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# Brigham Young University Studies

*A Voice for the Community of LDS Scholars*

Volume 18    Winter 1978    Number 2

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## Guest Editor's Introduction

We are happy once again to offer another issue of *BYU Studies* on the history of the Church in Nauvoo. Though it has been over two years since the last Nauvoo issue, we feel the time has been well spent and that the articles in this issue make a significant contribution to our understanding of who was there and what was happening in Nauvoo.

Of considerable importance is the recent find of the Nauvoo journal of George Laub, a member of the Church who, though unfamiliar to most of us, left a fairly detailed journal of the events in and around Nauvoo from 1844 on. Included in his journal were personal notes of various talks given by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Hyrum Smith.

Three scholars worked to bring us the historical context, newly amalgamated version, and doctrinal impact of Joseph Smith's 7 April 1844 King Follett Discourse.

There are articles about the influence of the Mississippi River in Nauvoo, about David H. Smith's artistic accomplishments, an oral history of Joseph Smith recorded by T. Edgar Lyon, and a look at the Saints who lived across the river from Nauvoo. There is also an article that helps us understand the function of rebaptism in the Nauvoo period.

We hope you find that this issue contributes to your understanding of Church history.

May we invite all members of the LDS scholarly community who are researching and studying in the Nauvoo period to contact Dr. LaMar C. Berrett at Brigham Young University to discuss possible inclusion of research in future special issues of *BYU Studies* on Church history.

—LaMar C. Berrett—  
 Director, Church History Area  
 Religious Studies Center  
 Brigham Young University

# Nauvoo West: The Mormons of the Iowa Shore

Stanley B. Kimball

To date, interest in the Illinois period of Church history has focused largely on events within the corporate limits of the city of Nauvoo, but many Saints lived elsewhere in that general area. Eight short-lived stakes were organized in other Illinois communities: in Ramus (now Webster), Hancock County; at Lima, Quincy, Mount Hope (now Columbus), and Freedom (near Payson), Adams County; in Geneva, Morgan County; in Springfield, Sangamon County; and in Pleasant Vale (now New Canton), Pike County. There was also the longer-lasting Iowa or Zarahemla Stake immediately across the Mississippi River from Nauvoo in Lee County, Iowa.

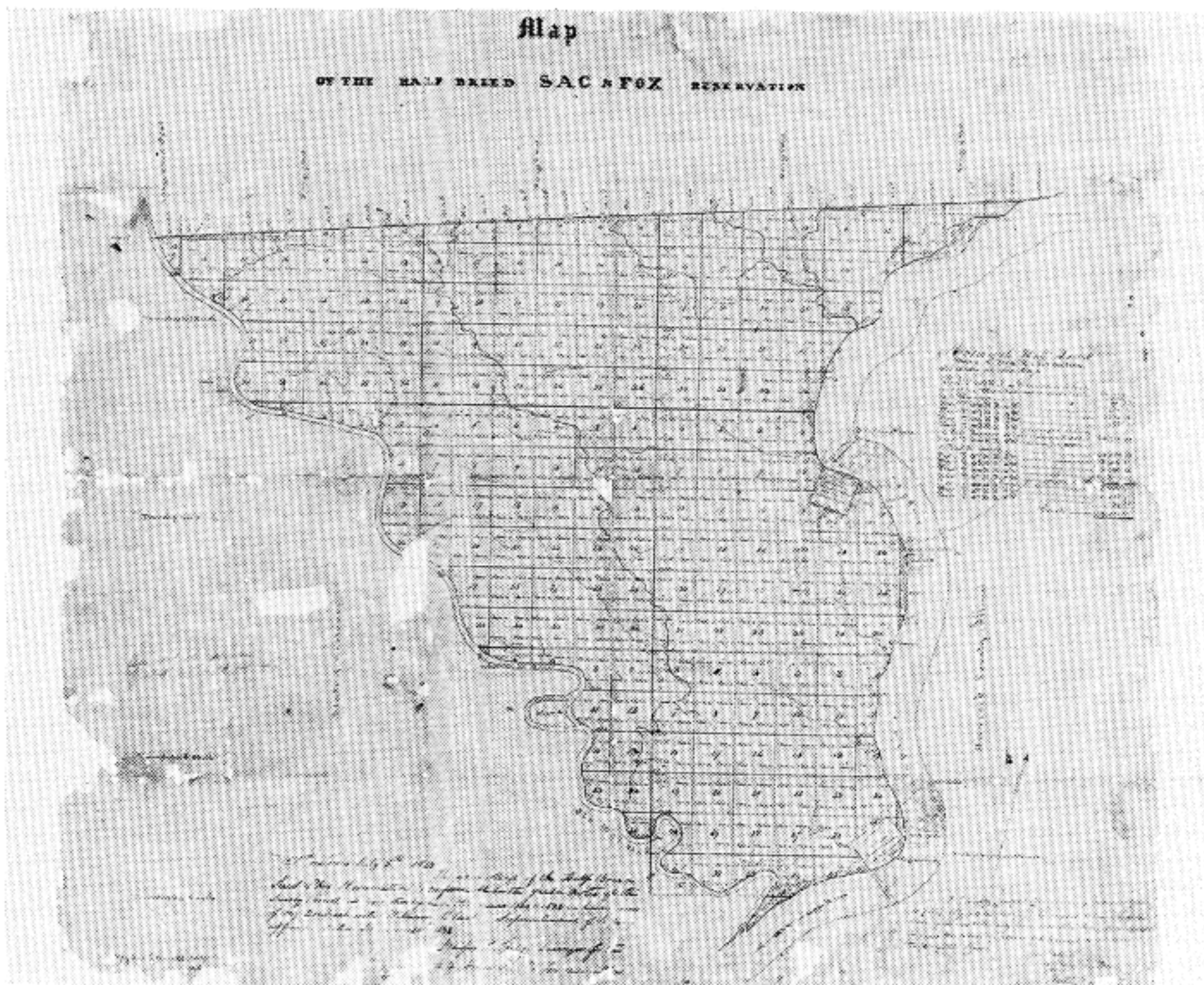
In many ways the eastern part of Lee County may be considered as part of Greater Nauvoo. Land was purchased in both areas at the same time from the same person. Stakes were established in both places. Apostles and other Church leaders lived on both sides of the river for a season. Joseph Smith preached and visited in Lee County and on at least two occasions sought refuge there and on Dundie Island which lay close to the Iowa shore. A weekly newspaper titled the *Nauvoo Ensign and Zarahemla Standard* was projected, but never printed. The Mormons helped found Masonic lodges in Montrose and Keokuk. The settlements were connected by ferry and the Church met opposition in both places. The Sugar Creek camp and staging ground for the 1846 trek across Iowa lay seven miles west of the river and the September 1846 "Miracle of the Quails" took place on the Iowa shore.

Apparently the first Mormons in Lee County were Israel Barlow and about thirty others who fled there from Caldwell County, Missouri, during the fall and winter exodus of 1838-39. Most Missouri Mormons headed for the ferries at Quincy, Illinois, and Louisiana, Missouri, but some did not. In Lee County, Barlow was made welcome at Montrose. He was attracted to that community

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An earlier version of this paper was read at the Mormon History Association meetings in Nauvoo, Illinois, April 1974.

Stanley B. Kimball is professor of history at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

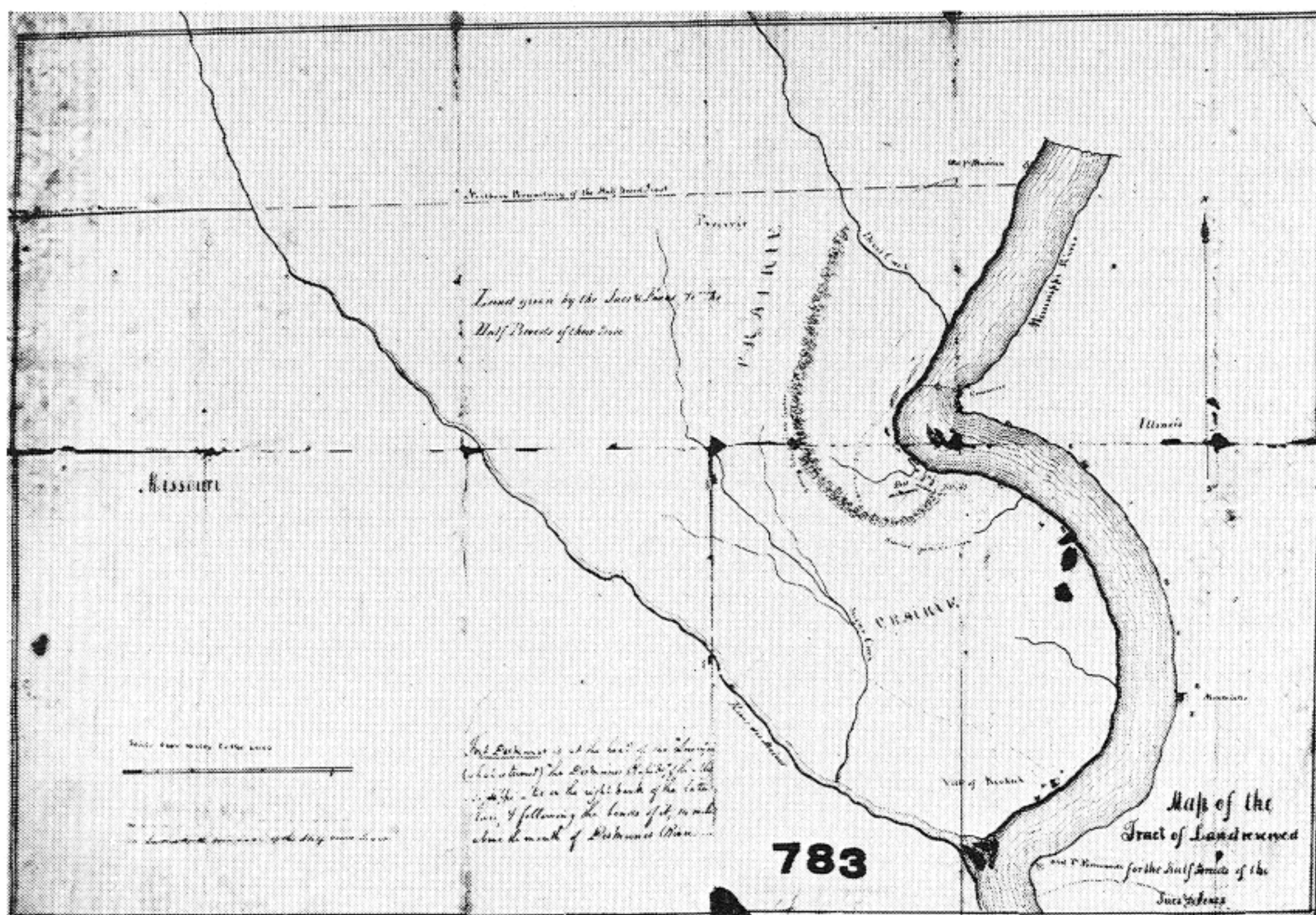


Map of the Half Breed Sac and Fox Reservation, 1833. This map shows the one mile square village of Montrose, the village of Keokuk, the sites of Nashville, Sugar Creek, and the house of Captain James White at Commerce, Illinois. Courtesy National Archives.



Detail of the Map of the Half Breed Sac and Fox Reservation, 1833. This map shows more clearly the Captain James White house, Montrose, and the site of Nashville. Courtesy National Archives.





Map of the Tract of Land reserved for the Half Breeds of the Sacs & Foxes. This map clearly shows Commerce, Illinois, Fort Des Moines at Montrose, Sugar Creek, and Keokuk. Courtesy National Archives.

because of the abandoned Fort Des Moines which he figured could house forty or fifty refugee families.<sup>1</sup> Upon inquiry he found that the fort and most of the available land near Montrose was claimed by Isaac Galland, an eastern land speculator who had it up for sale. Galland had originally settled in Nashville, Lee County, in 1829, but was then living across the river at Commerce, Illinois, in the James White stone residence.

Barlow sought out Galland who made the Church an attractive offer of land on both sides of the river, including 20,000 acres in Iowa for \$2.00 an acre to be paid in twenty annual installments interest free. Sometime in January 1839, Barlow went south to Quincy to relay Galland's offer to the Church leaders who had gathered there awaiting Joseph Smith's release from jail in Liberty, Missouri. During February and March the offer was discussed by many including Brigham Young, Sidney Rigdon, William Marks, and Edward Partridge. A committee was sent to talk further with Galland and after Joseph escaped from Missouri in April, land was purchased in Illinois and Iowa during May and June. (Galland

<sup>1</sup>See Ora H. Barlow, *The Israel Barlow Story* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1968), pp. 132-37.

joined the Church the following July and for a time acted as one of Joseph's business agents.)

The Iowa land to which Galland had quasi-title was part of the 119,000 acre Half-Breed Tract constituting that triangular part of Lee County south of Fort Madison between the Mississippi and Des Moines rivers. It was so named because in 1824 the enlightened Sac and Fox Indians had set it aside by treaty with the United States for the use of the half-breeds of their tribe who did not feel at home with either whites or Indians.

The site of Montrose had long been a center of this tract. The Sac and Fox Indians had maintained a trading post there since at least 1674 when Marquette and Joliet visited them. Subsequently the site developed into a Sac and Fox village. By 1832 a white man, James White, settled there and another settler, David W. Kilbourne, named it Mount of Roses, from the wild roses which covered the nearby bluffs—a name soon shortened to Montrose.

Two years later, in 1834, the United States established Fort Des Moines at Montrose to protect the rights of the half-breeds from encroaching whites who were moving illegally into the coveted area. Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny led a detachment of dragoons and a cavalry unit from Fort Leavenworth and erected a fort near the river.<sup>2</sup> According to some students, Nathaniel Boone (son of Daniel), E. V. Sumner, Winfield Scott, Jefferson Davis, and even Robert E. Lee served at Fort Des Moines.<sup>3</sup>

Since many Mormon families later lived in this fort a description of it is in order. Contemporary military records reveal that it was badly located and unhealthy, "less comfortable and of meaner appearance, than those occupied by any other portion of the army . . . and of a temporary character, hastily constructed and of round logs. . . ."<sup>4</sup> At its height it housed 184 officers and men and 205 horses and mules. It was a U-shaped enclosure 425 feet wide by 675 feet deep facing the river. In addition to thirty-four 16 by 18 foot rooms arranged in rows along the back and sides, there were stables, corncribs, hayracks, supply rooms, a guardhouse, and a hospital.

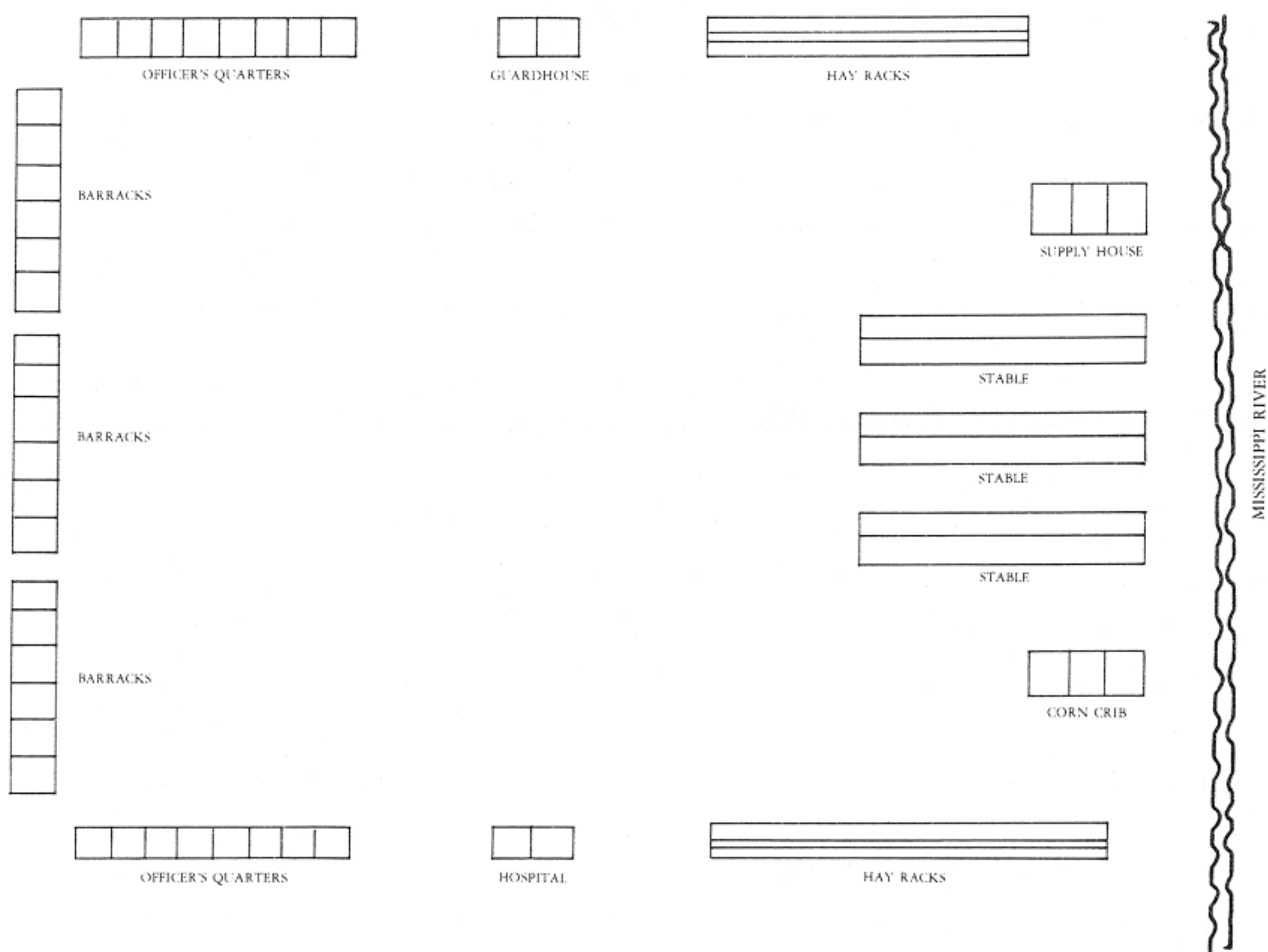
Within three years after the fort was built, however, most of the Indians and half-breeds had sold out to the whites and gone

<sup>2</sup>In passing it might be noted that it was this same Colonel Kearny who nine years later from Fort Leavenworth ordered Captain James Allen to find the Mormons on the Missouri River and recruit a battalion of 500 men.

<sup>3</sup>Edwin K. Sloat, "Iowa's First Fort Des Moines," *The Iowan* 3 (June-July 1955):48.

<sup>4</sup>"Fort Des Moines (No. 1), Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 3 (1897-99):353, 358.

PLAN OF FT. DES MOINES (based on the original plan in the National Archives)



west. In June 1837 the fort was abandoned and the troops were transferred back to Fort Leavenworth. The site of the old fort, now known as River Front Park, can be seen from present-day Nauvoo.

Despite Galland's questionable title to the Iowa land, the Mormons made at least two extensive purchases of thousands of acres. (The question of clear title grew out of the fact that the treaty which had turned the tract over to the half-breeds in the first place did not specify the number or names of those who had the right to sell at some future time and some half-breeds sold land to which they had no title. As a result many subsequent transactions came into dispute—a fact which troubled the Mormons.) Apparently the first Mormon purchase was on 24 June 1839 when the Church bought the undeveloped town site of Nashville (now Galland) and 20,000 surrounding acres located on the river three miles below Montrose. An additional 30,000 acres were purchased in and near Montrose and some individual Mormons acquired land in Keokuk, Ambrosia, and elsewhere in Lee County as well as in contiguous Des Moines and Van Buren counties.

Of these several Iowa communities, Montrose figures most prominently in LDS history. Mormon settlement there apparently

commenced in May 1839 (even before any formal land purchases) at which time Brigham Young (not being able to find suitable housing in Commerce) moved his family from Quincy into one of the barracks rooms of deserted Fort Des Moines. He was soon joined by the families of John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Orson Pratt, John Smith, Elijah Fordham, Joseph B. Noble, and others. This sudden influx of Mormon squatters alarmed some of the old settlers (some of whom were squatters themselves) who became antagonistic. Joseph B. Noble, for example, was ordered off a garden plot he cultivated and Kilbourne, who had laid out the town in 1837, became so hostile that he publicly insulted Joseph Smith and later conspired in an attempt to kidnap the Prophet.<sup>5</sup>

The old fort was the location of Joseph's well-known healing of Brigham Young and Elijah Fordham in July 1839.

He walked into the cabin where I was lying sick [Brigham later recorded] and commanded me, in the name of Jesus Christ, to arise and be made whole. I arose and was healed, and followed him and the brethren of the Twelve into the house of Elijah Fordham, who was supposed to be dying, by his family and friends. Joseph stepped to his bedside, took him by the hand and commanded him, in the name of Jesus Christ, to arise and be made whole. His voice was as the voice of God. Brother Fordham instantly leaped from his bed, called for his clothing and followed us into the street.<sup>6</sup>

By October of that same year there were so many Mormons in Lee County that a stake—one of the eleven pre-Utah stakes—was organized there. John Smith, an uncle of the Prophet and former president of the Adam-Ondi-Ahman Stake, was sustained as president. He called Reynolds Cahoon and Lyman Wight, who had served with him in Missouri, as counselors. Erastus Snow, Elijah Fordham, William Clayton, and Asahel Smith, among others, served on the high council, and Alanson Ripley was called as the bishop. (Membership was so small it was believed one bishop would suffice.) This stake soon became and remained, next to Nauvoo, the second most important stake and community of Mormons in the United States. This was especially true after 24 May

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<sup>5</sup>See Stanley B. Kimball, "Missouri Mormon Manuscripts: Sources in Selected Societies," *BYU Studies* 14 (Summer 1974):474-77. Another peculiarly disgusting act of anti-Mormonism happened at Augusta, Van Buren County during January 1841 when two dapple-gray horses belonging to Joseph Smith were maimed. See *Times and Seasons*, 15 January 1841. The Burlington *Hawkeye and Iowa Patriot* of 21 January 1841 called the act an "Outrage . . . hardly [to] be tolerated among savages."

<sup>6</sup>Elden Jay Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young: 1801-1844* (Salt Lake City: Smith Secretarial Service, 1968), p. 49. It was from these same quarters that Brigham Young left for his mission to England during September 1839. In 1840 Wilford Woodruff, while also on a mission in England, learned that his two-year-old daughter had died there.

1841 when Joseph Smith officially discontinued all other stakes except those in Nauvoo and in Lee County.<sup>7</sup>

The Iowa Stake, comprised of several small branches, was so widely scattered over three counties that President Smith claimed his job "require[d] the patience of Job, the wisdom of Solomon, and the preservance and faithfulness of an Abraham to keep such order as ought to be in the Church of Christ. . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Montrose was the center of the stake and the high council met regularly in the home of Elijah Fordham. The council was strict and authoritarian. Among other things they voted to "come up to the law of tithing as far as circumstances would permit for the benefit of the poor." They decided to disfellowship anyone who sued other members for any old Missouri debts, and, in fact, to "uterly discard the practice of suing brethren at the law, and that such as do it, shall be disfellowshipped." They also voted to "disfellowship all brethren who should persist in keeping tippling shops in that branch of the Church."<sup>9</sup>

Apparently the council went so far as to try to reinstate the Law of Consecration for on 6 March 1840 Joseph Smith attended a meeting of the Iowa High Council and asked them to "desist from trying to keep it; and if persisted in, it would produce a perfect defeat of its object, and that he assumed the whole responsibility of not keeping it until proposed by himself."<sup>10</sup>

In March 1841 Joseph Smith received a revelation (Doctrine and Covenants 125) regarding the Iowa Stake. In it the Lord instructed the "Saints in the Territory of Iowa" to

build up a city unto my name upon the land opposite the city of Nauvoo, and let the name of Zarahemla be named upon it. And let all those who come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, that have desires to dwell therein, take up their inheritance in the same, as well as in the city of Nashville. . . . (D&C 125:3-4)

The earliest known reference to this Zarahemla is one of 2 July 1839 when Joseph Smith and a group went to Iowa to inspect a town site immediately west of Montrose, about a mile from the river, which Bishop Vinson Knight had purchased for the Church from Galland. At that time Joseph advised "that a

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<sup>7</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1957), 4:362 (cited hereafter as *HC*).

<sup>8</sup>"Manuscript History of the Church in Iowa," 7 January 1841, Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 6 December 1839, 7 December 1839, 4 January 1840, and 7 February 1840.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 6 March 1840.

town be built there, and called Zarahemla.”<sup>11</sup> Little, however, was done to build a city until the March 1841 revelation, after which it soon became the largest Mormon community in Iowa.

Five months later, during an August 1841 conference under the direction of George A. Smith and John Taylor, the name of the Iowa Stake was changed to the Zarahemla Stake.<sup>12</sup> John Smith remained as president with David Pettigrew and Moses Nickerson as counselors. At that time the stake consisted of 750 members located in nine branches in Lee, Des Moines, and Van Buren counties, Iowa, and in Brown County, Illinois. These branches were as follows:

*Zarahemla, Lee County, 326 members represented by Willard Snow.* Although it was anticipated that Zarahemla would expand to include Montrose and become a sister city to Nauvoo, only about thirty small houses were ever built there. The site has since completely disappeared and the non-Mormon Montrose was built up in its stead.

*Ambrosia, Lee County, 109 members represented by George W. Gee.* What is left of this community is marked by a cluster of later homes about three miles west of the city limits of Montrose on county road J72, locally known as Ambrosia Lane. The Sugar Creek campsite of 1846 was in part of this scattered community.

*Nashville, Lee County, 90 members represented by Elias Smith.* Known today as Galland, it is located three miles south of Montrose on the river.

*Mecham Settlement, Lee County (?), 65 members represented by Elias Smith.* Its location is unknown, but it was probably named after Joseph Mecham.

*Keokuk, Lee County, 13 members represented by George W. Gee.* This city of some 20,000 on the Mississippi is the county seat of Lee County.

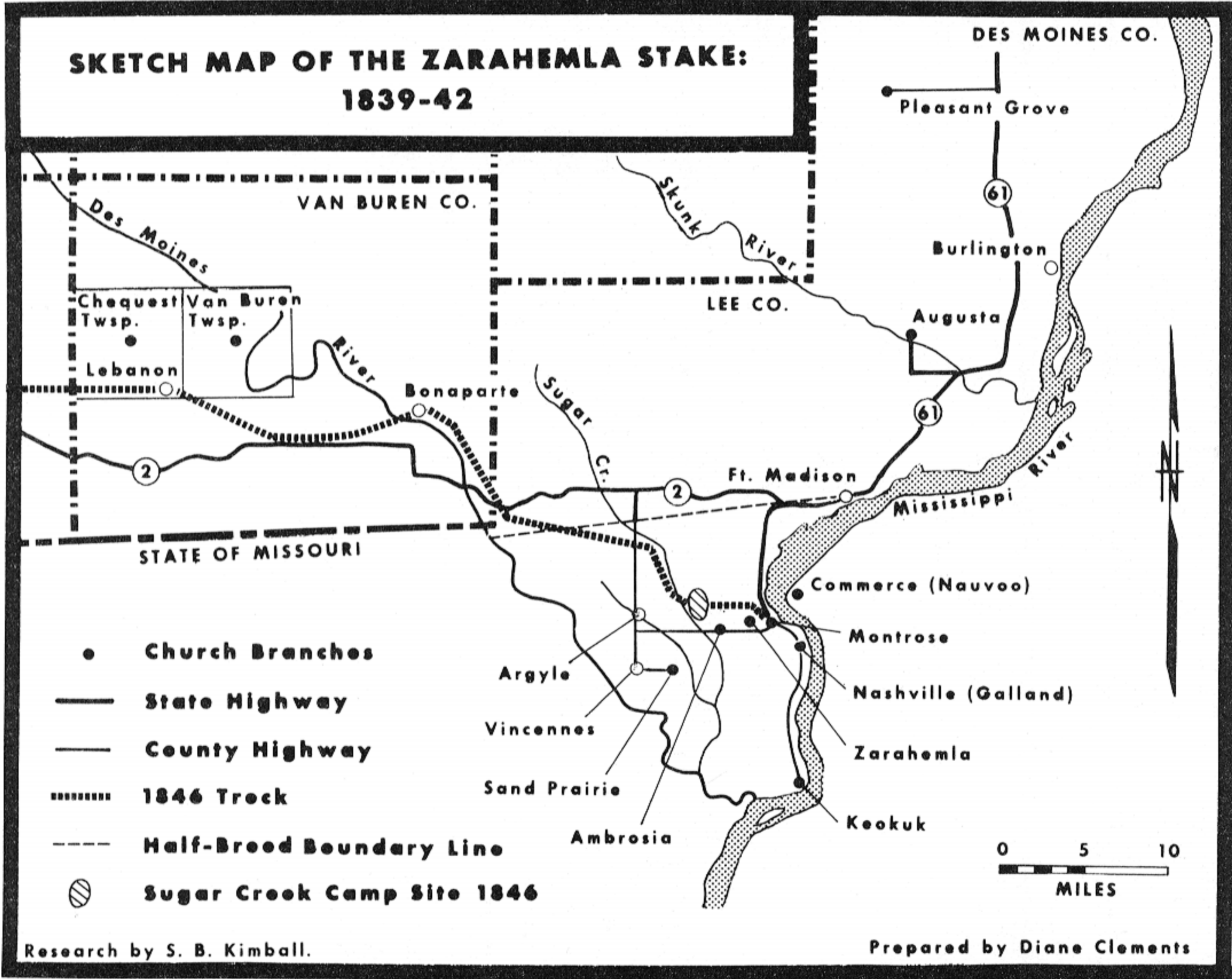
*Augusta, Des Moines County, 50 members represented by Willard Snow.* This branch was located immediately across the Lee County line on the Skunk River. Augusta still exists. Some of the Saints settled on the south bank of the Skunk River in what for a time was called South Augusta.

*Van Buren Township, Van Buren County, 11 members represented by John Lowry.*

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 2 July 1839.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 7 and 9 August 1841.



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*Chequest Township, Van Buren County, 30 members represented by W. Baldwin.*

*Siloam, Brown County, Illinois, 67 members represented by "Brother Forrister."* Siloam has been absorbed by the Siloam Springs State Park.<sup>13</sup>

There is some evidence that there was a small branch at Pleasant Grove, Van Buren County, and that some Mormons lived at Timothy Block and the Hawley Settlement, sites unknown today.<sup>14</sup>

One month following this conference, in September 1841, Joseph Smith accepted an invitation to review the Lee County Militia. This was the occasion for Kilbourne's public insult. Kilbourne told the militia it did not have to be reviewed by the Mormon Prophet and that Joseph was out of order for even showing up. Few paid attention to Kilbourne's harangue.

Five months after the encouraging Zarahemla conference, that stake was discontinued on 6 January 1842 and reduced to branch status with John Smith staying on as branch president. Thus the whole life of the first Iowa Stake was but twenty-seven months, five of which it was known by the name of Zarahemla. (No more stakes were organized in Iowa for over 124 years until the Cedar Rapids Iowa Stake was organized in 1966.)

The dissolution of the Zarahemla Stake and subsequent decline of the Church in Iowa was caused by the continuing ingathering of that time to strengthen Nauvoo. Thereafter we hear little of Church activities in Iowa although some branches struggled on for a while and at least one new branch was organized. (In 1854 at Sand Prairie, Lee County, there was a group of forty-nine members led by Arnold Potter.)<sup>15</sup>

On 6 August 1842, Joseph participated in the installation of the officers of the Rising Sun Lodge of Masons in Montrose. At this time he apparently uttered the famous prophecy that the Saints would become a mighty people in the Rocky Mountains.<sup>16</sup> A few days later he returned secretly to Montrose to seek temporary asylum with his uncle, John Smith. Joseph was being hunted

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<sup>13</sup>Siloam, about twenty-five miles east of Quincy, apparently at one time had been part of some stake in Adams County. After the dissolution of these stakes the members seem to have been, for awhile at least, transferred to the Zarahemla Stake. The *Times and Seasons* of 1 April 1841 refers to Siloam, Iowa, and there is a 17 July 1841 reference to "the Siloam branch of the Church in this [Lee] County." Miscellaneous Minutes of the Zarahemla Stake, 1840-41, George A. Smith Papers, University of Utah.

<sup>14</sup>"Manuscript History of the Church in Iowa," 18 July 1840.

<sup>15</sup>*Times and Seasons* 6 (15 March 1845). Sand Prairie no longer exists, but it was located east of Vincennes near a branch of the Sugar Creek.

<sup>16</sup>HC, 5:85.



by Missourians in connection with an attempted assassination of Lilburn W. Boggs, former governor of Missouri.

About two years later Joseph again fled to Montrose. During the night of 22 June 1844 he went to William Jordan's house, but the next day Emma sent a message entreating him to return. He did and took the road to martyrdom at Carthage.

Sixteen months after Joseph's death when anti-Mormon activities again broke out in Illinois, some Iowans followed suit. Anti-Mormon meetings were held in Montrose in October 1845, and the following month in Augusta to get rid of the few Mormons left in Lee and Des Moines counties.<sup>17</sup> (Pressure was kept on the Mormons to leave even after the exodus commenced.)<sup>18</sup>

Lee County had one more important role to play in early Mormon history. During February 1846 on the banks of Sugar Creek seven miles west of the Mississippi River Brigham Young established the staging ground for the exodus from Nauvoo across Iowa. For the rest of that year thousands of Mormons camped temporarily on Sugar Creek. During October the dramatic "Miracle of the Quails" took place while about 640 destitute Saints, driven from Nauvoo by mob action, were camping on the Iowa river bottoms. On 9 October, flocks of quail, exhausted from a long flight, fell at the feet of the Saints and were gathered for food.

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<sup>17</sup>Burlington, *Hawkeye and Iowa Patriot*, 16 and 23 October and 6 November 1845.

<sup>18</sup>During May 1846 a mass meeting was held in Montrose to determine how to get rid of the Mormons still in Lee County "who apparently have no intention of moving westward with their brethren." *Lee County Democrat*, 2 May 1846. Little can be learned from the Iowa press about Mormons in Iowa during the 1840s. Even the weeklies in Burlington, Fort Madison, Keosauqua, and Keokuk were so concerned with events in Illinois, especially Nauvoo, that they reported very little about the Mormons in their own state and neighborhood.

# Recollections of "Old Nauvooers"

## Memories from Oral History

T. Edgar Lyon

In the early years of the twentieth century I lived with my parents in Salt Lake City, Utah. Of a Sunday morning in the Kindergarten I have a vague recollection of hearing stories about Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, the Hill Cumorah, the pioneers, etc. At that age my recollection of places and people beyond my own immediate dwelling and neighborhood had little meaning and practically no interest to me. The names of Joseph and Hyrum Smith had little meaning as I did not know them as I knew living people in my family and neighborhood. "The Prophet" had little meaning to me except as a sort of vague concept of an old man with a long beard who had lived before my time, as I had seen in our illustrated Bible. Cumorah and New York were as meaningless to me as London, Brigham City, and Logan—I hadn't been there.

Then one Sunday afternoon at 2:00 P.M., my father took me to a fast meeting in the old Twentieth Ward chapel on Second Avenue and D Street in Salt Lake City. What I experienced there was my first meaningful acquaintance, even though vicariously, with Joseph Smith and the story of the restoration of the gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. This was the most exciting meeting I had ever attended. The people who bore their testimonies had known Joseph and Hyrum Smith personally, and related their recollections of them, their love of Joseph Smith as a decidedly human being, and their appreciation of the religious and spiritual understanding he had given them. I think I missed but few fast and testimony meetings after that introductory one.

Gradually I became aware that there were two distinct groups in the fast meeting. One numbered about twenty or twenty-five people who seemed very old to me, and the other group was made up of those of a younger age, such as my parents. In the older group were women in black dresses trimmed with white collars and cuffs. They wore small black bonnets tied under their chins with black silk ribbons. The men were dressed in black suits and ties, and practically all had full beards and gray or white hair.

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T. Edgar Lyon is a research historian for Nauvoo Restoration, Inc., and a member of the *BYU Studies* editorial board.

When the meeting was opened for testimony these were the ones who rose and bore their testimonies, and were still at it when the bishop closed the meeting. Gradually I became aware that they were known as "The Old Nauvooers." Among the younger members of this group was my Grandma Lyon, who was a girl of five at the time Joseph Smith was murdered.

A few years later, when my understanding was a bit more mature, I expressed an opinion to my mother that what was said in fast meeting indicated that if one had not known Joseph Smith personally and lived in Nauvoo, one did not have a testimony. This was a youthful observation as these people were the only ones I remembered who bore testimonies. Her reply was that there appeared to be an unwritten law in the Twentieth Ward that if you had not lived at Nauvoo and known Joseph Smith, you could not bear your testimony until all the Old Nauvooers had borne theirs. As there were so many of them they seldom all got through and hence one heard few testimonies of other people.

Young as I was, I was impressed by the love and respect these people had for Joseph Smith, based on an intimate relationship with him and a closeness to him. Although these people had known Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith, who was then president, these leaders were referred to as "president of the Church," while the Old Nauvooers referred to Joseph Smith with two more endearing names: "The Prophet," or "Brother Joseph." What impressed my young mind about Joseph Smith from their talks was his concern for people and their problems, and the personal contacts they had experienced with him.

What follows is oral history, and is hence suspect as all oral history must be. As it has a subjectivity to it, it may not always be reliable. Nevertheless, it records significant personal impressions, both of those who experienced the events and the present writer who heard the original people repeat their personal reactions to Joseph Smith.

One man related that one day at Nauvoo he and another boy were having a fistfight in front of the Mills City Hotel on Main Street, which still stands a block north of the Mansion House, the Prophet's second home at Nauvoo. The City Council was in session on the second floor of Joseph Smith's store, which was a block west of the Mansion House. Joseph, then mayor, was presiding at the meeting. Looking through the window toward the northeast, he saw the two boys fighting. Turning the meeting

over to one of the aldermen to conduct, he ran down the stairs, crossed the street, vaulted over a fence, and ran diagonally north-east toward and arrived just as the two antagonists had pulled pickets from a fence and were about to continue their quarrel with the pickets. The speaker said Joseph grabbed them each by their shirt collars, ordered them to throw down their weapons, then releasing his grip on them asked, "Don't you know that no one in this town is allowed to fight except me?"

Sheepishly they admitted they did not know it, and then, perhaps with a twinkle in his eye, the mayor of the town said, "Next time you feel like fighting come to my home and ask for a fight and I'll fight you, and it will be legal."

The narrator then continued, "That ended our fighting. We certainly didn't want to fight 'Brother Joseph.'"

Another related that one day a group of boys and girls were playing "Anthony-Over" (usually corrupted into "Anti-I-Over") in which two teams of children on opposite sides of a house, having one ball, throw it over the roof. The team on the other side waits for its arrival and if anyone catches it, the entire team then tries to get to the other side of the house without being tagged by the opposite team. Having no soft rubber ball, they were using a wooden ball, but the owner of the house ordered them away, fearful that the hard ball would split the dry shingles. Joseph Smith passed by, saw the discouraged look on the children's faces, and said, "Let's walk over to Brother Hancock's carpenter shop." There Joseph picked scraps of wood from the waste box and asked Brother Hancock to make some tippies for the children on his foot-powered lathe. While Brother Hancock was doing that, Joseph secured more scraps and asked the children to whittle paddles to strike the tippies. Then he took them to Main Street—the widest street in town—and showed them how to strike the tippy with the edge of the paddle, and then as it flew upward, try to bat the airborne tippy with the paddle toward a distant goal. Joseph Smith set the goal for the rock quarry at the head of Main Street. The children then played with the tippies, trying to whack them toward the goal each time they came to rest on the ground. The narrator said it gave them good exercise, tested their muscular skills, and kept them busy for an hour or two, thereby keeping them out of mischief.

Another elderly sister related that their home was about two miles east of Nauvoo, out in the country, near Joseph Smith's farm. One day her mother sent her to Nauvoo for a paper of pins

and a paper of thread—it wasn't sold on spools at that time. The day was sunny and sultry, and as she trudged home in the heat a carriage drove alongside her and stopped, and the driver offered her a ride home. He assisted her into the seat beside him and talked with her about what she did to help her mother and other members of the family.

Arriving at her house, the driver hopped down from the carriage, assisted her to the ground, walked her to the house, and said to her mother: "You have an excellent daughter. Continue the excellent training you have given her and she'll grow up to be a good wife and mother, and know how to give service to those who are unfortunate."

This experience she had never forgotten and always remembered Brother Joseph as a kind, considerate man.

A man with a long, white beard testified to a great lesson the Prophet had taught him. As a teenager, he and another boy had gotten into some sort of devilment, unthinking of the seriousness of what they were doing. He failed to state exactly what they did, but they had destroyed some property. They might have done what was common sport in those days, setting fire to a rail fence, or tearing out a few panels of such a fence so that cattle, sheep, horses, and hogs could get out of the enclosure and wander for miles; perhaps some of the cows bloated and died from eating too much of the wrong kind of forage. The owner of the farm where they had committed their destructive act was furious. He found out who they were, swore out a warrant for their arrest, and the sheriff took them to Carthage before the county judge. They were found guilty and sentenced to six months in the Hancock County jail, and fined \$50.00. (This may not seem a heavy fine to an affluent society, but when one considers that skilled craftsmen and mechanics at that time earned a dollar a day, it was a heavy fine for youths in the 1840s.)

The father of the boys complained to Joseph Smith about the severity of the sentence, the need of the parents for the help of the young men with the harvest and fall planting, and the fear of boys spending six months in an unheated stone jail. Wouldn't the Prophet intercede with the judge for a reduction of the sentence?

Joseph Smith went to Carthage and talked to the judge, whose answer was, "They did wrong and I'm going to teach them a lesson never to do such a thing again."

Joseph Smith's reply was, "I'm afraid you won't teach them that lesson by an imprisonment. After six months they'll come out of that jail hating you and the sheriff and the man whose

property they destroyed, and perhaps antagonistic against the ordered society we stand for. With nothing worthwhile to do they'll spend their time planning how they could do the same thing again and not get caught. They might even be persuaded to join one of the gangs of outlaws who infest this country and become professional criminals."

The judge asked Joseph Smith what he could propose as a better punishment to which he replied, "Release them to my custody for six months. Our Nauvoo streets are difficult to travel because of mud holes. We'll employ them to haul stone chips from the temple quarry and gravel from the river banks to improve our streets. We'll pay them fifty cents a day to reimburse the man whose property was destroyed. This will save the county money as they won't have to be fed for six months at county expense. Let them pay the costs of the court procedures and all will be better off than a jail sentence would achieve."

