the perspective of his own secular agenda. All of this is woven together with accounts of landscapes, the weather, and the like in an entertaining, amusing, and sometimes instructive way.

Nearly a third of *The Divine Supermarket* is devoted to Joseph Smith and Mormon things. These form his primary example of irrational, absurd religion in America. For this portion of the book, Ruthven acknowledges help from scholars with Latter-day Saint connections including Jan Shipps, Linda Newell, Davis Bitton, and Alfred Bush. He describes an interview with “Paul Edwards, principal of the Temple School [which the RLDS use, among other things, to train their paid clergy], [who] is widely regarded as the RLDS church’s leading intellectual” (95). Edwards turned out to be friendly, about forty, with an honest, open manner. I felt immediately at ease with him. We talked about differences between the RLDS and the Utah Church. The Reorganized Church had a saying: “Utah has the kingdom, we’ve got the king.” It brought to mind the anthropological distinction between the cult of the person and the cult of the text: Catholics, Shi’as and Reorganites are person-oriented, Protestants, Sunnis and Utah Mormons are peoples of the book. This . . . would explain [the current RLDS president] Wallace Smith’s alleged disbelief in the Book of Mormon. So long as the RLDS had the Holy Family, they didn’t need Joseph’s Golden Bible. (95)

Edwards explained that up to 1915 “family legitimacy was crucial,” but “after that the reorganization became protestantised.
I think it has enough identity now to survive without a Smith at its head" (95–96). Edwards further explained that the Latter-day Saints had managed to establish their church without the legitimacy of the Prophet's family, enabling them to expand at an unbelievable rate. Although the RLDS had the Family, they had never managed to establish the same sense of legitimacy for their church. They remained a comparatively small, elitist group of about quarter of a million. Most of them lived in the Independence area, and could trace their membership back two or three generations. (96)

Edwards said that the RLDS constitute "an aristocracy," who have the princes and princesses of the blood royal; but we also have a whole range of dukes and duchesses, lords and ladies whose fathers or grandfathers held important positions in the church. So while there's a lot of loyalty to the Smith family, I think there's even more to their predecessors at court. Most of the members of our Joint Council had fathers or grandfathers on the Council; some even go back to the fourth generation. My impression is that the family aristocracy is a much stronger source of allegiance than any particular religious belief. From the theological point of view, most of our people would be quite satisfied with Methodism or Baptism, though their style is probably closer to the Quakers. (96)

Ruthven next asked Edwards about the "part the Book of Mormon played in the teachings of the Reorganized Church" (96). Edwards said that his "guess would be that it constitutes less than ten per cent of our scriptural readings. We don't teach it much in our schools. Our people believe in it, but they don't believe it. It's important as a symbol" (96). For Edwards, the Book of Mormon is something the RLDS have to live with: "It's a story, a myth, who knows what? For most people I know it's got nothing to do with anything. It's the way we explain ourselves. But whenever possible, I avoid bringing it up. If somebody else brings it up I squirm. If somebody wants to know what I think I usually lie" (96).

Ruthven wanted to know why Edwards, given his view of the foundations of the faith, remains RLDS. "The Church," Edwards said, "has some social and I think, in a very small sense, some religious meaning, and I don't want to see it destroyed. I'm a member of the Church despite the Book of Mormon, not because of it. I don't think that's an unusual position for people in the RLDS, but it's totally unacceptable to announce it" (96–97). Ruthven asked whether Wallace Smith, the current RLDS president, had announced that he does not believe the Book of Mormon, but Edwards brushed that question aside. About Latter-day Saint evangelism, Edwards maintained that it
is much more committed to the Book of Mormon. It's more difficult for them because they have a less elitist organization. For some of them the Book of Mormon is a positive attraction. The church tells them what to believe, they're not allowed a lot of questions. So you get the impression that the LDS are a bunch of happy, content people, whose questions have been answered. But if you actually know any Mormons, you know better than that. (97)

Edwards complained that a "lot of the Utah Saints don't know we [RLDS] exist. It comes as a great shock to them to discover that a quarter of a million people use the same scripture as they do, but don't think Brigham Young is a prophet" (97).

When he reached Utah, Ruthven was aware of "attacks on the Book of Mormon . . . from within the scholarly community—from the Mormon and non-Mormon academics who wrote about magic and Masonry; in particular the historians and anthropologists who were bound, from the professional point of view, to have questions not only about the book's origins, but about its claim to be a factual account of pre-Columbian American history" (119). He wondered "how educated, sophisticated modern Americans, people with professional backgrounds and interests, could still accept the Book of Mormon" (119). His inquiries took him to Brigham Young University, where his first interview was with Leonard J. Arrington, whom he describes as "a distinguished historian."

