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The Laie Hawaii Temple: A History from Its Conception to Completion

Richard J. Dowse

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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August 2012

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ABSTRACT

The Laie Hawaii Temple: A History from Its Conception to Completion

Richard J. Dowse
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Master of Arts

The Laie Hawaii Temple majestically overlooks the beaches of Oahu and has stood as an emblem of the Latter-day Saint faith to the world since 1919. Although the structure is iconic and highly significant to Latter-day Saints, a comprehensive history of the Laie Hawaii Temple has never been published. This thesis provides such a history from the conception of the temple until its dedication.

The history of this particular temple is important for several reasons. At its dedication, the temple in Laie became the fifth operating temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was the first dedicated temple outside of the state of Utah (following the exodus) and outside of North America. It was also the first temple built in one of the missions of the Church.

It was a pioneering temple as one of the first that catered to a large number of patrons from different cultures speaking different languages. Its multi-cultural, multi-lingual integration is something that would not be seen in other temples for several decades. Over the years, the temple and the attractions built around it have drawn millions of other visitors as well. Its location has made it an internationally recognized edifice and a valuable tool for the Church to introduce its message to the world.

This history is also compelling because of what the temple in Laie, Hawaii represents in terms of the Latter-day Saint conception of the doctrine of the “gathering.” As the first temple built outside of the traditional centers of Mormon colonization, this temple became an early prototype of a method of gathering that does not appear to begin taking hold Church-wide until the mid-twentieth century.

Ahead of its time in other ways, the temple was built in a place where, according to the thinking of the time, Church membership was not yet sizable enough to warrant a temple. This thesis explains why the temple was built in Hawaii. These aspects of the temple’s history produced ramifications that continue to impact the Church today, nearly 100 years later.

As with many temples, a folk history of oral tradition has developed around the story of the Laie Hawaii Temple. This thesis will also provide a review of the historical record and offer clarity in sorting through that tradition.

Keywords: Laie Hawaii Temple, Laie, Hawaii, temple, temples, gathering, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Latter-day Saints, Mormon, Joseph F. Smith, Reed Smoot, Charles W. Nibley, Samuel E. Woolley, Ralph E. Woolley, Hyrum C. Pope, Harold W. Burton, Walter T. Spalding, Lewis A. Ramsey, LeConte Stewart, A.B. Wright, Avard Fairbanks, J. Leo Fairbanks, friezes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe my heartfelt thanks to many for their assistance with this thesis. Without the help of countless people, this work would not have been realized. First, I thank my parents, Hank and Judy Dowse. Next to my wife, they understand more than any other the challenges accompanying this endeavor. And, next to my wife, they have patiently and willingly done more than any other to help me finish this undertaking. I also thank my other parents, Doug and Mary Ann Grant. I extend my appreciation to Mary Ann for so willingly sharing her time, so I could write, and I thank Doug for so willingly sharing his wife. My sister, Julie, also deserves acknowledgement for her caring help and support.

I am much obliged for the concern, support and flexibility of Russ Bulloch, my compassionate area director, and Mike Graf, my remarkable principal. This would not have happened without their intervention. I am also thankful to my friends at the Church History Library; namely, Mike Landon, Bill Slaughter, Emily Utt, and Chad Orton. They entered the scene late in the game, but like high dollar relief pitchers, they saved the day. Their contributions have helped more than they likely realize.

I am grateful to all of my religion professors, each of whom assisted in my pursuit of this degree. I would especially like to recognize Dr. Richard E. Bennett for being committed to my success at a critical point in my life. And my deep thanks go to Dr. Ray Huntington for making things happen and for always being so cheerful and encouraging.

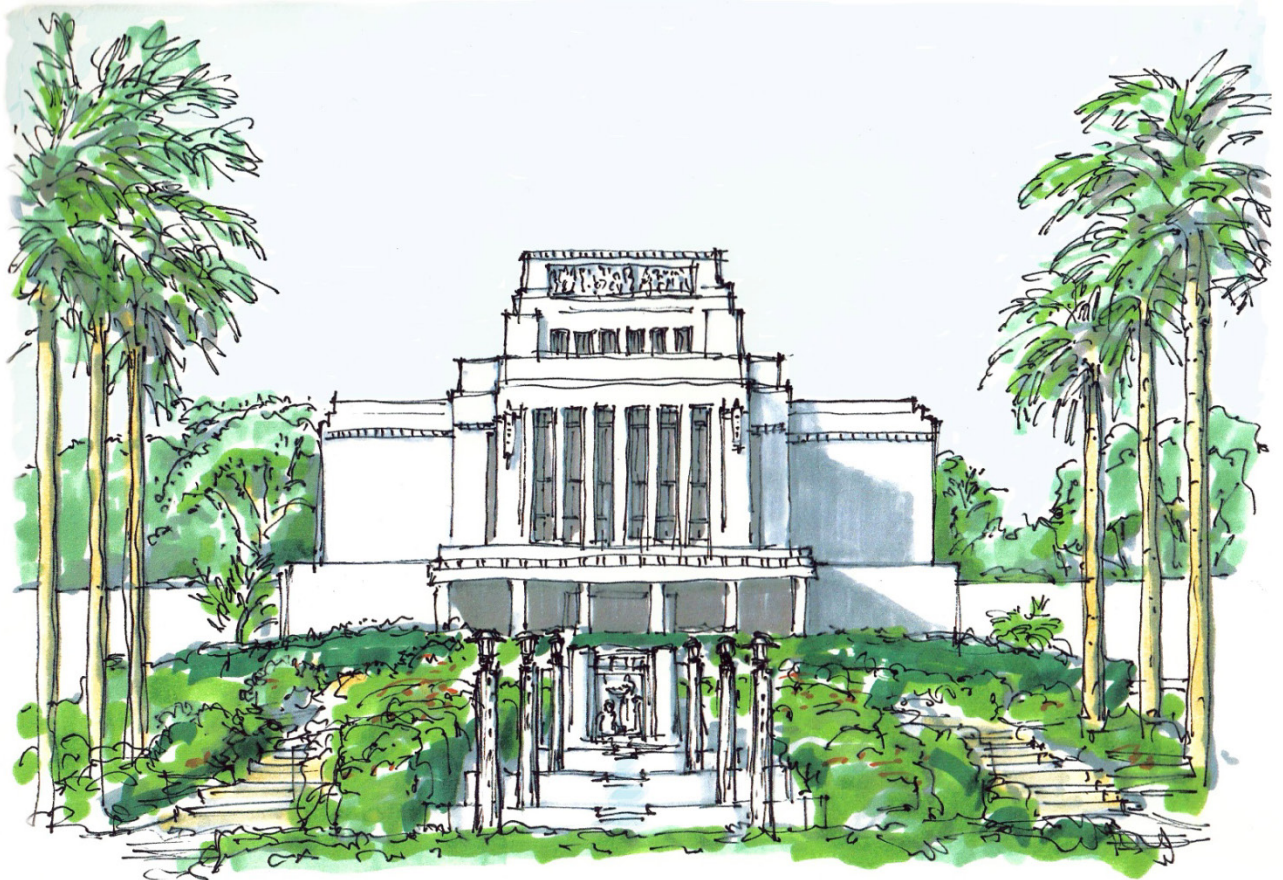
I am forever indebted to each of my committee members. I owe my appreciation to Dr. Craig Manscill for encouraging me to challenge myself in a way that ultimately expanded the scope of this thesis and positively changed its course. All who venture to read this thesis will also be grateful for Julie Ogborn, Brother Manscill's assistant. Julie is the most adept editor I know. I

am so thankful for the hours of hard work she spent pouring over this thesis. Dr. J.B. Haws also deserves my thanks for so willingly signing on to this project in the eleventh hour. The suggestions and support he provided was invaluable. I cannot thank Brother Cowan's assistant, and my former student, Rachelle Price, enough either. She is brilliant in more ways than one and she patiently read every word of this thesis—more than once. And, of course, I owe a big *MAHALO NUI LOA* to my committee chair, Dr. Richard Cowan. He is a true miracle man! My hope is to one day see all that is most important as clearly as Brother Cowan does. You are an inspiration to me, Brother Cowan. Aloha!

Finally, my love and gratitude goes to my little family. I thank Andrew, Christian, Madeline, and James. I am so thankful for their patience and for their understanding when Daddy had to devote so much time to what seemed to become his selfish step-child. I am especially grateful for all of their prayers. Their pleas to help Daddy finish his “feesis” have finally been answered. Guess what guys? Daddy's done! Yea!

Most importantly, I must express my gratitude to Catherine, my lovely wife. Catherine has given whole-heartedly for this thesis and subsequent degree to become a reality. She has willingly, and more than patiently, sacrificed time, convenience, and the companionship of her husband during this process. On more days than I would like to acknowledge she has juggled the needs and demands of four little children on her own. What's more, she has been an unwavering source of strength to me when, in truth, she was the one in need of encouragement and support. For her love and selflessness, I will always be indebted, and to her this thesis is dedicated.

In conclusion, I must express my deepest gratitude to the Lord, my God. Nothing short of His amazing grace has enabled me to finish. With the completion of this thesis, yet another mighty miracle may be attributed to the Almighty hand of the Lord. Hallelujah!



The Laie Hawaii Temple, 2010. Sketch by Paul L. Anderson.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Hawaiian Islands are currently home to more than seventy thousand members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹ The Polynesian Cultural Center, a world-famous cultural theme park founded by the Church, has attracted over thirty-three million visitors since it opened its doors in 1963.² Also, on the island of Oahu, twenty-four hundred college students attend the most internationally diverse campus in the United States—Church-owned, Brigham Young University–Hawaii (BYU–Hawaii).³ Near the campus and cultural center, the Laie Hawaii Temple majestically overlooks the beach, standing as an emblem of the Latter-day Saint faith to the world since 1919.

Although the structure is iconic and highly significant to Latter-day Saints, a comprehensive history of the Laie Hawaii Temple has never been published before. The purpose of this thesis is to provide such a history from the conception of the temple until its dedication.

The history of this particular temple is important for several reasons. At its dedication in 1919, the temple in Laie became the fifth operating temple of the Church. It was the first dedicated temple outside of the state of Utah and outside of North America. It was also the first temple built in one of the missions of the Church.

Currently, the temple serves the Latter-day Saints in the Hawaiian and Marshall Islands, but for decades it serviced a much larger area. Until temples were eventually dedicated in New

¹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Facts and Statistics,” USA – Hawaii. <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/united-states/state/hawaii> (accessed May 19, 2012).

² Polynesian Cultural Center, “Purpose and History,” <http://www.polynesia.com/purpose-and-history.html> (accessed August 5, 2010).

³ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Education,” <http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/background-information/education> (accessed May 19, 2012). According to a *U.S. News and World Report* survey, in 2006 BYU–Hawaii was the most internationally diverse campus in the United States, with more than 74 countries represented.

Zealand (1958) and Japan (1980), the Laie Hawaii Temple was the principal temple for members in Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, and the Asia Rim, as well as members in Hawaii.⁴ As a result, it was a pioneering temple as one of the first that catered to a large number of patrons from different cultures speaking different languages.⁵ Its multi-cultural, multi-lingual integration is something that would not be seen in other temples for several decades.

Over the years, the temple and the attractions built around it have drawn millions of other visitors as well. Its location has made it an internationally recognized edifice and a valuable tool for the Church to introduce its message to the world.

This history is also compelling because of what the temple in Laie, Hawaii, represents in terms of the Latter-day Saint conception of the doctrine of the “gathering.” As the first temple built “away from the traditional centers of Mormon colonization in Utah,” this temple becomes an early prototype of a method of gathering that does not appear to begin taking hold Church-wide until the mid-twentieth century.⁶

The temple was ahead of its time in other ways as well. It was built in a place where, according to the thinking of the time, Church membership was not yet sizeable enough to warrant a temple. This thesis will explain why the temple was built in Hawaii. These aspects of the temple’s history produced ramifications that continue to impact the Church today, nearly 100 years later.

As with many temples, a folk history of oral tradition has developed around the story of the Laie Hawaii Temple. This thesis will also provide a review of the historical record and offer clarity in sorting through that tradition.

⁴ *The Hawaii Temple*, Pamphlet (Salt Lake: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979).

⁵“The Hawaiian Temple: Laie, Oahu, Hawaii,” *The Genealogical and Historical Magazine of the Arizona Temple District*, 1945, 16.

⁶ Richard O. Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1989), 120.

A Brief History of the Restoration of the Church and Temple Worship

One early spring morning in 1820, a fourteen-year-old young man ventured into the woods bordering his family's farm. His purpose was to find a solitary location where he could kneel and offer his first audible prayer to God. He was a spiritually sensitive young man, concerned with the welfare of his soul yet confused from his exposure to a myriad of competing religious philosophies. The boy's family moved to a small town in western New York State and was soon caught up in what he described as "an unusual excitement on the subject of religion" (Joseph Smith History 1:5).

The "Second Great Awakening"⁷ is what historians later termed the religious enthusiasm that swept the region and engulfed Joseph Smith Jr. Committed to his quest for truth, young Smith desired to unite himself with whichever church he found to be the one God fully sanctioned. In the midst of his search, Smith was reading the Bible and encountered a verse in the New Testament that greatly impacted him: "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). Adhering to that admonition, Smith knelt in the forest and asked God with simple, yet strong, faith for the wisdom he was lacking.

According to Joseph Smith Jr., God the Father and His son, Jesus Christ, appeared to answer his prayer personally. They forbade Joseph to join any of the churches, informing him that they were all corrupted forms of the church Jesus organized while He was on the earth. Such institutions undoubtedly possessed portions, perhaps even great amounts, of the truth, and their

⁷ Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (1957); specifically for New York and the area. See also Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (1951); Judith Wellman, *Grassroots Reform in the Burned-over District of Upstate New York: Religion, Abolitionism, and Democracy* (2000); and C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of the Churches of Christ*, (Abilene Christian University Press, 1988).

pews were filled with devout followers, whose sincerity remains without question. These churches lacked, however, Christ's authority in addition to a fullness of His doctrines, rites, ordinances, and structure—thus, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5).

Through this experience and many subsequent interactions with other heavenly beings, Latter-day Saints affirm that Joseph Smith was called to be a prophet of God and was given the priesthood, or the authority to act in God's behalf on earth. Endowed with this priesthood authority, Joseph Smith then acted under divine direction to restore the original Church of Jesus Christ again to the earth.

According to believers, this restoration of Christ's Church in modern times is the fulfillment of the Apostle Peter's prophecy of “the times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21), and requires the reinstatement of all of the doctrines, practices, and rituals of the original Church. Temple building and temple worship have always been characteristics of God's chosen people as evidenced in the tabernacle built by Moses and the Children of Israel, the Temple of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and eventually the Temple of Herod, which was frequented by Jesus himself.

These sanctuaries have served several significant functions throughout time. As Richard O. Cowan, a noted scholar who has studied Latter-day Saint temples extensively, explained: “First, they were regarded as places of contact between heaven and earth, or of communication between God and man. Second, these sacred structures were also places for performing Holy priesthood ordinances.”⁸

These sacred ceremonies are important because an essential tenet of the Latter-day Saint religion is a belief in the immortality of the soul. Latter-day Saint theology teaches that “all

⁸ Richard O. Cowan, “Joseph Smith and the Restoration of Temple Service,” in *Joseph Smith and the Doctrinal Restoration: The 34th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University and Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2005), 109.

human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God.” They believe that every person on earth is “a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents” with a divine nature and destiny. Their doctrine states that each person’s spirit lived in God’s presence prior to mortal birth and will continue to live after death. Each spirit comes here to “obtain a physical body and earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life.”⁹

The Bible also teaches that Christ conquered the mortal death introduced by the fall of Adam and Eve (see 1 Corinthians 15:20–22). Thus, Mormons believe that because of Christ’s resurrection from the dead, every person will attain immortality, which is to live forever as a resurrected being. They say that for most, the reuniting of the spirit with an immortal physical body will begin to occur after the second coming of Jesus Christ. The Church asserts that immortality is a free gift to everyone regardless of their circumstances or deeds in this life. Therefore, the ultimate goal of faithful Latter-day Saints is not immortality, it is eternal life. Eternal life, also called exaltation, is to live forever in God’s presence and continue as families (see Doctrine & Covenants 131:1–4).

Although eternal life, like immortality, is made possible through the atonement of Jesus Christ, it is achieved through “obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (see Articles of Faith 1:3). Ordinances are official, sacred acts performed by the authority of the priesthood, such as baptism. Latter-day Saints interpret Jesus’ words literally when he said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). In addition to baptism, other necessary or saving ordinances, and their associated covenants, or promises, are needed to return to God’s presence.

⁹ “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, November 1995, 102. This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the general Relief Society meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Temples are vital to Mormon theology because that is where many of these saving ordinances are performed. Latter-day Saints believe that the “sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”¹⁰

It is recorded that Joseph Smith began receiving revelations concerning the building of a “House of the Lord” in the early 1830’s (Doctrine & Covenants 57:2–3). Temples were subsequently built in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois. Following the martyrdom of Joseph Smith in Carthage, Illinois, his followers were exiled from Nauvoo, forcing them to leave the state and their temple behind. The Latter-day Saints’ exodus west, however, did not end their desire to obey what they believed to be a God-given mandate to build these holy structures. They resumed building temples when they settled in the Rocky Mountains. By the turn of the century, four temples had been dedicated in the Utah Territory. The temple in Laie Hawaii would be the first temple dedicated during the twentieth century and the first outside the continental United States.

Several theses and many books have been written to tell the histories of other Latter-day Saint temples. Obviously, much has been written on the Salt Lake Temple as well as the temples in Kirtland, Ohio, and Nauvoo, Illinois. Other less-heralded temples, however, have also received attention, including those in Logan, Manti, Saint George, and even Vernal in Utah; as well as in Cardston, Alberta, Mesa, Arizona, Washington, D.C., Denver, Colorado, Idaho Falls, Idaho, and Colonia Juárez, in northern México. While each of these temples is historic in its own right, the circumstances and stories which comprise the history of the Laie Hawaii Temple are no less compelling.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Review of Related Literature

A review of the literature on the Laie Hawaii Temple is rather brief. As noted, there is no comprehensive history of the temple. In fact, the author is not aware of any books dedicated solely to the Laie Hawaii Temple, except one elegantly arranged book—a very limited, privately published volume. In six pages, the book presents a timeline of events related to Hawaii and only briefly mentions the temple. It then uses many beautiful pictures to show in depth the renovation and rededication of the temple in late 2010.¹¹ Aside from this book, a study of the Laie Hawaii Temple is consigned to a dispersed collection of sundry book sections, chapters, articles, and pamphlets.

Articles that only provide the Laie Hawaii Temple’s basic facts make up much of the available literature. The treatment is often brief and typically draws heavily from a few seminal pieces. While a thorough handling of the Laie Hawaii Temple will necessarily require additional repetition of fundamental facts and information, many parts of this thesis will draw heavily from primary sources—including letters, minutes, diaries, and interviews—in order to present a fresh view of the subject and to provide a meaningful contribution.

It is in no way the object of this thesis to discuss in any detail the purpose of holy temples or “to trespass upon the sacred precincts of temple covenants and worship.”¹² Those desirous to learn more about the history and nature of temples, as well as the work that takes place therein, will find Latter-day Saint collections replete with books written for this purpose that are aimed at varied audiences with different levels of familiarity. For our purposes, readers are directed to two books widely recognized in the Latter-day Saint (LDS) community as the definitive works on the

¹¹ Scott D. Whiting and others, *The Laie Hawaii Temple: 2010 Dedication* (Blurb.com, 2011).

¹² Richard E. Bennett, “Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept’: Reflections on the 1877 Commencement of the Performance of Endowments and Sealings for the Dead,” *BYU Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005): 39.

subject. These books, written by apostles in the Church,¹³ are namely, *The Holy Temple* by Boyd K. Packer¹⁴ and *The House of the Lord* by James E. Talmage.¹⁵

The Ensign, the LDS Church's official magazine, dedicated its entire October 2010 issue to the subject of LDS temples, explaining their purposes and various aspects of temple worship. The issue featured selections from both of the books previously noted in addition to pieces from several Church presidents and an apostle on the subject.

For context and an overview of the history leading up to the building of the temple in Hawaii, several books are recommended. Historian R. Lanier Britsch, perhaps the foremost expert on the Church in the Pacific, has written extensively on the subject. His numerous articles vary from general histories to detailed accounts of specific incidents, but two of his books are must reads in order to become conversant with the Church's history in the South Pacific. In the book *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, Britsch gives a comprehensive view of the Church's introduction and involvement in all of that region's major islands and archipelagos. Six chapters from this nearly six-hundred-page book focus on Hawaii, with a section in one of the chapters dedicated to the temple in Laie. A more in-depth look at the Church in Hawaii is offered in Britsch's *Moramona: The Mormons in Hawaii*. Each book contains unique and insightful

¹³ Mirroring the organization and administration of the church established by Jesus Christ as outlined in the Bible, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is led by apostles. Apostle is an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood, and those so ordained are customarily set apart as members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is the Church's highest governing body equal in power and authority to the First Presidency of the Church (Doctrine & Covenants 107:24), which consists of the President of the Church (the Prophet, Chief Apostle, or Presiding High Priest (Doctrine & Covenants 107:65-66)) and his two counselors. Apostles are "special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world" (Doctrine & Covenants 107:23) and are given authority to direct and regulate the affairs of the Church throughout the world (Doctrine & Covenants 107:33-35). In addition, apostles are upheld by the membership of the Church as prophets, seers, and revelators. As one may infer, the teachings and writings of members of Quorum of the Twelve Apostles hold great credence among the faithful membership of the Church.

¹⁴ Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1980).

¹⁵ James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord: A Study of Holy Sanctuaries, Ancient and Modern* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Publishers, 1962).

differences, but despite content overlap, *Moramona* stands out as the definitive history of the Church in Hawaii, and Britsch's contribution is second to none.

Another historian, Joseph H. Spurrier, authored a book that offers unique details likely unattainable elsewhere: *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the Hawaiian Islands*. This book documents the history of the Church in Hawaii and is worthy of mention, despite its limited size and depth. Unfortunately, a number of the book's historical insights need verification and must be qualified because Spurrier fails to reference any sources or provide a bibliography.

Two theses discuss the temple in Hawaii, focus on the Church there, and add complimentary details to Britsch's work. The first, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the Hawaiian Islands," by Comfort Margaret Bock, consults many sources available only in Hawaii. Though dated, Bock's thesis shares little-publicized facts and specific details regarding Church administration found only in her paper.¹⁶ The second, Richard C. Harvey's thesis, "The Development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Hawaii," is less detailed, but offers a greater coverage of time due to its later date. Overall, Harvey's work is more general and less careful. However, it does say more about the temple and about significant happenings that postdate Bock's thesis.¹⁷

Several authoritative and comprehensive histories of the Church also mention Hawaii and the Hawaiian temple specifically. A brief entry in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* on the Church in Hawaii includes an even briefer paragraph on the temple.¹⁸ The exhaustive

¹⁶ Comfort Margaret Bock, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Hawaiian Islands" University of Hawaii, 1941.

¹⁷ Richard C. Harvey, "The Development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hawaii." Brigham Young University, 1974.

¹⁸ "Encyclopedia of Mormonism" (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), s.v. "Hawaii, The Church in."

Encyclopedic History of the Church, compiled by the venerable Andrew Jenson (assistant Church historian at the time), contains entries on both the Church and the temple in Hawaii, but information on the temple is based largely upon information from earlier publications.¹⁹ Mormon historian Brigham H. Roberts's helpful six-volume history, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, concisely summarizes the temple's dedicatory services, providing information not as easily accessed elsewhere.²⁰ The *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* also has useful entries about the church and temple in the Hawaiian Islands.²¹ Its entries are thorough despite their brevity; however, the Laie Hawaii Temple entry perpetuates several pieces of information that some have considered questionable.

When it comes to books, very few devote so much as a chapter to the Hawaiian temple. While many books mention the temple and may even share valuable insights, most appear to rely uncritically on several influential articles or chapters. The list of books which touch upon the temple is lengthy, so only a few of the most beneficial will be reviewed here.

Temples of the Most High is an early book on LDS temples compiled by N.B. Lundwall.²² According to its introduction, the book is a compilation of "rare, inspirational, and very inaccessible writings" of the Church's earliest leading officials, regarding temple related subjects. It also contains interesting historical sketches and descriptions of the temples in existence at the time of the book's printing and many reprintings. One of the book's particularly helpful contributions concerning the temple at Laie is a full transcription of the temple's

¹⁹ Andrew Jenson, ed. *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1941).

²⁰ Brigham H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1965).

²¹ "Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History" (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 2000), s.v. "Hawaii Temple."

²² N. B. Lundwall, ed. *Temples of the Most High*, 16th ed. (Salt Lake City Bookcraft, Inc., 1940).

dedicatory prayer. “The Hawaiian Temple” chapter also contains a physical and historical description of the building, a short excerpt from an address delivered at the dedication services, and a list of the temple’s presidents (current to the printing date). A short descriptive essay, perhaps found only in this book, by Harold W. Burton, one of the temple’s architects, describes many of the temple’s physical dimensions with specificity.

A more modern book on temples and one that is cited more in later literature on the Laie Hawaii Temple is Richard O. Cowan’s, *Temples to Dot the Earth*.²³ This book provides a cogent overview of temples throughout the ages, nicely weaving a connection from the temples in antiquity to those built by the Latter-day Saints in modernity. Cowan’s clear explanation of the history and functions of temples through the ages supplies a broad understanding to those seeking to comprehend the purpose of Mormonism’s pursuit of proliferating temples throughout the world. *Temples to Dot the Earth* also contains what was the most thorough coverage of the Laie Hawaii Temple available in a book chapter until recently. Another chapter dealing with this temple was written by Dr. Cowan and published in the book, *Voyages of Faith*. “Temples in the Pacific: A Reflection of Twentieth-Century Mormon History,” is worth reading for its additional insight into the coming forth of the temple in Hawaii. Its main contribution, though, comes from the broader context that Cowan provides the reader. He successfully shows the temple’s significant historical placement among the Church’s other temples and in Mormon history.²⁴

Coincidentally, *Voyages of Faith* contains another important article pertaining to the temple in Hawaii: “A Jewel in the Gardens of Paradise: The Art and Architecture of the Hawaii Temple.” This is the best article available on its subject. As the subtitle suggests, in this chapter

²³ Richard O. Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1989).

²⁴ Richard O. Cowan, “Temples in the Pacific: A Reflection of Twentieth-Century Mormon History.” In *Voyages of Faith: Explorations in Mormon Pacific History* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2000).

Paul Anderson presents a wealth of information and history about the temple's architecture, murals, and statuary. Also most printed under the same title in a volume of *BYU Studies*, this piece is most informative, interesting, and comprehensive. Anderson has published several articles in other journals and magazines that address the architecture and history of the Laie Hawaii Temple along with other temples. "A Jewel in the Gardens of Paradise," however, is focused solely on the Laie Hawaii Temple and contains all of the most important information on the temple from the other articles.²⁵

In 2011, three scholars of Hawaiian Church history published a comprehensive book on the history of Laie, the town which is home to the temple. From its earliest days, as an ancient city of refuge, to its current station, as a college town and the location of the famous tourist attraction, the Polynesian Cultural Center, *Gathering to Laie* details the complete history of this unique Hawaiian town.²⁶ Due to the temple's prominent position, not only in the city, but in its history, one of the book's most important and interesting chapters is on "Building the Temple, 1916–1919." The chapter recounts events leading up to the building of the Laie Hawaii Temple, including various prophecies pertaining to the temple, stories surrounding the temple's site selection, its construction, and its dedication services. The authors intertwine typical temple facts with informative quotations and entertaining stories. The chapter's endnotes provide an ample bibliography on the subject and introduce several rare citations of primary sources available only in Hawaii. Riley Moffat, Fred Woods, and Jeffrey Walker have made a significant contribution with this chapter from their book.

²⁵ Paul L. Anderson, "A Jewel in the Gardens of Paradise: The Art and Architecture of the Hawaii Temple." *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 164–182.

²⁶ Riley M. Moffat and others. *Gathering to Laie* (Laie, Hawaii: The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Island Studies, 2011).

Concerning the many articles associated with various aspects of the Laie Hawaii Temple, nearly all of them can be traced back to a few pieces published soon after the temple's announcement and dedication. The first of these articles on the Hawaiian temple was printed in the September 1916 issue of the *Improvement Era*, an official Church magazine.²⁷ The temple had just been announced in October 1915, so when this article was written by Apostle John A. Widtsoe, the temple was being constructed. In "The Temple in Hawaii: A Remarkable Fulfilment of Prophecy," Elder Widtsoe carefully paints a vivid mental picture of the temple's tropical setting. He further discusses the background to the building of the temple. Elder Widtsoe's main purpose, however, was to present a prophecy made by Brigham Young in 1853 at the laying of the cornerstone of the Salt Lake Temple. Widtsoe asserts that the prophecy "fits with singular exactness, the architecture of the temple in Hawaii."²⁸ Widtsoe's desire in forming this connection was to use it as another example of "the guiding hand of God," in directing the affairs of the Church.

After the Hawaiian temple was completed and dedicated, the *Improvement Era* featured an article written by one of its architects, Hyrum C. Pope.²⁹ Pope's article, entitled "About the Temple in Hawaii," was printed in December 1919 and is another foundational source on the subject. The greatest contributions from his article pertain to the disclosure of details Pope was privy to as the architect. For example, he discusses the difficulty they confronted when

²⁷ John A. Widtsoe, "The Temple in Hawaii: A Remarkable Fulfillment of Prophecy." *The Improvement Era*, 1916, 958. It is interesting to note that President Gordon B. Hinckley referenced the same Brigham Young prophecy in the April 2000 General Conference when discussing the design of the Conference Center across the street from the Salt Lake Temple. In his remarks he said, "We have not built a temple with trees and fishponds on the roof. But on this edifice we have many trees and running water. Brigham Young may have foreseen this structure very near the temple," ("To All the World in Testimony," *Ensign*, May 2000, 4.).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 957–958.

²⁹ Hyrum C. Pope, "About the Temple in Hawaii," *Improvement Era*, December 1919, 149–153.

determining how to construct the temple in a location “almost devoid of building materials.”³⁰ He describes the exterior design and dimensions of the temple along with the inspiration behind the architecture. Pope also provides an accounting of the materials used on the interior of the temple and a description of the various works of art that adorn the edifice.

The Hawaiian temple’s first recorder, Duncan McAllister, wrote “The House of the Lord in Hawaii.” This article was distributed as a thirty-nine-page booklet and was apparently written mainly for people of other faiths. Its purpose was not only to describe the exterior and interior of the Hawaiian temple, but also to provide an explanation of the purposes for which it was built. McAllister gives the most detailed description of the original temple available. In one section, McAllister’s biblically based elucidation on the purposes behind Latter-day Saint temples is so logical and articulate that, despite being dated, it is well worth the read.

Rudger Clawson’s record of the proceedings of the dedication of Hawaiian temple was published in the *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* in January 1920 and is quoted by Duncan McAllister.³¹ Clawson, an apostle at the time, was present at the dedication and gives an eye-witness account of the services, including a brief summary of the address of each speaker on the program. Clawson’s report is likely the only published primary account of the dedicatory services and also contains a full transcript of the dedicatory prayer.

An interesting article in connection to the dedication was published in 2010. A special hymn was written for the temple and was sung at the Church’s General Conference in 1916 and later at temple dedication. “A Temple in Hawaii,” was originally published as a poem then put to

³⁰ Ibid., 149.

³¹ Rudger Clawson, “Dedication of Hawaiian Temple.” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, January 1920, 14.

music by a missionary serving in Hawaii at the time. Dean Clark Ellis uncovered the fascinating story behind the hymn, which is told in his article of the same name.³²

An entire conference of the Mormon Pacific Historical Society was dedicated to the subject of the Laie Hawaii Temple. At least seven papers were presented and published from the proceedings of the conference held at Laie in May of 1988. Each of the papers is informative and beneficial. Several articles that deal with the temple's architecture and artwork will be reviewed in chapter six. Several others address the widely discussed and heavily researched alleged attempted bombing of the temple on December 7, 1941. Two papers from the conference warrant mentioning here due to the enlightening historical information contained therein, which pertains to the temple. First, historian Lanier Britsch explores some of the unique conditions that led to the building of a temple in Laie, Hawaii, prior to 1920 in "The Conception of the Hawaii Temple." Second, Professor Joseph H. Spurrier shares some fascinating, albeit undocumented, details about the temple in his paper, "The Hawaii Temple: A Special Place in a Special Land."

While a complete enumeration of pertinent literature will be available in this thesis's bibliography, the preceding works are the most significant pieces in relation to a general history of the Laie Hawaii Temple. As mentioned, this thesis will glean essential portions of information from the works cited above in order to present a comprehensive recitation of the history. In addition, however, an earnest attempt has been made to produce material that is not only unique to this thesis, but to arrange and present the aforementioned material in an appealing new way.

³² Dean Clark Ellis, "A Temple in Hawaii." In *Mormon Pacific Historical Society*, Laie, Hawaii, 2010, 31.

CHAPTER TWO

Latter-day Saint Beginnings in Hawaii

Even though the temple in Laie was dedicated in the twentieth century, the roots of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hawaii go back to the middle of the nineteenth century. This chapter will present this history through the time when a gathering place for Hawaiian Latter-day Saints was established in Laie on the island of Oahu and a thriving community was preparing for a temple to be built there.

Beginnings in the Pacific and Close Encounters with Hawaii

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a long and storied history in the Hawaiian Islands. From 1839 to 1846 the Church was headquartered in Nauvoo, Illinois. During this era the missionary efforts of the Church were mainly focused in and around England, yet it was during this time that the first Latter-day Saint missionaries were called to “the Pacific Isles.”¹

Addison Pratt, Noah Rogers, Benjamin F. Grouard, and Knowlton F. Hanks were the four who embarked on the first mission to the South Pacific. Pratt’s call as a missionary to this area of the world was a logical choice. As a young man, he lived on the island of Oahu during a six month hiatus from whaling.² Pratt was familiar with the Hawaiian language and had discussed his island experiences with Joseph Smith. One scholar suggests that these conversations with the

¹ James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 166; Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols.; (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1980), 5:386; hereafter *HC*.

² S. George Ellsworth, *Zion in Paradise: Early Mormons in the South Seas* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University, 1959), 6.

Prophet became “parent to the call.”³ Notwithstanding his experience in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii),⁴ according to the official church record, Addison Pratt and his companions were set apart “to go to the Society Islands,” now called French Polynesia.

In time it has been questioned whether the men were instructed to labor first in Hawaii, the Society Islands, or on any suitable island in the Pacific. As noted, the official history states that Addison Pratt and company had been called to labor in the Pacific Isles,⁵ and were later set apart to go to the Society Islands.⁶ Several reputable contemporary sources, however, supply evidence that they were sent to preach in the Sandwich Islands.⁷ Another report substantiates this hypothesis claiming that apparently the missionaries sought to book passage on a ship bound for Hawaii, but failing this they boarded whaling ship bound for the Society Islands.⁸

Further support comes from historian Lanier Britsch’s observation that Pratt’s decision to stay on Tubuai was a struggle for him to make. Britsch claims that the difficulty arose largely because “[Pratt’s] first intention had been to teach the gospel in Hawaii and then in well-known

³ Ibid., 6. (See also R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 3–4.

⁴ Captain James Cook of the British navy is credited with the discovery of the archipelago on January 18, 1778, while en route from the Society Islands toward the northwest coast of America. He named the group the Sandwich Islands “in honor of the Earl of Sandwich, then first lord of the admiralty.” Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1778–1854*, Vol. 1, *Foundation and Transformation*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1957), 13; HC, 5:404.

⁵ HC, 5:386.

⁶ HC, 5:404.

⁷ Wilford Woodruff, who would become the fourth President of the Church, recorded at the time in his diary: “Addison Pratt, with three others, was called to carry the gospel to the Sandwich Islands.” Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff: History of His Life and Labors as Recorded in His Daily Journals*, ed. Matthias F. Cowley, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1909), 174. Further, an official proclamation of the Twelve Apostles published on April 6, 1845, referred to Addison Pratt as “our missionary to the Sandwich Islands.” This declaration by the governing body of the Church appears to indicate that nearly two years into his assignment, the very leaders who sent Pratt assumed he was serving in the Sandwich Islands. When the exhaustive *Encyclopedic History of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1941), was later published, Andrew Jenson (assistant Church historian at the time) stated that “it was the intention of these missionaries to commence their labors on the Hawaiian Islands.” See Jenson, *Encyclopedic History*, 322.

⁸ R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea*, 3. See also Ellsworth, *Zion in Paradise*, 7.

Tahiti.” Whatever the initial intention or directive may have been, Pratt believed through prayer that tarrying on Tubuai was the Lord’s will.⁹

As it was the missionaries spent their time in French Polynesia. In fact, Addison Pratt did not step foot on Hawaiian sand until April 1847—after he had already lived and preached on the tiny island of Tubuai for three years.¹⁰ Pratt’s brief visit to Honolulu came during his trip home on a brief layover en route to San Francisco.¹¹

Interestingly, Pratt’s stop was not the Islands’ first encounter with Mormonism. Nearly a year prior to Pratt’s arrival, an old converted cargo ship docked in the Honolulu Harbor on June 20, 1846.¹² The *Brooklyn* was ferrying two hundred thirty-four Latter-day Saints from six states, who were anxiously anticipating what they believed was their role in selecting and settling the final destination of the exiled body of Latter-day Saints who were simultaneously traveling on foot from Illinois to the Rocky Mountains.

The seafaring Saints set sail from the New York Harbor on the exact date the main exodus of the saints from Nauvoo began, February 4, 1846. Four months into their eventful trip en route to the California coast, the *Brooklyn* Saints were thrilled with their brief reprieve in the Sandwich Islands. Their ten days in Hawaii proved to be “the most delightful episode of their long voyage.”¹³

It may be of interest that prior to their departure from Honolulu, Samuel Brannan, the group’s ambitious and energetic twenty-seven-year-old leader, preached sermon that was likely

⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰ Today, Tubuai is the main island in the Austral Islands, the southernmost archipelago in French Polynesia. According to Britsch, Tubuai is a “mere three-by-six-mile oval with a small population” (*Unto the Islands*, 4).

¹¹ Britsch, *Unto the Islands*, 14.

