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FIG. 1. Newel K. (N. K.) Whitney, engraving, originally published in a Church magazine in January 1885 (almost thirty-five years after Whitney's death). The magazine editor explained that this engraving was "as good a likeness . . . as was possible." The only "authentic portrait" available was a painting by William Major, which the magazine editor considered a poor likeness. To create this engraving, the artist drew from the memories of some of Whitney's close friends and relatives. The editor admitted some discrepancies between the subject and this engraving but thought it a "fair portrayal" nonetheless. Junius F. Wells, "Our Engravings," *Contributor* 6 (January 1885): 154.

“Thou Art the Man”

Newel K. Whitney in Ohio

Mark L. Staker

In the early 1820s, Newel K. Whitney set up his first store in Kirtland, Ohio, in a little log cabin¹ (fig. 1). From such humble beginnings he created a thriving business that would later become central to the early history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. However, over time the holdings and contributions of the Whitney family in Kirtland were largely forgotten. It was in Kirtland where Joseph Smith arrived and reportedly said to Whitney, whom the Prophet had never met before, “Thou art the man.”²

The fortunes of the Whitneys were intertwined for a time with those of Sidney Gilbert, Whitney’s partner for several years in a firm called N. K. Whitney and Company. Whitney rose above many hardships during the Church’s turbulent early years. This article chronicles Newel K. Whitney’s activities leading up to and connected with the firm of N. K. Whitney and Company, as well as the company’s impact on the Church in Ohio.

N. K. WHITNEY’S LIFE AND BUSINESS BEFORE KIRTLAND

Born in Marlborough, Vermont, in 1795, Whitney was the second child and eldest son in a family of about nine children. Samuel Whitney and Susanna Kimball christened him Newel Kimball Whitney. Always pleased that he bore his mother’s maiden name, he insisted that his family honor the Kimball name throughout his life.³ Perhaps it was because of his emphasis on both given names that at some point Newel Kimball became known to his family and friends simply by the initials “N. K.” Before the harvest season in 1803, the Whitney family left the hard scrabble of Windham County, Vermont, and moved to Fairfield, Herkimer County, New

York, located at the heart of New York's rural farming lands.⁴ Samuel and Susanna did not stay long in Fairfield; they moved around the state a few times and eventually drifted back to Vermont. The Whitneys never owned property in those early years, and it is not clear how the family earned a living.⁵

N. K. as an Army Sutler

When N. K. Whitney turned nineteen, it was 1814, and the United States was at war with Britain. The people of upper New York had already experienced a few skirmishes. Much of New England was not supportive of the war, and fewer soldiers enlisted than politicians expected. This lack of support was partly due to the trade embargos, shipping disruptions, and other business problems the war brought to the port cities. Despite the hardships of a wartime economy, Whitney found a way to use the war itself as an opportunity for merchandising: he started as an army sutler, selling the American soldiers alcohol, food, military supplies, and a variety of everyday articles as he traveled with the camp along Lake Champlain in New York.⁶ For a young man without family responsibilities, this was the ideal way to start selling, since he had a captive market, so to speak, not far from commercial centers. All N. K. needed was a wagon and a little money to get started.

The final showdown with the British, the battle of Plattsburgh Bay, took place on Lake Champlain. N. K.'s ten-year-old brother, Samuel, was apparently helping him with the selling and recalled watching ten thousand British soldiers move south from Montreal, presumably planning to restore northern New York and New England to the British empire. In this last battle, the heavily outnumbered Americans defeated the British. Somehow during that intense battle, Whitney lost all of his property "by the war."⁷ The ordeal was pivotal in his life as he sought to recoup his losses elsewhere.

N. K. tried to make a new start of suttling by following American troops across Lake Erie, where the army officially mustered out of service a large detachment in what would become Monroe, Michigan—a new little village formed after the war on the western edge of the lake. At that time, Michigan primarily had Native American settlements. After there were no more soldiers to buy his wares, N. K. Whitney pushed further west up Lake Huron, where he traded with the Native American communities along Lake Michigan in Green Bay and Milwaukee. Whitney traveled along the Great Lakes, transporting furs bought on the westernmost edge of the lakes east to Buffalo, New York. The ideal stopping point midway between Green



Locations Associated with N. K. Whitney's Travels and Homes, 1814–1838

Bay and Buffalo was Monroe. Whitney's time in Monroe would prove to be a turning point in his life due to his association with a Monroe merchant named Sidney Gilbert, a man who would become Whitney's business partner and friend.

Sidney Gilbert. Shortly after the war, Algernon Sidney Gilbert made his way west to Monroe and set up a small store catering to settlers there.⁸ Sidney, as he was known to his friends, hailed originally from Connecticut, where his prominent extended family in New Haven included several well-to-do merchants. Gilbert's Monroe store was situated on the edge of town, just a few dozen feet from the harbor and easily accessible to merchants going and coming along Lake Erie.⁹ He apparently lived in part of his store while he traded out of another part with Indians, veterans of the recent war, and young settlers. Both Gilbert and Whitney needed to travel to New York on business trips, and Sidney Gilbert may have accompanied Whitney from time to time, thus beginning a lifelong friendship.

Ann Smith. A second turning point was Whitney's meeting Elizabeth Ann Smith, an eighteen-year-old who had settled in remote Kirtland, Ohio, only a few months before N. K. met her (fig. 2). Ann described their meeting and courtship:

In his travels to and from New York he passed through the country where we resided, and "we met by chance." became attached to each other, and my aunt granting her full approval, we were married after a courtship of reasonable length, as in those days girls were not allowed to marry without the lover paying court for a certain length of time.¹⁰

Ann's family was from Connecticut, and Ann was the oldest child.¹¹ After encountering undisclosed problems with her mother, she left home and traveled to Ohio with her father's sister Sarah Smith, who was determined



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FIG. 2. Elizabeth Ann Smith Whitney, ca. 1876, detail of photograph taken by Charles R. Savage about six years before Ann's death. Although she gave more attention to household and family concerns than to their store, Ann was influential in the Latter-day Saint community in her own right. As a counselor to Emma Smith in the Nauvoo Female Relief Society organization and in other ways in Kirtland, Nauvoo, and Utah, she contributed to the Restoration.

to make her own way on the frontier. These two single women with a strong sense of self-reliance traveled to Ohio alone. Aunt Sarah purchased land in the Connecticut Western Reserve, a large strip of land in north-eastern Ohio of which Kirtland was part of. “It was then a new country, comparatively, and to undertake so long a journey was almost as remarkable then as to go round the world would be now [in 1878],” Ann recalled.¹² Shortly after their journey, Ann’s uncle Elijah Smith traveled with his family to join them in Kirtland. Although her father had written that he hoped to come, Ann’s mother would never consent to move.¹³ (Years later, her father traveled alone to Kirtland for baptism as a Latter-day Saint.)

Ann “received in early life the most judicious training and was carefully educated,” which may have contributed to her strong spirit.¹⁴ A young woman able to make her own way on the frontier was the perfect marriage partner for an ambitious young man such as N. K. Whitney. Ann and N. K.’s “courtship of reasonable length,” as she called it, lasted three years, enough time for the couple to get to know each other quite well. Part of the three years of courting included Whitney’s moving to Ohio in fall 1819, apparently convincing his friend Gilbert to come along, too.¹⁵

Saved by a Young Girl

Although N. K. moved to Ohio in order to court Ann, the Whitney family also believed he left the fringes of the frontier because of its rough nature. Part of the job of an army sutler was to sell alcohol to soldiers, and Whitney continued this practice by selling alcohol, along with the other things he traded, to Native Americans. One of his customers was addicted to alcohol, and Whitney, placing the interests of his customer above his own financial interests, refused to sell him any more. The angry man threatened Whitney’s life; N. K. was saved by a young Native American girl who grabbed onto the attacker and held him until Whitney escaped. He and Ann later named one of their daughters Moudalina after that girl.

Information taken from Orson F. Whitney, “Newel Kimball Whitney,” in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, comp. Andrew Jenson, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History, 1901–36), 1:222.

Sidney Gilbert's Store in Mentor, Ohio

In September 1819—a month before Whitney first showed up in Ohio and a year before Gilbert bought his Mentor property—when Sidney Gilbert convinced New York financiers William L. Vandervoort and John S. Van Winkle to lend him \$1,091.49, almost three year's wages for a typical laborer. Gilbert created a promissory note on September 17, agreeing to repay the loan with interest in six months. Since N. K. Whitney first appeared in the Painesville, Ohio, records right after Gilbert took out the loan, and Gilbert and Whitney moved together to Ohio, Gilbert probably used the money in some way connected to their move. When his loan fell due on March 17, 1820, Gilbert still owed more than a thousand dollars on the note.¹⁶

On June 10, 1820, Gilbert sold his property in Monroe, Michigan, for \$765 to Lewis Downs.¹⁷ Although Gilbert's sale of his Michigan property in the face of an unpaid loan seems reasonable from a business perspective, he did not immediately receive money for it, nor did he transfer title to his property over to his creditors. Instead, he continued to try to earn his way out of debt.

On October 28, 1820, a year after moving to Ohio, Sidney Gilbert purchased property in Mentor, on the edge of Painesville and just a few miles north of Ann Smith's Kirtland home.¹⁸ James Olds charged him eighty dollars for that acre situated on Ridge Road just a few rods from Olds's tavern.¹⁹ The property was in a good location. Olds's tavern was worth \$1,000, the most expensive building in the county.²⁰ A young, ambitious merchant could easily make big plans living by a big neighbor.

Gilbert immediately contracted to build a five-hundred-dollar store—a store that was worth three to four times the typical operation in the state. Five hundred dollars would typically buy close to 2,500 square feet of floor space. That much space would have made it a massive frontier store. Whitney worked in the store with him.²¹ Whitney family tradition recalls that while Gilbert ran his operation, he took Whitney “into his store as clerk and gave him some knowledge of book-keeping.”²² Evidently that was a skill Whitney had not properly learned while working with the army and on the frontier. Later documents confirm that Gilbert had superior penmanship and spelling abilities.²³ Sidney Gilbert, however, ran into a succession of bad luck with the store.

On November 15, 1820, a few weeks after the land was purchased and the store was already under construction, Lewis Downs defaulted on Gilbert's property in Michigan and gave him a letter providing Gilbert with power of attorney over the land.²⁴ Certainly Sidney Gilbert had not

planned on Downs defaulting and therefore had not provided adequately for the possibility. When the New York mortgage company caught up with him and pressed for payment, Gilbert had no way of paying the debt.

On April 2, 1821, Sidney Gilbert was forced to deed his Mentor property over to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage in lieu of debt payment. He transferred the property for \$1,000 in debt—far above the \$19 valuation for the acre of land and \$500 tax valuation for the store. No mention was made of merchandise in the property transaction, and the mortgage company apparently never entirely recouped its losses. The lenders, more interested in their money than in the Mentor property, offered Gilbert an extension. They stipulated: “A. S. Gilbert, his heirs executors or administrators shall well and truly pay the aforesaid note with the interest thereon, one half in four months and the remainder in one year from this date.”²⁵ This mortgage default gave Gilbert until August 1821 to come up with \$500 and until April 1822 to have the whole \$1,000; if Gilbert met this requirement, then the property would be returned to him. He likely felt it was a hopeless cause from the start because he never bothered paying taxes on the property.²⁶

N. K. Whitney signed the mortgage default as a witness, but the document did not directly involve him in the land transaction. Whitney was probably not interested in using his resources to redeem \$519 worth of property for \$1,000. The property records for the Mentor store mention only Gilbert’s name.²⁷ Whitney may have owned some of the merchandise in the store, but Gilbert was able to transfer title to the entire store as sole owner to his creditors for unpaid debts. Gilbert was also embroiled in other money disputes, and he likely felt he would never recover. Whitney was separate enough financially from Gilbert that he was not listed in lawsuits when angry neighbors sued Gilbert in 1821 for a small debt and when still others sued the next spring for several hundred dollars. Lawsuits continued mounting as Gilbert spent the next several years in appeals while his numerous creditors sought their money.²⁸ Whitney separated himself from Gilbert and moved to Kirtland.

Even after calling in Gilbert’s loan in 1821, the former creditors continued to rent the Mentor property out to him until 1825. On September 29, 1823, Sidney Gilbert married Elizabeth van Benthuyzen, a New York-born woman living in the neighboring town of Chagrin.²⁹ They lived in the Mentor store (many store owners of the time lived in their stores); later advertisements described it as a “dwelling house.”³⁰ Gilbert had not been able to repay his loan by the deadline stipulated in the 1821 mortgage default. However, he was finally able to straighten out his business dealings with the legal transfer, on January 29, 1824, of his store and property to Van-

dervoort and Van Winkle. By the time of the transfer, Gilbert was in debt to the lenders for about \$293.51 in interest on top of the \$1,091.49 principle, a total of \$1,385. Since the mortgagers took property valued a little over \$500 in exchange for the debt, they lost money on the deal.³¹

In April 1825, Gilbert was still at the Mentor store when the mortgage company decided to end their relationship. The New York mortgagers ran an advertisement through Samuel Cowls, their agent in Cleveland, offering to either sell or rent the property.³² But the mortgage company could not sell the property, and Vandervoort and Van Winkle continued to pay taxes on the store for several years. However, they must have found another renter.

Lewis Downs's default on the Monroe, Michigan, property may have contributed to Gilbert's financial problems because it tied up his flow of money, but Gilbert did not attempt to resolve the issue until after the New York mortgagers and other debtors were no longer interested in him. This delay was probably because there was not enough value in the Michigan property to cover all his debts. On May 6, 1824, an advertisement appeared in the *Painesville Telegraph* in which Gilbert sought to exchange his Monroe, Michigan, store and property "for property in this state."³³ But he did not find any suitable offers for Ohio property through the paper. For some reason, Gilbert was not interested in returning to Michigan. He stayed in Ohio.

In May 1825, Gilbert finally made arrangements to sell his Monroe store and received a \$225 initial payment from George Alford on the day of the sale. This money would have kept Gilbert and his wife going for a while, as well as discouraging Alford from defaulting on the agreement. On January 20, 1826, Gilbert completed the sale of land and received an additional \$400.³⁴ Despite the sale, at the close of 1826, when the Gilberts moved from Mentor, Ohio, to Kirtland, they had only a single steer listed in the property tax records.³⁵ However, Gilbert was finally free of his debts and legal entanglements and could join his friend N. K. Whitney in a new effort at partnership.

N. K. WHITNEY'S BUSINESS VENTURES IN KIRTLAND, OHIO

Whitney did not have the same financial troubles as did his friend Gilbert. Ann Whitney later commented that among their friends "it came to be remarked that nothing of my husband's ever got lost on the lake, and no product of his exportation was ever low in the market, always ready sales and fair prices."³⁶ Whitney did lose products on the lake at least once, but his business experiences in Kirtland were markedly different from those of his friend in Mentor.

After Whitney separated from Gilbert in Mentor in 1821, N. K. moved to Kirtland to more effectively court Ann Smith. In 1821 or 1822, N. K. Whitney set up his first Kirtland store in a little log cabin on the property of Elijah Smith, Ann's uncle, on the north end of Kirtland Flats (the name used for the area of land situated in a low, swampy area where the east branch of the Chagrin River made a wide, horseshoe bend on the north end of Kirtland township).³⁷ Whitney operated a successful business. Ann recalled of these early years, "He accumulated property faster than most of his companions and associates. Indeed, he became proverbial as being lucky in all his undertakings."³⁸

Whitney had not only luck but also a great deal of skill. He was bright and was able to quickly perceive traffic patterns in town. He knew that as more people passed his store or had business near his store he was likely to

The Perils of Traveling in Early Kirtland

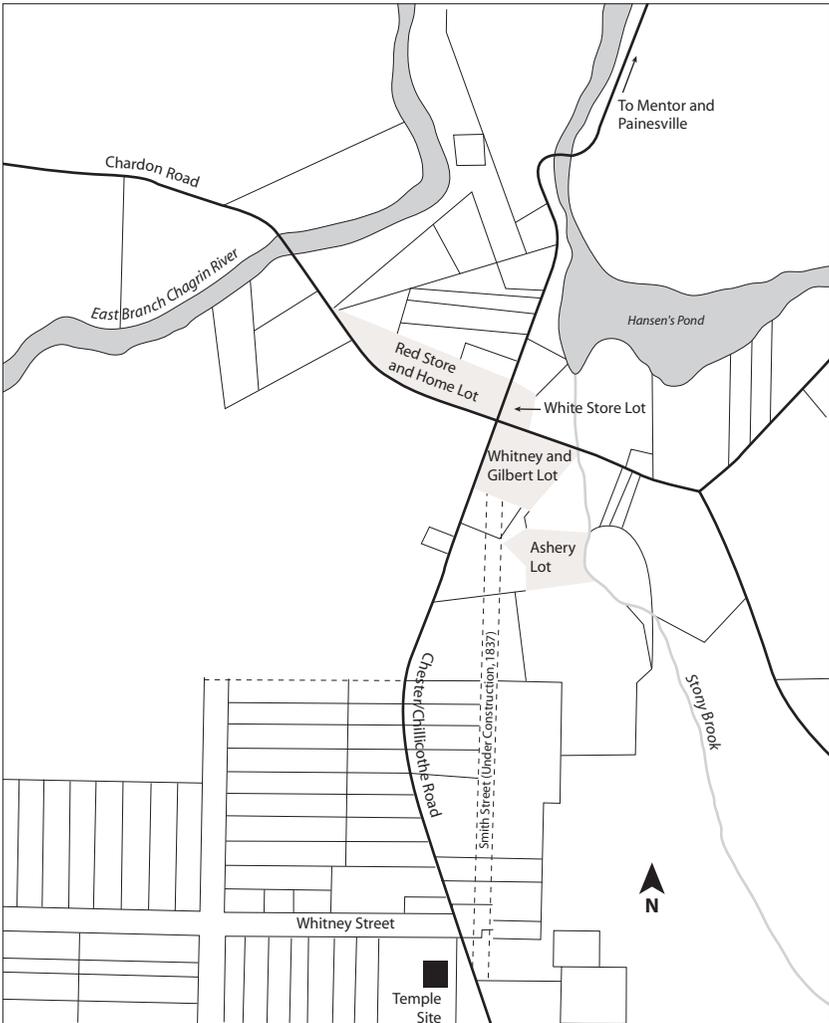
North of the Whitney home, the Chester Road ascended in a steep incline toward the town of Mentor. An unidentified resident of Kirtland described an incident on that stretch of road:

That hill with its sharp angle about one-third of the way down it, was a terror to all travelers. A well loaded wagon could not be got safely up or down it. . . . A Mr. Buell, . . . in going down it was unable to make the sharp turn and he, his horse, sleigh and load went to the bottom of the gully, and strange to say neither man nor beast was killed. ("Kirtland, a Boy's Recollections of His First Fourth of July," *Willoughby Independent*, 1902, in *Haden Scrapbook*, n.d., 13, Lake County Historical Society, Mentor, Ohio)

James A Rollins, Sidney Gilbert's nephew, recalled another incident on the steep hill, this one taking place when Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland:

As early as February, 1831, I first met Joseph Smith in my Uncle Sidney Gilbert's house. This was the first day he arrived in Kirtland, and while he was in the house conversing with my uncle and aunt, I being at the front gate, saw a wagon turn over as it was coming down the slippery hill, and heard a woman and 2 or 3 children screaming. This was Joseph's family. I ran in and told Joseph and Uncle about it, and Joseph ran to assist them without his hat . . . none of them were hurt. (James H. Rollins, *A Life Sketch of James Henry Rollins*, 1898, 2, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City)

do more business. One of the busiest spots in all of northeastern Ohio (known also as the Western Reserve) was at the crossroads of Chardon and Chester Roads. The major road was Chester. This road went to the nearby town of Chester (just south of Kirtland) but continued all the way to Chillicothe in western Ohio, the location of the state capitol at that time. Over time this thoroughfare became known as Chillicothe Road, the most-used road for immigrant traffic and the second oldest road in the region.



