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# Artworks in the Celestial Room of the First Nauvoo Temple

*Jill C. Major*

Because of the scant time the first Nauvoo Temple was open for sacred ordinances, portraits of prominent Nauvoo citizens were borrowed to adorn the temple walls.<sup>1</sup> Brigham Young and the temple committee also planned, commissioned, and paid for at least one other portrait for display in the temple. The presence of these images demonstrates how carefully Brigham Young and the temple committee arranged every detail of the temple experience to make it meaningful and purposeful, even while they planned to abandon the City of Joseph. Knowing about the portraits also adds to our knowledge of the importance of art in the Nauvoo culture. What follows is an identification of the portraits that hung in the celestial room, as well as analyses of the extant paintings; in addition, reasons are suggested for the absence of temple murals and a portrait of Joseph Smith. Biographical sketches of two principle Nauvoo Temple artists are also provided.

## Portraits in the First Temple

In the first Nauvoo Temple, the celestial room was “adorned with a number of splendid mirrors, paintings and portraits” and had “a very splendid and comfortable appearance.”<sup>2</sup> William Clayton, who wrote this description, also recorded the subjects of twenty-two of the known portraits that hung in the celestial room.<sup>3</sup>

**Brigham Young: *Delivering the Law of the Lord*.** Centered among the portraits on the east wall of the celestial room, according to Clayton, was the portrait of President Brigham Young<sup>4</sup> (fig. 1), placed where members would see the seven-foot-tall, full-body portrait of their leader immediately

upon stepping into the room. A portrait of Brigham Young already existed, a bust view, which was possibly created in Philadelphia on June 1, 1841, to commemorate Elder Young's fortieth birthday.<sup>5</sup> The President could easily have loaned this portrait for the prominent east wall of the celestial room, yet the busy leader took time to pose for a second portrait in July 1845.<sup>6</sup> According to the biographer of the man chosen to paint this portrait—the artist Selah Van Sickle (1809–ca. 1880)—Brigham Young selected the message of his new portrait, which he called *Delivering the Law of the Lord*.<sup>7</sup> This was not to be a portrait of a sitting figure with hands clasping the scriptures, as Nauvoo artist William W. Major had portrayed other citizens.<sup>8</sup> Instead, Brigham Young chose to dress in formal clothes and stand solemnly in front of a large case of mostly historical books. A Book of Mormon and a Bible lie on a cloth-covered table to his right, but Brigham Young selected to emphasize a third book on the table by standing it up. The book is titled “Law of the Lord.”<sup>9</sup>

Starting in December 1841, the names of those contributing tithing in the form of money or goods for the building of the temple were written in a large, five-hundred-plus-page, leather-bound record called “The Book of the Law of the Lord,” which was kept in the counting room of Joseph Smith's brick store on Water Street.<sup>10</sup> Relief Society sisters were encouraged to donate one cent per week to buy glass and nails for the temple. Hyrum Smith promised the sisters that for this act “they should receive their blessings in that temple. All who subscribed the cent per week should have their names recorded in the Book of the Law of the Lord.”<sup>11</sup> The Saints abroad were commanded to send donations for the construction of the temple and were promised that when they gathered to Nauvoo

if it is found that you have previously *sent up* of your gold or your silver, or your substance, the tythings [*sic*] and consecrations which are required of you, for this building, you will find your names, tithings, and consecrations written in the Book of the Law of the Lord, to be kept in the Temple, as a witness in your favor, showing that you are a proprietor in that building, and are entitled to your share of the privileges thereunto belonging.<sup>12</sup>

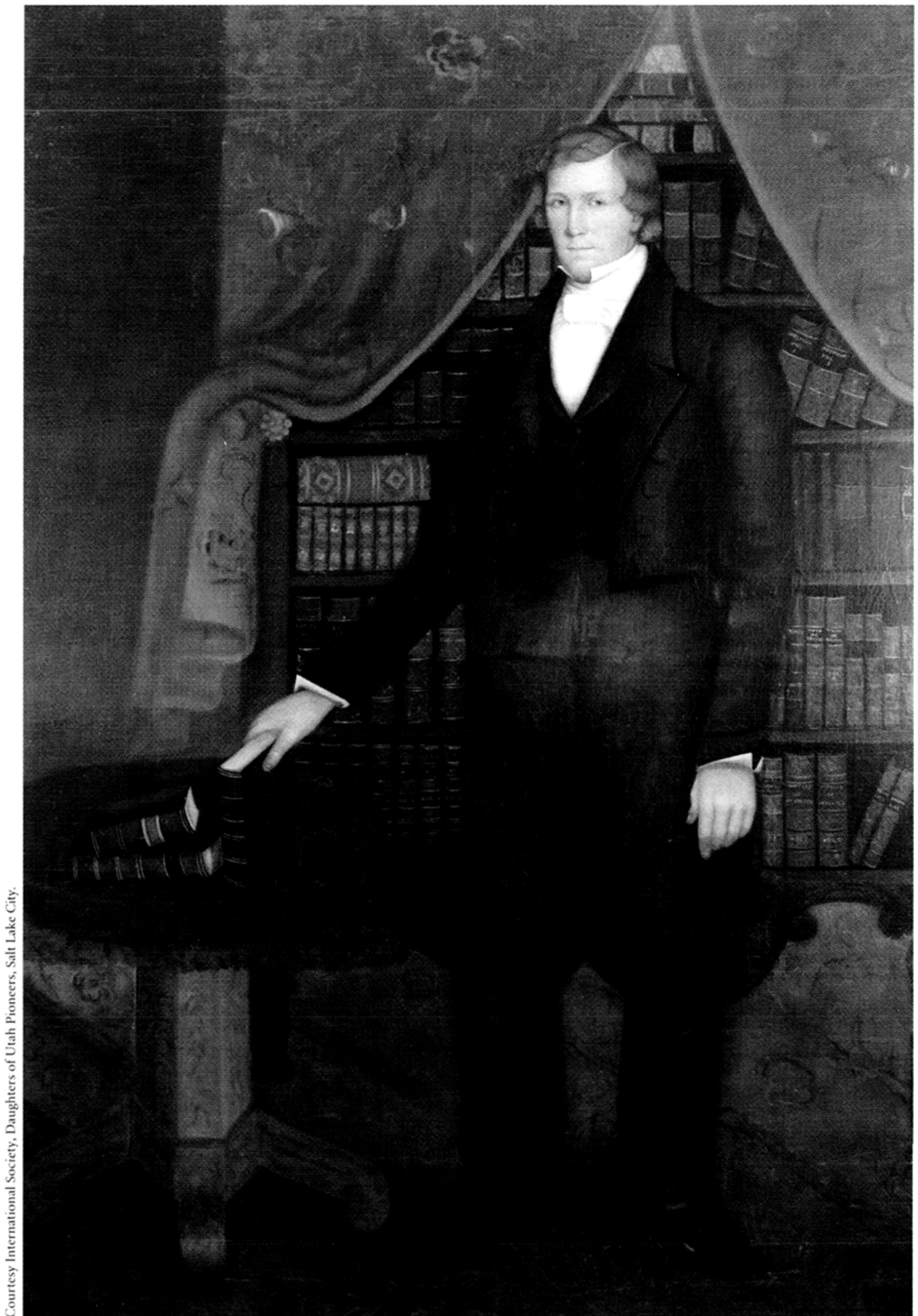
Additionally, this volume also contained some of Joseph Smith's personal journal entries; in August 1842, the Prophet Joseph wrote:

Hyrum, thy name shall be written in the book of the law of the Lord, for those who come after to look upon, that they may pattern after thy works.<sup>13</sup>

Later that month, on August 22, 1842, Joseph wrote:

There is a numerous host of faithful souls, whose names I could wish to record in the Book of the Law of the Lord; but time and chance would





Courtesy International Society, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City.

**FIG. 1.** *Delivering the Law of the Lord*, by Selah Van Sickle (1809–ca. 1880). Oil on canvas, 84" x 59½", 1845.



fail. I will mention, therefore, only a few of them, as emblematical of those who are too numerous to be written.<sup>14</sup>

“The Book of the Law of the Lord” was thus an important record of the faithful. It also served as a sacred text: at times revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith were recorded in it and read in conference.<sup>15</sup>

As the faithful Saints entered the celestial room, their eyes would focus on the face of Brigham Young and then travel down to the book he held. They could feel assured that, because their names were written in the “The Book of the Law of the Lord,” they had “a right to all the promised blessings, ordinances, oracles, and endowments which will not only benefit them, but their posterity to the latest generation.”<sup>16</sup> The book symbolized the beginning of the fulfillment of all the glorious covenants they had made in the temple of the Lord.