¹² Lorin K. Hansen, “Voyage of the Brooklyn.” *Dialogue* 21 (Fall 1988): 51.

¹³ Hansen, “Voyage,” 61; quoting Edward C. Kemble, “Twenty Years Ago: The ‘Brooklyn Mormons’ in California.” In *A Kemble Reader*, edited by Fred B. Rogers (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1963), 23. First appeared in *Sacramento Daily Union*, Sept. 11, 1966.

“the first Mormon sermon preached on the island.”¹⁴ At the request of the Reverend Samuel C. Damon, Brannan delivered a Sunday sermon in the nondenominational Seaman’s Bethel. Several days later, he and his refreshed company re-boarded the *Brooklyn* and re-embarked on the last leg of their journey.

Opening a Mission on the Sandwich Islands

On December 12, 1850, four and a half years after the *Brooklyn*’s stop, another ship with Latter-day Saint passengers docked in the Honolulu Harbor. This time their arrival ushered in a new era in Hawaiian Latter-day Saint history. Ten missionaries who had been laboring in California had been reassigned to open a mission in the Sandwich Islands.

They had originally been appointed by the prophet and Church president, Brigham Young, to become gold mining missionaries in California. Less than a year into the mission, however, circumstances necessitated a change in assignment.

Slap Jack Bar was the name of the mining camp where the elders had staked their claim. On September 24, 1850, Elder Charles C. Rich, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the presiding authority of the Church in the Pacific Coast area, rode into camp.¹⁵ Rich’s purpose in visiting was to invite some of them to fill missions to the Sandwich Islands. By the following morning Rich had selected eight of the miners for missionary service: Henry William Bigler, George Quayle Cannon, John Dixon, William Farrer, James Hawkins, James Keeler, Thomas Morris, and Thomas Whittle. The men were all called and set apart by Rich for this new

¹⁴ Ibid., 61.

¹⁵ Britsch, *Unto the Islands*, 93–94.

endeavor. Two additional elders from neighboring camps, Hiram Clark and Hiram Blackwell, were also called to proselytize in Hawaii.¹⁶

Elder Rich was direct in explaining the purpose for the mission to the Sandwich Islands. His frank explanation revealed that the mission was as motivated economically as it was ecclesiastically. The rapidly approaching winter would bring high water rendering it impossible to mine. To further complicate matters, the gold rush of the late 1840's caused the prices of provisions in California to skyrocket. The inability to mine combined with the inflated market would make sustaining the elders in their current habitation very difficult.¹⁷ Understanding their dilemma, one of the newly called missionaries spoke of the mission to the Sandwich Islands as “killing 2 birds with one stone for we would live there . . . cheap and at the same time perform a mission.”¹⁸ Apparently the others saw wisdom in the change of assignment too, because “all felt it was for [their] best good.”¹⁹

At fifty-five years of age, Hiram Clark was the oldest of the newly called missionaries and was a seasoned veteran in the work of the Church. Naturally, Rich appointed Clark to serve as president of the new Sandwich Islands Mission and under Clark's jurisdiction the ten Elders²⁰ departed for the islands.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Donald R. Shaffer, “Hiram Clark and the First LDS Hawaiian Mission: A Reappraisal.” *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 98.

¹⁸ Henry William Bigler, Journal, September 25, 1850, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; quoted in Shaffer, “Hiram Clark,” 98.

¹⁹ *Union*, extracts 13 (The St. George, Utah, *Union* ran Bigler's experiences in a series between January 11 and May 28, 1896.); quoted in M. Guy Bishop's “Henry William Bigler: Mormon Missionary to the Sandwich Islands During the 1850s.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 20 (1986): 123.

²⁰ There are two priesthoods in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They are, namely, the Melchizedek and the Aaronic (See Doctrine and Covenants 107:1). The Melchizedek is the greater of the two priesthoods. Latter-day Saints believe this Melchizedek Priesthood to be the power and authority of God, which he gives to worthy males to guide the Church and officiate in its sacred ordinances. *Elder* is an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood and any male member of the Church who has had this office and its authority conferred upon him can be appropriately referred to as an elder. Full-time male missionaries for the Church are also referred to by this title,

The morning after their arrival in Honolulu, on the Island of Oahu, the men hiked up a nearby mountain each carrying a stone.²¹ In the beautiful King Falls, they bathed for the first time in over a month, and then they ascended another mile up the mountain.²² In a secluded location they built an altar with their stones that was approximately three feet high and three feet in diameter. President Hiram Clark then proceeded to offer a prayer dedicating the Sandwich Islands for the preaching of the Gospel.²³

Following a spirit-filled dedication service the elders quickly and happily descended down the mountain undoubtedly excited for the adventures that awaited them. They discussed the logistics of the new mission and assignments. They decided to spread throughout the archipelago and assign companionships to work on each specific island. Clark selected Thomas Whittle to serve as his companion and counselor, and determined that Honolulu should be the mission headquarters. President Clark chose Henry Bigler, John Dixon, James Hawkins, and the youngest missionary, George Q. Cannon to each preside over a respective island. The island assignment was determined by casting lots, then the four men picked their companions based on order of the number they picked. Within a week, all of the missionaries had found passage to their assigned islands and had begun proselyting.

Interestingly, by the time the mission was scarcely four-months old only five of the original ten missionaries remained to proselyte on three of the six islands. Many factors contributed to the decision made by half of the Elders to leave the mission. Despite this drastic depletion, however, the message of Mormonism spread throughout the Sandwich Islands.

regardless of their office in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Those who hold the office of Apostle in the Melchizedek Priesthood are also generally referred to by the title of Elder.

²¹ Jenson, *Encyclopedic History*, 322.

²² R. Lanier Britsch, *Moramona: The Mormons in Hawaii*, 3rd ed. (Laie, Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1989), 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

George Q. Cannon, James Keeler, Henry Bigler, William Farrer, and James Hawkins were the missionaries left shouldering the load of establishing the Church. The task proved to be difficult on many levels. Learning the Hawaiian language, for example, was a great stumbling block for the elders and a hindrance to church growth.²⁴ Due to their determination and faith, however, the elders forged on through the difficult drudgeries of establishing a new mission, and their efforts eventually yielded fruit in the form of Hawaiian converts.

The most significant segment of those first baptized into the Church was the natives of high social rank with great influence in their respective communities.²⁵ As prominent natives embraced the new religion, subsequent baptisms within their communities followed. By the end of August of 1851, there were five branches (small, local congregations) and over two hundred converts on the island of Maui alone. That same month, missionary reinforcements began to

²⁴ Keeler, Bigler, Farrer, and Hawkins experienced particular difficulty learning to speak Hawaiian. In a lamentation recorded nearly three years into his mission, Henry Bigler bemoaned, “I never can speak fluently and . . . I cannot understand readily what a native says when speaking.” He continued, “I have wanted this language so bad some times that I could not rest and . . . it would seem as if my heart strings would burst.” See Bigler, Journal, Aug. 18, 1853, quoted by M. Guy Bishop in “Henry William Bigler: Mormon Missionary to the Sandwich Islands During the 1850s.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 20 (1986): 126.

²⁵ George Q. Cannon was arguably the most influential Mormon missionary in Hawaiian Church history. Only three weeks after his arrival in Hawaii, Cannon had a miraculous experience which enabled him to understand the Hawaiian tongue. He records:

My desire to learn to speak was very strong; it was present with me night and day, and I never permitted an opportunity of talking with the natives to pass without improving it. I also tried to exercise faith before the Lord to obtain the gift of talking and understanding the language. One evening, while sitting on the mats visiting with some neighbors who had dropped in, I felt an uncommonly great desire to understand what they said. All at once I felt a peculiar sensation in my ears; I jumped to my feet, with my hands at the sides of my head, and exclaimed to Elders Bigler and Keeler who sat at the table, that I believed I had received the gift of interpretation! And it was so.

From that time forward I had but little, if any, difficulty in understanding what the people said. I might not be able at once to separate every word which they spoke from every other word in the sentence; but I could tell the general meaning of the whole. This was a great aid to me in learning to speak the language, and I felt very thankful for this gift from the Lord. (Cannon, 1988, 134–135.)

Cannon’s ability to speak quickly followed permitting him to share his gospel message. Shortly thereafter, he taught and baptized an educated, influential judge named Jonatana H. Napela and his two friends, William K. Uaua and K.H. Kaleohano. According to Cannon, these men were all educated, “fine speakers and reasoners, and were men of standing and influence in the community.” Cannon, *My First Mission*, 144. With the help of Napela, Cannon later translated the Book of Mormon into the Hawaiian language. Later in his life, he became an Apostle in the Church and served as a counselor to four presidents of the Church.

arrive from the mainland, and the work continued to swell like the surf on the North Shore of Oahu.

As the Church grew, so did its opposition from rival clergyman and government organizations. By the time the Church had been in the islands for a year, other churches began to view it as a “troublesome” threat.²⁶ Pressure from these churches also became a growing nuisance to the Latter-day Saints.²⁷ Some converts waived while others fell away completely. Despite the problem of persecution from outside the church and apostasy within, membership continued to climb the first two years.²⁸ The principles, as well as the policies and procedures, of Mormonism appeared to appeal to the Hawaiian people.

For a time the Church enjoyed a triumphal period of progress. Scores were baptized almost daily into the Church and hundreds more were being miraculously healed from various ailments after being “administered to,” or blessed by the elders. Faith in Mormonism with its ensuing signs reached a pinnacle early in 1853. Only three years after Latter-day Saint missionaries landed in the Sandwich Islands, Church membership numbered over three thousand. There were fifty-three branches of the Church organized throughout the major islands. Thirty-one foreign missionaries were serving in Hawaii and local Saints filled many important positions within the Church. By all indications, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was well established in Hawaii.²⁹

Regrettably, this flourishing faith was on the precipice of a great trial. The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1853 claimed the lives of thousands of natives that summer and its

²⁶ Rufus Anderson, *History of Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Board, 1872), 257.

²⁷ M. Guy Bishop, “Waging a Holy War: Mormon-Congregationalist Conflict in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Hawaii.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 17 (1991): 110–119.

²⁸ Britsch, *Moramona*, 23.

²⁹ Britsch, *Unto the Islands*, 110.

ravaging was keenly felt by the Mormons.³⁰ Minutes from the October 1853 mission conference report that one hundred eighty Latter-day Saints died throughout the Sandwich Islands Mission.³¹ Oahu suffered the greatest loss, with the majority of reported deaths occurring in its largest city, Honolulu.

A tragedy with the magnitude of 1853's pandemic left no life untouched and sent shockwaves through every aspect of life in the islands. As for the Church, some of "the most efficient and the very best of the native saints" died from the plague which delivered a devastating blow to many congregations of the fledgling faith.³²

To make matters worse, in August 1853, hostility from opposing clergymen and the government escalated. It was during this time of increased antagonism that the missionaries attempted to gather all of the Hawaiian Saints into one centralized location where they hoped to fortify their faith and find refuge from the storm of persecution that engulfed them.

The concept of gathering has been an important tenet of the Latter-day Saints since the earliest days of the Church. Dating back to the Old Testament, the idea of gathering has literal and figurative underpinnings. Throughout the ages, God's chosen people have been commanded to "gather" to divinely specified locations (often called Zion) where they could hear his teachings, live the gospel, and worship the Lord with likeminded believers. His people were also

³⁰ Initial assessments reported 5,000–6,000 as the death toll. Subsequent estimates, derived from census counts, indicate that an upwards of 10,000–15,000 may have fallen prey to the dreaded pox. See O. A. Bushnell, *The Gifts of Civilization: Germs and Genocide in Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1993), 210.

³¹ The "Minutes" of the Semiannual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, held at Wailuku Island of Maui, October 6, 1853, were recorded by John Stillman Woodbury. Detailed in the statistics is each branch's information (i.e., the number of members, of Priesthood holders, of baptisms, etc.). According to the statistics, the elders in Oahu reported the following number of deaths: Bigler, 24; Farrer, 143; and Tanner, 1. This made a total of 168 deaths on that island. William Farrer's area, Honolulu, was the epicenter of the epidemic. See Woodbury, "Personal Diary, Vol. 3," October 6, 1853, Harold B. Lee Library, Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1853, 95–97. Also accessible at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISO-ROOT=/MMD&CISOPTR=2066&REC=2>.

³² Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing & Publishing Co., 1947; reprint by Lofgreen Printing Co., 1979), 158 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

“gathered” spiritually as they accepted and lived according to God’s commands and came out of the influence of the world. Converts to the Church were encouraged to “gather” with other members in the various places which served as the headquarters of the Church.³³ Consistent with the direction of the day, missionaries in the Islands clearly taught their native converts the doctrine of gathering to a centralized “Zion.”

Arrangements were made with the approval of Brigham Young, the president of the Church. Eventually, the missionaries decided that a promising basin in Palawai, on the nearly uninhabited island of Lanai³⁴ would become the gathering place for the Church. The mission president, Phillip B. Lewis, told President Young in a letter that he “felt that this valley had been preserved for their special use” and would be a “haven of peace.”³⁵

Lanai: The Experiment of Establishing a Hawaiian Zion

Lanai may have provided respite from the billowing tension experienced on other islands, but that was the only rest it would afford its new settlers. Lanai was a Hawaiian island, but there were good reasons for its scarce population—it was not exactly a tropical paradise. When Elder Francis A. Hammond called twenty-one native members on missions to assist in settling this “barren” gathering place, he called them to be “pioneers.”³⁶

The effort required to settle Lanai was similar to what fellow pioneers in and around the Utah Territory were experiencing. The pioneers were organized into three companies and set to

³³ The call to gather first summoned the Saints to Kirtland, Ohio; then to Jackson County, Missouri; then to Nauvoo, Illinois; and lastly to the Great Salt Lake Valley and the territory in and surrounding what was eventually named the state of Utah.

³⁴ R. Lanier Britsch, an historian and expert on the Church in Hawaii, numbers the total population on Lanai at around six hundred. See Britsch, *Moramona*, 37.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁶ R. Lanier Britsch, “The Lanai Colony: A Hawaiian Extension of the Mormon Colonial Idea,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 12 (1978): 72.

work clearing land, plowing fields and sowing seeds. Later, streets were surveyed and a town was laid out. Various other provisions were attended to in preparation for the reception of more and more Saints expected to heed the call to gather to Lanai. Nothing came easily in the new settlement, however. The adjustment to the demanding and rigorous lifestyle of a pioneer was not an easy transition for the natives. Elder Ephraim Green, the newly appointed superintendent, was often frustrated at the effort required to “brake them in to work.”³⁷

While Green tried to be optimistic about the pioneers’ potential, less hopeful difficulties demanded consideration. The procurement of water proved to be the greatest challenge to the Saints in Lanai; a challenge that would never be adequately solved while the Saints lived there. The group attempted to dig wells but failed, so fresh water had to be transported from a spring over a mile outside of the colony and then stored in cisterns.

Despite these difficult conditions, over fifty acres of crops were planted during the first year. The wheat and corn harvests were reported as being “very good.”³⁸ Potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, beans, and a myriad of other vegetables were also gleaned with some degree of success. In time, the nearly all-male colony began to grow and “the experiment was deemed to be worth the effort.”³⁹ Sadly, the success of this first harvest on Lanai was not repeated. The crops were poor from 1855 to 1856, and then an extended drought vexed all of the islands until late 1857.

Gathering the faithful to Lanai was intended to bolster the Saints in their commitment to the faith, but in a twist of fate it may have actually done more harm than good. Only the most

³⁷ Ephraim Green, “Journal, Vol. 1851–1855,” April 9, 1855, Harold B. Lee Library, Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1855. Also accessible at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/MMD&CISOPTR=5148&REC=16>.

³⁸ Green, May 1, 1855. Green chronicled the success of his farming in these words: “I have bin hoing corn to day our corn is very good and bids fare to make a hevy crop our wheat is also very good and nearly redy to harvist.”

³⁹ Britsch, “The Lanai Colony,” 74.

faithful Saints were willing to leave their homes, families, and friends and move to Lanai. In fact, only between one hundred fifty and three hundred ever did.⁴⁰ The overwhelming majority of Hawaiian members refused to gather, regardless of the incessant preaching on the necessity of gathering throughout the mission. With the strongest members absent from the helm, congregations floundered.

The ensuing dilemma was astutely encapsulated by a young missionary serving on the island of Molokai. “The gathering at the island of Lanai has gleaned out most of the faithful and diligent brethren,” observed Elder Joseph F. Smith, a future prophet and sixth president of the Church. He explained further: “that, perhaps, is one cause why the Saints feel so discouraged on the other islands.”⁴¹ During this harrowing time of great disenchantment, several of the most prominent native members left the Church and took many others with them.⁴² Several cases of mass apostasy also led to the demise of previously active and successful branches.⁴³ In its weakened state, the Church could hardly expect mercy from its opposition and greatly aided by apostates, other churches heightened their attack on the Latter-day Saints.

At this tense time, twelve seasoned missionaries were released to go home, and in the fall of 1857, a new group inherited the dire state of affairs. Fortunately, four of the missionaries in this new wave of reinforcements were from the mission’s founding company. One of these veterans, Elder Henry William Bigler, had been called to lead the group as the mission president. The church’s present state must have been disheartening to these former missionaries. When Bigler left the islands in 1854, he wrote about being “surrounded by thousands who seem to love

⁴⁰ Britsch, *Moramona*, 46; see also Britsch, “The Lanai Colony,” 81.

⁴¹ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 183; quoted in Britsch, “The Lanai Colony,” 76.

⁴² Scott G. Kenney, “Mormons and the Smallpox Epidemic of 1853.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 31 (1997): 15.

⁴³ Britsch, “The Lanai Colony,” 76.

us and are Saints.”⁴⁴ But upon returning in 1857, his “soul was pained [sic] to hear the Elders all testify that there was no Saints [strong church members] except here and there.”⁴⁵ In the three years that had elapsed since the first missionaries departed, the number of total Church members remained virtually the same.

Bigler was instrumental in establishing the mission in Hawaii and would ultimately be the one responsible for closing it down. After several disappointing months, President Bigler received a letter from Brigham Young. The letter was addressed to his predecessor, but Bigler was privy to the important instructions it contained. President Young noted: “The reports from the Sandwich Islands have for a number of years agreed in one thing, that is that the majority of the Saints on these Islands have either been dead or dieing [sic] Spiritually . . . Having taken the matter into consideration I think it best for all of the Elders (with one or two exceptions) to come home. . . . You had better wind up the whole of your business and return with most of the Elders as soon as possible.”⁴⁶ Immediately Bigler notified the missionaries dispatched on other islands and by the following spring, most had left Hawaii.

President Young acknowledged the missionaries’ concerns about inadequate leadership for the Hawaiian members. Knowing, however, that steadfast Saints with experience “enough in the work to enable them to stand firm in the faith” remained behind provided Young the justification he needed to proceed with the decision to withdraw the foreign missionaries. Spiritual decline in the mission was not the sole rationale for the drastic action of calling all of

⁴⁴ Bigler Journal, Feb. 20, 1854; quoted in M. Guy Bishop, “Henry William Bigler: Mormon Missionary to the Sandwich Islands During the 1850s,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 20 (1986): 132.

⁴⁵ Bigler Journal, Sept. 13, 1857; quoted in Bishop, “Henry William Bigler,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 20 (1986): 131.

⁴⁶ Bigler, November 20, 1857.

the non-Hawaiian elders home. Newspapers had kept them abreast of the growing tensions between the United States Government and the Church in the Utah territory.⁴⁷

In mid-April, Bigler received another letter from Young heightening the urgency to close down the mission and “speedily” return to Utah, “not even leaving one Elder who has been sent there.” The reason for Young’s haste was the rising threat of an imminent war in the Utah Territory. A Federal Army, which the Church believed had hostile intent, was en route to the Great Basin and all of the missionaries serving in the South Seas along with most serving throughout the United States and Europe were similarly called home to help protect their homes and families.⁴⁸ Most pertinent literature recognizes the conflict between the Latter-day Saints and the US government as the prime basis for the dissolution of the Sandwich Islands Mission. Rarely acknowledged, however, are the difficulties that faced the mission and Young’s letter prior to his final call for the Utah Elders to return.⁴⁹

Regardless, by May 1, 1858, all but one Elder had sailed home, and that missionary soon departed.⁵⁰ “The care of the Saints on each of the islands was entrusted to a native Elder,” and control of the Church was completely placed in the hands of the Hawaiian members.⁵¹ The happenings of the next three years are largely unknown until July of 1861. Very few records exist, but available reports reveal that church membership declined. In addition, church structure and organization was compromised, and corruption, contention and even extortion contaminated

⁴⁷ Ibid.; quoted in Britsch, “The Lanai Colony,” 78.

⁴⁸ Britsch “The Lanai Colony,” 79. See also Bishop, “Henry William Bigler,” 132–33.

⁴⁹ For example, in the exhaustive Encyclopedic History of the Church, under the heading, “Hawaiian Mission,” the pertinent entry reads as follows: “In 1858, in consequence of disturbed conditions in Utah, the missionaries on Hawaii were called home by Pres. Brigham Young and the mission was left in charge of native Elders.” See Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1941), 324.

⁵⁰ Britsch, *Moramona*, 48.

⁵¹ William W. Cluff, *My Last Mission to the Sandwich Islands*, ed. George Q. Cannon (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 60.

the Church.⁵² Leaving the Hawaiian Saints without clearly defined leadership resulted in serious difficulties, but they paled in comparison to the troubles that arose when the first authorized representative of the Church came to “look after their welfare.”⁵³

The Reign of Walter Murray Gibson

On July 4, 1861, Walter Murray Gibson stepped upon the shores of Honolulu in Oahu. Although he did not identify himself as a Mormon for several months, “Captain” Gibson, as he is frequently referred to in the annals of the Church, had been baptized the prior year by Apostle Heber C. Kimball. Brigham Young later confirmed him a member of the Church.⁵⁴ Originally, Gibson travelled from the Eastern United States seeking to persuade Brigham Young to relocate the general Church populace to New Guinea in the East Indies. When his first objective failed, Gibson appears to have taken some advice Young offered him seriously to investigate the Church and its doctrines and then to unite himself with the Latter-day Saints should he become satisfied with its truthfulness.⁵⁵

Gibson was sent on a mission to the Eastern States but returned after six months to request a change in assignment.⁵⁶ Three weeks later he received a rather open-ended blessing from Brigham Young saying that “he would go with a commission to all nations upon the earth, and he should go with [Young’s] good will and blessing.”⁵⁷ It appears that Gibson originally intended to go spread the gospel in Japan, but never made it that far. Apparently, President Young proposed that “if it was not inconvenient” he might visit the Saints in Hawaii and Tahiti

⁵² Britsch, “The Lanai Colony,” 80. See also *Moramona*, 50–51.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵⁴ B.H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church*, 98; hereafter *CHC*.

⁵⁵ Britsch, *Moramona*, 52.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁵⁷ Roberts, *CHC*, 5:98.

on his way to the Orient to “look after their welfare.”⁵⁸ At some point, Captain Gibson must have become interested in the prospects of the Sandwich Islands, because it is reported that he “made it a specialty” to become “well informed” about every aspect of life and the Church there.⁵⁹

Once in Hawaii, Gibson concealed his religious affiliations for several months in public. In September 1861, however, this charlatan began to capitalize on the chaos of the Church by assuming control of the Church in Hawaii.⁶⁰ Revealing his “penchant for pageantry,” Gibson bedecked the certificate of his mission call with “an elaborate array of ribbons and seals to make it appear more official and important.”⁶¹ Then brandishing the glorified parchment signed by the prophet, he informed the Hawaiian Saints that “he had been sent by President Young, not only to take charge of the mission on those islands, but to preside over all the churches that might be raised up on any of the Pacific islands.” He further purported “in that capacity, that he was equal to, and entirely independent of President Young.”⁶²

Gibson settled upon the title and office of “Chief President of the Islands of the Sea and of the Hawaiian Islands, for the Church of Latter Day Saints.” As “Chief President,” one of his first acts of business was to sell every Church member, who desired to remain such, an official certificate of membership for the economical price of only fifty cents.⁶³

As Gibson’s artful aspiration increased, so did his fees. He reconstructed the Church by establishing a new First Presidency, with himself at the head. He ordained twelve apostles, High

⁵⁸ Britsch, *Moramona*, 53.

⁵⁹ Cluff, “My Last Mission,” 61.

⁶⁰ Britsch, *Moramona*, 53.

⁶¹ Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith: Patriarch and Preacher, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 73. See also Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 208.

⁶² Cluff, “My Last Mission,” 61.

⁶³ Britsch, *Moramona*, 53.

Priests, Seventies, etc. He even concocted offices such as Archbishop.⁶⁴ At the hands of Gibson, women could receive the high honor of becoming “priestesses of the temple.”⁶⁵ The cost of obtaining any office was proportionate to its presumed importance. For example, the honor of being initiated into the office of an Apostle would cost a man the handsome sum of one hundred and fifty dollars.

Simony raised the funds Gibson used to buy property on Lanai, but he needed more than membership and ordination fees to accomplish his grand designs. On his insistence, Church properties, such as chapels and land on other islands, were sold off. Gibson required members to contribute to a land purchasing fund by selling their homes, holdings and other private property. He assured the native Saints that he was securing a suitable gathering place for them all, but insisted that the property be deeded to him. In time he raised “sufficient means for the purchase of one half of the island of Lanai.”⁶⁶

For three years, Gibson controlled the Church in Hawaii and used the Saints in an attempt to gratify his grandiose ambitions. Finally, in late December 1863, several of the Hawaiian elders wrote letters to their former missionary friends in Utah, detailing all of Gibson’s actions and seeking advice on how to proceed. The letters were translated and given to the First Presidency, who immediately dispatched a delegation to go to Lanai and investigate the claims made against Gibson.⁶⁷ Apostles Ezra T. Benson and Lorenzo Snow were accompanied by three former missionaries to the islands: Joseph F. Smith, Alma L. Smith, and William W. Cluff.

⁶⁴ Britsch, *Moramona*, 54.

⁶⁵ Joseph F. Smith to Cannon, May 4, 1864, Manuscript History of Brigham Young, CA; quoted in Britsch, *Unto the Islands*, 122. See also B.H. Roberts, *CHC*, 5:99.

⁶⁶ Cluff, “My Last Mission,” 62.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 63. See also Roberts, *CHC*, 5:99–100.

Reaching the Lanai settlement on the morning of April 3, 1864, the brethren began to interview an unpleasantly surprised Gibson. In a number of meetings held over the course of the next few days, Gibson made several attempts to retain the Saints' allegiance. He recalled all that he had done for them, assuring them of his determination to protect them. He also reminded them of the destitute and downtrodden state he found them in after their abandonment by the Utah missionaries. Gibson implored, "now, you, my red-skinned friends, must decide who your friend and father is; whether it is these strangers, or I, who have done so much for you."⁶⁸

At one point during his remarks, Gibson flashed his missionary-decorated certificate and supposedly cried, "Here is my authority, which I received direct from President Brigham Young. I don't hold myself accountable to these men!" Following the outburst, William W. Cluff made an observation that is classic in its candor. He stated, "had there been no other proof of the wrong course of Mr. Gibson, that remark was sufficient to satisfy the brethren what their plain duty was, and they acted promptly in the matter."⁶⁹

The decision was not as easy for the Hawaiians to make as one might suppose. The Saints were reluctant to disavow the captain. To his credit, as acknowledged by the visiting authorities, much temporal improvement had been made in the Palawai Basin of Lanai since Gibson's arrival. In truth, the commanding and charismatic leader had obtained such a strong hold upon their minds and purse strings that it was very difficult for the native members to renounce him.

As equally undeterred, the Utah authorities continued preaching to the natives in an effort to convince them of the errors of Gibson and their present course. Confident that truth and justice would prevail, Apostle Lorenzo Snow arose and prophesied that, "Mr. Gibson would see the

⁶⁸ Cluff, "My Last Mission," 71–72.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

time that not one of the Saints would remain with him.”⁷⁰ On April, 8, 1864, an obstinate and unrepentant Gibson was officially excommunicated from the Church, and the prophecy of Elder Snow was fulfilled quickly thereafter.⁷¹

After mitigating the situation, Elders Benson and Snow returned home. Responsibility for the mission was left in the hands of the mission president they had just appointed, twenty-five-year-old Joseph F. Smith.⁷²

Gibson refused to deed the Lanai property (and thus all that was on it—homes, livestock, crops, etc.) over to the Church. This left the heavily invested members destitute. The Saints were counseled to return to their home islands and wait for their respective branches⁷³ to be reorganized.

President Smith and his companions commenced a tour of the Islands. They went to work reorganizing branches, rebuilding the Church, and inciting a “reformation” among the Hawaiian members.⁷⁴ As one historian explained, “even though discouraged, [Joseph F. Smith] still loved the Hawaiian people and hoped for their success as Latter-day Saints. Out of this hope he and the others likely developed the idea of establishing a new gathering place somewhere in the islands

⁷⁰ Cluff, “My Last Mission,” 73.

⁷¹ Ibid., 73–74. See also Roberts, *CHC*, 5:100. The official grounds recorded for Gibson’s excommunication are listed here as recorded by Apostle E. T. Benson. They are as follows: 1) making merchandise of the offices of the Priesthood, 2) introducing the former pagan superstitions of the people for the purpose of obtaining power, 3) seeking to establish a temporal and independent kingdom on the Pacific isles, and 4) antagonising the plan laid down in the gospel for the redemption of man. The apostolic delegation concluded that “what they had seen and heard since their arrival, proved that the complaints made by the native Elders, in their letters to Utah, were correct, as far as they went, but the half had not been told” (Cluff, 72–73).

⁷² William W. Cluff, “Acts of Special Providence in Missionary Experience.” *Improvement Era*, March 1899, No. 5, 364.

⁷³ “Members of the LDS Church are organized into congregations that meet together frequently for spiritual and social enrichment. Large congregations are called wards. . . . Small congregations are called branches. . . . Each ward or branch comprises a specific geographic area.” *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 35–36.

⁷⁴ Manuscript History of the Hawaiian Mission, October 1–4, 1864, compiled by Andrew Jenson. See also R. Lanier Britsch, *Moramona*, 61–62; hereafter, *Moramona*.

where the Saints could be taught how to live according to principles of the gospel and industry.”⁷⁵

The young mission president shared this idea with the prophet, Brigham Young.⁷⁶ Apparently the prophet approved. Later that year, President Young deemed it was time to release President Smith of his duties and assigned two men to replace him. The men were Francis A. Hammond, a former missionary to Hawaii, and George Nebeker, a seasoned Church man with colonization experience. They were sent to the Islands with specific instructions from the prophet to purchase land as a gathering place for the Hawaiian Saints.⁷⁷

Laie: A New Gathering Place

On their way to Hawaii, Elders Hammond and Nebeker met with Joseph F. Smith and William W. Cluff in San Francisco. The latter two were traveling home to Utah, following their release. Smith and Cluff were happy to learn of their replacements’ purpose to secure a new gathering place. According to Cluff, they “told the brethren [Nebeker and Hammond] they might go and examine all the places that might be offered for sale on any of the Islands, but if the Laeie [sic] Estate could be purchased, we were confident they would buy that property.”⁷⁸

The reason behind their confidence in the location stemmed from a singular experience Cluff had while he and his companions were in Laie. Joseph F. Smith, William W. Cluff, and Alma L. Smith had been visiting the Islands with the help of two newly arrived reinforcements, Benjamin Cluff and John R. Young. At one point, several of them were in Laie visiting the small branch there. William Cluff said the missionaries spent a few days visiting “the house of a native

⁷⁵ Britsch, *Moramona*, 61–62.

⁷⁶ Joseph F. Smith to Brigham Young, 5 July 1864, Manuscript History of Brigham Young. (As quoted in *Moramona*, 61–62.)

⁷⁷ Britsch, *Moramona*, 63. See also Cluff, 74–75.

⁷⁸ Cluff, “Acts of Special Providence in Missionary Experience,” 365.

family who were tenants of the white rancher” who owned the land.⁷⁹ Cluff describes the property as being “very pleasantly situated, having about three miles front on the sea shore, and running inland to a point on the top of a high range of mountains, several miles distant.” It was here that an event took place which caused William Cluff to declare: “Ever afterwards [Laie] appeared to me the best place on the Islands for the gathering of the Saints.”⁸⁰

Cluff explains the experience in these words:

One day, feeling somewhat lonely and depressed in spirits, I retired to one of the thickets and knelt down in secret prayer, after which I strolled along a path winding through grass plots and haw thickets, more or less in a listless mood or reverie, when suddenly—and to my astonishment—President Brigham Young came walking up the path and met me face to face. After the ordinary greetings were exchanged, we sat down on the grass beside the path, and a brief conversation about the work of the Islands passed between us. He then referred to the beautiful landscape before us, commenting on the beautiful plain, the rich alluvial soil, the verdure covered and timbered mountain in the distance and of the beach washed by the gentle waves of the Pacific Ocean. “This,” he said, “is a most delightful place!” He then arose to his feet and silently casting his eyes over the surrounding country, turned to me, and in his pleasant and familiar manner, said: “Brother William, this is the place we want to secure as headquarters for this mission.” The interview then terminated and I was alone.

The meeting and the interview had all seemed so real and matter of fact, that when I found myself alone I was filled with wonder and amazement. Had I suddenly awoke from a dream in which I had had such a conversation, it could not have seemed more real. Had I really been dreaming? Had I been in vision, or what had happened that so agitated my mind, and filled me with amazement? I knew I had not been dreaming.

Hastening back to the house I related the strange incident to the brethren, who thought with me that it was most remarkable.⁸¹

In the same account, Cluff also says, “that same day we made a friendly call on the gentleman who owned the property, he received us very kindly and during the conversation gave us to understand that he might be induced to sell the property.”

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Fred G. Beebe, *The Cluff Missionaries in the Sandwich Islands* (Bountiful, Utah: Family History Publishers, 1987), 61. As cited in Riley M. Moffat and others’ *Gathering to Laie*, 24.

⁸¹ Cluff, “Acts of Special Providence in Missionary Experience,” 364–365.

Hammond and Nebeker arrived in Honolulu on December 23, 1864, and began an earnest search for a new gathering place. The Islands were suffering from economic instability resulting mainly from repercussions caused by the US Civil War. This made conditions favorable for purchasing good land at a good price. The men carefully researched and hunted for the right property for several weeks. After scouting out possibilities on the Island of Kauai, they returned to Honolulu. Eventually, the men were confident they would soon find a satisfactory location, so Nebeker left Hammond to continue the search, while he went back to Utah to get their families.⁸²

Within a few days, Hammond was on a plantation called Laie, located about thirty-eight miles from Honolulu on the northeast side of Oahu. The owner of the property was Mr. Thomas T. Dougherty, United States vice-consul in Honolulu. Dougherty was operating a stock ranch on the site and, like Hammond's predecessors, had reported that he was looking to sell his property. Hammond investigated the property for several days. Hammond must have felt the plantation was what he was looking for; still he may have been understandably cautious. During Hammond's deliberation about Laie, he reportedly had an experience akin to William Cluff's.⁸³

One night, Hammond went to bed with the Laie proposition weighing heavily on his mind. He then apparently had "a vivid and convincing dream" he deemed to be an answer to prayer. "President Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball came and went with him over the plantation, calling his attention to the many desirable features it presented for the gathering place of the native Saints, and also saying in a very positive manner that this was the chosen spot."⁸⁴

⁸² Britsch, *Moramona*, 64.

⁸³ Riley M. Moffat and others. *Gathering to Laie* (Laie, Hawaii: The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Island Studies, 2011), 23–24. See also Britsch, *Moramona*, 64 and 73.

⁸⁴ Marvin E. Pack, "The Sandwich Islands Country and Mission," *The Contributor*, September 1896, 693; as cited in Moffat, 23. See also David W. Cummings, "Centennial History of Laie," 5–6 (There is no pagination in this publication. The page number is the author's unofficial page assignment.).

The dream apparently settled all of Hammond's doubts. He met with Dougherty on January 26, 1865, and an agreement to purchase the plantation was negotiated. Of the agreement, one historian wrote, "Hammond believed he had made a good bargain—and he had."⁸⁵ The 6,000 acre plantation at Laie came with several ranch buildings and furnished homes, including a large frame house called the "Mansion." At least 500 head of cattle, 500 sheep, 200 goats, 26 horses, and some farm equipment were also included in the sale. The price Dougherty and Hammond finally settled on was \$14,000.⁸⁶ And so the decision was made to acquire Laie, the plantation originally recommended by William W. Cluff and Joseph F. Smith as the most suitable place for the new Hawaiian gathering place.⁸⁷

After arranging the purchase of Laie, Hammond went to Utah excited to report his progress to Brigham Young. He left responsibility for the plantation with Elders Alma L. Smith and Benjamin Cluff. In Utah, Hammond and Nebeker shifted their attention from searching for a gathering place to selecting a company of missionaries to staff it. These missionaries were intended to act as mentors for Hawaiian Saints. Four had previously served in the Islands, and many were skilled in important trades, such as farmers and mechanics. They were expected to train and pass their trades to the natives.⁸⁸

Nearly all of the men selected were married and were called to go to Hawaii with their spouse. The couples with children brought them also. In addition to teaching temporal skills, President Young planned for the missionary families "to show the Hawaiians how proper Saints

⁸⁵ Britsch, *Moramona*, 73.

⁸⁶ Ibid. See also Moffat, 23, and Cummings, "Centennial History of Laie," 5.

⁸⁷ Cluff, "Acts of Special Providence in Missionary Experience." See also Gibbons, 79; Smith, 224; and Britsch, *Moramona*, 61–63.

⁸⁸ Britsch, *Moramona*, 74–75. See also Moffat, 25, and Cummings, "Centennial History," 6.

lived and conducted their lives.”⁸⁹ This plan was consistent with the original purpose of Laie. When Joseph F. Smith presented his proposition of a new gathering place to Brigham Young, he envisioned a community where Hawaiian Saints were taught manual skills in conjunction with gospel living. Historian Lanier Britsch nicely summarized its purpose in these words: “Laie was not to be a gathering place in the normal Mormon sense of the term. It is clear that it was to be a refuge from the world. But it was also to be a school in proper behavior, in hard work, in virtue, and in morality. It was to be not only a place where the Saints could gather to strengthen each other in their determination to live Christian lives, but also a center for learning.”⁹⁰

The missionary party, which numbered forty, was settling into life at Laie by July 1865. The group encountered expected and unanticipated difficulties, but one of the most challenging was rebuilding faith and persuading the Saints to move there. Having endured the drama of Lanai, many members were reluctant to trust and to gather again. It took time, but a core of stalwart native leaders gathered and helped the missionaries establish the new Hawaiian gathering place at Laie.⁹¹ The character and spirit of the faithful Hawaiian members inspires admiration, especially considering that the most regrettable period in Hawaiian Church history had just transpired. The fact that any Saints survived the Lanai debacle with their faith intact speaks volumes of the nature and dedication of the native Saints.

