

Joseph Smith and the United Firm

The Growth and Decline of the Church's First Master Plan of Business and Finance, Ohio and Missouri, 1832–1834

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A year after Joseph Smith organized the Church, the young prophet began to gather about him a management team that helped direct the Church's early business affairs. These officers assisted him before the principal quorums of Church leadership were formed or fully developed. This growing board of managers printed the first collection of Joseph Smith's revelations; planned for the new city of Zion and its temples, as it did for Kirtland; operated the Lord's storehouses; and fostered other commercial interests. These members, directed by revelations given to Joseph Smith, formed a sometimes little-understood business partnership or firm through which they functioned. Diverse aspects of the firm are here brought together to enable those interested in early Church history to better understand it as a whole. Thus, to examine the wide scope of the firm, its influence, and particularly the complex revelation (now D&C 104) that discontinued it is the focus of this article.

While Latter-day Saints may not typically think of Joseph Smith as an energetic businessman or an assertive entrepreneur, multiple business interests captured his attention beginning shortly after the Church was organized. By February 1831 in Kirtland, Ohio, he began to inquire about economic matters, and by July, the twenty-five-year-old Joseph Smith embarked on a path of land acquisition, community planning, and other commercial ventures. He operated his businesses under the principles of consecration and stewardship and coordinated his enterprises through a business management company he named the United Firm. He supervised the firm by revelation, including a final lengthy revelation in April 1834

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that terminated the company.¹ Most of the revelations about the firm he then published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, cautiously substituting an array of replacement words or unusual pseudonyms not found in their manuscript copies. These words, which had a tendency to obscure the company's activities, replaced the names of the firm's officers, businesses, and operational details. Most notably, the Church leader replaced the company's name with what Orson Pratt called a new "fictitious" title—the United Order. And, using another pseudonym, Joseph renamed the revelation that terminated the firm "Revelation given to Enoch," which later added to its misunderstanding. Confusion increased, inadvertently perhaps, when in territorial Utah, Brigham Young borrowed the firm's pseudonym for a new pioneer enterprise of his own—the Utah United Order. For some, Brigham's reuse of the substitute title colored their interpretation of Joseph Smith's already enigmatic organization. The purpose, therefore, of this discussion of the United Firm—including the text and annotation of the revelation that disbanded it—is to affirm its existence as a business partnership and to better understand Joseph Smith as the manager of an extensive though troubled business enterprise.

A Lengthy and Complex Revelation

The United Firm emerged in 1832 when Joseph Smith and other Church leaders gathered at Independence, Missouri, and founded a branch mercantile business. They joined the new branch with an already established business in Kirtland and named the unified enterprise the United Firm. While functioning privately, the officers of the firm supervised these and other properties in Ohio and Missouri under a strict but tenuous

1. Though several writers have discussed the revelation that ended the United Firm, currently the most insightful treatment of the revelation and of the United Firm itself is Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1985), 43–70; and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Provo, Utah: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981), 167–69, 210–12. Others who comment on the United Firm with awareness of its existence are Mark L. Staker, "'Thou Art the Man': Newel K. Whitney in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 42, no. 1 (2003): 107–12; Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 182, 235; Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (1984; reprint, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, and Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 34 n. 47, 277; Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 31; Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 71, 144; Mario S. De Pillis, "The Development of Mormon Communitarianism, 1826–1846" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1960), 170–99.

spiritual bond. Then, after the firm had experienced two years of lively financial activity, debt encroached, and Joseph Smith received a revelation on April 23, 1834, to retrench and set the firm in order. This lengthy revelation, Doctrine and Covenants 104, directed the Prophet to terminate the firm as then organized and redistribute its Kirtland business properties and urban and rural real estate to its officers for their own use or management. While naming the properties, the revelation provides readers with a rich inventory of the company's Kirtland holdings. Although the revelation did not include the properties located in Missouri, all of the firm's properties will be considered.

The revelation also separated the growing branch of the United Firm at Kirtland from the branch in Missouri. It affirmed the owners of the Church's new publishing business in Kirtland, which Joseph referred to as the "literary firm," and it assigned business and residential lots to some of its officers. It also assigned to Joseph Smith a large temple lot, which had been selected to accommodate three "houses" of the Lord. It granted authority to another officer to sell city lots in the expanding Latter-day Saint community and planned a treasury for the now separate United Firm at Kirtland. The revelation also expressed disapproval and marked chagrin over unnamed officers of the firm because problems arose from their sometimes discordant leadership, but it ended agreeably while encouraging the leaders in their future pursuits.

The revelation as recorded in our current edition of the Doctrine and Covenants is used here for convenience, but the full text of the annotated revelation (pp. 41–57 herein) is taken from its earliest known manuscript, written April 26, 1834, by Orson Pratt under the direction of Joseph Smith (three days after the Prophet received it).² Pratt copied the revelation from its original transcription (now lost) into a book currently designated as Book C, the third of three manuscript notebooks containing an intermediate copy of the revelations of the Ohio and Missouri period.³ The first of the three notebooks bears on the worn cardboard cover the title "Book of Commandments Law and Covenants," and inside the cover is written faintly, "Orson Hyde Bk A." Hyde was Joseph Smith's principal scribe in

2. Orson Pratt, "Second Book of Orson," 78, Orson Pratt Papers, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives).

3. After copying the revelation into Book C, Pratt wrote at the end of the revelation, "copied from the original by O. Pratt." Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, C, 43, Revelation Collection, Church Archives.

recording these revelations into the three notebooks.⁴ Four months after Pratt recorded the revelation into Book C, Orson Hyde copied it and other revelations from there into the larger and better-known “Kirtland Revelation Book,” sometimes used as an early source for publication.⁵ At the end of this revelation in the larger record, Hyde wrote, “Recorded by O. Hyde 18 Augt. 1834 upon this Book.”⁶

The Beginning: Three Early Commanding Interests of Joseph Smith

In 1831, following a revelation that directed the Saints to gather to Ohio from New York, Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland about the first of February with Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, Ohioans who had gone to New York to meet him.⁷ Once in Ohio, the Prophet attended to three emerging Church interests: economics, Zion’s location, and the publication of his revelations.

An Economic Plan for Zion. On February 9, just five days after appointing Partridge, a Painesville merchant, to be the Church’s first bishop, Joseph Smith received a revelation containing an economic plan of operation based upon frugality, industry, virtuous living, and certain core management principles of consecration and stewardship, precepts he believed would be necessary in building Zion, the millennial New Jerusalem. This economic plan was part of an extensive revelation known as “the law,” given for the government of the Saints.⁸ The plan directed the faithful who would gather to Zion—soon to be identified as being in western Missouri—to consecrate or grant their property by certificate to Bishop Partridge, the Church agent there over temporal affairs. Then, Bishop Partridge would return to them as stewards their personal property, adding tracts of agricultural land by lease, to provide them stewardships

4. The three notebooks contain thirty-one revelations. Orson Hyde was scribe to Joseph Smith from June 6, 1833, to January 21, 1836. Dean C. Jessee, “The Writing of Joseph Smith’s History,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 444.

5. On its front cover and spine, this record also bears the titles “Book of Revelations” and “Kirtland Revelations,” respectively. Kirtland Revelation Book, Revelation Collection, Church Archives. For a review of the Kirtland Revelation Book and the thirty-five revelations it contains, see Earl E. Olson, “The Chronology of the Ohio Revelations,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 329–49.

6. Kirtland Revelation Book, 107.

7. D&C: 37:3; 38:32; 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), 1:145 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

8. D&C 42:2, 30–42. “The law” also directed Church members in the moral law, the ministry, and other principles.

or inheritances. By this grant and lease transfer system, the gathering Mormon settlers to Missouri, even the poor, were positioned to prosper as farmers, craftsmen, and shopkeepers. By their diligence and faith as wise stewards and faithful laborers, the Saints could then generate a sufficient profit or surplus to help the Church build its Zion community.⁹

At Kirtland, while the law of consecration and stewardship pertained loosely to all the Saints in principle, its implementation was soon applied directly to the future partners of the United Firm.¹⁰ In December 1831, a revelation appointed Newel K. Whitney bishop at Kirtland and directed him to consecrate his properties to the Church. Obediently, he consecrated his two-story, white-frame store, the anchor of his N. K. Whitney and Company, to the service of the Church. After doing so, he continued to operate the store not only for public use but also for use as the Lord's storehouse, which sometimes helped poor Saints, needy missionaries, and later the officers of the United Firm.¹¹ Whitney also consecrated his other properties and managed them as holdings of the United Firm after it was organized the following spring. These included a residential lot on the hill near the site of the future temple and properties near his store at the crossroads in the main village center, located a half mile north of the temple lot and in the valley or flats of the east branch of the Chagrin River. The properties near his store comprised a lot for his residence and another house, a commercial lot he owned with a business partner, and a profitable ashery.¹²

The Location of Zion. Joseph Smith's second interest, a pressing one, was to identify the location for the city of Zion. Before Joseph left New York, the Saints already knew that the site for the sacred gathering place was

9. For published copies of the certificates of transfer, see Arrington, Fox, and May, *Building the City of God*, 28–29; William E. Berrett and Alma P. Burton, *Readings in L.D.S. Church History from Original Manuscripts*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953–58), 1:113–17.

10. At first, some saw Kirtland only as a temporary gathering place or way station for the Saints en route to Missouri. D&C 29:8; 64:21–22; see Ezra Booth as quoted in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: by the author, 1834), 199.

11. D&C 72:2–12; 78:3; 63:42; see Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 211.

12. D&C 104:39–41; see Staker, “Thou Art the Man,” 84–85, 95; Geauga County Deed Record, 8:426; 15:322; 14:385; 12:627; 8:427, microfilm located in the Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

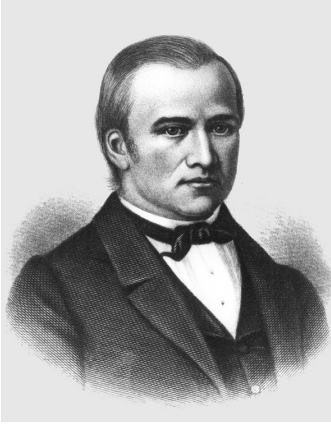


FIG. 2. Newel K. Whitney (1795–1850). In 1832, Whitney at the age of thirty-seven became the chief financial agent of the United Firm at Kirtland, after having been appointed bishop the previous year. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

somewhere in western Missouri on the “borders by the Lamanites.”¹³ Now in Ohio, Joseph Smith was determined to locate the site precisely. In response to a revelation received in June 1831, Joseph Smith, Edward Partridge, Sidney Rigdon, and two dozen other elders left Kirtland for the West. Once in Missouri, the Prophet identified the site for the future holy city as Jackson County, on the western edge of the state, next to the Indian lands, and Independence, the county seat, as the center place.¹⁴ He also met with Oliver Cowdery and other vanguard missionaries, who had arrived several months earlier and briefly taught the Indians on their lands and the settlers in the county. At Independence, a revelation appointed Bishop Partridge to administer the new economic program of consecration and stewardship in Missouri; Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Whitney’s

mercantile partner in Kirtland, to establish a store at Independence; and William W. Phelps to serve there as “printer unto the church” with Oliver Cowdery as his assistant.¹⁵ Phelps, who had converted to the Church only a month before, was suited to the job, having served as editor or publisher of newspapers in New York.¹⁶ On August 2, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, and others met eight miles west of Independence and two miles east of the Indian border and dedicated the land for Zion. The next day Rigdon consecrated the future temple lot¹⁷ a half mile west of the new

13. See 3 Nephi 20:22; D&C 28:8–9; Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 213; Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 17, 1830, 6, Church Archives (hereafter cited as Journal History).

14. D&C 52:3–32; 57:1–3; “To Oliver Cowdery. To the Elders of the Church of Latter Day Saints,” *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 12 (September 1835): 179.

15. D&C 57:6–13. The revelation was dated July 20, 1831; see Kirtland Revelation Book, 89.

16. See Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University: 1997), 1:17–18.

17. D&C 58:57. For a description of the temple site by Ezra Booth, an elder present at the dedication, see Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 198–99. For the present

Jackson County courthouse.¹⁸ The brick courthouse was in the center of the ax-hewn and rugged frontier village of Independence; both the town and its citizens reflected “the backwoods style,” said Emily Partridge, Bishop Partridge’s daughter.¹⁹

The First Literary Firm. After his return from Missouri, Joseph Smith’s next notable interest, his publication pursuits, prompted him in September 1831 to move from Kirtland, Geauga County, to neighboring Hiram, Portage County. At Hiram, he worked on his papers while he and his family lived for a year with John and Elsa Johnson, interrupted only by another visit to Missouri. Important to Joseph were editing the “New Translation” of the Bible and preparing his own revelations for publication. In September he sent William W. Phelps to Cincinnati on Phelps’s return to Missouri to purchase a press for use in Independence where Joseph would publish his revelations.

Meanwhile in Hiram, Joseph Smith and leading elders held five conferences, November 1–13, 1831, to prepare his revelations for publication. At their final meeting, they organized a “literary firm,” an antecedent to the United Firm, to manage Church publications and provide an income for its officers. Named at a meeting with a “claim on the church for recompense” for past publishing services were Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, John Whitmer, and Martin Harris.²⁰ The conference of elders then elected these men, whom a revelation ratified, and added the name of Phelps to help manage the literary firm in Zion.²¹ The revelation appointed

locations of the two newly-dedicated sites, see Lamar C. Berrett, ed., *Sacred Places, Missouri* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 19–22, 33–36, 95–96.

18. A revelation named the new courthouse as a reference point. D&C 57:3; see Max H Parkin, “The Courthouse Mentioned in the Revelation on Zion,” *BYU Studies* 14, no. 4 (1974): 451–57.

19. Emily D. P. Young, “Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent* 13 (December 1, 1884): 103.

20. Joseph Smith said, “Br. Oliver has labored with me from the beginning in writing & Br. Martin has labored with me from the beginning, brs. John and Sidney also for a considerable time, & as these sacred writings are now going to the Church for their benefit, that we may have claim on the Church for recompense.” Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 32.

21. D&C 70:1. In organizing the literary firm, the elders “voted that in consequence of the diligence of our brethren, Joseph Smith jr. Oliver Cowdery John Whitmer & Sidney Rigdon in bringing to light by grace of God these sacred things, be appointed to manage them according to the Laws of the Church & the Commandments of the Lord.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 32; D&C 57:11–13, 69:1–3.

the men “stewards over the revelations” and guardians over both their publication and sales; hence, they were to be the beneficiaries of the revenue because “this is their business in the church,” it declared.²² Until the literary firm could generate enough income of its own, however, the officers were allowed to draw from the Lord’s storehouses for their needs; once acquired, surplus earnings from the sales of publications were to be turned over to the storehouse for the Church’s use.²³ John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery left Ohio on November 20 with manuscript copies of the revelations and arrived in Independence on January 5, 1832, to assist Phelps in operating the new printing house.²⁴ Quickly, with Phelps’s help, they began preparing a printer’s copy of the revelations from which they set type for the prospective “Book of Commandments.” The following June, their new publishing firm, W. W. Phelps and Co., began printing the Church paper *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which contained imprints of the revelations awaiting fuller publication in the Book of Commandments.²⁵

Establishing the United Firm

Meanwhile in Ohio, the Prophet learned that he needed a system to better manage the Church’s growing commercial and financial interests. “The time has come,” stated a revelation (D&C 78) in March 1832, for Newel K. Whitney, Joseph Smith, and Sidney Rigdon to “sit in council” with the Saints in Missouri.²⁶ A crucial but unpublished part of the revelation informed the Prophet as to their specific purpose for going to Missouri. There “must needs be . . . an *organization of the literary and mercantile* establishments of my church both in this place and in the land of Zion,” it declared.²⁷ This new unified enterprise should be “for a permanent

22. D&C 70:3–7.

23. D&C 42:34; 70:7; 72:20.

24. Bruce N. Westergren, ed., *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 102; D&C 69; for a consideration of the texts they delivered, see Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1969), 198.

25. *The Evening and the Morning Star*, June 1832, 1, 8; *History of the Church*, 1:217, 273. Besides these printed works, the Prophet contemplated soon the publication of others, such as his “New Translation” of the Bible, the Church hymnal, children’s textbooks and a Church almanac. See Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 46; *Evening and Morning Star*, June 1832, 6; Kirtland Revelation Book, 19, 105; Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration*, 44.

26. D&C 78:9.

27. Kirtland Revelation Book, 16. This part of the revelation was never placed in the Doctrine and Covenants. See the 1835 edition of Doctrine and Covenants,

and everlasting *establishment and firm* unto my Church.”²⁸ The revelation instructed Joseph Smith and others, including the leaders in Zion, to be “*joined together in this firm*” as partners by an “everlasting covenant” and thereby be equal in both heavenly and earthly things.²⁹ Thus they were directed to operate the Church’s mercantile and literary interests as a united enterprise to be governed by a single board of managers.

Joseph Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and the Prophet’s two newly appointed counselors in the presidency of the high priesthood, Sidney Rigdon and Jesse Gause, left Kirtland on April 1, 1832, for Missouri to organize the new firm.³⁰ On April 26, two days after they arrived, the visiting Church officers met with the leaders in Independence and discussed the instructions of the commandment (revelation) that had sent them west.³¹ Later that day in Independence, the Prophet received another revelation designated as a “new commandment” (D&C 82) that gave additional instructions and named the leaders who would compose the firm.³² It then announced that these officers would also have authority over “all things” pertaining to both bishoprics. And it reminded them that in serving the new firm they were to be “bound together by a bond and covenant.”³³ The following day, April 27, compliant to the March commandment to organize the mercantile establishment in Missouri, they established Gilbert, Whitney and Company, a business that would manage the store in Independence to serve the public and the Saints as the bishop’s storehouse in Zion. At the meeting, the leaders joined this new company with the N. K. Whitney and Company of Kirtland and named the newly integrated mercantile establishment the United Firm.³⁴ This was a defining step toward the Church more widely managing its financial and commercial interests for the next two years—the life of the firm. For the United Firm had a

D&C 75:1 (now D&C 78:3–4); italics added. Section and verse numbers in the 1835 edition differ from section and verse numbers in more recent editions.

