"The work progressed slowly but without marked interruption; and this fact becomes surprising when the many unfavorable conditions are considered. The Saints had found but temporary respite from persecution; and as the Temple rose opposition increased.

On November 8, 1841, the font was ready for dedication, and the dedicatory prayer was offered by the Prophet himself. Thus, less than six months before the Temple was finished, ordinance work was in progress within its precincts, the font being enclosed by temporary walls.

Beside the baptized, other parts of the Temple were prepared for temporary occupancy while yet work on the walls was in progress; and on Sunday, April 6, 1842, a general assembly was convened therein. This is recorded as the first meeting held in the Temple.

It was not permitted that Joseph Smith the prophet, nor Hyrum Smith, one-time counselor in the First Presidency and later Patriarch of the Church, should live to see the completion of the building. On the 27th of June, 1844, these men of God fell victims of the bullets of assassins, at Carthage, Illinois. Though heavy the burden and cruel the afflictions suffered by the Saints in the martyrdom of their leaders, the work of the Church showed scarcely perceptible hindrance. Within two weeks after the dread event, construction on the Temple was resumed, and from that time till the completion of work was prosecuted with increased vigor and determination.

The somber clouds of persecution were gathering and thickening about the devoted people. Under counsel from their leaders the people prepared once again to leave their homes; and this time they crossed the Mississippi and went beyond the bounds of the United States. A general exodus was imminent; and as early as February, 1846, this had begun. Most of the Saints, however, remained for a short time; and with these the completion of the Temple was the main purpose and object of life. Though they knew the sacred edifice would soon be abandoned, they labored diligently to complete it, even to the smallest detail.

In the late hours of April 30, 1846, the Temple was privately, yet officially, dedicated, in the presence of such general authorities of the Church as could be convened.

The semi-private character of the dedication was due to the thought that possibly there would be interference in a public ceremony, so active was the spirit of intolerance and persecution.

The Saints had met the requirement made of them by the Lord in the building of another House to His name. Ordinance work continued apace, though the exodus was imminent; and as early as February, 1846, this had begun. Most of the Saints, however, remained for a short time; and with these the completion of the Temple was the main purpose and object of life. Though they knew the sacred edifice would soon be abandoned, they labored diligently to complete it, even to the smallest detail.

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The Talmage book also cleared the matter of the picture that is usually used for the reproductions of the Temple. It is a drawing by a certain W. Murphy, with a copyright date of 1868. Mr. Smith sent us a copy of a daguerreotype made in 1846, and showing a side view of the building. Unfortunately, we received this too late for use; it shows a more attractive building than the one depicted by Mr. Murphy. The tower in the daguerreotype is significantly different; it is shorter, heavier, and decorated in a better style and proportion than that of the Murphy drawing.

The building itself was constructed of much heavier blocks of stone than indicated by Mr. Murphy, and all building decoration was of better design than the Murphy concept.

The riverside village of Nauvoo is gradually being restored, and will become one of the historic and memorial sites in all of the shrines of Illinois. What a tragedy that the Temple could not have been saved on its hilltop site.

The four blocks for the print and the type were of tulipwood and sugar pine for the underprinting. The printing, as usual, was by hand, using the Japanese method.

Fred and Betty Turner

Christmas, 1956

Urbana

Illinois