

Chapter 28

AIDE TO THE APOSTLES

In the latter half of 1844 the Twelve Apostles settled into their role as the church's presiding quorum with Brigham Young clearly at their head. W. W. Phelps smoothly shifted the kind of heartfelt loyalty he'd felt for Joseph Smith to them. With their blessing, he led out in proclaiming through his writings that Joseph Smith was a modern prophet in every sense—prophet, seer, and revelator—and that the Quorum of the Twelve retained the keys to lead in his absence. Phelps's work in this area was important, coming as it did at a time when the apostles' claim to leadership as successors to Smith was disputed by some. Phelps would witness the various challenges with great interest. In numerous ways he demonstrated his loyalty to the Twelve.

Phelps helped guide the Nauvoo City Council following the elevation of Brigham Young along with the rest of the Twelve as leaders of the church. Phelps led out in deciding questions of the city's paying its debt for quashing the *Nauvoo Expositor*, salaries to city officials (including himself), the role of the police, and nominating Daniel Spencer to become mayor pro tem. In September the council named Phelps as "Recorder of Deeds," a necessary role in settling Joseph Smith's estate since a large portion of Nauvoo properties were in Joseph Smith's name. These issues needed to be resolved to pay off the city's debts. In October Phelps read to the council an ordinance he had written to control the sale and distribution of "Spirituuous Liquors."¹

Even though apparent unity existed in Nauvoo to support the Quorum of the Twelve, dissident groups formed around specific individuals claiming a right to lead the church, some of them early on and others a few months or even years later. W. W. Phelps was directly involved in the Sidney Rigdon imbroglio in August and September. Over the next two years he had some interplay with the William Smith and James J. Strang cases.

STRUGGLES WITH SIDNEY RIGDON

After Sidney Rigdon was rebuffed by the general assembly of the Saints on August 8, 1844, he decided he would create a church of his own, which he did, hoping to draw a huge number of Mormons with him, which he did not succeed in doing. Rigdon had been acting delusionary off and on for several years, but this was especially the case since his return to Nauvoo on August 3. Attempting to mimic Joseph Smith, he organized a group of “kings and priests,” apostles and prophets, and a council akin to the Council of Fifty. He prophesied that the Quorum of the Twelve under Brigham Young would fail and that the temple in Nauvoo would never be completed. After unsuccessfully trying to put Rigdon in the right, Young decided that Rigdon had to be tried for his membership. A public trial was called for September 8 that Rigdon decided not to attend.²

W. W. Phelps participated in this trial and completely supported the Twelve’s conclusion that Sidney Rigdon had gone far beyond his authority and license in his actions and should be excommunicated. Phelps prayed at the proceedings, testified and clarified, and finally made a motion that Rigdon be cut off from the church. He then published the proceedings of the trial in the *Times and Seasons*.

The Twelve Apostles were careful to set up the trial according to procedures expressed in D&C 107:82 that a “common council” should judge all the evidence and provide the verdict and that the apostles would only serve as witnesses. Thus, the Nauvoo Stake presidency and high council were seated according to regulations. In theory, Bishop Newel K. Whitney was in charge of the council. But it was clear to the thousands in attendance that the Twelve were in command. Regarding Phelps, he was neither a member of the Twelve nor a member of the high council, although he was a member of the critical Council of Fifty. He was the only non-apostle to testify against Rigdon and was allowed to provide motions in the trial.³

President Young conducted the public meeting attended by thousands. He directed the police to keep order. Young laid out his case against Sidney Rigdon and emphasized Rigdon’s ordaining “prophets, priests, and kings” surreptitiously and without authority. Four apostles—Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, Amasa Lyman, and John Taylor—followed with testimonies. They emphasized that Joseph Smith the previous March had given the Twelve “keys” to carry forward all the sacred ordinances, that Rigdon did not fulfill his calling as counselor in the presidency, and that Rigdon did not understand the holy endowment and sealing ordinances as did they.⁴

W. W. Phelps then took the stand.⁵ By this time in Nauvoo, both leadership and general membership had come to recognize that he was close to Joseph Smith as scribe and thus would know the Prophet’s feelings well. Indeed, Phelps testified how important it was to “be acquainted with all the facts in this case” and that he knew all these facts. He also said he had been a better friend to Sidney Rigdon over the past few years than most, so he was not prejudiced against him. Yet when he spoke with Rigdon after he arrived back in Nauvoo in early August, Phelps noticed “in all [Rigdon’s] conduct there appeared to be something wrong, a reluctance to communicate.”

Phelps then proceeded to explain that the Twelve were the legal successors to the Prophet. He felt that he was acquainted with “the whole of Joseph Smith’s revelations as any other man” and he could certify that “the Twelve are the first authority after the first presidency.” They were called “to regulate all the affairs of all the churches in all the world.” He asked the congregation if they were willing to throw away all that had been built up in the kingdom of God or throw away “the revelations and all the measures laid down by Brother Joseph.” He answered his own question: “No! verily no!”

Calling on his knowledge of the facts and documents, Phelps then quoted from a prophecy of Joseph Smith that came in the form of a special priesthood blessing given to Sidney Rigdon back in 1833 in Kirtland. The blessing stated that Rigdon would be lifted up but because of pride would be brought down. He would have to humble himself before receiving his desired blessings.⁶ Phelps also emphasized that Satan had blinded Sidney Rigdon’s eyes so that he could not understand properly the revelations that had already come from Jesus Christ. Phelps concluded, “This church has been built up to Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith always taught us that there is no other name whereby we can be saved but in and through the name of Jesus Christ.”

Close as he was to Joseph Smith, and with a knowledge of the revelations and a well-informed historical perspective, Phelps delivered a testimony that rang true and reliable. That he was called on to speak also demonstrated that the Twelve Apostles trusted him as much as the Prophet did. Phelps’s statements were every bit as assertive as any made by the apostles.

Many other testimonies against Rigdon followed. Bishop Whitney also gave a history of his experiences with Sidney Rigdon, and they were not a few. He declared, “I believe he is an evil designing man. He is dishonest, and he has lied to carry out his theory. He preached one thing one day and the contrary another.”⁷

Toward the end of the proceedings, W. W. Phelps moved that Rigdon be cut off from the church. “The vote was unanimous,” the minutes recorded, “excepting a few of Elder Rigdon’s party numbering about ten.” “Elder Phelps” offered the benediction to the six-hour proceedings.⁸ Rigdon soon left Nauvoo with as many who would follow him. At first his organization would remain viable, but after two years the “Rigdonites” would become fewer and fewer up to his death in 1876.

EDITING THE *TIMES AND SEASONS* AND THE *NAUVOO NEIGHBOR*

In the year and a half following the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, Phelps continued his steady stewarding of the *Times and Seasons* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.⁹ John Taylor was the nominal editor, but his role was superficial. After he recuperated from the Carthage shooting, Taylor was closely involved with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in leading the church, vulnerable as it was with succession questions. He also had to deal with Joseph and Hyrum Smith’s murder trial, political opposition in Illinois against the Nauvoo Charter, and malicious assaults against Latter-day Saints, particularly in the villages outside Nauvoo. Furthermore, he was appointed chairman of Nauvoo’s influential

"Nauvoo Trades Committee" that supervised manufacturing in the city. Gradually, Taylor also created and ran the Nauvoo Manufacturing Association and the Mercantile and Mechanical Association. In truth, Brigham Young relied on Taylor an enormous amount during these critical months.

Under direction of Taylor and other apostles, Phelps made sure through the newspapers that church members were brought up to date with official epistles from the Twelve, reports of general conference,¹⁰ growth of the church in other parts of the globe, world events, local news, theology, state of life in Nauvoo, building the temple, conditions of the Indians and Jews, admonitions to righteous behavior, preparing for the endowment and sealings, and preparations to move to the Rocky Mountains. Demonstrating that he was the main man at the printing office, Phelps wrote Wilford Woodruff in Britain: "The Times and Seasons and Neighbor contain a living stream of my mind and so you can satisfy yourself at leisure."¹¹

The Twelve wanted the Saints, including the youth, to continue to be productive in Nauvoo. Hence Phelps, seemingly with much authority, provided encouragement for the Saints to labor diligently at various productive pursuits and definitely to avoid idleness:

Labor is the manufacturer of wealth. It was ordained of God, as the medium to be used by man to obtain his living; hence it is the universal condition of this great bond to live. But says one, I do not like the condition, because two thirds of mankind live without work; or in other words, one third of the world carries the balance on their backs. Well, admit the position, does that destroy the principle that labor is the only way appointed of God to obtain an honest living? No! . . .

O saints, saints! inasmuch as the almighty has displayed, and will display his "handy work" for the glory and benefit of his saints, his covenant people, will you not arise, and shake your garments, cleansing them from the dust, and spots of corruption, idleness and folly, and show your faith by your works. God will soon make a man more precious than fine gold. Do you know it? Let the world traffic, we must make men better by wisdom, virtue, and industry.¹²

Coincident with the above admonition, Phelps reported in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* the founding of the manufacturing committees, for which he served as secretary under Chairman John Taylor. Representatives from various manufacturing groups gathered in the stately Masonic Hall to give their reports and also prospects for the future. Taylor urged them to work harmoniously with each other for the benefit of the city (i.e., the church) and not to create monopolies. Phelps reported that similar meetings would convene weekly to achieve their goals.¹³ He indicated that the Saints needed a productive economy to bless everyone in the city, not just the property holders. Phelps urged his readers to save money and spend it wisely and to look out for each other, not just themselves.¹⁴

At about the same time, W. W. Phelps spoke up in a city council meeting about the need to continue educational efforts in Nauvoo, even though the state of Illinois intended to eradicate the Nauvoo Charter, which would also end the University of Nauvoo. They could still have a library and a school in Nauvoo "for the diffusion of Useful knowledge

throughout all the world,” for “Intelligence is the life of liberty—Every exertion shall be made to find out Intelligence.”¹⁵

Phelps definitely encouraged Saints living away from Nauvoo not to follow after apostates. First, he emphasized that building the temple was moving forward.

