
“Upon a Lot . . . Not Far From the Courthouse”: A Photographic History of the Temple Lot in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri

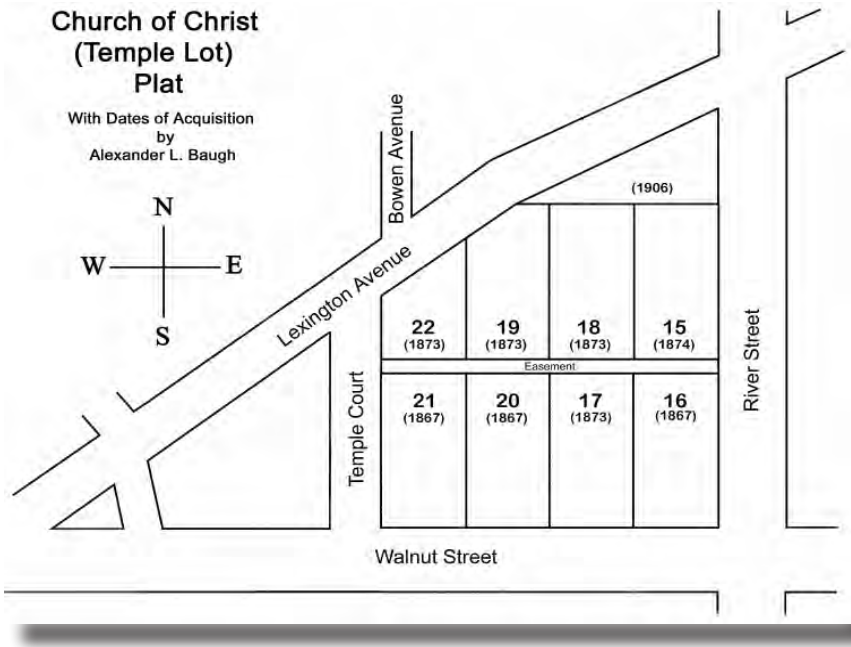
R. Jean Addams and Alexander L. Baugh

Among the diverse expressions of the Latter Day Saint movement, the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) or “Hedrickites” (as members of their church have been called historically) is unique in its early claim to a specific revelation to return “as a church” to Jackson County, Missouri, and to redeem or reclaim the “temple lot” in the “center place” of Zion.

Soon after the organization of the Church founded by Joseph Smith Jr. in Fayette, New York, on April 6, 1830, the first missionaries were sent by Smith to Missouri (see D&C 28:8–9; 30:5–8; 32:1–5).¹ The following year, Smith and some of his closest advisors left Kirtland, Ohio (where the Church had relocated in 1831), and traveled to Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. Shortly after Joseph Smith’s arrival in the early summer of 1831, he announced, by revelation, the Lord’s intention to make Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, the chosen place for the gathering of the Saints (D&C 57:1–4). In the revelation, the town of Independence (in Jackson County),

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Map showing the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) property acquisitions. Map courtesy of Alexander L. Baugh.

Missouri, was designated as “the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse.”² Just two years later, in the fall of 1833, Church members living in Independence and the surrounding area were driven *en masse* from Jackson County. To the vast majority of the Restoration churches who claim as their original basis the revelations of Joseph Smith as the Prophet of the Restoration, the “temple lot” in the “center place” of Zion remains a fundamental tenet.

In the very first issue of the *Truth Teller*, the Church of Christ’s first newspaper, dated July 1864, Hedrick published a revelation delivered to him by an angel on April 24, 1864.³ He recorded, in part, that the angel instructed him and his followers to “gather together upon the consecrated land which I have appointed and dedicated by My servant Joseph Smith . . . in Jackson County, state of Missouri . . . in the year A.D. 1867.”⁴

As instructed, most of the followers of Hedrick sold their farms and homes in central Illinois and elsewhere and moved to Jackson County, Missouri, in 1867 and 1868.⁵ After the arrival of thirty to sixty members in early 1867, John Hedrick began to acquire the eight separate lots that composed the immediate area on or near the “spot” where Joseph Smith and others stood when

he dedicated the site for the temple on August 3, 1831.⁶ Hedrick purchased three of the eight lots in 1867. William Eaton acquired the remaining five lots in 1873 and 1874.

The eight lots eventually acquired by the members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) included “Lot 15” (as laid out in the plat for the Maxwell-Woodson addition to the City of Independence in 1851).⁷ It was on what later became platted as “Lot 15,” where Joseph Smith stood when he dedicated “the spot for a temple” in 1831. The “spot” had been marked with a stone at the northeast corner.⁸ The location was also known to local citizens of Independence and was identifiable to early Church members such as William E. McLellin, a former member of the Twelve. McLellin was excommunicated in 1838, but he returned to live in Independence on or about the time he joined Hedrick (albeit briefly) and his followers in 1869.⁹

Photograph 1

In 1887, after twenty years of discussing the matter of building a meetinghouse or small chapel on their property, members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) finally moved ahead with their plan. During the April 6 session of conference, the members agreed “that a committee of three be appointed to superintend the building of a house of worship and to locate the same on



Photograph 1. Church of Christ (Temple Lot) 1889 meetinghouse, east side, ca. 1890s.
Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.

the temple grounds.”¹⁰ The small building was completed and the committee discharged at the October 1889 conference.¹¹

The construction of this church on the property, long coveted by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), was also a catalyst to litigation instigated in 1891 by the RLDS church in what has become known historically as the “Temple Lot Case.”¹²

Photograph 1 shows a group of the early members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot)—twelve total—posed in the front, or east side, of the 1889 meetinghouse.¹³ The single story structure measured sixteen by twenty-five feet. The presence of trees, brush, grass, flowers, and a rustic fence suggests that the church had made some improvements to the property since 1867. The photo was probably taken in the early 1890s and is possibly the earliest image of the 1889 building.¹⁴

Photograph 2

Sometime in the 1890s, fifty-two Church of Christ (Temple Lot) members posed on a hot Sunday afternoon for this photo. (Note the open windows.)