A second reason to commission such a commanding portrait was to remind Church members of the importance of relying on the President of the Twelve Apostles to lead them. After Joseph Smith’s martyrdom, Sidney Rigdon, James J. Strang, William Smith, and Lyman Wight claimed revelations and authority to lead the Church. These men opposed Brigham Young and quickly gathered small groups of followers.<sup>17</sup> The life-sized portrait sent a powerful message that Joseph Smith’s personal record book had passed to the hands of Brigham Young and only Brigham Young had the authority to *deliver* the law of the Lord to the Church. Those who remembered this lesson from the Nauvoo Temple continued their spiritual and temporal journey, following the westward path made by their leaders. Those who forgot or ignored it left the Church and wandered on other roads.

**Portraits of Apostles.** Also on the prominent east wall of the celestial room, positioned to the left of the Brigham Young portrait, was a painting of Heber C. Kimball. On the right side of the President was a painting of Willard Richards. On the same wall hung paintings of Apostles John Taylor, Orson Hyde, and George A. Smith.<sup>18</sup> This grouping communicated a message of unity and leadership as if to proclaim, “Here are your guides. Follow them. They know the path to the celestial kingdom.”

**Portraits of Prominent Married Couples.** Paintings of priesthood leaders and their wives were begun as early as January 1845. Eventually, portraits of Leonora A. Taylor (wife of Apostle John Taylor, whose painting is mentioned above), Patriarch John Smith<sup>19</sup> (fig. 2) and Clarissa Smith,<sup>20</sup> Sarah Pea Rich and Brigadier General Charles C. Rich (figs. 3 and 4), and Bishop George Miller and Mary Catherine Miller graced the walls of the celestial room.<sup>21</sup> Although the portraits of each couple were not displayed

side by side, the portraits of the Millers and Riches were grouped, suggesting that at least those images might have been commissioned to serve as a symbol of the eternal nature of the marriage covenant. (The portraits of John Smith and Clarissa Smith may have been borrowed for the same purpose.) In May 1843, the Prophet had announced that a couple could attain the highest degree of the celestial kingdom only if they entered “the new and everlasting covenant of marriage” (D&C 131:1–4). Two months later, a revelation was recorded that declared, “If a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world” (D&C 132:15). Temple sealings of husbands and wives were the crowning completion to the sacred ordinances performed in the Nauvoo Temple.

**Borrowed Portraits.** Many of the portraits that hung in the celestial room were borrowed from Nauvoo citizens. In nineteenth-century America, it was fashionable to have a “likeness” painted. Serving this custom were Yankee artists who lived like peddlers, moving from city to city, from the East Coast to the western wilderness, selling their portraits at a reasonable cost.<sup>22</sup> Portrait painting was considered a skill, like carpentry, and the artist seldom signed his or her name to the picture. For this reason, it is often difficult to identify the artist or the year in which a portrait was painted. However, thanks to these itinerant artists and other talented men and women who had established themselves in larger cities, the citizens of Nauvoo already owned some portraits that they could lend to the temple committee.

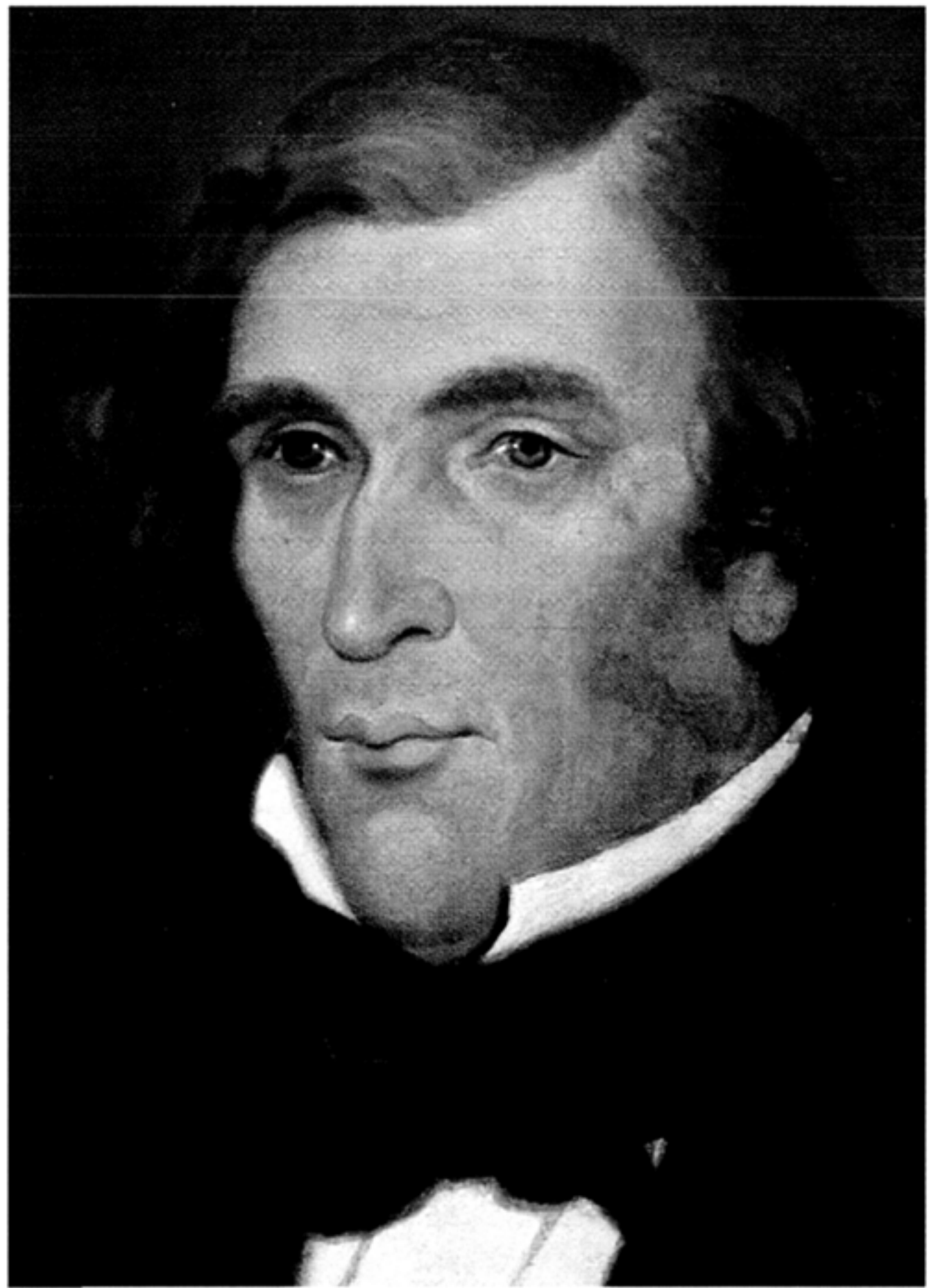


FIG. 2. Patriarch John Smith, artist unknown. Oil on canvas, 13" x 10", 1835.