We take this opportunity to say to the saints abroad,—all is *union and peace at Nauvoo*, and *the temple is rising rapidly as a token that God has not forsaken his church and people*. With the same health and industry that now blesses us, if the weather permits, but a few months more will elapse, and *the temple of God at Nauvoo will be a standing witness for the gathering of Israel*. It affords us a great consolation, too, to add, that the saints continue to come to Zion, to walk in the ways of the Lord: it seems he is softening the hearts of the people for good; and we pray that he may continue to do so, until the waste places of Zion shall be built up, and *the “great temple” be built, whereon the “cloud and pillar” shall rest; and in which the sons of Moses and Aaron shall minister an acceptable offering on Mount Zion*.¹⁶

A month later he added that in spite of predictions that Nauvoo would cease to prosper and “Mormonism would die, with its great leader, . . . twice as many have been added to our numbers as those that have left [to follow other claimants to Joseph Smith’s authority], as emigration has been pouring in all the time.”¹⁷

W. W. Phelps never forgot his mandate from the Lord to select and write “books for the schools in this church, that little children also may receive instruction before me as is pleasing unto me” (D&C 55:4).¹⁸ In the October 1845 general conference, Phelps pointed out that one day the children would be those taking the gospel to all the world and that they would need better instruction. He suggested that he prepare a book that would “instruct our children in the paths of righteousness.” The conference then passed a motion that Phelps write six schoolbooks for children.¹⁹ Finishing the temple and then performing ordinances therein took up the bulk of Phelps’s and other leaders’ time over the next few months. Persecution forced the Saints to begin the exodus to the West in February. Phelps could not achieve this goal of writing new books in Nauvoo, and the issue would resurface in Salt Lake City.

On December 26, 1844, Brigham Young dedicated the commodious “Seventies Hall.” Since August, the Twelve prepared most of the ordained elders in and around Nauvoo to be ordained seventies before fulfilling missions to all the world. By the time of the dedication, fifteen Quorums of the Seventy existed. Two quorums per day attended the recurring dedication proceedings over seven days. W. W. Phelps’s signal contribution to the proceedings was to compose a new hymn—“A Voice from the Prophet: ‘Come to Me’”—that was sung to the tune “Indian Hunter.”²⁰ This was the opening hymn for the dedication ceremonies. The song was a poignant plea from Joseph Smith in the spirit world for the Saints to prepare for their heavenly home:

Come to me, will ye come to the saints that have died,—
To the next better world, where the righteous reside;
Where the angels and spirits in harmony be
In the joys of a vast Paradise? Come to me.

Come to me where the truth and virtues prevail;
Where the union is one, and the years never fail;
Where a heart can't conceive, nor a nat'ral eye see,
What the Lord has prepar'd for the just: Come to me.

Come to me where there is no destruction or war;
Neither tyrants, or mobbers, or nations ajar;
Where the system is perfect, and happiness free,
And the life is eternal with God: Come to me.

Come to me, will ye come to the mansions above,
Where the bliss and the knowledge, the light, and the love,
And the glory of God, do eternally be?
Death, the wages of sin, is not here: Come to me.

Come to me, here are Adam and Eve at the head
Of a multitude, quicken'd and rais'd from the dead;
Here's the knowledge that was, or that is, or will be—
In the gen'ral assembly of worlds: Come to me.

Come to me; here's the myst'ry that man hath not seen;
Here's our Father in heaven, and Mother, the Queen,
Here are worlds that have been, and the worlds yet to be;
Here's eternity,—endless; amen: Come to me.

Come to me, here's the future, the present and past;
Here is Alpha, Omega, the first and the last;
Here's the fountain, the "river of life," and the Tree:
Here's your Prophet & Seer, JOSEPH SMITH: Come to me.²¹

In the summer of 1845, an incident took place with the entire staff of the printing office that displayed Phelps's unusual personality. The occasion was a party held at John Taylor's farm property. Phelps was sitting comfortably in an easy chair. Behind him came his son Waterman, who pinned a cushion to his father's coat skirt. Laughter resulted when Phelps stood up and walked around. "But the judge did not relish the joke. His face colored up and a very black cloud rested down upon his usually fun-loving visage as he looked around and probably guessed the author of it. He left the room in a terrible passion and did not return nor quite recover from it during the whole evening."²²

INTERACTION WITH WILLIAM SMITH

Meanwhile, the subject of William Smith, Joseph Smith's sole surviving brother, would become a matter of great significance in Nauvoo. Elder Smith, a member of the Twelve and for a few months in 1845 the patriarch to the church, would lose his prominent positions and even his membership. Thereafter, he would bounce around from one offshoot of the church to another. Because of his friendship with William Smith, Phelps reported a great deal on this issue.

William Smith did not return to Nauvoo with other members of the Twelve after the assassination of his brothers. For one thing, he was warned that his life would be in jeopardy since he was Joseph and Hyrum's brother. He also did not want to take his bedridden wife, Caroline Grant Smith, on a long trip that might take her life. Throughout the rest of 1844 and the first four months of 1845, William Smith presided over various branches, conferences, and missionaries in the East. Phelps published reports of the conferences that Elder Smith conducted. Meanwhile, Brigham Young and other apostles heard reports of some ill-considered activities by Elder Smith.²³ The Twelve in late 1844 ultimately decided to send Parley P. Pratt to New York to replace William Smith as supervisor of *The Prophet*, the church newspaper, and as presiding elder of the eastern conferences.

William Smith wrote an open letter to assistant editor Phelps on November 10, 1844, feeling that he had a friend in Phelps, and indeed he did.²⁴ After receiving the letter and knowing Smith would be returning with his family to Nauvoo, Phelps laid out the pleasant prospects for Elder Smith: "It will be his privilege when he arrives, to be ordained to the office of patriarch to the church, and to occupy the place that his brother Hyrum did, when living; and he will stand in the same relationship to the Twelve, as his brother Hyrum did to the First Presidency, after he was ordained patriarch." Phelps added these kind words: "We sincerely sympathise with him in the loss of his brothers, and in the sickness of his family; and although he may find himself lonely and desolate on his return, having lost three brothers since his departure—three of the best men in the world—yet we can assure him that his old friends the Twelve have not forgotten him."²⁵

In the *Times and Seasons*, Phelps published an open letter to William Smith. Remarkably, Phelps wrote as if he were a peer with the apostles, which he probably thought he was. The letter was written in a most empathetic manner. He emphasized his closeness to Smith: "Since we have been members together in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I think it may be said we have been one in faith, one in love, and one in friendship, and like the often used key, we have grown brighter and brighter, as we have performed the great service of opening and shutting the 'lock' on religious understanding."²⁶ Phelps gave a warm report about the greater Smith family, providing as he did key genealogical data. Warmly, he reported about Lucy Smith and Emma Smith:

Now for the welfare of your relatives. I have seen your mother and she cried for joy over your letter. Though in her 69th year, her heart was big with hope for her "darling son, William:"—and she blessed you in the name of the Lord.

The rest, I think, enjoy good health, and especially Emma, who amid her great affliction, has given birth to a son, and like David of old, may he yet be a terror to evil doers; one that will light his candle in the same great fire where his father's was lit, and search the world by the light of it, till the last stain of his father's blood, is made white by righteousness.²⁷

Phelps expressed his fondness for members of the Quorum of the Twelve, William Smith included. He gave each nicknames, fond monikers that have often remained in historical accounts and biographies.

I know the Twelve, and they know me.—Their names are Brigham Young, *the lion of the Lord*; Heber C. Kimball, *the herald of grace*; Parley P. Pratt, *the archer of paradise*; Orson Hyde, *the olive branch of Israel*; Willard Richards, *the keeper of the rolls*; John Taylor, *the champion of right*; William Smith, *the entablature of truth*; Orson Pratt, *the gauge of philosophy*; John E. Page, *the sun dial*; and Lyman Wight, *the wild ram of the mountain*. And they are good men; the best the Lord can find; they do the will of God, and the saints know it.²⁸

Phelps continued to show his loyalty to William Smith in February 1845. In effect, Phelps was defending his friend against his accusers.

The N. Y. Prophet [the newspaper] of January 25, contains cheering news from Elder Wm. Smith. In the midst of trials, tribulations and accusations from false brethren, he triumphs; and really, when we learned that his “wife [Caroline] was better,” we rejoiced,—for it seemed good before the Lord.

We give the letter entire, that the saints generally may sympathize with Elder Smith in all his afflictions, and pray for him, and rejoice, as the Lord, in his infinite mercy, blesses him and his family.²⁹

When spring arrived and with Caroline somewhat better from her severe dropsy,³⁰ William Smith and his family left their home in New Jersey on April 19 and arrived in Nauvoo on Sunday, May 4, 1845. Caroline barely made the trip alive. Phelps warmly reported their arrival in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* and wished them good recovery in their health as they settled in.³¹ A week later Phelps wrote of a Sabbath meeting where Smith spoke: “An uncommon large audience listened to a discourse from Elder W. Smith on Sunday afternoon. And who could hear without reflecting that he was the last man of five brothers who had carried this kingdom in their arms when it was a child?”³² On that same day, Smith wrote an extensive letter to the Twelve that defended himself regarding charges against his actions in the East that had been rumored around Nauvoo.³³

Sadly, Caroline’s health failed her and she passed away on May 22. William Smith had no time to grieve before he was asked to testify in a meeting of the Twelve Apostles on the twenty-fourth to discuss his questionable actions in the East along with those of some of his lieutenants there. Smith was accused of performing a plural marriage for Samuel Brannan and of participating in an unauthorized plural marriage himself. In the same meeting, Smith also strangely asserted that he should receive the patriarchal office and also preside over the whole church.³⁴

Brigham Young and the other apostles agreed that day that William Smith should become “patriarch to the whole church,” and he was thus ordained. However, warm feelings did not continue. Once again, W. W. Phelps was connected to an unfortunate episode.

