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Recommended Citation

Lisle G Brown, "A Perfect Estoppel': Selling the Nauvoo Temple," *Mormon Historical Studies*, 3/2 (Fall 2002): 61-85.

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“A Perfect Estoppel”: Selling the Nauvoo Temple

Lisle G. Brown

“The Temple is still unsold, and I do not know but that God of Heaven intends to have it so remain as a standing monument of our sacrifice, and as witness against the nation.”—John S. Fullmer¹

In 1840, the Latter-day Saints began to build an impressive limestone temple at Nauvoo, Illinois.² However, progress on the temple was slow. Four years later, in June 1844, the walls were only half way up when Joseph Smith, President of the Church, and his brother Hyrum, Patriarch to the Church, died at the hands of a mob in the county jail at Carthage, Illinois. After the Saints’ initial shock and sorrow had subsided, the tragedy galvanized their resolve to finish the House of the Lord under the direction of Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. As the temple neared completion, the *New York Sun* reported, “The building of the Mormon Temple under all the troubles by which those people have been surrounded, seems to be carried on with a religious enthusiasm which reminds us of olden times, by the energy which controls all the movements toward its completion”³

Among the “troubles” confronting Brigham Young and the Twelve during the winter of 1845–46 was the reality that the Saints would have to abandon the city in the face of bitter persecution.⁴ The question of the temple’s disposition weighed heavily on their minds. Should they abandon it to their enemies? Should they sell it? Lease it? Ultimately, the Twelve considered all three options, but the problem proved quite intractable. The Church’s attempt to dispose of the building took three years to resolve—and then not in an entirely satisfactory manner. This article looks at the final

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years of the Nauvoo Temple, specifically how the Church finally relinquished ownership of the building.

The First Attempt to Lease the Nauvoo Temple, September 1845–January 1846

As early as 25 September 1845, the Twelve recognized that they could “not expect to find purchasers for [the] temple and other public buildings, but [they] were willing to rent them to a respectable community who may inhabit the city.”⁵ Church leaders initially considered the possibility of the Roman Catholic Church purchasing the entire city. On 16 September 1845, they appointed agents to confer with leading priests about purchasing the property of the Saints.⁶ Before making an approach directly, the agents sought out the opinion of Judge James H. Ralston of Quincy, Illinois, an influential Catholic. On 26 October, LDS Bishop George Miller hosted Judge Ralston and Judge Norman H. Purple, also of Quincy. After a tour of the city, the two men later met with Brigham Young and other Church leaders. Judge Ralston supported the Church’s desire to sell its property to the Catholic Church, and he assured the Brethren that he would use his influence with the congregation in Quincy to come and settle in Nauvoo.⁷

Five days later, on 31 October 1845, the Twelve drafted a letter to John B. Purcell, Bishop of the Diocese of Cincinnati, Ohio, and “all Other Authorities of the Catholic Church.” They informed the bishop of the Church’s intention to vacate Nauvoo in the spring. This move compelled them to dispose of numerous public buildings, including the Nauvoo Temple, Nauvoo House, Seventies Hall, Music Hall, and other structures. They also informed him, “The individual members of our community have also determined *en masse* to do the same with their effects.” They introduced Almon Babbitt as their agent, who was empowered to represent all property owners in the city. Upon the suggestion of Judge Ralston, they invited representatives of the Catholic Church to visit and negotiate the sale of the city. They assured the bishop that they would “forbear any extensive sales to other communities” until they heard from him.⁸ Babbitt traveled by steamboat down the Mississippi River to St. Louis. On 4 November 1845, he likely met with Bishop Peter Richard Kendrick.⁹ He continued on to Cincinnati and met with Bishop Purcell on 12 November.¹⁰ The bishop did not offer much hope from his diocese, but he suggested that Babbitt should visit the bishops of the dioceses of Detroit and Chicago. He drafted a letter of introduction to Bishop Peter Paul Lefevere of Detroit, in which he wrote that the Church’s offer was “deserving of the most serious consideration.”¹¹ In Detroit, Babbitt likely succeeded in meeting with Bishop Lefevere, who

drafted a letter of interest.¹² Babbitt's last visit was with Bishop Quarter of the Archdiocese of Chicago on 26 November 1845. Of all the bishops Babbitt interviewed, Quarter was the most interested in the Church's offer. He wrote letters to Reverend Hilary Tucker of Quincy, Illinois, and Reverend George Hamilton of Springfield, Illinois, asking them "to go to Nauvoo and see what arrangements could be made regarding the leasing, if not the purchasing, of the Mormon Temple."¹³

Almon Babbitt returned and reported to the Twelve and the Temple Committee on 1 December 1845. He was very optimistic, bringing tidings that were "good and cheering."¹⁴ He presented letters from the bishops of the dioceses in Cincinnati, Detroit, and Chicago. The Twelve read the letters with great interest. They learned the Catholics "were very anxious to lease the Temple, but were not able to buy it," and they "were making considerable exertions to have members of their church purchase



*Replica of the Original Nauvoo Temple,
Nauvoo, Illinois.
Photo by Maurine Carr Ward*

[the Saints'] properties." Babbitt reported that Bishop Quarter of Chicago was interested enough to send a representative to meet with the Twelve, who was expected as soon as the following day.¹⁵

By this time, word of the Church's intention to sell Nauvoo had reached other interested parties. The day after Babbitt's report, the Twelve received a letter from the firm of Messr. Duncan and Co. of Bloomington, Illinois, which represented a Philadelphia firm that wanted to know the Church's terms, proposing to pay in cash for the whole city if a bargain could be concluded. The Twelve responded that, if the firm would send agents to view the city, they "would sell the whole or part of the City of Nauvoo, owned by

our people, or the farms in the country” for 50 percent of market value. He concluded, “We should much rather [sell at] wholesale than retail it.”¹⁶ Even Fort Madison, Iowa, businessman David W. Kilbourn, a well-known anti-Mormon, made “an offer for their temple & other buildings.” Undoubtedly, the Twelve rejected Kilbourn’s offer out of hand because he planned on using the temple for a sheep pen.¹⁷

On 9 December 1846, Bishop Quarter’s representatives, Revs. Tucker and Hamilton, arrived in the city to investigate the sale of property in Nauvoo.¹⁸ After a tour of Nauvoo, they met with the Twelve that evening. Brigham Young told them the Saints were willing to reduce the value of the property so as to make it attractive for either “a society or speculators,” but they really desired to “hand it over to the Catholics” and so stop the speculators, who “would want to have [their] property for nothing.”¹⁹ After the two priests left, the Twelve wrote out their proposition.

The following morning, Revs. Tucker and Hamilton were admitted to the temple to meet with the Twelve in Brigham Young’s office in the attic.²⁰ After some conversation about the temple, Orson Hyde read aloud the Twelve’s proposition. Brigham Young explained the underlying motivation for the sale of Nauvoo properties, “We wished to realize from the sale of our property, sufficient to take all our poor with us in a comfortable manner.” William Clayton wrote Reverend Tucker’s response: “Fr. Tucker said he thought it would be wisdom to publish our positions in all the Catholic [news]papers, and lay the matter before their people. He should also think it advisable for the Catholic Bishops to send a competent committee to ascertain the value of our property, &c, at the same time they will use all their influence to effect a sale as speedily as possible. He thinks they have men in St. Louis, New York and other Cities who could soon raise the amount wanted, but the time is so very short, he don’t know whether it can be done so soon.”²¹

Reverend Tucker asked if the Brethren would be willing to have the proposition printed in Catholic newspapers. Brigham Young responded that they would not object, as long as it was understood they reserved the right to sell if another opportunity presented itself.