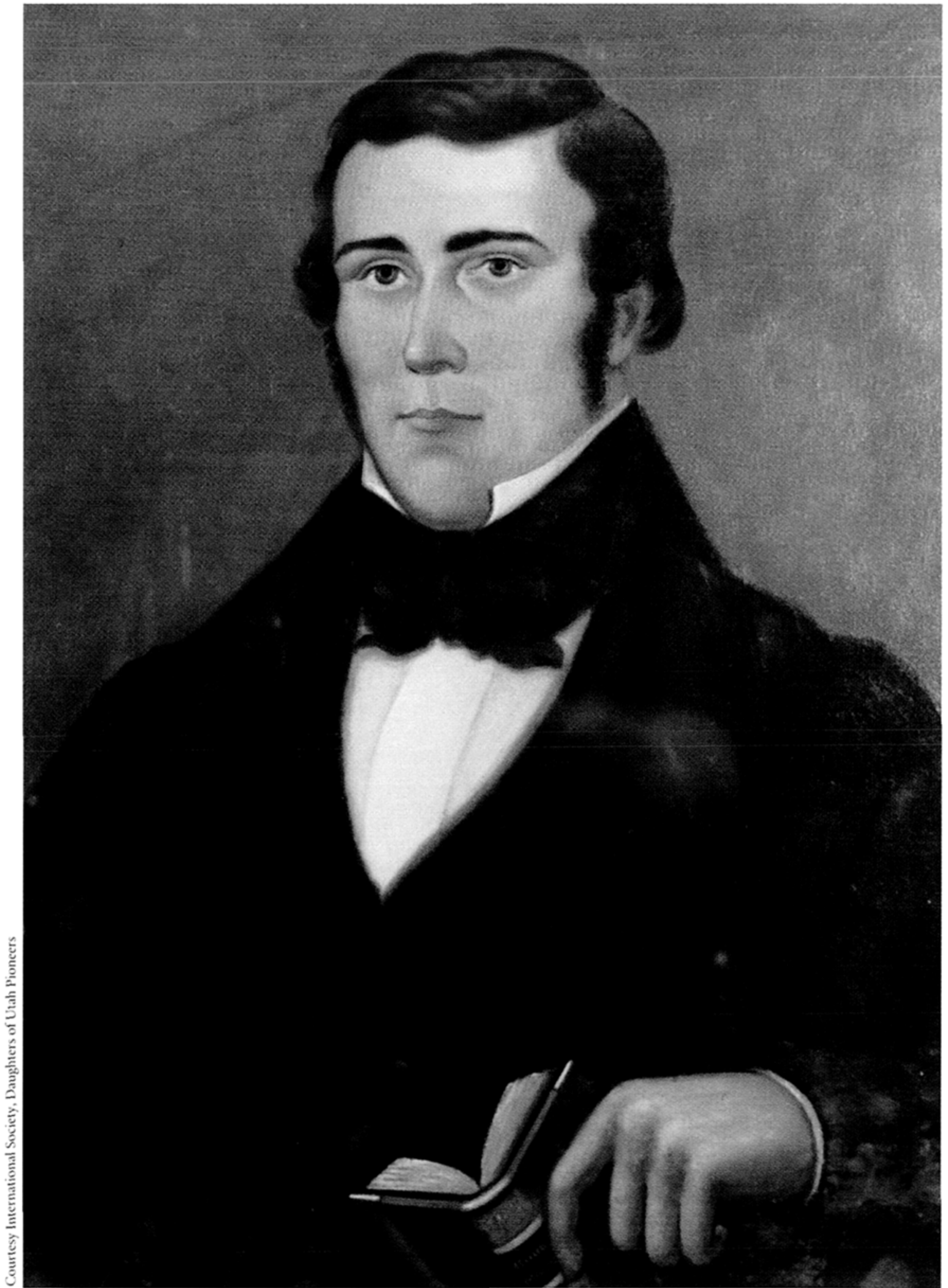
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Courtesy International Society, Daughters of Utah Pioneers

FIG. 3. *Sarah de Arman Pea Rich*, by William W. Major. Oil, 27½" x 21½", ca. 1842.



Courtesy International Society, Daughters of Utah Pioneers

**FIG. 4.** *Charles Coulson Rich*, by William W. Major. Oil, 27½" x 21½", ca. 1842(?). Charles Rich is shown here holding a copy of the Book of Mormon.



A painting of William Cottier, a temple stonecutter, was loaned to the temple and hung in the celestial room.<sup>23</sup> A “handsome portrait” of Hyrum Smith, possibly loaned by his widow Mary Fielding Smith, was centered above a brass clock.<sup>24</sup> Two pictures of Apostle George A. Smith,<sup>25</sup> first cousin of the Prophet Joseph Smith, hung in the celestial room. Additional borrowed portraits included the previously mentioned portraits of Patriarch John Smith and Clarissa Smith (George A. Smith’s parents), as well as portraits of their children Caroline Smith and John L. Smith.<sup>26</sup>

This high proportion of art from one branch of the Smith family may be due to the artistry of Bathsheba Bigler Smith (1822–1910), George A. Smith’s wife. In Nauvoo the twenty-three-year-old Bathsheba took art lessons from William Warner Major. “I am agoing to school to Br Major a Portrait painter from London,” she wrote her friend Phebe Carter Woodruff on April 13, 1845.<sup>27</sup> Bathsheba’s sketchbook shows hours of careful study and practice. She copied prints by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough, prints that Major brought with him from England.<sup>28</sup> One of her best pieces is a duplication of a portrait of poet Alexander Pope (fig. 5) by artist Jean-Baptiste Van Loo.<sup>29</sup> Certainly,

Bathsheba is responsible for one of the two paintings of her husband, for we know that when she went west she carefully packed in her wagon her own paintings of her husband, George’s parents, Joseph Smith, and Hyrum Smith.<sup>30</sup>

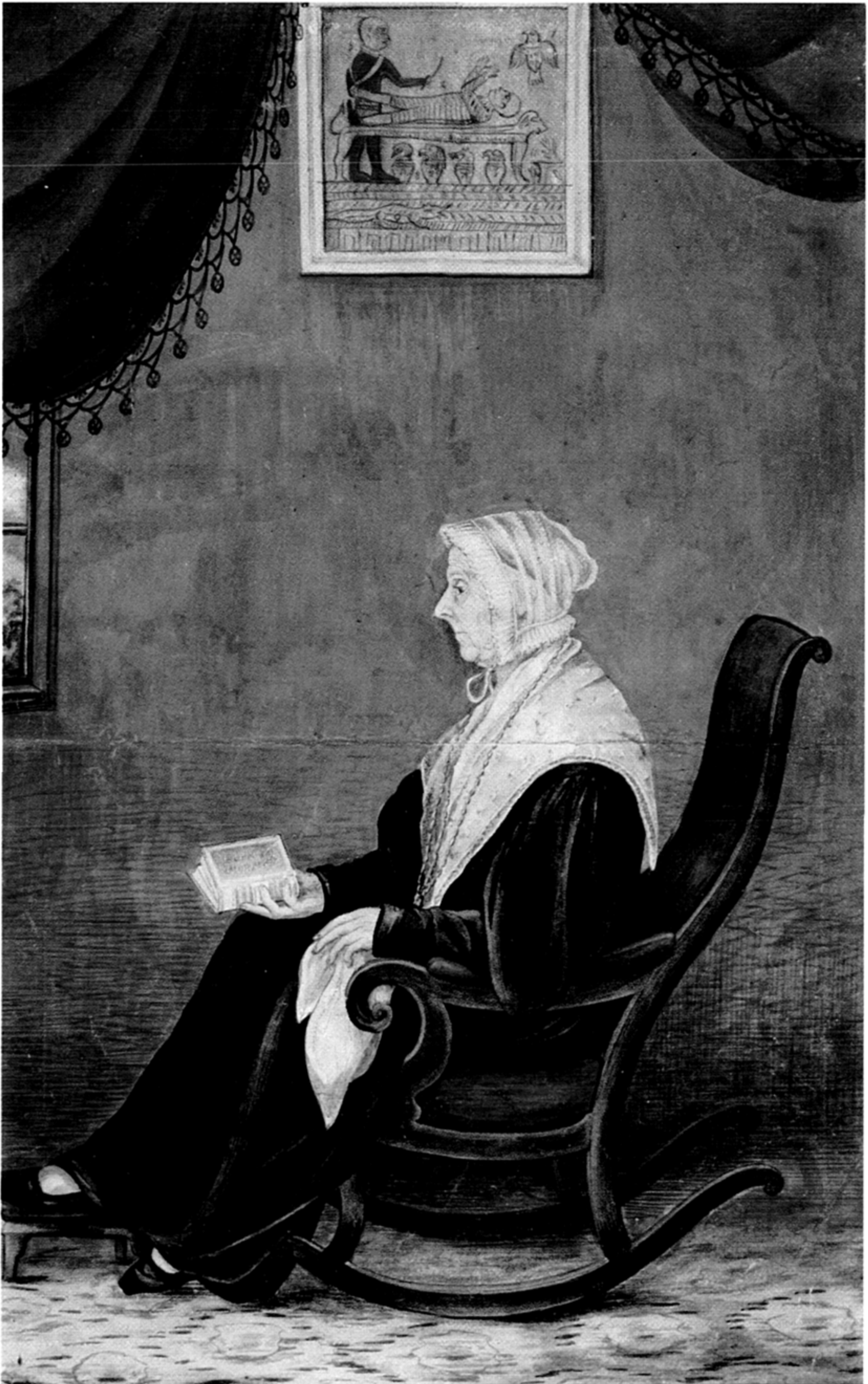
Another member of the Smith family whose portrait hung in the celestial room was “Mother” Lucy Mack Smith<sup>31</sup> (fig. 6). A portrait of Lucy was created in 1842 by Sutcliffe Maudsley (1809–1881), a convert to the Church from Lancashire, England.<sup>32</sup> It is not known whether his was the one that hung in the temple. Lucy Smith was honored in the temple not only because she was the mother of the



FIG. 5. *Sketch of Alexander Pope*, by Bathsheba Smith (1822–1910), study of a work by Jean Baptiste Van Loo (1684–1745). Pencil on paper (from her sketchbook), approx. 10" x 7", date unknown.