After his ordination, Smith dictated a letter to the *Times and Seasons* entitled “Patriarchal.” Phelps quickly published Smith’s statement and then made remarks of his own about the patriarchal calling and William Smith’s right to assume it. In his piece, Smith wrote a number of self-congratulatory paragraphs regarding his fifteen-year service and severe persecution. He said that the Saints should follow the Twelve as a group (i.e.,

including himself) and not just one of them (i.e., Brigham Young). Remarkably, Smith said that they should “follow me as I follow Christ.” He grossly exaggerated the growth of the church, claiming that there were now 200,000 members when in reality fewer than 40,000 existed. Smith stated he was now available to pronounce blessings on interested church members.³⁵

Phelps’s accompanying editorial (signed “ED” as if it were John Taylor) discussed the role of the patriarchs. He asserted that the “office of Patriarch *over the whole church is to be a father to the church*, and to confer blessings on its members, according to the order handed down from the first of Patriarchs to the present.”³⁶

William Smith’s and W. W. Phelps’s statements both surprised and annoyed the Quorum of the Twelve. They dispatched John Taylor, who was nominal editor of the *Times and Seasons* anyway, to pen a contravening editorial for the next edition:

Since the publication of the last *Times and Seasons*, we have frequently been interrogated about the meaning of some remarks made by Eld. Wm. Smith in an article headed patriarchal, and also concerning *some expressions in the editorial* connected therewith; and as the nature of the office of Patriarch, does not seem to be fully understood, *we thought a little explanation on this point might not be amiss.*

So far as the editorial is concerned *it was written rather hastily by our junior editor, W. W. Phelps, and did not come under our notice until after it was published.* There are some expressions contained in it, *which might have been worded better and have rendered it less subject to criticism;* but he [Phelps] assures us that no such intention was intended to be conveyed as that which is conceived by some. And concerning Brother Wm. Smith, we are better acquainted with him, and with his views, than to believe that he intended to convey any such idea as the one which some persons would put upon, or gather from his sayings.³⁷

Taylor went on to explain the office of patriarch in a way that the Twelve would approve and then exclaimed,

We have been asked, “Does not patriarch over the whole church” place Brother William Smith at the head of the whole church as president?

Ans. No. Brother William is not patriarch over the whole church; but patriarch TO the church, and as such he was ordained. *The expression “over the whole church,” is a mistake made by W. W. Phelps. He is patriarch TO the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.* The Twelve are commanded to ordain evangelical ministers in all large branches of the church abroad, and who has charge over them, the patriarch? No. Those who ordained them, and to whom is committed the power and authority to regulate all the affairs of the churches abroad. And who has the charge of the whole priesthood here? Ans. *The presidency of the church; and not the patriarch.*³⁸

Smith’s biographer explained that “William had crossed a line with his public claims” and that he had to be rebuked by Brigham Young and other apostles like other men who had also angled for church leadership following the death of Joseph Smith.³⁹ This reality also turned W. W. Phelps away from being an advocate for William Smith since Phelps had every intention to show his loyalty to the Twelve. Phelps had also become aware of

Smith's recalcitrant attitudes toward the Twelve, particularly after this public rebuke by John Taylor. When Smith desired to give a rejoinder to Taylor in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, something Phelps would have been completely aware of, Smith was turned down.

Thereafter Phelps was essentially mum about William Smith in his writing and editing of the *Times and Seasons* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, although he reported about the festival dinner for the entire Smith family provided by the Twelve and the Nauvoo bishops in the Mansion House on July 9, 1845. This was an honest attempt by church authorities to do well by the Smith family, who had suffered so exceedingly. At the feast apparent unity prevailed, including between William Smith and his brethren of the Twelve. Phelps added the following toast at the gathering: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and all the Smith family in it; and *her* spiritual authorities; perfect union; unceasing vigilance; increasing power, and eternal lives, in eternity *now*, and eternity then."⁴⁰

Sadly, thereafter William Smith couldn't control his feelings of anger and his perceived victim's status. He broke from the Saints the third week in September when he fled Nauvoo and thought of joining competing Mormon offshoots.⁴¹ Phelps never again publicly mentioned William Smith, who in a few months would interact with Strangism and become a part of that movement.

PARTICIPATION IN RECONSTITUTED COUNCIL OF FIFTY

During these same months, Phelps also continued his role in the Nauvoo City Council, to which he was reelected in February 1845.⁴² He also participated in the reconstituted Council of Fifty that Brigham Young reactivated on February 4, 1845, for the first time since Joseph Smith's death. Young considered this a necessary action to protect the Saints from their enemies and to prepare for a westward migration to a yet-undetermined location. Millennial kingdom of God matters were put to the side. Several unfaithful council members were dropped and others nominated to take their place.⁴³ For his part, Phelps sustained the idea that the council be reconstituted and that Brigham Young serve as the "standing chairman." He also reported that, sadly, many outside newspaper reports had referred to leaked secret Council of Fifty activities.⁴⁴

Phelps's contributions to the Council of Fifty were many. On February 27 he gave a report on where the various Indian tribes were located in the West. He added his view that James Emmett's drawing off many Mormons to Indian lands was the act of an enemy, not a faithful council member. Phelps reviewed the revelation that Joseph Smith had given regarding the Lamanites (Indians) in July 1831.⁴⁵ He also indicated that Illinois' repeal of the Nauvoo Charter was actually a benefit to the church. "We are free" from the Gentiles, he emphasized.⁴⁶

At the March 1 meeting, W. W. Phelps agreed with two new propositions: that council representatives should be sent to scout out a location where the Saints could settle apart from the influence of the United States and enact their own laws, the laws of God; and that the Lamanites would accept the gospel en masse and ally with the Saints against

all enemies. "We are the hammer of the whole earth and we will break it in pieces," he prophesied.⁴⁷

With fiery words on March 4, Phelps urged that the "Western Mission" (composed of council members charged with finding a resting place for the Saints and converting the Indians) begin as soon as possible. "We want [them] to go and tell them to prepare, for our enemies are forging chains for us. . . . Let these men go and tell Jacob [i.e., the Indians] and let them come & execute that which is reserved for them [i.e., to help build the New Jerusalem]." Phelps also mocked the United States for not redressing the Saints for the persecutions endured in Missouri and Illinois.⁴⁸ At this same meeting, Phelps was appointed to a committee to write a letter to each governor of the respective states in the Union to ascertain their feelings about Mormon grievances.⁴⁹

On March 11, 1845, Phelps proposed creating a new police force for Nauvoo since the repealed charter did not allow for an official force. The notorious "whistling and whittling brigade" that would ward off outsiders without resort to arms came about as a result.⁵⁰ Brigham Young also appointed Phelps to learn regulations established by the state of Illinois for performing marriages because the charter's repeal had deprived city officials of the authority to perform such.⁵¹

At the next week's meeting, Phelps presented a report about the value of settling "Upper California" because of its climate and fertile soil. He further stated that the next *Nauvoo Neighbor*, which he in essence edited, would contain a report from John C. Fremont, the US military's chief topographical engineer.⁵² Later in the meeting, Phelps belligerently declared that if the Mormons' enemies brought up petty lawsuits, he would be willing to kill them if they came to serve the suits.⁵³ This is ironic given that Phelps in Far West had defended lawsuits.

At the March 22 meeting, a discussion ensued about how the *Times and Seasons* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor* were being edited and the emphasis that one newspaper should have compared to the other. Phelps, who ran the printing office, responded defensively that "they [at the office] have however labored under many disadvantages. They have not been able to get but a few weeks paper [newsprint] at a time and this has caused irregularity in the times of publication. They have not type enough to print both papers at the same time, and they have sometimes taken matter which was already published in one paper and have put it in the other paper."⁵⁴ Three days later, the council discussed the possibility that John Taylor and W. W. Phelps might have to leave the printing office and Nauvoo because writs for their arrest had been issued. The council considered replacement editors. However, it turned out that Taylor and Phelps did not have to leave, because their enemies were temporarily appeased and did not seek any arrests at that time.⁵⁵

In a council meeting on April 15, 1845, Phelps was defiant: "We do not wish to resist the law," yet he was determined to protect his family and property at all costs. "Let the government take up the murderers of Joseph & Hyrum and execute the law upon them, and untill they do that and put a stop to their saying that we shall be exterminated we ought not to respond to any writ."⁵⁶

The Council of Fifty did not meet from May 10 through September 9, 1845, in order to focus on building the temple and the Nauvoo House. It was also a time of comparative peace. However, in early September vigilante attacks on Mormon settlements began anew. Strategic council meetings took place in September and early October 1845. Mobocratic abuse of the Saints had escalated to a point where more specific plans for a Mormon exodus from Illinois had to be implemented. Phelps offered a motion “that the chairman [Brigham Young] select such a portion of this council [of Fifty] as may be necessary to make the location [in the West], and they select the families.”⁵⁷ On October 4 Brigham Young directed W. W. Phelps, Parley P. Pratt, and Orson Spencer to draft a thorough document outlining how the United States had mistreated the Latter-day Saints and serving as “a farewell warning in the name of Israel’s God.”⁵⁸ The council also decided to cease publication in the coming week of the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.⁵⁹

NAUVOO TEMPLE COMPLETED

Throughout these same months, Phelps continued to help prepare the temple for the performance of its ordinances, which he understood well. On Saturday, May 24, 1845, the temple was far enough along that Brigham Young conducted a capstone ceremony. Phelps reported on the glories of this day:

On the morning of the 24th, at a little past six, a goodly number of Saints had the honor, and glory to witness *the Capstone of the Temple laid in its place*. The morning was cool, clear, and beautiful; the Saints felt glorious, the band on the top of the walls, played charmingly, and when the stone was placed, there was a united *Hosanna to God, the Lamb, amen and amen*, shouted three times, which not only gave joy on earth, but filled the heavens with gladness. A new hymn, composed for the occasion, was then sung.⁶⁰

This hymn, written by W. W. Phelps as he was accustomed to doing, reflected the feelings of the Saints at the time of being persecuted and betrayed by members within:

Have you heard the revelation,
Of this latter dispensation,
Which is unto every nation,
O! prepare to meet thy God?