28. The word “firm” used here and elsewhere in the manuscript of this revelation was changed to read “order” when published in 1835 in the Doctrine and Covenants (then D&C 75:1). Kirtland Revelation Book, 16; D&C 78:3–4; italics added.

29. D&C 78:6–11; Kirtland Revelation Book, 16; italics added.

30. Joseph Smith said, “March 8th 1832 [I] Chose this day and ordained brother Jesse Gause and Broth Sidney to be my counsellors of the ministry of the presidency of the high Priesthood.” Kirtland Revelation Book, 10–11.

31. D&C 78:11; Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 43–44.

32. D&C 82:8, 11.

33. D&C 78:3, 11; 82:11–12, 15; Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45, 48.

34. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 47–48; *History of the Church*, 1:270. A. S. Gilbert, however, was already operating a Church store from his house. See n. 79 herein.

broader mission than just uniting the two stores and connecting the publishing and mercantile firms.³⁵ On April 30, the officers of the United Firm met and shaped a guiding policy allowing the firm to expand when “special business” was introduced to it.³⁶ Nine of the firm’s ten members attended this meeting. The ten officers of the firm were Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Newel K. Whitney, Jesse Gause, and Martin Harris³⁷ of Kirtland, and Oliver Cowdery, William W. Phelps, Edward Partridge, John Whitmer, and Algernon Sidney Gilbert of Independence.³⁸ Phelps and Gilbert drafted a bond to bind the members of the partnership, and Whitney and Gilbert were appointed as financial agents for their respective branches.³⁹ Jesse Gause soon left the Church, and Frederick G. Williams⁴⁰ and John Johnson⁴¹ joined the firm at Kirtland the following year.

35. The organization’s name, United Firm, fittingly applied not only to the union of the two stores, but also to the union of the mercantile and the publishing establishments and to the united endeavor of its leaders.

36. On April 30, 1832, the firm’s minutes state: “Resolved that whenever any special business occur it shall be the duty of the United Firm by their branches at Jackson County Missouri & Geauga County Ohio to regulate the same by special agency.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 47–48.

37. Martin Harris was not in Missouri to attend these meetings and was not named as a member of the firm in their minutes, but his name later appeared (by the use of a code name) with the others in the “new commandment” revelation when it was published in 1835 as Doctrine and Covenants 86:4 (now D&C 82:11). By contrast, Jesse Gause’s name was excluded from the published copy of the revelation. The Prophet noted that Jesse Gause was excommunicated on December 3, 1832. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 2:4; D. Michael Quinn, “Jesse Gause: Joseph Smith’s Little-Known Counselor,” *BYU Studies* 23, no. 4 (1983): 487; Robert J. Woodford, “Jesse Gause, Counselor to the Prophet,” *BYU Studies* 15, no. 3 (1975): 362–64.

38. William E. McLellin said that there were nine members of the United Firm; he possibly took his figure from the “new commandment” revelation that excluded Jesse Gause when printed, D&C 82:11. McLellin, *Saints’ Herald* (July 15, 1872): 436.

39. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45, 47; D&C 82:15. For reference to their operating legally, see Kirtland Letter Book, 45, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives; *History of the Church*, 1:363.

40. Williams was called to replace Jesse Gause in the Church Presidency in 1833, not in 1832 as suggested by the current date for D&C 81:1; see Kirtland Revelation Book, 17, where Jesse’s name was erased and the name “Frederick G. Williams” was added in its place. Williams was appointed to the United Firm on March 15, 1833, a week after he was made a member of the Church Presidency. Kirtland Council Minutes, 11; D&C 90:6; 92:1.

41. D&C 96:8; Kirtland Letter Book, 45; *History of the Church*, 1:363. Johnson is at least the twelfth and possibly the last to be appointed as an officer of the United Firm.

Possessing managerial, financial, or publishing skills, members of the United Firm consecrated their time, money, property, and energy and pledged their cooperation to advance the business of their new joint stewardship. While income from the firm's various enterprises was stated to be available for the temporal needs of the officers,⁴² each member was to manage his own stewardship or responsibility within the firm for the benefit of the Church, requiring at times the need to help one another. For example, in June 1833, the Presidency wrote to Bishop Partridge at Independence that inasmuch as "all members of the United Firm are considered one," currently the stewardship of the "literary firm . . . is of the greatest importance" and should be supported by the profits generated by the store in Zion.⁴³ At that time, the leaders were concerned about the expenses associated with printing the Book of Commandments, which by then was well advanced and costly.⁴⁴ Thus, members of the firm believed that by seeking the interest of one another and effecting the success of their united cause, but without ever holding "any property in common," according to Whitney, they could achieve the firm's ultimate fiscal goal of enabling the Church to stand financially "independent above all other creatures."⁴⁵

The United Firm as a company did not own the properties it managed, nor indeed did its officers own them collectively. The deed titles to its businesses remained in the names of individual Latter-day Saint landowners or business proprietors. Various officers of the United Firm owned and managed the following properties: N. K. Whitney and Company; Gilbert, Whitney and Company; W. W. Phelps and Company (entities previously identified); F. G. Williams and Company; Whitney's Kirtland ashery; the firm's real estate—including a commercial lot owned jointly by Whitney and Gilbert; the farm of Frederick G. Williams; the former Peter French

42. D&C 82:17.

43. Kirtland Letter Book, 48; *History of the Church*, 1:365–66.

44. Besides Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer, the married officers of the literary firm at Independence, the press provided labor for four single workers; at least one, William Hobert, a "typographer," had only recently been hired. While *The Evening and the Morning Star*, a monthly publication, and the Church's new *The Upper Advertiser*, a weekly paper, brought in some revenue, the Book of Commandments was labor and material intensive without yet generating any income. *Evening and Morning Star* 2 (December 1833): 2, 5; *History of the Church*, 1:412. They bought paper to print the Book of Commandments on credit. Kirtland Revelation Book, 19.

45. N. K. Whitney to S. F. Whitney, October 2, [1842?], Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections); D&C 78:13–14; 82:17–19.

farm at Kirtland; and Bishop Partridge's stewardship lands in Missouri—and other properties. The revelations admonished the partners to be wise in their stewardships and manage them righteously under the bond of the sacred covenant they had made; otherwise they placed themselves in jeopardy, and, in doing so, they understood that judgment might befall them.⁴⁶

The Frederick G. Williams Farm

Shortly after his arrival in Kirtland in February 1831, Joseph Smith settled his parents on a farm owned by Frederick G. Williams. Williams, one of the earliest Kirtland converts, owned a 144-acre farm that he made available to help the newly arriving Saints.⁴⁷ The farm was located on high ground a half mile south of the Whitney store (see fig. 5). An unpublished revelation received in May 1831 gave the Prophet's parents, Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith, and others access to the farm for their support. The revelation states, "Let mine aged servant Joseph govern the things of the farm . . . inasmuch as he standeth in need."⁴⁸ Father Smith quickly began to manage the farm for his livelihood. Concerning the Smiths, Philo Dibble, a resident of nearby Chardon, wrote, "I held myself in readiness to assist the Smith family with my means or my personal services as they might require, as they were financially poor. They were living on a farm owned by F. G. Williams, in Kirtland."⁴⁹ Lucy spoke of the economy of the farm: "My family were all established with this arrangement, that we were to cultivate the farm, and, from the fruits of our labour, we were to receive our support." Consecration and stewardship seemed to apply to the efforts of the Smiths. At harvest time, anything "over and above" their needs became available "for the comfort of strangers," Lucy said.⁵⁰ When he could free himself from his scribal chores for the Prophet and other duties, Williams

46. D&C 78:12; 82:4, 11; 104:4–10. "God will bring transgression into judgment," wrote the Presidency on June 1833 to officers of the firm. Kirtland Letter Book, 48–49; *History of the Church*, 1:366.

47. A revelation stated that Frederick G. Williams "willeth that the brethren reap the good" of his farm. Kirtland Revelation Book, 92.

48. Kirtland Revelation Book, 92.

49. Philo Dibble, "Philo Dibble's Narrative," *Early Scenes in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1882), 78. Lucy had the faulty impression that her son or the Church owned the farm. She wrote, "We remained two weeks at Mr. [Isaac] Morley's, then removed our family to a farm which had been purchased by Joseph for the Church." Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 540.

50. Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 540.



FIG. 3. Frederick G. Williams (1787–1842). In January 1833, Dr. Frederick G. Williams, age forty-five, consecrated his farm to the Church and that same year became a member of the Church Presidency and a partner in the United Firm. Officers of the firm soon began to subdivide his farm into city lots as part of their plan for a city of the Saints at Kirtland. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

sometimes worked with the Smiths on the farm.⁵¹ By the end of 1835, the increased burden of the farm upon the aging Smith couple forced them to move to a less demanding place.⁵²

On January 5, 1833, a different use of the Williams farm than farming would come to light, however, when a revelation directed Frederick G. Williams to give up his farm. “Let thy farm be consecrated for bringing forth the revelations,” it stated.⁵³ Joseph Smith apparently hoped that the cost of publishing the scriptures in Missouri could be covered by the sale of lots from the Williams farm, which he integrated into the United Firm. Furthermore, five months later, on June 5, 1833, Church leaders broke ground for the construction of the Kirtland Temple on a lot on the southeast edge of the adjacent Peter French farm, which the United Firm had just acquired. This was an early step in the much larger vision of Kirtland municipal planning, in which both the Williams farm and the French

farm would play a major role, as Joseph Smith and other officers of the United Firm began to lay the foundation for an expanded Latter-day Saint Kirtland.

51. Ezra G. Williams, son of Frederick G. Williams, recalled that Joseph Smith Sr. “worked the Farm and Dr Williams rode the Horse to plough corn and potatoes and helped Father Smith in Haying times.” Henrietta Elizabeth Crombie Williams, Journal, May 1, 1899, “Account Book,” 245, Frederick G. Williams Papers, Church Archives. Henrietta Williams was married to Ezra G. Williams.

52. By December that year, the Prophet received his parents into an upper room of his house near the temple and two doors south of the Kirtland cemetery “where we lived very comfortably for a season,” said Lucy. Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 587; Jesse, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:123.

53. “Revelation for Farm,” unpublished revelation, January 5, 1833, Frederick G. Williams Papers, Church Archives.

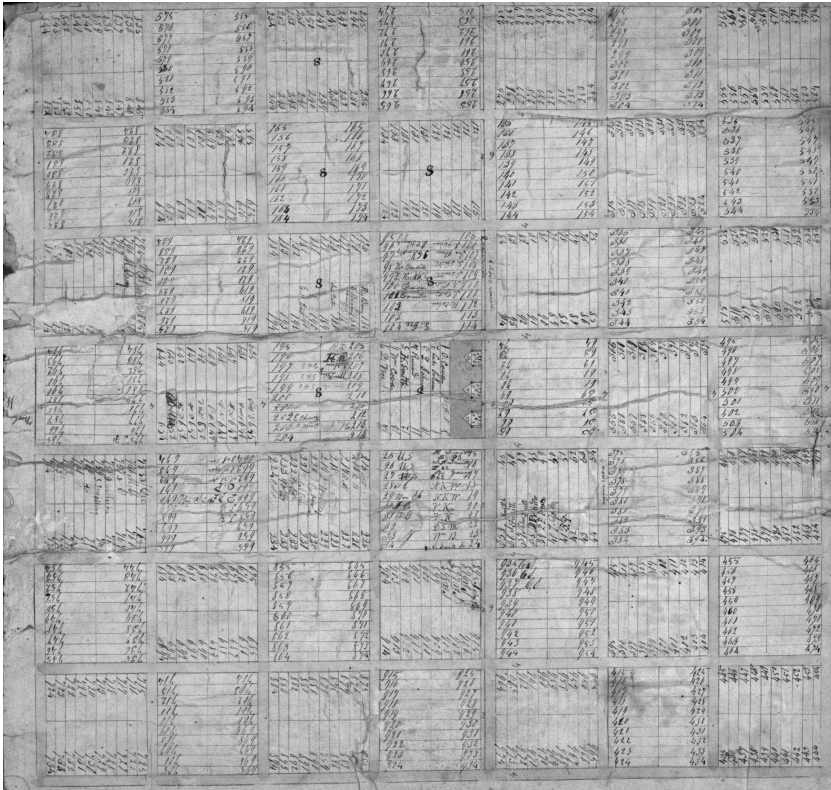


FIG. 4. Plat map for the Latter-day Saint City of Kirtland, 1833. After acquiring the Peter French and Frederick G. Williams farms, Joseph Smith and other leaders of the United Firm began to lay the “foundation of the city of the stake of Zion” (D&C 94:1). A mile-square city was planned with the large temple lot on the east end of the center block, shown here with three lightly sketched buildings. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. To view this map in greater detail, see the online version of this article.

On August 2, 1833, a revelation instructed the Church at Kirtland to commence building the “city of the stake of Zion” with the temple to be in the city’s center.⁵⁴ The Williams farm would provide most of the southwest quarter of the proposed city and the French farm would provide most of the northwest quarter. Joseph Smith and other leaders of the firm quickly platted the area into a one-mile-square community with a Kirtland plat map showing the temple lot on the city’s center block (fig.4). The plat map

54. D&C 94:1. The date listed for this revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants is incorrect. The correct date is August 2, 1833; see Kirtland Revelation Book, 64; Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 195–96; D&C 88:119.

showed the city divided into forty-nine ten-acre blocks and the blocks subdivided into twenty half-acre building lots. The temple lot on the southeast edge of the French farm was combined with a similar, adjacent temple lot on the northeast edge of the Williams farm; together they formed the eastern third of the city's new center block (see fig. 5). This larger temple lot would provide space for three major Church buildings, houses, or temples, as had been directed by the August revelation (D&C 94). The first temple was to be used for worship and for schooling, and on the Williams portion of the temple lot, immediately south and parallel to the temple under construction, were to be two additional large edifices—an office building for the Presidency and next to it a substantial Church printing house.⁵⁵ Later, the April 1834 revelation (D&C 104), which distributed the properties of the United Firm, assigned these two small contiguous lots to Joseph Smith to manage as a single larger temple lot while the Saints built the city around it.⁵⁶ Two weeks after Joseph received the April revelation, Frederick G. Williams transferred title of his farm to Joseph Smith in two separate deeds, one for the temple lot on his farm and the other for the rest of his farm, which then was just over 142 acres.⁵⁷

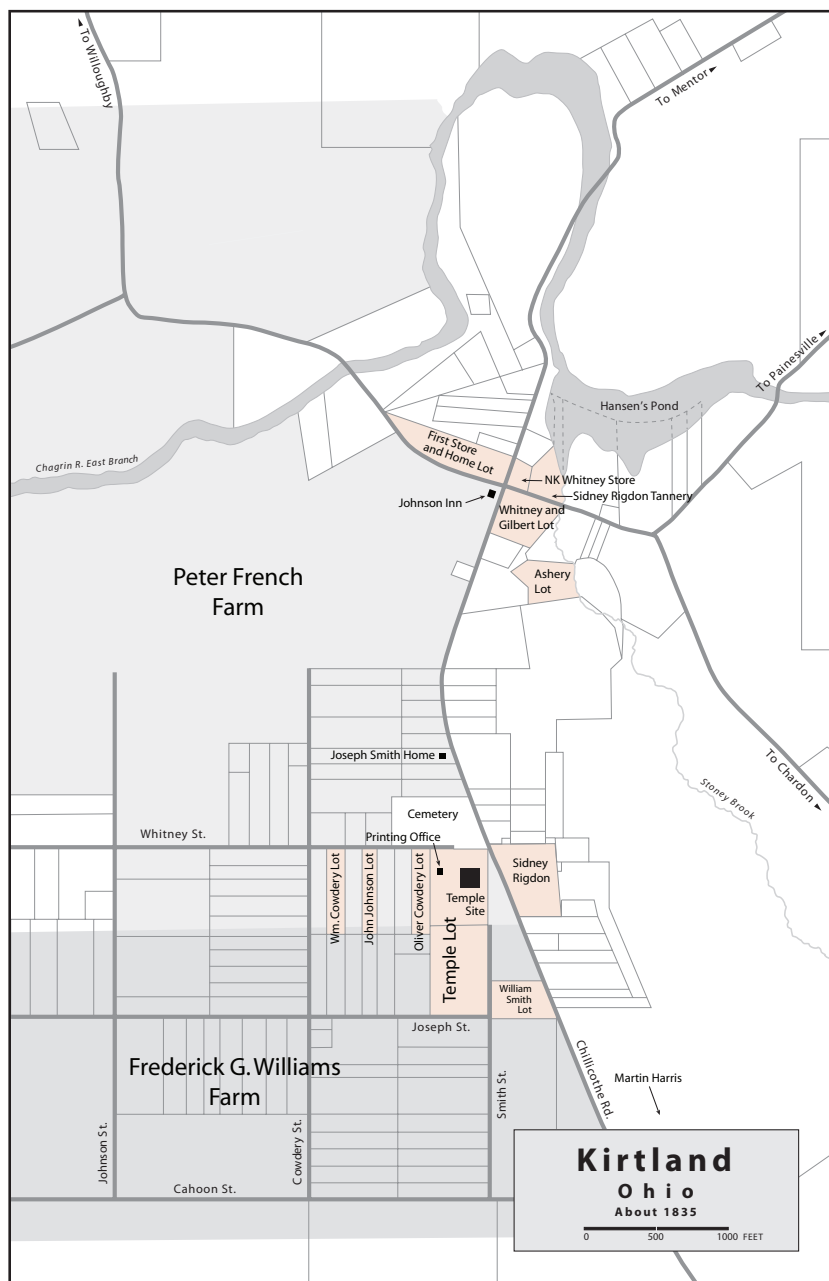
The Peter French Farm

Meanwhile, to prepare for population growth and economic development at Kirtland, the Church had already purchased the Peter French farm. Joseph Coe, a short-term Church land agent but not a member of the United Firm, had paid Peter French \$2,000 down on his 103-acre farm located on the flats of the Chagrin River and southward up the hill to the Williams farm (see fig. 5). The farm also included French's dwelling house and inn. Coe purchased the farm in April 1833 for total price of \$5,000 with a mortgage contract to pay the remaining balance of \$3,000 in two equal payments in April 1834 and 1835. But on June 4, a revelation directed Bishop Whitney to "take charge" of the farm, and within a few days N. K. Whitney and Company, serving as a holding agent for the United Firm,

55. The three buildings were to be of the same appearance and dimensions, 55' x 65'. D&C 88:78–79, 118–19; 94:3–12; Plat Map of Kirtland, 1833, Church Archives.