Acknowledgment of the adversity they endured reveals a beautiful symbolic meaning in the location of the Church’s second attempt to gather in Hawaii. In earlier times, Laie was known as a “City of Refuge.” Safety and protection awaited the fugitives and outcasts who entered the

⁸⁹ Ibid., 75.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Moffat, 30. It seems appropriate to name some of these courageous Hawaiian Saints. Those listed by Moffat and others are Jonatana H. Napela, William Uaua, K. H. Kaleohano, Keanu, Puoanui, Kalawai’a, M. K. Hawai’i, George Raymond, Sister Kealohanui, Sister Kamehaokalani, and J. W. H. and Mary Kou.

sanctuary of Laie.⁹² It seems fitting that this same place would once again provide asylum for a people in need. More than a decade earlier, missionaries began to gather the Hawaiian Saints to Lanai in search of a temporary safe haven. Finally, in Laie, they found a permanent gathering place.

The new headquarters for the Hawaiian Church may have been a place of temporal and spiritual safety, but life in Laie was not easy. Many hardships afflicted the Hawaiian members and Utah missionaries who lived there. External opposition from the highest levels posed an immediate threat to the colony. After the plantation had been purchased Brigham Young sent a letter to the king of Hawaii detailing Latter-day Saint beliefs and explaining the Church's intentions for Laie. King Kamehameha V felt the temporal aspects of the new initiative were acceptable, but he disapproved of spiritual ones. The king and his advisors believed that many of the Latter-day Saint teachings were at variance with typical Christian doctrine. This misunderstanding led the Hawaiian government to view the renewed activity of the Church as an attempt to undermine the kingdom's sovereignty. This perception troubled the Church for years.⁹³

Other troubling difficulties originated from within. Unity was at times a problem amongst the missionaries. Differing personalities, pressures, and perceptions fostered contention and conflict in the community. With constant concerns confronting the group like supplying sufficient food, homes, jobs, and other general necessities accompanying an effort to colonize, these additional stressors taxed the operation heavily.

Unlike the land on Lanai that was leased, Laie was purchased by the Church. This likely comforted the Hawaiian Saints because it signaled the permanence of the Church's plans. On the

⁹² Cummings, "Centennial History of Laie," 4.

⁹³ Britsch, *Moramona*, 76. See also Moffat, 25.

other hand, it meant that the plantation had to be profitable in order to repay the original loan payments. The pressure to turn a profit was keenly felt by George Nebeker. The Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, passed by the United States Congress in 1862, targeted the Latter-day Saints in several ways. It banned the practice of polygamy and it limited ownership rights for any church or non-profit in any territory of the United States. Under the law, the value of property a church was permitted to own was capped at \$50,000. Technically, Hawaii was an independent kingdom at the time, but church leaders still felt it was best not to assume ownership of the plantation in the Church's name. As a result, the Church supplied the funds for the property, but the mortgage for Laie was held in Nebeker's name. He and Hammond were told payment of the debt was their responsibility and Nebeker felt he had interest enough in Laie to insist that it operated as he thought it should. Apparently some disagreements stemmed from his approach.⁹⁴

Personal considerations aside, for the community to be self-sufficient, it had to find a cash crop to help support it. At first they attempted to use cotton as the primary crop. Cotton was in demand due to the Civil War and the Church hoped that Hawaii could supply the market in Utah. The risk of losing the cotton crop was too high, however, because of its vulnerability to wind and worms. After several years, in a decision hastened by the end of the Civil War and a decreased demand for foreign cotton, the attempt to grow cotton was abandoned and replaced by sugarcane.

The first few decades in Laie met continued adversity. Crises were averted, or endured. Discouragement and doubt about the success of the operation persisted. Throughout the years unceasing effort was expended to build a self-sustaining plantation and community, but Laie continued to need loans from the Church to prop it up. "The economic outlook was seldom

⁹⁴ Ibid., 64 and 77.

bright at Laie.”⁹⁵ Throughout the years, the sustenance Laie needed seemed to somehow be supplied. The plan continued on and progress, though slow, persisted. On occasion, help came in extraordinary ways.

One such occurrence helped propel the plantation and the people of Laie forward. Due to its singularity alone it warrants attention. It is especially appropriate to address in this thesis, because it may arguably be one of the most important contributing factors to the building of a temple in Laie. For over two years, Laie was privileged with the presence of President Joseph F. Smith.

Prior to his presidency, as the sixth president and prophet of the LDS Church, Joseph F. Smith had a longstanding history with Hawaii. His first call to labor in the Sandwich Islands came when he was a boy of fifteen. This first mission was a foundational experience during his formative years. He returned a decade later to salvage a Church in shambles following the reign of Walter Murray Gibson. As the mission president, he worked on reforming the Church and formulated the plan to gather the Saints in Laie. Then, during the 1880’s, on what has been called his third mission to Hawaii, President Smith, at the time an apostle and second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, used his spiritual stature and administrative prowess to prepare Laie and its Saints for a temple.

At the height of the federally sponsored anti-polygamy crusade, President Smith was forced into exile. US Marshals had a keen interest in detaining him due to his experience as a recorder in the Endowment House. More particularly, they desired to obtain the records of the Endowment House in his possession, which would undoubtedly be key evidence in prosecuting

⁹⁵ Ibid., 102.

many Church leaders.⁹⁶ Anxious that neither fall into the hands of their enemies, President John Taylor was persuaded to send Joseph on a “mission” to Hawaii in late 1884.

Accompanied by his wife, Julina, and their infant daughter, President Smith would make Hawaii his home for the next 2½ years. It was undoubtedly an incredible burden to be so far away from family for such a long time. Julina left behind 5 children, the youngest of whom had just turned three. Joseph was separated from four other wives and seventeen children.⁹⁷ Despite their personal difficulties, the Smiths’ contributions provided a tremendous boon to the struggling settlement in Laie.

As expected, the Church’s efficiency in Laie increased in many areas thanks to the leadership supplied by the extended presence of a member of the First Presidency.⁹⁸ A surprising example of his servant-leadership approach is reflected in the minutes of a council meeting held at Laie in September of 1885. According to the record, “President Joseph F. Smith suggested the propriety of giving Laie a separate branch organization” and the motion passed unanimously. Enoch Farr, who was serving as mission president, was appointed president of the new Laie Branch. The record routinely continues, “He chose Joseph F. Smith and Albert W. Davis as his counselors, and Van R. Miller was appointed clerk of the Branch.”⁹⁹ Having the second counselor in the First Presidency simultaneously serving as the first counselor in a branch

⁹⁶ Smith, 262. See also Gibbons, 136.

⁹⁷ The author derived the figure of seventeen children from Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 487–490.

⁹⁸ R. Lanier Britsch reports the following benefits of President Smith’s leadership in Laie: “He regularly taught the missionaries and their president concerning the organization of the Church and correct procedures. He encouraged better record keeping and stricter attention to statistical matters. His ability to use the Hawaiian language had diminished little since his last mission in 1864. He frequently spoke in Sunday meetings and also in every conference session while in the islands.” (See *Moramona*, 100–101.)

⁹⁹ Manuscript History of the Laie Ward, Oahu Stake, Wednesday, Sept. 30, 1885, LDS Church History Archives.

presidency is perhaps the best example of the uniqueness of the privilege provided to the people of Laie at that time.

President Smith's hands-on service was not limited solely to ecclesiastical matters, however. "Besides these duties, he was constantly assisting in the building of fences, cultivating fields, shingling houses, making sugar, mending wagons, and otherwise laboring with his hands."¹⁰⁰ Adding to the already unconventional work for a member of the Church's First Presidency, occasionally the scope of President Smith's duties expanded even further. For example, his wife Julina had assumed the responsibility of being the colony's midwife. When the time came for her to have her own baby, however, midwifery duties fell upon her husband. On April 21, 1886, she gave birth to a baby boy, Elias Wesley, who was delivered by his father.¹⁰¹ Interestingly, Wesley, as he was called, would return to his birthplace nineteen years later to serve as a missionary, and later still to serve as the mission president on two occasions.¹⁰²

When President Taylor's severe illness demanded Joseph F. Smith's return, he left Hawaii on July 1, 1887.¹⁰³ Upon his departure, Laie was undoubtedly in a better position temporally and spiritually. Under President Smith's tutelage "the church was fully organized and functioning, including all the auxiliaries,"¹⁰⁴ and the work of the Hawaiian Mission was streamlined and expanded.¹⁰⁵ The plantation and its subsidiaries were improving, even though its growth was curtailed by its interest in the native members. While in exile, President Smith

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Fielding Smith, 279.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 279. See also Russell T. Clement, "Apostle in Exile: Joseph F. Smith's Mission to Hawaii, 1885–1887." In *Mormon Pacific Historical Society Proceedings*, 1986, 57.

¹⁰² Clement, "Apostle in Exile," 57. Wesley Smith's first mission was from 1907 to 1910. He served as Mission President from 1919 to 1922 and again from 1947 to 1950. He died in 1970.

¹⁰³ Smith, 286. See also Gibbons, 154–155.

¹⁰⁴ Moffat, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Joseph F. Smith to John Taylor, February 1, 1877, reprinted in *Manuscript History of the Hawaiian Mission*; as cited in Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Mormon Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Polynesia," *Journal of Mormon History*, 75. See also Britsch, *Moramona*, 120.

demonstrated through his tireless service that he clearly understood the purpose of the Laie experiment—it was not to develop a lucrative Church plantation, but to build up the Latter-day Saints in Hawaii. He penned a letter to Orson F. Whitney in January 1886, updating him on the conditions at the sugar plantation. In part he wrote: “It is a hard, tedious labor, but a profitable business when thoroughly well conducted. We work to a great disadvantage, financially, on account of dividing the interest in aid of the colony, i.e. Instead of hiring the cheapest labor, and running the plantation for all it will make, we hire the members of the Church and devote the profits largely in their interest.”¹⁰⁶

New leadership continued to bring advancement to Laie and the new century brought unparalleled achievement and expansion. “The era of Hawaiian Church history that began with President Matthew Noall in January 1892 and culminated in 1921 at the end of President Samuel E. Woolley’s tenure was very different from the previous period,” wrote one historian.¹⁰⁷ Under the careful financial and statistical accounting and better general record keeping of Noall the plantation finally became profitable. In addition to improving the finances of the plantation, he contributed much to the general improvement of the environment in and around Laie.¹⁰⁸

In 1895, Samuel E. Woolley was called as the new mission president and plantation manager and he added to the momentum initiated by President Noall. During his twenty-six-year tenure, Woolley provided some of the most important advancements to the Church in Hawaii. Historian Lanier Britsch summarized his input as “an important influence in shaping the destiny

¹⁰⁶ Clement, 55–56. See also, Moffat, 41.

¹⁰⁷ Britsch, *Moramona*, 107.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

of the mission and the Laie community, he made a significant contribution to the modernization and institutionalization of the mission and plantation.”¹⁰⁹

Notwithstanding its eventual success as a sugar plantation, the main purpose of Laie was to gather and strengthen the Hawaiian Saints by enriching their lives through living gospel principles and becoming self-sufficient through honest, hard work. This objective was never lost on those called to direct the work of the Church in Hawaii. Industrious, inspired leaders, diligent missionaries and faithful members worked together through decades of difficulty to build a self-sustaining plantation and church community. In time their sacrifices, grit, exertion, and faith transformed Laie from a desolate fledgling plantation into a soaring profitable operation. All of this prepared and placed Laie on a trajectory to become a people and a place fit for a House of the Lord.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 111.

CHAPTER THREE

The Conception of a Temple in Laie

While serving as the Second Counselor to Church President Lorenzo Snow in 1901, Joseph F. Smith recognized the Church's need for temples in distant areas of the world. He said: "I foresee the necessity arising for other temples or other places consecrated to the Lord for the performance of the ordinances of God's house, so that the people may have the benefit of the House of the Lord without having to travel hundreds of miles for that purpose."¹ The Laie Hawaii Temple was the first temple dedicated in a mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was also the first to begin to fulfill Joseph F. Smith's prophecy. It is unlikely that nearly twenty-years before its existence President Smith would have known that a temple in Hawaii would hold this distinction in Church history. Nor would he likely have dreamed he would play such a vital role in the realization of this temple that was so personally significant to him.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the Latter-day Saint temple in Laie, Oahu, Hawaii became the first temple "away from the traditional centers of Mormon colonization in Utah."² This is significant, because with the temple comes the introduction of Laie as an early prototype for the method of gathering, which does not appear to begin taking hold Church-wide until the mid-twentieth century. The focus will be on the details concerning the conception of the Hawaiian temple leading up to the dedication of its site and the temple's announcement to the Church. The following questions will be addressed: first, what conditions preceded the temple's site selection and announcement? Why was the decision made to build a temple in Hawaii at that

¹ Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, April 1901, 69; as cited in Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1989) 119–120.

² *Ibid.*, 120.

time in Church history? Why and how was Laie, Hawaii selected as the location for the temple? And lastly, what impact did the decision to build the Laie Hawaii Temple have on the Church then and today—nearly 100 years later?

Before the Temple in Laie

To a large assembly of Saints at the Nauvoo Temple on June 11, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith inquired as to the purpose of gathering “the people of God in any age of the world.” He then instructed, “The main object was to build unto the Lord an house whereby he could reveal unto his people the ordinances of his house and glories of his kingdom and teach the people the ways of salvation.”³ The Prophet practiced what he preached by establishing the pattern of gathering Latter-day Saints to designated locations then proceeding to build temples. Subsequent presidents of the Church endeavored to follow this pattern in their respective eras. This concept of gathering and temple building was certainly not lost to Joseph Smith’s own nephew—Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the Church.

During his first mission to the Sandwich Islands, Joseph F. Smith, wrote a letter home to the first counselor in the First Presidency, President Heber C. Kimball. In it, the seventeen-year-old shared his observation that “some [Saints] have a strong desire to ‘go up to the mountain of the Lord’s house,’” or the temple, and indicated this desire resulted from the instructions they received from the missionaries. Elder Smith closed his letter by conveying his wish for the work in which he was engaged. “May the ‘little stone roll forth’ til it has done its work among the nations, and it alone ‘shall stand and fill the whole earth.’”⁴

³ Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon Cook, ed. *Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 212.

⁴ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 191–192.

Latter-day Saints believe the stone that was “cut out of the mountain without hands” (Daniel 2:45) in King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream represents their Church and gospel. For that stone to literally fill “the whole earth” (Daniel 2:35) it must be permanently established throughout it. In the 1850s, the heart of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints consisted of a small group of persecuted pioneers exiled to the Rocky Mountains of the United States. The Church’s modus operandi was for their converts to gather from various parts of the world to one relatively centralized geographic location in the American West. An eventual shift in their method of gathering was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the early years of the restoration when the Lord said that there would be “other places” for gathering “and they shall be called stakes” (Doctrine & Covenants 101:20–22; 115:17–18). This shift, however, would not come until the twentieth century.

Consistent with the direction of the day, Elder Smith and his fellow missionaries in the Islands clearly taught the doctrine of gathering to a centralized Zion. Their native converts also understood that the purpose of gathering was to receive temple ordinances they deemed necessary for salvation. At that point in time, these essential blessings were only available in Salt Lake City.⁵ Several of the early missionaries, however, prophesied of a day when temple ordinances would be available to the Saints there in Hawaii.

It is unclear in some instances whether a following temple prophecy was expressed precisely as they were recorded, or later reported. What is clear is that the tradition grew among Hawaiian Saints and missionaries that someday a temple would be built on their shores. Such traditions, it appears, had a motivating influence on the native members, missionaries and even

⁵ The Saint George Temple was dedicated in April 1877. It was the first temple in operation after the forced abandonment of the Nauvoo Temple. Prior to its completion, members generally received temple ordinances in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. The Endowment House functioned from 1855 through 1889.

visiting authorities. In this way, these “prophecies,” regardless of their true form or intent, may have, to some extent, become actual self-fulfilling prophecies.

Prophecies of a Temple in Hawaii

Two years after the Sandwich Islands Mission opened and sixty-three years before it was announced that a temple would be built there, missionaries gathered together for a conference in October of 1852. That evening, Elder John S. Woodbury was moved upon by the spirit and spoke in tongues. Francis A. Hammond then interpreted Woodbury’s message, stating that the Lord was well pleased with the missionaries and that they were laboring among a remnant of the seed of Joseph, who would be built up on the Islands. The interpretation concluded by prophesying of a temple being built in Hawaii.⁶

Several elders recorded the prophecy in their journals with little variation.⁷ However, one missionary, William Farrer, recorded a slight, yet significant difference. In his diary Farrer wrote “that *temples* would be built here” (emphasis mine).⁸ George Q. Cannon, who later served as a counselor in the First Presidency with Joseph F. Smith, was present when the prophecy was made. There is evidence that Cannon believed, as Farrer had reported, that not only *a* temple but, *temples*, would someday stand in the Sandwich Islands.⁹ The notion of there being more than one temple in the Islands has been realized only in recent years with the dedication of a second temple, in Kona, on the large island of Hawaii. This prophecy seems even more astounding when

⁶ Francis A. Hammond, Journal, October 6, 1852; as cited in Joseph H. Spurrier, “The Hawaii Temple: A Special Place in a Special Land.” In *Mormon Pacific Historical Society* Laie, Hawaii, 1988. See also Cowan, “Temples in the Pacific: A Reflection of Twentieth-Century Mormon History,” in *Voyages of Faith: Explorations in Mormon Pacific History*, ed. Grant Underwood (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2000), 130.

⁷ Spurrier, 28.

⁸ William Farrer, *Journals*, Vol. 4, 1851–1852, 19. LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City. See Also <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/MMD/id/4168/rec/28>.

⁹ Personal conversation of the author with Chad Orton of the Church Historical Department, December 2011.

considering the fact that the Salt Lake Temple site had not even been dedicated at the time. Such grandiose hope is an indication of the great promise these missionaries felt for their Hawaiian brothers and sisters.

Several other prophetic accounts about a temple in Hawaii have surfaced throughout the years. Chronologically, the next reported prophecy originated with William W. Cluff in 1864. Cluff was a member of the party sent to rectify the Church in Hawaii after control had been usurped by Walter Murray Gibson. After Gibson was disciplined and the colony on Lanai was disbanded, Joseph F. Smith, Alma L. Smith, William W. Cluff, Benjamin Cluff, and John R. Young toured the various Hawaiian Islands. Their purpose was to reorganize the existing branches of the Church. They also used their travels to scout possible locations for a new gathering place for the Saints.

While Cluff and those with him were on Oahu visiting members at Laie, he reported receiving a miraculous visitation from Brigham Young (the Church's prophet who was living at the time). We currently have two accounts that Cluff recorded himself. As Cluff recounts his experience, he encountered President Young in a vision who told him: "This is the place to gather the native Saints to."¹⁰

A version retold many years later by others claims that Brigham Young also declared to Cluff: "upon this land we will build a temple unto our God."¹¹ If the secondary report is accurate, it is curious to consider how Cluff could omit this important detail concerning the temple in his own version of the vision. Lending credence to the later variations, however, is the fact that it was referenced in the dedicatory prayer of the Hawaiian temple by Church president

¹⁰ Cluff, *My Last Mission to the Sandwich Islands*, ed. George Q. Cannon (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 74.

¹¹ Samuel E. Woolley, in Eighty-eighth Semiannual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1917), 79–80.

Heber J. Grant. He prayed: “We thank Thee, O Father, this day that the promise made in a dream to Thy servant William W. Cluff, by Thy Prophet Brigham Young, that the day would come when a temple should be erected in this land, is fulfilled before our eyes.”¹²

Another commonly reported prophecy is ascribed to George Q. Cannon. In 1850, Cannon was part of the first wave of missionaries to arrive in the Islands. He returned as a member of the First Presidency of the Church to celebrate the mission’s jubilee in December 1900. During his stay he is credited with making several prophetic statements in connection with the temple.

While speaking at meetings in Laie and Honolulu, President Cannon felt moved to promise the Saints that if they lived faithfully and worthily, access to the sealing power of the priesthood would be given them and “they would have the privilege to be sealed in marriage.”¹³ This would make it possible for members in Hawaii to participate in temple ordinances “without going to the temples in Zion to have [those ordinances] performed.”¹⁴

In his journal, President Cannon recorded his recollections saying that he told the people that if they lived pure lives and had faith “the Lord might move upon His servant, the prophet...to authorize one of his servants to seal wives to husbands for time and eternity.”¹⁵ As we have them recorded, President Cannon’s actual statements appear only to suggest that the sealing power and authority would be given to a representative in the Islands, not necessarily that a temple would be built there. Then again, according to at least one native of Laie, Cannon’s words were more

¹² “Impressive Dedicatory Prayer in the New Hawaii Temple. Full Text of Dedicatory Prayer by President Heber J. Grant,” *Deseret News*, November 27, 1919.

¹³ Andrew Jenson, “Manuscript History of the Hawaiian Mission.” See also Moffat, *Gathering to Laie* (Laie, Hawaii: The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Island Studies, 2011), 106.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ George Q. Cannon, December 30, 1900, Journal of Travels to the Hawaiian Mission Jubilee, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City, 16; as cited in Britsch, *Moramona: The Mormons in Hawaii*, 3rd ed. (Laie, Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1989), 115.

explicit. Gus Kaleohano claimed to remember hearing him say, “It won’t be long when a temple to God will be built in Hawaii.”¹⁶

Regardless of his actual wording or the implied message, it has been suggested that President Cannon’s words “gave rise to the tradition that he had prophesied that a temple would be built in Hawaii.”¹⁷ It may have been directly expressed, or perhaps it came because the sealing power is employed in ordinances which are typically performed only in Latter-day Saint temples. Despite the origins, it appears that Hawaiian Saints anticipated the construction of a temple in their homeland since the first years of the new century. We may also safely assume that President Cannon was hopeful that the blessings of the temple would soon be made more readily available to the faithful Hawaiians.¹⁸

This tradition was perpetuated through the first decade of the 1900s and beyond. School children in Laie grew up with their missionary teachers instructing them to “be good and go to church all the time” so a temple could be built.¹⁹ Church leaders stressed personal worthiness in order for members to qualify for temple blessings. And temple work was a regular topic at mission conferences.²⁰ The tradition that stemmed from Cannon’s sentiments also received additional validation from several church authorities in the following years.

After the Church announced its plan to build a temple in Hawaii, Elder John A. Widtsoe wrote about it in a 1916 *Improvement Era* article. In the piece, Elder Widtsoe affirmed that

¹⁶ Gus Kaleohano interview by Clinton Kanahale, 1970, Clinton Kanahale Collection, Joseph F. Smith Library, Brigham Young University–Hawaii; as cited in Moffat, 106.

¹⁷ Britsch, 115.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ John Fugal, *Ruby Enos Interview*. Laie, Hawaii, 1990. Recording is in the possession of the author.

²⁰ Moffat, 106. See also Britsch, 120.

Cannon had predicted that a temple in Hawaii “was near at hand.”²¹ Then, as if supplying supporting evidence, he noted that Cannon’s widow, Sarah Jenne Cannon, donated money for the building of the temple before it had even been announced. Coincidentally, Sister Cannon made her contribution while she was on a vacation to Hawaii in the spring of 1915. This was just prior to President Smith’s visit when he dedicated the temple site in Laie.

Former Hawaiian Mission President Samuel E. Woolley spoke at the dedication of the temple in November 1919. In his remarks, he referenced President Cannon’s 1900 visit and said that “he predicted that there would be a house of the Lord erected in these islands.”²² In this same address, Woolley recounted Cluff’s dreamlike encounter with Brigham Young, including Young’s supposed communication that a temple would be built in Laie.

Earlier, Woolley recorded a prophecy of his own in his diary. His experience came during a visit to Utah just six months prior to the dedication of the temple plot in Laie. While worshipping in the Salt Lake Temple, he had an experience that led him to believe that there would someday be a temple among the Hawaiian people “in their own land.” Through this impression Woolley also came to believe he would be there at that time “looking after” the people.²³

Perhaps his own experience, combined with the believed statements of others, gave President Woolley the courage to extend this bold challenge and promise to the Hawaiian Saints on April of 1915. He declared: “Are we prepared for a temple to be built? . . . Who knows but what the Lord wants to build a temple in this land? I tell you that there are people here today who

²¹ John A. Widtsoe, “The Temple in Hawaii: A Remarkable Fulfillment of Prophecy.” *The Improvement Era*, 1916, 955.

²² Rudger Clawson, “Dedication of Hawaiian Temple.” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, January 1920, 10. See also N. B. Lundwall, ed. *Temples of the Most High*, 16th ed. (Salt Lake City Bookcraft, Inc., 1940), 153.

²³ Samuel E. Woolley, “Journal,” December 4, 1914, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City. See also Moffat, 106.

if they continue in the work of the Lord, shall enter into the temple or other temples; and the time will come, in my judgment, that a temple will be built here.”²⁴

This prediction by Woolley barely predates the temple site’s dedication. Knowledge of other prophecies surfaced even later. In the first of five dedication services of the temple, Arnold B. Bangerter, a traveling missionary, was given the opportunity to speak. During his address he quoted what he regarded as a remarkable prophecy about the temple.²⁵ Elder Bangerter reported the following: “I am thankful to my heavenly [sic] Father for the opportunity I have in being present at the dedicatorial services of this Temple. I recall now, as I read over my patriarchal blessing the other day, given me by one of the patriarchs who has long since passed away, and though he is dead, yet his words still live, and while I was only three years old at the time, the blessing this dear brother pronounced upon my head was to this effect: He said: ‘When you grow up you will be called to leave your home and go upon a mission to the islands of the sea. There you will meet with many of the descendants of Nephi, and while you are there you will see a temple reared to the name of the Lord.’ I appreciate the blessing that the Lord has extended to me.”²⁶

In his article on the temple, Elder Widtsoe declared that “many persons have foreseen the coming of a temple at Laie.” He then asserted that “in time, it seemed to all who labored in the Hawaiian Mission, it certainly would be made easily possible for the thousands who entered the

²⁴ General Minutes, Hawaiian Mission, Conference, April 3, 1915, fd. 5; as cited in Britsch, *Moramona*, 121.

²⁵ Arnold Bangerter’s statement refers to his patriarchal blessing. A Patriarchal blessing is a special blessing given by an ordained patriarch (an office in the Melchizedek Priesthood) to interested and worthy members of the Church. A patriarchal blessing declares the recipient’s lineage in the house of Israel. It also contains personal counsel from the Lord specific to the person receiving the blessing. Bangerter’s account was published in early versions of *Temples of the Most High*, by N. B. Lundwall, but was removed at some point in reprint editions. The exact time of and reason for the redaction is unknown to the author. In editions that include the account, Lundwall provides this footnote: “This blessing is recorded in Vol. 89, p. 186, of Blessings, and fully confirms this statement” (Lundwall, 157). It has also been confirmed that Arnold Bangerter indeed made brief remarks at the first dedicatory session of the Temple. (See Clawson, 11.)

²⁶ Lundwall, 156–157.

Church to receive the rites given in the temples, and thus to enjoy a fulness of the gifts of the gospel.”²⁷ The 1915 announcement of the building of a temple in Hawaii may have surprised some members of the Church outside of Hawaii. But the Saints there likely viewed the announcement as partial fulfillment of their longstanding prophecies and traditions.

The Need for a Temple

Some Hawaiians who yearned to experience the blessings of the temple felt they could not wait for these prophecies to be fulfilled. They had been taught by missionaries the doctrine of gathering to Zion for the necessary purpose of receiving temple ordinances. A longing to heed the call to “come to Zion,”²⁸ compelled Latter-day Saint converts throughout the world to brave the arduous trip to Utah. Many faithful Saints in the South Pacific keenly felt that same desire, yet relatively few were able to make the journey to Salt Lake to obtain the spiritual blessings they desperately wanted. Those who were able to emigrate, however, began visiting the Utah Territory as early as 1866.

One contemporary missionary, Castle Murphy, noted “how handicapped the saints . . . were without having a Temple nearby.”²⁹ He further explained the extent to which many Hawaiian Saints were willing to sacrifice in order to receive their temple blessings. He wrote how “Some . . . sacrificed so much to come to Utah to receive their endowments and sealings . . .

²⁷ Widtsoe, 955.

²⁸ Richard Smyth. “Israel, Israel, God is Calling.” Hymn 7. (See also D&C 133:7-9.)

²⁹ Castle Murphy for Hawaiian Temple Jubilee, November 14, 1969. Castle H. Murphy Papers, Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT. Castle Murphy and his wife, Verna, were missionaries in Hawaii for ten years before the temple was dedicated (from 1909 to 1913). They returned less than twenty years later, and from 1930–1936, the Murphy’s served as president and matron of both the Hawaiian Mission and the Hawaiian temple. They would return in 1938 for another stint as temple president and matron. In January 1944, they were called back a fourth time to preside over the Hawaiian and Central Pacific Missions. By June of that year, they were assigned to again oversee the Laie Hawaii Temple. The Murphy’s were released from their final mission in May 1947. (Jeffrey S. Hardy, HBLL, Digital Collections, 2012).

They used their life's savings to make the trip and returned home in debt." Murphy reported that upon their return, "they kept their covenants . . . and died true to the faith."

Others who traveled to Utah for the temple, however, never made the return trip. By the late 1880's, a portion of northwest Salt Lake City was home to a small community of about seventy-five Hawaiians.³⁰ This gathering led to the August 1889 founding of a Hawaiian colony at Skull Valley. It was located west of Salt Lake City in Tooele County. Fittingly, the community was named *Iosepa* (pronounced: yo-sepa), which meant "Joseph" in Hawaiian. It was a tribute to their beloved missionary and Apostle, Joseph F. Smith.³¹

"The Hawaiian Saints desired to obtain their endowments and be sealed together as families," observed one historian. "Endowment work," he continued, "was undoubtedly the major motivation for gathering to Zion."³² Other scholars agree that the reason behind the Hawaiian pioneers' settling in desolate Skull Valley rather than a more agronomically favorable location was because such available locations "were far from a temple, and that was the reason that Hawaiians wanted to be in Utah."³³ The agricultural village was supervised by several former Hawaiian missionaries. It was partially modeled after, and managed much like the plantation in Laie. The colony lasted for twenty-eight years and, in 1915, was a profitable, thriving community with 228 inhabitants.

³⁰ Britsch, 123.

³¹ Ibid., 124.

³² Ibid., 123.

³³ Moffat, 49.

Dedication of the Temple Site

It is no secret that Joseph F. Smith loved Hawaii—the place, the poi, the pace, and especially the people.³⁴ He prized these sites of such significance from the formative years of his life and faith. Tellingly, he visited the Islands more throughout his life than any other destination outside of the American West. In fact, President Smith traveled to Hawaii four times just during his administration as Church president.³⁵

President Smith was continually impressed by the progress he observed in Hawaii, and among the members there, during his visits from January 1899 to May of 1915. Observations from his 1915 trip were summarized in a letter written from Laie to his son, Hyrum M. Smith. After detailing infrastructure improvements and other modern advancements, President Smith reported, “In brief, I may say our saints in Hawaii, especially those of this little colony and those of Honolulu, are apparently in vastly better temporal conditions than I have ever seen them in before. Every indication points to the belief that they have made excellent spiritual progress also.”³⁶

Elder Reed Smoot, who was in Hawaii with President Smith on his 1915 visit, shared similar sentiments about the “wonderful improvements” he witnessed. Smoot had not been to Hawaii since 1880, and he remarked, “Laie has greatly changed since I was there 35 years ago.”³⁷ This must certainly have been gratifying to the prophet who was known to have “kept a careful eye on Hawaii.” The number of missionaries sent there increased during his presidency

³⁴ Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith: Patriarch and Preacher, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 198.

³⁵ “Four times [President Smith] made trips to the Hawaiian Islands, in March, 1909, May, 1915, February, 1916, and the last time in May, 1917. It was while on his visit in 1915, that he selected and dedicated a site for a Temple at Laie.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 421.)

³⁶ “From Far Away Hawaii,” *Millennial Star*, July 8, 1915.

³⁷ Harvard S. Heath, ed. *In the World: The Diaries of Reed Smoot* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 270.

(at one point by more than fifty percent), as did the membership of the church in Hawaii. This included the significant addition of over a thousand new members just from 1910 to 1915.³⁸ Apostle Reed Smoot, also a United States senator at the time, was invited to visit the Islands as a guest of the Hawaii Legislature. Senator Smoot then asked President Smith and his wife Julina to accompany him as his guests on the Hawaiian trip set for early May.³⁹ The Smiths' departure was delayed due to a family illness, but along with Charles W. Nibley, the presiding Bishop, and his wife, they finally met up with the Smoots upon their May 21 arrival.⁴⁰

The vacation was filled with the typical fanfare expected during the stay of a beloved prophet, especially one so highly esteemed as was Joseph F. Smith. It was also filled with the anticipated ministerial duties and—as is the lot of nearly all priesthood leaders—some unanticipated ones, too. On Saturday, May 29, President Smith presided and spoke at the funeral of a faithful Hawaiian brother, and it may be that this Saint's sudden passing was instrumental in prompting the inspiration the prophet needed to dedicate ground for the long awaited temple in Hawaii.

Mission records reported, “Peter Kealakaihonua, an aged Hawaiian Elder . . . died suddenly in Honolulu.”⁴¹ Not a great deal is known about this man. He lived in Honolulu for many years with perhaps the most prominent Latter-day Saint couple in Hawaii, Abraham and Minerva Fernandez.⁴² The fact that President Smith and Elder Smoot attended his funeral was mentioned in an article printed in *The Liahona*, the Church's missionary publication of the day.

³⁸ Britsch, 120.

³⁹ Reed Smoot, “Personal Letter,” March 15, 1916, Joseph F. Smith Papers. LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City.

⁴⁰ Heath, 268.

⁴¹ Manuscript History of Hawaiian Mission, May 27, 1915. In the manuscript history Peter's last name is spelled Kealakaihomua. The spelling used by the author was decided on by consulting several other sources.

⁴² Reed Smoot, “*Diary*,” Thursday, May 27, 1915, Reed Smoot Papers, Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

The article provides the following information about “Elder Kealakaihonua.” It states that he was “one of the oldest and most respected members of the Church in the islands. He had been a member of the Church for many years and had been the means of converting a large number of the islanders.”⁴³ In his journal, Elder Smoot also noted Peter’s unexpected passing and added this intriguing insight: “The old man has been to Utah and received his endowments.”⁴⁴

Available records do not indicate how much this experience impacted President Smith specifically, but a later journal entry confirms that Peter’s death certainly had an impact on Elder Smoot: “After the funeral services of Peter last Saturday I told Sister Smith and Sister Nibley as we were going to the grave yard [sic] that the church ought to erect an Endowment House or Temple at Laie so the islanders could secure their endowments and do temple work for the living and the dead.”⁴⁵

Elder Smoot made this timely comment just three days before, as one biographer put it, “an ecclesiastical event of historic significance.”⁴⁶ On the well-documented evening of Tuesday, June 1, 1915, President Smith requested that one of his dearest friends, Bishop Nibley, and Elder Smoot accompany him on a walk. They strolled through their beautiful surroundings about 400 yards up a small hill to the chapel called, *I Hemolele*—which in Hawaiian suitably means, “Holiness to the Lord.” According to President Smith, the men then “had some conversation on the subject of recommending that a small temple or endowment house be erected here at Laie.”⁴⁷

In his account of the evening’s events, Elder Smoot adds several noteworthy details: “President Smith said Bp Nibley had suggested to him that as the Mission was in a financial

⁴³ “President Smith and Party Return,” *The Liahona*, July 6, 1915.

⁴⁴ Reed Smoot, “*Diary*,” Thursday, May 27, 1915.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Tuesday, June 1, 1915.

⁴⁶ Gibbons, 310.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 310.

condition that [if] it could build a small Endowment House or Temple it should do so.” According to Smoot, Nibley also suggested that the temple be built on that very spot where the chapel stood, which would necessitate moving the *I Hemolele* meeting house. President Smith then stated, “if that met with approval of all three of us he felt impressed to consecrate and dedicate the ground for that purpose.”⁴⁸

In a later telling of the experience, Smoot included this description of President Smith’s pre-dedicatory words: “I feel impressed to dedicate this ground for the erection of a temple to God, for a place where the peoples of the Pacific Isles can come and do their temple work. I have not presented this to the Council of the Twelve or to my counselors; but if you think there would be no objection to it, I think now is the time to dedicate the ground.”⁴⁹ In either case, Smoot is clear that the notion “met with [his] hearty approval.”⁵⁰

Following the dedicatory prayer, Elder Smoot expressed that “the very ground seemed to be sacred.”⁵¹ The trio then returned to the mission house and each of them spoke to a group of Saints gathered there. While recording the evening’s events in his journal, Smoot added his conviction that the event was “the first step towards the erection of a small temple here in Laie wherein the Hawaiian Saints as well as the saints of other Islands of the Pacific can have their temple ordinations, sealings, baptisms, etc [sic] attended to.” Then, as if to acknowledge the magnitude of this milestone, Elder Smoot proclaimed, “This can be considered a blessed day for members of the church living on the islands of the Pacific.”⁵² There is no question as to the significance of the step taken on that “blessed day.”

⁴⁸ Heath, 273.

⁴⁹ Reed Smoot, Conference Report, October 1920, Third Overflow Meeting, 137.

⁵⁰ Heath, 273.

⁵¹ Smoot, Conference Report, 137.

⁵² Heath, 273.

Smoot's records supply rich contextual information about the circumstances surrounding this monumental event, especially the connection and timing of the funeral just a few days prior to the dedication of the temple site.