**N. K. Whitney's and N. K. Whitney and Company's Properties
in Kirtland, Ohio**

Chardon Road, the oldest road in the region, was also a major funnel for traffic. The road ended in Cleveland, but its major side road continued on to Chardon, passing through the Kirtland Flats, where it intersected with Chillicothe Road. This intersection of roads meant that everyone—every local Indian, immigrant, settler, drifter, frontiersman, educator, former soldier, itinerant preacher, state politician, runaway slave, judge, and peddler—traveling through northern Ohio went through the Kirtland Flats.

That busiest of intersections was owned entirely by Peter French, a man who helped survey the region and was the earliest settler in the area.³⁹ On the northwest corner, French had a huge apple orchard that “covered about all the land he owned on that corner.”⁴⁰ Whitney saw the business potential for this intersection and the marketing prospects for his wares to both travelers and locals, and on June 1, 1822, Whitney purchased Peter French’s large apple orchard.⁴¹

N. K. Whitney’s Red Store

On this lot purchased from French, N. K. built what his family called their “Red Store”—possibly as early as 1822 when he bought the land, but clearly by 1824. There was probably a small residential area in the store where the Whitneys lived. This would explain why a home was not taxed on the property then.⁴² The small twenty-by-forty-foot store was a story and a half of sawn lumber with a central chimney.⁴³ There were two rooms upstairs, but the store portion was likely the eight hundred square feet on the main level. A comparison between Whitney’s Red Store and Gilbert’s Mentor store highlights a pattern that remained consistent through the years: N. K. Whitney built small while his friend Sidney Gilbert built large.

N. K. Whitney left most of the apple trees on the lot. He maintained the orchard and planted red currant bushes from which he and Ann later made wine for their family and for Latter-day Saint worship services.⁴⁴ He also built a barn on the acre, perhaps to store feed or other farm products customers used as payment.

N. K. Whitney’s Ashery Business

On September 5, 1822, Whitney purchased another section of land from Peter French a few hundred yards southeast of his first piece of property. This new purchase was a small lot (just over a half acre) nestled against Stony Brook, the little waterway that emptied into the east branch of the Chagrin River.⁴⁵ He purchased this lot to begin an ashery. Frontier settlers could bring wood to an ashery such as N. K.’s and receive money or credit. N. K. would burn the wood and run water through the ashes, creating

A Kirtland Fourth of July

Sometime after Whitney purchased Peter French's apple orchard lot (where N. K. would build his Red Store), the citizens of Kirtland, Ohio, decided to celebrate July 4 in fitting fashion. Townsfolk set up a stand on the Whitney lot in the shade of the apple trees. They primarily honored the older Revolutionary War soldiers, but certainly some comments were made about participants in the recent war with Britain. A fife and two drums provided music for the procession, after which the town held a prayer, and someone read the Declaration of Independence. Much oration followed, and Kirtland's citizens finished up with a dinner. "Good whisky was plenty and cheap. Everybody then drank a little, but few to excess."

This information comes from Christopher Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences* (Marshalltown, Iowa: Marshall Printing, 1893), 13, 28. Crary recalled that the oration took place in Peter French's new barn. The unidentified author of an undated early newspaper article ("Kirtland, a Boy's Recollections," 13) remembered that the July 4th celebration took place "about the year 1825" but wasn't certain of the exact year. The writer recalled that if N. K. Whitney "was not then on the north-west corner of the flats he moved there shortly afterwards." This description connects the celebration to the approximate time of Whitney's move to the intersection and fits with Crary's recollection of 1821 or 1822 being the year. N. K. Whitney would either purchase this lot the following year or had purchased it the month before this celebration took place.

potash, which was used in making glass, cleaning wool, and other industrial processes. Settlers could also trade ashes from their household stoves or from the burned vegetation of cleared fields. Whitney could sell his potash to local companies and to industries in the East and in Great Britain—a venture made easier when the Erie Canal was completed in 1825.

For this operation, Whitney needed a ready supply of water. When he purchased the land, Whitney also bought rights to a spring up on the hill south of his property and "the privilege of conveying said water on a direct line to any part of the lot of ground."⁴⁶ French was using some of the water for his distillery, but the remaining water was sold to Whitney. French used "pump logs" to bring water down the hill to his distillery, and Whitney could have taken water from the same system if he chose to do so.⁴⁷ Pump logs today would be recognized as wooden piping or troughs. Remnants of

pipings uncovered at the entrance of the Whitney spring were open sawn timbers with a U-groove cut in the top, suggesting a trough-like system to bring water down from the hill. Ashery manuals from the time suggested that river and rain water were preferable to well or spring water because the authors believed river and rain water contained fewer minerals. But Whitney's spring had good pure water, and getting the water easily to the ashery was an important consideration.

Although water was the essential element in an ashery operation, other facilities played a role, too. "How to" manuals of the day and archeology of New England operations suggest that large frame buildings were frequently used as part of American ashery operations long before the 1820s, but N. K. started out with a central structure of rough-hewn logs or poles.⁴⁸

During these early years, Whitney played an important role in a cash-scarce economy. His ashery was essential to the entire community's well-being, as individuals worked through him to turn their resources into something useful. Christopher Crary, who lived several miles away in the south end of Kirtland Township, recalled how he worked out one of those early exchanges:

Took an old axe pole to Chatfield's blacksmith shop and had it jumped. The charge was only 75 cents, as I found the steel. I paid him at N. K. Whitney's store, and paid Whitney with wood at his ashery. It took two of us a day to grind the axe, and when finished it had cost me about seven days' work.⁴⁹

The combination of ashery operation and merchandising was successful enough that N. K. Whitney did well, and his account book suggests that New York financiers paid him high prices for his products.⁵⁰ He also had local demand for the potash if he chose not to travel. Kirtland's carding operation used potash for processing wool, and in Painesville felt makers such as the hatter Edward Partridge paid 37.5¢ a pound per two-hundred-pound bundle of clean wool.⁵¹

The citizens of South Kirtland had put up their own ashery a few years before at Peck's Corners, several miles south of Whitney's operation. Mr. Latimer, who operated the ashery, paid four cents a bushel for field ashes and seven cents a bushel for hearth ashes, which was a penny less for each than the going rate in nearby towns.⁵² Peck's Corners did not have the heavy traffic flow that Kirtland Flats did, and citizens in South Kirtland, such as Christopher Crary, found themselves doing business with the ashery up north because they wanted goods from Whitney's store. The ashery down south apparently went out of business soon after Whitney began his operation, and Whitney quickly looked at expansion.

N. K. Whitney purchased fifteen hundredths of an acre just south of his ashery in June 1824, increasing the land to eighty hundredths of an acre, suggesting that his ashery business was doing well enough to expand. The 1826 tax records for Kirtland indicate that his firm had \$2,500 worth of merchandise on hand.⁵³ Although the largest store in the county was in nearby Painesville with \$4,500 worth of merchandise, Whitney's was still a substantial operation and one of a small group of good-sized stores in the region.

N. K.'s Family Life in Kirtland

Within two months of purchasing the ashery lot, N. K. Whitney married Ann Smith. On November 6, 1822, the *Painesville Telegraph* announced the marriage of "Newal [sic] K. Whitney and Ann Smith" in one of the paper's rare uses of Whitney's first name.⁵⁴ N. K. and Ann Whitney quietly continued to operate out of their Red Store and to run a small ashery operation. Directly across the street from the Red Store, travelers lodged at French's log cabin inn and would have frequently bought goods at the N. K. Whitney store before they continued on their journey.

Locals could sell goods—ashes, as mentioned above, or wheat, rye, and other items—to Whitney for cash or store credit. By June 1825, he was advertising that he "earnestly" urged those who owed him debts to pay. Whitney concluded these notices with the signature "N. K. Whitney," not mentioning at that time a "company" or any other individual, indicating, as later records confirm, that at this early date he was operating as an independent businessman. The notice also announced that Whitney was purchasing salts of lye, confirming that his ashery operation was fully functional.⁵⁵

Around the time Whitney bought additional property for his ashery, the Whitneys also built a modest home just west of and behind the Red Store (fig. 3). This new house likely expanded merchandising space in the Red Store, as space formerly used for living quarters could now be used for saleable goods. The Whitney home was 28½' x 25½' with a 20' x 12' summer kitchen attached on the back. It had a single bedroom on the main floor, where Ann's Aunt Sarah frequently stayed, and an open half story upstairs, where N. K. and Ann slept with their children.⁵⁶ They painted their small frame house and placed a well-made fence around each of their properties.

N. K. Whitney and Company

In fall 1825, just weeks before the opening of the Erie Canal, Newel K. Whitney traveled to New York on a buying trip. Whitney completed his



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FIG. 3. The restored Whitney home, 2002. After careful research, a team of historians, architects, archaeologists, and curators restored the N. K. Whitney and Ann Whitney home to appear as it did when it was first built around 1824. When the family entertained guests in their home, guests slept in a small bedroom on the main level while the entire family slept upstairs in the single room.

buying two days before the canal opened and returned home on one of America's most significant transportation systems.⁵⁷ The opening of the Erie Canal marked the start of a major expansion of Whitney's economic activities in Kirtland. The canal transformed the transportation of goods from the East Coast to Ohio and had a major impact on the prices Whitney would pay and could charge. The local paper observed:

In 1819 the transportation of goods from the city of New-York to this place, was *four dollars twenty five* cents per hundred: now we pay *one dollar and thirty seven* cents per hundred—a distance of six hundred miles. In 1820 we paid \$3 per hundred from this place to Pittsburgh—now eighty cents.⁵⁸

As he would do often, rather than keep an opportunity to himself, N. K. shared his good fortune with others. He invited Sidney Gilbert to help him capitalize on this new opportunity, and, in the last weeks of 1826, N. K. Whitney and Company was born.

N. K. Whitney's White Store. In April 1826, six months after Whitney's trip on the Erie Canal and almost nine months before N. K. Whitney and Company was organized, Whitney paid \$100 for Peter French's quarter-acre

N. K. Whitney's 1825 Purchasing Trip to New York

N. K. Whitney could have made the nine and a half miles from his house to the stagecoach landing in Painesville, Ohio, in less than two hours on September 20, 1825. Early that Tuesday morning, he closed up his small, red, frame store and parted from Ann, his wife of almost three years, their two-year-old son Horace, and their six-month-old baby, Sarah Ann. To get to Painesville from his home, Whitney would first head up Chester Road's steep incline out of Kirtland's flatlands. The road passed the Morley farm near the site of his earlier log store, and he could not go by the homes of his wife's family and their friends without hallooing a greeting on the way. As Whitney passed by the farm, the road led him into Ohio's hills to Ridge Road on his way northeast. On Ridge Road, inside Mentor Township boundaries, Whitney would have passed by Gilbert's store, which Gilbert was still renting from his creditors.

Painesville was not the young merchant's final destination—his destination was east. At 1:00 P.M., travelers, luggage, and stage bounced out of town heading east for Buffalo, New York, through the thick forests of a sparsely settled region. The travelers made fast progress on roads that had been significantly improved since N. K.'s first trips to Buffalo. By nightfall, Whitney was in Pennsylvania; Thursday morning he pulled into Buffalo. The trip, including incidentals along the road, cost Whitney \$3.25, as he traveled comfortably to a place he had been many times before. He paid an additional \$5.88 to stay ten days at a landing house in Buffalo.

When Whitney arrived in Buffalo, the last locks of the Erie Canal looked almost finished. N. K. had been to this town many times before when he worked as an Army sutler and fur trader. During these visits, the town was home to fewer than fifteen hundred people, but now there were several thousand people in Buffalo, and entrepreneurs were flocking to the young city in droves. The city smelled of fish and cattle as goods went through on their way to Eastern markets. Soot from the constant arrival of steamboats combined with the product of local chimneys settled over buildings packed in narrow streets.

Two days after he arrived, Whitney visited R. W. Haskins's bookstore in the heart of Buffalo and paid thirty cents for a small ledger to write down all the details and expenses of his trip. He wrote boldly in

the front cover, "N. K. Whitney Book Sept 25, 1825." After a few days in Buffalo, Whitney took another stage heading east. His route went along the canal toward Rochester, where he could inspect the canal more closely. The stage route curved down the Seneca Turnpike, heading south and just missing Palmyra and Manchester on his way south toward Auburn. After spending time in Auburn, he moved on to "York," where he finished up his business.

Although in some ways this was a routine trip much like businessmen from Ohio frequently took, this time there was a significant difference. The trip was essential preparation for a new, larger store he would build in the spring. Along with selling 94 barrels of "ash" (potash from his ashery) for well over a thousand dollars, Whitney sold other goods, more than covering all the expenses and purchases of his trip. Whitney also purchased supplies from a number of firms to ship back to Ohio. Among his listed expenses, he included some items purchased for his friend Sidney Gilbert. He also made a vague reference to the payment of some of the last of Gilbert's debt obligations: "To cash, paid for A. S. Gilbert \$400 of my own money . . . to consil [cancel] his note for Boon + Brickery."

Whitney moved on to New York City, where his last dated entry was for October 23, 1825, two days before the Erie Canal officially opened. The canal was clearly at the heart of all Whitney's new business plans. He had every opportunity to check out its system of locks and barges and talk with those intimately involved with its operation. With the canal nearing completion, Whitney now had water access through New York State, across Lake Erie, and all the way to Fairport Harbor, immediately north of Painesville. He made careful preparations, purchasing merchandise shortly before the big opening. Arriving back in Ohio just in time to miss the Great Lakes' destructive gales of November, N. K. Whitney was probably one of the first to ship goods along the newly completed canal.

Information taken from Whitney's ledger, catalogued as Account Book in the Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.



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FIG. 4. N. K. Whitney & Co. Store, ca. 1910, photographer unknown. Built by N. K. Whitney shortly before Sidney Gilbert came to Kirtland to work as his partner, this store was the site of many significant events in early Church history. The front porch was added after the Whitney family sold the property; archaeology confirms that the original stoop was on the left side of the front of the building.

lot of land at the northeast corner of the intersection across the street from Whitney's home.⁵⁹ This land was also at the intersection between the major roads in town and contained a "double log cabin" where Peter French and his family had lived and operated their first hotel.⁶⁰ Within a year, the lot jumped in value to \$338, as Whitney quickly removed the cabin and built a \$300 store on the site.⁶¹ This building, a little over 1,500 square feet and significantly smaller than Gilbert's Mentor store, would become known by the Whitney family as the "White Store"⁶² (fig. 4).

Samuel Whitney, N. K.'s brother, recalled going to Kirtland in 1826.⁶³ Since he frequently helped N. K. maintain his properties over the years, Samuel may have come to Kirtland to help build the store and at the very least probably hoped to be involved in the expansion of his brother's enterprise.

