

I well remember driving into Nauvoo one afternoon, some ten years ago. I was on my first research trip to that historic place. As I rounded the bend, passed Nauvoo State Park, and turned right onto Mulholland, a strange feeling came over me. I felt as if I had been there before, as if I were seeing the town again and not viewing it for the first time. I felt like I was “coming home.” My sister Leslie, who was with me, also had the same impressions. That evening, she telephoned her husband and said, “Sell the house and bring the camper. I’m not leaving here!” Since that visit, I have returned to Nauvoo several times. Each time, I am greeted with the same sensation.

During the past few months, thousands of people have made the historic trek to Nauvoo to witness the building of the “new” Nauvoo temple or to visit the open house for the temple prior to its dedication. A relative from Omaha, Nebraska was one of the guides for the open house. Upon returning to Omaha, she excitedly phoned me. “I knew that this was a new building,” she said, “but, it seemed like it had always been there.”

The spirit of Nauvoo and the temple *has* always been there, as well as the spirit of the men, women, and children who lived, died, worked, and played in the City of Joseph.

This issue of *Mormon Historical Studies* pays tribute to those early Saints. In the first article, “Telling the Nauvoo Story,” Kenneth Godfrey introduces us to the many books and publications written about Nauvoo, then he makes suggestions of areas where more research needs to be done.

Three papers look at life in Nauvoo. Arnold Garr’s “Joseph Smith, Nauvoo Mayor,” shows Joseph in his role as a government figure, not in his calling as prophet and president of the church. In “Preparing Kingdom-Bearers: Educating the Children of Nauvoo,” Brian Jackson discusses the importance of education in Nauvoo and shows that the goals set in place there were carried with the Saints as they traveled westward. Alexander Baugh sheds new light on early practice of baptism for the dead, with his paper, “The Practice of Baptism for the Dead Outside Temples.”

Two important articles focus on the Smith family. Kyle Walker edits two letters from Joseph's sisters, in "Joseph Smith's Sisters' Views of Succession: Katharine Smith Salisbury and Lucy Smith Millikin's Letters to Their Utah Nephews." The other paper details the quest of Robert Talbot to identify a small daguerreotype in his mother's possession in "The Discovery and Identification of a Frederick Granger Williams Smith Daguerreotype."

The story of the temple drawings of William Weeks and their return to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake by a young missionary, Vern Thacker, has been told many times recently. Marjory Bennion adds new insight to this story, through her chance meeting with one of the Weeks' descendants and thorough family photographs.

One traumatic aspect of life in old Nauvoo was the almost daily occurrence of death. Fred Woods has transcribed over 800 names found in William Huntington's "Nauvoo Death Register" for our Historic Research Index section. He has also created a graph showing the identification of each cause of death, and how often the deaths occurred. This is a wonderful new tool for family and historical research.

In June this year I visited Stanley Kimball at his home in St. George, Utah, where he moved after living and teaching in Illinois for forty-one years. He is one of the most well-known and loved historians of the church and of historic western trails. My interview with Stan adds to the continuing effort of *Mormon Historical Studies* to say "thank you" for the dedication and passion of our "tried and true" historians.

Two book reviews complete our issue: Lavina Fielding Anderson comments on *Gathering to Nauvoo*, by Fred E. Woods (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2001). Richard Bennett offers his review of *Obscure Believers: The Mormon Schism of Alpheus Cutler*, by Biloine Whiting Young (St. Paul, Minnesota: Pogo Press, 2002).

The story of Nauvoo is old and it is new. Even though some stories have been told many times, continuing research brings out new ideas and information. Other accounts are miraculously discovered and told for the first time. We have provided both old and new in these pages. We invite you, our readers, to feel the "spirit of old Nauvoo," as you read our offerings in this issue, and we invite you to "come home," again, to the City Beautiful, City of Joseph, Nauvoo, Illinois.

Maurine Carr Ward, editor