CHORUS—We are a band of brethren,
And we’ve rear’d the Lord a temple,
And the cap stone now is finish’d,
And we’ll sound the news abroad.

Go and publish how Missouri,
And without a judge or jury,
Drove the saints and spilt their blood.
Like a whirlwind in its fury,

CHORUS—We are a band of brethren, &c.

Illinois, where satan flatters,
 Shot the prophets too, as martyrs,
 And repeal'd our city charters,
 All because we worship'd God.
 CHORUS—We are a band of brethren, &c.

Bennett, Law and many others,
 Have betray'd our honest brothers,
 To destroy our wives and mothers,
 As a Judas did the Lord.
 CHORUS—We are a band of brethren, &c.

And their chief is Sidney Rigdon,
 Who's a traitor, base, intriguing,
 And will fight at Armageddon,
 When the fire comes down from God.
 CHORUS—We are a band of brethren, &c.

While the devil such men jostles,
 With his keys of conquest morsels,
 We'll uphold the Twelve apostles,
 With authority from God.
 CHORUS—We are a band of brethren, &c.

And we'll give the whole world a sample,
 Of our faith and works most ample,
 When we've finished off the temple,
 As a dwelling for the Lord.
 CHORUS—We are a band of brethren, &c.

And we'll feed the saints that's needing
 And improve our hearts by weeding,
 Till we make Nauvoo as Eden,
 Where the saints can meet the Lord.
 CHORUS—We are a band of brethren, &c.⁶¹

The roof of the temple was completed in July, and the steeple was placed on the sacred structure. Phelps reported in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* that he took a tour up in the steeple. The view was glorious. “The day was fine, and the view grand; it seemed like climbing to the masthead of a vessel, and surveying the vast deep below;—it was an ocean of gardens and grainfields, exhibiting the bounty of Providence and the reward of industry.”⁶²

Following the roof's completion, members labored devotedly to complete the temple during the ensuing months. However, their efforts were forestalled somewhat in September by mob attacks on outlying Mormon settlements. Even so, the first floor assembly room of the temple was ready for public meetings for the October conference sessions. Phelps reported that through “indefatigable exertions, unceasing industry, and heaven blessed labors, in the midst of trials, tribulations, poverty, and worldly obstacles, solemnized, in

some instances by death, about five thousand saints had the inexpressible joy and great gratification to meet for the first time in the House of the Lord in the city of Joseph.”⁶³

PREPARING TO MOVE WEST

Even as church members worked feverishly to complete the temple so that all faithful Saints could receive their washings, anointings, endowments, and sealings, Brigham Young and his advisers prepared to migrate to the West, to territory unclaimed by the United States. In October general conference, they made public much of what they had decided in recent Council of Fifty minutes. Phelps publicized these ideas in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* and at the same time announced its cessation:

As we are making all the preparation in our power to leave the United States next spring, because we are compelled by mobocracy on account of the weakness of the law and the stupidity or hypocrisy of its executors, to *quit* the “asylum of the oppressed,” we have considered it advisable to discontinue the *Neighbor* at this number. . . .

The power that made Nauvoo; that gathered thousands from various climes and kingdoms; that reared the Temple; and that whispered to us now, “peace be still and wait for the salvation of God,” can guide us to bring forth a better city, an hundred forth of gathering, and five times as good a temple, in five years, and demagogues will not deceive us for our votes and then connive for our extermination.⁶⁴

W. W. Phelps did his part in preparing the Saints for their expected exodus, primarily in the pages of the newspapers. For example, in an “extra” of the *Nauvoo Neighbor* issued on November 19, 1845 (a month after the paper had supposedly ceased operation), he wrote:

Many strangers are visiting Hancock county and Nauvoo, for the purpose of purchasing our property. This is all right, and . . . we hope they will continue to do so; help keep the peace; help us fit out, and help us away. We want teams, and we want money and merchandize. There never was a greater chance for bargains in personal and real estate, or furniture . . . and help us to go where we shall neither *trouble* nor be troubled. *Peace*, is our motto, and let the will of God be done.⁶⁵

The emergencies facing the Latter-day Saints prompted leadership to hasten the temple’s completion for the sacred ordinances that they wished all faithful to receive before heading west. They had always wanted to be finished earlier in 1845, but events, expenses, and unforeseen circumstances held them back. Brigham Young directed all available craftsmen and workmen to do all they could to be ready in late November. Even so, it was not until December that the temple was far enough along that certain precincts on the third floor could be dedicated for the performance of the endowment ordinances.

During this same period, on December 1, 1845, Phelps penned a letter to his one-time close friend Oliver Cowdery:

Sir: The Quorum of the Twelve solicited me to write to you some time since, but a press of business in preparing for the endowment in our new temple, has deterred

me. I saw your letter to Phineas [Young], etc. To be short, we have concluded to let this rotten government alone, and shall not petition at Washington. That will satisfy you on that score. As to our exodus, if you believe that we are Israel, come and your friends say come, and let him that is athirst say come, with all things ready.⁶⁶

SPIRITUAL HEIGHTS IN THE TEMPLE

W. W. Phelps was involved in nearly every step in preparing the temple for its intended purposes. The Twelve Apostles certainly needed him and his expertise to publicize the temple's progress and aims in the pages of the *Times and Seasons*. Phelps was usually in attendance at key preparatory meetings, including "prayer meetings."

A significant portion of temple preparation was the prayer meetings, or prayer circles, that members of the Twelve conducted privately in church-owned buildings or occasionally in private homes. Joseph Smith had taught them that these prayer circles represented the "true order of prayer" and that appealing to God in this manner was to be part of the temple endowment ceremony.⁶⁷ The first known such prayer meeting occurred on May 26, 1843, in the upper room of the red brick store, the usual location where Joseph Smith conducted endowment or "Quorum of the Anointed" business. Approximately eighty men and women had been initiated into the "Quorum of the Anointed" in Joseph Smith's lifetime. This quorum had met for weekly prayer circle meetings with Joseph and Emma Smith.⁶⁸ One of these took place in the Phelps home on February 28, 1844.⁶⁹

Leaders' prayer circles involving Phelps intensified after the October 1845 General Conference in preparation for the ordinances in the Nauvoo Temple. Phelps was "mouth" in the prayer circle on November 25. These sacred gatherings were held on nearly a daily basis.⁷⁰ Then, finally, on November 29, as carpet was being laid in the temple, this prayer circle of male church leaders, Phelps included, took place in the temple itself. This event was a time of fervent thanksgiving. Now the circle could meet and pray daily in the temple as they made all necessary preparations for administering the ordinances. Phelps was involved nearly every step of the way.⁷¹

A most special circle took place on the Sabbath day, December 7, 1845. The temple was just about ready to open for ordinances. The Quorum of the Anointed met, and this time all the wives (Sally Phelps included) participated in an enormous prayer circle. Everybody then had the chance to visit all the rooms. W. W. Phelps was among the brethren to express his feelings of joy that they had the privilege of gathering in the temple "in spite of the combined opposition of men and devils." Then on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, the brethren of the quorum met in the temple to dedicate and prepare all the rooms for the endowment ordinances and ceremonies. On that Wednesday the tenth, the women of the quorum were also invited in, and all the men and women who had previously been endowed received the endowment anew in the temple itself. (Emma Smith was an exception because she had decided not to follow the direction of the Twelve Apostles.) William and Sally Phelps, who had cherished their promise of an eternal marriage for

ten years already, were grateful to be part of that company.⁷² The Phelpses “tarried in the Temple all night” so they could be ordinance workers the next day.⁷³

The Nauvoo Temple opened its doors on Thursday, December 11, 1845, for new initiates. Now, for the first time in the church’s young history, every worthy elder and his wife (and, when applicable, plural wives) could receive his and her individual endowment.

Members of the Twelve Apostles conducted all the male ordinances and performed the dramatic male roles in the endowment ceremony that first day when eighteen men and women received their endowments. Leading sisters performed the female ordinances. The only non-apostle male actor in the ceremony was W. W. Phelps, who acted “as the serpent.”⁷⁴ On Friday and Saturday, scores of others received their ordinances, thus laying the foundation for similar “around the clock” services over the subsequent nine weeks. Phelps continued to play the serpent in the ceremonies. Gradually, other brothers and sisters who had been initiated began to officiate in the ordinances. Many of the ordinance workers, including Phelps, had food and blankets with them in the temple and stayed overnight because the scheduled workload was so heavy.⁷⁵

With three days’ experience, the brethren had learned much about how they should administer ordinances more efficiently and how to conduct affairs properly in the temple with the patrons. Thus, at ten o’clock Saturday night, Phelps laid out some “rules of order” for the temple that he had drafted by assignment. These rules stipulated that patrons go from one ordinance room to another only with proper supervision and that loud speaking was not allowed.⁷⁶

The next day, Sunday, December 14, 1845, was a momentous day for church leaders in the Nauvoo Temple, and significantly so for W. W. Phelps and his wife Sally. At eleven o’clock in the morning, a special meeting convened involving the apostles and their wives, fifteen other men (eight of them, including Phelps, with their wives), and four widows of key church officials who had died (specifically *not* including Emma Smith). Brigham Young conducted and gave important counsel pertaining to performing ordinances and spoke to rules written the previous day by Phelps. Bread and wine for the sacrament were administered and passed to the participants; this was considered a most holy experience. Finally, a prayer circle with everyone in attendance took place. Brigham Young then directed W. W. Phelps and Parley Pratt to give items of “instruction” in a subsequent meeting for all brothers and sisters who had been endowed during the previous week. According to recorder William Clayton, “They [the endowed] were especially instructed [by Phelps and Pratt] more fully into the nature and importance of the blessings and powers of the Holy Priesthood which they have received, and it was enjoined upon them not to talk out of doors, but to be wise and prudent in all things.”⁷⁷