N. K. had a brief setback caused by the famed November gales on Lake Erie. On November 17, 1826, "a blow" on Lake Erie "probably cleared every floating thing from its surface," including the *Morning Star*, a ship with a large cargo of merchandise forced to return to Buffalo harbor after losing her main mast. The *Morning Star* also lost a small boat from her deck and

a cask of goods belonging to “Mr. N. K. Whitney, of Kirtland.”⁶⁴ A few months later, right after construction was completed on the White Store, Sidney Gilbert first appeared in Kirtland records and the name N. K. Whitney and Company first appeared in the tax records.⁶⁵

Whitney and Gilbert’s Partnership. In the last weeks of 1826 or the first weeks of 1827, Sidney Gilbert arrived in Kirtland to work in partnership with N. K. Whitney. On December 15, 1826, N. K. again published a request that all debts be paid to him by January 1.⁶⁶ N. K. apparently targeted that date for the beginning of a new enterprise with Sidney Gilbert. In anticipation of this new beginning, the firm published a request on December 29 that payments be made to store clerk Orson Hyde at “N. K. Whitney & Co.”⁶⁷ The use of that name was the first reference to the joint business efforts of the new enterprise in Kirtland. In surviving business papers from the company, a “List of Notes in the Hands of Justices of the Peace for Collection in Favor of N. K. W. and Co.” begins with a note dated February 8, 1827—suggesting that the two had begun their partnership by the first week in February.⁶⁸

However, the property remained in N. K. Whitney’s name, and even after the firm changed names, when land records mention the store in boundary descriptions or in other contexts, it was still consistently described as the “Whitney store”⁶⁹—suggesting that the “and Company” existed on paper but did not play a significant role in the minds of Kirtland’s residents, who were already accustomed to thinking of the store as Whitney’s. Yet a merger had clearly occurred because the \$2,500 in merchandise that had appeared the year before under the name of N. K. Whitney was now listed as company property in tax records, along with a single horse. This relationship continued for several years—Whitney was taxed on land, buildings, and personal property; Gilbert was never taxed on land apart from the company land but was occasionally taxed on personal property.⁷⁰

When the Gilbert family arrived in Kirtland, just as the White Store went into operation, they probably moved directly into the Red Store, which became a residence.⁷¹ Gilbert’s home was on the Whitney property facing east, suggesting that he and his family lived in the Red Store on the corner.⁷² The Gilberts remained in the Red Store until they moved to Missouri in fall 1831, after which the Red Store became a residence for others.⁷³ It lost its identity as a store after it became a residence, and when it was returned to Whitney by commandment, it was included with “the houses and lot where he now resides” (D&C 104:39).

In 1828 the Gilberts brought Elizabeth’s widowed sister and her three children to Kirtland. Their husband and father, John Rollins, had drowned seven years before; the delay in the arrival of this family suggests that the

Gilbert couple was finally becoming somewhat comfortable financially after years of struggle and could now help the Rollins children. James, Mary Elizabeth, and Caroline Rollins all worked hard for their new family. James recalled doing chores for both his uncle and N. K. Whitney, and, when he was “old enough,” he began working in the store as a clerk.⁷⁴

However, the hoped-for expanded success of the new partnership did not immediately materialize. The store could not provide income to support everyone, which increased dependence on the ashery. Orson Hyde, a store clerk who had previously worked in the Red Store “for a year or two,” returned to the business right at the expansion “under moderate wages.” Hyde was one of those moved to the ashery: “In 1827, business being rather slack in the store, I went to work for the same parties, making pot and pearl ashes.”⁷⁵

Ashery Expansion. The increased number of people depending on N. K. Whitney for support combined with the sluggish expansion of the store business put heavy pressure on the ashery to help take up the slack. In 1828, Whitney and Gilbert expanded the ashery. Although Whitney retained ownership of the ashery property and apparently provided capital for the endeavor, Gilbert evidently had a project management or book-keeping role, since he oversaw the purchase of materials. On May 14, Gilbert hired John Burk (who operated the local sawmill) to saw “2747 feet of w[hite] w[alnut]” and “1188 feet of oak 4-4.”⁷⁶ Apparently, this lumber was used to expand the housing for the ashery. Along with Burk, Reynolds Cahoon was hired to place twenty cords of stone for a foundation wall approximately two and a half feet wide and more than six feet high.⁷⁷ The ashery property jumped in valuation from \$10 to \$310 from 1828 to 1829, confirming the ashery operation was greatly expanded in summer 1828.⁷⁸

Building the new ashery took a massive investment. The frame building was sixty feet long and approximately twenty feet wide.⁷⁹ The construction included a small office addition on the west side of the main ashery building. To lay in the building would have required extensive excavation. Not only did Reynolds Cahoon dig foundation trenches, but, immediately south of the ashery, workers dug a large pit area about thirty feet in diameter and more than five feet deep in the center. Perhaps this ash pit stored leached ashes until farmers could pick them up for broadcasting on their fields. Immediately south of the pit was a large area of paved brick where workers could conveniently walk without worrying about water and mud. This brick may have served as a burn area both before and after the operation of the larger ashery. Instruction manuals of the time suggest that wood left to dry for a year was “to be burned on an area formed of bricks.”⁸⁰ This area may also have been used for a time as a lumber kiln when the sawmill was constructed a dozen feet away.

The Whitney and Gilbert Lot. On March 5, 1829, “N. K. Whitney and Sidney Gilbert + Co.” purchased from Peter French the southeast corner lot at the intersection of Chillicothe and Chardon Roads across the street and directly south of the White Store.⁸¹ French had run a livery operation on this lot and built a barn on it as well. This was the only land the two men owned together. When Whitney later purchased one half of the lot from Gilbert’s widow, the record of sale indicated that Whitney and Gilbert were equal partners in this land.⁸² Although there is no concrete evidence how the land was used, it certainly was not left vacant. All the other Whitney properties were crowded with buildings, and N. K. Whitney and Company would not have invested scarce resources in an acre and then leave it fallow.

The Whitneys’ Religious and Community Involvement in Kirtland

The Gilberts’ move to Kirtland coincided with the beginning of important religious events that would change the futures of the Whitney and Gilbert families, as well as Kirtland itself. Sometime during 1827, “there was a Methodist camp meeting about six miles distant from Kirtland,” and a number of individuals joined the Methodists. What began at the camp meeting “spread much in Kirtland.”⁸³

The Campbellite Movement. In the Whitney family, Ann influenced her husband’s choice of religious denomination. Her own education while growing up downplayed the importance of religion, but she recalled, “I was naturally religious, and I expressed to my husband a wish that we should unite ourselves with one of the churches, after examining into their principles and deciding for ourselves.”⁸⁴ Sidney Rigdon, a local Reformed Baptist minister (or “Bishop”) in neighboring Mentor, began baptizing a number of Kirtland’s residents into this reformation movement, which sought to restore primitive Christianity. (Followers of this movement became popularly known as Campbellites. In later years, they called themselves Disciples of Christ.) These baptisms started in 1827 and peaked in the first half of 1828 when a number of Kirtland’s citizens joined the movement. By July 1828, the Campbellites’ religious publication noted, “Bishops Scott, Rigdon, and Bentley, in Ohio, within the last six months have immersed about eight hundred persons.”⁸⁵ “Sometime after their marriage,” N. K. and Ann Whitney joined with the Campbellite movement because its “principles seemed most in accordance with the Scriptures.”⁸⁶

The Whitneys were fervent in their attempt to live the principles of their newfound faith. One issue, however, continued to nag at them. The Campbellites baptized for the remission of sins and believed in the laying on of hands for the gifts of the Spirit but did not claim authority to confer

the Holy Ghost. Ann Whitney viewed the influence of the Holy Ghost as important, and the Campbellites' lack of authority to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost concerned her.⁸⁷ The importance of the Holy Ghost in Ann's life increased when, later in life, the gift of tongues and other gifts of the Spirit would play a central role in her experience as a Latter-day Saint.

N. K.'s Community Involvement. Gilbert's arrival in Kirtland seemed to free up more time for N. K. to become involved in community affairs. Although Gilbert's only involvement in local affairs was his appointment as an elector on October 9, 1827, Whitney became deeply involved. He served as an elector several times, was placed on the committee to reelect John Quincy Adams, and served in a variety of other local government functions as well, including inspector of fences for many years and a member of a committee that promoted "*Internal Improvements, and the protection of Home Manufactures*" in the region.⁸⁸ He also became heavily involved in the Grand River Bible Society, an auxiliary to the Connecticut Western Reserve Bible Society. He was responsible, with the Reverend Burbank and Deacon Holbrook, for the Kirtland District, where he was to determine "the number of families that have Bibles and Testaments, and also the number of families that are destitute."⁸⁹ It is not clear how or to what extent Whitney was involved in helping the destitute meet their needs, but he quickly rose to be one of many vice presidents of the Tract Society, organized from those involved in the Bible Society.⁹⁰ Sidney Rigdon was also part of this Bible Society.

The "Golden Bible" in Kirtland. Mary Rollins, Gilbert's niece, recalled that the townsfolk in Kirtland heard about a new religious book in New York. On September 22, 1829, exactly two years to the day after Joseph Smith received the golden plates, the *Painesville Telegraph* published an article under the heading "Golden Bible," announcing that someone in New York claimed to have seen the "spirit of the Almighty."⁹¹ It was sometime during this same period that Ann and N. K. had a singular experience while searching out the things of the Spirit with Sidney Rigdon's group, seeking for greater influence by the Holy Ghost in their lives. Ann recalled:

It was midnight—as my husband and I, in our house at Kirtland, were praying to the Father to be shown the way, the Spirit rested upon us and a cloud overshadowed the house. It was as though we were out of doors. The house passed away from our vision. We were not conscious of anything but the presence of the Spirit and the cloud that was over us. We were wrapped in the cloud. A solemn awe pervaded us. We saw the cloud and felt the Spirit of the Lord. Then we heard a voice out of the cloud, saying, 'Prepare to receive the word of the Lord, for it is coming.' At this we marveled greatly, but from that moment we knew that the word of the Lord was coming to Kirtland.⁹²

Through this experience, the Whitneys understood that what they were learning from Sidney Rigdon was not all they were searching for and that there was additional information to come. However, there was no intimation that the Whitneys knew where to look for the “word of the Lord,” and they “continued in [the Campbellite] church, which was to us the nearest pattern to our Savior’s teachings.”⁹³

At the end of October 1830, just over a year after the “Golden Bible” article appeared in the local paper, Kirtland’s citizens were again confronted with news of the “golden bible” when four Latter-day Saint missionaries passed through Painesville on their way to Mentor. They brought additional information about that strange book. These missionaries stopped primarily to visit Sidney Rigdon, the spiritual mentor of one of their number, Parley P. Pratt. Pratt recalled, “We tarried in this region for some time, and devoted our time to the ministry, and visiting from house to house.”⁹⁴ The missionaries preached a sermon in nearby Euclid. Sidney Rigdon took the group around to his various congregations, which was probably how they were first introduced in Kirtland. Their teaching had a dramatic impact on the entire village. Pratt wrote that “meetings were convened in different neighborhoods, and multitudes came together soliciting our attendance; while thousands flocked about us daily.”⁹⁵

Isaac Morley was the first person in the area to embrace the doctrines that the missionaries preached. His example encouraged others to follow, including Diantha Morley Billings, the first woman to join the Church in Kirtland.⁹⁶ The missionaries slept at night at the Morley farm and preached in the surrounding area during the day, including reading sections from the Book of Mormon at the Methodist chapel on the hill by the cemetery south of the Whitney home. The Whitneys were apparently not among the first to hear from the missionaries but seemed to have heard news indirectly through their friends. Ann later wrote:

When I heard that these Elders were preaching without money, or remuneration of any kind, and more especially when I knew Bro. Morley had received them into his house and had united himself to their faith, and that they were opposed to all priestcraft, I felt an earnest desire to hear their principles proclaimed, and to judge for myself.⁹⁷

Ann believed that what she heard was true. She shared it with her husband, telling him she planned on being baptized into the new faith. N. K. asked her to wait until he had a chance to feel the same conviction, but Ann could not wait and was baptized a few days before her husband in November 1830.⁹⁸

The Gilbert family was also drawn into the Church at this time. Mary Rollins and her mother, Keziah, were among those baptized in October, while Sidney and Elizabeth Gilbert waited until spring 1831.

THE WHITNEYS AND THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

When the Whitney family joined their new faith on or near November 15, 1830,⁹⁹ they were among a large group of converts in the area; between November 15 and November 30, local Church membership grew from twenty or thirty members to about one hundred.¹⁰⁰ Apparently the Whitneys joined the Church without having read even part of the Book of Mormon. Although the missionaries arrived in Ohio “well supplied with the new bibles,”¹⁰¹ there clearly were not enough to go around for the thousands who were interested in their message. The *Painesville Telegraph* gave a very brief summary of the work because few had a copy available to read.¹⁰²

When the missionaries arrived that fall, cold weather was already on its way. This meant that Squire Sawyers’s orchard, where summer meetings were generally held, was no longer a suitable place to preach. In the winter, the congregation met “in school-houses and at residences”—including on the Whitney and Morley properties. Some of the first meetings of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio were held at the home of Selah Griffin on Chardon Road, a little east of the Whitney home. At least one of those earliest congregational meetings in Kirtland took place at the Whitney home.¹⁰³ The Whitneys also provided wine for the first sacrament and for many subsequent observances of that ordinance in Kirtland.¹⁰⁴

While the members were meeting in Kirtland, Joseph was preparing to join them there, following the commandment to gather to Ohio. He left with Emma for Ohio, but Joseph and the four men traveling with him stopped to preach along the way,¹⁰⁵ getting to Kirtland early in February. John Whitmer arrived in Kirtland about two weeks earlier, and the local newspaper announced then that Joseph was on his way, so the Whitneys were expecting him.¹⁰⁶

The Whitneys had been members for only a few months when they met the Prophet. Ann Whitney later recorded this important event:

Joseph Smith, with his wife, Emma, and a servant girl, came to Kirtland in a sleigh; they drove up in front of my husband’s store; Joseph jumped out and went in; he reached his hand across the counter to my husband, and called him by name. My husband, not thinking it was any one in whom he was interested, spoke, saying: “I could not call you by name as you have me.” He answered, “I am Joseph the Prophet; you have prayed me here, now what do you want of me?” My husband brought them directly to our own house; we were more than glad to welcome them and share with them all the comforts and blessings we enjoyed.¹⁰⁷

Although the Whitneys were expecting the Prophet, they perhaps were not expecting his manner of presentation. Whitney's grandson later recalled that not only did the Prophet call him by name (something not entirely unexpected because Whitney's name was likely on a large sign out front), but he also followed it with the unusual phrase "thou art the man."¹⁰⁸ The only other record of Joseph's using this phrase was when he cited scripture. It was the same phrase Amulek used in the Book of Mormon when he met Alma, agreeing that he was "a holy prophet of God" and continuing, "Thou art the man whom an angel said in a vision: Thou shalt receive. Therefore, go with me into my house and I will impart unto thee of my food . . . And it came to pass that the man received him into his house . . . and he brought forth bread and meat and set before Alma" (Alma 8: 20–21). Similarly, N. K. Whitney provided a home and food for Joseph and his family.¹⁰⁹

It is unclear exactly how many people Whitney took under his roof at this time; there may have been two servants with Emma and her children. Years later, Whitney family members recalled a young boy with a servant girl when the Smiths arrived in Kirtland.¹¹⁰ Since Emma had been very ill and had lain in bed for an entire month just before leaving for Ohio, some assistance from servant children was entirely warranted.

The Smiths stayed at the Whitney home for some weeks.¹¹¹ Ann "had then a babe in arms and two older children living."¹¹² The Whitney family of five did not leave much space in their small home for the Smiths. Little Orson Whitney was just under a year old when the Smiths arrived, while Sarah Ann Whitney was five, and Horace Whitney was seven. Aunt Sarah might also have been living in the home but was more likely living on her brother's property at the north end of Kirtland Flats at this time.¹¹³ Their Red Store was occupied by another family, and the White Store did not have the necessary modifications at the time to accommodate the group.

Joseph and Emma were put into the Whitneys' east room on the main level of the home, a nine-by-twelve-foot room just off the front entrance.¹¹⁴ At this time, Emma was between six and seven months pregnant with twins and would have been feeling awkward and exhausted, having just traveled about two hundred and thirty miles with all her worldly belongings. Since she had been in bed for a month before they left New York for Ohio, even the small Whitney room would have been a comforting respite. Gathering to Ohio was as inconvenient for those who arrived as for those who accommodated them.

Joseph and Emma Smith at the Whitney Home

The Smiths arrived in Kirtland on Friday, February 4,¹¹⁵ and must have taken at least a few days to get minimally unpacked and situated.

Since a wagon followed their sleigh, they might have brought some furniture as well as clothing and sacred papers, but there was no room in the Whitney home to store their things. Despite the inconvenience and crowded conditions, the Whitneys did all they could to make the Smiths comfortable during their stay. Joseph Smith reminisced that, while under the care of the Whitneys, his family “received every kindness and attention which could be expected, and especially from Sister Whitney.”¹¹⁶ Ann agreed: “Joseph and Emma were very dear to me, and with my own hands I ministered to them, feeling it a privilege and an honor to do so.”¹¹⁷

However, Joseph did not even have time to settle into the Whitney home before he began filling his role as leader of the new faith. On the day he arrived, Joseph met with the elders of the Church. He observed that “strange notions and false spirits” had crept in among the Lord’s people in Kirtland, a fact that prompted him to receive the first of many revelations in Ohio (introduction to section 41). The three critical issues presented in that revelation would have long-term ramifications for the Kirtland Saints. They were told that the elders of the Church should meet together “to agree upon my word” and “receive my law” (D&C 41:2, 3). The members were also commanded that their prophet, Joseph, “should have a house built, in which to live and translate” (D&C 41:7). The third important issue was the calling of Edward Partridge to be “ordained a bishop unto the church” (D&C 41:9). Although no one knew then how a bishop should fulfill his calling, the use of the word “bishop” would have suggested to Kirtland’s new Saints something similar to the Campbellite ministerial office they were familiar with.

By the next Wednesday, twelve elders met together, and portions of “the law” of the Church were revealed to the group as a whole as they discussed doctrine (D&C 42). Although it is generally believed that these early revelations were received at the Whitney home, the home was small, and there may have been more convenient places to meet with a group of men. However, at least some people came to meet with the Prophet in the Whitney home¹¹⁸ (fig. 5).