Several questions arise in relation to the reasons behind President Smith's initiation of the dedication. Particularly in light of the suggestion Elder Smoot made to the wives of President Smith and Bishop Nibley, one may be prompted to ask: did Sister Smith discuss the proposition of building a temple in Hawaii with her husband? Did Sister Nibley pass on the suggestion to Bishop Nibley? Did Peter Kealakaihonua's death in some way incite Bishop Nibley and President Smith's dialogue on the matter? That is the effect it had on Elder Smoot. Peter's death was noteworthy even to have been reported in a newspaper article on the mainland that highlighted President Smith's trip to Hawaii. Was his death a poignant enough event to cause the prophet to reflect upon the state of those Hawaiians who, unlike Peter, had not had the opportunity to go to the temple in Utah?

Regardless of the existence of such exchanges, or the impetus behind the inspiration, this important fact remains: Joseph F. Smith, in his role as the prophet of God, dedicated the ground in Laie, Hawaii for the building of a House of the Lord. As a result, the evening of Tuesday, June 1, 1915, marked the dawning of a new era of temple construction and expansion in Church history—it would be the first temple outside of North America.

President Smith's announcement to build a temple in Hawaii was made just over three months after returning home from that momentous visit. President Smith's experiences on his 1915 trip to Hawaii were crucial in his determination to see a temple built there.

Hawaii Temple Announcement: Its significance Then and Now

In the autumn of 1915, *Iosepa*, the Hawaiian Colony west of Salt Lake City, was a successful community with satisfied residents. It was the only home many of its younger residents had ever known. Surprisingly, shortly over a year later, by early 1917, the last group of Hawaiians left *Iosepa*. The ranch was sold shortly thereafter and today little remains as evidence that the colony ever existed.⁵³ What incited this exodus from *Iosepa*?

The answer is a historic announcement in the Eighty-sixth Semiannual General Conference of 1915. Shortly after ten in the morning on Sunday, October 3, the prophet and president of the Church stood to address the congregation seated in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Then, near the end of his sermon, Joseph F. Smith explained:

Now, away off in the Pacific Ocean are various groups of islands, from the Sandwich Islands down to Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, and New Zealand. On them are thousands of good people...of the blood of Israel. When you carry the Gospel to them they receive it with open hearts. They need the same privileges that we do, and that we enjoy, but these are out of their power. They are poor, and they can't gather means to come up here to be endowed, and sealed for time and eternity, for their living and their dead, and to be baptized for their dead. What shall we do with them? Heretofore, we have suffered the conditions that exist there . . .

Now, I say to my brethren and sisters this morning that we have come to the conclusion that it would be a good thing to build a temple that shall be dedicated to the ordinances of the house of God, down upon one of the Sandwich Islands, so that the good people of those islands may reach the blessing of the House of God within their own borders, and that the people from New Zealand, if they do not become strong enough to require a house to be built there also, by and by, can come to Laie, where they can get their blessings and return home and live in peace, having fulfilled all the requirements of the Gospel the same as we have the privilege of doing here.⁵⁴

President Smith then proposed to “build a temple at Laie, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii.” All present manifested their approval by raising their right hand to which the prophet noted, “I do not see a contrary vote.”

⁵³ Britsch, 122–126, 135.

⁵⁴ Joseph F. Smith., Conference Report, October 1915, 9.

After receiving the support of the Saints in Utah, President Smith expounded on the need for and viability of the proposed temple in Laie. “I want you to understand that the Hawaiian mission, and the good Latter-day Saints of that mission, with what help the Church can give, will be able to build their temple,” he explained. “They are a tithe-paying people, and the plantation is in a condition to help us. We have a gathering place there where we bring the people together, and teach them the best we can. I tell you that we (Brother Smoot, Bishop Nibley and I) witnessed there some of the most perfect and thorough Sunday School work on the part of the children of the Latter-day Saints that we had ever seen.”⁵⁵

In the announcement of a temple in Laie, the Hawaiians living in *Iosepa* also heard a call to return to their homeland. They felt the need to help build Zion there, complete with its temple. Temple blessings led to the formation of the colony at *Iosepa*, and the blessing of having a temple in their native land caused the Hawaiian Saints to abandon it.⁵⁶ The establishment and eventual disbanding of *Iosepa* can be valuably viewed as a microcosm for the purpose and evolution of the gathering doctrine.

In a related way, the establishment and building up of Laie, and the construction and dedication of a temple there marked the genesis of a shift in gathering and temple building for the Church. This temple, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, became the first realization of the long foreseen direction of the gathering of scattered Israel on the “isles of the sea” (2 Nephi 10:8). It was a forerunner to the future method of building Zion in the dispensation of the fullness of times.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁶ Britsch, 123. See also Bock, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Hawaiian Islands.” M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1941, 77.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Construction of a Temple in Hawaii

The Latter-day Saint temple in Laie, Oahu, Hawaii was dedicated on November 27, 1919. At the time it became the first temple “away from the traditional centers of Mormon colonization in Utah.”¹ The story of how the Laie Hawaii Temple came to be as it is recognized today is multifaceted. It tells of unique happenings and unconventional methods. When it comes to temple building, the tales associated with this temple are likely some of the most intriguing. The focus of this chapter will be to disclose interesting and important details concerning the Laie Hawaii Temple from its conception to its completion. Because the architecture of the temple will be considered in chapter six, its design will be mentioned only briefly in the present chapter as it relates to the building’s construction

Two of the most frequently debated aspects of the temple’s construction are the question of who was responsible and whether or not lumber was provided in a miraculous manner at a critical time. This chapter will seek to answer both questions.

Behind the Building of the Temple in Hawaii

President Joseph F. Smith proposed the building of a temple in Hawaii during the Eighty-sixth Semiannual General Conference of the Church. The proposition was embraced unanimously and signaled by what one publication described as a “great forest of uplifted hands which gave affirmation to the proposal.”² Church members present in the Salt Lake Tabernacle that Sunday morning in October of 1915 were undoubtedly excited. It was reported that “the

¹ Richard O. Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1989), 120.

² “Temple in Hawaii,” *The Liahona*, October 26, 1915.

decision reached . . . to proceed with the erection of a temple in the Hawaiian Islands is one of the most interesting and significant events in Church history in many a day.”³

Indeed, the idea of a temple in Hawaii was as symbolic as it was significant. The decision to build a temple in any location represents a very serious long-term commitment and investment by the Church. The presence of a temple is indicative of dedication, importance, and permanence. In committing to build this temple the Church was manifesting its faith in, and expectations, for the people of the islands of Hawaii and the Pacific region. This sacred structure was to stand as a monument of the faith and as a symbol of the expanding and enduring international presence of the Church.

In conjunction with this change, the announcement, building, and ultimate dedication of the temple in Laie signaled the growth of the Church in a different way. The administration of President Joseph F. Smith began in the dawn of the twentieth century. It was a period of development and increased prosperity for the church. Two new temples, one in Canada and one in Hawaii, became fitting symbols of the Church’s increasing vitality.

When Church leaders announced plans to build a temple in Alberta, Canada in 1912, it had been over thirty-seven years since the last announcement of a new temple (in Manti, Utah). When the Hawaiian temple, as it was originally called, was dedicated it had been more than twenty-six years since the last temple dedication had taken place, in Salt Lake City. These two momentous projects, led by the first Church president of the new generation, Joseph F. Smith, also introduced the emergence of a second generation of temple architecture and construction.

The Salt Lake Temple was dedicated in 1893. Massive in its scale and marvelous in its detail the Salt Lake Temple presents a vivid contrast with the much smaller and towerless Laie

³ Ibid.

Hawaii Temple in several striking ways. The temple in Salt Lake, like the temples preceding it, embodied “the best in design and craftsmanship that the pioneer generation had to give.”⁴ The Hawaiian temple, the first of the modern temples to be completed, was constructed during the rise of professionally trained builders. This new generation of builders received their construction training in the halls of academia as opposed to the “on the job training” previously received on the job site.

Master craftsmen of the pioneer era built the prodigious temples in Utah. In Salt Lake, enormous granite boulders hewn from nearby quarries were transported, skillfully shaped and painstakingly placed to form the temple. The colossal undertaking took forty years to complete. For the modern temples of the new century, church leadership sought the expertise of the most talented and prominent Latter-day Saint architects.⁵ In Hawaii, the temple was designed by professional architects and construction was overseen by a graduate of MIT, who specialized in “the new field of structural concrete engineering.”⁶ Built using the most modern materials and methods of the day, the temple in Laie was finished in less than a tenth of the time it took to build the Salt Lake Temple.⁷ In fact, amazingly, in 1919, the Hawaiian temple was completed in roughly the same amount of time it takes the Church to build a temple today, almost a century later.

⁴ Paul L. Anderson, “First of the Modern Temples.” *Ensign*, 1977.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Reference to Walter T. Spalding of Spalding Construction Company. Riley M. Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company and the Building of the Laie Temple” In *Mormon Pacific Historical Society* 32 Laie, Hawaii, 2011.

⁷ It should be noted that at 10,500 square feet, the temple in Hawaii was by far the smallest temple the Church had built at that date. When compared to the more than 380,000 square feet of the Salt Lake Temple, the Laie Hawaii Temple is miniscule. Still, the rate at which it was constructed in the early 1900s is impressive. In addition, due to several renovations, the Laie Hawaii Temple is now 42,000 square feet.

Selecting and Preparing the Site

This modern temple was constructed at an impressive rate, but it took old-fashioned hard work. The temple site was dedicated in the evening of Tuesday, June 1, 1915. Bishop Charles W. Nibley, who was with President Smith at the time, suggested the temple be built on the very spot where a chapel stood.⁸ This meant that before building could begin on the temple, the chapel (*Hemolele*, or “Holiness to the Lord”) had to be moved.

The plan to build a temple on the island of Oahu in Hawaii had been announced to the Church in October of 1915. A few months later, the entry for Wednesday, January 12, 1916, in the mission’s manuscript history states: “Work commenced for the erection of the new Temple.”⁹

About two and a half weeks later, the history’s next entry announces the beginning of the relocation project: “Work commenced for moving the meeting house at Laie from the Temple site to a point nearer the town. The moving of this structure was quite a task . . . The installing of the Chapel in its new location took until Mar. 1.”¹⁰

A description of the procedure quickly reveals why it was said to be “quite a task.” Hamana Kalili, one of the men who reportedly oversaw the Chapel’s relocation offered this illuminating explanation many years later:

The LDS chapel and school, a three-room building about 90 feet by 30 feet, needed to be moved away from the Temple site. There were no trailers or trucks, nor any mechanical device to lift or move as large a building as the chapel. Finally under the direction of Brother Pope, of the Pope & Burton Architects, and under the foremanship of Hamana Kalili and David Haili, some twenty husky Hawaiians moved the building. First, they lifted the nine-ton building off its foundation with jacks and placed large timbers under it. Then they laid two rows of four inch pipe about three feet long on solid timbers under either side of the building. With tackles and long ropes the men pulled and pushed the building down the hill...Each time the building rolled off a pipe someone would pick it up and carry it ahead of the building and placed it on solid timber again to await the time

⁸ Harvard S. Heath, ed. *In the World: The Diaries of Reed Smoot* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 273.

⁹ Andrew Jenson, “Hawaiian Mission Manuscript History,” Wednesday, January 12, 1916.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Tuesday, February 1, 1916.

when the chapel would roll over it. Pipes and timber were carried down the hill ahead of the building to make a continuous track on which the chapel was hauled. When it reached level ground, it was then hauled over to the spot where the present Laie chapel stands. It took many days to move the chapel and to set it up. . . .¹¹

This report of the method used to move the meeting house seems almost inconceivable in our day.

It may have been strange for outsiders to observe the relocation of *I Hemolele* to make way for the building of a temple. This meetinghouse had been a well-known landmark since 1883. Built to accommodate the growing population of Saints gathering to Laie, *I Hemolele* was a striking edifice in the still stark Laie landscape of the day. Assistant Church Historian, Andrew Jenson, wrote this interesting description of the chapel: “It occupies an elevated piece of ground and can be seen to advantage a long distance oft [sic]. It is known among non-members of the Church as the Mormon Temple—a distinction which it perhaps duly deserves, it being the finest house of worship on the island of Oahu outside of Honolulu.”¹²

The “Mormon Temple” nickname given to *I Hemolele* undoubtedly caused a certain degree of confusion among those unfamiliar with specific Latter-day Saint terminology. While the temple was under construction a magazine article was written about “Mormonism in Hawaii.” It provides an example of the uncertainty that must have existed in the minds of some. The piece published in *Paradise of the Pacific*, a magazine commissioned by the Hawaiian monarchy, noted: “Hawaii is to have a second Mormon Temple. . . . This temple is for the same purpose as that at Salt Lake City . . .”¹³

¹¹ As told to Violet Kalama by Brother Hamana Kalili, *Hui Lau Lima News*, November 24, 1957, 8 and 9; as cited in Moffat, *Gathering to Laie* (Laie, Hawaii: The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Island Studies, 2011), 111–112.

¹² Jenson, June 3, 1895.

¹³ Kate Marcia Forbes, “A New Blade in an Old Knife: Mormonism in Hawaii.” *Paradise of the Pacific*, January 1917, 8.

President Smith and Bishop Nibley also arrived “for a short visit” on the day *I Hemolele* was permanently resituated¹⁴ Elder John A. Widtsoe reported that the purpose of their visit was to arrange “with President Woolley many of the details connected with the building.”¹⁵ A few days later an important meeting was held in the office of Mission President Samuel E. Woolley.

According to the mission record, “the following were present: President Joseph F. Smith, Bishop Charles W. Nibley, Pres. Samuel E. Woolley, Hyrum Pope, Wilford J. Cole, and Ralph E. Woolley.” President Smith presided over the meeting, the purpose of which was to contract a builder for the proposed temple. The record further states: “the proposition was discussed as to the advisability of entering into a contract with the Spaulding [sic] Construction Company of Honolulu to build the L.D.S. Temple at Laie. The mission was to furnish all the materials they had on hand, and the company to furnish all the materials needed outside of that.”¹⁶

This discussion went on for some time. Then Bishop Nibley motioned “to authorize the taking up of the Spaulding Construction Company’s proposition and enter into contract with them as a working medium to build the Laie Temple, at the very best terms possible.” President Smith then “put the resolution to vote and it was unanimously adopted.”¹⁷

The decision reached during this meeting to contract the Spaulding Construction Company is significant for several reasons regarding the construction of the temple. This conclusion is important because it helps resolve several longstanding quandaries associated with Ralph E. Woolley, the son of Hawaiian Mission President Samuel E. Woolley, and his role the building of the Hawaiian temple. The first question has to do with Ralph’s role in building the temple.

¹⁴ Jenson, Wednesday, March 1, 1916.

¹⁵ John A. Widtsoe, “The Temple in Hawaii: A Remarkable Fulfillment of Prophecy.” *The Improvement Era*, 1916, 956.

¹⁶ Jenson, Wednesday, March 4, 1916.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Who Was Responsible for Building the Hawaii Temple?

Most Latter-day Saint sources credit Ralph E. Woolley as the sole individual who was in charge of building the Laie Hawaii Temple. Other sources, however, have identified Walter E. Spalding as the contractor for the temple. A review of what actually happened will show the relative roles of these two men.

Just over a year after the Hawaiian temple was dedicated, Ralph E. Woolley married Jeannette Romania Hyde on December 8, 1920, in the Salt Lake Temple.¹⁸ Over twelve years after Ralph's death in 1957, Romania, as she was known, gave a speech at the unveiling of a bronze bust of her husband. The unveiling took place at the library of the then, Church College of Hawaii, to commemorate the library's being named in his honor. Romania's remarks given on February 17, 1970, appear to have generated, or at least publicized several episodes pertaining to the construction of the temple in Hawaii questioned by some historians throughout the years.

The first has to do with President Joseph F. Smith's selection of the contractor for the temple. More than fifty years after the event had occurred; Romania Woolley referenced President Smith's Hawaiian vacation during which he had dedicated the temple site. She then recalled that at the conclusion of his trip, President Smith asked Ralph for a ride to Honolulu so he could board his steamer. She then tells of a conversation that supposedly occurred between President Smith and Mission President Samuel E. Woolley, Ralph's father. She said that as they were getting in the car, President Woolley said, "Now President Smith, you've arranged for the plans for the temple; who will we get to build the temple?" She then reported that "without any hesitation, [President Smith] turned to Ralph and said, 'Why, we'll have Ralph build it.'"

¹⁸ Preston Woolley Parkinson, ed. *The Utah Woolley Family: Descendants of Thomas Woolley and Sarah Coppock of Pennsylvania* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1967), 549.

Samuel Woolley rebutted, “But he’s never even built a house!” To which President Smith replied, “Well, hasn’t he got his degree? He’s got his degree of course he can build it.” Romania then reported Ralph’s reaction: “If I hadn’t been seated at that automobile with my hands on that wheel, I’d have fainted.” She continued, “He rushed to the libraries. He studied everything he could get on building and construction. He interviewed . . . three contractors . . . as to how he could learn to build this thing.”¹⁹

Ralph was born in Grantsville, Utah, March 4, 1886. He moved with his family to Laie, Oahu, Hawaii at the age of nine when his father was called to preside over the Hawaiian Mission in 1895. He returned to Utah for his schooling and ultimately earned a degree in Engineering from the University of Utah in 1912.²⁰ He left the mainland for Hawaii in 1915.

Romania’s narrative, however, is problematic in several ways. First, President Smith was traveling with a large party, some of whom thoroughly documented the events of their stay. It seems unlikely that not even a reference to an exchange of such importance was recorded in his own diary, or by any of President Smith’s fellow travelers. Although Sister Woolley’s account does not make it seem so, perhaps it was a serious, private conversation and that is why it was not recorded. Either way, a few other points about the conversation raise warnings.

Elder Smoot was the best at chronicling the trip. He was present at the dedication of the temple plot, but does not mention any conversations about the temple with Samuel Woolley.

¹⁹ Romania Woolley, *Ralph E. Woolley Library Speech*. Audio Recording. Laie, Hawaii, 1969.

²⁰ Nearly all of the secondary information available about Ralph Woolley contains conflicting “facts.” For example, according to his wife, Romania, Ralph graduated with a degree in Mining Engineering. Other biographical sketches, however, claim his degree was in Civil or even Irrigation Engineering. The title of his 1912 thesis is “The Travertine Deposit of Cedar Mountains, Utah,” which seems to support Romania’s assertion. Regardless, such is just one example of several conflicting pieces of information about his life. For more information, see George F. Nellist, ed. *The Story of Hawaii and Its Builders* (this includes *Men of Hawaii: An Historical Outline of Hawaii with Biographical Sketches of Its Men of Note and Substantial Achievement, Past and Present, Who Have Contributed to the Progress of the Territory*), Vol. 3, Honolulu: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1925; and John William Siddall, ed. *Men of Hawaii: Being a Biographical Reference Library, Complete and Authentic, of the Men of Note and Substantial Achievement in the Hawaiian Islands*, Men of Hawaii, Vol. 2, Honolulu: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1921.

Following their special experience, Smoot says that President Smith, Bishop Nibley, and he went back to the mission home to find members on lawn ready to participate in a program President Woolley had arranged. The meeting would not have started before 8:30 pm and it extended well into the evening. Smoot says, “It was after eleven o clock before we got to bed.”²¹ According to Elder Smoot, the next morning was filled with vacation-like activities and then the entire party left for Honolulu in the early afternoon accompanied by President Woolley. They stayed there until their departure on Friday, June 5.²² This seems to contradict the events and timeline presented in the alternative account in which Ralph Woolley gives President Smith a ride to Honolulu to board his ship home.

The supposed discussion, although described as having taken place rather cavalierly, would almost certainly not have originally occurred that way. Those involved in the dedicatory experience in Laie always spoke of it in a reverential tone. This seems especially true of President Joseph F. Smith. Temples were a serious subject to him and it is supposed that he would have viewed his role and decisions in the building of one especially so. Granted, the content of the alleged conversation was relayed nearly sixty years after it took place and the tone may also have been altered to enhance its entertainment value for the retelling. Still the possibility of the existence of such a conversation raises more questions.

Prior to offering a dedicatory prayer on the land for the temple, President Smith made a telling remark to his companions. Elder Smoot records that he said, “I feel impressed to dedicate this ground . . . *I have not presented this to the Council of the Twelve or to my counselors* [emphasis added]; but if you think there would be no objection to it, I think now is the time to

²¹ Reed Smoot, “*Diary*,” June 1, 1915. Reed Smoot Papers, Harold B. Lee Library Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

²² *Ibid.*

dedicate the ground.”²³ President Smith’s obvious concern for propriety suggests the unlikelihood of any offhanded conversation about the Hawaiian temple. Considering his concern and desire to discuss the proposition with the rest of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve makes it hard to imagine President Smith prematurely discussing the new temple plans in such a way.

After the proposal to build the temple had been approved in general conference, it was reported that a conversation about the temple had taken place between Samuel Woolley and President Smith. It apparently occurred the day the prophet dedicated the ground for the temple in Laie. “On the first of June [President Smith (and likely Bishop Nibley)] talked the matter over with President S.E. Woolley and it was decided to recommend to the presiding authorities of the Church that a temple be built there. He said they went out and dedicated a spot of ground for the erection of a temple on the condition that it be approved by the Church authorities and members.”²⁴

The article does not cite its sources directly, but is written as if the information was obtained from a personal interview with Joseph F. Smith. Reed Smoot does not mention any such meeting with President Woolley, but it is quite possible he was not involved in one. From his recollection of President Smith’s words on the night of June 1, however, it is clear that the prophet and Bishop Nibley had previously discussed the matter. Perhaps their discussion included President Woolley. Samuel Woolley was an avid journal writer; we do not have his

²³ Reed Smoot, Conference Report, 1920, 137.

²⁴ Jenson, Sunday, October 3, 1915.

account of these events, however, because May 13, 1915, unfortunately marks the end of his journal entries in existence.²⁵

Letters between Joseph F. Smith and Samuel E. Woolley the summer after this trip contain some information about the temple, which might also raise questions about Ralph's supposed appointment as temple contractor. At the end of a letter written to President Woolley soon after his return home in June 1915, President Smith included this status update on the Hawaiian temple. Following the heading, "Private," the news read: "The matter of building a sacred place at Laie was presented to the Council last Thursday, at our first meeting, and was joyfully accepted and approved by all present. While it is not time to make it public, I will soon give you further information as the first steps which will be taken."²⁶ The desired confidentiality seems to be inconsistent with the idea that President Smith would have discussed building the temple so openly with Ralph Woolley; and the facts that the "first steps" were still future would seem to suggest that the appointment of a builder had not yet been made. A few months later President Smith apprised Woolley further saying, "We expect to make public announcement of the Sacred building . . . during our October conference. In the meantime it will not be necessary to make any positive declarations of it to the public."²⁷

In an effort to clarify Ralph's role, the following facts we do know for certain. Samuel E. Woolley is credited with providing general supervision over the work. Supervising the work naturally included the need for Woolley's involvement in financing the project.²⁸ This is

²⁵ Lance D. Chase, "Samuel Edwin Woolley: A Valet's Hero," in *Mormon Pacific Historical Society* (Laie, Hawaii: Mormon Pacific Historical Society, 1991), 26.

²⁶ Joseph F. Smith, Personal letter to Samuel Woolley, June 23, 1915, Joseph F. Smith Papers, LDS Church History Archives, Salt Lake City.

²⁷ Joseph F. Smith, Personal letter to Samuel Woolley, August 17, 1915, Joseph F. Smith Papers, LDS Church History Archives, Salt Lake City.

²⁸ Widtsoe, 954.

supported by many reliable sources. It also seems right because, as mission president, the temple was built under his jurisdiction. It has also come to light that President Woolley offered the labor of his plantation workers, even though they knew nothing about concrete work. The work was difficult and was done without the modern luxury of power equipment. It required intense manual labor, such as large excavations made by hand shovel, pick and blasting powder. We also know “the men worked ten hours, six days a week. They received a salary of \$1.25 per day.”²⁹

In March 1916, an important meeting was held in the office of Mission President Samuel E. Woolley. According to the record, “the following were present: President Joseph F. Smith, Bishop Charles W. Nibley, Pres. Samuel E. Woolley, Hyrum Pope, Wilford J. Cole, and [interestingly] Ralph E. Woolley.” President Smith presided over the meeting, the purpose of which was to contract a builder for the proposed temple. The record further states: “the proposition was discussed as to the advisability of entering into a contract with the Spaulding [sic] Construction Company of Honolulu to build the L.D.S. Temple at Laie. The mission was to furnish all the materials they had on hand, and the company to furnish all the materials needed outside of that.”³⁰

This discussion went on for some time. Then Bishop Nibley motioned “to authorize the taking up of the Spaulding Construction Company’s proposition and enter into contract with them as a working medium to build the Laie Temple, at the very best terms possible.” President Smith then “put the resolution to vote and it was unanimously adopted.”³¹ The decision in this meeting clarified that Ralph Woolley did not have sole responsibility for building the temple, but shared it with Walter Spaulding.

²⁹ Related by Hamana Kalili, as quoted in Moffat, *Gathering to Laie* (Laie, Hawaii: The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Island Studies, 2011), 112–113.

³⁰ Jenson, Saturday, March 4, 1916.

³¹ *Ibid.*

After the meeting President Smith is reported to have said, “I am mighty well pleased with this arrangement, for I must admit that it has been somewhat of a worry to me, but now I feel perfectly easy about the matter. I feel that my trip has been a success now.”³² There would have been no need for the meeting, or the decision to make such an arrangement if the arrangement had already been made. And it is reasonable to ask why President Smith would have been worried about who was building the temple if the matter had been settled nearly a year earlier. Perhaps his concern was that Ralph didn’t have the qualifications, so bringing Spalding on board solved this deficiency.

The Salt Lake architectural firm of Pope and Burton was commissioned by the First Presidency to prepare plans for the temple and supervise its construction. The firm’s German-born partner, Hyrum C. Pope, was the Project Architect for the temple.³³ He was responsible for overseeing all the architectural aspects, and more, of the building project in Hawaii. Apparently, he was there when the present *I Hemolele* was relocated. In all, Pope was on site in Laie for up to eight months throughout the temple’s construction phase.³⁴

There are conflicting reports as to whether it was Architect Hyrum Pope or Mission President Samuel Woolley who approached Walter T. Spalding in Honolulu to request he bid on building the temple. Recent research indicates that Spalding’s bid on the temple was “for cost plus 5% which was a good deal since he usually charged 10% or 12%.”³⁵ Spalding, a recent graduate of MIT “with a degree in the new field of structural concrete engineering,” had formed

³² Ibid., Saturday, March 4, 1916

³³ Eliza Rutishauser Pope, “The Personal History of Hyrum Conrad Pope.” Church History Department (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1866–1951).

³⁴ Samuel E. Woolley reportedly approached Spalding, according to the Official Statement by Muriel P. Moody, May 13, 1992, “Contractor for Building the Temple at Laie, Hawaii.” See Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company,” which states that Spalding “was approached by the Salt Lake architectural firm of Pope and Burton.”

³⁵ Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company.”

the construction company with his father and brother in Portland, Oregon.³⁶ For a time, Walter acted as the manager of the Hawaiian branch of the company as he oversaw the building projects they won bids for in the Islands. A biographical encyclopedia on prominent men and women in Hawaii included a sketch of Walter Spalding. Spalding's biography highlighted some of his company's projects in Hawaii. On the list was "the Mormon Temple at Laie" along with the Honolulu Iron Works Building, the Marine Barracks, Officers' Quarters and the Naval Hospital at Pearl Harbor among others.³⁷

Much of the detail we have on Spalding's role in building the temple comes from an interview conducted by the late Max Moody. This interview took place on the evening of May 28, 1973. Max and his wife, Muriel, would later serve as temple president and matron in Laie from 1978 to 1982. This interview is especially important because it gives due credit to the Spalding company, something that has been occasionally neglected in local church history. According to Muriel, Max "was concerned that the facts be correct as to who was the contractor for building the Temple. He was a longtime friend of Walter T. Spaulding [sic] and knew him to be the contractor in the local building records. It was disturbing for Max to hear and read otherwise. . . . so he asked Walter to relate the circumstances to his part in the building of that special edifice."³⁸ Apparently, "in local Church history Ralph Woolley was the only person given credit for building the Laie Temple" which was disconcerting to Max Moody.³⁹ With

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Perry Edward Hilleary, ed. *Men and Women of Hawaii: A Biographical Encyclopedia of Persons of Notable Achievement, an Historical Account of the Peoples Who Have Distinguished Themselves through Personal Success and through Public Service* (Honolulu: Honolulu Business Consultants, 1954), 610.

³⁸ Moody, "Contractor," (official statement).

³⁹ James E. Hallstrom, Personal letter to John L. Hepworth Letter, April 4, 1992, "Information of the December 7th Incident and the Miracle of All Miracles," Honolulu, Hawaii, 1992, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City.

further examination, it will become more evident why this partial misconception is so common in more official early accounts and reiterated in more recent retellings.⁴⁰

Spalding recalled that President Woolley asked him to hire his son Ralph. He did and said, “Ralph was good at checking levels and measurements.”⁴¹ In a letter written to President Smith early on in the building process, Samuel Woolley gives this progress report on their efforts: “We are getting along nicely with the construction of the Temple. [We] have about 40000 (forty thousand) feet of lumber set up in forms ready for the pouring of the concrete, I am insisting on having every detail looked after [so] that nothing shody [sic] or not of the best goes into the construction of the building. *I am pleased with the foreman we have on the job* [Emphasis added] he is interested in the work and is taking a great deal of pride in it all, he is a clean nice gentleman, and is out for right and honest labor. then [sic] Ralph is on the job too and I feel that I can depend on him, he is such a help to me and is helping to take the load like a man, and he loves the work.”⁴² Notice how President Woolley refers to Ralph and the foreman as two different in the people.

The Spalding Construction Company’s involvement and contribution to the project are indisputable. Hyrum Pope, one of the architects, relayed the difficulties associated with determining what material to use to build the temple in Hawaii. As he put it: “although highly favored in other respects the islands are almost devoid of building materials,” but he continued, “volcanic rock which is readily obtainable near the site could be crushed into an aggregate which

⁴⁰ Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth*; Chad S. Hawkins, *The First 100 Temples* (Salt Lake City: Eagle Gate, 2001); D. M. McAllister, “A Description of the Hawaiian Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1921). See also; Castle H. Murphy, “Temples: Sacred Institutions Dedicated unto the Most High God.” Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1935; and Chad S. Hawkins, *Holy Places: True Stories of Faith and Miracles from Latter-day Temples* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2006).

⁴¹ Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company.”

⁴² Samuel E. Woolley, Personal Letter to Joseph F. Smith, June 13, 1916, Laie, Hawaii. Joseph F. Smith Papers, LDS Church History Archives, Salt Lake City.

would make very good concrete.” Pope then explained: “it was therefore finally decided to build the entire edifice, floors and roofs as well as the walls of cement concrete, reinforced with steel in all directions.”⁴³

Concrete was the most modern building material of the time. Building with reinforced concrete was Walter Spalding’s specialty.⁴⁴ Without his know-how and that of his men overseeing the work, it is difficult to conceive of how this magnificent building would ever have taken shape in the form and manner which it did.

New research specifies that the on-site “foreman” Woolley referred to “was a man named Beaton from Los Angeles.”⁴⁵ There was also a “job engineer for Spalding Construction on the temple project” named Guy Rothwell.⁴⁶ Most of this information came from the 1973 Walter Spalding interview. It seems only a few people were aware of the interview, however. It wasn’t until 2011 that its contents were more fully examined and reported by a professor at BYU–Hawaii. Dr. Riley Moffat prepared a paper for the Mormon Pacific Historical Society titled, “The Spalding Construction Company and the Building of the Laie Temple.” Moffat’s contribution constitutes the most comprehensive understanding of the subject to date. As a result, of its late exposure, unfortunately the Spalding Construction Company and its work are still rarely acknowledged in the majority of literature available on the temple.

On the other hand, it is widely reported that Ralph Woolley was responsible for the building of the temple. So how did Ralph Woolley go from being “on the job” as hired help to becoming in charge of the whole operation as the “superintendent of construction?”⁴⁷ First, it

⁴³ Hyrum C. Pope, “About the Temple in Hawaii,” *Improvement Era*, December 1919, 149.

⁴⁴ Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company.”

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Spurrier, 30.

must be remembered that even though Spalding and company was contracted to build the structure there was still a great deal to be done in order to finish it. In his helpful piece Moffat concludes that “the contract with Spalding Construction was just for the concrete core of the building and not for the whole project.”

Construction officially commenced on the temple in Laie in 1916.⁴⁸ It appears, however, this took place rather unceremoniously, especially when compared with the traditional fanfare associated with temple building today.⁴⁹ With construction underway, Spalding made the “all-day excursion” from Honolulu to Laie “once or twice a week” to access the progress.⁵⁰

Elder John A. Widtsoe visited the Islands and was in Laie in June of 1916.⁵¹ Following his stay he said: “the work on the temple is proceeding rapidly and it will be ready for use in the spring or early summer of 1917.”⁵² Originally, plans called for the temple to be finished by June 1, 1917. As seems typical with many building projects, however, the schedule had to be pushed back.⁵³

According to Spalding’s recollection, though, his part was completed around March 1917. This seems consistent with other records which show the work had advanced enough on the interior of the building that materials “to finish the woodwork” were ordered as early as

⁴⁸ Ibid. The Hawaiian Mission Manuscript History reports that work began on January 12, 1916, but it does not mention an official ground breaking ceremony. Spurrier says: “Ground was broken for the temple on the 8th of February, 1916,” but gives no reference. See also Moffat, *Gathering to Laie*, 110–111. Moffat et al. seem to reference, but does not cite Spurrier. They also quote an eyewitness who claims that “in October 1916, . . . the ground breaking ceremony was held. Immediately thereafter excavations for the construction of Temple commenced.”

⁴⁹ To the best of the author’s ability to discover, there were no official ceremonies for the groundbreaking, cornerstone laying, or capstone laying associated with the Laie Hawaii Temple.

⁵⁰ Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company.”

⁵¹ Samuel E. Woolley, Letter to Joseph F. Smith.

⁵² Widtsoe, 956.

⁵³ Lewis A. Ramsey, Letter to Elizabeth Brown Ramsey, March 5, 1917, Laie, Hawaii, Lewis A. Ramsey Papers, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City.

January 1917.⁵⁴ Knowing this portion of the temple’s timeline provides perspective, which helps to better understand Ralph Woolley’s part in its construction. Although, the core of the building was completed by early 1917, the temple itself was not completely finished until April of 1918. In the meantime there was a lot of work to be done—work that was supposedly done under Ralph Woolley’s supervision.

Excavations from the most recent 2008 to 2010 renovations revealed that the historic cast-in-place concrete exterior walls were plastered and then painted white. The historic interior walls, which were also primarily cast-in-place concrete, were plastered and painted, or covered in wall covering. A small number of interior walls were made with wood studs then covered in lath and plaster.⁵⁵ Finishing the exterior and interior of the 10,500 square-foot structure constituted a significant amount of work.

In an article published and circulated Church-wide immediately following the temple’s dedication in December 1919, Pope wrote “About the Temple in Hawaii” and referenced Woolley’s role. He said, “A description of the temple would be incomplete without calling attention to the painstaking labors of Mr. Ralph E. Woolley, *who had charge of the construction work* [emphasis added], from commencement to completion . . .”⁵⁶ Pope’s accolades for Ralph E. Woolley may not be fully understood, but it is impossible to accept that his comments were unfounded. If Hyrum Pope and others are taken at their word, all of this work would have been carried out under Ralph Woolley’s direction. Further, according to his best recollection, Spalding “believed Ralph Woolley supervised the construction of auxiliary buildings” after he was done

⁵⁴ Ibid., January 25, 1917.

⁵⁵ Marty Pierson (of FFKR Architects) was interviewed by the author in May 2012, Salt Lake City.

⁵⁶ Pope, “About the Temple in Hawaii,” 152.

and gone. He thought Ralph was also responsible for overseeing the finishing of the interior, and the landscaping of the temple.⁵⁷

There is evidence indicating that some workers' perception of Ralph as being in charge may have even preceded Spalding's completion and departure. One source suggests that Ralph may have acted as a liaison between the Church and the Spalding Construction Company.⁵⁸ It should be remembered that Ralph spent a significant portion of his formative years in Laie and spoke Hawaiian fluently. It then seems practical to assume that as a professionally educated man, Woolley would have been a natural choice for the liaison between Spalding, his company foremen and the native laborers.

Along this line of thinking, another observer explained that despite his regular appearances, the local workers likely had little to do with Walter Spalding. Conversely, they probably worked with Ralph Woolley day in and day out. Thus, in their minds and as they recorded it in their personal histories, "Ralph was the boss and therefore the builder of the Temple rather than Spalding or his on-site manager, Beaton."⁵⁹

Extenuating global circumstances caused the postponement of the temple's dedication until near the end of 1919. This places Ralph Woolley at the head of the whole building project for about two and a half years. Comparing Woolley's time and exposure with that of Walter Spalding and his company's one year on the job, makes it easier to see how Ralph was nearly exclusively given credit as the project's contractor and supervisor by the end.

At age 29 he was in Laie at an opportune time. Undoubtedly, Ralph was in a position to be heavily involved in the work on the temple. Whatever the extent of his knowledge, skills, or

⁵⁷ Moffat, "The Spalding Construction Company."

⁵⁸ Hallstrom,

⁵⁹ Moffat, "The Spalding Construction Company." Paraphrase of a possible explanation given to Muriel Moody.

training had been before work commenced on the temple, he took full advantage of his chance to learn and gain experience in the field. His work on the temple was a springboard for him professionally, launching him into the construction business. Ralph Woolley went on to become a well-known and respected contractor. According to one source he “handled many of the most important construction projects in Hawaii.”⁶⁰

An understanding of the circumstances, times, and divisions of labor among those who built the Hawaiian temple, helps to shine light on the confusions of the past. It is clear that “Walter Spalding and his company [were] responsible for at least the core concrete work that has withstood the test of time so well as one of the first reinforced concrete structures in Hawaii.”⁶¹ Evidence suggests that Walter Spalding and Ralph Woolley (and countless unnamed workers) should share the credit for building “the iconic structure that sits so solidly on the hill in Laie.”⁶²

The Lumber Story

Another interesting account of an event that supposedly took place during the building of the temple also centered on Ralph Woolley. The story, or at least some of its details, appears to have originated in the speech delivered by Ralph Woolley’s widow in February of 1970. Regardless of its beginnings or its authenticity, at one time the tale was being told at the temple’s Visitors’ Center as the “Miracle of All Miracles.”⁶³ After its 1970 telling, the account has also been retold in several books and printed under subtitles like, *True Stories of Faith and Miracles*

⁶⁰ Nearly all of the secondary information available about Ralph Woolley contains conflicting “facts.” For more information see Parkinson, ed.; Nellist, ed; and Siddall, ed.

