demand cash from the sale of land or goods to his followers, many of whom were impoverished by the costly migration to Kirtland. The resulting cash-flow problem, common in frontier communities, could have been alleviated by a bank with the capacity to transfer long-term assets into short-term liquidity.

In the fall of 1836, Joseph Smith and his associates drew up a charter for such a bank, the Kirtland Safety Society. The question of fraud has long hovered over the Society. Its timing was unfortunate. During 1836 and 1837, the Ohio legislature, dominated by the hard-money wing of the Democratic party, refused all applications for bank charters. Within a week of realizing the hopelessness of their request for a charter, Church leaders, probably with legal counsel judging from the language of the document, formed a joint stock company and began issuing notes sometimes stamped “anti-banking” notes.

Because an 1816 Ohio law forbade the issuance of unauthorized money, some have thought that the Kirtland Safety Society notes were illegal. But the definition of what constituted “unauthorized” money remained controversial as late as 1873. Several other commercial institutions in Ohio issued notes or scrip, including the Ohio Railroad Company, which issued almost $100,000 of scrip during the same year as the Kirtland Safety Society. Whigs, soft-money Democrats, and several newspapers encouraged such action in opposition to what they considered the unlawful and unconstitutional behavior of the hard-money majority in the legislature.

Heavy demand for redemption of the Kirtland Safety Society’s notes led to the suspension of specie payments within its first month of operation. Thereafter, the notes were backed by land values, rather than specie, and almost immediately its notes circulated at a heavy discount. It was further buffeted by the nationwide banking panic of May 1837, when all Ohio banks suspended specie payment. The tenacious Kirtland bank, or anti-bank, continued its faltering operations until November, when it closed its doors for the last time.

The Kirtland Safety Society’s first note issue during January 1837 was probably not for more than $15,000. Subsequent note issues may have totaled as much as $85,000 in face value, but the increasing discounts against these issues probably kept the real value of outstanding notes at about the January level or lower. At the time of the initial issue, paid-in subscriptions were also approximately $15,000. That amount, plus the unusual loyalty of the LDS community and a $3,000 loan from the Bank of Geauga, might have provided resources sufficient for a legally chartered bank in Kirtland to experience modest success.

Whatever might have been, the institution did not have a bank charter and did not survive, thereby adding substantially to Joseph Smith’s financial woes. He bought more stock, paid more per share than 85 percent of the other investors, and continued to add his own money to the assets of the bank as late as April 1837, well after it had suspended specie payments. After the banking panic of May, Joseph Smith transferred his interests in the bank and other financial assets to Oliver Granger and Jared Carter, who continued to attempt to settle Joseph’s financial obligations as late as 1843.

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KIRTLAND, OHIO

[This entry presents the history of LDS settlement in Kirtland and gives an idea of what it would have been like to have lived among the Saints in this community in the 1830s.]

During most of the 1830s there were two gathering places for Latter-day Saints, one in western Missouri and the other in northeastern Ohio. Although more members gathered to the Missouri frontier, Kirtland, Ohio, was the principal administrative headquarters of the Church and the major base for directing missionary work from 1831 until early 1838.
Latter-day Saint growth in northeastern Ohio began not long after the Church was organized in 1830. The Church was introduced into Ohio in late October 1830 and within a month gained 135 new members, of whom about 35 lived in Kirtland township (see LAMANITE MISSION). Joseph Smith and his family moved there early in 1831, and in the spring and early summer of that year, other Latter-day Saints, primarily from Ohio and New York, followed. Although the Prophet made two trips to Missouri and lived for a time in nearby Hiram, Ohio, from the summer of 1832 until 1838 the Kirtland area was his primary residence.

The larger part of the first wave of Latter-day Saint settlers in Kirtland moved to Missouri before the end of 1831. The major growth of the LDS population in Kirtland began in 1833. The number rose from approximately 100 in that year to 2,000 in 1838. During the decade preceding the Mormon immigration, the population of the township doubled, increasing from 481 in 1820 to 1,018 in 1830. During the ensuing seven years, primarily as a result of immigration of Latter-day Saints, the population tripled.