Contemporary Nauvoo notes show that from time to time Joseph Smith, the mayor, or Brother Sherwood, the city surveyor and supervisor of streets, checked on the boys. Once they found them loafing, another time not on the job, and docked them a day's pay for their indolence.

Then the narrator said something to this effect: "That was the greatest training I ever had not to wantonly or willfully destroy property of another. It was the best training to work consistently and earn an honest day's pay I ever had. Here I am advanced in years and I've never done anything since that episode that brought me into a court for misconduct." To this man Joseph Smith was a man of warm feeling, great compassion, and wonderful insight into the minds of youths in training them to avoid delinquency.

Another man, who was nine years old shortly before Joseph Smith was killed, related this account: It was Temple Tithing Day (they had two tithings in Nauvoo, the regular tithing on one's increase or earnings, and the other on time, so that each person was expected to work every tenth day on the temple without pay). This boy's father had hitched his team to his wagon and with his son had gone to the quarry to load a large stone into the wagon; then, they started for the temple. Pulling out of the quarry with its stone floor was no problem, but when they started across the "Flat" their wagon became stuck in a mud hole. The father whipped the horses and they lurched forward against their collars, but this sudden pull merely jiggled the wagon and made it sink a bit deeper in the mire. The father handed the reins to his son, telling him to stay with the team while he went up to the

temple and secured someone to come down with a team or two of oxen and pull his wagon out of the mud.

His father had just stepped off the wagon when a man walking along the side of the street (where they had planned sidewalks, but had not yet constructed them) called to him and said, "I see you are having trouble, Brother Bybee."

"Yes," replied the latter, "I'm going to the temple to get someone to pull me out."

The man waded into the mud and said to the father, "Brother Bybee, you get by that left rear wheel and put your right shoulder under a spoke. I'll get my left shoulder under a spoke of the right wheel." Then to the nine year old boy he said: "Get your whip ready and when I say 'Lift' we'll lift with our shoulders, and don't you spare the horseflesh."

So saying, each in position, the man said "Lift." Each did his part. The horses jumped at the sting of the whip, the wagon moved a bit, and the horses were able to keep it going. After going about a hundred feet onto dry ground the boy let the team rest. The two men caught up with the wagon and as Brother Bybee climbed up to the driver's seat and took the reins from his son, the father called out, "Thank you, Brother Joseph."

The boy had been greatly impressed that a prophet of the Lord, probably on his way to pay his temple tithing in labor, was not above wading in mud halfway to his knees and getting his shoulder covered with mud to help another man in distress.

One lady related the coldness of the winter of 1842-1843 when the Mississippi was frozen over for several months. One freezing day Joseph Smith did not go to his office. Instead he remained at home to play with his children on the ice. They were sliding down the sloping lower end of Main Street near the Homestead where enough momentum could be gained to send the loaded sleigh out onto the smooth ice of the river. Joseph Smith III, Alexander, and Frederick G. were engaged in this activity. Soon other children gathered and the Prophet taught some of the older children how to slide on the soles of their shoes, balancing their bodies erectly. Others he taught how to steer the crude wooden sleighs of the day with their feet.

Another lady mentioned she had worked as a servant girl in Joseph Smith's home. One day when the Prophet's mother was quite ill, he remained home and nursed her all day.<sup>1</sup> She men-

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<sup>1</sup>See Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 5:290.

tioned that Joseph often read to his children from a special children's magazine he had in his home.<sup>2</sup>

There was a coal miner from Wales who had been converted and migrated to Nauvoo. At the time he bore his testimony he was about eighty-five years of age. He related that when he was a young married man with a child or two, he and a companion had been employed to work in an abandoned coal mine, removing small pockets of coal. One day as they were working a slab of stone fell from the ceiling and smashed their oil lamps, leaving them in total darkness perhaps a mile from the entrance to the mine. Only slightly injured by the falling stone, the two sought their way out of the mine by feeling with their feet the small iron rails on which the mine cars rolled. But there were frequent side tunnels and as they came to these switches, they tried to remember which of the side tunnels they must follow. Sometimes at such an intersection they would feel the walls of the tunnel, searching for a familiar marker which might indicate where they were.

Several times they made wrong turns: when they came to the end of a side tunnel, they had to retrace their steps back to the main tunnel and try again. At last, after much anguish of spirit and prayers to God, they chose another turn and after the tunnel itself had made a turn, they saw far ahead of them a glimmer of light. With hurried pace they soon were at the portal and saw below them the beautiful green valley where they lived.

Then this aged man made a comparison. He had been a member of one of the Protestant churches, had become disillusioned when he read his Bible and found his church neither preached nor practiced many things which characterized the early church. He compared his searching for a truly Christian church to the time he was groping in the mine trying to find his way out into his home valley. Then two Mormon missionaries came to his village and held a meeting on the public square as they could not use the local chapel. He and his wife heard the message, accepted the gospel, and migrated to Nauvoo. They attended meetings in the grove and heard Joseph Smith explain the restored gospel. He labored on the temple, and he and his wife received their endowments and were sealed for eternity. The religious and spiritual teachings of Joseph Smith's restoration had produced a world as strikingly wonderful and soul-satisfying as the sunlit valley they saw from the entrance of the mine. He had experienced a spiritual

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 6:133.



rebirth. He now knew the true nature of God, his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. He had learned who he was—a spirit begotten by his Heavenly Father, and now clothed temporarily in a mortal tabernacle, bequeathed to him by his earthly father and mother. He understood his relationship to the eternities, to his earthly parents, and also his heirship to his Eternal Father. He had learned the doctrine of free agency, which had enabled him to throw off the shackles of predestinarianism and salvation by election. Priesthood had come to mean a power granted by God whereby he could become a blessing to himself, his wife, his family, the Church, and all mankind. And so he enumerated what the gospel light revealed through “Brother Joseph” had done for him. He had received a testimony of who was to succeed Joseph Smith by a miracle in the grove when he saw and heard Brigham Young preach and his voice sounded as the voice of Joseph Smith. So he had followed Brigham Young and the Twelve into the Salt Lake Valley. Here he had built a house of his own on land which he owned—something he never could have done in Wales—and had raised a good family of faithful Latter-day Saint children and had many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. As with David of old he could exclaim, “My cup runneth over.”

Month after month I heard such incidents related—how Joseph Smith visited unannounced in the homes, had children sit on his lap as he told them stories, admonished them to be honest, to love and obey their parents, not to quarrel with each other, and to be helpful to those who were sick or in need. They related his eagerness to arm-wrestle, pull sticks, or participate in other contemporary games of physical prowess. They recalled how “The Prophet” dropped by their homes at mealtime, ate with the family and kept a lively conversation going, or how some of them had been guests at his table with Emma Smith as hostess.

Such were the components of my first meaningful introduction to Joseph Smith—a very human being, engaged in doing the kinds of things which would appeal to children, young people, and those of mature years and thinking. I’m certain these Old Nauvooers bore testimonies to the divinity of Joseph Smith’s work as a spiritual leader. Although I was not old enough at that time to understand the meaning of abstract faith and principles of the gospel, I did learn to love and admire him, as many of those testimony-bearing Saints of my childhood years had done, as a very much alive and alert and loveable and human person.

# George Laub's Nauvoo Journal

Edited by Eugene England

Despite his unusually informative and moving Nauvoo Journal, George Laub is not well known to Latter-day Saints, or even to students of Mormon history. He was one of a number of faithful followers of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young who did not achieve notoriety—either through prominent position or through dramatic apostasy. But he was one of those ordinary Saints whose life was brushed by extraordinary events and forces and to whom our generation is increasingly attracted as we seek fuller understanding, both of our pioneer past, and of our own possibilities, from such humble but engaging lives.

We are fortunate indeed to have this slim journal preserved in the LDS Church Archives. It not only provides essentially all we know of George Laub's early life but also gives us a unique record of such things as some of Joseph Smith's sermons, his martyrdom, and the earliest account of the 1844 "transfiguration" of Brigham Young when he was given the Prophet's "mantle" of authority. The journal represents one of those small miracles of nineteenth century Mormonism that we are still learning to appreciate more fully, partly because of their rarity in the twentieth—that a person without literary training, engaged often in desperate struggles for survival against men and nature, should be moved by his faith to make the effort to create a remarkably literate and enduring account of his great loyalties, his joys, his losses, of the events and ideas that shaped his life.

George Laub began his journal on 1 January 1845, a few years after converting to Mormonism in Pennsylvania and gathering with the Saints to Nauvoo, Illinois. He includes a summary of his life to that point, sermons of Church leaders in Nauvoo, and a review of the traumatic events of 1844 when Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed and Brigham Young became the Church's leader; Brother Laub then continues with sporadic, dated entries, especially detailing the exodus from Nauvoo in the spring of 1846, and ending with the entry for 6 June.<sup>1</sup> On that date Laub appar-

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<sup>1</sup>The journal, 12 by 16 centimeters in size and ruled like an account book, contains 113 numbered pages written entirely in ink; it was bound (probably later in Utah) in light tan leather.

ently began the first of what eventually became a three-volume set of much thicker journals, covering most of his life, by transferring the small Nauvoo journal into it (with some generally minor changes).<sup>2</sup> He then continued his record in the larger volume, the very next day having to report the death of his infant son, apparently from the hardships of the expulsion, and then describing exactly where he buried the small body on his lot in Nauvoo and drawing a diagram in his journal for remembrance ("The Black dot in the South west Corner . . . Represents the grave . . .").

Two parts of Laub's Nauvoo journal are perhaps of most value to students of Mormon history and doctrine: first, his account of speeches by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and others, including what appears to be a version of the Prophet's famous "King Follert Discourse" of 7 April 1844, a sermon which explores startling ideas about the nature of God and the universe and about man's eternal identity and potential godhood; second, his recollection, recorded in March 1846 and therefore the earliest specific reference yet found, that at the public confrontation with Sidney Rigdon on 8 August 1844, after Joseph Smith was killed, "when President Young arose to address the congregation his Voice was the Voice of Bro. Joseph and his face appeared as Joseph's face." But there are many other riches, including unique records of sermons by Hyrum Smith on "the plurality of gods" and the only known summary of a vigorous speech given by Brigham Young at the dedication of the Seventies' Hall in December 1844 ("Follow me and I will lead you into the Kingdom and if I do not then my Soul for yours").

As we are here introduced to Laub's early life and Nauvoo experience, it is useful to know something of the quality of his later

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<sup>2</sup>The chief evidence that the smaller volume published here is the original for the 1845-46 period is that in the first of the three volume set, under the date June 6, 1846, Laub noted, "Written the date above Mentioned. Here Ends the transfer of the first" (p. 140). These three volumes, each 10 by 15 centimeters and bound in red leather, are still in the keeping of Laub's descendants, but Juanita Brooks, beginning in 1938, arranged to have a copy of all three volumes typed at Brigham Young University. Typescripts have been made from that copy for the Utah State Historical Library and Dixie College Library and volume two (1858-70) was microfilmed by the Huntington Library. Laub's account of his early life and some excerpts from 1852 to 1858, taken from the typescript of the three-volume set, have been published in Carrie E. Laub Hunt, *Memories of the Past and Family History* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing Company, 1968) excerpts from his summaries of sermons and from the years 1845-57 were reproduced in *Pioneer Journals* (Dugway, Utah: n.p., 1869). The section copied into the first of the three-volume set varies from the original printed here most significantly by including extra reports of speeches, particularly ones by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Amasa Lyman, all apparently in December 1844, and by omitting some of Laub's report of the succession crisis of 1844, such as the unique report of Brigham Young's transfiguration.

life.<sup>3</sup> After joining the Saints in Winter Quarters and there helping many others on their way, he emigrated to Utah in 1852. Under Brigham Young's direction he used his skill as a "joiner," or master carpenter, to help build mills (including the famous "Sugarhouse" originally designed for processing sugar beets) and the Salt Lake Theatre. In 1863 he left behind, at great financial sacrifice, the beautiful Salt Lake home he had built, to respond to President Young's call to help colonize St. George, where he served as a foreman in building the tabernacle. He later helped develop the United Order and in his sixties accepted a "carpentry mission" to work on the temple (instead, as he noted, of building houses for the lead miners at Silver Reef for the then-unheard-of wage of \$6 a day). Laub's account, in volume two of his journal, of the "Big Move" in June 1858, the evacuation from northern Utah to Provo and south when the Mormons were threatened by "Johnston's Army," gives unique details of the attitudes and actions of the Saints at that time when they were willing to leave their homes and crops again, even to set them to the torch, at President Young's command. And his detailed record of the conditions faithfully endured by the settlers of southern Utah, including some occasions when they felt "the Northern Brethren took the Advantage of our needcesity while we war oblidgeed to sell our wagons and cattle as a Sacrifice to obtain bread to Sustain and uphold and upbuild these places in Dixey South," has provided valuable insights into Mormon colonization.<sup>4</sup>

In editing Laub's manuscript journal, I have silently provided minimal punctuation and capitalization for clarity, and I have occasionally added letters appropriate to modern standardized spelling

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<sup>3</sup>In a section of his journal called "A Memerendom of Ordination" (pp. 64-68), which I have omitted, Laub records that after being baptized on March 12, 1842, "I was confirmed by or under the hands of Samuel Swanner and James Downing and that of the prisbitary [presbytery] of the Laying on of hands was sealed on my head that I should turn meny from the Errors of their ways and convince them of the truth and Speake words astonishing to myself and Prophecy in the name of the Lord." He was ordained an Elder in March 1843 and a Seventy in the 12th Quorum in June 1844. On April 10, 1845, he records that he "was ordained to the presidency of the 25th Corum of Seventys under the hands of Brother Levi Hancock & Bro. Miles, to be as counciler to my Brethren and with them in Rituosness. I shall have wisdom & knowledg given me to council in rituousness & to goe to the Nations of the Earth & help to Bare off this Kingdom to the nations of the Earth & help to gather them to the place of gathring & to overcome the week and tran[s]itories of this world with rituousness, and we seal all this Priesthood upon your head in the name of Jesus Christ. Even So Amen."

<sup>4</sup>See Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 465-77, and Andrew Karl Larson, *I Was Called to Dixie* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961), p. 190. Laub appears in Frank Esshom's *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Pioneers Book Publishing Company, 1913), with a short biography on p. 1000 and a photograph on p. 327.

in order to avoid confusion—for instance, where Laub used “the” for “they” and “of” for “off.” He used an ampersand for “and” and a double ampersand (&&) to indicate “etc.” and I have sometimes used the expanded forms. Other changes, additions, or explanations I have included in brackets. Additions made by Laub above his original lines I have simply included in the text; his occasional subject headings at the tops of pages, as well as his obviously inadvertent repetitions, I have omitted. To provide better continuity, I have removed the reports of sermons and placed them in chronological order at the end because they were entered in the journal later (from notes and memory) rather than when given and therefore have no particular relationship to the daily accounts. The few places I have omitted material, such as some strictly personal and genealogical information and some duplicated accounts, I have indicated with ellipses.

### GEORGE LAUB'S JOURNAL Commenced January the 1st, 1845.

Nauvoo city. January the 1st. Now I George Laub do goe to give an account of my Life and Jurnal to whome it may concern. I lived with my father till I was about Eight years of age. My fathers name was John Laub, a Son of John Laub Senior. My fathers occupation was Coopering and following this in part for his living and earning his bread by the Swe[a]t of his brow as God gave command to our first parrents. Tilling the ground. He having a family of Seven children, Six of us Sons & one Daughter. The names I will now assirt from the older to the younger. The first is Conrad, John the Second, Washington the Third, and I George the fourth, Isaac the fifth, and Elizabeth my only Sister the Sixth. Then Jacob my youngest Brother.

There was three older and three younger th[a]n myself. It often Seems to me Since I have Embraced the gospel of Jesus that I was Born in the mer[i]dien of my fathers family to be a Saviour to the family since I have come into the covenant of the celestial law of God. But I will proceed to my former. Being about Eight years of age my father was taken with the Bludy flux and died & we was left to be Scattered among Strangers & my mother re-tyred from house keeping. Now I met with good fortune and fell into the hands of a good man who[s]e name was George Weydler. He having noe of his own adopted me into his family by the Jentile law and he being very welthy he was a good father to me.

My mother agreed with him that I should live with him till I was Twenty one years acording to the law of the State of Pennsylvania. My mother then went and lived with her brother. Some time after She quit house keeping and then was maried again to a man whoes name was Peter Garver and by him had two more children. Now I was about fourteen years of age. My mother and her two children was taken Sick and the two children died and as I went to See the youngest bueried the Elder also died and my mother was then laying Senceless for She knew me not, no[r] the deth of her children, but died herself

and her and her Elder was both laid in the Same grave. I was then about fourteen years of age.

But I was nurished by my old friend as a father would take care of his own child. He gave me a limited Education of two years. But my mind was fixed for more lerning but my opertunity was but Slim. So I had a companion under like Sircumstan[ce]. As we was close neighbours so we would meet on the Sabeth day and Spent our time in reading history in order to gain Information. My companion's name was John Eaby and thus we proceeded till I was about Eighteen years of age. Then I made aplication to my old friend to retyre from farming and lern the carpenter trade. This was granted to me. I then went to my Employer to commence the carpenter and joiner trade, to Jacob Frankhouser. So I fell into cruel hands So I mad[e] my time Short with him.

But about Six months I then returned home again and Stayed but a Short time till I chose a nother to finish my trade, whoes name was George Bailey. He lived in Chester County, Pennsylvania, Honey Brook Township, a Small vililage called Waynesburg (for I was born in the same state in the adjoining county called Lancaster and Township of Earl). I Stayed with Bailey three years. There I became acquainted with a young man whoes name was William H. Given. He worked in company with us. We became favourites. His parents lived in the same vacinity. They became fond of me. I use[d] to goe home with him & spend the Sabbeth with him and his parents Set great Store by me, they being Methodist by profession. William, he often Spoke to me concerning relegeon and persuaded me to seek for the same. This was Methidist relegeon. I always felt as though I wished a knowled[ge] of God but how to atane this I knew not. William persuaded me to seek the relegeon he Embraced, So I went to the m[o]jurners Bench to pray to have my sines forgiven. I Saught with Earnest but all in vein to me. I did this in three Evenings in Succession but found noe deleverence. The Third Evening the priest told me to believe I had it and then I would have it. I told him I could not beleav that I had a thing when I knew that it was not So. I Said if this is relegeon there is none for me, So I arose off from my knees and Stood on my feet. By this they all Exclamed brother and took my name as one of the members. This I thought, a person should belong to some Society, So I remained with them during that Season.

Then came along the Book called Priest's *American Antiquities*.<sup>5</sup> I opend to the place and page where he speeks of an angel coming to visit or rather of Joseph Smith finding the golden plates or the Book of mormon being Showed to him by an angel. But however I was struck with Such a Sensation of fe[e]ling that it was the work of God the Spirit run through my veins as a Shock of Electric and I never rested till I Saw the Book and heard the first Elder, Erast[u]s Snow, Preach, then Elder Elisha H. Davis. The Second time I was

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<sup>5</sup>Josiah Priest's *American Antiquities* (Albany, N.Y.: Hoffman and White, 1830) was immensely popular in the 1830s, going through a number of editions of many thousands of copies. It catalogues various kinds of evidence that "America was, anciently, inhabited with partially civilized and agricultural nations, surpassing in numbers its present population" and that these inhabitants were in part immigrants that included "Asiatic nations, very soon after the flood," and also "Polynesians, . . . Phoenicians, . . . Israelites. . ." etc. The passage that Laub is apparently referring to, on page 76 of the fifth edition (1835), mentions "the Mormonites, who pretend to have discovered a book with golden leaves, in which is the history of the American Jews, and their leader, *Mormon*, who came hither more than 2,000 years ago."

fully convinced by the Spirit that it was the work of God. But the Saints then had ben preaching in my old neighbourhood and this Same John Eaby had Embraced the gosple and spake to me before I Ever herd any preach. But I thought I would doo where I was because I had my understanding darkened. This was conversation took place before my hereing any preach or Seeing the Book, as it comes to my mind while I am writing. Then I Saw the *Antiquities* and he spake to me, John Eaby spake concerning the angel. But I thought this was great and glorious news as it was in the days of the antience [ancients]. Then after that I saw the Book of Antiquities and heard Elders Snow & Davis in the Cambridg School house. Now Elder Davis obtained a School house in Cambridg and I went to here him preach. I found noe falt But yet I could not fully understan fully. But I could Remember the greater part of his sermon. He preached concerning the woman flying in the Wilderness.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after that he preached again of the needcesity of revelations at the presentimes and always needs be with God's people when he accnolleges any as his people. Now Caleb Jones one of the lernd of the Devines was there to oppose Br. Davis & when Br. Davis closed [he] gave permition to any if any fault or remarks. Jones arose to Do away revelation, that they ware not needed as, Said he, we have the New Testament is Sufitient. Br. Davis replied to him and the hole house laffed him to Scorn because of his Ignorance.

I then began to understand the principle and to advocate the cause. Then I was called a Mormon. This rather Insulted me, for my companions told me they would forsake me if I would follow them. So I then herd Brother Snow & Deem & James Downing. I then commenced Serching the Scriptures and found the Same as I herd from them. I then Prayed that I might have my understanding fully opened. I prayed often and the Lord heard me and answered my potitions and my memery was strenthened and my understanding opend to the truth of the doctrin, But I dare not leave my friends know of the mind that was in me, for they ware apposed to the Latterday Saints—But I oft times would goe to See them and ask of them for knowledg and would read the Scripture till nine and ten oclock at night & rise in the morining at three and four. I was then at my old home. They then told me they thought I was getting to be crazy. But I knew how crazy I was for I heard the gospel and I was crazy after the truth. I then felt able to advocate as I thought fully, for I could withstand any of the Sects.

So I then forsook the friendship of the Sects and my good name and went forth and was Baptized by James Downing & Rejoiced greatly. I also was confirmed by the laying on of hands & Receaved the holy Ghost, which caused my heart to leap for joy. This was on the 12 day of March 1842 but I did not tell my old parents untill they asked me. Then I told them I was baptised for I knew it to be the truth & I boar my testimony unto them that this latter day work was the truth from God or Else there is noe truth in the world and all Cristendom hass gone astray and perverted the true ways of God and I would not give it for worlds and not Enjoy the Same for I know it the truth from heaven and feel the power thereof unto Salvation to all who obey it and keep its laws. Now these are the acts of my life from my youth.

Now I will proceed to tell of these things after my Baptism & confirmation in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints. I then went to

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<sup>6</sup>This is probably a confused reference to the angel in Revelation 14:6-7.

work at my trade (Joiner) that summer. I was oftentimes asked questions concerning the gospel. I told them the principles. On this they tried to to Scorn me, but I would Expound the Scripture to them which did Silence them in all cases. This gave me great Joy for I could confound them in all there questens and did Expound the Scripture to them, & So I made preperations for my journey to Nauvoo, where the Lord hass appointed for our gathring at this time after the murdring and driving the Saints from Missouri and there to build a house unto his name and to receave our ordinances in that house per-taining to the Everlasting priesthood which is our only shure Salvation or in other words to make our calling and Election Shure. And Shortly before our departure from the East which was Pennsylvania, as was about Thirty in company from that part Earl Township, Lancaster County, there ware two Elders came to the branch and they selected myself & John Wickell to be ordained Elders to preach on our way through and we was ordained under the hands of Ezerah Hays & William G. Sterret & Sterret & I went forth and preached in that section of country. We went to Lancaster, thence to mount Nebo, thence to Georgetown & thence to my native place. . . .

Now I Started on my Journey myself to fulfill my covenant. I then told the Brethren I would perhaps meet them at Pittsburg as that was the head of the Navigation. Pittsburg was 250 miles from my place of nativity. This was a very hard rought [route] for me across the mountains. I Started without purs or Script as the antians use[d] to travel and preach the gospel. But I could Scarse get anything to Eat on my Journey. Sometimes I traveled two days and a half without any thing to Eat and had to lodg in barns in the Straw for my night's rest Because of the hardness of the people. But I came to Pittsburg & Stoped with some of the Saints there till the company came up to Pittsburg of our Brethren and Sisters. Here in the Pittsburg Branch i found great strife amongst the Brethren & Sisters, a dividing Spirit. Now as I did not fully understand all the order of things there was a man made aplication for me to Baptize as Re-baptize him. This I did without asking the Presiding Elder of the branch but I was soon Informed of my Error and chastized. But I done my part out of pure motives. He was then confirmed into the Church under John C. Page<sup>7</sup> unto the Church. His name was James Spratley.

By this time our company landed at Pittsburg. Here we again took passage on a boat called the New World and set sail for our gathring place which then was Nauvoo. Here we Soon landed with Joy and gladness to meet with our brethren and Strike hands with those who had gone before us and with the Prophet Joseph & Patriarch Hiram Smith, the leaders of the Church to whome the angel made known the gospel of Jesus & Book of Mormon. Now we went to see Joseph the Prophet and was Interdused to him by Br. William Green and Shook hands for Joy of Seeing our Prophet Joseph.

I then was in the city for five weeks without work. I desired to Labour. Then I got in to Labour at Joiner work at the Prophet's house with Jos. Colledge the forman. I worked for him sometime when I Joined on my own hand and found constant Employ. I worked Some Forty days on the Stone quarry at the commenceing and pay my tithing for Two years. I then Joined to work at my trade and continued thence.

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<sup>7</sup>Probably Apostle John E. Page, who at this time was in charge of the "Conference" which included Pennsylvania.



Now we was taught from the mouth of the prophet from Sabeth to Sabeth, who spake with great power and much ashurance. He expounded the Scripture that it could not be misunderstood for plainness. He also told us the will of the Lord concerning our present situation and State. In this my Soul found food, as a hungary mans body that Sits to the lu[x]eries of the Earth. He told us how to walk before the Lord and how to leade a happy life, Exorting us to obey the council. To these words also to add works, to our faith virtue, knowledg, temperence, Brotherly kindness, charity, with all making our calling and Election shure, for if these things abound in you you will neither be barren nor unfruitfull, and our Spirits bare & do bare witness of his teachings that they are from God and they are true & the various denominations know knothing about God or Jesus Christ or of the Father or of faith or of truth or of knowledge as it consists in God, etc. But I will show the true principles of the doctrin of Jesus Christ in its purity.

Now there is a true and perfect order and plan of Salvation, a perfect rule for the Salvation of man. Now we know when there is any thing perfect there can not any thing be added or taken from lest it will render that imperfect. And if our Earthly fathers tell us to do any thing if we will not obey them they will not be pleased with us and they will chastise us and if we still resist them they will cast us off and they will not give us any part or lot of their inheritance untill we are willing to obey there commands and then they will have mercy on us. But if they make their will and die they leave it to some of the heirs as overseer to us and when we become obedient to the will of the one they leave it to, then we can pertake of that blessing left for us. And if not, Then it is bequethed to our heirs and so on and our State hass become miserable. Now Jesus Christ hass laid a plan of Salvation that by our obedience to the commands of the Father we may be Saved & save those also who was disobedient afore times that they might live according to God in the Spirit for what men do for them in the flesh. Now the ordinance of Jesus was to come to the knowledg of the truth that we was alience [?] from the truth and that we had to repent from off our alience and forsake them and obey his commands that we might be grafted in by baptism and have hands laid on for the reception of the Holy Ghost and that will lead us to do the will of the Father. By the obediance of all the commands then we are true sons of God, heirs and Joint heirs of Jesus Christ our Elder brother, for the Seal will be placed upon our heads by the Saints of God or by the Servants of God in obedience. When Jesus was upon the Earth there was a Sertain one standing at the door and told Jesus that his mother was at the door. He then answered & asked who is my mother and he looked upon his dissiples and Said he that doeth the will of my father in heaven the same is my mother & my brother & my Sister. . . . [Here the original included three sermons by Joseph Smith (dated, probably erroneously, 6, 13, and 20 April 1843) and also one for "27 April 1843" and one undated, both by Hyrum Smith. I have placed these, with the other sermons, after the journal proper.]

City Nauvoo 1843

I landed in the City on the 9th of May, I.E. having then ended 19 Nineteen days Journey by watter & by land, which was a Joyfull home to me & longing to see the prophet. I then had the opertunity of striking glad hands

with him and my heart leaped in me for Joy, for I had greater affections towards him th[a]n for any person on the Earth. And I viewed the temple. Then I remembered my Night vision I Saw when yet in the Eastern Country, Seeing the temple in the same form as it really was and the city the Same also. After having been in the City not over forty days till Bro Joseph & his wife was going to visit her relatives about Seventy miles up the Missisipia River, all being peas [peace] at home, Save a few false brethren who sought to overthrow or destroy his hapyness, who gave notice to his Enemy of Missouri, the plan was then devised to take him to Misouri and kill him. There was a man Named Harmon Wilson<sup>8</sup> who followed him under the pertents of an old writ took him & abused him and marched him with a drawn pistle ready to kill him and thrust him into prison. —dam you old Jho. Smith, I have you now. But the hand of the Lord was with him and raised friends unto him and they administered unto him. Wilson was Striving to prevent them. The lord told him that Night what to doo. So Wilson was put under arrest. But Brother Joseph gave him free and told him to goe home in peas. So he brought his enemys to shame. So they was in great fear & trembled, for they was troubled of themselves. He told us that was the Fourty Second Suit brought against him falsly, & he always was cleared by the Law of the Land.

So there was writ after writ served on him but always under false pertents. So at lenth Br. Sidney Rigdon was accused of Some of the caus of his trouble being brought upon him, as being bribed by his enemys to betray him (as appeared, after his death). This caused a Special Conference to be called & Joseph told us he did not want him for his counciler any further, that if the people put him there they might. But he said I will Shake him off. He Shook him Self and Shook hands on them words with Rigdon. But the mercy pleading for Rigdon by Bro Hyrum Smith the patriarch Softened the hearts of the people, so they put him in again by their Voice. But Joseph never acknowledged him any further.<sup>9</sup> Yet Rigdon was weeping & pleading. But Joseph Said he cursed god in the Misouri troubles. Meny things occured here yet but too tedious to mention. Some time after, Fosters, Laws, & Higbeys apostatised from the Church and caused much trouble. They went So far even as to Establish a printing press in the city to Excite the minds of the people, our enemys, and the City Council or our city charter granted us the prevaledg to remove all Nucens [nuisances] out of the city, as was called or declared a nuicence by the City Council. So the printing publication was declared as such and was de-

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<sup>8</sup>This is the famous occasion (reported in Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971], 5:439–75 [hereafter cited as *HC*]) when Joseph H. Reynolds, sheriff of Jackson County, Missouri, and Constable Harmon T. Wilson, of Carthage, Illinois, disguised themselves and captured Joseph near Dixon, Illinois, where he had gone to preach. They intended to take him to Missouri, but delays of various kinds succeeded until Reynolds and Wilson in turn were arrested for false imprisonment and escorted to Nauvoo by a body of Joseph's friends. There he served his two enemies a fine dinner before they were released.

<sup>9</sup>On 13 August 1843, Joseph Smith, on the basis of evidence he had just received, accused Rigdon of being traitorous and asked that he be disfellowshipped "and his license demanded," which was done. At the "Special Conference" here referred to, on 6 October 1843, after various leaders spoke in Rigdon's defense, the conference voted that he "be permitted to retain his station as Counselor in the First Presidency." A footnote in the Manuscript History notes that then Joseph Smith arose and said, "I have thrown him off my shoulders, and you have again put him on me. You may carry him, but I will not" (*HC*, 6:49). Soon after that Rigdon went to Pittsburgh, where he remained, except for a visit in April 1844, until after Joseph's martyrdom.

stroyd Emediately. This caused a mob to collect in the Sorounding County & some of the brethren murmerd. They thought it was wrong. But Bro Joseph called a meeting at his own house and told the people or us that God showed him in an open vision in daylight that if he did not destroy that press, Printing press, it would cause the Blood of the Saints to flow in the Streets & by this wise that Evil destroy. And I write what I know and seen & heard for myself. Then there was a writ Isued again & the mob was gathered around & threats breathed against us in all quarters by our enemy. And for our security, Bro. Joseph was Lieutenant General of the States army, called out the Nauvoo Legion, & we was on our guard for about fifteen days while our enemys was striving to find some Law to arrest Joseph, & at lenth they got fals writs & fals witnesses to draw us out of the city.

Brother Joseph called the City Council together and asked them if they would stand by him. He also told them if they would not that he would leave them and goe to where he could rais up a people that would stand by him. He also Called the Legion together and got upon a frame building across the street from his mansion and asked them if they would Stand by him if the Governor of the State of Illinois would turn mobicrat. This he asked thrice in Succesion. There was a unanimus voice every time he asked. He then Exclaimed, It is enough, I thank thee, oh Lord God, for those that thou hast gave me out of the world, for I am thine & they are mine & I will have them & I can say that I have more to stand by me th[a]n Jesus had at his death. He then said, The enemy is seeking my life and are laying planns to kill me, but if they kill me they kill an Inocent man. This I will call on God, angels & men to witness. They will take me out to Carthage and I am going inocent as a lamb to the Slauter. But I have Laid the foundation of the work of what the Lord hass gave me to doo, therefore have noe longer leas of my life. I have acco[m]plished my work that was given me & others can build on the same, & I have noe more leas of my life any longer than any other man & my enemys are blood thirsty & they have laid meny planns and helish designs for my life (he said). There is Joseph Jackson. He hass threatend to kill me if I told of his secret murders which he told me of. He told me he hass killed some four men and made catfish bate of some of them and now, dalm you, if you tel on me I will kill you, for I never told any one of these things but you. Now Jackson is Seeking deep for my life, fearing I will tell of his helish deeds & now I curse him in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for his evil designes & wickedness.<sup>10</sup>

And it was but a day after [that] he gave himself up to be tried by the Law of the land, also Hyrum Smith, his Brother the Patriarch. For the writ demanded both of them. They was two Inocent men & always lived above the Laws of the Land & the Enemy knew this and hated them greatly because they ware ordained of god. They went out to Carthage to await their trials & was committed to Jail without any trial contrary to law or justice. But, Said he, they will Slay me an Inocent man, but we could not beleave at the time that

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<sup>10</sup>A synopsis, compiled by George A. Smith from various verbal reports, of this "Last Speech of President Smith to the Legion," on July 18, 1844, is contained in *HC*, 6:498-500. Joseph H. Jackson was an adventurer who showed up in Nauvoo in December 1843 and pretended to be investigating Mormonism but became one of those plotting Joseph's death and a member of the mob at Carthage (*HC*, 6:149, 435-36, 569). These comments on Jackson are not recorded in George A. Smith's synopsis.

the lord would Suffer him then to be taken from our Midst. Now after they had committed him to Jaol the guard that would have rescued him was dismissed, and his hottest Enemy was placed around the Jaol, and was loaded with blanks while his murderous Enemy was secreted till the Signal was given, then rushed in upon them while the guard passed them by and Shot their blanks into the air. They said the law will not reach them but powder and lead will. And there was two of the twelve, John Taylor and Willard Richards, went in to Stay with them, while four Balls Struck Joseph & four struck Hyrum & Taylor, while Richards Escaped unhurt. Not a hole was put in his Robe as he was the only one had his robe on. So Said Joseph went to Jump out of the prison window is where he received his death by four balls. Then there was a man ran up to him to cut his head off, but the Lord Sent his angel, who stood between and interfeard, and they Stood like dead men around him while the others had to goe and pull them away. This was testified by one of the party a few weeks after who came to Nauvoo. He said he was over persuaded by the party of murder[er]s and Said he took noe active part with them but partly taken by threats & forced. His Name was Daniels.<sup>11</sup> This was his testimony. Brother Taylor was saved by the forth ball Striking his watch in his [v]est pocket and flatted the watch. The governer Ford of the State of Illinois was at Carthage at the time they was put to Jaol. Brother Taylor went to him and told him that the people ware so enraged that they would kill him if he dismissed the guards who ware his friends. But he Pledged his faith & the faith of the State of Illinois that they should not be harmed.

Here fell Two as good men as Ever trod this Earth Save Jesus Christ our Elder Brother.

Now concerning the Governor of the State of Illinois. In the mean time while our beloved Brethren was yet in the city of Nauvoo, Governer Ford was sent for. But before our Br. Embasider [Ambassador]<sup>12</sup> reached his place of abode the Enemy had brought him to the place of their randesvoos, which was Carthage, the county Seet of that county, & there it appears the plann was laid for the horrible deed, for the nature of the case was such as to Satisfy that he was Engagued in the plann, for in the morning while they ware thrust to Jaol he Started for Nauvoo to be out of the way of the murder and while he was Coming to our city this murder took place. He emediatly returned after making some few Inflammatory Remarks. While on his return met a mesenger with the horid news. They forced him back again till they had warned the citisens of Carthage to flee for life and he fledd himself.

Now after Joseph & Hyrum gave themselves up to be tried by the law of the Land, the Governor Thomas Ford Inshured them his protection under the pledged faith of the State of Illinois & after that broke the pledg and had them thrown into Jaol & disbanded the Smith friends & set his hottest enemys

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<sup>11</sup>William M. Daniels became the chief prosecution witness in the trial of those accused of murdering Joseph and Hyrum in May 1845. Just two weeks before the trial he published a twenty-four page booklet on "the names and proceedings of the principal murderers of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," which contains the account of the alleged attempt to behead the Prophet related by Laub. The booklet, because of its exaggerations and untruths, was used effectively by the defense to discredit Daniels as a witness; though some of Daniels' account has persisted in Mormon folklore—and has even been repeated in some nonofficial books—it has not been accepted in any official way and in fact was attacked by B. H. Roberts as "incredible." See Dallin Oaks and Marvin Hill, *The Carthage Conspiracy* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1975), pp. 87–90.

<sup>12</sup>"Brother Ambassador" is apparently a sarcastic appellation for Governor Ford.

around the Jaol to preserve the lives of the prisoners. But while they was yet Devising plans in the court house, They Sent Some of the officers to bring them to the Court house, but the keeper, knowing their demands was not lawfull he being an honest man, So he told the demand was not good and he would not let them goe unlawful. So they told the governer this & he replyd have you not force enough to bring them out by force & noe diffience for law, & he yet pledgd his honer that the law should protect these four men.

This Sho[w]s he was about to give the murders a good chance & he took his leaf for Nauvoo. Such are the conduct of our rulers. Such will God Judg when he comes to seek thos who are guilty of Blood of Innocence again. When the governer came into our city he gave us of the grocest insults. He commanded us to lay down our wepons of war and let our reledgeon Sheld us. He also told us to not make any more outbreaks. Just as though we had been Injuring the Mobbers. Now we had insulted noe man. He told us if any of these apostats was mising that we would have to atone for them, that the whole State would be on us & would burn our houses & kill men, Wemen & Children. (Now if any of those men would have concealed themselves, we would had to suffer for their helish decines.)

Now the time Bro. Joseph & Hyrum Started for Carthage, about the Last words they told to us was to take good care of ourselves and to keep the commandments of the Lord. These Sayings I am a witness to myself & could I have had the preveledg of Standing between them & death Sweet would it have been to me to Save their lives. . . . [Here the original included a sermon by Heber C. Kimball and one by President Brigham Young, both given at the dedication of the Seventies' Hall in December 1844; both of these I have removed to the end in this edition. The original also included here a "Memerendom of Ordination," which I have omitted.]

In my hering & presents, Propheyses of Joseph Smith, this being transfere[d] in this Book from the various Scraps of 1843 & 4, as he was martred in 1844, June 27th. Now I will relate some of the Prop[h]esies that I heard our Beloved Joseph Smith Declare while filled with the Spirit of the Living God in the name of Jesus Christ, that if the people put him in for ruler of this nation he would save them & set them at liberty. But if they refused they Shall & will be swept off. That there will not be anymore than a greese spot of them left. Also, while filled with the Spirit he prophesied in the Name of Jesus Christ that if the Missourians would not redress the Rongs of the Saints that the red hot Wrath of Almighty God would be Poured out upon them & upon the rulers of this Nation. Also that the Misourians Should be destroyed of a meaner people then they themselves & that ear [ere] long, etc.

Now since I have heard this prophesi Delivered I have heard & Seen fire, pestilence, murders, and distress of all [k]inds, & The Nations have refused his Salvation & also to redress the rongs of Missouri. . . . [Here the original includes a duplicate account of the "Death of Joseph and Hyrum," which I have omitted.]

Now the Following Proceedings. In a few days after [the Prophet's last address to the Nauvoo Legion] Joseph & Hyrum was agoing to take their flight to the Valleys of the mountains or to uper Callifornia, as they had at one time Selected 30 Thirty men to goe & spye out the Land, but after wards refrained from so Doing, I being one asked the question if I could goe. I then Said I could But [k]new not for why, but now I See that Joseph knew this place for

Refuge for the Saints. To hide themselves from their Enemies. They crossed the river Missisippia in preparation. But Some of the Brethren grew very timid & faint & fearfull Least the Enemy Should come in on the Sitisons and Kill our Wemen & children & Burn our City. This the enemy threatened for to do if we would not give up our Prophet Joseph & Hyrum Smith. These men who went & strove for Joseph & Hyrum to come back and give themselves up to the mob are well known. I will not name. But the prophet knew their design, and to spare their Lementation, So they came & gave themselves up to be tried by the Law of the Land. But Joseph Said we will goe but as sheep to the Slautter. They went fourth as he said and Seald their testimony with their Blood acording to his Words They died to save the people. But this caused us to morn their Loss greatly, as it apeard then Darkness was cast over the whole Land. Now our enemys troubled us very much, for we had to wach day & Night to keep our Enemys from coming in on us. Thus we Lay out at Night watching to prevent their invasion & we overcome them by so doing, & then our troubles Seased for some time & there was peas in the State for Nearly one year.