Reverend Hamilton raised the question about obtaining only two of the Church’s “public buildings, one for a school and the other for a church.” Presumably, one of these two buildings was the temple. They said they intended to write to Bishop Quarter and wished to give him information on these two buildings. Brigham Young did not like the prospects of selling only two pieces of Church property, and he said that he was “well aware there were many men in the Catholic Church who could furnish all the money

[they] wanted immediately.” He strongly said, “Perhaps it is too much trouble to dig their money out of their vaults, but I wish it distinctly understood that while we make liberal propositions to dispose of our property, we must have the means to help ourselves on the way.”²²

As the meeting drew to a close, Brigham Young decided to amend the Church proposal for publication, adding a provision concerning the temple, which was to the effect that the Church “would lease them the Temple for a period from five to thirty-five years, at a reasonable price, the rent to be paid in finishing the unfinished parts of the Temple, the wall around the Temple and the block west of the Temple, and keeping the Temple in repair.”²³ Reverend Tucker seemed very encouraged and felt that an arrangement could be speedily reached. Bishop Quarter’s answer came on 7 January 1846 in a letter from Reverend Tucker, who wrote that the Catholics could not raise enough money to purchase all the Church’s property and proposed to lease only one public building, presumably the temple, but they could not insure it against fire or mobs. The Twelve felt the offer was insulting and decided against even responding to it.²⁴

Trustees Appointed for the Nauvoo Temple, January 1846

After the failure to consummate a deal with Bishop Quarter, the Twelve realized that it was unlikely they could dispose of the Nauvoo Temple and other properties before the Saints had to abandon the city. They would have to leave agents behind to represent their interests. At a meeting on 18 January 1846 with the captains of the various emigration companies, the Twelve presented the names of five men to form a committee to dispose of the property of the Saints—Almon W. Babbitt, Joseph L. Heywood, John S. Fullmer, Henry W. Miller, and John M. Bernhisel—who would receive letters of attorney authorizing them to act legally for the Church.²⁵

On Saturday, 24 January 1846, the Twelve met with the “official members of the Church”—those brethren who had received their endowments—on the second floor of the Nauvoo Temple to arrange the business affairs of the Church prior to its departure from the city. President Young explained the actions taken on 18 January and informed those present that the trustees would act in concert with Bishops Newel K. Whitney and George Miller, as long as those two men remained in Nauvoo. When the bishops left, the trustees “would carry on the finishing of the Temple and the Nauvoo House, also disposing of our property, fit out the Saints and send them Westward.” President Young then nominated Babbitt, Heywood, and Fullmer to act as trustees for the temple and Miller and Bernhisel to act as the trustees for the

Nauvoo House. All present sustained the men without a dissenting vote.²⁶

Babbitt was an attorney, and Heywood and Fullmer were both trusted and experienced businessmen. Almon W. Babbitt, a thirty-nine-year-old graduate in law from the State University at Cincinnati, had joined the Church in 1833.²⁷ Although one of the earliest converts to the Church, he had a checkered career among the Mormons, some of whom considered him untrustworthy and unprincipled. He was disfellowshipped twice (in 1840 and again in 1841) for not following counsel, only to be reinstated both times.²⁸ The Lord chastised him in a revelation to Joseph Smith for establishing his own counsel and for setting “up a golden calf for the worship of my people” (D&C 124:84). Although he apparently declined to represent Joseph Smith when Joseph was arrested and incarcerated in the Carthage Jail, he “rendered efficient legal service to the Church during the persecutions and mobbings in Illinois.”²⁹ Some felt that he often placed his own interests above the Church’s. He was a capable and skilled lawyer as well as an extremely ambitious man who was imbued with talents that both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young recognized and used.³⁰

Thirty-one-year-old Joseph L. Heywood opened a store in Quincy, Illinois, in 1839. Upon hearing Joseph Smith preach in 1842, he was converted instantly and asked for baptism the same hour. He moved his family to Nauvoo in the fall of 1845 and opened a store on Main Street.³¹ He has been described as a “diplomat—an intelligent, well-educated man, tall and slim in stature, with a kind and affable disposition. He was also good with figures. He had the knack of defusing potentially explosive situations.”³²

After his conversion in 1839 in Nashville, Tennessee, thirty-nine-year-old John S. Fullmer moved his family to Nauvoo. He became a close confidant of Joseph Smith, serving as a secretary-clerk in the Prophet’s red brick store on Water Street. He was with the Prophet when Joseph was arrested and placed in the Carthage Jail but left for Nauvoo the morning of the martyrdom. He has been described as “a man of detail and assertion, one who could hold his own in any argument and give as much as he took.”³³ Brigham Young’s reason for selecting the three men was quite pragmatic. “I appointed the Trustees myself, Babbitt for lawyer, Fullmer for bulldog and growl, and Heywood to settle debts.”³⁴

The trustees’ work was daunting. One historian has succinctly described their largely thankless job as follows:

In addition to selling Church properties, including the temple . . . they were responsible for paying outstanding Church debts, contesting legal actions, helping the poor and destitute still languishing behind, and keeping a watchful and caring eye on Emma Smith, widow of the Prophet, and her immediate family as well her mother-in-law, Lucy Mack Smith.

They also represented the private business concerns of many former citizens. Properties were to be sold at the best price possible and the proceeds credited either against past debts or toward future purchases. Individual tithing accounts often needed settling; those who had been advanced Church teams and wagons on credit had no other form of repayment. Several men who had worked as laborers on the construction of the temple were still unpaid. And when time permitted, the trustees were also to push the cause of gathering, counter opposition, and allay discontent and all this as a Church calling without remuneration.

Misunderstood and unappreciated by their own people, whose property values plummeted as the city emptied, and distrusted by the anti-Mormons, who viewed them contemptuously as the last vestiges of an evil empire, the trustees inherited a lose-lose situation. Almost everyone with Nauvoo property and improvements got far less than they needed or deserved—no more than one-eighth the value and often far less than that at sale. Ill feelings inevitably developed.³⁵

It was a herculean task, fraught with frustration and disappointment to many of those who left their property in the trustees' hands, but Fullmer later wrote, "We have a conscience void of all offence."³⁶ Although the focus here is the trustees' work in the disposition of the Nauvoo Temple, the demands on these men's attention and time included much more than this one arduous task.