I began by raising the questions of magic, Masonry, and Indian origins. Every day new material was being published about early nineteenth-century American culture which threw the composition or "translation" of the Book of Mormon into greater relief (I picked my words cautiously). Was this not making it more and more difficult to sustain the official version, that there was a 1500-year gap between the Book's original composition and its "discovery" by Joseph Smith? (119)

Arrington indicated that he has always read the Book of Mormon as "sacred history," which is for him "separate and distinct from the kind of history" (120) done by professional historians in universities:

What the Church tells us is sacred history, and somehow it doesn't bother me that what I'm doing down here—the study of people, and places and events—appears different. I don't expect them to merge together. When I was a student I read George Santayana's *Reason and Religion* in which he discusses the difference between myth or sacred history and actual history. He presents the idea that there is a sacred epic for Christians, Muslims and practically every other people. . . . So at an early stage I came to accept the idea that there is a truth which does not rest upon historical narrative, but comes under the heading of faith, belief or religion. Nothing that has come up, in the form of new
historical data, has ever bothered me. The story, the way that it's told, is something that's in your heart. When you hear songs sung, or poems read, or see pictures that show these things, whether it's Christian history, or Mormon history, or whatever, it stirs you inside. But it does not affect what you're writing professionally. Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim historians have found ways of pursuing their work and displaying their integrity while maintaining their faith. Why shouldn't Mormons do the same? (120)

Of his encounters with other Latter-day Saint intellectuals, Ruthven's interview with John W. Welch was in some ways the most intriguing precisely because Welch did not avoid the issue of the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon by attempting to explain it away as a kind of founding myth. He set forth an argument for the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon that both stumped and annoyed Ruthven. Though Ruthven had been prepared by others with ways to counter Welch's favorite arguments, Ruthven could not handle them and hence brushed them aside by describing Welch as the type of person he instinctively disliked and then by adding a bit of humor. And yet Ruthven came away from his conversation with Welch ready to admit that "there was obviously more to the Book of Mormon than met the eye—at least, the eye unendowed with faith" (126). Though he "remained sceptical, the Mormon intellectuals had been persuasive ambassadors for the faith. Even if one didn't accept their arguments, it became possible to begin to see things from their point of view" (126).

Apparently what made Ruthven certain of the absurdity of the foundations of Mormonism was an assumption about the absurdity of all religion. For him, religion

is a by-product of human biochemistry that, like other cultures in the organic realm, has the ability to transform or modify the substances upon which it feeds. What Mormondom had created out of the repetitious flights of Joseph's fancy, his impoverished romancing, was no less impressive in its way than those much vaster edifices of myth, theology, mystery and drama that Christianity had built out of the bleeding, tortured corpse of its founder. In Provo the quest for truth about Mormon origins became meaningless. The truth was plain enough, in the passion with which the scholars, like early Christian fathers, defended the impossible and then, by trimming its more preposterous edges, gradually negotiated its acceptance in the wider world. (127)

In 1861 Remy, equally certain of the absurdity of Joseph Smith's presumed imposture, had argued that "absolute liberty" of conscience makes it possible for such movements as Mormonism to
flourish. "If Mormonism be a stain upon the United States, liberty is to be made responsible for it." Remy felt that "the use and abuse of religious liberty, in a society of low intellectual culture, must rapidly bring back the principle of authority," or terrible consequences, which the Latter-day Saints illustrate, can be expected. Ruthven's explanation for the religious mischiefs he finds in America is similar to that proposed by Remy. It is an explanation that deserves critical scrutiny because in the end, it advocates that the government engage in "quality control" over matters of conscience.

Ruthven argues that the American founders "sought to preserve political freedom by protecting the state from religiously sanctioned tyranny" (19). Freedom of conscience was coupled in the First Amendment to a prohibition on the establishment of a national church and eventually involved the disestablishment of state-supported churches. Ruthven traces the First Amendment back to the work of Thomas Jefferson (and James Madison) to set in place the Virginia statute for religious freedom; he senses that that statute was also an effort to protect the commonwealth of Virginia from the tyranny of an established church, thereby ensuring freedom of conscience, for the one could not be accomplished without the other. From Ruthven's perspective, "The First Amendment is a two-edged sword. The disestablishment of religion is a condition of its free exercise. Freedom of worship means freedom, not just from the coercive power of the state, but from public scrutiny—freedom from anything resembling religious quality control" (307). From Ruthven's perspective, the primary flaw in the First Amendment is that "the wall of separation erected to protect the state from ecclesiastical tyranny had the complementary result of protecting any group which organizes itself into a 'church' from embarrassing scrutiny by the state." Because of this flaw, the unintended result has been that in the United States there has been no public authority to effectively suppress such mischiefs as "the absurdities in Mormonism" (309) or the host of other manias that dot the religious landscape of America. Ruthven believes that such "distortions would find it harder to entrench themselves in a Europe with established priesthoods manned by worldly professionals" (309–10).