Experiences with Gifts of the Spirit

In late March or early April 1831, Elsa Johnson arrived in Kirtland. She came with a group of eight people from Portage County to ask the Prophet to heal her afflicted arm. Joseph invited the entourage or parts of it to stay overnight and meet him the next morning in the Whitney parlor, where he healed Elsa’s arm.¹¹⁹

Ann had a particular gift of speaking in tongues. Ann recalled that the Prophet promised her she would never lose the gift if she remained wise in

using it. According to a local minister, she used seer stones, also known as “peep stones”: “Mormon elders and women often searched the bed of the river for stones with holes caused by the sand washing out, to peep into. N. K. Whitney’s wife had one.”¹²⁰

After “several weeks” with the Whitneys, the Smiths moved onto the property of Isaac Morley.¹²¹ In obedience to commandment (D&C 41:7), a home was quickly built on the Morley property; the Smiths were living there by April 30 when Emma delivered her twins.¹²²

N. K. Whitney and Company and Whitney’s Role as Bishop

Edward Partridge was called as the first bishop in the restored Church. He served the Saints in Missouri with N. K. Whitney serving as his “agent” for Kirtland and for the congregations in the eastern part of the United States. On December 4, 1831, the Lord called Whitney to be bishop in Kirtland: “It is expedient in me for a Bishop to be appointed unto you, or of



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FIG. 5. The Whitney home, Kirtland, Ohio, 1907, photographed by George Edward Anderson. The Whitney family always lived in a modest home while in Kirtland. This picture shows the home after the upper floor was raised from its original half story and the old Red Store was attached to the rear of the home in place of the smaller summer kitchen. The small room on the main level in the corner facing the viewer was where Joseph and Emma Smith stayed when they first arrived in Kirtland.

you, unto the Church in this part of the Lord's vineyard" (D&C 72:2). Whitney's grandson Orson F. Whitney later recalled:

The thought of assuming this important responsibility was almost more than he could bear. . . . [He] distrusted his ability, and deemed himself incapable of discharging the high and holy trust. In his perplexity he appealed to the Prophet:

"I cannot see a Bishop in myself, Brother Joseph; but if you say it's the Lord's will, I'll try."

"You need not take my word alone," answered the Prophet, kindly, "Go and ask Father for yourself."¹²³

Whitney prayed in his bedroom for confirmation and "heard a voice from heaven: 'Thy strength is in me.'"¹²⁴ He then went to the Prophet and said he would accept the office. Ann Whitney recalled that Bishop Whitney "felt that it would require a vast amount of patience, of perseverance and of wisdom to magnify his calling."¹²⁵

Before Whitney's call, the office of bishop was largely undefined in revelation. Bishop Partridge had been working as a hatter and general entrepreneur in Painesville when he was asked "to leave his merchandise and to spend all his time in the labors of the church" (D&C 41:9). In a subsequent revelation, members were instructed to impart of their "substance unto the poor" by laying it before the bishop and his counselors. Everyone would receive a stewardship by consecration, and the excess would be kept in a "storehouse" to administer to the poor and needy. Under Bishop Partridge's direction, the law of consecration and stewardship developed in Missouri.¹²⁶

Bishop Partridge's experiences could easily have established the pattern for subsequent bishops, but Whitney seemed unsure of the direction he should follow. Did the command for Partridge to "leave his merchandise" apply to all bishops, or was it specific instruction just for Partridge? When Whitney was ordained a bishop "he did not know at the time nor Joseph either what the position of a bishop was."¹²⁷ The Lord gave only this instruction when Whitney was called: "The duty of the bishop shall be made known by the commandments which have been given, and the voice of the conference" (D&C 72:7). This left how Bishop Whitney fulfilled his calling open to personal inspiration.

Whitney did receive specific direction on a few matters, particularly that he was to keep the Lord's storehouse in Kirtland and to administer to the wants of Church elders, "who shall pay for that which they receive, inasmuch as they have wherewith to pay" (D&C 72:11). Unlike Partridge, who had been commanded to leave his merchandise, Whitney understood

this instruction to mean that he would continue operating his store and charge for his merchandise where it seemed sensible. This situation set him up for problems with customers, such as the unsatisfied member who “said that Bro. Whitney was not fit for a Bishop and that he treated the Brethren who came into the Store with disrespect that he was overbearing and fain would walk on the necks of the Brethren &c.”¹²⁸ Another brother accused him of the same things. Although Bishop Whitney was exonerated, such accusations would naturally hamper his ability to operate his store while serving in a leadership position. Complicating matters further, the N. K. Whitney and Company store also began to operate as a “bishop’s store-house” where the poor could occasionally come for assistance, although there is no evidence such aid was given on more than a limited basis.¹²⁹

Sidney Gilbert and the Store in Missouri

After the Whitneys joined the Church, they remained fervent in living up to their beliefs. They were perhaps the most financially successful family in the entire town and had resources to continue fostering their nascent religious community. Since Whitney’s friend Sidney Gilbert was also part of the firm, Gilbert was also in a position to promote using the firm to help the Saints. He was not in a position to help directly, however. Judging from tax records, from 1830 on, Sidney Gilbert never had personal property in Kirtland. The amount of personal property Whitney owned, on the other hand, continued to increase.¹³⁰

The brief business relationship between Whitney and Gilbert in Kirtland changed dramatically with the arrival of Joseph Smith and the gathering of the Latter-day Saints to Kirtland. Gilbert left for Missouri in June 1831, after being commanded by the Lord to travel there with Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon (D&C 53:5). Shortly after arriving there, he was instructed to “establish a store” primarily to “sell goods without fraud, that he may obtain money to buy lands for the good of the saints, and that he may obtain whatsoever things the disciples may need to plant them in their inheritance” (D&C 57:8). Thus it was clear that the merchants would play an important role in helping the Church. The significance of this Missouri store was reinforced in revelation when Gilbert returned briefly to Kirtland in the fall to pick up his family:¹³¹ “And now, verily I say that it is expedient in me that my servant Sidney Gilbert, after a few weeks, shall return upon his business, and to his agency in the land of Zion” (D&C 64:18). Obediently, Gilbert returned to Missouri quickly with his family.

While Whitney and Company operated in Kirtland, Gilbert, Whitney and Company purchased a store on a lot right at the prime intersection in

Independence, Missouri. This arrangement allowed Gilbert to move his family into a substantial home near his newly purchased brick store where he could operate the Gilbert and Whitney Missouri business interests. Gilbert's arm of the firm apparently relied heavily on the Kirtland enterprise.¹³²

N. K. Whitney had not gone to Missouri with Gilbert, so he would naturally have wondered what his role would be in the new store when the Prophet returned to Kirtland in August. The subsequent revelation on the subject was apparently the first hint that his store and the things in it were not entirely his own but to be shared freely under his own discretion with the Church. "Let my servant Newel K. Whitney retain *his* store, or in other words, *the* store, yet for a little season. Nevertheless, let him impart all the money which he can impart, to be sent up unto the land of Zion" (D&C 63:42–43, italics added).

By spring 1832, the value of the merchandise of N. K. Whitney and Company had dropped from \$2,500 to \$2,000—the first drop in value since Whitney started his operation in Kirtland¹³³—which seems to indicate that Whitney was sending support to Missouri. In 1832, Church members were also asked to contribute money to the Missouri store. Philo Dibble later recalled that he "was then called on for money to be placed in the hands of Brothers Whitney and Gilbert, who were going to New York to purchase goods to take up to Jackson County, and gave them three hundred dollars."¹³⁴

Despite the contributions of Whitney and others, however, the Missouri store continued to struggle. On December 10, 1832, about a year after the Missouri store was established, Gilbert wrote a letter to Church headquarters condemning some Church leaders. In response, they acknowledged that Sidney Gilbert "is doing much, and has a multitude of business on hand . . . let him do just as the Lord has commanded him, and then the Lord will open His coffers, and his wants will be liberally supplied. But if this uneasy, covetous disposition be cherished by him, the Lord will bring him to poverty, shame, and disgrace."¹³⁵

It is hard now to say which of the promised alternatives Gilbert acted on; however, the following July, unrest developed in Jackson County, during which the Missouri store encountered heavy opposition. Sidney Gilbert was among the leading elders in Independence, Missouri, when the mob came into town and started destroying things in July 1833 (fig. 6). He joined Bishop Partridge, Isaac Morley, and others in offering themselves on behalf of the Church, but their offer was rejected. Gilbert was allowed to sell his remaining goods before he left.¹³⁶



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FIG. 6. *Mobbers Raiding Printing Property and Store at Independence, Missouri, July 20, 1833.* In this photograph of a now-lost painting by C. C. A. Christensen, the mob clamors in the distance to destroy a building identified by a large white sign as “Gilbert’s Store.” N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland contributed significant resources to help establish the firm in Missouri and foster the gathering of Latter-day Saints there.

The Smiths and Church Headquarters at the Whitney Store

One of the most significant roles N. K. Whitney and his family played in Kirtland’s history was through providing living space for the Prophet’s family and space for Joseph to carry out the Lord’s work. In February 1831, when the Prophet first arrived in Kirtland, the Whitneys had shared their home with the Smiths, and in spring 1832 the Smiths again needed lodging in Kirtland.

A Home for Emma in Kirtland. That spring, Joseph was going to Missouri with N. K. Whitney due to the financial struggles of the Missouri store. As they were leaving, Whitney suggested that Emma move temporarily from Hiram and stay with his wife in Kirtland.¹³⁷ Emma followed the request to stay in the Whitney home. At first Aunt Sarah turned Emma away, saying that there was not enough room.¹³⁸ Since the modest Whitney home had only a nine-by-twelve-foot bedroom on the main level and a single, open half-story sleeping area on the second level for the entire Whitney family (including four or five young children and Ann, who was sick), Aunt Sarah’s perception that there was not room in the home for her and Emma

would have been reasonable. If Emma were to stay at the home, she would have shared a bed with Aunt Sarah or slept in the summer kitchen in the rear of the home. Emma apparently expected to sleep in the summer kitchen, but the weather was getting warmer, and Aunt Sarah refused to let Emma stay in the summer kitchen.

Whitney's properties and those of N. K. Whitney and Company were apparently the only properties owned by Latter-day Saints in the Flats then. Gilbert's family had moved out of the Red Store, but it was apparently not available for Emma; N. K. Whitney's father and mother moved into the Red Store about this time.¹³⁹ That left the White Store as the only place available for a temporary residence, but Sidney Rigdon and his family were already living there.¹⁴⁰ These unfortunate circumstances explain how Emma, who had just lost one child, had a year-old little girl, and was about three months pregnant, found herself living at the homes of Reynolds Cahoon, Frederick G. Williams, and her in-laws while waiting for her husband to return from Missouri. N. K. Whitney and Joseph Smith returned from Missouri on July 5, 1832.¹⁴¹ Joseph then returned with Emma and Julia Murdock Smith to Hiram, where they continued living.

By September, Whitney was able to make space available on his property for the Smiths. Sidney Rigdon had been unwell and confined to his bed in the White Store for six or seven weeks, until the end of August 1832.¹⁴² When Rigdon had recovered, Whitney allowed the Rigdon family to move into a log home on another property he owned.¹⁴³ This freed up space in the White Store, allowing Joseph Smith to move out of the Johnson home in Hiram, Ohio, on September 12, 1832, and settle in Kirtland, where Church activity began converging.

When the Smith family moved into the White Store, Emma was pregnant, as was Ann Whitney. As the Smiths moved in, Ann went into labor and delivered a son the following day. Clearly, she was not able to attend as dutifully to the Smiths' needs for a short time after they moved in as she had done earlier. Six weeks later Emma gave birth to a baby boy.¹⁴⁴

The School of the Prophets and the Word of Wisdom. The Smiths lived in the "dwelling portion" of the White Store.¹⁴⁵ The Church conducted business in other upstairs rooms. Brigham Young later described these early meetings:

The first school of the prophets was held in a small room . . . in which the Prophet received revelations and in which he instructed his brethren. The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen.¹⁴⁶

Many sacred meetings were held in that small room, and a number of significant events took place there. The Word of Wisdom was first given there:

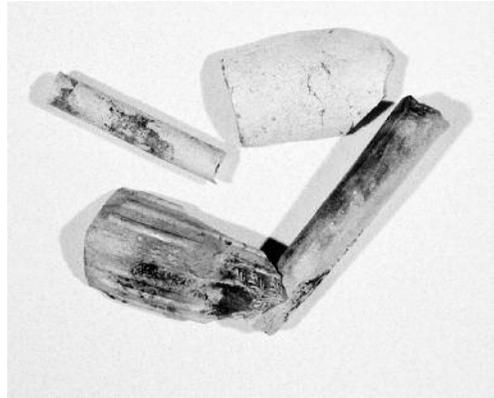
When the Word of Wisdom was first presented by the Prophet Joseph (as he came out of the translating room) and was read to the School, there were twenty out of the twenty-one who used tobacco and they all immediately threw their tobacco and pipes into the fire. There were members as follows: Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, William Smith, Fredrick G. Williams, Orson Hyde (who had the charge of the school), Zebedee Coltrin, Sylvester Smith, Joseph Smith Sen., Levi Hancock, Martin Harris, Sidney Rigdon, Newell K. Whitney, Samuel H. Smith, John Murdock, Lyman Johnson and Ezra Thayer.¹⁴⁷ (fig. 7)

During early meetings at the store, many of the plans for Kirtland were developed and refined. It was in the White Store that many of the discussions were held about building the temple. Joseph and his family moved out of the White Store into their own home up near the temple, probably in 1836.¹⁴⁸ However, the store continued to serve as a meeting place from time to time.¹⁴⁹

The United Firm of Newel K. Whitney and Company

In spring 1832, while Emma tried to find a place in Kirtland for her family, N. K. Whitney traveled with Joseph Smith to Jackson County, Missouri. In Missouri, Joseph and N. K. met with other leading brethren to

FIG. 7. Pipe fragments uncovered by the author in the ash pit archaeological dig just south of the Whitney ashery, September 2000. These pipe fragments may be a remnant of those thrown into the Whitney fireplace when Joseph received the Word of Wisdom. Although we have a clear date of 1842 in layers well above the pipe-fragment level in the dig, it is hard to date each layer of earth precisely. Since Orson Hyde smoked



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Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art

and worked at the ashery, some of his pipes may have broken and ended up in the ashes on site. However, Whitney bought ashes from other people's kitchens to run through his ashery, and he probably took his own ashes to the ashery. There is a very good chance that at least some, if not all, of the pipe fragments uncovered came from the Whitney fireplace. The name "Johnson" is stamped on the side of one of the pipe stems. Lyman Johnson was present when the revelation was given; however, there were many Johnsons in the area (or the name may be a manufacturer's mark), and positive identification is impossible.

find a solution to the financial troubles of the Missouri Saints. During these meetings, Joseph received a revelation that brought N. K. further into Church financial operations:

Therefore, verily I say unto you, that it is expedient for my servants Edward Partridge and Newel K. Whitney, A. Sidney Gilbert and Sidney Rigdon, and my servant Joseph Smith, and John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, and W. W. Phelps and Martin Harris to be bound together by a bond and covenant. . . .

To manage the affairs of the poor, and all things pertaining to the bishopric both in the land of Zion and in the land of Kirtland . . .