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**FIG. 6.** *Lucy Mack Smith*, by Sutcliffe Maudsley (1809–1881). Ink, watercolor on paper, 12<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 7<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>", 1842. This portrait may have hung in the Nauvoo Temple. In this painting, Mother Smith is holding the Book of Mormon and is seated below a drawing of Facsimile 1 from the Book of Abraham.



Prophet but also because she helped apply some of the temple's decorative painting. The temple committee paid Lucy Smith on three different occasions. For one day's painting on July 22, 1845, she received one dollar and fifty cents and four pounds of paint, worth seventy-five cents.<sup>33</sup> Lucy Smith's wages were equal to those made by the men who painted the walls in the Nauvoo Temple,<sup>34</sup> and she received a take-home bonus of paint as well. Perhaps Brigham Young, who always felt tender toward Mother Smith, asked her for the honor of hanging her portrait in the temple.

### **Map of the City of Nauvoo**

William Clayton mentioned that a "plot of the City of Nauvoo hangs on the West partition" of the celestial room.<sup>35</sup> Although there was an 1839 plat map of Commerce, the map displayed in the Nauvoo Temple was probably the more colorful 1842 Nauvoo map<sup>36</sup> (fig. 7). It was compiled by Gustavus Hills and printed in New York City by John Childs. Copies of the finished map were offered for sale at Brigham Young's home in May 1844.<sup>37</sup> This map includes a small inset of the Nauvoo Temple in the upper left-hand corner and a miniature full-length side-view inset of Joseph in his Nauvoo Legion uniform in the bottom left-hand corner. The small watercolor of Joseph was rendered by Sutcliffe Maudsley.<sup>38</sup> Joseph posed for this sketch on June 25, 1842; it was recorded in Joseph's journal that he "sat for the drawing of [his] profile to be placed on a lithograph of the city of Nauvoo on the city chart."<sup>39</sup> Maudsley, a Nauvoo resident from 1841, is credited with creating several profiles of Joseph Smith as well as sketching and hand coloring pictures of other Nauvoo citizens.<sup>40</sup> The map provided the only likeness of the Prophet in the celestial room, which may be one of the reasons the map was hung.

### **The Lack of a Framed Portrait of the Prophet Joseph Smith**

The pictures of Lucy Mack Smith, Hyrum Smith, and other members of the Smith family conveyed even greater significance because a framed oil painting of Joseph Smith was conspicuously missing, if William Clayton's list of portraits in the temple is an accurate indication. Emma owned matching portraits of Joseph and herself, which hung in the Smith's Mansion House in Nauvoo.<sup>41</sup> Glen Leonard, director of the Museum of Church History and Art suggests:

Because no portrait of Joseph Smith was hanging with the other oil paintings in the upper room of the Nauvoo Temple, we can assume that only one oil portrait of Joseph Smith existed at that time, the David Rogers



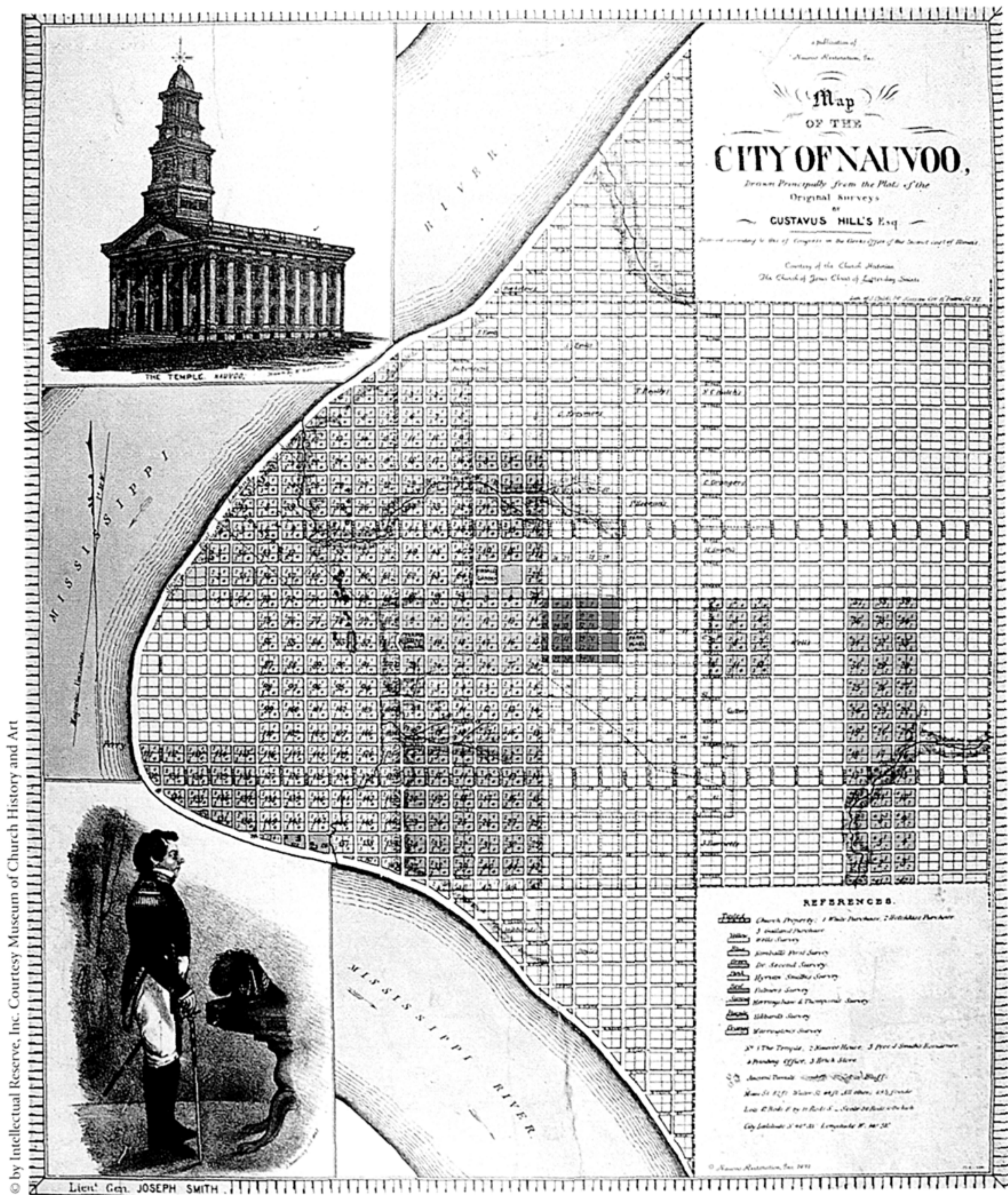


FIG. 7. *Plat Map of Nauvoo*, drawn by Gustavas Hills, printed by J. Childs, inset of Joseph Smith by Sutcliffe Maudsley. Paper print and printing plate, 26¼" x 22", ca. 1842. The inset provided the only image of Joseph Smith hung in the Celestial Room. The lack of a framed portrait has been addressed in the new Nauvoo Temple, where Gary Smith's portrait of the Prophet (see front cover) now hangs.



rendering done in 1842, and that Emma Smith, who owned it, either rejected an invitation to loan it or was not asked.<sup>42</sup>

Joseph Smith's death had precipitated a conflict between Brigham Young and Emma Smith. Brigham felt that certain property and other items that had been in the possession of Joseph belonged to the Church. Emma disagreed. For example, when Willard Richards asked Emma for the new translation of the Bible, "she said she did not feel disposed to give it up at present."<sup>43</sup> It may be that she also did not feel disposed to lend the picture of Joseph to the temple.