Describing conditions in the Kirtland community in the mid-1830s, one contemporary wrote, "They came, men, women, and children, in every conceivable manner, some with horses, oxen, and vehicles rough and rude, while others had walked all or part of the distance. The future 'City of the Saints' appeared like one besieged. Every available house, shop, hut, or barn was filled to its utmost capacity. Even boxes were roughly extemporized and used for shelter until something more permanent could be secured" (History of Geauga and Lake Counties, Ohio, p. 248).

The sudden influx of Latter-day Saints to Kirtland had a major impact on the community. One of the visible changes was the increase of small temporary dwellings. Although log and small frame houses dotted the landscape during the first two decades of colonization, larger and more permanent frame and brick structures were erected before 1830. Squatters or renters, comprising half of the population in 1830, lived in small frame houses. As Mormon immigration increased, however, clusters of small adorned cabins, a throwback to the dwellings of the earliest settlers, appeared primarily in the northwestern section of the township.

Most Latter-day Saints were poorer than the older settlers, partly because the Mormons were recent immigrants. Prior to joining the Church, most members were not transients, nor were they from the lowest economic classes in the East. Many, however, lost economic ground by migrating to Kirtland. Some sold farms in New York or New England for less than the market value, and many left equipment in the East because of the expense of transporting it. All spent a portion of the money derived from such sales on moving their families and supplies westward. The few Saints who moved from Jackson County, Missouri, to Kirtland were also in a difficult economic situation. In the course of their expulsion from that county in 1833, their homes were burned and their property was stolen. On arrival in Kirtland the new settlers faced inflated land values. Since the price of land increased in relation to the growth of population, most newcomers (both Mormon and non-Mormon) could not afford to buy sufficient land to support their families.

After arriving in Kirtland, Latter-day Saints fell further behind economically as a result of contributing labor and scarce resources to Church projects. The Church erected a variety of buildings in Kirtland between the east branch of the Chagrin River and the eastern portion of a plateau that overlooked the river. The principal structure was the KIRTLAND TEMPLE. For almost three years, between the summer of 1833 and the spring of 1836, nearly all members united in building the three-story "House of the Lord" to be used as a meetinghouse and school. While women and girls were carrying on their usual household duties, preparing food for their families, caring for young children, knitting and making clothes, and working in kitchen gardens, they also provided food and clothing for temple workers and drove supply wagons to the temple site. Meanwhile, men and boys worked on farms, cut wood for winter, tanned hides, hunted game, and fished, in addition to hauling stone to the temple site. They also cut, milled, and transported lumber for the construction.

While working on the temple, Latter-day Saints constructed a smaller building to the west

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Kirtland village. Roads, buildings, and properties, 1837.
that was used as a school, printing establishment, and office building. They also erected a sawmill to assist with their building program, established a tannery and ashery, and constructed shops and stores that provided settlers with merchandise and employment opportunities.

Along with all these sacrifices, many of the men postponed improvement of their standard of living to serve on missions without pay. During the 1830s, traveling elders preached the gospel throughout the United States and eastern Canada, and Heber C. Kimball led a group of missionaries (many of them from Kirtland) to England in 1837.

While constructing the temple and supporting missionary work, the Kirtland Saints found time for school. Although growing out of their New England culture and impulses in the Ohio environment, the Saints’ educational efforts received their greatest impetus from revelations recorded in Kirtland by Joseph Smith. While living in an apartment above the Newel K. Whitney store, the Prophet received a revelation that declared, “Teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:78–79; 93:36).

As a result of this and other divine commands, Joseph Smith in 1833 invited about twenty elders to attend a school of the prophets. Following the initial sessions of that school, Church leaders and members established a school of the elders, a grammar school, and various private schools, in which adults and youth studied theology, philosophy, government, literature, history, geography, English grammar, penmanship, arithmetic, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In 1836 more than one hundred Latter-day Saints commenced studying Hebrew. Women attended and taught school in Kirtland, and studied various subjects with their husbands.