The Attempt to Lease the Nauvoo Temple, February–April 1846

With the anticipated departure of most of the Church leaders by the end of February 1846, including both Bishops Whitney and Miller, the Twelve met on the ninth and appointed Joseph Young, Brigham Young's brother and one of the seven Presidents of the Seventies, to preside over the Saints in Nauvoo.³⁷ On the twenty-sixth, Babbitt, Heywood, and Fullmer visited Brigham Young at the Sugar Creek camp across the Mississippi River for final instructions.³⁸ Two days later, a "pioneer" company moved out from Sugar Creek, and Brigham Young followed on 1 March 1846, commencing the Saints' westward exodus. Upon reaching Richardson Point, some fifty-five miles from Nauvoo, the Twelve wrote Orson Hyde, who was still at Nauvoo. They told him "to stay at Nauvoo and dedicate the Temple."³⁹ The same day, Brigham Young wrote his brother, Joseph, informing him of the Twelve's decision, saying "Brother Orson Hyde, yourself and others had better go into the Temple when the lower part is done, if you are there, and offer up your supplications to the Most High, and leave the house in the hands of the Lord."⁴⁰

Although Babbitt, Heywood, and Fullmer were the legal agents of the Church (trustees in trust), they were, of course, supervised by Elders Hyde and Young, who were the presiding elders in Nauvoo. In a 15 March 1846

letter, Brigham Young counseled the trustees to keep a strict accounting of all their transactions so they could eliminate difficulty and hard feelings among the brethren, whose property they were selling.⁴¹ The trustees commenced their attempt to dispose of the temple, placing the following advertisement in the *Hancock Eagle* on 10 April 1846:

TEMPLE TO LEASE

The undersigned Trustees of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, propose to lease on favorable terms, for a period of twenty years, "The Temple" in this city for religious or literary purposes.

Although the Catholic Church was no longer interested, at least one wealthy Catholic was interested in the temple and various properties in the city. An unidentified gentleman, described variously as "a wealthy Catholic benefactor" or a "wealthy gentleman from the South," responded to this announcement. This was probably the same individual that the *Sangamon Journal* reported as "a rich old bachelor from the South" who was negotiating for the purchase of the temple, intending to turn it into "a retreat for poor widows and other females."⁴² When he and Elder Hyde met with the trustees, they easily reached an agreement on the sale of nearly a hundred residential lots, the Masonic Hall, and the Nauvoo Legion Arsenal, but the Nauvoo Temple proved a stumbling block in the negotiations. The man offered \$200,000 for the building, saying he would only purchase the other property if the temple were included. Hyde must have found this offer very tempting, but he had no authority to sell the temple and so offered to lease it instead. This gentleman found the offer unsatisfactory, and the negotiations broke down.⁴³

Attempts to Sell the Nauvoo Temple, April 1846–August 1847

On 26 April 1846, Brigham Young, who was encamped at Garden Grove in central Iowa, received a letter from Orson Hyde describing the failed negotiation to lease the temple, but Hyde hoped for the \$200,000 offer. He wrote that he "was afraid the Temple would fall into the hands of our enemies as borrowed means were being called for, and numerous obligations were rolling in upon the trustees without means to liquidate them." He asked if it might not be better to sell the Church's two temples at Kirtland and Nauvoo and use the money to help the poor move west.⁴⁴ The same day Brigham Young also received a letter from George A. Smith, encamped at Point Pleasant, some fifteen miles east of Garden Grove. Smith had learned of Hyde's recommendation. He expressed his and Amasa M. Lyman's sentiments about selling the temple, "We have felt much anxiety on that subject

until we all agreed in council not to sell it last winter.” However, he continued, if the Twelve “should think it best to sell the same to help the poor in the present emergency [they would] frankly concur . . . and [would be] willing to sacrifice our feelings at times for the good of the Saints.”⁴⁵

The Twelve with some sixteen others met the next day. This council felt the Nauvoo Temple would be of no benefit to the Saints if they could no longer retain the city for their personal residences; and if they ever returned to Nauvoo to reclaim their lands, they could also reclaim the temple, too. The council decided “that a sale [of the temple] would secure it from unjust claims, mobs, fire, and so forth, more effectually than for the Church to retain it.”⁴⁶

On 29 April, the Twelve called the men at Garden Grove together. After discussing issues concerning the westward migration, Heber C. Kimball placed before them the decision of the council concerning the sale of the temple. Those present concluded that if the money from the sale of the Church property were used for keeping the poor from perishing, the Lord would justify selling both the Kirtland Temple and the Nauvoo Temple. All present unanimously sustained this decision.⁴⁷ Hosea Stout, who was present, jotted in his diary that since the Saints would be far removed from the two temples, “they [would] not be of any service to [them] and the money was needed to help the poor [get] away from among the Gentiles.”⁴⁸ The next day the Twelve sent Shadrach Roundy with a letter to Nauvoo authorizing Hyde to sell the temple for \$200,000.⁴⁹ On 3 May 1846, during the temple’s final dedicatory service, Hyde addressed the assembled Saints about the need to sell the building, noting that “a vote was taken last fall not to sell it,” but if they had “to sell the Temple to remove the Poor the People that [made them] do it must pay the bill & meet the consequences.” Anticipating the Twelve’s approval, he made a motion, “All who are in favor of selling this House if it meets with the Council of the Twelve manifest it by raising the right hand.”⁵⁰ The vote was unanimous in support of selling the temple.

The news of the Church’s intention to sell the temple swept through the area newspapers. The *Hancock Eagle* reported “THE TEMPLE IN THE MARKET.—the deliberations of the great Mormon Council, which was held on Sunday last (on the occasion of the dedication) resulted in the passage of a resolution to sell the Temple, for the purpose of obtaining funds to effect a removal of the poor from the State.”⁵¹ The story was picked by the *St. Louis American* on 13 May, the *Alton Telegraph & Democrat Review* on 16 May, and the *Missouri Whig* on 21 May. Beginning on 15 May 1846, the temple trustees began running the following advertisement in the *Hancock Eagle*:

TEMPLE FOR SALE.

The undersigned Trustees of the Later Day Saints propose to sell the Temple on very low terms, if an early application is made. The Temple is admirably designed for Literary and Religious purposes. Address the Undersigned Trustees.⁵²

They also ran the same advertisement in the *Nauvoo New Citizen* from 15 May until 23 December 1846. The *Alton Telegraph & Democrat Review* reported that the Church “hoped that some wealthy individual or corporation [would] purchase it, as it [was] well adapted for a college, or other public institution.”⁵³ There may have been some initial response to the trustees’ advertisement. The *Quincy Whig* reported in its 16 June 1846 issue that there were three negotiations underway concerning the lease or sale of the temple, but nothing came from these efforts.

