
The Printing Building

D&C 94:10–12

In this revelation, Hyrum Smith, Reynolds Cahoon, and Jared Carter were appointed to the Church Building Committee, also known as the Kirtland Temple Committee. The committee was given oversight of the “building of a house of the presidency” (D&C 94:3). They were also given oversight of a “lot on the south” which was to “be dedicated unto me for the building of a house unto me, for the work of the printing of the translation of my scriptures, and all things whatsoever I shall command you” (v. 10). The dimensions for the printing house were given by revelation: “fifty-five by sixty-five feet in the width thereof and the length thereof, in the inner court; and there shall be a tower and a high court” (v. 11) The Lord specified that “this house shall be wholly dedicated unto the Lord from the foundation thereof; for the work of the printing, in all things whatsoever I shall command you” (v. 12).

As it turned out, on October 10, 1833, a decision was made to build one building that would house the offices of the First Presidency and a printing press. There was also to be space in the building for the School of the Prophets to meet and for other meetings to be held.

With plans being made, Oliver Cowdery was sent to New York to purchase a printing press. With eight hundred dollars, he purchased a press and other equipment. While waiting for the building to be finished, a temporary printing office was set up in the John Johnson Inn in Kirtland. It was not until November 1834 that a building was completed.

Under the direction of the “Literary Firm,” a number of books and newspapers were printed in the building:

1. *The Evening and Morning Star*. The newspaper printed from December 1833 to September 1834. Issues first printed in Independence, Missouri, were reprinted in Kirtland in January 1835.

2. *The Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate*. The newspaper printed from October 1834 to September 1837.
3. Hymnal. The first Church hymnal was completed in February 1836. The printed book measured three inches by four inches.
4. *The Northern Times* newspaper was first printed in February 1835 and continued for about a year. It was a monthly newspaper on the politics of the day.
5. The Doctrine and Covenants. The printing of the Doctrine and Covenants, which contained 101 revelations and the Lectures on Faith, was begun in June 1835. By mid-September 1835, the first copies were bound and ready to be sold.
6. The Book of Mormon.
7. *The Elders' Journal* was a monthly newspaper printed in October and November 1837.¹

Ownership of the printing office was transferred from the Literary Firm to the firm of Oliver Cowdery and Company in June 1836. From there, the printing office was sold to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. They, in turn, sold the office to William Marks in May 1837 with a contractual arrangement to lease the equipment. In December 1837 the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, "Our printing establishment was attached to satisfy an unjust judgment of the county court, and soon after the whole printing apparatus and office were burned to the ground."²

¹ Karl Ricks Anderson, *Joseph Smith's Kirtland: Eyewitness Accounts* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1989), 122–125.

² History, 1838–1856, volume B-1 [1 September 1834–2 November 1838], 779.