56. D&C 104:43; see ns. 199 and 200 herein.

57. The date for the transfer as recorded on both deeds was May 5, 1834, but the agreement for the transfer may have been much earlier. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:477–80.



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CARTOGRAPHY: R&R ERICKSON

FIG. 5. Kirtland, 1835. The map shows the properties at Kirtland managed by the United Firm and assigned to the firm's officers at the time the firm was discontinued. The Church planned to construct three "houses" or temples on the large temple lot on the city's center block.

acquired the farm (and its debt) from Coe and managed it.⁵⁸ Together, the Williams and French farms composed most of the west half of the proposed new Latter-day Saint city of Kirtland. Lots were to be surveyed and sold to the Saints “to benefit *the firm* for the purpose of bringing forth” the scriptures being published in Missouri.⁵⁹ In about 1813, Peter French had constructed a two-and-a-half-story brick house or inn on the river flats of his farm. The inn was located at the village’s principal intersection on the township’s main road, across from the future Whitney store. The township’s primary north-south route, Chillicothe Road, now bordered the two Church farms lying west of it and, like other existing land features, was not represented on the new plat map. Four years later, Church leaders filed an expanded community plat with the county, petitioning for a two-mile square city, still showing the large temple lot in the center.⁶⁰

In March and June 1833, Frederick G. Williams and John Johnson, respectively, were added as officers in the United Firm.⁶¹ Williams entered the firm that spring as he replaced Jesse Gause in the Church Presidency and possibly as a reward for the consecration of his farm.⁶² Johnson entered possibly because of his many acts of service to Joseph Smith at Hiram and because of the hope that the firm would receive funds from the sale of his farm in Portage County, Ohio.⁶³ As Johnson moved to Kirtland, he received the former French Inn as his stewardship and residence and was authorized with Bishop Whitney to sell town lots surveyed from the

58. D&C 96:2. The date on the deed of transfer for the French Farm from French to Coe was April 10, 1833, and from Coe to N. K. Whitney and Company was June 17, 1833. Geauga County Deed Record, 17:38–39; 360–61; Kirtland Council Minutes, 18.

59. D&C 96:3–4. Quoted from the original, Kirtland Revelation Book, 61; italics added. Whitney and Johnson were appointed as agents of the firm to sell lots from the farm. “List of Town Lots Sold b[y] Johnson and Whitney,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

60. “A Map of Kirtland City,” 1837, Geauga County Deed Record, 24:99; separate copy in Church Archives.

61. D&C 92:1; 96:6–8; Kirtland Council Minutes, 11, 13; Kirtland Letter Book, 33, 45; *History of the Church*, 1:340, 363.

62. Kirtland Council Minutes, 11; see n. 40 herein.

63. Portage County Deed Book, 18:393–94. Funds from the sale of Johnson’s farm may not have been available until May 10, 1834.

farm.⁶⁴ In 1836, N. K. Whitney and Company, which still held title to the French farm, transferred ownership to Johnson.⁶⁵

The Ashery and Other Properties

Members of the United Firm operated other businesses in Kirtland as named in the April 1834 revelation that dissolved the firm (see fig. 5). Perhaps the most profitable of these was an ashery owned by Bishop Whitney as part of his N. K. Whitney and Company. Years before, on September 5, 1822, Whitney, as a newlywed, had bought a lot from Peter French for an ashery a few rods south of his future Whitney store. He started his ashery business by January 1824, which proved successful, and then expanded it with a smaller lot to the south. During that period, asheries often provided a profitable cash product for mercantile institutions, and a number of stores in northeastern Ohio did business with asheries or owned them outright as did Whitney.⁶⁶ Whitney's Kirtland ashery produced potash and the more refined pearlash, both of which had robust markets in New York and England as ingredients in the production of soap, glass, gunpowder, and other products. After he consecrated his ashery, Whitney continued to operate it profitably for the United Firm.⁶⁷

Other industries used or operated at Kirtland by Latter-day Saints included a brickyard, a stone quarry, a sawmill, and a tannery, some of which were supervised by the United Firm. Frederick G. Williams superintended a brickyard a half mile northwest of the Whitney store.⁶⁸ Joseph Coe had purchased the brickyard as part of the French farm, intending to use brick from it to help build the community. At first, even the builders of the temple considered using brick for its walls but later changed the project to stone.⁶⁹ The brickyard, however, was not singled out as a separate business of the United Firm sufficient enough to have it listed in the April revelation. To build the temple, the Church used stone from a quarry two miles

64. D&C 96:2–3, 6–8; 104:34–36; “List of Town Lots,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

65. Geauga County Deed Record, 22:497. N. K. Whitney and Company continued to hold title to the farm, including the inn, and paid taxes on it until 1836. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, Vol. 507:27; 508:19; 509:25.

66. See Benjamin C. Pykles, “An Introduction to the Kirtland Flats Ashery,” *BYU Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002): 164–66; Staker, ““Thou Art the Man,”” 85–88; see n. 196 herein.

67. D&C 104:39; see Pykles, “Kirtland Flats Ashery,” 160–79.

68. Kirtland Council Minutes, 19.

69. Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Mesa, Ariz.: 21st Century Printing, 1992), 16.

south of the temple lot and also built a water-powered sawmill near the ashery to assist in its construction, but, again, the April revelation did not include these enterprises. The revelation, however, did name a commercial lot owned jointly by Whitney and Gilbert, across the street from the Whitney store, and a tannery.⁷⁰ Arnold Mason, a non-Mormon, had purchased an acre lot from French in 1832, immediately east of the Whitney store, and built a tannery on it. On April 2, 1833, a council of high priests authorized Ezra Thayer to purchase the tannery from Mason for the Church,⁷¹ but no purchase was made until May 3, 1834, ten days after the April revelation that distributed the firm's properties. The revelation awarded the tannery to Sidney Rigdon, who afterwards managed it as a successful personal stewardship and business.⁷²

The United Firm Properties in Missouri

With the expected gathering of the Saints to Jackson County, Joseph Smith, during his first visit to Missouri in July 1831, quickly stressed the need to purchase land. Buy “every tract lying westward” to the Indian border and southward “every tract bordering by the prairies,” pronounced a revelation in Independence that July.⁷³ The Prophet Joseph and others immediately scouted much of the area in Kaw township from the Blue River west of town to the Indian line, ten miles west of the Jackson County courthouse.⁷⁴ That same month, Bishop Edward Partridge purchased 356 acres in four tracts in Kaw township. Two tracts were on the Indian border near the government's Shawnee-Delaware Indian Agency, and two tracts were just east of them, all of which were on the edge of the prairie about five miles south of the Missouri River and twelve miles southwest of

70. D&C 104:20, 39.

71. Kirtland Council Minutes, 19; Geauga County Deed Record, 18:487; see Mark L. Staker, “History of the Kirtland Flats Tannery,” Appendix A, 2–3, unpublished typescript, Museum of Church History and Art.

72. D&C 104:20; Geauga County Deed Record, 18:487; see n. 177 herein; *Times and Seasons* 4 (May 15, 1843): 193.

73. D&C 57:4–5.

74. The distance from Independence directly to the Indian lands was ten miles, twelve miles by way of the old road, known as the Westport Road, a link in the Santa Fe Trail. Joseph Knight, who arrived on July 25, 1831, said, “Joseph [Smith] at this time Looked out the Country and found the place for the City and Temple and set a mark.” Dean Jessee, “Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 1 (1976): 39.

Independence.⁷⁵ Then, on August 8, a day before Joseph Smith left Independence for Ohio, Partridge bought two adjacent town lots, one for Phelps's printing house, a half block south of the courthouse.⁷⁶ That fall and during the next two years, Partridge continued buying land. Most of it was in the heavily forested area of Kaw township toward the Missouri River and some along the north-flowing Blue River where Kaw and Blue townships met, including the crossing where Orrin Rockwell later operated a ferry. As funds became available, Bishop Partridge acquired a total of 2,136 acres in Jackson County, most of which he distributed to the Latter-day Saints as stewardships of about twenty acres each.⁷⁷ The bishop held title to all the land he purchased, including the sixty-three acres of the temple lot a half mile west of the courthouse, which he acquired on December 19, 1831, for \$130.⁷⁸

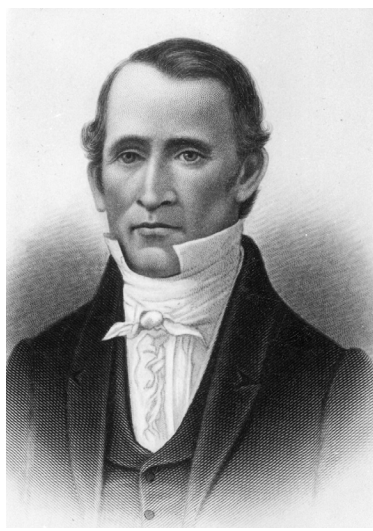


FIG. 6. Edward Partridge (1793–1840). Bishop Edward Partridge, a merchant of Painesville, Ohio, was appointed first bishop of the Church in 1831. The following year, at age thirty-eight, he became a member of the United Firm in Jackson County, Missouri. In this capacity, he bought land to administer consecration and stewardship in Zion. Courtesy Scott H. Partridge.

75. The four tracts were purchased on July 26, 1831. U.S. Land Patents, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.; copies are in the author's possession.

76. Lots 75 and 76, the two lots Partridge purchased, sold in 1827 in Independence's original lot sales for \$10 each. Partridge acquired Lot 76 "with appurtenances" for \$50 for the printing house and Lot 75 for \$10. Jackson County Deed Record, A 111, 114; Fifth Judicial Circuit Court, February Term, 1835, 27, 47–49. "Book of Original Sales, Independence, Mo.," Jackson County Courthouse, Independence, Missouri.

77. Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 513; Berrett, *Sacred Places: Missouri*, 11, 18, 84; Benton Pixley, "The Mormonites," *Independent (Boston) Messenger*, November 29, 1832, np.

78. The size of the temple lot, purchased by Bishop Partridge from Jones Flournoy, was 63 43/160 acres. Jackson County Deed Record, B 1–2. At Winter Quarters, Nebraska, in 1848, Brigham Young gave Edward Partridge's widow, Lydia, permission to sell the temple lot to help get her family "over the mountains"

Other officers of the United Firm bought stewardship land in Jackson County. Shortly before the firm was organized, Sidney Gilbert bought a town lot on Lynn Street, a block southeast of the courthouse, with a log building on it that he used for his own residence and temporarily as the Church store.⁷⁹ Then in November 1832, six months after the leaders organized the United Firm, the recently established Gilbert, Whitney and Company at Independence purchased a lot facing the courthouse on the northwest corner of the intersection of Lexington and Liberty streets as a permanent site for their mercantile firm—the Gilbert and Whitney store—with Gilbert continuing as storekeeper.⁸⁰ Later, Gilbert, Whitney and Company bought four adjacent lots on Liberty Street a block south of the courthouse.⁸¹ Meanwhile, Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer, as managers of W. W. Phelps and Company, together bought four lots on Liberty Street across from the future Gilbert and Whitney lots.⁸² In April 1833, Gilbert, Whitney and Company bought a tract of 154 acres on the Missouri River

to the Salt Lake Valley. Lydia sold it on May 5, 1848, for \$300. Jackson County Deed Record, N 203–4; Journal History, April 26, 1848.

79. D&C 57:8. On February 20, 1832, Sidney Gilbert, in the name of “Gilbert and Whitney,” purchased the vacated Jackson County pioneer log courthouse and its site on Lynn Street, the west 1.5 acres of Lot 59, for \$371. Jackson County Court Record, 1:22, 30, 136; Jackson County Deed Record, B 32–33. Gilbert renovated the log building into a residence and a store by adding a brick side room for the store. See Mary Lightner, “Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (1926): 195; Ronald E. Romig, *Early Independence, Missouri: “Mormon” History Tour Guide* (Blue Springs, Mo.: Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation, 1994), 36. The log courthouse was built in 1828 under the supervision of Lilburn W. Boggs, superintendent of Jackson County public buildings. Jackson County Court Record, 1:22, 30. In 1916, in a dilapidated condition, the courthouse, as a frontier icon, was moved to Kansas Street and restored. Celebrated today as the oldest courthouse west of the Mississippi River and one in which county judge (and later) President Harry S. Truman briefly held court, the building should also be remembered as the oldest surviving house, and bishop’s storehouse, owned and occupied by Latter-day Saints in Missouri.

80. Gilbert, Whitney and Company purchased Lot 51 for \$700 with “appurtenancey and Buildings thereunto” on November 19, 1832. Jackson County Deed Record, C 13. This store is not to be confused with the earlier store located in Sidney Gilbert’s residence. See n. 79 above. Gilbert had a tendency to deny poor Saints credit in his store, for which he was chastised. Kirtland Letter Book, 34–35; *History of the Church*, 1:341.

81. Lots 104, 105, 108, and 109 of about .28 acres each were bought from the county on August 14, 1833, for a total of \$50. Jackson County Deed Record, C 14.

82. Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer purchased lots 95, 98, 99, and 102, the latter with “appurtenances,” from Azariah Holcomb on December 29, 1832, for \$160. Jackson County Deed Record, B 135, F 54.

five miles northeast of Independence. This riverfront land was immediately west of the Blue Mills landing, Independence's principal freight landing, and just two miles north of the main road from neighboring Lexington, Lafayette County, to Independence.⁸³ Although Church leaders never left a record as to their intended use of this riverfront property, they probably considered it valuable in developing a landing for their use in the mercantile business and for Mormon immigration to the county. Since Independence was the chief departure point for the far West, the Church leaders probably desired that their people avoid contact with the brutish if not sometimes rough behavior of Rocky Mountain fur trappers, western adventurers, and Santa Fe Trail freighters who used the public landings.⁸⁴ Through these land purchases by officers of the United Firm and through immigration, the Saints were vigorously laying the foundation of Zion.

Just as Joseph Smith and other members of the United Firm at Kirtland were making plans to develop that community, the same leaders were also developing plans for a similar city of the Saints at Independence. On June 25, 1833, Joseph Smith mailed a package to the firm's leaders at Independence, containing a plan for the New Jerusalem, and reminded them that "all members of the United Firm" were considered equal in their ventures. The package contained a plat map for a proposed mile-square city with streets and lots laid at right angles like those planned for Kirtland. The plat map with the temple lot in the center had the numbers one to twenty-four to mark the location for temples or houses of the Lord to be built on two fifteen-acre center blocks.⁸⁵ It also contained drawings for the buildings, architecturally similar to the Kirtland Temple, and a letter of instructions from the Presidency.

83. Gilbert and Whitney purchased the land for \$840 and issued a bond to pay \$350 in April 1834 and in 1835, but they transferred the title in May 1833, while still under the bond, back to Solomon Flourney, the original owner. Jackson County Deed Record, B 196, 200–201, 209–10. Union Historical Company, *The History of Jackson County, Missouri*, (Kansas City, Mo.: Birdsall, Williams and Co., 1881), 388, 391; Gregory M. Franzwa, *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail* (St. Louis, Mo.: Patrice Press, 1989), 23.

84. Independence had two landings; the second was three miles north of town, but a long northern loop on the Missouri River at the time made it less inviting.

85. Zion Plat Map, June 1833, Church Archives. In the June letter, the Prophet wrote, "The whole plot is supposed to contain from 15 to 20 thousand people[,] you will therefore see that it will require 24 buildings to supply them with houses of worship, schools." Kirtland Letter Book, 39; *History of the Church*, 1:358. At first they considered building a single temple in Zion. D&C 57:3; 84:4.

