
“For This Ordinance Belongeth to My House”: The Practice of Baptism for the Dead Outside the Nauvoo Temple

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The *Elders' Journal* of July 1838, published in Far West, Missouri, included a series of twenty questions related to Mormonism. The answers to the questions bear the editorial pen of Joseph Smith. Question number sixteen posed the following query: “If the Mormon doctrine is true, what has become of all those who have died since the days of the apostles?” The Prophet answered, “All those who have not had an opportunity of hearing the gospel, *and being administered to by an inspired man in the flesh*, must have it hereafter before they can be finally judged.”¹ The Prophet’s thought is clear—the dead must have someone in mortality administer the saving ordinances for them to be saved in the kingdom of God. Significantly, the answer given by the Prophet marks his first known statement concerning the doctrine of vicarious work for the dead. However, it was not until more than two years later that the principle was put into practice.²

On 15 August 1840, Joseph Smith preached the funeral sermon of Seymour Brunson during which time he declared for the first time the doctrine of baptism for the dead.³ Unfortunately, there are no contemporary accounts of the Prophet’s discourse. However, Simon Baker was present at the funeral services and later stated that during the meeting the Prophet read extensively from 1 Corinthians 15, then noted a particular widow in the congregation whose son had died without baptism. After referring to the statement Jesus made to Nicodemus that a man must be born of the water

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and of the spirit, Baker recalled the Prophet saying that the Saints “could now act for their friends who had departed this life, and that the plan of salvation was calculated to save all who were willing to obey the requirements of the law of God.”⁴



South end of Main Street, Nauvoo, Illinois, with the Mississippi River and Lake Cooper formed by the Keokuk Dam in the background (2002). In the 1840s, this location was of four riverboat landings in the Nauvoo area. Baptisms, both for the living and the dead, are known to have been performed at this location. Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh.

It is not known precisely when the first proxy baptism or baptisms were performed, however, the first documented baptism for the dead was performed on 12 September 1840. On that occasion Jane Neyman requested that Harvey Olmstead baptize her in behalf of her deceased son Cyrus Livingston Neyman. Vienna Jacques witnessed the proxy baptism by riding into the Mississippi River on horseback to hear and observe the ceremony. A short while later, upon learning the words Olmstead used in performing the baptism, Joseph Smith gave his approval of the ordinance.⁵

In the early 1840s, Nauvoo had four landing sites—the Upper Stone House Landing, the Kimball Wharf, the Lower Stone House Landing, and the Main Street Dock near Joseph Smith’s Homestead and later the Nauvoo House.⁶ Each of these locations likely would have provided a suitable place

for baptisms to be performed, although the ordinance was conducted at any number of locations near the riverbank. Traditionally, the Main Street Landing has been the site generally believed to be where baptism, both for the living and the dead, was performed most frequently.

There is a good possibility that Alvin Smith, Joseph Smith's older brother who died in November 1823, was one of the first deceased persons to have his baptismal work performed. Lucy Mack Smith recalled that just prior to her husband's death, Joseph told his father, "that it was . . . the privilege of the Saints to be baptized for the dead," whereupon Joseph Sr., requested that, "Joseph be baptized for Alvin immediately."⁷ Significantly, Joseph Sr., died on 14 September 1840, less than a month after the Prophet first taught the doctrine of baptism for the dead and only two days after Jane Neyman was baptized in behalf of her deceased son. If Joseph and the Smith family were true to their father's request that Alvin's baptism be done "immediately," the likelihood exists that it was performed sometime around mid-September. The record containing the early proxy ordinance information indicates that Hyrum acted as proxy (not Joseph, as Father Smith requested), but does not give any other date than the year 1840.⁸ The ordinance was performed for Alvin a second time, again by Hyrum in 1841, and was probably done after the font was completed and dedicated in the basement of the Temple.⁹ A friend and contemporary of the Prophet, Aroet Hale, stated that Joseph Smith instructed the Saints, "to have the work done over as quick as the temple was finished, when it could be done more perfect."¹⁰

Developmental Beginnings

The early practice and procedure of baptism for the dead during the Nauvoo years was developmental and not as clearly defined as it is today. For example, first, in the case of the Neymans, a female was baptized for a male. Second, though a witness was present (Vienna Jacques), the individual was not a priesthood holder. Third, no mention is made of a confirmation following the baptism (although there may have been one, perhaps soon after the baptism or sometime later). Fourth, no "official" baptismal record is known to exist. Finally, the ordinance was performed in the Mississippi River, not in a temple font. In consideration of these irregularities, in 1873 Brigham Young reported the following:

When Joseph received the revelation that we have in our possession concerning the dead, the subject was opened to him, not in full but in part, and he kept on receiving. When he had first received the knowledge by the spirit of revelation how the dead could be officiated for, there are brethren and sisters here, I can see quite a number here who were in Nauvoo, and you recollect that when this doctrine was

first revealed and in hurrying in the administration of baptism for the dead, that sisters were baptized for their male friends, were baptized for their fathers, their grandfathers, their mothers and their grandmothers, &c. I just mention this so that you will come to understanding, that as we knew nothing about this matter at first, the old Saints recollect, there was little by little given, and the subject was made plain, but little was given at once. Consequently, in the first place people were baptized for their friends and no record was kept. Joseph afterwards kept a record, &c. Then women were baptized for men and men for women.¹¹

Thus, Joseph Smith gave additional instructions to the Saints concerning baptism for the dead as he came to more fully understand the principle. By September 1842, a little more than two years after his first discourse on the subject, his words and teachings reveal that he had gained a profound theological and symbolic understanding of proxy baptism (see D&C 128:1–18). With this increased understanding came the need to be more procedurally correct in the performance of the ordinance; hence, instruction was given that a recorder be present to properly record and archive the ordinance (see D&C 127:5–9).¹²

As indicated, the first proxy baptisms were performed in Nauvoo in the Mississippi River. In the first revelatory instruction concerning baptism for the dead, given in 19 January 1841—five months after the first baptisms for the dead were performed—the Saints were instructed that this practice would be temporary. “For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for the dead—For this ordinance belongeth to my house, and cannot be acceptable to me, only in the days of your poverty, wherein ye are not able to build a house unto me” (D&C 124:29–30; see also vv. 31–34). In essence, the revelation allowed a provision for the performance of the ordinance outside the temple until a font could be completed and placed in the temple, or the temple itself was completed.

The Saints enthusiastically embraced the doctrine and practice. Examining the records of baptisms for the dead performed in 1841, M. Guy Bishop calculated that 6,818 baptism for the dead were performed.¹³ Furthermore, considering the fact that baptisms for the dead were not performed in the Nauvoo Temple until 21 November, the majority of the baptisms performed in 1841 would likely have been river baptisms. Bishop also notes that in 1841 the most active Latter-day Saint proxy was Nehemiah Brush who was baptized for more than one hundred deceased relatives and friends. The most baptized woman was Sarah M. Cleveland, who performed the saving ordinance for forty deceased persons.¹⁴

Several individuals recorded their experiences and first impressions of participating in the new practice. “I saw the Elders baptizing for the dead in the Mississippi River,” Robert Horne wrote. “This was something new to me



*The Mississippi River, looking east towards Nauvoo.
Courtesy of LDS Church Archives.*

and the beauty of this great principle dawned upon me. I had never heard of such a doctrine then. Orson Pratt was baptizing. Brother Joseph stood on the banks.”¹⁵ Aroet Hale remembered Joseph Smith performing more than two hundred baptisms in the Mississippi River. “Then the apostles and other elders went into the river and continued the same ordinance. Hundreds were baptized there.”¹⁶ Wilford Woodruff stated that Joseph Smith “went into the Mississippi River, and so did I, as well as others, and we each baptized a hundred for the dead.”¹⁷ Interestingly, while the Prophet was known to have officiated in performing the ordinance, there is no record that he ever participated as a proxy.¹⁸

Baptism for the Dead Practiced Outside Nauvoo

A significant part of D&C Section 124 often overlooked is a provision in the revelation allowing for the Saints living outside Nauvoo to temporarily perform the ordinance. The revelation stated, “And after this time [after the Saints had a sufficient time to complete a place in the temple to perform baptisms], your baptisms for the dead *by those who are scattered abroad*, are not acceptable unto me, saith the Lord. For it is ordained that in Zion, and in her stakes, and in Jerusalem, those places which I have appointed for refuge, shall be the places for your baptisms for the dead” (D&C 124:35–36; emphasis added).