Now we hurried on in building our temple with all speed, but before we got it altogether Reared there was a nother Tremendious Enemy arose & they used great hostillity towards the Brethren in the regeon, round about. They Drove them out of their own houses & some ware Sick not able to walk. They ware compelled to leave their dwellings, for the mob Set their houses on fire, burned their household furniture if it was not removed in fifteen minits after notice. The grain also was destroyed, their cattel drove off & nearly all they had. This was a time when Jacob B. Backenstos<sup>13</sup> was the pea[ce] offiser of Hancock County. He was a friend of the Latterday Saints & Emediatly isued a proclamation for the Riators to Seas [cease] their hostility. But it was all in vain. He isued the Second, Third & fourth & fifth But all in vein, & so he ordered out a pose[e] of men to goe forth and Stop it by force. This posey consisted of Saints, for our Enemy was also his Enemy. I was called on & went fourth as one of the posse accompanied by about Two hundred in one Company. We traveld at the rate of Twelve Miles, Nearly all night, till we got to the place of randesvoos where we was welcomed by Brother Markems, Stephen Markems [Markham] as colonel of a ridgment of brethren who had gone before we did. We marched nearly to the Enemy camp. There was Some five or Six hundred of the Enemy. There was five or Six houses on fire when Some of our brethren was Scouting, and the Lord Speeded the animels of the brethren so that the house burners could not get out of the [way] & Severl was shot dead. This frightened the residew So they Seased their burning for a Short time. The head of the mob, which was Levi Williams & Thomas Sharp, them

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<sup>13</sup>Jacob B. Backenstos, non-Mormon sheriff of Hancock County (and member of the state legislature where he opposed repeal of the Nauvoo Charter), so enraged the anti-Mormon mobs, which he tried to control when they again began attacks on the Saints in September 1845, that they sought to kill him; they also tried unsuccessfully to prosecute him for the "murder" of Frank Worrell, who was shot by Orrin P. Rockwell in an attack by the mobbers on Backenstos' posse. The posse activities described by Laub culminated in the death of several members of the mob, and also of two of the Mormons, which so appalled Brigham Young that though he had at first talked tough and encouraged the Backenstos-led effort, he arranged a meeting with arbitrators chosen by Governor Ford and agreed the Mormons would leave the next spring to avoid any further bloodshed (*HC*, 7:444-51).

& the mob they took their flight & crossed the Missisipia River at Warsaw. Just as we got to the river they landed on the other Shore & Warsaw was left Desolate. Also part of the company marched for Carthage & Sorounded it & took prisners, those that had not fled. So Carthage was in our posesion for the Space of ten or Twelve days, & Thus the Twelve apostles then was endited for treason. I then was called on by J. D. Lee as one of the guard to accompany them to Carthage to await their trial. The trial came on but noe charge found against them So they was Honerably Equited.

Now there was a company sent fourth to keep the peace of the county, that the Enemy might do noe more Injury. But as I am now writing I here the Sad news of the Enemy Killing two of our Brethren. Now we had formed a treaty with our Enemy that if they Would leave us alone & not trouble us till the Spring, 1846, that we would leave the United Stats & we would leave that we might enjoy pea[ce]. But they kept not the treaty. Thus we are now making ready for our Journey and goe to a place where we can rear a Standard of liberty & enjoy the blessings of our god. Heare our lives are at Stake all the time.

Here the Saints left their fine habitations without any reward. I also left a fine brick house, half Lot, Valuation about one Thousand Dollars.

Now in these times Sickness invaded on me and I was left destitute. So I was dictated by the Spirit of God to wright to my friend George Weydler my Sircum Stances by way of letter, to which he blessed me with Means, also requesting me to send again if in want for more. Thus I hoap the god of our Salvation will bless him all the days of his life, that he may come forth in the morning of the Resurrection.

Now by him I was brought up to manhood age of years as an orphant, for my father Died when I was about 8 years of age. My mother Die[d] when I was about 14 years of age & George Weydler took me to him when I was Eight years old. My fathers name was John Laub & my mothers name was Barbary Kesler, as her maden name. George Weydler was a father to me & a friend.

A friend like you is true Sensation  
I trus[t] for you to gain Salvation

December 12th, 1845, commenced End[o]wment In the temple of Nauvoo.

Now in this time I agreed to goe in to John D. Lee's family as to the Law of Adoption through his persuasion according to the celestial law.<sup>14</sup> Now the Endewments commenced in the house of the Lord in the temple of Nauvoo, in which John D. Lee was one of the first to Receave his Endewments & on the 19th Nineteenth I received mine. This the 19th of December as being chosen to recieve my washing & anointing in the house of the Lord in the Temple of Nauvoo, also Keys whereby to approach our heavenly Father, Signs & Tokens. Now I say, he that knows his fellow who is anointed to be a king in Isreal and a priest unto God, be ware to touch not the Lord's anointed Least you touch the apple of his Eye, least thou be cut asunder. Neither Speak Evil of

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<sup>14</sup>This interesting practice of being sealed into a prominent leader's family, which persisted into the 1890s, was closely related to the Mormon understanding of salvation through a unified family going back to Adam, but it also had important this-worldly effects of uniting the Mormon community. See Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption," *BYU Studies* 14 (Spring 1974):291-314.

Such, etc., Least thou say aught agains[t] his children. Also how to Detect fals Spirits or deceavers who profess to be apostles and are none. And the New name that noe man can read Save him that Recieveth the Same or Recieve it, etc.

Now while the Endowment was continuing, till the Twenty Fifth of December, ware raging and came against us with Enditments against the Twelve for the Saying of being counterfitters in money matters. But as William Miller threw Brother Brigham Young's mantle over him the Soldiers took him in great hast, thinking they had Brigham Young, our chief Apostle. They knew not till they ware twenty miles with him from Nauvoo.<sup>15</sup> Thus they ware striving to overthrow the Kingdom continually, being ignorant it being the work of God. . . .

Now on the Second day of February Mary Jane Laub, my wife, Recieved her anointing in the Temple of the Lord, at Nauvoo. Now I am present this day in the house of the Lord.

Febry 3d My fathrinlaw came to me & wished me to take his teem to goe in the first company. But John D. Lee wishes me to Stop and take care of his affairs, as he Said he was obliged to goe and help to establish a nother Stake in the West, & our Enemy's are oppressing us, Destroying our property. Now the remaining part of the Saints are to tarry till grass grows & watter runs. As the first company crosses the Missisipia on the Ice these who tarry till they can Sell their property and fit out to be comfertable for their Journey. Now my desire was great to goe with the first company. But to submit to council I now tarry.

By Br. Amasia Lyman. Now Amasia Lyman being autherised to adopt & Seal. So on the 5th day of Febry, 1846, I & My Wife with many others ware adopted to J. D. Lee family. This adoption is to Link the chain of the priesthood in Such a way that can not be broken only by braking Covanants, for they are made before God, Angels and the present Witness. We covenant together for him to be a father unto those who are Seald to him, to do unto them as he would to his own Children, & to counsil them in rituousness & to teach them all the principles of Salvation & to share unto them of all the blessings to comfert. These & all that are calculated to make them happy both in time & eternity. Now we did also covenant on our side to do all the good for his upbuilding & happyness both in time & Eternity. This was done at the alter according to the patren of the ordinance.

Sealing of Mariag. Now on the Same date, on the 5th of Februry, 1846, My wife Mary Jane<sup>16</sup> was Sealed to me a wife for time & Eternity, to be my companion & comfert & to fill up the measure of our creation, & we was sealed up unto Eternal Lives, to come fourth in the Morning of the first Resurrection & nothing to prevent, only the Sin against the Holy Ghost, which is Sheading

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<sup>15</sup>This famous event occurred when men trying to arrest Brigham Young on false charges were about to enter the temple but saw Miller (wearing Brigham's cap) get into President Young's coach. Despite his vigorous protestations that he was not Brigham Young, Miller was taken to Carthage, where it was finally recognized that indeed he was not. The escape greatly delighted the beleaguered Mormons, was related often as a morale booster, and became widely known as the "Bogus Brigham Incident."

<sup>16</sup>Mary Jane McGinnis (as her maiden name was officially spelled) lived until 1872, when she died at the age of forty-one after bearing Laub eleven children, two of whom died in infancy.



Inocent blood or the concenting there unto. Now when we was sealed in this order, J. D. Lee Embraced us in his arms & blessed us in the name of the Lord that we Should become mighty upon the Earth & our names to be honerable in all generations.

Now the first company Started on the 12th of February, 1846. Myself with Lee & others crossed the Missippi to the Iowa Shores, where we met meny Brethren. As the Enemy was in persuit of them I crossed & recrossed meny times conveying Such things as they needed & thus Stayed with them Two Nights. . . .

Now on the 4 of March I again crossed and recrossed the River, helping J. D. Lee across with the residue of his family. This it was cold & Snow. In the first he took Two of his wemen at this time he. Now the Last was Rachel Martha & Loiza Lee & H. Bowans & Wife, with many others of his family. . . . [Here in the original is an account of the events following the martyrdom that duplicates the one below.]

Now after the death of Br. Joseph & Hyrum, Sidney Rigdon having A mis-ion appointed him by Joseph to Pittsburg before his death. Now after his death Sidney came in all the hast[e] in him to Nauvoo from Pittsburg to claime the presidency of the church, him not knowing that Joseph Sent him out of the way to get r[i]d of him. Now when he returned to Nauvoo he called all the people to gether to choos them a guardian, as he Expressed himself. Now, Said he, the Church is 14 years old and it was the duty of the church to choose a guardien & preached there for Two days on that subject of guardianism & the Lords ways was not as mans ways, But as the heavens are hier than the earth So are the Lords ways above mans ways, etc. Just about the time that the Vote was to be taken for him to be president & guardien, But as the Lord would have the Twelve to come home & I felt to praise God to See Bro Brigham Young walk upon the stand then. Thes[e] positive Revelations of Rigdon's ware only guess So, & he thinks So & hoap so, while the lord had told him how to proseed before according to his one [own] mouth & after wards only Suposed them so.

Now when President Young arose to address the congregation his Voice was the Voice of Bro. Joseph and his face appeared as Joseph's face, & Should I not have seen his face but herd his Voice I Should have declared that it was Joseph.<sup>17</sup> Now he arose and commenced Speaking, Saying I would rather have ~~fasted and~~ murned forty days then to come here, & if Rigdon was the Legal heir to lead the Church why did he not Stop to Pittsburg till we came and accompanied him as I had wrote to him. But he was afraid that he could not kerry out his designes & conspericy underhanded, etc. Emediately Rigdons followers armed them with the wepons of death & with the Brandy Jug So that they might have their Spirits of their calling, for Rigdon was filled with that

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<sup>17</sup>This account, written in March 1846, is the earliest yet found that specifically mentions the change in voice and appearance in this "transfiguration." Other, more general accounts, and the context which made important such a miraculous validation of Brigham Young's right to the Mantle of Joseph are described in D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," *BYU Studies* 16 (Winter 1976):209-12. Laub did not copy this detail into his three-volume journal, but at the equivalent point only says, "But as the Lord would have his servant Brigham Young the President of the Twelve to come just in time to tell the People who was the fals[e] sheperd or who the good Sheperd and Rigdon soon Quaked and trembl[ed] . . . (pp. 116-117).

Same Brandy Spirit, & as Marks<sup>18</sup> was his first council & the party having ben counceled by Rigdon to goe and kill the first man that would say aught against him. But Marks told him & them if they did they would all be killed for their Recompence, & So they remained Quiet as the following day was continued in meeting etc. Now previous to this William Law arose & profesed to be the Leader of the Church But was cut off & withered & all his followers.

Strang. Now here indirectly comes Strang,<sup>19</sup> Profesing to have Revelations, & declares to be apointe[d] by Joseph & ordained by an angel & Which is contrary to this dispensation of this last despensation. He would not give it to any other people, Save he should be apointed & ordained of him who held the power which was Joseph, & James J. Strang Wrote many Revelations & that to his own condemnation, & when he or his followers would debate, the truth of Mormonism Swept their arguements So that they could not Stand before the truth. Yet he had meny followers. Even John E. Page, one of the Twelve Apostles, Turned to Strang. Page was at one time a mighty orator upon Mormonism, But on Strangism he was Very easy Confounded. He always defyed the world at Large to confound him upon Mormonism, & thus we See meny tossed toe & froe by diffrent winds of doctrine, Because they grow cold & Negligent in the Truth.

March the 9th, 1846. 25 Quorum of Seventys, which is our Corum, which I consist as one of the Council. We met to wind up the Buisness of the Quorum in Nauvoo, & we had made A Barrel of grape wine as Corum property. This we distributed in the Quorum, also Some oil. This was Quorum property & was divided & the Nauvoo Brass Band playe[d] for us.

Now as I was moved upon By the Spirit I again Wrote to my old friend Weydler asking him for assitence the Second time, as he requested me when he sent me the first that if I neded to let him know. My prayer ware for his assistance. This I again obtained, Twenty dollars. But he Wrote to me on this wise, that he beleaved our reledgeon was noe better than any other because there was so many turned away from us. Now in Answer to his I took the Sayings of the apostle John in the days of Jesus when he was teaching the Disciples Sertain doctrin & they turned from him, Saying who is able to Stand by these Sayings, and many turned away. Then the Saviour turned to the Twelve, asked them will Ye also turn away. They Answered, Where will we goe Lord, we know that thou hast the words of Eternal Life, & also told him the Sayings of Paul, that many should depart from the faith, & I reasoned upon Scriptures of these Sayings and told him it would not make the work false if they would turn away. And even if I would turn away he might put me down as one who denyed the work of the Lord in these Last days, & for I say unto you If any man or woman turns away from this Church are [a]postats from the Church

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<sup>18</sup>William Marks was president of the Nauvoo Stake. Though he came under Joseph's suspicion in January 1844 for his connection with William Law and other traitors, he seemed to be faithful through the martyrdom and presided at the crucial succession meeting on 8 August 1844, where Brigham Young and the Twelve, whom Marks seemed to support, were sustained. However, he apparently turned to support Rigdon, because on 5 October 1844, he was rejected by vote of the Church as Nauvoo Stake President for not sustaining the Twelve (*HC*, 7:296).

<sup>19</sup>James J. Strang was a charismatic figure who joined the Church in February 1844 and explored a site for Mormon settlement in Wisconsin, where he eventually collected over 2,000 followers and reigned over them as a "King" until he was murdered in 1856. See Quinn, "Succession Crisis," pp. 194-96.

of Jesus Christ. And this I wrote him, seven pages reasoning out of the Scripture on principles of truth & rituousness.

Now there was Robery & Theft. Bro. Orson Hyde was left as a Sheperd to watch over the flock That was left behind after the first Company had Started. Now Bro. Hyde continued preaching & Prophesying unto the people, commanding them to be industerous, to use all their efforts to goe to the west and there meet with our Brethren who hass gone before where we can enjoy liberty and that the Judgments of the lord was about to be poured out upon this ungodly generation and that it was Just at their doors for the Earth groneth to be delivered Because of the Blood of the Saints & prophets that was martred & that it will be required of this generation, & they are oppressing us daily & persecuting us, Seeking our Blood. And he also told them if they did Scatter, to all Scater on the one track, and if any comes along to crye for mercy to take them along also. And Some one would have compasion on them, & he also pronounced woe unto the Rich, in as much as you do not open your hearts and help the poor, & that they shall be cursed & we do not want you to goe with us for I will be a danight [Danite]<sup>20</sup> unto them. I will throw my Self across their path, and I will be their accusers when we get up to the camp, etc. For the poor does all the day long and are Suffering for the comferts of life, while the rich are living in Splender & the poor are just as good as the rich. The Scripture Says if any man hass this world's goods and Shuteth his Bowels of compasion hath not the Love of God dwelling in him & we want the pure in heart. Now he preached & prophesied Severl Sabeth & told them it was the will of god to give to the poor of their Riches & his skirts should be clear, and if they will not do it then the curse of god be upon you rich, and he Shook himself and his garments against them.

Now Brother A. Babet<sup>21</sup> arose & Set forth the Law & the propositions of our Enemys that was made concerning our Removal from Nauvoo, & Six thousand of the Saints was to remove & now there is already ten thousand gone & meny more ready to Start, & we are getting ready as fast as we can. For we do not want to stay amongst our Enemys any longer, for the meny Seasons of [w]rongs we have to Suffer by them is too greivous to be born. They need not think we want to stay amongst them. He also told us that General Waren<sup>22</sup> Wrote him a letter Stating something like this, that it was Expected that the Entire Mormon population would leave the State of Illinois or Hancock County & was the mind of the people abroad that they should leave till that time, & that he was going to disbanden his troops till that time. Then they would have to take care of themselves. But, Said Babet, we never asked the governor to place any of his armed forces here to gard us. But we can plainly See that

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<sup>20</sup>On this unofficial group of Mormon vigilantes, whose name became a symbol of vengeance, as it is used here, see Leland Gentry, "The Danite Band of 1838," *BYU Studies* 14 (Summer 1974):421-50.

<sup>21</sup>Almon W. Babbitt, early convert, member of Zion's Camp, and once president of the Kirtland Stake, later disfellowshipped and then reinstated, was a faithful Saint at this time, serving as a messenger for Joseph at Carthage and assisting in leadership of the exodus from Nauvoo.

<sup>22</sup>Laub is probably referring to Major W. B. Warren, commanding officer of the Illinois volunteers "who had been charged by Governor Ford to supervise, in a military way, the affairs of Hancock county and keep the peace..." (B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. [Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965], 2:528).

the governors troops are as great mobocrats as any of the rest, for they come into the city & create Excitement & torment us all the day long, & thus we cannot get any done to us but oppresion all the day. The trops was to be disbandend on the first day of May 1846. This is giving the mob full Sway to doo their develish deeds & abominable acts against us & our ingery, and we are compeld to Leave & goe to a place where we can Enjoy Liberty, Even out of The United Stats, for we have noe place, noe Joy, noe comfert amongst the inhabitants of Illinois.

Concerning Rob[b]ing & plunder. Now the mobers Stole from the Saints horses & Cows & oxen & Waggon & all maner of thing that they could Steel from us, then turned and Said the Saints had Stole from them, So as they could enter Lawsuits against us. But there was noe law for the Saints, but we did have to Submit to their deeds. This was our treatment from our Enemy in Illinois.

Lonza Roads, Traiter. April 17th, 1846.

Now Benjamin Meginness [Laub's father-in-law] Took Mercy Ann Brooks to Wife as Second, etc. Lonza Roads went to the Enemy and filed an affidavit that Br. Benjamin Meginness was Living in open adultery. The Writ was Isued on a States Warrant to our Shirif Pro tem, Br. Pain of Nauvoo, which Br. Pain Sent Bro. Meginness word to Step out of the way for he was coming with the warrent. Thus he repeted the Mesag 3 Three times, & I took Br. Meginness in the carriag & took them over to Br. Esrah Chase, South of us about Three miels, & Secreted them from the Enemy. Then I brought them word of the movements of the times from time to time concerning the times. Now he placed his property into my hands to Sell to the best advantage and manage the affairs Judisiously while he had to be absent in hiding from the Officers, etc. Now in this time he, Br. Meginness, had Sold a peas of Land to one of the governers troop. His name was VanSchoonhover and the Deed or title proved not to be cleard up, and he came back and Seased upon his property and took away his wagon & carriag & Three Sets of harnace. There was five others of the governers troops with him, & the constable Whoes name was Welch, an old mober, & they took the property about Ten miels North West to a place called Pontusuch [Pontoosec] where Chancy Higby was Justice of the peace. There they deposited them for Sale. I went & strove to get them but all in vain. Now I & Brother Meginness was riding to gether in the city, for I had entred into a decree with Br. Pain that he would not Serve the warrant on him, only for him to keep out of the way & Not come right up to him. Now as Lonza Rods Saw Br. Meginness in the city he ran to Br. Pain, insisting on him to take Meginness. So Pain Sent Roads to the river to watch and keep him from crossing. Rods did so and ran up & down the river while Pain was minding his own buisness. This Pain done to get Shut of Rodes, then told me of the Sircumstances. Thus Roads had his trubble In Vain.

Now as I & Br. Meginness was Striving to Lone Sufitient money, one hundred & fifty dollars, & Called to Br. Hunter's, Stated the Sircumstances that we could do nothing unless our property. Hunter told us he could not do any thing for us. Then we went to Br. E. D. Wolley's to try to Lone the Same amount. But Wolley told us he could not raise one hundred & 50 cents, let lone one hundred & fifty dollars, as we only wanted it for a few days. So we rode till the Seventh of May 1846. Then we called at Br. Daniel Russel's, Stated our Sircumstances. He told us if we could do noe better he would assist

us. So we went to Br. Celley's, tried him. But he made an excuse that he had promised his money to a Mr. Clark, one of our Enemys, & others of the Same Stripe & he could not acomodate us. But he could acomodate our Enemys to all that he had for to speculate on the Brethren. So Br Daniel Russel [a]comodated us with the Same & I and Megeness Started for Pontusuc to Stay the sale.

Now when I & Megeness was there they told us they would Save it for our Redemption. As we went to return home Francis Higby & John Welch consulted together & then came & took his horse from him & made him pay \$20 Twenty Dollars to get the beast back again, Saying we must make Shure of the demands against you. And we returned to our homes and this is the way they heaped oppresion upon us, & and we could do nothing but yeald to their oppresion for we could get noe Justice done on our Side. John Welch was a hipocrit & a mobicrat & Francis M Higby, In Sted of Chancy.

Now the governer of Illinois Wrote a letter to A. W. Babit that he never made any Treaty With us, Neither did he with the antimormans concerning the removal of this People, But he Suposed the Mormans would all Leave as Soon as Watter run & grass grew & that time was now at hand & that the antimormans are Determined that we Should Leave or Else they would have a war & the sooner it would be over (that is to say to our enemys they should goe to Work). But he suposed in as much as the Leaders of the Church had crossed the Missippia that there would be noe more gathring in Illinois, & in as much as the heads of the Church hass taken all the means with them that those poor unfortunated Wretches who was left behind had to depend on the Sales of their property to take them away & he did not Suppose any one Would desturb them. For, Said he, I cannot muster force Enough to Quale the mob as you have Seen here to fore. But again if war must come between the Two partys let it come, be over with the Sooner. This was the contents of the Letter to Almon W. Babit. Now Every honest heart could See that the mob are Li-cent [licensed] by the governer to come and plunder & mob & Rob and kill & drive us out of the State, & he Sanction all their movements. Now we are getting Ready as fast as posible & Sacrifice our property with much lo[s]s in order to get an outfit, yet for one fourth of the value. Yes & now the plunderers are making their appearences & whipping our Brethren when they can get them out from homes.

Now on the 15th day of May 1846 I George Laub & Brother Herington, Daniel Russle's Son-in-law, went up to Pontusuch and demanded a Settlement with the constable John Welch to Satisfy the Judgment against Megeness, Which was one hundred dollars, & the cost was Seven dollars. This cost was not to be paid by us but they forced it out of us unjust, for Henry Vansconhover promised us the property if we paid him one hundred fifty dolors. But we was forced by the constable & Frances M. Higby—Now this Higby is one of the [a]postats who went out from us, etc., and Now I told Welch to tell Vansconhover to come down to our place & receave all his propertys value in payment, as he was not there himself. That he should not be Roug[h]ed. So we Started for home and drove about four mile till we was over taken by a possey of armed men demanding fourty Dollars more of us. They ware armed with Swords and pistles and guns. They came with vengence, hailed us, we halted, and the constable Welch said that all things ware not Settled. (Br. Herington knew the posey. I knew them not.) They wanted us to goe back with

them again. It was then nearly Sundown, & we told them it was now Night & we had some 4 or more miles to goe, yet then the constable Welch told us he would cease [seize] on the carrage & take it back. But he had noe attachment. This is why he brought this force with him. For to force us to measures as we ware only two & unarmed. So we found that we ware forced to Measures, and we formed a tretim with them that we would pay them fifty dollars & goe home. This was done. We took a receipt in full of all demands.

Now one of the men's names was Meolley. He had his Sword hanging by his side and the others I did not know. There was 3 of the governer's troops & while we was in their custoday they Laught at us and mocked us and was making Sport, & Now this day there was a mob meting at Pontisuc. There was about forty of them perading & I Supose about that Number looking on (this same day) & daming the Mormons & drinking to Excess, drinking & Swaring & Quarling among themselves. This was their conduct of the day. I Understood by Some that Major Warr[e]n would have to recall the Sayings he had made in favour of the Mormans or they would give him hell. I also understood that they passed a resolution that all the Mormans that are Endeivering & making efforts to goe they would leave in peace. But those who did not do so they would drive them & Now they came the Second time and took the cariag and a two year colt on a nother pretent against Megenness as he had Brought the pay for William Castos property. They Strove to make him pay and Welch came back the Second time to ceese more property, which I demanded his Writ & he could produce none & I made him leave.

Now I told Br. Megenness that he better move to my house in the city, So he got Br. Robberts to hall the best of his goods that night to the City. Also Br. Russel came to our assistence & we Laboured all that Night. So we moved to the city of Nauvoo, as we then lived four miles East of the City. Now Br. Megenness crossed with part of his family & we sold his Farm at less than the house cost him. Now by this time the mob grew bolder & was all round the city & our lives was in danger. So we endeivered to get away as fast as we could. Now I sold my hous & Lot for one hundred & 25 Twenty five dollars, it being worth \$800 Dolls at the rate of fair Value, & this we are all most all compelled to do or we cannot Sell at all.

June the 6th 1846. By George Laub

April the 6, 1843. by Joseph Smith.<sup>23</sup>

Now concerning Spirits, First of all or in the begining the great Eloheam, in the Hebrew meaning the God of all gods, called a grand council & and they

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<sup>23</sup>On this date, a Thursday, a "Jubilee" Conference (celebrating the anniversary of the Church's founding in 1830) was held, according to Willard Richards' report, "on the platform of the temple or floor of the basement." Minutes were kept carefully by Richards in his diary and these were the basis for the account in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* (5:327-37). Various remarks of Joseph Smith were reported by Richards, but none on the subjects contained in this report by Laub. Of course, at this time, there was no exact recording process, not even shorthand, and Laub's report may have to do with a separate, unreported speech or a part which Richards missed recording of one of the reported speeches. However, the lack of any reference by Richards, to this or the other speeches summarized by Laub for "April 1843," despite their extraordinarily significant content, raises serious questions about Laub's accuracy in this reminiscence from two years later, at the very least a suspicion about his dating. The suspicion is confirmed when we see that he remembered arriving for the first time in Nauvoo on 1 May 1843, *after* the dates he gives for this and the following four sermons. This fact and the similarity of this sermon, which Laub dates 6 April 1843, to Jo-

councild together to form this planet on which we are now, or do dwell at present. They Spake and Earth from cayus [chaos] Sprang by their workmanship, cayus being mature mater, Element, the Law till time should be no more, and they spake concerning the Redemption of this world and formed Limited Sircumstances concerning the redemption, Jesus Christ being the greater light or of more Inteligence for he loved rituousness and hated in[i]quity. He being the elder Brother Presented himself for to come and redeem this world as it was his right by inheritance. He stated he could save all those who did not sin against the Holy Ghost & they would obey the code of laws that was given. But their sircumstances ware that all who would sin against the Holy Ghost Should have noe forgiveness neither in this world nor in the world to come. For they had strove aganst light and knowledg after they had tasted of the good things of the world to come. They should not have any parden in the world to come because they had a knowledge of the world to come and ware not willing to abide the law. Therefore they can have noe fo[r]giveness there but must be most miserable of all and never can be renewed again. Referred to 6 Chapter of Hebrews. But Saten or Lucifer being the next heir and had alotet to him great power and authority, even prince of the Eir. He spake emediatly and boasted of himself Saying Send me I can save all Even those who Sined against the Holy Ghost and he accused his brethren and was h[u]rled from the council for striving to breake the law emediately and there was a warfare with Saten and the gods and they hurld Satan out of his place and all them that would not keep the law of the councill. But he himself being one of the council would not keep his or their first Estat[e] for he was one of the Sons of perdition and concequently all the Sons of perdition became devils, etc.

How came Spirits? Why, they are and ware Self Existing as all eternity & our Spirits are as Eternal as the very God is himself & that we choose to come on this Earth to take unto ourselvs tabernakles by permission of our Father that we might be Exalted Equil with God himself & therefore Jesus spake in this wise, I do as my Father before me did. Well, what did the father doo? Why, he went & took a body and went to redeem a world in the flesh & had power to lay down his life and to take it up again. This is the way we become heirs

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seph Smith's King Follet Discourse, given 7 April 1844, might suggest a simple mistake in the year. But this apparent additional account of the King Follett Discourse also contains interesting material not reported in the four other accounts we have, and the following sermons do not match up with other existing reports of sermons given in April 1844. (See the three articles on the King Follett Discourse in this issue of *BYU Studies*.) It seems most likely that Laub reconstructed the sermons in 1845 from notes of actual speeches heard but not accurately dated and from memory of those speeches and other teachings he had heard; this is confirmed in part by his explicit reference, on his page 69, to transferring the prophecies of Joseph Smith into "this book from the various scraps of 1843 & 4" and his note at the end of the "6 April 1843" sermon, "memery by George Laub." Evidence that Joseph Smith was speaking on these subjects earlier than 1844 is contained in the "Minute Book of William Patterson McIntire" (MS, Church Archives), which reports that on 8 January 1840, at Joseph's office in Nauvoo, when asked the question, "Did the Lord God make the Earth out of Nothing," he answered that "as for his own knowledge the Earth was made out of sumthing for it was imposible for a sumthing to be made out of Nothing. . . . also Earth has been organized out of portions of other Globes that has ben Disorganized. . . ." At a later meeting he said that "the spirit of the inteligence of men are self Existant principles before the foundation of this Earth." Joseph Fielding Smith refers, on page 181 of his *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), to remarks and answers to questions by Joseph Smith on 5 January 1841 "at the organization of a school of instruction": "The elements are eternal. That which has a beginning will surely have an end. . . . The first step in salvation of man is the laws of eternal and self-existent principles. Spirits are eternal."

of gods and joint heirs of (with) Jesus, etc. But those who die without the obedience of the gospel while having a privilege here will have to subject to the law they are under, but those who have not had this privilege will have it in the prison of Spirits. For so long as they have not the priviledg they cannot be condemned. Therefore they must come under condemnation by this wise, etc. For they will be as they ware in torment of fire & brimstone untill the fullness of times, for they know not what will be their doom and as there are many mantions or Departments in my father's kingdom suitable for every one's condition, Jesus Said he would goe to prepare a place, That where I am ye may also come. For we are to goe from glory to glory & as one is raised, the Next may be raised to his place or Sphere and so take their Exaltation through a regular channel. And when we get to where Jesus is he will be as far ahead of us in exaltation as when we started.

Thus as one Star differs from another So does one glorry differ from another and our bodies are in like fashon as God or Jesus likewise, etc. But, says the English translation, God created all things out of nothing but there was never yet anything made of nothing. Shame to such logick. The words in the Hebrew is thus, when the gods counsiled to gether they went to work and roled this earth in existence. This the theme of the begining. The word hell Signifies prison of Spirits. This is the Signification of hell. There torment will be as with fire and Brimstone & all those that are not adopted into the kingdom by baptism are in some degree punished according to their works. For their conscience are grawing them because they know not what will become of them till some one in the flesh Proximates [does proxy work] for them and pays the utmost farthing for them, that they may live in the Spirit acording to what men do for them in the flesh, or else why are we baptized for the dead if the dead rise not at all, for if we are planted together in the likeness of his death and buerial then shall we rise again in the likeness of his resurection & burried in Baptism, put under the watter in the liquid grave. And thus do we become Saviours on mount Zion.

Memery by George Laub

Joseph Smith. Nauvoo, April 13th, 1843.<sup>24</sup> Concerning Gods Witness.

Mathew

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24th Chapter of ~~Revelations of John 6 & 7~~ verses, & the orriginal translation Reads thus: And I will Send you a nother witness & he shall preach this gospel to all nations to the ends of the world, But woe to that man or woman who Shall lift up their or his hands against God's witness, for they are rasing their hands or arms against the power of God and they will be cursed. But in these times in the last days there will many fals prophet arise and false teachers and deceive many. They shall have many followers by their deceit. They strive to have power and by their pernitious ways lead off many—for Brother Joseph Smith was chosen for the last dispensation or Seventh Dispensation. The time the grand council set in heaven to organise this world Joseph was chosen for

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<sup>24</sup>The only other known account of a speech by Joseph Smith on 13 April 1843 is the one from Willard Richards' diary (published in *HC*, 5:354–57). That speech, given to the Saints newly arrived from England, is entirely different in subject matter from the one reported by Laub. This one makes many unusual, even unique, comments on the Resurrection and Second Coming, especially the relationship of the Tower of Babel to the City of Enoch.



the last & greatest Prophet, to lay the foundation of God's work of the Seventh Dispensation. Therefore the Jews asked John the Baptism if he was Elias or Jesus or that great prophet that was to come.

The Devil Lusifer also organised his kingdom in oposition to overthrow God's kingdom & he became the Son of perdition.

Also concerning the kingdoms: In my Father's house or kingdom are many kingdoms or worlds. I will goe to prepare a place for you and according to your works you shall be rewarded. These who will not obey the gospel will goe to the world of spirits, there to stay till they have paid the utmost farthing or till some person pays their de[b]ts they owe. Now all those die in the faith goe to the prison of Spirits to preach to the ded in body, but they are alive in the Spirit & those Spirits preach to the Spirits that they may live according to God in the Spirit and men do minister for them in the flesh and angels bare the glad tidings to the Spirits & they are made happy by these means. Therefore those who are baptised for their dead are the Saviours on mount Zion & they must receive their washings and their anointings for their dead, the same as for themselvs, till they are connected to the ones in the dispensation before us and trace their leniage to connect the priesthood again.

And if any other man preach any other gospel then this and the Baptism for the remision of sins and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost let him be anathamised or acursed. The curs of God shall be upon him or them.

Concerning Resurrection. Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God or the kingdom that God inherits or inhabits, but the flesh without the blood and the Spirit of God flowing in the vains in sted of the blood, for blood is the part of the body that causes corruption. Therefore we must be changed in the twinkle of an eye or have to lay down these tabernacles and leave the blood vanish away. Therefore Jesus Christ left his blood to atone for the Sins of the world that he might assend into the presents of the father, for god dwels in flaming flames and he is a consuming fire. He will consume all that is unclean and unholly, and we could not abide his presents unless pure Spirits in us. For the Blood is the corruptible part of the tabernacles.

For the resurrection is devised to take away corruption and make Man perfect or in the glory which he was created for. The body is Lower[ed] in corruption & raised in incorruption. Then we will be able to goe in the presents of God. Br. Joseph Smith was sent to remind the world of Sin, of rituousness, & of the Judgments to come. But this is that of what John says in his 14th Chapter, but he says of sin, of rituousness, and of a Judgment to come to reprove the world. This is rong Translation, for *to remind* is correct.

Concerning those who here the gospel. Now concerning those who know the gospel & do not obey, But fight against it, will be shut up in prison condemnation and shall not be visited till many days hence, Isaijah 24 chapter. Then some person has to redeem them by making a forfit of some payment for them, etc. Now the name of Adam in the Hebrew signifies Red Earth

Cain signifies Posesion.

Able denots sorrow.

Eloheam denots Gods.

Now the history of Joseph[u]s in Speaking of angels came down and took themselves wives of the daughters of men, See geneses 6 Chapter 1-2, verses. These ware resurrected Bodies, Violated the Celestial laws.

Now in the days of Noah there was a man the name of Nimrod, he being the first one that sant [?] after as of himself. After the flood god commanded the people to Spread over the earth but they would not & stayed & stayed upon the high Land for fear of a nother delluge. But Nimrod rose up and said he could withstand God. He Said Come let us Build a tower hier than the watter can rise and I will goe up and fight this God. This is the account Joseph[u]s tells us. But God confounded their languag and they ware oblided to scatter abroad over the land.

Now Bab[y]lon Signifies Confu[s]ion. Joseph Signifies another to come. Moab. Do [ditto] the daughter lay with the fathers or Fathers with Daughters. Ammon Denots one of the kinfokes. Isaac denots Lafter for when the Angel told Abraham they should have a Son Sarah Laughed. Jacob Denots weekness, Isreal the Earth. Again, 5th Chapter of 2 Corinthians, 1st Verse, a house not made with corruptable hands for there is not any house or thing made without hands as a building.

Now I will tell the designs of building the tower of Bable. It was designed to goe to the city of Enoch, for the veil was not yet so thick that it hid it from their Sight. So they concluded to goe to the City of Enoch, for God gave him place above this impure Earth. For he could breath a pure hair & him and his City was taken, for God provided a better place for him for they was pure in heart. For it is the pure in heart that causes Zion to be & the time will come again to meet, that Enoch and his city will come again to meet our city & his people, our people, & the Air will be pure & the Lord will be in our midst for Ever.

#### Hyrum Smith the Patriarch<sup>25</sup>

The Plurality of gods. The 28th Chapter of first Samuel, 13 vers. The woman was a woman of god, possessed of the Spirit of god, & as Samuel was Sealed to his wife & family in the Everlasting Covenant of the Sealing power, therefore they all had to come with him because he was the head of the family & the woman had power with god to goe to the world of Spirits and bring him forth. Therefore She cried with a loud voice and then Said, I Saw gods ascend out of the Earth as being many. See Exodus 22 ch, 28 verse. Thou shalt not revile the gods nor curse the rulers of the people. See Psalm 28 chapter, 6 verse. I have said Ye are gods & all of you are children of the most high. See same Chapter, 1st verse. I God stand in the congregation of the mighty. He

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<sup>25</sup>Laub does not date this sermon of Hyrum Smith's, though it might be presumed that it occurred on the same day, "13 April 1843," as the one by Joseph which Laub records just before it. There is no reference to this speech (or the similar one Laub records as given by Hyrum on "27 April 1843") in the *History of the Church* and there is no other known account of a speech by Hyrum on "the plurality of Gods," although, as Van Hale points out in this issue of *BYU Studies*, there is some evidence that this unusual doctrine was being taught before April 1844 (for instance the letter from Sarah Scott to her brother, 1 March 1845, stating that both Joseph and Hyrum taught the plurality of gods "day and night the last two years of their earthly careers"—see Hale's footnote 46). But as Hale shows, this teaching was probably mainly to a select circle, because as late as 15 March 1844 Hyrum Smith, in a letter published in the *Times and Seasons*, was insisting that preachers in the Church must "let the matter of the grand councils of heaven, and the making of gods, worlds, and devils entirely alone"—see Hale's footnote 64. If my earlier conjecture (footnote 23) is correct, that these sermons dated by Laub as April 1843 were actually given in April 1844, then it is quite possible that Joseph Smith's King Follet Discourse in April changed the policy stated by Hyrum in March, and they both began then to preach these matters openly.

judges among the gods. See John ch 10th, 34 & 35 verse. Jesus ansred them, Is it not writen in your law, I say ye are gods. 35, if ye call them gods unto whome the word of [God] came & the Scripture cannot be broken. See Revelations 1 Chapter, 6 Vers. And hass made us kings and Priests unto & hiss father, to him be glory & dominion for ever. this showing us of more gods then one, but as we are only to worship the one we must know how to pay reverence to him & where his abode is & what relation we sustain to him and how to aproach him, & unless he reveals himself to us we know nothing concerning him. Therefore by obedience of the commandments we are heirs of God & joint heirs of Jesus Christ. See 1 Corinthians 8 ch, 5 Vers. For though there be that are called, w[h]ether in heven or in the Earth, as there be lords meny and gods meny, but to us there is only one God the Father of whome are all things. And we in him and our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him. See Joel 2 Ch, 32 Vers, & it shall come to pass that in mount Zion there shall be Del[i]verence or Redemption for your dead & in Jerusalem and those that (will) not be redeemed or do not be redeemed, the An[tions] [Ancients] Shall come & redeem them in their glory. Then Saviours, or in other words gods, will come on mount Zion etc.

By Joseph Smith April 20 1843<sup>26</sup>

The Scripture say I and my father are one & again that the Father, Son, & Holy Ghost are one, 1 John 5 ch., 7 vers. But these three agree in the same thing & did the Saviour pray to the Father, I pray not for the world but those [w]home he gave me out of the world that we might be one, or to Say be of one mind in the unity of the faith.

But Every one being a diffrent or Seperate persons & so is God, & Jesus Christ & the Holy Ghost. Seperate persons. But they all agree in one or the self same thing. But the Holy Ghost is yet a Spiritual body and waiting to take to himself a body, as the Savior did or as God did or the gods before them took bodies. For the Saviour says the work that my Father did do I also & those are the works. He took himself as a body & then laid down his life that he might take it up again & the Scripture say those who will obey the commandments shall be heirs of God & Joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We then also took bodys to lay them down, to take them up again, & the Sperit itself bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God & if children then heirs and Joint heirs with Jesus Christ if so be that we suffer with him in the flesh that we may be also glorified to gether. See Romans 8 ch., 16 & 17 Vers.

Bro. Hurum Smith April 27th 1843

Concerning the *plurality of gods & worlds*.

Now I say unto you that there are lords meny & gods meny. But to us there is but one God the Father & Jesus Christ the first begotten, who is made Equil with God so that he himself is a god. And now the work that the Father done did he doo also & So there is a whole trane & leniage of gods, & this world was created by faith & works. The same as if a man would build a house. He knows where the materials are & believes he could do the work of

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<sup>26</sup>Neither this sermon nor any reference to it appears in the *History of The Church*.

that building, for he understood the Science of building & by faith he gained the work with his own hands and compleated that Building. The Same way was this world by faith & works & by understanding the principle. It was made by the hands of God or gods. It was made of Element or in other words of cayus [chaos]. It was in cayatick form from all Eternity and will be to all Eternity, & again they held counsil together that they might ro[1]l this world into form as all others are made, Showing you by the building of a house as a sample or as figure in my Father's house are many mantions, or in my Father's world are meny worlds. I will goe & prepar a place for you, & then if there are meny worlds then there must be meny gods, for every Star that we see is a world and is inhabited the same as this world is peopled. The Sun & Moon is inhabited & the Stars & (Jesus Christ is the light of the Sun, etc.). The Stars are inhabited the same as this Earth. But eny of them are larger then this Earth, & meny that we cannot see without a telliscope are larger then this Earth. They are under the same order as this Earth is undergoing & undergoing the same change. There was & is a first man Adam and also a Saviour in the Meredien of times, the same computing times and all things in order. Meny things are to be considered that will bring knowledg to our understanding, but the foolish understand not these things for this world was paternd after the former world or after Mansions above.

By Heber C. Kimble<sup>27</sup>

If we become to be kings & priests unto God we must make our children just as hapy as they can be & we must be rulers over them, to give them their inheritences. And all these Seventies must & will become presidants before Ten years from this 31st day of December 1844, for this work will rool on yet for Two Thousand years. There was much spoken concerning the times in Missouri & the time will come that we must goe forth to put our Enemys to flight by the power of the holy ghost. But the time hass not yet come for us to run through the city before it is clensed, for it is not yet time & Preserve our President & his wife for we must receive our endewments through them. But it must be done in order, every one in & at his time as it comes through the chanel comencing at the head, & be patient & wait till your time & turn comes.

By President Brigham Young<sup>28</sup>

*Commencing the Kingdom.* At the dedication of the Seventys Hall. Now concerning the organisation of the kingdom of God is brought to pass. The Sav-

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<sup>27</sup>These remarks seem to have been given at the dedication of the Seventies' Hall in late December, 1844. The official minutes briefly report two speeches by Heber C. Kimball on 26 and 27 December, both of which were apparently somewhat similar to this in subject matter, but neither of which is clearly the one Laub's report is based on (*HC*, 7:335 and 339-40).