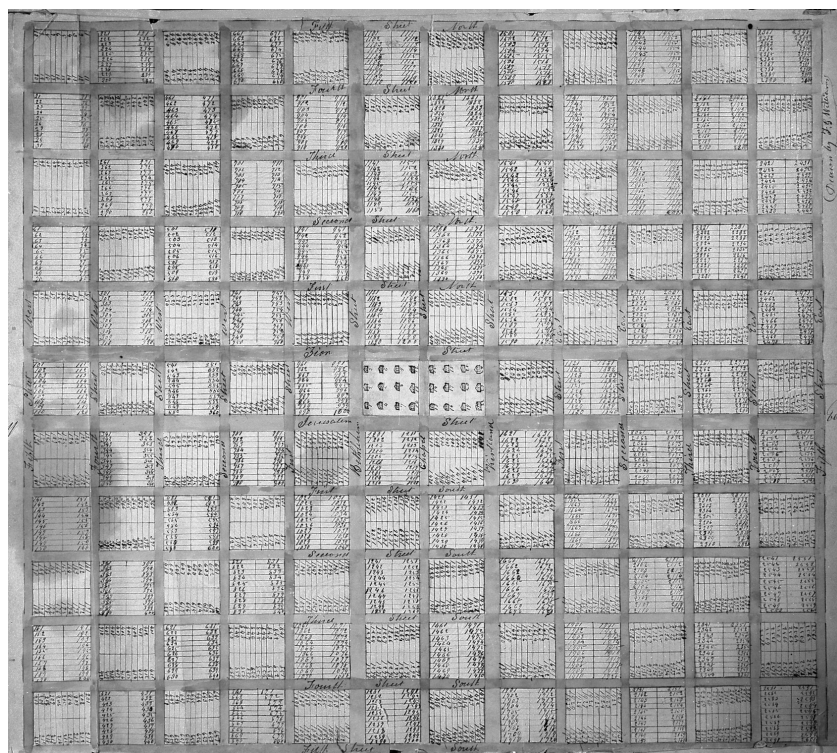


FIG. 7. Plat Map of Zion, August 1833. Similar to the plat for Kirtland, but for a larger city, the map, drawn by Frederick G. Williams, shows twenty-four line-drawn structures on the center ten-acre lots. Instructions accompanying the map directed the leaders of the United Firm at Independence, Missouri, to construct first the three buildings of the twenty-four that were to serve the same purposes as those planned for Kirtland. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

On August 6, Joseph Smith and other leaders of the firm at Kirtland sent another package—one containing a revised city plat for Zion, for a larger city with new temple plans, and another letter of instruction. The revised city plat now had two ten-acre blocks in the center, with sketches of twenty-four line-drawn temples or “houses” to be built on the two center blocks, and, like the first plat, it divided each of the rest of the blocks into twenty half-acre lots but added five more tiers of blocks (fig. 7). The package also contained a pattern for larger buildings. Oliver Cowdery, who had recently returned to Kirtland, helped to prepare the August package. He wrote:

Those patterns [of the temple] previously sent you [June 25, 1833], per mail, by our brethren are incorrect in some respects; being drawn in grate

haste. They have therefore drawn these, which are correct. The form of the city was also incorrect being drawn in haste. We send you another.⁸⁶

The new city plat named some of the city streets with titles such as “Jerusalem Street” and “Bethlehem Street.” The new, modified temple designs, which were drawn for the larger buildings, depicted two tiers of nine windows on each side compared to five windows shown on the earlier design.⁸⁷

Both packages contained instructions for building the first three of the twenty-four temples planned for Zion. Moreover, the Kirtland plan for the three “houses of the Lord” and the sequence of building them was also to be the pattern for Independence.⁸⁸ Like the Kirtland Saints, Church members in Independence had an urgent need for a meetinghouse and school.⁸⁹ Therefore, the first building was to be “for all purposes of religion and instruction,” said the Presidency in their June letter, and it was to be “built immediately.”⁹⁰ The Missouri leaders learned that the Lord approved of the building plan for Independence from a revelation dated August 2, 1833, that accompanied the second package. The first temple was to be “a place of thanksgiving” or worship for the Saints and for “a school in Zion,” reported the Lord in that revelation; it was to be like the “pattern which I have given you.”⁹¹ Then after the first structure was built, the Presidency

86. Oliver Cowdery, “An explanation of the following pattern,” on back of an architectural drawing. Zion Temple plans, August 1833, Church Archives.

87. The size of the temples in Zion were here enlarged from 87' x 61' to 97' x 61'. Zion Temple plans, August 1833. See also Ronald E. Romig and John H. Siebert, “Jackson County, 1831–1833: A Look at the Development of Zion,” *Restoration Studies* 3 (1986): 286–304.

88. D&C 88:118–119; 94:2–12; see n. 55 herein. Cook, *Revelations of Joseph Smith*, 195–96.

89. D&C 97:3–4, 11. Parley P. Pratt said that his “school of Elders” met in the “open air, under some tall trees, in a retired place in the wilderness.” Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 93–94. Emily Dow Partridge wrote, “About the first thing the Saints did after providing shelter for their families, was to start a school for their children. The first school I remember attending was in a log cabin in Jackson Co.” Emily D. P. Young, “Autobiography,” *Woman's Exponent* 13 (December 1, 1884): 103.

90. Kirtland Letter Book, 41, 46; *History of the Church* 1:359, 363; see D&C 97:3–4, 10–13.

91. D&C 97:10–11; letter to “Beloved Bretheren,” August 6, 1833, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives. The corrected “pattern” for both the temple and city designs was provided in the August 1833 packet. A note in the hand of Frederick G. Williams on the face of one of the June drawings read, “For your satisfaction we inform you that the plot for the City and the size form and dimensions of the house were given us of the Lord.”

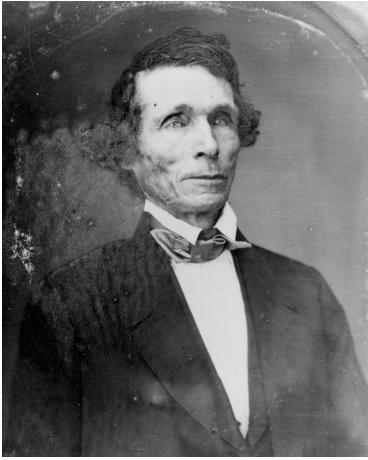


FIG. 8. William W. Phelps (1792–1872). Phelps, though pictured here in his old age, was thirty-nine years old when he became proprietor of the W. W. Phelps & Company printing house at Independence, Missouri. Soon after this he became a member of the United Firm. He and his assistants, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, were assigned to print the scriptures in Zion. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

citizens next attacked the store, which Gilbert quickly closed to save it, and tore down the nearby two-story brick house and printing shop of W. W. Phelps and Company. They threw the type and unfinished papers of the Book of Commandments and *The Evening and the Morning Star* into the street, demolished the building to its foundation and gave the Saints an ultimatum that required them to leave the county beginning at the end of the year.⁹³

wrote, you “are to build two others,” one for the use of “the presidency and one for the printing” of the scriptures. Moreover, they were “to be built as soon after the other as means can be obtained.”⁹² But the instructions from Ohio were never acted upon; disturbances against the Saints commenced before the second package of instructions arrived.

Exiled from Jackson County

The growing Mormon presence in Missouri began to annoy local settlers, and trouble soon erupted. Hostilities against the Latter-day Saints in Jackson County began early in 1832 and mounted until the Saints were driven from the county in November 1833. Severe conflict flared up on July 20, 1833, when the local citizens demonstrated against the Mormons by tarring and feathering Edward Partridge and Charles Allen on the courthouse square. That same day, the brawling

92. Letter to “Beloved Brethren,” August 6, 1833. The August 1833 packet contained copies of D&C 97 and 94, in that order, with the date of both being August 2, 1833.

93. “The Outrage in Jackson County, Missouri,” *Evening and Morning Star* 2, December 1833, 2; Isaac Morley said that he saw “the printing office leveled to the Ground.” Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions*, 499; see Isaac McCoy, “The Disturbances in Jackson County,” *Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], December 20, 1833,

Encouraged by Missouri Governor Daniel Dunklin, who advised them to seek redress in the courts, the Saints decided to hold their ground. Upon learning of their revised plans, the restless citizens began attacking Mormon settlements on October 31, 1833. During the first week of November, the mobs continued their assault on the residents of the five Latter-day Saint settlements—three in Kaw township, another at the township line at the ford of the Blue River, and one in Independence.⁹⁴ The Gilbert and Whitney store was damaged by the citizens, goods were destroyed, and accounts receivable were left unpaid.⁹⁵ The attack severely damaged Gilbert's log house and the homes of other Church members in the town and throughout the settlements.⁹⁶ The most severe violence was caused by the rougher Jackson County citizens who harassed, whipped, and drove the 1,200 Latter-day Saints in an unprepared condition from the county.⁹⁷ Traveling mainly northward, the refugees crossed the Missouri River into Clay County.⁹⁸ By the end of November, most Church members were scattered over fifteen miles of wild river bottom in Clay County, south and east of Liberty, the county seat, with many of the assets managed by the United Firm either destroyed or unavailable.⁹⁹

2; Warren A. Jennings, "Factors in the Destruction of the Mormon Press in Missouri, 1833," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1967): 71.

94. On September 11, 1833, the Saints in Jackson County had divided its five settlements into ten ecclesiastical branches. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 65.

95. The largest debts due A. S. Gilbert were from the leaders of the United Firm, apparently from drawing goods from the Gilbert and Whitney store. William W. Phelps owed \$74.31; Edward Partridge owed \$43.68; John Whitmer owed \$14.43. A few small accounts by non-Mormons such as Samuel C. Owens, county clerk, and Jesse Overton were also left unpaid. The total uncollected was \$405.57. "Property of Gilbert & Whitney," A. S. Gilbert, Probate Court, 1838, Clay County, Liberty, Missouri.

96. Mary Elizabeth Rollins, a resident of the Gilbert house, said, "After breaking all the windows, they commenced to tear off the roof of the brick part amidst awful oaths and howls that were terrible to hear." Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 195–97; see n. 79.

97. See John C. McCoy, "A Famous Town," *Kansas City Journal* (January 18, 1885): 8.

98. Not until the following spring when the citizens learned of the Mormon relief party, Zion's Camp, did they burn the abandoned Mormon homes to discourage their return to Jackson County. W. W. Phelps reported that about 170 buildings were burned; Parley P. Pratt reported it as 203 houses. "The Outrage in Jackson County, Missouri," *Evening and Morning Star* 2, May 1834, 8; June 1834, 8; Pratt, *History of the Late Persecutions*, 23.

99. Sidney Gilbert, the storekeeper, died of cholera near Liberty on June 29, 1834. When his estate was probated in 1838, there was little to show for the assets of Gilbert, Whitney and Company of the United Firm. Five Gilbert and Whitney

Joseph Smith and Governor Dunklin advised the exiled people to continue seeking redress in the courts for the damages they had suffered.¹⁰⁰ Efforts at criminal and civil prosecution in Jackson County, beginning in February 1834, failed because of the hostile climate at Independence, even with the state militia sometimes serving as a guard and with the presence at Independence of the state's Mormon-friendly attorney general, Robert W. Wells.¹⁰¹ Receiving a change of venue to nearby Richmond, Ray County, leaders of the United Firm pressed for two test cases from events that had occurred in Independence on July 20, 1833. The charge of "trespass" was leveled against the Jackson County defendants both for assaulting Bishop Partridge and for destroying the house and press of W. W. Phelps. The two men claimed civil damages of \$50,000 each.¹⁰² The Circuit Court, in its July 1836 term at Richmond, ruled against the mob defendants, but the judge awarded Partridge the frivolous damages of "one cent" and Phelps "seven hundred and fifty Dollars."¹⁰³ Meanwhile, Phelps's press was salvaged and bought by Robert N. Kelly and William H. Davis of Liberty, who paid \$300 to the Mormon-retained attorneys as part payment of their \$1,000 legal bill.¹⁰⁴ The Missouri officers of the United Firm received little recompense from the Missouri courts of law.

The New Kirtland Literary Firm

After the printing office in Independence was destroyed, the leaders of the United Firm turned their attention to establishing a press in Kirtland. On August 18, 1833, Joseph Smith wrote to Phelps and others in Missouri: "We shall get a press immediately in this place and print the *Star* until you can obtain deliverence and git up again."¹⁰⁵ On September 11, five officers

lots, including Lot 51, the site of the Gilbert and Whitney store, were sold for \$800 in 1838; \$600 went to Whitney and \$200 to Gilbert's widow. Jackson County Deed Record, F 52–53.

100. D&C 101:81–89; *History of the Church*, 1:476–78.

101. "The Outrage in Jackson County, Missouri," *Evening and Morning Star* 2, March 1834, 3.

102. Ray County Circuit Court Record, A 245–248; Edward Partridge's handwritten statement of damages. Edward Partridge, "In the Year of Our Lord," 1–3, Church Archives.

103. Ray County Circuit Court Record, July Term 1836, 249–50; see Max H. Parkin, "A History of the Latter-day Saints in Clay County" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1976), 97–108.

104. *Kansas City Star* (February 27, 1972): G 15; *Times and Seasons* 1 (February 1840), 50.

105. Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 310.

of the United Firm met in Kirtland to establish the new press. The officers, Smith, Rigdon, Williams, Whitney, and Cowdery, who had recently arrived from Jackson County as a “delegate to represent the residue” of the United Firm in Missouri, established the Kirtland publishing firm of F. G. Williams and Company, with Williams as publisher.¹⁰⁶ At the meeting, they authorized the new company to print *The Evening and the Morning Star* in Kirtland, which it did for ten months, and at the same meeting they established a replacement paper, the *Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, with Oliver Cowdery as editor of both papers.¹⁰⁷

A temporary shop for the new press was provided, and early in December 1833, Cowdery and Bishop Whitney arrived from New York with press and type. On December 18, Joseph Smith and others dedicated the press in a room in the French Inn, where Cowdery and others worked until a new building became available near the temple.¹⁰⁸ “Our office,” Oliver wrote of their location in the inn, the soon-to-be-renamed Johnson Inn,¹⁰⁹ “is yet in the brick building, though we expect in the spring to move on the hill.”¹¹⁰ They printed the first issue of the *Star* in December 1833 and the first issue of the *Messenger and Advocate* the following October. By then they were in the printing shop on the upper floor of the newly finished schoolhouse behind the unfinished temple.¹¹¹ Plans to publish Joseph Smith’s revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, his translation of the Bible, and other projects prompted the Church to bring Phelps and John Whitmer from Clay County to work in the new printing shop. Whitmer arrived on May 17, 1835, and commenced working at the press the next day.¹¹² By June 1835, Whitmer replaced Cowdery as editor of the *Messenger and Advocate*, and Phelps began setting type for the revelations to be published in the new Doctrine and Covenants.

106. Kirtland Council Minutes, 24.

107. D&C 104:29; *Evening and Morning Star* 2, September 1834, 8; see also Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 1:47–49.

108. Kirtland Letter Book, 58; see *History of the Church*, 1:418, 448, 465.

109. John Johnson was granted a tavern license on April 5, 1834; Geauga County Court of Common Pleas, April 5, 1834, Book M, 184.

110. Oliver Cowdery, Letter Book, 22, typescript, Church Archives.

111. The school opened in December 1834. *Messenger and Advocate* 1, February 1835, 80; Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 572–74, 579. The building was 30’ x 38’. Church meetings were being held in the schoolroom by August 11, 1834. Kirtland Council Minutes, 52; *History of the Church*, 1:418, 448, 451, 465.

112. John Whitmer varies between May 16 and May 17 as his arrival date. “Day and Account Book,” 22, John Whitmer Papers, Church Archives; Westergren, *The Book of John Whitmer*, 137.

Inasmuch as the original literary firm established in Hiram and implemented in Independence preceded the United Firm, it functioned independently at first.¹¹³ But at Independence, W. W. Phelps and Company operated as a stewardship of Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitney, officers of the United Firm.¹¹⁴ In the meeting of September 11, 1833, the leaders established the new literary firm at Kirtland as F. G. Williams and Company, under the aegis of the United Firm.¹¹⁵ This publishing business was the printing office referred to in the April 1834 revelation that disbanded the United Firm and distributed its properties.¹¹⁶

The United Firm Is Replaced by the High Councils

In February 1834, two months before the April revelation was received, Joseph Smith organized a standing high council of the Church in Kirtland. This council of fifteen high priests, three presidents and a body of twelve counselors, possessed legislative and ecclesiastical authority.¹¹⁷ Six members of the high council were also members of the United Firm.¹¹⁸

After the Prophet received the April revelation ending the firm's joint association between Independence and Kirtland, the United Firm's policy-making functions at Kirtland soon shifted to the new high council rather than to the newly designated "United Firm of . . . the City of Kirtland," as directed in the revelation.¹¹⁹ At a high council meeting on September 24, 1834, its leaders uncharacteristically began to discuss administrative and financial concerns previously handled by the United Firm. For example, the high council planned a forthcoming project for the new literary firm and elected the presidency of the high council (Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams) and high counselor Oliver Cowdery, all former members of the United Firm, to manage the undertaking.¹²⁰ The high council authorized them to take charge of "arranging and publishing" the

113. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 46.

114. See n. 162 herein and the text associated with ns. 27–33.

115. Kirtland Council Minutes, 24.

116. D&C 104:29.

117. The minutes referred to the new high council as "a standing council for the church." Kirtland Council Minutes, 29–39; D&C 102:1.

118. The six members of the United Firm were Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams as high council presidents and Oliver Cowdery, John Johnson, and Martin Harris as "counsellors."

119. Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C, 31; see also D&C 104:48.

120. This high council committee also comprised the Presidency of the Church. Oliver Cowdery would be ordained to the Church Presidency as Assistant President on December 5, 1834. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:24; 2:36.

revelations in the forthcoming Doctrine and Covenants and of receiving “the avails” from its sales.¹²¹ Increasingly, the Kirtland high council made financial decisions that typically had been made by the United Firm. It advised Bishop Whitney on the operation of his store, directed the payment of debt, and counseled Church members on their land purchases in Missouri.¹²² The support gained from the wide leadership base of the high council seemed beneficial. Accordingly, the leaders of the high council, who also had been officers of the original United Firm, functioned implicitly as the leaders of the new so-called United Firm of Kirtland.

Events in Missouri eventually followed a similar course. About two months after he received the April revelation on distributing United Firm properties, Joseph Smith was in Clay County with Zion’s Camp delivering relief to the Saints. While there, the Prophet organized a Missouri high council to govern the spiritual affairs of the Saints in exile; this high council would later also extend its ecclesiastical reach beyond spiritual duties. On July 7, 1834, at the Zion’s Camp discharge site two miles south of Liberty, Joseph Smith appointed David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and John Whitmer presidents of the Missouri high council, with twelve high councillors to advise them, as at Kirtland. Following the Prophet’s return to Ohio, this high council slowly began to direct financial matters. For example, in 1836 it appointed elders to canvas Church branches in several eastern states to borrow and collect money for the “benefit of ‘Poor Bleeding Zion.’”¹²³ Later, it acknowledged that the “High Council and Bishop of Zion” were appointed “to do business for Zion.”¹²⁴ Consequently, the proposed new separate United Firms of Kirtland and Zion, as named in the revelation to disband the firm, remained irrelevant and nonexistent apart from their embodiment in the high councils. Put another way, the high councils fulfilled that part of the revelation by each temporarily functioning in the role of the local firm. Likewise, the work of the treasurer and treasury, also named in the revelation, was later performed by the bishop and superintended by the Church Presidency, as later developments show.¹²⁵ Clearly, the administrative and financial activities of the United Firm at Kirtland were continued by the same leaders but in their developing ecclesiastical roles.

121. Kirtland Council Minutes, 76.

122. Kirtland Council Minutes, 76–80.

123. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 105. There are no minutes for the Clay County high council meetings in 1835 and only one for 1836.

124. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 108.

125. D&C 104:48, 67; see ns. 223 and 225 herein. The author has not found any documents of the early Church after April 1834 that refer to the separate United Firms or their treasuries.