The portraits of Smith family members may have confirmed in the minds of the Nauvoo faithful that even though Emma was estranged from the Church, many members of the Prophet's family looked upon the temple and Brigham Young's leadership with approval.

### **The Lack of Murals in the First Nauvoo Temple**

Mural art was not used in the first Nauvoo Temple even though this art form was familiar to the Nauvoo membership. Panoramas, a kind of moving mural used for entertainment and education, were popular in both Europe and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. Two hundred miles down the Mississippi River, the growing city of St. Louis boasted several major panoramists. In March 1841, artist John Banvard proclaimed that he had created the "largest pictures in the world" for display in the St. Louis Museum. His portrayals of Jerusalem and Venice "cover[ed] an extent of canvass exceeding 100 [1,000?] square feet" (brackets in original).<sup>44</sup> St. Louis was a common stopping place for those traveling to or from Nauvoo, so it is likely that the Saints were aware of such panoramas.

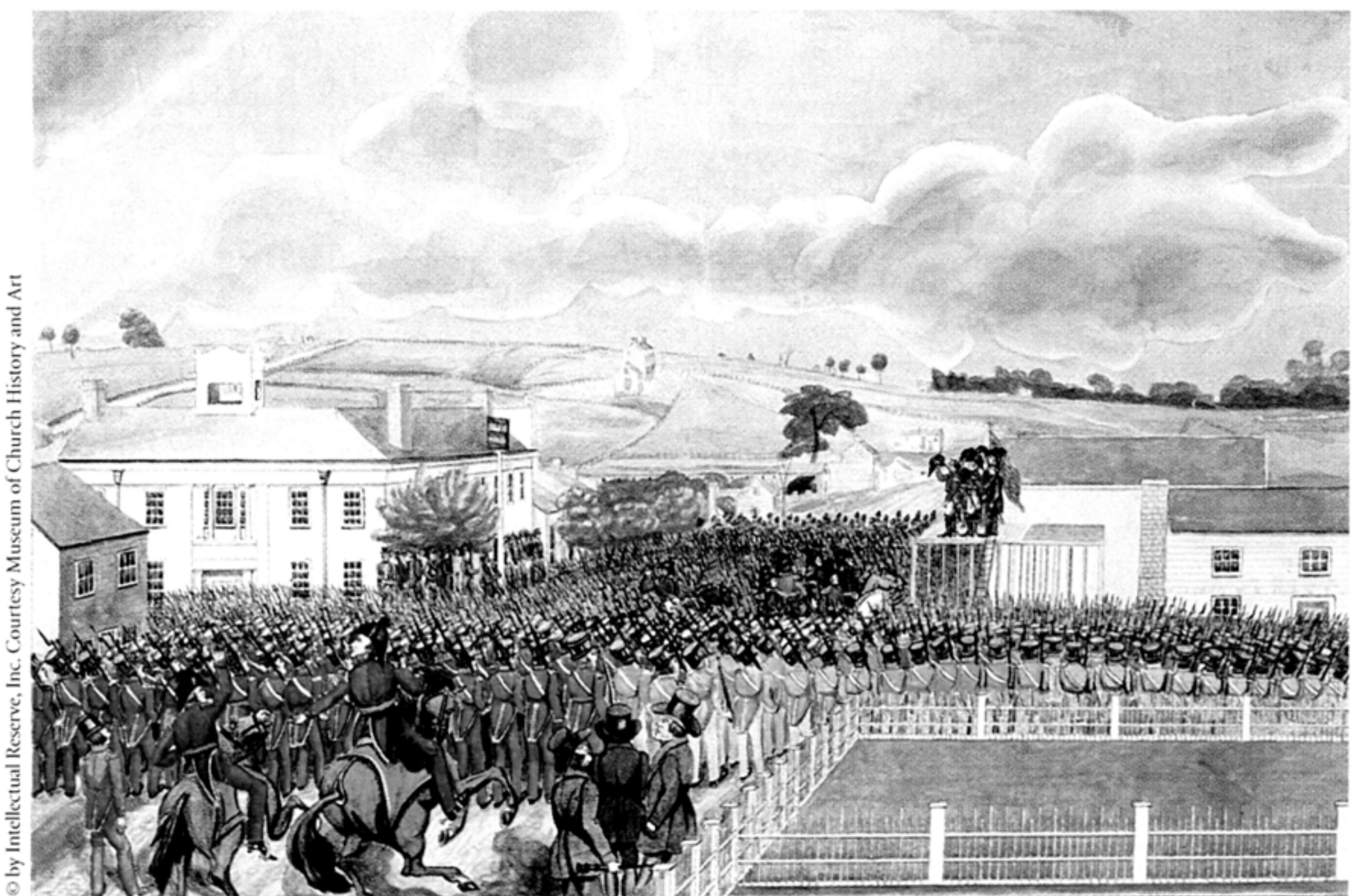
Shortly after Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred, June 27, 1844, Philo Dibble, an early convert and an entrepreneur, gathered a group of Nauvoo artists to record the tragic scene on canvas. Major was appointed lead artist, and the 128-square-foot painting was first exhibited on Friday, April 4, 1845.<sup>45</sup> Dibble charged twelve and a half cents to see the paintings and advertised that "those having 'the cash,' are particularly invited to attend."<sup>46</sup> During fall 1845, the same group of Nauvoo artists collaborated on a large scene of Joseph Smith addressing the Nauvoo Legion<sup>47</sup> (see fig. 8 for the preliminary study). Later, these canvases were rolled up and transported west. Dibble exhibited them at Winter Quarters and throughout Utah.<sup>48</sup>

However, the existence of Nauvoo artists experienced in panoramas did not result in temple murals. One possible reason for not including mural art was the impending necessity for the Saints to leave Nauvoo and the temple. Symbolic wall murals would have been relinquished to the



enemies of the Church and become one more desecration to holy ordinances. Were the Saints to stay in Nauvoo and to complete the temple under less pressure, they might have incorporated murals. Certainly that is one assumption under which murals were created for the new Nauvoo Temple, according to Bruce R. Finlinson, manager of the temple interior design group: “We wanted to portray the Nauvoo temple as if the pioneers used it for ten years and had the opportunity to decorate it accordingly.”<sup>49</sup>

A second reason for the lack of murals is that Brigham Young employed art as a means to fuse to the hearts of the Saints lessons that would aid the members as they moved west without those leaders who had apostatized and lead away splinter groups. Temple portraits of faithful Church members anchored in the minds of the Saints those whom they should follow as examples and leaders. Probably for these purposes, Brigham Young chose easily transportable framed portraits, not wall murals. In selecting portraits rather than other types of art, he also followed the precedent set almost a decade earlier in the Kirtland Temple, where portraits of Church leaders were displayed “for a time.”<sup>50</sup>



**FIG. 8.** *General Joseph Smith Addressing the Nauvoo Legion*, by Robert Campbell (1810–1890). Ink, watercolor on paper, 11<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 16<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>", 1845. William W. Major and other artists used this small, preliminary sketch in 1845 for a panorama painting of the Nauvoo Legion. Neither this preliminary sketch nor the subsequent mural hung in the Nauvoo Temple.



## Nauvoo Temple Artists

William Warner Major and Selah Van Sickle, five years apart in age and a world apart in culture, figure prominently among the artists chosen to paint the Nauvoo Temple portraits.