And you are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships. (D&C 82:11–12, 15, 17)

Although all nine of these men were particularly qualified to help “manage the affairs of the poor,” only N. K. Whitney was financially successful enough to use his own resources to help significantly. Although Martin Harris and Edward Partridge had been prosperous, they had given all they had to the Church before this time. Whitney was already helping Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith, and, indirectly, Sidney Gilbert. Oliver Cowdery would also soon owe Whitney a little money.¹⁵⁰ Although “equal claims on the properties” seems ambiguous today, apparently in the minds of those present it was clear that the properties under discussion were the Whitney mercantile interests: the next day, April 27, 1832, another gathering of priesthood holders resolved that “the name of the Firm mentioned in the Commandments yesterday be Gilbert, Whitney & Company in Zion. And Newel K. Whitney & Company in Kirtland Geauga Co. Ohio.”¹⁵¹ By April 30, the combined Missouri and Ohio companies had come to be known as the United Firm.¹⁵²

Sidney Gilbert and N. K. Whitney were appointed agents to act in the name of the United Firm. The first item of business assigned to the new organization was to secure a loan for fifteen thousand dollars for five years or longer at 6 percent interest. Apparently this loan was meant, as the Prophet stated, “for supplying the saints with stores in Missouri and Ohio.”¹⁵³ N. K. Whitney and Company was assigned to negotiate the loan on behalf of the Church. During the return trip to Kirtland, Whitney broke his leg in several places,¹⁵⁴ which delayed attempting to negotiate loans; but in fall 1832 he left with Joseph Smith for New York and Massachusetts, even though his leg was not fully healed. The two preached along the way, but loans were not acquired at that time for reasons unknown.¹⁵⁵

After the United Firm was formed, Whitney served as a manager of financial operations for Church affairs, even acting as a financial attorney

for some members. On June 18, 1833, his former neighbors Selah and Polly Griffin gave him power of attorney to represent them in a land transfer. Their land in Kirtland, Ohio, was sold to Seth Johnson “by their Attorney N. K. Whitney.” The Griffins were given land in Missouri, apparently in exchange for consecrating their acre and a half in Kirtland to the Church.¹⁵⁶ Whitney was likely acting in his role as bishop as the Griffins’ “attorney.” Joseph Coe, who had purchased the Peter French farm for \$5,000 as agent for the Church, transferred ownership of the farm to N. K. Whitney and Company at the same time.¹⁵⁷ During this time, the United Firm became responsible for more than one hundred acres of Church property scattered in Kirtland; as the Church’s financial officer, N. K. Whitney paid taxes on this property.¹⁵⁸

Whitney’s role in the United Firm meant he was involved financially with all of the leading brethren in the Church. He was also given special responsibility over the French farm property. As United Firm members discussed the disposition of the farm they had purchased, “the council [*sic*] could not agree who should take the charge of it but all agreed to enquire of the Lord.”¹⁵⁹ The revelation Joseph subsequently received on June 4, 1833, in response to the request of the council directed them to place Whitney in charge of the French property and to divide the land into lots “for the benefit of those who seek inheritances” in Kirtland (D&C 96:3).¹⁶⁰ Whitney remained responsible for the French property while the United Firm was still together. He even paid taxes on the Peter French Inn for four years.¹⁶¹

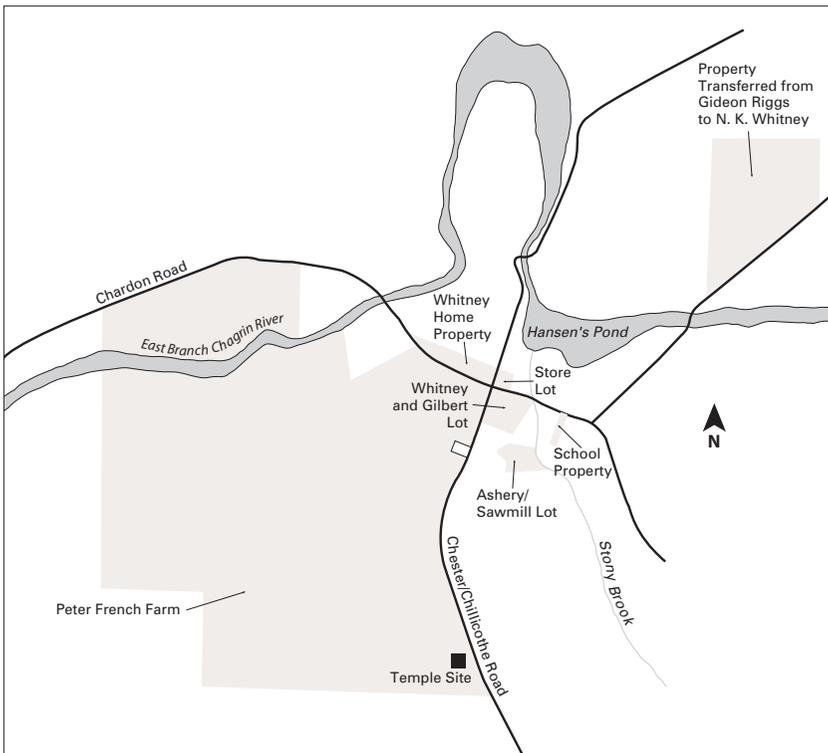
Although title to the Kirtland ashery remained in N. K. Whitney’s name, given subsequent use of the property for temple construction, he likely perceived it as a Church entity, or at least he believed that the Church had rights to what it produced as long as the United Firm was operative.¹⁶²

N. K. Whitney’s relationship to these properties is not wholly clear. This may be due in part to the secrecy surrounding the operations of the United Firm. When the revelations dealing with the United Firm were published, pseudonyms were used for the organization and those involved with it. This reinforced a lack of understanding of the organization and its members by outsiders and most Latter-day Saints. Even Orson Hyde, who worked in the Whitney enterprise for a time and served as an Apostle, did not understand early Church economic organization in Kirtland. When the Church was headquartered in Nauvoo, Hyde was one of a number of people responsible for “the story abroad that we held property common among the Heads or principle [*sic*] men in the Church” in Kirtland. Whitney strongly denied this rumor. He insisted, “We never held any property in common” when he served in the Church leadership in Kirtland.¹⁶³ However, even after the United Firm was dissolved, most Church members

continued to misunderstand the economic activities of Church leaders. Because N. K. Whitney and Edward Partridge both served as bishops for the Church, it was easy to assume that their approach to their callings and solutions to challenges were the same. This was not entirely the case.

Threatened Expulsion from Kirtland under the Poor Laws

In 1833, Whitney's role in assisting the poor became centrally important to furthering the work of the Church when those opposed to the Latter-day Saints in Kirtland used the poor laws as a means of fighting the Church. After the first season of temple construction, R. D. Cotterell and John Parks, the elected "Overseers of the Poor" in Kirtland, submitted a list of persons for the town constable Stephen Sherman to warn about possible expulsion.¹⁶⁴ This action wasn't entirely unusual. In many towns, the Overseers of the Poor were elected officials responsible to make sure that those



Properties Controlled by N. K. Whitney and Company
under the United Firm

not willing to support themselves did not become dependent on the community. Anyone considered destitute or without visible means of support who came in from outside the community and was duly warned could not ask the town for assistance without being expelled from the community. Whitney's early work with the Bible Tract Society helping the destitute would naturally have placed him at odds with this practice years before the Overseers of the Poor set themselves against the Church.

Although town records indicate that the Overseers of the Poor warned a few families from time to time in Kirtland, in winter 1833–34—for the first time in the town's history—the warning included a long list of names. The first warning listed twenty-two heads of household and their families, and the second listed twenty-seven heads of household and their families. The threatened expulsion was no small event for the 150 members of the Church then in Kirtland; several of those warned were working on the temple. Among those warned of expulsion were three men assigned in revelation to assist the poor of the Church: Joseph Smith Jr., Sidney Rigdon, and Martin Harris. The constable served papers on those on the first list in December, and the second list of additional targets was prepared in January by the Overseers to the Poor.¹⁶⁵

Whitney's resources were already stretched thin. The merchandise in his store had already dropped to \$1,500 in 1833, the lowest point ever in his operation.¹⁶⁶ The Church also had significant needs brought about by temple construction in Kirtland and property acquisition in Missouri. Although antagonism was clearly at the root of the slated expulsions of the poor, there was likely some truth to the accusation that Church members on the warning lists were unemployed. The lists were drawn up when temple construction was inhibited because of weather conditions. During the winter, the water froze, so access to the sandstone quarries was virtually impossible, and the sawmill could not operate. Those assisting in temple construction had little other work available during this downtime. In addition, not as many missionaries were returning from the field with gifts and donations from members during the winter months as they had in the fall.

The United Firm's Dissolution

By early 1834, Kirtland seemed stretched to its financial limits. Although Whitney's merchandise bounced back from an all-time low of \$1,500 in 1833 to its normal \$2,500 levels in 1834,¹⁶⁷ several members of the United Firm were heavily in debt to the United Firm. The United Firm was not a common stock enterprise; each member of the organization was responsible for reimbursing the United Firm for resources they used.

Whitney would later point out that even among the leading brethren who were members of the United Firm, “we never held any property in common.”¹⁶⁸

In February and March, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders traveled through Ohio and New York to gather resources and people for Zion’s Camp, an organized effort to reinstate Gilbert in his Missouri store and others to their property after they had been driven out the previous July. As part of these redemptive efforts, the Prophet preached “for the Church to gather up their riches.” But this gathering of riches was not only to assist in Missouri. The Saints were “to devise means, or obtain money for the relief of the brethren in Kirtland, say two thousand dollars, which sum would deliver the Church in Kirtland from debt.” Joseph gave three of the brethren the specific assignment to obtain the two thousand dollars, which they thought they could do by the first of April.¹⁶⁹

Unfortunately, the trip east to gather money for Zion’s Camp and to redeem Kirtland’s debts did not obtain enough money to help the United Firm. Hoping for another solution, on April 7, Joseph met with Whitney and other leading brethren in the White Store. They prayed that God “would furnish the means to deliver the United Firm from debt, that they might be set at liberty.”¹⁷⁰ They also prayed that Joseph would prevail in a lawsuit, which he did on April 9. The next day, Church leaders agreed to dissolve the United Firm “and each one have his stewardship set off to him.”¹⁷¹ When the organization was dissolved, the Lord instructed that “every one of what was then called the United Firm [was] to give up all notes & demands that they had against each other and all be equal.”¹⁷² Whitney had the financial means to cover the “notes and demands” of the members. Thus the answer to the organization’s debt problems: the debts individual Firm members owed would be cancelled, and Whitney would cover the costs. The former members of the United Firm would now “all be equal” because they could all draw on Whitney’s resources.

Although the decision to dissolve the United Firm was made on April 9, the actual dissolution occurred on April 23, 1834. Speaking to those in Kirtland, the Lord told the group they were no longer to be bound together in a united order of priesthood leadership with those living in Missouri. Instead, he told them that they should do business individually, “in [their] own names” (D&C 104:49–50). On the same day, in a separate revelation, those who had accounts against the United Firm had them balanced “without any value recd.” The United Firm then wrote off \$3,635.35 in debt.¹⁷³

The Lord reemphasized in an unpublished revelation five days later that the Firm of Zion and the Firm of Kirtland were to be separated from each other. At the same time, he recognized the financial support N. K. Whitney and Company had provided by specifying that they were to

reserve three thousand dollars “for the right and claim of the Firm in Kirtland for inheritances in due time.”¹⁷⁴ Although the resources of the United Firm went to individuals and obligations in Kirtland, the firm in Kirtland would still be allowed to loan the Missouri firm money (D&C 104:53).

The Creation of New Stores in Kirtland

After the United Firm was disbanded, Whitney demonstrated his love for the leaders of the Church by helping them establish their own store in Chardon. Whitney also helped Joseph establish a store in Kirtland that operated in direct competition to his own establishment.

When the Lord dissolved the United Firm in April 1834, the distribution of resources contributed in part to helping meet the needs of poor, faithful members of the United Firm. For example, Sidney Rigdon was “appointed” by revelation “the place where he now resides, and the lot of the tannery for his stewardship” (D&C 104:20). The property he was living on belonged to N. K. Whitney.¹⁷⁵

Despite some assistance given to poorer members of the United Firm, they were still not entirely able to take care of their own needs. In addition, the Church needed to pay off debts incurred during temple construction. The pressures on the poor Saints in Kirtland and the financial needs of the Church appear to be the impetus for the expansion of merchandising efforts in Geauga County.

On Wednesday, October 7, 1835, Bishop Whitney and Hyrum Smith “started by stage to Buffalo, New York” (where Whitney had already developed contacts, a good reputation, and solid credit) to purchase goods for the various stores. Joseph Smith received a blessing “through the Urim and Thummim” for Bishop Whitney before he left.¹⁷⁶ In that blessing Bishop Whitney received specific instruction related to the poor. He was promised “the time cometh that he shall overcome all the narrow-mindedness of his heart, and all his covetous desires that so easily beset him; and he shall deal with a liberal hand to the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, the widow and the fatherless.” Bishop Whitney was the one chosen by the Lord and “anointed to exalt the poor, and to humble the rich.”¹⁷⁷

In Buffalo, New York, Whitney used his business connections to get credit and letters of recommendation to creditors in New York City. Whitney and Hyrum Smith then returned to Kirtland with massive amounts of goods. These goods were probably not all intended for Joseph’s Kirtland store as some later accounts imply.¹⁷⁸

In 1836, N. K. Whitney used his own business connections and resources to help establish several stores for Church leaders. At least three

stores grew out of those efforts: Rigdon, Smith and Cowdery in Chardon; the Joseph Smith Variety Store and R. Cahoon, J. Carter and Co. in Kirtland. Two of these stores were intended to help pay debts of temple construction.¹⁷⁹ The firm Pratt and Goodson, run by the editors of the Kirtland edition Book of Mormon, Parley P. Pratt and John Goodson, may also have received Whitney's assistance.

Joseph himself learned how hard it was to operate a store and "exalt the poor." When he ran operations in his store, he sometimes gave away some of his store's merchandise to needy members.¹⁸⁰ He probably did not give away much, however, because Ira Ames, an experienced businessman, was involved in most of the day-to-day operations of the store. Still, for some reason, the Kirtland store did not operate for long. Perhaps Joseph learned he could not keep in business with the poor pressing him so heavily to have their needs met. Most likely there were just too many stores to turn much of a profit. With all these Church-owned stores as well as stores owned by others competing directly against N. K. Whitney and Company, the increased effort was not bringing increased funds into the Church. Joseph's Kirtland store was closed down about a year after it started. Joseph traded most of his store goods away for property for the Church.¹⁸¹ Therefore, although Joseph did trade his goods away, they were not given to the poor individually but given to help the Church as a whole.

Feasts for the Poor

The bulk of responsibility for helping the poor remained with Whitney, who met with the needy in the Kirtland Temple. He distributed butter, bread, or other foods contributed by members who held fast meetings for this purpose. Shortly after his call as bishop, Whitney received divine instruction giving further insight. He was commanded to "travel round about and among all the churches, searching after the poor to administer to their wants by humbling the rich and the proud" (D&C 84:112). During that time, a practice developed of holding patriarchal blessing meetings in which a large dinner was served "for the poor."

Bishop Whitney and his wife regularly attended these meetings, and the Whitneys decided that they too would follow this practice to honor N. K.'s parents, who had both come to Kirtland to live and had joined the Church. N. K.'s parents were both to receive their patriarchal blessings, along with some other individuals. The Whitneys made that meeting a special event, three days of celebration the like of which had never been seen in Kirtland. Ann recalled that event: "This feast lasted three days, during which time all in the vicinity of Kirtland who would come were invited . . . To me it was 'a feast of fat things' indeed; a season of rejoicing never to be forgotten."¹⁸²

Joseph wrote of his attendance at the opening of the feast, commenting that “this feast was after the order of the Son of God the lame the halt and blind were invited according to the instruction of the Saviour. . . . we then received a bountiful refreshment, furnished by the liberality of the Bishop.” The Whitney home was small, but many attended, so they likely attended the feast in shifts. Joseph attended the first day and then went to Hebrew school on the second day. On the third day, Joseph was again at the Hebrew school when he received a note inviting him to come back to the Whitney home at noon so “the poor & lame will rejoice at his presence & also think themselves honored.” Joseph immediately cancelled school and returned to the feast, where “a large congregation assembled,” and they were all filled physically and spiritually.¹⁸³

When Bishop Whitney received his own patriarchal blessing in 1834, he was reminded, “Thou art a strange man, and thy ways have been unlike the ways of other men; nevertheless, thou hast sought to be a man of God, and to do away all thy unbelief and doubts, and in this the Lord has given thee strength.” Whitney was declared in the blessing to be “a descendant of Melchisedek,” and as such he exercised priesthood authority on behalf of the local membership and would fulfill many of the ancient roles of Melchizedek in his own life.¹⁸⁴ Bishop Whitney recommended which faithful brethren would be ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Winter 1836 seemed to be a transforming time in the life of Bishop Whitney. He increased his emphasis on reaching out to the poor and providing for their basic needs. When he was out of town, his two counselors, Hyrum Smith and Reynolds Cahoon, also provided assistance.¹⁸⁵

The Death of Sidney Gilbert: The End of N. K. Whitney and Company

Shortly after the United Firm was dissolved in spring 1834, mobs drove Sidney Gilbert and the other Saints from their homes again. His brother came from New York to visit and died of cholera while in Missouri. Although the disease has a short incubation period, he may have been the one who brought death to Sidney.¹⁸⁶ Zion’s Camp arrived at the Gilbert home just as the disease broke out, and they too may have been carriers of cholera. Sidney Gilbert quickly became painfully ill in an attack that sufferers described as influencing their intestinal systems “like the talons of a hawk.”¹⁸⁷ As severe dehydration set in, Gilbert was “among the first to die” of the painful illness.¹⁸⁸ Gilbert was one of more than seventy people who became ill and one of more than fourteen who died of cholera at the time.

After Gilbert died on June 29, 1834, it took several years to sort out all the legal issues associated with his business interests. Frederick G. Williams was appointed administrator of his estate by Elizabeth Gilbert in July 1838.

Samuel F. Whitney “Knows Not the Lord”

When Bishop Whitney received his patriarchal blessing in 1834, he had concerns about his family in relation to the gospel of Christ. Those concerns were addressed in his blessing: “Thy father will yet come into the Church, and his heart shall rejoice in his old age.” He was also concerned about his brother Samuel F. Whitney who liked to refer to himself as the “Reverend Whitney,” a long time Methodist with no formal religious training. N. K.’s blessing commented on those concerns:

Thou hast an ungodly brother who knows not the Lord, neither does he understand His ways; though he supposes he is a minister of the Gospel, and makes his boasts that his feet are upon the Rock that cannot be moved. (Orson F. Whitney, “Newell Kimball Whitney,” *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 128)

The blessing also acknowledged that N. K. had “besought the Lord many times for [Samuel] and greatly desired his salvation.”