Although Ruthven's theory is correct if and only if the amendment was intended solely to protect the state from the tyranny of organized religion, he ends up defending the establishment of churches as an appropriate device to foster and protect enlightenment
from the ravages of the irrational "religious impulse" and thereby avoid the tyranny he sees inherent in all religion:

Most religions are absolutist. Claims to revelation militate against rational argument and compromise. In this sense all religions contain totalitarian possibilities; for totalitarianism, which welds the state into a single body "knit together as one man" (to borrow Governor Winthrop's phrase) is really the religious impulse, the worship of leadership and ideology, the cult of Person or Book, directed towards secular ends. (310)

Thus the religious impulse necessarily involves "the possibility of totalitarianism, of a state which abolishes the individual will, just as surely as did Prussia or the empire of the Tsars. Anyone who doubts this possibility is unlikely to have witnessed the apparatchiks of Utah obediently voting for their geriatric 'prophet'" (310). Ruthven thus feels that democracy is threatened by churches and the religious impulse: "Utopian dreams, millennial yearnings and other irrational manifestations of the religious spirit all tend to undermine democracy, whose principal moral resource is reasoned discourse. All of these things flourish in America as surely as in other parts of the globe, including the world of Islam. They thrive on the same insecurities, embracing as they do the same paranoid responses to the moral uncertainties and social disruptions of modernity" (311). Religion, therefore, has no genuine role in a republic.

Such an assessment of religion is grounded in Ruthven's dogma that all religion is inherently irrational, absurd, and dangerous. There is a corollary: enlightenment or secularization or reason should have caused churches to disappear or at least should have helped restrict the religious impulse to a harmless sphere. Instead, in America, religious liberty has prevented reason and enlightenment from penetrating the hearts and minds of Americans enough to exorcise the fanatic enthusiasm of witless parochials. Where Tocqueville saw a major role for religion in a genuinely democratic regime, Ruthven sees religion as a crude instrument of unreason that industrialization and/or enlightenment should have swept aside. He insists that America has therefore failed to keep pace with Europeans, and especially the British, in managing to turn religious devotion into a genteel and harmless "museum culture" and sparing themselves the ravages of religious enthusiasm.

Europe and Britain succeeded precisely because the state could exercise some quality control over religion. In Europe "an accommodation had been reached in which the church was
subordinate but nevertheless remained part of the public realm”; the state could suppress somewhat the irrationality of religion, rendering it harmless, impotent, and hence relatively safe. The kind of religious flowering that Ruthven finds on the American religious landscape has not taken place elsewhere except “among the confused, the deracinated, the health-conscious, the unhappy or the merely curious” (306)—a nice way of admitting that such a flowering has been and still is taking place virtually everywhere, even or especially in stodgy old Britain, where once separatist independents fought for freedom of conscience and where a multitude of faiths bloom even now despite the dreary accommodation with secular modernity by the fashionably liberal religious establishment.

NOTES


Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, A Journey to the Great-Salt-Lake City with a Sketch by Jules Remy of the History, Religion, and the Customs of the Mormons, 2 vols. (London: W. Jeffs, 1861), iv–cxxx; for the allusion to Tocqueville, see ix, c, cii, cxxv–cxxx.

Remy and Brenchley, *A Journey to the Great-Salt-Lake City*, xxxi. For Remy, Joseph Smith was “the greedy speculator, without conscience, and without shame” (xxxii).

For example, Jan Shipps, whose *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985) is not mentioned by Ruthven, is credited with having read the portions of *The Divine Supermarket* dealing with the Latter-day Saints and with having straightened out some details. When we notice that Ruthven describes Mormonism as “a new religious tradition” and that he paraphrases the architecture of Shipps’s explication of the central thesis of her *Mormonism*, we might conclude that his debt to Shipps seems greater than he grants. For an additional indication of his debt to Shipps, see Ruthven’s “The Mormons’ Progress,” 22–48, which has appended to it an inaccurate, revealing bibliographical essay by Shipps entitled “Background Books,” 48–50. There are other anomalies. Ruthven claims to have consulted Richard L. Bushman’s *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and Social Order in Connecticut* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); yet he does not mention Bushman’s highly relevant *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984). Shipps also fails to mention this book in her “Background Books,” though she celebrates Fawn Brodie’s *No Man Knows My History* and her own *Mormonism*, as well as books by writers such as Sterling M. McMurrin and by non-Mormons Lawrence Foster, Mark Leone, and Kenneth H. Winn.