**William Warner Major.** William Warner Major was born January 27, 1804, in St. James Parish, Bristol, England.<sup>51</sup> His mother's family, the Warners, were established booksellers. His father, Richard Major, came from a family of book and music publishers.<sup>52</sup> From 1811 to at least 1820, Richard Major owned a "cheap music warehouse" in various locations throughout London.<sup>53</sup> Each location was within walking distance of the art treasures of Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, Royal Academy at Somerset House, British Gallery, and Buckingham House (later Buckingham Palace) in London's wealthy West End. According to an 1819 travel book, exhibitions of London art "are uncommonly numerous."<sup>54</sup> Thus an opportunity to copy and learn was available to William from his early youth. He brought to America a copy of Sir Joshua Reynold's celebrated painting *The Infant Hercules Strangling the Serpents Sent by Hera*. He also packed at least one print by Thomas Gainsborough and portraits of Queen Caroline and King George IV.<sup>55</sup>

In 1841, when the missionaries contacted William Major, he was already an established portrait painter. William, his brother Richard, his sister Elizabeth, and their spouses and children joined the Church in London in 1842.<sup>56</sup> After a successful mission to Newbury, Major was made the London Conference President.<sup>57</sup> In 1844, he immigrated to the United States with his wife, Sarah Coles, and their seven-year-old son, William Jr. Upon his arrival in Nauvoo, Major immediately became acquainted with the leadership of the Church.<sup>58</sup> Because the Mormons were consciously seeking "anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy,"<sup>59</sup> Major was able to add significantly to Mormon education and culture. Not only was he widely sought out to create "likenesses," but he contributed as an art teacher. As part of their lessons, students copied from the prints he brought from England.<sup>60</sup>

Possibly the arrival of Major sparked the idea to place framed portraits of Church leaders and their wives in the temple. In January 1845, John Taylor sat for his likeness,<sup>61</sup> and other Church leaders also employed Major as an artist.<sup>62</sup> Willard Richards, a counselor to Brigham Young, and Richards's wife, Jennetta Richards, modeled for Major in the Seventies Hall beginning in spring 1845.<sup>63</sup>

**Selah Van Sickle.** Selah Van Sickle had a more rustic background than Major. Van Sickle was born in New York in 1809, but his parents moved the

family to central Ohio in autumn 1817, when Selah was eight years old. John Waddell Van Sickle, Selah's first cousin, later described Selah as "a man of warm and generous feelings, and superior intellect."<sup>64</sup> Selah's biography specifically mentions his lack of college education and does not report any artistic instruction. Likely, he was one of a force of self-trained artists who were multiplying across America at that time. Whenever there was an opportunity to meet a professional artist, they gleaned whatever tips they could, but mostly they used their Yankee resourcefulness. Artists taught themselves by copying engravings from available books. Some were fortunate enough to obtain instruction books printed in America's eastern cities or in England.<sup>65</sup>

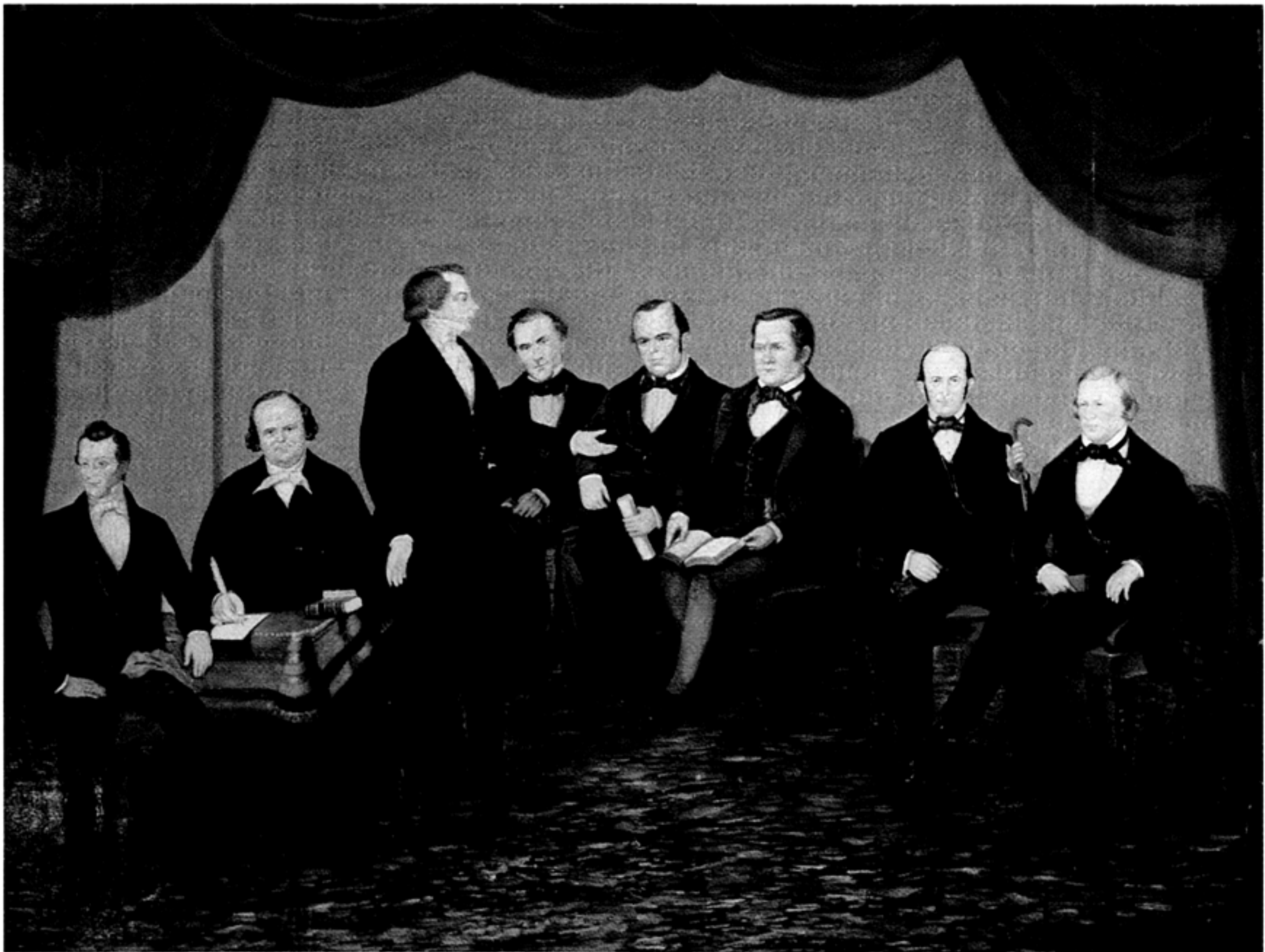
Selah Van Sickle probably heard about Joseph Smith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ohio early in 1845. He arrived in Nauvoo about six months after Major, in spring 1845, with four small children and his pregnant wife, Mary Dunham.<sup>66</sup> Like Major, Selah Van Sickle was acquainted with the leaders of the Church. He fully participated in the culture and practices of the Mormons and was a religious man throughout his life.<sup>67</sup>

**Portrait Painters.** The two professional artists soon formed an association. The *Nauvoo Neighbor* encouraged the citizens of Nauvoo to patronize this local talent. Under the title of "Fine Arts," this paragraph appeared on June 4, 1845: "We have two portrait painters in the city, Mr. Major and Mr. Van Sickle. They are both good workmen, and as the saints generally are 'men greatly wondered at,' it will be no more than justice to increase the wonderment by excellent *likenesses*."<sup>68</sup>

During summer 1845, the joint studio of Major and Van Sickle was busy. Brigham Young commissioned Van Sickle to paint the portrait that served as the centerpiece of the celestial room. Among other projects, Van Sickle painted a life-sized portrait of a man and women strolling with a boy about seven years old. Unfortunately, the subjects of the painting have long ago been forgotten.<sup>69</sup> Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde posed for pictures that Major set in a group painting with Joseph and Hyrum Smith and other members of the Quorum of the Twelve in Nauvoo<sup>70</sup> (fig. 9). Major also began portraits of the Heber C. Kimball family and the Brigham Young family.<sup>71</sup> During these sittings by Major and Van Sickle, the larger portraits for the Nauvoo Temple may have been created. Brigadier General Charles C. Rich, who held many positions of leadership in Nauvoo,<sup>72</sup> and his wife, Sarah Pea Rich, posed for the British artist.<sup>73</sup> Their paintings hung in the Nauvoo Temple on the right and the left sides of the portrait of Hyrum Smith.<sup>74</sup>

When it was time to decorate the temple, the portraits were moved from Major and Van Sickle's studio in the Seventies Hall, as Heber C. Kimball





**FIG. 9.** *Joseph Smith and His Friends* (left to right: Hyrum Smith, Willard Richards, Joseph Smith, Orson Pratt, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Hyde, Heber C. Kimball, and Brigham Young), by William W. Major (1804–1854). Oil on canvas, 23½" x 31½", 1843–1844. Portraits of Young, Hyde, Kimball, Richards, and Hyrum Smith hung in the celestial room of the Nauvoo Temple.