N. K. Whitney’s concern for his brother Samuel became more acute after Father and Mother Whitney joined the Saints. The stubborn son continued to resist. Samuel recalled that one day an Elder Gould was brought to the house to talk with him:

I was painting my brother’s house. He first read a chapter or two from the Bible in the unknown tongue . . . [and then set out to convert Samuel]. My brother’s wife said I had better spend time to have him do it. It would be of infinite value to me. I objected to neglecting my work. My brother said he would give me the time. I told Gould I had not a mind susceptible of the force of his arguments. . . . He retorted, I see the devil in your eye. . . . I laid down my paint pot and brush and started for him. He fled. (Mrs. H. W. Wilson, “Statement,” in *Naked Truths about Mormons*, ed. Arthur B. Deming [Oakland, Calif.: Deming, 1888], 3)

Samuel continued to challenge the faithful. During Philastus Hurlbut’s trial in 1834, Samuel testified against Joseph Smith’s veracity. After the trial, Joseph and Samuel and others had a confrontation at the Whitney store. As recorded in 1885 by Samuel, Joseph asked Samuel why he had testified as he did. A discussion began in which the two men questioned each other’s veracity. Samuel recalled:

The conversation began in the morning and lasted two hours. Jo shook his fist in my face, raved around violently, and threatened to whip me. My brother ordered us to stop talking, that he would

not have such conversation in his store. Jo said he must free his mind. I told him to go ahead, I would take care of N. K. Jo's language was out of character. Rigdon began talking; I told him he ought to have better manners than to speak when his master was speaking. Two weeks previous Jo laid his hands on me and called me his spiritual brother. . . . I said I should not reject a spiritual brother because he swore to a lie. The store was full of Mormons and I the only Gentile, but I was not afraid of them. (Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney on Mormonism," in *Naked Truths about Mormons*, 3)

Samuel remained in Kirtland and died March 22, 1886, never having joined the Church. ("Died in Kirtland," *Deseret News*, May 26, 1886, 292)

The last bill sent for collection by N. K. Whitney and Company was dated August 4, 1838, which dates the end of the entity as a corporation.¹⁸⁹

Previously, with the dissolution of the United Firm, the Lord gave Whitney the entire lot he had owned jointly with Gilbert (D&C 104:39). However, the property records were never changed to reflect this. Elizabeth Gilbert had the land put up at public auction when she later settled her husband's estate.¹⁹⁰ N. K. Whitney was living in Illinois at the time and had his brother Samuel purchase Gilbert's half of the property at auction.¹⁹¹ He never insisted that he had a right to the property because it had been given to him by revelation.¹⁹² This suggests that Whitney was more interested in helping Gilbert's widow when he purchased the property from her than he was in making a profit.

Whitney's Financial Sacrifices for the Church

After the United Firm was dissolved and Whitney was given back all his property by commandment, his merchandise value rose again to the consistent \$2,500 where it stayed for the rest of the time the Whitneys remained in Kirtland.¹⁹³ By his own estimation, Whitney had \$7,761 in net worth when he left Kirtland, including the \$2,046 still owed him. Although prices were still high in town, this was substantially less than Whitney started out with when first called to be a bishop, if his brother Samuel gave an accurate assessment. Samuel said his brother N. K. "was a thorough and successful business man, worth, when he became a Mormon, from twenty to thirty thousand dollars."¹⁹⁴ Although the huge difference between twenty and thirty thousand dollars suggests that Samuel was only guessing,

Whitney had clearly sacrificed financially for the Church. Even after writing off some debts by commandment and contributing to a variety of Church and member needs, “the Company” still owed him \$946.¹⁹⁵

Troubles in Kirtland

Although N. K. Whitney was able to keep his store profitable during all the early financial struggles the Church encountered, he could not keep entirely free from the problems others faced. Because the Church relied so heavily on his financial strength, when Whitney encountered problems, the entire Church felt it. Something referred to only as “embarrassed circumstances” happened in fall 1834 that impacted Whitney’s fortunes: “The counsellors decided that brother Newel K. Whitney be privileged to make such arrangements with his store, as he shall deem most advisable considering his present embarrassed circumstances.”¹⁹⁶ Although the nature of the problems that arose is unclear, by the next spring the value of Whitney’s ashery dropped from \$310 to \$77.¹⁹⁷ A major destruction of the building and later reworking of the remains is confirmed by recent archaeology.¹⁹⁸ Although it’s impossible to date such an event precisely by archaeological methods, the destruction could have occurred in fall 1834. Whitney was able to list only the “entrails to the ashery” as an asset by 1837.¹⁹⁹

The most likely cause of the ashery’s destruction was fire. Fire was not unusual in Kirtland. Earlier, a fire had broken out in Orson Johnson’s shoe shop, located about twenty feet north of the Whitney home. Lumber cut at the sawmill on the Whitney ashery property caught on fire no less than six separate times while drying in the kiln.²⁰⁰ Thus the lack of contemporary accounts of the ashery fire is unusual, but, given the frequent fires in the area, it is not unexpected. However, the financial loss due to the destruction of Whitney’s massive potash factory must have been significant and unexpected. Whitney sold his ashery property in February 1837 to Jacob Bump (who sold the property to Jonathon Holmes in April 1837).²⁰¹ Eventually the brick flooring was reworked into an outside ashery operation, and a smaller building was erected on a portion of the foundation as a tannery, but the Church lost the ashery as a major source of income.

As problems increased, dissension within the Church rose along with antagonism toward members by outsiders (fig. 8). However, even given the difficulties in Kirtland, the Whitneys remained there long after others left and only moved west when they were finally asked to do so.

The Loss of the N. K. Whitney and Company Property in Kirtland

In fall 1838, the Whitney family left Kirtland for Far West, Missouri, where N. K. Whitney had been called to serve as bishop of the newly

N. K. Whitney Properties

As part of the estate proceedings, N. K. Whitney disclosed in 1837 his property interests, including interest on Gilbert's business dealings. Whitney made a list of these separate interests while he still lived in Kirtland:

one acre of Land with all appurtenances on which he now lives	\$2500
The White store + Lot on the north east corner	1500
Two city lots Bot. of Joseph Smith Jun or Saml Whitney Sen.	500
Half of the south east corner (our own)	500
A lease of the springs on the Hill save enough to carry a distillery	500
A quit claim deed of school house lot on the flats (cost 20\$)	20
8 Burying ground Lots <+ some of Cahoon> in grave yard on the Hill Bot. of Temple	40
Half of Hay scale on the flats with Jno Johnson 50\$	50
Part of a Lot (on which is the cold spring) on the hill bot. of Cahoon or Redfield	100
One Bark Store on M. C. Davis Lot (Gift of S. Shannon)	<u>5</u>
	\$5715
The entrails of ashery lot 400\$ note v.s. Trurner do vs—di	400 75
notes vs. Kimball	290
note vs Joseph Young	300
note vs C.S. Whitney	35
notes vs the Company	<u>946</u>
	\$2046
X note vs. Spary + Son	100 settled
note vs. A. S. G. Estate	
14 March 1837 P + Interest	\$394.86

“List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney, Aug. 1837,” Whitney Collection.



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FIG. 8. N. K. Whitney's military issue pistol and accoutrements. As troubles increased in Kirtland, confrontations occurred between Latter-day Saints and Kirtland residents. Although the mild-natured Whitney was an army sutler during the War of 1812, he apparently did not have a weapon to defend his family and the Prophet living on his property. This U.S. Army pistol was made about 1819 and could shoot a half-ounce ball, serving as formidable protection. The pistol was about fifteen years old when Whitney bought it as army surplus in the 1830s. He made the accoutrements himself sometime that same decade. Whitney carried his pistol during the troubles in Far West and Nauvoo and as the leader of a company of pioneers traveling to the Great Salt Lake Valley.

formed stake at Adam-Ondi-Ahman. In Missouri, the Whitneys and other Saints encountered heavy persecution and were driven into Illinois, where they lived in difficult circumstances.²⁰² Joseph Smith invited the Whitneys to live in a small cottage in his yard, employing N. K. in his Nauvoo store. Ann wrote that this was a fulfillment of prophecy:

One day while coming out of the house into the yard the remembrance of a prophecy Joseph Smith had made to me, while living in our house in Kirtland, flashed through my mind like an electric shock; it was this: that even as we had done by him, in opening our doors to him and his family when he was without a home; even so should we in the future be received by him into his house.²⁰³

The Whitneys must have believed that they would return to Kirtland some day; N. K.'s father held out some hope that his grandchildren, at least,

A Disturbance while Crossing the Plains

While crossing the plains to Utah, N. K. was the object of some good-natured ribbing. Horace Eldridge, a member of the camp that N. K. was crossing with, recorded:

About 11 o'clock in the Evening the curiosity of the Guard was excited by some unusual noise supposed [*sic*] to be a mule choked. I was caled [*sic*] up by O. P. Rockwell and Luke Johnson, and up on examination we found it to be bishop Whitney a snoring somewhat to the annoyance of some of the camp. No harm done but ended in a little sport. (Horace Sunderlin Eldredge, Journal, March 10, 1847, Church Archives, source courtesy Jenny Lund)

would be reunited with him in Kirtland. At the end of a visit to Nauvoo, N. K.'s father told his granddaughter Helen Mar, "I shall try and secure the old homestead, in Kirtland, for you and Horace. I want you to come and live there by us."²⁰⁴ Sadly, that reunion never took place; N. K.'s father died shortly after his visit to Nauvoo. However, something else N. K.'s father said at his last meeting with his son did come true. Before leaving Nauvoo for Kirtland, N. K.'s father told Ann, "I can only see N. K. till he gets to the mountains, but you, Ann, will live a great many years."²⁰⁵

N. K. Whitney migrated to Utah in 1848.²⁰⁶ In September 1850, he complained of a severe pain in his side and became bedridden. His ailment was pronounced "bilious pleurisy," and he grew rapidly worse. On September 24, 1850, after thirty-six hours in bed, he died.²⁰⁷ After N. K.'s death, his brother Samuel took the Kirtland property through probate, describing himself to the courts as "a creditor . . . and also the nearest of kin within this State." Because of this, he was placed as administrator of the Whitney estate on May 2, 1857. He had the property appraised by two other long-time Kirtland residents, who concluded that the "value of personal estate + effects of said decedent [N. K. Whitney] does not exceed the sum of one hundred dollars."²⁰⁸ Samuel told the court that his brother was in debt to him for a sum exceeding one thousand dollars. Thus, the title to all of N. K. Whitney's remaining Kirtland property was transferred to Samuel, who sold it off piece by piece. Soon there was nothing left of the original holdings of N. K. Whitney and N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland, Ohio. Over time, the importance of N. K. Whitney and Company to the financial survival of the early Latter-day Saints has been largely forgotten.

Changes to the Whitney Properties in Kirtland, 1870

In 1870, N. K. and Ann's oldest son, Horace, stopped in Kirtland while serving a mission for the Church. He wrote to his widowed mother describing the changes he saw in what had been the Whitney properties:

While I was in Kirtland I visited . . . the old homestead; but many things are quite changed & gave me very lonely feelings; for instance, your kitchen has been taken away & attached to the barn; & the red store where grandfather W. lived has been put in the place of it. Many of the old apple trees, tho' showing signs of great age, yet remain; others have been hewn down, & many other depredations have been committed by unprincipled men & boys which contribute to make the place look desolate. Your old "East Room,"—where Joseph & Emma lived on their first arrival from York State in December 1831,—looks quite natural; as also the [illegible] rooms up stairs & down stairs of the main building;—the white store has been enlarged & considerably changed. (H. K. Whitney to mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870, Whitney Collection)

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1. "Kirtland, a Boy's Recollections of His First Fourth of July," *Willoughby Independent*, 1902, in *Hadden Scrapbook*, n.d., 13, Lake County Historical Society, Mentor, Ohio. Compare *History of Geauga and Lake Counties, Ohio* (Philadelphia: Williams Brothers, 1878), 247.

2. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor* 6 (January 1885): 125.

3. Helen Mar Whitney, "Life Incidents," *Woman's Exponent* 9 (February 17, 1881): 138.

4. Samuel F. Whitney, N. K.'s younger brother, was born in Fairfield, New York, March 17, 1804. "Died in Kirtland," *Deseret Weekly*, May 26, 1886, 297.

5. Whitney family information comes from birth records listed in Family Files in the Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. These records indicate the locations where the Whitney children were born.

6. Orson F. Whitney, "Newell Kimball Whitney," in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, comp. Andrew Jenson, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History, 1901–36), 1:222.

7. Orson F. Whitney, "Newell Kimball Whitney," in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:222.

8. Gilbert purchased a town lot from Samuel Egnew for \$150. Samuel Egnew to Algernon S. Gilbert, Land Deed, September 10, 1818, Monroe County, Michigan Deeds, Bk. D, p. 98, Monroe County Courthouse, Monroe, Michigan, microfilm, Family History Library.

9. The store occupied a corner lot with 68 feet of frontage on Monroe Street and 110 feet of frontage on First Street.

10. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "A Leaf from an Autobiography," *Woman's Exponent* 7 (August 15, 1878): 41.

11. "Death of Mother Whitney," *Deseret News*, February 16, 1882, 3. Ann was the daughter of Gibson and Polly Bradley Smith. She was born December 26, 1800, in Derby, New Haven County, Connecticut. Ann would later become a leader in the Relief Society, the second woman to receive her endowment in Nauvoo, and a leader in the move to live plural marriage. Compare "Funeral Services of Sister Elizabeth A. Whitney," *Deseret News*, February 17, 1882, 3; "Death of a Pioneer," *Deseret News*, August 1, 1884, 3.

12. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography," 41.

13. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography," 41.

14. "Death of Mother Whitney," 3.

15. N. K. Whitney first appears in the Painesville pollbook in October 1819 but becomes active in the Mentor business in 1820. Poll Book, Lake County Historical Society; Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: n.p., 1877), 34.

16. A. S. Gilbert to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage, Mortgage Deed, April 2, 1821, Geauga County Property Records, vol. 8, p. 138–39, Geauga County Archives and Records Center, Chardon, Ohio, microfilm, Family History Library.

17. A. S. Gilbert to Lewis Downs, Property Deed, June 10, 1820, Monroe County, Michigan Deeds, Bk. D, p. 462. Although their new store would be in Mentor, Ohio, Whitney and Gilbert indicated on the transaction that they were from Painesville, Ohio, suggesting that even before the Mentor store was built, they did business with residents of Painesville and identified with the town. Whitney signed as a witness to the Gilbert transaction with Downs. (There is no evidence that Whitney was more than just a witness to this transaction, however.)

18. When Whitney and Gilbert moved to Ohio in 1819, there were 1,299 heads of household in Geauga County with only twenty-eight employed in commerce. Twenty-four of those employed in commerce lived in Painesville, which had

already become the clear center for commercial activity in the county. 1820 U.S. Census, Geauga County, Ohio. N. K. Whitney's interest in Ann Smith, who was living in Kirtland, may have been the reason Whitney and Gilbert settled in Mentor, between the two towns.

19. James Olds to Algernon S. Gilbert, Deed of Land Sale, October 28, 1820, Geauga County Property Deeds, vol. 7, p. 478–79, Geauga County Archives and Records Center. Today this is Johnnycake Ridge Road and is a major thoroughfare just on the north edge of Kirtland, Ohio. The eighty-dollar purchase price was about sixty dollars more than an empty lot cost—roughly the value of a modest two-story building twenty-five by thirty feet—suggesting that there was an existing building on the property.

20. List of Houses Which Appraised in 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828, Geauga County Archives and Records Center.

21. Orson F. Whitney, a grandson of N. K. Whitney, later believed that N. K. Whitney had worked in the firm "Gilbert and Whitney" before the firm N. K. Whitney and Company was established in Kirtland. He wrote that "the firm of Gilbert & Whitney had been dissolved, as to Kirtland, the business which they formerly carried on being superseded by that of N. K. Whitney & Co." Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 124, 128. Although he may have been confused with the later "Gilbert, Whitney, and Co." established in Missouri, Orson Whitney believed that the "Gilbert and Whitney" firm with N. K. Whitney as junior partner was located in Kirtland as early as 1817, and that later N. K. Whitney and Company was established in the same town. If Orson Whitney was correct on the date and sequence of store operation, then Gilbert's store in Monroe, Michigan, was the first "Gilbert and Whitney" firm. Legal records and other primary sources are clear that Whitney operated for his entire time in Kirtland either as "N. K. Whitney" or "N. K. Whitney & Co." There never was a "Gilbert and Whitney" in Kirtland.

22. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 124.

23. See, for example, Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Notebook, ca. 1831–1834, Church Archives; Algernon Sidney Gilbert, [Book of Commandments] Book B, [ca. 1833], Church Archives.

24. A. S. Gilbert to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage, pp. 138–39.

25. A. S. Gilbert to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage, pp. 138–39. The Vandervoort and Van Winkle mortgage company began paying taxes on the building and rented out the property.

26. Geauga County Tax Records, 1819–26, Geauga County Archives and Records Center.

27. In 1827, a sheriff sale was held to dispose of some other defaulted property. The property being sold at auction lay just west of the land "deeded by J. Olds to A. S. Gilbert and H. Damon." Although the advertisement lumped Gilbert's and Damon's names together, the two most likely owned separate properties, both of which lay adjacent to the property up for sale. Uri Seely, "Sheriff Sales," *Painesville Telegraph*, September 21, 1827, 3. See also James Olds to Algernon S. Gilbert, October 28, 1820.

28. See *Aurora McKinney v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal, Book F, 226, Geauga County Archives and Records Center, Final F, Court of Common Pleas, 431–34 (April 2, 1821); *John Lay Jr. v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal G, 61, Final G, Court of Common Pleas, 201–3

(March 26, 1822); *Henry Phelps Admr of the Estate of Seymour Austin Deceased v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal G, 61–62, Final G, Court of Common Pleas, 203–6 (March 26, 1822); *Mager King v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal G, 159, Final G, Court of Common Pleas, 433–35 (March 18, 1823); *Eli Bond v. Algernon S. Gilbert*, Court of Common Pleas, Journal H, 70, Final Record H, 195 (June 7, 1824). Gilbert was also the Plaintiff in one suit against the Henry Phelps estate. See Court of Common Pleas, Journal G, 61–62, Final Record G, Court of Common Pleas, 203 (March 24, 1822).

29. Mary Elizabeth Rollings Lightner, “Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (July 1926): 193. Methodist minister and later ardent anti-Mormon Ira Eddy married them. Sidney Gilbert and Elizabeth van Benthuyzen’s marriage announcement appeared in *Painesville Telegraph*, October 1, 1823, 3.

30. Samuel Cows, “For Sale or Rent,” *Painesville Telegraph*, April 2, 1825, through April 30, 1825.

31. A. S. Gilbert to Vandervoort and Van Winkle Mortgage, pp. 138–39.

32. Cows, “For Sale or Rent.”

33. A. S. Gilbert, “House & Lot,” *Painesville Telegraph*, May 6, 1824, 3; Gilbert was probably renting the Monroe store out as was commonly done in that day. We know he was receiving mail from a distance during that time because the postmaster was forced to advertise on March 31, 1824, that Sidney Gilbert and N. K. Whitney had letters waiting for them to pick up. J. H. Hills, “A List of Letters,” *Painesville Telegraph*, April 1, 1824, 3.