In a 26 June 1846 letter, Fullmer wrote Brigham Young that Babbitt and Heywood had started for St. Louis that morning to meet with a potential buyer for the temple. A Mr. Paulding had expressed interested in the building, but his agent, Charles Mulliken of Saint Louis, indicated a deal could not be closed for five to six weeks because Paulding was in New Orleans.⁵⁴ Upon Babbitt’s and Heywood’s return to Nauvoo, the trustees drafted a report for Brigham Young, writing that they wished they could make a more favorable account. They had not consummated the deal with Paulding, who had set a price of \$100,000. They had been expecting to hear from him in the last two weeks but had not. The trustees concluded hopefully, “God grant that he may be set to us good.”⁵⁵ On 25 August, Brigham Young responded, again counseling the trustees not to sell the temple for less than \$200,000.⁵⁶

On 17 September, the trustees wrote to Brigham Young describing the so-called battle of Nauvoo, in which the anti-Mormon faction in Hancock County succeeded in driving the remaining Saints from Nauvoo. The trustees were allowed to stay and continue disposing of Church and private properties.⁵⁷ Given the gravity of the situation and the desperate condition of the dispossessed Nauvoo Saints, the Saints at Winter Quarters sustained the Twelve in authorizing the trustees to use their best judgment in selling the Church’s property and to use the proceeds to assist those who had been driven from Nauvoo.⁵⁸ The next day President Young wrote the trustees of the decision and then counseled the men, “If you conclude to sell the temple, sell it as soon as possible, and all other property—settle your affairs and come up and winter with us.”⁵⁹ In an attempt to sell the temple and other properties, as well as to solicit aid for the dispossessed Nauvoo Saints, Heywood returned to St. Louis in early October.⁶⁰ While there, he met again with Mulliken, who indicated he and Paulding had not given up on the idea of purchasing the temple and other property, but Heywood returned to

Nauvoo empty handed. A clearly weary and disappointed Heywood wrote Brigham Young, "If we could effect a sale of the Temple and be enabled to wind up the affairs of Nauvoo we should be very happy; for, Nauvoo seems, to be [for] a saint, like the abomination of desolation."⁶¹

While Heywood went to Saint Louis, Babbitt journeyed to Winter Quarters, arriving on 6 October. He reported on conditions at Nauvoo to the Twelve the same day, saying the trustees had retired some \$60,000 in debts, leaving only \$25,000 due, and he felt they could sell all the Church property for \$125,000. The following day the Twelve directed him "to sell the Church property in Nauvoo without delay, if he could at wholesale, and could get \$125,000."⁶² Babbitt left for Nauvoo on 9 October.

Having found no buyers in the local area, the trustees felt they might locate interested parties in eastern cities for the purchase of both the Nauvoo Temple and the Kirtland Temple. Babbitt began making arrangements in November for a trip east, but he had trouble raising sufficient funds for the journey.⁶³ It was not until late December that he started out.⁶⁴ Accompanied by his business partner, John Edmunds, Babbitt left Nauvoo and traveled east. By late January, he was in New York City attempting to find buyers.⁶⁵ He continued on to Baltimore, but his efforts did not go well. On 3 February 1847, Brigham Young received a letter from the two trustees who had remained in Nauvoo. They reported that Babbitt had written them that he had made an unsuccessful attempt to sell the temple and other property to a firm in Baltimore.⁶⁶ Babbitt returned to Nauvoo on 20 March.

Writing to Brigham Young, the trustees were still hopeful, in spite of the discouragements of Babbitt's trip. "We still entertain a hope (walking by faith and not by sight all the time) that when spring shall advance the Lord will put it into the hearts of someone to purchase the Temple that we may get through with our mission here and soon be able to join our brethren in the west."⁶⁷ Two weeks later, Babbitt personally wrote the Twelve about his failure, "I was in every city in the eastern land, but could effect no sale of the property here, at least for any price that we could entertain." The most he could get was \$100,000 for the temple, other Church properties, and various residential properties. He felt the Church could get a similar price around Nauvoo, if the Church would take it.⁶⁸

As Heywood and Fullmer learned more about Babbitt's conduct on the eastern trip, they grew resentful. While Fullmer was absent on personal business in Tennessee, Heywood wrote his own confidential report on 20 April 1847 to the Twelve, unbosoming his and Fullmer's misgivings about their colleague. Heywood wrote that "it was not in his heart to injure Brother Babbitt," but he and Fullmer were both "quite dissatisfied" with Babbitt's conduct while in the east. They felt Babbitt had kept them in the dark about

his real intentions and had spent too much of his time in “preaching and doing wonderful things, holding conferences in western New York . . . presiding over all the Saints east . . . leaving business pretty much to Mr. Edmunds’s care.” They felt that if Babbitt could have sold the temple and properties for \$100,000, he should have done it. Their letter expressed their frustration with Babbitt. “You can judge our feelings when it seemed as if there was a reasonable prospect for sale, and those prospects were blighted by the inattention and darkness of mind of one in whom we had a right to confide.”⁶⁹

On 13 April 1847, the day before Brigham Young left Winter Quarters for the pioneering trip to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, he still had concerns about selling the temple. His sentiments likely reflect the somber news of Babbitt’s unsuccessful eastern trip. Brigham wrote a letter to the trustees, using these unequivocal words:

Has the Lord turned bankrupt? or are his children so needy that they are obliged to sell their Father’s house for a morsel of bread? and if they should sell, how much would they get after they had paid some millions of unjust debts, mortgages, canceled claims, demands, attachments, fines, forfeitures, imprisonments, massacres, lawsuits, judgements and the while etceteras that united mobocracy could bring against you before you could get one dollar removed from the vault to a place of safety.

We leave you to answer this question, and advise you, according to your request, to repair forthwith to this place, with all your surplus funds, books, records, papers and moveable effects belonging to the Church, and let nothing be lost.⁷⁰

With all the Church’s efforts to lease or sell the temple frustrated, Brigham Young was apparently ready to abandon the temple, as he looked forward to the Saints’ resettlement in the West.

A number of factors interfered with the trustees immediately complying with instructions to leave. Illness prevented Heywood from leaving, and he went to Quincy to recuperate during May. Fullmer and Babbitt were also delayed by the arrival of one of the last shipments of lumber from Wisconsin, which was a welcome source for retiring some of the Church’s obligations.⁷¹ During this interim, the trustees’ prospects for selling the temple seemed to brighten. In June 1847, Babbitt and Heywood returned to St. Louis, hoping to consummate the sale of the temple through an agent to a wealthy Catholic investor from New Orleans, perhaps the same Mr. Paulding who had been expressing an interest for the past year.⁷² This time the effort appeared to succeed. A local newspaper heralded the sale of the temple, with a headline announcing, “From Nauvoo! The Temple Sold” for \$75,000 to the Catholics.⁷³ But it was not to be. In July 1847, many area newspapers reported that the negotiations to sell the temple had failed again.⁷⁴ In its 7

August 1847 issue, the *Warsaw Signal* reported the reason for the collapse of the sale—a defective deed.⁷⁵ The *Keokuk Register* reported on the crux of the issue, “The Temple within the past year has been on the eve of changing hands several times, but each time, we believe failed to be transferred in consequence of the defective title.”⁷⁶

Legal Suits Cloud the Sale of the Nauvoo Temple

The collapse of the June 1847 offer likely resulted from opposition to the sale of Church property by James J. Strang and from legal proceedings by others. Strang joined the Church on 25 February 1844. Apparently, after a meeting with Joseph Smith, he soon left Nauvoo to explore Wisconsin as a possible place to establish a stake. After Joseph Smith’s death in June 1844, he produced a letter with a purported revelation, dated 18 June 1844, supposedly signed by the Prophet. Strang claimed the letter and revelation appointed him the Prophet’s successor. When Strang presented his claim in a branch conference at Florence, Michigan, on 5 August 1844, the branch president denounced the revelation and signature on the letter as a forgery and excommunicated him.⁷⁷ Strang then wrote the Twelve, advancing his claim as the Prophet’s successor; they also excommunicated him on 26 August 1844. Strang persisted in his claim, however, and succeeded in attracting a following, including some influential Church leaders, such as William Smith and John E. Page of the Quorum of the Twelve and William Marks, Nauvoo stake president. Strang led his followers to Voree, Wisconsin.⁷⁸