Photograph 2. Church of Christ (Temple Lot), 1889 meetinghouse, south side, ca. 1890s.
Photography courtesy Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Independence, Missouri.

The photo is of the south side of the 1889 Church of Christ (Temple Lot) meetinghouse.¹⁵

Photograph 3

This photograph of the temple lot shows almost the entire view of the two and one-half acres owned by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). The view is to the north and clearly shows the 1889 Church of Christ (Temple Lot) meetinghouse and the RLDS Stone Church completed in 1892. Immediately behind and to the left of the Church of Christ meetinghouse is the home of C. A. Bishop. The large home shown to the right was owned by George Bartholomew. The photo was taken in the winter or early spring of the year, as evidenced by the fact that the trees are bare. One can see in the photograph the efforts made to beautify the temple lot property. When Joseph Smith Jr. dedicated the temple lot in August 1831, the property was heavily treed. In the intervening years following the expulsion of the Saints in 1833, the trees were cut down by local residents for their timber value.¹⁶ The trees seen on the grounds were planted in 1883.¹⁷



Photograph 3. View of the temple lot to the north showing the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) 1889 meetinghouse and the RLDS Stone Church, ca. 1890s. Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.

Photograph 4

This photograph shows a view of the temple lot property to the south. The elevated position suggests the photo was probably taken from an upper-story window, or one of the towers of the RLDS Stone Church located on the north side of Lexington Street. The men, women, and one child (eleven total), possibly RLDS Church members, are posing for the occasion. Note that electrical lines have been put in place and run parallel to Lexington. The blacksmith shop owned by RLDS member James Page is partially visible in the background. The Community of Christ Auditorium now stands on the site where the blacksmith shop is located.



Photograph 4. View of the temple lot to the south, probably taken from a window in the RLDS Stone Church, ca. 1890s. Photograph courtesy Community of Christ Archives-Library Archives, Independence, Missouri.

Photograph 5

An inscription on this photograph indicates the image was taken on September 1, 1893. This view of the temple property is to the north-northwest and is similar to Photographs 3 and 4, however only the RLDS Stone Church can be seen in the background. The presence of a cow on the property suggests that Church of Christ (Temple Lot) members allowed animals to graze on the property to keep the grass from overgrowing.



Photograph 5. View of the temple lot to the north-northwest, September 1, 1893.
Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.

Photograph 6

On September 4, 1898, the meeting house of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) was set afire by W. D. C. Pattyson, an enemy of the church, who had been released from prison only two days before for having previously set on fire the fence surrounding the property. Later that day he “turned himself in” to the local jailer.¹⁸ The loss of the little church was a tremendous blow to the members, who were still recovering from the financial difficulties caused by the “Temple Lot Case.”¹⁹ The photo shows that the fire was extinguished before it consumed the entire building. However, because of the extensive damage, the decision was made to raze the building. The building had stood for approximately nine years (1889–98).

Photograph 7

This photo is a view of the temple lot to the east from an elevated position across the street to the west of the site. The prominent feature in this image is the second Church of Christ (Temple Lot) meetinghouse built on the temple lot. Following the 1898 fire that destroyed the first Church of Christ (Temple Lot) church, plans were immediately made to build a new building



Photograph 6. Church of Christ (Temple Lot) 1889 meetinghouse (south and east sides) shortly after the September 4, 1898, fire. Photograph courtesy Richard A. Wheaton.



Photograph 7. View of the temple lot to the east, ca. 1902-1907, photograph by C. Ed Miller. The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) 1902 meetinghouse and the tower of the Jackson County courthouse are visible in the photograph. Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.

on the same site. To accommodate a growing membership base, a two-story building was constructed.²⁰ The structure was dedicated on April 6, 1902. Another prominent feature in this photograph is the tower of the Jackson County Courthouse, located about a half-mile to the east. In 1907 the courthouse and tower were remodeled and enlarged. This image was taken before the 1907 courthouse renovations.

Photograph 8

This view of the temple lot is to the east. Lexington Street and the RLDS Stone Church can be easily seen in the left of the photo. The west side of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) can be seen through the trees, along with cattle grazing in the fenced portion of the property. The west end of the property shown in the foreground indicates that this portion of the temple property had not been maintained as well as the fenced portion of the site.