⁶¹ Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company.”

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Hallstrom.

*from Latter-day Temples.*⁶⁴ While the story may indeed be true, it is important to examine if it can be substantiated from contemporary sources because it is so widely quoted.

The incident, also referred to as “The Lumber Story,” is said to have occurred sometime during the end of 1916 or the beginning of 1917.⁶⁵ While the temple was being built in Hawaii, Europe was in the throes of World War I. During this time some resources became scarce in other parts of the world because of the commodities being redirected to Europe to support the war effort. At one point, the impact of these global circumstances reportedly impeded the temple building effort.

The structure of the Hawaiian temple was built using cast-in-place concrete. In this method of construction, wooden frames were built and concrete was poured into them to form the building’s walls and roof. According to some, when the walls of the temple were about halfway up, a shortage of lumber caused by the war halted the work. It was at this time when the “miracle” in “The Lumber Story” supposedly took place.

Romania Woolley explained: “at this point, [Ralph Woolley] was desperate. He climbed up . . . in the steeple of the belfry of the old Laie church. . . . and pled with the Lord. ‘Tell me what to do. Where can I get some lumber?’ . . . Oh about two days passed, and he heard a commotion in the village—people were running to the sea. . . . A freighter had run aground on the reef out at Goat Island.” He learned that the ship was “full of lumber.” But the captain couldn’t let him have any of it without permission of “the agents in Honolulu.” When Woolley told them of the conditions, the agent supposedly said, ““You can have all the lumber you want for nothing, if you can get it off the ship.””

⁶⁴ Hawkins, *Holy Places: True Stories of Faith and Miracle*, 109. See also Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth*, 129-130 and Hawkins, *First 100 Temples*, 20-21.

⁶⁵ John Fugal, *Viola Kawahigashi Interview*. Laie, Hawaii, 1990. Recording is in the possession of the author.

Woolley organized a group “of swimmers.” Then as Romania described, “those wonderful Hawaiian young kids threw the lumber off piece by piece. It was lugged up to the temple grounds and he started to finish the temple. And it didn’t cost the Church a cent.”

Sister Woolley continued: “But here’s the interesting thing: When they got all the lumber they wanted. Like an unseen force—there was no tug boats because everything had been taken from the harbors—that boat righted itself and slid off the reef and went into Honolulu. Now you know the answer to that.”⁶⁶

“The Lumber Story” is entertaining and intriguing, but throughout the years some have questioned its truthfulness on a few points. For instance, no account of this event has been found earlier than 1970. Even just a few months before her telling of the story, Romania Woolley gave a speech at the celebration of the Laie Hawaii Temple Jubilee, on November 27, 1969. A portion of her remarks focused on several of the problems her husband encountered and overcame while building the temple, but interestingly she never mentioned the lumber miracle.⁶⁷

Rudger Clawson, then acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was among the Church dignitaries who traveled to Hawaii to participate in the temple dedication in 1919. Letters describing his experiences were sent back to Salt Lake and published in the newspaper. His letters contained detailed descriptions of the temple and its grounds. They also included an enumeration of the “many difficulties” encountered during the temple’s construction.

President Clawson mentioned “most of the materials used in the construction of the building had to be imported from San Francisco, which many times caused delay,” but oddly absent from the list is any comment on a grave lumber shortage, or a miraculous intercession. In

⁶⁶ Romania Woolley, *Ralph E. Woolley Library Speech*.

⁶⁷ Romania Woolley, *Laie Hawaii Temple Jubilee Celebration*. Audio Recording. Laie, Hawaii, 1969.

fact, at the end of his summary of the difficulties endured, Clawson concludes: “Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the work went steadily on until the completion of the temple.”⁶⁸

The fact that such a remarkable event was not written in any known member or missionary journals, recorded in official mission histories, nor reported in any contemporary newspapers, magazine articles, or books seems strange indeed. Furthermore, neither Samuel nor Ralph Woolley ever spoke or wrote about the occasion.⁶⁹

When Spalding was “asked if he recalled a ship bearing lumber running aground in Laie Bay he couldn’t recall.” One source claims he did, however, verify that he remembered building supplies like lumber being difficult to obtain due to the war.⁷⁰ Still, this supposedly took place at the time when Spalding was in charge of temple construction, and was making trips out to Laie at least weekly. Even if he had somehow missed the event entirely, certainly he would have been informed about it. Though possible, it is hard to imagine that he could have forgotten such a critical situation involving the lumber, let alone such an unprecedented resolution.

Because boats like that do not typically even travel near the windward side of Oahu this event would have been very unusual indeed. Just seeing a large ship simply sailing past Laie would have been noteworthy, but a mishap like the one reported in “The Lumber Story” would have been unforgettable. According to one researcher, data collected at the Hawaiian Maritime Museum and Library revealed “there were no reports of ships running aground near Laie from 1915 to 1919.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ Rudger Clawson, “The Hawaiian Temple.” *Millennial Star*, November 1919.

⁶⁹ Hallstrom,

⁷⁰ Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company.”

⁷¹ Hallstrom.

When confronted with such evidence, however, supporters of the story may retort that is exactly why it was such a miracle. They believe that the grounding of the ocean steamer was a sign of divine intervention and a direct answer to Ralph Woolley’s prayer. In fact, Romania Woolley used this very example as supporting evidence of the miracle in her talk.

She asked the audience, “How many times have you seen a steamer come along this route—an ocean liner? Oh, you may have seen sailboats, but not an ocean steamer. They never come around this way. So, of course, we know what the Lord did. He had that captain come around here, and He ran him on the reef. But it didn’t injure the boat. And so Ralph Woolley got all the lumber he needed to build the temple, and then it slid off and went back into Honolulu.”⁷²

Romania is not the only one whose testimony supports “the Lumber Story.” Gus Kaleohano, was a native of Laie who would have been in his thirties when the alleged event occurred. In an interview in 1970, he was asked if he recalled the incident. He responded in the affirmative saying: “Those reports were true. Ralph Woolley asked the elders of the Church to unite, for that was the only way out, being united, asking God to open the way by which might be obtained the lumber to complete that building.”⁷³

When asked in the same interview how the lumber was obtained, and if he remembered a steamer that went aground, Kaleohano, an octogenarian, replied: “Yes, yes.” He then expounded: “the steamer grounded at Mokuauia, loaded with lumber, loaded. Grounded; we attempted to pull it off. Couldn’t. Stuck. The sea had pushed it and it was grounded on the reef. Really stuck. The steamer, the lumber, the whole thing, rested there. And that was the lumber used to complete that temple. True, true, I thank you for bringing that up. That is correct.”

⁷² Romania Woolley, *Ralph E. Woolley Library Speech*.

⁷³ Gus Kaleohano interviewed by Clinton Kanahale, 1970; as cited in Moffat, *Gathering to Laie*, 114–115.

Several others are also on record affirming the reality of such an event. Recordings are in existence of at least three women who claim they were involved in the excitement of that experience. The women were interviewed in 1990 by John Fugal. Fugal and his wife were serving in Hawaii as missionaries in the Visitors' Center at the temple when they became aware of the story. They were concerned about validating the story and in the process of actively researching it they learned of a few supposed eyewitnesses.

The women were natives of Laie and faithful Latter-day Saints revered by those who knew them.⁷⁴ The three women, Viola Kehau Peterson Kawahigashi, Ruby Kekauoha Enos, and Mary Kamuoha Pukahi were all children when the event took place, and in their eighties at the time of their interviews. They each tell their own memories of the episode, which are varied, yet mostly similar and surprisingly vivid at times. With varying degrees of detail, they each remember the marooned ship, lumber being unloaded by swimmers, floated into shore, dried, and transported up to the temple to be used in its construction. The women seem to sincerely express what they believe to be their honest recollection of events from the past. It would be difficult to read into their accounts any motivation other than to share their memories of a significant experience from their past. At the beginning of her interview, Viola Kawahigashi even expressed gratitude for the opportunity she had to share her “wonderful blessings of remembering events in [her] life that had blessed [her] life.”⁷⁵

Critics have attempted to explain away such testimonies by pointing out: “in the early days lumber was taken by small ship or barge to Windward Oahu. Because there were no wharves nor harbors the vessel would anchor and then with the help of Hawaiian swimmers, old and young, the lumber would be thrown off the ship and floated to shore. It was then stacked

⁷⁴ Eva Newton, “Finishing the Hawaii Temple,” 1991.

⁷⁵ Fugal, *Viola Kawahigashi Interview*.

triangularly on the shore to dry out.”⁷⁶ (This method of triangular stacking is consistent with the description given by Viola Kawahigashi.) They then suggest: “Perhaps the old Hawaiians remembered this primitive method of unloading and somehow, after being told a ship ran aground, they began to believe this ‘Lumber Story.’”

In fairness, Romania Woolley, was an entertaining and enjoyable speaker. She was a talented storyteller who seemed to possess the ability to captivate her audience. While her stories were always well delivered, she did, in truth, tell more than one tale that was intriguing yet unsubstantiated. Even those who do not believe her, however, seem to try to be careful not to “discredit her in anyway.”⁷⁷

For example, one person who was cautiously critical of her account of these events was not critical of Romania in the least. In fact, he described her in these words: “She was a beautiful person who contributed much to Hawaii. She was well loved by the Saints and she gave of herself to the Church and community. Sister Woolley always bore a strong testimony of the truthfulness of the Gospel. I, for one, can’t fault her for being proud of her good husband even to the point of exaggerating a little here and there.”⁷⁸

When it comes to definitively determining the historical accuracy of any event one truth always remains: It is immeasurably easier for someone to claim that something happened than it is to unequivocally confirm that it did not. Further, as with most things of this nature, *something* probably did happen. Concluding whether that something happened exactly as a particular person claimed is the ever-elusive task. As for “The Lumber Story,” it is up to the reader to decide whether it is simply the product of the well-intentioned exaggerations of a sentimental

⁷⁶ Hallstrom.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

and doting widow, or the “Miracle of all Miracles,” which is certainly within the acceptable realm of possibilities in a religion that firmly believes in the power of collective faith and personal intervention by a benevolent God. Perhaps we may never know for certain.

Funding the Temple

“A Description of the Hawaiian Temple,” is a small, illustrated booklet written by Duncan McAllister, the temple’s first Recorder. Published in 1921, the book was written to provide the curious onlooker with a thorough description of nearly every aspect of the temple. It also contains cogent explanations concerning the purposes for which the temple was built. In his opening paragraph McAllister writes, “The temple in Hawaii...is so uniquely beautiful that it excites the wonderment of all who see it; and the questions are usually asked, ‘What has it cost?’ and ‘What is the purpose for which it has been built?’”⁷⁹ This pamphlet is intended to provide all enquirers with the authentic information they desire, but it is necessarily given in a somewhat brief form.” This purpose of this section is to do the same, except attention will be focused only on the first inquiry, “What has it cost?” This additional question will also be addressed: “How was it paid for?”

Prior to presenting his proposal to build a temple in Hawaii, President Smith expounded on the need for one there. After receiving the support of the Saints in Utah, he focused his remarks on reassuring the Saints of the viability of the proposed temple in Laie. “I want you to understand that the Hawaiian mission, and the good Latter-day Saints of that mission, with what help the Church can give, will be able to build their temple,” he explained. “They are a tithe-paying people, and the plantation is in a condition to help us. We have a gathering place there

⁷⁹ D. M. McAllister, “A Description of the Hawaiian Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1921), 1.

where we bring the people together, and teach them the best we can. I tell you that we (Brother Smoot, Bishop Nibley and I) witnessed there some of the most perfect and thorough Sunday School work on the part of the children of the Latter-day Saints that we had ever seen.”⁸⁰

The announcement of the temple seemed to further energize the members in Hawaii. At the mission conference six months after President Smith’s announcement “tithing for the year [1916] was several thousand dollars in excess of the amount paid during any year in the past, notwithstanding the substantial fund voluntarily raised by the saints for the building of the temple.”⁸¹ Apparently this trend continued and throughout the next year adding on to already record revenues. In October general conference, 1917, President Woolley reported: “the spirit of this work is moving upon the people, and notwithstanding this large amount of money that they have collected for the building of the temple the tithing has increased about 30 per cent during the last nine months, and they have met every other obligation.”⁸²

Samuel E. Woolley was a proven adept financier. Years of running operations on the sugar plantation undoubtedly helped. He seems to have been a good fundraiser, as well, judging from his efforts overseeing the financial side of the temple’s construction. After seeing him in action, Elder Widtsoe spoke highly of Woolley’s service in these words: “with skill and energy President Woolley, who hopes that the mission may be able to build the temple unaided, inspires and supervises the financing and building of the temple.”⁸³

⁸⁰ Joseph F. Smith, in *The Eighty-sixth Semiannual General Conference*, 1915, 9.

⁸¹ E. L. Miner, “The Hawaiian Mission,” *The Liahona*, May 30, 1916.

⁸² Samuel E. Woolley, in *The Eighty-eighth Semiannual Conference*, 1917, 80.

⁸³ Widtsoe, 954.

Woolley had several approaches to help raise contributions to the temple fund. One way was through his ability to powerfully preach stirring sermons to the Hawaiian Saints. This sample of his rousing rhetoric was delivered during the mission conference in April 1916:

This is an important conference and a propitious time for the saints of these lands. Twice during the year has the mouthpiece of the Lord visited this mission, and he...dedicated a site for the building of a temple of God for the blessing and salvation of the living and the dead. The Spirit of the Lord moved upon the servants of the Lord to do this work. The work has begun. We want it finished before next conference. How can this be done? With money, with work, with unity, and with faith. The responsibility is with us. Is our faith sufficient? Can we get together \$50,000 by that time? There are over 9000 saints in the Church in Hawaii. If each gives \$5, that will be \$45,000. If we do enough that we will have plenty. If we have enough faith we can do it. If we donate \$5 for the temple, what may we receive? We may receive eternal blessings, salvation for us and our families and relatives. Is it worth while? I think it is a good investment. All those who are willing to help, hold up your hands. (All hands were raised).⁸⁴

Woolley employed other methods in an effort to raise needed funds as well. For instance, in a letter to Joseph F. Smith he told the prophet a few of his ideas. He wrote: “The Saints are interested in getting what money they can for the Temple Fund, I feel that they are doing real well and will yet do more I am going to send a report to each Conference and ask the Brethren to have it read in each Branch as they visit showing what each one of the Branches has done in each of the Conferences, as a reminder that they ought to keep on doing.”⁸⁵

President Woolley cared deeply for the Saints whom he served for nearly all of his adult life. It was acknowledged at the time that “the authorization to build a temple is the realization of one of his dearest hopes for the mission.”⁸⁶ He often spoke in General Conference always portraying the Saints in Hawaii to the rest of the Church membership in a sincere and most favorable light.

⁸⁴ Miner.

⁸⁵ Samuel E. Woolley to Joseph F. Smith.

⁸⁶ Widtsoe, 954.

His feelings for them shine through in the continuation of his letter to President Smith. After he relayed his idea for motivating the Saints to contribute more towards the temple, Woolley revealed his personal motives for doing so. He said, “I want them to feel that it is a great privilege given to them to assist in building a Temple in Hawaii for themselves and for their kindred dead.” He then continued, “I hope to get out some myself and stir them up to the importance of the work, not only the building of the Temple, but to become better prepared for the blessings that are to be had in the Temple by those that are worthy to enter therein.”⁸⁷

The Hawaiian Saints rallied around their leader and the cause he promoted. To the members of the Church in Hawaii “the promise of a temple came as a glorious gift of God.”⁸⁸ The information currently available seems to indicate that supporting the temple was a huge focus in their lives, and the natives seemingly all sacrificed in one way or another to make their donations and to assist in building it. Their efforts to build the temple unaided were noble indeed.

Elder Widtsoe described what he witnessed: “The children save their pennies, and the parents their dollars, to help along the work. The widow gives her mite, and the poor find it possible to give their meager [sic] but good gift. Concerts and other entertainments and bazaars are held to secure monies with which to increase the temple fund. One group of sisters go into the mountains for bamboo and lauhalla, which they make into fans, pillows, mats and other useful articles, which are sold, and thus their labor is converted into money for the temple. Several Relief Societies hold one or two sewing meetings a week at which quilts, laces, mats and many other things are made, later to be sold at bazaars held for the benefit of the temple. And all this is done joyously.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Samuel E. Woolley to Joseph F. Smith.

⁸⁸ Widtsoe, 954.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The amounts raised in many of the branches are not known, but some specific figures do exist. In 1917, Laie was a small village of only about 450 residents. Despite its size, however, “in that village alone the little Primary organization which numbers a little over 100 [raised] over \$1,000 toward the temple . . . and the Relief Society [raised] over \$1,250-between that and \$1,300.”⁹⁰ Other organizations in other branches reportedly did well also. One specific example is the branch of Honolulu that took in an estimated amount between \$4,000 and \$5,000 alone. In all the “good people of Hawaii” were said to have raised over \$30,000 for the temple by 1917.⁹¹ By the time the temple was completed, several reports state that the Saints had donated \$60,000.⁹²

In a demonstration of touching neighborly kindness and cooperation the some friends outside of the Church willingly offered of their substance towards the building of the temple. Viola Kawahigashi was a young girl living in Laie while the temple was under construction. She related her memory of specific examples of this inter-faith generosity. Her story also identifies another way Hawaiian Latter-day Saints raised funds for the project. Viola recalled traveling with her mother to all of the villages surrounding Laie, which “took about three weeks.” Their routine was to go up and down each street stopping “at every home to ask for donations for the building of the temple.”⁹³

Viola remembered the response they received at non-LDS households, especially from Japanese and Chinese farmers. Some would say: “Yeah, we heard you folks are having a special church built, but you know we don’t have money. But we have taro. You can have a sack of taro.

⁹⁰ Samuel E. Woolley, in *The Eighty-sixth Semiannual General Conference*, 1915, 112.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² McAllister, 10.

⁹³ Fugal, *Viola Kawahigashi Interview*.

We'd be glad to donate that.” According to Viola, in those days, a hundred pounds of taro cost \$1.50. She remembers “some Chinese men” who donated five bags of taro. .

The financial support coming from inside and outside the Church in Hawaii was inspiring. Unfortunately, Samuel Woolley’s hope of financing the building of the temple without the assistance of outside funds was not realized. Finishing the temple in Laie required accepting additional contributions from the Church in Salt Lake. At one point Samuel Woolley seems to suggest that he figured \$45,000 would be enough to complete the temple. How their early estimates could be so far off is unclear, but if Walter Spalding’s records were accurate the cost of the building alone was \$135,000 plus his commission.⁹⁴ In answer to the frequently asked question, “What has it cost?” Duncan McAllister reports: “the Temple and grounds [cost] about \$215,000.”⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Moffat, “The Spalding Construction Company.”

⁹⁵ McAllister, 10. The most reliable figure appears to be \$215,000. Several other estimates in circulation, however, place the total cost as high as \$265,000. See Spurrier, 31. One article quotes the Presiding Bishop’s Office with an actual cost of \$256,000. See “The Hawaiian Temple: Laie, Oahu, Hawaii,” *The Genealogical and Historical Magazine of the Arizona Temple District*, 1945, 4.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Laie Hawaii Temple Dedication

The dedication of the Laie Hawaii Temple was monumental in several ways. At the time of its dedication in 1919, the Hawaiian temple became the fifth operating temple of the Church. It was the first operating temple outside of the state of Utah. It was also the first temple outside of North America. Currently the Laie Hawaii Temple serves the saints in the Hawaiian and Marshall Islands, but for decades it serviced a much larger area. Until temples were eventually dedicated in New Zealand (1958) and Japan (1980), the temple in Hawaii was the principal temple for members in Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, and the Asia Rim.¹ Thus, it was also one of the first temples that catered to large number of patrons from different cultures speaking different languages.

This chapter takes the story of this important temple from the completion of its construction to its historic dedication. This will be done in two main parts. The first section will explain the events and preparation that took place prior to the temple's dedicatory services. The second section recounts the happenings surrounding this monumental event. In connection with the temple's dedication, several occurrences, which turned out to be significant events in Hawaiian and general church history, will be noted throughout this chapter.

Preparation for the Dedication

A newspaper article printed after the announcement of the Laie Hawaii Temple in 1915 reflected the excited anticipation felt throughout the Church. It states: "It is poetically and historically interesting that the suggestion for this temple should have been made and should be carried into effect under the presidency of a beloved leader [Joseph F. Smith] who, sixty one

¹ "The Hawaii Temple," LDS Church Pamphlet, 1979.

years ago last Monday, landed at Honolulu, a courageous but lonely and inexperienced boy of sixteen . . . The prayer of the Latter-day Saints here at home and also in Hawaii, will be that his days may be spared to lay not only the foundation, but also the capstones of the new temple, and to dedicate the completed structure as a House of the Lord.”²

The Hawaiian temple was significant to the Church, but it was especially so to President Joseph F. Smith. The frequent correspondence he maintained with Hawaiian Mission President Samuel E. Woolley was one sign of the prophet’s keen interest in the temple. His interest was demonstrated more overtly, however, by his efforts to monitor its progress personally. Twice he made trips to Hawaii to oversee work on the temple. He was intimately involved in the details of its construction, from commissioning the architectural firm to approving the artwork—even to the point of ordering the correction of the color schemes in a mural’s water scene.³

His concern and desire to ensure that the project was progressing brought him to the temple site in May of 1917. His biographer, Francis Gibbons, reflected President Smith’s feelings: “The day after reaching Oahu, Joseph made his way to Laie and immediately delved into the matter that was uppermost in his thoughts: ‘We visited the temple & found the workmen all around.’”⁴

Plans originally called for the completion and dedication of the temple by June 1, 1917.⁵ As work on the temple advanced, however, it became clear that the temple would not be ready.

² “Temple in Hawaii,” *The Liahona*, October 26, 1915.

³ Zipporah L. Stewart, “Hawaiian Temple: A Labor of Love,” (1978), 3. Lewis A. Ramsey, Letter to Elizabeth Brown Ramsey, May 7, 1917, Laie, Hawaii, Lewis A. Ramsey Papers, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City. See also Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith: Patriarch and Preacher, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 320.

⁴ Gibbons, 320.

⁵ Lewis A. Ramsey, Letters to Elizabeth Ramsey, January 10 and 13, 1917, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City. See also *The Liahona*, May 30, 1916, 13:778; Andrew Jenson, Hawaiian Mission Manuscript History, April 9, 1916.

Gibbons underscored the president's anxious desire for the temple's completion: "A combined sense of urgency and irritation may be inferred from [Joseph's] entry of the fourteenth [of May]: 'Visited the temple this morning. Workmen still busy and to all human appearance the finish is by no means nearby.'"⁶

The thinly-veiled disappointment in President Smith's progress report is evidence of his excitement for the temple's dedication. From a later entry, however, there is an indication that a portion of his frustration may have been caused by his fear that he may not live to see its completion. At the conclusion of his 1917 trip, while en route to the mainland, Joseph F. pensively reminisced in a telling journal entry. He wrote: "we boarded the ship and bid good by [sic] to our friends and Honolulu, perhaps for the last time" (emphasis in original).⁷

Sadly, the prophet's entry was indeed prophetic. A dedication of the temple by President Smith was not to be. Construction on the temple itself was completed by April 18, 1918. The landscaping was still in progress, but William M. and Olivia S. Waddoups of Salt Lake City were called to be the temple's first President and Matron. They arrived in Honolulu with their family on July 22, 1918. Things were moving forward, but unforeseen extenuating circumstances delayed the temple's dedication for more than a year.

The worldwide influenza pandemic of 1918 reached the United States and Hawaii by summertime, causing the dedication to be postponed.⁸ That summer and fall found Joseph F. Smith battling his own illnesses until he finally succumbed to a bout of pleurisy that developed into pleuropneumonia. He passed away Tuesday morning, November 19, 1918.⁹

⁶ Gibbons, 320.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Riley M. Moffat and others, *Gathering to Laie* (Laie, Hawaii: The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Island Studies, 2011), 116–118.

⁹ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 475 and 479.

“Great regret [was] felt by the Hawaiian people that their dearly beloved leader, the late President Joseph F. Smith, [would] not be with them at dedication time.” Reported reaction to the news of President Smith’s passing continued as follows: “During his three missions to the islands he became loved and revered by all. His honest, gentle, fearless and sympathetic character drew the confidence, respect and boundless love of this naturally trusting people.”¹⁰

The mission history for that fateful day records: “The sad news of the death of President Joseph F. Smith reached Laie, which sent a gloom over mission headquarters. The schools were closed half a day and the flag set at half mast in honor of the beloved president.” Though deeply saddened, the Hawaiian Saints still had much to look forward to. The dedication of the sacred structure that would forever stand as a token of President Smith’s undying *aloha* for the Hawaiian Saints approached.

The new prophet, President Heber J. Grant, was compelled to delay the dedication until the “Spanish flu” pandemic subsided. One of the architects, Harold Burton, later explained that the dedication was also delayed “owing to the First World War.”¹¹ In the meantime, labor continued on the landscape architecture until all was said to be completely finished by July 15, 1919.¹² With the dedication of the temple imminent, attention was needed to prepare the temple to be opened for public display. This was done and for more than two months before its dedication “the Laie Temple [was] opened to visitors, and many had visited the Temple.”¹³

There was plenty of work to be done in other ways as well to prepare for the opening of the temple. As a result, focus also shifted to other germane areas, such as family history work.

¹⁰ Edwin S. Bliss, “Hawaiians Prepare to Entertain Pres. Grant,” *Deseret News*, November 11, 1919.

¹¹ N. B. Lundwall, ed. *Temples of the Most High*, 16th ed. (Salt Lake City Bookcraft, Inc., 1940), 151.

¹² Rudger Clawson, “The Hawaiian Temple.” *Millennial Star*, November 1919.

¹³ Andrew Jenson, “Hawaiian Mission Manuscript History,” Wednesday, November 5, 1919.

During the October 1915 General Conference, an exuberant Samuel Woolley addressed the audience following the announcement of a temple in Hawaii. In his remarks he declared: “Now there are tens of thousands of people who have joined the Church in that land, who have passed away without the Temple blessings, and there are tens of thousands who never did belong to the Church who were honest hearted. *They will have to be worked for, and the Lord will have to help us to, obtain their genealogies, because they haven’t kept genealogy, but He can do it, He knows how, and He will do it in the right way too*” [emphasis added].¹⁴

This help seems to have been provided in several interesting ways. First, while on vacation in 1916 with her Apostle husband, “Leah D. Widtsoe asked President Woolley if she could start teaching the sisters how to do genealogy in preparation for the opening of the temple. He agreed, and she began teaching sisters in Honolulu and Laie how to prepare names for temple work. The first class began in Laie in June 1916.”¹⁵

William Waddoups, who had been called to be the temple’s first president, was in Hawaii with his family sixteen months before the temple was dedicated. While waiting for the building to be dedicated he wisely used his time to travel throughout the Islands, continuing the work begun by Sister Widtsoe.¹⁶

Another related and timely occurrence took place the year of the temple dedication. Abraham Fornander was a prominent “judge of the High Court” in Hawaii. The Swedish-born emigrant spent twenty years studying Hawaiian antiquity. In 1919, six volumes of *Fornander’s Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities and Folk Lore* were translated and published in English. It reportedly “contained many disconnected genealogies, and some connected genealogies going

¹⁴ Samuel E. Woolley, in *The Eighty-sixth Semiannual General Conference*, 1915, 112.

¹⁵ “Latter-day Temples” *Relief Society Magazine* 4, no. 4 (April 1917), 194; as cited in Moffat, 116.

¹⁶ R. Lanier Britsch, *Moramona: The Mormons in Hawaii*, 3rd ed. (Laie, Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1989), 136. See also Moffat, 116–117.

back according to their generations, to about 56 B.C.”¹⁷ Prior to this voluminous publication, family record-keeping among the Polynesian people was passed “down from father to son, memorized and orally transmitted through the generations.”

Observing this fortuitous advancement in terms of its impact on the native Saints’ ability to prepare and perform temple ordinances for their ancestors, Susa Young Gates wrote some insightful commentary just one month prior to the temple dedication. She declared: “How strange the handdealing of the Lord! For twenty years this Hawaiian genealogist and antiquarian has been at work on the preparation of these volumes; and now, with the completion and the approaching dedication of the Hawaiian Temple, comes the publication of this master work for the people of that land.”¹⁸

The Temple is Dedicated

Finally, on Thursday, November 13, 1919, a telegram arrived in Hawaii with word that the temple dedication was set for the end of that month.¹⁹ President Heber J. Grant and other Latter-day Saint dignitaries arrived in Honolulu just over a week later on Friday, November 21. It was noted that more general authorities arrived in Hawaii during the days prior to the temple dedication than had ever before been on the islands at one time.²⁰ The special visitors were given a hearty Hawaiian welcome. It was a time of great celebration and in addition to the lavish welcome prepared by the Hawaiian Saints, the next day a party was held in honor of President Grant’s “natal day,” as it was then called. He turned sixty-three. A party was held in honor of

¹⁷ “The Hawaiian Temple: Laie, Oahu, Hawaii.”

¹⁸ Susa Young Gates, “Sandwich Island Genealogy.” *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, October 1919.

¹⁹ Jenson, Thursday, November 13, 1919.

²⁰ Rudger Clawson, “Dedication of Hawaiian Temple.” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, January 1920, 10.

his²¹ On Tuesday, missionaries and “large companies” of members began coming by steamer into Honolulu, then by train to Laie.

Others came every conceivable way, by horse, wagon, carriage, automobile, or simply by foot.²² Over the next few days a steady stream of excited members flowed into Laie for the dedication. The small village was again a literal gathering place for the Hawaiian Saints. By Thursday afternoon an estimated twelve to fifteen hundred members had assembled in anxious anticipation of the dedication. Because the number of Saints gathered was so much larger than the temple could accommodate, it was necessary to hold five separate dedication services in order for all to participate.²³

The most comprehensive source currently available documenting the day of dedication is the letters of President Rudger Clawson, the president of the Church’s Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time. He took copious notes on the events associated with the dedication as well as the proceedings of the dedicatory services, which were later compiled and published. The majority of information heretofore related about the temple dedication was derived from President Clawson’s record.

Conference meetings that coincided with the dedication services were held for those not in the temple. “The visiting brethren and also native elders were the speakers” and it was reported to be a “wonderful time of rejoicing during the four days of temple services and conference meetings.”²⁴

²¹ Clawson, “The Hawaiian Temple.”

²² Moffat, 118.

²³ Clawson, “Dedication of Hawaiian Temple,” 1, 12–13.

²⁴ Ibid., 13.

The time appointed for the dedicatory service was Thursday, November 27, 1919, at 2:30 p.m. At this time President Heber J. Grant, the seventh president of the Church, had the privilege of dedicating the Church's fifth operating temple, in Laie, Hawaii. It was Thanksgiving Day, a holiday which had long been celebrated in Hawaii like it had in the United States. The spirit of thanksgiving was strongly felt on that momentous occasion and was an ongoing theme throughout all of the dedicatory services.

“At 2:30 p.m. 310 Saints (including missionaries from Zion) were admitted to the Temple upon written recommends and passing through the various rooms were finally seated in the upper rooms of the building.”²⁵ Inside the temple, the service itself was held in “the largest and most beautiful of all the rooms in the Temple,” known as the celestial room. For the dedication services an arrangement was made to provide the needed seating capacity. “The adjoining [terrestrial] room was connected with [the celestial room] on the occasion, pushing aside the curtains which separate the two rooms; curtains were opened also to a passage way on the east side, where [several] smaller [sealing] rooms are located.”²⁶

President Rudger Clawson, the president of the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, described the scene inside: “Presidents Heber J. Grant, Anthon H. Lund, together with Elder Stephen L. Richard of the Council of Twelve, Bishop Charles W. Nibley and Elder Arthur Winter of the visiting brethren, from Utah were seated facing the congregation.”²⁷ Although he does not say it, President Clawson, was assumedly seated with the other brethren.

In the first several rows of chairs were seated Presidents E. Wesley Smith, the new mission president, and son of Joseph F Smith; Samuel E. Woolley, the outgoing mission

²⁵ Ibid., 1.

²⁶ McAllister, 16.

²⁷ Clawson, “Dedication of Hawaiian Temple,” 2.

president; William M. Waddoups, president of the temple. Seated alongside them was Duncan M. McAllister, the temple's "chief recorder," and Sister Sarah Jenne Cannon, widow of the late Hawaiian Mission pioneer, President George Q. Cannon. Between thirty and forty "traveling elders and lady missionaries" from Utah were also seated near the front.

President Clawson again reported: "President Grant presided and conducted the service. The choir, composed of 12 singers selected in equal numbers from the Honolulu and Laie choirs, sang for the opening number the hymn entitled, 'A Temple in Hawaii,' words by Ruth May Fox and music by Orson Clark, formerly a Hawaiian missionary."²⁸ The song had special meaning for President Joseph F. Smith. His announcement of plans to build a temple in the Islands had inspired Ruth May Fox, a poet and member of the Young Women's General Board. Her poem was published in the December 1915 *Improvement Era*.

President Smith later heard the poem in song form on his next trip to check on the progress of the temple. He explained the details behind how this took place in the April 1916 general conference. He said, "One of our elders [in the Hawaiian Islands], Brother Orson Clark, composed music to [the poem], and on the recent visit of Bishop Nibley and myself, we found them singing this beautiful song."²⁹ President Smith loved the hymn so much he brought a copy of the words and music home and arranged for the hymn to be performed in general conference. At the conclusion of his remarks, a quartet sung, "A Temple in Hawaii" in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Two days later, the Laie Choir sang the hymn as a special anthem at a conference held on Sunday, April 9, 1916.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Joseph F. Smith, in *The Eighty-seventh Annual General Conference*, 1916, 37.

³⁰ Dean Clark Ellis, "A Temple in Hawaii." In *Mormon Pacific Historical Society*, Laie, Hawaii, 2010, 3.

Following the choir's number in the dedication, President Grant offered the "Prayer of Dedication." President Clawson declared the prayer (see Appendix A) to be "most impressive and inspiring and was received with great rejoicing by the entire assemblage." He went on, "all seemed to feel that the Lord had accepted the beautiful prayer of dedication and the house which had been erected by the Church and the good people of Hawaii and was now dedicated to his service."³¹

Clawson reported that another hymn was then sung, "Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah," following which "the Sacred Hosanna Shout was given with deep feeling and inspirational effect." At this point in the service, speeches were made by the visiting authorities and others so invited. The quotations that follow are a selection of a few of what President Clawson considered to be the more memorable remarks made throughout the four hour dedication service.

"President Anthon H. Lund [First Counselor in the First Presidency] . . . congratulated the Saints . . . on having a House of the Lord in which they could enter and receive the choicest blessings of God both for themselves and their ancestors. . . . [He] urged the people to seek out the genealogies of their forefathers."

Next, Samuel E. Woolley spoke and "expressed the feeling that this was the greatest of all days to him. It was the fulfillment of hopes long entertained. . . . [He] had been thinking about it dreaming about it and laboring with all his power to bring about conditions favorable to its accomplishment."

President Rudger Clawson later spoke and made a remarkable statement. "It is the greatest day in all the history of Hawaii," he declared, "for here stands a temple reared to the

³¹ Clawson, "Dedication of Hawaiian Temple," 9. All of the quotations and information that follow are taken from the proceedings report by President Rudger Clawson, unless otherwise noted.

Most High God.” He then offered an interesting observation saying, “What must the feelings of Father Lehi be at this moment. He must be touched with a deep sense of gratitude for what the Lord is doing for his posterity.” He continued, “The key is turned and the door is unlocked for the full blessings of salvation to the posterity of Lehi.”

Elder Arthur Winter, secretary in the Church President’s office, declared: “The Son of Man had now a place in Hawaii in which to manifest himself.” He then “expressed his opinion that perhaps in no other part of the United States would there be so perfect a celebration of Thanksgiving Day as [there.] Then Sister Sarah Jenne Cannon spoke saying simply that ““it was a great day for her and that she rejoiced exceedingly.””

Sister Cannon’s brief message was historically significant. President Clawson makes a point in his several accounts of the dedication proceedings to note that she was the first woman to ever speak at a Latter-day Saint temple dedication.³² Another unique element of the service was when President Grant invited all of the missionaries to briefly “express themselves.” Though it appears that not all of the missionaries spoke in that service, it seems that each did have the opportunity during one of the sessions.

Following the missionaries, Elder Stephen L. Richards, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles made some particularly pointed remarks, in terms of what Church leaders expected of the Hawaiian Saints. He declared, “The predominant theme of the meeting was gratitude and thanksgiving and the only way to show our gratitude for the manifold mercies received was to do the will of God.” Continuing he proclaimed: “Words are easily spoken, but the great thing is to work, and to conform our lives to the gospel of Jesus Christ which takes sacrifice and

³² Ibid., 11.

determination and an abiding faith. In presenting to the Lord this holy house, the overpowering thought [I have had is], Can we be worthy of it? Can we appreciate the full significance of it?"

Elder Richards then made an observation that captures well the reason why Latter-day Saints place such importance on temple worship. He observed: "The temple is something more than a beautiful building. It is a monument to the great truths of the gospel, and stands for all that is best and holiest in life. While it is a house for the salvation of the dead it should never be forgotten that it is a house for the living and intended to stimulate us to higher things."

After expressing his hope "that the young men and women of the Church would be worthy to come into this house and be united in the new and everlasting covenant," Elder Richards concluded his remarks by giving his strong endorsement of temples: "There is no greater monument of liberty in all the world than a temple of God, for true liberty is freedom from sin."

Several times throughout the meeting, memories and remarks turned to President Joseph F. Smith, who had passed away almost exactly one year prior. His son, Hawaiian Mission President E. Wesley Smith, was born while his father was on assignment in Laie. When he spoke, he "said it was an honor to serve in the ministry in this land and a privilege to represent his father."

Bishop Charles W. Nibley was the third speaker and one of Joseph F. Smith's dearest friends. He was with President Smith when he dedicated the temple site and his first remarks referenced that special occasion. President Clawson recorded: "With deep emotion he expressed his sorrow that President Smith had not lived to attend [the] dedication but reminded the Saints that the authority which he held was still [there] and . . . [rested] upon President Grant."