Historical sources reveal that baptisms for the dead were indeed performed by Latter-day Saints living in areas other than Nauvoo. For example, on 9 November 1840, a meeting was held at the home of Melvin Wilbur in Quincy in Adams County, Illinois. Somewhere near the Wilbur property, perhaps in the Mississippi River, Ezra T. Benson was baptized for his deceased brother John Benson.¹⁹ At this same time, members of the Lima/Yelrome branch, situated just a few miles north of Quincy, were also performing the ordinance. On 7 November 1840, John Murdock, Gardner Snow, Edmund Durfee, Albert Miner, Levi Osgood, Joseph Allen, Lane Durfee, Lydia B. English, and Sarah Weston, “performed baptisms for their dead friends.” One week later, on 14 November, the ordinance was attended to again by six branch members.²⁰ The fact that there is evidence showing that Latter-day Saints were performing baptisms for the dead in these outlying areas, suggests that Mormons in other settlement communities such as Montrose, Nashville, Ramus, LaHarpe, and Plymouth, may have also engaged in the practice.

Baptism for the dead was also practiced in Kirtland, Ohio. In fact, it was probably due to problems associated with the leadership of the Church in Kirtland that the practice of baptism for the dead outside the temple was cut short. During the Church’s October 1840 general conference held in Nauvoo, Almon W. Babbitt was appointed to preside as stake president over approximately three to four hundred Latter-day Saints still residing in Kirtland.²¹ At the time of the conference, it had only been six weeks since Joseph Smith had first publically revealed the doctrine of baptism for the dead, and during one of the sessions the Prophet delivered another major discourse on the subject.²² Clearly, Babbitt knew of the doctrine before leaving Nauvoo and then taught the principle to the Ohio Saints after his arrival. On 23 May 1841, during a conference in Kirtland at which he presided, Babbitt entertained the subject. The minutes of the conference include the following report: “Elder Babbitt delivered a discourse on baptism for the dead, from 1 Peter 4:6, to a very large audience, setting forth that doctrine as compatible with the mercy of God, and grand council of heaven.” W. W. Phelps, the conference clerk, followed Babbitt and “continued the same subject from 1 Corinthians 15:22, bringing scripture upon scripture to prove the consistency of this doctrine.”²³ The conference minutes end with the following entry: “About 25 baptisms took place, the most of which were for the dead.”²⁴ During the years the Church was in Ohio, a small dam was situated across a portion of the east branch of the Chagrin River in the Kirtland Flats area; the baptisms likely took place there.

Evidence that Latter-day Saints indeed practiced baptism for the dead in Kirtland in the early 1840s is also supported by Alfred Holbrook, a non-

Latter-day Saint who lived in the Kirtland area. In constructing his memoirs, Holbrook remembered the Saints instituting the practice in Kirtland but observed that the doctrine was rather strange to him, noting that “it seemed to me and others that this was running baptism into the ground.”²⁵

It is not known to what extent baptisms for the dead were performed in Kirtland, but the practice was relatively short-lived. Contrary to the First Presidency’s counsel, Babbitt began preaching and promoting Kirtland, rather than Nauvoo, as the main gathering place. News of Babbitt’s countermanding reached Church leaders in Nauvoo and was likely a primary reason why on 2 October 1841, during a general conference of the Church in Nauvoo, Babbitt was disfellowshipped.²⁶ Then, the following day, the Prophet announced, “There shall be no more baptisms for the dead, until the ordinance can be attended to in the Lord’s House. . . . *For thus saith the Lord!*”²⁷ Four weeks later, on 31 October, Hyrum Smith, representing the First Presidency, addressed a letter to the Kirtland Saints in which he encouraged them to move to Nauvoo so that “the House of the Lord and the baptismal font shall be finished” and then added with possible reference to proxy work that “any proceedings of the Saints otherwise than to put forth their hands with their might to do this work, is not according to the will of God.”²⁸ In short, Babbitt’s conduct and the lack of confidence exhibited by Church leaders in his leadership contributed to the cessation of the practice of baptism for the dead outside the temple both in Nauvoo and the surrounding Mormon settlements, and Kirtland.²⁹