Tension in the United Firm

The April 1834 revelation speaks of jarring problems among the members of the United Firm. The “transgressor” among them “cannot escape my wrath,” the revelation stated.¹²⁶ Dissonance among them had roots early in the firm’s organization and continued during the two years of its existence. In fact, problems between the leaders in Ohio and Missouri arose as early as July 1831 at the time Zion was dedicated. That summer, Bishop Partridge had reservations about the Prophet’s conjectured size of the branch that awaited their arrival in Jackson County. According to Ezra Booth, one of the elders traveling to Missouri that summer, the Prophet expected a large branch of the Church resulting from Oliver Cowdery’s missionary work there the previous spring, but when they arrived there were only a few members. What Booth believed was Joseph’s errant prediction and his other shortcomings soon contributed to his own apostasy, and he attempted to take others with him. In a lengthy letter to Edward Partridge reviewing his complaints, Booth remonstrated with the bishop to join him and leave the faith, but his appeal bore no fruit.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, Sidney Rigdon kept alive his own complaint against Partridge for his doubts and possibly for other concerns until the two men met at Independence in April 1832. There the disagreements were “settled” and “the hearts of all run together in love,” wrote John Whitmer.¹²⁸ Then, in a climate of peace, they organized the United Firm.

As the United Firm was established, its leaders made a covenant of solidarity. Sometimes, however, they had trouble fulfilling their ideal. Distance, differing views on administrative policy, misunderstandings, and perhaps personality variances sometimes got in their way. In November 1832, a problem between the leaders in Kirtland and in Independence prompted a chastising revelation directed at Bishop Partridge that threatened to replace him as bishop in Zion if he did not repent. He is the “man, who was called of God and appointed, that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God,”¹²⁹ it said. But after an accompanying rebuke, the

126. D&C 104:4–10.

127. Ezra Booth, “Letter VII,” *Ohio Star*, November 24, 1831, 1; Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 200–210. See D&C 58:14–18; *History of the Church*, 1:215–17; for a consideration of the relationship between Booth and Bishop Partridge, see Max H Parkin, *Conflict at Kirtland* (Salt Lake City: Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 1967), 77–88.

128. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 41, 45; *History of the Church*, 1:267.

129. D&C 85:8. Sometimes problems arose over Bishop Newel K. Whitney at Kirtland. See Kirtland Council Minutes, 25.

crisis passed and a successor was never named.¹³⁰ In January 1833, when another problem between the two groups arose, the Prophet sent Phelps a copy of a revelation that Joseph termed the “olive leaf” to uplift the Saints in Missouri, but he sent it with a letter containing a grim message: “If Zion will not purify herself, . . . [God] will seek another people.”¹³¹ Also in an accompanying letter, two representatives of a council of high priests at Kirtland censured Partridge, Gilbert, and Phelps individually for hasty words; the representatives then added a caution from Joseph Smith, that if Zion did not improve “the Lord will seek another place.” In their letter, the two spokesmen, Hyrum Smith and Orson Hyde, excoriated the three men. “We feel more like weeping over Zion,” they wrote, “than we do like rejoicing over her.”¹³²

After the Saints were driven from Jackson County, however, the leaders in Ohio expressed sympathy and love for their exiled brethren. On December 10, 1833, the Prophet wrote to Partridge, Phelps, and others in Missouri: “Brethren, when we learn [of] your sufferings it awakens ev[er] sympathy of our hearts; it weighs us down; we cannot refrain from tears.”¹³³ Nevertheless, problems continued. From Clay County, Phelps wrote “sharp, piercing, & cutting reproofs” against the Kirtland leaders, as Joseph quoted him in a letter dated March 30, 1834. The Prophet answered Phelps, Partridge, and “others of the firm”: “O, how wounding, & how poignant must it be to receive chastisement & reproofs, for things that we are not guilty of from a source we least expect them, arising from a distrustful, a fearful, & jealous spirit.”¹³⁴ Perhaps to soften his reprimand, however, Joseph Smith added that he would “forgive, and . . . forebear, with all long suffering and patience.”¹³⁵

During the winter of 1834, alarm in Kirtland was heightened for another reason. A former Church member, Philastus Hurlbut, threatened the life of Joseph Smith and helped excite local hostility against the Saints.¹³⁶ That winter, a mob passed through Kirtland at night threatening

130. “One Mighty and Strong,” *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 4:113, 117, November 13, 1905.

131. D&C 88; Kirtland Letter Book, 19; *History of the Church*, 1:316.

132. Kirtland Letter Book, 21; *History of the Church*, 1:319–20.

133. Kirtland Letter Book, 72; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 330.

134. Cowdery, Letter Book, 31; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Prophet Joseph Smith*, 334–35; *History of the Church*, 1:317–21.

135. Cowdery, Letter Book, 34; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 337. The Prophet’s letter was dated March 30, 1834.

136. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:19; *History of the Church*, 2:46–49; see David W. Grua, “Joseph Smith and the 1834 D. P. Hurlbut Case,” *BYU Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 33–54.

to tear down the walls of the partially built temple. Heber C. Kimball remembered, “We had to guard ourselves night after night, and for weeks were not permitted to take off our clothes, and were obliged to lay with our firelocks in our arms.”¹³⁷ Joseph feared also that the press office and school-room near the temple might be damaged. These tense times prompted Joseph to write to Partridge about his fears: “We know not how soon [the enemy] may be permitted to follow the example of the Missourians,” he wrote December 5, 1833.¹³⁸ In January the Prophet “united in prayer” with other members of the firm. Sympathetically, he prayed on behalf of the exiled Saints in Clay County “that they perish not with hunger nor cold.” Then, turning to local concerns, Joseph prayed “that the Lord would also hold the lives of all the United Firm, and not suffer that any of them shall be taken” and added that Bishop Whitney “will have means sufficient to discharge every debt that the Firm owes.”¹³⁹

Debt of the United Firm at Kirtland

Besides threats from their neighbors, Joseph Smith and other firm leaders found that by March 1834 the mounting debt of the United Firm at Kirtland had become a haunting concern. Funds were scarce and payments were either due or soon would be. When the United Firm was organized at Independence in 1832, Joseph and the partners authorized a loan for \$15,000, which Whitney was appointed to acquire for the firm.¹⁴⁰ Of this the Prophet wrote, “Arrangements were . . . made for supplying the saints with stores in Missouri and Ohio,” and he later authorized the use of credit to buy paper for Phelps’s press.¹⁴¹ Whitney made yearly trips to Buffalo or New York City to restock the store in Kirtland and probably the store in Independence as well. In October 1832, the Prophet traveled to New York with Whitney on one of his buying trips. “It is [a] tedious Job to stand on the feet all day to select goods,” Joseph wrote to his wife, Emma, concerning the task that faced Whitney. While the two men stayed in a boarding-house on Pearl Street in the merchant district of New York City, Joseph

137. Heber C. Kimball, “Extract from the Journal of Elder Heber C. Kimball,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 771.

138. Kirtland Letter Book, 68–69. The problem persisted; Cowdery wrote on January 21, 1834, reporting on events on the previous week: “They . . . fired cannon, we suppose to alarm us.” Cowdery, Letter Book, 22. For more on the problem, see Parkin, *Conflict at Kirtland*, 204–10.

139. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:18–19.

140. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 48.

141. Unpublished revelation, March 20, 1832, Kirtland Revelation Book, 19; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:382.

further observed that “Brother Whitney is received with great kindness by all his old acquaintance[s].”¹⁴² In December 1833, Whitney was again in New York, this time with Oliver Cowdery to buy the press for Kirtland. A month before the April 1834 revelation was received, Joseph Smith wrote to Edward Partridge, “We have run into debt for the press, and also to obtain money to pay the New York debt for Zion.”¹⁴³ Additionally, their first payment on the French farm was due, further stressing their resources.¹⁴⁴

Besides its outside debt, the United Firm was also burdened with unpaid bills among its officers. Partners of the firm in Kirtland accrued debt as they drew from the Whitney store either as paying customers or as beneficiaries of the Lord’s storehouse. Nevertheless, Whitney kept a record of accounts receivable on members of the firm. In spring 1834, Joseph sought to have these internal debts canceled. Frederick G. Williams wrote that when the Prophet received the revelation to distribute the assets of the United Firm, he received another revelation, but one “not written,” he said. It required “every one of which were then called the firm to give up all notes and demands that they had against each other . . . and all be equal.”¹⁴⁵ Whitney stoically wrote, “Joseph said it must be done.”¹⁴⁶ Whitney’s account showed that the debt owed to him by the five principal Kirtland members of the United Firm totaled \$3,635.35.¹⁴⁷ Compliant, Whitney accepted Joseph’s direction “without any value recd,” he noted.¹⁴⁸ Williams was also asked to relinquish his claim on all members of the firm, “which was the cause,” he wrote, “that I never got any thing for my farm.”¹⁴⁹

Meanwhile in February 1834, the Prophet received a revelation to go east with others to raise recruits and funds for Zion’s Camp to help the Saints in Missouri. Joseph decided to use the trip also for raising money to pay on the Kirtland debt. Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt, his

142. Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 279–80.

143. Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 337.

144. Staker, “‘Thou Art the Man,’” 104, 111.

145. “Statement of fact relative to Smith and myself,” Frederick G. Williams Papers, Church Archives.

146. “Memo of Balances,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

147. Newel K. Whitney reported that the balances owed him on April 23, 1834, were from Joseph Smith, \$1,151.31; Sidney Rigdon, \$777.98; John Johnson, \$567.68; F. G. Williams & Co., \$584.14; Williams personally, 485.67; and Oliver Cowdery, \$68.57. “Memo of Balances,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections; Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 211.

148. “Memo of Balances,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

149. This suggests that consecrations were not always seen by the donor fully as freewill offerings. Frederick G. Williams, “Statement of Fact,” Frederick G. Williams Papers, Church Archives.

companion, left Kirtland on February 26, as did Orson Hyde and Orson Pratt and other traveling pairs.¹⁵⁰ Three weeks later, at a conference of elders in Livingston County, New York, Joseph reviewed his Kirtland financial concerns: “Two Thousand Dollars . . . will deliver Kirtland from Debt for the present,” he told the audience.¹⁵¹ In response, the conference appointed five elders to raise the funds. The next few weeks, however, saw them raising but little money. On April 7, after he returned to Kirtland and while lamenting the poor collection, Joseph wrote to Hyde: “If this Church . . . will not help us, when they can do it without sacrifice . . . God shall take away their talent.”¹⁵² On that same day, Joseph met with Whitney, Cowdery, and Williams and prayed that the Lord would “deliver the firm from debt.”¹⁵³ On April 10, while pondering their difficulty, Joseph discussed the problem with the officers of the “united firm . . . [and] agreed that the firm should be desolv[ed].” He wrote, “Each one [is to] have their stewardship set off to them.”¹⁵⁴

Thirteen days later, on April 23, 1834, the day before Orson Pratt returned to Kirtland,¹⁵⁵ Joseph Smith received the revelation to distribute the Kirtland resources of the United Firm to its members and directed them to manage the properties as personal stewardships. Two days after he arrived, Orson Pratt copied the revelation into the Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, without providing any heading other than the date. Four months later, Orson Hyde copied the revelation from that book into the Kirtland Revelation Book and added the heading: “Revelation given April 23d 1834 appointing to each member of the united firm their Stewardship.”¹⁵⁶

150. D&C 103:36–40; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:21; Elden J. Watson, *The Orson Pratt Journals* (Salt Lake City: Elden J. Watson, 1975), 34.

151. Kirtland Council Minutes, 42–43.

152. Kirtland Letter Book, 82–83; *History of the Church*, 2:48. At the Livingston County, New York, meeting, Orson Pratt was voted to return to Kirtland.

153. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:28.

154. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:29. He did not name the members of the United Firm with whom he met.

155. Orson Pratt and Orson Hyde, who left Kirtland together on February 26, separated and Pratt returned to Kirtland alone on April 24.

156. Kirtland Revelation Book, 100. On April 28, 1834, an uncanonized revelation referred to the “settlement of the United Firm,” the last time the firm is so referenced in the early documents. Kirtland Revelation Book, 111. Orson Pratt’s recording of the revelation that follows is in the Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C, 19–43.

Sec. 104

April 23, 1834

Verily, I say unto you my friends,
I give unto you counsel & a commandment concerning all the properties which belong to the Firm, which I commanded to be organized & established to be a United Firm, & an everlasting Firm, for the benefit of my church, & for the salvation of men until I come, with a promise immutable & unchangeable, that inasmuch as those whom I commanded were faithful, they should be blessed with multiplicity of blessings; but inasmuch as they were not faithful, they were nigh unto cursing. Therefore

FIG. 9. The first page of the revelation to end the United Firm and to distribute its properties, as Orson Pratt copied it into the "Book of Commandments Laws and Covenants" (D&C 104:1-3). In the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, Church leaders changed the name of the "United Firm" to read "United Order" and changed other words to protect the firm and its officers from an unsympathetic public. Someone later added the words "Sec. 104" in pencil at the top. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Orson Pratt's Copy of the Revelation in Book of Commandments Law and Covenants That Became Doctrine and Covenants 104

April 23, 1834

Verily I say unto you my friends, I give unto you council & a commandment concerning all the properties which belong to the Firm,¹⁵⁷ which I commanded to be organized & established to be a United Firm,¹⁵⁸ & an everlasting Firm,¹⁵⁹ for the benefit of my church, & for the salvation of men until I come, with a promise immutable & unchangeable, that inasmuch as those whom I commanded¹⁶⁰ were faithful, they should be blessed with a multiplicity of blessings; but inasmuch as they were not faithful, they were nigh unto cursing. Therefore [p. 19]¹⁶¹ inasmuch as some of my servants have not kept the commandment but have broken the covenant, by covetousness¹⁶² & with feigned words,¹⁶³ I have cursed them with

157. D&C 104:1. Although this revelation is “a commandment concerning all the properties” of the United Firm, only those in Kirtland are mentioned specifically in the revelation.

158. D&C 104:1. The title “United Firm” or “firm” was used by Pratt and Hyde for this revelation and by others. Kirtland Revelation Book, 16, 100–107, 111; Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45, 47–48; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 34, 43, 334.

159. D&C 104:1. The word “firm” was replaced with “order” in the following references: D&C 78:4, 11; 82:20; 90:1.

160. D&C 104:2. There were twelve known members of the United Firm.

161. D&C 104:4. Page numbering in the Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C.

162. D&C 104:4. While not naming members of the firm, the revelation was referring to its members in Missouri who sometimes entertained reproachful attitudes. In a letter dated March 30, 1834, “To Edward [Partridge], William [Phelps], and others of the firm,” Joseph Smith referred to the “wickedness of my brethren,” and chided Phelps in particular for speaking of the press as “my press, my type, &c.” The Prophet asked Phelps, “How came they to be ‘yours?’” Cowdery, Letter Book, 36; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 337–38.

163. D&C 104:4. The charge of using “feigned words” may have stemmed from separate letters, not now available, sent to the leaders at Kirtland by John Corrill, William W. Phelps, and Sidney Gilbert in Missouri in 1832. Corrill had complained of Joseph “seeking after monarchical power and authority,” and Gilbert expressed other “low, dark and

a verry sore & grievous curse; for I the Lord have decreed in my heart, that inasmuch as any <man> belonging to the Firm, shall be found a transgressor, or in other words, shall brake the covenant with which ye are bound,¹⁶⁴ he shall be cursed in his life & shall be trodden down by whom I will; for I the Lord am not to be mocked in these things; & all this that the innocent among you may not be condemned with the unjust, & that the guilty among you may not escape because I the [p. 20] Lord have promised unto you a crown of glory at my right hand.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, inasmuch as ye are found transgressors, ye cannot escape my wrath in your lives; & inasmuch as ye are cut off by transgression ye cannot escape the buffetings of Satan¹⁶⁶ unto the day of Redemption. And I now give unto you power from this verry hour, that if any man among you, of the Firm, is found a transgressor, & repenteth not of the evil, that ye shall deliver him over unto the buffetings of Satan, & he shall have no more power to bring evil upon you; but as long as ye hold communion with transgressors, behold, they [p. 21] bring evil upon you.¹⁶⁷ It is wisdom in me, therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves, & appoint every man his stewardship,¹⁶⁸ that every man may give an account unto me of the stewardship which is appointed unto him; for it is

blind insinuations.” Kirtland Letter Book, 21; see *History of the Church*, 1:318–19. In March 1834, Joseph Smith answered complaints against the Missouri leaders who were trying “to steady the ark.” Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 337.

164. D&C 104:5. Details of the covenant or the bond are not given. See D&C 78:11–12; 82:11. At the organization of the United Firm, William W. Phelps and Sidney Gilbert were appointed to “draft the bond” binding members of the firm. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45; see also *History of the Church*, 1:363.

165. D&C 104:7; D&C 76:20, 23, 108; 78:15.

166. D&C 104:9. D&C 78:12; 82:21. The reprimand may have been only to appeal to the leaders in Missouri or Ohio not to sin further. No officer of the firm was excommunicated from the Church resulting from these accusations.

167. Between D&C 104:10–11. This sentence, containing the previous fifteen words, was also in the Kirtland Revelation Book, 101, but was not printed in the Doctrine and Covenants.

168. D&C 104:11. This is the central message of the revelation—to “appoint every man his stewardship.” See n. 173 herein.

expedent, that I the Lord, should make every man accountable, as stewards over earthly Blessings, which I have made & prepared for my creatures. I the Lord stretched out the heavens; & builded the earth as a verry handy work, & all things therein are mine,¹⁶⁹ & it is my business to provide for my saints, for all things are mine; but it must needs be done in mine [p. 22] own way: & behold, this is the way that I the Lord hath decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted in that the rich are made low; for the earth is full, & there is enough & to spare; yea, I have prepared all things, & have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.¹⁷⁰ Therefore if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, & impart not his portion according to the law of my gospel unto the poor & the needy,¹⁷¹ he shall with [the] Diveles¹⁷² lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment. And now verily, I say unto you concerning the properties of the Firm,¹⁷³ Let my servant [p. 23] Sidney [Rigdon]¹⁷⁴ have appointed unto him the place where he now resides,¹⁷⁵ & the lot of the Tanery for his

169. D&C 104:14. God as the Divine Creator allows man to be stewards over his possessions. See D&C 104:54–56.

170. D&C 104:17; 58:26–28; see 2 Nephi 2:26–27.

171. D&C 104:18. The “law of my Gospel unto the poor” was revealed in 1831 as described in D&C 42:30–39 and in subsequent revelations: D&C 51:2–5; 70:4–10; 72:2–6; 78:3–6. The bishops under the direction of the United Firm had the responsibility of caring for the poor. D&C 78:3; 82:12.