<sup>28</sup>The dedication of the Seventies' Hall continued from Thursday, 26 December 1844, through Monday, 30 December. There were many lengthy and impressive speeches, new hymns presented by W. W. Phelps and John Taylor, and two dedicatory prayers, the first by Brigham Young. John D. Lee kept the minutes, which first appeared in the *Times and Seasons* (6:794-99) and then were expanded for the *History of The Church* (7:330-45). But Lee gave no indication of any speech by Brigham Young, though he does provide a summary of a similar speech on a similar subject by Orson Pratt. In the copy of this journal included in the first of his three-volume set, Laub added a summary of a speech Amasa Lyman apparently gave on 29 December (which is not similar to Lee's re-

our told his deciples as he Seen the father do so does he, & as Joseph Smith seen Jesus doo so did Joseph do, & as I seen Joseph do so do I also, though follow me & I will lead you into the Kingdom & If I do not then my Soul for yours. All I want you to do is to obey my council to what I tell you.

The Kingdom is first organised with puting a head to it, then the various members belonging to the body, First Joseph, then the Twelve, then the High Priests, then the Seventys & Elders, then the lesser priesthood & Teachers & Deacons & members. This fills the Whole body & if we take any of these offices away the body has a vacancy or a cism [chasm?] is in the body. But Christ is the head of all, for he is our head & Elder Brother. For we was once organised before God, & Jesus was the first born or begotten of the Father & we were sent here upon this Earth to choose bodys & dwell here in the flesh as our Father who is in heaven. God sent our father Adam first & Eve. He placed them in the garden. Then he gave Adam a commandment to people this Earth, to multiply & replenish the Earth, & told him not to eat of the tree of forbidden fruit, But the devil, being one of the organised of the heavenly body, third in power, prince of the Eir, he had a Spirit like Cain. He saw that Jesus was the most [acc]epted before the Father, for he loved rituousness & hated in[i]quity. This gave a jelousy to him & he began to accuse the brethren, Which soon herld him out, Adam & Eave then being sent to this Earth. Saten then went forth & told Eve that She Should know good & evil if She Eat of the forbidden or of the tree of knowledg, & She did Eat, for he told her meny truth and some lies. But yet this was the decree of the Father. For when he sent Adam on this Earth he decreed it to that he might for get all about his former Estate, and this is the way that God first introduced Sin into the world that man might be Exalted & bring about the great purpus of God. For this was fore-ordained from before the foundation of the world, that men might be Exalted, & first to decend below all things that he or they might raise above all things as the Father did before us & be able to create worlds & goe from world to a nother. Therefore the heavens cannot contain him because he can goe where he pleases & any that are noe hier then [no higher than] himself, and this is what he wants us to doo, & the relationship we sustain to God is that we are Sons of God and heirs Joint [h]eirs with Jesus. For he came and pertook a body as we did, left the Father that he might Exalt himself & redeem this world among his brethren by establishing the priesthood after the order of Melcesadeck and was a Saviour to the Brethren, and now we are to be Saviours of men of our brethren to redeem our dead friends & the friends of those who will not save their own friends, to Exalt our selvs untill we are all linked together again. For one despensation will hand in their work after another, till the Son Jesus hath them all or our Elder Brother. And so we will return home to our Father who sent us that we may exalt ourselvs & glorify him who sent us. Then we shall have power to create worlds ourselvs & rule them as Jesus did, for Jesus when on the Earth called the twelve deciples his brethren & all who do the will of the Father in heaven, & the Scripture also tels us of the prodigal Son who left his fathers house & went a far Journey, also that there is non our Father but one who is in heaven.

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port of one given by Lyman on 26 December); Laub then added reports of a speech by Kimball on the Resurrection and one by Brigham Young on Satanic power, neither of which is reported elsewhere (pp. 63-70).

# The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective

Donald Q. Cannon

On Sunday afternoon, 7 April 1844, the Prophet Joseph Smith delivered what has been called his greatest sermon,<sup>1</sup> the King Follett Discourse.<sup>2</sup> It has also been published more frequently than any other of Joseph's discourses. In the speech, which lasted over two hours, the Prophet spoke concerning some twenty-seven doctrinal subjects, including the character of God, the origin and destiny of man, the unpardonable sin, the resurrection of children, and the Prophet's love for all men.<sup>3</sup> Who was King Follett, and what were the historical circumstances surrounding this, the last conference address of Joseph Smith? What makes the King Follett Discourse the Prophet's greatest sermon?

King Follett was born 24 July 1788, somewhere in Vermont. While still a youth he moved to Cuyahoga County, Ohio. In the spring of 1831 he came in contact with the Mormon missionaries and was baptized.

Moving with the Saints from Ohio to Missouri, he encountered the hatred and abuse which most nineteenth-century Mormons experienced in that state.<sup>4</sup> As Church members attempted to

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<sup>1</sup>Many students of Joseph Smith agree that the King Follett Discourse was his greatest sermon. See, for example, Preston Nibley, *Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1944), p. 503; Joseph Fielding McConkie, "A Historical Examination of the Views of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on Four Distinctive Aspects of the Doctrine of Deity Taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith," (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968), p. 135; John J. Stewart, *Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Mercury Publishing Company, 1966), p. 207; George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith, the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), p. 479; Jay R. Lowe, "A Study of the General Conferences of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1901" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1972), p. 212.

<sup>2</sup>There is some discrepancy in the early records on the spelling of the name *Follett*. Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, and William Clayton spelled it *Follet*, and Thomas Bullock spelled it *Follit*. Almost all of the published accounts of the King Follett Discourse use the current spelling—Follett—which is the correct spelling, according to the Genealogical Department and members of the Follett family.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 6:302-17 (hereafter cited as *HC*).

<sup>4</sup>*HC*, 2:523; Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record*, 9 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson, 1886), 5:31; Melvin R. Brooks, *LDS Reference Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), pp. 96-97.

flee from Missouri in the spring of 1839, Follett was captured and imprisoned with Parley P. Pratt and four others in the jail at Richmond, Missouri, on 24 April 1839, charged with robbery. Commenting on this charge, Parley P. Pratt wrote: "Being charged with robbery meant that he was one of a posse who took a keg of powder from a gang of ruffians who were out against the Mormons."<sup>5</sup> On 22 May 1839, the State of Missouri transferred the prisoners from Richmond to Columbia, and on 4 July they escaped. Unfortunately, Elder Follett was recaptured and remained in confinement for several months. Finally, in October of 1839, he came to trial and was acquitted. Following his release, he joined his family in Illinois.<sup>6</sup>

King Follett was one of those who assisted in transforming swamp-infested Commerce into prosperous Nauvoo. He purchased property on the bluff on the northwest corner of the city (Block 26, Lot 1). His neighbors included Charles Hewlett and Hiram Kimball. He erected a large log house for his family and then went to work as a stonemason. According to the 1842 tax list, Follett had \$163 in real and personal property, making him somewhat better-off than most of his fellow citizens. He and his wife Louisa had six children and were members of the Nauvoo First Ward.<sup>7</sup> On the morning of 9 March 1844, King Follett was walling up a well when a bucket of rock fell on him, crushing him to death. The following day, Wilford Woodruff recorded: "Brother King Follett was buried this day under Masonic honors."<sup>8</sup>

Joseph Smith, who spoke at the funeral, turned his thoughts to genealogy and temple work. In this 10 March funeral sermon, the Prophet stressed that the living cannot be saved without their dead, elaborating on the mission of Elijah.<sup>9</sup> Less than one month later, the family of King Follett again prevailed upon the Prophet to speak in honor of their loved one, as Joseph acknowledged in the preface to his conference remarks.

#### THE 1844 SETTING

The spring of 1844 was a busy period in the Prophet's life. Earlier in the year he declared himself a candidate for the presidency

<sup>5</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), p. 226.

<sup>6</sup>Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 22 May 1839, 4 July 1839; Pratt, *Autobiography*, pp. 261-62.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with James L. Kimball, Jr., 12 March 1976, Church Historical Department.

<sup>8</sup>Journal of Wilford Woodruff, Church Archives.

<sup>9</sup>HC, 6:249; Pearson H. Corbett, *Hyrum Smith: Patriarch* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963), p. 340.

of the United States, drafted a formal political platform, and called elders to serve in the campaign. During the month of March, Joseph Smith created the obscure but powerful Council of Fifty to assist in his campaign and to function in other political matters.<sup>10</sup> Also in the weeks immediately preceding April conference, a conspiracy developed against the Prophet. Those involved in the intrigue claimed that Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet, citing as evidence the practice of polygamy, the monopolistic economic policies of the Church, and the increase in his personal power. Hoping to raise popular support for their cause, the conspirators desired to confront the Prophet during the conference. Joseph, realizing that nothing could be gained by confronting his accusers directly, chose not to address himself to them during that conference,<sup>11</sup> though he did make occasional references to their charges.

April conference of that year was a most important one. Elders from all over the country were summoned home to attend the meetings and to be reassigned to the political campaign which would get underway in May. Historically, the conference was important because it turned out to be Joseph's last—within a few months, he would be dead. Joseph also identified April of 1844 as a special time in his life. At no other time did he sense his prophetic calling so keenly. In his opening remarks he disclosed, "I feel in closer communion and better standing with God than ever I felt before in my life, and I am glad of this opportunity to appear in your midst."<sup>12</sup> The Lord blessed the Saints with warm, spring-like weather on conference Sunday, although it had rained during the Saturday afternoon session. The coming of spring added to the joy of the occasion, and many diarists mentioned the beauty of the Mississippi River Valley, adorned as it was with blossoming trees.

Good weather was a blessing for the Saints because their meetings were held outdoors. In fact, the Mormons did not build any meetinghouses in Nauvoo. Virtually all of their public meetings were held outdoors in areas referred to as "the groves." The Saints held meetings in three different groves located on the edges of the bluff to the northeast, west, and south of the temple. The sloping contours of the bluffs provided a natural amphitheater, to which

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<sup>10</sup>HC, 6:155–301. For additional information on the Council of Fifty, see Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1967).

<sup>11</sup>Lowe, "General Conferences of the Church," pp. 197–211.

<sup>12</sup>HC, 6:288.



the Saints added wooden benches and a speaker's rostrum.<sup>13</sup>

While it is apparent that the groves which the Saints used for their meetings would accommodate large crowds, the actual size of the audience is a matter of dispute. Some of those who attended the conference and kept diaries maintained that 20,000 people heard Joseph Smith deliver the King Follett Discourse.<sup>14</sup> Even those assigned to record the official proceedings of the conference used that figure. Present-day historians, however, are skeptical of the number.<sup>15</sup>

In any case, to however many thousands assembled in the grove on that pleasant spring Sunday in 1844, Joseph spoke for about 2¼ hours.<sup>16</sup> Even by the standards of that day, the King Follett Discourse was a long sermon. Given the length of the sermon, the physical conditions, and the number of people present, definite problems developed. Given such poor hearing conditions, as well as some outside disturbances, the Prophet must have exerted himself tremendously to make himself heard. On the following day, he had to abbreviate the address he had prepared because his lungs had given out and he could no longer project his voice.<sup>17</sup>

#### OFFICIAL RECORDERS

As Joseph Smith spoke, three men made official notes: Thomas Bullock, William Clayton, and Willard Richards. Wilford Woodruff also took notes for his journal.<sup>18</sup> These men, expe-

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<sup>13</sup>David E. and Della S. Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City and Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1974), pp. 70-71; James L. Kimball, Jr., "Nauvoo: Life and Worship," *Deseret News*, Church Section, 1 May 1976.

<sup>14</sup>Journal of Edward Stevenson, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

<sup>15</sup>T. Edgar Lyon believes that 8,000 would be closer to the actual size of the gathering (interview with T. Edgar Lyon, 5 December 1975). In their book, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph*, David and Della Miller maintain that both Mormons and non-Mormons in nineteenth century Illinois regularly overestimated the population (Miller, *Nauvoo*, p. 5). James L. Kimball, Jr., says that census figures for Nauvoo effectively discount the accuracy of the 20,000 figure. State census records from 1845, in the possession of Brother Kimball, report 11,057 inhabitants in Nauvoo. Even with the influx of Church members from surrounding communities, Kimball sees no way that 20,000 people could have been in attendance during April conference of 1844. In addition, according to Kimball, the groves would not accommodate 20,000. Also, one must bear in mind the impossible task of speaking to 20,000 people without the aid of a loudspeaker (*Ibid.*). Then where did the 20,000 figure come from? The noted American historian Daniel J. Boorstin has suggested a plausible answer. He argues convincingly that nineteenth century Americans spoke and wrote in terms of anticipation. Instead of current population figures, they used numbers which they anticipated, resulting in a "language of exaggeration," definitely related to the language of twentieth century advertising. (Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* [New York: Random House, 1965], pp. 289-98.) Thus, the residents of Nauvoo spoke of the 20,000 people who would eventually live there, and not of the 11,000 who actually did.

<sup>16</sup>Diary of Joseph Smith, kept by Willard Richards, Church Archives (hereafter cited as Smith [Richards] diary). Richards wrote that the sermon started at 3:15 and ended at 5:30.

<sup>17</sup>Woodruff Journal.

<sup>18</sup>The reports of Thomas Bullock, Willard Richards, and William Clayton are preserved in the

rienced in note-taking, often recorded sermons given by Church authorities. While all of them recorded the King Follett Discourse, their notes and methods of note-taking differed greatly. Thomas Bullock, perhaps the least known in our day of the four recorders, served with distinction in his native England as a law clerk, a position for which he had received formal training. He also served as an officer of excise (clerk of customs) under Queen Victoria. Recognizing the clerical talents of the newly-arrived English Saint, Joseph appointed Bullock as his personal clerk in October of 1843. Other clerical duties he filled during his residence in Nauvoo included clerk of conferences of the Church, secretary of the courts-martial for the Nauvoo Legion, clerk assigned to write brief synopses of sermons given by the Prophet, and clerk for the "Maid of Iowa," an LDS-owned vessel on the Mississippi. His official conference minutes were by far the most nearly complete made on the King Follett Discourse.<sup>19</sup>

William Clayton, another recorder, also served as a private secretary to Joseph Smith. According to one biographer, Clayton "received a good common-school education" and was "a clear writer" with a "love for order."<sup>20</sup> The popularity and versatility of his missionary and pioneer journals bear witness of his ability as a recorder of historical events.<sup>21</sup>

The third clerk, Willard Richards, served the Prophet Joseph Smith as "private secretary" and historian. In that position, he kept Joseph Smith's daily journal for the years 1842-44, and recorded his summary of the King Follett Discourse in that journal. Of Richards' abilities as a scribe, Orson Spencer wrote that he "was eminently gifted. He chronicled events, dates, circumstances, and incidents with rare accuracy of judgement and rare tenacity of memory."<sup>22</sup>

Wilford Woodruff, by far the best-known of the four recorders today, had received no formal stenographic training, but had a

LDS Church Archives. Bullock's journal indicates that he had been assigned to take minutes; Willard Richards had the assignment by virtue of his calling as Church Historian. He was keeping Joseph's journal, in which he was recording Joseph's teachings and actions. William Clayton was also a clerk and probably had been assigned to take minutes of the conference. Wilford Woodruff also reported it in his journal, but unofficially.

<sup>19</sup>C. Ward Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1956), pp. 6, 14, 17.

<sup>20</sup>Paul E. Dahl, "William Clayton: Missionary, Pioneer, and Public Servant" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1959), pp. 8-9.

<sup>21</sup>See William Clayton, *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton 1840-1842*, ed. James B. Allen and Thomas G. Alexander (Salt Lake City and Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1974), and William Clayton, *William Clayton's Journal* (Salt Lake City: Clayton Family Association, 1921).

<sup>22</sup>*Deseret News*, 16 March 1854.

strong desire to write a history of the Church. Consequently, he recorded not only his own activities, but also the sermons, teachings, and prophecies of Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. He chose to record most of this material in his personal journal, which has been characterized as "careful and painstaking."<sup>23</sup> Woodruff developed a unique note-taking method which one writer described in this manner:

He had a gift from God. It was this, that when he did not have pencil or paper with him, he could, after hearing the Prophet Joseph Smith preach a sermon, go home and write it word for word and sentence for sentence; but after completing the writing . . . the sermon would pass from his mind, as though he had never heard it.<sup>24</sup>

Apparently on the day of the King Follett Discourse, Brother Woodruff had "pencil and paper," for he said that he wrote the sermon on the crown of his hat, while standing in the congregation.<sup>25</sup> At any rate, one realizes that Wilford Woodruff, working either from memory or from brief notes, habitually made a summary in his journal of the discourses he heard.<sup>26</sup> Other people attending the conference kept brief notes on the sermon, but the current published version of the King Follett Discourse was constructed from the notes of Woodruff, Richards, Clayton, and Bullock.

#### COMPARATIVE TECHNIQUES

The opening statement, or lead paragraph, of the King Follett sermon, as recorded by each of the four writers, provides a concise and useful comparison of the length, style, and methodology of the four reporters:

[BULLOCK] "The Prophet: While I address you on the subject which was contem[plated] in the fore[part] of the con[ference]—as the wind blows very hard it will be hardly possible for me to make you all hear it is of the greatest importance & most solemn of any that co[uld] occupy our attention & that is the subject of the dead on the decease of our bro. Follit who was crushed to death in a well—& inasmuch as there are a great many of this congre[gation] who live in this city & who have lost friend[s] I shall speak in general & offer you my ideas so far as I have ability & so far as I shall be inspired by the H[oly] S[pirit] to dwell on this subject."<sup>27</sup>

[CLAYTON] "President Smith called the attention of the con[gregation] upon

<sup>23</sup>Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), p. v.

<sup>24</sup>Southern Utah Mission, Historical Record, pp. 124-25, Church Archives.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>One of the pleasing features of the Woodruff journal is that he printed his entries in block script, making it considerably easier to read than many other diaries from that period.

<sup>27</sup>Thomas Bullock report of 7 April 1844 Conference Discourses, manuscript, Church Archives.

the subject contemplated in the for part of the con[ference]—as the wind blows very hard it will be hardly possible for me to make you hear unless profound attention—subject of the greatest importance and most solemn that could occupy our attention, the subject of the dead been requested to speak on the decease of Br Follet who was crushed to death—I have been requested to speak by his friends & relatives & inasmuch as great many here in con[gregation] who live in this city as well as elsewhere who have deceased friends feel disposed to speak on the subject in general—wil offer my ideas as far as ability & as far as inspired by H[oly] S[pirit]. . . .”<sup>28</sup>

[RICHARDS] 3 ¼ P. M. Joseph commenced speaking on the subject of the dead relative to the death of Elder King Follet who was crushed in a well by the falling of a tub of rock on him.<sup>29</sup>

[WOODRUFF] The following important edeyfying + interesting discourse was delivered by President Joseph Smith to about twenty thousand souls upon the subject of the death of Elder King Follett.

I now call the attention of this congregation while I address you upon the subject of the dead the case of our beloved brother King Follett who was crushed to death in a well as well as many others who have lost friends will be had in mind this afternoon. I shall speak upon the subject in general as far as I shall be inspired by the Holy Spirit to treat upon the subject. . . .<sup>30</sup>

These opening statements reveal the characteristics of each writer, which are apparent throughout the body of the record of each. Thomas Bullock wrote in more complete phrases, making use of his own method of abbreviation, which allowed him to record more of the talk. William Clayton’s record is comparable to Bullock’s in depth, although it stops about three-quarters of the way through the sermon. Willard Richard’s account is the shortest, featuring only the basic details. Wilford Woodruff’s text is more concise, shortening the thoughts into compact powerful sentences.

Comparison of these four texts to the current published edition of the discourse reveals the rough percentage of material that each recorder contributed to the composite text:

Bullock	51%
Clayton	37%
Richards	11%
Woodruff	29%
<u>Total</u>	<u>128%</u> <sup>31</sup>

#### AUDIENCE REACTION

How did Joseph’s audience respond to his lengthy and elo-

<sup>28</sup>William Clayton report of 7 April 1844 Conference Discourses, manuscript, Church Archives.

<sup>29</sup>Smith (Richards) Diary.

<sup>30</sup>Woodruff Journal.

<sup>31</sup>This comparison was made by typing the most frequently printed version of the text and then

quent sermon? Reactions ranged from brief comments in diaries, lengthy articles in newspapers, to gossip in personal letters. The amazing thing is that the Saints would bother to comment at all during a time when so much was transpiring. Certainly the candidacy of Joseph Smith, the conspiracy against him, and in several weeks, the martyrdom, would overshadow a conference talk. The fact that the people did record their reactions at all is remarkable.

Most of the thousands who heard the Prophet speak did not leave written comment on the sermon. Some left only brief statements. A few, however, made both lengthy and meaningful comments on the King Follett Discourse. (Most of these are positive, though it is well to remember that the diaries we have come west with Saints who accepted both the leadership of the Twelve and many of the doctrines which were denied by those groups who broke away from the Church after the death of the Prophet.) Joseph Fielding's journal clearly indicates that the discourse profoundly moved him: "April 6th-7th '44. Our annual conference began and continued 4 days. Joseph's discourse on the origin of man, the nature of God, and the resurrection was the most interesting matter of this time." Fielding went on to say that Joseph Smith was not a fallen prophet, but was acting under the inspiration of God, noting, "I never felt more delighted with his discourse than at this time. They said at his oration, it is the voice of a god not of a man."<sup>32</sup>

Wandle Mace, another early Mormon diarist who recorded his impressions of the King Follett Discourse, had been ordained a high priest at that conference. Expecting the Prophet to confront the conspirators at the conference, Mace discovered that Joseph Smith had chosen another course. Quoting the opening remarks of the Prophet, Mace recorded: "It had been expected that the little difficulties which existed would be investigated before the conference, but they are too trivial a nature to occupy the attention of so large a body." Mace was impressed by the words and conduct of the Prophet. Later in his diary, Brother Mace called the funeral sermon of King Follett a "remarkable discourse." Still later, he recorded another entry concerning "this most interesting

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using a color code system. Each recorder was indicated by a different color and the percentages calculated by tabulating the differently colored portions. The percentages total more than 100% because of overlapping among the four records.

<sup>32</sup>Journal of Joseph Fielding, Church Archives. My research assistants and I read some 300 journals at the LDS Church Archives and at Brigham Young University. Most did not comment on the discourse, however those who did comment made meaningful observations.

and instructive conference.”<sup>33</sup> The words of the Prophet had left a lasting impression on him.

Edward Stevenson was so inspired by the sermon that he recorded major selections from the address in his diary. He called it the “Grand funeral sermon of King Follett.” Summarizing his experiences at the conference, including the discourse, Stevenson wrote some time after Joseph’s death:

What a glorious time we have had; the occasion was a most interesting one, the weather was lovely and the surrounding river and the Iowa side with its sloping hills looks lovely. The Prophet appeared to be full of instruction, and so near his final end of this present life.<sup>34</sup>

Samuel W. Richards looked forward to the conference with great anticipation, for he had never attended one before. He recorded: “Nor were my expectations in vain.” Summarizing the conference, he recorded: “The conference closed having had a joyful time together being made glad by the spirit of God which was there with them.”<sup>35</sup> Erastus Snow, describing the conference and sermon, said: “All were highly edified and highly delighted.”<sup>36</sup> Joseph Lee Robinson claimed that the Prophet’s statements amazed him and caused him to wonder.<sup>37</sup> Angus M. Cannon commented on the strength he received from the words of the Prophet.<sup>38</sup> Wilford Woodruff called the King Follett Discourse “important, edifying and interesting.”<sup>39</sup> Alfred Cordon wrote: “I was much delighted with the teachings and doings of the conference.”<sup>40</sup> James Burgess recorded that it “truly was a glorious time.”<sup>41</sup> Thomas Bullock wrote in his diary that these were “the greatest, best, and most glorious five days that ever were.”<sup>42</sup>

But some who heard the King Follett Discourse were converts who had just joined the Church and had been raised in religions where the ideas Joseph taught in the King Follett Discourse would have been considered “horrid blasphemy.” For some time

<sup>33</sup>Wandle Mace Journal.

<sup>34</sup>Edward Stevenson Journal.

<sup>35</sup>Journal of Samuel W. Richards, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

<sup>36</sup>Sketchbook of Erastus Snow, Lee Library.

<sup>37</sup>Journal of Joseph Lee Robinson, Lee Library.

<sup>38</sup>Hyrum L. and Helen Mae Andrus, *They Knew the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974), p. 163.

<sup>39</sup>Woodruff Journal

<sup>40</sup>Journal of Alfred Cordon, Church Archives.

<sup>41</sup>Journal of James Burgess, Church Archives.

<sup>42</sup>Journal of Thomas Bullock, Church Archives.

prior to the spring of 1844, some of these had been dissatisfied with conditions in Nauvoo, and Joseph's actions and personality, new doctrines, and general disenchantment were leading more and more Saints into dissension or apostasy.

They had arrived in Nauvoo knowing only the first principles, the Book of Mormon, and the gathering. They had no idea of the plurality of gods, plural marriage, temple ordinances, and other "mysteries," which were being taught at Nauvoo. This is understandable because Brigham Young had admonished the elders at October conference, 1841, "on the importance of teaching abroad the first principles of the gospel, leaving the mysteries of the kingdom to be taught among the saints."<sup>43</sup> Apparently this meant Nauvoo, for in January of 1844, one Saint at Nauvoo wrote to his daughter, a member in Canada, and told her of a new revelation that marriages for eternity could be performed, and that "the work of *generation* is not to cease forever." He did, however, explain that

There are many things connected with this subject, which I am not at liberty to communicate to you, where you are living which would make the matter plainer to your minds and more satisfactory, therefore, beware how you treat this subject for no doubt it is of God. Other revelations intimately connected with this momentous dispensation and which are almost ready to unfold themselves to us, I cannot communicate to you at present although I know them in part, for you could not bear them now. If you were living with the Church, your spiritual advantages would be much greater, than they now are: but to inform you of *all*, that is made known to the Church, here, it would go abroad from you and likely cause you much persecution.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, while many suffered much anxiety after sacrificing significantly to gather to Nauvoo to find doctrines being taught which challenged their religious beliefs, most viewed the new teachings as glorious new revelations of truth, "hid from before the foundation of the world . . . revealed to babes and sucklings in the last days."<sup>45</sup> But it is easy to understand how there would be some who, as Joseph put it, would "fly to pieces like glass as soon as

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<sup>43</sup>*Times and Seasons* 2 (15 October 1841):578. This was common instruction. See also Joseph Fielding Smith, comp, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), pp. 292, 77 (hereafter cited as *Teachings*); *Times and Seasons* 1 (November 1839):13; *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 March 1844):474; and *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 July 1844): 580. The material in the text between footnotes 43 and 48 was compiled and contributed by Van Hale.

<sup>44</sup>Jacob Scott to his daughter, 5 January 1844, Church Historical Department. The original is at the RLDS Department of History.

<sup>45</sup>*Teachings*, p. 321.

anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all.”<sup>46</sup> One who had to struggle was Sarah Scott, who expressed her anxiety in a letter to her parents, six days after hearing the Discourse:

Mother you think you have trials but I can tell you there is nothing there to try your faith; I mean comparatively speaking. I never fully understood the place in the holy writ where the Lord says he will have a tried people until I came here with the Church. Sometimes I almost fear that I shall give up but by the help of the Lord I mean to endure to the end. You know little concerning the Church, I can assure you; I think that if the saints were as wise before they start as after they get here, many would not have faith enough to come. A word to the wise is sufficient. Dear Mother pray for me that I may be of the household of faith.<sup>47</sup>

Sarah Scott represented those who wanted to believe but weren't sure they could. Most who could not accept these new doctrines quietly left the Church without making any attempt to change Mormonism. There was, however, a growing nucleus who would not follow that course. Most prominent of these were the Laws, the Fosters, and the Higbees, the primary figure being William Law, Joseph's second counselor in the First Presidency. Although these men had some rather serious differences with Joseph over temporal matters, they had retained their standing in the Church and community, claiming to believe “that the religion of the Latter Day Saints as originally taught by Joseph Smith, which is contained in the Old and New Testament, Book of Covenants, and Book of Mormon, is verily true.” They hoped that “many items of doctrine, as now taught . . . considerate men will treat with contempt; for we declare them heretical and damnable in their influence, though they find many devotees.” As well as stating their total contempt for the doctrine of plurality of wives, they indicated that “among the many items of false doctrine that are taught the Church, is the doctrine of many Gods, one of the most direful in its effects that has characterized the world for many centuries.” By 7 June 1844 they had determined that “earnestly seeking to explode the vicious principles of Joseph Smith” was their moral obligation, feeling “as if forbearance has ceased to be a virtue.” They had

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<sup>46</sup>*Teachings*, p. 331.

<sup>47</sup>Sarah Scott to her mother, 13 April 1844, “The Death of a Mormon Dictator: Letters of Massachusetts Mormons, 1843–1848,” ed. George F. Partridge, *The New England Quarterly* 9 (December 1936):592, 593.



sought a reformation in the church, without a public exposition of the enormities of crimes practiced by its leaders, thinking that if they would hearken to counsel, and shew fruit meet for repentance, it would be as acceptable with God, as though they were exposed to public gaze.<sup>48</sup>

Their efforts were in vain.

Non-Mormon newspaper accounts of the conference also tended to be negative. Thomas Sharp, a notorious leader of the anti-Mormons, commented sarcastically about the conference in Nauvoo in his newspaper, the *Warsaw Signal*. Sharp datelined his article from "The Holy City" rather than Nauvoo:

Of course all the Saints and some of the sinners from the adjoining districts were in attendance. The number that was on the ground on this occasion is estimated at from 15-20 thousand—nearly all of whom were of the faith. Truly, one could think that so many fools congregated on one spot would disturb the equilibrium of the earth.<sup>49</sup>

The single edition of the ill-fated *Nauvoo Expositor* contained some serious attacks on the doctrines presented by Joseph Smith in the King Follett Discourse. After stating that the religion of the Latter-day Saints as originally taught by the Prophet was true, the paper attacked him for the practice of polygamy and other "vicious principles." One item of "false doctrine" especially repugnant to the proprietors and editors of the *Expositor* was the doctrine of the plurality of gods and the notion that man could become a god, a doctrine clearly set forth in the King Follett Discourse.<sup>50</sup>

#### PUBLICATION HISTORY

Before the end of 1844, the King Follett Discourse had been published at least three times, attesting to the impact it had on the Saints. It first appeared in the *Times and Seasons* of 15 August 1844. During the fall of 1844, it came out in print in the *Millennial Star*<sup>51</sup> and in a publication by John Taylor called the *Voice of Truth*.<sup>52</sup> The sermon was published at least five more times before 1900, appearing in the *Zion's Watchman*,<sup>53</sup> the *Deseret (Weekly)*

<sup>48</sup>*Nauvoo Expositor*, 7 June 1844.

<sup>49</sup>*Warsaw Signal*, 10 April 1844.

<sup>50</sup>*Nauvoo Expositor*, 7 June 1844.

<sup>51</sup>*Millennial Star*, November 1844, pp. 87-93.

<sup>52</sup>This publication is now very obscure, but was widely read in 1844.

<sup>53</sup>*The Zion's Watchman*, 12 April 1855, pp. 249-56. This was the first edition of an LDS publication published in Sydney, Australia.

*News*,<sup>54</sup> the *Journal of Discourses*,<sup>55</sup> in a revised form in the *Millennial Star* in 1861, and in an 1883 *Contributor*, the official publication of the MIA.<sup>56</sup>

Interestingly, the King Follett Discourse has been published more times in this century than in the previous one. Since 1900 it has appeared in at least eleven different publications: the *Improvement Era* in 1909, in a pamphlet published privately by Magazine Printing Company in 1913 and later editions, in two privately printed editions with no specific dates,<sup>57</sup> in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* in 1938, in a German translation printed in Switzerland in 1943,<sup>58</sup> in the *Liabona* in 1945,<sup>59</sup> in the *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Messages of the First Presidency*, and the *LDS Reference Encyclopedia* (all printed in 1965), and most recently in the *Ensign*, April and May 1971.

The exclusion and inclusion of the King Follett Discourse in the *History of the Church* constitutes one of the most interesting episodes in the history of Church publishing. B. H. Roberts, editor of the six-volume work, decided to include the King Follett Discourse in Volume 6 of the first edition. Apparently, at the last minute, it was removed. An examination of the first edition of Volume 6 (1912) provides conclusive evidence that the King Follett Discourse was indeed removed as the book was ready to be bound, as pages 302–317 are missing. In the second edition of Volume 6 (1950), pages 302–317 are reinserted, and they contain the King Follett Discourse.<sup>60</sup>

We do not know exactly why the sermon was removed or who ordered its removal, but available evidence indicates that some of the Brethren had become suspicious of the King Follett Discourse, maintaining that all of its doctrines might not be authentic, and expressing some concern over the accuracy of the text. In a letter to Samuel O. Bennion, president of the Central States Mission, George Albert Smith said:

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<sup>54</sup>The "History of Joseph Smith" was published in the *Deseret News*, beginning in the 1850s, the King Follett Discourse appearing on 8 July 1857. This is the first time the Grimshaw Amalgamation appeared in print.

<sup>55</sup>*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1855–86), 6:1–11.

<sup>56</sup>*The Contributor*, April 1883, pp. 252–61.

<sup>57</sup>C. C. Anderson, comp., *The Boy Prophet's Wonderful Sermon of the Funeral of King Follett* (n.p., n.d.); Newman Bulkely, S. M. Farnsworth, C. D. Evans, *Wonderful Sermon of the Prophet Joseph Smith at the Funeral of King Follett* (n.p., n.d.).

<sup>58</sup>Joseph Smith, *Die King Follett Ansprache*, trans. Max Zimmer (Basel: n.p., 1943).

<sup>59</sup>The *Liabona*, May 1945. The King Follett Discourse appears in an abbreviated form in this publication of the Mexican Mission.

<sup>60</sup>On the deletion, see T. Edgar Lyon, "Doctrinal Development of the Church during the Nauvoo Sojourn, 1839–1846," *BYU Studies* 15 (Summer 1975):445, note 12. Brother Lyon also provided valuable insight into this matter in the interview referred to in footnote 15 above.

I have thought that the report of that sermon might not be authentic and I have feared that it contained some things that might be contrary to the truth. . . . Some of the brethren felt as I did and thought that greater publicity should not be given to that particular sermon.<sup>61</sup>

Testifying in Washington, D.C., during the Reed Smoot hearings, Charles W. Penrose stated that:

there are some sermons published in the *Journal of Discourses* the authenticity of which has been disputed . . . for instance some of the sermons attributed to Joseph Smith, the Prophet. They were taken down at the time in longhand and have been published in the *Journal of Discourses* and there have been disputes as to their correctness.<sup>62</sup>

Whatever the reasons, the King Follett Discourse remained outside the official *History of the Church* for thirty-eight years. It was included in the second edition, however. The reincorporation of the sermon in the 1950 *History of the Church*, coupled with the fact of the numerous reprintings in other books and magazines since that time, attest to its acceptance in the mid-twentieth century.

That the King Follett Discourse has value for Latter-day Saints today has been affirmed by eyewitnesses to the event as well as by present-day students of the sermon. Concerning the discourse, Elder George Q. Cannon recorded:

His address ceased to be a mere eulogy of an individual, and became a revelation of eternal truths concerning the glories of immortality. . . . The Prophet seemed to rise above the world. It was as if the light of heaven already encircled his physical being. . . . Those who hear that sermon may never forget its power. Those who read it today think it was an exhibition of superhuman power and eloquence.<sup>63</sup>

Since that time, biographers, historians, theologians, and others have joined in proclaiming the sermon's value and asserting that it was indeed Joseph Smith's greatest sermon.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>George Albert Smith to Samuel O. Bennion, 30 January 1912, George Albert Smith Family Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

<sup>62</sup>*Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections, United States Senate in the Matter of the Protest against the Right Hon. Reed Smoot, A Senator from the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat.* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1904) 2:442.

<sup>63</sup>McConkie, "A Historical Examination of the Views of the LDS and RLDS. . .," pp. 145-73.

<sup>64</sup>Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith*, pp. 478-79.

<sup>64</sup>See references in footnote 1. A recent article by a psychotherapist shows the wide range of present interest in the King Follett Discourse. See Frances H. Tucket's "Perfectionism in Religion and Psychotherapy or: On Discerning the Spirits," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 4 (Winter 1976):25-33.

# The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text

Stan Larson

The King Follett Discourse of 7 April 1844, perhaps the most significant sermon delivered by the Prophet Joseph Smith, was preserved in manuscript form by Thomas Bullock, William Clayton, Willard Richards, and Wilford Woodruff.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Bullock's account is the longest, and there are indications that it was written down at the very time that Joseph Smith was speaking. Bullock was able to keep up as well as he did because he used a personal kind of shorthand with many abbreviated words. There are a few places where his pen ran out of ink, and because he had to dip his pen, he lost a few words as Joseph continued speaking, but picked up again a few phrases later. For example, in one place Bullock recorded: "when we find to know how to come to him," with the ink suddenly becoming dark again at the words "to know." An interesting observation of this is that at this very point Clayton's account fills in material missed by Bullock. This segment is recorded by Clayton thus: "when we . . . find out God—what kind a being we have got to worship—when we begin to know how to come to him."

William Clayton provides a very full coverage of the discourse until the last fourth which he merely summarized in two lines.<sup>2</sup> Evidence seems conclusive that Clayton also wrote his account as he was listening to the discourse. For example, in one place where Clayton left one-half line blank, Bullock's account fills in the information. The correlations between Bullock's and Clayton's accounts support the position that both were written at the time the discourse was given.

Willard Richards left a quite sketchy account, often with disjointed sentence fragments. He seems to have merely taken down

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<sup>1</sup>See Donald Q. Cannon's article in this issue of *BYU Studies* for more information and background on these four individuals.

<sup>2</sup>The point at which Clayton no longer kept a detailed record corresponds to Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), p. 358, paragraph 3 (hereafter cited as *Teachings*) and Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 6:315, paragraph 1 (hereafter cited as *HC*).

various points during the discourse that he felt were particularly important. He often leaves spaces or inserts dashes to indicate he is not taking down every word. His report is "minutes" in the strict sense of the word since the sermon, which lasted a little over two hours, has been reduced to be read in just a few minutes.

Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal a more nearly complete account, but only after a formal introduction in which he described the sermon in terms that could only be known after it was finished. Though Woodruff claimed in 1877 to have recorded the King Follett Discourse "on the crown of his hat, standing in the congregation,"<sup>3</sup> he must have meant no longer extant notes which he later transferred to, and expanded in, his journal since his neatly-printed journal account has no abbreviated words, no gaps in the recording, and no unclearly written words. This transfer could have occurred that same day, or as much as a week or two later. Often the Woodruff account has synonyms and a slightly different word or phrase order when compared to the other accounts, but it is compatible to the other three versions in terms of the basic sense of the message. These considerations seem to indicate the need for a slightly different use of the Woodruff account.

#### ACCURACY OF THE REPORTS

It may, in all fairness, be wondered just how accurate the reports of the King Follett Discourse are. In an absolute sense, it is impossible to determine since there is no way to recover the words actually spoken that day in April of 1844 and thereby judge the accuracy of the reports. However, it should be noted that the reports have no irreconcilable parts—no contradictory statements—and it is sometimes quite amazing how easily the various accounts combine. A high degree of agreement and harmony exists among them. There is no evidence that any account was made by copying and/or expanding any other account. Every indication points to the Bullock, Clayton, and Richards versions' being written as Joseph spoke; this fact deserves emphasis. Of all the speeches given by Joseph Smith, this one has the greatest contemporary manuscript support, which certainly strengthens claims of its reliability and authenticity.

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<sup>3</sup>History of the Southern Utah Mission, 10 June 1877, p. 124, manuscript, Church Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

## THE GRIMSHAW AMALGAMATION

Though a version of this sermon was published only four months later in the *Times and Seasons*, the version in general use today is an “amalgamation” made in 1855 by Jonathan Grimshaw.<sup>4</sup> It has been pointed out that when several reports were made of the Prophet’s discourses “the editors faced the task of dove-tailing differing reports together to make a single, cohesive summary.”<sup>5</sup> How the Grimshaw amalgamation differs from this newly amalgamated text in both approach and result can best be seen by a specific example, showing how each of the four independent manuscript sources read, how they were combined in 1855, and how they have been combined in the present version:

### *Thomas Bullock—1844*

how does it read in the Heb. that God made man c put into<sup>is</sup> Adams Spirit c so became a living Spirit—the mind of man—the ~~min~~ mind of man is as immortal as God himself—hence while I talk to these mourners—they are only separated from their bodies for a short period—their Spirits coexisted with God c now converse one another same as we do—does not this give your satisfact?<sup>n6</sup>

### *William Clayton—1844*

(-refers to the bible) dont say so in the old Hebrew—God made man out of the earth and put into him his spirit and then it became a living body. The mind of man—the intelligent part is coequal with God himself I know that my testimony is true. hence when I talk to these mourners what have they lost—they are only separated from their bodies for a short season. but their spirit existed co-equal with God and they now exist in a place where they converse together as much as we do on the earth.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>George A. Smith in a letter to Wilford Woodruff, dated 21 April 1856, said that Jonathan Grimshaw had “amalgamated” Joseph Smith’s discourses from the reports that had been made. That Grimshaw is the one who compiled this particular discourse is stated in a marginal note in the Manuscript History of Joseph Smith, Book E, p. 1978. Actually, the first published version of the King Follett Discourse in the *Times and Seasons* was made by “amalgamating” or combining the reports of Bullock and Clayton.

<sup>5</sup>Dean C. Jessee, “The Reliability of Joseph Smith’s History,” *Journal of Mormon History*, 3 (1976):40. He illustrates how this was done in the King Follett discourse by presenting the four separate accounts and the “final edited version” for a particular paragraph. The passage he chose shows a number of differences in the final version.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas Bullock, minutes of 7 April 1844 address, manuscript located in the Archives, Church Historical Department.

<sup>7</sup>William Clayton, minutes of 7 April 1844 address, manuscript, Church Archives.

<sup>8</sup>Willard Richards, 7 April 1844 address reported in the Joseph Smith diary, Church Archives.

*Willard Richards—1844*

in hebrew put into him his spirit.—which was created before. Mind of man co-equal with God himself= friends separated. for a small moment. from their spirits. coequal with God. and hold converse when they are one with another.—<sup>8</sup>

*Wilford Woodruff—1844*

God made a tabernacle & put a spirit in it and it became a Human soul, man existed in spirit & mind coequal with God himself, you who mourn the loss of friends are ownly seperated for a moment, the spirit is seperated for a little time, they are now conversant with each other as we are on the earth.<sup>9</sup>

Jonathan Grimshaw  
Amalgamation—1855  
(Published in 1857)

God made a tabernacle and put a spirit into it, and it became a living soul. [Refers to the old Bible.] How does it read in the Hebrew? It does not say in the Hebrew that God created the spirit of man; it says, 'God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam's spirit, and so became a living body.'