In total, the allowance and practice of performing proxy baptisms outside the temple lasted approximately thirteen and one-half months (15 August 1840–3 October 1841). With the announcement that such a practice must cease, the Saints in Nauvoo moved quickly to comply with Joseph Smith’s directive. On 8 November 1841, Brigham Young dedicated a temporary wooden baptismal font in the basement of the unfinished temple.³⁰ Less than two weeks later, on 21 November, the first baptisms for the dead were performed in the temple by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor, who performed the ordinance for approximately forty deceased persons. Willard Richards, George A. Smith, and Wilford Woodruff performed the confirmations.³¹ Sometime in late 1845, a stone font replaced the wooden one.³²

Although the Saints were instructed not to perform proxy baptisms outside the temple after the October 1841 conference, a few recorded instances were found showing that there were exceptions to the policy. Charlotte Haven, a non-Latter-day Saint who lived in Nauvoo in 1842-43, wrote a letter to her family in the east describing a baptismal service she observed being performed in behalf of the dead. In the letter, dated 2 May 1843, she wrote:

Last Sunday morning . . . was a balmy spring day, so we took a bee-line for the river, down the street north of our house. Arriving there we rested a while on a log, watching the thin sheets of ice as they slowly came down and floated by. Then we followed the bank toward town, and rounding a little point covered with willows and cottonwoods, we spied quite a crowd of people, and soon perceived there was a baptism. Two elders stood knee-deep in the ice-cold water, and immersed one another as fast as they could come down the bank. We soon observed that some of them went in and were plunged several times. We were told that they were baptized for the dead who had not had an opportunity of adopting the doctrines of the Latter Day Saints. So these poor mortals in ice-cold water were releasing their ancestors and relatives from purgatory! We drew a little nearer and heard several names repeated by the elders as the victims were doused, and you can imagine our surprise when the name George Washington was called. So after these fifty years he is out of purgatory and on his way to the "celestial" heaven! It was enough and we continued our walk homeward.³³

Wilford Woodruff recorded two instances where he and others performed baptisms for the dead outside the temple after the October 1841 injunction. The first of these occurred on 26 August 1844. He recorded in his journal that he and his wife Phoebe, "went to the River in company with Mrs. Woodruff to be baptized for some of our dead friends." He continued, "I was baptized for five of my friends under hands of G. A. Smith & confirmed under the hands of Elder Richards." He then notes the names for whom he was baptized, each of whom were his relatives. Phoebe was also baptized for five deceased persons who were members of her family.³⁴ Even though the temple's wooden font was in place in November 1841, and the stone font in use in late 1845, ongoing construction probably prohibited use of the baptistry at times, thereby necessitating the need to perform the ordinance elsewhere.

Post-Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead

Following the Nauvoo exodus, with the exception of three documented instances, baptism for the dead was not practiced again until 1867. The first of these occurred on 4 April 1848. While in Iowa, just prior to his return trip to the Salt Lake Valley, Wilford Woodruff performed nine baptisms for deceased persons in the Missouri River, followed by four confirmations.³⁵ On 21 August 1855, Margaret E. Moffatt was baptized and confirmed for Lyrena Evans Moffatt by Ezra T. Benson in City Creek in Salt Lake City. Two years later, on 23 October 1857, Nancy Kent was baptized for Nabby Howe, and Fanny Smith was baptized for Nabby Young, with John and Joseph Young officiating.³⁶ These two baptisms took place in the baptismal font affixed to the Endowment House in Salt Lake City.³⁷

Beginning in 1867, Church leaders once again allowed members to perform baptisms for the dead in the Endowment House font. This practice continued for a period of nine years (1867-76) until the completion and dedication of the St. George Temple in 1877. One example of this is the case of Martin Harris, one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. On 29 August 1870, Harris arrived in Utah. During the first week of September he met with several Church leaders who instructed him concerning some of the doctrines that had been revealed since his disaffection from the Church in late 1837, including the principle of baptism for the dead. Following his own rebaptism by Edward Stevenson and reconfirmation by Orson Pratt, “he returned into the font and was baptized for several of his dead friends—fathers, grandfathers, etc. . . . [and] his sister also was baptized for the female relatives, and they were confirmed for and in behalf of those whom they were baptized for, by . . . Jos. F. Smith being mouth.”³⁸

With the completion of the St. George Temple, all of the ordinances for the dead, including priesthood ordinations, endowments, and sealings, could be administered. Thereafter, the practice of performing temple ordinances, including baptism for the dead outside the temple, came to a permanent end.