Photograph 8. View of the temple lot to the east, ca. 1904. Photograph courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

Photograph 9

At the conclusion of the 1896 “Temple Lot Case,” leaders of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and the RLDS church tried on several occasions to agree on points of doctrine and to improve relationships.²¹ By 1904, the date of this photo, points of doctrine were again being argued. In the photo an unidentified man dressed in a suit and wearing a hat wends his way toward the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) church in the right center of the photo. The view is to the north-northwest. The image is taken from a stereo photograph (side by side images).



Photograph 9. Stereo view of the temple lot to the north-northwest, 1904, image produced by Underwood and Underwood Publishers. Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.



Photograph 10. View of the temple site property and Church of Christ (Temple Lot) meetinghouse to the south-southeast, April 26, 1907. Photograph by George Edward Anderson, courtesy LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Photograph 10

On April 26, 1907, while on a “photographic” mission through the Midwest and East, Mormon photographer George Edward Anderson took six photographs of the temple site property from different angles and positions. This photograph is a view of the temple lot property and the 1902 Church of Christ (Temple Lot) meetinghouse to the south-southeast. Anderson recorded in his diary how he took this image: “Albert Thatcher . . . janitor of the [RLDS] ‘Rock Church’ . . . assisted me in getting ladders . . . to the top of the west tower of the Rock Church—and I secured some negatives of temple lot and Independence. Very difficult climb we had in the church tower.”²²

Photograph 11

Between 1900 and 1917 the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) experienced some growth in membership and dealt with internal dissent, but stalemated in its attempts to improve relationships with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This photo of the temple site was taken about



Photograph 11. View of the temple site to the north-northeast, ca. 1910. Photograph courtesy Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

1910 during this period of quandary as the leadership in the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) sought divine guidance in moving the organization forward. A different perspective of the greater acreage surrounding the $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres of the “temple lot” is captured in this photograph. Readily noticeable is a young boy posed on a rock outcropping at the southeast boundary of the greater property of the $63\frac{1}{4}$ acres purchased for the Church, December 19, 1831, by Bishop Edward Partridge.²³ The Columbian School can be seen in the upper left of the image. The roof structures of the RLDS Stone Church and Church of Christ (Temple Lot) are barely visible.

Photograph 12

This photograph, taken in the early 1900s, is a view of the temple lot to the northeast and was probably taken from the second story window or rooftop of a two-story commercial building (later called the Star Market) located on the southeast corner of Walnut and Lexington Streets. The four men and the boy in the photograph are likely members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). Several features stand out in the photograph. The most noticeable are the two outbuildings constructed on the southwest corner of the temple lot, used as storage sheds for tools and equipment.²⁴ It is not known when these structures were built or removed. Also noticeable is the dirt road or street that has been cut, running directly north and south (subsequently called “Temple



Photograph 12. View of the temple lot to the northeast, early 1900s. Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.

Court”), connecting Lexington and Walnut Streets. The four men in the photograph appear to be standing on a raised wooden pedestrian sidewalk.

Photograph 13

In January 1918, the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and the RLDS church ushered in a new period of improved relationships with the signing of the “Agreements of Working Harmony” (sometimes referred to as the “Articles of Working Harmony”).²⁵ However, in April 1926, the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) proceeded to establish its own Quorum of Twelve Apostles, much to the dismay of their RLDS associates.²⁶ This action, with others, resulted in a rescission of the “Agreements of Working Harmony” by the RLDS church during their April 1926 conference.²⁷

The April 1927 conference of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) was “abuzz” with the announcement that Otto Fetting, one of the recently ordained apostles, had received revelations or “messages” (from a divine being who identified himself as John the Baptist) regarding the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophesy (Malachi 3:1), and that the building of the “long-awaited” temple was to soon commence.²⁸ This group photo, while only a portion of the total membership of the church, is representative of the significant growth experienced by the Church of Christ during the period 1918–29. The growth was primarily the direct result of “transfers” from the RLDS church, a practice that was permitted at this time in accordance with the “Agreements of Working Harmony.”²⁹ Before 1918, the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) membership was estimated at two hundred.³⁰ However, between 1918–29, it is estimated



Photograph 13. Members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) assembled on the south side of the 1902 meetinghouse, as part of the April 6, 1927, general conference. Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.



Photograph 14. Panoramic view of the temple lot to the northeast, April 30, 1927. Grinter photograph, courtesy Bill Curtis.



Photograph 15. View of the temple site to the northwest, ca. 1927. The image shows the construction taking place on the RLDS Auditorium. The top of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) meetinghouse and the RLDS Stone Church can also be seen. Photograph courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

that two to three thousand RLDS members transferred their membership to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot).

Photograph 14

This panoramic photograph, dated April 30, 1927, is a view of the temple lot to the east-northeast, taken about three weeks after the historic conference.

The trees are fully mature, over forty-years-old at the time the photo was taken. A well-worn walking path cuts through the property.

Photograph 15

This view of the temple site is to the northwest, probably from a location near present-day Pacific and Pleasant Streets. In the upper right hand corner, the tops of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and RLDS Stone Church can be seen. More prominent is the RLDS Auditorium (ground-breaking began in 1926), shown under construction, and the Columbian School in the upper left of the photo. The photograph illustrates the elevated height of the temple lot. Because of its prominence, it truly is a “temple mount.” From this view one can understand why Joseph Smith selected the site, the location of which he later said was revealed to him by revelation. Interestingly, although the temple lot is situated on one of the highest points in Jackson County (1,020 feet), the Jackson County Courthouse located on the public square is actually twenty feet higher than the temple site.³¹ The road or path seen in the photograph appears to cut through a portion of RLDS property (today called the Campus Property) and a portion of the LDS property purchased in 1904.