When it was President Heber J. Grant's opportunity to offer his concluding remarks, a major portion of his words were centered on his late predecessor. He "expressed a keen regret that President Joseph F. Smith had not lived to come here and dedicate this temple." It seems as though President Smith's earthly absence from this singular event had a powerful effect on President Grant. His associates claimed that President Grant later confided in him that "going to Hawaii to dedicate the Temple was the saddest assignment of his life. He knew how President Smith would have enjoyed being there to dedicate the Temple."³³

Towards the conclusion of his remarks President Grant "bore a strong and powerful testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was a prophet and that the Spirit of the living God [had] been present on [that] occasion." He then "pleaded with the people to keep themselves free from sin that they might be in all respects worthy to enter this holy house." Clawson observed that "the president's inspired discourse stirred the people to their very souls." Samuel Woolley agreed, noting that "the Spirit of the Lord was made manifest in rich abundance. All eyes were wet with tears of joy. Never have I been in a place where I felt more of the sweet peaceful influence of the Lord as much as in this dedication."³⁴

Fittingly, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning" was the closing hymn. Then President Clawson reported simply that "the benediction was pronounced by one of the native brethren." Later research has identified that native brother to be David Kailimai. He was "one of the few Hawaiian Saints who had already received his temple endowment," as one scholar explains. "A number of years earlier he and his family had sacrificed their life savings in order to

³³ Castle Murphy letter for Hawaiian Temple Jubilee, November 14, 1969. Castle H. Murphy Papers, Harold B. Lee Library, Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

³⁴ "Impressive Dedicatory Prayer in New Hawaii Temple," *Deseret News*, November 27, 1919; as cited in Moffat, 119.

travel with a group of returning missionaries to Utah, where they received their temple blessings.”³⁵

A total of five dedicatory services were held for the Laie Hawaii Temple in order to accommodate all of the Saints who desired to attend. In addition to the first session on Thursday afternoon, two services were held on Friday in the morning and afternoon. Two were also held in the morning and afternoon on Sunday. The Sunday morning dedication service was unique in that it “was given for the benefit of the children of whom there were 235 present, mostly Hawaiians.” There was no dedicatory prayer offered in that meeting, but the children reportedly “[listened] attentively to the testimonies and remarks made.” President Grant spoke to the children, all of them under twelve, and then led them in singing, “‘Who’s on the Lord’s Side, Who.’ In response to the question . . . every hand was raised.”

In all, a total of 1,239 people attended the five services. “There were 81 speakers in all,” and although she was the first, Sarah Cannon was not the only woman to speak at the dedication. “Brief testimonies were borne by . . . all of the traveling elders and lady missionaries and others.”

After the Dedication

On Tuesday, December 2, 1919, the doors opened for the first time for baptismal work.³⁶ That first day, Samuel Woolley did the baptizing, and after performing 279 baptisms for the dead he contentedly wrote, “I am tired but happy.”³⁷ Within the week, worthy Saints were able to enjoy the full services of the temple.³⁸

³⁵ Richard O. Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1989), 131.

³⁶ Jenson, Tuesday, December 2, 1919.

³⁷ Samuel E. Woolley, *Journals*, December 2, 1919: as cited in Moffat, 123.

³⁸ Britsch, 137.

Woolley recorded another sweet experience that took place shortly after the temple's opening. "Ma Manuhii," he described, "an old helpless blind lady who was a dear friend of Pres. Jos. F. Smith, was carried into the Temple and received her blessings and was sealed to her husband."³⁹ More than sixty years earlier, when Joseph F. Smith was on his first mission, he became very ill. Ma Manuhii was a Hawaiian woman, not many years older than he was. She and her husband cared for the young missionary and nursed him back to health for three months.⁴⁰ President Smith maintained a warm love for her throughout his life and regarded her as his Hawaiian "Mama."⁴¹ Sister Manuhii was able to attend one of the temple's dedication services and the next week she received her temple blessings, as Woolley explained.

Ma Manuhii, now blind and unable to walk, had to be carried through the temple from room to room by two missionaries, Elder Nathan Ford Clark and Elder Francis Newman. At one point during the temple session, Elder Clark recorded that "a dove flew thru the window and sat on the end of her bench."⁴² In the temple she also heard, as Woolley wrote, "the voice of the late Pres. Smith say 'Aloha' to her." This "caused her to weep for joy." She returned to her home in Honolulu having been to the temple, "a thing for which she had lived." Within a week she died.⁴³

After the dedication of the temple in Hawaii, Saints continued to flock to Laie from throughout Hawaii and all of the Pacific islands. By the temple's second year in operation, demand necessitated that a schedule be maintained. The temple was reserved over the Easter recess for Saints from Maui. Thanksgiving was set aside for the Saints from Molokai. June and

³⁹ Moffat, 119.

⁴⁰ Britsch, 44.

⁴¹ See Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith*, 186–187. In this well-known account, Bishop Charles Nibley describes the tender reunion he witnessed between Ma Manuhii and President Smith, when she greeted him upon his docking in Honolulu in 1915. See also Moffat, 121.

⁴² Nathan Ford Clark, Journals, December 5, 1919; as cited in Moffat, 119–120.

⁴³ Jenson, Thursday, December 11, 1919.

July were scheduled for the Saints from Kauai and the island of Hawaii, respectively. For many, many years Saints from islands like Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and New Zealand traveled to the temple to receive the blessings they sought after.⁴⁴

In addition to drawing Saints from these locations, the temple's influence has extended elsewhere. In 1936, President William Waddoups recorded the following information, which shows just how far-reaching and historic the temple's service has been. "It is so far as I know," he reports, "our pleasure to have done the first work for any living persons of the following races in any Latter Day Saint Temple: Chinese, Japanese and Korean." He also noted that even though quite a few Hawaiians, a small number of Maoris, and a number of Samoans had received temple blessings elsewhere, he did "not know if any persons from other Polynesian lands have been endowed in any of the mainland temples."⁴⁵

As one historian put it, "the temple at Laie became the Spiritual gathering place for the peoples of the Pacific."⁴⁶ Indeed, since the day of its dedication, the temple in Hawaii was for many years *the temple* for a large portion of the international Church—the world's temple.

⁴⁴ Moffat, 121–122.

⁴⁵ "The Hawaiian Temple: Laie, Oahu, Hawaii," *The Genealogical and Historical Magazine of the Arizona Temple District*, 1945, 16.

⁴⁶ Moffat, 122.

CHAPTER SIX

The Appearance, Architecture, and Artwork of the Laie Hawaii Temple

The Laie Hawaii Temple is a widely recognized temple throughout the Church. It is stately situated near the top of a gentle knoll, facing east with an unobstructed view of the gleaming Pacific Ocean. Four terraced pools of crystal blue water cascade down from the temple as if the beautiful building is the fountainhead. The scene is reminiscent of the living, healing waters issuing from the house of the Lord as prophesied in the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel. When admiring its strikingly white exterior placed in a backdrop of lush tropical landscaping, it is easy to see why it is featured in many church publications.

The visitor familiar with the temple from pictures may be surprised to discover that it is much smaller in reality than they had likely anticipated. Compared to many other temples, and especially those before it, the temple in Laie is quite small. Despite its smaller size, however, it has the capacity to capture the esteem and admiration of everyone who visits its grounds. As one writer put it, “The building’s size makes its architectural presence all the more remarkable. The architects, builders, gardeners, and artists,” he continues, “somehow managed to endow this structure with an aura of dignity and grandeur that transcends its modest dimensions to express its greater symbolic and spiritual importance.”¹

This chapter will detail the architecture and artwork inside and outside the temple that makes it a recognizable edifice called by one “a lasting monument to the faith and devotion of the Hawaiian Saints.”² This magnificent building is nearly a hundred years old. Over time it has

¹ Paul L. Anderson, “A Jewel in the Gardens of Paradise: The Art and Architecture of the Hawaii Temple.” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 165.

² Hyrum C. Pope, “About the Temple in Hawaii,” *Improvement Era*, December 1919, 153.

undergone continued maintenance, updating and remodeling, including additions, both to its structure and to its grounds. While such projects have taken place multiple times throughout the years, some to a significant scale, the purpose of this thesis is to preserve and present the history of the temple as it originally stood in 1919. Therefore, some of the temple's additions or modern amendments may be mentioned, but only to provide perspective or pertinent information. The focus of this chapter will be to describe the temple's original design, architecture, art, and landscaping. In addition, details and information will be given about the skilled artisans whose handiwork coalesced to create the Laie Hawaii Temple.

Architecture and Design

When plans to build the Laie Hawaii Temple were announced in 1915, the Church was in a period of relative peace and increased prosperity. Joseph F. Smith was the first president of the Church from the second generation of Latter-day Saints. He was the first prophet of the Church who did not serve in Church administration alongside the Prophet Joseph Smith. Interestingly, the design for each of the temples he commissioned was daringly different than those built by his predecessors.

The new generation of Church leadership introduced a new era of temple building, in approach and design. After announcing their intent to build a temple in Alberta, Canada, Church leaders decided to hold an architectural competition and invited Salt Lake's leading architects to submit drawings. In this way, they sought to engage the most talented people the Church had to offer.³ Prior to this, temples had been designed by the Church architect and built by local pioneer labor. Suggestions regarding a new design were given to the architects for the competition. One scholar summarized: "Church leaders, seeking to avoid needless expense, had recommended

³ Paul L. Anderson, "First of the Modern Temples." *Ensign*, 1977.

against large towers and spires. They also [decided] that a large assembly room was no longer needed.”⁴

In December of 1912, seven of the firms invited to participate turned in anonymous drawings for the new temple. Several designs that reflected the architecture of past temples were passed over. Ultimately, the First Presidency and the Presiding Bishopric selected a boldly modern design that introduced a new architectural concept. The winning firm, Pope and Burton, was that of young Salt Lake architects, Hyrum C. Pope and Harold W. Burton.⁵

These two men had been in business together for less than three years when they received this major commission. Hyrum Pope, the senior member of the team, was a capable and ambitious thirty-two-year-old German immigrant. He was the engineer and business manager of the firm. In addition to overseeing its financial and business dealings, Pope oversaw the construction side of the job. Harold Burton was a twenty-five-year-old Salt Lake native, born to English immigrants. He was a designer and the artist member of the team.⁶ Burton was described as “a man who understood harmony, design, and other artistic qualities that would make the finished job a work of art as well as a sacred temple.”⁷

Pope was trained at the University of Chicago and both he and Burton were influenced by the architect Frank Lloyd Wright and his “Prairie School” style of architecture.⁸ This inspiration was manifested in their temple design. With an architectural style distinctly different from that of earlier temples built by the Church, Pope and Burton approached the task of designing a temple

⁴ President Bishop’s Office, “Diary,” in Presiding Bishopric Journals (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1912); as cited in Anderson, “A Jewel in the Gardens of Paradise,” 167.

⁵ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 167.

⁶ Anderson, “First of the Modern Temples.”

⁷ Zipporah L. Stewart, “Hawaiian Temple: A Labor of Love,” (1978), 2, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City.

⁸ Eliza Rutishauser Pope, “The Personal History of Hyrum Conrad Pope,” 1866–1951, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City.

differently.⁹ They did not want to create another variation of a classic temple or a Gothic cathedral. Rather, Pope explained his desire to create “an edifice which should express in its architecture all the boldness and all the truth for which the Gospel stands.” Because it would be built to be a House of the Lord, he felt it “should be ancient as well as modern. It should express all the power which we associate with God.”¹⁰

Pope and Burton’s daring design for the Alberta Temple was a drastic diversion from the plans of prior temples. The first temples of the Church in Kirtland, Ohio and Nauvoo, Illinois have been called “meetinghouse temples.”¹¹ This original design consisted mainly of two large meeting rooms, one on top of the other, which could be partitioned off to accommodate various functions. When the Church left for the West in 1846, it carried its temple plans with it. The St. George Utah Temple was built with the typical assembly rooms, but in the late 1870s, Church leaders decided to change future temple plans by replacing the lower assembly room with five progressive-style ordinance rooms for the presentation of the endowment ceremony.

Architects submitting drawings in the 1912 competition were advised by Church leaders against including unnecessary embellishments. They were also reminded that a large assembly room was no longer necessary.¹² Pope noted how “the absence of this large feature necessitated a different shape of ground plan with all its natural consequences.”¹³

The unique shape of Pope and Burton’s building design was centered on Harold Burton’s brilliant scheme of progressive-style rooms in an ascending circular arrangement with the apex

⁹ Castle H. Murphy, “Temples: Sacred Institutions Dedicated unto the Most High God.” Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1935, 8.

¹⁰ Hyrum Pope Remarks, “Dedication Proceedings of the Alberta Temple,” August 26–29, 1923; as cited in Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth*, 122.

¹¹ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 166.

¹² *Ibid.*, 167.

¹³ Pope, 151.

being the primary and centrally located celestial room. Paul Anderson provides a good description of the floor plan: “the four ordinance rooms would be arranged around the center like the spokes of a wheel, each one a few steps higher than the one before, with the celestial room in the center at the very top of the building. The baptismal font would be in the center of the lower level, directly below the celestial room. Individuals participating in a temple session would pass through all four ordinance rooms in an ascending spiral. Finally, they would enter the central celestial room, a tall space with light coming down from high windows above the roofs of the other rooms.”¹⁴

Church leaders were in favor of the general arrangement of the design and pleased with Pope and Burton’s plans. Just after the cornerstone had been laid for the temple in Canada, President Joseph F. Smith announced in general conference plans to build a temple in the Hawaiian Islands. President Smith had dedicated the site in Laie four months earlier on June 1, 1915. For the new temple in Hawaii, Church leaders turned again to Pope and Burton to prepare the plans. They were directed to continue with a design similar to the temple in Canada, only smaller.

The resultant architectural style of the Hawaiian temple was reported to be “a blend of the influence of the modern American architect Frank Lloyd Wright and elements of ancient American ruins”.¹⁵ The temple was built in the form of a Greek cross, with the annex at the east end. The dimensions run 102 feet from east to west, and 78 feet from north to south. “The central portion of the edifice rises to a height of 50 feet.”¹⁶ This portion of the structure gave the effect

¹⁴ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 168.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Pope, 151.

of a “truncated pyramid or tower.”¹⁷ The exterior architecture was straightforward in nature, without spires or towers.¹⁸ In fact, as one of the “modern temples,” the Laie Hawaii Temple was the first completed temple of only three in the Church to be built without a spire.¹⁹

The Exterior

The temple was constructed using the most modern building materials and methods of the day: steel-reinforced concrete. This turned out to be advantageous because, although the islands lacked in building materials, the readily obtainable volcanic rock was crushed into an aggregate which made “very good concrete.” The outer surface was then cleaned and tooled to create a monolithic appearance. When Hyrum Pope later described the temple particularly its color, he reported that after the structure’s concrete had thoroughly hardened it was “dressed on all of its exterior surfaces by means of pneumatic stone cutting tools, *thus producing a cream-white structure* (emphasis added).”²⁰

What other accounts add to Pope’s description is the fact that the temple exterior was plastered and painted to achieve its white color. Excavations from the most recent 2008 to 2010 renovations confirmed that the temple’s typical exterior color is a result of the concrete exterior walls being plastered and then painted white.²¹ At one point during the renovation, all of the layers of paint on the temple were stripped to reveal its original bare walls. The exposed concrete shell was gray in color, just as would be assumed.²² Making Pope’s claim even odder is the fact

¹⁷ John A. Widtsoe, “The Temple in Hawaii: A Remarkable Fulfillment of Prophecy.” *The Improvement Era*, 1916, 956.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ As of 2012, the temples in Cardston, Alberta, Canada and Mesa, Arizona are the other two temples without spires.

²⁰ Pope, 149–151.

²¹ Marty Pierson (of FFKR Architects), Interview by the Author, May 2012.

²² Scott D. Whiting and others, *The Laie Hawaii Temple: 2010 Dedication* (Blurb.com, 2011), 22.

that this finding is corroborated by the original blueprints drawn up by Burton. The plans indicate that the architects intended for the temple to be plastered (See Appendix B).²³

In addition to plastering the outside walls of the temple, this process was also used on most of the walls inside.²⁴ This fact was noted by a missionary serving in Laie during construction of the temple. She recorded: “The work had already begun in painting the first filler coats on the plaster walls throughout the building.”²⁵

The Interior

One can imagine the temple patrons approaching the magnificent structure for the first time in 1919. Gazing upon the stunning Hawaiian temple, adorned with its heavy, bronze front door, they eagerly anticipate discovering the beauty awaiting them upon entering.²⁶ As they passed through the doors they would not have been disappointed. Hyrum Pope, who spent months in Laie overseeing the work throughout the construction phase, shared the following: “briefly it may be said that both in exterior treatment and interior arrangement, [the architectural design] is a highly symbolical expression of the sacred purpose of the edifice. Truth and simplicity have been the guiding stars in every detail of the design, to such an extent that, with the exception of one or two features on the exterior and interior, there is almost a total absence of architectural detail and ornamentation.”²⁷

Castle Murphy served as the president of the Laie Hawaii Temple on three separate occasions between 1930 and 1947. As one very familiar with the building, he summarized: “The

²³ The Temple’s original blueprints contain the provision: “Note: All measurements are to the rough concrete wall faces before plastering is applied.” A copy a blueprints in Author’s possession.

²⁴ Pierson, Interview.

²⁵ Stewart, 3.

²⁶ Murphy, 12.

²⁷ Pope, “About the Temple in Hawaii,” 151.

interior workmanship and finish are extraordinary in all respects. The furnishings are beautiful indeed. Appropriate paintings adorn the walls of the various rooms. Corridors of marble and tile connect the various ceremonial rooms.” Murphy further described the stippled walls as being a “faint ivory” delicately accented with bleached white oak doors, moldings and baseboards. He then expressed, “As one passes from room to room, he cannot but be impressed with the divine simplicity and artistic motif maintained throughout.”²⁸

Although the Laie Hawaii Temple is comparatively small, the interior was designed to capitalize on its limited space, and create a feeling of openness. Architect Paul Anderson explains: “For its interior, the temple also borrowed ideas from antiquity to increase its feeling of monumentality. The concrete walls along the corridors connecting the ordinance rooms were scored to look as if they were made of huge blocks of stone. As a result, the rather small passageways and stairs suggest the feeling that, like tunnels through the great pyramids, they are part of a huge, solid structure.”²⁹

Carpet was chosen to cover the majority of the flooring, and light tones were selected,³⁰ or what architect George Whisenand described as “light and cheerful.” The plush “velvet pile” carpeting, in shades of white and ivory, added to this light, airy motif.³¹ Mosaic tile and marble were minimally used in the baptistry and a few other areas throughout the building.³² Drapery in the temple also followed the theme of soft, light colors and has been described as a “beautiful

²⁸ Murphy, 10.

²⁹ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 170.

³⁰ George Whisenand, “An Architect’s View of the Mormon Temple at Laie,” *Hawaii Architect*, May (1978): 19.

³¹ D. M. McAllister, “A Description of the Hawaiian Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1921), 12.

³² Pope, “About the Temple in Hawaii,” 151.

shade of Japanese silk.”³³ Each room was equipped with abundant hinged windows, which originally were kept open and provided excellent ventilation.³⁴ All of these elements combined to produce “...an atmosphere of absolute peace.”³⁵

The original interior motif of the temple was one of light hues, which presented a pleasant contrast with the beautiful grain of the native koa wood. Hardwood was used extensively throughout the temple. The primary rooms were finished with golden-brown koa, which grows only in Hawaii. This wood was said to rival “the choicest mahogany in the beauty of grain and color.”³⁶ Although expensive, the natural splendor of this tropical hardwood produced a stunning result that was sympathetic to the Hawaiian culture.

A special feature of temples designed by Pope and Burton was the care taken to ensure seamless harmony throughout the entire edifice, both exterior and interior. This included the unique practice of designing custom furniture to perfectly match the motif of the temple. The furniture for this temple was designed to be sympathetic to the arts and crafts style of detailing. For the Hawaiian Temple, furniture was custom made by Salt Lake Cabinet and Fixture. German immigrant Kasper Fetzer had incorporated the Utah woodworking shop in 1913.³⁷ Fetzer ensured that each piece was fashioned according to Burton’s specific design. The detailed chairs and tables matched the modernistic style of the temple, with straight lines and geometric angles. Oak

³³ McAllister, 12.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Clawson, “The Hawaiian Temple.” *Millennial Star*, November 1919.

³⁶ Pope, “About the Temple in Hawaii,” 151.

³⁷ Fetzer Architectural Woodwork, “History,” <http://www.fetzersinc.com/Information/History/> (accessed June 2012).

furniture was used to blend with architectural woodwork throughout the temple. On key pieces, wooden inlays were used to add contrast.³⁸

In connection with the furniture of the Laie Hawaii Temple, Fetzter's son, Percy, related a humorous anecdote some years after the temple had been in operation. As the story goes, President Heber J. Grant was walking down the street in Salt Lake City upon his return from dedicating the temple in Hawaii. As it turned out he happened upon Kaspar Fetzter. Fetzter asked President Grant how he liked the temple furniture, to which he solemnly answered, "Kaspar, you made a terrible mistake." Shocked, Fetzter quickly offered to fix any error he had unwittingly made. Laughing, President Grant responded, "When the Polynesian sisters sit in the arm chairs and get up, the chairs come with them." Fetzter stood stunned, yet likely relieved as President Grant strolled away chuckling.³⁹

Rooms of the Temple

In keeping with Church leaders' instructions that the new temples did not need a large assembly room, the room called the "chapel" in the Laie Hawaii Temple is a small meeting room that could seat up to fifty. The room's large bench seats made wonderful use of unpolished oak. That same oak corresponds with the doors, window casings, and paneling of the walls. This seating style and wood finish were continued throughout most of the rooms in the temple.⁴⁰

Throughout the temple various rooms are used for the purpose of attending to the sacred work performed therein. The baptistry is described by Duncan McAllister, the first temple recorder, in these words: "The Baptismal Font occupies the center of the main hall on the second

³⁸ Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 179.

³⁹ Paul L. Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise: The Art and Architecture of the Hawaii Temple," in *Mormon Pacific Historical Society*. Laie, Hawaii: 1988, 11. This story was relayed to Anderson in a conversation he had with Kaspar's son, Percy Fetzter, around 1986.

⁴⁰ McAllister, 12.

floor. This is a prominent feature of the Temple.” The hall of the baptistry is covered with an arched walkway. The baptistry ceiling is higher than the other rooms of the temple, producing a spacious, majestic atmosphere. Mosaic tiling chosen for the flooring and marble steps were beautifully crafted, descending into the room. The marble continued up a stairway on the east side, leading to the upper rooms.⁴¹

The focus of the room centered on the large bronze basin of the baptismal font. The baptismal font was beautifully constructed and designed by sculptor Avard Fairbanks. It rests atop twelve full-size figures of oxen standing on a decorative base, also brilliantly designed and modeled by Fairbanks.⁴² Another descriptive summary of the oxen offers additional detail: “There are four groups, each consisting of three life size oxen symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel. These oxen are modeled in half realistic and half decorative style. Their poses are naturalistic rather than formal. Only the heads, shoulders, and front legs [are visible]. They are represented as emerging from conventionally treated reeds and cattails. Thus a beautifully solid and compact architectural treatment was possible so that in connection with the bowl the whole thing is cast as a monolithic font.”⁴³ Further description and praise for Fairbanks’ work is provided by Anderson: “The oxen of the baptismal font appear dignified, strong, and lifelike in their movements, perhaps the best ever executed for a temple.”⁴⁴

A beautiful flight of bronze steps inset with tile and adorned with a solid bronze handrail, leads from the floor to the edge of the font. These steps connect with another set of steps that lead down into the font.⁴⁵ Archways or colonnades frame this arresting room. Another striking

⁴¹ Ibid., 12–13.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ J. Leo Fairbanks, “The Sculpture of the Hawaiian Temple,” *Juvenile Instructor*, November 1921, 582.

⁴⁴ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 172.

⁴⁵ McAllister, 13.

feature of the baptistry is seen at the top of seven colonnades: a series of oil paintings fill the upper space of the archways. These paintings, or lunettes, were created by A.B. Wright and will be described in greater detail in the art section of this chapter.

The baptistry is located directly in the center of the temple. Directly above the baptistry in an elevated position is the temple's largest room. Prior to entering this room, however, patrons progress through four endowment lecture rooms. The creation room is located on the east side of the temple. Oak benches originally provided seating for about 50 people. Unpolished wood, canvas-covered walls painted a soft olive hue, and six panels, each containing a magnificent oil painting representing one of the six periods of the Creation, adorned the room. The paintings are the work of Utah artist LeConte Stewart.⁴⁶

A few steps higher and to the south of the creation room is the garden room. It is similar in size to the creation room. The walls of this room were also painted by LeConte Stewart, "to represent delightful scenery, groves of beautiful trees, lawns and flowering shrubs, along which are various animals, all evidently living together in peaceful association."⁴⁷ This room is filled with splendid natural light, due to the ceiling-to-floor windows on the south side.

The world room, a few steps above and to the west of the garden room, is furnished like the other two rooms, but the wall paintings have an obvious difference. Contrasting from Stewart's beautiful, peaceful and harmonious paintings, A.B. Wright successfully depicts a sample of the rugged, harsh scenery of the world. Upon ascending several more steps toward the north, one enters what is called the terrestrial room. French plate mirrors originally made this room shine with beauty. The center portion of the south wall in this room is covered by

⁴⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

substantial silk drapes. These curtains separate it “from the largest and most beautiful of all the rooms in the Temple,” which is located in its direct center.⁴⁸

The crowning room of the temple—the celestial room— is twenty-nine feet square with a grand ceiling that extends to a height of eighteen feet. The walls and ceilings were initially paneled in genuine oak, bleached white, lacquered and stippled. White Chenille Damask drapes, made in Scotland, with raised, yellow designs were hung on all four walls. Bevel diamond cut mirrors extended across the four corners of the room, reflecting the soft light that radiated from the elegant chandelier suspended in the center of the ceiling.⁴⁹ “High windows were leaded in a geometric pattern” displaying a classic illustration of Frank Lloyd Wright’s, “Prairie School” style.⁵⁰ These elements combined to produce a peaceful ambiance with soft and mellow lighting.⁵¹ The paneled ceiling and walls of the celestial room were beautifully outlined with genuine oak and striped with gold leaf.⁵² White was the predominant color of the room. Furniture was either upholstered or lacquered in the color and the floor was covered with a plush white carpet.⁵³

To the east of the celestial room is a corridor lined with three smaller rooms. All of these rooms were elegantly furnished and originally paneled with beautifully polished koa wood. Duncan McAllister explained one of these rooms. He said, simply, “the middle one is the most elaborate; it is used for the highest of the Temple ordinance.”⁵⁴ The two outer rooms are called

⁴⁸ Ibid., 14 and 16.

⁴⁹ Murphy, 12.

⁵⁰ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 179.

⁵¹ Clawson, “The Hawaiian Temple.”

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Murphy, 12.

⁵⁴ McAllister, 16.

sealing rooms. In addition to other furniture, each room has an altar in the center.⁵⁵ Temple marriages, which Latter-day Saints believe have the potential to extend beyond death, are performed in these rooms when couples were united in matrimony and “sealed” as husband and wife for “time and all eternity.”

Interior Artwork

Behind the beautifully painted murals and splendid lunettes inside the temple lies the intriguing story of how each one of the artists came to work on the temple. Originally, the commission for the murals in each of the three ordinance rooms was given to forty-four-year-old Fritz E. Weberg of Norway in 1916. After joining the Church at the age of twenty-six and immigrating to Utah, his artistic gifts were recognized by Church leaders. He accomplished several mural paintings in Utah before working on the Laie Hawaii Temple. Weberg’s European training was evident in his dramatic and realistic landscape style. Lewis A. Ramsey, an established artist in Utah, was hired by the Church to assist Weberg in Hawaii. The forty-one-year-old Ramsey had studied in Paris and was gifted in landscape art and portrait work.⁵⁶

Although the combined abilities of these two talented artists presented limitless possibilities, their work together was cut short. Unfortunately, time quickly revealed that Weberg was somewhat mentally unstable. Apparently he was also a bit at odds with the Church and his leaders in Utah, which exacerbated the situation.⁵⁷ Church officials in Hawaii sent word to Church Headquarters about Weberg’s irrational behavior and volatile personality; the wireless

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁶ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 177.

⁵⁷ Lewis A. Ramsey, Letters to Elizabeth Brown Ramsey, December 17 and 26, 1916, Laie, Hawaii, Lewis A. Ramsey Papers, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City.

reply from Salt Lake was direct: “Send Weberg Home.”⁵⁸ Having been in Hawaii for just over two weeks, “Weberg seemed a little shocked” and was confused about why he was being sent home.⁵⁹ Sadly, a few years later he was declared insane and committed to the state mental hospital by a judge in Ogden, although after a period of recovery he would paint the creation room in the Arizona Temple.⁶⁰

Ramsey stayed after Weberg left, and early in 1917, he developed sketches for the murals. His painting, however, was postponed. First, it was delayed to allow the construction to advance to the point where painting was feasible. And, second, moisture problems in the temple interior required rectification. The inherent moisture of Hawaiian climate made the walls in the temple sweat. This quickly caused mildew problems with the cloth when the canvases were mounted.⁶¹ The walls were treated with some type of “plaster finishing” that was supposed to retain all of the moisture inside. After the attempted remedy had been applied, Ramsey began to paint. The creation and garden room scenery included tropical foliage and views of the ocean, reflecting the local backdrop. The world room scenery shifted to the Rocky Mountains and featured wild animals.

While Ramsey was busy painting murals, President Joseph F. Smith and Presiding Bishop Charles W. Nibley came to Hawaii to check on the progress of the temple in May of 1917. After inspecting Ramsey’s work, President Smith recorded, “We did not approve of Bro. Ramsay’s [sic] coloring in his water scenes and we ordered a change.”⁶² Ramsey did what he

⁵⁸ Lewis A. Ramsey, Letter January 3, 1917.

⁵⁹ Ibid. January 3 and 7, 1917.

⁶⁰ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 177.

⁶¹ Lewis A. Ramsey, Letters January 30 and February 5, 1917.

⁶² Francis M. Gibbons, *Joseph F. Smith: Patriarch and Preacher, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 320.

could in an attempt to comply. Five days later the Brethren returned to scrutinize the murals again. Apparently the pair was at least somewhat pleased with the direction of the murals.⁶³ President Smith simply wrote: “Bro. Ramsay [sic] is trying to improve his colors by our suggestion.”⁶⁴

This experience illustrates just how interested and personally involved in the Hawaiian temple President Smith was. President Smith dedicated the temple site. He personally arranged for its architects and builder. He made the long trip to Hawaii twice in two of his final years to check on its progress. Clearly, he even had a hand in the details, to the point of ordering the correction of the color schemes in a mural’s water scene.

By the time Lewis Ramsey left the islands, he had completed the murals in three ordinance rooms. Sadly, however, the canvas of these murals had been remounted directly on the walls, against the artist’s recommendations. The earlier treatment evidently had not worked. Shortly after Ramsey’s departure, a kind of fungus appeared on the canvas-covered walls and the murals began to deteriorate from mildew and moisture until it became necessary to take them down.⁶⁵ We know what we do of them from the scores of letters he wrote to his wife Elizabeth while he painted in the temple. Some photographs of the murals have also survived.⁶⁶

In one letter, Ramsey expressed to his wife his hope to paint in more temples, but that hope was never realized.⁶⁷ According to one researcher, “Ramsey felt his association with Weberg resulted in his being passed over for future temple commissions.”⁶⁸ It seems he

⁶³ Lewis A. Ramsey, Letter, May 14, 1917.

⁶⁴ Gibbons, 320.

⁶⁵ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 177–178.

⁶⁶ Lewis A. Ramsey, “Scrapbook,” ca. 1897–1940, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City.

⁶⁷ Lewis A. Ramsey, Letter, January 3, 1917.

⁶⁸ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 177.

thoroughly enjoyed his time working on the Laie Hawaii Temple, however, and he once shared with the Hawaiian Saints that he “felt honored in being called to paint in the temple.” He said the opportunity was “in fulfillment of blessing [he] received when a lad.”⁶⁹

Incidentally, Rudger Clawson, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time, visited the temple for its dedication. He explained how the moisture problem was eventually solved. “The walls were then treated with a damp-proof preparation, also a special paste was used to stick the canvas to the walls, which proved very satisfactory, and eliminated further trouble in this direction.”⁷⁰

With the walls of the temple once again bare, the mission was in need of another gifted artist. Just in time, on June 11, 1917, a group of missionaries arrived in Honolulu. One of the young missionaries was from Kaysville, Utah. His name was LeConte Stewart. As fate would have it, twenty-four-year-old Stewart was “already an accomplished painter.”⁷¹ Although Stewart was originally sent to Honolulu as a missionary, his talents were recognized by architect Harold W. Burton. He “recommended that Stewart be placed in charge of the interior painting of the temple and other decorative work.”⁷² Instead of the typical duties of a missionary, Stewart was sent to the temple with the splendid opportunity to paint murals in the creation and garden Rooms.⁷³

Stewart received his artistic training at the New York Art Students’ League, and his style differed from that of Ramsey’s. Stewart had learned the French method of impressionism, which utilized small strokes of separate color to create images with a shimmering effect. This technique

⁶⁹ Lewis A. Ramsey, Letter, January 3, 1917.

⁷⁰ Clawson, “The Hawaiian Temple,” *Millennial Star*, November 1919; McAllister, 13.

⁷¹ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 178.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 178.

⁷³ Stewart, 2.

is particularly reflected in some of his paintings in the creation room.⁷⁴ Before Stewart could put his ideas down in paint, however, he was advised to obtain approval from Church leaders.

Sources claim Elder Stewart had long talks discussing the temple with architects Pope and Burton, as well as Ralph Woolley, who at the time was working on the construction of the temple. After everyone else had gone home for the night, these four, “drawn together by mutual interests,” would theorize about the building’s structural completion, interior decorations, furnishings, and external landscaping. At some point they developed an idea for painting the ordinance rooms in a way that, like most features of the temple, was a departure from the past. They thought “mural panels” would be more decorative “than painting all over the walls and ceilings as had been done in the other temples.”⁷⁵

Prior to proceeding with their idea, Stewart was assigned to paint his representation of the Creation. This was done on six small panels, which had been prepared to scale. The new proposal along with the miniature paintings were then sent to Salt Lake for approval. The men waited for a response from Church headquarters for several weeks. Then one morning a cablegram came through that contained a reply from the prophet himself. Joseph F. Smith’s message said only: “Tell Brother Stewart to go ahead. We approve the new idea.”

This is another example of the personal interest that President Smith had in the temple being built in his beloved Hawaii. As an additional side note, it should be pointed out that the murals in the temple increase in size as progression is made through the rooms. Apparently, the idea of “mural panels” was either intended for the creation room only or otherwise discarded for unknown reasons. Although the murals do get larger, ultimately filling the entire wall above the wood paneling, they never expand to cover the whole wall or ceiling.

⁷⁴ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 179.

⁷⁵ Stewart, 2–3.

Stewart spent many hours in prayer and scripture study, especially of the first chapter in the Book of Genesis, in preparation for these paintings. When finished, the six large panels of canvas framed in wooden molding were fixed like picture frames to the walls. Stewart painted each panel to represent a day of the creation story, which made the artistic telling of the Creation authentic.

Stewart's pieces speak for themselves and are considered by many to be outstanding pieces of art. There is a "beautiful feeling of color harmony" in the murals, and they were painted in tones to blend perfectly with the surrounding walls and ceiling.⁷⁶ In the garden room, Stewart created larger, lush images of landscape, depicting a paradise in Eden.⁷⁷ In his wife's words, this room "seemed to almost sing in its exquisite harmony of color and design."⁷⁸

Interestingly, Stewart went on to produce murals for the temples in Alberta and Arizona, and led an illustrious career as a landscape painter and art teacher. He served as chairman of the University of Utah art department for a number of years, and was widely referred to as the "dean" of landscape painters in Utah.⁷⁹

Stewart's artistic abilities were also employed in areas other than painting. Brother Ralph Woolley asked Stewart to assist in choosing furniture, carpets, and drapes to harmonize with the paint color scheme throughout the temple.⁸⁰ According to Pope, Stewart supervised the general

⁷⁶ Ibid., 3–4.

⁷⁷ Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 179.

⁷⁸ Stewart, 4.

⁷⁹ Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 179.

⁸⁰ Stewart, 4.

decorative work throughout the temple.⁸¹ Stewart's final task on the temple was putting 18 Karat gold leaf on the small cement fretwork adornment around the top of the structure.⁸²

As Stewart began his work, Church officials commissioned A.B. Wright, an art professor at the LDS University, to come to Hawaii and aid Stewart with the mural painting. Having studied art in Paris, Wright brought with him a unique style. He expertly painted murals in the world room, in a "hard-lined," concrete style. His task was to represent the imperfect, harsh, rugged world we live in.⁸³ He successfully captured this through his painting of "broken, rocky mountains, storm-swept landscapes, gnarled trees," and "wild beasts in combat."⁸⁴

Wright also painted a series of seven lunettes in the baptistry. Each of the oil paintings in the upper part of the arched colonnades depicts an original representation of the first principles and ordinances of the gospel, selected from historical events in the Bible and Book of Mormon.⁸⁵ Faith, repentance, baptism, confirmation, and healing are the subjects represented.⁸⁶ In the words of the temple recorder, Duncan McAllister, Wright's representations are superb: "Each subject is so strikingly portrayed, by the expressive individual figures and appropriate setting that the intended meaning of the artist is made clearly apparent." Like LeConte Stewart, Wright was very conscious of producing perfect color harmony.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Pope, "About the Temple in Hawaii," 153.

⁸² Stewart, 6.

⁸³ Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 178.

⁸⁴ McAllister, 14. See also Murphy, 12.

⁸⁵ Pope, "About the Temple in Hawaii," 153.

⁸⁶ McAllister, 13.

⁸⁷ Stewart, 4.