Obviously, if Strang could take possession of the temple at Nauvoo, it would help to legitimize his claim to be Joseph Smith’s successor. When Strang learned of the Catholic priests’ visit to Nauvoo in December 1845, his newspaper, the *Voree Herald*, reported it was disturbed to learn of the Church’s offer to lease it to the Catholic Church.⁷⁹ Strang’s followers adopted resolutions in their April 1846 general conference that the trustees were illegally constituted and possessed no legal authority in the sale or lease of Church property, including the temple. He cautioned anyone in making a purchase from them.⁸⁰ Strang printed a special edition of the *Voree Herald* with the resolutions, and his followers distributed the newspaper throughout the region around Nauvoo.⁸¹ Strang’s followers renewed the resolutions in opposition of the sale or lease of the temple at the October general conference.⁸² Strang’s assertions made the trustees’ work much more difficult, especially when he published information from the Hancock County Book of Mortgages and Deeds, attempting to show that Joseph Smith’s successor was the President of the Church, who was also the trustee in trust, and only the

President, not the trustees, had the right to convey title to Church property.⁸³ Of course, when the Church membership sustained Brigham Young as the President of the Church on 5 December 1847, the action largely negated Strang's argument.⁸⁴ There is no evidence that Strang succeeded in his legal maneuvers, but apparently his actions clouded the situation enough to discourage potential purchasers from proceeding.

Another irritant to the trustees was Isaac Galland, an erstwhile land merchant, who had first sold land to the Saints in 1839.⁸⁵ On 26 November 1846, John M. Bernhisel notified Brigham Young that Galland had put an attachment on Church property, including the temple, for \$20,000.⁸⁶ Galland's action was just one of many lawsuits. In April 1847, Babbitt wrote President Young, describing the effect of these nettlesome legal obstructions: "There are forty suits of different kinds against the Trustees, some of the old Kirtland money, one against you by way attachment for Kirtland money. Galland has commenced a suit in Chancery, as well as at common law. All these are impediments against the sale of property."⁸⁷ These legal actions, like Strang's, were unsuccessful, but apparently such suits raised the question of who held legitimate title to the temple. All these impediments clearly affected the trustees' attempts to dispose of the Nauvoo Temple.

The Nauvoo Temple Sold, September 1847–November 1848

As 1847 drew to a close, Fullmer was pessimistic about the temple's prospects. Writing to a relative in September 1847, Fullmer lamented, "The Temple is still unsold, and I do not know but that God of Heaven intends to have it so remain as a standing monument of our sacrifice, and as witness against the nation Sold or unsold, I should think it such as we shall not be able at best to get one dollar in twenty of what it cost."⁸⁸ With no success for the temple's sale throughout 1847, that winter Fullmer traveled to Winter Quarters to consult with the Twelve, who had recently returned from the Salt Lake Valley. On 3 November 1847, Fullmer reported on the situation in Nauvoo. The Twelve voted for the trustees to gather all their papers and books and as many of the poor Saints as they could and move to Winters Quarters.⁸⁹ Two days later, the discussion about the temple continued, and Brigham Young wrote the trustees of the council's decision, "If you do not rent the Temple before you leave we recommend that you leave the lease and charge of the Temple with Judge Owens, that he may take care of it and see that it is preserved, and rent it, if he has the opportunity, or if it is necessary for its preservation." The Twelve told the trustees they had decided to leave "the Temple of the Lord in the care of the Lord into whose hands [they] committed it before [they] left."⁹⁰



Nauvoo Temple keys, located in the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County, Quincy, Illinois, December 2001. The sixteen keys are reported to have been given to Artois Hamilton, owner of the Hamilton House Hotel in Carthage, Illinois. Following the attack on Carthage Jail, Hamilton assisted Willard Richards in bringing the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and the wounded John Taylor back to the hotel. The inscription with the keys reads:

Keys to the Old Mormon Temple

Upon departure of the Mormons from Nauvoo, these keys were given to Mr. Artois Hamilton by the Elders of the church, for safe keeping in appreciation for the tender care Mr. Hamilton gave the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum Smith when they were killed in Carthage, Illinois, on June 27th 1844.

Presented by E. Bently Hamilton.

The Historical Society's records indicate that Artois Hamilton gave the keys to his son Elisha B. Hamilton. Elisha passed them on to his children, E. Bently Hamilton and a Mrs Allan F. Ayers who donated them to the Society in the 1940s. Phil Germann, director of the Society, believes the keys were given to Artois Hamilton by Brigham Young. However, prior to the departure of Young and the Twelve, Young appointed Almon W. Babbitt, Joseph L. Heywood, and John S. Fullmer as trustees over the property of the Church including the temple. In August 1848, David R. Cowen, and John S. Snider were appointed as Church trustees along with Babbitt. To prevent attempts by others to secure title to the temple, the three trustees conveyed the title of the temple over to David T. LeBaron, a Latter-day Saint. abbitt, Cowen, Snider, or possibly LeBaron were the elders who probably turned the keys over to Artois Hamilton, not Brigham Young.

Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh.



Closeup of one of the Nauvoo Temple keys in the possession of the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County, Quincy, Illinois, December 2001. The Society loaned the key shown above to the LDS Church so that reproductions of the key could be made for commemorative use by the Church.
Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh.

During December 1847, the trustees gathered their records as directed. Upon completing this task, the men became concerned about the amount of unsettled business that would remain if they left Nauvoo as they had been instructed. Fullmer addressed their concerns in a letter to Brigham Young dated 12 January 1848. He and Heywood were particularly anxious to leave the city and recommended that it might be wise for one of the trustees to tarry in Nauvoo. He then continued, "If so, Brother Heywood and I are selfish enough to beg of the three, it may be Brother Babbitt." He gave the following reasons: Babbitt had expressed that his personal business in the region might need attention for another year; of the three men, he alone was a lawyer; the necessary means to outfit him for the trip west could easily outfit the two of them; and if they attempt to do too much, they might fail in their responsibilities. In conclusion, however, he stressed that he and Heywood would obey the decision of the council.⁹¹

In mid-January 1848, Babbitt, accompanied by future trustee John Snider, left for Winter Quarters, likely carrying Fullmer's letter. The two men arrived on the twenty-first and met in council with the Twelve and other Church leaders on the twenty-fifth. Babbitt brought the Twelve up to date on the situation in Nauvoo, defending some of his business transactions for which he had been severely criticized. Instead of chastising the trustee, the council approved a document, prepared on 22 January, that affirmed, "It is resolved unanimously: that we have the utmost confidence in the faithful discharge of their duties as Trusts-in-Trust in Nauvoo, namely Babbitt, Heywood and Fuller, and we tender to them our thanks; and we pray our Father in Heaven in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, to bless them and prosper them in all

things pertaining to the building of His Kingdom on the earth.”⁹²

In the council, the Brethren discussed the temple’s situation at length. President Young reaffirmed his personal feelings that he “did not wish the temple sold.”⁹³ Babbitt and his companion left for Nauvoo on 31 January, arriving in Nauvoo six days later.