172. D&C 104:18. “Diveles” changed to “wicked” in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:2).

173. This begins the naming of the recipients of stewardships.

174. D&C 104:20. Last names have been added throughout the revelation for convenience. Orson Pratt added full names in brackets in the 1876 edition to identify recipients of the pseudonyms.

175. D&C 104:20. As a recipient of a stewardship, Sidney Rigdon received the place where he “now resides.” Rigdon was living on a one-acre lot on Chillicothe Road across from the temple lot. On February 25, 1832, Newel K. Whitney purchased the lot for \$90 from Jemima Doane who had purchased it from Peter French in 1827 for \$40. Geauga County Deed Record, 15:322; Staker, “History of the Kirtland Flats Tannery,” Appendix A, 2. At the time of Whitney’s purchase, Doane was residing there in a log house with her children. In 1832, after Rigdon and Joseph Smith were mobbed at Hiram, Portage County, Rigdon moved his family into the former Doane house, then owned by Whitney. In compliance

stewardship¹⁷⁶ for his support while he is labouring in my vinyard,¹⁷⁷ even as I will, when I shall command him; & let all things be done according to counsel of the Firm, & united consent, or voice of the Firm which dwells in the land of Kirtland.¹⁷⁸ And this stewardship & blessing, I the Lord confer upon my servant Sidney [Rigdon] for a blessing upon him, & upon his seed after him, & I will multiply blessings upon him & upon his seed after him inasmuch as he shall be humble [p. 24] before me. And again let my servant Martin [Harris] have appointed unto him

with the above revelation, on April 30, 1834, Whitney transferred ownership to Rigdon. The lot and house were valued at \$100. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:488. Because log houses were not taxed in Geauga County, the lot in 1835 was valued at \$12 for tax purposes. Geauga County Tax Record, 508 (1835). Rigdon had built a frame house on the site by the time he sold it to William Marks on April 7, 1837, for \$1,500. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:535.

176. D&C 104:20. The tannery assigned to Sidney Rigdon was located on the lot just east of the N. K. Whitney and Company store. In October 1832, Arnold Mason, a non-Mormon, had purchased this one-acre lot from Peter French and soon built a tannery on the site. On May 3, 1834, ten days after the revelation assigned these properties, Mason sold the lot and tannery to Sidney Rigdon for \$450. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:487; Staker, "History of the Kirtland Flats Tannery," Appendix A, 2–3.

177. D&C 104:20. Sidney Rigdon, who had served since March 8, 1832, as counselor to Joseph Smith in the presidency of the High Priesthood, needed an income. He had worked as a journeyman tanner his last two years in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, before moving to Ohio in 1825, but he had not taken well to the "humble occupation" of a tanner. *Times and Seasons* 4 (May 15, 1843): 193. Soon after receiving the tannery, Rigdon engaged his mother, Nancy Rigdon, to manage the firm; she in turn sought management assistance from William Marks and an experienced tanner, Zerah Coles. *Northern Times*, 1, December 2, 1835, 4; see Staker, "History of the Kirtland Flats Tannery," 6–7. On October 17, 1836, Rigdon sold the business to his mother for \$450. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:71. Nancy Rigdon sold the tannery on January 18, 1838, for \$1,000 to George and Lawrence Frank. Geauga County Deed Record, 25:303; *History of the Church*, 3:1; see Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 211.

178. D&C 104:21. Members of the United Firm who composed the "council of the Firm" at Kirtland were Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Newel K. Whitney, John Johnson, Martin Harris, and, recently arrived from Missouri, Oliver Cowdery.

for his stewardship the lot of land which my servant John [Johnson] obtained in exchange for his farm,¹⁷⁹ for him & his seed after him; & inasmuch as he is faithful I will multiply blessings upon him & his seed after him. And let my servant Martin [Harris] devote his moneys for the printing of my word, according as my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.] shall direct.¹⁸⁰

And again let my servant Frederick [G. Williams] have the place upon which he now dwells,¹⁸¹ and let my servant Oliver [Cowdery] have the lot which is set off joining the house which

179. D&C 104:24. John Johnson sold his 160-acre farm at Hiram, Portage County, to Jude and Patty Stevens on May 10, 1834, for \$3,000 plus the Stevens farm (Township Lot 45, a mile southwest of the temple) in Kirtland, which the revelation awarded to Martin Harris. Portage County Deed Record, 18:393–94. While the Stevenses transferred the 105-acre lot to Harris, they delayed recording the sale until November 15, 1838. Geauga County Land Record, 27:250.

180. D&C 104:26. Martin Harris, who had paid \$3,000 for the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1829 and had continued using his resources for the Church since that time, was again asked to contribute money. See Peter Crawley, “A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (1972): 471; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 363. In 1831, Martin was listed as one who “may have claim on the Church for recompense.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 32.

181. D&C 104:27. The location where Frederick G. Williams “now dwells” is unknown. When Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland in February 1831, he visited the Williams family, probably residing on their recently purchased farm. Soon after this a revelation stated, let a “house be prepared” for the Williams family. Kirtland Revelation Book, 92. On October 10, 1832, a conference of elders decided that the Williams family should be “provided with a comfortable dwelling according to the commandment.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 15–16. Still, a year and half later, on March 8, 1833, a revelation instructed Joseph Smith, “Let there be a place provided” for “Frederick G. Williams.” D&C 90:19. Neither Church nor family records identify the location of the Williams residence. Correspondence between Dr. Frederick G. Williams, historian and great-great-grandson of President Frederick G. Williams, Provo, Utah, and the author, January 13, 2003, Provo, Utah.

[p. 25] is to be for the printing office¹⁸² which is lot number one;¹⁸³ & also the lot upon which his father resides;¹⁸⁴ & let my servants Frederick [G. Williams] & Oliver [Cowdery] have the printing office & all things that pertain unto it; & this shall be their stewardship which shall be appointed unto them;¹⁸⁵ & inasmuch as they are faithful, behold, I will bless them, & multiply blessings upon them, & this is the beginning of the stewardship which I have appointed unto them; for them & their seed after them; & inasmuch as they are faithful I will multiply blessings upon them & their seed after them, even a multiplicity of blessings. [p. 26] And again, let my servant John [Johnson] have the house

182. D&C 104:28. Plans to construct a combined printing office and schoolhouse were in place by October 1833, and the building was finished a year later. *History of the Church*, 1:418. The building was located on the temple lot west of the temple, next to lot number one. See n. 183 below.

183. D&C 104:28. "Lot number one," granted to Oliver Cowdery, was located just west of the printing office and the temple and labeled "O. Cowdery" lot "1" on the 1833 Kirtland Plat Map. According to the deed, John Johnson sold this lot to Cowdery on May 5, 1834, two weeks after the revelation assigned him the lot. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:479. On May 27, 1837, Cowdery sold the lot back to John Johnson, who sold it later that year to Oliver Granger. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:374; 25:552.

184. D&C 104:28. William Cowdery, Oliver's father, resided on lot 6, five doors west of Cowdery's lot 1. See n. 183 above. John Johnson, a United Firm land agent and later owner of the French farm, where these lots were located, sold lots 1 and 6 to Oliver Cowdery on May 5, 1834, for \$110, probably intending lot 6 for Oliver's father. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:479. On June 2, 1835, Leonard Rich sold William Cowdery a half-acre lot about a half mile west of the temple lot. John Johnson repurchased lots 1 and 6 from Oliver Cowdery on May 27, 1837. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:39; 24:374. William Cowdery died in Kirtland on February 26, 1845.

185. D&C 104:29. Frederick G. Williams and Oliver Cowdery received the Kirtland literary firm of F. G. Williams & Company including the press, located on the temple lot just west of the temple, where the two men operated the press as a joint stewardship. The officers of the United Firm had established the Kirtland literary firm on September 11, 1833. Kirtland Council Minutes, 24.

in which he lives,¹⁸⁶ & the farm,¹⁸⁷ all, save the ground which has been reserved for the building of my houses, which pertains to that farm,¹⁸⁸ & those lots which have been named for my servant Oliver [Cowdery],¹⁸⁹ & inasmuch as he is faithful I will multiply blessings upon him. And it is my will that he should sell the lots that are laid off for the building up of the city of my saints,¹⁹⁰ inasmuch as it shall be made known to him by the voice of the spirit & according to the counsel of the Firm,¹⁹¹ & by the voice of the Firm, & this is the beginning of the steward <ship> [p. 27] which I

186. D&C 104:34. John Johnson lived on lot 4, four doors west of the temple, on the new city's center block. After moving to Kirtland from Hiram in June 1833, Johnson was given the French Inn in which to live after he had cleared "the incumbrances" imposed upon it by a previous renter. Afterwards he moved to lot 4. The date of the move is unknown. D&C 96:9; Geauga County Deed Record, 22:497; Lamar C. Berrett, ed., *Sacred Places: Ohio and Illinois* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 2002), 31. In 1841, two years before his death, Johnson sold lot 4 to his son John Jr. Lake County Deed Record, A:539.

187. D&C 104:34. "Farm" changed to "inheritance" in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:6). The farm was the former French farm with the brick inn. Joseph Smith acknowledged Johnson's generosity to the Church, probably referring to the sale of Johnson's Portage County farm. In a blessing given on April 3, 1836, Joseph said, "As thou hast been liberal with thy property as befit the saints thou shalt have an hundred fold." "John Johnson Blessing," 1836, John Johnson Papers, Church Archives. Johnson did not take title to the French farm from the N. K. Whitney and Company, however, until September 23, 1836. Geauga County Deed Record, 22:497; see n. 179 herein.

188. D&C 104:34. "Farm" changed to "inheritance" in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:6). The "ground" refers to the Kirtland Temple lot on the French farm, and "my houses" refers to the three temples to be constructed on it and on the adjacent lot on the Williams farm. D&C 96; see n. 200 herein.

189. D&C 104:34. John Johnson was denied the two lots assigned to Oliver Cowdery on the south edge of the French farm. D&C 104:28; see ns. 183 and 184 herein.

190. D&C 104:36. John Johnson was here authorized to sell lots that were platted and subdivided on the French farm, particularly those near the temple lot on the south edge of the farm. In selling the lots, Johnson was acting as agent for the United Firm with Newel K. Whitney, who also sold lots. D&C 96:2-3; "List of Town Lots," Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

191. D&C 104:36.

have appointed unto him, for a blessing unto him & his seed after him;¹⁹² & inasmuch as he is faithful I will multiply a multiplicity of blessings upon him.

And again let my servant Newel [K. Whitney] have appointed unto him the houses & lot where he now resides,¹⁹³ & the lot & building on which the store stands,¹⁹⁴ & the lot also which is on the corner south of the store,¹⁹⁵ & also the lot on which the Ashery

192. D&C 104:37. The statement “his seed after him” allowed John Johnson to transfer his stewardship, the former French farm, to his son, John Jr., which he did on May 29, 1837. Johnson, however, sold only the remaining eighty acres, excluding the lots near the temple. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:278.

193. D&C 104:39. Returned to Newel K. Whitney were the two houses he had built on an acre lot. On June 1, 1822, Whitney had purchased from Peter French the lot on the northwest corner of the village’s main intersection, on which he built two houses. Whitney built the first house, 20’ x 40’ with two stories, in about 1822, where he and Elizabeth, his wife, lived upstairs for about two years while Newel kept shop below. In about 1824, just to the west and on the same lot, Whitney built a frame house, 25.5’ x 28.5’ with a 12’ x 20’ summer kitchen in the rear; here the family resided until they moved to Missouri in 1838. Staker, “Thou Art the Man,” 85, 88, 101. Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Newel K. Whitney’s business partner, and his wife, Elizabeth, probably lived in the first house, the vacated apartment-store, until they moved to Missouri in the fall of 1831. Whitney’s parents were probably living in it at the time of the revelation. Horace K. Whitney to Elizabeth Ann Whitney, February 16, 1870, Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

194. D&C 104:39. The “lot & building” refer to the main Whitney store of “N. K. Whitney & Co.” and the lot on which it stood. On April 13, 1826, Newel K. Whitney had purchased this lot from Peter French, comprising .26 acres, at the northeast corner of the main Kirtland village intersection. Geauga County Deed Record, 14:385. By January 1827, Whitney had built a two-story frame store on this lot and stocked it with merchandise. The “Whitney Store” was listed in land and tax records as “N. K. Whitney & Co.” and “Newel K. Whitney & Co.” Geauga County Tax Record, 507 (1834). Whitney took Algernon Sidney Gilbert as a partner in the store in February 1827, shortly after Gilbert arrived in town. Previously, Whitney had served as a clerk in Gilbert’s store in nearby Mentor, Ohio. Orson F. Whitney, “The Aaronic Priesthood,” *Contributor* 6 (January 1885): 124.

195. D&C 104:39. The lot “on the corner south” of the Whitney Store was on the southeast corner of Kirtland’s main village intersection. The lot was jointly owned by Newel K. Whitney and Sidney Gilbert. Gilbert

is situated.¹⁹⁶ And all this I have appointed unto my servant Newel [K. Whitney] for his stewardship, for a blessing upon him & his seed after him, for the benefit of the mercantile establishment of my Firm, which [p. 28] I have established for my Stake in the land of Kirtland;¹⁹⁷ yea, verily, this is the stewardship which I have appointed unto my servant Newel [K. Whitney], even this whole mercantile establishment, him & his agent, & his seed after him,¹⁹⁸ & inasmuch as he is faithful in keeping the commandments which I have given unto him, I will multiply blessings upon him, & his seed after him, even a multiplicity of blessings.

never owned land in Kirtland himself, and this was the only property the two men owned together. Peter French sold this one-acre lot to “N. K. Whitney & Co.” on March 5, 1829. Geauga County Deed Record, 12:627.

The revelation assigned the lot to Whitney because Gilbert had moved to Missouri in 1831. Legal ownership of the lot, however, continued jointly between Whitney and Gilbert until Gilbert’s death in Missouri on June 29, 1834. When Gilbert’s estate was settled, Newel K. Whitney, who was then living in Illinois, gave his brother Samuel F. Whitney, a Kirtland resident, power of attorney on August 29, 1839, to buy Gilbert’s undivided half interest in the property from Gilbert’s widow, Elizabeth. Samuel F. Whitney purchased the lot from Elizabeth Gilbert at a public auction, and on December 26, 1839, Newel acquired the lot from his brother. “Power of Attorney” and “Proclamation,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections; Lake County Deed Record, A: 574–75.

196. D&C 104:39. The ashery lot was located about a rod (16.5 feet) southeast of the lot owned jointly by Whitney and Gilbert and next to Stoney Brook, which emptied northward into the Chagrin River. Whitney had bought this lot of .65 acres from Peter French on September 5, 1822, for \$26. Geauga County Deed Record, 8:427–28. On that same day, Whitney had also leased water rights from French for a spring south of the property, apparently for use at the ashery. Two years later, Whitney had enlarged the lot by buying an adjacent .15 acres south and nearer to the spring. Geauga County Deed Record, 8:429; 14:386; “List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney Augt 1837,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections. Whitney had started his ashery enterprise by January 1824 and expanded it in 1828 when he constructed a frame building and a small attached office. “Notice,” *Painesville Telegraph* (January 14, 1824); Staker, “Thou Art the Man,” 85–88.

197. D&C 104:40; D&C 94:1.

198. D&C 104:41. The phrase “this whole mercantile establishment” refers to the “N. K. Whitney and Company,” including the Whitney store and properties associated with it.

And again let my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.] have appointed unto him the lot which is laid off for the building of my houses,¹⁹⁹ which is forty rods long and [p. 29] twelve wide,²⁰⁰ & also the farm²⁰¹ upon which his father now resides;²⁰² & this is the beginning of the

199. D&C 104:43. “Houses” changed to “house” in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:8). At the time this revelation was given, the Church planned to construct three sizable “houses” (temples or Church buildings) on a large temple lot. See D&C 88:119; 94:1–4, 10–11. The word “houses” was retained by Orson Hyde in Kirtland Revelation Book, 104; see n. 200 below.

200. D&C 104:43. “Forty rods long and twelve [rods] wide” (660' x 198') are the correct dimensions of the combined temple lot taken partly from the French and Williams farms. This temple lot was represented as the rectangle of the east third of the center block on both the 1833 plat map and the county-filed 1837 plat map. Information on the 1837 plat map and the deeds of the two smaller lots confirm these dimensions. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:477–79; 24:99.

The deeds of the two lots as issued in 1834, however, proved to be illegal. The problem arose from a minor surveyor's error, requiring the lots to be resurveyed and the deeds to be reissued. The new deed for the south lot was dated September 15, 1835, and the deed for the north lot was dated January 4, 1837. Geauga County Deed Record, 21:226; 24:100.

201. D&C 104:43. “Farm” changed to “inheritance” in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:8). The stewardship granted to Joseph Smith Jr. was the Frederick G. Williams farm, which Joseph spoke of as “my farm.” Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:120. Williams had purchased his farm of 144 acres from Isaac More and then consecrated it to the Church on January 5, 1832. Joseph acquired title to the Williams farm, now of 142 44/160 acres, and the Williams temple lot of 1 116/160 acres on May 5, 1834. Geauga County Deed Record, 16:22; 18:480; see ns. 53 and 200 herein.