34. Alford to Gilbert, Mortgage Deed, May 19, 1825, Monroe County, Michigan Deeds, vol. E, p. 98; Gilbert to Alford, Deed, January 20, 1826, Monroe County, Michigan Deeds, vol. E, pp. 240–42.

35. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1827, p. 21, Geauga County Archives and Records Center.

36. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “A Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued,” *Woman’s Exponent* 7 (September 1, 1878): 51.

37. “Kirtland, a Boy’s Recollections,” 13. Compare *History of Geauga and Lake Counties*, 247. Although the construction of the log store is dated to 1823 in the Williams Brothers’ volume, the location of the store is incorrectly placed at the Kirtland Safety Society Bank location on F. G. Williams’s property instead of on Elijah Smith’s property. Since locations are much easier to remember fifty years later than are dates, this makes the date uncertain—especially since property deeds clearly indicate the corner lot where the Red Store was erected was purchased in 1822. This suggests that the log store was most likely in operation as early as 1821 or 1822, while the Red Store was under construction. It would not make sense for Whitney to purchase an ideal store lot in one location only to build a temporary store in a less-than-ideal location later.

38. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “Leaf from an Autobiography,” 41.

39. Christopher Crary sixty years later would claim the designation of first permanent settler for his own family (Christopher Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences* [Marshalltown, Iowa: Marshall Printing, 1893], 6), but a number of primary sources confirm Peter French was in the region before the Crary family arrived. French came along the Chagrin River on March 22, 1798, and won a prize for building the first mill in the Western Reserve (in what is now Willoughby

Township, right next to Kirtland). French then cleared land about thirty-five miles south of this in Mantua, where he grew wheat, but he sold the land in 1799 and moved back north. Although French was married in Painesville in 1804, it is unclear where he lived or what he did from then until he later appears in the 1819 and 1820 Kirtland City records, which list his livestock markings. In 1819 he had four cattle and one house. Location of information courtesy Rebecca Sorenson. However, dendrochronology on an early structure on French property in the Kirtland Flats dates the building to 1802 and confirms that Peter French was building in the Flats before other settlers arrived. See Orrin Harmon, *Historical Facts Appertaining to the Township of Mantua, A. D. 1866*, unpublished manuscript, 63, 65, 70–71, Case Western Reserve Historical Society; Jean McNamara, Letter, Lake County Historical Society; Marriage License for Peter French and Sally Russel, July 15, 1804, original on file at the Morley Public Library, Painesville, Ohio; *Kirtland Township Minutes, 1817–1846*, 17, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library; Henri D. Grissino-Mayer, *Dendrochronology Study*, Valdosta State University, 1999, copy on file at the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City.

40. “Kirtland, a Boy’s Recollections,” 13.

41. Peter French to Newel K. Whitney, Property Land Deed, June 1, 1822, Geauga County Property Records, vol. 8, p. 426.

42. Log buildings were not taxed, and if the Whitneys lived in a log home, it would not appear in the records.

43. The Red Store was attached to the Whitney home sometime in the 1860s, and portions of it survived until recently. Compare H. K. Whitney to Mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870, Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; V. Garth Norman, “Newel K. Whitney Home, Summer Kitchen: Kirtland Restoration Project Archaeological Investigation,” April 16–27, 2001, Preliminary Report, May 2001, unpublished ms. in author’s possession; Elwin Robison, “Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney Home: Historic Structures Report,” Elwin C. Robison and Associates and Chambers, Murphy, and Burge, Restoration Architects, June 27, 2001, unpublished ms. in author’s possession.

44. Bishop N. K. Whitney later “made and provided” the wine for the solemn assembly meeting at the Kirtland Temple. This suggests he had substantial amounts of wine at his disposal. Helen Mar Whitney, “Life Incidents,” 130.

45. Peter French to N. K. Whitney, Property Deed, September 5, 1822, Geauga County Property Records, vol. 8, pp. 427–28.

46. Peter French to N. K. Whitney, pp. 427–28.

47. Peter French to N. K. Whitney, p. 426.

48. Frame, brick, and stone buildings were all listed and taxed in early records. N. K. Whitney was first taxed on his ashery property in 1826 for \$10. He continued to pay a \$10 tax on the property through 1828. This represented the value of the land without a taxable building. However, he advertised for salts of lye during this period, confirming that he did have an ashery in operation. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1826, p. 18; 1827, p. 19; 1828, p. 19. For advertisement for salts, see *Painesville Telegraph*, January 15, 1824, 3. See also “Business Papers from Ohio, Illinois, & Utah Periods,” 5–12, Whitney Collection.

49. Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences*, 49.

50. N. K. Whitney, Account Book, September 25, 1825, Whitney Collection.
51. Advertisement, *Painesville Telegraph*, July 2, 1823, 3.
52. Crary, *Pioneer and Personal Reminiscences*, 12; compare “Ashes! Ashes!” advertisement, *Painesville Telegraph*, July 16, 1825, 4.
53. Geauga County Tax Records, 1826, p. 22.
54. *Painesville Telegraph*, November 6, 1822, 3. The paper announced that the two were married by Nathaniel Wheeler, a local farmer and sometimes minister who was heavily active in local politics over the next decade. A month later, the newspaper corrected its story, announcing that N. K. Whitney and Miss Smith were married in Kirtland by the Reverend J. Badger. *Painesville Telegraph*, December 4, 1822, 3. This correction places their marriage before the first article was published. Somehow the wrong information on who performed the ceremony was inserted, and N. K. Whitney sought to get the correct information in the paper. Ann Whitney’s obituary said she was married by the Reverend Badges [*sic*] on October 20, 1822. “Death of Mother Whitney,” 3.
55. *Painesville Telegraph*, January 5, 1824, 3.
56. Norman, “Newel K. Whitney Home, Summer Kitchen,” 5; Robison, “Newel K. and Elizabeth Ann Whitney Home.”
57. N. K. Whitney, Account Book, September 25, 1825.
58. *Painesville Telegraph*, July 28, 1826, 3, italics in original.
59. Peter French to Newel K. Whitney, Property/Land Deed, April 13, 1826, Geauga County Property Deeds, vol. 14, p. 385–86.
60. “Kirtland, A Boy’s Recollections,” 13. French was in the process of moving into his new brick home that same year and apparently saw no need to maintain the cabin as additional sleeping quarters for weary travelers once he finished the brick structure. (Innkeepers of the day often built a large home where their family slept and had their children move out of beds or rooms depending on the number and type of travelers that came by.)
61. List of Houses Which Appraised in 1825, 1826, 1827 and 1828.
62. A front porch was added to the store long after the Whitneys moved on to Utah. Archaeology uncovered the original stoop underneath the current porch. The original entrance stood where visitors are currently brought into the building on the far left side of the porch. T. Mike Smith, personal communication with author, 2002. Horace Whitney likely was referring to this porch addition when he mentioned in his 1870 letter that the store had been significantly enlarged.
63. Samuel F. Whitney, “Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney on Mormonism,” in *Naked Truths about Mormons*, ed. Arthur B. Deming (Oakland, Calif.: Deming, 1888), 3.
64. *Painesville Telegraph*, November 24, 1826, 3, italics in original.
65. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1827.
66. *Painesville Telegraph*, December 15, 1826, 3.
67. *Painesville Telegraph*, December 29, 1826, 3.
68. “List of Notes in the Hands of Justices of the Peace for Collection in Favor of N. K. W. and Co.,” 1, Whitney Collection.
69. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1838.
70. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1827, p. 21; 1828, p. 21. Although merchandise was taxed under the company, the land for both the ashery and the White Store continued appearing in the tax records under N. K. Whitney, consistent with the original land titles. Gilbert was not taxed on land.

71. In 1827 the buildings on the northwest corner lot were taxed for the first time. Because store goods were taxed but not store buildings, the taxation of buildings located on the northwest corner suggests that they were no longer used as stores. The known buildings on that lot included the Whitney Red Store, the Whitney's small frame home, and various barns or other outbuildings. The three hundred dollars worth of buildings in the tax record for the northwest corner lot were clearly frame structures and not barns or outbuildings. It is not clear if the frame structures were both the Red Store and the home, or just one or the other. Since the home was worth only about sixty dollars, it is probable that both buildings were first taxed this same year (suggesting that the Whitneys built their home as part of the expansion of their business). The White Store did not clearly appear in the records as such until 1841. That store may have been one of the two buildings taxed from 1835 to 1840. The Red Store was never specifically mentioned in the tax records. Although the tax records do not clearly distinguish the Whitney home from other structures on the property until 1841, the records do suggest that the home was built in late 1826 or early 1827, when there was a dramatic shift in the value of the home property. Whitney was paying taxes on merchandise from very early on, but he apparently paid taxes only on the store buildings when someone was actually living in them as a residence. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1826, p. 22; 1827, p. 23; 1828, p. 23.

72. James Henry Rollins says in his narrative that the Gilbert home was facing east with a view north up the road as it descended down into the East Chagrin River. See James Henry Rollins, *Reminiscences*, 1898, 2, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. In addition, Gilbert's residence was placed in a different road district from the Whitney home. "Road Districts," *Kirtland Town Records*, September 1830, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library; Bureau of the Census, "Kirtland, Ohio," 1830 *General Population Census* (Columbus: Ohio Library Foundation, 1964), 271.

73. The Gilberts moved out of their home and left for Missouri in fall 1831. Horace Whitney later mentioned that his grandparents Susanna and Samuel Whitney lived in the Red Store for a time in the mid-1830s until they were able to move up by the temple. H. K. Whitney to mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870, Whitney Collection. Some later reminiscences recalled Black Pete, a local member living with the Whitneys. He apparently moved into the Red Store and lived there for a time, but if he did so, it is not clear whether he lived there before the Gilberts arrived in Kirtland or after they left for Missouri. He had apparently moved out by fall 1832. Mrs. H. W. Wilson, "Statement," in *Naked Truths about Mormons*, 3. There is a remote possibility that Joseph and Emma then moved into the Red Store for a time. Lucy Mack Smith said, "After the return of her husband a comfortable house was provided for Emma and her adopted daughter and this house belonged to Brothers Whitney and Gilbert being previously occupied for a store[.] [S]oon after She moved into this house." Lavina Fielding Anderson, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 566–67. Anderson argues, perhaps rightly, that Lucy was incorrect here and the Smiths were taken immediately into the Whitney store still functioning as a store, where they lived for some time. However, if Mother Smith was correct, then Joseph and Emma lived in the Red Store for a time. Until further information is uncovered, we cannot be sure whether the Smiths lived in the Red Store. For many years individuals have thought of only one store every time the

“Whitney store” was mentioned, and it may take some time to sort out exactly how the Red Store was used by the Whitney family.

74. James Henry Rollins, *Reminiscences*, 1898, 2, Church Archives. Since he arrived in Kirtland when he was twelve and left when he was fifteen, James would have been clerking in the Whitney store while in his early teens.

75. Orson Hyde, “History of Orson Hyde,” *Millennial Star* 26 (November 19, 1864): 743. Hyde is vague with his dating of most events involved with the store: “I next went into the store of Gilbert and Whitney in Kirtland to serve as clerk, where I continued for a year or two” (743). He also shifts on his description of the store name, mixing the names of the Missouri store where he later lived and the Kirtland store where he first worked as though they were interchangeable names: the firm of Gilbert and Whitney, the old store of Whitney and Gilbert (743, 761). In this one instance, he is specific on his date, suggesting that the date is accurate, but it should be accepted with caution, especially when trying to place his statement in the context that business was slack in the store when he went back to work there at the end of a major expansion.

76. “1828 A. S. Gilbert,” Jameson Family Collection, 1825–1938, Church Archives.

77. N K W to “Brother Saml,” September 9, [1843], Whitney Collection. The foundation for the ashery was made up of stone quarried nearby. Most of the rocks were fairly small, but some may have been about 2.5 feet square. They were stacked in such a way that the foundation wall for the building was 2.5 feet wide. The wall was six feet high; the high foundation helped raise the wood portion of the building a little higher from the ground.

78. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1827, p. 19; 1828, p. 19; 1829, p. 19.

79. T. Michael Smith, “Preliminary Report of the Excavations Conducted at the Ashery Building, Kirtland, Ohio,” unpublished ms., 2001, 11, copy in possession of author. Because the brook adjacent to the ashery eventually destroyed the north wall of the building, its exact dimensions from north to south are only approximated based on known probabilities.

80. Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, *The Art of Manufacturing Alkaline Salts and Potashes*, trans. Charles Williamos, Esq. (n.p.: Royal Academy of Sciences, n.d.), 6.

81. Wallace Whelpley and Wife to Hiram A. Holmes, Lake County Deeds, vol. W, pp. 393–94, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library.

82. Sidney Gilbert never owned any property by himself in Kirtland. When the tax records for 1829 were compiled, the tax assessor wrote down Gilbert’s name and then crossed it out, not finding any property of Gilbert’s to tax. This notation was followed by property taxed in the name of N. K. Whitney and N. K. Whitney and Company. Because Gilbert’s name was the only one ever written and then crossed out in the county tax records, this suggests that his lack of property was not readily visible to the tax collector. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1829, pp. 19, 24.

83. Hyde, “History of Orson Hyde,” 743–44.

84. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued,” 51. The fact that the couple had chosen a Presbyterian minister to marry them in 1822 may indicate that they had some inclination toward the Presbyterian faith.

85. “Extracts of Letters, Received by the Last Mail,” *Christian Baptist* 5 (June 2, 1828): 98, reprinted in Alexander Campbell, ed., *The Christian Baptist: Seven Volumes in One* (Cincinnati: D. S. Burnet, 1835), 452.

86. "Death of Mother Whitney," 3; Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

87. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 125.

88. "To the Citizens of Geauga County," *Painesville Telegraph*, September 19, 1828, 3, italics in original. Whitney would later become involved in promoting "home manufacture" in the West, as well.

89. S. Rosa, *Painesville Telegraph*, January 11, 1828, 3.

90. "Tract Society," *Painesville Telegraph*, February 1, 1828, 3.

91. "Golden Bible," *Painesville Telegraph*, September 22, 1829, 3.

92. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 125.

93. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 125.

94. Parley P. Pratt, ed., *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, 9th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 47.

95. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, 48.

96. Diantha Morley Billings was Isaac Morley's sister and wife of Titus Billings. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography," 51, 91.

97. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

98. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

99. Ann Whitney did not give the date of her baptism. However, she implies in her reminiscences that she was baptized on the same day as Sidney Rigdon. Ann also states that her husband was baptized "within a few days" after her. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography," 51.

Sidney Rigdon was baptized on November 15, 1830. B. H. Roberts accepted the recollection of Harriet Wight made years later that her family and Sidney Rigdon were baptized on the same day. Lyman Wight had written years after the event that his family was baptized on November 14, 1830. *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1967, 1:153–54. Although this date has been commonly cited, November 14 was a Sunday, and sources are clear that Rigdon preached at the Methodist chapel in Kirtland on Sunday, November 14, and was baptized the next day. Just a few months after Rigdon's baptism, a letter to the local newspaper related his baptism on the Monday following the sermon. M. S. C., "Mormonism," *Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831, 1. Josiah Jones repeated a few months later that Rigdon was "rebaptized" on Monday, the day after the sermon. "History of the Mormonites," *Evangelist*, June 1, 1831, 132. See also P. P. Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled* (New York: Joseph W. Harrison, 1842), 41–42; and *Times and Seasons*, August 15, 1843, 290.

100. The November 16, 1830, *Painesville Telegraph* mentions that "twenty or thirty have been immersed into the new order," while the November 30, 1830, edition notes that "there are rising of 100" who had been baptized, including many who were "respectable for intelligence and piety." "The Golden Bible," *Painesville Telegraph*, November 16, 1830, 3; "The Book of Mormon," *Painesville Telegraph*, November 30, 1830, 3.

101. Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled: [sic] or, a Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: By the author, 1834), 102.

102. The paper's printing of the title page suggests that the editor had a copy available. "The Book of Mormon," 3. Mary Rollins described years later, drawn from her memories as a young child living in Kirtland, the arrival of John Whitmer

to Kirtland with copies of the book. Whitmer apparently brought only one extra copy of the book, with other copies coming on the Prophet's wagons. Young Mary borrowed the book and took it home to the Gilbert family. Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 193–95.

103. Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.

104. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 71.

105. Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 506.

106. *Painesville Telegraph*, January 18, 1831.

107. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

This account of the Prophet's entering her husband's store and introducing himself has sometimes incorrectly been interpreted to imply that the Whitneys did not know Joseph was coming to Kirtland. The version cited in 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), 1:146 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*), comes from a later rephrasing of Ann Whitney's account by her grandson Orson F. Whitney. Orson had no firsthand knowledge of the event and makes a number of factual mistakes in his account. He clearly got his information on this event from his grandmother's account, and her account should be given priority for historical accuracy.

108. See Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 125, for the phrase "Thou Art the Man"; compare Orson F. Whitney, in *Eighty-Second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1912), 50.

109. The same phrase was also used in the Bible by the prophet Nathan following a parable describing David's greed in taking what did not belong to him (2 Sam. 12:7). Although the biblical use of the phrase is not appropriate to Joseph's meeting with N. K. Whitney, several years later the Prophet specifically mentioned to Sidney Gilbert Nathan's exchange with David when he told Gilbert, "Thou art the man!" in an effort to encourage him to talk plainly while condemning him for his greed and ambition. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 1:317.

110. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel Kimball Whitney," *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 223.