There is every indication that, while Babbitt was at Winter Quarters, Brigham Young read Fullmer’s letter and approved his request. It is also likely that at this same time, President Young may have begun considering the appointment of John Snider as a trustee. Babbitt likely returned with the answer to Fullmer’s request because he and Heywood left Nauvoo with their families by May 1848. They arrived at Winter Quarters in time to join the last wagon train that season under the direction of Willard Richards, which departed on 3 July 1848. They reached the Salt Lake Valley on 19 October 1848.⁹⁴ However, the two trustees did not receive a release until 1 August 1848, when David R. Cowen and John S. Snider officially replaced them as trustees in trust for the Church.⁹⁵

When Babbitt returned from Winter Quarters to Nauvoo in February, he learned that Emma Smith had entered the litigious disputations about the Church’s Nauvoo properties. Emma, who had married Lewis Bidamon on 23 December 1847, filed a suit challenging the Church’s ownership of property. A disgusted Fullmer wrote to Brigham Young, “Now these twain concocted a grand scheme by which they would effectually block our wheels and enrich themselves. They hit on the idea that the church, according to a limited construction of one of our state laws, could only hold ten acres of land, and that consequently, the deed from Emma and Joseph to Joseph as a ‘Trustee’ was illegal.” He observed that this placed “the Trustees in the extremest difficulty, as to title, while it destroys the confidence of everyone, and it prevents those who would have purchased, from doing so.”⁹⁶ Babbitt resented Emma’s actions, which “operated as a perfect estoppel [*sic*] to the sale of any city property.”⁹⁷

With his trustee duties in Nauvoo apparently winding down, Babbitt spent most of the ensuing months touring the various settlements between Winter Quarters and Nauvoo, campaigning for the Democrats during the election of 1848. His attention was called back to Nauvoo in the fall. On 11 November 1848, Babbitt, Cowen, and Snider conveyed the title of the Nauvoo Temple to David T. LeBaron, Babbitt’s brother-in-law, for \$5,000.⁹⁸ This was probably a stopgap measure to prevent others from gaining title to the temple, since LeBaron was a Mormon, and Babbitt continued his efforts to lease or sell the building. In any case, as of March 1848, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints no longer owned the Nauvoo Temple.

Conclusion

Babbitt had not given up on finding a suitable buyer. On 27 September 1848, a local newspaper reported that a Mr. Bower of New York was interested in leasing the temple for fifteen years and converting it to a college for the American Home Missionary Society of New York.⁹⁹ On 2 October, newspapers reported that Babbitt had agreed to lease the temple to the association.¹⁰⁰ However welcome this news, the lease occurred too late to save the building. On the night of 9 October 1848, an arsonist set fire to the temple, gutting the building.¹⁰¹ Brigham Young later said, "I hoped to see it burned before I left, but I did not. I was glad when I heard of its being destroyed by fire, and of the walls having fallen in, and said, 'Hell, you cannot now occupy it.'"¹⁰²

The arson of the temple sealed its fate. It was only through the most fortuitous circumstance that Babbitt, still on the job, found a buyer for the temple. On 2 April 1849, David T. LeBaron and his wife, Ester, with Almon Babbitt as cosigner, conveyed the fire-damaged temple and property west of the temple lot to Etienne Cabet for \$2,000.¹⁰³ Brigham Young learned of the sale on 14 June 1849.¹⁰⁴ Frenchman Cabet and his followers hoped to establish a communistic utopian society in America, and Nauvoo with its many abandoned homes appeared to be the perfect location.¹⁰⁵ Babbitt must have departed Nauvoo shortly after this transaction. He and his family left Kanesville, Iowa, on 24 May 1849, arriving in Salt Lake City on 1 July 1849—the last of the original three trustees to reach Utah.¹⁰⁶

Cabet hoped to repair the temple as a school, but on 27 May 1850, a tornado suddenly assaulted the building, toppling the north wall and damaging the others.¹⁰⁷ The Icarians abandoned any idea of reconstructing it, and on 28 May 1850, they "declared that the southern and eastern walls would soon fall down, and that to avoid any serious accident, it was better to destroy them."¹⁰⁸ The walls were razed, leaving only the west facade standing. By 1859, most of the Icarians, like the Latter-day Saints, had abandoned Nauvoo, but the temple ruins remained. Over time, the façade slowly crumbled until only the southwest corner "alone remained, a monument of [its] former beauty and grandeur."¹⁰⁹ In February 1865, the Nauvoo city fathers had the damaged corner purposely leveled for safety. The *Carthage Republican* reported, "The last remaining vestage of what the famous Mormon temple was in its former glory has disappeared, and nothing now remains to mark its site but heaps of broken stone and rubbish."¹¹⁰ In 1876, William Adams visited Nauvoo and recorded in his journal, "No remains of the temple, except pieces of wall on the north side of the block could I discovered."¹¹¹ Eventually, even these meager remnants were cleared away, and



*Ruins of the Nauvoo Temple from
Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley
by Frederick Piercy.
Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.*

no trace of the temple remained, except its well, on the temple block.

For the next century, new owners used the temple lot for many purposes, including private residences, saloons, a school, a hospital, a motion picture theater, and other businesses—even a lighted baseball diamond. The situation changed in 1937, when the Church began to repurchase the temple lot, parcel by parcel, which took over two decades to finalize. After archaeological investigations of the temple site during 1960s, the Church tastefully landscaped the temple lot as a monument to the temple and the Nauvoo Saints during the 1970s. That is how the temple lot remained during the rest of the twentieth century.¹¹² All this changed dramatically in April 1999. During the final session of the general conference that month, Church President Gordon B. Hinckley announced the rebuilding of the Nauvoo Temple on the original site. After three years of construction, the completed Nauvoo Temple, a nearly faithful exterior reproduction of the original, was dedicated on 27 June 2002. The Nauvoo skyline is once again dominated by a Mormon temple.

Notes

1. John S. Fullmer to George Fullmer, 2 September 1847, John S. Fullmer Letterpress Book, LDS Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.

2. For published histories of the Nauvoo Temple, see Don Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple: A Story of Faith* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002); E. Cecil McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1962); and Heidi S. Swinton, *Sacred Stone: The Temple at Nauvoo* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002); also David R. Crockett, "The Nauvoo Temple: A Monument of the Saints," *Nauvoo Journal* 11, no. 2 (fall 1999): 5–30; and Stanley Buchholz Kimball, "The Nauvoo Temple," *Improvement Era* 66, no. 11 (November 1963): 974–84.

3. *New York Sun* in Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 7:434, hereafter cited as *History of the Church*.

4. For studies on the events leading to the Saints' evacuation of Nauvoo, see Annette P. Hampshire, *Mormonism in Conflict: The Nauvoo Years* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985); Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A Place of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 508–621; and Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 306–41.

5. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 2:512.

6. Journal History of the Church, 16 September 1845, LDS Church Archives; Don Colvin, "A Historical Study of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1962, 167.