The temple ordinances then proceeded apace with scarcely a pause, often conducted well past midnight on some days, up through February 8, 1846. As for Brigham Young, he averaged only four hours of sleep per day. A total of 5,583 endowments were administered in the Nauvoo Temple. In early January, after a sacred altar was prepared, the apostles also started sealing husbands and wives for eternity. A total of 1,097 wives were sealed to husbands. On January 8, 1846, the “second anointings” started for specifically

designated individuals, and within a month about six hundred such ordinances had been performed.⁷⁸

W. W. and Sally Phelps were regular ordinance workers throughout the nine weeks. Sally participated in washing and anointing other women.⁷⁹ William performed second anointings for numerous individuals.⁸⁰ In most endowment ceremony sessions, Phelps played the role of the serpent, or devil, tempting Adam and Eve,⁸¹ after which eventually “the serpent is cursed and leaves the room, slithering on his stomach.”⁸²

In the *Times and Seasons*, Phelps exulted about events then taking place in the temple:

The blessings promised, are beginning to be realized, and the worthy saints, who have watched and labored night and day, go in and receive the “penny appointed,” and know of a certainty that diligence, faithfulness, and charity are rewarded. O, Lord, the true hearted saints now know that the endowments, and blessing upon the faithful, as far exceeds the earthly glory of Babylon, as the sun outshines a spark from the fire; and therefore, we beseech all who would be saved, “to quit their vanity” for “they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”⁸³

William and Sally Phelps were sealed anew in the temple on January 15, 1846. (They had earlier been sealed by Joseph Smith on February 2, 1844.) Both renewed their second anointings as well on January 15.⁸⁴ All Nauvoo Temple ordinance work concluded on February 8.

During this period, W. W. Phelps entered into plural marriage with two additional wives. He left no record at this time as to his feelings about polygamy, but given his loyalty to Joseph Smith and the Twelve Apostles, he likely supported the practice, at least doctrinally speaking. Later in Utah, Phelps would write affirmatively about plural marriage. He was sealed to Laura Stowell and Elizabeth Dunn on February 2, 1846.⁸⁵ Little is known about either woman or how Phelps became acquainted with them.⁸⁶ They also did *not* go west with William and Sally Phelps and their younger children.

William and Sally’s oldest son, W. Waterman Phelps, was also endowed and sealed to Lydia Caroline Brewster in the Nauvoo Temple on December 19, 1845.⁸⁷ Waterman, twenty-one, had married Lydia, eighteen, on July 8, 1845, in Nauvoo. He was also ordained a seventy on October 9, 1845. Lydia was born to William Brewster and Caroline Williams Brewster on January 14, 1827, in Rome, Oneida County, New York.⁸⁸

THE SAINTS HEAD WEST

Even as the Phelpses and others were engaged in this sacred temple work, church leaders, including W. W. Phelps, met often in the temple regarding the planned westward migration. Anti-Mormons had continued harassing the Saints in an attempt to drive them from the state in advance of a previously brokered agreement that they would begin leaving in the spring. Enemies even sought to arrest Brigham Young and other leaders on occasion. In response to these tense developments, the Council of Fifty met formally in the temple on Sunday, January 11, 1846, and decided to start west earlier than planned.

At subsequent council meetings over the next several days in the temple, designated “captains of fifty” and “captains of tens” made reports about how the companies would be created and outfitted for the hastily-called-for trek.⁸⁹

While the Twelve and their helpers completed ordinances in the temple, the first contingent of pioneering Saints crossed the Mississippi River and headed west on February 4, 1846. After February 8, Brigham Young directed the ferrying of many families across the river. He himself crossed on February 21, and then on March 1 he began guiding the “Camp of Israel” westward. Regarding the first wave of the exodus, Phelps observed in the *Times and Seasons*:

All things are in preparation for a commencement of the great move of the Saints out of the United States;—(we had liked to have said, beyond the power of Christianity,) but we will soften the expression, by merely saying, and lack to their “primitive possessions,” as in the enjoyment of Israel. It is reduced to a solemn reality, that the rights and property, as well as the lives and common religious belief of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, cannot be protected in the realms of the United States, and, of course, from one to two hundred thousand souls, must quit their freedom among freemen, and go where the land, the elements, and the worship of God are free.⁹⁰

Phelps completed the run of the *Times and Seasons* with the February 15, 1846, issue. Heroically, Phelps had directed its publication even while helping prepare the temple for the ordinances in November and serving as an ordinance worker in December, January, and early February.

W. W. Phelps remained temporarily in Nauvoo to assist in completing church financial transactions as much as possible. His role was logical since he was the city’s recorder of deeds. The brethren also contemplated publishing a new newspaper and thus would need Phelps, but this effort came to naught. He also helped Elders Wilford Woodruff and Orson Hyde of the Twelve and Elder Joseph Young, a president of the Seventy, in guiding the thousands of Saints who couldn’t leave Nauvoo in February but who left in March, April, May, or June after being outfitted for the journey.

On Sunday, March 8, apostate William Smith arrived in Nauvoo with some of his cronies who were allegedly drunk. He went through the city looking for possible adherents to his causes. He found none. Thomas Bullock, a clerk in the historian’s office, reported the following in his journal: “As he was passing along the Street he saw Sister [Sally] Phelps standing in her garden. He went up to her and said, how do you do sister Phelps, offering his hand to her. She replied sharply dont sister Phelps me!”⁹¹

An extant interchange of letters between officials of the “Camp of Israel” in Iowa Territory and W. W. Phelps sheds light on the circumstances of both Phelps in Nauvoo and his friends on their difficult trek. Willard Richards, clerk of the camp and an apostle close to Brigham Young, wrote Phelps on March 18, 1846. In a friendly manner he pleaded with Phelps to send him in every “mail” many copies of newspapers from “every part of the great Christian world” to bring Brigham Young’s council up to date on current affairs. Richards wryly indicated that they had been obliged to travel without a “sun dial” that

would give necessary light to them. “Please keep in kindness, these gentle hints from your old Friend and Bro.” Richards signed his name and added the nickname that Phelps had earlier given him—“Keeper of the Rol[ls].”⁹²

Phelps immediately responded to Richards and added irony of his own, saying that sending letters hopefully would provide “a smile in this aspect of woe.” He also reported on William Smith’s recent pathetic visit to Nauvoo and that new copies of the Doctrine and Covenants were being printed.⁹³

On April 29, 1846, Phelps participated in the official Nauvoo Temple dedication as part of a group of twenty-four high priests. Orson Hyde and Wilford Woodruff of the Twelve were in attendance. Together the group offered up sacred prayer in their temple robes and thanked God that the Nauvoo Temple had served its righteous purposes. They concluded with a hosanna shout.⁹⁴

On June 3 Phelps wrote Brigham Young regarding Young’s request that the press and type be delivered to the Camp of Israel. Phelps reported that because most of the type had been sold by the Nauvoo trustees, he could not comply with Young’s request. Phelps indicated that basically only the poor and widows were left in Nauvoo and that they needed any available funds to supply themselves for the exodus. Thus new type could not be obtained. Phelps believed he himself would likely soon leave Nauvoo.⁹⁵

A week later the mobs again violently harassed the remaining Saints in Nauvoo. Every family who had enough means to be outfitted left the city for the West to join the Camp of Israel. Phelps reported in a letter regarding the desperate circumstances that he hoped soon to meet his brethren in “Council Bluffs.”⁹⁶

Beginning June 25, 1846, W. W. Phelps guided a group of Saints down the Mississippi to St. Louis and thence on the Missouri River to Council Bluffs.⁹⁷ William and Sally took with them their youngest children: Henry Enon (eighteen), James (fourteen), and Lydia (eleven). Waterman, his wife Lydia, and their children did not leave the Nauvoo area for several years.

Little is known about the Phelps family between June 1846 and March 1847. On November 4, 1846, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball crossed the Missouri River from the Nebraska “Indian Territory” side to see W. W. Phelps in Council Bluffs on the eastern side.⁹⁸ As the Phelps family moved to Winter Quarters on the western side, they would have seen a community “consist[ing] of 538 log cabins, 83 sod houses, and a population of 3,483, which grew to 4,000 in 1847. Eventually about 800 cabins, huts, caves, and hovels were built and occupied.”⁹⁹

Phelps attended Council of Fifty meetings on November 12–13 and December 25 and 27, 1846.¹⁰⁰ Phelps joined the “silver grays,” a group organized on February 5, 1847, in Winter Quarters for “all the old men in the Camp of Israel over 50 years of age.”¹⁰¹

MISSION TO THE EAST

Phelps received a significant calling from the Twelve on March 31, 1847, just days before Brigham Young and seven other apostles led the “pioneer company” to find a new home for the Saints in the West. Since Phelps had not been able to bring the Nauvoo press and

type with him to the Camp of Israel, the brethren decided to get another press. Phelps, knowing the craft as he did, likely recommended that the church purchase a newer and smaller press that could be more easily transported.¹⁰² “Elder William W. Phelps was authorized to go east and procure a printing press and type. A recommendation to the saints in the East was subsequently given him. The saints were called upon to assist Elder Phelps on his mission.”¹⁰³

The next day the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles under the signatures of Brigham Young and Willard Richards, clerk, wrote “to the saints in the United States and Canada.” Showing that obtaining printing equipment was of high priority, they wrote:

