



10-1-1994

Temples of the Most High comp. by N. B. Lundwall; *Every Stone a Sermon* by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel; *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Great Mormon Temple and Its Photographers* by Nelson B. Wadsworth; *The Salt Lake Temple: A Monument to a People* by C. Mark Hamilton with C. Nina Cutrubus; *The Stones of the Temple* by J. Frederic Voros Jr. and Kathleen B. Peterson, illustrator

Richard H. Cracroft

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>



Part of the [Mormon Studies Commons](#), and the [Religious Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cracroft, Richard H. (1994) "*Temples of the Most High* comp. by N. B. Lundwall; *Every Stone a Sermon* by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel; *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Great Mormon Temple and Its Photographers* by Nelson B. Wadsworth; *The Salt Lake Temple: A Monument to a People* by C. Mark Hamilton with C. Nina Cutrubus; *The Stones of the Temple* by J. Frederic Voros Jr. and Kathleen B. Peterson, illustrator," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 34 : Iss. 4 , Article 19.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol34/iss4/19>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

N. B. LUNDWALL, comp. *Temples of the Most High*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993. Originally published 1941. Revised 1966. x; 427 pp. 46 illustrations, index. \$11.95.

RICHARD NEITZEL HOLZAPFEL. *Every Stone a Sermon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992. xi; 126 pp. 54 illustrations, appendix, index. \$15.95.

NELSON B. WADSWORTH. *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Great Mormon Temple and Its Photographers*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992. xi; 388 pp. 350+ illustrations, index. \$39.95.

C. MARK HAMILTON with C. NINA CUTRUBUS. *The Salt Lake Temple: A Monument to a People*. Salt Lake City: University Services, 1983; reprinted 1993. 208 pp. 99 illustrations. \$50.00.

J. FREDERIC VOROS JR. and KATHLEEN B. PETERSON, illustrator. *The Stones of the Temple*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Primary Press, 1993. 32 pp. 21 illustrations. \$12.95.

Reviewed by Richard H. Cracroft, Professor of English, Brigham Young University.

The year-long celebration of the centennial of the April 6, 1893, dedication of the Salt Lake Temple sparked the publication and republication of a variety of books celebrating this landmark event in the history of the Church and Utah. Editor Annie Wells Cannon spoke for the Mormon people when she wrote in the May 1893 issue of *Woman's Exponent* that the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple was "to the Saints the greatest event for many years." She added the understatement that "now that it is so handsomely completed well may we feel proud and happy" (in Holzapfel, 93). Today, a century later, the Salt Lake Temple remains for many "*The Temple*," the proud and venerable flagship of the fleet, and arguably one of the most remarkable edifices built during the nineteenth century.

The sacred nature of temple ceremonies prevented Latter-day Saints from writing about their temples until Elder James E. Talmage, then newly called to the Quorum of the Twelve, was

commissioned by the First Presidency to write *The House of the Lord: A Study of Holy Sanctuaries, Ancient and Modern* (1912; reprint, 1962, 1976), which remained for several decades the “definitive” treatment of Mormon temples and rites. Then in 1965, W. A. Raynor published *The Everlasting Spires: A Story of the Salt Lake Temple*, followed by John K. Edmunds’s *Through Temple Doors* (1978), Elder Boyd K. Packer’s *The Holy Temple* (1980), Elder Royden G. Derrick’s *Temples in the Last Days* (1987), and Richard O. Cowan’s *Temples to Dot the Earth* (1989). Now the Salt Lake Temple dedicatory centennial has evoked several valuable additions to the short shelf of books about Latter-day Saint temples and, in particular, the Salt Lake Temple itself.

A notable reissue for the centennial, in Bookcraft’s attractive Collectors’ Edition series, is N. B. Lundwall’s *Temples of the Most High*. Lundwall, that father-of-all-LDS-compilers, scrapbooked “rare and invaluable writings by Authorities of the Church” into *The Vision or the Degrees of Glory* (1939). He later assembled, in *The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (1952), a similar pastiche of undigested, variously sound and occasionally dubious “historical data” about Joseph Smith Jr.—his life, death, burial, family, and the trial and eventual fates of his murderers. For seasoned Saints (those over age fifty), the reissue of *Temples of the Most High* is a sentimental return to earlier apologias (such as Hugh Nibley’s *Lehi in the Desert*, 1952), which revealed to many the rich store in journals, diaries, letters, narratives, sermons, newspaper accounts, and other lore beyond B. H. Roberts’s wonderful *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (1902) and Joseph Fielding Smith’s very serviceable *Essentials in Church History* (1922).

Under the capstone of each of the Latter-day Saint temples, Lundwall brought together a curious, haphazard documentary history of the temples, from the dedicatory prayers and services and the physical dimensions and construction history to long-buried accounts of events centering in the various temples. He originally wrote about the temples constructed from Kirtland days through the 1930s. In the revision, Lundwall added chapters for succeeding temples through the Oakland Temple (1964). The reissue makes no attempt to update information about the temples built

since 1964, even though several ill-organized addenda to the 1968 revision provide additional information regarding the now long-superseded temple renovations of the 1960s. Reading this paste-and-scissors scrapbook with its oh-by-the-way addenda is much like trying to make sense of a refrigeration manual which has been irregularly and haphazardly updated for twenty years after its initial issue.

