

port temple construction with cash. The Twelve Apostles wrote the English Saints in 1841, “The first great object before us, and the Saints generally, is to [complete] the Temple . . . to secure the salvation of the Church” (*HC* 4:449). For Joseph Smith, completion of the temple was the first priority. The 1841 revelation authorizing the temple also threatened rejection of the Church unless the building was completed in “a sufficient time” (*D&C* 124:30–32). Even so, when Joseph Smith was killed in 1844, the walls were only half built.

Though building the temple was a labor of love, its economic cost put a severe drain on the city’s resources. Capital was diverted from enterprises needed to provide goods and employment. Even Joseph Smith, though enthusiastic about the temple, recognized the problem. “I prophesy,” he said in 1843, that “as soon as we get the Temple built, so that we shall not be obliged to exhaust our means thereon, we will have means to gather the Saints by thousands and tens of thousands” (*HC* 5:255).

Nauvoo’s economy developed during the national depression of 1839–1843. The refugee founders were virtually destitute, but few Americans of any station had sound money during that period. The banks had failed, and specie had fled. The Saints fashioned an ingenious but shaky exchange system based on barter, letters of credit, informal IOUs, and “bonds-for-deed”—bonds given in land sales in lieu of deeds, a necessity because the whole Nauvoo tract was purchased on a long-term contract without deed until full payment. The system worked because the economy was generally expanding and the Saints trusted each other and were bound by common purpose.

The land purchase, the temple, the NAUVOO HOUSE (a large hotel), and the whole kingdom-building project upon which the Saints believed their salvation depended were headed by Joseph Smith and his ecclesiastical organization. Because Nauvoo represented an intermingling of the sacred and the secular under a prophet-leader, when he was killed in 1844, the survival of the project depended upon how and by whom he was succeeded (*see* SUCCESSION IN THE PRESIDENCY). Those who accepted the leadership of Brigham YOUNG and the Quorum of the Twelve transplanted the system of political economy fashioned in Nauvoo to the West (*see* PIONEER ECONOMY; WESTWARD MIGRATION, PLANNING AND PROPHECY). Some who did not and who chose to move away from the model of Nauvoo

later joined the REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS.

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ROBERT B. FLANDERS

NAUVOO EXPOSITOR

The *Nauvoo Expositor* was the newspaper voice of APOSTATES determined to destroy the Prophet Joseph SMITH and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the spring of 1844. During the last few months of Joseph Smith’s life, an opposition party of disgruntled members, apostates, and excommunicants coalesced into a dissenting church. The principals claimed to believe in the Book of Mormon and the RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL, but rejected what they termed Nauvoo innovations, notably PLURAL MARRIAGE. Claiming that Joseph was a fallen PROPHET, the dissenters set out, through the *Expositor*, to expose the Prophet’s supposed false teachings and abominations. They held secret meetings, made plans, and took oaths to topple the Church and kill Joseph Smith. The publication of the newspaper was crucial to their stratagem.

When the press for the *Expositor* arrived in Nauvoo on May 7, 1844, it stirred great excitement among Mormons and non-Mormons alike, but there was no immediate interference. Within three days the owners, all leaders of the opposition movement, issued a broadside prospectus for their newspaper. One month later, on June 7, the first and only issue of the *Nauvoo Expositor* appeared and caused an immediate furor in the community. Nauvoo residents were incensed at what they saw as its sensational, yellow-journalistic claims about Nauvoo religion, politics, and morality. They were also struck with sharp foreboding. Francis Higbee, one of the proprietors of the newspaper, set an ominous tone when he described Joseph Smith as “the biggest villain that goes unhung.”

The literary quality of the paper was inferior. A contemporary non-Mormon critic described it as

“dull or laughable,” with “lame grammar and turgid rhetoric” (Oaks, p. 868). But the *Expositor’s* polemics against the Church and Joseph Smith were threatening and polarizing. The anti-Mormons were exultant about the *Expositor*, but Church members demanded that something be done.

As mayor of Nauvoo, Joseph Smith summoned the city council. Following fourteen hours of deliberation in three different sessions, the council resolved on Monday, June 10, about 6:30 P.M., that the newspaper and its printing office were “a public nuisance” and instructed the mayor “to remove it . . . without delay.” Joseph Smith promptly ordered the city marshal to destroy the press and burn all copies of the paper. At 8:00 P.M. the marshal carried out the mayor’s orders (HC 6:432–49). That action, justified or not, played into the hands of the opposition. It riled anti-Mormon sentiment throughout Hancock County and provided substance for the charges used by the opposition to hold Joseph Smith in CARTHAGE JAIL, where he was murdered on June 27, 1844 (see MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH AND HYRUM SMITH).

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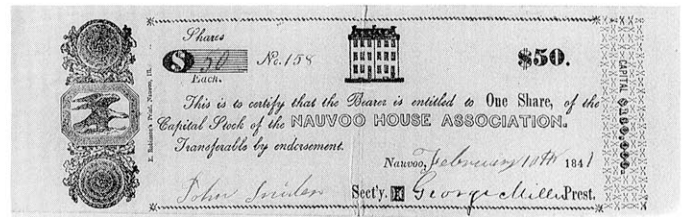
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NAUVOO HOUSE

A revelation to Joseph Smith in January 1841 commanded the Saints to build both the NAUVOO TEMPLE and the Nauvoo House, a hotel that would be “a delightful habitation for man, and a resting place for the weary traveler” (D&C 124:60). The Saints were not to isolate themselves from the world, but to provide attractive accommodations for strangers and tourists while they “contemplate the word of the Lord; and the corner-stone I have appointed for Zion” (D&C 124:23).

Joseph Smith donated the land for the Nauvoo House, and many Latter-day Saints purchased



One of the first projects of the Church in Nauvoo was to build a hotel called the Nauvoo House. This uniface stock certificate was issued by the Nauvoo House Association, an Illinois corporation. In D&C 124, many Church members were called upon by name to invest capital in this project. Courtesy Rare Books and Manuscripts, Brigham Young University.

stock. The design of architects Lucien Woodworth and William Weeks called for an L-shaped brick building forty feet deep and three stories high. Construction began in the spring of 1841 and progressed (with interruptions) into 1845. Eventually, the work was discontinued in an effort to complete the Nauvoo Temple.

When the Saints left Nauvoo in 1846, the Nauvoo House walls were up above the windows of the second story. The large unfinished building on the south end of Main Street facing the Mississippi River became the property of Joseph Smith’s widow, Emma SMITH. Subsequently, Emma’s second husband, Lewis C. Bidamon, tore down the extremities of the L-shaped structure and used their bricks to complete the central portion as a smaller hotel, variously known as the Bidamon House and the Riverside Mansion. He and Emma lived there from 1871 until they died. After Bidamon’s death, the REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS purchased the Nauvoo House and still owns it.

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HELENE HOLT

NAUVOO LEGION

The Illinois legislative act of December 1840 that incorporated the city of Nauvoo also authorized creation of a military body or militia that came to