By our well-beloved brother W. W. Phelps whom we have delegated on a special mission to such regions among you as he shall find necessary, to procure means to purchase a printing press, type, fixtures for the benefit of the saints in camp, the Stake of zion about to be located [in the West], yourselves and all saints, inasmuch as you desire the intelligence of eternity to flow forth from the proper source to cheer your hearts, and that it should be printed and handed down to your posterity for their edification and salvation, we earnestly solicit you to receive Elder Phelps, an aged¹⁰⁴ and faithfully servant in Israel, and one who is striving to accomplish a good work, as our messenger; and assist him in this journey of noble enterprise, with such means as our Heavenly Father has placed at your disposal, that he may soon return, with a fulness, and the blessings shall revert upon your own heads an hundred fold. Elder Phelps has been in camp with us the last winter and understands our present situation and future prospects, so far as they are known; and it will be his duty to instruct and council the brethren, wherever he may go, in all wisdom, as he shall be led by the Holy Spirit; and we invite all saints to receive the blessings which will follow them through obedience to his teachings.¹⁰⁵

The Twelve also charged the church's Nauvoo trustees to cooperate in every way with Elder Phelps's mission. Emphasizing the absolute need of a press and type, the letter stressed, “This people cannot live without intelligence, that is by obedience to that principle they are to receive exaltation.” The press was necessary, the brethren insisted, “whereby we can furnish our children with books, and the saints with new things to feast the soul.”¹⁰⁶

Phelps stayed on at Winter Quarters a few more weeks. He had to set up his wife and three children in appropriate circumstances to sustain themselves or be cared for in his absence. Difficult weather in April with inadequate roads across Iowa may have also been a factor. On April 19, 1847, Phelps was named to a committee to work out a peaceful solution to the huge problems with competing Indian tribes trading with the Mormons and, in many cases, stealing horses and cattle from the Mormons. The committee visited “Big Elk,” the chief of the Omaha tribe, and worked out a peace treaty.¹⁰⁷

In late May, Phelps made his way to Nauvoo. As he had been charged by the Twelve, he sought Latter-day Saints who could afford to contribute to his mission to travel to the East and then purchase a press and type. One of his first prospects was Reuben Miller. Miller had been converted to the church in January 1843 and soon demonstrated his leadership abilities. Brigham Young had even called upon him to lead a company to the

West. However, for a few months in 1845 and into 1846, Miller became acquainted with James J. Strang and seemed to agree with Strang's claims to be successor to Joseph Smith and the recipient of angelic visitations. But by the summer of 1846 when Phelps wrote to Miller in Burlington, Wisconsin, Miller had left Strangism and was writing a strongly worded refutation of this "pretended prophet."¹⁰⁸ On May 30, 1847, Phelps wrote to Miller that it was time for him to fulfill his duty to the Camp of Israel, to join the Saints at the Missouri River, and to come to Nauvoo and give Phelps fifty dollars with which to buy printing equipment.¹⁰⁹

No extant documents detail Phelps's journey eastward. Conceivably, he could have visited some branches along the way. He apparently knew his ultimate destination—Boston, Massachusetts. Phelps received a warm reception in Boston at the hands of branch president Alexander Badlam, a veteran of Zion's Camp, a member of the First Quorum of Seventy, a member of the Council of Fifty, and a wealthy coach maker and piano manufacturer. The Boston Branch boasted more members than any other in the eastern states. In future years Badlam would continue to be called on to contribute money to help the Saints in their progress to the West.¹¹⁰

Phelps was in Boston through most of the month of August 1847. The Badlams ended up contributing the enormous amount of \$700 for the purchase of press and type. Three more members contributed a total of \$150, so it can be presumed that the press cost approximately \$850 or more.¹¹¹

Phelps's acquisition was known as a "Ramage Press," named after its creator, Scottish-born Adam Ramage (1772–1850). Ramage sought successfully, in his own words, "to render the hand press efficient, simple in construction, and moderate in price." This wooden "hand press" was substantially lighter and more compact than other well-known presses of the era and was designed to be delivered more easily to distant locations. It would be simple to operate and repair, and others could easily be trained how to print with it.¹¹² As an accomplished printer, Phelps knew what he wanted and where he could acquire it. Phelps's purchase became the press used by the church in Utah for many decades, although over time additional presses also would be obtained.

En route back to Winter Quarters, Phelps visited various branches. We know he went to Batavia, New York, where a branch existed.¹¹³ He also might have checked on his parents and siblings in Cortland County. Oliver B. Huntington was present at one of Phelps's discourses at an unknown location. Huntington reported:

Such a discourse of strong meat they never heard in that branch before; but, 'twas good. I never had much acquaintance with [Phelps] before, but I found he was as deceiving [in the sense of how he appeared] at first, as any man I ever saw. He knew seemingly everything for a man, and all the learning was his, but at first sight his looks and motions said he was just two thirds man, only. But there was no end to the knowledge continually poured out by him, as well as amusement.¹¹⁴

EXCOMMUNICATION FOR UNAUTHORIZED POLYGAMY

W. W. Phelps arrived at Winter Quarters on November 12, 1847, just twelve days after eight apostles, including Brigham Young, returned from founding a colony in the Salt Lake Valley.¹¹⁵ The brethren were grateful that Phelps had achieved success in his mission to obtain moneys and purchase an efficient press and type. However, they were astounded to learn that Phelps had exceeded his authority in taking to himself three additional wives!

Phelps married these women in St. Louis en route back to Winter Quarters from Boston. Elder Henry B. Jacobs, who was returning from a mission to the British Isles, was in St. Louis as well, and it was he who performed these marriages. Even though Phelps had been previously authorized to take plural wives, he had not received the required specific authorization from the apostles for these three additional wives. Phelps was open and honest with Brigham Young and the other apostles about what he had done, including the fact that he indeed had consummated these marriages as he continued his journey via the Missouri River to Winter Quarters. But the apostles were stunned nevertheless.

Brigham Young and the apostles in Winter Quarters decided to hold a council on the Phelps/Jacobs affair, which turned out to be “a long and tedious hearing of the matter.” Hosea Stout, clerking for the Twelve on November 30, 1847, recorded that the council pronounced Phelps guilty of adultery and that “he should be cut off from the church.” Wilford Woodruff recorded that although Henry Jacobs and Phelps were both brought in, Jacobs “was mostly cleared & the blame fell upon Br Phelps.”¹¹⁶ On December 9 the Quorum of the Twelve officially excommunicated Phelps. (This was the third time Phelps had officially been excommunicated!) This action appeared to be a warning to other brethren that they should always have authoritative counsel and permission to enter plural marriage henceforth.¹¹⁷ The brethren realized that Phelps had sinned in committing this mistake but that he had done so somewhat honestly. Thus he was rebaptized two days later “after acknowledging his misunderstanding.”¹¹⁸

It is historically fascinating that while Phelps was excommunicated for marrying plurally without obtaining permission from Brigham Young, two apostles—Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor—were only privately reprimanded for taking unauthorized additional wives.¹¹⁹

Sarah Betsina (Betsy) Gleason was one of Phelps's three new plural wives and was the only one of the three who remained with Phelps thereafter. The identities of the other two women are unknown. Existing genealogical data shows that Betsy was formally married to W. W. Phelps on December 22, 1847, merely two weeks following Phelps's excommunication and rebaptism. Betsy was born September 9, 1828, in County Tipperary, Ireland, allegedly just before her family emigrated from Ireland to the United States. Her father's name is thought to be Henry Gleason and her mother Ellen Cleary Gleason.¹²⁰ She was nineteen at the time of her marriage to Phelps, who was nearly fifty-six.

One can only imagine (for there are no records) how Sally Phelps felt about these plural marriages. She had always remained true and faithful to her husband William through thick and thin, and now she was expected to cope with this scandal that surrounded her husband. Sally likely believed that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were

correct in God's sight in authorizing plural marriages. Certainly, she was present when her husband was sealed to two other women in the Nauvoo Temple back on February 2, 1846. Natural feelings of jealousy must have risen in Sally's bosom when she greeted her husband in November 1847 with three much-younger women tagging along with him. Perhaps she came to feel at peace with Betsy Gleason and thus consented to William's being married to Betsy and later sealed to her in Utah.

PREPARATIONS FOR TREK TO SALT LAKE

From late December 1847 through late May 1848, the Phelps family was busily engaged in outfitting for their arduous trek to their new Zion in the West. They would be part of Brigham Young's enormous party that would consist of four different companies and 1,220 individuals at the time of their embarking from Winter Quarters in June 1848.

Meanwhile, W. W. Phelps put his meteorological training to use by compiling detailed weather conditions at Winter Quarters for December 1847 and January and February 1848.¹²¹

In January 1848 Phelps assumed other leadership roles befitting his background. He prepared a petition to the Iowa legislature about expanding Pottawattamie County, where Mormons had set up numerous settlements with the idea of many residing there for the next several years. He was also assigned to preach at the Seventies Jubilee in the new Kane Log Tabernacle.¹²²

According to official Brigham Young 1848 Company records, the Phelpses who made this trip at the time of the start of the journey were William Wines Phelps (fifty-six), Sally Waterman Phelps (fifty), Henry Enon Phelps (nineteen), James Phelps (fifteen), Lydia Phelps (thirteen), and Sarah Betsy Gleason Phelps (nineteen).¹²³ William and Sally's son Henry was just a month and a half younger than William's plural wife Betsy, and all of Henry's older siblings in the Midwest were substantially older. Such a curious relationship connected to Mormon polygamy was not unique, however, with the Phelpses.

The journey to the Salt Lake Valley would be long and laborious through mid-September, but with his native enthusiasm, confidence, and optimism, W. W. Phelps still looked forward to new chapters in his life where he could contribute to the kingdom of God.