The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is coequal with God himself. I know that my testimony is true; hence when I talk to these mourners, what have they lost? Their relatives and friends are only separated from their bodies for a short season; their spirits which existed with God have left the tabernacle of clay only for a little moment as it were, and they now exist in a place where they converse together the same as we do on the earth.<sup>10</sup>

## New Amalgamation-1978

[He refers to the Bible.] How does it read in the Hebrew? It doesn't say so in the old Hebrew. God made the tabernacle of man out of the earth and put into him Adam's spirit (which was created before), and then it became a living body or human soul. Man existed in spirit; the mind of man—the intelligent part—is as immortal as, and is coequal with, God Himself. I know that my testimony is true.

Hence, when I talk to these mourners, what have they lost? You who mourn the loss of friends are only separated for a small moment from their spirits, and their spirits are only separated from their bodies for a short season. But their spirits existed coequal with God and they now exist in a place where they hold converse together one with another the same as we do on the earth. Does not this give you satisfaction?

Comparing the Grimshaw amalgamation of this passage against the original reports reveals a number of differences. The words underlined in the Grimshaw amalgamation indicate what

<sup>9</sup>Journal of Wilford Woodruff, 7 April 1844, Church Archives.

<sup>10</sup>*Deseret (Weekly) News*, 8 July 1857, p. 1, which is the first printing of the final revised form of Grimshaw's amalgamation, as copied into the Manuscript History of Joseph Smith.

was *added* with no manuscript authority; the words underlined in the new amalgamation on the right indicate what the Grimshaw amalgamation *deleted* from the original accounts. Notice also that sentences one and five in Grimshaw are essentially the same in meaning, but were derived from separate accounts; in the present amalgamation these have been combined as a single statement to avoid redundancy. Yet the opposite is true in the second paragraph where Grimshaw ends with a single thought; the present amalgamation has a double one—the mourner is separated from the loved one, and the spirit of the loved one is separated from his own body.

Since the Grimshaw amalgamation was made over eleven years after the discourse was given, there may be some concern about the questionable process of expanding or “fleshing out” the text, as well as the propriety of eliminating material from the original manuscript accounts.<sup>11</sup> From a historical point of view, it is preferable to use primary sources and not reminiscences of over a decade later.

#### THE NEWLY AMALGAMATED TEXT

The following procedure was used in making the present amalgamation. The account of Thomas Bullock was used as the basic running text. William Clayton’s version was then superimposed, adding a number of refinements such as extra clauses and clearer development of ideas. Afterwards, the parts recorded by Willard Richards were compared with what had already been developed; generally the Richards account merely confirmed various parts, though it added a number of new elements also. Finally, the Wilford Woodruff account was considered, and its new material was added, with the understanding that his material may not be as likely to represent the words actually spoken by Joseph Smith, though the basic meaning would likely be preserved.

This amalgamation has been edited in matters of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraph division, foreign language transliterations,<sup>12</sup> plurals, and in the addition of

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<sup>11</sup>A marginal note in the Manuscript History of Joseph Smith, Book E, p. 1978, states that this version of the King Follett Discourse was “carefully revised and compared by George A. Smith and Thomas Bullock, read in Council Sunday 18th Nov. 1855 and carefully revised by President Brigham Young.” However, there would still be the same difficulty of remembering the precise words spoken eleven years earlier.

<sup>12</sup>The manuscripts vary on the transliterations of the Hebrew words used by Joseph Smith. For example, what we have as BARA (see *Teachings*, p. 348, par. 2; and *HC*, 6:307, par. 1) is supported only by Bullock, with Clayton and Richards using *barau* and Woodruff *beaureau*; what is here BER-



junctions and transitions needed for coherence, but it can be read with the confidence that only the barest minimum has been added. Because the editorial additions do not change the meaning, it has not been thought necessary to indicate where they are added.<sup>13</sup> While it is true that there are still parts of the sermon that are inexplicable and "there are some imperfections in the report of this discourse, which one here and there feels, since at some points the matter is not absolutely clear or the thought not completely rounded out,"<sup>14</sup> still it is not deemed justified to go beyond extant manuscript evidence of the four sources. Since these accounts have been meshed together as much as possible, and not just tacked onto each other, the repetition of overlapping parts has been eliminated. When synonyms occur, the best attested is used or sometimes both are used.

The following are included to assist in the reading of this newly amalgamated version: Those words found only in Woodruff are indicated by the use of italics, so there is a ready distinction between these parts and the rest of the discourse as found in the other three accounts. Parenthetical comments spoken by Joseph are indicated by parentheses. Notations made by the scribes as to what Joseph did and the editorial expansion for the quotation from the Hebrew<sup>15</sup> are indicated by brackets.

## THE KING FOLLETT DISCOURSE

I *now* call the attention of *this* congregation while I address you on the subject which was contemplated in the fore-part of the conference. As the wind blows very hard it will be hardly possible for me to make you all hear unless there is profound attention. It is a subject of the greatest importance and the most solemn of any that could occupy our attention, and that is the subject of

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ESHITH is spelled in Bullock as *berosheet*, in Clayton *berosheit*, and in Woodruff *barasheet*. What is here YA'AQOB (see *Teachings*, p. 349, par. 2, and *HC*, 6:307, par. 4) is spelled in Clayton as *You-gacoub*. Also, *gnaulom* is the spelling of Richards, but GNOLAUM is used here (see *Teachings*, p. 361, par. 3, and *HC*, 6:317, par. 3), instead of something like 'OLAM, in order to correspond with the spelling found in Abraham 3:18.

<sup>13</sup>The following are the words that have been added to the texts of the original manuscript accounts: *a, about, after, and, are, at, be, because, but, for, have, he, him, I, if, in, is, it, one, or, our, so, the, their, then, there, these, things, this, what, which, will, and with.*

<sup>14</sup>Note by B. H. Roberts, in a pamphlet he edited and published, *The King Follett Discourse: The Being and Kind of Being God Is; The Immortality of the Intelligence of Man. By Joseph Smith, the Prophet.* (Salt Lake City: Magazine Printing Company, 1926), p. 3.

<sup>15</sup>What is given here as "'ROSHITH [BARA ELOHIM] signifies [the Head] to bring forth the Elohim" (see *Teachings*, p. 348, par. 2, and *HC*, 6:307, par. 1) is found in the Clayton account as "rosheit signifies to bring forth the Eloheim." The scribe has obviously only recorded part of the Hebrew and part of the explanation. The fact that in other places more Hebrew words were spoken by Joseph Smith than are recorded in any of the accounts is hinted by the "Berosheit ~~Banu~~" in the Clayton account, which shows that more was spoken and it was begun to be recorded, but was finally crossed out.

the dead. I have been requested to speak on the subject on the decease of our *beloved* brother, Elder King Follett, who was crushed to death in a well, by the falling of a tub of rock on him. I have been requested to speak by his friends and relatives but inasmuch as there are a great many *others* here in this congregation, who live in this city as well as elsewhere, who have lost friends, *their case will be had in mind this afternoon, and* I feel disposed to speak on the subject in general and offer you my ideas as far as I have ability and as far as I will be inspired by the Holy Spirit to *treat and* dwell upon this subject. I want your prayers, faith, the inspiration of Almighty God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost that I may set forth things that are true and that can easily be comprehended and which shall carry the testimony to your hearts. I pray that the Lord may strengthen my lungs, stay the winds, and let the prayer of the Saints to heaven appear that it may enter into the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth, for the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much. *There is strength here* and I verily believe that your prayers will be heard. I will speak in order to hold out.

Before I enter fully into the investigation of the subject that is lying before us, I wish to pave the way, make a few preliminaries, and bring *up* the subject from the beginning in order that you may understand the subject when I come to it. I do not calculate to please your ears with superfluity of words, with oratory, or with much learning, but I calculate to edify you with the simple truths of heaven.

In the first place I wish to go back to the beginning of creation. There is the starting point in order to know and be fully acquainted with the mind, purposes, decrees, and ordinations of the great Elohim that sits in the heavens. For us to take up beginning at the creation it is necessary *for us* to understand something of God Himself in the beginning. If we start right, it is very easy for us to go right all the time; but if we start wrong, *we may go wrong, and* it is a hard matter to get right.

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. They cannot comprehend anything that is past or that which is to come; *they do not know—they do not understand* their own relationship *to God*. The world knows and comprehends but little more than the brute beast. If a man knows nothing more than to eat, drink, sleep, arise, and not any more, and does not comprehend what any of the designs of Jehovah are, what better is he than the beast, for it comprehends the same things—it eats, drinks, sleeps, comprehends the present and knows nothing more about *God or His existence*. This is as much as we know, unless we are able to comprehend by the inspiration of Almighty God. And how are we to do it by any other way?

I want to go back, *then*, to the beginning *that you may understand* and so get you to lift your minds into a more lofty sphere and exalted standing than what the human mind generally understands. I want to ask this congregation—every man, woman, and child—to answer this question in their own heart: What kind of a being is God? Ask yourselves! I again repeat the question: What kind of a being is God? Does any man or woman know? *Turn your thoughts in your hearts, and say*, Have any of you seen Him? Or heard Him? Or communed with Him? Here is a question that will, peradventure, from this time henceforth occupy your attention while you live.

The Apostle says that this is eternal life to know *the only wise* God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent—that is eternal life. If any man inquire, What kind of a being is God?—if he will cast his mind to know and search diligently his own heart—if the declaration of the Apostle be true, he will realize that unless he knows God he has not eternal life for there can be eternal life on no other principle.

My first object is to *go back and* find out the character of the only wise and true God *and what kind of a being He is*. If I should be the man so fortunate as to comprehend God and explain to your hearts *what kind of a being God is*, so that the Spirit seals it, *then* let every man and woman henceforth put his hand on his mouth, sit in silence, and never say anything or lift his voice against the servants of God again. But if I fail to do it, I have no right to revelation and inspiration and it becomes my duty to renounce all of my pretensions to inspiration *or to being a prophet*, etc. If I should do so, should I not be as bad as all the rest *of the false teachers* of the world? They will all be as badly off as I am. They will all say I ought to be damned. There is not a man or a woman who would not breathe out an anathema on my head if they knew I was a false prophet. Some would feel authorized to take away my life, *but you might just as well take the lives of other false teachers as mine, if I were false*. If any man is authorized to take away my life who says I am a false teacher, then, upon the same principle, I should have the same right to take the life of all false teachers and who would not be the sufferer and where would be the end of the blood?

But *meddle not with any man for his religion*, for no man is authorized to take away life in consequence of religion. All laws and government ought to tolerate *and permit every man to enjoy his religion*, whether right or wrong. There is no law in the heart of God that would allow anyone to interfere with the rights of man. Every man has a right to be a false prophet, as well as a true prophet. If I show verily that I have the truth of God, *show the world is wrong by showing what God is*, and show that ninety-nine out of a hundred are false prophets and teachers while they pretend to hold the keys of God, and go to killing them, would it not deluge the whole world with blood?

*I am going to inquire after God because* 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. This will let you know that I am His servant, for I speak as one having authority and not as a scribe.

What kind of a being was God in the beginning, before the world was? *I will go back to the beginning to show you. I will tell you*, so open your ears and eyes, all ye ends of the earth, and hear, for I am going to prove it to you with the Bible. I am going to tell you the designs of God for the human race, the relation the human family sustains with God, and why He interferes with the affairs of man. 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.

In order to understand the subject of the dead and to speak for the consolation of those who mourn for the loss of their friends, it is necessary to understand the character and being of God. For I am going to tell you how God came to be God and what sort of a being He is. For we have imagined that God was God from the beginning of all eternity. I will refute *that* idea and *take away the veil so you may see*. Truth is the touchstone. These things are incomprehensible to some, but they are simple. 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*.

I will show it from the Bible. *I wish I were in a suitable place to tell it*. I wish I had the trump of an archangel. If I had the privilege, I could tell the story in such a manner that persecution would cease forever. *The scriptures inform us* (Mark it, Brother Rigdon) *that Jesus Christ* said:—What did Jesus say?—As the Father has power in Himself, even so has the Son power *in himself*. To do what? Why, what the Father did. That answer is obvious; *even* in a manner to lay down His body and take it up again. Jesus, what are you going to do? “To lay down my life as my Father laid down His body that I might take it up again.” *Do you believe it?* If you don’t believe it, you don’t believe the Bible. The Scriptures say it and I defy all hell—all the learned wisdom and records and all the combined powers of earth and hell together to refute it!

Here then is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God. You have got to learn how to make yourselves Gods in order to save yourselves and be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done—by going from a small capacity to a great capacity, from a small degree to another, from grace to grace, until the resurrection *of the dead*, from exaltation to exaltation—till you are able to sit in everlasting burnings and everlasting power and glory as those who have gone before, sit enthroned. I want you to know that God in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming His name, is not trifling with you nor me.

*I want you to know* the first principles of consolation. How consoling to the mourners when they are called to part with a husband, father, wife, mother, child, dear relative, or friend, to know, though *they lay down this body and* all earthly tabernacles shall be dissolved, that their very being shall rise in immortal glory to dwell in everlasting burnings and to sorrow, die, and suffer no more. And not only that, but to contemplate the saying that they will be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. What is it? To inherit *and enjoy* the same glory, powers, and exaltation until you ascend a throne of eternal power *and arrive at the station of a God*, the same as those who have gone before. What did Jesus Christ do? “Why I do the *same* things that I saw my Father do when worlds came rolling into existence.” *Saw the Father do what?* “I saw the Father work out His kingdom with fear and trembling and I am doing the same, *too*. When I get my kingdom, I will give it to the Father and it will *add to and* exalt His glory. *He will take a higher exaltation and I will take His place and am also exalted*, so that He obtains kingdom rolling upon kingdom.” So that Jesus treads in His tracks as He had gone before and then inherits what God did before. God is glorified in the salvation and exaltation of His creatures.

It is plain beyond comprehension and you thus learn that these are some of the first principles of the Gospel, about which so much has been said. When you climb a ladder, you must begin at the bottom rung. You have got to find the beginning of the history and go on until you have learned the last principle of the Gospel. It will be a great while *after the grave* before you learn *to understand* the last, for it is a great thing to learn salvation beyond the grave and it is not all to be comprehended in this world.

I suppose I am not allowed to go into an investigation of anything that is not contained in the Bible. *If I should*, you would cry treason, and I think there are so many learned and wise men here who would put me to death for treason. I will, *then*, go to the old Bible and turn commentator today. I will go to the very first Hebrew word—BERESHITH—in the Bible and make a comment on the first sentence of the history of creation: "In the beginning. . . ." I want to analyze the word BERESHITH. BE—in, by, through, and everything else; next, ROSH—the head; ITH. Where did it come from? When the inspired man wrote it, he did not put the first part—the BE—there; but a man—an *old Jew* without any authority—put it there. He thought it too bad to begin to talk about the head of any man. It read in the first: "The Head One of the Gods brought forth the Gods." This is the true meaning of the words. ROSH-ITH [BARA ELOHIM] signifies [the Head] to bring forth the Elohim. If you do not believe it, you do not believe the learned man of God. No learned man can tell you any more than what I have told you. Thus, the Head God brought forth the Head Gods in the grand, head council. I want to simplify it in the English language.

O, ye lawyers, ye learned doctors, who have persecuted me, I want to let you know *and learn* that the Holy Ghost knows something as well as you do. The Head One of the Gods called together the Gods and the grand councillors sat in grand council *at the head* in yonder heavens to bring forth the world and contemplated the creation of the worlds that were created at that time. When I say doctors and lawyers, I mean the doctors and lawyers of the Scriptures. I have done so hitherto, to let the lawyers flutter and let everybody laugh at them. Some learned doctor might take a notion to say that the Scriptures say thus and so, and we must believe the Scriptures, for they are not to be altered. But I am going to show you an example of an error.

I have an old book (New Testament) in the *four languages*: Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and German. I have been reading the German. I find it to be the most correct that I have found and find it corresponds the nearest to the revelations that I have received and given the last fourteen years. *What does this text say?* It tells about JAKOBUS, the son of Zebedee, which means Jacob. In the English New Testament it says James, the son of Zebedee, *but this says Jacob, the son of Zebedee*. Now, if Jacob had the keys, you might talk about James through all eternity and never get the keys. Matthew 4:21 gives the testimony that it is the word of Jacob, instead of James. *The doctors (I mean doctors of law, not of physic) say, "If you say anything not according to the Bible, we will cry treason."* How can we escape the damnation of hell, unless God be with us and reveal it to us. Men bind us with chains. The Latin says IACOBUS, which means Jacob; the Hebrew says YA'AQOB, which means Jacob; the Greek says IAKOBOS—Jacob; and the German says Jacob. I thank God I have got the oldest book in the world *and the Holy Ghost*. I thank Him *for the old book, but more for having the oldest book in my heart—the gift of the Holy Ghost*. *Here* I have all four testimonies: Greek, Hebrew, German, and Latin.

Come here, ye learned men, and read, if you can. I should not have introduced this testimony, only to show that I am right and to back up the word ROSH—the Head Father of the Gods. In the beginning the Head of the Gods called a council of the Gods. *The Gods came together* and concocted a scheme to create this world *and the inhabitants*. When we begin to learn in this way, we begin to learn the only true God. We find out God and what kind of a being we have got to worship. *Having a knowledge of God, we know how to approach Him and ask so that He will answer*. When we begin to know how to come to Him, He begins to come to us. When we are ready to come to Him, He is ready to receive us. As soon as we begin to understand the character of God, He begins to unfold the heavens to us and tell us all about it before our prayers get to His ears.

Now, I ask all the learned men who hear me, why the learned doctors who are preaching salvation say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. They account it blasphemy to contradict the idea. *If you tell them that God made the world out of something*, they will call you a fool. The reason is that they are unlearned but *I am learned and* know more than all the world put together—*the Holy Ghost does, anyhow*. If the Holy Ghost in me comprehends more than all the world, I will associate *myself* with it.

You ask them why, and they say, “Doesn’t the Bible say He created the world?” And they infer that it must be out of nothing. The word create came from the word BARA, but it doesn’t mean so. What does BARA mean? It means to organize; the same as a man would organize and use things to build a ship. Hence, we infer that God Himself had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter—which is element and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time He had. The pure principles of element are principles that never can be destroyed. They may be organized and reorganized, but not destroyed. Nothing can be destroyed. They never can have a beginning or an ending; they exist eternally. It is associated with the subject in question, the resurrection of the dead.

I have another subject to dwell on *which is calculated to exalt man*, but it isn’t possible for me to say much but to touch upon it. Time will not permit me to say all. So I must come to *what I wish to speak of*—the resurrection of the dead—the soul—the immortal spirit—the mind of man. *Where did it come from?* All doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning, *but it is not so*. The very idea lessens the character of man, in my estimation. I don’t believe the doctrine. Hear it, all ye ends of the earth: I know better for God has told me so. I will make a man appear a fool before he gets through. If he doesn’t believe it, *it won’t make the truth without effect*. I am going to tell of things more noble.

We say that God Himself is a self-existent God. Who told you so? It’s correct enough, but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principle? [He refers to the Bible.] How does it read in the Hebrew? It doesn’t say so in the old Hebrew. God made *the tabernacle of man* out of the earth and put into him Adam’s spirit (which was created before), and then it became a living body *or human soul*. *Man existed in spirit*; the mind of man—the intelligent part—is as immortal as, and is coequal with, God Himself. I know that my testimony is true.

Hence, when I talk to these mourners, what have they lost? *You who mourn the loss of friends are only separated for a small moment from their spirits*, and

their *spirits* are only separated from their bodies for a short season. But their spirits existed coequal with God and they now exist in a place where they hold converse together one with another the same as we do on the earth. Does not this give you satisfaction?

I want to reason more on the spirit of man for I am dwelling *on the immutability of the spirit and* on the body of man—on the subject of the dead. Is it logical to say that a spirit is immortal and yet have a beginning? Because if a spirit of man had a beginning, it will have an end, *but it does not have a beginning or end.* This is good logic and is illustrated by my ring. I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto the mind of man—the immortal spirit—because it has no beginning *or end.* Suppose you cut it in two—as the Lord lives there would be *a beginning and* an end. *So it is with man.* All the fools and learned and wise men from the beginning of creation, who come and say that man had a beginning, prove that he must have an end. If that doctrine be true, then the doctrine of annihilation would be true. But if I am right, then I might with boldness proclaim from the housetop that God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. God Himself could not create Himself.

Intelligence *is eternal and* exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age and there is no creation about it. The first principles of man are self-existent with God. All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement *and improvement.* *The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge.* God Himself found Himself in the midst of spirits and glory. Because He was greater He saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest, who were less in intelligence, could have a privilege to advance like Himself *and be exalted with Him,* so that they might have one glory upon another in all that knowledge, power, and glory. So He took in hand to save the world of spirits.

*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. I rejoice more and more.

I want to talk more of man's relation to God. I will open your eyes in relation to your dead. All things whatsoever God in His infinite reason has seen fit and proper to reveal to us, while we are dwelling in our mortal state, in regard to our mortal bodies, are revealed to us in the abstract and independent of affinity of this mortal tabernacle. *His commandments* are revealed to our spirits precisely the same as though we had no bodies at all and those revelations which must of necessity save our spirits will save our bodies. God reveals them to us in the view of no eternal dissolution of our bodily tabernacles. Hence, the responsibility, the awful responsibility, that rests upon us in relation to our dead; for all the spirits who have not obeyed the Gospel in the flesh must either obey the Gospel *and be baptized,* or be damned. Solemn thought! Dreadful thought!

Is there no preparation for—no salvation for—nothing to be done for—our fathers and friends who have gone before us and not obeyed the decrees of the Son of Man? I would to God that I had forty days and nights *to talk, and* to tell you all, to let you know that I am not a fallen prophet. *What promises are made? What can be said if in the grave?* What kind of characters are those who

can be saved, although their bodies are moldering and decaying in the grave? We are looked upon by God, *who dwells in eternity*, as though we were in eternity, and when His commandments touch us it is in view of eternity. *He does not view things as we do.* The greatest responsibility that God has laid upon us in this world is to seek after our dead.

The Apostle says, "They without us cannot be made perfect." Now I am talking of them. I say to you, Paul, "You can't be *made* perfect without us." I will meet Paul half way. It is necessary that those who have gone before and those who come after us must be made perfect and have salvation in common with us. *For it is necessary that the seals be in our hands, to seal our children and our dead for the dispensation of the fulness of times—a dispensation to meet the promises made by Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world for the salvation of man.* God has made it obligatory to man and thus has He laid it upon the eaves of the world. Hence, the saying of Elijah: God said He shall send Elijah, etc.

I have a declaration to make in relation to the provisions which God made for every creature from before the foundation of the world to suit the conditions of man. What has Jesus said? All sins and all blasphemies—every transgression that man may be guilty of—shall be forgiven in this world or the world to come, except one—the *sin against the Holy Ghost*. There is a provision for salvation for him, either in this world or in the world of spirits which is to come. Hence, God has made a provision that *the spirits of our friends and every spirit* in that eternal world can be ferreted out and saved, unless he has committed that unpardonable sin which can't be remitted to him, whether in this world or in the world of spirits. God has wrought out salvation for all men, unless they have committed a certain sin. Every man who has got a friend in the eternal world can save him, unless he has committed the unpardonable sin. You can save any man who has not committed the unpardonable sin. So you can see how far you can be a savior.

A man cannot commit the unpardonable sin after the dissolution of the body. *He cannot be damned through all eternity*; there is a way possible for his escape *in a little time*, so he is not particularly damned. *If a man has knowledge he can be saved*, for knowledge saves a man. There are those that are without wisdom until they get exalted to wisdom, and in the world of spirits there is no way for a man to come to understanding and be exalted but by knowledge. *If he has been guilty of great sins, he is punished for them.* So long as a man will not give consent and heed to the commandments, he must abide without salvation. *When he consents to obey the Gospel, whether alive or dead, he is saved.*

A sinner has his own mind *and his own mind damns him*. He is damned by mortification and is his own condemner and tormenter. Hence the saying: They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. *I have no fear of hell fire, that doesn't exist, but the torment and disappointment of the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone—so is the torment of man.*

I know the Scriptures; I understand them. I said that no man can commit the unpardonable sin after the dissolution of the body. Why? Because they must commit the unpardonable sin in this world *after they receive the Holy Ghost*. *All will suffer in the eternal world until they obey Christ himself and are exalted.* Hence, the salvation of the Savior Jesus Christ was wrought out for all men to triumph over the works of the devil; if the plan did not catch them in one place, it would in another. The devil came to save the world and stood up as a



savior. The contention in heaven was that Jesus contended that there would be certain souls that would be condemned and not saved, but the devil said, "*I am a savior,*" and that he could save them all. As the grand council gave in for Jesus Christ, the lot fell on him. So the devil *rose up*, rebelled against God, fell, and was thrust down, with all who put up their heads for him.

All sin shall be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, *for Jesus Christ will save all except the sons of perdition. What must a man do to commit the unpardonable sin?* He has got to deny the plan of salvation; he has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it with his eyes open; he has got to *receive the Holy Ghost*, deny Jesus Christ when the heavens are open to him, *know God, and then sin against Him*. After a man has sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, there is no repentance for him.

Hence, from that time they begin to be enemies, like many of the apostates of Christ—of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They go too far, and the Spirit leaves them. Hence, when a man begins to be an enemy, he hunts me, he seeks to kill me, he thirsts for my blood, he never ceases *to try to hurt me*. For he has got the same spirit *of the devil* that they had who crucified Jesus, the Lord of Life—the same spirit that sins against the Holy Ghost. You can't renew them to repentance—*you cannot save them*; awful is the consequence, *for they make open war like the devil*.

I advise all to be careful what you do. Stay, *all that hear*. Do not give way; *don't make any hasty moves*. You may be saved, or you may by and by find out that someone has laid a snare for you and you have been deceived. Be cautious: await. *If a spirit of bitterness is in you, don't be in haste*. When you find a spirit that wants bloodshed—murder—the same is not of God, but is of the devil. Say you, "*That man is a sinner;*" well, *if he repents, he shall be forgiven*. Out of the abundance of the heart, man speaks. The man that tells you words of life is the man that can save you. The best men bring forth the best works. I warn you against all evil characters who sin against the Holy Ghost; for there is no redemption for them in this world nor in the world to come.

*I could go back and trace every subject of interest concerning the relationship of man to God, if I had time*. I can enter into the mysteries; I can enter largely into the eternal worlds; for Jesus said, "In my Father's *kingdom* there are many mansions," etc. There is one glory of the moon, sun, and stars, etc. *What have we to console us in relation to our dead?* We have reason to have the greatest hope and consolation for our dead *of any people on earth*. For we have aided them in the first principles. For we have seen them walk *worthily on earth* in our midst, and sink asleep in the arms of Jesus; *and those who have died in the faith are now in the celestial kingdom of God*. Hence, is the glory of the sun.

You mourners have occasion to rejoice, for your friend has gone to wait until the perfection of the reunion and the resurrection *of the dead*. At the resurrection of your friend in felicity, *he will go to the celestial glory*, while *there are many who die in the world who must wait many* myriads of years before they can receive the like blessings. Your expectation and hope is far above what man can conceive. For why has God revealed it to us?

I am authorized to say *to you my friends*, by the authority of the Holy Ghost *and in the name of the Lord*, that you have no occasion to fear; for he is gone to the home of the just. Don't mourn; don't weep. I know it by the testimony of the Holy Ghost that is within me. *You may wait for your friends to come forth to meet you in eternity in the morn of the celestial world*. Rejoice, O Israel!

Your friends *who have been murdered in the persecutions* shall triumph gloriously in the celestial world, while their murderers shall welter and dwell in torment for years, until they pay the uttermost farthing. I say this for the benefit of strangers. I leave the subject.

I have a father, brothers, *children*, and friends who are gone to eternity to a world of spirits *soon to meet me*. I bless those who have lost friends. They are *only* absent for a few moments and the time will soon be gone. They are in the spirit. *The trump will soon be blown, and then shall we hail our mothers, fathers, friends, and all.* There will be no fear of mobs, etc., but all will have an eternity of felicity.

*A question about parents receiving their children. Will mothers have their children in eternity? Yes! Yes! Mothers, you will have your children. For they will have it without price; for their debt of redemption is paid. There is no damnation awaiting them for they are in the spirit. But as the child dies, so will it rise from the dead and be living in the burning of God and possessing all the intelligence of a God. It will never grow, it will be the child in its precise form as it was before it died out of your arms. Children dwell and exercise power, throne upon throne, dominion upon dominion, in the same form just as you laid them down. Eternity is full of thrones upon which dwell thousands of children, reigning on thrones of glory, with not one cubit added to their stature.*

*I will leave this subject here, and make a few remarks upon baptism.* The baptism of water with the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost attending it is necessary and inseparably connected. He must be born of water and the Spirit in order to get into the kingdom of God. Found in the German Bible is a text that bears me out the same as the revelations which I have given and taught for fourteen years about baptism. I have the testimony to put in their teeth that my testimony has been true all the time. You will find it in the declaration of John the Baptist. *I will read a text in German upon baptism.* [He reads from the German.] John says, "I baptize you with water, but when Jesus Christ comes, who has the power and keys, He will administer the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost." Great God! Now where is all the sectarian world? If this testimony is true, they are all damned as clearly as any anathema ever was. I know the text is true. I call upon all to say, Aye. [Shouts of "Aye."] Alexander Campbell, how are you going to save them with water? For John said his baptism was good for nothing without the baptism of Jesus Christ. *Many talk of any baptism not being essential to salvation, but this would lay the foundation of their damnation.* Leaving the principles of the doctrine of baptism, etc. There is one God, one Father, one Jesus, one hope of our calling, one baptism; that is, all three baptisms make one.

I have the truth and I am at the defiance of the world to contradict it. I have preached Latin, Hebrew, Greek, and German, and I have fulfilled all. I am not so big a fool as many have taken me for. The Germans know that I read the German correctly.

Hear it, all ye ends of the earth: I call upon all men—priests, sinners, and all. Repent! Repent! Turn to God and obey the gospel. For your religion won't save you, and if you do not, you will be damned, but I do not say how long. *There have also been remarks made concerning all men being redeemed from hell, but those who sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven in this world or in the world to come. But I say that those who commit the unpardonable sin are doomed to GNOLAUM and must dwell in hell, worlds without end; they shall*

die the second death. As they concoct scenes of bloodshed in this world, so they shall rise to that resurrection which is as the lake of fire and brimstone. Some shall rise to the everlasting burning of God, for God dwells in everlasting burnings; and some shall rise to the damnation of their own filthiness, which is the same as the lake of fire and brimstone.

I have intended my remarks to all—to all the rich and poor, bond and free, great and small. I have no enmity against any man. I love all men—I love you all, but hate your deeds. I am their best friend, and if persons miss their mark it is their own fault. If I reprove a man, and he hate me, he is a fool; for I love all men, especially these my brethren and sisters. I rejoice in hearing the testimony of my aged friend.

You don't know me—you never will. You never knew my heart. No man knows my history. I cannot do it. I shall never undertake it. I don't blame you for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I could not have believed it myself. I never did harm any man since I have been born in the world. My voice is always for peace. I cannot lie down until my work is finished. I never think evil nor think anything to the harm of my fellowman. When I am called at the trump and weighed in the balance, you will know me then. I add no more. God bless you. Amen.

# The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse

Van Hale

As the calendars in Nauvoo were changing from March to April in 1844, Saints from up and down the Mississippi began gathering for the fourteenth anniversary of the organization of the Church. Congregations estimated variously from 8,000 to 25,000<sup>1</sup> assembled during the five-day conference. Perhaps the prospect of some sort of confrontation was a factor in drawing many to conference. Not only was tension building rapidly between Mormons and non-Mormons, but dissension within the inner circle of Church leaders was escalating toward a climax. Whatever Joseph Smith did seemed only to fan the flames of discord and dissension on both fronts.

A large segment of non-Mormons had become alarmed at the rapid growth and influence of the Mormons at Nauvoo. Their major concern was the extent of Joseph Smith's religious and civil power. Convinced that he was a "knave," "despot," "tyrant," "false prophet," "fraud," and "a dangerous and powerful man whose actions should be watched, and closely scrutinized," they had organized a group calling themselves the "Anti-Mormons" whose purpose was to expose "Smith's blasphemy, hypocrisy, and political proceedings," and give "him to understand that his career of usurpation and aggression must be stayed, or otherwise the consequence to himself will be fearful."<sup>2</sup> The *Warsaw Signal* alone printed fourteen articles on the Mormons the month preceding this conference criticizing Joseph's teachings, political views, writings, and actions as mayor and Church leader.<sup>3</sup>

Of greater concern to the Prophet was the growing dissension among some of his most intimate associates. He stated, "Our difficulties and persecutions have always arisen from men right in our midst."<sup>4</sup> The difficulties apparently began in the summer of 1843

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the estimates, see Donald Q. Cannon, "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective," in this issue of *BYU Studies*.

<sup>2</sup>*Warsaw Signal*, 6 March 1844.

<sup>3</sup>*Warsaw Signal*, 6, 13, 20, and 27 March and 3 April 1844.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 6:241 (hereafter cited as *HC*).

when the revelation on plural marriage was written and then read on several occasions. This revelation created a breach between Joseph and several other Church leaders.<sup>5</sup> By March of 1844, a strong resistance to the Prophet was forming as indicated by a report in the 3 April *Warsaw Signal*:

It is said however that a difficulty originated some time since between the Prophet and some of his most conspicuous followers, in relation to the doctrine of spiritual wives.<sup>6</sup>

Joseph even feared that some of them had joined in a conspiracy to take his life.<sup>7</sup> The dissenters too were scrutinizing Joseph's teachings and actions in search of material which might support their opposition. Joseph indicated his awareness of this element among those attending conference:

I suppose I am not allowed to go into an investigation of anything that is not contained in the Bible. If I should, you would cry treason, and I think there are so many learned and wise men here who would put me to death for treason.<sup>8</sup>

In this explosive atmosphere conference opened on Friday, 5 April 1844. Joseph declared that "those who feel desirous of sowing the seeds of discord will be disappointed on this occasion." He admonished the police, "I want you to exercise your authority; and don't say you can't do anything for us, for the constitutional power calls you to keep good order, and God Almighty calls you, and we command you to do it."<sup>9</sup> Never had there been a more appropriate occasion for Joseph to avoid the controversial and seek the passive. He seldom had time to prepare for his speaking engagements,<sup>10</sup> but on this occasion he had made some preparation.<sup>11</sup> His material was controversial, but he would not be sidetracked from his subject. Some had requested that he devote his time to resolving the "petty difficulties" which had arisen at Nauvoo,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Interview with William Law, *Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 July 1887.

<sup>6</sup>*Warsaw Signal*, 3 April 1844.

<sup>7</sup>HC, 6:272, 278-80.

<sup>8</sup>"King Follett Discourse." All quotations from this discourse are quoted from Stan Larson's newly amalgamated text, in this issue of *BYU Studies*. This text has been chosen because of its strict reliance on the original minutes.

<sup>9</sup>HC, 6:288.

<sup>10</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), p. 320 (hereafter cited as *Teachings*).

<sup>11</sup>This is indicated by his remarks on April 5 (see HC, 6:288). Also, he probably had Willard Richards and Thomas Bullock prepare the Hebrew and German quotations used in this sermon. (See Thomas Bullock Journal, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

<sup>12</sup>HC, 6:288.

but Joseph would not allow his time, nor the time of so large a congregation, to be occupied in that manner. On Friday he revealed his intention to give "some instruction on the principles of eternal truth. . . . The Great Jehovah has ever been with me, and the wisdom of God will direct me in the seventh hour."<sup>13</sup> Considering his upcoming sermon to be of great importance, he had assigned three clerks to take minutes. On only one other occasion had any of his discourses been reported by more than one clerk.<sup>14</sup>

With his clerks to record his words and thousands of Saints, sinners, gentiles, and dissenters to hear, discuss, and react to his comments, Joseph took the stand at 3:15 P.M., Sunday, 7 April 1844, and delivered the most controversial sermon of his life, unparalleled in Mormonism in historic and doctrinal significance. Mormonism could never be the same thereafter. The dispersing congregation would alter Joseph's life and significantly change the course of the Church.

Joseph spoke with such power on that occasion that Wilford Woodruff, at a temple dedication in 1893, after forty-nine years of rich experience,

testified that only on one previous occasion had he felt the spirit of God more powerfully manifest than during the dedication of this Temple [Salt Lake]—that was when the Prophet Joseph delivered his last address. The Prophet in that instance stood on his feet three hours, and the spirit of God was present like a flame of fire.<sup>15</sup>

Of that sermon Joseph Fielding wrote in his diary,

Joseph's Discourse . . . was the most interesting matter of this time, and anyone that could not see in him the Spirit of Inspiration of God must be dark, they might have known that he was not a fallen Prophet, even if they thought he was fallen.<sup>16</sup>

This attitude, however, was to be found only among Joseph's firm supporters. His dissenters found the sermon strong evidence that Joseph had fallen as a prophet. Granville Hedrick once declared it to be "one of the most infamous sermons of blasphemy ever preached from the pulpit," and on another occasion stated, "A more high handed and degrading infamous attempt in blasphemy

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>*Teachings*, pp. 287-94. This is the only discourse reported by more than one clerk (Willard Richards and William Clayton). Two reports of a number of others do exist. Wilford Woodruff recorded a number of Joseph's sermons in his journal, but he was not acting officially, and none of his reports found their way into the official records of the Church until the 1850s.

<sup>15</sup>Diary of L. John Nuttall, 20 April 1893, typescript, p. 537, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

<sup>16</sup>Journal of Joseph Fielding, April 1844, p. 29.

never was uttered by mortal tongue.”<sup>17</sup> William Cadman even claimed a revelation concerning it, “‘That Joseph Smith (in that case) taught a worse doctrine than the Devil did in the Garden of Eden.’ The Devil only taught that men should be as Gods. But Joseph taught that men should be Gods.”<sup>18</sup> The doctrines of the sermon were declared “false and damnable” in a resolution by another group of dissenters.<sup>19</sup>

Joseph reacted publicly to these negative feelings in Nauvoo on at least two occasions. In a discourse on 12 May Joseph replied, “My enemies say that I *have* been a true prophet. Why, I had rather be a fallen true prophet than a false prophet.”<sup>20</sup> On 16 June he stated:

Now, you know that of late some malicious and corrupt men have sprung up and apostatized from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and they declare that the Prophet believes in a plurality of Gods, and, lo, and behold! we have discovered a very great secret, they cry—“The Prophet says there are many Gods, and this proves that he has fallen.”<sup>21</sup>

He continued to teach the doctrine of the plurality of gods with several significant additions to what he said in the King Follett Discourse.

#### ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE PLURALITY OF GODS.

The strong reaction to the King Follett Discourse creates the impression that Joseph shocked the Saints with a startling revelation of new doctrine, previously unknown to the members. The absence of any reaction among the Saints prior to the Discourse, adds support to this impression. But Joseph had taught several concepts individually before, though he did not tie them all together until the King Follett Discourse. Fawn Brodie notes this very idea:

For the first time he proclaimed in a unified discourse the themes he had been inculcating in fragments and frequently in secret to his most favored saints: the glory of knowledge, the multiplicity of gods, the eternal progression of the human soul.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>*Truth Teller* 1 (September and October 1864):37 and 53.

<sup>18</sup>William Cadman, *Faith and Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ* (Roscoe, Pa.: Roscoe Ledger Print, 1902), p. 16.

<sup>19</sup>*Nauvoo Expositor*, 7 June 1844.

<sup>20</sup>*Teachings*, p. 365.

<sup>21</sup>*Teachings*, p. 369.

<sup>22</sup>Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows my History* (New York: Knopf, 1945), p. 366.

Of the several concepts taught by Joseph Smith in the King Follett Discourse, four are of primary importance to this discussion, because of their impact on Mormonism:

1. Men can become gods,
2. There exist many gods,
3. The gods exist one above another innumerably, and
4. God was once as man now is.

That these ideas had been taught by 7 April 1844 cannot be disputed. Fragments of them appeared in pamphlets, books, and periodicals (Mormon and non-Mormon); and in unpublished letters, diaries, and sermons.<sup>23</sup> Research for this article uncovered forty-nine references to these concepts before the King Follett Discourse.

Evidence strongly suggests Joseph's concepts of God were not fully developed in the spring of 1820, but rather grew, "precept upon precept," and possibly had not reached their full stature even at his death in 1844.

These four concepts appear to have developed in the following order, and approximately on the following timetable:

1. 1832—Joseph received a revelation, detailed in "The Vision," that men can become equal with God.
2. 1835–1839—He began to teach that there were many gods, a council of whom directed the creation of this earth, ideas which may have come from his translation of the Book of Abraham and his study of Hebrew.
3. 1835–1839—He conceived, perhaps from revelation through work with the Egyptian papyri, that gods "exist one above another, so that there is no end to them."
4. 1838–1841—With the foregoing ideas established, Joseph taught that God had not always been a God, having once existed as a man.

### *"As God is Man May Become"*

The idea that men can become equal with God is not only the most common of the four concepts but is also the earliest.

On 16 February 1832, Joseph and Sidney Rigdon recorded a vision in which those who attain the highest, or Celestial, glory are promised to receive of God's "fullness, and of his glory" be-

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<sup>23</sup>A chronological list of references pertaining to the doctrine of plurality of gods has been included with this discussion.



coming “gods,<sup>24</sup> even the sons of God” (D&C 76:58). Seven months later in a revelation, Jesus Christ, speaking of the “elect of God,” promised “all that my Father hath shall be given” (D&C 84:38). Three months later another revelation declared that in the resurrection “the saints shall be filled with his [God’s] glory, and receive their inheritance and be made equal with him” (D&C 88:107).