111. Joseph dictated to his scribe:

The latter part of January, in company <with> Brother Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, I started with my wife for Kirtland, Ohio, where we arrived about the first of February, and were kindly received and welcomed into the house of brother N. K. Whitney. I and my wife lived in the family of Brother Whitney several weeks. (Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92], 1:346–347)

112. The Whitneys had lost two children between Sarah Ann and Orson. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51.

113. The 1830 census lists five Whitneys in their household and six Gilberts in their household. Census Office, *1830 General Population Census*, "Kirtland, Ohio" (Columbus: Ohio Library Foundation, 1964), 271.

114. Horace Whitney wrote his mother during a visit to Kirtland on February 16, 1870, “Your old ‘East Room,’—where Joseph & Emma lived on their first arrival from York State in December 1831,—looks quite natural; as also the [illegible] rooms up stairs & down stairs of the main building.” H. K. Whitney to mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870, Whitney Collection. Horace, like his mother, dates the Smith arrival to their home to December (although he places it a year later). He probably got that date from his mother.

115. Although Ann remembered that they joined their new faith in November 1830 and that Joseph came to their home in December 1830, other sources agree that he arrived in Kirtland in February 1831. For example, eight years later, Joseph recalled arriving in Kirtland “*about* the first of February” (italics added), while a contemporary newspaper story and E. D. Howe’s 1834 account drawing from some contemporary letters both stated that Rigdon arrived at Kirtland on November 30, 1830, and after a brief sermon returned to his home in Mentor on February 1, followed by Joseph’s arrival in Kirtland on February 4. M. S. C., “Mormonism,” 1–2; Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 112–13. See also Daniel J. Ryan, *A History of Ohio with Biographical Sketches of Her Governors and the Ordinance of 1787* (Columbus: A. H. Smythe, 1888), 114.

116. *History of the Church*, 1:146.

117. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued,” 51.

118. Samuel F. Whitney recalled, “Jo Smith stopped with my brother, N. K. Whitney, some weeks, when he moved his family to Kirtland, where I became acquainted with him.” Samuel F. Whitney, “Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney,” 3.

119. For details on this, see Mark Staker, “It Came from God: The Johnsons, Joseph Smith, and Their Neighbors in Hiram, Ohio,” unpublished manuscript.

120. Samuel F. Whitney, “Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney,” 3.

121. *History of the Church*, 1:146.

122. Samuel F. Whitney gives evidence that the birth took place on Morley’s property, although he mistakenly states that this was the delivery of Joseph Smith III, confusing his birth with the earlier birth of the twins:

I was informed that Jo Smith, son of the Mormon prophet . . . was born in the dwelling part of Whitney’s store; he was born in a house put up for his father on Isaac Morley’s farm. (Samuel F. Whitney, “Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney,” 3)

123. Orson F. Whitney, “Newel K. Whitney,” *Contributor*, 126.

124. Orson F. Whitney, “Newel K. Whitney,” *Contributor*, 126.

125. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued,” 71.

126. See Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 15–40.

127. Edward Hunter, “Aaronic Priesthood Minutes, Miscellaneous Minutes, 1855–1972,” March 3, 1877, Presiding Bishopric Collection, Church Archives, cited in Dale Beecher, “The Office of Bishop,” *Dialogue* 15 (winter 1982): 103.

128. Council Minutes, December 26, 1833, holograph, Kirtland High Council Minutes, December 1832–November 1837, p. 25, *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), vol. 1, DVD 19.

129. See Dale Beecher, "The Office of Bishop: Its Development through History," manuscript, 1975, 16–17, 103–15, in author's possession.

130. Whitney also paid taxes on the land he had purchased before Gilbert's arrival as well as on the \$2,500 in merchandise owned by N. K. Whitney and Company. The company, on the other hand, paid taxes on a one-acre lot of property purchased by Whitney and Gilbert together at the southeast corner of Chardon and Chillicothe Roads. "Business Papers from Ohio, Illinois, & Utah Periods," 5–12, Whitney Collection.

131. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 11; Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 195.

132. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 47–48.

133. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1832.

134. Philo Dibble, "Philo Dibble's Narrative," in *Early Scenes in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 81.

135. *History of the Church*, 1:319. Unfortunately, no copy exists now of the letter Gilbert sent, so we do not know why he condemned the Church leaders.

136. *History of the Church*, 1:412.

137. Joseph and Emma received a small house on the Morley property in spring 1831. That fall Isaac Morley sold his property and left for Missouri. Joseph and Emma went to live with John and Elsa Johnson in Hiram, Ohio, in September and were still living there when Joseph was mobbed and left briefly for Missouri. After Joseph returned, he and Emma continued to live in Hiram until September 1832.

138. Ann Whitney later explained her aunt's actions:

Aunt Sarah, who had always lived with me, and felt a sort of supervision of everything pertaining to my welfare and happiness, and who had been a true and faithful friend to us, under all circumstances, was very much disconcerted and . . . acting upon her own theory and responsibility, when my husband was absent with the Prophet Joseph upon business, and I was in delicate health, and unable to attend to any domestic duties, she took the opportunity to rid herself and us of the family, considering it not only an incumbrance, but an entirely unnecessary inconvenience. I would have shared the last morsel with either of them [both Sarah and Emma], and was grieved beyond comparison when I found what she [Aunt Sarah] had done; but she had a good motive in it, and really thought she was consulting the best interests of those who were far dearer to her than her own life. (Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 51)

139. H. K. Whitney to mother [Elizabeth Ann Whitney], February 16, 1870.

140. Lucy Mack Smith wrote that the store had been remodeled into a home and implied that Joseph and Emma actually stayed in the Red Store. See Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 566–67. Although there is no data to directly contradict her statement, the White Store actually seems to fit subsequent events better. The Red Store had only two rooms upstairs. See "Agreement with Wm Dimaline for Shop Rent, July 1838," Whitney Collection.

141. Reynolds Cahoon, Diaries, 1831–1832, July 5, 1832, Church Archives.

142. Rigdon preached at a meeting and declared to the Church, “The keys of the kingdom are taken from you, and you never will have them again until you build me a new house.” This rash statement naturally concerned Church members, and Joseph was brought up to settle the issue. The Prophet told Rigdon he was left to the “buffetings of Satan.”

Sidney was lying on his bed alone. An unseen power lifted him from his bed, threw him across the room, and tossed him from one side of the room to the other. The noise being heard in the adjoining room, his family went in to see what was the matter and found him going from one side of the room to the other, from the effects of which Sidney was laid up for five or six weeks. Dibble, “Philo Dibble’s Narrative,” 80.

143. Mark Staker, “Kirtland’s Mormon Tannery,” unpublished manuscript.

144. Joseph Smith III, “Recollections,” *Saints’ Herald* (November 6, 1934): 1413.

145. Samuel F. Whitney, “Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney,” 3.

146. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 12:158, February 8, 1868.

147. Merle H. Grattam, ed., *Salt Lake School of the Prophets: Minute Book 1883* (Palm Desert, Calif.: ULC, 1981), 37.

148. I could find no record that mentions exactly when Joseph moved out of the White Store. Since Joseph bought windows for his home using Bank of Monroe scrip and Oliver Cowdery became an official in the Monroe bank in 1836, there is a strong probability that Joseph moved into his home some time in 1836.

149. Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 136–37, 280.

150. Joseph Smith owed Whitney \$1151.31; Sidney Rigdon owed him \$777.98; Oliver Cowdery, \$68.57. “Amt of Balances Due,” April 23, 1834, Whitney Collection. He had helped Gilbert earlier by paying his debts and establishing the store in Missouri.

151. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45.

152. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 47.

153. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:382.

154. *History of the Church*, 1:271.

155. By the time Whitney finally worked out a variety of loan arrangements with various business contacts in Buffalo, New York, the United Firm had already been disbanded; Whitney believed he acted on Joseph’s behalf rather than as an agent for the United Firm in acquiring the loans. N. K. Whitney to Samuel F. Whitney, October 2, [1842?], Whitney Collection.

156. Selah J. Griffin to Newell K. Whitney, Land Deed, June 18, 1833, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 17, pp. 357–58; Selah J. Griffin to Seth Johnson, Land Deed, September 14, 1833, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 17, pp. 358–59.

157. Joseph Coe to N. K. Whitney and Co., Land Deed, June 17, 1833, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 17, pp. 360–61; Peter French to Joseph Coe, Land Deed, April 10, 1833, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 17, pp. 359–60.

158. Joseph Coe to N. K. Whitney and Co., p. 360–61; “Whitney N. K. + Co.,” Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1834, p. 27.

159. Council Minutes, June 4, 1833, holograph, Kirtland High Council Minutes, p. 13, *Selected Collections*, vol. 1, DVD 19.

160. Council Minutes, June 4, 1833, *Selected Collections*.

161. Franklin D. Richards, Journal, June 8, 1844, Church Archives.

162. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1833–1836. See also Joseph Coe to N. K. Whitney and Company, p. 360.

163. In 1836, two years after the United Firm was dissolved, Whitney helped establish a store in Kirtland for Joseph Smith and other former members of the United Firm, who contracted debts with one of Whitney's business contacts in Buffalo, New York. A representative of the New York debtor later traveled to Kirtland, trying to find some resolution for their debt, and met with Orson Hyde, who apparently told them that Whitney had been a business partner of those who had contracted the loan. Whitney heard a little about the meeting and wrote his brother, expressing frustration that some individuals were trying to lay the unpaid debts of Church leaders at the doorstep of his firm. Rather than emphasize that the United Firm was dissolved long before the loan was contracted, however, he wrote to dispel the widespread rumor that the principals of the United Firm had held all things in common. N. K. Whitney to Samuel F. Whitney, October 2, [1842?].

164. Kirtland Township Trustees' Minutes and Pollbook, 1817–1838, October 21, 1833, p. 114, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library.

165. The lists included Jared Carter and Hyrum Smith, two of the three members of the temple building committee; Jacob Bump, overseer of construction on the temple; Thomas Hancock, recently involved in operating the brick kiln for making temple bricks; Joel Johnson, who just finished building a sawmill to cut temple lumber; John Reed, John Johnson, M. C. Davis, and Isaac Bishop, workers in temple construction; and Ira Ames, a guard protecting the exposed temple walls. Missionaries, such as David Patten, Luke Johnson, and Lyman Johnson, were also threatened with expulsion. Since most of the missionaries were out of town and did not leave families behind, work on the temple was threatened more than missionary work. Kirtland Township Trustees' Minutes and Pollbook, 1817–1838, January 31, 1834, pp. 114–16.

166. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1826, 1827, 1828.

167. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1826, 1827, 1828.

168. N. K. Whitney to Samuel F. Whitney, October 2, 1842, Whitney Collection.

169. *History of the Church*, 2:44.

170. *History of the Church*, 2:47.

171. *History of the Church*, 2:49.

172. Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.

173. Some of the debt may have been due to living expenses, such as a portion of the \$1,151.31 that Joseph Smith Jr. owed the United Firm. But much of the debt was likely due to Church operations, such as the \$584.14 that F. G. Williams and Company owed the United Firm. Williams was overseeing publication efforts, and N. K. Whitney and Company apparently had covered some of the costs of printing.

174. Kirtland Revelation Book, April 28, 1834, 111, Church Archives.

175. N.K. Whitney from Jemima Doane, Land Deed, February 25, 1832, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 15, p. 322. See also Newel K. Whitney to Sidney Rigdon, April 30, 1834, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 18, p. 488.

176. Introduction to Newel K. Whitney Blessing, October 7, 1835, manuscript, Church Archives.

177. *History of the Church*, 2:288–89.

178. Some accounts say \$20,000 worth and others \$40,000, but they don't distinguish whether they are giving wholesale values or retail values. Brigham Young

said it was \$20,000 worth of goods. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:215–16, October 9, 1852. Ira Ames said it was \$40,000 worth of goods. Ira Ames, *Autobiography and Journal*, 1858, 15, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. Brigham Young is one of the later accounts (1852) that implies all the goods went to Joseph's Kirtland store.

179. See *Hezekiah Kelly (of the Bank of Buffalo) v. The Firm of Rigdon, Smith and Cowdery*, Court Records of Geauga County, Book U, pp. 97–99 (June 5, 1837), microfilm, Family History Library. There were evidently more members of the Building Committee than these three individuals. Ira Ames recalled “an organization was entered into by Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Reginold Cahoon, Jared Carter and William Smith called the ‘Building Committee.’” Ira Ames, *Autobiography and Journal*, 15.

180. Brigham Young describes Joseph's experience as a store manager in a manner that suggests he was unable to keep anything in the store without giving it away. President Young used hyperbole to make a point. He also added in reference to Kirtland and the early Church, “If any brethren came into the midst of them as merchants, I never knew one of them go into their stores and go out again satisfied.” Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:215–16. However, Whitney was clearly able to continue doing business. Although Brigham Young hints that Joseph gave the entire \$20,000 worth of goods away to the poor, almost all of the goods were traded to Jacob Bump for property. The gifts to the poor were more than likely the exception rather than the rule.

181. Out of the original merchandise acquired on credit in New York, \$10,000 was used as a down payment to buy David Holbrook's farm at \$400 an acre. Alfred Holbrook, *Reminiscences of the Happy Life of a Teacher* (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing, 1885), 224. More than \$7,000 in merchandise was given to Jacob Bump as a down payment for more than one thousand acres of his Kirtland property. Most of the goods may have gone to Bump, in fact. Jacob Bump to Joseph Smith Jr., December 5, 1836, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 22, p. 568; “Jacob Bump Merchant Capital,” Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1837. The land purchase was never completed due in part to lawsuits primarily by the owners of the Geauga Bank (with Grandison Newell and other opponents on its Board of Directors). The land reverted back to Bump, who kept his payment as well as his property. Ira Ames recalled the trade a little differently. He was clerking when “these goods were all sold to Jacob Bump for \$2,500. One thousand in cash and fifteen hundred to be paid in store pay. This I received.” Ames, *Autobiography and Journal*, 16. But he is not clear on what “store pay” might be, and other data suggests not all the goods went to Bump.

182. Jesse, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:130–31; Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued,” 83.

183. Jesse, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:130–31.

184. N. K. would later name one of his sons Newel Melchizedek, reflecting his belief in a connection to that ancient patriarch. N. K. Whitney's patriarchal blessing is published in Orson F. Whitney, “Newel K. Whitney,” *Contributor*, 128–29.

185. In addition to reaching out to the poor, Bishop Whitney also made his home available for *ad hoc* meetings. For example, on a Sunday in January 1837, the Latter-day Saints held a worship meeting in the temple. That evening Wilford Woodruff and a Priest, Brother Turpin, went to the Whitney home, where they had a “happy time in speaking singing hearing & interpreting tongues & in prayer with the family.” Wilford Woodruff, *Journal*, January 1837, Church Archives.

186. Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 197.
187. *History of the Church*, 2:114.
188. Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 197.
189. "List of Notes in the Hands of Justices of the Peace for Collection in Favor of N. K. W and Co."
190. "To All Whom It May Concern," *Proclamation by Samuel F. Whitney*, September 10, 1839, Whitney Collection; Newel K. Whitney from Elizabeth Gilbert, Heir and Widow of Algernon, June 2, 1838, Geauga County Property Records, vol. A, p. 574; compare property transfer February 22, 1839.
191. Whitney paid \$140 for Gilbert's half of the lot, nearly three times its value in the tax records; half the lot would have been worth only \$38.50, since tax records consistently valued the entire lot at \$77. Elizabeth Gilbert to N. K. Whitney, June 2, 1838, Lake County Deeds, vol. A, p. 574.
192. The Gilbert estate was \$244.09 short of settling Whitney's claims on the property they had owned jointly, even if Whitney had not paid \$140 for Gilbert's share of the southeast lot. However, on a list of his debts owed him, Whitney wrote down the \$394.86 Gilbert owed him separate from his other debts, perhaps because he never intended to collect it. "List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney, Aug. 1837," Whitney Collection; Estate Papers of Algernon Sidney Gilbert, 1838–39, Church Archives.
193. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1836–1837.
194. Samuel F. Whitney, "Statement of Rev. S. F. Whitney," 3.
195. "List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney."
196. Council Minutes, September 24, 1833, holograph, Kirtland High Council Minutes, p. 76, *Selected Collections*, vol. 1, DVD 19.
197. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, 1834.
198. The author participated in three digs of the ashery site and assisted with work on the Mormon sawmill and Whitney home sites while also serving as project historian. Archaeological excavations were done on the main ashery building under the direction of Principal Investigator T. Mike Smith in June, September 2000, April 2001, and July 2001 (Benjamin Pykles served as Crew Chief during the June session). Aerial and ground reconnaissance was done in April 2000, and GPR work was done by Tom Smith in June 2000. Other archaeological work done near the ashery included work at the sawmill, tannery, Johnson Inn, store/school building, Martindale home, Old School House, and the Whitney home. V. Garth Norman of ARCON assisted the project by digging several of these sites. Don Enders, Historic Sites Curator for the Museum of Church History and Art, also gave valuable assistance. Preliminary reports have been completed on most of the investigations, and final reports are in preparation.
199. "List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney."
200. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 130, 199.
201. Newel K. Whitney to Jacob Bump, Land Deed, February 11, 1837, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 23, p. 446; Jacob Bump to Jonathon Holmes, Land Deed, April 1, 1837, Geauga County Property Deeds, Bk. 25, p. 4.
202. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 91.
203. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, "Leaf from an Autobiography, Continued," 91.

204. Helen Mar Whitney, "Life Incidents," 82.
205. Helen Mar Whitney, "Life Incidents," 82.
206. Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:227.
207. Orson F. Whitney, "Newel K. Whitney," *Contributor*, 124, 128.
208. See "Newell K. Whitney Estate," Final Record B, Lake County Probate Court, 1857, 93, Lake County Historical Society, microfilm, Family History Library.