202. D&C 104:43. Joseph Smith Sr. was residing on the farm of Frederick G. Williams, which Joseph Smith Sr. had helped manage. See n. 49 herein. The exact location of Father Smith's residence on the farm in 1834 is uncertain, but he may have lived with his son William. On December 18, 1835, Joseph Smith noted that his father lived with William in William's “own house.” *History of the Church*, 2:341. The Prophet said, however, that during December his parents moved in with him and Emma. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:111, 123; Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 587. The next year, on December 11, 1836, Joseph, who held title to the Williams farm, recorded the transfer of a lot from the farm to his brother William in the name of his wife, Caroline Grant. The lot faced west on Smith Street immediately southeast of the south temple lot. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:25. This lot may have been where William and his father resided at the time of the above revelation. See George Edward Anderson, *Church History in Black and White: George*

stewardship which I have appointed unto him, for a blessing upon him & upon his father; for behold, I have reserved an inheritance for his father, for his support;²⁰³ therefore he shall be reckoned in the house of my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.]: & I will multiply blessings upon the house of my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.] inasmuch as he is faithful, even a multiplicity of blessings.

And now a commandment I give unto you concerning Zion, that you shall no longer be [p. 30] bound as a United Firm, to your brethren of Zion, only on this wise: after you are organized, you shall be called, The United Firm of the Stake of Zion, the City of Kirtland, among your selves. And your brethren, after they are organized, shall be called, The United Firm of the City of Zion,²⁰⁴ & they shall be organized in their own names, & in their own name; & they shall do their business in their own name, & in their own names; & you shall do your business in your own name, & in

Edward Anderson's Photographic Mission to Latter-day Saint Historical Sites (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995), 147, 151; Lyle S. Briggs and Gladys A. Briggs, "Land Transactions of the Saints, Kirtland, Ohio, 1830's and 1840's," unpublished land records and maps, Lot 30, Map 3, Church Archives.

203. D&C 104:45. In May 1831, Joseph Smith Sr. received the farm of Frederick G. Williams to manage for his livelihood. See ns. 48 and 52 herein. On December 18, 1833, he was ordained Patriarch and a member of the Church Presidency by his son Joseph, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams. *The Book of Patriarchal Blessings*, 1834, 9, Church Archives. On September 14, 1835, the "high council of the Presidency" at Kirtland granted a stipend to Patriarch Joseph Smith Sr. when he served as Patriarch. The minutes state, "It is decided . . . President Joseph Smith Senr . . . be paid for his time at the rate of ten dollars per week, and his expenses." *Kirtland Council Minutes*, 107.

204. D&C 104:48. The United Firm, with properties in Ohio and Missouri, was now to be divided into two geographical branches with new names. With the death of storekeeper Sidney Gilbert in Missouri, however, the Missouri branch of the United Firm soon phased out, as did the branch at Kirtland. There are no records of the separate United Firms functioning as such. The business of making financial decisions for the Church shifted to the high councils in Kirtland and in Missouri and later to the Church Presidency. See n. 120 herein; *Kirtland Council Minutes*, 76–80; Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 48 n. 2, 105–8.

your own names.²⁰⁵ And this I have commanded to [p. 31] be done for your salvation, as also for their salvation, in consequence of their being driven out, and that which is to come.²⁰⁶ The covenant being broken through transgression, by covetousness & feigned words,²⁰⁷ therefore, you are dissolved as a United Firm with your brethren, that you are not bound only up to this hour unto them,²⁰⁸ only on this wise, as I said, By loan, as shall be agreed by this Firm in counsel as your circumstances will admit, & the voice of the council direct.²⁰⁹

And again, a commandment I give unto you concerning your Stewardship which I have appo[p. 32]inted unto you, behold, all these properties are mine, or else, your faith is vain, & ye are found hypocrites, & the covenants which you have made unto me are broken, & if these properties are mine, then, ye are stewards, otherwise ye are no stewards.²¹⁰ But, verily, I say unto you, I have appointed unto you to be stewards over mine house, even stewards indeed, & for this purpose have I commanded you to organize yourselves, even to print my word, the fulness of my scriptures, the revelations which I have given unto you, [p. 33] & which I shall hereafter from time to time give unto you, for the purpose of building up my church & kingdom on the earth,²¹¹

205. D&C 104:48–50. The officers were to operate their various properties in their own names, no longer as agents of the United Firm.

206. D&C 104:51. The exiled Latter-day Saints in Missouri suffered losses, unsettled property issues, and an uncertain future.

207. D&C 104:52. See ns. 162 and 163 herein.

208. D&C 104:53. The words “your brethren” refer to the officers of the United Firm in Missouri. A follow-up, uncanonized revelation received on April 28, 1834, declared, “Ye are made free from the Firm of Zion, and the Firm in Zion is made free from the Firm in Kirtland: Thus saith the Lord. Amen.” This is the last revelation that refers to the United Firm. “Kirtland Revelation Book,” 111. This revelation severed the solemn bond by which the two branches of the firm were bound. See D&C 82:11.

209. D&C 104:53. The firm at Kirtland retained the privilege to grant loans to the firm in Missouri, none of which are recorded.

210. D&C 104:56. The officers of the United Firm are reminded that in their individual stewardships, they are still supervising property belonging to God as the Creator. D&C 42:29, 32; 78:13–14; 82:4, 12, 19.

211. D&C 104:58. A general assembly of Church officers from Ohio and Missouri met in Kirtland on August 17, 1835, to accept the revelations

& to prepare my people for the time of my coming which is nigh at hand.²¹² ²¹³(Therefore, a commandment I give unto you that ye shall take the books of Mormon, & also the copy-right, & also the copy-right which shall be secured of the articles & Covenants,²¹⁴ in which covenants, all my commandments,²¹⁵ which it is my will should be printed, shall be printed, as it shall be made known unto you; & also the [p. 34] copy-right to the new translation of the scriptures;²¹⁶ & this I say that others may not take the blessings away from you which I have conferred upon you.) And ye

here spoken of and being published in the Doctrine and Covenants. Kirtland Council Minutes, 98–106; *History of the Church*, 2:243–51.

212. D&C 104:59. A popular belief in the Church was that the end of the world was near. See D&C 1:4, 12–13; 33:17; 34:7, 11–12; 46:64–69; 87:6. In Independence in 1832, Phelps suggested the end could be as early as “NINE years.” *Evening and Morning Star* 1, August, 1832, 6. In an 1834 letter to his family in Ohio, Edward Partridge suggested that if the signs of the end come “within the space of one, two, three or five years remember when you see them that I have forewarned you.” “Honored Father and Mother Beloved brothers and sister,” unpublished letter, October 22, 1834, 8, Partridge Papers, Church Archives. For statements from Joseph Smith, see *History of the Church*, 1:315–16; 2:182, 324. For a broader treatment of early Mormon millenarianism, see Glen M. Leonard, “Early Saints and the Millennium,” *Ensign* 9 (August 1979): 43–47, and Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1993).

213. D&C 104, between verses 59 and 60. The sentence contained in parentheses was not printed in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants or any other printed edition. In the manuscript, the parentheses marks were of a darker shade than the appearance of the other text and may have been added later. See Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C, 34–35. The sentence is included in the Kirtland Revelation Book, 105.

214. “Articles and Covenants” refers to the Doctrine and Covenants. The revelation directed the Church to acquire proper copyright protection for its sacred books.

215. “Commandments” refers to the revelations.

216. Joseph Smith’s revision of the Bible is identified here as the “new translation.” See *History of the Church*, 1:341, 365, 369. On June 15, 1835, Joseph Smith wrote, “We are now commencing to prepare and print the New Translation, together with all the revelations which God has been pleased to give us in these last days.” Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 363. While the printing of the “New Translation” was intended, lack of funds prevented it. For a treatment on the subject, see Robert J.

shall prepare for yourselves a place for a Treasury,²¹⁷ & consecrate it unto my name & ye shall appoint one among you to keep the treasury²¹⁸ & he shall be ordained unto this blessing; & there shall be a seal upon the Treasury, & all these sacred things²¹⁹ shall be delivered into the Treasury, & no man among you shall call it his own or any part of it; for it shall belong to you all with [p. 35] one accord,²²⁰ & I give it unto you from this very hour; & now see to it, that ye go to & make use of the stewardship which I have appointed unto you, exclusive of these sacred things,²²¹ for the purpose of printing these sacred things, according as I have said; & the avails²²² of these sacred things shall be had in the Treasury, & a seal shall be upon it, & it shall not be used or taken out of the Treasury by any one, neither shall the seal be lo<0>sed which shall be placed upon it only by the voice of the Firm, or by commandment. And thus shall ye preserve [p. 36] all the avails of these sacred things in the Treasury, for sacred & holy purposes, & this shall be called, The Sacred Treasury of the Lord,²²³ & a seal

Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).

217. D&C 104:60. There were to be two financial accounts or treasuries managed by unnamed treasurers. The first, a "sacred treasury," was to contain funds to finance the printing of scriptures. The second or "another treasury" was a revolving account to contain working funds deposited by the firm's Kirtland officers to be drawn upon by them as needed.

218. D&C 104:60. The keeper of this treasury, later called the "sacred treasury," is not named in Church records.

219. D&C 104:62. Sometimes "sacred things" referred to the printed revelations, sometimes to the proceeds from the sale of them, as here.

220. D&C 104:62. The "sacred treasury" would belong to those who worked on the preparation and publication of the scriptures. This included Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Oliver Cowdery. Kirtland Council Minutes, 24, 76.

221. D&C 104:63. The stewards were told not to expect to draw from the sacred treasury.

222. D&C 104:64. "Avails" refers to the profits or proceeds from the sale of the Doctrine and Covenants. See Kirtland Council Minutes, 76; D&C 70:1–3.

223. D&C 104:64–66. The sacred treasury, which was to contain the proceeds, profits, or "avails" from the sale of the scriptures, was to be disbursed by the "voice of the Firm" or by revelation. As the Church's

shall be kept upon it, that it may be holy & consecrated unto the Lord. And again, there shall be another Treasury²²⁴ prepared & a Treasurer²²⁵ appointed to keep the Treasury & a seal shall be placed upon it, & all monies that you receive in your stewardships by improving upon the properties which I have appointed unto you, in houses, or in lands, [p. 37] or in cattle, & in all things save it be the holy & sacred writings, which I have reserved unto myself for holy and sacred purposes, shall be cast into the Treasury as fast as you receive monies, by hundreds, or by fifties, or by twenties, or by tens, or by fives, or in other words, if any man among you, obtain five dollars, let him cast it into the Treasury, or if he obtain ten, or twenty, or fifty or a hundred, let him do likewise; & let not any man among you say that it is his own; for it shall not be called his, nor any part of it, & there [p. 38] shall not any part of it be used, or taken out of the Treasury only by the voice & common consent of the Firm.

And this shall be the voice & common consent of the Firm that any man among you, say unto the Treasurer, I have need of this to

financial policy was developing, the distribution of the funds that fit the description of the sacred treasury was immediately directed instead by the presidency of the high council at Kirtland, which also was the Presidency of the Church. Kirtland Council Minutes, 76; *History of the Church*, 2:165. In this a protocol on handling Church funds by the Presidency was developing. In 1838 when the tithing of personal income was revealed as a “standing law . . . forever,” the revelation gave jurisdiction for its disbursal to the “First Presidency of my Church.” D&C 119:4; 120.

224. D&C 104:67. This second or “another” treasury was to serve as a general account to which the stewards operating their individual stewardships could make deposits or from which they could make withdrawals.

225. D&C 104:67. Neither of the two treasurers was otherwise named in Church records. However, Bishop Newel K. Whitney had been previously appointed to “receive the funds of the church” and probably was the most financially experienced and reliable among the members to continue to do so. D&C 72:8–10. Also, an unpublished revelation given in 1832 instructed the two bishops of the Church “to administer the benefits of the church or the overpluss of all who are in their stewardships according to the Commandments.” “Duty of Bishops,” March 1832, Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections. The bishop and his council were appointed by revelation in 1838 to participate with the First Presidency in disposing of the Church tithing funds. D&C 120.

help me in my stewardship, if it be five dollars, or if it be ten dollars, or twenty, or fifty, or a hundred. The treasurer shall give unto him the sum which he requires, to help him in his stewardship, until he be found a transgressor, & it is manifest before the counsel of the Firm, [p. 39] plainly that he is an unfaithful & an unwise steward; but so long as he <is> in full fellowship & is faithful & wise in his stewardship, this shall be his token unto the Treasurer, that the Treasurer shall not withhold; but in case of transgression the Treasurer shall be subject unto the counsel & voice of the Firm, & in case the Treasurer is found an unfaithful & an unwise steward, he shall be subject to the counsel & voice of the Firm, & shall be removed out of his place & another shall be appointed in his stead. And again, verily I say unto you concerning [p. 40] your debts, behold, it is my will that you should pay all your debts; & it is my will that you should humble yourselves before me, & obtain this blessing by your diligence, & humility & the prayer of faith; & inasmuch as you are diligent & humble, & exercise the prayer of faith, behold, I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, until I shall send means unto you for your deliverance. Therefore, write speedily unto New York,²²⁶ & write according to that which shall be dictated by my Spirit, & I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, that [p. 41] it shall be taken away out of their minds to bring affliction upon you. And inasmuch as ye are humble & faithful & call upon my name, behold, I will give you the victory; I give unto you a promise, that you shall be delivered this once, out of your bondage.²²⁷ Inasmuch as you obtain a chance to loan²²⁸ money by hundreds, or by thousands, even until you shall loan enough to deliver yourselves from bondage,²²⁹ it is

226. D&C 104:81. The officers of the United Firm had accumulated considerable debt, some of it to New York suppliers. Whitney later referred to one of their creditors in Buffalo, New York, who sent a company representative in 1836 to Kirtland to settle debts with Joseph Smith and others. "Dear Brother," October 2 [1841], Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

227. D&C 104:83.

228. D&C 104:84. To borrow.

229. D&C 104:84. To pay off old debts by borrowing from new lenders, Church leaders appear to have received only moderate immediate help. On the day of this revelation, Joseph Smith and five other members

your privilege, & pledge the properties which I have put into your hands this once by giving your names by common consent, or otherwise as it shall [p. 42] seem good unto you, I give unto you the privilege this once, & behold, if you proceed to do the things which I have laid before you, according to my commandment, all these things are mine, & ye are my Stewards, & the Master will not suffer his house to be broken up;²³⁰ even so, Amen.”

of the firm—Rigdon, Williams, Whitney, Johnson, and Cowdery—prayed for financial relief. They also sent Zebedee Coltrin to collect funds from Jacob Myers, who had been dispatched to “borrow for us,” said the Prophet. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:32–33; *History of the Church*, 2:54. However, no report was given. But on November 29, 1834, some Saints from Essex County, New York, on their way to Missouri with money to buy land arrived at Kirtland. The Prophet expressed appreciation “for the relief which the Lord had lately sent us by opening the hearts of certain brethren from the east to loan us \$430.” Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:34; Kirtland Council Minutes, 77–80.

230. D&C 104:86. On November 3, 1834, the Prophet noted in his journal, “While reflecting upon the goodness and mercy of the Lord, this evening, a prophecy was put into our hearts, that in a short time the Lord would arrange his providences in a merciful manner and send us assistance to deliver us from debt and bondage.” Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:35. Two months later, John Tanner, a member from New York, arrived at Kirtland and provided Joseph Smith with a loan of \$2,000. Tanner’s own report was that the brethren had prayed for someone “to lift the mortgage on the farm upon which the temple was being built.” Of the event, Tanner, writing in third person, said, “The day after his arrival in Kirtland, by invitation from the prophet, he [John Tanner] and his son, Sidney, met with the High Council, and were informed that the mortgage of the before mentioned farm was about to be foreclosed. Whereupon he loaned the prophet two thousand dollars and took his note on interest, with which amount the farm was redeemed.” John Tanner, “Sketch of an Elder’s Life,” in *Scraps of Biography* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883), 12; Kirtland Council Minutes, 83.

The Use of Substitute Words in the Published Revelation

In preparing the revelations about the United Firm for publication in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the Prophet was concerned about protecting members of the firm. Undoubtedly, hostility against the Latter-day Saints in Ohio motivated Church leaders to protect these revelations from unnecessary scrutiny by a sometimes unfriendly public and peering creditors. At first, the leaders considered not publishing the revelations about the firm because of their sensitive content. Because of the Saints' great interest in them for their spiritual value, however, the leaders decided to publish them, but only after inserting imaginative code words in place of select words pertaining to the firm. They made fifty-four changes to the names of officers, business properties, and places in the April 1834 revelation, with perhaps the most significant change being the pseudonym "Order" for the word "Firm." Additionally, they placed substitute words regarding the United Firm in four other revelations.²³¹

After the Doctrine and Covenants was published in Kirtland in 1835, different views on the meaning of the substitute words soon circulated. William S. West, a traveler from Trumbull County, who visited Kirtland two years after the Doctrine and Covenants was printed, said that reading the pseudonyms afforded him "much amusement." This prompted him to inquire of several Latter-day Saints as to whom the pseudonyms represented. Some answered him that the names were "those of persons and places" from the day of biblical Enoch, but others told him that they were names of "certain persons that lived in Kirtland, and acknowledged that Pelagoram was Sidney Rigdon."²³² This mixed interpretation of the revelation may have been prevalent among members of the Church.

231. The four other sections with code names are D&C 78:4, 8; 82:11, 20; 92:1–2; and 96:2, 4, 6, 8 (these sections appear in the 1835 edition as 75:1–2, 86:4–5; 93:1–2; 96:1–2); compare Kirtland Revelation Book, 15–17; 55; 60–61 (no section 82). None of the revelations in the two major manuscript collections contains the code names except D&C 96, which had the original names marked out and code names written above them. Kirtland Revelation Book, 60–61.

232. William S. West, "A Few Interesting Facts, Respecting the Rise, Progress, and Pretensions of the Mormons," (n.p., 1837), 13. West wrote that "Some [Latter-day Saints] said it was a revelation given to Enoch, the third from Adam, concerning the order of the church that was established in his day. . . ." This illustrates the lack of understanding of the revelation by some early Saints. In his pamphlet, West published a list of thirteen code names and their meanings. Thanks to Dr. Mark Staker for leading me to this source. For a complete list of the twenty-five pseudonyms in the revelations, see David J. Whittaker, "Substituted Names in the Published Revelations of Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 23, no. 1 (1983): 111.

