

Knight Family Connections to Come Follow Me 2025
Doctrine and Covenants Section 124



Photo of the Nauvoo Temple, circa 1847

Excerpts from Newel's journal on building and serving in the house of the Lord in Nauvoo

Building a temple in Nauvoo was a paramount goal for the entire city and region. Newel Knight wrote in his journal about several of the important events in the construction of the temple.

Laying the cornerstones, 1841:

"The 6 April 1841 was a day ever to be remembered. It had been appointed as the day on which the cornerstones of the Temple should be laid. It was a day of great festivity. The Legion was out in strength, well officered, and joined by several independent companies from across the river. The ladies presented the Legion with a splendid silk flag, and the Lieutenant

General reviewed the Legion. A grand procession was then formed to the temple site, and the four cornerstones were laid with due ceremonies. President Sidney Rigdon delivering a fine oration. Conference continued until Sunday, at which much good instruction was given.”¹

Milling Lumber for the temple, December 1843:

“First I will speak of my mill which has been doing well, and I have done my best to keep things in that direction moving on all right. But in relation to the saw mill things did not move as prosperously, for Brother Scott and myself could agree about nothing at all about it. The mill remained unfinished, and seemed likely to, so I made an offer to Scott to either buy his share or sell mine to him, and named the conditions. He would not agree to buy or sell at my offer, and would not sell at all at anything like a reasonable price. At last I proposed to him to give my share of the mill to the Temple committee for the use of the temple as there was a great demand for lumber in that direction. So he accompanied me to the committee, and a statement of our intentions was made. The committee were willing to take Brother Scott’s share, and credit him on his tithing, but preferred that I should keep my share, and put the mill in operation. We accordingly entered into this arrangement, and I gave my obligations to the committee for what had been Scott’s share of the mill, and soon got it in readiness for work.”²

Capstone of the Temple, May 1845:

“Saturday, May 24th 1845, the capstone of the Temple was laid this morning a little past 6 o’clock after a little more than four years of hard labor of the Saints, during which time we have passed through scenes of persecution too great to be painted by man. The blood of our best men has stained the floor of Carthage jail, and the earth has drunk of the same blood while our enemies have been thus cruelly satiating their fury. The brethren have been laboring by day and watching by night to raise the House which the Lord has commanded to be built unto His most Holy Name. The morning was cool, clear and beautiful. The Saints rejoiced while the band poured forth its sweetest strains of music upon the tops of the walls. When the stone was laid there was a united “Hosannah to God and the Lamb, Amen & Amen.” Shouted three times, which not only gave joy to the Saints, but filled the heavens with gladness. The Twelve and other authorities were there to witness and direct the scene. President Young made some appropriate remarks. A new hymn was sung, and all hearts rejoiced in the hope that the wrath of our enemies might be stayed until the building be completed and the faithful receive their endowments therein.”³

Temple Progressing, 1845:

“The temple is progressing finely. A golden harvest is in prospect, and the brethren are united in their labors. But the mob seem again to lust after the fruits of the industry of the Saints, and are trying the old method of obtaining them. They have commenced mobbing and

¹ Journal of Newel Knight, Allen Typescript version, p. 94

² Ibid p. 117

³ Ibid, p. 136-7

burning houses in the outer settlements, thinking no doubt that all will be winked at by the administrators of the law, as has been the case in all the murders, robberies, and scenes of violence which have been practiced heretofore against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”⁴

A Partial Dedication, General Conference, Oct. 1845

“October 5th. Sunday. Through the indefatigable exertions, unceasing industry, and heavy blessed labors in the midst of trials, tribulations, poverty, and worldly obstacles, solemnized in some instanced by death, from mites and tithings the Saints have raised a House to the honor and glory of the living God, and to-day for the first time about five thousand assembled in that house to worship the true and living God.

It certainly afforded a holy satisfaction to the thousands assembled, to know that since the 6th of April 1841 when the first stone was laid, amidst the most straightened circumstance the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had witnessed the bread cast upon the waters, or more properly speaking, their obedience to the commandments of the Lord appear in the tangible form of a splendid temple raising its towers to the skies, in which they may receive the heaven born ordinances which will bestow eternal blessings upon them and their posterity after them.

And here to-day were assembled about five thousand in meeting preparatory to the General Conference which is to convene tomorrow, no General Conference having been held for three years past, according to the declaration of the Prophet Joseph. “There shall be no more baptisms for the dead until the ordinance can be attended to in the font in the Lord’s house, and the Church shall not hold another General Conference until they can meet in the House of the Lord.”

President Young opened the service of the day with a dedicatory prayer presenting the temple thus far finished as a document of the Saints liberality and fidelity, concluding with “Lord we dedicate this House and ourselves unto thee.”

The day was spent in giving and hearing teachings and in offering up the gratitude of honest hearts for the privilege of worshipping in a House, whose beauty of workmanship will compare favorably with any house of worship in America, and whose motto is “Holiness to the Lord.”

On the 6th the General Conference was held which was numerously attended, and much business transacted.

The brethren who occupied the time spoke by the spirit and felt that all is right with the church and that present persecution is only hastening the fulfillment of God’s purpose concerning His people.

During the fall everybody is busy preparing for the spring, cooperative institutions for nearly all kinds of labor have been organized, and the work of preparation is being pushed ahead with much zeal, all that can be done is being done, to enable all to leave early in the spring for our future, though at the present unknown home.”⁵

⁴ Ibid, p. 142.

⁵ Ibid. p. 144.

January 31st 1846, laboring in the temple

“For the last two weeks my time has been altogether taken up in laboring in the temple.⁶ It is expected that the time will be short in which the Saints can have the privilege of receiving their endowments, as our enemies are prowling about on every side, like ravening wolves, and in fact they have only been held at bay during the whole winter by the prayers of the Saints, and as the brethren generally have been faithful in laboring to build the Temple, that the Lord might have a place prepared in which to give blessings, and endow the Saints with power from on high, President Young says no time shall be lost, for as they have been faithful in building, so the servant of the Lord shall be faithful in waiting upon them.

We attend the temple both day and night, and I can truly say it is better to be a waiter in the House of the Lord than to enjoy all the glittering wealth this world can afford. My soul has been filled with the love of God. I feel his spirit burning within me day by day. The blessings I have received during this winter have doubly repaid me for all the I have done towards building this House.”⁷

⁶ Newel is referring to serving as a temple ordinance worker, not temple builder at this point. He was a member of the Nauvoo High Council, and was apparently invited to help the thousands who needed their temple blessings.

⁷ Newel Knight Journal p. 144.