Photograph 16

This 1927 view of the temple lot shows a fenced outdoor baptismal font. The font is below ground and made of concrete. The elevated view was probably taken from a window on the second story of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) 1902 meetinghouse. When the font was constructed is not known. For a number of years, Church of Christ (Temple Lot) leaders allowed the RLDS church to use the outdoor font for baptismal services. The font was removed around 1929 at the time the excavation work was begun on the temple.

Photograph 17

In March 1928, Apostle Otto Fetting received historic “Message 5” from John the Baptist. This revelation specifically directed the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) to begin construction of the long-awaited temple in 1929. Accordingly, the church held an impressive ground-breaking ceremony on Saturday, April 6, 1929, in conjunction with the church’s annual conference. At two o’clock in the afternoon, a crowd of two to three hundred members and curious outsiders assembled about one hundred feet south of the meeting house. The weather was considered favorable for an early April outdoor gathering.³²



Photograph 16. View to the south-southwest of the temple lot. The 1927 image shows a fenced outdoor baptismal font constructed by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot).
Photograph courtesy Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Independence, Missouri.



Photograph 17. View of the temple lot to the west with members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) assembled for the ground-breaking ceremonies of the temple, April 6, 1929. Photograph courtesy Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Independence, Missouri.

Photograph 18

The ground-breaking dedication consisted of “appropriate songs, sermons, prayers, and scripture reading, [after which] Bishop Alma O. Frisbey ‘took the spade and cut out and laid upon the ground a small square of sod.’”³³ In this photograph Frisbey is about to turn the first shovel of ground. To the rear of Bishop Frisbey is a slightly raised platform on which are seated the members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) Quorum of Twelve Apostles, including Otto Fetting, B. C. Flint, and Walter Gates. The platform was erected over the outdoor baptismal font.



Photograph 18. View of the temple lot to the west with members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) assembled for the ground-breaking ceremonies of the temple, April 6, 1929. Photograph courtesy Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Independence, Missouri.



Photograph 19. Purported to be the northeast cornerstone temple marker, Grinter photograph, June 24, 1929. The inscription is believed to be a surveyor's marker indicating that the stone was placed forty feet west of the northeast cornerstone. Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.



Photograph 20. Church of Christ (Temple Lot) Bishop Alma O. Frisbey holding the stone excavated from the temple site identifying the location of the northeast corner of the temple, while RLDS Apostle Joseph Luff looks on, 1929. Photograph courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.



Photograph 21. Southeast cornerstone temple marker, discovered June 26, 1929. The above photograph was taken March 29, 1930. Church of Christ (Temple Lot) officials believe the inscription "SECT 1831" to stand for "South East Corner Temple 1831."
Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.

Photograph 19

Following the April 1929 ground-breaking ceremony, Church of Christ (Temple Lot) leaders and members solicited funds for the temple construction project. The first phase of the project involved excavating the site and preparing the ground for the foundation. The dimensions of the temple were to be 90 feet by 180 feet, with a depth of 9 feet 11 inches. On May 18, 1929, six weeks after the ground-breaking ceremony, while excavating, workers discovered a stone that included several distinct markings—“4[reversed]0W 1831.”³⁴ Church of Christ (Temple Lot) officials immediately surmised that the stone was genuine and that it had been placed at the site by Joseph Smith and his party on the occasion of the temple site dedication on August 3, 1831. Furthermore, church officials interpreted the stone to be a surveyor’s stone or marker that had been placed in the ground forty-feet west (“40W” with a backwards or reverse “4” to distinguish it from a “9”) of the northeast corner of the temple.³⁵ The inscription on the image indicates that the close-up photograph of the stone was taken on June 24, 1929, about five weeks after its discovery.

Photograph 20

Shortly after the discovery of the surveyor’s stone, Church of Christ (Temple Lot) Bishop Alma O. Frisbey posed for a photograph while he held the surveyor’s stone while he stood in the excavation. Behind him is RLDS Apostle Joseph Luff.

Photograph 21

The discovery of the “so-called” surveyor’s stone on May 18, 1929, was followed a month later with the discovery on June 26, 1929, of a second stone with the inscription “SECT 1831.”³⁶ This inscription was interpreted to have stood for “South East Corner Temple 1831.” To explain the discovery of the second stone, Church of Christ (Temple Lot) leaders surmised that the stone had possibly been placed on the temple lot in March 1839 by Brigham Young and other members of the Twelve. Their explanation was based on a statement by John Hyde Jr., who reported that “in company with several of the Apostles and ‘other brethren,’ he [Brigham Young] assisted to re-lay the foundation of the Temple at ‘The New Jerusalem’ in Independence, Jackson Co. Mo., this was done at midnight on the 25th and 26th of March 1839.”³⁷ Young and six other members of the Twelve, and about twenty others, did in fact rededicate a temple site and reset the southeast cornerstone on March 25–26, but it was at Far West in Caldwell County, not Independence.³⁸ Regardless, Church of



Photograph 22. View to the east showing the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) temple excavation, ca. 1929–1930. Photograph courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives,

Christ (Temple Lot) officials maintain that both the surveyor's stone and the southeast marker stone are genuine.³⁹ Both stones are prominently displayed in the Church of Christ's (Temple Lot) visitors' center located in the basement of the Independence meetinghouse. In addition, cement markers have also been placed on the temple lot to identify the locations where the stones were discovered.