7. *History of the Church*, 7:489–90.

8. Copy of the letter in *History of the Church*, 7:508–9.

9. *History of the Church*, 7:537; Almon Babbitt to Brigham Young, 4 November 1845, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives, cited in Glen Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 561. Kendrick was born in 1806 and was ordained a priest in 1832. He was ordained a bishop, becoming the Coadjutor Bishop of Saint Louis in 1843. He became archbishop in 1847 and retired in 1895. He died a year later. See "Catholic Hierarchy," <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bkendrick.html>.

10. *Cincinnati Commercial*, 20 November 1845. Purcell was born in 1800. He was ordained a priest in 1826 and Bishop of Cincinnati in 1833. He was appointed Archbishop of Cincinnati in 1850. He died in 1883. "Catholic Hierarchy," <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bpurcell.html>.

11. Bp. Purcell to Bp. Lefevre, 12 November 1845, Archives, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. Lefevre served as bishop of the Detroit Diocese from 1841 until death in March 1869. "Catholic Hierarchy," <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bplefevre.html>.

12. The archives of the Detroit Diocese have no record of Babbitt's visit with Lefevre. However, Babbitt returned with a letter from Detroit. See *History of the Church*, 7:537. Lefevre likely had previous contact with the Mormons, having served in Missouri as a priest in the late 1830s. Robin L. W. Petersen, "Catholic Church in McDonough County, Illinois," <http://www.macomb.com/~ilmcdono/Churches/CathCh.html>. He was born in 1804. He was ordained a priest in 1831 and bishop in 1841, serving as Coadjutor

Bishop of Detroit until his death in 1869. "Catholic Hierarchy," <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/blfevere.html>.

13. William Quarter, Journal, 26 November 1845, Archives, Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. Quarter was born in 1806. He was ordained a priest in 1829 and the Bishop of Chicago in 1844. He died in 1848. "Catholic Hierarchy," <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bquarter.html>. Full names of Tucker and Hamilton supplied by Rebecca J. Hartman, Archives, Archdiocese of Chicago, email to author, 22 March 2001.

14. Stanley B. Kimball, ed., *On the Potter's Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 155.

15. *History of the Church*, 7:537; Journal History, 1 December 1845, LDS Church Archives.

16. *History of the Church*, 7:537–38; and Brigham Young to H. H. Duncan, 21 December 1845, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives.

17. David W. Kilbourn to Thomas Dent, 16 December 1845, in Warren A. Jennings, "The Lynching of an American Prophet," *Brigham Young University Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 215.

18. *History of the Church*, 7:539–40; Kimball, *On the Potter's Wheel*, 167; Gregory R. Knight, "Journal of Thomas Bullock (1816–1885), 31 August 1845 to 6 July 1846," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 31, no. 1 (winter 1991): 36.

19. *History of the Church*, 7:539.

20. The account of the meeting is taken from William Clayton's report in Heber C. Kimball, 1845–1846 Journal, 10 December 1845, LDS Church Archives. The account in *History of the Church*, 7:539–40, appears to be an abbreviated version of Clayton's report.

21. Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 10 December 1845, LDS Church Archives; also *History of the Church*, 7:540.

22. Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 10 December 1845, LDS Church Archives; also *History of the Church*, 7:540.

23. Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 10 December 1845, LDS Church Archives.

24. Heber C. Kimball, Journal, 7 January 1845, LDS Church Archives; also Elden J. Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847* (Salt Lake City: Elden J. Watson, 1971), 7.

25. *History of the Church*, 7:569; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 14.

26. *History of the Church*, 7:576; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 22–23.

27. For a biography of Almon W. Babbitt, see Jay D. Ridd, "Almon Whiting Babbitt," M.A. thesis, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1953.

28. Susan Easton Black, *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 2–5.

29. *History of the Church*, 6:600; Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 1:285.

30. Babbitt was killed by Cheyenne Indians on 7 September 1856 on the plains of Nebraska while on a trip west from Washington, D.C., after an appointment as the secretary to the territory of Utah. See Ridd, "Almon Whiting Babbitt," 75–83.

31. Jenson, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:646–47. Heywood, who was born in 1815, lived to be 95. He held a number of appointed positions in the territory of Utah, including postmaster of Salt Lake City and U.S. marshal. He also served as bishop of the Salt Lake City Seventeenth Ward and later moved to southern Utah where he was called as the patriarch of the St. George Stake. He died on 16 October 1910 at Panguitch, Utah.

See also "Joseph Leland Heywood," in Susan Easton Black, comp., *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 1830-1848*, 50 vols. (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 22:575–82.

32. Richard E. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus 1846–1848* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 317–18; Black, *Membership of the Church*, 22:575–82.

33. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 318. Fullmer, who was born in 1807, was a member of the Nauvoo Legion as well as the Council of Fifty. He served a mission to England. He was also active in politics and served the Utah Territorial Legislature. He died in Springville, Utah, in 1883. See "John Solomon Fullmer," in Black, *Membership of the Church*, 17:519–25.

34. Minutes of Trustees Meeting, 22 January 1847, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives, quoted in Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 317.

35. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 318–19.

36. John Fullmer to Brigham Young, 26 June 1846, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives. By the time the trustees completed their work, they had succeeded in selling nearly all of the developed lots and land in and around the Nauvoo, but at a loss to the owners from 60 to 85 percent of the properties' actual value. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 591–92.

37. Journal History, 9 February 1846, LDS Church Archives; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 31. George Miller left Nauvoo on 6 February 1846, and Newel K. Whitney on 28 February 1846. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 28, 54.

38. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 51.

39. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 73.

40. Brigham Young to Joseph Young, 9 March 1846, LDS Church Archives; and Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 75.

41. Brigham Young to Almon Babbitt, Joseph Heywood, and John Fullmer, 15 March 1846, LDS Church Archives; and Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 86.

42. *Sangamon Journal* (Springfield, Illinois), 22 April 1846.

43. *Daily Missouri Republican* (St. Louis, Missouri), 22 April 1846.

44. Orson Hyde to Brigham Young, 22 April 1836 to Brigham Young, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives; and Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 143.

45. George A. Smith to Brigham Young and Council, 26 April 1846, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives, as quoted in Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 55. See also Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 145.

46. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, 145.

47. Notes of Orson Pratt, 28 April 1846, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives, cited in Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 65; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 147.

48. Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:158.

49. Council of the Twelve to Orson Hyde and Wilford Woodruff, 30 April 1846, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives, cited in Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 56; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 147.

50. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–1984), 3:45.

51. *Hancock Eagle* (Nauvoo, Illinois), 13 May 1846.

52. *Hancock Eagle* (Nauvoo, Illinois), 15 May 1846.