To assist the Latter-day Saints in their educational pursuits and to promote missionary work, Church leaders sponsored a major publishing program in Kirtland beginning in 1834. Within four years, the Saints published a periodical, the Latter-day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate; a secular and political paper, Northern Times; a hymnal (1835); a second edition of the Book of Mormon; and a collection of 102 sections of revelations recorded by Joseph Smith in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (1835), which included the “Lectures on Faith.” Historical and doctrinal information that is now included in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST) and portions of the Pearl of Great Price (book of Moses) were also printed in Missouri and Kirtland during the early 1830s.

In addition to working long hours and studying, Latter-day Saints participated in regular worship services. The first day of the week (Sunday) was observed as the Lord’s Day, during which members rested from their daily labors. Meetings were initially held in homes and schools. Following the construction of the Kirtland Temple, meetings were also held there. By the mid-1830s a pattern of Sunday worship had been established. Members attended morning and afternoon services during which they sang, prayed, and listened to sermons delivered by leaders and other members. They generally partook of the Lord’s Supper not only during the afternoon meetings but also sometimes during the week in their homes. Confirmations of new members and marriages were also performed on Sunday in the temple and in homes on other days. On the first Thursday of each month, a fast and testimony meeting was held in the temple, and many of these meetings continued from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., with members singing, praying, bearing testimonies, and teaching one another.
During this decade Church members also participated in an unusual pentecostal season. Shortly before and after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, many Latter-day Saints wrote of seeing visions, speaking in tongues, and receiving the spirit of prophecy. During a series of meetings held between late January and early May 1836, several Latter-day Saints declared that they saw the Savior, and many claimed to have communed with other heavenly messengers. Many also testified that they sang accompanied by a choir of heavenly personages.

Along with their other activities, Latter-day Saints found time for recreation. Hunting, fishing, swimming, sleighing, skating, wrestling, horseback riding, and riding in carriages were among the most popular leisure pursuits. Although children had few toys, they played with balls, marbles, whistles, and homemade dolls (Backman, pp. 275–83).

Some of the non-Mormon residents considered the intrusion of Latter-day Saints into the community a threat to their traditional pattern of living. Some complained that the Mormon practice of living in harmony with revelations recorded by a prophet was hostile to the American spirit of democracy. Residents not only rejected LDS beliefs regarding visions, revelations, and the restoration but also claimed that the Latter-day Saints had increased the poverty of the community and were a political and economic threat. The political competition reached a peak in 1837 when Latter-day Saints were elected to all local township offices except for the office of constable. Prior to that year, only four Latter-day Saints had been elected to a major office, and there had been a tendency for the citizens to reelect the earliest settlers. In addition to gaining control of the local government, Latter-day Saints transformed the township’s voting pattern from Whig to Democratic. Since Kirtland was located in a Whig section of Ohio and all townships in Geauga County in the mid-1830s, except Kirtland, supported that party, Whigs in northeastern Ohio united in opposition to the Mormons. Complaints and charges escalated into threats and mob action.

Early in 1838, amid intensifying pressures from outside the Church and apostasy within, accentuated by the demise of the Kirtland Safety Society and the Panic of 1837 (see KIRTLAND ECONOMY), the exodus of Latter-day Saints from Kirtland and vicinity began. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and other leaders fled from mobs in January. Other members gradually followed.

In most instances small groups of less than fifty traveled westward. On July 5, 1838, however, more than 500 members left in a stream of fifty-nine wagons—with twenty-seven tents, ninety-seven horses, twenty-two oxen, sixty-nine cows, and one bull. As this long wagon train, known as Kirtland Camp, moved across the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, spectators gathered to watch the sight. Some gave encouragement, while others jeered and threatened violence. Because of financial problems, many in this group were asked by the leaders to leave the camp, so that only a portion of them reached the Missouri frontier.