Photograph 22

The period between the April 1929 conference and ground-breaking ceremony and a special conference of the church in October 1929, was one of great excitement followed by bitter disappointment. Fetting's "Message 12" was received in July 1929. It was interpreted by Fetting as requiring rebaptism of all "transferees" (both old and new) to the Church of Christ, including himself.⁴⁰ This interpretation resulted in Fetting's being "silenced" by the church and dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve.⁴¹ Fetting immediately left the church and started his own "Church of Christ." Approximately one-third of the membership of the church left with him.⁴² This loss resulted in a major setback to the construction of the temple, which excavation was barely underway, as evidenced by this wintertime photograph taken sometime in 1929–30.



Photograph 23. View to the southeast showing the temple lot excavation, 1933. Ed C. Miller photograph, courtesy Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Independence, Missouri.



Photograph 24. View to the east showing the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) excavation, ca. late 1930s or early 1940s. Photograph courtesy of the Wilford C. Wood Foundation, Bountiful, Utah.

Photograph 23

Notwithstanding the disappointment of Fetting's departure from the church, members rallied and continued the excavation process while attempting to raise the necessary money to begin the physical construction of the temple. This "posed for" photograph looking into the excavation, taken in the fall of 1933, clearly shows the progress in completing the preparation for the building's foundational support.⁴³ The photograph is particularly significant because it possibly marks the furthest point in the excavation and construction project (although some additional work was performed in the late summer of 1934).

Photograph 24

Otto Fetting's "Fifth Message" called for the temple on the temple lot to be built in seven years.⁴⁴ However, the project never got any further than the excavation. By the late 1930s, the excavation became a property eyesore, full of loose rock, wild grasses, weeds, and rotting wood, as shown in this photograph by the late Wilford C. Wood of Bountiful, Utah.



Photograph 25. View to the northwest showing the temple excavation, late 1930s to early 1940s. Photograph courtesy Bill Curtis.

Photograph 25

The Great Depression of the 1930s posed a significant problem in accumulating the necessary funds to commence the temple construction. Efforts were specifically made by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) to solicit contributions from other branches of the Restoration, including the LDS and RLDS churches. These efforts proved fruitless. In fact, RLDS Apostle J. F. Curtis, published a sixty-three page pamphlet titled *The Temple of the Lord, Who Shall Build It?* in which he questioned Fetting's "messages," including "the spot" where the temple was to be built, Granville Hedrick's claims as a prophet, and those individuals who had defected from the RLDS church to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot).⁴⁵ In February 1930, RLDS Apostle Joseph Luff proclaimed a revelation directed to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) stating, "The Temple of your proposing ye shall not be permitted to build as ye have planned."⁴⁶ In the LDS Church's October 1929 General Conference, Church authorities Antoine R. Ivins, Charles W. Nibley, and Rudger Clawson spoke out against the Church of Christ (Temple Lot)'s plans to build the temple.⁴⁷ In addition, in an address printed in the July 1930 issue of the *Liahona* magazine published in Independence, LDS Apostle Orson F. Whitney also criticized the proposed plans of Church of Christ (Temple Lot).⁴⁸

Shortly thereafter, in 1931, a revelation given to James E. Yates, an apostle in the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), instructed church members that they should not begin the construction of the temple itself until "the sum of five thousand dollars shall have been accumulated in the treasury."⁴⁹ Efforts to raise the money and to keep the project going continued throughout the 1930s and early 1940s.

The temple project was virtually abandoned by the late 1930s and formally halted in 1943.⁵⁰ In 1946, Church of Christ (Temple Lot) leaders accepted a proposal from the City of Independence to fill in the excavation, and the property soon returned to the condition of the late 1920s, only without most of the trees.⁵¹

Photograph 26

This mid-1950s aerial photograph looking to the east shows the temple lot and surrounding property (probably taken during an April RLDS general conference) a few years after the excavation had been filled in. On close examination, the outline of the filled-in excavation can be seen.



Photograph 26. Aerial view to the east showing the temple lot (including the filled-in excavation) and the surrounding RLDS (Community of Christ) and LDS properties, ca. 1950s. Photograph courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.



Photograph 27. Dedication ceremony of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) marker commemorating the 100th anniversary since the return of church members to Jackson County, 1967. Photograph by Bill Curtis. Inset: Historical marker, 1979. Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh.