noted in his diary: “Sartaday the 6 [December 1845] . . . Returned back to the Temple, put up the Looking glasses, and Maps and potrats [portraits]. As William W. Majors brought som up from his chop [shop] to Adorn our room.”<sup>75</sup>

Major was paid over \$180 in goods (a wagon, yoke of oxen, cowbells, shoes, boots, socks, corn, oats, and flour) by the Nauvoo Temple Committee.<sup>76</sup> Although the ledger does not record what services Major rendered for this wage, it was probably for his artwork. There is no indication that he performed other duties for the Church in Nauvoo, and he was characterized by Brigham Young as a portrait painter.<sup>77</sup>

The Nauvoo Temple Committee Daybook gives some indication of how much a portrait cost in Nauvoo. George Miller, the Second Bishop of the Church, and his wife, Mary Catherine Miller, paid for their portraits with a cow and a cord of wood from Temple Committee funds. These goods were worth about fourteen dollars.<sup>78</sup> In mid-nineteenth-century Illinois, individual portraits painted with oil on canvas cost from fifteen to twenty dollars.<sup>79</sup>

Ironically, Van Sickle did not internalize the symbolism represented in his own painting of Brigham Young: he refused to follow the Church leaders west. After a year in Nauvoo, Van Sickle moved to Michigan and then to Ohio. There he painted “the Panorama of the Life of Christ, which was . . . highly praised by all who saw it.” During the rest of his life, he joined different religious groups including the Spiritualists, finally settling on what he regarded as the true “Cabalistic Philosophy.” He died in Michigan sometime after 1880.<sup>80</sup>

When Van Sickle chose not to move with the Mormons, Major’s artistic talents became even more important to the Church. Crying babies, squirming children, proud mothers and fathers, elderly matriarchs and patriarchs, and Church authorities were subjects of portraits by the British professional. Indian chiefs living in Nebraska and the Utah Territory stood silently in front of his scrutinizing gaze and quick hand. He sketched the scenery while crossing the plains in 1848 and recorded on canvas pictures of early Utah settlements. He died October 2, 1854, while serving in the British Mission.<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusion

In the final planning and commencement of temple ordinances, artwork was given the same detailed thought as the rest of the building. This care speaks highly of the pioneer’s efforts to cultivate beauty in their religious buildings. But the portraits were also chosen for their symbolism, including that of the commissioned paintings of several Church leaders and their spouses (table 1).

The early Saints’ emphasis on symbolic portraits continues in the new Nauvoo Temple, where the Nauvoo Temple interior design group imitated the original temple’s decor by hanging numerous portraits of pioneers. Some of the portraits are copies, some are originals moved from other Church locations, and some are portraits commissioned especially for the reconstructed Nauvoo Temple. The interior design group’s work in this area is not yet complete. As portraits that hung in the first Nauvoo Temple are identified, the group hopes to commission reproductions for the new temple.<sup>82</sup>

Jill Major is a professional writer and researcher. She received a B.S. from Weber State University and a B.S. from the University of Utah. Currently, she is completing a biography of William Warner Major, which will be published by BYU Studies. The author would like to thank her husband, Kenneth A. Major, the great-great-grandson of Nauvoo Temple artist William Warner Major, for making this article possible.



TABLE 1  
Artworks in the Celestial Room of the First Nauvoo Temple

Portrait	Artist	Location in Temple Celestial Room
Brigham Young <i>Delivering the Law of the Lord</i>	Selah Van Sickle	East wall
Orson Hyde	William W. Major?	"
Heber C. Kimball	William W. Major	"
Willard Richards	William W. Major	"
George A. Smith	unknown	"
John Taylor	William W. Major	"
L. N. Scovil	unknown—Major painted family group	East side of the first division of the arch
Bathsheba Bigler Smith	William W. Major?	"
George A. Smith (second portrait)	Bathsheba Smith?	"
John Smith, the Patriarch	unknown—possibly painted in Kirtland	"
Mother Lucy Smith	Sutcliffe Maudsley?	"
William Cottier	unknown	West side of the first division of the arch
Heber C. Kimball (second portrait)	unknown	"
Caroline Smith	unknown	"
John L. Smith	unknown	"
George Miller	William W. Major	East side of the second division
Mary Catherine Miller	William W. Major	"
Charles C. Rich	William W. Major	"
Sarah Pea Rich	William W. Major	"
Clarissa Smith	unknown	"
Hyrum Smith	unknown—possibly painted in Kirtland	"
Leonora Taylor	William W. Major? Engraving?	"
1842 Plot Map of Nauvoo (with inset of Joseph Smith)	Gustavus Hills (map), Sutcliffe Maudsley (inset)	West partition

1. Heber C. Kimball, *On a Potter's Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball*, ed. Stanley B. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 162, 165.

2. Heber C. Kimball, 1845–1846 Diary, December 11, 1845, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; William Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, ed. George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 206. This description is included in both books because William Clayton was the scribe for Heber C. Kimball's temple diary.

3. Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206.

4. Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206.

5. Widtsoe Family Collection, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah. The location and the artist of the portrait are unknown.

6. Brigham Young, Office Files, July 7, 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives. This portrait now hangs on the first floor in the lecture room of the Pioneer Memorial Museum, International Society, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Pioneer Memorial Museum).

7. John W. Van Sickle, *A History of the Van Syckle Family, in the United States of America, Embracing a Full Biographical Sketch of the Author* (Springfield, Ohio: By the author, 1880), 208. The book was published while Selah Van Sickle was living.

8. Those portraits are of Jennetta Richards Richards (Pioneer Memorial Museum); Charles Coulson Rich (Pioneer Memorial Museum); James Ferguson (Pioneer Memorial Museum); and Rachel Burgess Fanness (private collection).

9. It is certain that the Van Sickle portrait was the one displayed in the Nauvoo Temple because the recorded title matches the image's emphasis on this book.

There is no record of payment for this portrait. Brigham Young often did not record the details of the money he withdrew from Temple Committee funds, so it is possible Van Sickle was paid in cash through one of these withdrawals. After ordinance work was completed in the Nauvoo Temple, Selah Van Sickle's portrait of Brigham Young was removed from its frame, rolled up, and transported to Salt Lake by covered wagon. Apparently it was not displayed again in the 1800s. The painting was placed in a cupboard in the Daughters of Utah Pioneers' former headquarters in the basement of the Utah Capitol. When the move was made to the present museum in 1950, Kate B. Carter, president of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, discovered the painting and had it framed. It was identified by a descendant of Selah Van Sickle in 1971 because it was mentioned in Van Sickle's biographical sketch.

10. Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 530. "The names of those who contributed [to the temple] were carefully recorded, together with the amount, and placed in the Book of the Law of the Lord, which is today in the First Presidency's vault in Salt Lake City." Leonard J. Arrington, "Mormon Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *BYU Studies* 27, no. 1 (1987): 72.

11. Mercy Thompson, Autobiographical Sketch, holograph, Church Archives, 8.

12. Brigham Young and others, "Baptism for the Dead: An Epistle of the Twelve to the Saints of the Last Days," *Times and Seasons* 3 (December 15, 1841): 626; italics in original.

13. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 5:108 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

14. *History of the Church*, 5: 125.



15. R. B. Thompson, "Minutes of the General Conference," *Times and Seasons* 2 (April 15, 1841): 386.

16. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff, Fourth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: History of His Life and Labors as Recorded in His Daily Journals*, ed. Matthias F. Cowley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), 670.

17. Susan Easton Black, "Joseph Smith III and the 'Lost Sheep,'" in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint History: Illinois*, ed. H. Dean Garrett (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1995), 55–56. Brigham Young held the office of President of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles until he was ordained President on the Church in December 1847.

18. Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206.

19. Museum of Church History and Art; Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206. John Smith was a brother of Joseph Smith Sr.

20. The location of Clarissa Smith's portrait is unknown.

21. Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206. The portrait of Patriarch John Smith is on display at the Museum of Church History and Art. It was brought across the plains by George A. Smith and Bathsheba Smith. The portraits of Charles C. Rich and Sarah Pea Rich are in the Pioneer Memorial Museum. The locations of the other portraits are not known.

22. Betty I. Madden, *Art, Crafts, and Architecture in Early Illinois* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974,) 83, 84.