Meteorological Journal

for Winter Quarters near Council Bluffs. Latitude 41° 18' N. Longitude 20° W

December 1847

Day of Month	Day of Week	Sunrise			Noon			Sunset			Remarks &c
		Thermometer	Weather	Wind	Thermometer	Weather	Wind	Thermometer	Weather	Wind	
1	W	22	hazy cloudy	S	50	hazy	W high	39	hazy	SW	more than inch of rain water
2	Th	22	clear	N	25	cloudy	N	19	cloudy	N	
3	F	14	clear	S	35	cloudy	S	31	cloudy	N	
4	Sat	27	clear	N	35	clear	N	32	clear	N	
5	S	16	clear	N	30	clear	S	27	clear	S	
6	M	22	clear	S	49	clear	S	46	clear	S	
7	T	30	cloudy	NE	20	cloudy	NE	17	cloudy	NE	○ New moon 3 P.M.
8	W	5	clear	N	28	hazy	S.W	21	hazy	S	
9	Th	24	snow	E	34	snow	E NE	25	cloudy	E	snow fell 2 1/2 inches
10	Fri	11	cloudy	SW	36	cloudy	S	12	cloudy	S	
11	Sat	14	clear	S	40	hazy	S	22	hazy	S	
12	S	8	clear	N	18	clear & raw	N	10	clear	N	
13	M	9	clear	NW	20	clear	SW	6	clear	SW	
14	Tue	9 1/2	clear	SE	26	clear	S	19	clear	SW	☾ First Quarter 10 P.M. light wind
15	W	15	clear	N	34	clear	N	27	clear	NE	
16	Th	5	clear	N	30	clear	W	20	clear	N	
17	Fri	10	clear	W	32	clear	S	30	clear	S	
18	Sat	15	hazy	W	34	hazy	S	37	clear	N	
19	S	10	hazy	N	25	hazy	W	32	clear	NW	high wind in P.M.
20	M	9 1/2	clear	N	12	clear	N	8	clear	N	cold day
21	Tue	10	clear	S	34	hazy	W	30	hazy	N	● Full moon 4 1/2 P.M.
22	Wed	20	cloudy	W	31	clear	W	24	clear	W	
23	Thur	32	clear	N	39	clear	N	28	clear	N	
24	Fri	20	cloudy	NE	20	clear	N	15	clear	N	light snow 1/2 inch deep
25	Sat	10	cloudy	NW	5	clear	W	3	clear	NW	coldest day
26	S	6	hazy	S	27	hazy	S	23	cloudy	S	
27	M	23	clear	N	37	clear	NW	36	clear	S	
28	Tue	25	hazy	S	39	hazy	S	37	hazy	S	
29	Wed	40	cloudy	S	46	hazy	S	40	hazy	S	☾ Last quarter 8 A.M. Warm day
30	Thur	28	clear	E	40	cloudy	SE	37	cloudy	SE	foggy
31	Fri	34	clear	NW	36	cloudy	N	32	cloudy	N	Snow Squall in P.M.

Taken by W. W. Phelps

with the use of Fahrenheit's

Thermometer

NOTES

1. John S. Dinger, ed., *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011), August 8, 1844, 282–94.
2. Rigdon's alleged illicit activities were outlined in considerable detail in his public "trial" that took place on September 8. Phelps published extensive minutes of the trial serially in the *Times and Seasons*. According to general protocol, it seems unusual that these proceedings were public instead of private. However, the final portion of Phelps's own trial in Far West in March 1838 was public as well. Brigham Young felt that Rigdon's case was of such magnitude that the general church membership should witness and be part of the process.
3. Sources for the next three paragraphs are "Trial of Elder Rigdon," *T&S* 5 (September 15, 1844): 647–55; "Continuation of Elder Rigdon's Trial," *T&S* 5 (October 1, 1844): 660–67; and "Conclusion of Elder Rigdon's Trial," *T&S* 5 (October 15, 1844): 685–87. Minutes of the trial were reprinted in *The Prophet* 1 (November 16, 1844): 3 and 1 (November 23, 1844): 1–2.
4. "Trial of Elder Rigdon," *T&S* 5 (September 15, 1844): 647–55; "Continuation of Elder Rigdon's Trial," *T&S* 5 (October 1, 1844): 660–67; *JSP, CFM*:378n592, 379n594, 379n595.
5. Phelps's testimony is found in "Conclusion of Elder Rigdon's Trial," 685–87.
6. This "revelation" of November 19, 1833, pertaining to Sidney Rigdon does not appear in the Doctrine and Covenants. It is found in Joseph Smith's journal as kept by Oliver Cowdery at the time. Just prior to this blessing/prophecy on Rigdon, Smith also dictated, "Brother Sidney is a man whom I love but is not capab[le] of that pure and stedfast love for those who are his benefactors as should possess the breast of a Presedent of the chu[r]ch of Christ this with some other little things such as a selfish and indipendence of mind which to[o] often manifests [and] destroys the confidence of those who would lay down their lives for him." *JSP, J1*:18.
7. "Continuation of Elder Rigdon's Trial," 663.
8. "Conclusion of Elder Rigdon's Trial," 686–87.
9. In Council of Fifty minutes, it was always Phelps who explained in detail the activities of the printing office and the two presses and the challenges the workers there experienced. *JSP, CFM*:369–70, 390, 413–15. An additional indication that Phelps was the de facto editor is that Mormon elders wrote reports of their South Pacific missionary activities specifically to Phelps for inclusion in the *Times and Seasons*. Addison Pratt, "From the 'Islands of the Sea,'" *T&S* 5 (November 15, 1844): 707–10; Benjamin Grouard, "From the Islands of the Sea," *T&S* 5 (December 15, 1844): 749–40. Addison Pratt's letter to Phelps was reprinted in *The Prophet* 1 (January 11, 1845): 1.
10. Curiously, "Elder Phelps" often prayed both at the beginning and end of sessions of general conference.
11. W. W. Phelps to Wilford Woodruff, June 1845, Wilford Woodruff Journals and Papers, 1828–1898, MS 1352, CHL.
12. "Labor," *T&S* 5 (October 15, 1844): 679–80; "Labor," *NN* 2 (November 16, 1844): 2; emphasis added.
13. "The Trades," *NN* 2 (October 16, 1844): 2.
14. "Economy," *NN* 2 (October 16, 1844): 2. For further Phelps articles on this topic in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, see "Trades' Meeting," 2 (November 13, 1844): 2; "Nauvoo Manufactories and Trades Meetings," 2 (December 4, 1844): 3; [Untitled], 2 (January 1, 1845): 3; "Trades Meeting," 2 (January 9, 1845): 2; "Trades Meeting," 2 (January 15, 1845): 2; "The Trades Meeting," 2 (January 29, 1845): 2; "For the Neighbor" [letter to the editor written under the pseudonym "R. A. Mechanic"], 2 (March 19, 1845): 1; "Be One, Mechanics!," 3 (June 25, 1845): 2.

15. Dinger, *Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, December 10, 1844, 302.
16. "Union and Peace in Nauvoo," *T&S* 5 (November 15, 1844): 711; emphasis added.
17. "The City of Nauvoo," *T&S* 5 (December 15, 1844): 743–44.
18. At a meeting of the Council of Fifty on April 11, 1845, Phelps indicated that with upgraded printing equipment and supplies, the Nauvoo printing office could and should produce books for children. *JSP, CFM*:414.
19. [Untitled], *T&S* 6 (November 1, 1845): 1015; Autobiography of Norton Jacob, typescript in L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.
20. "Indian Hunter" was first published in 1836. Eliza Cook composed the poem and Henry Russell the music. Phelps patterned his poem/hymn to a small degree after the original composition. See Michael Hicks, "Poetic Borrowing in Early Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 140–41.
21. "A Voice from the Prophet: 'Come to Me,'" *T&S* 6 (January 15, 1845): 785; *NN* 2 (January 9, 1845): 1; "Nauvoo," *The Prophet* 1 (February 8, 1845): 2.
22. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo," *Woman's Exponent* 12, no. 9 (October 1, 1883): 71.
23. William Smith's apostolic service in the East, including the scandals, is detailed in Kyle R. Walker, *William B. Smith: In the Shadow of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2015), 171–207.
24. Back in May 1844, Phelps wrote in the *Times and Seasons*: "[William Smith's] talents are known and appreciated, in his conduct in the last session of the Legislature proved him to be a man of talent and of genius, a patriot and a statesman, and a man every way qualified to maintain the interests of the people he represented." "For the Neighbor," *T&S* 5 (May 15, 1844): 534. For his part, Smith, as editor of *The Prophet* in New York City, reprinted many of Phelps's articles in that newspaper.
25. "City of Nauvoo," *T&S* 5 (December 1, 1844): 727.
26. "Answer," *T&S* 6 (January 1, 1845): 757. This letter of Phelps to William Smith was reprinted in *The Prophet* 1 (February 1, 1844): 1–2.
27. "Answer," 759–60.
28. "Answer," 761; emphasis added.
29. "Letter from Eld. Wm. Smith," *T&S* 6 (February 15, 1845): 814.
30. Caroline's horrible difficulties with dropsy and the remedies of that era are discussed in Walker, *William B. Smith*, 216–18.
31. [Untitled], *NN* 3 (May 7, 1845): 2.
32. "Meeting," *NN* 3 (May 14, 1845): 2; emphasis in original.
33. William Smith, "Dear Brethren," *NN* 3 (May 14, 1845): 2–3.
34. This episode is recounted in Walker, *William B. Smith*, 236–42.
35. "Patriarchal," *T&S* 6 (May 15, 1845): 904–5.
36. [Untitled], *T&S* 6 (May 15, 1845): 905; emphasis added.
37. "Patriarchal," *T&S* 6 (June 1, 1845): 920; emphasis added.
38. "Patriarchal," 921; emphasis added (capitalization per original).
39. Walker, *William B. Smith*, 252.
40. "Dinner to the Smith Family," *NN* 3 (July 16, 1845): 2; emphasis in original.
41. Walker, *William B. Smith*, 299–304. See also *JSP, CFM*:460.
42. Dinger, *Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, February 7, 1845, 322. According to council minutes, Phelps promoted safety for Nauvoo citizens by providing constables in each ward;