Years later, Orson Pratt believed the need for the pseudonyms had passed. To encourage their removal, he explained the reason the words had been used. In a letter to Brigham Young in 1852, he wrote that “fictitious names” were put in the revelations so that “their creditors in Cainhannoch (New York) should not take advantage of this Church firm.”²³³ Then, two years later, while again reflecting upon their early decision to encrypt the revelations, Pratt wrote:

When at length the time arrived to print the manuscripts, it was thought best not to publish them all, on account of our enemies, who were seeking every means to destroy the Prophet and the Church. On account, however, of the great anxiety of the church to see them in print, it was concluded, through the suggestions of the Spirit, that by altering the *real* names given in the manuscripts, and substituting fictitious ones in their stead, they might thus safely appear in print without endangering the welfare of the individuals whose real names were contained therein.²³⁴

In 1873, in his continuing effort to have the substitute words removed from the Doctrine and Covenants, Pratt taught, “The word Enoch did not exist in the original copy; neither did some other names. The names that were incorporated when it was printed, did not exist there when the manuscript revelations were given, for I saw them myself. Some of them I copied,” he said. “Joseph was called Baurak Ale . . . [and] Gazelum. . . . He was also called Enoch.”²³⁵ The substitute names, however, remained in the Doctrine and Covenants without clarification until the 1876 edition when Pratt, now Church Historian, added the original words in brackets next to the pseudonyms, as far as he knew them. In the 1981 edition, all original names were restored, and the code names eliminated²³⁶ except the words “order” or “United Order,”²³⁷ which still have not been replaced by their

233. Orson Pratt to Brigham Young, November 20, 1852, cited in Whittaker, “Substituted Names,” 106. In his letter, Pratt used the code word for New York. See D&C 104:81 (1835 ed., D&C 98:13).

234. Orson Pratt, *The Seer* 2 (March 1854), 228. Italics in the original.

235. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 16:156, August 16, 1873.

236. It took until the 1984 printing of the 1981 edition to complete the changes. See Whittaker, “Substituted Names,” 103–112; Robert J. Matthews, “The New Publications of the Standard Words—1979, 1981,” *BYU Studies* 22, no. 4 (1982): 406–8.

237. The retention of the words “order” or “United Order” in the current Doctrine and Covenants is as follows: D&C 78:4, 8 (2 times); 82:20 (2 times); 92:1–2 (2 times); 104:1, 5, 10, 19, 21, 36, 40, 47–48, 53, 64, 71, 72, 74, 76–77 (22 times). While there is no extant copy of D&C 82 prior to the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, that revelation would originally have used the word “firm,” not the later pseudonym “order,” as substituted in the 1835 edition. Brief evidence for this

original words “firm” or “United Firm.” Technically, it is an anachronism for writers to use the terms “order,” “United Order,” or “Order of Enoch” to represent Joseph Smith’s business affairs before 1835, the year these substitute words were placed in the Doctrine and Covenants. And to use them indiscriminately afterwards may distort the Prophet’s history.²³⁸ In preparing the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph and other editors also changed the headings to the revelations about the United Firm. The heading for the April 1834 revelation in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants reads, “Revelation given to Enoch, concerning the order of the church for the benefit of the poor.”²³⁹ “Enoch,” in this case, was of course a pseudonym for Joseph Smith, confusing some who read it.²⁴⁰

After the United Firm

After the termination of the United Firm, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders still intended to fulfill their dream of building the city at Kirtland. Joseph, who had received the title to Williams’s farm in 1834, transferred it in 1837 to William Marks, a recent arrival in Kirtland, and authorized him to sell building lots on the blocks south of the temple.²⁴¹ That same year, Joseph Smith and others filed a proposal with Geauga County for a larger two-mile square Kirtland city plat.²⁴² But the building lots on the Williams farm as set out on the Kirtland plat maps were never fully developed, nor were the two additional “houses” of the Lord ever constructed on the Williams side of the temple lot. Moreover, Marks bought the north temple lot from Joseph Smith and, on July 11, 1837,

is found in the minutes of the firm at Independence, April 27, 1832. The minutes said, “Resolved, that the name of *the Firm mentioned in the Commandments* [D&C 78 and 82, read] yesterday be Gilbert, Whitney & Company in Zion.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45; italics added.

238. Because the original words “firm” or “United Firm” have not been restored to the revelations in place of “united order,” some may mistakenly assume that the firm was a “religio-socio-economic law instead of a business partnership,” as Cook states. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration*, 66.

239. For the early manuscript headings on the revelation, see p. 39 herein; Kirtland Revelation Book, 100.

240. See n. 235 herein. The heading for D&C 78 in the Kirtland Revelation Book simply reads, “Kirtland March 1—1832.” Kirtland Revelation Book, 15.

241. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:537. In 1841, Joseph Smith acquired the Williams farm and again became its “sole trustee.” Lake County Deed Record, A 505. Marks transferred the full 144 acres, which included the former south temple lot, to Joseph Smith for \$1.

242. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:99.

mortgaged the temple to three New York City merchants.²⁴³ But John Johnson and Newel K. Whitney continued to sell lots on the French farm near the temple. Johnson, who now had title to the farm, sold the farm's remaining eighty acres on May 29, 1837, to his son John Jr.²⁴⁴ While details of the actual mortgage payments on the French farm by the United Firm or its agent, the N. K. Whitney and Company, are unknown, the original agreement between Joseph Coe for the Church and Peter French in 1833 was still in force. A final payment was eventually made to French under that contract, and the note was cancelled in 1848 as paid "in full."²⁴⁵

A year after the Kirtland literary firm was established, Williams and Cowdery, with the help of Phelps and Whitmer, began publishing important imprints. In 1835, besides printing the *Messenger and Advocate* and the Doctrine and Covenants, they also printed *A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*²⁴⁶ and the *Northern Times*, a short-lived political newspaper.²⁴⁷ In June 1836, shortly after Phelps and Whitmer left their editorial duties in Kirtland and returned to Missouri, Oliver Cowdery bought out Frederick G. Williams, to become the sole editor and proprietor of the Kirtland publishing business, thus ending the existence of F. G. Williams and Company.²⁴⁸

Eventually, with mounting financial and legal problems at Kirtland, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon left Kirtland for Far West, Missouri, as

243. Joseph Smith sold the north temple lot to William Marks on April 10, 1837. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:536. The mortgaging firm was Mead, Stafford and Company, consisting of Zalmon H. Mead, Jonas Stafford, and Robert W. Mead, with payments due them in 1838, 1839, and 1840. The mortgage covered the temple and .475 acres, two rods (33 feet) from the temple walls. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:211. On February 11, 1841, Marks transferred the north temple lot to Joseph Smith as Trustee-in-Trust. Lake County Deed Record, A 327.

244. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:278. Johnson sold the remaining part of the French farm to his son for \$5,000, the same amount that Joseph Coe contracted for it in 1833.

245. The promissory note dated April 10, 1833, between Peter French and Joseph Coe, contained a notation of payment written across the page: "I have Received my pay in full on this Mortgage[.] I Thereby discharge the same and the notes thereon . . . this 18 day of September 1848. Peter French." Geauga County Deed Record, 17:38–39.

246. D&C 25:11–12.

247. *History of the Church*, 1:450–51. Max H Parkin, "Mormon Political Involvement in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 4 (1969): 488–97; Crawley, *A Descriptive Biography of the Mormon Church*, 51–52.

248. *Messenger and Advocate* 2, June 1836, 329, 336. On April 2, 1836, Phelps and Whitmer were released as "joint partners in the [literary] firm." Kirtland Council Minutes, 199.

directed by a revelation on the night of January 12, 1838.²⁴⁹ Meanwhile, a local businessman and enemy of the Saints pressed charges against the Church Presidency, forcing the sale of the printing office. Referring to that building, Hepzebah Richards wrote to her brother, Willard, “Last Monday it was sold at auction” into the hands of a Mormon dissenter. The next night, January 16, Hepzebah said she was awakened “at one o’clock,” to see the burning of the printing office. “In one hour it was consumed and all its contents,” she lamented.²⁵⁰ Benjamin F. Johnson, while reporting that the dissenters against Joseph Smith had taken control of both the temple and the printing house, said that Lyman R. Sherman, a high councilman, set fire to the printing house to prevent their enemies from using it to fight against the Church.²⁵¹

After the United Firm was dissolved in 1834, the leaders in Kirtland continued vigorously in economic endeavors. They organized three new stores in Kirtland, adding more merchandise purchased in New York and more debt,²⁵² organized a banking company in 1836 that later failed,²⁵³ and sold town lots that sometimes followed a national trend of inflated prices.²⁵⁴ These conditions, coupled with other local problems and a national financial panic in 1837, caused Kirtland’s economy to fail, which induced a failure of faith among many of the Saints.²⁵⁵ Some members

249. Unpublished revelation received on January 12, 1838, “Scriptory Book,” 53, Church Archives. Joseph Smith appointed Oliver Granger as his financial agent in Kirtland to handle his debt and other unfinished business. D&C 117:12–15.

250. Parkin, *Conflict at Kirtland*, 254–56; *Journal History*, January 18, 1838.

251. Johnson, *My Life’s Review*, 29–30; see Lyndon W. Cook, “Lyman Sherman—Man of God, Would-be Apostle,” *BYU Studies* 19, no. 1 (1978): 123–24.

252. These stores were: Joseph Smith’s Variety Store, located on Chillicothe Road across the street from the temple; Reynolds Cahoon, Jared Carter and Co., operated by the temple committee to raise funds for its construction, located just northwest of the N. K. Whitney and Company store; and the Boynton and Johnson store, owned by John F. Boynton and Lyman E. Johnson, located near Joseph’s Variety store. Mark L. Staker, “N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland, Ohio,” unpublished typescript, Museum of Church History and Art, 35.

253. For information on the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company, see Marvin S. Hill, C. Keith Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, “The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 4 (1977): 391–472.

254. For one perspective on Kirtland land sales and its accompanying economics, see R. Kent Fielding, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 4 (October 1959): 331–55; Robert Kent Fielding, “The Growth of the Mormon Church in Kirtland, Ohio” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1957), 207–83.

255. For consideration of a wider cause of the failure of faith in 1837, see Marvin S. Hill, “Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Reconsideration of

withdrew from the Church, and several leaders in Missouri and Ohio became dissenters or were sympathetic to them, including some former members of the United Firm. Frederick G. Williams, William W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, John Johnson, Martin Harris, and John Whitmer all left the Church. Later, however, Frederick G. Williams followed the Saints to Illinois and was restored to fellowship in April 1840, dying in full faith at Quincy in 1842.²⁵⁶ Bishop Partridge died at Nauvoo as a faithful member just a month after Williams returned to the Church, and Phelps returned to the faith two months later. Years passed before Cowdery and Harris returned.²⁵⁷

Ever since young shopkeeper Newel K. Whitney had built a log store northeast of Kirtland and his first frame store at the crossroads on the flats of the Chagrin River, he had prospered. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, his wife, said, “He had thrift and energy, and he accumulated property faster than most of his companions and associates.”²⁵⁸ Arguably the most prosperous of the Saints in Kirtland, Whitney was the one ordained as bishop to help exalt the poor and humble the rich; but he had his own share of troubles, either with the Saints or with the elements.²⁵⁹ After a severe fire at his ashery in 1835—an economic disaster for the Church—Whitney sold what was left of that company to Jacob Bump on February 11, 1837, who two months later sold it to Jonathan Holmes.²⁶⁰

the Causes of Kirtland Dissent,” *Church History* 44 (September 1980): 286–97; Backman, *The Heavens Resound*, 310–41.

256. Frederick G. Williams, “Frederick Granger Williams of the First Presidency of the Church,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 3 (1972): 258–59.

257. Oliver Cowdery was rebaptized in 1848, and Martin Harris moved to Utah and was rebaptized in 1870. Richard Lloyd Anderson, “Oliver Cowdery,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:339; Rhett Stephens James, “Martin Harris,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 2:576.

258. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “A Leaf from an Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent* 7 (August 15, 1878): 41.

259. In a blessing, the Prophet told Whitney that he would overcome “the narrow-mindedness of his heart, and all his covetous desires that so beset him.” Blessing dated September 14, 1835, “The Book of Patriarchal Blessings, 1834,” 33, Church Archives.

260. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:446; 25:4. Site historian and anthropologist Dr. Mark L. Staker, while on several digs on the Kirtland ashery site in 2000 and 2001, found evidence of several fires probably caused by the kiln of the sawmill adjacent to the ashery. Staker, “N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland,” 42, 59. Further, the ashery tax assessment for 1834 was \$310. It dropped the next year to \$77, suggesting a severe fire in 1835. Geauga County Tax Record, [1834] 507:27; [1835] 508:19. In his “List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney Augt 1837,” Whitney records “entrails of ashery lot” for his ashery business. Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.



FIG. 10. The N. K. Whitney and Company store, ca. 1910. Newel K. Whitney purchased the lot for his store in 1826 and constructed the building soon afterwards. In 1832, N. K. Whitney and Company became the mainstay of the United Firm at Kirtland and the holding company of the Peter French farm and other properties of the firm. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Though troubled by the late economic failures at Kirtland and the disaffection of his brethren, Newel K. Whitney moved to Far West, Missouri, and then to Nauvoo. After Joseph Smith's death, he took his family to Utah. He died in Salt Lake City, September 25, 1850, as the Presiding Bishop of the Church. Meanwhile, he had left his properties in Kirtland in the hands of his brother Samuel F. Whitney, who never joined the Church and was resentful against his brother's role in it.²⁶¹ In 1857, Samuel, still Newel's creditor, was appointed executor of his estate. At his death, Newel still owned the Whitney store building, his two houses next door, and a few other minor properties at Kirtland, all of which his brother sold to pay Newel's debts, including over \$1,000 he owed Samuel.²⁶² When Newel

261. In a blessing given to Whitney, Joseph Smith Sr. said of Newel's brother Samuel, "Thou hast an ungodly brother who knows not the Lord, neither does he understand His ways." Orson F. Whitney, "The Aaronic Priesthood," *Contributor* 6 (January 1885): 128.

262. In his "List of Properties Owned by N. K. Whitney Augt 1837," Newel appraised the value of the acre lot and his houses to be \$2,500 and his store to be \$1,500, but after the Mormons left Kirtland, values depreciated. Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

died, his property was the cheaply valued remnants of N. K. Whitney and Company, the once vibrant core of the United Firm.²⁶³

By 1870, memory of the United Firm had faded, its meaning and the details of its history obscured by the code name “United Order.” In the West, the Church faced new struggles—sometimes monumental ones. One of these was the Saints’ economic survival after the arrival of the transcontinental railroad, the abundant appearance of non-Mormon marketers, and the increased threat of non-Mormon mining. To answer this collective menace, Brigham Young established a flurry of pioneer cooperative enterprises: manufacturing, agricultural associations, banking, and merchandising, buttressed by the newly established Zion’s Co-operative Mercantile Institution with branches in a hundred Utah communities.²⁶⁴ But their success was threatened by the impact of the economic panic of 1873. In response, one year later, Brigham Young, while in St. George, Utah, established a creative and unique branch to his already remarkable cooperative movement. In organizing the new enterprise, which took several socioeconomic forms, Brigham borrowed for it the name “United Order,” linking the new endeavor by name to the past. Some of these united orders featured communal ownership and thus were markedly different from the United Firm. As President Young’s movement spread to 150 Mormon settlements, it gave a new life to the old pseudonym, and during the approximate decade of its existence, its legacy tended to obscure or color the facts about Joseph Smith’s United Firm.²⁶⁵ Nevertheless, by prudently preserving much of its historical record, the Church has enabled others to reexamine the past and thereby to better reconstruct it.

263. “Newel K. Whitney Estate,” Lake County Probate Court, Final Record 1857, B 93. Shortly before his death, Newel appointed his brother with power of attorney and suggested to him to sell the Whitney store for a modest \$800, but the sale was not made. Staker, “N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland,” 43–44.

264. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 293–320.

265. For a consideration of the United Order in Utah, see Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 323–52; Arrington, Fox, and May, *Building the City of God*, 135–75; Leonard J. Arrington, *Orderville, Utah: A Pioneer Mormon Experiment in Economic Organization* (Logan: Utah State Agricultural College, 1954); Edward J. Allen, *The Second United Order among the Mormons* (New York City: AMS, 1967); Kathryn St. Clair Fellows, “Brigham City Experiment” (master’s thesis, Clairmont Graduate School, 1967); and James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975): 359–66.

Conclusion

This treatment of the United Firm is intended to elevate readers' awareness of the firm's importance in the early Church. The firm, while applying the principles of consecration and stewardship, was the means by which the infant Church tried to achieve its temporal mission. Thus, the Prophet used its board of managers to help build the Kingdom before the quorums of high-level leadership were developed to assist him in his work. Knowledge about the firm helps furnish the context for much that happened shortly after the Church was organized. This discussion also provides a comprehensive inventory of the properties held by the United Firm in both Ohio and Missouri, while emphasizing certain important properties and clarifying the less-understood ones named in the 1834 revelation. It identifies the later-emerging high councils as fulfilling the assignment given to the two new local United Firms and the bishop and First Presidency as eventually fulfilling by flexible application the assignment given to the treasurer and treasury. It shows that the community plan for Kirtland with its three temples was used as the model for the city of Zion and for the first three temples that were to be constructed in it. In an attempt to help free LDS history from misunderstanding, this review reminds us that the title "Firm" or "United Firm," as used in the manuscripts of the revelations about it, is still missing from the printed scriptural text. Thus, this briefly sponsored but dynamic institution of the early Church should not be minimized in our historical writings. It was prominent in the early 1830s and deserves a legacy of its own. This discussion may also shed light on the aptness of Joseph Smith in his role as business executive and manager, as he served as the firm's leader and principal advocate. Most important, perhaps, it helps to underscore the fact that the prayerful Prophet was heavily occupied by the affairs of the United Firm when he also similarly and simultaneously guided the Church in the other demanding dimensions of its prophetic mission.

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