Still, *Temples of the Most High* provides the only ready access to some of the great spiritual and visionary experiences associated with the various temples. For example, this volume is where most of us first read of the appearance of the Savior to Lorenzo Snow in the Salt Lake Temple, of Brigham Young's statement that the Manti Temple site had been previously dedicated by Moroni, or of other little-known, but remarkable, manifestations of the Lord's acceptance of the various latter-day temples. Lundwall has made these spiritual events accessible to several generations of Latter-day Saints, and this timely and interesting reissue of a rough-hewn, but often moving, classic makes the physical and spiritual history of a century of LDS temples available to current believing generations.

A far different kind of book, but every bit as valuable to the Latter-day Saints, is *Every Stone a Sermon*, by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel. Holzapfel centers his thorough, well-balanced, and well-written historical account of the construction of the Salt Lake Temple on intriguing and often overlooked aspects of the more than forty eventful years it took to build the edifice. He keeps his focus fixed on the impressions of men and women who recorded in letters, journals, and diaries their accounts of events taking place on and about Temple Square. He includes Emma Bennett's giving birth to a baby boy in one of the smaller rooms of the temple after one of the dedicatory sessions (82). (Incidentally, Brother and Sister Bennett returned to the temple on April 15, eight days later, so the baby could receive a special blessing from Elder Joseph F. Smith, who named the child Joseph Temple Bennett.)

Holzapfel carefully sets individual Mormon responses to the construction, painting, decorating, furnishing, rush to completion, and the memorable dedication of the temple in the contexts of the shifting social and political climates of the late nineteenth century. For example, he points out that, within a few months after the dedication, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir won second

place in an international choir competition at the Chicago world's fair at the same time that the U.S. government was finally beginning the process of returning confiscated Church property (84). *Every Stone a Sermon* is a fascinating book, a worthwhile reading experience.

Very different in its focus, centered as it is on the temple's architecture, artistry, and symbolism, is the graphically stunning reissue of *The Salt Lake Temple: A Monument to a People*, by C. Mark Hamilton, professor of art at BYU, in collaboration with C. Nina Cutrubus. Of special interest is the beautifully illustrated section tracing the influence of British architecture on Brigham Young and temple architects William Ward Jr., both Truman O. Angell Sr. and Jr., and Joseph Don Carlos Young. Also fascinating are hitherto generally unavailable architectural plans and studies for the temple, as well as Ralph Savage's 1911 photographs of the temple interior, published in their entirety for the first time. Hamilton's incisive chapter on "The Symbolism of the Exterior" is a major contribution to LDS architectural history.

Another remarkable treat has been offered *aficionados* of the Salt Lake Temple and early Salt Lake history in Nelson B. Wadsworth's *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: The Great Mormon Temple and Its Photographers*. Wadsworth recounts the outlines of the history of the Salt Lake Temple through the camera eye of eleven pioneer photographers who documented not only the temple's construction, but much of the community life and progress of Salt Lake City.

This impressive volume contains 366 rare photographs, including some "forbidden" photos by Gisbert Bossard, a disaffected Swiss convert bankrolled by Max Florence, a gentile Salt Lake businessman (who later did time for bootlegging). Armed with a rapid-lens camera and magnesium flashlight, Bossard persuaded a gardener in 1911 to allow him to enter the temple. President Joseph F. Smith defused Bossard's extortion attempt and obviated the value of his illicitly obtained photographs by commissioning James E. Talmage, a University of Utah professor and not-yet-member of the Quorum of the Twelve—though that calling would come before the book was finished—to write a book about the Salt Lake Temple, a book which would also include interior

photographs by Ralph Savage, son of Charles R. Savage. Also included in Talmage's volume are the photography of Marsena Cannon, Edward Martin, C. W. Carter, C. W. Symons, George Edward Anderson, James H. Crockwell, Charles Ellis Johnson, James William Shipler, and Harry Shipler.

Concluding this review of recent books about the Salt Lake Temple is a very different perspective of the temple: an adult describing the temple and its history to a child. *The Stones of the Temple*, written by J. Frederic Voros Jr. and illustrated by Kathleen B. Peterson, is a lovingly simple and simply lovely illustrated children's book which speaks to all ages, evoking the rich spiritual meaning of the edifice through the history and architecture of the building. Speaking in Voros's simple but richly imaged language of faith and works that are made graphic by Peterson's luminous and vivid art, this little book has *soul* appropriate to the loftiness of its subject. Voros concludes his lyrical text thus: "It is His house. The walls are His; the towers and spires are His; . . . the laughing children, the golden trumpeter, the praying prophet and the shouting people—all these are His; and you too are His" (28).

The New York *Times* noted in its April 7, 1893, edition, "The Mormon Temple is a significant monument in enduring stone to the power and resistless growth of the Mormon Church" (in Holzapfel, 97). Shortly before his death, Elder B. H. Roberts, writing about the Salt Lake Temple, expressed an expanded meaning of this "monument in enduring stone":

I hold [this Temple] sacred in my heart; . . . it is a mass testimony of a whole people, a testimony to the world that God has spoken, and that he has revealed his truths once more for the salvation of men and has ushered in the dispensation of the fullness of times. [The Salt Lake Temple] is . . . a community testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and becomes a witness wherever . . . its architectural beauty is published to the world. (Holzapfel, 105)

The several books honoring the Salt Lake Temple in its centenary have lasting value and affirm that impressive testimony in imposing stone.