Notes

1. *Elders' Journal of The Church of the Latter Day Saints*, 1 (July 1838): 43; emphasis added.

2. The Prophet's initial understanding of vicarious work for the dead may have come to him as a result of the vision he received in January 1836 concerning his older brother Alvin, who had died in 1823, prior to the restoration of the gospel (D&C 137). In the vision, Joseph stated that he saw Alvin in the celestial kingdom, but wondered how he could have received such an inheritance without having received baptism under the proper authority (v. 6). It was then revealed to him that all those who died prior to the gospel being on the earth and all who would die henceforth without a knowledge of the gospel would be heirs of the celestial kingdom (vv. 7–8). With this revelation as a backdrop, the Prophet probably came to understand that while the gospel could be received by the dead following their departure from this life, the ordinance work must be performed for them by someone living in mortality.

3. Seymour Brunson died on 10 August 1840. See *Times and Seasons* 1 (September 1840): 176; and Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed B. H. Roberts, 2d. ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 4:179 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*). The date of 15 August 1840 is usually given as the date for Brunson's funeral. See *Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 15 August 1840, LDS Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as *Journal History*). Don F. Colvin gives 10 August 1840 (Brunson's death date) as the funeral date. See Don F. Colvin, *Nauwoo Temple: A Story of Faith* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002), 83. In a 19 October 1840 letter to the Twelve, the majority of

whom were serving in Great Britain, Joseph Smith stated that he first taught the doctrine while preaching Brunson's funeral sermon. See *History of the Church*, 4:231. Brunson joined the Church in Ohio in January 1831. He played an active role as captain in the Caldwell County militia during the 1838 Mormon conflict in Missouri. At the time of his death, he was a devoted friend of Joseph Smith and a member of the Nauvoo high council. See "A Short Sketch of Seymour Brunson, Sr.," *Nauvoo Journal* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 3–5.

4. Simon Baker, Statement, in *Journal History*, 15 August 1840; also cited in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 49 note 1.

5. See Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, Book A, attached note, microfilm no. 183,376, LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. See also, Jane Neyman and Vienna Jacques, Statement, 29 November 1854, in *Journal History*, 15 August 1840. The *Journal History* gives the name spelling N-e-y-m-o-n.

6. See LaMar C. Berrett, Keith W. Perkins, and Donald Q. Cannon, *Sacred Places, Ohio and Illinois: A Comprehensive Guide to Early LDS Historical Sites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 104-105, 115-17, 133-34, 195-96.

7. Lucy Mack Smith, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 714.

8. Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, Book A, 145.

9. Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, Book A, 149.

10. Aroet Lucious Hale, "Diary of Aroet Lucious Hale, 1828-1849," typescript, 8, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, spelling and capitalization corrected. Although the document is titled as a diary, it is actually an autobiography.

11. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: F. D. Richards, 1854-86), 16:165. Wilford Woodruff later recalled, "When that [baptism for the dead] was first revealed . . . a man would be baptized for both male and female [but] afterward we obtained more light upon the subject and President Young taught the people that men should attend to those ordinances for the male portion of their dead friends and females for females." *Journal History*, 9 April 1857; as cited in M. Guy Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers?: Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 87.

12. Between August 1840 and September 1842, Joseph Smith addressed the Saints on the subject of baptism for the dead on at least eight occasions. See Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 37 (15 August 1840); 38 (4 October 1840); 70 (8 April 1841); 71 (11 April 1841); 77–79 (3 October 1841); 109–10 (27 March 1842); 111 (7 April 1842); 131 (31 August 1842). In 1843–44, the Prophet addressed the subject on only four occasions. See Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 210–11, 213 (11 June 1843); 333 (10 March 1844); 362–65 (8 April 1844); 368, 370–72 (12 May 1844).

13. Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers?" 88-89. Since instructions regarding accurate record-keeping were not in place at that time, the 6,818 figure would have been larger.

14. Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers?" 90.

15. "Reminiscences of the Church in Nauvoo," *Millennial Star* 55 (4 September 1893): 585.

16. Hale, "Diary," 8, spelling and capitalization corrected.

17. Wilford Woodruff, "The Law of Adoption," 8 April 1894 General Conference Address, in Brian H. Stuy, ed., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. (Burbank, California, and Woodland Hills, Utah: B. H. S. Publishing, 1987-1992), 4:71.

18. Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers?" 92.

19. Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead, Book A, attached note. See also, A Record of the Branch in Quincy, 9 November and 15 November 1840, Church Archives; Richard E. Bennett, "Quincy—The Home of Our Adoption: A Study of the Mormons in Quincy, Illinois, 1838-40," *Mormon Historical Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 115; also in Susan Easton Black and Richard E. Bennett, *A City of Refuge: Quincy, Illinois* (Salt Lake City: Millennial Press, 2000), 101; and Bishop, "What Has Become of Our Fathers?" 87-88.

20. "Early Branches (Lima, Adams, Illinois to Mendon Monroe, New York)," *The Nauvoo Journal* 3, (April 1991): 24. I have corrected the spelling of the Durfee's.

21. *History of the Church*, 4:204.

22. *History of the Church*, 4:206.

23. "Minutes of a Conference, Held in Kirtland, Ohio, May 22nd 1841," *Times and Seasons* 2 (1 July 1841): 459, also in Lyndon W. Cook and Milton V. Backman, Jr., eds., *Kirtland Elders' Quorum Record, 1836-1841* (Provo: Grandin Book, 1985), 58.

24. "Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 2 (1 July 1841): 460; also in Cook and Backman, *Kirtland Elders' Quorum Record*, 59.

25. Alfred Holbrook, *Reminiscences of the Happy Life of a Teacher* (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing Company, 1885), 223. Holbrook claims the Mormon practice of baptism for the dead was introduced and took place in Kirtland while Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were residing there (i.e., before 1838). This is an obvious error, since the practice did not begin until May 1841, more than three years after the Prophet and Rigdon left northeastern Ohio. However, the fact that Holbrook had any knowledge of it whatsoever indicates that he was at least aware that it was practiced by the Saints there.

26. *History of the Church*, 4:424.

27. *History of the Church*, 4:426.

28. *History of the Church*, 4:443-44.

29. For a brief discussion of Kirtland under Babbitt's leadership, see Davis Bitton, "The Waning of Mormon Kirtland," *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 456-57. Biographical information on Babbitt's life and church involvement is found in Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 1:284-86; and A. Gary Anderson, "Almon W. Babbitt and the Golden Calf," in H. Dean Garrett, ed., *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Illinois* (Provo: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1995), 35-54.

30. *History of the Church*, 4:446.31. *History of the Church*, 4:454.

32. The *Times and Seasons* reported in January 1846, that "The Font, standing upon the twelve stone oxen, is about ready." *Times and Seasons* 6 (20 January 1846): 1096. However, Virginia S., and J. C. Harrington, in their report of the archaeological investigations of the Nauvoo Temple property give evidence showing the stone font was probably being used in late 1845. See Virginia S. and J. C. Harrington, *Rediscovery of the Nauvoo Temple: Report on Archaeological Excavations* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1971), 33.

33. Charlotte Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine* 16, no. 96 (December 1890): 629-30.

34. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-1984), 2:455. On this occa-

sion, both Wilford and Phoebe were rebaptized for relatives for whom they had previously been baptized for on 29 May and 25 August 1842. See Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:177, 204.

35. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:336.

36. Endowment House Baptisms for the Dead, 1867, 1-2, microfilm no. 183,382, LDS Family History Library, copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. The baptism and confirmation information of Lyrena Evans Moffatt, Nabby Howe, and Nabby Young are the first three that appear in the 1867 register.

37. The Endowment House was dedicated on 5 May 1855. The font was dedicated on 2 October 1856. See Richard O. Cowan, *Temples to Dot the Earth* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994), 69. See also, A. William Lund, "The Endowment House," *Improvement Era* 39, no. 4 (April 1936): 213.

38. *Deseret Evening News*, 5 September 1870; also in Edward Stevenson, "One of the Three Witnesses: Incidents in the Life of Martin Harris," *Millennial Star* 44 (6 February 1882): 87. Concerning the proxy baptisms done in the Endowment House, Brigham Young stated in 1873: "We can, at the present time, go into the Endowment House and be baptized for the dead, receive our washings and anointing, etc., for there we have a font that has been erected, dedicated expressly for baptizing people for the remission of sins, for their health and for their dead friends." *Journal of Discourses*, 16:186.