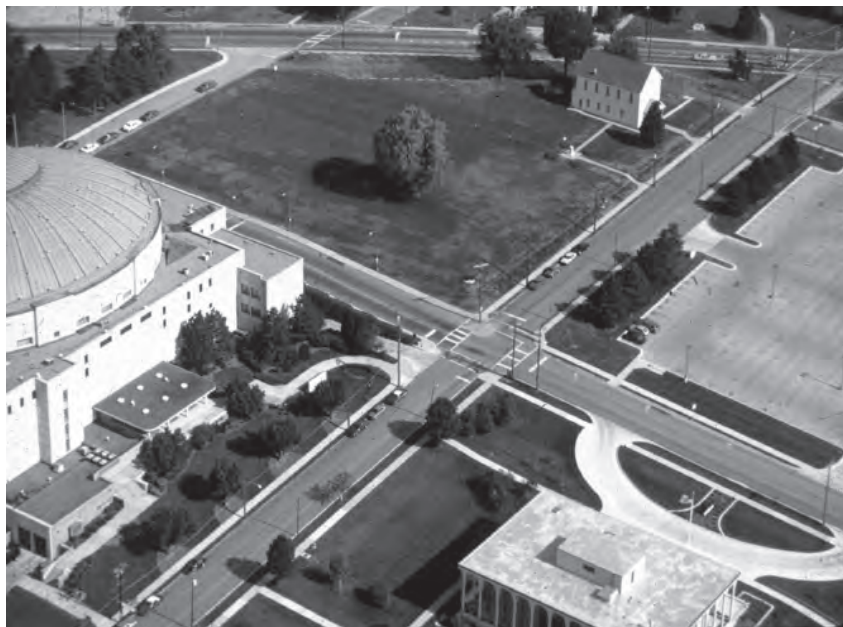
Photograph 28. City of Independence, Missouri, commemorative marker of the temple site, 2002. Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh

Photograph 27

In 1967, the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of the return of church members to Independence in February 1867 under the direction of Granville Hedrick (although evidence suggests that he came later).⁵² As part of the commemoration, a stone obelisk-shaped monument was constructed and dedicated. Pictured in the photograph are Donald W. Housknecht and Clarence L. Wheaton (including Wheaton's wife Angela in the dark dress holding the hymnbook), and church members who provided music for the occasion. During the construction of the 1992 meetinghouse, the obelisk was removed.

Photograph 28

In 1976, as part of the nation-wide commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the American Revolution, the city of Independence placed a historical marker on the east end of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) property. The inscription briefly explains the August 3, 1831 dedication of the site



Photograph 29. Aerial view of the temple lot to the north-northwest, ca. late 1980s.
Photograph courtesy LDS Church Educational System, Salt Lake City, Utah.

by Joseph Smith, and then notes the historical and spiritual significance of the property held by the various Restoration churches that emerged from the original Church of Christ.

Photograph 29

This aerial view of the temple lot from the southeast to the northwest shows the temple lot as it looked in the late 1980s just before the 1990 fire when the 1902 meetinghouse was destroyed. Note that only one of the trees planted in 1883 remained.

Photograph 30

On January 1, 1990, an arsonist once again set fire to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) meetinghouse. The facility also served as the general church headquarters. The resultant damage required the demolition of the entire structure. A new building was decided upon at the April 1990 conference. With donations from members, friends, and other churches, groundbreaking



Photograph 30. View to the north showing the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) meetinghouse on fire, January 1, 1990. Photograph by Merrill Harris, courtesy Bill Curtis.



Photograph 31. View of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) 1992 meetinghouse, east side, May 16, 2002. Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh.



Photograph 32. Aerial view to the east-southeast showing the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) 1992 meetinghouse and surrounding properties, 2001. Photograph courtesy LDS Intellectual Reserve, Salt Lake City, Utah.



Photograph 33 and inset. View to the north showing the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) 1992 meetinghouse and the in-ground marker placed by the Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation (May 25, 2000) situated on the south sidewalk of the temple lot, 2000. Photographs by Alexander L. Baugh.

of the third church to be built on the temple lot was held on Saturday, September 18, 1990.⁵³

Photographs 31 and 32

The third structure to be built on the temple lot is a beautiful yet simple building that blends “in appropriately with its surroundings.”⁵⁴ Dedication of the completed building took place on April 5, 1992.⁵⁵ Like its predecessor, the building also serves as the general church headquarters of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). In addition, the facility also houses a baptismal font, a kitchen and dining area, and a visitors’ center.

Photograph 33 (and inset)

In May 2000, the Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation (MMFF), in cooperation with the City of Independence, installed fourteen in-ground sidewalk historical markers at various localities around the central part of the city as part of the city’s “Missouri Mormon Walking Trail.” Included among the fourteen localities was a marker placed in the south sidewalk of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) property.⁵⁶ The bronze marker includes an illustration of Joseph Smith dedicating the temple site, along with the following inscription: “The Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith and Mormon leaders dedicated this area for construction of a temple, 3 August 1831. A temple complex was envisioned as the center of a city to be called Zion.”

Notes

1. See also Book of Commandments (Zion [Independence]: W. W. Phelps and Company, 1833), 30:7–10; 32:1–6. The revelation appointing Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson as missionaries to Missouri was not included in the 1833 Book of Commandments.

2. It is noteworthy that this section (chapter) of the Doctrine and Covenants is not contained in the 1833 Book of Commandments. The most likely explanations for this omission are that (1) The Book of Commandments was not completed at the time the press was destroyed by a mob in Independence, Missouri, in July of 1833; or (2) the editors/publishers opted not to include it for reason of its sensitivity. The latter conjecture or explanation was suggested to R. Jean Addams by William A. Sheldon, Apostle, Church of Christ, May 2006.

3. *Truth Teller* (Bloomington, Illinois) 1, no. 1 (July 1864): 4.