It is difficult to determine the exact date or length of his visit. And he has not indicated how he acquired insider information that allowed him to locate and play with those he interviewed.


Arrington preferred not to be mentioned by name. Ruthven’s interviews with Latter-day Saint academics (Wells Jakeman, John L. Sorenson, and John W. Welch), unlike his interview with Edwards, do not include direct mention of their names, but they are identified in his “Acknowledgments” (ix-x) and through his descriptions. John W. (Jack) Welch, for example, is described by Ruthven as a “formidably clever” lawyer involved in “textual analysis” of the Book of Mormon whose “specialty—or rather, obsession—was *chiasticus*, a form of inverted parallelism found in Hebrew and other ancient literatures” (124–27).

distinctions between real and 'sacred' history, arguing that professional commitment to the former need not undermine faith in the latter as myth.” In attempting to make this move, Ruthven feels that “the Saints are travelling down the same bumpy track as other American denominations—the track that leads to the abandoning of literal, historical, factual truth while salvaging the sacred for the private realm.” From his perspective, religion can survive only if “it abandons its claims to comprehensive, objective truth. Religion can resist the onslaughts of positivism or the erosions of scientific or historical facts, by redefining itself . . . as a ‘special type of symbolism concerned with the meaning of the whole,’” that is, as merely mythological. See Ruthven's “National and Denominational,” *Times Literary Supplement* 4497 (June 9, 1989): 630.

10 Remy and Brenchley, *A Journey to the Great-Salt-Lake City*, xxxvii.

11 Remy and Brenchley, *A Journey to the Great-Salt-Lake City*, cxxi, xcix.
Profiling Women of Nauvoo: An Essay in Black on White

Frank W. Jackson was inspired to do the silhouettes in this essay while serving as a missionary to Nauvoo from 1984 to 1986. His silhouettes revive an art form that was popular until daguerreotypes were invented. In his Nauvoo silhouettes (over seventy total), he expresses his delight in the personalities and activities of the city’s inhabitants and in the lines of its period furniture.
A View of Nauvoo

Richard G. Oman

Not only Mormons were interested in Nauvoo in the nineteenth century. Nauvoo was exotic. It was a relatively large city near the very edge of the American frontier. Nauvoo was the capital of a strange new American religion. The Mississippi River was the main water highway in the center of the continent, and Nauvoo occupied one of the most dramatic sites on the upper river. After the Mormons left, Nauvoo represented the romantic tragedy of a people forced to abandon their homes and flee into the wilderness in exile. All of these factors influenced the creation of works of art depicting the Mormon metropolis on the Mississippi. Some of the resulting etchings and engravings were published in magazines of the day and separately as prints. The painting on the cover of this issue is one such piece.

This image was first published in *United States Illustrated* in 1854 or 1855. Hermann J. Meyer of New York City owned the copyright and probably commissioned the original work in order to publish it as an engraving. His intention tells us that the national curiosity about the Mormons was marketable.

This view is a mixture of the real and romanticized. Nauvoo is depicted from across the river in Iowa. The log cabin in the foreground reminds the viewer that Nauvoo is on the raw frontier. This fact accentuates the exotic nature of having a major town in such a frontier environment. On the river is a large river steamer representing the way many people first came to Nauvoo; the City of Joseph was probably the most interesting stop between St. Louis and St. Paul. The topography of the site is greatly romanticized. The hill is accentuated and the Flat, where most of the population lived, is greatly foreshortened. The actual size of the Temple in relationship to the entire city is also exaggerated. These exaggerations were not

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the result of poor draftsmanship. Rather they were conscious attempts to focus on the visual elements that made Nauvoo recognizable; the bend of the wide Mississippi, the high hill setting, and the Mormon temple. The original work of art upon which this engraving is based was probably done between 1848 and 1850. On October 9, 1848, the Temple was burned. On May 27, 1850, a tornado struck the Temple and flattened the walls, leaving only the front of the structure standing. Here the roof and tower are gone, but a stone side wall remains. By the time that Frederick Piercy did his drawing of Nauvoo in 1853 the side walls had been flattened.2

NOTES

1 Seth Eastman (1808–75), an army officer on the western frontier, did many sketches along the upper Mississippi. Later he taught drawing and art at the West Point Military Academy. His superb 1848 drawing of Nauvoo is on permanent exhibit at the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City.

2 In the summer of 1853 the English convert Frederick Hawkins Piercy (1830–91) accompanied a company of Mormon emigrants from Liverpool to New Orleans, up the Mississippi to Nauvoo, and west along the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake City. His sketches were published in Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley in 1855 in Liverpool. One of Piercy’s most poignant engravings is the ruin of the Nauvoo Temple.