- participated actively on the municipal laws, public works, and finance committees; and continued as the registrar of deeds. Dinger, *Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, February 8, 323–36.
43. *JSP, CFM:xl–xli*; 215–29.
 44. *JSP, CFM:220–21*, 223.
 45. This revelation took place when Joseph Smith took about eight brethren, including Phelps, up to the Missouri state line on July 17, 1831. This revelation was not officially recorded, although Phelps later wrote it up according to his memory. W. W. Phelps to Brigham Young (both in Salt Lake City, Utah), August 12, 1861, CHL; *JSP, D2:11n45*; *JSP, CFM:533*, 533n24.
 46. *JSP, CFM:528*, 531, 533.
 47. *JSP, CFM:271–73*. The general feeling of Council of Fifty members during this spring was that getting out from under the oppressive influence of the United States government was top priority.
 48. *JSP, CFM:286*, 288. See also Richard E. Bennett, “‘We Are a Kingdom to Ourselves’: The Council of Fifty Minutes and the Mormon Exodus West,” in *The Council of Fifty: What the Records Reveal about Mormon History*, ed. Matthew J. Grow and R. Eric Smith (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017), 255–56.
 49. *JSP, CFM:292–95*. Willard Richards read Phelps’s letter to the council at the next meeting, March 11, 1845, and it was approved. *JSP, CFM:312–18*.
 50. *JSP, CFM:318*, 318n424. Phelps’s proposal was approved at the next council meeting, March 18, 1845. *JSP, CFM:334–36*, 336n475, 338. See also Jeffrey David Mahas, “‘I Intend to Get Up a Whistling School’: The Nauvoo Whistling and Whittling Movement, American Vigilante Tradition, and Mormon Theocratic Thought,” *Journal of Mormon History* 43, no. 4 (October 2017): 37–67, especially 49–50.
 51. *JSP, CFM:319*, 319n425. Phelps reported on state regulations at the next meeting, March 18. *JSP, CFM:332–33*, 332n466.
 52. *JSP, CFM:326*, 326n447. In subsequent meetings Phelps continued to encourage settling in California. He also placed articles in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* promoting California over Oregon.
 53. *JSP, CFM:333*, 333n468.
 54. *JSP, CFM:369–71*.
 55. *JSP, CFM:371–77*.
 56. *JSP, CFM:424*, 424n722.
 57. *JSP, CFM:476*.
 58. *JSP, CFM:486*, 497, 497n131.
 59. *JSP, CFM:494–95*, 495n125.
 60. “The Capstone of the Temple,” *NN* 3 (May 28, 1845): 2; emphasis in original.
 61. “The Cap Stone,” *T&S* 6 (August 1, 1845): 991. The hymn was actually written by May 10, 1845, as it was reviewed and sung at a meeting of the Council of Fifty that day. *JSP, CFM:454*, 454n816.
 62. “The Steeple of the Temple,” *NN* 3 (July 30, 1845): 2.
 63. “First Meeting in the Temple,” *T&S* 6 (November 1, 1845): 1017.
 64. “To Our Patrons,” *NN* 3 (October 29, 1845): 2.
 65. “Ho! Ho!,” *NN*, Extra, November 19, 1845; emphasis in original.
 66. Oliver Cowdery quoted Phelps’s letter to him in a December 18, 1845, letter to Phineas Young. See Scott H. Faulring, “The Return of Oliver Cowdery,” in *Oliver Cowdery: Scribe*,

- Elder, Witness*, ed. John W. Welch and Larry E. Morris (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, 2006), 329–30. Cowdery did not return to the church at this time, but his correspondence with his brother-in-law Phineas Young reveals that he was seriously contemplating such a move.
67. For an in-depth study of prayer circles, see D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 1 (Fall 1978): 79–105. See also *JSP, CFM*:447, 447n793.
 68. Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," 84–87, 86n30; *JSP, J3*:23, 23n80, 104–5, 104n481, 104n482, 104n483; Anderson and Bergera, *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed*, xxxvi, xxxix, xli, 41–42, 44–45, 63–64.
 69. Anderson and Bergera, *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed*, 70.
 70. Anderson and Bergera, *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed*, 152, 155, 161, 165–166, 169, 170–84.
 71. Anderson and Bergera, *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed*, 185–95.
 72. Anderson and Bergera, *Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed*, 195–205; Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," 93.
 73. Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1845: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 4.
 74. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 5, 10–11.
 75. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 11–26.
 76. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 26–27.
 77. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 28–35.
 78. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, xxvii–xxxviii, 376, 383, 396–98, 400.
 79. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 163, 176, 179, 180, 184–85.
 80. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 503, 586, 607.
 81. As recorded for each endowment session in chapters 1–5 of Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*.
 82. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, xxiii–xxiv.
 83. "January," *T&S* 6 (January 15, 1846): 1096.
 84. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 417.
 85. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 564–65.
 86. Laura Stowell was purportedly born July 27, 1825, in Lincoln, Chenango County, New York. She would have been twenty at the time of this sealing. She died purportedly on April 16, 1862, in Kansas. Laura's mother, Mary Stephens Holmes Stowell, went to Utah and raised some of her children there. Elizabeth (also known as Eliza Jane) Dunn was purportedly born July 4, 1828, in Greensboro, Hale County, Alabama. She would have been seventeen at the time of this sealing. See *MCJC*, 14:693, 696; 42:44. This information on Laura and Mary Stowell and Elizabeth Dunn is available at www.ancestry.com and www.myheritage.com.
 87. Anderson and Bergera, *Nauvoo Endowment Companies*, 87, 95, 99.
 88. *MCJC*, 6:661–62; 34:784–86.
 89. *JSP, CFM*:xliii–xliv; 506–25, 541–50. Phelps's reasoned comments are in *JSP, CFM*:517.
 90. "February," *T&S* 6 (February 1, 1846): 1114.
 91. Gregory R. Knight, "Journal of Thomas Bullock (1816–1885): 31 August 1845 to 5 July 1846," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 59.
 92. Willard Richards letter (Camp of Israel) to W. W. Phelps and Elias Smith (Nauvoo), March 18, 1846, MS 1490, Willard Richards journals and papers, 1821–1854, CHL.

93. W. W. Phelps letter (Nauvoo) to Willard Richards (Camp of Israel), March 23, 1846, Willard Richards journals and papers.
94. Nauvoo Temple Minutes, April 29, 1846, CHL.
95. W. W. Phelps to Brigham Young, June 3, 1846, Letters from Church Leaders and Others, 1840–1877, Brigham Young office files, CHL.
96. W. W. Phelps to Brigham Young, June 10, 1846, CHL. Quotation marks in original.
97. Knight, “Journal of Thomas Bullock,” 72, 72n201; “Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, etc.,” *St. Louis Daily*, June 29, 1846, News Clippings, vol. 8, p. 325, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.
98. JH, November 4, 1846.
99. WWJ, 2:103; Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1864), 1:219.
100. JSP, CFM:xliv.
101. WWJ, 2:125–26.
102. A thorough discussion of Phelps’s mission and the contextual setting of the Mormon press in 1846–1851 are found in the introduction of Peter Crawley, ed., *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997), 2:11–25, specifically 17–19. Phelps’s mission is also outlined in Wendell J. Ashton, *Voice in the West: Biography of a Pioneer Newspaper* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), 8–13.
103. JH, 31 March 1847. See also WWJ, 2:144.
104. Phelps was only fifty-five years old at the time, but he was significantly older than all the members of the Twelve, including the oldest, Brigham Young, who was forty-six.
105. JH, April 1, 1847.
106. JH, April 1, 1847.
107. Brooks, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:250–51.
108. A brief biographical sketch of Miller and a discussion of his book *James J. Strang, Weighed in the Balance of Truth, and Found Wanting* is in Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 1:349–51.
109. W. W. Phelps to Reuben Miller (Burlington, WI), 1847, MS 15328, May 3, 1847, CHL. Miller rejoined the body of the Saints and became a captain of an immigrant group. He would become a bishop in Utah.
110. Connell O’Donovan, *Early Boston Mormons and Missionaries, A to C, 1831–1860*, online at http://www.connellodonovan.com/boston_mormonsA-C.pdf, 64–84.
111. Alexander Badlam (Cambridgeport, MA) to Brigham Young (Winter Quarters, Nebraska Indian Territory), February 29, 1848, Brigham Young Incoming Correspondence, 1839–1877, box 21, folder 10, CHL. William I. Appleby, president of the Eastern States Mission, also obtained sixty-one dollars, which was later used to buy fine type. See also Crawley, *Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 2:386.
112. Letterpress Commons, <https://letterpresscommons.com/press/ramage-screw-press/>.
113. William I. Appleby autobiography and journal, 1848–1856, MS 15183, CHL.
114. “Diary of Oliver B. Huntington,” 1842–1847, part 1, as cited by Walter Dean Bowen, “The Versatile W. W. Phelps: Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958), 138.
115. WWJ, 2:290.
116. Brooks, *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:289–90; Wayne Stout, *Hosea Stout: Utah’s Pioneer Statesman* (Salt Lake City: printed by the author, 1953), 111–12; WWJ, 2:293.
117. WWJ, 2:293.

118. Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Volume 1: History* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2013), 605, 607–8.
119. Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 271.
120. That Betsy Gleason was born in Ireland comes from genealogical information compiled by the extended Phelps family. <https://www.myheritage.com/research/record-1-369376081-3-400/sarah-betsina-phelps-born-gleason-in-myheritage-family-trees?s=452572241>. A male with the surname Gleason is known to have attended Mormon meetings in Boston. See http://www.connellodonovan.com/boston_mormonsD-M.pdf, p. 56. Conceivably, Betsy could have been a brother to this man and was living in Boston when Phelps was there for a few weeks in the summer of 1847.
121. For Phelps's weather observations for December 1847 to February 1848, see W. W. Phelps, meteorological journal, 1847–1849, CR 1234/1, box 75, folder 40, Brigham Young office files, CHL. A photo of Phelps's "meteorological journal" for December 1847 is located at the Mormon Trail Center at Historic Winter Quarters, operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Omaha, Nebraska.
122. Gail Geo. Holmes, "A Prophet Who Followed, Fulfilled, and Magnified," in *Lion of the Lord: Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young*, ed. Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 148.
123. <https://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/companies/4/brigham-young-company>.