4. *Truth Teller* 1, no. 1 (July 1864): 4. The deliverance of this revelation “by an angel” does not appear in this 1864 article. Rather, it was provided to the authors by Nicolas F. Denham from his personal reminiscences of the Granville Hedrick family. As a teenager he was shown the bed that Granville Hedrick was sleeping on when “an angel appeared to him and gave him the revelation to return to Jackson County.” R. Jean Addams interview with Nicholas F. Denham, September 2005.

5. B. C. Flint, *An Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot)*, (Independence, Missouri: The Board of Publications, Church of Christ, 1953), 108–09 (hereafter cited as *Outline History*). A vanguard of three families actually purchased property in Jackson County in 1865 and 1866. See Jackson County, Missouri, Property Records, Book 43, 615–16 (J. Hedrick); Book 44, 564–65 (J. Clark); and Book 46, 405–06 (J. Owen), Independence, Missouri.

6. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1971), 1:196.

7. “Plat of Woodson and Maxwell’s addition to the Town of Independence, filed for record March 31, 1851,” Jackson County, Missouri, Property Records, Independence, Missouri, Plat Book 1, 7, Samuel D. Lucas, Clerk. For a historical examination of the acquisition of the temple lot property by the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) see R. Jean Addams, “Reclaiming the Temple Lot in the Center Place of Zion,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 7, nos. 1–2 (Spring-Fall 2006): 7–20. See also Steven L. Shields, “The Temple of the Lord: A History of the Temple of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot),” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 28 (2008): 114–15.

8. Concerning the placement of the northeast cornerstone, John Taylor (not to be confused with Elder John Taylor, Mormon apostle and third president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) testified in the “Temple Lot Case” that “the corner stone was up above the ground that marked the Temple, and I saw it myself with these eyes.” John Taylor testimony as cited in Richard and Pamela Price, *The Temple of The Lord* (Independence, Missouri: Price Publishing Company, 1982), 77.

9. William E. McLellin’s membership in the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) was short-lived, less than five months. He joined the church on June 5, 1869. See Old Record, 28, Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Independence, Missouri; see also William E. McLellin to “Our very dear Friends,” July 12, 1869, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri. McLellin disassociated from the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) on November 3, 1869, Old Record, 33. See also Inez Smith Davis, *The Story of the Church* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1934), 123.

10. Church Record, (Independence, Missouri: Church of Christ [Temple Lot]), 65; cited by Flint, *Outline History*, 114–15.

11. Church Record, (Independence, Missouri: Church of Christ [Temple Lot]), 65; see also Flint, *Outline History*, 115.

12. See Ronald E. Romig, “The Temple Lot Suit After 100 Years,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 12 (1992): 3–15; and S. Patrick Baggett II, “The Temple Lot Case: Fraud in God’s Vineyard,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 23 (2003): 121–36.

13. Three individuals can be positively identified in the photograph. The man on the far left under the tree next to the gate is Richard E. Hill. In front of the fence and next to the dog is James A. Hedrick. On the far right in front of the fence is George D. Cole.

14. The original image was touched up with water colors in the 1940s by Pearl Wilcox, a well-known writer of early Jackson County, Missouri, and Latter Day Saint history. The image has also been printed in Julius C. Billeter, *The Temple of Promise: Jackson County Missouri*, (Independence, Missouri: Zion’s Printing and Press Company, 1946), 122.

15. Fourteen of the fifty-two individuals can be identified in this photograph. The children in the front from left to right are: Grace Cole, Lee Freed, Ira Freed, unidentified, Ralph Hartley, Ada Hartley, and Billie Young. In the center of the photograph, the tallest person on the back row without a hat on between the windows is James A. Hedrick. On Hedrick’s left and also without a hat, but identified with a beard, is George D. Cole. On

Hedrick's right, the gentleman whose hat appears to be touching the corner of the window and is looking to the right is a man by the name of Patterson. On the right side of the photograph, the man without a hat holding his hands in front of him on the second row is Richard E. Hill. The woman standing to the right of Richard Hill who appears in front of the open window is Miriam Haldeman. The man standing at the corner of the building without a hat but holding it in front of him (he's looking partially to his left) is George P. Frisbey. Directly in front of Frisbey, seated on the ground, legs crossed with a derby style hat and bowtie and wearing a mustache, is Charles A. Hall. The portly man on the far right is George Scholy.

16. See Price and Price, *The Temple of the Lord*, 82. In his description of the temple lot Orson Pratt stated: "We commenced to lay the foundation of a temple about three quarters of a mile from Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. It was then (1831) a wilderness, with large trees on the temple block. I visited that place 47 years afterwards, namely a year ago last September, and not a tree was to be found on that temple block—not so much as a stump." Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–1886), 24:24.

17. *The Temple Lot Case* (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1893), 175–76, reprint by Price Publishing Company, 2003.

18. *Jackson Examiner* (Independence, Missouri), December 31, 1898, n. p.; see also *Searchlight* (Independence, Missouri) 3, no. 8 (September 1898): 254.

19. *Searchlight* 1, no. 7 (August 1896): 55.

20. *The Evening and the Morning Star* (Independence, Missouri) 5, no. 2 (March 15, 1902): n. p.

