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## The Work Continues/"On Nauvoo's Hill"

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## The Work Continues



As soon as the issue of succession was settled, the Quorum of the Twelve began to set the affairs of the Church in order. Church organization was expanded, missionary work continued, and efforts to complete the temple were intensified. Some Saints gave large sums of money for construction, while Relief Society sisters pledged to donate a penny each week so that glass and nails could be purchased. After the capstone was put in place in the spring of 1845, the roof was completed and work on the interior progressed quickly. On 10 December 1845, the first endowments were administered within the temple.

Brigham Young recorded that, in January 1846, he worked in the Temple “night and day, not taking more than four hours sleep, upon an average, per day, and going home but once a week.”<sup>65</sup> Delaying his February departure for the West, he continued to administer temple ordinances to the many Saints yearning to receive them. Temple records indicate that 5,615 received their endowments before leaving Nauvoo.

Fearing that the mobs would attempt to prevent the dedication, a small group of brethren met in private dedicatory ceremonies on 30 April 1846. Public services took place the next day. Due to rumors that federal troops planned the destruction of the Mormons, the Saints continued to evacuate Nauvoo as quickly as possible. By September all but five men and their families had left the city. The mob that entered Nauvoo looted the abandoned homes and desecrated the temple. In October 1848, an arsonist burned the interior of

the temple. A tornado destroyed three exterior walls in May 1850. The final wall was leveled in 1856.

Relocated in the valleys of the mountain west, the Church continued to grow in size and strength throughout the nineteenth century. By the end of the twentieth century, the Church, which was organized in 1830 with only six men, had close to 11 million members. Today increasing numbers of faithful Saints throughout the world acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Savior of the World, Joseph Smith as His Prophet, and the Book of Mormon as His word. We testify that the Church continues to be led by a living prophet. In recent years the Church has participated in a period of unprecedented temple building. Among the many temples completed since 2000 are those in Palmyra, New York; Winter Quarters, Nebraska; and Nauvoo, Illinois. The reconstructed Nauvoo Temple, dedicated 27–30 June 2002, with each of the other latter-day temples, stands as a witness that the work which the Prophet Joseph Smith commenced will continue to roll forth until all the purposes of God have been fulfilled.

# On Nauvoo's Hill

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## I

Cradled in the curve  
of the Mississippi,  
Joseph's city of gathering  
grows from sultry swamps,  
muddy banks—mortar,  
nail, brick and rail.  
Thriving seven years  
on frontier's edge,  
it flourishes around  
a central plot where  
walls of white devotion  
rise above gardens, hotel,  
schools and shops  
until angel, knowledge,  
power, crown  
the temple tower.

## II

Exiled, the builders leave.  
Victims of villainy,  
they journey west.  
Desolation moans  
a solemn requiem  
through silent rooms,  
hollow streets,  
cemetery still,

while homeless children  
of a homeless God  
begin to build again.

Hands that turned wood,  
carved suns and stars,  
polished brass and glass,  
push wagon wheels,  
dig winter graves,  
farm desert sod.

Desecrated, dead,  
their offering lies  
on the altar-crest  
of Nauvoo's hill,  
inward parts  
consumed by flames.  
Whirlwind wasted,  
charred stones remain  
like scattered bones  
across some  
ancient battlefield,

### III

A vast posterity  
reaches east and west,  
preserved and prospered  
by promises bestowed  
on Nauvoo's hill.  
The spirit brooding on  
that holy ground  
turns hearts at last

to sound the story,  
resurrect the glory,  
exhume the buried  
beauty of the past.

We firm the footings,  
raise strong walls,  
reverently fashion  
suns and stars,  
replicate the temple tower,  
fully furnish rooms and halls.  
Trumpets call down  
heaven's power.

It is finished!

The fathers' work is done,  
the perfect pattern  
of their sacrifice  
embodied in new stone.

*Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior .... His purposes fail not, ... (D&C 76:1 & 3).*