Lorenzo Snow’s first encounter with this doctrine occurred 5 June 1836 (two weeks before he was baptized) at a patriarchal blessings meeting at Kirtland where he was told by Joseph Smith, Sr.: “You will become as great as you can possibly wish—EVEN AS GREAT AS GOD, and you cannot wish to be greater.”<sup>25</sup> To Snow, this was a “dark parable,” approaching almost to blasphemy.<sup>26</sup> By 1838 this concept had become known to at least one non-Mormon, L. R. Sunderland, as he leveled a charge of blasphemy against the Mormons in *Zion’s Watchman*, a paper he edited.<sup>27</sup> In a pamphlet that same year, Parley Pratt, defending against Sunderland’s attack, quoted the Bible in support of the idea that the Saints of God shall be joint heirs with Christ and thus,

the spirit should guide his saints into all truth, God is in possession of *all truth*, and *no more*: consequently, his saints will *know* what he *knows*: and it is an acknowledged principle, that “knowledge is power;” consequently, if they have the *same knowledge that God has, they will have the same power*. . . . Hence the propriety of calling them “GODS, even the *sons of God*.”<sup>28</sup>

Pratt’s pamphlet, however, did not lay the matter to rest. Rather it prompted further charges of blasphemy during the next several

<sup>24</sup>In 1843 “A Vision” (D&C 76) was written in poetic verse apparently by Joseph Smith. In this version “gods” is written “Gods,” perhaps indicating the increased emphasis placed upon man’s possible attainment, *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 March 1843):84, verse 45.

<sup>25</sup>Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1884), p. 10. This reference comes from a reminiscent account by Lorenzo Snow. Since most of his papers are in private possession, it is difficult to determine when the account was written. The date of the event in this reference was 5 June 1835.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 46. In 1840 Snow received an “extraordinary manifestation” in which “the eyes of his understanding were opened” and the “dark parable” was unfolded, and he formed the often quoted couplet:

As man now is, God once was:  
As God now is, man may be.

<sup>27</sup>This series of articles was also published in the pamphlet, *Mormonism Exposed and Refuted* (1838). These articles are discussed briefly in Peter Crawley, “A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri,” *BYU Studies* 12 (Summer 1972):522.

<sup>28</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *Truth Vindicated* (New York: Parley P. Pratt, 1838), p. 27. This was written in answer to Sunderland’s article and published in four editions between 1838 and 1842.

years.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the existence of this concept by the time the Saints settled at Nauvoo is well-established. During the Nauvoo years, it received further development<sup>30</sup> and criticism.<sup>31</sup>

### *The Plurality of Gods and the Grand Council*

With the idea established that men can become gods, the foundation was laid for the next precept—the idea of the existence of many gods, a council of whom planned and created the earth. No recorded expression by Joseph of the existence of a plurality of gods has been found dating earlier than 1839, but he was probably introduced to the idea in 1835–36, as a result of his Hebrew studies at the Church-sponsored Hebrew school in Kirtland and his work on the Egyptian papyri. His major arguments in 1844<sup>32</sup> for the existence of a plurality of gods were founded on some basic Hebrew grammar, which would have been the subject of his first several Hebrew lessons. Joseph argued that “*Eloheim* is from the word *Eloi*, God, in the singular number; and by adding the word *heim*, it renders it Gods.”<sup>33</sup> He also related a conversation with a learned Jew in which Joseph asked, “If the Hebrew language compels us to render all words ending in *heim* in the plural, why not render the first *Eloheim* plural?” The Jew replied, “That is the rule with few exceptions; but in this case it would ruin the Bible.” Joseph went on to state that “The word *Eloheim* ought to be in the plural all the way through—Gods.”<sup>34</sup> He also argued the correct translation of the first line of the Bible to be “‘In the beginning the head of the Gods brought forth the Gods,’ or as others have

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<sup>29</sup>Several anti-Mormon writers responded to Pratt’s pamphlet: Henry Caswall, *City of the Mormons* (London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1843), p. 35. (At least two editions were published.) J. B. Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages* (New York: Platt & Peters, 1842), pp. 240–43. (Turner was a professor at Jacksonville, Illinois, about forty-five miles from Nauvoo.) John C. Bennett, *Mormonism Exposed* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842). (At least three editions were published.)

<sup>30</sup>Before the Nauvoo period, the concept of becoming gods probably consisted of man’s possibility of becoming a joint heir with Christ of the Father’s kingdom, with the concept, as Turner put it in 1842, “say they, we shall create, uphold, redeem, save, and reign for ever, over still greater worlds than that which Christ governs,” being a development of the Nauvoo period. The chart indicates other references on this point.

<sup>31</sup>See the three references in footnote 29. See also: Henry Caswall, *The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century* (London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1843), p. 95 (anti-Mormon); “Buckeye’s Lamentation for Want of More Wives,” *Warsaw Message*, 7 February 1844. This is a poem obviously written by a person of considerable knowledge. He does not identify himself except to indicate himself to be a dissenter at Nauvoo. The last line hints that it was written by one of the Laws. It was reprinted in the *Warsaw Signal*, 24 April 1844.

<sup>32</sup>King Follett Discourse, 7 April 1844; discourse of 16 June 1844, *Teachings*, pp. 369–76.

<sup>33</sup>*Teachings*, pp. 369–76. This is a report of Joseph’s last doctrinal discourse, 16 June 1844, reported by Thomas Bullock. A brief report of this sermon is also found in William P. McIntire’s *Minute Book*, p. 21, Church Historical Department.

<sup>34</sup>*Teachings*, pp. 369–76. Joseph followed this rule throughout Abraham 5 and 6.

translated it, 'The head of the Gods called the Gods together.'"<sup>35</sup>

The earliest reference to these concepts by Joseph is in his letter to the Church from Liberty Jail, 20 March 1839.<sup>36</sup> Although the letter was signed by all five in the jail, a letter the following day from Joseph to Emma indicates Joseph had dictated the letter himself:

I have sent an Epistle to the Church directed to you because I wanted you to have the first reading of it, and then I want Father and Mother to have a copy of it. Keep the original yourself as I dictated the matter myself. . . . I want you to have the Epistle copied immediately and let it go to the brethren, first into the hands of Father, for I want the production for my record.<sup>37</sup>

The record he mentions is the personal history he had begun dictating a year earlier. At least some of his instructions were followed, as the original was preserved, and is now among the holdings of the LDS Church Historical Department.

Although the concept of the existence of a plurality of gods did not become an official doctrine<sup>38</sup> of the Church until the King Follett Discourse, it was mentioned in the Mormon press, criticized in the non-Mormon press, touched upon in several discourses of Joseph and Hyrum, taught by some of the elders on missions,<sup>39</sup> and undoubtedly was the topic of many private discussions some years prior to 1844.

### "*Gods Higher Than the Highest*"

Concurrently with his study of Hebrew, Joseph was working on the Book of Abraham. This work solidified the plurality of gods idea, and also stimulated additional development. Joseph's records of 1835–1836 indicate that he spent a considerable amount

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>D&C 121:28, 32. This comes from a letter to the Church from Joseph, 20 March 1839, the original of which is in the Church Historical Department. It was first printed in *Times and Seasons* 1 (May 1840):99–104. This first printing was edited, eliminating the statements of interest to this discussion. The original compares with the current D&C printing, rather than the 1840 *Times and Seasons* printing. The editing out of the plurality of gods references in 1840 indicates the unofficial status of the doctrine before 1844.

<sup>37</sup>Joseph Smith to Emma Smith, 21 March 1839, Church Historical Department.

<sup>38</sup>What constitutes an official teaching of the Church is open to debate; in fact, from one point of view, Joseph's teachings in the King Follett Discourse are not yet official LDS doctrine, never having been accepted as such by a general conference of the Church. The distinction being made in this discussion is that before the King Follett Discourse, the concept of the existence of a plurality of gods was presented as an idea, not to be considered doctrine, or to be taught by the elders, whereas, after the Discourse, it was considered "eternal truth" and part of the "Mormon Creed."

<sup>39</sup>A complete listing of the references to this concept can be found by referring to the chart, concept 3.

of time translating the Book of Abraham. Some evidence does indicate that at least the ideas contained in the last three chapters were known to Joseph by 1839.<sup>40</sup> Chapter 3:16–19 is of particular importance to this discussion since Joseph stated that he learned this concept through the translation<sup>41</sup> of these verses. He said that in the resurrection, the believers will

... all come to dwell in unity, and in all the glory and everlasting burnings of the Gods; and then we shall see as we are seen, and be as our God and He as His Father. I want to reason a little on this subject. I learned it by translating the papyrus which is now in my house. I learned a testimony concerning Abraham, and he reasoned concerning the God of heaven. "In order to do that," said he, "suppose we have two facts: that supposes another fact may exist—two men on the earth, one wiser than the other, would logically show that another who is wiser than the wisest may exist. Intelligences exist one above another, so that there is no end to them."

If Abraham reasoned thus—If Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, you may suppose that He had a Father also.<sup>42</sup>

Mosiah Hancock wrote in his autobiography of 1838 that when Joseph was asked, "Who made the father of our God?" he said that "it is just as natural for God to have a father as it is for you or me to have one."<sup>43</sup>

Joseph explained the establishment of this order of one God above another in the King Follett Discourse.

What did Jesus Christ do? "Why I do the same things that I saw my Father do when worlds came rolling into existence." Saw the Father do what? "I saw the Father work out His kingdom with fear

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<sup>40</sup>The Church Historical Department has manuscripts written by 1837 containing Abraham 1:1–2:18. In addition to this, many items found in Abraham 3–5 can be found in other works prior to 1842. A good example of this is a comparison of these chapters with D&C 121.

<sup>41</sup>The idea that this concept may have been the result of revelation, was intimated earlier. The question of the method Joseph employed in producing the Book of Abraham has not been resolved. It is of interest that the idea was somewhat prevalent during Joseph's lifetime, and shortly after, that the Book of Abraham was the result of revelation, and perhaps not a "translation" in the generally accepted usage of the term. Several references suggesting this idea are: Jay M. Todd, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), pp. 221, 223, 224, 256; Richard Livesay, *An Exposure of Mormonism* (Preston, Mass.: J. Livesay, 1838), p. 10; A statement by Joseph's one-time secretary, Warren Parrish, while working on the Book of Abraham; Reuben Miller, *James J. Strang, Weighted in the Balance of Truth and Found Wanting* (Burlington, Iowa: Reuben Miller, 1846), p. 7; *Millennial Star*, 4 (1844):91; *True Latter day Saints' Herald* 1 (December 1860):270.

<sup>42</sup>*Teachings*, pp. 372, 373. The mention of John's discovery is a reference to Revelation 1:6. The knowledge gained from his work on the Egyptian papyri apparently changed Joseph's attitude toward the correct translation of this verse. The King James Version gives some support to this argument here, while his change of that verse in the "New Translation," several years earlier, does not. *Teachings*, pp. 369, 370.

<sup>43</sup>Autobiography of Mosiah Hancock, p. 2. This is a reminiscent account of a statement of Joseph in 1838. Mosiah Hancock was only four years old in 1838.

and trembling and I am doing the same, too. When I get my kingdom, I will give it to the Father and it will add to and exalt His glory. He will take a higher exaltation and I will take His place and am also exalted, so that He obtains kingdom rolling upon kingdom." So that Jesus treads in His tracks as He had gone before and then inherits what God did before.<sup>44</sup>

This was particularly offensive to the dissenters. They included an additional idea in their resolution against this concept. They claimed Joseph was teaching "a plurality of Gods above the God of this universe, and his liability to fall with all his creations."<sup>45</sup> This idea that God could fall is not found in any of Joseph's recorded teachings, but Isaac Scott corroborated that Joseph taught this. Scott wrote on June 16:

Joseph says there are Gods above the God of this universe as far as he is above us, and if He should transgress the laws given to Him by those above Him, He would be hurled from his Throne to hell.<sup>46</sup>

We don't know how accurately Scott reports the Prophet, but his notation bears the same date that Joseph taught on the plurality of gods. The report of that sermon was taken by Thomas Bullock, but he did not report the entire sermon due to a rainstorm.<sup>47</sup>

The same year the Book of Abraham appeared in print, this concept had become prominent enough to attract the attention of an anti-Mormon writer who shocked his readers with the "horrid Mormon blasphemy" that there are "gods, higher than the Highest."<sup>48</sup> However, references to this idea prior to 1844 are rare, indicating that it was less familiar than the idea of men becoming gods, or the existence of a plurality of gods—less familiar, probably because it developed later, again indicating a precept upon precept development of Joseph's concept of God.

### "As Man Now Is, God Once Was"

The earliest record of Joseph's teaching of this concept is 1841, when he taught that Christ did "all things that he had seen the Father do. He had done nothing but what he saw

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<sup>44</sup>King Follett Discourse, Larson amalgamation.

<sup>45</sup>*Nauvoo Expositor*, 7 June 1844.

<sup>46</sup>"The Death of a Mormon Dictator: Letters of Massachusetts Mormons, 1843-1848," ed. George F. Partridge, *The New England Quarterly* 9 (December 1836):593-605 contains three letters of importance to this discussion: Sarah and Isaac Scott to Sarah's parents, 16 June 1844; Sarah Scott to her parents, 22 July 1844; Sarah Scott to her brother, 1 March 1845.

<sup>47</sup>*Teachings*, p. 369.

<sup>48</sup>Turner, *Mormonism in All Ages*, p. 243.

the Father do, John the 5th,"<sup>49</sup> and that "As the Father hath life in himself, even so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. God the Father took life unto himself precisely as Jesus did."<sup>50</sup> In 1843 he also taught that "the father has some day laid down his body and taken it again so he has a body of his own—so has his son a body of his own so each one will be in their own body."<sup>51</sup> Or as Lorenzo Snow put it, "As man now is, God once was."<sup>52</sup>

Although Joseph taught this idea in Nauvoo on several occasions prior to the King Follett Discourse, no mention of it has been found in print until the fall of 1844, in the first printing of the Discourse. Also, no reference has been found of this concept in non-Mormon writings before 1844, suggesting that it was less widely known and taught than the previous concepts, since the non-Mormons certainly would have found it at least as "blasphemous," and valuable as ammunition in their efforts to discredit Mormonism.

One significant change in earlier doctrines resulted from the development of this idea. Prior to 1841, Church doctrine described the Father as "being a personage of spirit," while the Son was a "personage of tabernacle, made or fashioned like unto a man."<sup>53</sup> This was a well-established doctrine, having been taught to the elders at the School of the Prophets in 1834,<sup>54</sup> published in the Church paper in Kirtland in 1835,<sup>55</sup> approved by a general assembly of the Church at Kirtland in 1835 to be a part of the "Doctrine" section of the Doctrine and Covenants,<sup>56</sup> and taught by the elders until at least 1840.<sup>57</sup> However, by 2 April 1843 the new

<sup>49</sup>McIntire Minute Book, p. 4, contains statements made by Joseph at a lyceum held in Nauvoo in early 1841. The handwritten book appears to have been written at the time of the lyceum.

<sup>50</sup>*Teachings*, p. 181. This is a report of Joseph's discourse to a school at Nauvoo, probably the lyceum mentioned in footnote 49. The original report of this has not been located, 5 January 1841.

<sup>51</sup>*Teachings*, p. 312. This is an amalgamation of Willard Richard's and Wilford Woodruff's reports of Joseph's 11 June 1843 discourse. The quotation used is from the Woodruff report, Church Historical Department.

<sup>52</sup>Snow, *Biography of Lorenzo Snow*, p. 46.

<sup>53</sup>"Lectures on Faith," Lecture 5, paragraph 2, N. B. Lundwall, comp. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, n.d.), p. 48.

<sup>54</sup>HC, 2:176.

<sup>55</sup>*Messenger and Advocate*, 1 (May 1835):122–24.

<sup>56</sup>HC, 2:176. In the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants the book was divided into two sections: the Doctrine section consisting of the seven "Lectures on Faith"; and the Covenants consisting of the revelations. Although the Doctrine section was deleted from editions printed since 1921, the book has retained its original name.

<sup>57</sup>Parley P. Pratt, *An Answer to Mr. William Hewitt's Tract* (Manchester, England: W. R. Thomas, 1840), p. 9. "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

doctrine taught, of Jesus, that "all things that he had seen the Father do, he had done, and that he had done nothing but what he saw the Father do." Thus, the Father is a resurrected being of flesh and bones like the Son. The old doctrine gave way to the new, upon Joseph's frequent teaching on the subject,<sup>58</sup> and its harmony with the concepts of eternal progression which were becoming more common at Nauvoo.

#### DOCTRINAL IMPACT OF THE KING FOLLETT DISCOURSE

The King Follett Discourse deeply affected many Saints even though the doctrines were not new. What then caused the considerable reaction to this Discourse? A discussion of two questions may provide an answer: How familiar were the doctrines generally? and What was the difference in the attitude of the Church toward the doctrines before and after the Discourse?

The number of references to the plurality of gods may be somewhat misleading if the conclusion is drawn that almost all the Saints were familiar with the doctrine. Many of the references had not been published by 1844. Some of the published works would have been inaccessible to most of the Saints. Still other references are lines and phrases, which easily could have been passed over by the reader, not being a part of the major theme of the work. After the King Follett Discourse references to the plurality of gods, Joseph stated, "It has been my intention for a long time to take up this subject and lay it clearly before the people, and show what my faith is in relation to this interesting matter,"<sup>59</sup> perhaps an indication that Joseph felt most Saints were unaware of his beliefs on the subject. On the other hand, Isaac Scott wrote that this doctrine was taught by Joseph and Hyrum "day and night the last two years of their earthly career."<sup>60</sup> Probably this teaching "day and night" was to those who were considered prepared to receive of the "mysteries," but not to the Church in general. In 1843 Joseph informed the Saints that "In the resurrection,

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a spirit. But we would inform Mr. H. 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.' This represents at least Pratt's understanding of Mormon doctrine on the godhead in 1840.

<sup>58</sup>McIntire Minute Book, pp. 4, 12, 14, 21; *Teachings*, pp. 181, 312, 370; The King Follett Discourse, and D&C 130:22.

<sup>59</sup>*Teachings*, p. 370.

<sup>60</sup>Sarah and Isaac Scott to Sarah's parents, 16 June 1844, in "The Death of a Mormon Dictator," pp. 593-605.

some are raised to be angels, others are raised to become Gods. These things are revealed in the most holy places in a Temple prepared for that purpose.”<sup>61</sup> He had, however, begun revealing the temple ordinances and doctrines by that time to a small group of his closest associates. This group may have been the Saints to whom Scott referred. All things considered, it seems impossible to determine with certainty, how familiar the doctrine was before the King Follett Discourse, but most of the Saints may have been virtually unfamiliar with it.

The more important question centers around the attitude of the Church before and after the Discourse. Joseph’s very first written statement on the subject, from Liberty Jail in 1839, intimated that the time was coming, “in the which nothing shall be withheld whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest” (D&C 121:28). This attitude of uncertainty apparently prevailed until the King Follett Discourse. An 1842 editorial comment, probably by John Taylor, is of the same attitude: “Joseph Smith opposes vice and error, and supports his positions from revelation: no odds whether there be two, three or ‘Gods many.’”<sup>62</sup> Also in 1842, a non-Mormon reported an interview at Nauvoo with a man he identified as “a Mormon doctor,” who stated “We believe that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; that makes three at least who are God, and no doubt there are a great many more.”<sup>63</sup> Just three weeks before Joseph’s Discourse, a letter of Hyrum Smith’s appeared in the *Times and Seasons* in reply to an inquiry by a concerned elder. This letter undoubtedly presented the Church position at that time, stating that

... an elder has no business to undertake to preach the mysteries in any part of the world. Neither has any elder any authority to preach any mysterious thing to any branch of the church unless he has a direct command from God to do so. Let the matter of the grand councils of heaven, and the making of gods, worlds, and devils entirely alone: for you are not called to teach any such doctrine—for neither you nor the people are capacitated to understand any such principles—less so to teach them. For when God commands men to teach such principles the saints will receive them. Therefore beware what you teach! for the mysteries of God are not given to all men; and unto those to whom they are given they are placed under re-

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<sup>61</sup>*Teachings*, p. 312.

<sup>62</sup>*Times and Seasons* 3 (15 September 1842):926. This was probably written by John Taylor, who was assisting Joseph as editor of the *Times and Seasons* at the time.

<sup>63</sup>Caswall, *City of the Mormons*, p. 35.



strictions to impart only such as God will command them . . . and let the mysteries alone until by and bye.<sup>64</sup>

Hyrum did not deny any of the concepts mentioned, but merely indicated that they were not to be taught to the world, nor to the Saints in general, until “by and bye.” This “by and bye” came in twenty-two days.

Following the King Follett Discourse, the doctrine of the plurality of gods was no more a matter of speculation to be approached with caution. Joseph claimed the doctrine he was about to preach to be “eternal truth.” He declared,

I have the truth of God . . . the world is wrong . . . and I speak as one having authority. . . . If you don't believe it, you don't believe the Bible. The Scriptures say it and I defy all hell—all the learned wisdom and records and all the combined power of earth and hell together to refute it!

He even laid his prophetic claims on the line, stating that if he could not show “the character of the only wise and true God . . . it becomes my duty to renounce all of my pretensions to inspiration or to being a prophet.”<sup>65</sup> Isaac Scott recognized a change had taken place, and that the plurality of gods, which had been taught “for two years past . . . now assumes a portentous aspect.”<sup>66</sup>

Following the Discourse, the plurality of gods doctrine immediately became a common subject. Despite the apostasies caused and the strong objections voiced, Joseph would not back down from the doctrine, stating:

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.” And if it does rain, I'll preach this doctrine for the truth shall be preached.<sup>67</sup>

Before Joseph's death, he preached the doctrine publicly once more on 16 June, and Orson Pratt published it as “The Mormon Creed.”<sup>68</sup> Shortly after Joseph's death, the doctrine was the major topic of three articles in the *Times and Seasons*,<sup>69</sup> was touched upon

<sup>64</sup>*Times and Seasons* 5 (15 March 1844):474. This was a letter written by Hyrum Smith.

<sup>65</sup>King Follett Discourse, Larson amalgamation.

<sup>66</sup>Sarah and Isaac Scott to Sarah's parents, 16 June 1844.

<sup>67</sup>*Teachings*, p. 370.

<sup>68</sup>Orson Pratt, *The Prophetic Almanac for 1845* (New York: Prophet Office, 1845–46). This was advertised for sale in *The Prophet*, 27 June 1844.

<sup>69</sup>*Times and Seasons* 6 (February 1845):808, 809. This is an article written by John Taylor; “Paracletes,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (May 1845):891, 892. The author is suspected to be W. W. Phelps, but Orson Pratt should also be considered. This article was concluded in *Times and Seasons* 6 (June 1845):917.

four more times in other printed matter,<sup>70</sup> was the subject of at least one discourse,<sup>71</sup> and was mentioned in a poem.<sup>72</sup>

It was, then, the King Follett Discourse which identified what had been considered a speculative doctrine as “eternal truth,” part of the “Mormon creed,” a transition which tested the faith of many Church members. Were it not for the King Follett Discourse, the doctrine of the plurality of gods may have remained obscure, among the purported teachings of Joseph of which his sanction is yet uncertain. The doctrinal impact of Joseph’s canonization of the doctrine of the plurality of gods in the King Follett Discourse must be considered the most significant aspect of the sermon.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 25 December 1844. This also appeared in W. W. Phelps to William Smith, *Times and Seasons* 5 (1 January 1844):758. See also Parley P. Pratt, “Materiality,” *The Prophet*, 24 May 1845; and Thomas Ward, editorial comment on the King Follett Discourse, *Millennial Star* 5 (September 1844):95.

<sup>71</sup>William P. McIntire Minute Book, p. 27, Church Historical Department. He mentions that Phineas Young preached a sermon on the plurality of gods, 20 April 1845.

<sup>72</sup>*Times and Seasons* 5 (January 1845):767. This song was written by John Taylor for the dedication of the Seventies Hall, 26 December 1844.

<sup>73</sup>The Discourse itself received unprecedented attention. It was printed four times by the end of 1845 (see Donald Q. Cannon’s article in this issue of *BYU Studies*), at a time when only five other of Joseph’s discourses had been printed by the Church (see *Teachings*, pp. 11, 187, 191, 196, and 324). Before the Saints left Nauvoo, the plurality of gods had become a basic doctrine, so widely printed that hardly any member could have been uncertain of the Church’s position on it.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF REFERENCES TO THE  
FOUR PLURALITY OF GODS CONCEPTS

Date	Reference	Plurality of Gods Concepts*			
		1	2	3	4
1832	D&C 76:58	X			
	D&C 88:107	X			
1835	Eliza R. Snow Smith, <i>Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow</i> (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1884), p. 10	X			
1838	Abraham 3-5		X	X	
	<i>Autobiography of Mosiah Hancock</i> (n.p., n.d.), p. 2.				
	LaRoy Sunderland, <i>Mormonism Exposed and Refuted</i> (New York: Piercy & Reed, 1838).	X			
	Parley P. Pratt, <i>Truth Vindicated</i> (New York: Parley P. Pratt, 1838), p. 27	X			
1839	D&C 121:28, 32		X		
1840	Parley P. Pratt, <i>Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt</i> (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), pp. 297, 248	X			
	Smith, <i>Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow</i> , p. 46.	X			X
	A Philanthropist, <i>Mormonism Unmasked</i> (Philadelphia: T.K. & P.G. Collins, 1840), pp. 18, 22.	X			
1841	Wm. P. McIntire Minute Book, p. 4, Church Hist. Dept.				X
	Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., <i>Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith</i> (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), p. 181 (hereafter cited as <i>Teachings</i> ).				X
1842	Lorenzo Snow Letterbook, pp. 75-77, Church Hist. Dept.	X			
	<i>Times and Seasons</i> 3 (March 1842):703-706, 718-722		X	X	
	<i>Teachings</i> , p. 216	X			
	Henry Caswall, <i>City of the Mormons</i> (London: J.G.F. & J. Rivington, 1843), p. 35.	X	X		
	J. B. Turner, <i>Mormonism in All Ages</i> (New York: Platt & Peters, 1842), pp. 240-43.	X	X	X	
	John C. Bennett, <i>Mormonism Exposed</i> (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842).	X	X	X	
	<i>Times and Seasons</i> 3 (15 September 1842): 474		X		

Date	Reference	Plurality of Gods Concepts*			
1843	"A Vision," <i>Times and Seasons</i> 4 (1 March 1843):84, verse 45.	X			
	<i>Times and Seasons</i> 4 (1 March 1843):121		X		
	Journal of George Laub, pp. 22-44, Church Hist. Dept.	X	X	X	X
	Heber C. Kimball Papers, 28 May 1843, Church Hist. Dept.	X			
	<i>Teachings</i> , p. 312	X	X		X
	D&C 132	X			
Henry Caswall, <i>The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century</i> (London: J.G.F. & J. Rivington, 1843), p. 95.	X				
1844	"Buckeye's Lamentation for Want of More Wives," <i>Warsaw Message</i> , 7 February 1844	X			
	<i>Times and Seasons</i> 5 (15 March 1844): 474	X			
	King Follett Discourse	X	X	X	X
	<i>Nauvoo Expositor</i> , 7 June 1844		X	X	
	<i>Teachings</i> , pp. 369-76	X	X	X	X
	Sarah and Isaac Scott to Isaac's parents, 16 June 1844 (see footnote 46).		X	X	
	Orson Pratt, <i>The Prophetic Almanac for 1845</i> (New York: Prophet Office, 1845-46).	X	X		X
	Sarah Scott to her parents, 22 July 1844 (see footnote 46).		X		
	<i>Millennial Star</i> 5 (September 1844):95.	X			
	<i>Nauvoo Neighbor</i> , 25 December 1844		X		
<i>Times and Seasons</i> 5 (January 1845):767		X			
1845	<i>Times and Seasons</i> 6 (February 1845):808, 809	X	X	X	
	Sarah Scott to her brother, 1 March 1845 (see footnote 46)		X		
	McIntire Minute Book, p. 27		X		
	"Paracletes," <i>Times and Seasons</i> 6 (May-June 1845):891, 892, 917.		X	X	
	"Materiality," <i>The Prophet</i> , 24 May 1845	X			
		26	23	11	10

## \*Plurality of Gods Concepts

1. Men can become gods.
2. There exist many gods.
3. The gods exist one above another innumerably.
4. God was once as man now is.

# The Practice of Rebaptism at Nauvoo

D. Michael Quinn

Until recently, on the rare occasions when rebaptism has been mentioned in LDS histories, the central incident has been the rebaptism of Brigham Young and his fellow apostles in the Salt Lake Valley on 6 August 1847. All chroniclers of that event have left the impression that this was the first occasion in Mormonism where rebaptism for renewal of covenants was practiced.<sup>1</sup> The one author who acknowledges that the practice of rebaptism existed during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, also limited that practice to two functions: (1) those who were baptized for remission of sins prior to 1830 and who were rebaptized as members of the Church once it was organized on 6 April 1830, and (2) "some members of the Church who were in transgression were again baptized, without first having lost their membership by excommunication."<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, a recent scholarly history of the LDS Church has noted:

For many years [in the nineteenth century] it had been common for members to rededicate themselves to building up the Kingdom through rebaptism. This practice was not considered essential to salvation but was a symbol of rededication. On other occasions the Saints were rebaptized as a symbolic gesture related to blessings for their health, entry into the United Order, preparation for marriage, and even for going to the temple if they had not been there for some time.<sup>3</sup>

As we study the records and journals we find this latter statement an accurate general description of rebaptism among the Latter-day

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<sup>1</sup>William E. Berrett, *The Restored Church: A Brief History of the Origin, Growth and Doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1936), p. 381; Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), p. 319; Carter E. Grant, *The Kingdom of God Restored* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), p. 434; Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and his Work* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1936), pp. 102-03; Russell F. Ralston, *Fundamental Differences between the Reorganized Church and the Church in Utah* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1963), pp. 64-65; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century I*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1930), 3:286-87; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 27th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), p. 375; Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1892-1904), 1:348-49; Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888), p. 380.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-56), 2:332-37.

<sup>3</sup>James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), pp. 425-26.

Saints. Rebaptism was manifest during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, Jr. It was particularly prominent during the Nauvoo years and served many functions.

#### REBAPTISM FOR ENTERING A NEW ECCLESIASTICAL RELATIONSHIP

The earliest suggestion of rebaptism in LDS history was in the 1830 Book of Mormon description of the righteous Nephites being rebaptized at the command of the resurrected Christ when he visited them.<sup>4</sup> Then, although Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had baptized themselves and others for remission of sins for nearly a year prior to the organization of the Church in 1830, the previously baptized followers of Joseph Smith were again baptized as members of the newly organized Church of Christ.<sup>5</sup> These two examples have been described as necessary ordinances to introduce gospel followers into a new Church organization.<sup>6</sup>

Although the documents are fragmentary, there is evidence that during the Nauvoo period of the Church, previously baptized Latter-day Saints were baptized again when they moved from a distant branch of the Church to the Nauvoo area. Between 1841 and 1843, for example, ten members of the Church who moved to the Nashville, Iowa Branch were added to the branch by being rebaptized.<sup>7</sup> The specific reason for this rebaptism is not indicated. It might have been an absence of records proving their prior baptism, or it might have been that the newly arrived Saints wished to demonstrate their rededication after making a long journey to the new branch.

#### REBAPTISM FOR REFORMATION AND REMISSION OF SINS

The earliest known case in which a person was rebaptized because he felt that he had faltered in his original baptismal commitments was on 7 May 1832. On that date David Johnson requested and received rebaptism because he "had lived unworthy of the communion of the Sacrament," and also because the man who had baptized him had been subsequently excommunicated. A year later in Kirtland, John Murdock's diary notes that he "rebaptized

<sup>4</sup>See 3 Nephi 12:1 and 3 Nephi 19:10-13.

<sup>5</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 1:76, note (hereafter cited as *HC*).

<sup>6</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957-1966), 3:205-06.

<sup>7</sup>Records of Nashville, Iowa Branch, after page 84 of Seventies Record A, CR3/3, Archives Division of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. One of the 1843 entries for rebaptism was "Mary Willson colored woman."

Benjamin Bragg.”<sup>8</sup> These may have been isolated cases in the 1830s, but during the Nauvoo years rebaptism for reformation and remission of sins was general among the Latter-day Saints.

William Clayton’s journal indicated that rebaptism for remission of sins was practiced at Nauvoo after Joseph Smith had remarked on the subject at April 1841 conference.<sup>9</sup> However, the beginning of a general Nauvoo Reformation can be dated from the remarks of Hyrum Smith to the Nauvoo High Council on 18 January 1842, that “there was a general want of action in the Church—that he wanted every one to start anew.”<sup>10</sup> During the afternoon meeting on Sunday, 1 May 1842, the authorities at Nauvoo expanded this into a call for a reformation within the Church.<sup>11</sup> By that time the Church at Nauvoo had become embroiled in rumors and disclosures about unauthorized sexual activities wherein men like John C. Bennett, Chauncey and Francis Higbee, William Smith, and others had exploited numerous women under the guise of “spiritual wifery.”<sup>12</sup> Although Bennett and others were disfellowshipped or excommunicated for this unauthorized conduct, the effect of the situation was such that many were urged to be rebaptized, as indicated when dissident Church member Oliver H. Olney wrote on 27 July 1842, “That when they do wrong They get rebaptized They then stand fair in the sight of God Altho they have done ever so bad This is the theme amongst those That are a wallowing in the mire.”<sup>13</sup>

Most of the Latter-day Saints who were rebaptized for remission of sins during the Nauvoo period were not receiving this ordinance for what was regarded as gross misconduct, but instead for a personal reformation and remission of those sins which the ancient apostle John said were part of the human condition.<sup>14</sup> Surviving certificates of baptism from Nauvoo indicate that from

<sup>8</sup>Journal of Jared Carter, 1831–1833, p. 66, 7 May 1832, Church Archives; Diary of John Murdock, p. 25, 24 March 1833, Church Archives.

<sup>9</sup>James B. Allen and Thomas G. Alexander, eds., *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton, 1840–1842* (Salt Lake City and Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1974), pp. 209, 212.

<sup>10</sup>Nauvoo High Council 1840–1842 Record, p. 35, 18 January 1842, Church Archives.

<sup>11</sup>Oliver H. Olney Papers, 1 May 1842, Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

<sup>12</sup>*Affidavits and Certificates, Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett's Letters* (Nauvoo, Ill.; n.p., 31 August 1842); *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 15 May and 19 June 1844; *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* 23 (12 October 1861):657–59; *HC*, 5:71–82 and 6:407; *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 August 1842):868–74 and 5 (15 March 1844):537–41; Daniel W. Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith,” (Master’s thesis, Purdue University, 1975), pp. 223–60. In the original affidavits before the Nauvoo High Council, William Smith and others were identified whose names were eliminated from the published affidavits.

<sup>13</sup>Olney Papers, 27 July 1842.

<sup>14</sup>See 1 John 1:8–10.

1843 to 1844 many members of the Church in good standing were rebaptized “for Remission of Sins.”<sup>15</sup> The general nature of this Nauvoo reformation is indicated in the enthusiastic letter of Jacob Scott from Nauvoo on 28 February 1843: “Nearly *All* the Church have been *Baptized again*, for the Remission of their *Sins*, since they joined the Church, I have also, by the hands of Br. Joseph (as he himself has been,) & I would advise Jan and you Mary, to attend to it as soon as you can have the opportunity of an Elder or Priest of the Church to administer it.”<sup>16</sup>

#### RENEWAL OF COVENANTS THROUGH BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

Although baptism for the dead has traditionally been regarded as distinct from rebaptism, baptism for the dead at Nauvoo was also another form of rebaptism. Since 1840 sermons and revelations had provided authorization for already baptized members of the LDS Church to be baptized in behalf of their deceased friends and relatives.<sup>17</sup> Among instances of this practice within the Joseph Smith family were Emma Smith being baptized for her father, Isaac Hale; Hyrum Smith for his brother Alvin; Lucy Mack Smith for her brother, uncle, and aunts; Don Carlos Smith for his “Friend” General George Washington; and Joseph Smith performing baptisms for the dead as late as 5 July 1843.<sup>18</sup> Because each living proxy had already been baptized, the ordinance thus provided a rebaptism for the living proxy as well as a first baptism for the deceased, as indicated in a certificate dated 4 July 1841: “Catharine Fory renewed her covenant with the Lord, and was baptised in behalf of. . . .”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, each person who was baptized in behalf of another person was simultaneously renewing his own or her own original covenants of baptism.

#### REBAPTISM FOR HEALTH

The frequent use of rebaptism at Nauvoo as a means of healing sickness may have derived from evidences of healing that occurred upon original baptism. For example, Rhoda Richards (sister

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<sup>15</sup>Records of Baptisms at Nauvoo, CR 342/1, LDS Archives; Records of Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, Book C, p. 2, Book D, 23 April 1844, Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

<sup>16</sup>Jacob Scott to Mary Scott Warnock, 28 February 1843, Research Library and Archives of The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.

<sup>17</sup>HC, 4:231, 558, 568–69, 595; D&C 124, 128.

<sup>18</sup>Records of Baptisms at Nauvoo, CR 342/1; Records of Baptisms for Dead at Nauvoo, LDS Genealogical Society.

<sup>19</sup>Certificate in CR 342/1.



of Apostle Willard Richards and subsequently a plural wife of Joseph Smith) recorded in her journal that when she was baptized a member of the LDS Church on 2 June 1838: "In obeying the commands of the Lord I found great good. Health was improved, poison disappeared, the cake of ice was melted from my stomach. I found no need of Thomsonian medicine."<sup>20</sup> The first instructions concerning baptism for health were given by Joseph Smith when he dedicated the baptismal font of the Nauvoo Temple on 8 November 1841, as recorded in a journal of William Clayton:

Brother Samuel Rolfe being present, and being seriously afflicted with a felon on one hand president Joseph instructed him to wash in the font, and told him he would be healed, although the doctors had told him it would not be well before spring, and advised him to have it cut. He washed his hands in the font and in one week afterwards his hand was perfectly healed.

After this time baptism was continued in the font, and many realized great blessings both spiritually and bodily.<sup>21</sup>

Word of this use of the temple font was widely circulated and within a few months a Mormon in a distant branch of the Church wrote to the Prophet: "I have confidence that if I can be Baptized in the font I shall be healed of a hereditary disease I am, and ever have been laboring under. what is known by the name of sick head ache. I hope to be with the Saints soon."<sup>22</sup> In time, baptisms for health were extended to the outlying branches of the Church, as indicated by the baptisms for health performed in October 1843 at Philadelphia by Jedediah M. Grant.<sup>23</sup>

Although some were baptized for health purposes in the Nauvoo Temple font, still others resorted to the Mississippi River for this ordinance. The most notable example occurred when Joseph Smith baptized his wife Emma twice in the Mississippi River on 5 October 1842 because of her serious ill health, and then went with her on 1 November 1842, "to the temple [the font being the only part completed] for the benefit of her health."<sup>24</sup> The Prophet's anxiety for his wife to receive baptism for health was such that a non-Mormon businessman reported that Joseph Smith had interrupted a business interview because "Mrs Smith lay Dangerously ill at the time and they ware about to administer the

<sup>20</sup>Journal of Rhoda Richards, 2 June 1838, Church Archives. Punctuation added.

<sup>21</sup>Journal of William Clayton, 1840-1845, p. 21, 8 November 1841, Church Archives.

<sup>22</sup>Alphonso Young to Joseph Smith, 6 May 1842, Newell K. Whitney Family Papers, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

<sup>23</sup>Philadelphia Branch Record, p. 99, RLDS Research Library.

<sup>24</sup>HC, 5:167-68, 182.

Rights of Baptism to her.”<sup>25</sup> Apostle Willard Richards also baptized his wife frequently for her health.<sup>26</sup> Certainly one of the most extraordinary examples of baptism for health at Nauvoo occurred in December 1842, when Horace S. Eldredge cut holes in the frozen river seven mornings in a row for the purpose of baptizing John Bills for rheumatism and bleeding lungs.<sup>27</sup> For the Mormons of Nauvoo, baptism for health was both a priesthood ordinance and a dramatic demonstration of personal faith.

#### REBAPTISM IN CONNECTION WITH PLURAL MARRIAGE

Although the evidence is not as clear as with other forms of rebaptism at Nauvoo, it appears that members of the Church were also rebaptized as a preparation for, or a confirmation of, entering into plural marriage. Brigham Young recorded in his daily journal on 30 October 1843 that he baptized Sister Cobb and Harriet Cook, but the next entry for 1 November 1843 was obliterated in his journal.<sup>28</sup> Although it is regrettable historically, the obliteration may have been regarded as necessary during the troubled times of Nauvoo, for other records indicate that on this occasion Augusta Adams Cobb and Harriet Cook were sealed as plural wives to Brigham Young by Joseph Smith.<sup>29</sup> The association of rebaptism and plural marriage may also explain the following entry in the journal of Joseph Smith on 11 May 1843: “6 A.M. baptized [blank spaces] Sisters Snow, Louisa Bemen, Sarah Alley &c.”<sup>30</sup> According to later affidavits, Eliza R. Snow had become Joseph Smith’s plural wife on 29 June 1842, Louisa Beaman had become his plural wife on 5 April 1841, and Sarah Alley had been sealed as a plural wife to Joseph B. Noble on 5 April 1843.<sup>31</sup> The blank space and “&c” of this 11 May 1843 entry in the Prophet’s journal may be explained by the affirmations of Emily and Eliza Partridge that they were sealed to Joseph Smith as plural wives on this date

<sup>25</sup>John D. Gillett to Smith Tuttle, 5 November 1842, Gillett and Whittle Papers, Manuscript Section, Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.

<sup>26</sup>Journal of Willard Richards, 15 April, 16 April, 27 April, 7 July 1843, Church Archives.

<sup>27</sup>Journal of Horace S. Eldredge, December 1842, Church Archives.

<sup>28</sup>Journal of Brigham Young, 1840–1844, 30 October, 1 November 1843, Church Archives.

<sup>29</sup>Affidavit of Augusta Adams Young on 12 July 1869 and affidavit of Harriet Cook Young on 4 March 1870 in Plural Marriage Affidavit Books, Church Archives. They gave the date of the marriage as 2 November 1843.

<sup>30</sup>Journal of Joseph Smith, Jr., 11 May 1843, Church Archives; *HC*, 5:385.

<sup>31</sup>Affidavit of Eliza R. Snow on 7 June 1869 and affidavit of Joseph B. Noble on 26 June 1869 in Plural Marriage Affidavit Books; Hazel Noble Boyack, *A Nobleman in Israel: A Biographical Sketch of Joseph Bates Noble, Pioneer to Utah in 1847* (Cheyenne, Wyo.: Pioneer Printing Co., 1962), p. 69.

in the presence of his wife Emma.<sup>32</sup> These incidents may demonstrate that the frequent use of rebaptism in Utah during the nineteenth century as a preparation for endowment and sealing ordinances had its origin in Nauvoo practices.