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53. *Alton Telegraph & Democratic Review* (Alton, Illinois), 16 May 1846.
54. *Journal History*, 26 June 1846, LDS Church Archives; Gavin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 113.
55. *Journal History*, 15 July 1846, LDS Church Archives. Brigham Young received the letter on 17 August 1846. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 329.
56. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 349.
57. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 395. Brigham Young received the letter on 24 September at Winter Quarters. For documentary history of the Battle of Nauvoo, see John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius, eds., *Cultures in Conflict: A Document History of the Mormon War In Illinois* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1995), 299–360; for a discussion, see Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 600–21.
58. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 398.
59. *Journal History*, 28 September, 1846, LDS Church Archives; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 399.
60. *Saint Louis Weekly Reveille* (St. Louis, Missouri), 5 October 1846, in Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 405.
61. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 432. As late as November 1846, Paulding and Mulliken were still expressing a desire to purchase the temple and other properties. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 448.
62. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 407, 409.
63. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 448.
64. Brigham Young at Winter Quarters learned of Babbitt's departure during the first week of January 1847; see William S. Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing, 1997), 9.
65. *Journal History*, 29 January 1847, LDS Church Archives; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*; Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 24.
66. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 520; Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 29.
67. Joseph L. Heywood to Heber C. Kimball, 21 March 1847, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives; and *Journal History*, 21 March 1847, LDS Church Archives.
68. *Journal History*, 5 April 1847, LDS Church Archives; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 546; Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 48.
69. *Journal History*, 20 April, 1847, LDS Church Archives.
70. Brigham Young to Trustees, 13 April 1847, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives; *Journal History*, 13 April 1847, LDS Church Archives, see also McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 117.
71. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 321. For a history of the Church's timber operations in the 1840s, see Dennis Rowley, "The Mormon Expedition in the Wisconsin Pineries," *Brigham Young University Studies* 32, nos. 1, 2 (winter and spring 1991): 119–48.
72. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 93.
73. *Warsaw Signal* (Warsaw, Illinois), 12 June 1847; see also *Iowa Sentinel* (Council Bluffs, Iowa), 26 June 1847.
74. *Keokuk Register* (Keokuk, Iowa), 24 July 1847; *Daily Missouri Republican* (St. Louis, Missouri), 28 July 1847; *Burlington Hawk Eye* (Burlington, Iowa), 5 August 1847; *Warsaw Signal* (Warsaw, Illinois), 7 August 1847; *Monmouth Atlas* (Monmouth, Illinois),

13 August 1847; all cited in John Hajicek, "The Sale and Burning of the Nauvoo Temple," paper presented before the 25th Annual Meeting of the John Whitmer Historical Association, Kirtland, Ohio, 27 September 1997, revised 2001, 4, typescript in author's possession.

75. *Warsaw Signal* (Warsaw, Illinois), 7 August 1847.

76. *Keokuk Register* (Keokuk, Iowa), 19 October 1847.

77. Modern forensic analysis also concluded Joseph Smith's signature on the letter was a forgery. See D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 210.

78. Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, 211, 224.

79. *Voree Herald* 1 (February 1846), 2, cited in Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 56.

80. *Voree Herald* 1 (April 1846), 20, cited in Hajicek, "Sale and Burning of the Nauvoo Temple," 2.

81. Hajicek, "Burning of the Nauvoo Temple," 2.

82. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place*, 56.

83. Hajicek, "Burning of the Nauvoo Temple," 3.

84. *History of the Church*, 7:621.

85. David E. Miller and Della S. Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph* (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine, 1974), 27–29, 239–41.

86. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 482. On 20 January 1847, Brigham Young learned from the trustees that the amount of Galland's attachment was \$25,000. Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 507–8; Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 18.

87. *Journal History*, 5 April 1847, LDS Church Archives; Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, 546; Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 48.

88. John S. Fullmer to George Fullmer, 2 September 1847, John S. Fullmer Letterpress Book, LDS Church Archives, cited in Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 593.

89. Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 76.

90. *Journal History*, 5 November 1847, LDS Church Archives; *History of the Church*, 7:617; see also Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 76. Judge Owens was likely Thomas H. Owen (also Owens), who was a fair-minded politician from Carthage who settled in Nauvoo after the Saints left, becoming the city's first non-Mormon postmaster from 1847 to 1849. Ida Blum, *Nauvoo: An American Heritage* (Carthage, Illinois: Journal Printing Co., 1969), 50; Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:192–93; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 298, 557, 752.

91. *Journal History*, 12 January 1848, LDS Church Archives.

92. *Journal History*, 28 January 1848, LDS Church Archives.

93. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:311, 314 (21, 25 January 1848); Matthew F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1964), 327.

94. Jenson, *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1: 647; *Deseret News 1997–1998 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1996), 168.

95. "Affidavit of Election for Trustees held 1 Aug. 1848," Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; see also Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 592, 756. According to family traditions, John Snider returned to Nauvoo from Toronto, Canada, in 1847, where "he assisted in disposing of Mormon properties after the exodus of the Saints." Black, *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants*, 305. Cowen may have been a non-Mormon. He is not listed in Black, *Membership of the Church*. Andrew A. Timmons, a Mormon, was selected as the trustees' secretary. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 756; "Andrew A. Timmons," in Black, *Membership of the Church*, 43:617.

96. Journal History, 27 January 1848, LDS Church Archives. Emma's legal issues about ownership of properties were not resolved until 1851 when she was forced into three public auctions to sell property to repay her first husband's debts. See Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 258–59.
97. Journal History, 31 January 1848, LDS Church Archives.
98. Almon Babbitt, David R. Cowen, and John Snider to David T. LeBaron, Deed, 11 November 1848, Hancock County Courthouse, Recording Clerk's Office, Carthage, Illinois, Deeds, Bk. V, 93.
99. *Oquawka Spectator*, 27 September 1848.
100. George A. Smith to Brigham Young, 2 October 1848, in Journal History, 2 October 1848, LDS Church Archives.
101. For an account of the fire from the *Nauvoo Patriot*, see Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 134. The arsonist has never been positively identified.
102. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–1886), 8:203, 8 October 1860.
103. David T. LeBaron, Ester M. LeBaron, and Almon W. Babbitt to Etienne Cabet, Deed, 2 April 1849, Hancock County Deeds, Bk. V, 408.
104. Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 214.
105. For a history of the Icarian movement, see Robert Sutton, *Icariens: The Utopian Dream in Europe and America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); and Albert Shaw, *Icaria: A Chapter in the History of Communism* (New York: AMS Press, 1973). For a firsthand account of the community's Nauvoo period, see Emile Vallet, *An Icarian Communist in Nauvoo* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1971).
106. Ridd, "Almon Whiting Babbitt," 35.
107. Vallet, *Icarian Communist in Nauvoo*, 22–23. For a newspaper report on the tornado from the *Missouri Republican* (St. Louis, Missouri), see Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 296.
108. *Missouri Republican* (St. Louis, Missouri), in Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850*, 296; see also *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, Utah), 24 August 1850.
109. "Autobiography of Mary E. Lightner," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (July 1926): 254.
110. *Carthage Republican* (Carthage, Illinois), 2 February 1865, as cited in Virginia Harrington and J. C. Harrington, *Rediscovery of the Nauvoo Temple* (Salt Lake City: Nauvoo Restoration, 1971), 6.
111. Autobiography of William Adams, 36, quoted in Harrington and Harrington, *Rediscovery of the Nauvoo Temple*, 6.
112. For a history of the temple lot from 1846 to 2002, see the author's "Nauvoo's Temple Square," forthcoming in *Brigham Young University Studies*.