By mid-July 1838, more than 1,600 Latter-day Saints in the Kirtland area had reluctantly left the temple, vacated their homes, and headed westward. Only a few Latter-day Saints remained in a neighborhood of predominantly empty cabins, and most of these people moved westward before the mid-1840s.

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KIRTLAND TEMPLE

The divine command that led to the building of the Kirtland Temple was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in January 1831 when the Church was beset by poverty and turmoil. At that time, the Saints were to gather to Ohio, where the Lord promised he would endow them “with power from on high” (D&C 38:32; cf. D&C 88:119; 95:3, 8, 11). Thus they began to build the first of the Latter-day Saint temples.

The Church then consisted of only a few hundred members, men, women, and children who labored together for the temple and contributed, as Eliza R. Snow wrote, “brain, bone and sinew” and “all living as abstemiously as possible” so that “every cent might be appropriated to the grand object” (Tullidge, p. 82). According to Benjamin F. Johnson, “there was not a scraper and hardly a plow that could be obtained among the Saints,” to prepare the ground for the foundation of the temple (Benjamin Johnson, My Life’s Review, p. 16). Lumber was brought from nearby forests. Stone was hewn from a local quarry.

As the exact patterns of the Tabernacle of Moses and Solomon’s temple had been revealed from on high (Ex. 25:9; 1 Chr. 28:11–12), so also were the design, measurements, and functions of the Kirtland Temple revealed. Its interior was to be fifty-five feet wide and sixty-five feet long and have a lower and a higher court. The lower part of the inner court was to be dedicated “for your sacrament offering, and for your preaching, and your fasting, and your praying, and the offering up of your most holy desires unto me, saith your Lord.” The higher part of the inner court was to be “dedicated unto me for the school of mine apostles” (D&C 95:13–17).

The cornerstone was laid on July 23, 1833. Brigham Young later explained that the first stone was laid at the southeast corner, the point of greatest light, and at high noon, the time of the greatest sunlight (JD 1:133). This was a symbolic reminder that the House of the Lord is a center of light and truth.

The external design of the Kirtland Temple is typical of other contemporary houses of worship at that time, but the arrangement of the interior is unique. On each of the two main floors are two series of four-tiered pulpits, one on the west side, the other on the east. These are symbolic of the offices of the Melchizedek and Aaronic Priesthoods and accommodated their presidencies.

The construction of the temple was abruptly slowed with the call of Zion’s Camp to Missouri, though many of the women, older men, and the infirm remained in Kirtland. Sidney Rigdon, of the First Presidency, recorded walking the walls of the temple “by night and day and frequently wetting the walls” with his tears, praying for the completion of the temple. At other times the work was slowed because of harassment and threats by enemies of the Church. Elder George A. Smith recalled that sometimes guards attended the temple day and night and worked with a trowel in one hand and a gun in the other.

The women—who, Joseph once remarked, were “first in temple labors”—did spinning, knitting, and sewing so that temple laborers would have clothes to wear. To give the exterior glaze a sparkling appearance, the women contributed glassware to be broken in bits and applied to the plaster. In his dedicatory prayer, Joseph referred to the sacrifice of the Saints: “For thou knowest that we have done this work through great tribulation; and out of our poverty we have given of our substance to build a house to thy name, that the Son of Man might have a place to manifest himself to his people” (D&C 109:5).

An estimated 1,000 people attended the dedication on March 27, 1836. A repeat dedication ceremony was held on March 31. It was a time of great rejoicing. Dedicatory anthems were sung, including “The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning,” which was written for the occasion. The sacrament was administered. The inspired dedicatory prayer, filled with Hebraic overtones, became the pattern for all subsequent temple dedications. In it, the Prophet pleaded with the Lord for the visible manifestation of his divine presence (the Shekhinah), as in the Tabernacle of Moses, at Solomon’s temple, and on the day of Pentecost, “And let thy house be filled as with a rushing mighty wind, with thy glory” (D&C 109:37; cf. Ex. 29:43; 33:9–10; 2 Chr. 7:1–3; Acts 2:1–4). Many recorded the fulfillment