#### THE HERITAGE OF NAUVOO REBAPTISM

As with nearly every public and private practice of Nauvoo during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, rebaptism was institutionalized by Brigham Young as he built the Kingdom of God throughout the Great Basin of the American West. A history of those practices of rebaptism after the departure of the majority of the Saints from Nauvoo is beyond the scope of this article, but as indicated by Allen and Leonard earlier, the practice of rebaptism for rededication, renewal, reformation, health, and preparation for temple ordinances continued throughout the nineteenth century. Although some rebaptism ordinances, such as for health and rededication, continued to be performed as late as 1913 in the temples, the LDS Presidency decided during the administration of Joseph F. Smith that since rebaptism ordinances had always been supplementary to such principles and ordinances as individual repentance, partaking of the Sacrament, and priesthood blessing of the sick, it would be wise to discontinue a practice that might tend to diminish the importance of the primary principles and ordinances upon which rebaptism was predicated. This has been done as Elder Bruce R. McConkie notes in *Mormon Doctrine*: "There is no need for and no ordinance of rebaptism in the Church."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Affidavit of Emily D. Young on 1 May 1869 and affidavit of Eliza Partridge Lyman on 1 July 1869 in Plural Marriage Affidavit Book, in *Deseret Evening News*, 18 October 1879, and in "Plural Marriage," *The Historical Record*, ed. Andrew Jenson, 6 (May 1887):233.

<sup>33</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), s.v. "Baptism," p. 71.

# David H. Smith: A Son of the Prophet

F. Mark McKiernan

On 17 November 1844, nearly five months after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Emma Smith bore a son whom she named David Hyrum. Though perhaps best-known in later life as a singer and poet, David Smith also did a number of paintings which have recently become available for study and publication, and which give insight into post-Mormon Nauvoo, the Smith family, the infant Reorganization, and most of all, into David Smith himself.

Of the few Mormons who remained in Nauvoo after the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo in 1846, perhaps the most notable were Emma Smith and her children. But the Nauvoo in which David grew up during the 1850s and 1860s was much different from that Kingdom on the Mississippi which his father had once dominated. He painted an incomplete Nauvoo—the ruins of the temple, the walls of the Nauvoo House, and the bend in the river showing the abandoned homes of the old town. He was interested in what had been his father's city; thus, his paintings are of Mormon Nauvoo rather than of the gentile community on the hill. The paintings are primitive, showing an almost photographic attention to detail, and depicting historical buildings, nature scenes, and David's friends.

David received the basic education common to the children of Nauvoo, and there is no evidence to suggest that he ever received any special training in either art or poetry. He did, however, show an early interest in artistic expression. In 1852, Julia Dixon wrote Emma to thank her for "your letter and in seeing those drawings of David's. God bless his little soul for remembering his absent sister."<sup>1</sup> While visiting Nauvoo in 1853 the artist Frederick Piercy commented that David was "of a mild studious disposition, and is passionately fond of drawing, seeming to be never so happy as

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<sup>1</sup>Julia Dixon to Emma Bidamon, 25 March 1852, Galveston, Texas. The original is in the archives of the Church Historian of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Independence, Missouri.

when he has a pencil and paper in his hand.”<sup>2</sup> David differed from his brothers in talents and personality—while Alexander was regarded as one of the finest marksmen in Hancock County, David was known for his sensitive sketches of flowers and shells. He had a rich solo voice and was in constant demand to sing for the Saints; his brother Joseph’s speaking voice was unimpressive. But Joseph had a trained legal mind and was deliberate in his decisions as well as patient in achieving his goals where David was charismatic and compulsive. Early he showed signs of depression punctuated by brilliant flashes of creative productivity.

The influences of his family upon his writings are easy to document. For instance, the dedication of his small book of verse, *Hesperis*, reads:<sup>3</sup>

Dedication.  
to  
Emma,  
A Most Noble and Devoted  
Mother  
Her Grateful Son Dedicates  
This the Child of His Mind,  
Wishing it more worthy  
Her Memory

Emma had a great influence on all her children which shaped their lives and with them the course of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The sons of Joseph Smith, Jr., comprised the First Presidency of the Reorganization, David joining his brothers Joseph and Alexander in this calling.<sup>4</sup> He was obviously aware of being both a son of the Prophet and the youngest of the Smith brothers, and clarified his position for the church in 1863 when he wrote:

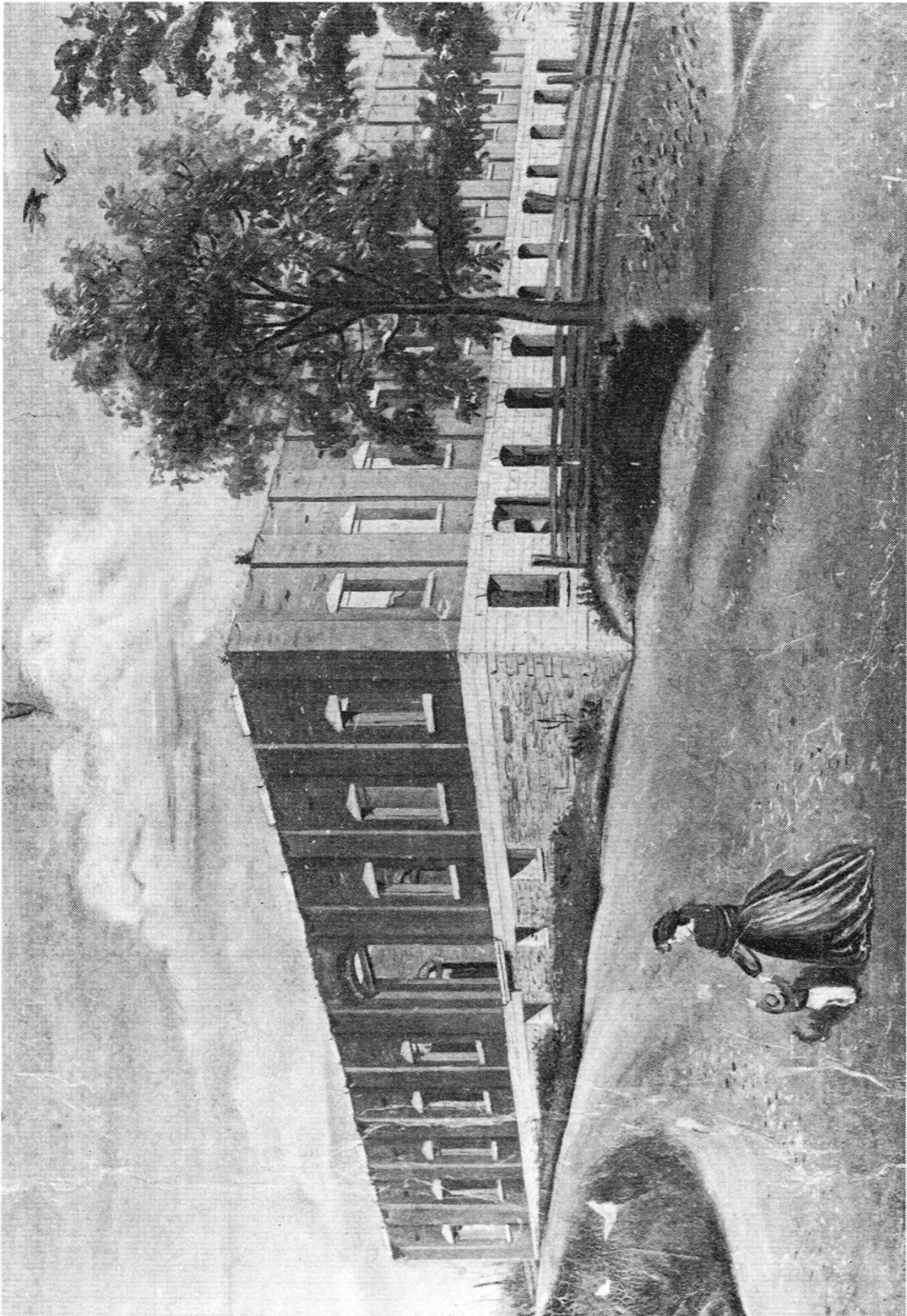
Joseph is the Chosen Prophet  
Well ordained in God’s clear sight  
Should he lose by his transgression  
Alexander has the right.

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<sup>2</sup>Frederick Piercy, “A Visit to Nauvoo in 1853,” *Journal of History* 3 (1910):246.

<sup>3</sup>David H. Smith, *Hesperis, A Book of Poems* (Plano, Illinois: Herald Steam Book and Job Office, 1875). It is interesting that David’s mother was still alive when the volume was published, though the dedication reads as though she had died; Emma died four years later in 1879.

<sup>4</sup>David was ordained a priest in 3 March of 1863 and an elder seven months later. On 3 March 1873, he was called to the First Presidency of the Church. For additional information see Paul M. Edwards, “The Sweet Singer of Israel: David Hyrum Smith,” *BYU Studies* 12 (Winter 1972):171–84.



"The Nauvoo House," by David H. Smith. Courtesy of the Audio-Visual Department, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Joseph, Alexander, David  
 Three remaining pillars still  
 Like the three remaining columns  
 Of the Temple on the hill!

Joseph's star is full and shining  
 Alexander's more than mine;  
 Mine is just below the mountain  
 Bide its time and it will shine.

Joseph is the Chosen Prophet  
 Well ordained in God's clear sight  
 Should he lose by his transgression  
 Alexander has the right.<sup>5</sup>

David was greatly loved by the members of the church, who affectionately called him "The Sweet Singer of Israel."

In 1847 Emma married Louis Bidamon who provided her and her children with economic security. Joseph III wrote kindly of his stepfather,<sup>6</sup> but David's writings reveal his disgust with Bidamon's drunkenness and foul language. The Major, as he was called, had a local reputation for both. David illustrated his displeasure in his poem, "Two Fates," which was written on 7 August 1865 at Nauvoo:

An old horse stood by the "grocery" door,  
 And a weary long time he had stood;  
 His line was half tied, he was aged and poor,  
 Yet, he would not depart though he could.

His master was in at the sloppy bar,  
 I felt sad for the weary old horse;  
 But felt as I looked at the two, by far  
 That the fate of the master was worse.

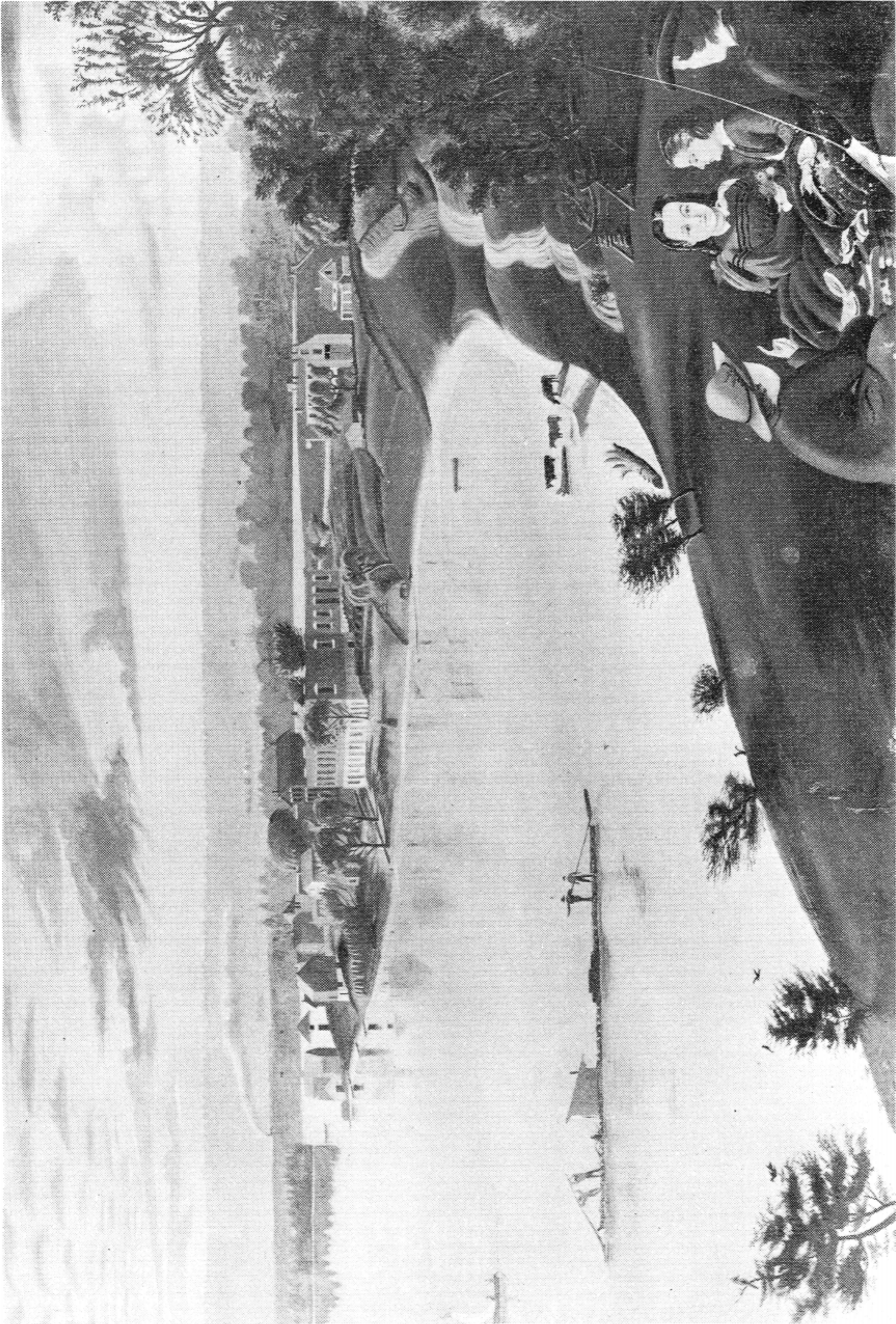
The dust was beat up like a scorching bed,  
 And the gadflies tormented him sore;  
 He was marked with blows, and he hung his head,  
 As he stood in the filth at the door;

But filthier far the words of the man  
 As he drained off the glass with a curse,  
 And hotter the fever that over him ran,  
 Than the sunshine that scorched the poor horse.

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<sup>5</sup>Quoted in Paul M. Edwards, "The Sweet Singer of Israel: David Hyrum Smith," *Courage* 2 (Summer 1972):485.

<sup>6</sup>*Joseph Smith III and the Restoration*, ed. Mary Audentia Smith Anderson (Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1952), pp. 95, 96.



"Bend of the River," by David H. Smith. Courtesy of the Audio-Visual Department, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



One bore in meek patience what heaven had willed,  
 Thus degraded, not by his own will;  
 The other with poison and blasphemy filled,  
 Cursed fate, and yet willed it so still.

I passed by the corner and went my way,  
 I felt sad for the poor old horse,  
 Yet, said to myself, "the best I can say,  
 Is, the fate of the master is worse."<sup>7</sup>

This is in marked contrast to his hymn about the father he never knew:

There's an unknown grave in a green lowly spot,  
 The form that it covers will ne'er be forgot.  
 Where haven trees spread and the wild locusts wave  
 Their fragrant white blooms over the unknown grave  
 Over the unknown grave.

And near by its side does the wild rabbit tread,  
 While over its bosom the wild thistles spread.  
 As if in their kindness to guard and to save  
 From man's foot-step intruding the unknown grave,  
 Guarding the unknown grave.

The heavens may weep and the thunders moan low,  
 Or the bright sun-shine and the soft breezes blow,  
 Unheeding the heart, one responsive and brave,  
 Of the one who sleeps there in the unknown grave,  
 Low in an unknown grave.

The prophet whose life was destroyed by his foes  
 Sleeps now where no hand may disturb his repose,  
 Till trumpets of God drown the notes of the wave  
 And we see him arise from his unknown grave,  
 God bless that unknown grave.

The love all embracing that never can end,  
 In death, as in life, knew him well as a friend,  
 The power of, Jesus the mighty to save  
 Will despoil of its treasure the unknown grave,  
 No more an unknown grave.<sup>8</sup>

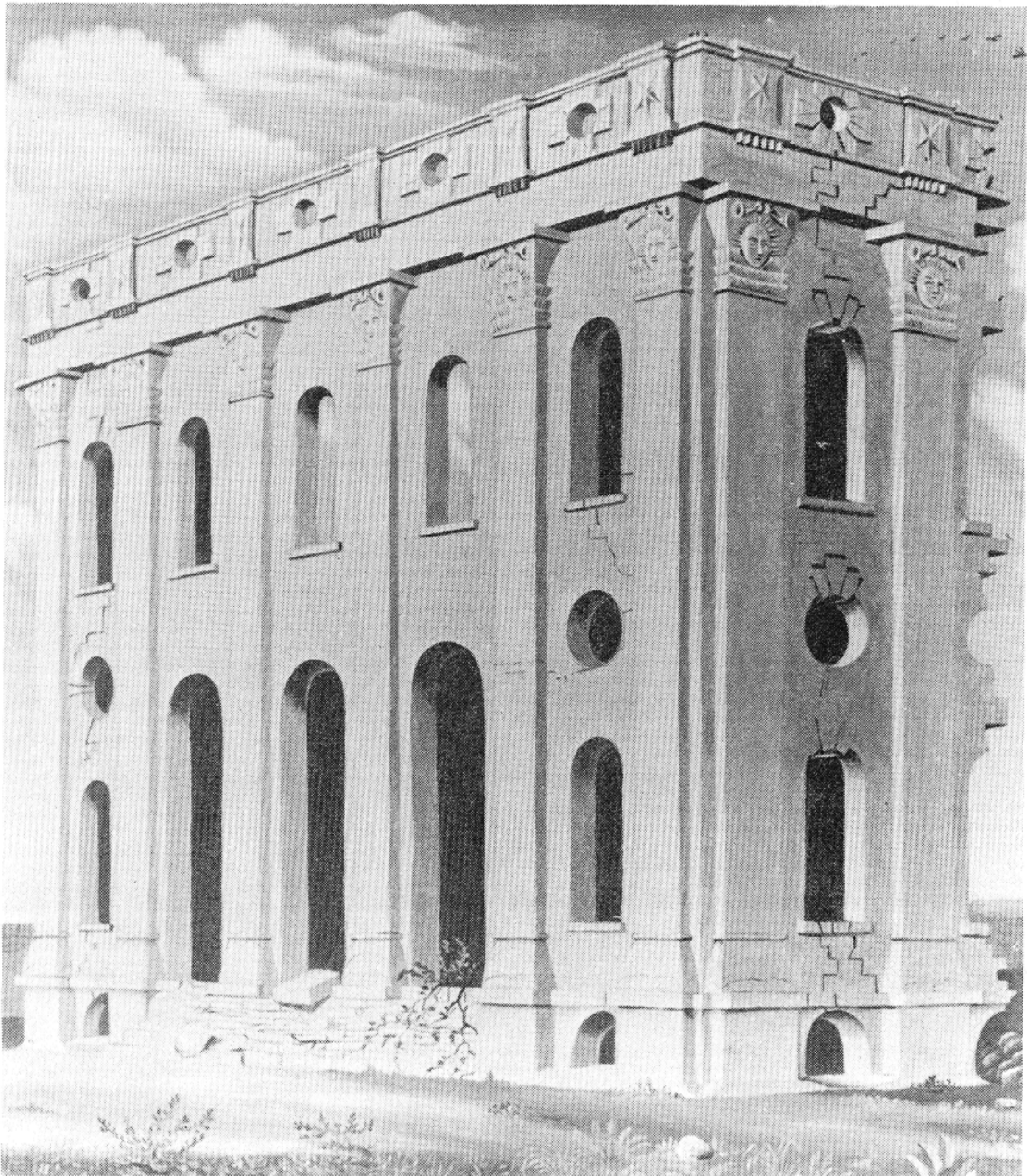
The importance of being the seed of the Prophet was central to David's thinking, and this became more important after 1860 with the Reorganization.

David spent a great deal of time walking the semi-empty streets of Nauvoo and painting pictures of buildings that represented a glory that was past. He was fascinated by the ruins of the

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<sup>7</sup>Smith, *Hesperis*, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup>"The Unknown Grave," framed and hanging typescript, Homestead, Nauvoo.



"Nauvoo Temple Ruins," by David H. Smith. Courtesy of the Audio-Visual Department, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Nauvoo House, the unfinished hotel which—begun as a joint stock venture in 1841—was intended to house the kings and princes of the world when they came to Nauvoo to learn of the gospel. It remained unroofed until 1869 when the Smith family remodeled it, and then it served as Emma's home until she died a decade later. "The Nauvoo House" is an oil painting of the unfinished building with Emma and David in the foreground. It is extremely accurate in such details as the formation of the limestone, number of windows, and the general physical setting. This attention to detail is also evident in his "Bend of the River" which illustrates the horseshoe bend in the Mississippi off the south end of Main Street. In the lower right-hand corner is a picnic scene which includes Emma, Rosalinde Newberry, and the artist in his round-brimmed hat with another young girl.<sup>9</sup> David, like others before him, was fascinated by the remaining wall of the Nauvoo Temple which he also painted.<sup>10</sup>

Two of David's paintings have only recently been discovered at Nauvoo.<sup>11</sup> One, painted on ship's canvas, is described by a notation on the back as a scene from Hamlet. The woman in the picture clearly resembles David's wife Clara Hartshorn, whom he married 10 May 1870 at Sandwich, Illinois. The painting resembles several drawings in his sketchbook which are inferior to the quality of his earlier paintings.

The other canvas is a strange painting. It was possibly painted as an allegory from a plate in a Bible but with David's surroundings as the setting. His poetry indicates he was influenced by Bible illustrators.<sup>12</sup> It appeared that he sat by the Mississippi between the Nauvoo House and the Homestead using what he saw as a background. Centered in the painting is the Holy Family with everything that is common to it: Joseph, the Babe in swaddling clothes, and the Virgin, who once again resembles Clara. The Nauvoo House is in the right foreground, and over in the left corner are the picket fences of the Homestead. However, the most interesting thing about the picture is the face of the baby. When compared to the family's portrait of Joseph Smith, the Seer,

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<sup>9</sup>Lynn E. Smith, grandson of David H., who has a vast collection of David H. Smith's manuscripts and paintings, identifies the unknown young girl as someone named "Emma." Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Lynn E. Smith, Independence, Missouri, 26 November 1974.

<sup>10</sup>Frederick Piercy also painted the ruins of the temple.

<sup>11</sup>In August 1972, Milton Perry, curator of the Truman Museum in Independence, Missouri, and I found two David H. Smith paintings in the Mansion House. They were placed in the back of a closet and no one knew of their existence or background.

<sup>12</sup>Smith, *Hesperis*, p. 30.



"Scene from *Hamlet*," by David H. Smith. Courtesy of the Audio-Visual Department, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

the unmistakable and striking resemblance suggests that his painting is an allegorical representation of Joseph Smith, Jr., as the Savior of the World!

The quality of the painting and the fact that Clara appears in the picture would date it after his illness, which became serious after 1869. David was afflicted with a "Malady" which affected both his mind and body.<sup>13</sup> His poetry reflects his illness and his inability to cope with a disease he could not understand. He wrote "Thoughts During Fever" while he was hospitalized in San Francisco in 1870.

I think of marble mansions, built in shade,  
 with cool verandas, pillared, high and wide;  
 Where the fountains sparkle in the sunshine, made  
 By streamlets creeping down the mountain side;  
 Through the high windows falls the cold, pale light,  
 O'er carpets of soft buff, and darkest blue;  
 Shielded from dust with linen, clean and white  
 Lie heaped cushions of a slately hue.  
 Between the trees, the green sward slopes away,  
 Barred with the sunshine, with the shadows crossed;  
 Where leaves, like flitting fingers, deftly play  
 A Melody, when by breezes tossed.  
 Small, starry flowers in those shades appear,  
 Lifting their quiet eyes with looks of peace;  
 While faint perfumes upon the atmosphere,  
 Are blessed with sweetness that bids sorrow cease.

I see the inmates on kind errands go,  
 With quick firm steps of health and cheerful hope,  
 Or 'neath their finger's genial tasks do grow,  
 Bringing no drop of bitter to their cup.<sup>14</sup>

Two years later his "I Am Not As I Was" brought home the realization of his decline.

I am not as I was, she said, and bowed,  
 The frosts have been upon me; and the wind  
 Of this world's winter,—stormy, fierce and loud—  
 Has touched my forehead roughly; and unkind  
 The will of fate has been. I once was proud,  
 With a sweet pride, and pleasure filled my mind.

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<sup>13</sup>There is a debate over the nature of David H. Smith's illness. See F. Mark McKiernan, "The Tragedy of David H. Smith," *Saints Herald*, December 1972, and Letters to the Editor, *Saints Herald*, January 1973.

<sup>14</sup>Smith, *Hesperis*, pp. 52, 53.



"Nativity Scene," by David H. Smith. Courtesy of the Audio-Visual Department, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Now I am broken; and the tresses, then  
 So free and flowing, wander now no more  
 In their old fashion, but seem dead; and when  
 I look into my mirror for the eyes of yore  
 Those of a stranger answer me. Ne'er again  
 Can I recall the light that shone before.

The fair brief morning of my life is passed;  
 Its wings of rainbow brightness were too swift;—  
 A change has crept over my soul at last;—  
 The clouds hang low that o'er my landscape drift;  
 The beauty and glory round me cast  
 By Youth's roseate dreams, begin to lift.

I strive to win again the pleasant thought;  
 The music only speaks in mournful tone;  
 The very flowers wear a shade, and nought  
 Can bring the halo that is gone;  
 And every company my soul hath sought,  
 Though crowds surround me, finds me still alone.

I turn unto my tasks with weary hands,  
 Grieving with sadness, knowing not the cause;  
 Before my face a desert path expands,  
 I will not falter in the toil, nor pause;  
 Only, my spirit somehow understands  
 The mournful truth—I am not what I was.<sup>15</sup>

After it was evident that the family could no longer care for him, David was committed to the Illinois Hospital for the Insane on 10 January 1877. He remained there until his death on 29 August 1904. He was buried in the Rose Hill Cemetery adjoining Joseph Smith III's Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa.

The impact of David's creative genius is still found in Nauvoo. It was there that David expressed the love he found for the things around him. He discovered a secluded limestone waterfall overlooking the Mississippi a few miles downriver from his home, and wrote a poem, "The Woodland Path," about the place that has since become known as "David's Chamber."

Adown the Woodland path, at break of day, I love to roam,  
 To brush the dew drops from the fresh, green grass;  
 To hear the wild bird singing in his cool, and shady home,  
 And watch the painted moths and butterflies go past.  
 The minnows dart along the stream,  
 And in the golden sunlight gleam;  
 The distant hills are hazy like a dream;  
 And all is fair, adown the woodland path.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 3, 4.

In every nook some sight of beauty wakes a tender thought;  
 Some flower blooming by some old gray stone;  
 Or tiny bird's nest with abundant skill and labor wrought;  
 Or faithful shadow over shining water thrown.  
 The thickets darkly dense and still,  
 Where scarce the slender vine leave thrill,—  
 Unbend, O, brow! and sad heart, take thy fill  
 Of rest, beside the lonely woodland path.

O, bend above me, honeysuckle, blooming in the wood;  
 And breathe upon my face thou low, sad wind;  
 Whose gentle cadences will do my weary spirit good,  
 While care, and toil, a moment enter not my mind.  
 The forest brings to me a balm;  
 Its moving gives my soul a calm;  
 As if the Spirit of the great I Am,  
 Came to me, while I roam the woodland path.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 22.



## A Dam for Nauvoo: An Attempt to Industrialize the City

Donald L. Enders

During the winter of 1838–39 a handful of Mormons recently expelled from Missouri made contact with a gentleman known as “Doctor” Isaac Galland, a resident of Commerce, Illinois. Galland was a landholder of some consequence and claimed title to various pieces of property along the Mississippi River between Montrose and present-day Keokuk, Iowa. Having lived along that portion of the river since 1829, he had become familiar with the supposed advantages of the area, one of which was that the current in this part of the river could be harnessed as a source of waterpower. He subsequently sold a large tract of his Iowa holdings to the Mormons and favored their purchase of land across the river in Illinois. Most of the land acquired by the Latter-day Saints on both sides of the river was situated near the head of what was designated the “Lower” or “Des Moines” Rapids, where the “river flow[ed] with great velocity over an irregular bed of blue limestone.” This twelve-mile stretch of water had a vertical drop of nearly twenty-five feet, and long before the Mormons settled in the vicinity had been viewed as a “location well suited for industry.”<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1830 the state of Missouri had petitioned Congress for permission to annex the southeastern limits of the Iowa Territory,<sup>2</sup> which, had the request been granted, would have given that state access to the rapids. The memorial affirmed that “that [segment] of water in future times . . . would be of immense importance to the commerce of the whole western valley” and would, because of the “inexhaustible power of the mighty stream,” be the impetus which would give rise to a “commercial city” which would serve as the “great entrepot of the Upper and Lower Mississippi.”<sup>3</sup> That the Saints viewed the rapids as a source of power

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<sup>1</sup>United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Letter from the Secretary of War Transmitting the Inspection Report of Colonel S. H. Long, and the Report of Lieutenant Warren of his Operations During the Past Year on the Des Moines and Rock River Rapids, in the Mississippi River*, 33rd Cong., 1st sess., 1854.

<sup>2</sup>That portion of Lee County known as the Half-Breed Tract.

<sup>3</sup>Jacob van der Zee, “The Half-Breed Tract,” *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 13 (April 1915):160–61.

from which industry could be developed is apparent from the June 1840 article in the *Times and Seasons* which emphasized that the city was “situated on a beautiful point of land on the Mississippi” which because of its proximity to the rapids “afforded good privileges for all kinds of machinery in consequence of the rapidity of the current.”<sup>4</sup>

In succeeding issues of that periodical, more was written about the use that could be made of the river for hydraulic purposes. However, it wasn’t until early 1841, with the anticipation that a host of converts from England would soon be arriving, that the need to industrialize the city began to loom large. Sensing the urgency of the situation, Joseph Smith gave the following instructions to Church officials in England:

There are great numbers of the Saints in England who are extremely poor and not accustomed to the farming business, who must have certain preparations made for them before they can support themselves in this country, therefore, to prevent confusion and disappointment when they arrive here, let those men who are accustomed to making machinery, and those who can command a capital, though it be small, come here as soon as convenient, and put up machinery and make other such preparations as may be necessary, so that when the poor come on they may have employment to come to.<sup>5</sup>

In this communiqué, as in another written two weeks later to “The Saints Scattered Abroad” in North America, the Prophet noted the significance of Nauvoo’s position on the river. The city has advantages, he said, for “manufacturing and commercial purposes, which, but few other [communities can] boast of” as the “waters of the Mississippi [can] be successfully used for manufacturing purposes to an almost unlimited extent. . . .”<sup>6</sup> These remarks paved the way for what shortly thereafter became the central theme for industrializing the city—the construction of a dam to turn the current of the Mississippi to Nauvoo’s use.

On 3 February 1841, the city’s first mayor, John C. Bennett, proposed in his inaugural address that a dam and ship canal of extensive proportions be constructed. He suggested that the dam be built at the north end of the promontory occupied by Nauvoo where there were a ravine and a small inlet of the Mississippi. The dam was to project west into the river. The ship canal, he con-

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<sup>4</sup>*Times and Seasons* 1 (June 1840):122–23.

<sup>5</sup>*Times and Seasons* 2 (1 January 1841):259.

<sup>6</sup>Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 14 January 1841, Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah.

cluded, should run from the inlet down the middle of Main Street, terminating in a grand reservoir on the south side of the promontory. The dam would ensure that water would be made available to raise and lower boats that passed through the locks of the canal and would also allow for a good head of water capable of "propelling any amount of machinery for mill and manufacturing purposes." The new mayor considered that when the work was finished, the "future greatness of Nauvoo would be placed upon an imperishable basis," as it would not only promote industry but would "afford the best harbor for steamboats, for winter quarters on the Mississippi."<sup>7</sup>

The city council was prompt to consider the recommendation. According to his history, Joseph Smith, one of the city's nine councilmen, "reported a bill for the survey of a canal through the city." This bill was accepted and the Prophet "was appointed to contract for its survey."<sup>8</sup> Alanson Ripley, the city surveyor, was selected to conduct the study, and in less than a week he made his findings public. They were not encouraging, however, for the survey revealed that the northern end of Main Street was undercut by a massive layer of limestone which, if the suggested waterworks programs were pursued, would require the removal of more than half a million cubic yards of earth and stone.<sup>9</sup>

The prospect of chiseling through a layer of stone more than a mile long must have been uninviting to most, as the only other notice in the *Times and Seasons* mentioning Bennett's grandiose scheme was unfavorable: "In the infant state of the . . . city . . . the agitation of the subject [is] premature."<sup>10</sup>

The heavy loss of property so recently suffered in Missouri had placed the Mormons in financial difficulties and the lingering tremors of the Panic of 1837 made the Saints cautious about starting large-scale projects during their early months in Illinois. For the time being Nauvoo had to be content with the economic growth that came from the development of small private businesses. The town attracted a great variety of trades, but there were only a few converts who took the Prophet's suggestion to establish manufactories which could be powered by the current of the

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<sup>7</sup>*Times and Seasons* 2 (15 February 1841):318.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 4:297 (cited hereafter as *HC*).

<sup>9</sup>Donald L. Enders, "The Des Moines Rapids: A History of its Adverse Effects on Mississippi River Traffic and its Use as a Source of Water Power to 1860," (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973), p. 177.

<sup>10</sup>*Times and Seasons* 2 (15 February 1841):319.

stream. In 1842 Newell Knight, to name one, was granted the privilege of "running a wing [dam]"<sup>11</sup> into the river; and his mill, built adjacent thereto, operated throughout the Mormons' residence in the state. At least one citizen of the community found Knight's mill a welcome establishment. In 1844 William Adams, newly arrived in the "City of the Saints," wrote that by

selling and trading some . . . clothing and other things that . . . could best be done without I was enabled to buy some shorts [a mill by-product of bran and meal or flour] from Bro. Newell Knight who owned a small grist mill on the bank of the Mississippi River, run by the power of the stream.<sup>12</sup>

Mill privileges similar to those offered Newell Knight were granted to other members of the community, though the actual number of mills subsequently constructed is not known. Whatever the number may have been, it appears they did little to strengthen Nauvoo economically. Throughout the next two years Nauvoo experienced tremendous growth, and by early 1844 the population was probably in excess of 8,000, about double what it had been in mid-1842. The increase was likely a significant factor motivating the city fathers to reconsider Nauvoo's economic situation, and probably helped rekindle enthusiasm in promoting a community-wide waterworks project.

An article printed in the *Times and Seasons*, 1 January 1844, at the request of the city council, announced that "a charter [had] been . . . granted by [that body] for the erection of a dam upwards of a mile long," which they considered would "afford the best mill privileges in the western country." The dam, unlike the one proposed by Bennett, was to "commence some distance below the Nauvoo House," move in a westerly direction across the river, "and intersect with an Island" opposite the little village of Montrose, thus leaving the channel of the river open to boat travel. Mentioned in the city council minutes, though not noted in the *Times and Seasons*, "a dam, pier, or breakwater" was to project north for a short distance from the island where the main dam was to terminate. This would create a sizeable harbor for boats.<sup>13</sup>

To ensure that construction and operation would run smoothly, the charter specified that "Joseph Smith and his successors"

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<sup>11</sup>"A Charter Granted to Newell Knight to Erect a Wing Dam in the Mississippi, April 9, 1842," Records of the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, Illinois, Commencing A. D. 1841, Church Historical Department.

<sup>12</sup>Journal of William Adams, 1844, p. 10, Church Historical Department.

<sup>13</sup>"An Ordinance to Erect a Dam in the Mississippi River, December 8, 1843," Records of the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, Illinois, Church Historical Department.

were appointed to manage the waterworks, although the power to regulate tolls regarding the use of the dam, its wharves, and its landings, would be retained by the city council.<sup>14</sup>

Weeks in advance of the announcement of the charter, at least one idea had been considered for financing the project. On 23 November 1843, Joseph Smith recorded that he met "in council" and then walked to the river where he "suggested the idea of petitioning Congress for a grant to make a canal over the falls, or a dam to turn the water to the city. . . ."<sup>15</sup> But the fact that nothing was mentioned regarding the subject at the time the charter was made public and for many weeks thereafter indicates that the federal government was probably not approached concerning the matter.

The realization that missionaries were continuing to reap a substantial harvest of converts in England turned attention to support for the project in that direction. Sensing that money might be available among the British Saints who had not yet emigrated to America, Brigham Young and Willard Richards sent a letter to the British members to determine whether they could help fund the project. "Could five, six, or seven thousand dollars be raised to commence the dam at its lower extremity," wrote Young and Richards, "a large amount of machinery might be propelled by water."<sup>16</sup>

Six weeks later, however, Joseph Smith was shot to death at Carthage. The excitement and fear surrounding the martyrdom were slow to subside and the promotion of the waterworks project was discontinued for a time both in England and Nauvoo. Many felt that the death of the Prophet would lead to a rapid deterioration of the Mormon city, especially since it was rumored that its charter would soon be repealed. In spite of that concern the Quorum of the Twelve, which provided leadership for both the Church and the community after Joseph's death, agreed that the development of the city must continue. "Nauvoo must be built up," they stated through the *Times and Seasons*, 15 August 1844, and it must "be supported by the gathering of those who have capital, who are willing to lay it out for the erection of every branch of industry and manufacture."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>HC, 6:80.

<sup>16</sup>Journal History, 3 May 1844.

<sup>17</sup>*Times and Seasons* 5 (15 August 1844):619.

The admonition of the Twelve stirred some interest among the craftsmen of the city, and during the next few weeks a sizeable number organized themselves into the Trades Meeting Association (TMA) to promote industry in Nauvoo. At their 2 December gathering in the Masonic Hall on Main Street, interest was revived in the charter for the dam granted the "late General Joseph Smith."<sup>18</sup> Though most of December and the early weeks of the new year were spent in grappling with the troublesome issue of how to finance the dam, by mid-February the problem appeared to be resolved. Encouraged by the Twelve, the TMA invited the residents of the city to "subscribe twelve thousand days work," which was anticipated sufficient time to "put a dam in the river." It was estimated that the project would cost \$250,000, but by acquiring the work force on a "subscribed" basis, gathering some revenue from selling stock, and having much of the material needed for the waterworks already in its possession in the form of stone and timber, it was calculated that "Nauvoo [would] yet make some use of the rapids for manufacturing."<sup>19</sup>

But there were still other problems to solve, and one of some consequence concerned the martyred Prophet. During the few short years of his life in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith had been involved in a variety of activities. Most frequently he acted as agent for the Church in acquiring properties and promoting business, but occasionally he negotiated for land and pursued business on a personal basis. Following his death, it became clear that legally it would not be an easy matter to prove where his personal involvements left off and the Church's began. Rather than be frustrated in its attempt to maintain control of the waterworks, once in operation, the city council nullified the ordinance granting Joseph Smith and his successors the privilege of erecting a dam in the Mississippi.<sup>20</sup> But feeling that there was a need to give the waterworks program some legal footing, the Twelve proposed that control of the project be shifted from the TMA to another of the city's trades unions, the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing Association, whose charter had been granted by the state. The idea had hardly been discussed when the Illinois legislature repealed the city's char-

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<sup>18</sup>*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 8 January 1845, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>"An Ordinance to Amend 'An Ordinance to Erect a Dam in the Mississippi,' December 4, 1844," Records of the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, Illinois.

ter. The question then became one of "the priority of acting under [the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing's] charter at all," since it was feared that it too would be rescinded, "after only two or three of the [dam's] piers had been built."<sup>21</sup>

Under these circumstances, the TMA resumed control of the project. Feeling, however, that some restructuring of their organization would better facilitate its efforts, John Taylor, an active participant in the scheme since its inception, suggested a "plan of organization . . . something like the Priesthood." Let there be a "living constitution" appointed, Taylor said, composed of "twelve men," with a "President, Secretary, &c., to take the lead in the concern."<sup>22</sup>

Apparently no objection was raised to the idea, for within a few days twelve men were selected and officially dubbed "The Living Constitution." Credit is due them for completing arrangements for the land where the dam would commence, which piece of ground was fairly extensive as one member of the group noted. He further informs us that, in addition to a previous desired amount, title to forty rods of river frontage was obtained.<sup>23</sup>

About the same time the Trades Meeting Association was being revamped, the Saints were contriving a plan to obtain federal government approval of the waterworks. A petition composed and signed by citizens of Nauvoo requesting the "privilege of erecting a dam on the Mississippi River at the head of the Des Moines Rapids" was hand-carried to Washington by Representative Joseph P. Hoge. It was not a plea for a subsidy but rather a request for permission to build the structure since any alteration of the river's course needed the sanction of Congress.<sup>24</sup>

After submitting the petition, the Latter-day Saints apparently felt free to pursue their objective, as they began construction of the dam before hearing from Washington. However, their proposal suffered a fate similar to that of many other internal improvement petitions sent to Congress during that decade. On 19 February 1845, after it had been read before Congress, the memorial found its way into the hands of the Committee on Roads and Canals. From that point it probably went the route of a good

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<sup>21</sup>*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 5 February 1845, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>Journal of Daniel Spencer, 18 February 1845, Church Historical Department.

<sup>24</sup>"Petition of the Citizens of the City of Nauvoo, Illinois, Praying Congress to Grant Them the Privilege of Erecting a Dam in the Mississippi, February 19, 1845," photocopy in files of Nauvoo Restoration, Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah.

many other proposals: tabled and then forgotten with the adjournment of Congress.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of the setback, the many months of planning and preparation seemed about to bear fruit. Arrangements had been made for the land, the stone, the timber, and the work crew needed for the dam's construction; even the federal government, it was supposed, had been appeased on the matter. Feeling confident that the time was ready for work to begin, members of the TMA and interested shareholders gathered near the river on Wednesday, 26 February 1845, and organized what for a brief period would be "The Nauvoo Water Power Company."<sup>26</sup>

The following day the waterworks project was commenced. "Many of the principal [residents of the city] proceeded to the contemplated location." About 9:00 A.M. amidst fanfare and speeches, John E. Page, the waterpower company's new president, dedicated the "land, water, men, and means to Almighty God." The brief ceremonies were concluded with a few remarks by Brigham Young about the benefits the dam would bring the community, after which construction began.<sup>27</sup>

Enthusiasm for the project continued to mount and during the next few days a "large [number of men were put] to work in the stone quarry" and a company was sent north to the pine forests of Wisconsin "for timber for the piers." The 5 and 12 March 1845 issues of the *Times and Seasons* printed lengthy editorials respecting the dam and announced that those who could furnish themselves with "wheelbarrows, picks, shovels, and crowbars" could "find employ." Each of the articles also emphasized the need for "CASH." In an effort to draw some from those who may have a little on hand, supposed advantages for the city were again extolled:

Here is the proud and gallant Mississippi, with her rapid current, rumbling to the broad Atlantic, seeming to say (as she quickens her pace over the rugged rocks of the lower rapids, just opposite our beautiful Nauvoo), only improve my shores and banks, ye saints . . . and I will propel your mills, cottons and woolen manufactories, by which your laborers can find employ, and your poor can be adorned after the similitude of a palace.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>*Register of Debates in Congress*, vol. 8, part 2 (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832- ), pp. 1437-41.