The Friezes

One of the most unique aspects of the Hawaiian temple art stretches boldly on the upper part of the temple's exterior (See Appendix C). Four scenes depicted by sculptured friezes adorn the top of the temple on each side of the building. Brothers J. Leo and Avard Fairbanks were hired to create sculptures for the temple in the fall of 1916. J. Leo Fairbanks, 28, was an established painter and sculptor. He studied art at Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and in Paris. Known for his "crisp, bright style" of painting, he later became head of the art department at Oregon State University.⁸⁸

Avard Fairbanks, 18, was considered an artistic prodigy. He received training at the N. Y. Art Students' League at the tender age of 13 and became the youngest artist ever to display art at the esteemed Paris Salon. He became one of Utah's most famous realist sculptors. Another gifted sculptor, thirty-five-year-old Norwegian Torlief Knaphus also helped cast the Fairbanks' work.⁸⁹

"Realizing the possibilities of cement in plastic symbolism the architects appealed to the [First] Presidency to allow them to use sculptural motives in the form of relief figures to decorate the upper art of the structure."⁹⁰ Originally, the friezes were to be three small panels on the upper portion of the temple. The Fairbanks brothers had something larger and grander in size and subject in mind. Their idea to create four long horizontal panels for each side of the temple was approved and carried out.⁹¹

Some have said that this work of art was the brothers' most ambitious project.⁹² The artists' description of the process shows why the task was so challenging. J. Leo Fairbanks

⁸⁸ Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 170 and 179.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁹⁰ Fairbanks, 575.

⁹¹ Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 173. See also Pope, "About the Temple in Hawaii," 152.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 170–172.

summarized a few of their considerations: “These sculptural groups were planned not only to tell a story but also to adorn or decorate the upper part of the temple. The treatment, therefore, required architectonic or architectural handling as well as realism. To give relief, shadows, and strength to the frieze, the upper part of the figures are made in full round and the lower part is low relief so that the upper part tips forward to avoid making the figures appear stubby. In all there are 123 figures, nearly life size.”⁹³

The figures represent characters from the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and early Latter-day Saint history. The friezes are presented in bold relief, depicting major events of the four principal dispensations.⁹⁴ “Each dispensation occupies one entire side.” One of the original temple workers described it this way: “One contains figures representing Adam and the Hebrew Prophets, and depicts episodes of the Old Testament history; another shows the persons of Jesus and His Apostles, and illustrates incidents related in the New Testament. The third panel is emblematical of the Book of Mormon history; the figure of Christ in the center and each side of Him, Prophets, Apostles and others, associated with incidents in their careers. The other panel conveys a representation of the ushering in of this dispensation, when the Father and the Son appeared to the praying boy, Joseph Smith.”⁹⁵

The Modern or Latter-day Dispensation is the front section which faces east. The Book of Mormon or Nephite Dispensation is on the North end of the building. Continuing counterclockwise around the building the next panel presents the Old Testament or Hebrew

⁹³ Fairbanks, 575.

⁹⁴ Pope, “About the Temple in Hawaii,” 152.

⁹⁵ McAllister, 11–12.

Dispensation. Lastly, the south side of the temple is the Christian Dispensation as described in the New Testament.⁹⁶

Architectural scholar Paul Anderson adds: “These figures were executed in high relief in the style of Greek and Roman sculptures that had become popular for Victorian public buildings and monuments.”⁹⁷ Another observer noted one of the ways the sculptor successfully created realistic figures explaining: “The varied postures, apparel of the figures and facial expressions are natural and life-like.”⁹⁸

Adding to their lifelike qualities, a few of the figures may even be recognizable. It has been told that two of the characters were fashioned in the likeness of early Laie leaders: long time mission president, Samuel E. Woolley (see Appendix C, Figure 3).⁹⁹ Another figure in the frieze worthy of particular mention is the Nephite ship builder, Hagoth (Alma 63:5–7). The bearded man stands to the right of Christ in the Book of Mormon panel next to a ship with an oar in hand (see Appendix C, Figure 4). According to the Book of Mormon text, Hagoth was an “exceedingly curious man” who built several ships and on two occasions sailed “northward” with “many of the Nephites” aboard (Alma 63:5–6). Following the second expedition, they were never heard from again (see Alma 63:8). His representation in this frieze is an acknowledgement of the common Latter-day Saint theory regarding the origin of the Polynesian peoples. The artist explained that “it is very probable that the Hawaiians are descended from the members of this expedition.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Fairbanks, 575.

⁹⁷ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 173.

⁹⁸ McAllister, 12.

⁹⁹ Romania Woolley, *Laie Hawaii Temple Jubilee Celebration*. Audio Recording. Laie, Hawaii, 1969.

¹⁰⁰ Fairbanks, 581–582.

Four small plaster tablets, reproductions of each of the four friezes, were originally placed on the walls of the chapel in the temple.¹⁰¹ These small design models were eventually recast and displayed on the temple grounds across from the visitors' center for guests to enjoy at close range.¹⁰² As a product of the most recent renovation, additional recasts now prominently adorn the lobby of the temple, too. And the lobby of the Church History Library in Salt Lake City also features a larger scale version of the dramatic friezes.

The Landscape

Designers wanted the temple's landscaping to augment the splendor of the building. They saw the temple's physical setting as their first advantage in that aim. Architect Hyrum Pope wrote: "The temple in Hawaii is situated on an eminence which commands an unobstructed view of the Pacific Ocean, whose vast expanse, coupled with the luxuriant semi-tropical vegetation of the fertile and highly cultivated land adjoining the beach, forms a foreground which, in its grandeur, could scarcely be surpassed."¹⁰³

As beautiful as Pope's description sounded, he was in truth being slightly generous in his portrayal. Today, the landscape of the Hawaii temple *is* a stunning array of full, lush greenery, beautiful fountains, and tropical vegetation. When viewing the grounds in its current state, it may be hard for onlookers to imagine this magnificent landscape was once quite barren and open.¹⁰⁴

In truth, however, the architects and landscapers had incredible vision. Thankfully, with their skill and know-how they were able to lay a workable foundation for the temple grounds with ample room for growth. Joseph F. Rock, a renowned botanist of the University of Hawaii,

¹⁰¹ McAllister, 11. See also Anderson, "A Jewel in the Gardens of Paradise," 173.

¹⁰² Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 170.

¹⁰³ Pope, "About the Temple in Hawaii," 149.

¹⁰⁴ Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 173.

was chosen to plan the landscape and gardening for the temple grounds in this, tropical environment. Remarkably volunteering his time, Rock put his extensive learning, experience, and travels to various countries to visit exotic gardens to use. His expertise in tropical plant selection has greatly enhanced the beauty of the grounds with each passing year.¹⁰⁵

Anderson describes it well: “The architects worked out a brilliant design for the temple grounds. . . Their grand conception of the temple as the climax of an arrangement of terraces, reflecting pools, waterfalls, and tropical plants arranged along a formal axis was one of their most powerful ideas—a concept that would take many years of patient care to realize completely.”¹⁰⁶ Setting aside the natural help the region’s flora has provided to the temple’s beauty, it should be remembered that every aspect of this sacred structure was painstakingly placed by design. Harold W. Burton, the artist and designer behind the architecture of this special building revealed one of his purposes behind his use of water features on the grounds. He explained that “reflection pools used by ancient temple builders” were meant “to enhance their sacred buildings and to increase their apparent size . . . These pools add to the beauty and the grandeur of these edifices.”¹⁰⁷

With this in mind, it becomes clearer that the grandeur which seems attributable to the temple’s natural setting actually resulted from methodical planning and meticulous implementation. Still, the outcome is remarkable, especially remembering the fact that, at the time, the Hawaiian temple was the smallest temple the Church had ever built by a large margin.

Every component of the temple grounds was created in a symmetrical, unified style. The tiered terraces leading up to the door of the temple still remain today. The upper terrace is in the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 180. See also McAllister, 8.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 180.

¹⁰⁷ Harold W. Burton, “Architectural Features of the Oakland Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” (1964).

shape of a semi-circle. Another pool of water rests here with a fountain flowing in the center. For nearly forty-two years, twin gatehouses marked the entrance of the grounds and added to the balance of the landscape. In addition, a pergola stretched between two fern houses in the rear of the temple, and the original four-foot wall of dark lava rock still surrounds the temple grounds.¹⁰⁸

Picturing this scene without the explosion of foliage that has grown throughout the years may again require some imagination. In the beginning, the twelve towering palm trees lining the ascending walkways on each side of the terraced pools had not been planted. Bare ground spread from the sidewalks to walls. Not only was this space void of trees and shrubs, but there was no grass either.¹⁰⁹

Zipporah Stewart, the wife of temple artist, LeConte Stewart, and a teacher in the Laie School, described how the lawn was laid. Different from the grass in her home state of Utah, Sister Stewart was first introduced to Hawaiian grass as she went to the temple to plant it with the Relief Society. She quickly learned that Hawaiian grass had to be planted root by root. Relief Society sisters got on all fours and pressed the roots into the soil by hand, about three or four inches apart. Stewart recalled that it must have been a sight to be seen—grown women crawling along the ground with a basket of roots. She explains that at first, the lawn did not look very good, but due to the humid air, sunshine and rain, it soon “looked like a lovely green carpet all over the ground.”¹¹⁰

The Statuary

At the time of its dedication, two fern houses connected by a long trellis were in the rear of the temple. Just past the center of the trellis was a majestic statue, representing Lehi blessing

¹⁰⁸ Anderson, “A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise,” 180.

¹⁰⁹ Clawson, “The Hawaiian Temple.”

¹¹⁰ Andrew Jenson, “Hawaiian Mission Manuscript History,” Nov. 27, 1919.

his son, Joseph. Today the statue now stands across the reflecting pool from the visitor's center, but initially it was positioned at the center of the pergola in the courtyard behind the temple. One observer claimed: "There is such a sense of serenity and awe in its presence that people naturally speak in low tones while viewing it."¹¹¹ This work of art was created by sculptor Avarð Fairbank and is larger than life in size.¹¹²

In the front of the temple, at the head of the uppermost terraced pool is a second piece. Titled "Maternity," this statue depicts a Hawaiian mother surrounded by her three children. The giant clam shell she is holding is a fountain that trickles water upon her children and consequently through the remaining pools. The water may well represent the nurturing love, care, hope, and life spring of motherhood. Clawson described this work as "beautifully executed" and asserted that it reflected "great credit upon the artist."¹¹³ Anderson, similarly impressed with this work by Avarð Fairbanks, describes it as "sensitive and mature."¹¹⁴ Three of these figures are reported have been modeled after locals. In this case all sources confirm that Eliza Nainoa Salm was the mother. The two older children in the piece were reportedly Manuela Kalili and Mileka Apuakehau Conn.¹¹⁵

An interesting and detailed description of statues, the tiered water pools, and their spiritual significance is given by J. Leo Fairbanks:

To add charm and spiritual significance, two large sculptural compositions were worked out by Avarð Fairbanks to be incorporated in the concrete setting. Originally the one representing Lehi blessing Joseph was placed at the entrance . . . It symbolizes God's promise to Lehi's son before its realization through the Hawaiian people. Following this

¹¹¹ Eugene F. Fairbanks, *A Sculptor's Testimony in Bronze and Stone: The Sacred Sculpture of Avarð T. Fairbanks* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1972), 25.

¹¹² Fairbanks, "The Sculpture of the Hawaiian Temple"; McAllister, 8.

¹¹³ McAllister, 7.

¹¹⁴ Anderson, "A Jewel in the Garden of Paradise," 180.

¹¹⁵ Moffat, *Gathering to Laie*, 123, fn. 33.

is a series of pools symbolical of the many waters that separated the original colony from its Hawaiian descendants and the promise from its fulfillment. These pools rise one above the other, gradually leading one into the center of the temple grounds where there is a group representing Maternity, or the fulfillment of the Promise through the seed or lineage of Lehi's children. The rippling, sparkling waters and the happy Hawaiian family is typical of the Hawaiian families that came to the Temple to do vicarious work for their departed loved ones, so that in the eternity the bonds of everlasting love may be consummated in unbroken family ties.¹¹⁶

The use of statuary on the temple grounds not only adds beauty and creativity to the surroundings, but also greatly enhances the spiritual significance of the landscape.

Summary

The dawn of the twentieth century ushered in a new era of Church leadership. The changing times in the Church brought a desire for a new style of temple architecture. Looking back, the design of the Laie Hawaii Temple seems significant because it seems to reflect the spirit of the times.

The temple's striking yet simple architecture, interior styling, and landscaping combined with its statuary, water features and natural setting produces a scene most consider as beautiful. A statement published by its architects, Hyrum C. Pope and Harold W. Burton, summarized their objective in designing the temple. Their purpose was to build a structure "as lasting as human skill could make it, and of a simple, chaste beauty which is the result of good proportions and appropriateness, rather than ornament and embellishment."¹¹⁷ Many would likely agree that this ideal was indeed accomplished as skilled artisans together to create a building that Latter-day Saints view as a "House of the Lord."

¹¹⁶ Fairbanks, "The Sculpture of the Hawaiian Temple," 582–583.

¹¹⁷ McAllister, 6.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

In many ways the history of each Latter-day Saint temple tells a story that mirrors that of the entire religion. It provides an individualized narrative of faith and hope, struggle and adversity, strength and endurance. Each constitutes an important frame in a dynamic moving picture; an individual epoch in a significant history. Each temple is historic in its own right, but the circumstances and stories that comprise the history of the Laie Hawaii Temple are uniquely compelling. The story behind this temple is one of survival and eventual blossoming. The history of this temple is, in essence, the story of the Church and its people throughout the world generally, and in the Hawaiian Islands specifically. It is a tale of destiny despite difficulty.

The purpose of this thesis has been to provide a fitting history for a building considered by many to be a significant, sacred structure. It is hoped that by preserving and presenting this history in an honest and compelling way, honor will deservedly come to those whose faith and sacrifice built this temple that today stands resolutely like a beacon in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean.

The Laie Hawaii Temple is iconic and significant to Latter-day Saints, yet a thorough history has never been published. The purpose of this thesis has been to provide such a history from the time of the temple's conception to its completion and dedication in 1919. Until now, the literature available on the Laie Hawaii Temple has been consigned to a dispersed collection of pamphlets and book chapters and sections. In addition to this, a diverse assortment of magazine and newspaper articles constitutes the overwhelming majority of source material that exists. One of this thesis's major contributions is its compilation and consolidation of the most important and pertinent information about the temple from seminal and sundry sources.

Lessons Learned and Suggestions for Further Research

Researching the history of this temple provides an education in many areas. Several of the lessons learned by the author will follow. It is hoped that the purveyance of a these lessons will assist future students of the subject in procuring and producing future additions to the body of knowledge available on the Laie Hawaii Temple. Perhaps the greatest lesson learned while researching this temple was how vital it is to consult the most primary sources available, in order to obtain the most accurate account possible. Throughout time, certain partial truths or even perceptions have been reported and repeated largely indiscriminately and regardless of authenticity. Only through thorough research was it possible to attempt to provide the most correct information about this subject. This is particularly true in dealing with some of the more controversial issues associated with the temple.

Concerning controversial subjects, I have gained a few additional insights. I have learned that for many, perception becomes reality. People become attached to their beliefs and develop strong feelings toward them. This is true even when strong evidence exists to challenge a particular notion. Thus, when addressing such topics, or presenting findings controversial in nature, it is important to do so with great care, respect, and objectivity. There is a need to confirm the authenticity of unusual events and controversial matters, but it is also needful to approach these subjects and transmit conclusions about them fair-mindedly.

In attempting to do this, I have been reminded of a few important truths. First, when it comes to definitively determining the authenticity of any event one truth always remains: It is immeasurably easier for someone to claim that something happened than it is to unequivocally confirm that it did not. And second, even accounts that turn out to be false (by every attainable measure) consist of at least a few elements based in truth. People are generally reasonable and

they typically base their views on reasonable tenets, too. In short, in pursuit of historical accuracy, question stories but, do so with sensitivity, taking care not to call into question those who are on either side of a particular debate.

Another applicable lesson was the reinforcement of the importance of recording history in the making. Historical records are left incomplete without the documentation of noteworthy events or conversations. Simple sentences in the journal of an eyewitness or participant add to the body of knowledge about a subject and may provide significant details that enhance history. In the absence of such accounts historians may regard a lack of documentation as evidence that a supposed event did not occur.

One example of this from the history of the Laie Hawaii Temple pertains to the ceremonies traditionally associated with Latter-day Saint temple building. Typically groundbreaking, cornerstone and capstone laying ceremonies mark significant milestones in the temple's construction. Aside from conflicting reports about the groundbreaking ceremony, records indicate that these ceremonies did not take place in Laie.¹¹⁸ If this is true it is very unusual and yet, as far as can be determined, no available records exist to suggest otherwise.

This example is connected to the next, which leads into some suggestions for future study. It has to do with timing. When compiling this history, needed information was often

¹¹⁸Although he did not cite his reference, one historian reported: "Ground was broken for the temple on the 8th of February, 1916, but curiously, there were no cornerstone laying ceremonies," (Joseph H. Spurrier, "The Hawaii Temple: A Special Place in a Special Land." In *Mormon Pacific Historical Society* Laie, Hawaii, 1988, 30). "Toward the end of his life Hamana Kalili related some of his experiences building the temple: 'In October, 1916, about one year after the dedication of the Hawaiian Temple site, the groundbreaking ceremony was held,'" (Riley M. Moffat and others. *Gathering to Laie* (Laie, Hawaii: The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Island Studies, 2011), 111). In the same interview, Hamana also claimed that "immediately [after the groundbreaking ceremony] excavations for the construction of the Temple commenced." This, however, is not true, based on a progress report given to Joseph F. Smith by Samuel E. Woolley. On June 13, 1916, Woolley stated: "We are getting along nicely with the construction of the temple," (Samuel E. Woolley, Personal Letter to Joseph F. Smith, June 13, 1916, Laie, Hawaii. Joseph F. Smith Papers, LDS Church History Archives, Salt Lake City.)

unattainable because it was never recorded or unavailable, and those who may have the answers were long since deceased. I frequently thought: “If only someone would have done this study 80, 50, or even 20 years earlier. Then someone who was actually there could have told us.” Due to the wealth of information, perhaps unrecorded, but nonetheless available in the minds living people, the first suggestion for future research is that it needs to be done as soon as possible. Invaluable potential primary accounts are undoubtedly waiting to be explored.

Future studies of the history of the Laie Hawaii Temple will be fruitful endeavors. This thesis covers the history up to the dedication, but it leaves ninety-three years of rich material unreported. This temple was the first temple built in one of the missions of the Church. It was the first temple dedicated outside of Utah and North America. People came to the temple from all over the Pacific Rim and Asia. Some came but never left, settling in the shadows of the temple, establishing new communities within Laie. Serving, as it did such a large portion of the world for so long, there are many intriguing stories to be told. Undoubtedly fascinating untold details deserve attention and can be gleaned from the history of one of the first temples that catered to a large number of patrons from different cultures speaking different language.

The Laie Hawaii Temple has also changed much throughout the years. Initially the building was 10,500 square feet and its connecting grounds originally covered an area of five acres.¹¹⁹ Today it occupies 42,000 square feet the grounds have been extended to amass 11.4 acres.¹²⁰ Over the years the temple has been remodeled and renovated four times. Some of the remodels have been extensive, and the process spanned a period of several years. It was rededicated twice: in June 1978, by President Spencer W. Kimball and in November 2010, by

¹¹⁹ D. M. McAllister, “A Description of the Hawaiian Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1921), 8.

¹²⁰ *Church News*. “Laie Hawaii Temple,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/temples/52/Laie-Hawaii.html> (accessed May 2012).

President Thomas S. Monson. A lot of research needs to be done to document these significant events and their impact throughout the years. The information currently available, at least readily, about most of these major changes is meager.¹²¹ Yes, a review of the temple's operation for nearly a century is certainly needed.

For such a history to be satisfactory it must include a more conclusive judgment (if possible) of the historicity of one specific controversial incident regarding the temple. The incident in question is the alleged bombing attempt on the Laie Hawaii Temple by a Japanese pilot on the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. The authenticity of arguably the most commonly covered episode concerning the temple in Hawaii is entangled in debate. The details of account are multifaceted and intriguing. Two of the foremost scholars on this supposed event have been clear in their appraisal. One of them most recently spoke for both and stated their opinion after summarizing their research that stretched “over a decade.” Dr. Ken Baldrige declared that all of the efforts he and Dr. Lance Chase devoted into chasing this tale finally resulted in “both of [them] finally concluding that the ‘attack’ never occurred.”¹²² Recent findings, however, reopen the case and question the common consensus on the purported attack.

Like “The Lumber Story” discussed in chapter four, there is a need to confirm the authenticity of these stories, but a tidy resolution may not be attainable. Efforts expended to substantiate these stories, however, are still worthwhile. The justification for future investigation is conveyed in the observation of a researcher interested in these two alleged accounts. He said: “. . . if [they] are true we should tell the world. . . .Nothing would please me more than to prove

¹²¹ Most of what we know about the temple's first remodel in 1938 and its first major remodel in 1962 is contained in two paragraphs of a brief article written by the original architect, Harold W. Burton, in N. B. Lundwall, ed. *Temples of the Most High*, 16th ed. (Salt Lake City Bookcraft, Inc., 1940), 151–153.

¹²² Ken Baldrige, “Review of Temple, Town, Tradition: The Collected Historical Essays of Lance D. Chase,” *Journal of Mormon History* 28, no. 2 (2002), 233.

the [stories] to be true. . . .On the other hand, there are so many ‘folk-lore’ stories circulating around the Church I don’t think we need another. Perhaps [these] should be laid to rest unless honest verification can be accomplished.”¹²³ My final suggestion for researchers of the alleged bombing is consistent with my advice concerning the rest of the history of the Laie Hawaii Temple—time is of the essence.

President Joseph F. Smith and the Laie Hawaii Temple

Perhaps a fitting conclusion to this thesis would be to illustrate the significant correlation between Joseph F. Smith, the Laie Hawaii Temple, and the course of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during the past century.

The seventeen-year administration of President Joseph F. Smith was a period of tremendous growth and increased temporal and spiritual prosperity for the Church. One significant milestone marked during his tenure was the Church becoming fiscally solvent. Despite such a monumental material achievement, however, Joseph Fielding Smith later recalled that his father’s “administration was noted, perhaps above all else, in the spiritual progress which had been made.”¹²⁴ The announcement and building of new temples in Canada and Hawaii was perhaps the most fitting symbol of the Church’s temporal and spiritual success in that era.

Joseph F. Smith led the Church through a pivotal period of transition in Latter-day Saint history. The genesis of one transformational change can be seen in the conception and building of these two temples outside the continental United States. Under President Smith’s direction, and due to his life experience the Church was uniquely suited to embrace its increasing

¹²³ James E. Hallstrom, Personal letter to John L. Hepworth Letter, April 4, 1992, “Information of the December 7th Incident and the Miracle of All Miracles,” Honolulu, Hawaii, 1992, LDS Church History Library Archives, Salt Lake City.

¹²⁴ Joseph Fielding Smith, *Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 420.

international presence in a paradigm-altering way. Evidence of this evolution is particularly manifest in the study of President Smith's singular role in the construction of the Laie Hawaii Temple.

Throughout this thesis, Joseph F. Smith's connection with the Hawaiian Islands has been adequately documented. It should also be shown that the establishment and building up of Laie, and the construction and dedication of a temple there marked the genesis of a shift in gathering and temple building for the Church. This temple, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, became the first realization of the long foreseen new direction of the gathering of scattered Israel and a foreshadowing of the future of building Zion in the dispensation of the fullness of times.

In a 1972 area conference in Mexico City, Elder Bruce R. McConkie clearly identified this new chapter in the gathering saga when he declared that "the place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala...and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. ...Every nation is the gathering place for its own people."¹²⁵ At the general conference the following October, the president of the Church, Harold B. Lee, referred to and endorsed Elder McConkie's significant statement.¹²⁶ In 1992, Elder Boyd K. Packer referred to President Lee's quoting Elder McConkie and declared that, "in effect, [this] announced that the pioneering phase of gathering was now over. The gathering is now to be out of the world into the Church in every nation."¹²⁷ Nowhere is this mid-twentieth-century shift in the Latter-day Saint conception of "gathering" more evident than in recent temple expansion.

¹²⁵ Bruce R. McConkie, Mexico and Central America Area Conference, 26 Aug. 1972, 45.

¹²⁶ Harold B. Lee, Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 7.

¹²⁷ Boyd K. Packer, "To Be Learned Is Good If ...'" *Ensign*, Nov 1992, 71.

Near the end of the Hawaiian temple's first year in operation, Elder Reed Smoot looked back at the foundational events of this magnificent structure, of which he was a part. He then looked forward prophesying: "Temple building, temple work, salvation for our dead and salvation for ourselves have just begun...I look to see the time when temples will be erected in all parts of the world."¹²⁸

Latter-day Saints today are witnessing the fruition of Elder Smoot's vision. Presently, the Church has one hundred and thirty-eight operating temples with several in every inhabited continent of the world, and another thirty under construction or announced.¹²⁹ President Thomas S. Monson illustrated the vastness of this expansion in the April 2011 general conference by pointing out that "eighty-five percent of the membership of the Church now live within 200 miles (320 km) of a temple, and for a great many of us, that distance is much shorter."¹³⁰

Fortuitously, in the same talk, President Monson recognized a man whose foresight and efforts have proved to be instrumental in our prolific modern temple program. He said, "During the October general conference in 1902, Church President Joseph F. Smith expressed in his opening address the hope that one day we would 'have temples built in the various parts of the [world] where they are needed for the convenience of the people.'" After detailing further examples of the swiftness at which this work is progressing, President Monson vowed: "These numbers will continue to grow." He then continued, "The goal President Joseph F. Smith hoped for in 1902 is becoming a reality. Our desire is to make the temple as accessible as possible to our members."

¹²⁸ Elder Reed Smoot, Conference Report, October 1920, Third Overflow Meeting, 137.

¹²⁹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "Temple Statics," <http://www.lds.org/church/temples/find-a-temple?lang=eng> (accessed June 20, 2012).

¹³⁰ Thomas S. Monson, "The Holy Temple—A Beacon to the World," *Ensign*, May 2011, 90-91.

According to President Smith, “not many years” before the announcement of the Laie Hawaii Temple, the Brethren wanted to build a temple in Northern Mexico, but it could not be.¹³¹ The temple in Alberta, Canada, was already under construction in October 1915, but would take nearly a decade to complete. And so, as destiny would have it and as history would record it, the Laie Hawaii Temple became the fifth operating temple after the Saints settled in the Rocky Mountains. In addition, this significant structure was the first temple built outside of Utah and the continental United States.

Just as it seems Joseph F. Smith’s life was destined to intertwine with Hawaii and the Saints who lived there, so it seems as though the temple in Laie was similarly destined to play its singular role in Church history as the forebear of the modern temple building movement with its focus of bringing temples to the people by spreading the gospel, gathering the believers, then strengthening the people until a temple can be built. In short, the Laie Hawaii Temple is the culmination of a prophetic prototype for building Zion in a new era of Church history. We cannot know what the Church would look like today if not for the pivotal leadership provided by its inspired, forward-thinking sixth president, whose heritage, life experiences, and skills many believe to be no less than customized by divinity. In considering all of this however, one thing may be safely suggested: without Joseph F. Smith there would be no Laie Hawaii Temple—at least not as we know it.

Thus, when considering this impressive monument to the dedication and faith of the Hawaiian Saints, it feels appropriate to acknowledge the contributions of the missionary and prophet they so deeply loved. How fitting indeed it was when in November of 2011, in the temple’s most recent rededicatory prayer, President Thomas S. Monson expressed gratitude “for

¹³¹ President Joseph F. Smith., Conference Report, October 1915, 9.

the insight and inspiration of President Smith . . . who served faithfully and tirelessly so that a House of the Lord could be built here.”¹³²

¹³² “Laie Hawaii Temple Rededicatory Prayer,” *Church News*, 27 November 2010, 6.

APPENDIX A

Dedicatory Prayer of the Hawaiian Temple Given by President Heber J. Grant on November 27, 1919

The following is transcript of the dedicatory prayer as it was published soon after the dedication of the Laie Hawaii Temple.¹

O God, the Eternal Father, we, thy servants and handmaidens, thank thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son, with all the power of our being, that we are privileged this day to be present in this beautiful land, to dedicate unto thy Most Holy Name, a temple of the Living God.

We thank thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that thou and thy Son, Jesus Christ, didst visit the boy, Joseph Smith, Jr., and that he was instructed by thee, and by thy beloved Son.

We thank thee that thou didst send thy servant, John the Baptist, and that he did lay his hands upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and ordain them to the Aaronic, or Lesser Priesthood.

We thank thee for sending thy servants Peter, James, and John, apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, who ministered with the Savior in the flesh and after his crucifixion, and that they did ordain thy servants Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, and bestowed upon them the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, by which authority and apostleship we do dedicate unto thee, this day, this holy edifice.

We thank thee for the integrity and the devotion of thy servants, the Prophet and Patriarch, Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith. We thank thee that they labored all the days of their lives, from the time of the restitution of the Gospel of Jesus Christ until the day of their martyrdom, and that they sealed their testimony with their blood.

We thank thee for thy servants, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith, who have severally stood at the head of thy Church since the martyrdom of thy servant Joseph Smith, and who have led and directed thy people by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, and who have sent forth representatives to proclaim the everlasting gospel in nearly every land and clime.

We thank thee for all the faithful members of the First Presidency of the Church, and for the Apostles, in this last dispensation; and for each and all of the faithful men who have held office as general authorities of the Church.

O God, our Eternal Father, we pray thee to bless the Presidency of thy Church—thy servants Heber J. Grant, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose. May these men, O Father, be guided by the unerring counsels of thy Holy Spirit, day by day. May they be even as a three-fold cord that cannot be broken. May they see eye to eye in all matters for the upbuilding of the Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth.

Bless, O Father, each and all of the Apostles, the Presiding Patriarch, the First Council of the Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric.

¹ “Impressive Dedicatory Prayer in New Hawaii Temple,” *Deseret News*, November 27 1919. See also Heber J. Grant, “The Dedicatory Prayer in the Hawaiian Temple,” *Improvement Era*, February 1920 1920.

Bless, we beseech thee, those who preside in all the stakes of Zion, and in all the wards and branches of the Church.

Bless those who preside over the missions of the Church throughout the world, together with all thy servants and handmaidens who have gone forth to proclaim to the peoples of the world the restoration again to the earth of the plan of life and salvation.

Bless those, O Father, who preside in the temples that have been erected to thy holy Name in the land of Zion. Bless, also, those who preside and who labor in the Church schools which have been established from Canada on the north to Mexico in the south.

O God, accept of the gratitude and thanksgiving of our hearts, for the very wonderful and splendid labors performed in the land of Hawaii by thy servants President George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith. We thank thee for their devotion to the gospel and to the people of this land. We thank thee for raising up thy servant Elder J. H. Napela, that devoted Hawaiian, who assisted thy servant President Cannon in the translation of the Book of Mormon, which is the sacred history of the Nephites, the Lamanites, and the Jaredites. We thank thee that the plates containing the Book of Mormon were preserved so that they could be translated, and that thy words to the Prophet Joseph Smith might be fulfilled; namely, "That the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved."

We thank thee, that thousands and tens of thousands of the descendants of Lehi, in this favored land, have come to a knowledge of the gospel, many of whom have endured faithfully to the end of their lives. We thank thee, our Father and our God, that those who are living and who have embraced the gospel are now to have the privilege of entering into this holy house, and laboring for the salvation of the souls of their ancestors.

We thank thee that on this occasion the widow of thy beloved servant, George Q. Cannon, even thine handmaiden, Sister Sarah Jenne Cannon, is present with us today, and is permitted to participate in these dedicatory services.

We thank thee, O Father in Heaven, for our families, our friends, our relatives, and for all the many blessings which thou hast bestowed upon us.

We thank thee for all of the temples that have been erected in this last dispensation, and we pray thy choice blessings to be and abide with all those who minister therein. We pray that that same sweet spirit which is present in all of the temples, may abide with those who shall labor in this holy house.

We thank thee, O Father, this day, that the promise made in a dream to thy servant William W. Cluff, by thy Prophet Brigham Young, that the day would come when a temple should be erected in this land, is fulfilled before our eyes.

We thank thee, O God, that thy faithful and diligent servant, President Joseph F. Smith, was moved upon, while in this land, on the birthday of thy servant President Brigham Young, in the year 1915, to dedicate this spot of ground for the erection of a temple to the Most High God.

We thank thee for the long and faithful and diligent labors of thy servant President Samuel E. Woolley, who has so faithfully presided over this mission for these many years. We thank thee for his labors in the erection of this temple, and beseech thee, O Father, that thou wilt bless him and all of his associate workers.

We pray thee, O Father, to bless the son of thy beloved servant President Joseph F. Smith, E. Wesley Smith, who now presides over the Hawaiian mission. May the missionary spirit be and abide with him. May he have that same splendid love for the people of this land which his dear departed father possessed.

We now thank thee, O God, our Eternal Father, for this beautiful temple and the grounds upon which it stands, and we dedicate the grounds and the building, with all its furnishing and fittings, and everything pertaining thereunto, from the foundation to the roof thereof, to thee, our Father and our God. And we humbly pray thee, O God, the Eternal Father, to accept of it and to sanctify it, and to consecrate it through thy Spirit for the holy purposes for which it has been erected.

We beseech thee that no unclean thing shall be permitted to enter here, and that thy Spirit may ever dwell in this holy house and rest mightily upon all who shall labor as officers and workers in this house, as well as all who shall come here to perform ordinances for the living or for the dead.

May thy peace ever abide in this holy building, that all who come here may partake of the spirit of peace, and of the sweet and heavenly influence that thy Saints have experienced in other temples, and that has also been experienced in visiting the monument and cottage erected at the birthplace of thy servant Joseph Smith, the great Latter-day prophet.

May all who come upon the grounds which surround this temple, in the years to come, whether members of the Church of Christ or not, feel the sweet and peaceful influence of this blessed and hallowed spot.

And now that this temple is completed and ordinance work will soon be commenced, we beseech thee, O Father, that thou wilt open the way before the members of the Church in these lands, as well as of the natives of New Zealand, and of all the Pacific Islands, to secure the genealogies of their forefathers, so that they may come into this holy house and become saviors unto their ancestors.

We thank thee, O God, our Eternal Father, that the land of Palestine, the land where our Savior and Redeemer ministered in the flesh, where he gave to the world the plan of life and salvation, is now redeemed from the thralldom of the unbeliever, and is in the hands of the great, enlightened and liberty-loving empire of Great Britain. We acknowledge thy hand, O God, in the wonderful events which have led up to the partial redemption of the land of Judah, and we beseech thee, O Father, that the Jews may, at no far distant date, be gathered home to the land of their forefathers.

We thank thee that thy servants, the Prophets Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, were moved upon to send holy apostles to Jerusalem to dedicate that land for the return of the Jews.

We acknowledge thy hand, O God, our Heavenly Father, that one of the benefits of the great and terrible world war, through which the nations of the earth have recently passed, will be the opportunity for the Jews to return to the land of their fathers.

We thank thee, our Father in Heaven, for the victory which came to the armies of the Allies, and we beseech thee that that victory may lead to increased liberty and peace throughout all the nations of the earth.

We pray for thy blessings to be upon the kings, and upon the nobles, and upon the rulers in all nations, that they may have it in their hearts to administer justice and righteousness and to give liberty and freedom to the peoples over whom they rule.

We thank thee that thou didst inspire the noble men who wrote the Constitution of our beloved country, and we beseech thee that the principles of that inspired document may ever be maintained; that the people may overcome selfishness and strife, and contention, and all bitterness, and that they may grow and increase in the love of country, in loyalty and patriotism, and in a determination to do that which is right and just.

We thank thee for this land of liberty in which we dwell, which thou hast said is choice above all other lands. We do thank thee, O God our Father, for the noble men who have presided over our country from the days of George Washington until the present time.

We pray thee to bless Woodrow Wilson, the president of these United States. Touch him with the healing power of thy Holy Spirit and make him whole. We pray that his life may be precious in thy sight, and may the inspiration that comes from thee ever abide with him.

We pray for the vice-president of the United States, for the members of the president's cabinet, for the senators and congressmen, and for all the officers of this great and glorious government in every state and territory, and in every land where the United States bears rule. We also remember before thee, all those who have been selected to administer the law in this favored land of Hawaii.

We beseech thee, O God in heaven, that the people of the United States of America may ever seek to thee for guidance and direction, that thy declaration and promise that this is a land choice above all other lands, and shall be protected against all foes, provided the people serve thee, may be realized and fulfilled, and that the people may grow in power, and strength and dominion, and, above all, in a love of thy truth.

We thank thee, O God, that thy Son, our Redeemer, after being crucified and laying down his life for the sins of the world, did open the prison doors and proclaim the gospel of repentance unto those who had been disobedient in the days of Noah, and that he subsequently came to the land of America, where he established his Church and chose disciples to guide the same.

We thank thee, for restoring again to the earth the ordinances of the gospel of thy Son Jesus Christ, whereby men and women can be, in very deed, saviors upon Mount Zion, and where they can enter into thy holy temples and perform the ordinances necessary for the salvation of those who have died without a knowledge of the gospel.

We thank thee, O Father, above all things upon the face of the earth, for the gospel of thy Son Jesus Christ, and for the Priesthood of the living God, and that we have been made partakers of the same, and have an abiding knowledge of the divinity of the work in which we are engaged.

We thank thee for the words of thy Son Jesus Christ to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon: "This is the gospel, the glad tidings which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us, that he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness, that through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him, who glorifies the Father and saves all the works of his hands."

We thank thee, O Father, that thou didst send thy Son Jesus Christ, to visit thy servants Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland temple, the first temple ever

erected by thy people in this last dispensation. We thank thee for the words of our Redeemer:

“I am the first and the last, I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain, I am your advocate with the Father. Behold, your sins are forgiven you, you are clean before me, therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice, let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have with their might, built this house to my name, for behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here, and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house.”

We thank thee, O God, that thou hast accepted, by the testimony of thy Holy Spirit, all of the temples that have been erected from the days of Kirtland until this present one.

We also thank thee for sending thy servants, Moses and Elias and Elijah, to the Kirtland temple, and delivering to thy servants, Joseph and Oliver, the keys of every dispensation of the gospel of Jesus Christ from the days of Father Adam down to the present dispensation, which is the dispensation of the fulness of times.

We thank thee, that Elijah has appeared and that the prophecy of thy servant Malachi, that the hearts of the fathers should be turned to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest the earth be smitten with a curse, has been fulfilled in our day, and that our hearts in very deed, go out to our fathers; and we rejoice beyond our ability to express that we can, through the ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ, become saviors of our ancestors.