21. Minutes of a Joint Committee, March 5–6, 1900, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

22. Richard Neitzel Holzzapfel, T. Jeffery Cottle, and Ted J. Stoddard, *Church History in Black and White: George Edward Anderson's Photographic Mission to Latter-day Saint Historical Sites* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995), 31. The six photographs Anderson took of the temple site are found on pages 28–29, 33–34, 37–38.

23. Jackson County, Missouri, Property Records, Book B, 1, Independence, Missouri. The exact date of the purchase is noted in the records: "Jones H. Flourney and Clara, his wife . . . to Edward Partridge, 63 and 43/160th acres in Section 3, Township 9, Range 32 . . . dated December 19, 1831."

24. Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Building Committee Report to the Quorum of the Twelve, June 28, 1935, Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Independence, Missouri. The report was signed by E. E. Long, committee chairman, copy in possession of R. Jean Addams.

25. Flint, *Outline History*, 119; see also Shields, "The Temple of the Lord," 115–16.

26. Flint, *Outline History*, 140.

27. Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 8 vols. (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1896), 8:67.

28. *The Word of the Lord* (Independence, Missouri: Church of Christ with the Elijah Message, 1938), 11–12; see also Shields, "The Temple of the Lord," 117–18.

29. Smith and Smith, *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 6:280–82.

30. Flint, *Outline History*, 139. Flint estimates the 1915 membership to be about two hundred. The transfer of members from the RLDS to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) began in 1916 (before the "Agreements of Working Harmony" officially provided for these transfers).

31. See LaMar C. Berrett, *Sacred Places Volume Four: Missouri* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 21. Google Earth gives the elevation of the Jackson County Courthouse lot at 1,044 feet above sea level and the temple lot property at 1,023 feet.

32. *Zion's Advocate* 6, no. 5 (May 1929): 61; see also Billeter, *The Temple of Promise*, 139; and Shields, "The Temple of the Lord," 118–19.

33. Flint, *Outline History*, 141; *Program for the Breaking of the Ground for the Temple*, Church of Christ, Independence, Missouri, April 6, 1929, copy of the program provided to the authors by Geri Adams, Blue Springs, Missouri. Adams is a great-great granddaughter of Granville Hedrick.

34. *Independence Examiner* May 29, 1929, 1; actual date (May 18, 1829) appears in *Zion's Advocate* 7, no. 4 (April 1, 1930): 51.

35. Billeter. *Temple of Promise*, 140.

36. *Zion's Advocate* 7, no. 5 (April 15, 1930): 76; see also Billeter, *Temple of Promise*, 142.

37. John Hyde, *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (New York: W. P. Fetridge & Company, 1857), 139.

38. See Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898*, typescript, Scott G. Kenney, ed., 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-1984), 1:326–27.

39. RLDS Apostle J. F. Curtis raised doubts about its authenticity soon after the discovery. See J. F. Curtis, *The Temple of the Lord: Who Shall Build It?* (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1929), 56–59.

40. *The Word of the Lord*, "Twelfth Message," to Otto Fetting, July 18, 1929 (Independence, Missouri: Church of Christ with the Elijah Message, 1938), 28–32, see verse 4 (hereafter cited as *Word of the Lord*).

41. J. F. Curtis, "October 1929 Special Conference of the Church of Christ," J. F. Curtis Collection, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri. Curtis attended these stormy sessions and took copious notes. See also Shields, "The Temple of the Lord," 122–23.

42. Flint, *Outline History*, 142.

43. *Zion's Advocate* 10, no. 10 (December 1933): 133. The woman seated on the far left is Loviti Gould Siebel, mother of current Church of Christ (Temple Lot) secretary Harvey Seibel.

44. See *Word of the Lord*, "Fifth Message," 16–18.

45. See Curtis, *The Temple of the Lord; Who Shall Build It?*

46. "Revelation Given to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot)" by Joseph Luff, February 19, 1930, Special Collections, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. See also J. F. Curtis Collection, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

47. *Journal History of the Church*, October 6, 1929, 2–5, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Family and Church History Department, Salt Lake City, Utah. The clipping was cut from the *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, Utah, October 7, 1929.

48. See *Liahona: The Elders' Journal* 28, no. 2 (July 8, 1930): 31. This was a publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for the missions of the Church. Whitney's remarks were first delivered in an address on KSL Radio in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Sunday evening, December 1, 1929.

49. *Zion's Advocate* 8, no. 13 (July 1931): 98. This revelation was given to Apostle James E. Yates. Yates had been called to the apostleship at the April 1928 general conference. See *Independence Examiner*, April 10, 1931.

50. *Zion's Advocate* 20, no. 5 (May 1943): 81; see also Billeter, *Temple of Promise*, 146.

51. *Zion's Advocate* 23, no. 5 (May 1946): 71. A resolution was passed by the membership of the church for "grading and beautification of the temple lot." To prepare the site for the excavation in 1929 and 1930, almost all of the trees that had been planted on the temple lot in the 1880s were cut down.

52. See note 7 above.

53. *Zion's Advocate* 67, no. 10 (October 1990): 136.

54. *Zion's Advocate* 67, no. 10 (October 1990): 136.

55. *Zion's Advocate* 69, no. 5 (May 1992): 60.

56. See *Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation Newsletter*, no. 24 (January-July 2000): 1-6.