<sup>26</sup>*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 5 March 1845, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 12 March 1845, p. 2.



In spite of the benefits which the waterworks hopefully would bring the city, its extensive size aroused serious questions concerning its practicality. The Mormons had already proven they could achieve some rather amazing results from united effort, hard work, and almost no money, so the expense could likely have been coped with, but to think of building a structure upwards of a mile in length, constructed chiefly of earth and stone and to expect it to withstand the combined force of a strong current, frequent heavy rains, and winter's intermittent periods of freezing and thawing, were all considered by some to be "as idle as it [was] ignorant."<sup>29</sup>

After only nineteen days, work on the dam was stopped. It was first rumored that construction of the waterworks would be postponed only until the next winter, but on 16 July the *Nauvoo Neighbor* announced that some prized property was for sale.

Lots belonging to the Nauvoo Water Power Co.—the cheapest and best in the city, are offered for sale on as moderate terms as a purchaser can reasonably ask. The lots are beautifully situated on the bank of the river, where the most business part of the city will eventually be.<sup>30</sup>

There was simply no time remaining to think about industrializing the city. Another surge of anti-Mormon sentiment had manifested itself in Hancock and surrounding counties; within a short time the Latter-day Saints would be forced to abandon their beloved Nauvoo. It is an interesting paradox that the Mormons, who had made a noticeable effort to tap the resources of the rapids, should, besides their other purported crimes, be accused of hindering the development of industry along that portion of the river. But so it was charged in the *Warsaw Signal*:

We believe that capital could be profitably invested in turning the water power of the rapids to manufacturing purposes and, now that there is a prospect of getting rid of the Saints, we hope that monied men will turn their attention to the subject.<sup>31</sup>

The rapids, however, would continue to run their course, untamed, for another sixty-seven years. Not until 1913, when the Keokuk hydroelectric power dam was completed, could it be boasted that at last the Des Moines Rapids had been harnessed as a source of waterpower.

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<sup>29</sup>*Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), 1 February 1845, p. 101.

<sup>30</sup>*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 16 July 1845, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup>*Warsaw Signal*, 20 May 1846, p. 3.

# Nauvoo: A River Town

Dennis Rowley

From its founding in 1839 until the main exodus of the Mormons under Brigham Young in 1846, Nauvoo, Illinois, was an integral part of the social, economic, and political fabric of the American frontier. Located on the Mississippi River midway between St. Louis, Missouri, and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin—both outposts for fur trading companies—Nauvoo was conceived and born concurrent with the dying gasps of the American fur trade's golden era. It emerged on the American scene halfway between 1815 and 1860, the chronological bounds of a genuine "transportation revolution" in the United States which saw a national economy replace a "colonially oriented" one.<sup>1</sup> Nauvoo participated in those economic changes and enacted (or attempted to enact) some scenes in miniature from the national stage, such as the replacement of domestic with factory systems of manufacturing. Demographically, it was the wonder of its age and region. Fed by a steady stream of immigrants from the international missionary system of the Mormon Church, Nauvoo grew at an almost precarious rate.

Some historians have viewed Nauvoo in a narrow context, literally from its own streets and almost solely through the eyes of the Mormons, and have overlooked its preeminence as a *river town*. Badly needed is an objective history of Nauvoo written from a broader perspective, viewing it in the context of the region and nation of which it was an inherent part. This article hopes to contribute to that effort by examining the setting and impact of the Mississippi River on selected aspects of Nauvoo.

The Nauvoo setting has been associated most prominently with swampy lowlands and malarial fevers, not without good cause.<sup>2</sup> Sickness plagued the Mormons throughout their seven-year stay in Nauvoo and reached nearly epidemic proportions during the summer and fall of 1839. However, the total Nauvoo environ-

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<sup>1</sup>George R. Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution 1815-1860*, Volume 4, *The Economic History of the United States* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), p. vii.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, David E. and Della S. Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City and Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1974), p. 5; and Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), pp. 38-40, who is not as narrow in his focus.

ment in 1839 was much more complex, for the Mormons had located in the middle of a lively and rapidly-developing river commerce.

When Nauvoo was founded, the steamboat industry of the Mississippi Valley was at the threshold of its golden era.<sup>3</sup> The trade had come of age since the initial launching of the *New Orleans* in 1811 by Nicholas Roosevelt, of the firm of Fulton and Livingston. The *New Orleans* proved to the skeptics that a large craft could safely descend the falls of the Ohio River by completing the run from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. But the skeptics were sure that no steamboat would ever ascend the falls or similar obstacles on other rivers, such as the Lower and Upper Rapids of the Mississippi. In fact, many people doubted that the steamboats could move upstream against the current. The doubters failed to reckon with the power of the high-pressure steam engine (the *New Orleans* had a low-pressure engine capable of speeds of three miles per hour at best), which enabled the *Enterprise* to ascend the Mississippi and Ohio rivers at high water stage in 1814, and the *Washington* to complete the run from New Orleans to Louisville in 1817 in twenty-one days at low water stage. Both trips were landmarks in the development of steamboating on western rivers, but the latter was especially important in convincing westerners that steamboats could successfully navigate the rivers at low water stages.

Lack of settlement and natural obstacles such as the Des Moines Rapids impeded the pre-1825 development of steamboat traffic on the Upper Mississippi. The *Virginia* was the first steamboat to successfully ascend the Des Moines Rapids with a cargo, when it delivered a load of supplies to Fort Snelling in 1823. At that time, the Mississippi Valley north of St. Louis was a sparsely-settled wilderness, the only demand for steamboat traffic coming from the fur trappers, the military posts, and the nascent lead mining industry. By 1826, a half dozen boats had followed in the track of the *Virginia*, but it was not until the mid-1830s that steamboat commerce on the Upper Mississippi became a thriving enterprise. Prior to that time the sparse settlement and the competition of the established trade route with the eastern United

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<sup>3</sup>The information on the two paragraphs that follow is summarized from William J. Petersen, *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi* (Iowa City, Iowa: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1968), pp. 1-90, and 204-26; and Herbert Quick and Edward Quick, *Mississippi Steamboatin': A History of Steamboating on the Mississippi and Its Tributaries* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1926), pp. 65-104.

States and Canada through Green Bay and Detroit eliminated the need for more than two boats per year above Galena, Illinois. With the removal of the Sac and Fox Indians west of the Mississippi after the Black Hawk War in 1832, and the establishment of the Wisconsin Territory in 1836, the first surge of a flood of immigrants began. From then on, the need for steamboats on the Upper Mississippi steadily increased, reaching a peak in the 1850s.

In the quarter century from 1823 to 1848, approximately 365 different steamboats worked the Upper Mississippi above Keokuk, Iowa, 200 of them in the lead trade. During that twenty-five year period, the lead boats made approximately 7,600 trips from the mines of Galena, Illinois; Dubuque, Iowa; and Lancaster, Wisconsin, to St. Louis.<sup>4</sup> Since the river was closed to navigation in the lead region for approximately five months of every year because of ice, the lead steamers averaged over 300 trips to St. Louis during the annual seven-month season. This means that an average of ten steamers a week passed by or stopped at Nauvoo during the spring, summer, and fall months.

In addition, the river was frequented by other steamers carrying furs, Indians, lumber, Indian annuities, military supplies, and soldiers.<sup>5</sup> Besides the steamboats, a wide variety of smaller craft plied the waters near Nauvoo while related shoreline activities went on simultaneously. Even before the Mormons arrived there was a ferryboat running between Montrose, Iowa, and Commerce, Illinois.<sup>6</sup> There was a steamboat landing at Commerce and probably a woodlot where the steamers replenished their supply of fuel, although the main woodlot for ascending steamers was on the Montrose side of the river, where the main channel was located. A lighterage business on the Iowa side of the river between Keokuk and Montrose helped steamboats ascend the eleven-mile long Des Moines Rapids, which began at Keokuk and ended at Montrose and Commerce. The steamboats unloaded all or part of their freight at Keokuk, and horse-drawn flatboats or "lighters" were used to transport the cargo over the rapids. The steamer, lightened of its load, and riding higher in the water, was able to ascend the rapids and reload at Montrose.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Statistics from Petersen, *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi*, p. 220.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 107-96; 381-90.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1948), 4:9 (hereafter cited as *HC*).

<sup>7</sup>Donald L. Enders, "The Des Moines Rapids: A History of Its Adverse Effects on Mississippi River Traffic and Its Use as a Source of Water Power to 1860," (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973), pp. 65-85.

Life on board the steamboats in the 1840s went on in a world apart from that of the shore. The finest, especially the rich, year-round boats of the lower Mississippi, were finer than anything on shore. They were lavishly decorated and painted, with lush furnishings, carpets, chandeliers, oil paintings, porcelain knobs, etc. Music, gaiety and excellent cuisine were abundant. The worst of the boats were floating slums or hellholes, carrying their sweaty, unwashed human cargo over the water to the accompaniment of abundant profanity, drunkenness, brawling, and thievery. Most passengers on the slum boats slept on deck, which was perpetually dirty, being exposed to the elements and the sparks and cinders from the smokestacks. By mid-1843, four or five steamboats a day stopped at Nauvoo. Their impact on the residents must have been enormous, but what it was is nearly incalculable today.

Overall, the sights, sounds, and odors of the river itself must have been impressive and memorable to Nauvoo's citizens: the sunset reflecting off the smooth surface of the water; the smell of fish in the air; the oppressive humidity in the summer months; the unbroken surface of miles of snow-covered ice; the sound of rain on the water; the happy laughter of children sliding on the ice in winter; the smell of catfish frying for the evening meal; the gentle lapping of the waves against the side of a ferryboat; the eerie sound of a steamboat bell or whistle in the distance; and the unearthly sounds of the great river shedding its winter ice. Add to this the pageantry of river traffic, and there existed a scene not easily forgotten by the adult or child who lived even a few years in the embrace of the river.

This setting had a major impact on the Mormon leaders in 1839 and 1840, and by the winter of 1840 a grand vision of Nauvoo as an economic, cultural, and spiritual center was taking shape. The Mississippi River was a vital element in the formulation of that vision and a major vehicle in its realization.

In July of 1840, Joseph Smith received three letters from John C. Bennett, a physician, who was serving as quartermaster-general of the state of Illinois. Bennett expressed concern over the treatment the Mormons had received in Missouri as well as his anxiety to join his fortune to theirs. He asked if Nauvoo were "to be the general point of concentration for the Mormon people."<sup>9</sup> Joseph's answer was cautious. While he had high praise for the commercial

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<sup>8</sup>Cancelled.

<sup>9</sup>HC, 4:172.

and growth potential of Nauvoo as the “principal location” of the Mormons, and while he invited “all the Saints, as well as all lovers of truth and correct principles to come to this place as fast as possible,” he did not write with total confidence of their future in that location. It was their “intention,” if “suffered to remain,” to erect “some public buildings” in the spring. His tone was hopeful regarding the charter for a railroad from Warsaw to Nauvoo, “which, if carried into operation will be of incalculable advantage to this place, as steamboats can only ascend the rapids at a high stage of water.”<sup>10</sup>

Two months later, in October 1840, Joseph Smith drew the elements of the vision of a future Nauvoo together for the first time in anything like an official communication. He wrote to the Council of Twelve Apostles in England that Nauvoo had “advantages for manufacturing and commercial purposes which but very few can boast of; and the establishing of cotton factories, foundries, potteries, etc., would be the means of bringing in wealth, and raising it to a very important elevation.” He indicated that preparations had begun to construct a temple “for worship of our God in this place,” and that a bill was pending before the Illinois legislature to charter the city of Nauvoo and to establish a “seminary of learning.”<sup>11</sup> In addition to the excellent soil of the region, here, then, were the three basic ingredients for an economic, spiritual, and cultural center: an industrial complex, the temple, and a university. This was the answer to Bennett’s question. Nauvoo was not going to be merely a point of concentration for the Mormons, but a great urban center, perhaps “one of the largest cities on the river, if not in the western world.”<sup>12</sup> The river was vital to two of the Prophet’s avowed goals: the industrial complex and the temple.

The more pragmatic and enterprising of the Mormons had begun to implement aspects of the vision before it was stated comprehensively by their prophet leader. In December 1839, the high council of Nauvoo voted to sustain Vinson Knight in cutting and providing 500 cords of steamboat wood.<sup>13</sup> Since many Nauvoo residents had been too sick and otherwise preoccupied to cut such wood in the spring of 1839, the fall and winter of that year repre-

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<sup>10</sup>HC, 4:177–78.

<sup>11</sup>HC, 4:228–29.

<sup>12</sup>HC, 4:178.

<sup>13</sup>Nauvoo High Council Minutes, 1839–45, 1 December 1839, Church Historical Department (hereafter cited as High Council).

sented their first real opportunity to realize a profit from the river traffic, and the Mormons were quick to seize upon it.

Because the river physically divided the Mormons in Illinois from those in Iowa, it forced them to take immediate action to insure quick, safe transport across the water. The high council moved quickly to establish Church control of the ferryboat running between Nauvoo and Montrose and the Church operated it until the exodus in 1846.<sup>14</sup> During three meetings in October 1838,<sup>15</sup> the high council went on record against unsafe, careless operation of the ferry by declaring that any person ferrying or carrying people or freight across the river "to the injury of said ferry" would be disfellowshipped. The council agreed to pay Vinson Knight \$150 for "that portion of the ferry owned on the Iowa side at Montrose as per charter,"<sup>16</sup> and they appointed D. C. Davis as ferrymaster during 1840 at a salary of \$30.00 a month. Although the total amount the Mormons realized from the operation of the ferry is unknown, it was apparently a steady source of revenue. Davis was to transmit the ferry tolls to the treasurer of the high council every Saturday so that proper records could be kept and the funds turned over to the council monthly. The council further stipulated that money from the sale of lots in Nauvoo was to be applied towards the repair of the horse boat. This could have had reference to one of the lighters or flatboats in operation on the Iowa shore, but more likely it referred to the ferryboat, since the council gave approval the following spring for purchasing some horses from George T. Harris "for the purpose of the ferryboat."<sup>17</sup> The main ferryboat (as opposed to hand-propelled skiffs and canoes) was propelled by two horses, "one on each side, working a treadmill, which furnished the power to turn the wheels and propel the boat."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>On 1 June 1843, Joseph Smith was licensed to operate a ferry. See *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 7 June 1843. See also *HC*, 4:416 and 421. This was probably a legal stamp of approval for operation of the *Maid of Iowa* as a ferry. It had been in operation since 12 May 1843 (*HC*, 5:386). Joseph Smith probably began this service because of the inability of the slower and smaller craft to satisfy the growing demand for regular crossings.

<sup>15</sup>High Council, 20, 21 and 27 October, 1839.

<sup>16</sup>This probably refers to the charter received by James White in 1833. See Enders, "The Des Moines Rapids," p. 29.

<sup>17</sup>High Council, 8 March 1840.

<sup>18</sup>The use of the term "ferry" in Mormon records is confusing. It definitely had reference in 1839 and 1843 to a skiff or rowboat propelled by an oarsman. (See *HC*, 4:9, and Henry Caswall, *City of the Mormons* [London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1843], p. 51ff., as cited in Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph*, p. 59.) It was applied to the *Maid of Iowa*, a full-sized steamboat and it was used, as indicated, to refer to a vessel propelled by horses. (See memories of Captain J. F. Daugherty of Keokuk, Iowa, who arrived in Nauvoo in 1841, and rode on the ferryboat, as published in the

In the spring of 1840, the high council appointed a committee of three consisting of the First Presidency to "superintend the affairs of the ferry," an indication of the importance they attached to its efficient and profitable operation.<sup>19</sup> The Church leaders were aware of the implications of having the ferry controlled by non-Mormons, especially in light of the continued persecution from Missourians and of the conflicts that arose over revenue from wharfage fees later. Consequently, they were careful to maintain legal, as well as physical, control. On 11 January 1845, the Nauvoo City Council authorized and licensed Brigham Young "to run a ferry across the Mississippi at Nauvoo in place of Joseph Smith, martyred."<sup>20</sup>

As a river town Nauvoo was a stopping place for steamboat pleasure excursions. Although they began in the 1830s, these excursions did not reach their heyday until the 1850s, but there were enough of them in the 1840s to have an impact on the economy and the social life of Nauvoo. The well-known artist George Catlin is credited with providing the impetus for the pleasure excursion by his favorable reaction to the beauties of the north country when he took a steamboat voyage up the Mississippi River to St. Paul in 1836.<sup>21</sup> As Catlin's fame grew and as the steamboats became increasingly lush and fast, the idea caught on. People, especially the rich and famous, began spending their vacation and leisure time on a pleasure cruise up the river. On board, they dined on the finest food and liquor and were entertained by bands, orchestras, and theatrical performers. At selected points on the river, they disembarked to tour and enjoy local sights, sounds, and points of interest.

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*Nauvoo Rustler*, 26 September 1916, and preserved in the Ida Blum Papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.) Cf. Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph*, p. 86, where he reads "house boat" in the original minutes of the high council rather than "horse" as I do. Horse boat seems to make more sense than house boat because of references to a horse boat in two separate but related instances, one already cited, and the other in an ordinance regulating tolls on the ferry passed by the Nauvoo City Council in 1843. Also, house boats were primarily a phenomenon of the Ohio and Lower Mississippi. (See Quick, *Mississippi Steamboatin'*, pp. 105-21.) Horses, cattle, other large animals and wagons cannot be ferried safely across a river in a skiff. A flatboat is required and one way to propel it is with horses, either through the use of a treadmill, a long rope attached to either end of the flatboat, or a pulley or turnstile, and a taut, stationary cable. Moreover, the Mormons could also have been referring to the lighters as ferries when they used the term "horse boat." Since horses were used to pull the lighters over the rapids, it would not be illogical to refer to "ferrying" cargo over the rapids in a horse boat.

<sup>19</sup>High Council, 15 May 1840.

<sup>20</sup>HC, 7:351.

<sup>21</sup>Petersen, *Steamboating*, pp. 248-95.



The Mormons and their burgeoning city of Nauvoo were certainly an attraction for the curious on the pleasure excursions. In January 1841, provision was made for those visitors when Joseph Smith announced a revelation from God in which he was instructed

...as pertaining to my boarding house which I have commanded you to build for the boarding of strangers, let it be built unto my name, and let my name be named upon it. . . . And let the name of that house be called Nauvoo House, and let it be a delightful habitation for man, and a resting place for the weary traveler, that he may contemplate the glory of Zion. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The revelation appointed George Miller, Lyman Wight, John Snider, and Peter Haws as a quorum for "the purpose of building that house." They were to "organize themselves," appoint a president, "form a constitution," and "receive stock for the building of that house" at not less than \$50.00 a share. No individual shareholder could invest more than \$15,000 and the revelation designated numerous individuals by name who were to purchase shares in the Nauvoo House.<sup>23</sup> One month later the four men complied with the specifications of the revelation by convincing the Illinois State Legislature to pass an act of incorporation for the Nauvoo House Association. The act authorized the four men named above to "erect and furnish a public house of entertainment, to be called the 'Nauvoo House,' " which "shall be kept for the accommodation of strangers, travelers, and all other persons who may resort therein for rest and refreshment." The life of the association was limited to twenty years, and "spiritous liquors of every description" were perpetually prohibited, "that such liquor shall never be vended as a beverage, or introduced into common use, in said house."<sup>24</sup> A curious and courageous turn of events, this latter provision, when one considers that most steamboat passengers and crews were accustomed to the free and bountiful use of "spiritous liquors" as a part of their daily fare.

Nauvoo House was never finished. It was one of the casualties of the all-out campaign to finish the temple before leaving for the Great Basin. While Nauvoo House was under construction and the Mormons still believed it would be finished, the needs of river travelers had to be met in other ways. At first, Joseph Smith pro-

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<sup>22</sup>HC, 4:279. See also Doctrine and Covenants 124:56-60.

<sup>23</sup>See D&C 124:62-145.

<sup>24</sup>HC, 4:301-302.

vided accommodations for visitors and travelers in his personal residence, the Mansion House. In time, however, as the number and frequency of visitors increased, he found this practice both burdensome and costly, since he apparently entertained many people at his own expense. On 15 September 1843, he announced that henceforth the Mansion House would be operated as a hotel in which he and his family would occupy three rooms as a personal residence. His announcement extolled the virtues of the Mansion House as providing the "best table accommodations in the city" and rendering "travelers more comfortable than any other place on the Upper Mississippi" with its "large and convenient" quarters. Near the Mansion House was a "large and commodious brick stable, . . . capable of accommodating seventy-five horses at one time, and storing the requisite amount of forage." Smith claimed the stable was "unsurpassed by any similar establishment in the State."<sup>25</sup> The existence of this stable is a good indication that not all of Nauvoo's visitors came from the river. Yet, a great many did, and it seems reasonable to suggest that Nauvoo House would not have been envisioned on such a grand scale and perhaps not envisioned at all, if Nauvoo had not been a river port of steadily growing population and importance, readily accessible to travelers and great and important people of the world.

The impact of the river on the economy of Nauvoo can also be seen in the attempts to construct a canal and a dam (see "A Dam for Nauvoo" in this issue), the development of a waterfront area to foster trade with the steamboats and the purchase and operation of a steamboat, the *Maid of Iowa*. There is not sufficient data to describe fully the many river-related businesses that were founded in Nauvoo from 1839 to 1846, but some details are apparent. Individual efforts to use the abundant waterpower to propel mills and other water-related business were unceasing and began shortly after the Mormons arrived. Earlier mention was made of the ferry and wood cut to sell to the steamboats in December of 1839. On 15 December of the same year, the high council gave approval for Messrs. Annis, Baseen, and Edmunds to build a water-powered sawmill adjacent to the city plat.<sup>26</sup> The three men apparently lost little time in building their mill, because it became a focal point of controversy when the city council

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<sup>25</sup>HC, 6:33.

<sup>26</sup>High Council, 15 December 1839. See also HC, 4:46; 5:272.

met in the spring of 1841 under the auspices of the Nauvoo Charter issued the previous fall.

In its initial meetings, the city council was concerned with the organization of the Nauvoo City plat, including proper alignment of present and future streets and with the control of the waterfront area by the city and the Church with a view toward its profitable operation. Apparently, the high council had either exceeded its authority or had acted without sufficient information, because Mr. Annis' sawmill illegally intruded into the land granted by the state charter for the operation of the ferry and the mill building itself was constructed too close to the street.<sup>27</sup> In order to move logs from the river into the mill, it was necessary to put them in the street. The prevailing sentiment in the city council favored the removal of the Annis Mill. The final decision in March 1841 did order the removal, but only after a serious controversy over the conflicting rights of Annis and the owner of the ferry as to where responsibility rested for the expense of the removal—with Annis, the city council, or the high council—and over whether the riverfront was public property.<sup>28</sup> The minutes of the city council are neither clear nor complete, but the evidence strongly supports the contentions that personal rights were overridden in an almost roughshod fashion in favor of the Church and the city.

There were suggestions that Annis move his mill to higher ground and operate it by steam power, which would have required the expense of a steam engine in addition to the expense of removal. Annis was finally forced to move the mill at his own expense. He later applied for permission to place the mill on an "outside butment," which probably meant moving it further out into the river. No clear final decision is indicated, but Joseph Smith was adamantly opposed to any petition infringing on the rights of the ferry.<sup>29</sup>

William and Wilson Law and Newel Knight also operated water-powered mills, but individual efforts were only part of the grand vision and were dependent to some extent upon the successful implementation of that vision as Mayor John C. Bennett outlined it in his inaugural address to the city council in February 1841. He called for the construction of a wing dam to divert part of the force of the current of the Mississippi River through a

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<sup>27</sup>Nauvoo City Council Minutes, 8 and 15 March 1841, Church Historical Department (hereafter cited as City Council).

<sup>28</sup>City Council, 15 March 1841.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 1 May 1841. See also footnote 18.

canal that the Mormons would dig. The two-mile-long canal was to run north and south down the middle of Main Street, which was to be eighty-two feet wide to accommodate the canal, shipping, wharves, and water-powered industry. The dam was to extend diagonally into the river until it connected with the island east of Montrose, thereby diverting most of the stream flow of the Mississippi that was not contained in the main channel, which ran west of the island along the Iowa shore. The city council appointed a committee with Joseph Smith as chairman to survey the route of the canal, but little progress was made because the survey showed Main Street lay on a formation of limestone.<sup>30</sup> Still the idea of a dam lingered on.

In the fall of that year, Benjamin B. Gates and David Higby, two non-Mormon businessmen, hired Edward Worth to construct a wing dam in the Mississippi River between Nashville and Keokuk on the Iowa shore.<sup>31</sup> The dam was completed in 1842 and used for a little over a year to operate a gristmill. Ice and the spring floods of 1843 destroyed both dam and mill. Joseph Smith and the other Mormons likely watched the construction process with intense interest. In December 1841, while the Worth Dam was under construction, the Prophet wrote to Pennsylvania convert Edward Hunter that Nauvoo had suffered from lack of steam engines and mills.<sup>32</sup> He encouraged Hunter to bring both to Nauvoo when he came.

Lack of funds was undoubtedly the main deterrent to beginning construction of the dam and canal during 1841–42. Interest remained high, however, for in the spring of 1842, the city council authorized Newel Knight, whose father had operated a mill in New York, to construct a wing dam and a gristmill.<sup>33</sup> Knight successfully completed both the dam and the mill and operated them for a number of years. On 14 May 1842, William and Wilson Law were granted similar privileges pertaining to constructing butments and piers for mills and shipping.<sup>34</sup>

On 23 November 1843, nearly three years after the decision to survey had been made, Joseph Smith gave the nearly-dormant project new impetus, as well as a slightly enlarged prospectus. He proposed that they petition the United States Congress to (1) con-

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<sup>30</sup>City Council, 8 February 1841, and *HC*, 4:297.

<sup>31</sup>Enders, "Des Moines Rapids," pp. 88–91.

<sup>32</sup>*HC*, 4:481–82.

<sup>33</sup>City Council, 9 April 1842.

<sup>34</sup>City Council, 14 May 1842.

<sup>35</sup>*HC*, 4:80.

struct a dam on the Mississippi to supply the city with adequate waterpower for its proposed industrial complex, and (2) dig a canal around the Des Moines Rapids.<sup>35</sup> Smith had a clerk draft plans for the dam and the city council passed a law authorizing Smith "and successors" to construct a dam, piers, breakwaters, docks, wharves, landings, and embankments and anything else necessary "for the purpose of propelling mills."<sup>36</sup> The act also authorized the operation of the proposed mills and wharves in exchange for fees and tolls as prescribed by city ordinance. However, the act did not appropriate funds for the project and little progress was made for another two years.

Early in 1845, under the shadow of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and in the face of rising anti-Mormon sentiment in Illinois and Iowa, Brigham Young and other Church leaders attempted to inject some life into the nearly dead waterpower project. The site for the dam was purchased and dedicated with prayer, the Nauvoo Water Power Company was formed to oversee the construction process, shares were sold, the citizens of Nauvoo pledged 12,000 hours of labor, and construction was enthusiastically begun.<sup>37</sup> One month later the Council of the Twelve Apostles decided that the work on the dam should be postponed until the winter of 1846 in order to devote all available energies to completion of the temple prior to the contemplated exodus westward.<sup>38</sup> But with the approaching exodus it became impossible to think of building any project other than the temple and on 16 July 1845, only two months after the initial postponement, the Nauvoo Water Power Company sold the waterfront lots that had been reserved as the site for the dam.<sup>39</sup>

Failure to complete the dam and canal did not hinder the Mormons from actively engaging in the commerce of the river.

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<sup>35</sup>HC, 6:80. The first serious effort to remove the threat to navigation posed by the Des Moines Rapids was made by the United States government from 1836 to 1839 (see Enders, "The Des Moines Rapids," pp. 39-57). After two years of planning and surveying, a campaign was mounted to deepen and broaden the natural channel of the Mississippi River through the rapids. Under the leadership of Lieutenant Robert E. Lee, later to win fame in more soldierly pursuits, the Army Corps of Engineers removed over 2,000 tons of limestone from the bed of the rapids. The work was suspended in 1839 for lack of funds. Except for critics who maintained the work had left the rocks of the riverbed sharp and jagged and a peril to steamboats, it was generally conceded that the deepening of the channel improved navigation. However, flatboats and keelboats continued to supply lighterage service at low water or when the current was particularly strong.

<sup>36</sup>HC, 6:103 and 106.

<sup>37</sup>*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 5 and 12 March 1845. Brigham Young's Manuscript Journal, 28 March 1845, as cited in Enders, "The Des Moines Rapids," p. 125. *Journal History of the Church*, 11 and 17 February 1845.

<sup>38</sup>Enders, "Des Moines Rapids," p. 129.

<sup>39</sup>*Nauvoo Neighbor*, 16 July 1845.

The Nauvoo charter extended the city limits to the midpoint of the river,<sup>40</sup> an indication that Joseph Smith, the self-proclaimed author of the charter, foresaw the eventuality of a highly-developed and profitable waterfront area, requiring the jurisdiction of the city government. As Nauvoo grew it required the services of an increasing number of steamboats on a regular basis.<sup>41</sup> The boats brought the people that were swelling Nauvoo's population, and they brought a large segment of the supplies necessary for such a city to function. Steamboats, of course, required wharves and landings. The latter apparently multiplied at a rapid pace and were not always operated by Mormons, the city, or the Church.

As might have been expected, conflict ensued. On 5 March 1844, a special session of the City Council supported Mayor Smith in his insistence that wharfage fees would be paid to the city. Hyrum Kimball and a Mr. Morrison were telling steamboat captains that they did not need to pay the city fee because they (Kimball and Morrison) owned the land on which the wharves were built. The Prophet told Kimball and the city council that "he should see the ordinance executed; and if the boats did not pay, he should blow them up and those who upheld them in resisting the ordinances. . . ." The city council supported the mayor, contending that "no man has a right to build a wharf without leave from the city council."<sup>42</sup> Following this the council ordered the extension of Water Street from the riverbank next to Joseph Smith's residence to the extreme north end of the city, attempting thereby to gain more complete control over the wharfage facilities and accompanying fees.

An interesting aside on the wharfage conflict concerns an excerpt from a speech delivered on the occasion by Hyrum Smith:

Kimball and Morrison say they own the wharves; but the fact is, the city owns them, sixty-four feet from high water mark. From the printing office to the north limits of the city is public ground, as Water street runs along the beach, and the beach belongs to the city and not to individuals. . . . The maritime laws of the United States have ceded up the right to regulate all tools, wharfage, etc., to the respective corporations who have jurisdiction, and not to individuals. Our lawyers have read so little that they are ignorant of this: they have never stuck their noses into a book on maritime law in their lives, . . . Our city lawyers are fools to undertake to practice law

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<sup>40</sup>HC, 4:239.

<sup>41</sup>Five steamboats a day were stopping at Nauvoo during the navigation season in 1843. HC, 6:32.

<sup>42</sup>HC, 6:234-35.

when they know nothing about it. I want from this time forth every fool to stay at home and let the steamboats and captains alone. No vessel could land anywhere, if subject to individual laws. This corporation owns the streets of the city, and has as much right to tax the boats to make wharves as to tax citizens to make roads. Let every man in this city stay at home, and let the boat-captains, peace-officers, and everybody alone.<sup>43</sup>

What more pointed illustration of the impact of the river could be found than a Mormon leader reading and citing maritime law in 1844 in the midst of the American frontier, over 1,000 miles from the high seas.

The Mormon leaders were not concerned solely with the profits to be made from charging fees and tolls and providing services for steamboats owned by others. On 3 May 1843, Joseph Smith directed that arrangements be made to convert the *Maid of Iowa* into a ferryboat to operate between Nauvoo and Montrose.<sup>44</sup> Nine days later the transaction culminated in the Church purchasing half-interest in the steamboat.<sup>45</sup> Its services, however, were not restricted to ferryboat duty. Recent converts to Mormonism immigrating to the United States from Europe and England were brought up the river from New Orleans and St. Louis; supplies were transported to Nauvoo, including food for the laborers on the temple and other public buildings; supplies and personnel for work in the Wisconsin pineries were taken upriver; pleasure excursions were taken by Joseph Smith and many other Mormons; and church services were even held on the decks of the newly-acquired steamboat. The *Maid of Iowa* served the Mormons well for two years. On 9 April 1845, in the face of the impending westward exodus, Brigham Young ordered that the *Maid of Iowa* be sold "for what they could get for it."<sup>46</sup>

In December 1841, Joseph Smith stated that lumber had to be brought twenty miles, and "that many buildings had arisen and still more would have but for the lack of lumber and brick."<sup>47</sup> Shortage of timber for lumber and fuel is normally associated with the Great Plains beyond the hundredth meridian. However, by the fall of 1843, Nauvoo had grown from a village of a few dozen

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<sup>43</sup>HC, 6:238.

<sup>44</sup>HC, 5:380.

<sup>45</sup>HC, 5:386.

<sup>46</sup>HC, 7:395. Local legend in Nauvoo maintains that the *Maid of Iowa* or the *Iowa Twins*, as it was renamed by the Mormons, was caught in an ice jam off Dundy landing and wrecked. "The hull lay in the river until it rotted away." Ida Blum Papers, Archives and Manuscripts, BYU Library.

<sup>47</sup>Joseph Smith to Edward Hunter, 21 December 1841, HC, 4:481-82.

houses to a prospering community of several hundred buildings.<sup>48</sup> Most of them were whitewashed log cabins and the remainder frame and brick. Timber was needed for all of them, as well as for fuel and fencing, and had been a coveted commodity from the initial arrival of the Mormons in 1839.<sup>49</sup> The plans for the huge three-story temple and other large public buildings merely added to the pressures and demands for the already scarce and expensive commodity.

The Mormon leaders turned to the river and the pine country of Wisconsin to solve their lumber shortage problems. A company of men was sent to the upper reaches of the Black River in Wisconsin in the fall of 1841, where they purchased and successfully operated several mills.<sup>50</sup> The company was reinforced in 1843 and 1844 and contributed several large rafts of lumber, timber, and shingles to the construction effort in Nauvoo.<sup>51</sup> Using the river to bring lumber from Wisconsin saved the Mormons thousands of dollars. Lumber was expensive and the riverboats were their most economical means of acquiring it. Least expensive of all was to go to the source and cut their own and float them down the rivers, which they did. It is clear that without convenient and direct river access to the pineries as a ready source of inexpensive lumber, the temple and many other buildings would never have been completed by the time of the exodus.

While the temple itself was a part of the spiritual vision, its construction was an endeavor of the economic. For five years, 1841 to 1846, almost the entire length of their stay at Nauvoo, the Mormons worked on the temple. Except for some interior finish work, it was complete when they left Nauvoo in 1846, largely because of concentration of efforts on the temple and the postponement and abandonment of other projects. That it was completed as far as it was, was due in no small part to readily available river transportation.

The walls and foundation of the temple were constructed of locally-quarried limestone. The interior and the roof were of lumber, Wisconsin white pine and hardwoods. The glass for the windows was brought overland from Chicago and Detroit and the lead for framing the windows undoubtedly came from Galena on

<sup>48</sup>Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph*, p. 75.

<sup>49</sup>High Council, 1839-1845. A number of legal suits occurred over thefts of rails and lumber. See, for example, High Council, 8 August 1840 and 4 July 1841.

<sup>50</sup>HC, 4:418.

<sup>51</sup>See, for example, HC, 4:418; 5:169-70, 386 and 397; 6:46 and 255-256; and 7:183 and 192.



a river steamer. On 1 February 1842, Joseph Smith referred to two stones for door sills that had just been "landed," an obvious reference to river transportation.<sup>52</sup> Finally, and perhaps more important than the building materials, which admittedly were vital, was the food to sustain the temple construction workers. In May 1844, food apparently began to run low and the *Maid of Iowa* was dispatched to Rock River to obtain a cargo of grain.<sup>53</sup> The boat returned in eleven days with 400 bushels of corn and 200 bushels of wheat, a speed and quantity that no land transportation available could have equalled. Such services enabled the work on the temple to go ahead on schedule and ultimately were instrumental in completing the building.

Steamboat wood, the ferry, the canal, the dam, the *Maid of Iowa*, and the Wisconsin pineries are but the most obvious examples of the impact of the river on the economy of Nauvoo. A deeper examination would include: consideration of land values on the riverfront versus those on the hill; a compilation of data on how many riverboat passengers and visitors came to Nauvoo annually; a study of the conflict with the established non-Mormon businessmen in Commerce, Montrose, Keokuk, and Warsaw, some of whom viewed the incoming Mormons as a distinct economic threat; and a study of the fluctuations in the economy brought on or encouraged by the fluctuations in the river from low water when few steamboats could safely navigate over the rapids, to high water and flooding, such as the flood of 1844, which destroyed much property in Nauvoo. Another question, not solely economic, worthy of consideration in a separate article, is the importance of the river in the demise of Nauvoo.

A further example of the river's impact lies in the rapid population growth of Nauvoo. Encouraged by the vision of Nauvoo as a great economic and spiritual center and facilitated by increasingly rapid river transportation, immigration pushed the population of Nauvoo upward almost perilously fast from 1841 to 1845.<sup>54</sup> Almost all of the early groups traveled overland from the east coast, but after 1840, except in seasons of low water, or ice, an increasing number of immigrants arrived by steamboat from New Orleans.

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<sup>52</sup>HC, 4:510. Obvious, yes, except the date was 1 February. The river did not normally thaw until March or April.

<sup>53</sup>HC, 6:350 and 376.

<sup>54</sup>Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph*, pp. 75-76.

It is tempting to ask if the rapid growth of Nauvoo's population would have been possible in the pre-steamboat era or if it had been a landlocked prairie town rather than a river town. One cannot respond conclusively. The driving force of the theology espoused by Joseph Smith cannot be underestimated and was surely the main factor precipitating the waves of immigration in the early 1840s, but, the economics of life must be given their just due. Joseph Smith indicated that most of the foreign converts were from among the poorer classes.<sup>55</sup> Parley P. Pratt wrote of the English converts, "I cannot hold them back, they would rather be slaves in America than starve in this country."<sup>56</sup> One could argue convincingly that Nauvoo's population would have increased rapidly because of the force of the gospel message, regardless of the city's location. However, other important factors in the rapid growth of Nauvoo from 1840–45 were: (1) cheap deck passage on the river steamers, (2) the speed of the steamers, and (3) the immigrant's dream of a great river metropolis where burgeoning industry and unlimited opportunity meant a job and a real home for him and his family.

Also, it is necessary to briefly consider the effect of the river on the average citizen of Nauvoo. Social life in Nauvoo was affected by the lively activities that took place on board the passing steamboats. Indians, gamblers, riverboat men, soldiers, bartenders, musicians, magicians, theatrical performers, roustabouts, and slaves, not to mention the members of the touring circus boats and the rich and famous of the pleasure-boat excursions, all left their imprint on the citizens of Nauvoo.<sup>57</sup> Steamboat races, for example, were a spectacle to excite young and old. The Mormons reacted to the river and its activities in a variety of ways. The *Times and Seasons* ran an editorial warning against the thieves and cutthroats of the river<sup>58</sup> and the Council of the Twelve warned prospective immigrants to steel themselves for the voyage up the river among the scum of the boats with their vile habits and language.<sup>59</sup> Hyrum Smith warned the Saints to keep the women away from the steamboat landing, undoubtedly because of the unrestrained profanity of the riverboat men.<sup>60</sup> However, the Saints provided fine

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<sup>55</sup>HC, 5:25.

<sup>56</sup>As cited in E. Cecil McGavin, *Nauvoo the Beautiful* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946), p. 95.

<sup>57</sup>Petersen, *Steamboating*, pp. 107–391 and Quick, *Mississippi Steamboat*, pp. 231–52.

<sup>58</sup>*Times and Seasons* 3 (1 December 1841):615.

<sup>59</sup>HC, 4:463–67.

<sup>60</sup>Conference Address, 7 April 1842, HC, 4:585.

food and accommodations at the Mansion House and they used the *Maid of Iowa* on several occasions for private pleasure excursions complete with music and food.<sup>61</sup> And, the young and the young at heart, Joseph Smith included, enjoyed sliding on the river ice during the winter months.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the river, that on the mentality and outlook of the average Mormon, is almost impossible to document. The historian who ventures into this area is dealing with what we might call the river mystique. How does a great river affect a person who lives close to its banks for several years? A great student of the Mississippi River recorded an old-timer's memories of forty years on the river. "There is no sound in the world so filled with mystery and longing and unease as the sound at night of a river boat blowing for the landing—one long, two shorts, one long, two shorts. . . . The sound of the riverboats hangs inside your heart like a star."<sup>62</sup> One cannot help but wonder how many of the Mormons carried such a memory of the river with them to the deserts of the Great Basin.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Maureen Ursenbach, ed., "Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal," *BYU Studies* 15 (Summer 1975):405, entries for 9 May and 4 June 1843. See also *HC*, 5:384-85.

<sup>62</sup>Walter Havighurst, *Voices on the River: The Story of the Mississippi Waterways* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 3. See also, Ursenbach, "Eliza R. Snow's Nauvoo Journal," 12 April 1843, for an emotional description of the river.

<sup>63</sup>Earlier mention was made of the devastating seige of illness the Mormons experienced while at Nauvoo. While continuing to stress that it is a part of the Nauvoo setting that has been over-emphasized in the past, one must not forget that it is another solid indication of the river's impact. Along with the sound of steamboat bells and whistles in the night, many Mormons carried with them to the Great Basin the memory and physical effects of the shakes, fever, and cold chills of the ague and related fevers.

Also, this article may have conveyed the suggestion that the Mormons were new to river life. Of course, many of them were not, having known life on the Connecticut, the Ohio, the Missouri, the Grand, the Susquehanna and other rivers and canals. The point is that Nauvoo, Illinois, was a river town and a frontier town, as well as a Mormon town. It would have been a much different town had it not been on the river. At the risk of overstatement, this must be emphasized. The Mormons, despite the uniqueness of their religious experience and the tragedy of their treatment by many of their fellow frontiersmen, had a profoundly *American* experience during their Nauvoo years. They participated in the early glory of the short-lived Age of the Steamboat, a colorful page in the history of America and the opening of the West. They had a taste of a choice era, which was gone forever shortly thereafter, laid to rest by the Civil War and the coming of the railroad. They helped to bind the nation together and strengthen its East-West ties by supporting the steamboat, which itself was a binding influence between East and West (see Dayton, *Steamboat Days*, p. 359), and by journeying still further west, opening and maintaining important western trails and establishing the foundation for a strong western state that would later become an inseparable part of the national fiber.

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