We thank Thee, O God, with all our hearts and souls for the testimony of thy servants Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon: “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony last of all, which we give of him, that he lives; for we saw him, even on the right hand of God, and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—that by him and through him, and of him the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.”

We thank thee, O Father, for the knowledge that we possess in our very souls, that thou dost live, and that thy Son Jesus is our Redeemer, and our Savior, and that thy servant, Joseph Smith, Jr., was and is a prophet of the true and living God. And, O Father, may we ever be true and faithful to the gospel of thy Son Jesus Christ, revealed through thy servant Joseph.

We beseech thee, O Lord, that thou wilt stay the hand of the destroyer among the natives of this land, and give unto hem increasing virility and more abundant health, that they may not perish as a people, but that from this time forth they may increase in numbers and in strength and influence, that all the great and glorious promises made concerning the descendants of Lehi, may be fulfilled in them; that they may grow in vigor of body and of mind, and above all in a love for thee and thy Son, and increase in diligence and in faithfulness in the keeping of the commandments which have come to them through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We pray thee, O Father, to bless this land that it may be fruitful, that it may yield abundantly, and that all who dwell thereon may be prospered in righteousness.

Bless all thy people who have named thy name in all parts of the world. Especially bless thy people in the Valleys of the Mountains, whereunto they were led by thy divine guidance, and where the greatest of all temples in this dispensation has been

erected, and where thou hast blessed and prospered thy people even beyond anything that could have been expected.

Bless, O Father in Heaven, all thy servants and handmaidens who hold responsible positions in all the various auxiliary organizations of thy Church, whether as general, stake, ward, or mission authorities; in the Relief Societies, in the Mutual Improvement associations, in the Sunday schools, in the Primary associations, and in the Religion Class organizations. Bless each and everyone who is laboring for the benefit of the members, as well as the members themselves, in these associations.

We especially pray thee, O Father in Heaven, to bless the youth of thy people in Zion and in all the world. Shield and preserve and protect them from the adversary and from wicked and designing men. Keep the youth of thy people, O Father, in the straight and narrow path that leads to thee; preserve them from all the pitfalls and snares that are laid for their feet. O Father, may our children grow up in the nurture and admonition of the gospel of thy Son Jesus Christ. Give unto them a testimony of the divinity of this work as thou hast given it unto us, and preserve them in purity and in the truth.

O God, our Heavenly and Eternal Father, sanctify the words which we have spoken, and accept of the dedication of this house, we beseech thee, in the name of thine Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. We have dedicated this house unto thee by virtue of the Priesthood of the Living God which we hold, and we most earnestly pray that this sacred building may be a place in which thou shalt delight to pour out thy Holy Spirit in great abundance, and in which thy Son may see fit to manifest himself and to instruct thy servants. In the name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen and Amen.

APPENDIX B

Selection of Early Pictures of the Laie Hawaii Temple

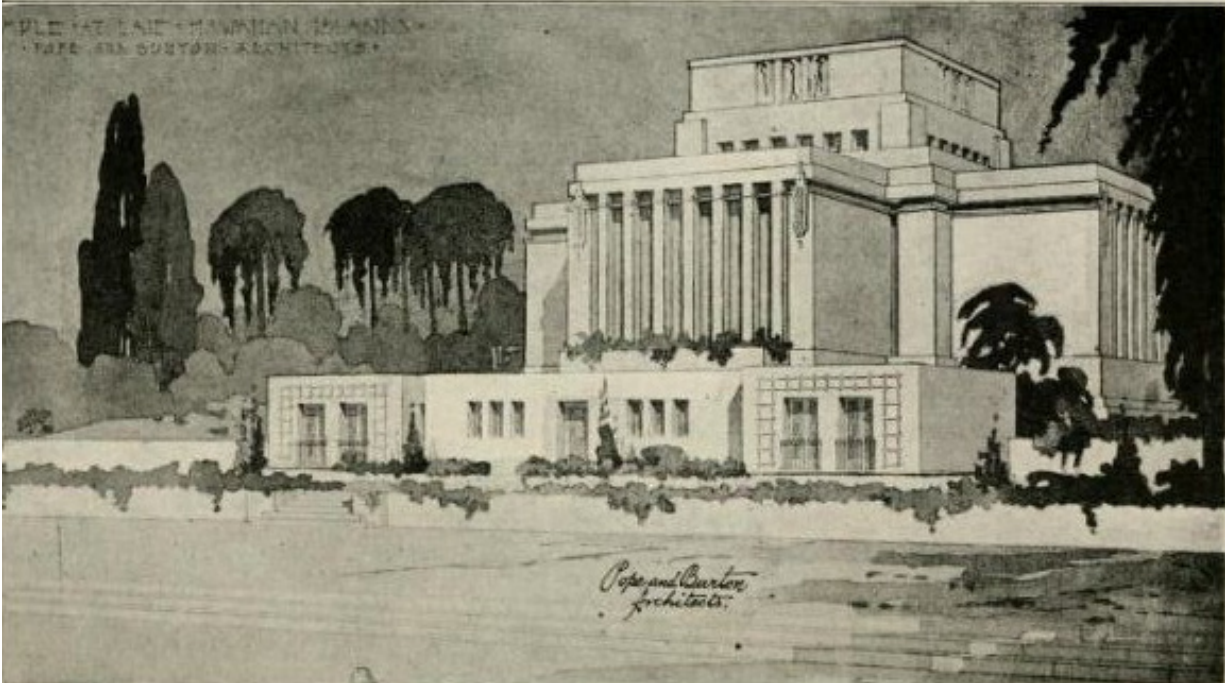


Figure 1. Early drawing of the Laie Hawaii Temple by Pope and Burton Architects. Published in *Improvement Era* 19, no. 11 (September 1916): 952.



Figure 2. Early photograph of the Laie Hawaii Temple. Photograph by Underwood and Underwood, N.Y. Published in *Improvement Era* 23, no. 3 (January 1920): 264.

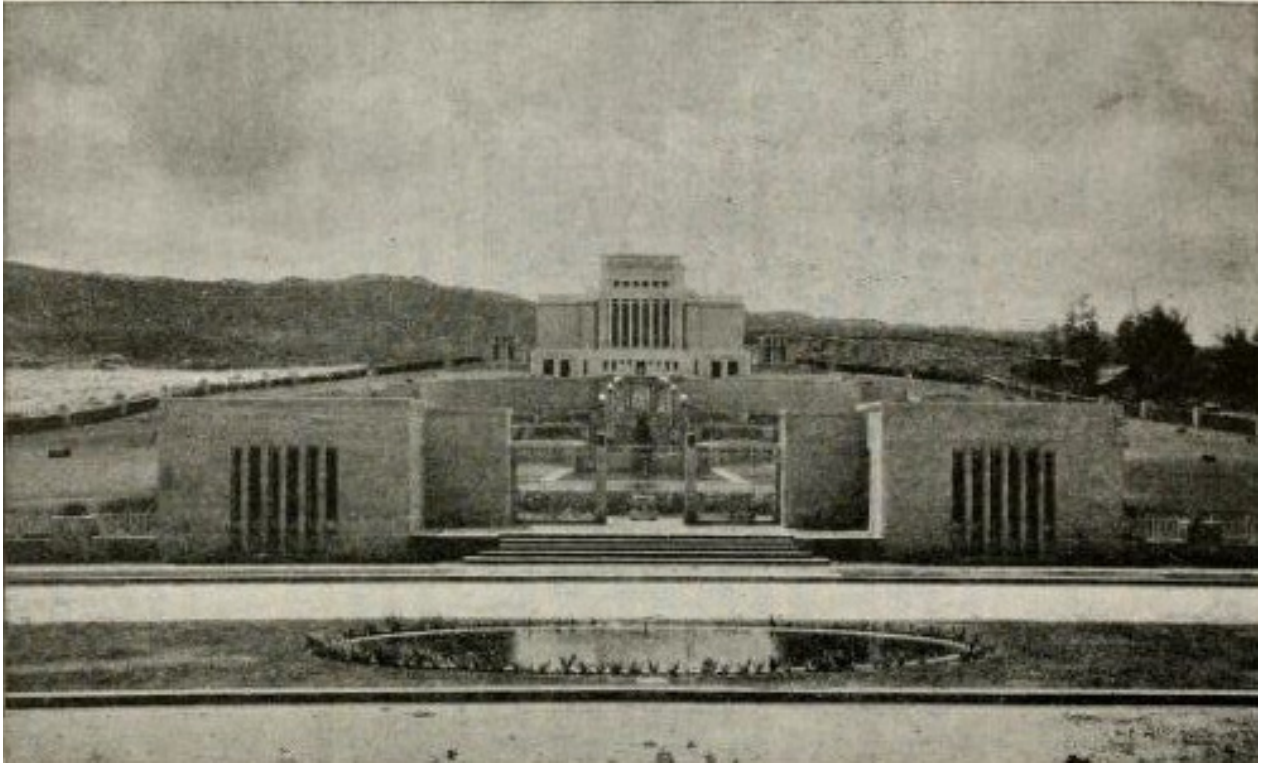


Figure 3. Early photograph of the Laie Hawaii Temple. Published in *Improvement Era* 24, no. 8 (June 1921): 704.

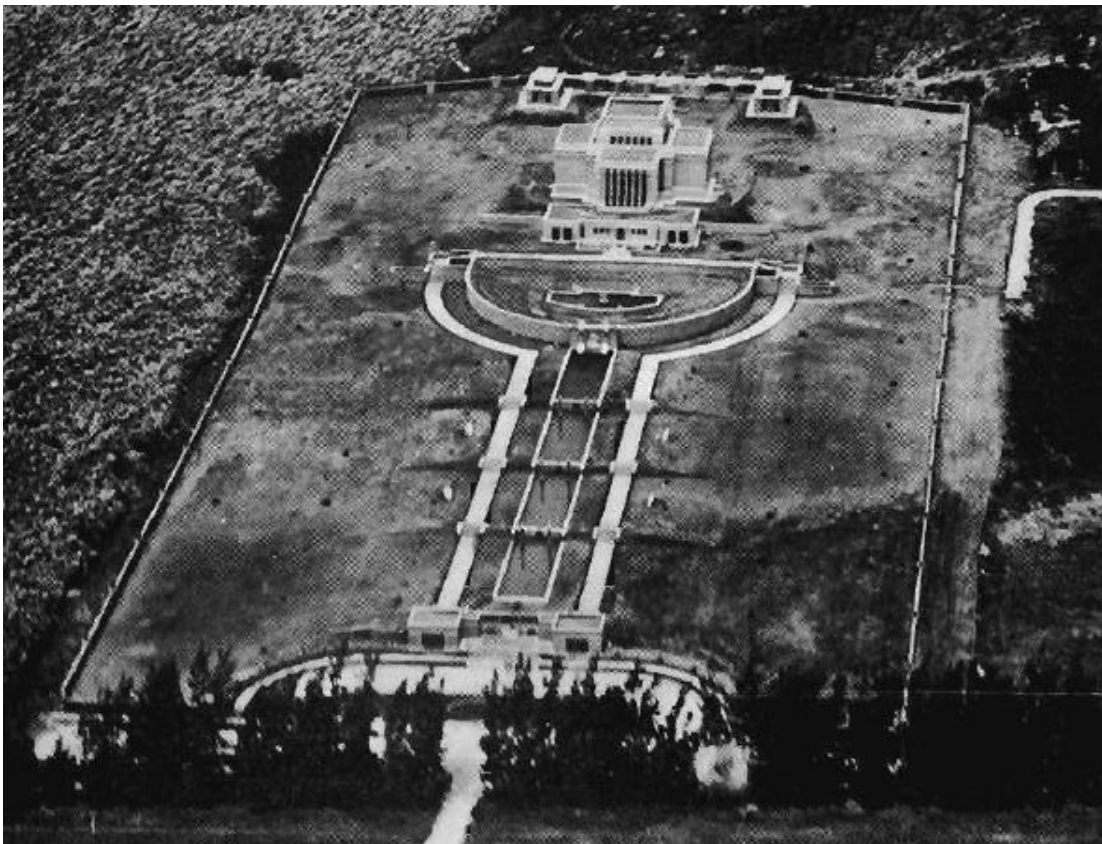


Figure 4. Aerial photograph of the Laie Hawaii Temple before 1920. Courtesy of the LDS Church History Library.

APPENDIX C

Photographs and Explanations of Friezes on the Laie Hawaii Temple By Avard and J. Leo Fairbanks

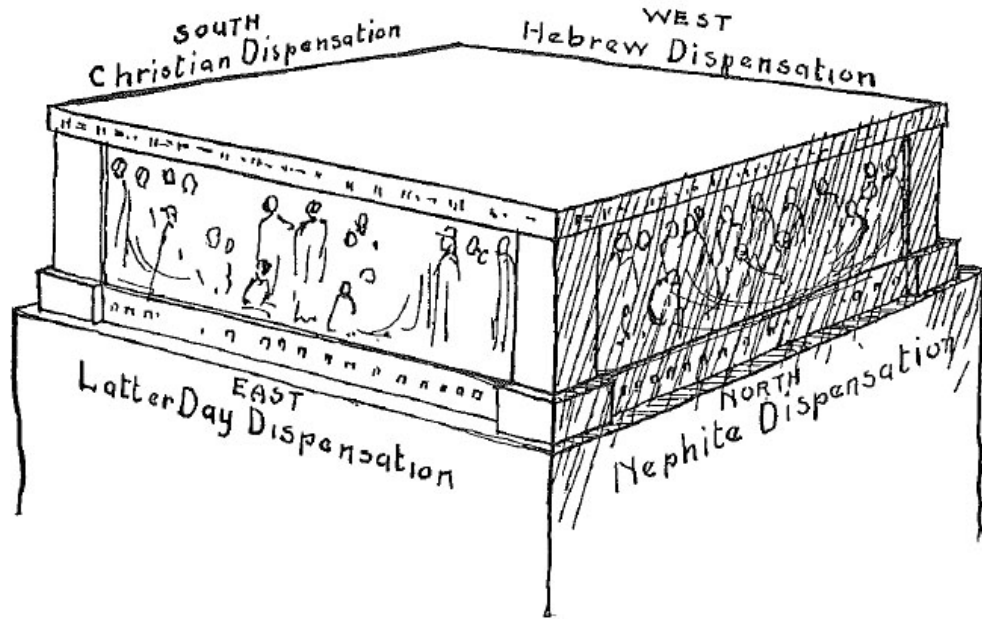


Figure 1. Rendering of the positioning of the friezes adorning the upper portion of the Laie Hawaii Temple's central truncated tower. Sketch by J. Leo Fairbanks. Published in "The Sculpture of the Hawaiian Temple." *Juvenile Instructor* 56 (November 1921): 576.

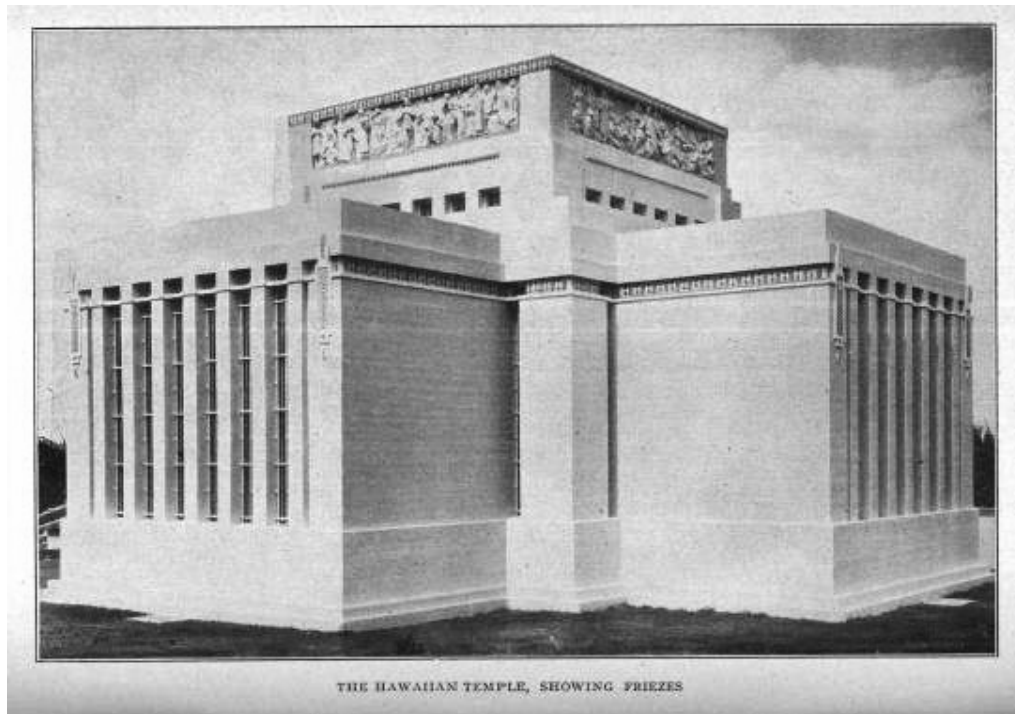
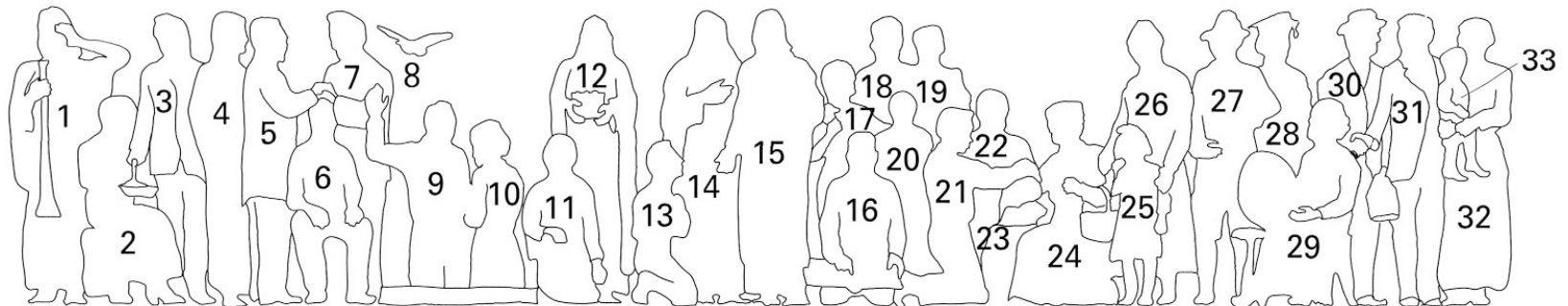


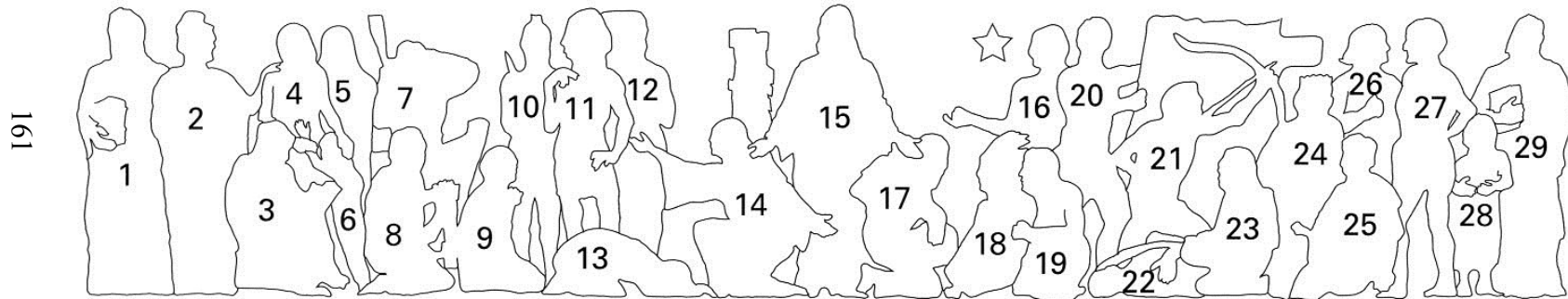
Figure 2. Photograph of the west (Old Testament Frieze) and north (New Testament Frieze) faces of the Laie Hawaii Temple. *Ibid.*, 574.



Latter-day Dispensation, on the east side

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. The angel flying in the midst of heaven | 9 and 10. A priesthood holder baptizing a woman | 15. Christ appearing to Joseph Smith | 27. A man offering his tithing |
| 2. A woman receiving the sacrament | 11. A kneeling woman representing repentance | 16. A temple worker searching genealogical records | 28. A figure representing education |
| 3. A priesthood holder offering the sacrament | 12. Angel Moroni with his record | 17, 18, 19, and 20. A family sealed in the spirit world through temple work | 29. A figure representing industry |
| 4. A priesthood holder | 13. Joseph Smith, praying | 21, 22, and 23. Two elders blessing the sick | 30. A missionary in the service of God |
| 5, 6, and 7. Two priesthood holders laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost | 14. God, the Father, appearing to Joseph Smith | 24. A Relief Society sister offering aid | 31, 32, and 33. A father, mother, and child sealed for eternity |
| 8. A dove representing the Holy Ghost | | 25 and 26. A sister teaching a child | |

Figure 3. Photograph courtesy of LDS Church History Library. Explanatory diagram courtesy *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 176. Line drawing by Robert E. M. Spencer for *BYU Studies*. The man seated center-right holding an open book was reportedly modeled after former Hawaiian Mission President Samuel E. Woolley. Note: The identification of the figures on the four friezes comes from J. Leo Fairbanks. "The Sculpture of the Hawaiian Temple." *Juvenile Instructor* 56 (November 1921): 574-83.



Dispensation of Nephites, on the north side

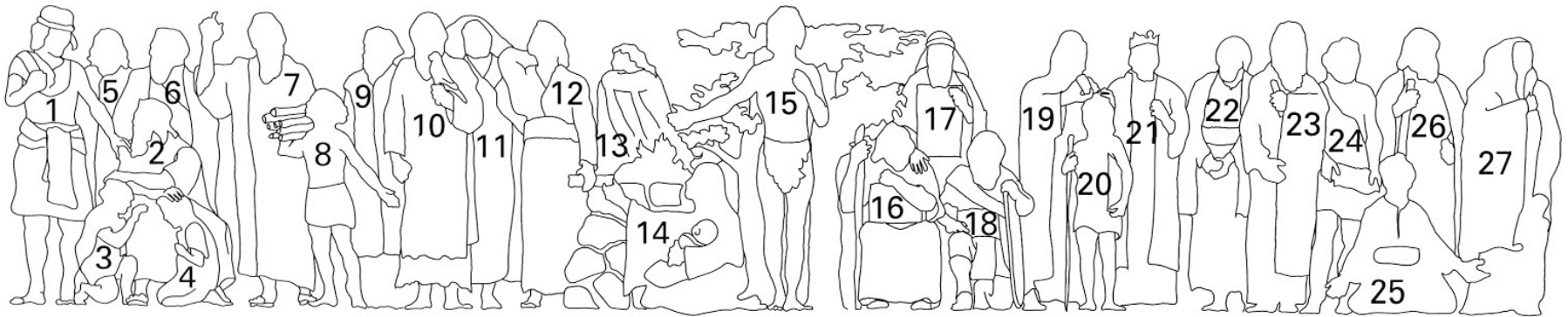
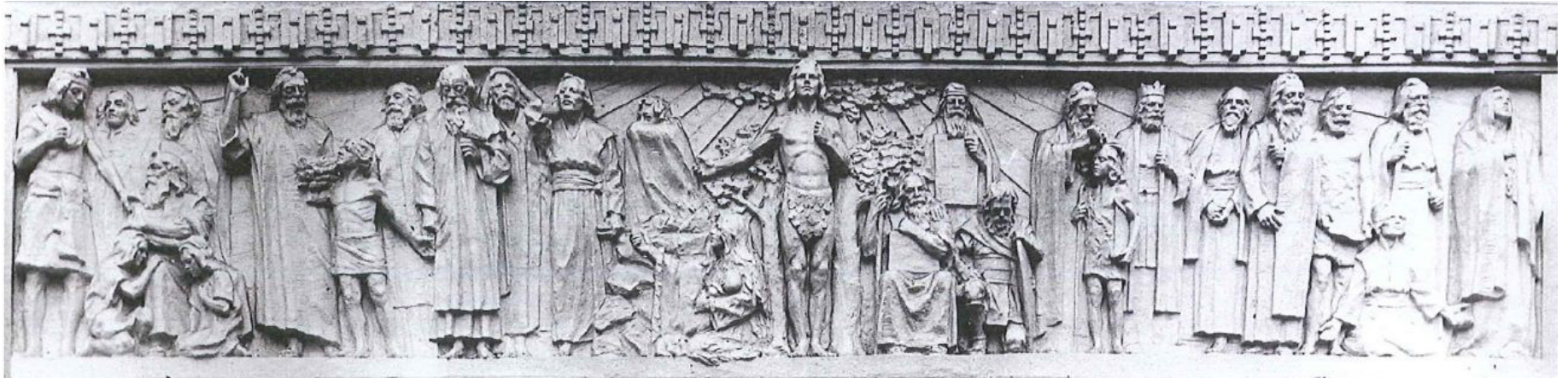
Chronologically, this frieze must be read right to left.

1. Moroni, holding the record of his people. His figure stands nearest to the frieze depicting the latter days
2. Columbia—the United States—extending her hand to Hawai'i
3. Mormon, writing his record
- 4, 5, and 6. A Hawaiian family looking to the Book of Mormon record
7. Hagoth, ship builder and explorer
8. A laborer, looking to Christ

9. A repentant person
10. Gadianton
11. Korihor
12. Kishkumen
13. A humble believer
14. Nephi₃, preaching
15. Christ appearing at the temple
16. Samuel the Lamanite, who prophesied of signs including the star
- 17, 18, and 19. Ammon teaching the mother and father of Lamoni

20. Captain Moroni, holding the title of liberty
21. Teancum
22. Amalekiah, slain by Teancum
23. Coriantumr, last of the Jaredites
24. King Noah
25. Alma₁
26. Laman
27. Nephi₁
28. Joseph, son of Lehi
29. Lehi, whose figure stands nearest the wall depicting the Old Testament story

Figure 4. Photograph courtesy of LDS Church History Library. Explanatory diagram courtesy *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 175. Line drawing by Robert E. M. Spencer for *BYU Studies*. Hagoth, possible ancestor of the Polynesian peoples, is depicted on the left side of the frieze with an oar in his hand.



Old Testament Dispensation, on the west side

- 1. Joseph, telling his father to reverse his hands. Joseph, whose branches ran over the wall, stands nearest the Book of Mormon frieze
- 2. Jacob, blessing Ephraim and Manassah (3 and 4)
- 5. Benjamin
- 6. Judah
- 7. Abraham, hearing the voice of God
- 8. Isaac, carrying wood for his own sacrifice

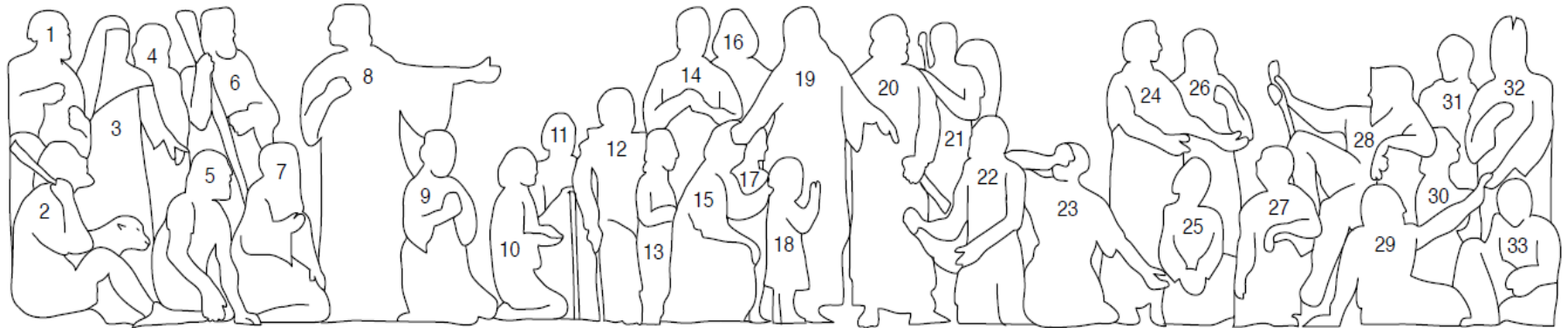
- 9. Melchizedek
- 10. Noah, holding the dove
- 11. Enoch
- 12. Seth
- 13. Cain, turning away from God
- 14. Eve, at the altar of sacrifice
- 15. Adam, between the two trees
- 16. Moses, with the tablets
- 17. Aaron, in the robes of his office

- 18. Joshua
- 19. Samuel, anointing David (20)
- 21. Solomon
- 22. Elijah
- 23. Isaiah
- 24. Jeremiah
- 25. Daniel, in Babylonian captivity
- 26. Ezekiel
- 27. A woman symbolizing Israel looking forward to the Messiah, depicted on the adjacent frieze

Figure 5. Photograph courtesy of LDS Church History Library. Explanatory diagram courtesy *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 175. Line drawing by Robert E. M. Spencer for *BYU Studies*.



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New Testament or Christian Dispensation, on the south side

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. Joseph of Nazareth | 9. A devout believer praying | 19. Christ, blessing the little children and telling Peter to put up the sword | 29. A purchaser of indulgences |
| 2. A Shepherd of Bethlehem | 10. Mother and child | 20. Peter, ready to smite the Roman soldier | 30. A queen, showing her devotion to the Church |
| 3. Mary, the mother of Jesus | 11. A grandmother | 21. Roman soldier | 31. A Catholic monk |
| 4. A fisherman who became a disciple | 12. A lame man seeking a blessing | 22. Cornelius, the centurion, pleading with Peter for the Gospel | 32. A Catholic bishop |
| 5. A beggar | 13. A child | 23. Saul at his visitation and conversion to Christ | 33. A reformer, translating the Bible and leading naturally into a need of a restoration of the Gospel or into the frieze on the east |
| 6. Fisherman leaving his net to become a fisher of men | 14. John the Beloved | 24. Silas, an early Christian missionary | |
| 7. The woman taken in sin | 15. The blind | 25. A converted pagan worshipping Christ | |
| 8. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ | 16. James | | |
| | 17 and 18. Little children | | |

Figure 6. Photograph courtesy of LDS Church History Library. Line drawing by Andrew C. Beck.

APPENDIX D

Photographs of the Statuary on the Laie Hawaii Temple Grounds By Avard Fairbanks

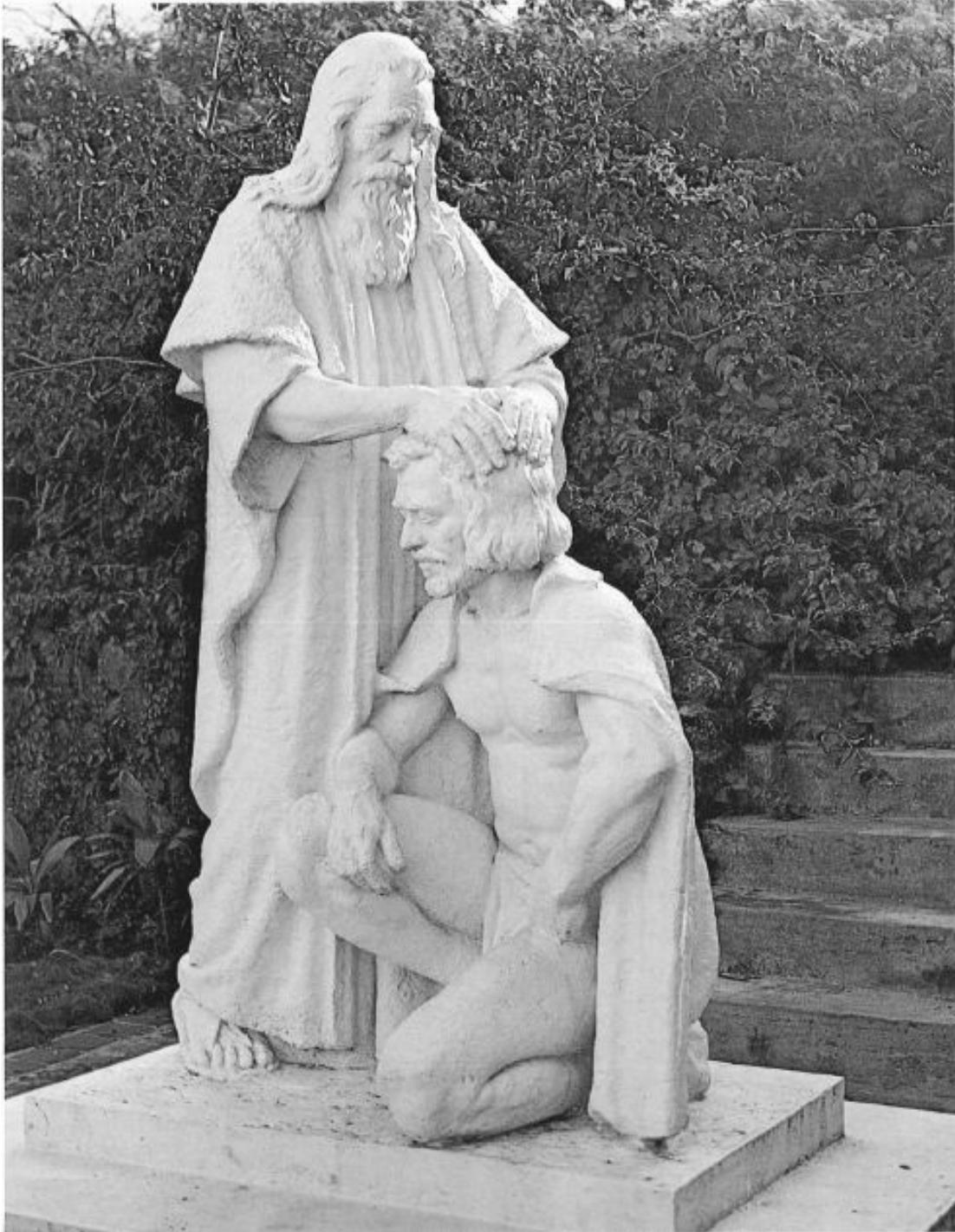


Figure 1. Lehi Blessing His Son, Joseph. Originally this larger than life statue was positioned at the entrance to the temple grounds. It was moved to the courtyard behind the temple shortly thereafter. Photograph courtesy of Eugene Fairbanks.

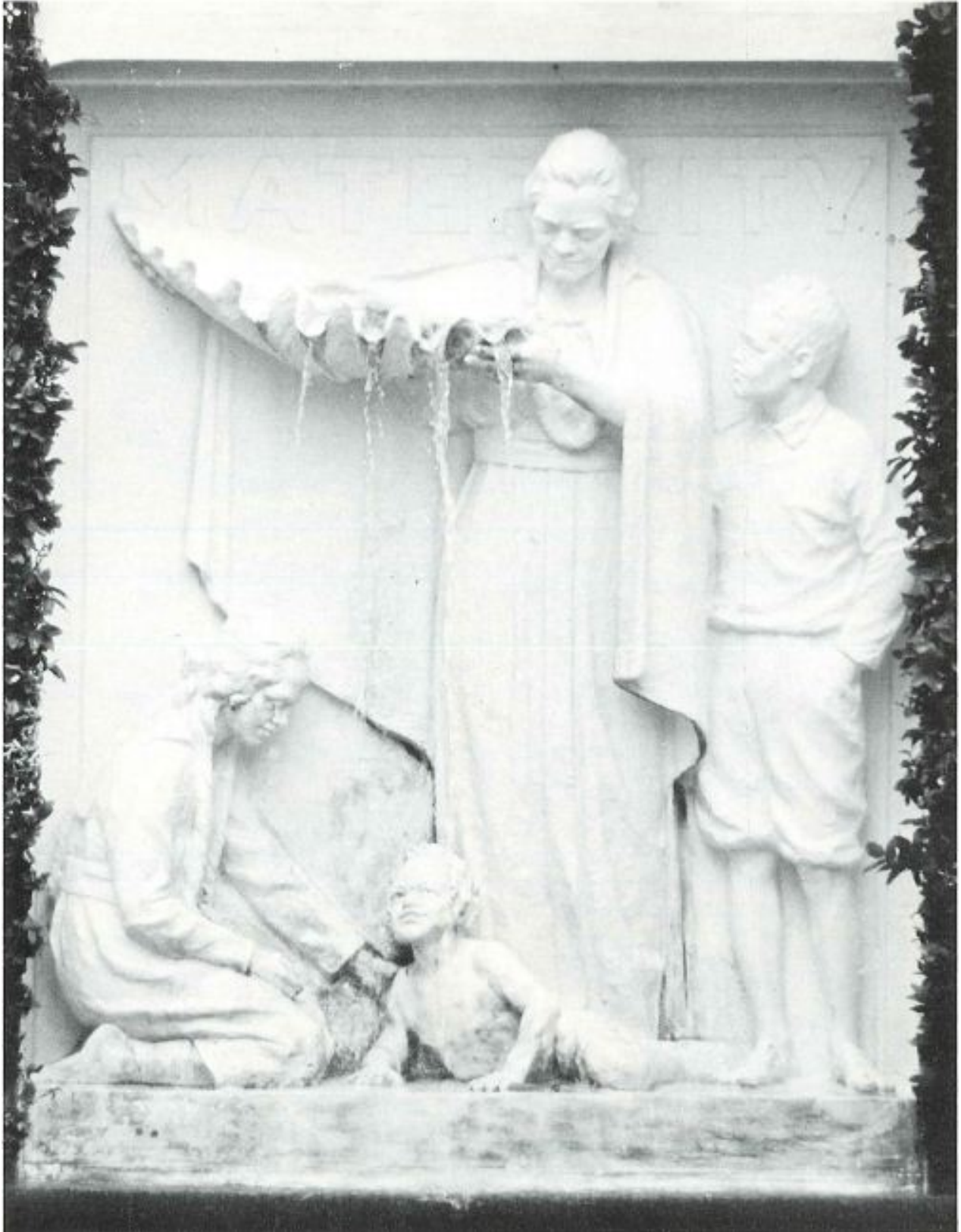


Figure 2. Representing Hawaiian motherhood this relief panel, "Maternity," sits at the head of the uppermost tiered pool in the center of the temple grounds. Photograph courtesy of Eugene Fairbanks.

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