23. Nauvoo Temple Records Ledgers, Book B, October 24, 1844; George D. Smith transcribed the name as William "Collier," but a search of the original holograph confirmed the name is "Cottier." Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206.

24. Richard G. Oman and Robert O. Davis, *Images of Faith: Art of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 6; Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206. The painting, a gift of Eldred Gee Smith, is located in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).

25. The current locations of these paintings are unknown.

26. Locations of Caroline Smith and John L. Smith portraits are unknown. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, Lucy Mack Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 352; Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206.

27. Wilford Woodruff Collection, Church Archives. From a note by Bathsheba Smith appended to a letter written by George A. Smith to Wilford Woodruff, April 13, 1845. The Woodruffs were serving a mission in England.

28. In her autobiography, Bathsheba Smith explains, "At Nauvoo I was privileged to study drawing and painting from an artist, Mr. Majors, who allowed us to draw from copies of Reynolds and Gainsborough." Bathsheba W. Smith, *The Autobiography of Bathsheba W. Smith*, ed. Alice Merrill Horne, 20, copy in possession of Harriet Horne Arrington, Salt Lake City.

29. Bathsheba Smith's Nauvoo Sketchbook, Museum of Church History and Art.

30. Harriet Horne Arrington, "Bathsheba Bigler Smith," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992) 3:1320–21.

31. Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206.

32. Oman and Davis, *Images of Faith*, 6.

33. Nauvoo Temple Building Committee Records, July 2, 1845; July 22, 1845; and September 12, 1845, Church Archives.

Lucy recorded in her history that in Palmyra, New York, she had “done considerable at painting oil-cloth coverings for tables, stands, etc.” Her business was so successful that she was able to purchase provisions and furniture. Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 63–64.

34. See, for example, Nauvoo Temple Building Committee Records, January 20, 1846, Church Archives.

35. Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206.

36. Gustavus Hills, *Map of the City of Nauvoo Drawn Principally from the Plats of the Original Surveys* (ca. 1842; recopied, Nauvoo Restoration, 1971), copy located in Harold B. Lee Library; an original copy of the map is displayed at the Museum of Church History and Art.

37. Advertisement, Brigham Young, “Map of Nauvoo,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, May 1, 1844, 3; Hills, *Map of the City of Nauvoo*.

38. Glen M. Leonard, “Picturing the Nauvoo Legion,” *BYU Studies* 35, no. 2 (1995): 101, 132.

39. *History of the Church*, 5:44.

40. Leonard, “Picturing the Nauvoo Legion,” 96.

41. The matching portraits of Joseph and Emma were passed down through Emma’s family and are now owned by the Community of Christ, formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

42. Glen M. Leonard, email to author, March 19, 2002.

43. *History of the Church*, 7:260.

44. John Francis McDermott, *The Lost Panoramas of the Mississippi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 12, 22.

45. Journal History of the Church, April 4, 1845, Church Archives, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library. Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:61–62, September 8, 10, 1845; Philo Dibble, “Brother Philo Dibble’s Sceneries, Museum, &c.” *Millennial Star* 11 (January 1, 1849): 11; Glen Leonard, “Picturing the Nauvoo Legion,” 95–136. The talents of the engraver and stone lithographer Robert Campbell and artist William Thomas were also employed. There are indications that Sutcliffe Maudsley and Selah Van Sickle may have helped in this immense undertaking.

46. Philo Dibble, “Will Be Exhibited,” *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 30, 1845, 3.

47. Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:61–62, September 8, 10, 1845; Dibble, “Brother Philo Dibble’s Sceneries,” 11; Leonard, “Picturing the Nauvoo Legion,” 111.

48. Louisa Barnes Pratt, Journal and Autobiography, February 21, 1860, Church Archives.

49. Bruce R. Finlinson, manager of Nauvoo Temple interior design group, conversation with author, May 28, 2002.

50. Oman and Davis, *Images of Faith*, 6.

51. St. James, Bristol, England, baptism records.

52. Charles Humphries and William C. Smith, *Music Publishing in the British Isles from the Earliest Times to the Middle of the Thirteenth Century* (London: Cassell, 1954), 224–5; Philip H. Highfill Jr., Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660–1800*, 16 vols. (Urbana: University of



Illinois Press, 1984), 10:60–61; Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, ed., *The Dictionary of National Biography Founded in 1882 by George Smith*, 22 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1917), 12:832; Frank Kidson, *British Music Publishers, Printers, and Engravers: London, Provincial, Scottish, and Irish* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1900, 1967), 76; Ian Maxted, *The London Book Trade, 1775–1800: A Preliminary Checklist of Members* (Kent, England: William Dawson and Sons, 1977), 146; Bristol, England, Directories (1806, 1807, 1811), copy in author's possession. There are thirteen pieces of music published by "R. Major" listed in the Catalogue of Printed Music, British Library.

53. Humphries and Smith, *Music Publishing in the British Isles*, 224; Highfill, Burnim, and Langhans, *Biographical Dictionary of Actors*, 61; Maxted, *London Book Trade*, 146. From 1811 to 1818, this business was located at 43 Bedford Street on the Strand; from 1818 to 1820, it was located at 1 Clare Court, Drury Lane; and after 1820 it was located at 7 High Holborn.

54. Leigh, *New Picture of London*, 292.

55. Smith, *Autobiography of Bathsheba W. Smith*, 20; Bathsheba Smith's Nauvoo Sketchbook.

56. Theobald's Road Branch, Record of Members, Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; Marylebone Branch, Record of Members, Family History Library.

57. Newbury Branch, Record of Members, Family History Library; British Mission, Manuscript History and Historical Reports, January 10, 1844, Church Archives.

58. William H. Kimball and James Marsden, "Death of Elder William Warner Major," *Millennial Star*, 16 (November 4, 1854): 700.

59. Article of Faith 13; *History of the Church*, 4:541.

60. Note by Bathsheba Smith appended to George A. Smith to Wilford Woodruff; Bathsheba Smith, *Autobiography of Bathsheba W. Smith*, 20; Bathsheba Smith's Nauvoo Sketchbook.

61. Dean C. Jessee, ed., "The John Taylor Nauvoo Journal," *BYU Studies* 23, no. 3 (1983): 34, 39.

62. Kimball and Marsden, "Death of Elder William Warner Major," 700; Jessee, "The John Taylor Nauvoo Journal," 34, 39.

63. Willard Richards, Journal, July 15, 21, 28; August 13, 16, 1845, Church Archives.

64. Van Sickle, *The Genealogy of the Family of Ferdinandus Van Sycklin*, 208.

65. Madden, *Art, Crafts, and Architecture in Early Illinois*, 82–85.

66. Van Sickle, *The Genealogy of the Family of Ferdinandus Van Sycklin*, 207–8.

67. See High Priests of Nauvoo and Early Salt Lake, Church Archives; Nauvoo Temple Endowment Register, 1845–1846, Church Archives.

68. "Fine Arts," *Nauvoo Neighbor* 3, no. 5 (June 4, 1845): 2.

69. Pioneer Memorial Museum.

70. Museum of Church History and Art.

71. Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo, and Incidents from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Woman's Exponent* 12 (October 15, 1883): 74.

72. *History of the Church*, 4:12, 287, 295, 323, 414.

73. Pioneer Memorial Museum. This information is in the files of the International Society, Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

74. Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 206; Pioneer Memorial Museum.

75. Kimball, *On a Potter's Wheel*, 162, 165.

76. Nauvoo Temple Building Committee Records, 1846, Church Archives, show that Major made draws from temple-committee funds on March 11, 12; April 17, 23, 24, 25; May 7, 11, 14, 15, 23, 26, 29; June 4, 5, 13; July 3, 14, 20, 23; and December 25, 1846.

77. Leland R. Nelson, comp., *The Journal of Brigham: Brigham Young's Own Story in His Own Words* (Provo, Utah: Council Press, 1980), 190.

78. Nauvoo Temple Building Committee Records, August 14, 1845; February 13, 1846.

79. Madden, *Art, Crafts, and Architecture in Early Illinois*, 84.

80. Van Sickle, *The Genealogy of the Family of Ferdinandus Van Sycklin*, 208. The Spiritualists believed that spirits communicate with the world through séances.

81. Kimball and Marsden, "Death of Elder William Warner Major," 700.

82. Finlinson, conversation with author.